Front Cover



Featuring Henrik and Saga

Media Language

Crime dramas have a recognisable repertoire of elements, these may be specific to a sub-genre, for example a psychological crime drama. These conventions have evolved over time and developed to reflect social and cultural change and the needs and expectations of audiences. However, these dramas share similarities which place them in the crime genre, including:

- **Narrative:** This is usually based on a crime that needs to be investigated and solved.

-> **Structure:** Crime dramas may use a range of different narrative structures- they may conform to Todorov's theory where the structure is linear from the initial disruption through to a resolution, or non-linear where time and space is manipulated. Inverted narratives show the crime and the perpetrator at the start and then may have a non-linear structure including flashbacks.

Media Language (cont)

Other examples of the genre create a restricted narrative in which information is withheld from the audience and they are involved in the solving of the crime alongside the police.** In The Bridge, there are elements of a flexi-narrative. The characters are complex, storylines interweave, and the audience is challenged through enigma and engagement with complex characters. **. -> **Narrative disruptions** occur that change the course of the story, these can be events that happen or revelations that are made by characters. Sometimes, the audience are in a privileged spectator position whereby they know more than the characters within the story world.

-> **Binary oppositions** function as a narrative element including **good vs evil, police vs criminal as well as, in the case of The Bridge, the cultural differences of Sweden vs Denmark, Saga vs Hanne, the nuclear vs the non-nuclear family and illusion vs reality.**

The **resolving of some of these binary oppositions within the story world may have an ideological significance, for example evil being punished and justice prevailing in a crime drama (Structuralism: Levi-Strauss).**

-> **Plot situations** are included that are typical of the crime genre. For example, the **discovery of a body, an arrest, an interview with a suspect or the denouement where the perpetrator of the crime is revealed by the detective.** These situations are made **slightly different in The Bridge** due to the **incongruencies in Saga's character**. For example, in the **interview with the victim's wife Saga has to be prevented from showing her the crime scene photographs.**

Media Language (cont)

-> **Story arcs** and narrative strands occur in episodes and across the series of a crime drama. In The Bridge, **as this is the first episode of a new series, there are several complex, enigmatic narrative strands, some new and some carrying over from other series, which will be interwoven across the episodes in this series**, including:

- **Saga's past and her involvement with Martin, her role in this narrative and how she relates to others, her past and her mother.**
- The partnerships and team dynamics, for example **Hanne Thomsen and Lillian and the tension with the Saga and the Swedish team.**
- The **crime- who killed Helle Anker?** The **enigma of the murder scene set up as a nuclear family.**
- The **additional storylines including the role of Alexsandr and his place in the narrative.**
- The **character of Henrik, his drug dependence** and the **enigma surrounding his family.** The **expectation of how he and Saga will work together.**
- **Stock characters** usually including a hierarchy with a boss, a detective, a sidekick, and other characters, for example a victim, a range of suspects, the perpetrator of the crime and experts/witnesses who help in the solving of the crime. **Often the pairing of characters are binary opposites, and their relationships contribute to tensions within the narrative, this is the case with Saga and firstly Hanne and then potentially Henrik.**
- **Setting and locations:** These will become synonymous with the programme and the brand and will relate to the characters and the sub-genre. **Some settings will be typical for the genre, for example the police station, the post-mortem lab and urban crime settings, others become iconic, for example, the bridge itself.**

-- APPLYING THEORY --

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Media Language (cont)

Narratology - Todorov
All narratives share a basic structure involving movement from one state of equilibrium to another, separated by a disequilibrium. **The opening of The Bridge establishes an initial equilibrium, Martin is now in jail, Saga is focused on work and Pettersen and Lillian are married.**
The **disruption to this equilibrium is the discovery of the body of Helle Anker**. **Enigma codes are then established as a key element of the narrative in the attempt to find the killer.**
A series of **story arcs are established which interweave across the episode.**
As this is an example of an **episodic drama there would not be a resolution at the end of the first episode, instead there is a cliff--hanger with an explosion where Hanne is seriously injured and the introduction of Henrik as Saga's new partner. The audience has been placed in a privileged spectator position regarding Henrik's situation which foreshadows possible future narratives.**
-- How genre conventions are socially and historically relative, dynamic and can be used in a hybrid way --
Although **genres have never been stagnant, it is increasingly the case that they are more dynamic and seek to challenge audience expectations**. The genre now is a **starting point to target the audience and then surprise them through hybridity and intertextuality.**
Some programmes, for example **The Bridge, challenge and subvert genre conventions, in this case through the narrative, the characters and reference to other genres.** The Nordic Noir crime dramas demonstrate their hybridity through reference to the conventions of film noir many, but not all of which are evident in The Bridge:

Media Language (cont)

-A **dark pessimistic tone and mood**
- **Chiaroscuro lighting and shadows establishing enigma codes and a bleak melancholy aesthetic.**
- A sexually attractive **femme fatale** functioning as a **strong protagonist**, until the end.
- **Disillusioned, flawed anti-hero (detective), often with a past**
- **Claustrophobic and menacing setting: closed frames to connote entrapment; canted angles suggesting disorientation.**
- A **slow pace**
- **Moral decline and ambiguity with a focus on the darker elements of life.**
- Themes of **corruption, greed, obsession, duality and isolation.**
- **Strong awareness of mortality and irony of human existence.**
- **Complex narrative and convoluted plot**
- **Iconography - bars created by shadows through blinds, cigarettes, neon, rain, alleyways, trench coat and trilby.**
-- APPLYING THEORY --
Genre - Steve Neale
Neale asserts that genres may be dominated by repetition, but they are also marked by difference, variation and change. Crime dramas have a recognisable repertoire of elements that place them in the genre, but to appeal to audiences they need to display something different to set them apart from other examples. **Difference is essential to sustain a genre, to simply repeat the codes and conventions of the form would not appeal to an audience.**
In The Bridge, the **Scandinavian setting, locations, and the enigmatic character of Saga proved novel for audiences.**

Media Language (cont)

The Bridge demonstrates that genres change, develop and vary as they borrow from and overlap with one another some contemporary crime dramas are less easy to categorise as they are hybrid genres and this variation consequently enhances audience appeal. **The Bridge is an example of the Nordic Noir sub-genre, borrows conventions from film noir.**
Genres exist within specific economic, institutional and industrial contexts. The recognisable codes and conventions of crime dramas make them easy to market to audiences. However, subverting and challenging these conventions by introducing more novel elements as in The Bridge can also ensure commercial success.
The Bridge demonstrates **typical elements of a police procedural crime drama**, but also, as Neale has suggested, **incorporates differences illustrating the dynamic and socially relative nature of genre conventions and the hybridity of the genre:**
- **Nordic Noir / Film Noir elements**
- Elements of the **action genre**, for example the chase scene
- **Horror conventions**, for example the **build-up of tense music, audio codes suggesting supernatural elements, slow turning to camera and the execution of the crime.**
- Elements of the **psychological thriller**, for example the **murder scene, the slow pace and the use of silence/lack of dialogue.**
- **Gender representations** - there are stock characters and representations we expect in a crime drama, but **strong female roles challenging expectations. Saga is an unusual heroine, she is flawed but central to the narrative, with unpredictable and interesting behaviour traits.**
- **Setting and aesthetic, intensity of mood and dark, unsettling themes.**

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Media Language (cont)

- **Technical codes which reference film noir, for example the low-key lighting, the use of torchlight, profile shots and intense close-ups and frames with isolated figures.**
- The **unique setting**, the bridge, represents the **'other-worldly' which links cultures but is neither one place nor another, shots of the bridge are used throughout the episode.**
- The narrative of the **stylised murders referencing "art" are notions of the surreal.**

-- How the combinations of elements of media language influence meaning --

- **Codes of clothing:** the **connotations of character's clothing and appearance to create meanings.** Clothing is a rapid way of communicating messages in The Bridge. Saga's versions of the **same outfit and colour scheme contribute to the enigma surrounding her character and her behaviour traits.** Clothing worn by the other detectives is **informal and functional, unlike UK crime dramas clothing does not connote a hierarchy within the police force.**
- **Gesture and expression:** Non-verbal communicators are quick ways of constructing meaning. The Bridge frequently uses **close-up shots of characters to communicate meaning and many of the expressions are serious, anxious and fearful, reflecting the dark themes and melancholy aesthetic. Saga's passive expression rarely changes, and it is only after the explosion and in the final scenes of this episode where she is confronted with her mother, that she is seen to be disconcerted, confused and afraid.**. - **Iconography and setting:** props, backgrounds and settings work together to construct the narrative.

Media Language (cont)

The settings in The Bridge clearly **establish realism and the film noir elements of the genre and also employ the typical Scandinavian elements of the cold weather and the dark**. The vast **Nordic landscape creates a sense of isolation and alienation.** The iconic image of the **Oresund Bridge features regularly in the series**. Many of the settings create a **sense of entrapment including corridors and dimly lit locations, for example the warehouse crime scene.**. -- Technical codes --

Camera shots, movement and angles work together to communicate messages and 'show' the narrative. The Bridge has high production values and a distinctive style which is used to convey information without the use of dialogue.

- **Close-ups advance the relationships between characters and establish tension and a dynamic.** This is evident in the conversation **between Saga and the other characters.** Often the close-ups show the profile of the character or are in silhouette, the **opening introduction to Saga in the lift combines both to construct her enigmatic character.**
- **Tracking shots are used to introduce both Saga and Hanne, constructing both as powerful women with a job to do and are also used to involve the audience as part of the investigative process as they follow the characters.**
- **Establishing shots are quick ways of communicating information**, the **bridge is used regularly to indicate changes of settings between Sweden and Denmark** and **bird's eye view city shots are used similarly**. These shots also **serve to create a sense of cultural verisimilitude establishing a real city in which the characters function, so reinforcing their believability.**

Media Language (cont)

- The **film noir technique of shooting through windows, or behind obstacles is used, positioning the audience as looking in on the scene or the lives of other characters as an outsider**. The **sense of entrapment** created by this filming in some cases **suggests their isolation** or that they have **something to hide**. For example, the **audience often views Saga from behind glass or another barrier and Henrik and his children are first viewed through the window.**
- The **post-production editing creates a desaturated colour palette which contributes to the dark, melancholic feel of the programme.**

-- Audio Codes --

Sound and music are effective in communicating meaning in this programme:

- **Music:** the **haunting track used for the credit sequence foreshadows the slow pace of the programme and creates expectations of the style of the programme to follow.** The tense music at the start of the episode has intertextual references to the **horror genre building audience expectation** of the macabre scene that unfolds.
- **Diegetic sound:** the clicking of the crime scene **investigator's camera at the start establishes generic realism**. The sound of the **cans at Morten's cabin is both unsettling and on the second visit, an action code for the explosion to follow which is then followed by a disconcerting silence.**
- **Dialogue:** some of the dialogue is **conventional of a crime drama and is related to the investigation and police procedure and as such advances the narrative**. Other elements of dialogue serve to **develop characters and relationships**.

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Media Language (cont)

Saga's clipped, at times forced, dialogue contributes to her idiosyncratic character. She is **very literal in her understanding and her responses are refreshingly honest**.
When the owner of the site where the victim is thought to have been murdered asks her "Could you hurry up a bit", she replies "No".
The conversations between the detectives and Helle Anker's wife creates a back story and possible motivates for her murder.
Saga's mother references to "your crime" in relation to Saga creates an enigma at the end of the fist episode and provides some insight into Saga's past, this is particularly intriguing as Saga has stated earlier in the episode, "I don't like my mum"..

Product Context

The Bridge (Bron/Breon) is one of the A Level options studied for Section A: Television in the Global Age alongside Life on Mars. The set product is the first episode of series 3 which was broadcast in the UK on BBC Four at 9pm on 21st November 2015.
The Bridge is an example of a Scandonavian sub-genre of crime-drama - Nordic Noir. The drama is set in Sweden, the title refers to the Oresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden and is a metaphor for the collaboration between the two police forces which commenced after a body was discovered in the middle of the bridge in the first episode of the first series.
The crime drama was a co-production between Filmlance International and Nimbus Film.
The Bridge followed on from the success of other Nordic Noir crime dramas broadcast by BBC Four including the highly successful The Killing and Wallander. There were four series between 2011 - 2018.

Product Context (cont)

Series 3 opens with the murder in Malmo of a prominent Danish gender campaigner and owner of Copenhagen's first gender neutral pre-school Swedish detective Saga Norén is assigned a new Danish colleague Hanne to help with the investigation, but their relationship does not get off to a good start with feelings still running high after Saga's involvement in sending her previous Danish partner Martin to jail for murdering the man who killed his son.

Industry

The Bridge is a **Swedish/Danish coproduction.** It was **broadcast in both of these countries, which means that funding came from two different places and has two different national audiences.**
The Swedish production company that was involved was **Filmlance**, and the Danish production company involved was called **Nimbus Film.**
Being produced by two companies in Sweden and Denmark meant that they could film in two countries, so the coproduction opened up options on locations. This does make it, in turn, both easier and tricker- it gives **easier access to film in these countries**, but what **makes it tricky is getting crew and cast across these countries**. It can cause **logistical problems**, such as **which country legally employs the cast and crew**, etc. There will also be **regulation issues-** which countries regulations do you follow?. **The Bridge followed the working laws of Sweden, but they filmed in both countries - they did have to state which laws they agree to follow.**
They were **granted funding by the Copenhagen Filmfund, a Danish company, so that meant that** they had to employ more Danish cast and crew**. Season 3 had more** funding from Creative Europe Media, who have them the resources to achieve a high-budget, high-quality feel to the show.

Industry (cont)

When production values seem higher, it often makes the show more appealing to audiences and also to other countries when trying to distribute it globally.
In Sweden, The Bridge was **broadcast on a channel called the SVT 1, it's a large public service broadcasting channel in Sweden-** what that means is that they are funded by the license fees and their content must "-serve the public" in some way (e.g. be cultural).
It means that their programmes need to demonstrate that they are not "wasting" citizens' money.
SVT as a channel has their own production studios in Malmo, which is very useful because The Bridge was able to use those production studios- using in-house resources saved money for The Bridge.
These **international coproduction's are on the rise in the TV industry, as it's a great way to share production costs and target global audiences.** However, it's important to remember that subtitled **"foreign language" programmes are still often considered quite niche by broadcasters and audiences**.
In Denmark, **The Bridge was broadcast on DR1, which stands for Denmark Radio 1.** Like the BBC and SVT, its also a public service broadcaster and license fee-funded. **Denmark is a small country and almost everyone there watches DR content. So broadcasting on this channel is a great way of reaching a large national audience in Denmark.**
In England, **The Bridge was broadcast on BBC Four,** under the BBC which is also a public service broadcaster, license fee funded organisation. BBC 4 focuses on showing programmes that feature arts, music and culture.

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Industry (cont)

BBC 4 showed The Bridge at **9pm on a Saturday, which is peak viewing slot. It's also a slot that the BBC4 dedicate to showing foreign language drama so it's a great way of targeting fans of this genre. Because all three channels mentioned are funded by the license fee, they aren't under pressure from advertisers to attract huge audiences. As they are funded regardless of how many people watch, they can afford to take more risks and broadcast more niche content.**

The show was **broadcast in over 174 countries worldwide and there are 4 seasons in total.** There have been remakes in other countries, such as UK/France, America, etc.

Theory: The series was remade for a US audience, and again for a UK/France audience, reflecting Hesmondhalgh's ideas about companies maximising their profit and minimising risk by reusing successful formats.

Ofcom regulate content shown on UK television to ensure it doesn't break rules about aspects such as violence, sex, drugs, etc. Viewers of The Bridge may have found the scenes of a leg being blown off too gruesome, or may have been offended by the references to gender and/or PTSD. The gruesome nature of some of the scenes may explain why the BBC chose to broadcast it 9pm, after the watershed.

This idea of watershed is almost null now, as **digital streaming sites including BBC I-Player mean that audiences can watch the show at any time of day, making the watershed a thing of the past.**

Industry (cont)

Piracy of new TV shows is on the increase and spoilers often get leaked online before many audiences even get to see the show, so they chose to control the availability of the show (Hesmondhalgh) by broadcasting each episode in both Sweden and Denmark simultaneously, so it reduced the possibility it could be pirated or spoiled during the 1/2 hr release difference.

The show was **released on Netflix in countries like Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Canada, so the producers are aware that digital streaming is becoming highly popular and a great way of teaching new audiences (e.g. via suggested content, "Watch Next", "You may be interested in")**

They used a range of marketing techniques to market the show, there are lots of **TV and magazine interviews with the cast and crew, like The Radio Times, and UK, Nordic Noir. The multiple magazine features and interviews allowed the programme makers and cast to explain the show to new audiences. The articles often featured female actresses and discussions about feminism, engaging audiences who wanted to see stronger female characters. Interviews with cast on daytime chat show This Morning targeted an older audience.**

They also took the cast and crew to a **TV convention called the Nordicana, where lots of people who are fans of the Nordic TV culture get together to learn more about the show. It's a way of** targeting that very specific niche genre fans. **

They **further promoted the show by inviting super fans of the series to the season 3 premiere,** which aided **word-of-mouth promotion across fans,** who would then go to **promote the show online.**

Industry (cont)

BBC Four has a webpage for The Bridge, where you can learn more about the characters individually and the plot, you could find out what you missed and when the next episodes were on, etc.

Social media was used to tease audiences with clips, info about the new series, and behind-the-scenes content.

They used several **hashtags across social media, including #TheBridge #TheBron #TheBroan - this was used to create trends and encourage audiences to join in discussions about the show.**

Lots of the marketing **utilised the BBC logo for marketing for the UK audience, it almost adds a mark of quality and respectability.**

The marketing materials **focused on making the genre of the show clear to audiences.**

The **trailer and some other marketing materials were really emphasising the bridge location itself which made the show seem exotic- some audiences might've been engaged by this.**

There's also the fact there's a **strong sense of anti-hero characters and feminist roles which would've engaged modern audiences and seemed unusual.**

Audiences

The programme attracts the more **niche, less mainstream BBC Four audience** who are **targeted through their expectations based on the brand identity of the channel.**

In broadcasting Nordic Noir, BBC 4 established that sub-titled stories could reach a British audience. "BBC Four's primary role is to reflect a range of innovative, high quality programming that is intellectually and culturally enriching."

The programme **may attract an inherited audience who will be familiar with other Nordic Noir dramas** broadcast on this channel, for example The Killing and Walllander.

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Audiences (cont)

The Bridge also offers a **range of pleasures for the fans of crime dramas (Uses & Gratifications theory)**, the programme has typical codes and **conventions of crime dramas but an element of escapism and diversion through the different characters, settings and culture. Audiences will gain pleasure from following the investigators as they attempt to solve the crime.**

Loyal audiences will have become familiar with the character of Saga, this is the start of series 3 and they will have **expectations of how her character will behave and may develop** based on other series.

Different demographic factors, for example nationality, may affect the ways in which an audience responds. The programme constructs an idea of cultural differences between Sweden and Denmark where, for example, the **Swedish characters are seen to be more politically correct than the Danish. Danish and Swedish audiences may feel that The Bridge confirms longstanding views and reaffirms the separate cultural identities. Conversely, some may feel that this is unfair cultural stereotyping.**

Cultural capital, for example an **understanding of the conventions of film noir or of other Nordic Noir dramas will enhance the viewing experience of the audience.**

Gender, for example women, may be **empowered by the construction of positive female representations in The Bridge. Audiences who are interested in crime dramas that offer a different cultural experience are likely to have a positive response to the programme.**

-- APPLYING THEORY --

Reception theory - Stuart Hall

Audiences (cont)

Consider Hall's assertion that there are three hypothetical positions from which messages and meanings may be decoded, in relation to The Bridge:

An audience may **understand and accept the producers intended meaning, to construct a programme that appeals to audiences by including some typical conventions of the crime drama whilst offering something different and more challenging through the character of Saga and the Scandinavian setting.** These viewers will be **entertained by the programme, its complex narrative, and the intertextual references to film noir. Feminist audiences are likely to feel empowered by the inclusion of strong, powerful women in the storyline**, by the representation of a **lesbian relationship and the narrative addressing gender issues.**

Some audiences may assume a negotiated position, they may enjoy the typical codes and conventions of a crime drama, the enigmas, and the involvement with the investigative narrative, but feel more **uncomfortable with the specific focus of the narrative. Swedish and Danish audiences may engage with the drama but feel the cultural depictions are stereotypical.**

An oppositional audience reading may **struggle to find Saga a sympathetic character.** Audiences may view her **behaviour traits with concern or find it difficult to connect to her emotionally as her responses are so different to expectations and she lacks humour.** A more **conservative audience may respond negatively to the Swedish liberal attitudes to sex, gender, and political correctness.**

Representation

Representations carry ideological significance and reflect the time in which the product was made. There is ideological significance to the way in which representations are constructed in The Bridge which positions the audience to look at social group and issues in different ways, reflecting cultural shifts. For example, this episode explores the growing contemporary interest in **gender** and how it is more fluid and changing than in the past and is a subject for discussion.

The Bridge, through the ways in which it constructs representations, constructs a **feminist discourse that challenges sexist, patriarchal ideas and values.**

- Women are **not marginalised**, they are **active and central to the narrative.**
- Women **are not sexualised**
- Women are **not portrayed in a domestic role or defined as carers or nuturers.**

-The women in the programme **challenge and/or subvert the typical social norms related to gender behaviour.**

The representations in The Bridge are influenced by contemporary attitudes and debates, and consequently audiences are **positioned to consider how representations have changed over time to reflect changes in society.**

-- Gender: women/femininity --

There are several representations of women in The Bridge which subvert and challenge the more typical representations of women in crime dramas. Whilst the **victim is more typically female**, in the detectives the **representation of women is strong reflecting shifts in society, culture and audience expectations.** These women include:

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Representation (cont)

- Saga: this character **breaks away from the more typical representation of a detective.** She is often compared to the 'flawed' detective of film noir but could be more accurately described as 'different'. Whilst the actor and programme's creators have **avoided attaching a label to Saga**, in constructing this character more **challenging, complex behaviours are explored.** She is described on the BBC website for the programme as 'a hardcore investigator who is socially challenged'.

All aspects of this character are pared back to the minimum including her clothing, dialogue, and relationships with others. She responds very literally to situations and in conversations which creates humour at times.

Interesting, whilst her representation is **constructed as a powerful female, there are characteristics of Saga that are more masculine, suggesting this has helped her to survive in a patriarchal world.** Her **stance and walk are masculine**, she is **active and dynamic**, moving about a lot, she is **unconcerned by conventionality,** for example she is not worried about changing her t-shirt in the middle of the office. **Her clothing is masculine**, for example, the leather trousers, military style overcoat and neutral t-shirt.. Her **passive expression has became iconic and is shown in closeup** particularly when she is attempting to process several pieces of information and inter-relationships with colleagues.

Representation (cont)

An example in this episode is when, late in the day and absorbed in the case, she asks John to find a map for her, Hans suggests that John needs to go home, this confuses Saga who replies, 'he's recently divorced and his ex-wife has the kids this week', illustrating her inability to comprehend anyone who has a life outside of the job. Saga continues to work through the night and the audience is rarely shown aspects of her life outside of work.. **Saga's construction allows the programme to explore a character who does not conform to social norms, but in doing so effectively represents a particular under/mis-represented social group.** Saga struggles with social situations, she knows how she should behave, but finds this challenging, for example when she attempts to make small talk with Hanne. She also lacks empathy and does not read sensitive situations well; she thinks rationally and says whatever occurs to her at the time with limited awareness of its appropriateness. However, she is shown to be vulnerable and afraid at the end of this episode when confronted with her past in the form of her mother.. - Hanne Thomsen: **Another example of a strong female character who is also a positive representation of an older woman who is well-respected, experienced and good at her job**. Like the other women in The Bridge, she is **not objectified**, her **clothing is functional and her grey hair and serious expression aid in constructing her representation**. She also exemplifies the **cultural differences between Sweden and Denmark,** 'From their first meeting hostilities begin to mount with Hanne showing her prejudices bordering on contempt for Swedish political correctness' (quote taken from BBC's webpage).

Representation (cont)

She can barely disguise her disdain when interviewing Anker's wife at the idea of a gender-neutral pre-school, she describes her as 'a bit Swedish'.. - Lise Friss Anderson: **Powerful but in a different way, she is middle-class, the wife of a wealthy businessman. Her views are right-wing, and she is an opinion leader through her blog displaying her views of what constitutes a family which is in direct contrast to those of Helle Anker.** She has no qualms in teaching her daughter to react with violence when bullied.

-- Gender: men/masculinity --

The representations of masculinity in The Bridge challenge the idea of inequalities of power between men and women. The representations are not typical of crime dramas as the female characters are active and central to the narrative.

- Hans: Whilst he's in a hierarchically powerful position, he does **not use this in an oppressive way and is understanding and supportive of those who work for him, traits that could be said to be more typically feminine.** He has an **equal relationship** with his partner Lillian who is a strong woman. He is a **positive representation of age.**

- Henrik: **Portrayed as a flawed, vulnerable character with issues. It is the men, rather than the women, who are presented in domestic roles. Henrik cooks and cleans and appears to be nurturing his children, a role usually given to female characters. Lise has a male cleaner, Rikard who fulfils a domestic role.**

-- APPLYING THEORY --

Feminist theory - Bell Hooks

Bell Hooks assertion that **feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination can be explored in relation to The Bridge:**

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Representation (cont)

Whilst patriarchal representations of gender are still evident in crime dramas, the constructions of representations of women in The Bridge largely challenge bell hooks' concept of 'the ideology of domination', reflecting changing ideologies and engaging in a feminist discourse.

Saga and Hanne challenge the norm of women in the police force as does Lillian who is the Danish Police Commissioner in Copenhagen. Representations of the family also challenge stereotypes.

Helle Anker is an LGBT spokesperson offering a positive representation of acceptance of lesbian marriage within society. Saga introduces **Hanne to "Hen" as a gender-neutral pronoun reflecting changing attitudes to gender.**

Men in The Bridge are also constructed as less dominant; Hans is gentle and caring, a father figure for Saga, and **Henrik is vulnerable and coping with his own demons.** However, **patriarchal domination is reflected in the crime where the victim is a woman with liberal views suggesting that when patriarchy is challenged women are targeted**. The way in which **her body is displayed representing a more traditional nuclear family, is relevant in reasserting stereotypical gender roles.**

Feminist theory - Van Zoonen

Van Zoonen's assertion that **gender is constructed through discourse** and that its **meaning varies according to cultural and historical context** can be applied to The Bridge:

Representation (cont)

The **construction of representations in The Bridge reflects the changing roles of men and women in society and challenges typical stereotypes of gender**. The creation of **Saga's character reflects the interest in society in the changing ideas and viewpoints regarding gender,** reinforcing Van Zoonen's assertion that the meaning of gender varies according to cultural contexts. In The Bridge, **contrary to Van Zoonen's claim, women are framed and constructed in a similar way to men. Women are active, not passive, they are not objects of the male gaze and it is they who drive the narrative forward. When Saga takes off her t-shirt, the gaze between Hanne and John is intra--diegetic, in bewilderment at her action, she is not objectified by the camera.**

Gender performanity - Judith Butler

Butler's assertion that **identity is performatively constructed and that there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender** can be explored in relation to The Bridge:

Through the programme's **inclusion of Helle Anker's narrative regarding gender identity, a discourse is opened up and debated within the programme focusing on the nature of gender. Hanne states regarding Anker, "she was very active in the gender debate, LGBT issues. You know, there's not gender, only humans".**

Saga subverts and challenges the accepted social norms regarding gender behaviour. The construction of her character through, for example, clothing, expression, and behaviour, challenges the typical representations of female characters in this genre.

Media Contexts

Social and cultural contexts

The fact that the programme reflects the **changing attitudes towards gender and specifically introduces a discourse into the narrative of this series around gender identity and LGBTQ issues.**

The representation of gender in the programme, including the construction of Saga's character, is **influenced by changing social and cultural attitudes regarding the role of women in society.**

The **binary opposition of the Swedish and Danish cultures highlights how issues may be treated differently in different cultures.**

Responses to The Bridge may **reflect the social and cultural circumstances of the audience.**

Historical context

The Bridge demonstrates that **genre conventions are historically relative and dynamic.**

The representations constructed in the program are affected by the historical context, they **subvert and challenge typical representations that have been accepted over time and in doing so reflect the society of the time.**

Different audience interpretations of The Bridge may reflect **historical circumstances.**

Economic contexts

The Bridge demonstrates the **economic advantages of international co-productions.**

The creation of the Nordic Noir brand meant that **programmes could be successful marketed globally.**

Establishing the codes and conventions of this style of programme builds a **loyal fanbase and reduces the economic risk.**

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