

Modern family tv show and the sociological imagination portrayed

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Most people's lives in the 21 century are in some way affected by media and it is affecting the way individuals perform daily tasks. Television shows are a great example of this; they show the development of characters over a period and display how greater social forces shape what they have become. C. Wright Mills uses a term the sociological imagination, it is the theory that people's lives are shaped essentially by greater social forces and society's expectations rather than biology and genetics. The show Modern Family is a good example of the sociological imagination because it has a diverse cast and the characters have many personalities, wants, and desires. Modern Family is a television show that has stories of separate individual families who are related. Claire and Mitch are siblings and Jay is their father. The families are Claire, Phil, Alex, Hailey and Luke. Mitch, Cam and Lilly and Jay, Gloria and Mani.

In episode 1 season 5 it is summer vacation and Claire and Phil are trying to coordinate their children's summer camps and vacations so they can have time alone with no kids in the house. Mani is planning on taking his first solo trip back to Columbia where he is from but Gloria keeps "losing" his travel documents. So, Jay and Mani end up having to go down to the city hall to pick up a new birth certificate. Same-sex marriage becomes legal and Cam and Mitch can finally get married to each other, the problem is that they both want to be the one to propose so they keep avoiding the other's proposal. Mitch asks Claire to help him think of the perfect proposal and Cam asks Gloria to do the same thing. While at dinner the night they were both planning to propose Gloria and Jay and Claire and Phil both showed up at Mitch and Cam's house to set up for the proposal and they find out both Cam

and Mitch both wanted to propose to each other that night. The twist to the story was that Cam and Mitch ended up getting a flat tire on their way back from dinner and had to change it while at the top of a hill, while in the processes they both looked at each other and said " I do." Claire and Phil do not end up getting time to themselves and Mani lands in Columbia safely.

The two characters Cam and Mitch in a same-sex relationship and most likely had to face problems and judgements within society; they have gained strength through earlier events that have occurred in their lives. C. Wright Mills expresses " the idea that the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances" (The Promise, 1959). Cam and Mitch most likely struggled growing up with trying to figure out why they were not the same as others, but when they met other men and women who were gay as well that instilled more confidence in them. In California where Modern Family is set, same-sex marriage is legal as of this episode and Cam and Mitch have been waiting to get married so they are now able to do what they could not prior. Although Cam and Mitch are both male they each take on specific roles just as a male-female relationship do. Mitch takes on the instrumental tasks that are most common for males in a male-female relationship; he works and comes home to Cam and Lilly, while Cam takes on the expressive tasks, he usually is home with their daughter Lilly (SIA 2013). These tasks are believed by the functionalist sociologists.

The families on Modern Family are influenced by each other because they are very close to one another. In the show we do not learn much about Cam's family supporting him however we learn about Mitch's support; his father Jay supports his sexuality although he seems a bit awkward about it, he loves his son and wants him to be happy. Gender is the expected and actual thoughts, feelings, and behaviours associated with a particular sex, within a certain culture, at a given point in history (SIA 2013). In society today being homosexual is becoming more accepted and the feelings behind masculinity relating to males and femininity relating to females are slowly disintegrating. Same-sex marriage becoming legal allows for even more expansion on these thoughts. Cam is the more feminine figure and Mitch is more masculine. This could be a result of how they were both raised. Mitch was raised by Jay who although supports Mitch he is uncomfortable talking about gay marriage and does not always know what to say. This behaviour may be the reason why Mitch has turned out more masculine. Modern Family is a representation of the sociological imagination because Cam and Mitch are gay and in their society they grew up in it is socially acceptable to be gay; it would not be likely that they would have come out if they were in a country like Russia or Iran where society does not accept being gay and same-sex marriage.

Cam and Mitch, like mentioned before are in a same sex relationship. Same sex marriage was a private issue between the two of them until it became legal for two men or two women to get married. C. Wright Mills says " the history that now affects every man is world history" (The Promise, 1959).

Cam and Mitch are a part of world history because they are essentially going

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to be of the first few in California to become legally married to each other in a same sex marriage. Although C. Wright Mills expresses that some men may feel like they cannot keep up with the fast paced changes in society, many men and women today have been waiting decades for the day to come where they can legally marry.