Media representation in lgbt

Media and its representation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual (LGBT) themes has been prevalent throughout time. According to the collections of studies and stories by Meem, Mitchell and Jonathan (2010) concerning LGBT individuals, it is important to represent such themes because it is able to enlighten people on how our society as a whole, has become dynamic. The Media can be seen as a " central source" where negative perceptions can be created. As a result, stereotypes can be either created or perpetuated about this group, negative or otherwise.

Media as a medium, therefore, is an extremely powerful tool in our society, and can be used to change or create people's perceptions about this particular segment of our world (LGBT). Stereotyping people can be harmful and have long lasting effects on us as a society, " It can transform slight assumptions on people and make them perceived realities" (Meem, Mitchell; Jonathan 2010). Such stereotypes are capable of perpetuating inequality and social prejudice in society. However, it is imperative to note that stereotyping through the media is sometimes inevitable.

In the case of television, stereotyping occurs through advertisements, news bulletins and entertainment. For films, stereotyping has been used as a form of marketing. The stereotypical codes give television and film audiences a common and quick way of understanding a particular person. In most cases, stereotypical codes focus on ethnicity, social roles, sexual orientation, occupation, race and gender. Most often, the groups being stereotyped may not defend themselves. They are usually the minority and raising their voices may make little or no impact.

However, there are some measures, which have been instituted to help reduce stereotyping. For instance, media campaign against this vice has become useful in reducing stereotypes in society. However, the vice is still rampant in some sections of the media. " There are those who have a common tendency of thinking that the way people think and can be uniform across the globe" (Carroll, 2009). This is not true people are diverse and their mindsets also vary. This is mostly applicable in homosexuality whereby gays and lesbians are viewed to be outside the mainstream or dominantculture.

With the emergence of gothic culture, it is probable to categorize them as being weird or abnormal. The dominant culture in this case refers to marriage and love relationships between people of different gender. Same sex marriages and behavioral patterns are prevalent in virtually all cultures. As Carroll (2009) documents, " same sex behavior is found in every culture, and its prevalence remains about the same" (p. 290). The media is a viable source of information in society such that televisions and films are very influential due to both sound and visual effect.

These two mediums ofcommunicationare crucial in symbolic annihilations of lesbians and gays. According to Vollmer (2003), films and TVs tend to avoid integrating gays and lesbians in their programs for fear of offending advertisers, target audiences as well as investors. This kind of portrayal is not desirable because it denies them theirhuman rights. The fact that they belong to a new generation culture does not mean that they should not enjoy their rights. With their visual effects, the two mediums of

communication cultivate a perception that homosexuals are bad elements in society.

They should not be given a chance to be heard if they have views to express. Due to fear of loosing audience and revenues, these two mediums of communication edit their programs to extent that audiences place homosexuals under the category of abhorred people. This has extended even in the ways they are covered in television news. " The issue of sexual orientation has been used as an indicator of villainy and deviance in children's movies" (Vollmer, 2003). If children were to be shown movies that portray homosexuals as bad characters in society, then, they would grow up hating them.

A negative perception is cultivated in such children. Such kinds of stereotypes can instigateviolencein society. For example, a gay male may not be welcomed in a party due to his sexual orientation. It is only a question of ethics. Homosexuals are also put as either victims or villains in movies. They are depicted as belonging to a weird or foreign culture that cannot be tolerated. It is rare to have a movie that has the main character being gay or lesbian. If a girl begins to demonstrate some signs of male characteristics, she is referred to as a ' tom-boy'. It is like a taboo to show such kinds of signs in a girl.

On the other hand, if a male does not have masculine features, he is seen as an outcast. All of these perceptions are obtained from the media, and especially televisions and movies. According to Mehta and Hay (2005), media houses have for a long time helped to construct and reinforce

stereotypical ideas about masculinity and men. From what is portrayed in the media, it is possible for people to dismiss others on the basis of whether they have masculinity or are feminine (Ferrey, 2008). Televisions and movies through their visual effects help define ' a real man'.

During advertisements, there are some particular aspects of man that are portrayed. A man who fails to have certain forms of male features may not be shown on TV or may not be considered for a film (Cohen ; Hall, 2009). Moreover, the marketing companies have started to objectifying men in the same manner women have been objectified. The fitness of a man, his muscles and general outlook count a lot in determining whether he is to feature in a program or not. Men are so used to this behavior, they do not see the need to object. Therefore, the media will never stop giving what one considers ' good or real' men airplay.

Forming a type of segregation. A research study titled, Attitudes toward stereotypical versus counter-stereotypical gay men and lesbians indicates that six hundred and sixty two confessed gays, lesbians and bisexuals had contended with victimization in the society (Cohen ; Hall, 2009). Of those, 20% reported to have been attacked or abused because of their sexual orientation. In the year 2005, Federal Bureau had reported 1, 171 of hate crime offenses took place because of homosexual orientation. This is the kind of segregation that has existed in the society for centuries.

The major problem is because media and mostly electronic media show homosexuals as people who have undertaken ' abnormal' directions of life. They are not part of the mainstream culture. The only solution is for

governments to create institutions that can help people understand that everybody should enjoy unlimited human rights. Forums can also help eradicated the notions cultivated by the media, about gays and lesbians and institute a culture of tolerance. In summary, no particular person should be segregated or discriminated on the basis of their sexuality.

However, gender pre-judgments are still present in all media, the best remedy to help integrate all people no matter their sexuality, is to spend resources oneducation. Young people need to be taught tolerance and understanding in order to accept all kinds of people, regardless of their sexual orientation and direction. References Carroll, J. L. (2009). Sexuality now: embracing diversity. Belmont: CengageBrain Learning. Cohen, T. R. ; Hall, D. L. (2009). Attitudes toward stereotypical versus counter-stereotypical gay men and lesbians. Retrieved on 17th November 2011 from http://findarticles. om/p/articles/mi_m2372/is_4_46/ai_n35656044/ Ferrey, P. A. (2008). Gender Stereotypes persist. Retrieved on 17th November 2011 from http://www. nytimes. com/inc_com/inc1211198677212. html Meem, D. T. , Michelle A. G. , ; Jonathan A. (2010). Finding Out: An Introduction to LGBT Studies. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Mehta, V. P. ; Hay, K. (2005). A superhero for gays? Gay masculinity and green lantern. The Journal of American Culture, 28(4), 390-404. Vollmer, M. L. (2003). Gender transgression and villainy in animated film. Taylor ; Francis Journal, 1(2), 89-109.