THE VIEWS OF LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS ON LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATION IN UK AND US TELEVISION MEDIA

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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March 2022

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the views of LGBTQ+ individuals on LGBTQ+ television media by combining the fields of media representation, audience reception, and evaluative language. I collected responses from LGBTQ+ participants in the form of questionnaires, focus group interviews, and individual interviews and used a combination of Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity to investigate, firstly, how participants use language to discuss representation and, secondly, what this reveals about how representation can be improved.

I suggest that participants' language use demonstrates the importance of representation in terms of identity construction and argue that, although progress is being made, LGBTQ+ representation still needs improvement. I consider the different types of representation experienced by different groups within the LGBTQ+ community and provide recommendations for better representations based on these considerations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am incredibly grateful to the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership for funding this study.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Joe Spencer-Bennett, for all your help throughout the duration of my PhD. Thank you for all your insights and support - it was your comments on my MA dissertation that encouraged me to develop that small study into this thesis. I especially thank you for your support over the last few chaotic months! I would also like to thank my co-supervisor Prof. Michaela Mahlberg. Thank you for your help and support in developing this thesis. I would also like to thank other current and previous members of the English Language and Linguistics faculty at the University of Birmingham for supporting me from my Undergraduate to the submission of this thesis, and the students I've taught over the past five years.

I would also like to thank my fiancée, Cara. Thank you for all your love and support. This process has been tough, and you have always been there for me. I genuinely could not have done this without you. Maybe now we can have that engagement party! Thank you also to my family for their endless love and support that extends far beyond the years it has taken to write this thesis, and to my friends who have helped keep a smile on my face throughout.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who took part in this study whose comments, again and again, reminded me why I set out to research this topic.

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandad. You taught me the importance of always questioning and wanting to learn more. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Every year since 2005, the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other marginalised gender/sexual identities) media advocacy group GLAAD has published a report, entitled *Where We Are on TV*, analysing the LGBTQ+ representation that has been included on US television that year. In 2016, the year the research for this thesis began, Sarah Kate Ellis, president and CEO of GLAAD, stated 'there is still a great amount of work to be done to ensure fair, accurate, and inclusive' LGBTQ+ representation on television (GLAAD, 2016: 3). In GLAAD's most recent report at the time of writing, she notes that, in the context of anti-LGBTQ+ bills being introduced in the US 'at record rates', representation is 'more important than ever' and calls for the industry to introduce LGBTQ+ characters 'that move beyond tropes' (GLAAD, 2021: 5).

Promisingly, the number of LGBTQ+ characters appearing on television has increased since GLAAD began their report from 1.4% of characters being identified as LGBTQ+ in 2005 to 11.9% in 2021 (GLAAD, 2005; 2021). Nevertheless, as is noted by Ellis (GLAAD, 2016: 3) it is not enough for LGBTQ+ characters to simply be present, they 'must be crafted with thought, attention, and depth'. Recent studies have suggested that, although the representation of LGBTQ+ characters on television has increased in number, there is a current lack of 'variety in depictions [that] is harmful to LGBTQ individuals and non-LGBTQ individuals alike' (Capuzza and Spencer, 2016; McLaren et al, 2021; Woods and Hardman, 2021: 1). A study equivalent to GLAAD's research analysing annual LGBTQ+ representation on British television does not exist; however, Stonewall (2011: 3) in a study of twenty programmes airing on BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5 across a period of sixteen weeks found that LGB people were on screen for 4.5% of the total runtime covered, and portrayed 'positively and realistically' for only 46 minutes (0.6% of runtime) in total.

At the core of the research conducted for this thesis is the views of LGBTQ+ individuals on whether they feel fairly represented on television. Do they feel that the representation they have seen has been created with the 'thought attention and depth' Ellis (2016: 3) states is vital? In order to investigate this, this thesis analyses the evaluations of LGBTQ+ individuals, given in the form of questionnaire responses, focus group interactions, and individual interviews, when discussing LGBTQ+ representation.

The research questions (RQs) this thesis addresses are as follows:

RQ1: How do LGBTQ+ individuals use language to convey how they feel about the representation of LGBTQ+ individuals in UK and US television media?

RQ2: What does this reveal about how such media could be improved?

By drawing on linguistic frameworks, namely Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity (see Chapter 3 for a description of these frameworks), to analyse participants' responses, this thesis outlines facets of representation that participants evaluate positively and negatively. This thesis notes that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to problems encountered with LGBTQ+ representation and considers the different concerns and desires expressed by participants within this study. It considers how different members within the LGBTQ+ community feel about different types of representation and notes instances in which evaluations generally varied between groups. This thesis argues that the language participants use when discussing television representation reveals important ways in which television representation can be improved and relevant suggestions with respect to this are made at the end of each of the analysis chapters (Chapters 6 to 9) and in the conclusion to this study (Chapter 10).

1.1.1 Notes on Terminology

The initialism 'LGBTQ+' (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other gender/sexual identities) is used throughout this thesis to refer to non-cisgender, non-heterosexual, and non-heteroromantic identities. The 'plus' is present to recognise other identity labels within the diverse spectrum of non-cisgender, non-heterosexual, non-homoromantic identities that are not indicated by the letters L, G, B, T and Q. When specific identities, rather than the community as a whole, are referred to throughout this study, the relevant labels will be used. When the focus of a discussion is specifically sexuality rather than gender, LGB+ is used to ensure that gender and sexuality are not conflated. The term 'gay' is used to refer to individuals of any gender who identify as such unless otherwise stated. When a discussion pertains specifically to gay men, for example, rather than gay women or non-binary individuals, this will be noted. The phrase 'cisgender heterosexual' is used as shorthand for anyone who is not LGBTQ+.

The term 'media' is used throughout this thesis to refer specifically to the representation of LGBTQ+ fictional characters in UK and US television programmes, unless otherwise stated.

1.2 Wider Social Context

This section covers some of the wider social context in which this thesis is written. I focus on UK and US contexts specifically as, due to the nationalities of the majority of respondents to this study, this thesis is concerned with UK and US television media.

In 1988, the UK Government introduced the Local Government Act, Section 28 of which made it illegal for local authorities to 'promote homosexuality', 'publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality', or 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship' (Local Government Act, 1988: 26). Although this Act was repealed in 2003, its impact remains today as, as Sauntson (2018: 18) notes 'there still appears to be a "legacy" from section 28 which has resulted in a pervading silence and fear of openly discussing non-heterosexual identities and relationships in school'. Additionally, Dodd (2020: 8) notes that many public libraries are still cautious of including LGBTQ+ narratives in their collections due to a lasting 'climate of fear' as a result of Section 28.

Newer legislation has aimed to encourage equality rather than silence and fear surrounding LGBTQ+ identities. In 2011, for example, the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO) published the Transgender Action Plan, a document outlining the Government's plans 'to deliver greater equality for transgender people' (GEO, 2011: 5). Following this, in 2018, the Government published an LGBT Action Plan policy paper explaining how the government 'will advance the rights of LGBT people' (GEO, 2018: 3). These were the first 'comprehensive cross-departmental policy paper specifically and solely addressing LGBTQI+ (in)equalities published by a UK government' (Lawrence and Taylor, 2020: 587). Arguably, these plans reflect a changing landscape in which LGBTQ+ individuals have been gaining 'new public visibility and viable presence within a human rights framework' (Taylor, 2011: 335). However, as Lawrence and Taylor (2020: 588) note, some important areas 'such as the experiences of LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum, LGBTQI+ rights post-Brexit, and pressing equality issues in devolved UK states' are not addressed within these plans. Furthermore, as noted by Sauntson (2018: 1-2), the process of leaving the European Union, and 'the subsequent loss of European human rights law which protects those identifying as LGBT+ from discrimination in particular contexts across EU countries', has impeded progress in terms of LGBTQ+ equality. Furthermore, in March 2022, Ron DeSantis, the governor of Florida, has signed into law a bill

reminiscent of the repealed Section 28 ‘that forbids instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade’ (The Guardian, 2022).

When considering the recent context of LGBTQ+ equality, it is important to recognise the impact the recent COVID-19 pandemic has had on the community. Stonewall (2018: 5) reports that, prior to the pandemic, 23% of LGBTQ+ individuals had witnessed discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals by healthcare staff, 13% had experienced unequal treatment in a healthcare setting due to their sexual and/or gender orientation, and 14% of LGBTQ+ individuals have avoided getting medical treatment ‘for fear of discrimination because they’re LGBT’ with this figure rising to 57% for transgender individuals specifically (TransActual, 2021). Evidence suggests that COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted many individuals, including LGBTQ+ individuals, ‘who already face disadvantage and discrimination’ due to the heightening of existing inequalities with respect to healthcare (McGowan et al., 2021: 1). Thus, it is likely that some of these figures have risen.

Further, in the US, the Department of Health and Human Services proposed regulations that would give ‘providers wide latitude to discriminate or refuse to provide certain key services to LGBT people … by asserting a moral or religious objection’ (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Navigating challenges associated with COVID-19 amongst this ‘backdrop of stigma and discrimination’ is particularly difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals, therefore (Goldberg, 2020: 108). One particular concern for LGBTQ+ individuals during the pandemic is social isolation. Studies show that LGBTQ+ individuals, especially older adults, experience ‘higher rates of social isolation than straight and cisgender age peers’ and that this is likely to be exacerbated during the pandemic (Cahill, 2020: 7; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2011).

Considering this context, it is of utmost importance that measures are taken to promote and ensure equality for LGBTQ+ individuals. It is within this context that the research for this thesis was conducted.

1.3 Research Rationale

Television has been demonstrated to be an important platform for encouraging individuals to engage with, accept, and support those different to themselves (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Cowan and Valentine, 2006; Oxley and Lucius, 2009; Perse and Rubin, 1989; Schiappa et al., 2006). Schiappa et al (2006), for example, found that watching television programmes which included gay characters encouraged participants to think more positively about gay people. This is especially the case when viewers do not (knowingly) have interactions with individuals from

different communities in their day-to-day lives (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Perse and Rubin, 1989). Indeed, the formation of beliefs and views about groups of people viewers know only from television has been described as a 'normal consequence of television viewing' (Perse and Rubin, 1989: 61). A study conducted in 2021 found that only 57% of UK adults report knowing a lesbian or gay person, 28% report knowing a bisexual person, 13% a transgender person, and 12% a non-binary or gender non-conforming person (Ipsos, 2021: 14). The importance of LGBTQ+ representation on television, therefore, is clear.

It is also important that LGBTQ+ individuals see LGBTQ+ characters that they can identify with and relate to (Amy-Chinn, 2021). It has been noted that there exists a direct correlation between a lack of media representation and higher rates of mental health issues reported by underrepresented LGBTQ+ individuals (Oxley and Lucius, 2009) and representations of minority groups have been shown to suggest to members of those groups, firstly, how wider society views them and, secondly, how they should view themselves (Dyer, 2002; Edwards, 2010). As summarised by Woods and Hardman (2021: 2) 'it is imperative that media is representative; especially as it plays an important role in the education, validation and self-esteem of LGBTQ individuals'.

With current concerns surrounding the social isolation of LGBTQ+ individuals during the COVID-19 outbreak, it is especially important that LGBTQ+ individuals are exposed to media in which they feel seen, represented, and to which they can relate. This thesis, therefore, is concerned with the views of LGBTQ+ individuals on how they are represented as they are directly impacted by representation and best positioned to evaluate the representation they have seen.

1.3.1 Language and Sexuality

As noted previously, LGBTQ+ individuals are directly impacted by LGBTQ+ representation and, thus, it is important to engage with this community when analysing representation. Further, despite assumptions by some linguists that non-linguists' relationships with language are merely 'prescriptivist' or 'commonsensical', Spencer-Bennet (2021: 283) demonstrates that non-linguists, in fact, exhibit 'a nuance which academic linguists would do well to engage with more fully'. In addition to this, it has been well-established that individuals, academics and non-academics alike, critically engage with media (Mehra, 2004).

Considering this, this thesis uses linguistic frameworks to analyse the language use of LGBTQ+ individuals as, as is noted by Sauntson (2018: 5):

> Language is a key means through which social ideologies are constructed and circulated. If we can understand how language operates in relation to ideologies about sexuality, this may enable us to begin understanding how to use language to challenge those ideologies which are detrimental to LGBT+ identities and relationships.

This thesis is largely situated within the field of Systemic Function Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1976). SFL is concerned with language in context and posits that meaning is created in context by interlocutors. A SFL approach to evaluative language, therefore, assumes that each piece of evaluation serves the function of creating meaning within the context in which it is used.

With this in mind, I use a combination of two frameworks – one underpinned by SFL, Appraisal Theory, and another designed to explore the linguistic construction of identities, the Tactics of Intersubjectivity – to examine how LGBTQ+ individuals linguistically evaluate the representation they have seen in order to unpack these opinions with a view to understanding how to ensure representation is 'fair, accurate, and inclusive' (GLAAD, 2016: 3). Appraisal Theory provides a framework to investigate the 'means by which [a] speaker's/writer's personal, evaluative involvement in [a] text is revealed' (White, 2015: 1). The Tactics of Intersubjectivity is a sociolinguistic framework designed to help understand the relationship between language and identity (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004).

These frameworks have previously been combined to analyse language use by LGBTQ+ individuals by Sauntson (2018) in her research into LGBTQ+ individual's experiences in school. She notes that, combined, these frameworks enable a nuanced analysis of evaluative language as the Tactics of Intersubjectivity provide 'an explicit methodological framework for considering how gender and sexual identities are produced relationally and intersubjectively in and through situated discourse', while Appraisal Theory 'relates specifically to units of lexico-grammatical meaning', and, thus, provides the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework with units which can be identified as expressing the intersubjective meanings (ibid: 53-54). Through Sauntson's (2018: 185) research, she shows that LGBTQ+ discrimination in schools 'largely operates at a discursive level and is therefore very difficult to challenge'. The application of the Appraisal and Tactics of Intersubjectivity frameworks reveals 'fear and confusion on the part of both educators and students' regarding the open discussion of gender and sexuality and

a ‘perceived gap between school rhetoric around challenging gender and sexuality discrimination and actual practice’ by students (ibid: 186).

This thesis will contribute to the fields of language and sexuality research by conducting a systematic analysis of language used by actual LGBTQ+ individuals when discussing representation. Data is collected in the form of questionnaire responses, focus group interactions, and individual interviews with LGBTQ+ individuals. Following Sauntson’s (2018) study, this thesis also combines the Appraisal and Tactics of Intersubjectivity frameworks, and uses them to investigate responses given by participants with respect to LGBTQ+ television representation.

1.3.2 Previous Research

I conducted a similar, smaller scale study in 2015 in which I used Appraisal Theory to analyse the how LGBTQ+ individuals responded to LGBTQ+ media (Trivette, 2015). This study consisted of a questionnaire, which received thirty responses, and a focus group involving four participants. Findings from this previous research revealed some interesting disparity between the evaluations made by respondents depending on their sexual or gender orientation. This thesis, therefore, expands on this by noting the differences in evaluations made by different groups to see if they feel differently about certain aspects of representation.

The majority of respondents (87%) to the previous study were gay men, lesbians, or bisexuals, and, thus, there were not enough responses from individuals with other gender or sexual orientations to draw clear conclusions about their views on representation. This current thesis, therefore, aims to target research towards a wider range of participants. How this is achieved is explained in Chapter 4. The methods of data collection are also expanded upon in this thesis as, as well as questionnaires and focus groups, I conduct individual interviews so that participants are given the opportunity to further expand on their views and to express anything they did not have time for, or did not feel comfortable expressing, in the focus group interactions.

Finally, the previous study is further expanded upon through the inclusion of the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework in the analysis of the data. While Appraisal Theory provided a clear and productive framework for analysis in the previous study, this thesis aims to consider more explicitly the ways in which representation may impact the ways in which LGBTQ+ individuals construct their identities and, thus, the identity-focussed, interaction-based Tactics of Intersubjectivity are drawn upon in combination with the Appraisal framework.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

This thesis is comprised of ten chapters. Following the current introductory chapter, Chapters 2 and 3 provide a discussion of relevant literature. Chapter 2 discusses previous research into LGBTQ+ representation in the media and contextualises the broad aims of this thesis. Chapter 3 serves to explain how the field of linguistics, and specifically the study of evaluative language, can contribute to research into LGBTQ+ representation. Chapter 3 also provides justification for the methodology used in this thesis and Sections 3.5 and 3.6 outline the frameworks used. Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approaches taken in this study including a description of the data, how the frameworks were applied to the data, and some considerations that had to be made when applying these frameworks. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the data which was gathered in order to provide context for the analysis which follows in Chapters 6 to 9. Section 5.2 gives an overview of how evaluative language was used throughout all methods of data collection by participants with respect to the relevant frameworks. Section 5.3 outlines the results of the questionnaire data gathered for this study.

Sections 6 to 9 constitute the majority of this thesis' analysis and are framed according to pairs of tactics within the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework. Chapters 6 and 7 are concerned with Adequation and Distinction, Chapter 8 with Authorisation and Illegitimation, and Chapter 9 with Authentication and Denaturalisation. Chapter 6 discusses the ways in which participants used heteroglossic Engagement to draw upon others' voices throughout the focus group and interview data in order to express Adequation with and Distinction from various identities. Chapter 7 considers participants' expressions of Adequation and Distinction through their lexical choices with respect to ways in which they relate to non-fictional people, to LGBTQ+ characters in general, and to LGBTQ+ characters with the same gender and/or sexual orientations as themselves. Chapter 8 discuss who, or what, participants position as able to assign legitimation to identities, how this is done, and whether they feel that LGBTQ+ identities are being legitimised. Chapter 9 discusses the complex ways in which participants constructed various identities as (in)authentic and their recognition of television media's role in Authenticating LGBTQ+ identities. Finally, Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by summarising the analysis, answering the research questions posed, providing recommendations based on the findings of this thesis, and noting areas for further development in the field.

Chapter 2: LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATION IN TELEVISION MEDIA

2.1 Introduction

This thesis encompasses two main research areas: LGBTQ+ representation in the media and evaluative language and, thus, contains two separate reviews of the literature to reflect this. This chapter discusses previous research into the media and LGBTQ+ representation and provides justification for the broad aims of this research. Chapter 3 is concerned with research into evaluative language and provides justifications for the methodology used.

This chapter firstly discusses the concept of representation in terms of the important impact television representation can have on society and culture. I then talk about this with specific reference to LGBTQ+ television media before discussing literature surrounding the representation of different groups within the LGBTQ+ community. Finally, I discuss the growing importance of the 'everyday' critiques of media representation from non-academics and the influence this can have on media and linguistic studies.

2.2 The Importance of Representation

Representations of minority and marginalised groups on television can directly influence viewers' opinions on such groups (Macey et al., 2014; Żerebecki et al., 2021). Depictions of groups on television have been shown to impact not only how viewers outside of these groups view marginalised groups, but how marginalised individuals see themselves (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Chambers, 2006; Craig, 1992; Porfido, 2009). As Edwards (2010: 3) summarises, the representations of marginalised groups within media suggest to these groups 'not only how the world regards them, but how they ought to regard themselves', and, in fact, representation in television shows 'produces and reproduces the norms of gender and sexuality that are our lived reality' (Chambers, 2006: 84).

In view of this, Żerebecki et al. (2021: 5) note that viewers' opinions of groups can 'become more positive upon consumption' of television content which represents these groups positively. Likewise, they note that representation which depicts the groups unfavourably can influence viewers to feel more negatively towards these groups. Research has shown that television representation can directly influence viewers' opinions on a multitude of individuals, groups, and movements including Muslims (Eyssel et al., 2015), the Black Lives Matter movement (Kilgo and Mourão, 2019), immigrants (Joyce and Harwood, 2014), and LGBTQ+

individuals (Schiappa et al., 2006). Television has been well-established, therefore, as having an important role in shaping culture and societal views (Amy-Chinn, 2012).

As a result of this, the representation of minority groups can be of importance in terms of political change. Davis (2007), for example, states that due to the impact television can have on large audiences, it can contribute to political change among a wide range of people. Gross (2001) similarly notes that television media is able to encourage public conversations about diversity and inclusion. Television programmes do not necessarily need to be explicitly political in their scripts to evoke this type of change. Marr (2000), for example, argues that the connection between representation and politics is inherent in the stating of something that is true to a wide audience. That is to say, simply airing programmes that depict LGBTQ+ identities positively and as the norm is of political significance as it forces viewers to recognise these identities as such if they continue watch.

Representation has also been shown to have importance in the construction of social relationships. Contact Hypothesis predicts that interpersonal contact between groups reduces prejudice between those groups (Allport, 1954). Building on this hypothesis, Schiappa et al. (2007) suggest that television viewers may form parasocial relationships with television characters as the brain has been shown to process fictional characters in a way that is similar to how it processes face-to-face interactions (Kanazawa, 2002; Reeves and Nass, 1996). Perse and Rubin (1989: 61) state that these parasocial relationships and the formation of views about groups of people based on television representation is a 'normal consequence of television viewing'. Żerebecki et al. (2021: 7) note that friendly parasocial contact is more likely to occur under certain conditions, such as frequent, and positive, exposure to the characters from the group in question. Banas et al. (2020) in their research into various studies in parasocial relationships noted that studies had shown increased positive attitudes towards various groups including LGBTQ+ individuals, Muslims, people of colour, immigrants, and people with mental illness after viewers had experienced positive representations of these groups.

As was noted in the Introduction to this thesis, a 2021 study found that, of the UK adults surveyed, only 57% report knowing a lesbian or gay person, 28% report knowing a bisexual person, 13% a transgender person, and 12% a non-binary or gender non-conforming person (Ipsos, 2021: 14). The importance of LGBTQ+ representation, therefore, is clear as it is often the case that people encounter LGBTQ+ individuals for the first time through media representation. Thus, this television representation has an even greater 'potential to influence

public understanding of, and tolerance for, minority behaviours and identities' (Amy-Chinn, 2012: 64-65). This is supported by Stonewall research into young people's relationships with media which reports that respondents with 'limited real-life acquaintance with gay people … rely on TV to learn about gay people' and that young LGB people felt 'positive and realistic portrayals of LGB people on TV … would have a positive effect on their own attitudes and behaviour and that of their peers' (Stonewall, 2011: 3).

Here, literary stylistics can be drawn upon to help further understand the relationship between representations and readers, or, in this case, viewers. Literary stylistics informs us that the better we, as a consumer, understand something which is presented to us, the more likely we are to engage with similar texts or topics again (Clark, 2014). This is especially relevant to this study as it has been demonstrated that one cause of homophobia is a lack of understanding (Cowan and Valentine, 2006). A greater exposure to realistic representations LGBTQ+ relationships in the media enhances the likelihood that cisgender heterosexual viewers will come across representation and be educated about the LGBTQ+ community. It follows, therefore, that this may lead to these cisgender heterosexual viewers understanding more about the LGBTQ+ community and, thus, more likely to be open to viewing programmes with LGBTQ+ representation in the future. Thus, a cycle ensues in which a greater understanding leads to a greater acceptance of LGBTQ+ content and, subsequently, LGBTQ+ individuals.

As mentioned above, LGBTQ+ representation is important, not only for cisgender heterosexual individuals, but for LGBTQ+ individuals. It has been noted that representations of LGBTQ+ individuals on television can provide LGBTQ+ viewers with role models and people with whom they can identify, especially if they do not have equivalent relationships in their lives (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Dyer, 2002; Edwards, 2010; Oxley and Lucius, 2009; Woods and Hardman, 2021). McInroy and Craig (2017: 38) found that many young LGBTQ+ individuals actively seek out LGBTQ+ characters 'to further understand their identities' and that this was often an important step in their 'coming out' process. It has further been noted that there is a direct correlation between a lack of media representation and higher rates of mental health issues reported by underrepresented individuals (Oxley and Lucius, 2009). A lack of LGBTQ+ characters can lead to a lack of LGBTQ+ role models for young LGBTQ+ individuals 'negatively impacting identity validation and potentially increasing isolation and alienation' (McInroy and Craig, 2017: 43. See also: Dhoest and Simons, 2012; Fouts and Inch, 2005).

Again, this relationship can be informed by previous research in literary stylistics. Clark (2014) asserts that if we, as consumers of a text, are able to identify with a character, a layer of complexity is added to the inferences we derive from a text. That is to say, that which we take from a text, be it a message, an interpretation, or simply enjoyment, is likely to be increased if we relate to the characters involved. Being able to identify with characters entails that consumers of the text are more likely to positively evaluate the story presented in that text (Clark, 2014). It follows, therefore, that LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to feel engaged with, and positively benefit from, programmes including relatable LGBTQ+ characters. Furthermore, as we tend to return to texts in which we see ourselves represented (Clark, 2014), LGBTQ+ individuals are at risk of becoming isolated from certain programmes, genres, or television in general if they are not represented. Furthermore, cisgender heterosexual viewers are more likely to relate to nuanced and multidimensional LGBTQ+ characters whom they feel they share interests, characteristics, or goals, for example, than they are to representations that depict LGBTQ+ individuals, not as complex human beings, but as one-dimensional stereotypes. Thus, it is important that the representation of LGBTQ+ characters is frequent and nuanced for both LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual viewers. However, despite the evidence for the importance of LGBTQ+ television representation, it has been noted that the LGBTQ+ community is often under- or misrepresented within a media which has been described as 'exclusively heterosexual' (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Fisher et al., 2007: 169; Porfido, 2009).

As Clark (2014) notes the direct correlation between the level of identification with a text and the positivity of the evaluations made by consumers, an analysis of evaluative language will provide a clear insight into the ways in which LGBTQ+ individuals feel they can, or cannot, identify with television characters. The ways in which evaluative language is engaged with in this thesis are detailed in Chapter 3.

2.2.1 Rainbow Capitalism

Whilst findings, such as those found by GLAAD's annual *Where We Are on TV* reports, suggest that LGBTQ+ representation is gradually increasing, some studies suggest that the motives behind the inclusion of some instances of representation may by such that the representation that occurs as a result may not actually be beneficial to the LGBTQ+ community. Some LGBTQ+ representation has been noted to have occurred as a result of rainbow capitalism (Yeh, 2017). There has been a shift in marketing practices since the 1960s towards targeting specialised as well as mainstream markets when companies began advertising towards more

marginalised communities in an attempt to widen their customer base (Engel et al., 1971; Yeh, 2017). In recent years, with the increasing recognition of LGBTQ+ identities within the mainstream, companies have begun to target products towards LGBTQ+ individuals. Termed 'pink capitalism' (Yeh, 2017: 2), 'rainbow capitalism' (Roque Ramirez, 2011: 176), 'homocapitalism' (Rao, 2015: 38), and 'gay capitalism' (Drucker, 2015: 75), this notion has been discussed and critiqued by the LGBTQ+ community and, increasingly, within academia (Yeh, 2017). Critiques of rainbow capitalism include its tendency to ignore the wider LGBTQ+ community in favour of targeting 'white, middle-class and urban gay men' suggesting an 'ideal' LGBTQ+ consumer (Yeh, 2017: 3) and the potential for such targeted marketing to further isolate the LGBTQ+ community from the mainstream (Guidotto, 2006).

Perhaps the most prominent critique of rainbow capitalism is that it is used by companies who are generally not supportive of the LGBTQ+ community in order to increase their profits (Drucker, 2015; Guidotto, 2006; Thatchell, 2017). Adidas, for example, released a line of merchandise in 2018 called the 'pride pack' whilst also sponsoring the FIFA World Cup in Russia despite concerns over the anti-LGBTQ+ laws there (Abad-Santos, 2018). Similarly, it has been noted that LGBTQ+ pride parades are beginning to consist more of corporations advertising their products than of LGBTQ+ individuals advocating for LGBTQ+ specific causes (Thatchell, 2019).

At the core of this critique is the notion that growing acceptance of LGBTQ+ communities is being exploited by companies for profit with few attempts made by such companies to address the wider issues experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals in society. As a result, 'pride products' are viewed as simply an attempt to 'cash in on queers' rather than as an overt demonstration of support for the community (Guidotto, 2006: 3). The relationship between this phenomenon and LGBTQ+ representation on television is discussed in Chapter 9 of this thesis.

2.3 The Varying Representation of Different Groups in the LGBTQ+ Community

McInroy and Craig (2017: 34) note that, since beginning to be represented on television, LGBTQ+ people have 'consistently been stereotyped as comic relief, villains and/or criminals, mentally and/or physically ill, and victims of violence'. They further note that the various sub-groups within the LGBTQ+ community have been represented in different ways and some of these stereotypes are more likely to apply to the representations of some groups than to others. This notion that different members or groups within the LGBTQ+ community receive a different quality and quantity of representation has been noted across the literature (GLAAD,

2021; McInroy and Craig, 2017; Netzley, 2010; Raley and Lucas, 2006; Stonewall, 2011). The quality of representation received by different groups within the LGBTQ+ community is discussed in Sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.5.

In terms of quantity, studies suggest that the representation of different groups is beginning to become more equal than it once was. Table 2.1 shows the percentage of LGBTQ+ characters that were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and asexual in studies conducted by GLAAD and Stonewall in 2011 and 2021. In 2011 both GLAAD's study of US television and Stonewall's study of UK television found that the majority of LGBTQ+ characters were gay men (64% and 77%) respectively. Stonewall have not published an equivalent report since 2011, however the data from GLAAD's 2021 study suggest that representation is becoming more evenly spread across LGBTQ+ groups with lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals each roughly accounting for a third of representation. The representation of transgender individuals has increased by 6% in this ten-year span, however transgender individuals are still represented far less that LGB individuals according to these findings. Stonewall's (2011) data did not include transgender characters and so this cannot be compared with GLAAD's findings. Asexual characters are also underrepresented, with only 0.3% of characters in 2021 being reported to have this orientation.

	Lesbian	**Gay Men**	**Bisexual**	**Transgender**	**Asexual**
Stonewall 2011 (UK television)	21%	77%	2%	N/A	0%
GLAAD 2011 (US television)	21%	64%	13%	1%	0%
GLAAD 2021 (US television)	32%	33%	28%	7%	0.3%

Table 2.1: A Comparison of Stonewall's and GLAAD's Findings Concerning LGBTQ+ Television Representation

It appears, therefore, that whilst the diversity of LGBTQ+ identities represented in the media is increasing, there are still improvements to be made. As McInroy and Craig (2017: 34) observe, there is a notable lack of representation of some groups within the LGBTQ+ community, including asexual, transgender, and non-binary individuals. McInroy and Craig (ibid) further note that the diversity of LGBTQ+ characters is also lacking in terms of identity factors such as 'ages, races/ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses'.

2.3.1 Clark's Stages of Representation

Clark (1969) suggests that the representation of marginalised groups within mainstream media can be categorised into four stages. These are: non-representation, wherein that group is excluded from media; ridicule, where the group is included to be mocked or ridiculed; regulation, the group is included in limited and restricted roles which are likely to represented widely held stereotypes; and, finally, respect, where the group receives representation which is realistic and accurate.

Raley and Lucus (2006) applied these stages to the representation of the LGBTQ+ community and found that gay and lesbian characters were largely situated in the stage of ridicule, although some programmes were beginning to include LGBTQ+ representations which fell into the categories of regulation and respect. They further found that their sample consisted of no characters that identified as bisexual, perhaps suggesting that bisexuality was in the stage of non-representation. While it seems from GLAAD's (2021) findings that bisexuals are moving beyond this stage, other groups, such as asexuals and transgender individuals, still receive very limited, if any, representation. Raley and Lucus' (2006) findings, along with the data shown in Table 2.1, demonstrate that different groups within the LGBTQ+ community experience different levels of representation and, thus, approaches to improving LGBTQ+ representation may need to vary between groups.

The following sections, which detail some of the research conducted into the representation of LGBTQ+ groups within television media, are, therefore, grouped into separate sexual and gender orientations. Whilst it is understood that there are some problems with representation that affect the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, this section looks into the representation of different groups within the community individually.

2.3.2 The Representation of Gay Men

This section discusses various studies into the representation of gay men in the media with a focus on how stereotypical characters have been reported to comprise the majority of these representations. Although it has been noted that gay men have been represented comparatively more than other LGBTQ+ gender and sexual orientations, it is important to note that they are still underrepresented overall. Hunteman and Morgan (2002), for example, state that heterosexuality is presented as the default by media and, thus, any other orientation is almost completely excluded in comparison. This view is supported by a more recent study I conducted in 2015 in which one area which was noted as important in the evaluations of gay men was that

of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity refers to the 'cultural bias' in favour of heterosexual relationships which assumes and perpetuates the view that heterosexuality is the norm and, in turn, others non-heterosexual orientations (Giertsen, 2019: 91). Heterosexuality as the norm was an issue which was raised and criticised by participants. The abundance of heterosexual content, heterosexuality itself, and heterosexual sex scenes were all evaluated with negatively weighted valuation by participants, perhaps suggesting a lack of improvement in representation in the thirteen years between this and Hunteman and Morgan's study (Trivette, 2015).

The representations of gay men which do exist within the media have often been criticised for perpetuating stereotypes and for depicting gay men as hypersexual and promiscuous. The following sections discuss these critiques in turn.

2.3.2.1 Punchlines and Stereotypes

The representation of gay men that does exist has been noted to often lack nuance. Blashill and Powlishta (2009: 784), for example, note that gay men are often portrayed as 'stereotypically feminine' and/or as 'the gay best friend'. Furthermore, Fisher et al. (2007) found, through their analysis of multiple genres of television programmes, that gay men tended be included in situation comedies far more than any other genre and that the representations of gay men in this genre tended, firstly, to draw on stereotypes and, secondly, to rarely develop them beyond existing only for comedic value. Similarly, Raley and Lucas (2006: 32) note that gay men are often 'ridiculed on TV' with their orientation being used as punchlines. Whilst these studies were published more than fifteen years ago, more recent studies suggest that the representation of gay men has not much improved. McInroy and Craig (2017: 43), for example, note that depictions of gay men are often still 'stereotypical, misinformed … and/or homophobic'.

Nevertheless, there are, promisingly, some suggestions that the representation of gay men may be beginning to move beyond being depicted as stereotypes and used for punchlines. In 2010, for example, it was noted that some programmes were beginning to include gay men as 'deep, nuanced people rather than caricatures' (Netzley, 2010: 981) and, more recently, Cook (2018: 13) suggests that depictions of gay men may be moving 'toward more complex characters'.

However, some research has suggested that, instead of moving towards a more nuanced depiction of gay men which is representative of the broad spectrum of identities within this group, the representation of gay men is still very limited. Siebler (2016: 4), for example, suggests that, in an attempt to move away from stereotypical 'effeminate' representations, more recent representations of gay men have focussed on 'one particular form of masculine

homosexuality' and any other 'body type or personality' is ridiculed. Šera (2020: 194-195), in a comparison of British TV programmes about gay men which aired in 1999 and 2015, argues that some representations are becoming less subversive, with 'effeminacy among gay men … [transitioning from being] perceived as a part of gay culture … to being presented in a negative and ridiculed way'. This suggests that, although representations may be moving beyond stereotypes such as those found in Blashill and Powlishta's (2009) study, they are simply depicting other stereotypes and, thus, representations are still limited as characters are not representing the diverse spectrum of this orientation.

2.3.2.2 Hypersexual and 'Asking for It'

The relationship between sexuality, sexual freedom, sexual liberation, and LGBTQ+ rights is one which is complex and nuanced. As noted by Hekma (2015: 23), after the First World War, 'Berlin developed into the homo/sexual capital of the world' with 'a rich gay subcultures … of bars and parties' and sexual freedom and liberation existed together within Berlin's gay rights movements until Hilter took power and the German gay rights movement was dismantled. In the years following the Second World War, a more conservative approach dominated gay rights movements (Jackson, 2015). The homophile movement, which emerged around this time, is often characterised as a movement which denounced 'the allegedly promiscuous aspects of the homosexual life style – the endless search of sex in bars, parks, public toilets and so on' and encouraged a more 'palatable' version of homosexuality that could 'win over' heterosexuals to make way for 'equal citizenship' (Jackson, 2015: 35). Some leaders within this movement encouraged gay men to behave 'inconspicuously' and disparaged the emergence of gay bars as locations for LGBTQ+ individuals to meet (Boyd 2003). However, the gay liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s critiqued the approach taken by homophiles and emphasised the importance of reclaiming one's sexuality and of 'social transformation' over the transformation of the individual into something 'inconspicuous' (Weeks, 2015: 51).

As this very brief history of LGBTQ+ rights movements demonstrates, discussion surrounding sexual freedom and liberation has been a crucial part of LGBTQ+ history. However, such discussions are complex, nuanced and connected to political freedom. Media depictions of gay men have often been criticised for lacking any such nuance and for portraying gay men as hypersexual and promiscuous (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Banbury, 2004; Rumney, 2010) and more likely to engage in risk-taking sexual behaviour (Hibbert, 2019; Stuart, 2013).

It has been noted that the perpetuation of this stereotype can have harmful real-world consequences. Abdullah-Khan (2008: 148), for example, found in her study that some police officers were less likely to believe gay men when they reported being raped by another man as they felt that gay men were 'promiscuous by nature'. Such attitudes lead to victim-blaming and the belief that it is not possible to rape gay men as they are 'asking for it' (Anderson and Doherty, 2008: 100). Similarly, Banbury (2004: 126) reports that when gay men are the victims of sexual violence in prison, they can be discouraged from reporting the crime to prison officers due to dominant narratives suggesting that they must have 'wanted it'. Such notions are part of a harmful discourse present in society and are only furthered by stereotypical and negative representations of gay men on television.

The representation of gay men as hypersexual has also been noted to have contribute to a 'moral panic' surrounding educating children about homosexuality (Robinson et al., 2017: 339). This attitude is summarised by DePalma and Jennett (2010: 19) who note that 'the hyper-sexualisation of gay and lesbian identities' and 'the implicit conceptual links between sexual orientation and sexual activity' contribute to the notion that an awareness of LGBTQ+ identities is inappropriate for children. Sauntson (2018: 18) notes that, within the context of schools in England specifically, Section 28 of the Local government Act 1988 which 'made it illegal for homosexuality to be "promoted" in schools' has 'resulted in a pervading silence and fear of openly discussing non-heterosexual identities and relationships in school', despite being repealed in 2003. Sexualisation and assumed promiscuity is an issue which is also discussed in relation to lesbians and bisexuals in the following sections of this chapter.

It is clear, therefore, that stereotypical and negative representations of gay men can have real-world consequences and that such representations need to be challenged with the inclusion of more diverse and nuanced gay characters in media. The next section discusses the representation of lesbians and gay women.

2.3.3 The Representation of Lesbians and Gay Women

Representations of lesbians and gay women have been noted to primarily fall into three categories: 'lesbian chic' (Beirne, 2008; Macdonald, 1995: 185; Moritz, 2004); sexualisation (Macdonald, 1995; Netzley, 2010); and the 'bury your gays' trope (Hulan, 2017; Waggoner, 2018). The section covers each of these in turn. These tropes have also been noted to apply to other queer women, such as bisexual women, and so these identities are also included within this discussion where relevant.

2.3.3.1 Lesbian Chic

Studies conducted into lesbian representation within the media have often critiqued programmes' inclusion of largely white, middle-class, feminine lesbian characters to the exclusion of any other identities (Moritz, 2004; Scanlon and Lewis, 2017). Macdonald (1995: 184) labelled this trend 'lesbian chic' and suggested that the lack of diversity within these representations is due to companies' desire to appeal to a mass market audience by using lesbianism to create intrigue and titillation. More than twenty years after Macdonald's suggestions, Scanlon and Lewis (2017: 1007) argue that a form of lesbian chic is still prevalent in media as there exists 'a tolerance of lesbians as long as they fit normative standards of behaviour in ways aside from their sexuality'.

Beirne (2008) suggests that two separate waves of lesbian chic can be identified: the first in the 1990s and the second in the early 2000s. The first wave of lesbian chic, she argues, included at least some positive aspects as it involved magazine interviews and cover photos of lesbian celebrities who were able to give at least some insight into the more realistic side of being a lesbian. She, further, notes that this wave helped to highlight and bring into the mainstream certain political and social issues faced by lesbians (ibid).

The second wave of the early 2000s, however, gave prominence to the mostly heterosexual, conventionally attractive, feminine actresses who were being cast as lesbian characters in programmes such as *The L Word* whilst real lesbian women were being overlooked (Beirne, 2008). It is perhaps the case, therefore, that the second wave came as a direct result of the first, with television companies creating programmes hoping to appeal to the market that had been created during the first wave of lesbian chic. The movement, therefore, moved from one which featured actual lesbians at its core, to one which used this previous success to promote programmes displaying an image of 'chic' feminine lesbian culture.

One example which highlights this phenomenon can be seen in a cover image on Vanity Fair's December 2003 issue. The headline for this issue read 'TV's Gay Heatwave' with the cover photo showing the heterosexual actresses who play heterosexual characters in the programme *Will & Grace*. In this instance the headline was referencing the lead in the series, a gay man, while images of the women were used underneath to suggest that this 'heatwave' concerned gay women as a way to create excitement and, ultimately, sell more copies (Beirne, 2008).

2.3.3.2 ‘Bound by the Male Gaze’

The sexualisation of lesbian characters is another, related, issue which has been noted in the literature. Macdonald (1995: 182) in her study into the representation of women in film, for example, argues that lesbian sex scenes were often not only theoretically being shown for the male gaze but also literally by being watched by men on screen. She notes, therefore, that sex scenes involving two women are often included, not as accurate representations of queer women, but are present to be viewed ‘through the eyes of the masculine onlooker’ (ibid). Further, it has been argued that programmes including lesbian sex scenes are sometimes ‘handled in such a way as to … actively invite male viewers to “participate” … as voyeurs, disruptive witnesses, or actual participants’ (Wolfe and Roripaugh, 2006: 2). Indeed, Alberton (2018: 1) argues that the only way lesbian, bisexual, and queer women have been seen as acceptable on television is when their inclusion ‘hinges on being bound by the male gaze’ and, as a result, they are ‘sexualized in service of heterosexual men’s pleasure’.

As was noted in Section 2.3.2.2, the sexualisation of characters in this way can lead to harmful real-world consequences. It has been argued, for example, that this can have a detrimental impact on how young lesbian and bisexual women view their sexuality and that this has ‘the potential to limit women’s sexual agency’ (Thompson, 2009: 4). Further, positioning lesbian, gay, and bisexual women’s identities as existing ‘in service of heterosexual men’s pleasure’ (Alberton, 2018: 1), effectively delegitimises these identities by suggesting that they do not exist in their own right (Diamond, 2005; Wilkinson, 1996). Consequences of the harmful narrative that lesbian, gay, and bisexual women’s identities exist for the enjoyment of men are still evident today. For example, in 2019, two women in a relationship were attacked by a group of men on a bus in London when they refused to kiss in front of them (BBC, 2019). It is clear, therefore, that the sexualisation of, and the removal of agency from, lesbian, bisexual, and gay women is an issue which is still relevant and detrimental.

2.3.3.3 Bury Your Gays

Another critique of LGBTQ+ media is that there exists a trope in which LGBTQ+ characters, especially queer women, are killed unnecessarily. Hulan (2017: 17) notes that there is often a ‘direct correlation’ between a same-sex relationship being confirmed to the audience and the death of one of the characters within the relationship. This trope, often termed ‘bury your gays’, has existed in literature since as early as the late 19th century when LGBTQ+ writers wanted to include LGBTQ+ characters in their novels ‘without risking social backlash [or] breaking laws

regarding "promoting" homosexuality' (ibid). However, this trope is still prevalent in media today. In 2016, GLAAD noted that more than twenty-five lesbian, gay, or bisexual women had died on television that year with the majority of these deaths serving no purpose beyond furthering the narratives of 'more central (and often straight, cisgender) characters' (GLAAD, 2016: 3). They suggest that this 'sends a toxic message about the worth of queer female stories' and delegitimises lesbian, gay, and bisexual women's identities.

Whilst this trope has existed for over a century, it rose to particular prominence within public discourse in 2016 when Lexa, a lesbian character in the CW's drama series *The 100,* was killed (Deshler, 2017). The response to this was unprecedented as fans took to social media to express their outrage. Following the episode in which Lexa was killed, #LGBTFansDeserveBeter trended on Twitter worldwide for over twenty-four hours and a campaign to donate to the Trevor Project, a suicide prevention organisation for LGBTQ+ youth, raised almost $60,000 within three weeks of the episode airing (Waggoner, 2018: 1884). The strong response to this character's death has been suggested to be as a result of *The 100*'s audience consisting of many young LGBTQ+ women who had been '"baited" into watching … because of the promise of positive representation' only to be disappointed when the programme drew on this trope (ibid: 1889). In the years since, many organisations have begun to count the deaths of gay characters in television in order to address this trope and prevent creators of media being able to 'claim ignorance' to its existence and the wider-reaching negative consequences (Hulan, 2017).

This section has considered three common critiques of the representation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual women in media. It is apparent from these that gender, as well as sexuality, plays an important role in the representation of these identities and the critiques they receive. The following section discusses the representation of people who are attracted to more than one gender.

2.3.4 The Representation of People Attracted to Multiple Genders

This section concerns the representation of individuals who are attracted to multiple genders. Numerous groups fall into this description including bisexual, pansexual, and polysexual. Three themes are discussed within this section: exclusion, sexuality as a 'phase', and representations as promiscuous and villainous. It is important to note that the two latter themes mainly describe representations of bisexuality as the representations of other orientations within this group are almost completely excluded from representation.

2.3.4.1 Invisibility

It has been noted that some queer identities have been repeatedly overlooked within previous studies into gender and sexual orientations (Slagle, 2006; Stein and Plummer, 1996). One criticism is that orientations which exist beyond binary categories, in particular, are ignored or excluded from such studies. Burrill (2002: 97), for example, states that bisexuality has often been understood to be 'a combination of heterosexuality and homosexuality' and, thus, not recognised as 'a unique identity of its own'. Further, it has been noted that people who are attracted to multiple genders have been 'notably absent' from television (Sender, 2007: 304. See also Amy-Chinn, 2012). As a result of this, Bond et al. (2009: 42) found that many individuals attracted to multiple genders felt they were not represented at all within media.

Bisexual characters are perhaps appearing more on television as society 'moves towards a perception of bisexuality as a legitimate sexual identity' (Barker at al., 2008: 151). GLAAD (2021), for example, note that just over a quarter (28%) of the LGBTQ+ characters included on US television in 2021 were bisexual. However, despite this, it has been argued that there still exists a culture of 'bisexual invisibility, in which bisexual people and their identities, experiences, and concerns are hidden from view' and this is even more apparent where identities, such as pansexual and polysexual, are concerned (Pollitt and Roberts, 2021: 358). This could perhaps be due to the fact that, even when characters who are shown being attracted to more than one gender are present in media, the explicit labelling of these identities as anything other than heterosexual or gay is often actively resisted (Barker et al., 2008; Fahs, 2009). As a result, characters who are not labelled but who can ostensibly be considered to be bisexual, pansexual, or polysexual are often interpreted by viewers as moving from heterosexual to gay, or vice versa (Barker et al., 2008). Hayfield and Křížová (2021: 169), for example, note that while some characters are 'interpreted to be pansexual' by audiences, the programmes in which they are depicted often fail to explicitly acknowledge this. The lack of characters explicitly identified as being attracted to multiple genders within programmes is something which was heavily critiqued by participants in my previous study (Trivette, 2015).

The lack of inclusion, or identification, of these characters presents an issues as bisexual individuals in a study conducted by Bond et al. (2009: 44) were 'unable to identify' with both gay and heterosexual characters depicted in media. As a result, some participants felt that this had hindered their understanding of their sexuality.

2.3.4.2 ‘It’s Just a Phase’

The studies referred to in this section and in Section 2.3.4.3 largely concern bisexual characters as, as previously noted, virtually no pansexual or polysexual characters exist on television. It has often noted that bisexuality is depicted as a ‘phase’ in media as characters who once identified as bisexual eventually ‘decide’ which gender they are attracted to (Bond et al, 2009; Barker and Langdridge, 2008; Barker et al, 2008; Fahs, 2009). Fahs (2009: 434) notes that storylines involving bisexuality often position a character’s bisexual identity as temporary before they, ultimately, identify as either heterosexual or gay with no further references to bisexuality following this. The fact that characters’ bisexual identities are often viewed as being no more than a transitional or temporary phase on the way to hetero- or homosexuality within such storylines effectively erases bisexuality and suggests that people can only ever truly be monosexual (Baker and Langdridge, 2008).

This type of representation has been theorised to have a direct impact on the way bisexual individuals are viewed. Alarie and Gaudet (2013) found that bisexual women were repeatedly viewed by the young adults in their study as heterosexuals acting for attention from men, whilst bisexual men were viewed as gay and reluctant to come out. In both instances a person’s bisexual identity was assumed to be temporary with bisexuals being assumed to eventually ‘admit’ to being attracted only to men (ibid). Additionally, Turner (2015: 148) found that lesbians within her study often negatively evaluated bisexuality and felt that bisexual women were ‘undecided’ as to whether they wanted to date women, or that they had ‘decided’ but were not ‘ready’ to label themselves as lesbians. It has been suggested that depictions within media of bisexuality as a phase may be contributing to this view (Alarie and Gaudet, 2013: 192).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that such representations of bisexuality as somehow less legitimate or constant than other identities negatively impact how bisexual individuals view themselves. Bond et al. (2009: 42) found that many bisexual individuals felt that the media had provided them with ‘misinformation’ about their orientations and this, as a result, they were reluctant to identify as bisexual.

2.3.4.3 Promiscuous and Villainous

Common critiques of representations of bisexuality in the media are that bisexual characters are depicted as deviant and/or promiscuous (Barker et al, 2008; Bryant, 1997; Klesse, 2011; Ochs, 1996). Bryant (1997: 67), for example, notes that, when characters are explicitly labelled

as bisexual, they are often shown as being 'promiscuous' and 'wicked'. Bryant (1997: 3) further argues that the depiction of bisexual characters as being both hypersexual and immoral is not a coincidence as, historically, bisexual representation has been negatively impacted by factors such as 'censorship, politics, [and] religious prejudices' resulting in this sexuality, and the stereotypes of promiscuity surrounding it, being used as to signal a character's immorality. He further states that such depictions have led to the lasting implication that 'it is not safe to be bisexual or to be in the company of people who are' (ibid: 67).

Klesse (2011) argues that these negative representations of bisexuals within media impact real bisexuals and negatively affects their attempts to build relationships. This can be seen in a study by Eliason (1997) wherein she reports that 75% of her participants stated that they would not date someone who identifies as bisexual. One notable factor that contributed to participants' responses was the assumption that bisexuals are more promiscuous than heterosexuals, gay men, or lesbians (ibid). Similarly, Ochs (1996: 201) argues that bisexuals are often viewed by gay men and lesbians as 'amoral' and 'hedonistic'. More recently, studies have suggested that the continued representation of bisexuals as promiscuous within the media has negatively affected individuals in the sense that they may feel uncomfortable identifying with the label 'bisexual' because they are worried about criticism or judgement from others (Alarie and Gaudet, 2013).

It is clear, therefore, that negative representation in the media affects people attracted to multiple genders in number of ways: they may feel uncertain about their own identity with no positive representations to relate to; they may feel reluctant to identify as being attracted to multiple genders due to the negative stereotypes about these identities which are perpetuated by media; and they may experience negative attitudes from both heterosexual and gay individuals leading to feelings of isolation and problems in forming relationships.

2.3.5 The Representation of Asexuals

As noted by Emens (2013), asexuality has received comparatively less attention in studies than other orientations despite the fact that it is important to consider the unique experiences of asexual individuals within a society that promotes 'compulsory sexuality' (Thompson, 2019: 8), otherwise defined as 'the pervasive cultural assumption … that everyone is defined by some kind of sexual attraction' (Emens, 2013: 306).

Asexuality has historically been misunderstood both within the media and by academics. For example, it has previously been critiqued by some queer and feminist scholars as being anti-sexual liberation (Milks, 2014) whilst other scholars have equated asexual individuals with non-asexual, or allosexual, women who choose not to have sex as part of a 'radical refusal' (Fahs, 2010). As Dawson et al (2018: 1) note, this can have damaging consequences for asexual individuals as 'asexuality comes to be treated as a disembodied entity which "challenges" contemporary society' while overlooking the fact that asexuality 'exists as a sexual orientation held by a diverse set of people'.

Asexual representation in the media is something which has, thus far, received a limited amount of academic research. However, the asexual visibility movement is something which has grown over the past few years (AVEN, 2018). Subsequently, asexual representation in mainstream media is something which is beginning to be discussed by various scholars and in online news sites and blogs. It has been noted that, whilst there is now some acknowledgement in media that asexuality exists, the representation has largely been negative (Renninger, 2014). Often, asexuality is shown as a problem that needs to be fixed and asexual individuals are viewed as 'broken' (Thompson, 2019: 36). Renninger (2014) notes that, on mainstream television, there is almost always some opposition to viewing asexuality as a valid identity.

This, Jankowski (2018: online) notes, is 'an incredibly dangerous message' as it leads to the misunderstanding of asexuality and, subsequently, the view that this orientation is not legitimate and needs to be changed. She argues that the treatment of asexuality as something that can change is incredibly problematic as it suggests that a person's orientation and their consent to have sex is something that can be debated. This shows the impact negative representation can have, not only in terms of the undoubtedly damaging affect it has on asexuals themselves, but also on society's views as a whole.

This level of representation raises some interesting questions with respect to Clark's (1969) stages of acceptance. The fact that there are a few examples of characters who do not feel sexual attraction in the media perhaps suggests that asexuality has moved beyond the stage of non-representation. However, like pansexuality, for example, this orientation is often not presented as legitimate, or even labelled, and so whether this truly constitutes representation beyond Clark's first stage is debatable. Furthermore, even if this limited representation does constitute a move out of the non-representation stage, it is difficult to place elsewhere on the scale. It could be argued that, since asexual characters are often mocked or derided by other

characters (MacInnis and Hodson, 2012), this orientation is in the stage of ridicule. However, something arguably more sinister appears to be happening with the representation asexuality. That is, characters are not just mocked for their orientation, but are actively tried to be 'fixed' by other characters. As such plotlines often result in the asexual character developing sexual feelings for another character (Jankowski, 2015), asexuality is not just, if recognised at all, mocked but defined as a problem to be solved. This would perhaps leave asexuality somewhere between the stages of non-representation and ridicule in an unenviable position of 'existing as a problem'.

2.3.6 The Representation of Transgender and Non-binary People

This section discusses the representation of transgender and non-binary individuals. Non-binary individuals are often included under the umbrella of transgender as they do not identify, or, in some cases, do not exclusively identify, with the gender they were assigned at birth. However, for the purposes of this study, transgender and non-binary individuals will mostly be discussed separately as these groups are generally represented differently within the media.

It should be noted that these are genders and not sexualities and, thus, the experiences of transgender and non-binary individuals are likely to differ in some ways from the groups previously discussed as transgender and non-binary individuals face unique challenges and discrimination. This is not to suggest that transgender and non-binary individuals will not also have experiences in common with LGB+ individuals. Intersectionality must also be considered as some transgender and non-binary individuals are also LGB+ and, thus, may experience marginalisation for their gender and sexual orientation.

2.3.6.1 The Representation of Transgender Men and Women

Film and television media has been noted to be often the first time individuals witness transgender individuals (Chiland, 2003; Heinz, 2012) and may be 'crucial to the development of transgender identity' (McInroy and Craig, 2015: 607). Additionally, this media has the potential to influence cisgender individuals' views on transgender people. Trans Media Watch (2010: 9) in their research into transgender individuals' view of UK television media, for example, found that 34% of their respondents 'felt that media representations of trans people had precipitated negative reactions amongst their families or friends'.

More recently, the Trans Lives Survey (2021: 5) found that 97% of transgender people surveyed had witness transphobia in the media, 93% reported that 'media transphobia had

impacted their experiences of transphobia from strangers on the street', and 85% felt that 'transphobic rhetoric in the media has impacted how their family treat them'. Additionally, over 70% felt that transphobia in the media had negatively impacted their mental health (ibid).

McInroy and Craig (2015: 607) note that depiction of transgender individuals in media is often negative and may have 'detrimental impacts, such as depression or shame, on transgender people' and 'incite fear in the nontransgender population'. As example of this can be seen in the Trans Media Watch (2010: 9) study as they found that 22% of their respondents 'had experienced verbal abuse that they believed was associated with representations of transgender people in the media' and 8% of respondents 'had received physical abuse that they believed was connected' to media representation.

The importance of positive representation of transgender individuals, therefore, is clear. Frameworks have been designed to investigate the level and quality of transgender representation. Capuzza and Spencer (2016: 219), for example, list five categories to be investigated when analysing transgender representation. These are: casting, whether the character is played by a transgender actor; visibility, how frequently the character appears; identity, including gender identity, race, sexuality, age, and whether they are closeted; embodiment, or the 'born in the wrong body' trope; and social interaction, the relationships the character has with others, including whether they are accepted or rejected. McLaren et al (2021) build on this by adding a sixth category: relevance, or how often the character's identity is a large part of the narrative.

In their study of three transgender television characters, McLaren et al (2021) build on this again and split their discussion into seven key factors: casting; framing, how the character is positioned in the narrative; transgender identity; social interaction; violence, whether the character is shown as the victim of harassment or violence; the 'born in the wrong body' trope; and romance, whether the character is shown to be able to engage in romantic relationships as opposed to being sexualised or viewed as undatable. They found that, whilst the representation of transgender characters was improving in some areas, it still remained unsatisfactory in others.

2.3.6.2 The Representation of Non-binary Individuals

It has been noted that Western society enforces a strict 'sex and gender binary' (Clark et al, 2018: 159) and that any existence outside of these 'normative identities reduces one to being an error of society' (Vijlbrief et al, 2019: 3). That is, any person who does not experience

gender as a binary disrupts the expected norms and, thus, has historically been subject to stigmatisation. It has been argued that, due to this, non-binary individuals 'are excluded from full recognition and inclusion in public life' (Elias and Colvin, 2020: 194). It is important, therefore, to consider the unique experiences of non-binary individuals and their representation within the media.

Fiani and Han (2019), in their research into the experiences of non-binary individuals found that their participants felt somewhat excluded from the dominant discourse surrounding non-cisgender individuals as these tended to focus on physical transitions in ways which were deemed less important to their participants. They also noted that their participants felt a level of 'helplessness' due to emphasis on non-cisgender individuals' need to 'pass or blend' which participants described as 'unattainable' for them (ibid: 190). Similarly, Hill (1997) notes that the prevailing understanding of gender as a strict dichotomy has detrimental consequences for non-binary individuals.

Dvorsky and Hughes (2008) suggest there have been two waves of historical transgender identity movements. They suggest that the first wave was constrained by the binary gender dichotomy and, as a result, focussed on binary transgender individuals having to conform to 'the conventional fixed-gender matrix of … femininity [and] masculinity' (Vijlbrief et al, 2019: 2). The second wave, Dvorsky and Hughes (2008) suggest, is categorized by the recognition of 'an infinite spectrum of possibility regarding masculinity, femininity, and anything in between … conceptualizing gender as multiplicity rather than dichotomy' (Fiani and Han, 2018: 183).

In a recent study, Trans Media Watch (2020) found that 86% of their non-binary respondents felt it would be beneficial to them to have 'visible non-binary role models in the media' (ibid: 7) and this figure rose to 92% when participants were asked if they felt having a visible non-binary role model would have helped them when they were younger. Unfortunately, they also found that the majority of the non-binary people they surveyed (80%) felt that non-binary representation was currently either 'bad' or 'very bad', with 74% of their respondents also stating that they felt the media 'knows nothing about' what it means to be non-binary (ibid: 9). Similarly, Fiani and Han (2018: 187) report that the non-binary participants in their study felt they had 'no frame of reference' for understanding their experiences as there was a severe 'lack of information' available to them. Furthermore, many of their participants felt they were delayed in being able to explore their identities or to 'come out' to friends and family and

attributed this to a lack of 'societal awareness, role models, supportive spaces [and] educational materials regarding non-binary gender' (ibid: 190). Additionally, their non-binary participants 'heavily cited the importance of a sense of community' (ibid). Given the fact that the media has been shown to be vital in providing representations of people viewers can identify with, it is important that media includes representations of non-binary individuals to help create this sense of community for those who do not know any other non-binary people in real life (Amy-Chinn, 2012).

It is clear from Section 2.3 that different subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community face different challenges with respect to representation and stigmatisation. This, as well as challenges faced by all members of the community, needs to be recognised in studies into the LGBTQ+ community.

2.4 'Everyday' Critiques of Media Representation

Before concluding this chapter, this section briefly notes the importance of engaging with non-academics' views of representation. This is expanded upon in Chapter 3 with reference to how I intend to engage with these views in this thesis.

The representation of sexuality in the media has become increasingly discussed by the public, as well as in academic communities. Internet forums and social media sites, in particular, have facilitated conversations about media and inclusivity. Sites specifically dedicated to the critique of media have arisen and this has become particularly common in the LGBTQ+ community with individuals critiquing television media's LGBTQ+ representation (see, for example, GLAAD's *Where We Are on TV* report). It has been well-established that individuals, academics and non-academics alike, critically engage with media (Mehra, 2004) and, thus, it is evident from this that representation is something which is important to members of the public as well as the academics cited earlier in this chapter.

This is important to this study in two ways. Firstly, it justifies the need for more research into the topic in the hopes of affecting change. The fact that multiple sites exist to critique representation not only exemplifies how important this topic is to many but also demonstrates viewers' dissatisfaction with the current representation and suggests that it needs to be improved. Secondly, it provides a clear potential for research. Many LGBTQ+ individuals clearly care about LGBTQ+ representation and have views on how it should be improved. One way in which studies can focus on changes that need to be made in this important area,

therefore, is to talk directly to members of the community. This is the methodology taken by this thesis and is expanded upon in Chapters 3 and 4.

2.5 Summary

In sum, it is clear that the media representation of marginalised groups is something which is worthy of study. Scanlon and Lewis (2017: 1007) note that analyses of the representation of LGBTQ+ characters 'are plentiful' and call for studies 'examining audience responses to representations of LGBTQ+ characters on screen'. This thesis aims to begin to fill this gap in the literature by analysing the responses of LGBTQ+ individuals to representations of LGBTQ+ characters on television.

The linguistic analysis of individuals' evaluative language provides a useful way of approaching the topic of representation as it allows for a thorough and structured approach to finding ways in which media can be improved, drawing on theories of audience reception and literary stylistics. By analysing the language LGBTQ+ individuals use to talk about the representation they have witnessed, I will be able to observe what is important to real people in terms of representation and how they feel the representation they have seen has influenced them. Evaluative language with respect to this project is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: STUDIES IN EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE

3.1 Introduction

It is evident from Chapter 2 that the television representation of minority groups such as the LGBTQ+ community is a significant issue and that it is, therefore, important to conduct research into this area. This section serves to explain how the field of linguistics can contribute to such research.

There exist multiple studies into the importance of LGBTQ+ representation on television however these are largely either situated within the fields of Sociology and Cultural Studies, or provide an analysis of specific pieces of representation rather than an examination of audience responses to such representation (Scanlon and Lewis, 2017). Linguistic studies into LGBTQ+ representation have been largely concerned with the ways in which language is used within the media to construct the sexual identities of characters. Similarly, there have been multiple studies conducted within the field of language and sexuality; however, the focus of these is rarely the evaluative language used by LGBTQ+ identifying individuals.

Building on studies within the fields of Cultural Studies and Sociological research which have demonstrated the significance of media representations of minority groups and linguistic studies which have analysed the linguistic constructions used to create LGBTQ+ characters within popular media, this research aims to combine these fields by using theories of evaluative language, to analyse how language is used by LGBTQ+ people to talk about LGBTQ+ representation.

Language is an important tool for highlighting issues with representation as, as Stubbs (1996: 197) asserts, 'whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it'. Zappavigna (2012) further notes the importance of a linguistic analysis in discovering how people express opinions and create relationships with others. A linguistic approach is particularly useful in analysing an individual's stance on a topic, especially one which is intertwined with sociocultural issues (DuBois, 2007: 139).

This thesis is concerned with LGBTQ+ individuals' responses to LGBTQ+ representation in television media. Using a combination of two frameworks, I explore how participants linguistically evaluate the representation they have seen and how they discuss its importance with respect to wider society. The frameworks I use are Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework and Bucholtz and Hall's (2004) Tactics of Intersubjectivity. The Appraisal

framework combines many aspects of evaluation in order to investigate the 'means by which [a] speaker's/writer's personal, evaluative involvement in [a] text is revealed' (White, 2015: 1). Bucholtz and Hall's Tactics of Intersubjectivity consider how speakers position themselves and others with respect to certain social groups. As this framework was created specifically to be applied to the analysis of the presentation of gender and sexual identities, it is beneficial in this study when considering how participants' draw on their own experiences with their identities to analyse media, and, thus, to aid in a more complete understanding of the real-world importance of certain facets of media representation. The methodology of this thesis draws upon Sauntson's (2018) study in which Appraisal Theory in combination with the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework is used to analyse the language used by young LGBTQ+ people in interviews about their experiences in school. Based on this study, I believe that a combination of these frameworks will also prove beneficial to this thesis in analysing LGBTQ+ individuals' responses to media.

This chapter serves to situate this study and the frameworks that are used within this study within the wider context. I, firstly, discuss the importance of studying evaluative language then, in Section 3.3, I outline some methods and traditions in the field, before situating the frameworks used within this study within the wider context in Section 3.4. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 outline the frameworks used. Finally, Section 3.7 provides a summary and outlines contributions made by this study.

3.2 Justification for Research into Evaluative Language

Evaluative language is a broad term used for 'the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions' about which they are talking (Hunston and Thompson, 1999: 5). This is seen as 'subjective and located within a societal value-system' (Hunston, 1994: 210), and can consist of 'individual words', 'word combinations', 'intensifiers', and 'phrases' (Hunston, 2011: 1) which are usually 'positive or negative' (Suárez and Moreno, 2008: 18).

Precht (2006: 239) states that stance is, in a sense, 'the perfect linguistic construct' as, by analysing a person's use of evaluative language and how they position themselves with respect to other's opinions, a researcher is 'investigating the space in language where literal, figurative, and functional meanings intersect'. As Painter (2006: 183) observes, the interest in evaluative language, or the 'stance' taken by speakers within specific contexts, has grown in the twenty-

first century in the field of linguistics. There are a number of reasons as to why this may be the case.

As linguistic studies shift from a focus on 'truth-value' and towards 'interactive' aspects of language use and utterances, the analysis of stance and (non-)alignment has become of increasing importance (Hunston, 2010: 3). This is due, in part, to the fact that using the language of evaluation in order to indicate an attitude towards something holds social significance (ibid). Furthermore, the invention and expansion of the internet and social media sites have provided researchers with access to large volumes of data consisting of opinions as well as the means to contact and communicate with a wide variety of potential respondents to studies (Liu, 2012). As Walton and Jaffe (2011: 288) note in their analysis of the 'Stuff White People Like' blog, the internet provides a space wherein individuals can interact and, 'under the protection of Internet anonymity, choose how to identify themselves' and how to express their stance in relation to others.

Additionally, the analysis of evaluative language can be of use in a variety of fields, both within and outside of academia. The analysis of evaluative language has many commercial applications, for example within the field of consumer feedback through the use of opinion mining, or sentiment analysis. Liu (2012: 8), for example, notes that opinions are 'key influencers of our behaviours' and, thus, the interest in evaluations extends beyond academia as potential consumers of products and services are interested in the evaluations of current consumers and businesses are concerned with public opinions on their products. As a result, interest in sentiment analysis, or the evaluations of consumers, has 'long been a huge business itself for marketing [and] public relations' (Liu, 2012: 8).

Within academia, analysis of people's evaluations and stances can be used across a variety of disciplines including psychology (Hayed and Wilson, 2003), women's studies (García-Gómez, 2011), and medicine (Josephson et al., 2015). Within the field of linguistics, evaluation is studied across a range of research areas including stylistics (Martin, 2000), the language of academic review (Fortanet, 2008; Kouriloua, 1996), corpus linguistics (Hunston, 2011; Page, 2006; Precht, 2006), conversations (DuBois, 2007; Eggins and Slade, 1997), and newspaper articles (Martin and White, 2005; Van Driel, 2018). As Page (2006: 211) notes 'evaluation is a concept that crosses discipline boundaries and has many diverse applications'. The following section discusses some of these applications.

3.3 Methods and Traditions in Evaluative Language

3.3.1 Form

Important in the analysis of evaluative language is the consideration of both the form and function of evaluative units (Xu and Nesi, 2017); that is to say it is necessary to consider both how evaluation is created linguistically and to what end. The form of evaluation has been discussed in multiple studies (see, for example, Hyland, 1999; Martin and White, 2005; Xu and Nesi, 2017). As Hunston (2010: 3) notes, there is no one form 'either grammatical or lexical that encompass[es] the range of expressions of evaluation'. Perhaps the most well-known type of evaluation is linguistic evaluation consisting of positively or negatively loaded words (Suárez and Moreno, 2008). However, the analysis of evaluation within linguistic studies has not been limited to evaluative terms themselves, but is also inclusive of cumulative evaluation created throughout a text or utterance, paralinguistic features, and evaluation via omission. That is, evaluation can be both implicit and explicit, internal and external.

Evaluation can occur cumulatively throughout phrases, sentences, or texts. For example, cumulation of lexical items expressing a similar viewpoint can prime a reader to interpret a following supposedly neutral phrase in an evaluative manner similar to that expressed by the previous items (Hunston, 2010). Additionally, paragraph structure can serve to express evaluation; for example, if a research aim is stated at the beginning of the paragraph, the stating of whether or not these have been achieved at the end serves as an evaluation of the success of the research even if no explicitly evaluative language is employed (Hunston, 1993).

Studies have also noted how paralinguistic features within spoken language can suggest evaluation. Pomerantz (1984), for example, notes that, in spoken interactions, features such as false-starts, repairs and pauses can function as evaluative devices in turns in which speakers are disagreeing with turns that invite agreement.

Implicit evaluation is of particular interest in the field of sociolinguistics as texts can encode ideological stances through implicit, as well as explicit, evaluation. Indeed, it has been noted that implicit evaluation may be the most persuasive as writers/speakers can appear to be offering an impartial, 'factual' view that can apparently be relied upon to be true without requiring any further critical analysis (White, 2006: 45). It is, therefore, important to consider not only explicitly positively or negatively weighted lexis in an analysis of evaluation, but also how speakers/writers convey evaluation implicitly. I use a combination of frameworks when analysing the data collected in this thesis in order to account for as much evaluation, both

explicit and implicit, as was possible considering time constraints. These frameworks are discussed further in Section 3.5.

3.3.2 Function

The functions of evaluations discussed within research broadly fall into two categories: to review and to perform an interpersonal role. Research which draws upon the former use of evaluations includes academic peer reviews (Fortanet, 2008); book reviews (Moreno and Suárez, 2008); and online reviews (Millar and Hunston, 2015). The interpersonal role of evaluative language has been investigated in relation to, among other topics, online communities (Drasovean and Tagg, 2015; Knight, 2008; Zappavigna, 2011); doctor-patient relationships in healthcare (Josephson and Bülow, 2014; Josephson et al., 2015); the learning of additional languages (Llinares, 2015; Morton and Llinares, 2016); and sexuality and education (Sauntson, 2018).

As is demonstrated by the aforementioned studies, evaluation occurs not only when individuals explicitly state opinions, but also by the process of interlocuters interacting with others. Such instances of evaluation still contain an element of review in that there is often still an entity that is being evaluated, however the evaluation is occurring perhaps more implicitly through interaction. One well-established model for explaining this process is The Stance Triangle.

3.3.2.1 The Stance Triangle

The Stance Triangle developed by DuBois (2007) is a model which recognises and accounts for the functions of reviewing and aligning occurring simultaneously. DuBois (2007) emphasises the importance of recognising that evaluation is an active process. He defines evaluation as 'the process whereby a stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterizes it as having some specific quality or value' (DuBois, 2007: 143). For DuBois, therefore, a person evaluates an object or topic by taking a stance towards or away from it. He also notes that this process is not something which occurs in isolation, but something which emerges in 'dialogic interaction' (DuBois, 2007: 174). This process is illustrated by the Stance Triangle (Figure 3.1).

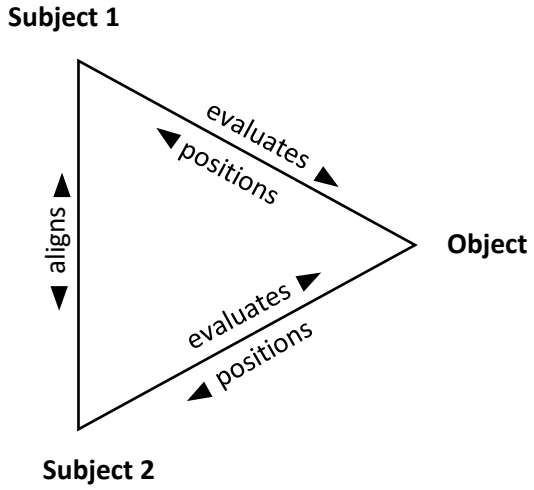


Figure 3.1: The Stance Triangle (DuBois, 2007: 163)

In DuBois' model, therefore, there are three vital components: two subjects and a stance object. The model demonstrates that speakers can align not only with other speakers directly, but also through the evaluation of a specific object or topic. That is to say, speakers can align or disalign themselves with others with the ways in which they evaluate the same object or topic.

As DuBois (2007: 163) states, stance can be defined as:

> 'a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field.'

Due to its concern with relationships between interlocuters as well as between speakers and the objects of evaluation, The Stance Triangle allows for the evolving nature of stance and addresses the important role a person's identity may play in their use of evaluation. DuBois (2007: 147) states that speakers 'draw on a range of biographical associations for the current speaker' including 'what their displayed regional, ethnic, gender, or other identities may be' and notes that this may impact the interpretation of a stance and the dialogic connections that arise. Such considerations are important for the present study as identity factors may influence the interpretation of stances taken by individuals depending on their understanding of the identities of their interlocutors and of the identities of the creators of the media they are evaluating. Throughout this study, I draw on Bucholtz and Hall's (2004) Tactics of Intersubjectivity, a framework designed to unpack how participants construct their identities with relation to others (see Section 3.6 for a further discussion of this framework). Also

important for the present study is the recognition that, whilst DuBois created The Stance Triangle with reference to speakers in conversation, it has also been successfully applied to forms of less-direct, written, communication (see, for example, van Driel, 2018).

3.3.3 Data Sets

Hunston (2011: 2) notes that there are two common methods of analysis, or 'traditions in the study of evaluative language', used by researchers looking into evaluative language use. Perhaps the most common method, Hunston (2011: 2) suggests, is one recommended by Stubbs (1986) in which researchers conduct a detailed study of 'the words, collocations and phrases' used by speakers to evaluate. This method, discussed further in Section 3.3.3.1, which is commonly used in the fields of stance, engagement, and metadiscourse, then allows researchers to compare the use of evaluative language across texts (Hunston, 2011). The second method, discussed below, is one which is often used when the researcher wishes to identify types of evaluative language in a large data set. This method is concerned mainly with positive and negative responses to a specific item or product, involves the 'automatic identification of evaluative language', and is used in areas such as Sentiment Analysis (Hunston, 2011: 2).

Large-scale studies which involve collecting large samples of opinionated data from surveys or interviews or, more recently, online reviews and social media sites are increasingly popular within the commercial sector due to their usefulness in determining how products have been received by an audience (Liu, 2012). Natural Language Processing (NLP) is often used to identify the instances of evaluation and draw conclusions as to how products have been evaluated (Chowdhury, 2003). The field has grown rapidly in recent years due to the accessibility of opinionated data through the internet, and its impact on 'management sciences, political science, economics and social sciences' is predicted to expand in future due to the importance of the analysis of opinions in these areas (Liu, 2012: 8). Whilst it is evident, therefore, that this method has uses as a research technique within many fields for the purposes of identifying evaluative language in large data sets, it should be noted that it is not without issues.

It has been argued that this computerised research method cannot adequately account for the often highly nuanced nature of language use. Liu and Zhang (2012), for example, note that there can be problems when using NLP to identify more subtle expressions of opinion in instances where sentiments are implied or created through a text's structure. Ding and Liu (2007: 812) state that, while some 'linguistic rules or conventions can be used to infer

opinions', the identification of evaluative language using such rules can be 'problematic' as the nuances of evaluation often come from the context, the complexities of which are difficult to identify unless taken on a case-by-case basis.

Whilst studies which require an 'automatic identification of evaluative language' (Hunston, 2011: 2) are useful and provide valuable results in fields such as marketing, a closer, manual analysis of smaller data sets is often the chosen method in studies within more linguistic focussed fields.

3.3.3.1 Manual Analysis

This section focusses on studies which can be categorised within Hunston's (2011) first approach and, thus, covers some of the ways in which evaluative language has been classified when a manual analysis is applied. Methods involving a detailed study of the words used in evaluation as well as their co-text and the context in which they occur is commonly used in English Language research. Various frameworks have been devised by researchers in order to provide guidelines for analysis to be applied across texts.

Identifying and classifying evaluative language is a complex process that has been approached in a number of ways by researchers. Hunston (2011: 3), for example, notes that there are no specific word class which 'encompass the range of expressions of evaluation'. That is, whilst adjectives and adverbs commonly express evaluative meaning, and generalised patterns can often be drawn from such instances, that is not to say that all forms of evaluation are marked by adverbial or adjectival usage, nor that all adjectives or adverbs express evaluations. Similarly, evaluative language does not always fall into one category of Halliday and Hasan's (1985) metafunctions. Whilst, as Hunston (2011) notes, they most obviously fall into the interpersonal metafunction as they serve to construct and reinforce relationships, evaluations can also fall into the ideational category as they help speakers construct and understand the world (Sinclair, 1987).

The structure of a text can also often help express evaluation cumulatively or implicitly. Hunston (2011: 3), for example, notes that a paragraph can be structured to evaluate the success of an experiment by beginning with 'setting a goal' and ending by noting whether or not the goal has been achieved, thus implicitly evaluating the experiment without any specific 'recognisable instances of evaluative language' (Hunston, 2011: 4).

It is apparent, therefore, that there are some difficulties in classifying evaluative language using specific frameworks, even when this is done manually and on a smaller scale. However, linguistic studies which use this method of a detailed study of the words, co-text, and context used in evaluation can minimise the associated risks with identifying evaluative language as they have the benefit of a close level of researcher led analysis that allows for flexibility in identifying individual instances of evaluation on a case-by-case basis (Xu and Nesi, 2017). This study uses a manual approach to data analysis as it is concerned with the ways in which individuals of a marginalised group evaluate the media that represents them and, thus, evaluations are likely to be complex, varied, and personal. Each instance of evaluation should, therefore, be considered within its context.

Various frameworks and methods of classifying evaluative instance have been developed within the field. Hunston (1994), for example, identifies three functions of evaluation and is concerned with status (the object being evaluated), value (the value given to that object), and relevance (the relevance of parts of the text). As noted in Section 3.3.2.1, Du Bois (2007: 163), on the other hand, focusses on the interactive nature of evaluation between two subjects and an object. Fortanet (2008), in her analysis of peer review referee reports, identified three categories of evaluation: criticism, recommendation, and questions. Biber et al. (1999) provide three categories of evaluation: affect, which is inclusive of emotions and attitudes, epistemic, which is related to knowledge and certainty, and manner, how something is said.

Perhaps the most widely used subcategories of evaluative language are those within the Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005). Hunston (2010: 2) terms this framework as 'probably the most theory-grounded study of the functions and forms of evaluative meaning in English'. Appraisal Theory first breaks evaluative language into three systems of Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation, before breaking each of these into smaller subsystems into which different types of evaluation fall. This framework is further discussed in Section 3.5. As Martin and White's approach is situated within the broader field of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the following section provides a short introduction to this field.

3.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Developed by Halliday (1976), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is concerned with language in context. Its main theoretical claims include that language use is functional, its function is to make meanings, its meanings are influenced by the context in which they are created, and its process is semiotic. SFL posits that meaning is created in context by

interlocutors, whether the individuals are in direct communication, as is the case in face-to-face conversations, for example, or in indirect communication, as is the case where a person is reading a text written for mass publication. A SFL approach to evaluative language assumes that each piece of evaluation serves the function of creating meaning within the context in which it is used. As Matthiessen (2009: 12) explains, SFL is a 'dynamic system' in that it develops with the language environment in which it is used, remaining open to new features and developing needs. It has, thus, continued to be used productively since its development in the 1960s. It has been used to describe and analyse texts as well as to actively engage with language development through, for example, the creation of language-teaching syllabi (Matthiessen, 2009; Nagao, 2019). It has proven to be an effective interdisciplinary resource, being utilised in fields including healthcare (Matthiessen, 2013), computation (Bateman et al., 2019), and stylistics (Butt and Lukin, 2009).

One important component of SFL is the recognition of three metafunctions of language (Halliday, 1971). These are the ideational, which is concerned with what is being represented, the interpersonal, which is concerned with the relationships between interlocuters, and the textual, which is concerned with how the message is organised (Halliday, 1970). These metafunctions help situate the tenets of SFL by emphasising the importance the function, context, and relationships present in language use.

The interpersonal metafunction has been of particular interest within evaluative language studies as it concerns how individuals align or disalign themselves with views, values, and others within a specific communicative context (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Nagao, 2019; White, 2015). One well established theory which has been developed within this context is Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005). Appraisal Theory has been described as the most 'fully theorised form of evaluative language analysis' and is situated within the interpersonal metafunction of SFL (Goźdź-Roszkowsk and Hunston, 2016: 133). This Theory is discussed in detail in the following section.

3.5 Appraisal Theory

This section discusses one of the two frameworks used within this study: Appraisal Theory. Developed by Martin and White (2005) Appraisal Theory is situated within the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics and provides a thorough framework for describing and categorising evaluative language. The theory has proven to be versatile in its application as it has been used in various studies in different fields (see, for example, Eggins and Slade, 1997;

Painter, 2006; Page, 2006; Sauntson, 2018). This is due, in part, to the detailed way in which Martin and White (2005) categorise types of evaluative language, providing a thorough and comprehensive framework to utilise in analysis.

Martin (2000: 145) defines appraisal as 'the semantic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgements and valuations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations'. This definition allows for the inclusion of not just the evaluative words themselves, but also the resources around them which are used to amplify, negotiate, and engage with other evaluations.

The Appraisal Framework (Figure 3.2) is comprised of three domains of Engagement, Graduation, and Attitude. Engagement is concerned with how a person positions themselves with respect to others. Graduation is concerned with the degree to which evaluation is graded in terms of positivity, negativity, and intensity. Attitude is concerned with emotional reactions, the evaluation of things, and judgements of behaviours.

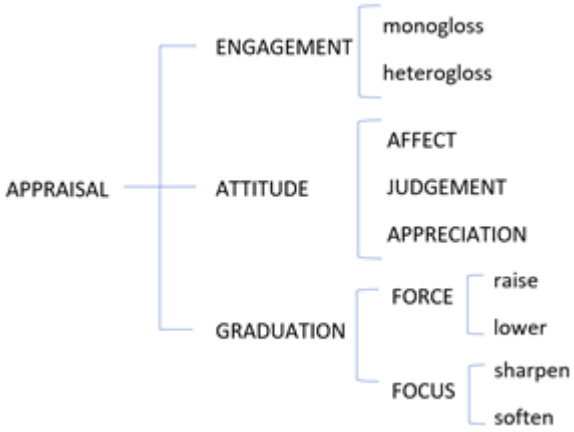


Figure 3.2: The Appraisal Framework (from Martin and White, 2005: 38)

Throughout this thesis, subsystems within the frameworks used will be capitalised to distinguish, for example, evaluations expressing 'Normality' – a subsystem within the Appraisal Theory's domain of Judgement – from other uses, such as in utterances made by participants as exemplified in the extract below:

Extract 3.1 (from Focus Group 4):

MO: I just want there to be a sense of normality surrounding it [being LGBTQ+] you know

3.5.1 Engagement

Engagement is concerned with language use that allows a speaker/writer to position themselves 'as standing with, as standing against, as undecided, or as neutral with respect to … other speakers and their value positions' (Martin and White, 2005: 93). Martin and White (ibid) note that this is important to consider when analysing evaluation as speaker/writers signal their own views by the ways in which they respond to others and, equally, by the ways in which they anticipate others will respond to them. Others' views, for example, may be presented as novel or as to be expected, as likely to be rejected or accepted, or as contentious or accepted depending on the views of the writer/speaker and their intended audience. The Engagement system of Appraisal Theory provides a model for analysing how positioning is created linguistically.

Within the Appraisal Framework, Engagement is divided into two further subsystems: Monoglossia and Heteroglossia. Monoglossic utterances are those which provide no recognition of 'dialogistic alternatives' (Martin and White, 2005: 100). That is, they are assertions which are presented as facts and do not allow for other stances. Heteroglossic utterances, on the other hand, recognise dialogistic alternatives. This can be done in one of two ways: through dialogic expansion or dialogic contraction. Dialogic expansion (Figure 3.3) actively allows for other viewpoints either by Entertainment, opening up space for other possibilities using, for example, reporting clauses such as 'I think', or Attribution, wherein speakers/writers explicitly acknowledge other stances. Speakers/writers can then either show general agreement with the stance by Acknowledging it, or general disagreement by Distancing themselves from it.

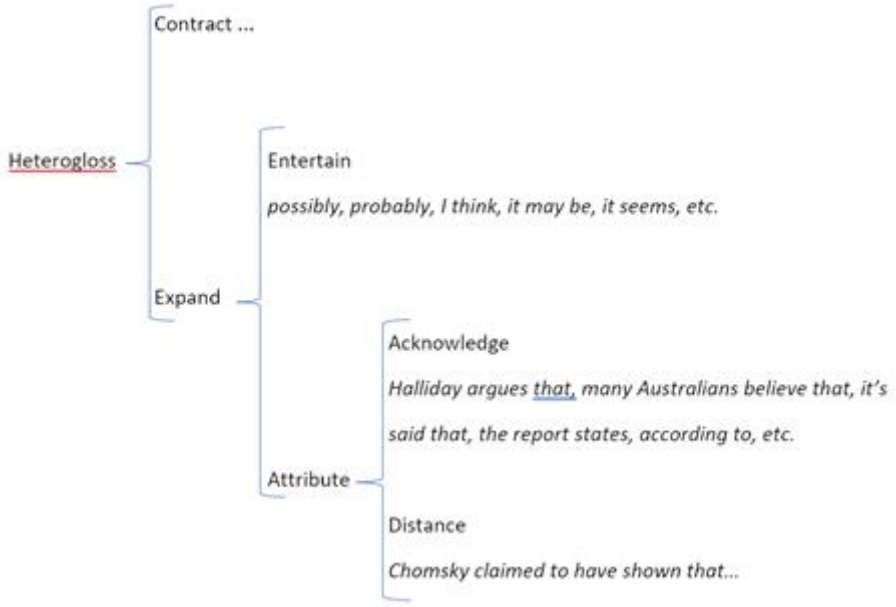


Figure 3.3: Dialogic Expansion (from Martin and White, 2005: 117)

Dialogic contraction occurs when a speaker/writer challenges alternative positions by 'restrict[ing] the scope' of these alternatives (Martin and White, 2005: 102). This can be done by Proclaiming or Disclaiming. A person can Proclaim by concurring with, pronouncing, or endorsing a statement, and can Disclaim by denying or countering a statement (see Figure 3.4 for examples).

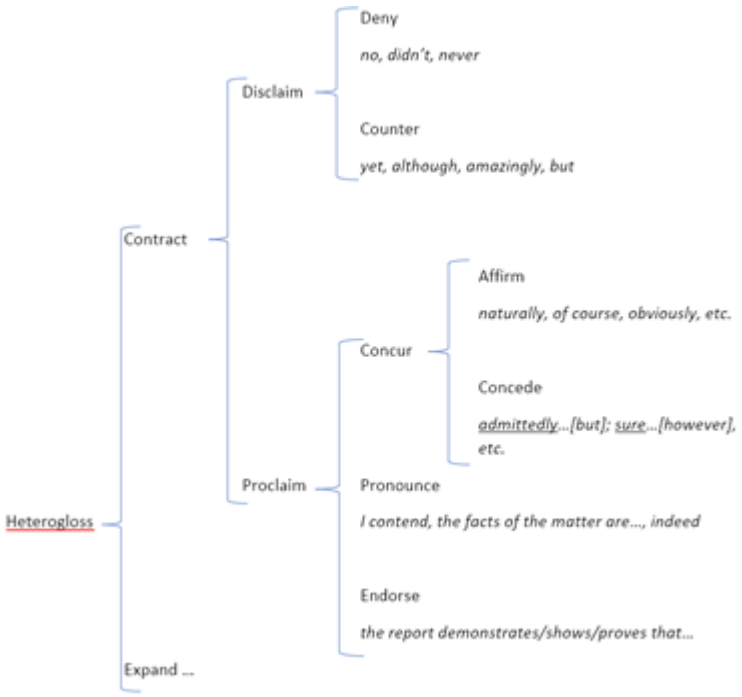


Figure 3.4: Dialogic Contraction (from Martin and White, 2005: 134)

3.5.2 Graduation

Graduation is concerned with 'up-scaling and down-scaling' evaluations (Martin and White, 2006: 135). That is, it concerns the means by which writers/speakers raise or lower the force of their utterances and the means by which they focus their evaluations. As Martin and White (ibid) state, 'a defining property of all attitudinal meanings is their gradability' and, thus, the ways in which an utterance is graded is an important factor of analysis when considering evaluation.

Graduation can serve to either add Force to or to Focus an utterance. Force is concerned with the Intensification and Quantification of statements and encompasses the up-scaling and down-scaling of attitudinal meanings. Focus is concerned with degrees of evaluation and the extent to which boundaries can be sharpened or softened. Focus typically applied to categories which 'when viewed from and experiential perspective, are not scalable' and, thus, Focus serves to evaluate an entity by highlighting or questioning its existence within a 'clearly bounded' category (Martin and White, 2005: 137). Figure 3.5 provides some examples of these subsystems of Graduation.

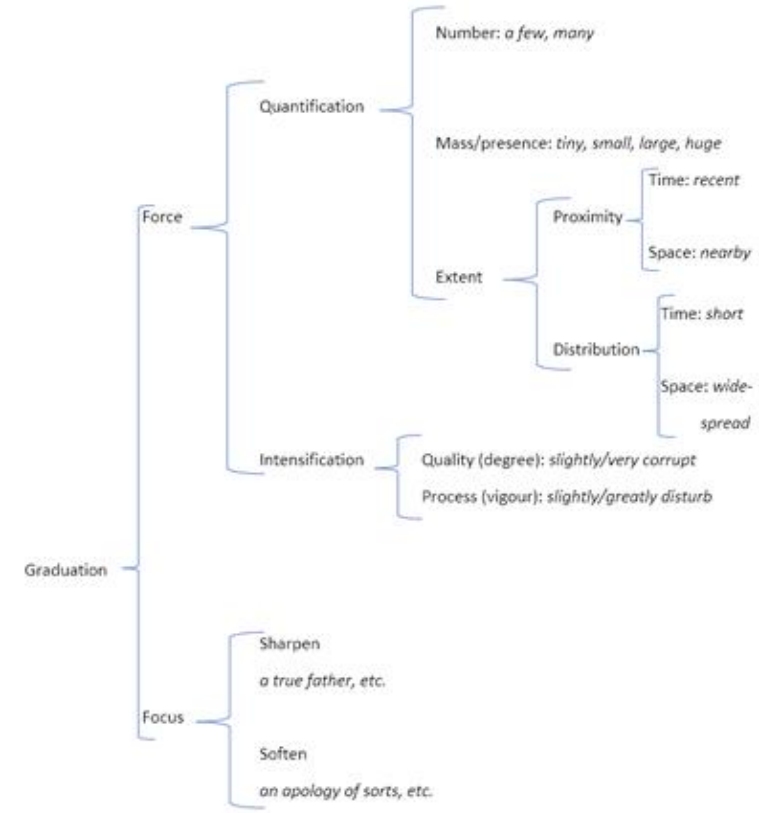


Figure 3.5: Graduation (from Martin and White, 2005: 138 and 154)

3.5.3 Attitude

The domain of Attitude is largely concerned with lexical realisations of evaluation and is divided into three systems of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation (Figure 3.6). Affect is concerned with the representation of emotions within an utterance, Judgement with attitudes towards behaviours of people, and Appreciation with evaluations of things, performances, and natural phenomena (Martin and White, 2005: 56).

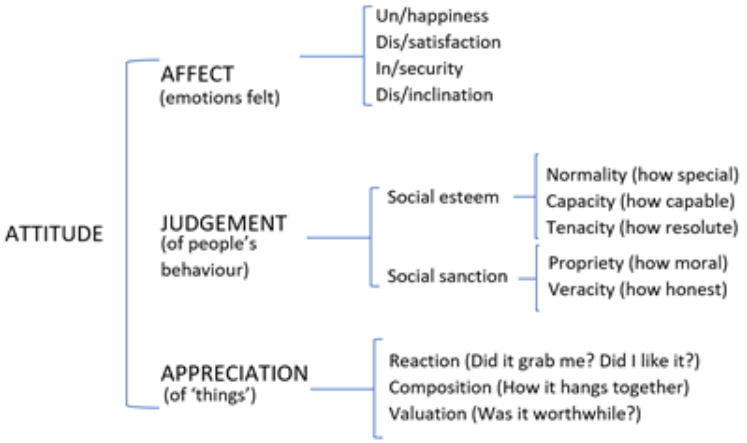


Figure 3.6: Attitude (from Martin and White, 2005: 42-45)

The recognition of these systems 'foregrounds the notion of choice' in that it highlights the fact that speakers have multiple lexical choices available to them when constructing their utterances (ibid: 17). Thus, any choice made encodes the opinions and stance of the speaker.

3.5.3.1 Affect

The system of Affect is concerned with the reporting of emotions. Affect is primarily linguistically realised through adjectives, adverbs, and mental processes. It is classified into four further subsystems: un/happiness, dis/satisfaction, in/security, and dis/inclination (Martin and White, 2005; Bednarek, 2008). Figure 3.7 provides some illustrative examples.

Figure 3.7: Affect (from Martin and White, 2005: 49-51)

Bednarek (2008: 14) states that Affect can be further categorised in four ways (Table 3.1). Further, Affect can be attributed to another. That is, as well as denoting how they feel, a person may also state how they believe another person feels or comment on another's reaction.

Classification	Examples
The feelings can be construed as positive or negative	Positive: I am happy Negative: I am sad
The feelings are realised as either a 'surge of emotion' or as an ongoing mental state	Surge: He giggled Ongoing: He was pleased
The feelings are realised as a general mood or as a reaction to something external	Mood: I was happy Reaction: I liked them
The feelings can be graded	Low intensity: dislike High intensity: loath
The feelings can relate to future or existing states	Future (irrealis): She wanted the food Existing (realis): She loved the food

Table 3.1: Classifications of Affect (from on Bednarek, 2008: 14)

3.5.3.2 Judgement

Judgement is concerned with linguistic realisations of 'attitudes towards people and the way they behave' (Martin and White, 2005: 52). It is used to express moral evaluations of human behaviour with respect to social and ethical norms. Judgement can be further divided into two subsystems: Judgements of Social Esteem and Judgements of Social Sanction.

Judgements of Social Esteem can express Normality, how special a person or their behaviour is, Capacity, how capable a person or their behaviour is, and Tenacity, how resolute or dependable a person or their behaviour is. Social Esteem is related to social network construction and tends to be used to evaluate the shared values of peers. Social Sanction, on the other hand, expresses Propriety, how moral a person is, or Veracity, how honest a person is. Judgements expressing Social Sanction, therefore, tend to be related to values which are held by society as a whole and regulated by those in power.

3.5.3.3 Appreciation

The final system within Attitude, Appreciation, concerns 'meanings construing our evaluations of "things" … performances … [and] natural phenomena' (Martin and White, 2005: 56). While Judgement concerns the evaluation of human behaviour, Appreciation concerns the evaluation of the products of human behaviour and natural phenomena. Appreciation is comprised of three subsystems: Reaction, Composition, and Valuation. Reaction concerns how and if attention is captured, Composition concerns the complexity and details of a text or product, and Valuation

concerns the significance something holds. Appreciation is 'especially sensitive to field' and, thus, linguistic realisations of this are likely to be context dependent. For example, 'intense' may hold positive connotation when referring to a horror film but may be used less positively if referring to a child's bedtime story.

This section has detailed the subsystems of Appraisal Theory, the following section details the categories within the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework.

3.6 Tactics of Intersubjectivity

Developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2004), the Tactics of Intersubjectivity model presents a method for identifying the ways in which speakers/writers create identities and position themselves with respect to others through language use. The six categories used within this framework exist on an interconnected scale rather than as a strict dichotomy to allow for the complex and interconnected nature of identity construction. The model, therefore, allows for the analysis of gender and sexuality identity construction as a multifaceted, intersubjective and shifting process. This framework has been used in numerous studies within the field of language and sexuality to date. It has been used, for example, to explore identity within lesbian communities (Jones, 2012), within women's sports teams (Sauntson and Morrish, 2012), and within a school context (Sauntson, 2018).

The framework consists of three pairs of tactics: Adequation and Distinction which are concerned with similarities and differences; Authorization and Illegitimation which deal with relations of power; and Authentication and Denaturalization which cover authenticity and artifice. These tactics are discussed in turn in the following sections.

3.6.1 Adequation and Distinction

Adequation and Distinction refer to whether individuals highlight similarities or differences between their identities and the identities of others. Adequation refers to individuals creating 'sufficient sameness between individuals or groups' (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 383), whilst Distinction 'creates and highlights differences' (Walz, 2018: 30) as individuals choose to distance themselves from certain groups or social practices. As the focus of this framework is the processes by which individuals construct their identities in context, the categories of Adequation and Distinction are not necessarily concerned with objective similarities and differences between groups, but with how individuals perceive or socially construct those similarities and differences.

Bucholtz and Hall (2004: 384) note that these tactics tend to manifest as binaries with individuals 'establishing a dichotomy between social identities construed as oppositional or contrastive' thus reducing complex identities to an 'us versus them' dynamic. In doing so, individuals may minimise perceived differences between themselves and others with whom they identify in order to create a shared sense of identity and distance themselves from others outside of the group (Higgins, 2007). An example of this can be seen in Queen's (1998: 211) study of conversation held by a group of gay men and lesbians of various ages and ethnicities in which participants, who did not constitute a pre-existing social network, used linguistic strategies to create a shared 'queer social network … establishing gender-inclusive queer ties' while minimising any other potential differences in their identities.

3.6.2 Authorisation and Illegitimation

Authorisation and Illegitimation relate to power. Authorisation refers to the process by which identities are legitimised, by being afforded 'some degree of institutional recognition' or plausibility (Sauntson, 2018: 56). That is, an authority, either real or perceived, is drawn upon to lend credence to a certain identity. Illegitimation, on the other hand, occurs when the validation of identities is withheld. One of the most notable examples of this is linguistic standardization. As Bucholtz and Hall (2004: 387) note the 'authorization of a single, often highly artificial, form of language as the standard may be central to the imposition of a homogeneous national identity'. The recognition of one linguistic form as being the most prestigious or authorised over another can lead to groups who do not use that form being denied validation.

Irrealis Authorisation may occur when the desired legitimisation of an identity by an authority is denied or is non-existent. In Sauntson's (2018: 65) study of LGBTQ+ youth, she found that the actual Authorisation of LGBTQ+ identities within a school context was rare and that most of the instances of Authorisation occurred when participants were 'constructing an "idealized" version of the school environment in which LGBT+ identities would be authorized'.

3.6.3 Authentication and Denaturalisation

Authentication and Denaturalisation are concerned with reality and artifice. These categories are not concerned with objective realities, but with how individuals talk about identities as either being undermined or perceived as authentic (Bucholtz, 2003). Within this framework, authenticity is not viewed as an 'essentialist aspect of a person's identity', but as a process wherein individuals or groups can establish the 'realness' of identities through language use

(Walz, 2018: 30). Due to this, language can be used by one individual or group to Authenticate an identity while simultaneously being used differently by another individual or group to Denaturalize that same identity. Tebaldi (2020: 4), for example, investigated how youth language has been used by some to Authenticate 'dominant modes of social organization; in particular whiteness and white supremacy' and by others to Denaturalize or resist these dominant modes.

Irrealis Authentication can occur when it is desired but not realised. Sauntson (2018: 62), for example, notes how participants in her study used irrealis Authentication to emphasise the importance of actual Authentication of LGBTQ+ identities within a school context. They did this by stating that resources used in schools could have the potential to represent LGBTQ+ identities as part of everyday life, thus, recognising them as a reality.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has outlined how previous research has contributed to the field of language and evaluation and has situated this study within the wider context. I discussed some methods and traditions within the field of evaluative language and noted potential difficulties in identifying and classifying certain aspects of evaluation with a view to creating a productive methodology for this study. I then outlined the frameworks which will be used within this study: Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity.

As evaluation is realised both explicitly and implicitly through a variety of linguistic and para-linguistic devices and is heavily context dependent, an analysis which combines the use of two frameworks for identifying and analysing evaluations is deemed appropriate for this study. As Sauntson (2018: 53) notes, the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework offers 'an explicit methodological framework for considering how gender and sexual identities are produced relationally and intersubjectively in and through situated discourse' by highlighting 'salient aspects of the discourse situation' (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 493). The Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework, therefore, is beneficial to use in a thematic analysis of evaluative language with respect to identity. Appraisal Theory, on the other hand, provides a systematic and detailed method of analysis when identifying evaluative language and, thus, can be used in combination with the Tactics of Intersubjectivity to provide a thorough analysis of data.

This thesis will contribute to the fields of language and sexuality research by conducting a systematic analysis of language used by actual LGBTQ+ individuals when discussing

representation. It builds and expands on previous research into LGBTQ+ representation by putting emphasis on the importance of the opinions of real LGBTQ+ viewers of LGBTQ+ media content. The next section details the methodological approaches taken in this study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The methods of data collection for this study consisted of a survey in the form of a questionnaire, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. The target respondents for each method of data collection were members of the LGBTQ+ community. The data consists of 145 questionnaire responses, five focus group interviews, and eight individual interviews.

This chapter discusses the methods used in this research. Section 4.2 details previous research used as a pilot study. Section 4.3 describes the data used within this research, including the justification for each data source, the questions asked to participants, and the distribution methods. Section 4.4 outlines the frameworks used within the study and provides justification for the use of them in combination. Section 4.5 outlines the transcription methods used and Section 4.6 details the methods of coding these transcriptions and the questionnaire data. Section 4.6 also details some of the considerations and decisions that had to be made when applying the frameworks to the data. Finally, Section 4.7 provides a summary for this chapter.

4.2 Previous Study

My previous research (Trivette, 2015) has been used as a pilot study for this thesis. In this pilot study, a questionnaire was circulated to a small number of individuals and a focus group was conducted. Participants were asked to self-identify and the breakdown of questionnaire respondents and focus group respondents' gender and sexual identities are detailed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

Sexual/gender identity of questionnaire respondents	**Number**
Lesbian, woman	10
Gay, man	6
Gay, non-binary	2
Bisexual, woman	5
Bisexual, man	4
Heterosexual, woman (transgender)	1
Gray asexual, woman	1
Demisexual, man	1
Total:	**30**

Table 4.1: Sexual/Gender Identity of Questionnaire Respondents in Pilot Study

Sexual/gender identity of focus group participants	**Number**
Lesbian, woman	1
Gay, man	1
Bisexual, woman	2
Total	**4**

Table 4.2: Sexual/Gender Identity of Focus Group Participants in Pilot Study

4.2.1 Pilot Questionnaire

An online chain-referral method was used to recruit questionnaire respondents. The questionnaire consisted of nine questions some of which required written answers to prompt more discursive responses which could be used for an analysis of evaluative language, and some of which asked for yes/no responses or asked participants to indicate their responses on a Likert scale. This was so this study would include both qualitative and quantitative results to ensure a broader, more accurate analysis of how participants felt about television representation. Including a variety of questions within this small-scale study also allowed me to determine which style of questions were most successful and could, therefore, be used as a guidance when creating the questionnaire for the present thesis study.

The questionnaire served a dual purpose of, firstly, gathering data from a greater number of individuals than could be interviewed in a focus group and, secondly, priming focus group participants by encouraging them to begin considering the topics that would be discussed in the focus group.

4.2.2 Focus Group

The second method of analysis was an interview of a focus group consisting of members of the LGBTQ+ community. The focus group questions were similar to those asked within the questionnaire but were expanded upon during this interview. The focus group lasted for approximately ninety minutes, was recorded using a Dictaphone, and then transcribed. The focus group consisted of a group of four friends who attended the same school, who meet regularly, and who all identify as LGBTQ+.

4.2.3 Summary of Previous Study and Implications for this Thesis

The results from this smaller-scale study were promising in that sufficient amounts of data for the size of the study were gathered. The chain-referral method used for the questionnaire and

the use of this to supplement the focus group data with responses from a wider spectrum of gender and sexual orientations and a larger number of participants was successful. Certain elements were kept for the present study including the option for participants to self-identify in terms of their gender and sexual orientation and the use of the questionnaire to prime focus group participants.

One concern prior to administering the previous study was how to address the balance between the need to include open-answer questions to prompt discursive answers and the need to ensure participants completed the questionnaire and were not discouraged by the requirement to provide written answers. Bosnjak (2001), for example, notes that questionnaires consisting mainly of open questions can be overwhelming for participants as they are viewed as time consuming and participants' reluctance to write long answers can lead to a lack of 'conceptual richness' in the responses (O'Cathain and Thomas, 2004: 4). Furthermore, Knapp and Heidingsfelder (2001) found that open-ended questions in online administered questionnaires led to an increased drop-out rate, whilst Reja et al. (2003) found that, in completed web questionnaires, open-ended questions were more likely to produce missed or invalid responses. Additionally, Reja et al. (2003) argue that, when the researcher is not present to probe for specific answers, participants tend to answer in very broad terms which often cannot be analysed in respect to the researchers' aims. It was important, therefore, that these potential issues were tested for before the questionnaire was created for this thesis.

Interestingly, this did not appear to be an issue within the previous study as the majority of participants completed the open-answer questions in full and, subsequently, written data was able to be collected from the questionnaires. This is perhaps due to the fact that participants self-selected as to whether they would participate in the questionnaire and were, therefore, interested in the topic and, thus, more likely to be willing to write about it. This suggested that the chain-referral method of distribution worked well for this study and was, therefore, kept for the thesis study.

Whilst the method of data collection appeared to be successful, the majority of respondents were gay men, lesbians, or bisexuals and, thus, there were not enough responses from transgender or asexual participants, for example, to draw clear conclusions about these groups specifically. When creating the methodology for this thesis, therefore, I made particular efforts to ensure the study would be as inclusive as possible. This is discussed further in later in this chapter.

Another issue encountered with the pilot questionnaire was that some participants discussed only reality television, documentaries, or films that they had seen, despite the focus of the study being television programmes in the fiction genre. Subsequently, the cover sheet for the questionnaire (Appendix 1) was revised to ensure the focus of the research was made more explicit.

Some focus group participants within the previous study stated that they would liked to have discussed more topics than was possible in the time allotted. As is advised by Bloor et al. (2001), focus group interviews should last no longer than ninety minutes and, thus, I did not want to extend the focus groups. Instead, I refined the questions asked within the focus group to ensure a more structured discussion (see Sections 4.3.2.2 to 4.3.2.5 for details of the questions asked) and left time at the end of the discussion to ask participants if there was anything they would like to mention that had not yet been discussed. I also added another method of data collection into the research design and conducted follow-up interviews with individuals at a later date to gain a more in-depth view of the topics discussed (see Section 4.3.4).

4.3 Data

Three methods of data collection were used in this thesis: a questionnaire distributed online, focus group discussions, and individual interviews. The questionnaire could reach more respondents than would have been possible to interview or include in focus groups, while the data gathered from the focus groups and interviews allowed participants to discuss the topic in more detail.

4.3.1 Ethical Approval

This research was approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham on the 8th of February 2018 (application number: ERN_17-1242). BAAL guidelines for ethical research were followed. Participants completed the questionnaire with the understanding that their identity would remain anonymous unless they wished to take part in a focus group or individual interview, at which point their identity would be kept confidential. Respondents were given pseudonyms and any information within the questionnaire data and transcripts which could reveal participants' identities was removed. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study or to leave any interview at any point. No participants left or withdrew. The information sheet and consent forms are provided in Appendices 2 to 5.

4.3.2 Questionnaire

The first method of data collection was a questionnaire. This allowed me to collect data from a larger number of people from a wider variety of locations than would be possible if only focus groups or interviews were conducted. Questionnaires have further advantages in social research in that participants may be less influenced by interviewer bias (Bryman, 2015) and may be more comfortable discussing potentially sensitive topics than they would be in person (Tourangeau et al., 2013). The questionnaire was distributed online which allowed it to be available to as wider group as possible to increase the chances of receiving responses from a variety of people within the LGBTQ+ community.

The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. The open questions helped prime participants for the focus group and provided me with knowledge of salient issues to raise in them as well as supplying linguistic data from a larger group of respondents than would be able to attend a focus group. Results from the closed questions may support, challenge, or provide a wider context to the results from the focus groups. Additionally, asking participants to select a response in a closed-question format and then briefly explain their answer provides linguistic data for the researcher whilst not overwhelming the participant as they are justifying their own view rather than being asked to write a detailed response on a topic (Schuman, 1966). Participants are also encouraged to talk about a specific topic, resulting in less vague responses.

As well as being a method of data collection in its own right, the questionnaire was designed to comprise three further purposes with respect to the study as a whole: priming participants, selecting participants, and reducing issues of sensitivity before the focus group and interviews were conducted. This is discussed in the following section.

4.3.2.1 Priming, Selecting, and Sensitivity

One purpose of the questionnaire was to prime respondents for the kinds of questions they would be asked within the focus groups, should they wish to participate, and to encourage them to consider their views on the issues which may be covered. A questionnaire which primes participants for a focus group must also be designed to select respondents to participate in the focus group (Zeller, 1993). The final question of the questionnaire asked participants if they would like to participate in a focus group and so the questionnaire served as a recruitment tool as well as a method of data collection. The questionnaire also asked participants to give their gender and sexual orientation, which helped to ensure the focus groups consisted of groups that were as diverse as possible to ensure views and experiences of a range of members of the

LGBTQ+ community were considered. As in the pilot study, participants were provided with a box to write their own identity labels.

Another topic which must be considered when selecting participants is sensitivity. Bradburn et al. (2004) define sensitive topics as those which are, or once were, considered taboo or uncomfortable to talk about in some way. By this definition, LGBTQ+ research can be considered a sensitive topic as it involves researching a marginalised group, some of whom may not wish for their orientation to be made public. It is important, therefore, that participants can decide whether they would like to self-select for the questionnaire, focus groups, and interviews. The online distribution of the questionnaire meant that participants could decide whether to participate in the study where and when they felt comfortable doing so.

However, as the focus group discussions were held in person, it was important that anyone wishing to participate in these was aware of and comfortable with this. Participants were made aware of the circumstances in which the focus groups would be held before agreeing to attend (this is further discussed in Section 4.3.2.3). Additionally, the questionnaire was used to prepare participants for the types of discussion that may take place in the focus group should they wish to participate. Zeller (1993: 176), for example, argues that questionnaires 'should be used to sensitize the participants to the topics to be discussed in the focus group'. That is, by designing the questionnaire to reflect the types of questions that will be asked in the focus group, respondents will be aware of the issues that will be raised in the face-to-face discussions, allowing them to decide whether they want to participate. Thus, participants were informed that similar questions would be asked in the focus group and so could decide whether to self-select based on this, minimising issues of sensitivity.

4.3.2.2 Questionnaire Questions

A copy of the blank questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3. The questionnaire began with a cover sheet (Appendix 1) outlining the purpose of the research, asking that it only be completed by those who identify as LGBTQ+, providing the details of myself and my supervisors, informing participants that their responses would be anonymous, and explaining that participation was entirely optional and that respondents could opt out of completing it at any stage. At the end of this page, participants were required to respond to the first 'question' which asked them to confirm that they were aged eighteen or over, that they had read the given information, and that they agreed to participate in the study before they were able to continue with the questionnaire.

The following three questions then served the purpose of identification and providing demographic information. Question 2 asked participants to provide a pseudonym so that if they wished to withdraw their responses after submitting them, they could email me with their pseudonym so that I could identify their response and remove it from the data set.

Question 3 asked participants to state their gender and sexual orientation. Due to the complex nature of sexuality and gender, and in order to ensure this study was inclusive, participants were not provided with set answers to choose from but given space to write their own identifying labels. This helped to ensure that anyone who did not identify with any researcher-defined categories was not excluded. The purpose of this question was: firstly, to ensure that any responses given by cisgender heterosexual heteroromantic individuals could be excluded from analysis; secondly, to help determine whether any patterns of differences arose within responses from participants of different gender and sexual identities; and, finally, to help with the selection of participants for focus groups to ensure that a variety of participants were included. The decision was made to request responses only from LGBTQ+ individuals as this is the community affected by representation and whose views, therefore, should be the ones shaping that representation.

The fourth question asked for the participant's age. This was, firstly, to ensure that only responses from participants over eighteen years old were included and, secondly, as with the second question, to provide demographic information in analysis.

Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12, in line with Schuman's (1966) guidelines on producing fruitful responses in social sciences questionnaires, consisted of two parts: a closed or short answer question followed by an option to expand on their response with a written answer. These questions provided both quantitative and qualitative data.

Questions five to eight introduced participants to the topic of the questionnaire and prompted them to think about the importance of representation by asking whether they thought LGBTQ+ representation is important for LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals to witness and why. Questions eleven and twelve then encouraged participants to think about what they liked or disliked about the representation they had seen by asking them to give examples of good and bad representation and explain why they felt that way about those examples. These questions in particular encouraged evaluative language use.

Question nine was designed to provide quantitative data which, among other purposes, served to measure whether any significant differences of opinion appeared between different genders

and sexualities. This question consisted of a Likert scale asking participants to state to what extent they agree with given statements about representation. At the end of the Likert scale questions, question ten provided a space for participants to expand on their answers with written responses. The final question of the main body of the questionnaire, question thirteen, asked participants if they had anything else they would like to say about LGBTQ+ representation and provided a written answer box for them to do so if they wished.

Question fourteen was designed to recruit participants for the next stages of the research. Respondents were asked if they would be interested in participating in a focus group. If they responded 'yes', they were asked to enter their email address so that they could be contacted with more details. Potential focus group participants were made aware that they would be discussing television representation in a small group consisting of other LGBTQ+ individuals and told that, if they would prefer not to do this but would still like to contribute further to the study, they could volunteer to take part in an individual interview instead (discussed further in Section 4.3.3).

If respondents answered 'no' they were shown a disclosure page which further explained the purpose of the study, including the fact that their language use would be analysed. This piece of information was omitted from the cover sheet to help minimise the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972). Participants were again told that they could withdraw their responses from the study and thanked for their involvement. The disclosure form participants were provided with can be found in Appendix 9.

4.3.2.3 Distribution

The questionnaire was created using Qualtrics and, as with the pilot study, was distributed online. The link to the questionnaire was shared on social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, chatrooms such as The Student Room and MeetUp, and sent to LGBTQ+ societies and organisations via email. In order to address the issue of diversity encountered within the pilot study, particular efforts were made to share the questionnaire among varied communities. It was shared, for example, on Facebook pages created for transgender people and on discussion boards on blogs discussing asexuality. The link was shared with a comment asking people to circulate it further if they were able.

4.3.2.4 Participants

A total of 145 usable responses were gathered. Responses deemed unusable included those which were not completed, responses given by participants who did not confirm their age as being over eighteen, and those which did not pass an internal validity check.

Respondents varied in age from eighteen to sixty-six, with the age receiving the most results being twenty. This is perhaps due to the method of online distribution and the fact that the link was shared amongst a number of student groups. This perhaps also is likely to be related to findings by recent studies which suggest that people aged sixteen to twenty-four are more than twice as likely to identify as LGB than the rest of the population (Office for National Statistics, 2017). The breakdown of respondents' ages can be seen below.

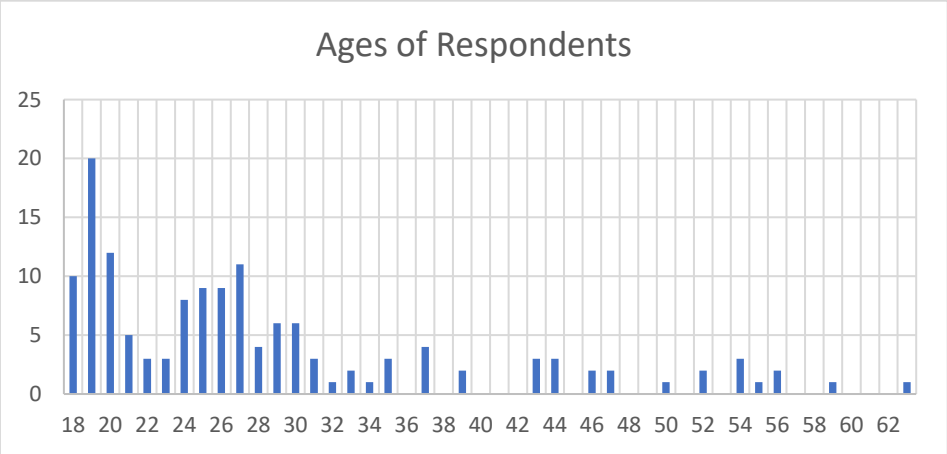


Figure 4.1: Ages of Questionnaire Respondents

When classifying this data, I am using the labels respondents used to identify themselves. Therefore, if a participant stated that they were a 'bisexual woman' rather than a 'bisexual cisgender woman' or a 'bisexual transgender woman', for example, then I do not assign them the label of 'cisgender' or 'transgender' but include them as 'woman: not stated' (see Table 4.4). Similarly, if a participant identified as 'bisexual', for example, without stating their gender, they will be included in the analysis of responses by bisexual individuals, but will not be assigned a gender.

Some participants noted their romantic as well as their sexual orientations. This was only done by participants who identified as either asexual or demisexual and these responses are noted in the analysis of asexual participants' responses (Section 7.3.2.4). A person's romantic identity may by different to their sexual identity if the genders they are romantically attracted to and those that they are sexually attracted to vary. For example, a person who is asexual and

biromantic may experience little or no sexual attraction to any gender but experience romantic attraction to multiple genders. Someone who is asexual and aromantic may experience little or no sexual or romantic attraction to any gender. Demisexual, perhaps a less well-known term than asexual, refers to people who only experience sexual attraction once they have a close emotional connection with a person.

The largest group of respondents to this study in terms of sexual orientation were those attracted to more than one gender. These include bisexual and pansexual respondents and make up 31% of the total responses. This is perhaps to be expected due to the high proportion of younger respondents as recent studies report that young people more likely identify as neither exclusively gay or heterosexual than previous generations (ONS, 2017). For present discussion, these respondents are included together; however, in the analysis sections (Chapters 5 to 9), they will be separated and analysed individually where appropriate. For example, if an issue was commonly raised by pansexual respondents but not by other respondents who are attracted to multiple genders, this will be noted and discussed in relation specifically to the pansexual respondents.

The next largest group of respondents were lesbians (24%) followed by gay people (including men, women, and non-binary individuals) (21%). Fifteen percent of respondents were queer, 8% asexual and/or aromantic, and 1% were heterosexual and transgender. The numbers of respondents for each of these orientations can be seen below (Table 4.3).

Sexuality	**Number**	**Percentage**
Lesbian	35	24
Gay	30	21
Attracted to more than one gender	45	31
Asexual/aromantic	12	8
Queer	21	15
Heterosexual	2	1
Total	145	100

Table 4.3: Sexuality of Questionnaire Respondents

In terms of gender identity, the largest proportion of respondents were women (44%). Twenty of these respondents were cisgender, nine transgender, and 35 did not state whether or not they

identified with the gender they were assigned at birth. Thirty-two respondents were men (22%) with seven being cisgender, ten transgender, and fifteen not specifying. Twenty-seven respondents were non-binary (19%), four were uncertain or questioning (3%), and eighteen respondents specified their sexual orientation but not their gender (12%). The breakdown of respondents' gender identity is presented in the table below.

Gender	**Number**		**Percentage**	
Man	32	**Cisgender** 7	5	22
		Transgender 10	7	
		Not stated 15	10	
Woman	64	**Cisgender** 20	14	44
		Transgender 9	6	
		Not stated 35	24	
Non-binary	27		19	
Uncertain/questioning	4		3	
Not stated	18		12	
Total	145		100	

Table 4.4: Gender of Questionnaire Respondents

4.3.3 Focus Groups

The second method of data collection used within this study was focus groups. Whilst the questionnaire data is beneficial in that it is able to reach a wider range of respondents, focus groups are also necessary for this research as they provide a greater amount of linguistic data for analysis. Furthermore, focus groups have long been recognised as an important method of data collection in the areas of communication research (Kitzinger, 1994), television reception

research (Corner et al., 1990; Schlesinger et al., 1992; Philo, 1990), and analysing reactions to services (Gregory and McKie, 1991; Kitzinger, 1994). Focus groups are also beneficial in research concerning evaluative language as evaluations can be created collectively or in response to another's opinions (Du Bois, 2007).

Each section of questions asked within the focus group served an individual purpose. These are discussed in the following section.

4.3.3.1 Questions

The pre-planned questions for each focus group (Appendix 5), which are discussed below, were similar to those asked within the questionnaire. The structure of these questions was influenced by the guide provided by Krueger and Casey (2000: 44-46). These were the same for every focus group to create consistency and reliability. However, these were expanded on or altered to follow the direction of conversation within each group, thus, the topics covered varied slightly between the groups as those which were deemed important by the participants of each were discussed.

Opening Questions:

- Tell us who you are (name/nickname/pseudonym), your gender/sexual orientation, and something you enjoy doing.

The initial questions asked within the focus groups were not designed to create discussion for analysis but to introduce the participants to each other and help them feel comfortable talking within the group. Krueger and Casey (2000) state that it is important to get participants talking as soon as possible as the longer it takes a person to talk for the first time, the less likely they are to contribute. Beginning with questions that are not vital to analysis also benefits the study as the observer's paradox is likely to be minimised the longer participants are talking and, thus, when the important questions are asked, the responses are more likely to be natural (Labov, 1972).

Introductory Questions:

- What is the first word or thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase 'LGBTQ+ television representation'?
- Tell us about the first time you saw LGBTQ+ representation on television.

The introductory questions were designed to introduce the topic and encourage participants to think about their own thoughts on the matter. Krueger and Casey (2000: 44) state that introductory questions such as these are typically 'open-ended [and] allow participants to tell [the researcher] how they see or understand the issue' and are useful for the purpose of beginning to 'give the moderator clues about participants' views'.

Transition Question:

- Do you feel that LGBTQ+ television representation has been important in your life?

Transition questions are designed to 'move the conversation into the key questions that drive the study' and 'set the stage for productive key questions' (Krueger and Casey, 2000: 44). The responses to this question were expected to be slightly longer and more discursive than answers to the previous questions and provide more content for analysis.

Key Questions:

- What do you think about LGBTQ+ representation on television in general?
- Do you think LGBTQ+ representation in television is important for those outside of the LGBTQ+ community to see?
- Can you talk about an example of good LGBTQ+ representation? What makes it good?
- Can you talk about an example of bad LGBTQ+ representation? What makes it bad?
- Do you think all members of the LGBTQ+ community are represented equally?

The key questions are the most important questions in the study to which the most time was dedicated. Kreuger and Casey (2000) suggest that these questions may take around ten minutes to answer and should appear around one third of the way into the discussion. These questions were designed to be similar to those asked within the questionnaire, but asked for further detail. They were also designed to prompt discussion between participants with potential for participants to compare their experiences. The majority of the linguistic analysis of the focus group data came from the responses to these questions.

Ending Questions

- Of all the issues discussed today, which is the most important to you?
- Is there anything else you would like to talk about on this topic?
- If you had one minute to talk to the head of programming on this matter, what would you say?

The ending questions were designed to bring closure to the discussion and aim to enable participants to reflect on previous comments made. They also provided participants with an opportunity to mention anything they wanted to discuss which had yet to be mentioned. Krueger and Casey (2000: 46) state that these questions fall into three categories: 'the all-things-considered question', 'the summary question' and 'the final question'. The ending questions, shown above, were designed to encompass these categories. These questions also help researchers assign weight to the topics discussed (*ibid*) and, thus, are beneficial for focussing an analysis. The final question was designed to encourage participants to summarise their views and determine which topics were of most importance to them.

4.3.3.2 Disclosure

Following participation, participants were emailed and asked to indicate if they would be interested in attending an individual interview. If not, participants were provided with the disclosure form and thanked for their participation (Appendix 10). The possibility of individual interviews was mentioned at the focus group meetings and participants were made aware that this was not compulsory.

4.3.3.3 Recruitment

Questionnaire respondents who stated that they would be interested in participating in a focus group on this topic were asked to provide their email address so they could be contacted with details. Potential participants were then contacted with further information about the focus groups, as well as a reminder that they did not need to participate or respond if they had changed their mind, and asked to respond with their general location, for example the nearest city, so that groups could be organised in locations convenient to as many participants as possible. As a result of this, five focus groups were organised in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Reading, and Oxford.

4.3.3.4 Participants

Twenty-two participants took part in five focus groups with each group consisting of four or five individuals. Participants in the focus groups were six gay cisgender men, three cisgender lesbians (one of whom also identified as a gay woman), two gay non-binary individuals, five bisexual cisgender women (one of whom also identified as pansexual), one bisexual transgender man, one asexual panromantic cisgender woman, one demisexual homoromantic non-binary individual, one heterosexual transgender man, one queer cisgender man, and one queer genderqueer individual. The composition of each focus group is shown below.

Focus Group Number	**Pseudonym**	**Gender**	**Pronouns**	**Sexual and/or Romantic Orientation**
FG1	Chris	Cisgender man	He/him	Gay
FG1	Jason	Cisgender man	He/him	Gay
FG1	Ryan	Transgender man	He/him	Heterosexual
FG1	Layla	Cisgender woman	She/her	Lesbian
FG1	Sam	Non-binary	They/them	Gay
FG2	John	Cisgender man	He/him	Gay
FG2	Rebecca	Cisgender woman	She/her	Lesbian
FG2	Jessica	Cisgender woman	She/her	Bisexual
FG2	Sophia	Cisgender woman	She/her	Bisexual
FG3	Anthony	Cisgender man	He/him	Gay
FG3	Dean	Cisgender man	He/him	Gay
FG3	Freddie	Non-binary	He/they	Demisexual homoromantic
FG3	Selena	Cisgender woman	She/her	Bi/pansexual
FG4	Nicky	Cisgender woman	She/her	Asexual panromantic
FG4	Rose	Cisgender woman	She/her	Bisexual
FG4	Mo	Cisgender man	He/him	Gay
FG4	Jay	Transgender man	He/him	Bisexual
FG5	Alex	Non-binary	They/them	Gay
FG5	Pablo	Cisgender man	He/him	Queer
FG5	Charlie	Gender queer	They/them	Queer
FG5	Michelle	Cisgender woman	She/her	Lesbian
FG5	Aimee	Cisgender woman	She/her	Bisexual

Table 4.5: Focus Group Participants

Before the focus groups began, participants were given an information sheet and consent form (Appendices 2 and 3) which they were asked to read and sign. I then emphasised the fact that they were free to leave the focus group at any point with no consequences and if they required a break to let me know so that this could be arranged. I also informed them that their identities would be kept confidential as they would be given pseudonyms in the writing up of the research and that, if they wished, they could also use a pseudonym during the focus group discussion so that other participants would not know their real name. Participants were also aware that the discussion was being audio recorded and would be transcribed at a later date. They were informed that they could request a copy of the transcription when it was finished.

4.3.4 Interviews

Interviews were the third and final method of data collection used within this study. These were used to gain further information about specific points raised within the focus groups, to provide individual participants an opportunity to discuss anything they felt had not been covered in the focus group discussions, and to allow them to discuss anything they did not feel comfortable discussing in a group setting if they wished.

The group dynamics of focus groups can be beneficial in that they facilitate discussion and may encourage participants to discuss topics they had not previously considered when they are raised by other participants (Morgan, 1997). However, there is also a risk that some participants may avoid voicing opinions they feel will not be shared by the group, potentially resulting in a limited range of opinions being discussed (Janis, 1982; Levine and Moreland, 1995). The questionnaire data gathered in this study aims to mitigate this to some extent by reaching a wider variety of individuals and allowing them space to state their opinions privately, however I also wanted to encourage participants to discuss their opinions in person. I, therefore, conducted individual interviews to allow for this. As noted by Agar and MacDonald (1995), individual interviews can encourage participants to discuss topics in more detail by allowing participants to explain their own viewpoint. They suggest that this is especially true when it comes to discussing intimate topics and so this may be of particular use in this study when asking participants to discuss their own experiences with representation in relation to their understanding of their sexual and gender orientation.

It has also been posited that individual interviews and focus groups may encourage the discussion of different aspects of a topic. For example, focus groups may be more likely to facilitate discussions of general opinions about a topic, whereas individual interviews may

encourage participants to discuss more personal experiences (Molzahn et al., 2005). It has also been noted that the same individuals may use language differently in focus groups and in interviews (Myers, 1998). Wight (1994), for example, found that the way boys spoke about women changed depending on whether they were talking just to the interviewer or to other boys in a focus group setting.

The combination of focus group and interviews data, therefore, leads to a more comprehensive understanding of participants' views and their language use than the use of just one of these methodologies in isolation (Kaplowitz and Hoehn, 2001; Lambert and Loiselle, 2007).

4.3.4.1 Questions

Two types of individual interviews were conducted. The first set were with those who had previously attended a focus group discussion and the second were with those who had not attended a focus group but who wished to discuss the topic in more detail than they had been previously able to when responding to the questionnaire. The questions asked within each interview varied accordingly.

Those who had previously attended a focus group were asked to expand on points they had made and encouraged to offer their opinions on topics that they felt had not been discussed fully in the focus group. They were also asked to raise any points they wished to discuss that had not been previously covered in the focus group or questionnaire at all. Where possible, participants were asked to expand upon why they stated that they had agreed or disagreed with statements made by others within the focus group if they had not had a chance to do this during the focus group itself.

Those who had not been involved in a focus group were asked questions similar to those that had been asked in the focus group discussions so that I was able to collect their thoughts on the same topics for comparison and to ensure a level of reliability. They were asked to expand on any points they made during the interview and to raise any issues or topics they felt had not been discussed.

4.3.4.2 Recruitment and Participants

Focus group participants who stated that they would be interested in participating in an individual interview were contacted following the focus groups with more details. Likewise, those who had not attended a focus group but what had stated in their questionnaire responses

that they would like to attend an individual interview were contacted via the email address they provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Potential participants were reminded that they did not need to participate or respond if they had changed their mind and asked to respond with a location that suited them if they still wished to participate in an individual interview. As a result of this, eight individual interviews were organised. Six of these were with individuals who had already participated in a focus group, and two were with individuals who had not participated in a focus group but who had stated that they would like to be interviewed when responding to the questionnaire. Details of the participants are shown in the Table 4.6 below.

Interview Number	**Pseudonym**	**Focus Group Number**	**Gender**	**Pronouns**	**Sexual and/or Romantic Orientation**
I1	Ryan	FG1	Transgender Man	He/him	Heterosexual
I2	Layla	FG1	Cisgender Woman	She/her	Lesbian
I3	Rebecca	FG2	Cisgender Woman	She/her	Lesbian
I4	Sophia	FG2	Cisgender Woman	She/her	Bisexual
I5	Dean	FG3	Cisgender Man	He/him	Gay
I6	Alex	FG5	Non-binary	They/them	Gay
I7	Celia	N/A (questionnaire and interview only)	Cisgender Woman	She/her	Lesbian
I8	Ash	NA (questionnaire and interview only)	Non-binary	They/them	Gay

Table 4.6: Interview Participants

As this was the final stage of data collection, all participants in the individual interviews were given disclosure forms following their interview (Appendix 11). Participants were also reminded that they could withdraw from the study and told that they could be sent the transcription of their interview upon request. A transcript of Focus Group 1 and Interview 1 can be found in Appendices 13 and 14 respectively.

4.3.5 Reliability and Validity

The data within this research was coded by one coder using the appropriate frameworks provided by Martin and White (2005) and Bucholtz and Hall (2004). The use of only one coder ensured a level of consistency between the coding of each text. All texts were coded using

Appraisal Theory and then re-coded for the Tactics of Intersubjectivity. To increase reliability, coding decisions are made explicit and further discussed in Section 4.6. To further increase reliability, the questionnaire used in the pilot study was readministered, with the updated questions, to the focus group used in the pilot study.

Some responses to the readministered questionnaire varied slightly in a manner consistent with participants' views developing over time along with the media they have witnessed. Testing the validity of the questionnaire helps to account for these differences and ensure that the questionnaire is still reliable. To do this, a combination of open and closed questions was used. By asking respondents to select answers to a closed question or position their view on a scale, I could test the questionnaire's internal validity by asking similar things in different ways and comparing their responses throughout the questionnaire (Del Greco et al., 1987). By supplementing this with participant's written responses, the validity was further tested. By comparing the written responses to the open questions asked in the pilot questionnaire to those in the readministered questionnaire, I could further investigate what had changed between the two questionnaires being administered and whether this could be accounted for by the different representation participants had seen.

To ensure validity within the focus group data, each focus group was a similar size, consisting of either four or five participants, and lasted for a similar length of time at around 90 minutes. The questions were kept the same for each group, and input from the researcher during questioning was kept to a minimum. For example, I would ask each question, try to keep the discussion on track if conversation strayed too far off topic, and ask participants to expand on points at times if necessary. The interviews were also a similar length, and each consisted of a similar number of questions to ensure the data set was not biased towards specific participants.

While the questionnaire was distributed as widely as was possible during the time constraints of the study to ensure responses from a variety of respondents, generalisations are kept to a minimum. Topics of discussion in the questionnaire, focus groups, and interviews were controlled in that participants were asked to discuss only programmes aired on television or streaming sites such as Netflix, and only those concerning fictional storylines as feature films, reality television and documentaries were not the focus of this study.

4.4 Combining Appraisal Theory and Tactics of Intersubjectivity

As this study's focus is LGBTQ+ individuals' responses to LGBTQ+ media, identity, as well as language, are important facets of the research. A framework which focusses specifically on

the construction of identity through language, therefore, was deemed important when analysing the data for this study.

Developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2004), the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework allows for the analysis of gender and sexuality identity construction as a multifaceted, intersubjective and shifting process. This framework has been used in numerous studies within the field of language and sexuality to date. It has been used, for example, to explore identity within lesbian communities (Jones, 2012), to research identity construction within women's sports teams (Sauntson and Morrish, 2012), and to examine how LGBTQ+ youth discuss their identities within a school context (Sauntson, 2018).

This framework was designed to explore how gender and sexual identities are constructed through language and, thus, is of particular use in this study when considering how individuals relate to media depictions of people who share the same gender and sexual orientations as them. The application of this framework, therefore, can aid in a more complete understanding of the real-world importance of certain facets of media representation.

As noted by Sauntson (2018: 53), the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework offers 'an explicit methodological framework for considering how gender and sexual identities are produced relationally and intersubjectively in and through situated discourse' by highlighting 'salient aspects of the discourse situation' (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 493). A thematic analysis of the data gathered in this study, therefore, was conducted using this framework. The six tactics outlined by Bucholtz and Hall were then used to structure the discussion to ensure identity was at the forefront.

The Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework allows for the fact that gender and sexual identities are multifaceted and continuous, with Bucholtz and Hall (2004) emphasising the importance of the framework as an overlapping and shifting scale, rather than as fixed categories representing a strict binary. Thus, while Chapters 5 to 7 are organised using the tactics, with each chapter focussing on a pair of tactics, the interconnected nature of the tactics is recognised and relationships between them are recognised where possible throughout the analysis.

As well as providing a framework for identifying salient issues within the data, the thematic analysis using the Tactics of Intersubjectivity also provided a structure for the application of Appraisal Theory. Appraisal Theory is used to provide a nuanced analysis of the evaluative language used by participants in relation to specific lexical systems. At its core, Appraisal Theory is concerned with interpersonal language and the 'subjective presence of

writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances' and communicate these towards their audiences (Martin and White, 2005: 1) and, thus, 'is a more effective means of analyzing how feelings, attitudes and values are inscribed in language than thematic analysis alone' (Sauntson, 2018: 46).

Appraisal Theory provides a thorough framework for describing and categorising evaluative language, whilst the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework highlights the fact that the way participants construe their identities is a contextually-sensitive process, and, thus, the two frameworks will be used together in this study to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the data in this study than if one framework were used in isolation.

These frameworks have been successfully used together in previous studies focussing on LGBTQ+ identities. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, Sauntson (2018), for example, drew upon them in her analysis of young LGBTQ+ individuals' discussions about their experiences in school. However, despite the much-discussed link between television and identity construction with minority-groups, these frameworks have yet to be applied to the analysis of LGBTQ+ television representation.

The application of these frameworks to the data gathered within this study is discussed further in Section 4.6.

4.5 Transcription Methods

After conducting the focus groups and interviews, the recordings were transcribed according to the transcription methods detailed in Appendix 12. As is the case with any transcription of spoken language, decisions had to be made as to the level of detail included. By their nature as written representations of spoken language, transcriptions are somewhat 'incomplete recontextualisations' (Robinson, 2015: 91) as, as explained by Flewitt et al. (2009: 45), 'transcriptions must be recognized as reduced version of observed reality, where some details are prioritized and others left out'.

The priority of this study is evaluative language and stance and, thus, lexical choices, which are also given priority by Martin and White (2005), took precedence. However, when transcribing the data for this study, I decided to include features which may encode evaluative intent, for example laughter, emphasis, and changes in tone of voice to imitate others. Features such as accent markers, and false starts which did not contribute to evaluations were omitted for ease of transcription and analysis. Researcher discretion as to what is viewed as important

in terms of evaluation applies here. However, to ensure consistency, transcription methods were kept the same throughout each focus group and interview. The decision was made to transcribe words which are 'non-standard' but commonly used in informal writing, such as 'gonna' and 'wanna', rather than standardizing them to appear as 'going to' and 'want to' as this would not affect the analysis of evaluative language but would more accurately represent the utterances as they were spoken.

4.6 Coding

The data collected from the written questionnaire answers, the focus group, and the interviews was coded in line with Martin and White's and Bucholtz and Hall's models. A manual approach was taken to ensure a full analysis of the data (Fuoli and Hommerberg, 2015). A manual approach further allowed for the data to be categorised using both Appraisal Theory and Tactics of Intersubjectivity and for the interaction between the two models to be detailed. Each evaluative instance was coded separately, allowing for the possibility of context-dependent evaluations (see Section 4.6.3.1). The data was coded and re-coded for each framework to improve reliability.

4.6.1 Appraisal Theory

Data was firstly coded in line with Martin and White's model. Items were coded for the positive or negative attitude expressed, and for their subsystems within the domains of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. A bottom-up approach ensured that notable types of evaluation and what patterns they revealed in terms of what was evaluated positively and what was critiqued could be seen in order to determine more accurately what was important to the respondents. An example of this coding is presented below.

Extract 4.1 (from Focus Group 2):

> **REBECCA:** in *Coronation Street* Sophie's sister Rose is like really accepting and good about it

Appraising Item	**Subsystem**	**Appraised**	**Source**
really accepting	+prop	LGBTQ+ character's cisgender heterosexual sister	Rebecca (I3)
good	+prop	LGBTQ+ character's cisgender heterosexual sister	Rebecca (I3)

Table 4.7: Example of Appraisal Framework Coding

Although the entirety of the Appraisal Framework was taken into consideration when coding this data, some subsystems were more salient than others when it came to specific parts of the analysis. For this reason, some aspects of the framework take precedence in the analysis in the following chapters. Engagement is primarily discussed in Chapter 6 with reference to participants' use of Adequation with and Distinction from the stances of others. In terms of Attitude: Chapter 7 draws on the subsystem of Appreciation to discuss how participants of different gender and sexual orientations varied in their evaluations of media; Chapter 8.3 discusses participants' use of Judgement and how this varies between evaluations of LGBTQ+ characters and cisgender heterosexual characters; and Chapter 9.34 draws on the system of Affect to compare how participants framed their own emotional responses to LGBTQ+ representation to the ways in which they framed the reactions of cisgender heterosexual viewers. Finally, Graduation is drawn upon where relevant throughout the analysis chapters.

4.6.2 Tactics of Intersubjectivity

The data was then coded in line with Bucholtz and Hall's Tactics of Intersubjectivity. This was less formulaic than the Appraisal Theory coding due to the fact that this evaluation was less often encoded in single words but rather was created throughout utterances. Instances were underlined within the transcription and then the relevant sections were included within tables, as in the example below.

Extract 4.2 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** I feel as well that we [*Layla and her friendship group*] were quite lucky (+norm, +valu) in that obviously we all gravitated towards each other (Adequation) we were lucky (+norm, +valu) because we had each other (Adequation) […] but then I was saying like for Jason obviously it [*television representation*] would've made more of a difference (Authorization)

Tactic	Definition (taken from Sauntson, 2018: 55-56)	Examples from data
ADEQUATION	Speakers use language which makes appeals to social sameness and highlights social practices which are consistent with their own identity.	'you know when you see a character for the first time are you're like oh they're like me' (Focus Group 2)
		'[labels help people] feel like they're part of a community' (Focus Group 3)
		'it's like having friends that were going through similar stuff'(Focus Group 5)

Table 4.8: Examples of Tactics of Intersubjectivity Coding

Chapters 6 to 9 of this thesis are framed by the pairs of tactics. The analysis is structured as follows: Chapter 6 and 7 focus on Adequation and Distinction; Chapter 8 on Authorisation and Illegitimation; and Chapter 9 on Authentication and Denaturalisation. Relevant Appraisal subsystems are discussed within each chapter. Importantly, each pair of tactics is not mutually exclusive, and so some overlap in analysis occurs. Due to this, in the following analysis chapters, I specify when an utterance is drawing upon more than one tactic and note why the discussion has been included in one chapter over another.

4.6.3 Considerations

When applying the Appraisal Framework and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity to this data, certain considerations had to be made. In some instances, it was not immediately clear to which system of Appraisal Theory a lexical item belonged, or whether a certain utterance expressed one Tactic of Intersubjectivity or another. Each of these instances was considered and a guideline was created to ensure a consistent analysis was conducted across all data within this study. Examples of such considerations are detailed below.

4.6.3.1 Lexical Ambiguity

The nature of some evaluation was not always immediately clear. In some instances, the evaluation conveyed by expressions was 'highly context-specific' and thus the meaning needed to be gleaned from an analysis of them in conjunction with co-text (Fuoli, 2018: 8). An example of such an instance can be seen in the following extract.

Extract 4.3 (from Focus Group 3):

> **SELENA:** people's sexuality is used as an interesting narrative point rather than as something that is just kind of incidental to who they are

Here Selena uses the adjective 'interesting' (Appreciation: Reaction) to describe storylines she has witnessed in the media. This term, along with related forms ('interest', 'interested'), was used throughout the data by participants. When used to evaluate storylines in fictional media, 'interesting' is generally a positive evaluation as creators of programmes want to hold viewers' interest to ensure they continue watching. Here, however, Selena is using this term to critique the representation she has witnessed. The use of the phrase 'interesting narrative point' to describe the purpose of the inclusion of an LGBTQ+ character is directly contrasted with characters for whom sexuality is 'just kind of incidental'. Here, 'is used as' implies that creators include LGBTQ+ characters to create storylines about sexuality rather than to create multi-dimensional characters who reflect the experiences of real LGBTQ+ people. Chapter 7 further explores participants' discussions of the inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters as 'interesting' or 'exciting' plot points rather than as representations of real LGBTQ+ individuals.

The phrase 'is used as' also contributes to the interpretation of 'interesting' as negative here. 'Used' implies that LGBTQ+ characters serve to benefit creators by making a storyline entertaining. This was an issue that was raised by many participants in this study, and which is also further discussed in Chapter 7. This instance was, therefore, coded as expressing negative, rather than positive, Appreciation: Reaction.

To add to the previous point, it is important to note that the categorisation of certain apparently neutral evaluations as either negative or positive do not reflect value judgements on behalf of the researcher. For example, in the utterance 'their image of a gay man was the hysterical, flamboyant, gay that they'd seen on the TV' (Table 7.1, Chapter 7), both 'hysterical' and 'flamboyant' are categorised as negative Normality. This is because the participant is noting that the depictions of gay men perpetuated by the media to which he is referring are not, in fact,

the norm, but are based on stereotypes. Similarly, the uses of 'femme' to describe lesbian characters are sometimes coded as negative Normality as participants usually used this term to note that, whilst some lesbians identify as femme, this does not represent the entire community and so should stop being depicted by the media as the norm. Such instances are, therefore, coded in respect of their context.

4.6.3.2 Judgement vs. Appreciation

The application of Appraisal Theory to this data presented some issues. One example of this is the distinction between the subsystems of Judgement and Appreciation. Martin and White (2005: 52) define Judgement as evaluations concerning 'attitudes towards people and the way they behave' and Appreciation as 'evaluations of "things" … we make … performances we give … [and] natural phenomena' (ibid: 56).

The distinction between these domains is usually dependent on what is being evaluated and has largely been glossed as the difference between evaluating human behaviour (Judgement) and products of human behaviour or natural phenomena (Appreciation) (see, for example, Thompson, 2008: 178). However, there are some examples for which the distinction is unclear. An example found in this data set can be seen in the following extract, taken from an interview.

Extract 4.4 (from Interview 7):

> **INTERVIEWER:** can you tell me a bit about the representation you have seen?
>
> **CELIA:** it's just stereotypes it's just not sincere is it like LGBT characters are just included for some weird entertainment factor

Here Celia is evaluating the representation she has witnessed as 'not sincere'. This could be classified as an example of Appreciation: Valuation as the entity being appraised is representation, a product of human behaviour, to use Thompson's phrasing. However, it could also be argued that the behaviour of the creators of the representation is being evaluated. It is usually people who are evaluated as (in)sincere and, thus, this could be categorised as an instance of Judgement of Social Sanction (Veracity).

Thompson (2014: 58) suggests that, when analysing such instances, 'the wording should be taken as the basis for the initial assignment of categories'. In Extract 4.2, Celia refers to the appraised entity as 'it' suggesting that she is evaluating an inanimate, non-human entity and,

thus, the evaluation should be categorised as Appreciation 'even if judging lexis is used' (*ibid*). Furthermore, she is responding to a prompt asking her to discuss 'the representation' she has witnessed. Thompson (2014) suggests that nominalisations represent non-human entities and, therefore, constitute an evaluation of Appreciation.

However, as noted by Fuoli (2018) a potential problem can arise when the evaluation does not easily fit into any of the Appreciation subsystems. In the instance above, it is unclear which system of Appreciation 'sincere' falls into. It could be argued that Celia is evaluating the value of the representation; it is not worthwhile as it is insincere. However, when the rest of the extract is considered, it becomes clear that there is further information conveyed by Celia's evaluation. Her use of 'included' supports the analysis that 'sincere' is implicitly evaluating the creators of the representation as it foregrounds the notion that there are individuals behind the creation of representation whose motives for including characters can be questioned. For this reason, I have evaluated such examples as encoding Judgement. Such instances wherein the creators of content are evaluated via participants' discussions of representation are further discussed in Chapter 9. In that chapter, the tactics of Authorisation and Denaturalisation are used to contextualise such discussions about the sincerity, or authenticity, of representation and creators of media content.

4.6.3.3 Irrealis Evaluation

One aspect of evaluation which needs to be accounted for is the evaluation of hypothetical, or irrealis, events. Martin and White (2005: 48) note that a distinction can be made between irrealis and realis Affect when considering 'desiderative and emotive mental processes (*I'd like to* vs *I like it*)'. However, as noted by Fuoli (2018: 10), such examples do not account for all instances of irrealis evaluation. There are many instances throughout the data collected in this present study where participants discussed representation which *could have* happened but which did not. In some instances, this was then compared directly to the representation participants had witnessed (Extract 4.5), but, in others, the evaluation of potential representation was enough to implicitly evaluate the realis situation without direction comparisons being made (Extract 4.6).

Extract 4.5 (from Focus Group 1):

> **RYAN:** it would be so good if there was decent trans representation out there but it's all just a bit shit really isn't it

Extract 4.6 (from Focus Group 2):

> **SOPHIA:** it'd be better understood and more normalised if there were bisexual characters in stuff

In Extract 4.5 Ryan explicitly evaluates the realis representation that he has witnessed as 'shit' (Appreciation: negative reaction) and compares it to hypothetical 'decent' (Appreciation: positive valuation) which would be 'good' (Appreciation: positive reaction). Here the evaluation of both the realis and irrealis representation is explicitly stated. However, in Extract 4.6, Sophia does not explicitly evaluate the representation she has witnessed. Instead, this is implied by her evaluation of the irrealis situation wherein bisexuality is more 'normalised' due to the existence of more bisexual representation. Here the actual representation is not evaluated explicitly, but is implicitly evaluated as having a negative impact by comparing it to the positive impact the irrealis situation could have.

Evaluations of irrealis situations and representation are clearly noteworthy and should be analysed. In order to do so, I refer to previous work by Labov (1972), Sauntson (2018), and Winter (1994). Evaluation of irrealis situations and the work I draw upon when analysing these is discussed in Chapter 8.

4.6.3.4 Overlapping Tactics

As noted by Bucholtz and Hall, the Tactics of Intersubjectivity do not exist independently of one another and represent fluid and context-dependent identity construction rather than binary and mutually exclusive categories. There are instances, therefore, where these categories overlap. During the coding process, therefore, decisions had to be made as to which section an utterance was discussed in if it could plausibly be included in more than one pair of Tactics. Where this is the case, this will be made clear in the analysis and a justification as to why the example is being discussed primarily in the chapter in which it is included will be given.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the steps I took in gathering, transcribing, and coding my data for this study. I have explained the reasons for including three data types, that is, the questionnaire data and the focus group and individual interviews, and have summarised why I applied two frameworks, Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity, to that data. I have taken steps to increase the validity and reliability of my research and have detailed these

above. Finally, I have discussed instances which needed consideration and how I given examples to highlight how I delt with these.

The following chapters comprise the analysis of the data. Each analysis chapter (Chapter 5 to Chapter 7) is framed by focussing on one pair of tactics per chapter. These chapters are then divided into salient points which arose throughout the data and Appraisal Theory is used in conjunction with each pair of tactics to discuss these points.

CHAPTER 5: DATA SUMMARY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the data gathered for this research in order to provide context for and situate the analysis which follows in Chapter 6 to Chapter 9. Section 5.2.1 gives an overview of how evaluative language was used throughout by participants with respect to the relevant frameworks. I then outline the results of the questionnaire: Section 5.3.1 addresses the closed questions; Section 5.3.2 the open-ended questions; and Section 5.3.3 the Likert scale questions. Participants' written responses to the open questions will also be drawn upon throughout to give further context to the figures presented.

5.2 Overview of Data

As noted in Chapter 2, the data for this study consists of 145 questionnaire responses, five focus group interviews, and eight individual interviews. There were 149 completed questionnaire responses, four of which were excluded from analysis as they did not pass an internal validity check. Responses did not pass an internal validity check if, for example, the responses on the Likert scale contradicted each other, or contradicted the written comments made by that participant. Table 5.1 shows the number of words gathered for each method of data collection.

	TOTAL WORDS	**AVERAGE**
Questionnaire (open question responses)	21,769	150 per respondent
Focus group interviews	58,761 (Range: 10,024 – 13,439)	11,752 per group
Individual interviews	66,891 (Range: 6,312 – 9,327)	8,361 per interviewee
TOTAL:	**147,421**	

Table 5.1: Total Words in Data

The majority of the words gathered came from the individual interviews and focus group interviews, with each constituting 45% (66,891 words) and 40% (58,761 words) of the total amount of data respectively. The words gathered from the questionnaire data comprised 15% of the overall total (21,769 words). A breakdown of the questionnaire, focus group and

interview participants is presented in Chapter 4, in Section 4.3.2.7, Section 4.3.3.4, and Section 4.3.4.2 respectively.

5.2.1 Frameworks

Using the Tactics of Intersubjectivity and Appraisal frameworks, the questionnaire, focus groups, and interview data were analysed in order to provide an insight as to the usage of each category or system. Each example was identified individually and instances wherein multiple categories appeared together were noted.

5.2.1.1 Appraisal Theory

Table 5.2 details instances of lexical realisations of Attitude throughout the data collected for this study. Lexical realisations of Appreciation were drawn on the most with 51% of all instances of Attitude belonging to this system. This is perhaps unsurprising given the nature of the data. Appreciation concerns 'meanings construing our evaluations of "things", especially things we make and performances we give' and so it follows that, when asked to evaluate fictional characters, television programmes, and media in general, participants would use lexis which falls into this system (Martin and White, 2005: 56).

Attitude System	**Number**		**Percentage**	
AFFECT				
Dis/inclination	111	372	5.78	19
Un/happiness	107		5.57	
In/security	114		5.94	
Dis/satisfaction	40		2.08	
JUDGEMENT				
Normality	197	571	10.26	30
Capacity	56		2.91	
Tenacity	38		1.98	
Veracity	76		3.96	
Propriety	204		10.63	
APPRECIATION				
Reaction	346	977	18.02	51
Composition	100		5.20	
Valuation	531		27.66	
Total:	**1,920**			

Table 5.2: Realisations of Attitude

Within Appreciation, Valuation was the most often draw upon by participants. This is perhaps interesting as it may be expected that, when referring to television programmes, Reaction would be drawn upon the most as it is concerned with whether an entity 'grabbed' or was liked by the person evaluating it. Valuation, on the other hand, is concerned with matters of worth. This perhaps demonstrates participants' recognition of the importance of LGBTQ+ media representation as they are assessing, not only whether they found a piece of media enjoyable, but whether it was worthwhile. Participants' use of Valuation frames some of the issues I discuss in the analysis chapters. Participants' use of Valuation is discussed in further detail in Chapter 7.

Following Appreciation, the subsystem of Attitude which was drawn upon the most often was Judgement. This is used to evaluate people and their behaviour. Participants drew on this in interesting ways as it was often used to evaluate characters as if they were real people. This is especially noteworthy when Judgements of Social Esteem are used as these are associated with social network construction. The ways in which participants drew on this, and a comparison to the ways in which they drew on Judgements of Social Sanction, are discussed in Chapter 7.2.2.

Normality and Propriety were the most commonly used subsystems of Judgements within this data. Positive realisations of Normality was used by participants to emphasise the importance of LGBTQ+ individuals being shown as 'normal' and being 'normalised' through the use of media, while negative realisations of Normality were used to critique programmes that included 'stereotypical' characters or characters that were portrayed as 'weird' due to their gender or sexual orientation (Chapter 6). Propriety was used in two notable ways. Firstly, as discussed in Chapter 7.3, it was used to evaluate cisgender heterosexual characters' behaviours in response to LGBTQ+ characters disclosing their gender or sexual orientations. Secondly, participants drew on this subsystem when discussing how individuals as their school or workplace reacted to LGBTQ+ individuals (Chapter 8.2).

Affect was the least drawn upon of the subsystems of Attitude. This perhaps suggests a level of emotional detachment from the LGBTQ+ media participants have witnessed. This is discussed further in Chapter 9.

5.2.1.2 Tactics of Intersubjectivity

Table 5.3 details the number of instances wherein participants constructed identities according to each of the Tactics of Intersubjectivity throughout this data. As noted by Sauntson (2018: 57), the 'patterns of intersubjectivity used … can draw attention to the most salient issues'

according to participants within the data. The pair that was drawn upon the most within this data were Adequation and Distinction, though Authorisation was the most often used individual category overall.

Tactic	**Number**		**Percentage**	
Adequation	191	464	16.23	39.42
Distinction	273		23.19	
Authorisation	340	429	28.89	36.45
Illegitimation	89		7.56	
Authentication	180	284	15.29	24.13
Denaturalisation	104		8.84	
Total:	**1,177**			

Table 5.3: Tactics of Intersubjectivity in Data

Adequation and Distinction were created by participants in a variety of ways. Heteroglossic Engagement was used to represent others' voices and to create alignment with or distance from the people they were representing and their views. Participants also expressed Adequation with and Distinction from real people and fictional characters through their lexical choices. Among those participants expressed Adequation with and Distinction from were: LGBTQ+ people; cisgender heterosexual people; LGBTQ+ characters in general; cisgender heterosexual characters; and LGBTQ+ characters with the same gender and/or sexual orientation as participants. Chapters 6 and 7 comprise the analysis of the ways in which participants created Adequation and Distinction.

Authorisation and Illegitimation were constructed by participants less often than Adequation and Distinction, but more often than Authentication and Denaturalisation. However, individually, Authorisation was expressed more often than any other categories. The majority of instances of Authorisation were irrealis as participants expressed hypothetical ideal situations in which positive LGBTQ+ representation validated and provided legitimation for their identities. This is discussed in Chapter 8.2.2.

The pair of tactics that were expressed the least were Authentication and Denaturalisation. However, these tactics were drawn upon in interesting ways throughout the data. Participants noted that, often, LGBTQ+ representation was inauthentic and unrealistic and attributed this to an insincerity on behalf of the creators of that representation. That is, participants felt that, when writers or producers positioned themselves as accepting due to their inclusion of

LGBTQ+ characters, but were simply using those characters as a means of attracting viewers and controversy, the representation that occurred as a result lacked authenticity. Chapter 9 discusses Authentication and Denaturalisation further.

5.3 Questionnaire Data

The above discussion has outlined the distribution of subsystems of Appraisal and tactics of subjectivity across my data This section presents the findings from the questionnaire. Participants' written responses are drawn upon throughout this section in order to give context for the figures provided.

5.3.1 Closed Questions

Questions five and seven asked participants whether they thought it was important for LGBTQ+ individuals (question 5) and cisgender heterosexual individuals (question 7) to witness LGBTQ+ representation. Participants had the choice of answering 'yes', 'no', or 'unsure'. These closed questions were then each followed by an open question that asked participants to explain their answer.

Do you think it is important that LGBTQ+ people witness LGBTQ+ representation?	**Number**	**%**
Yes	143	99
No	0	0
Unsure	2	1

Table 5.4: Responses to Question 5

The vast majority (99%) of respondents answered that they felt it is important for LGBTQ+ people to witness LGBTQ+ representation. Two respondents answered that they were unsure and gave the following reasons:

Extract 5.1 (from Questionnaire respondent):

> I know it's good to have positive role models and can be reassuring for lgbt people in bad environments to see such representation. However, I don't think lgbt characters should be forced and come at the expense of story etc.

Extract 5.2 (from Questionnaire respondent):

> It is important so we are not invisible. But I think I'd rather have no representation than only be exposed to negative images and views.

Here participants expressed concerns, firstly, that representation would be ‘forced’ rather than fitting into a narrative naturally and, secondly, that negative representation could cause more damage than no representation at all.

In order to initially investigate what participants felt was important when responding to this question, I used a corpus made of their response in order to note which words were used the most often. Table 5.4 shows the number of occurrences of words used by participants who answered ‘yes’ when explaining their answer. Concordance lines for these words were then viewed in order to determine how these words were being used in context. These were used as an initial method of analysis in order to get an overview of participants’ thoughts in response to this question. The word ‘feel’ revealed some notable results. Examples of the concordance lines for the word ‘feel’ are presented in Figure 5.5. These reveal common themes with respect to the impact participants noted that LGBTQ+ representation could have. Firstly, participants felt that representation provides a sense of community for LGBTQ+ viewers thus helping to combat feelings of ‘isolation’. Secondly, it was noted that representation can help viewers, especially young LGBTQ+ viewers, feel ‘normal’. Finally, participants noted that representation could provide viewers with a sense of ‘validation’ and ‘acceptance’. Chapter 9 discusses how participants expressed the feelings evoked by LGBTQ+ representation in more detail.

Word	**Number of instances**
people	74
see	42
feel	42
lgbtq	36
like	33
representation	26
important	24
lgbt	21
society	20
media	18
normal	17
characters	17
know	17
alone	15

Table 5.5: Words in Question 6

Otherwise I'd	feel	isolated, that I might have to hide my sexual orientation from others.
come to terms with their sexuality and	feel	that it isn't a secret thing to be hidden away
It makes LGBT+ people	feel	like they actually exist in society
it helps them	feel	comfortable within themselves as it provides normality
If only to	feel	a sense of acceptance and belonging
to	feel	that you're not alone in being /not being attracted to certain people.
So they	feel	less alone and more normal.
which means they start to	feel	unusual/abnormal themselves
young LGBTQ+ people who may	feel	isolated and alone.
positive experience that helps one	feel	less isolated and more "normal".
So that we	feel	validated and valued as part of society
So that we don't	feel	invisible and isolated
makes you	feel	less alone.
To help people	feel	less alone and more 'normal'
important to	feel	seen and understood
so they don't	feel	confused and ashamed about their sexuality
Makes you	feel	that you can be who you are
it makes people	feel	safer in the knowledge that it is acceptable
It makes me	feel	normal
So we can	feel	seen and normal
this led me to	feel	that my sexuality was 'other'
in order to	feel	validated in society.
see others that they can relate to and don't	feel	so abnormal or wrong for their sexual orientation
Because I	feel	that it is important to see characters that are like oneself
role models,	feel	part of society
Representation helps people	feel	less alone, less worried that they are different or wrong
Makes you	feel	like you're not the only one to be in your position
I	feel	it makes people realize they aren't alone
it is important for young people who often	feel	isolated and alone in their queerness
normative ideas made me	feel	like there wasn't anyone else like me.
punchline, which can make queer people	feel	that who they are is wrong
It normalises us and makes individuals	feel	more comfortable.
To make themselves	feel	normal' in a world dominated with heterosexual relationships
makes us	feel	less isolated
LGBTQ+ people can often	feel	isolated and seeing people like them in the media is comforting.
It makes you	feel	less alone and come to terms with yourself.
helps your identity	feel	more normalised and can give you confidence

Figure 5.1: Concordance Lines for 'feel'

In response to the question asking whether it was important for cisgender heterosexual people to see LGBTQ+ representation, again, the majority (98%) of participants answered 'yes'. Three participants answered that they were 'unsure'. The reasons participants gave for answering 'unsure' are shown in Extracts 5.3 to 5.5.

Do you think it is important that cisgender heterosexual people witness LGBTQ+ representation?	**Number**	**%**
Yes	142	98
No	0	0
Unsure	3	2

Table 5.6: Responses to Question 7

Extract 5.3 (from Questionnaire respondent):

> LGBTQ representation might help dispel myths that straight people have, but on the other hand, can confirm their negative feelings about LGBTQ people because LGBTQ people onscreen are treated differently to straight people.

Extract 5.4 (from Questionnaire respondent):

> It depends on the form of representation and if it is constructive/ non-harmful, especially with trans representation

Extract 5.5 (from Questionnaire respondent):

> It's important as far as being aware that other relationships exist and increasing acceptance but I don't think it's vital to everyday function or even tolerance.

Two of these participants were wary of representation which was not constructive, was harmful, or treated LGBTQ+ characters differently to how cisgender heterosexual characters were treated. This notion is discussed further in Chapter 6. One participant, the same participant who stated that LGBTQ+ representation should not be at the expense of a storyline, felt that representation would not increase 'tolerance' but recognised that it would help increase 'acceptance' among cisgender heterosexual viewers. It is perhaps worth noting, therefore, that not everyone who identifies as LGBTQ+ feels that representation is vital. However, as noted in Chapter 2, and by the majority of participants within this study, LGBTQ+ representation has 'the potential to influence public understanding of, and tolerance for, minority behaviours and identities' (Amy-Chinn, 2012: 64-65).

Again, the words which were used by participants in their written responses to this question were investigated to provide some initial insights. Concordance lines were created for the words which appeared the most frequently in order to provide context.

Table 5.7 shows the words used the most in the responses made by participants who answered 'yes' to this question. Interestingly, although 'feel' was one of the most used words in response to the previous question, there were only four instances of this word in response to this question. All of these referred to how the respondents themselves, rather than cisgender heterosexual viewers, felt. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. Rather than noting how representation may make cisgender heterosexual people 'feel', participants often noted how it would help them to 'see' LGBTQ+ people, to 'know' they exist, and to 'understand' their experiences (Figure 4.2). The emphasis, here, appears to be on educating cisgender heterosexual viewers to reduce prejudice. This is discussed further in Chapter 8.

Word	**Number of Instances**
people	110
lgbtq	48
community	23
representation	22
lgbt	22
see	20
know	19
understand	18
media	17
us	17
different	16
important	16
also	16
like	16
think	16
normalise	15
may	13
help	13

Table 5.7: Words in Question 8

The more they	see	us the more accepting they will be
that people outside of the community	see	this representation. Not only can it provide information and a
to	see	that we exist and to experience the glorious diversity of humanity
It's important to	see	representation to help people understand
new relations with the images they	see	around them, support LGBTQ+ cultural production
It should educate them a little, people will	see	we're not "going through a confused phase"
It makes them	see	LGBTQ people as normal
everyone needs to	see	that LGBTQ+ people exist, live lives like everyone else
are less likely to hate something they	see	represented regularly, understand and know.
and will never know what it is like to never	see	oneself represented at all
They need to	see	we're real people
allows them to	see	things from other points of view, learn a better way to interact
So they	see	that society is rich and diverse
it's important for them to	see	different LGBTQ people there are so they have a better understanding
It's important for people to	see	people different from themselves, this combats stereotypes
Because we're all people and it's nice to	see	others represented
if straights got to	see	what we are rly like maybe we can influence the minds of people who
So that all people have the opportunity to	see	the lives and demystify the lives of others
If they	see	us in the media it helps prevent othering
humanise people who they might otherwise	see	as just a stereotype

Figure 5.2: Concordance Lines for 'see'

5.3.2 Open Questions

Questions 11 and 12 asked participants to give an example of good and bad LGBTQ+ representation, respectively, and asked them to explain why they felt this was good or bad. This section provides a relatively straightforward thematic analysis of these responses which is complemented and developed by the more detailed Appraisal and Tactics of Intersubjectivity analysis in subsequent chapters.

Responses to question 11, asking for an example of good representation and an explanation as to why it was good, fell into three main categories: representation that was complex or nuanced; representation that was realistic or relatable; and representation that allow characters to be defined by more than their sexual and/or gender orientation.

Table 5.8 gives some examples of each category and Figure 5.3 shows how often each category occurred in these responses. As can be seen from Figure 5.3, the category which was most drawn upon when asked what made representation good was it including LGBTQ+ characters that were defined by more than just their sexual or gender orientation. However, these

categories are related and overlapping. That is, participants noted that representation in which characters were defined by more than just their sexual and/or gender orientation, by nature, allowed for more complex characters and was also, therefore, more likely to be realistic. The following extract exemplifies this view:

Extract 5.6 (from Questionnaire response):

> His sexuality plays a great part in his story but not everything revolves around it as we see him struggling with poverty and mental health issues, among others.

Category	Examples from Questionnaire Responses
Complexity/nuance	It allowed the characters to be flawed and human It showed a diverse array of queer women because he is an LGBTQ+ character who avoids falling into either the more macho or queenie camps, experiencing them in different ways though still being very much his own person
Realistic/relatable	They were just so... normal He was a normal guy that came out as gay and it didn't change anything for him. I felt this was really relatable and helped me come to terms with my sexuality
Not defined by sexual/gender orientation	it wasn't all about their sexuality Sarah Lance from Arrow/Legends of Tomorrow. She's bi, but not needlessly sexualised. There are also many other factors that determine her as a character - she's not just reduced to her sexuality. His sexuality plays a great part in his story but not everything revolves around

Table 5.8: Categories of 'Good' Representation

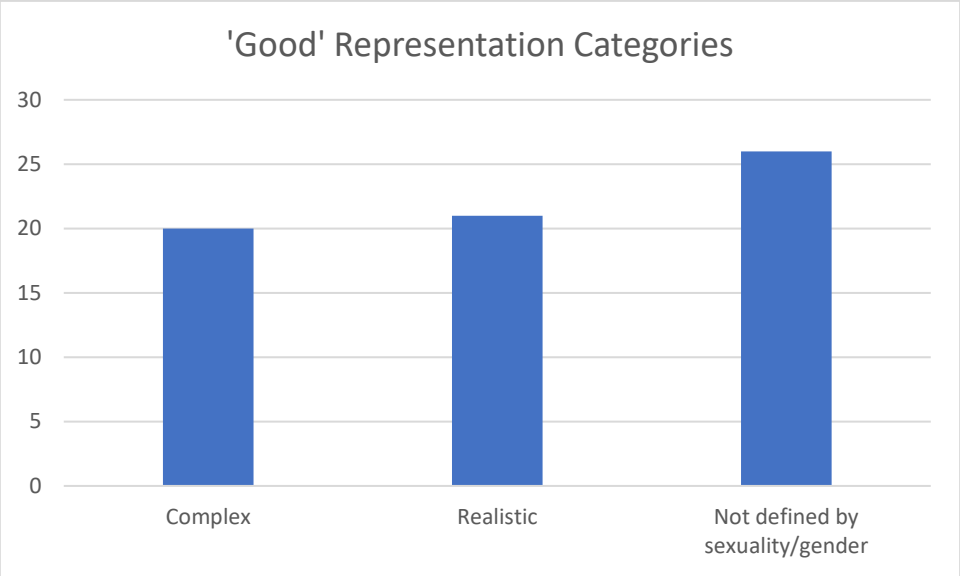


Figure 5.3: Categories of 'Good' Representation

Responses to question 12, asking for an example of bad representation and an explanation as to why it was bad, again, fell into three main categories. These were: representations of characters as stereotypes; the erasure or non-inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters; and characters that were included for comedic effect or were ridiculed for their orientations.

Table 5.9 gives some examples of each category and Figure 5.4 shows how often each category occurred in these responses. As can be seen from Figure 5.4, the category which was most drawn upon when asked what made representation bad was it including LGBTQ+ characters that were stereotypical. However, as was the case with the evaluations of good representation, two of these categories are related and overlapping. Participants often noted that stereotypical representations were used for comedic effect or that characters could not be taken seriously if they were not nuanced (Extract 5.7 exemplifies this).

Extract 5.7 (from Questionnaire response):

> Mrs Brown's boys. Outdated stereotype of a gay man plus a man in drag as the main butt of the joke.

Category	Examples from Questionnaire Responses
Stereotypes	I think they help propagate harmful stereotypes she becomes a lazy stereotype of bisexuals Lesbian women are treated even more poorly and stereotypically
Erasure/not labelled	at no point in the long running show does Michel ever get to be out or have a sexuality. 90% of Tv shows don't even have a single LGBTQ+ person in 'bisexual' is never said aloud
Ridiculed	As it was done in a comedic way it became a laughing stock for the public and in turn bad press for gay men Chandler's dad is treated as a joke I don't like how Sheldon's presumed asexuality in BBT is played for laughs.

Table 5.9: Categories of 'Bad' Representation

Chapter 7 of this thesis discusses the need for complex and realistic characters who are not defined only by their orientations in more detail; the importance of relatable LGBTQ+ characters to participants; how participants reacted to representations of specific gender and sexual orientations and how this varied between groups of respondents. Within this, stereotypical and comedic representations, as well as the erasure of certain genders and sexualities, are discussed. Chapter 8 further discusses the potential benefits and problems associated with explicitly labelling characters' gender and/or sexual orientations in programmes.

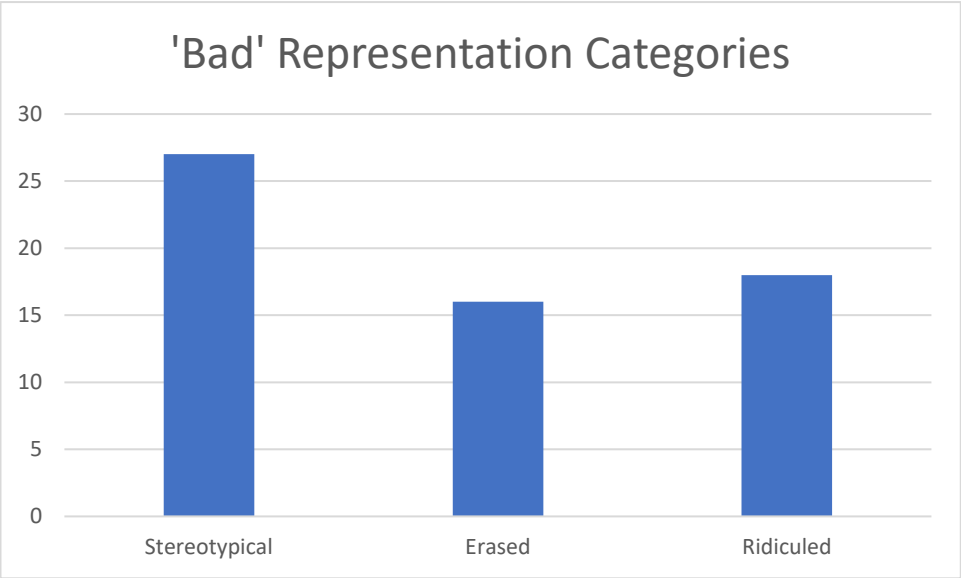


Figure 5.4: Categories of 'Bad' Representation

5.3.3 Likert Scale Responses

This section presents the responses to the Likert scale statements. These statements were designed to ascertain participants' views on four topics: the general quality of LGBTQ+ representation they had seen; the quantity of LGBTQ+ representation they had seen; whether they felt the representation they had seen was realistic; and whether they felt representation they had seen was inclusive. Responses to the statements within each topic are presented in the following sections.

5.3.3.1 Quality of LGBTQ+ Representation

The first topic, the quality of LGBTQ+ representation, was addressed by the following four statements:

- Statement 1: The LGBTQ+ representation on television that I have seen is generally good
- Statement 6: The LGBTQ+ representation on television that I have seen is generally bad
- Statement 9: The people I see like me on television are good representations (leave this blank if this is not applicable)
- Statement 12: LGBTQ+ representation on television needs to be improved

The responses to Statement 1 (Figure 5.5) and Statement 6 (Figure 5.6) are fairly similar in that the highest number of respondents answered 'neutral', the next highest answered 'agree' or

‘disagree’, and few answered that they strongly felt either way. In response to Statement 12 (Figure 5.7), however, the majority of participants answered ‘strongly agree’. This perhaps contradicts the responses to Statement 1, however, this can be explained with reference to participants’ written comments. Many participants stated that they were answering neutrally as they had sought out, and therefore viewed, good examples of representation and, thus, when specifically considering the representation they had seen, felt more positively than when considering representation as a whole. They, therefore, felt that representation overall needed to be improved, but that there did exist some positive examples. Extracts 5.8 and 5.9 exemplify this view.

Extract 5.8 (from Questionnaire response):

> As an LGBTQ+ person I actively seek out TV with good LGBTQ+ representation. I do not think that a cisgender straight person would have seen as much good LGBTQ+ representation as I have.

Extract 5.9 (from Questionnaire response):

> I only watch shows that I’ve heard have good queer characters. We're only just starting to have decent representation of trans people - I can think of about 3 non-binary characters and I look out for that!

Statement 9 (Figure 5.8) was not answered by all participants as it only applied to those who had felt they had answered that they ‘see people like [them] represented on television’ (Statement 8). Of these respondents, most responded with either ‘neutral’ or ‘disagree’ to Statement 9. Some participants, for example 28.57% of gay men and 25% of pansexual respondents, agreed that the representations they had seen of people like them were good. It should also be noted, however, that the same number of gay men, and twice as many pansexual respondents, disagreed with this.

Figure 5.5:
Statement 1: The LGBTQ+ representation on television that I have seen is generally good

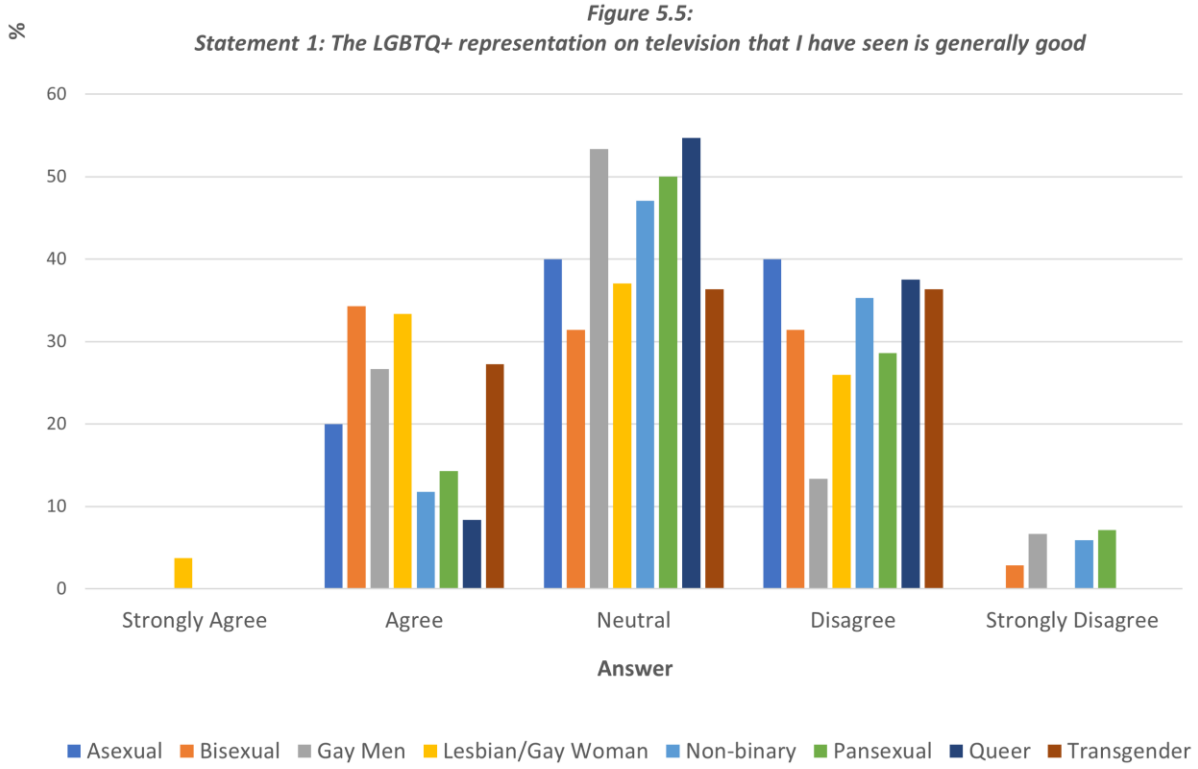


Figure 5.6:
Statement 6: The LGBTQ+ representation on television that I have seen is generally bad

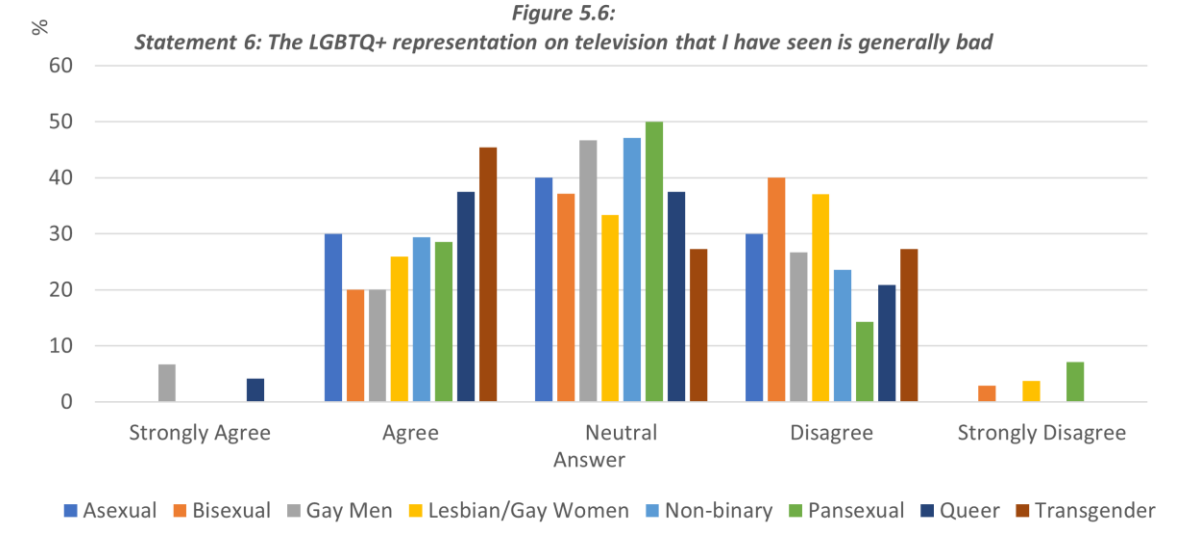


Figure 5.7:
Statement 12: LGBTQ+ representation on television needs to be improved

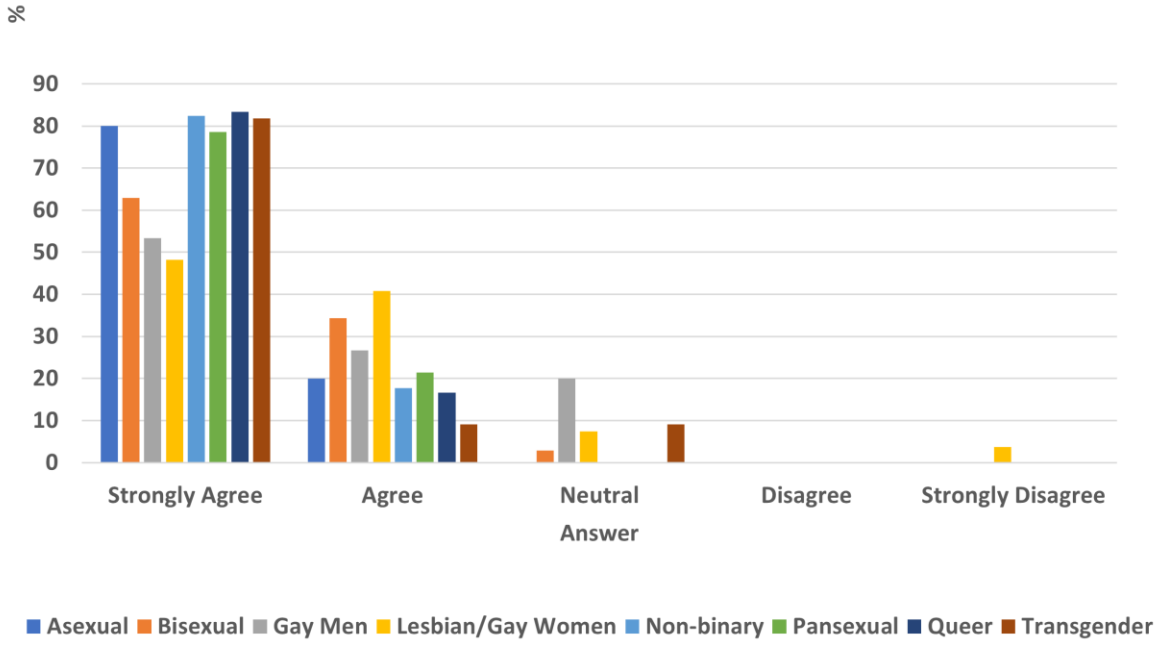
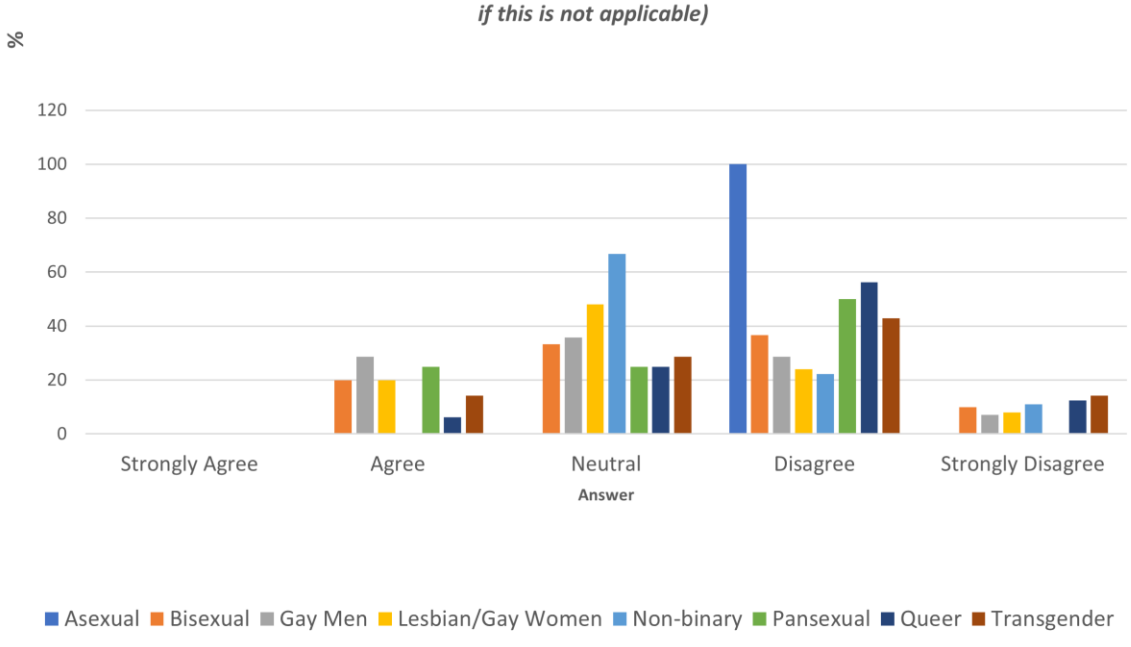


Figure 5.8:
Statement 9: The people I see like me on television are good representations (leave this blank if this is not applicable)



5.3.3.2 Quantity of LGBTQ+ Representation

The quantity of LGBTQ+ representation was addressed in statements 2 and 5:

- Statement 2: There needs to be more LGBTQ+ representation on television
- Statement 5: There is not enough LGBTQ+ representation on television

A vast majority of participants felt that there needed to be more LGBTQ+ representation on television (Figure 5.9) and, similarly, that there is not enough LGBTQ+ representation currently on television (Figure 5.10). Two participants, one lesbian and one bisexual respondent, strongly disagreed that there is not enough LGBTQ+ representation and one participant, the same lesbian respondent, also strongly disagreed that there needs to be more representation. The reason given for this was that LGBTQ+ individuals make up only a small percentage of the population and so should not be overrepresented (Extract 5.10). However, according to a 2018 survey, around 23% of people aged 15 and over in the UK do not identify as exclusively heterosexual (Ipsos, 2018) and it is estimated that around 1% of the UK population are transgender and/or non-binary (Stonewall, online). The GLAAD (2018) Where We Are on TV report found that only 8.8% of characters on television were LGBTQ+ and, thus, at the time the data for this thesis was gathered, LGBTQ+ individuals were underrepresented on television.

Extract 5.10 (from Questionnaire respondent):

> I don't think there NEEDS to be more representation of group of people on TV. The LGBT community make up 10% of the population and there is already of good representation out there for such a small community.

Figure 5.9:
Statement 2: There needs to be more LGBTQ+ representation on television

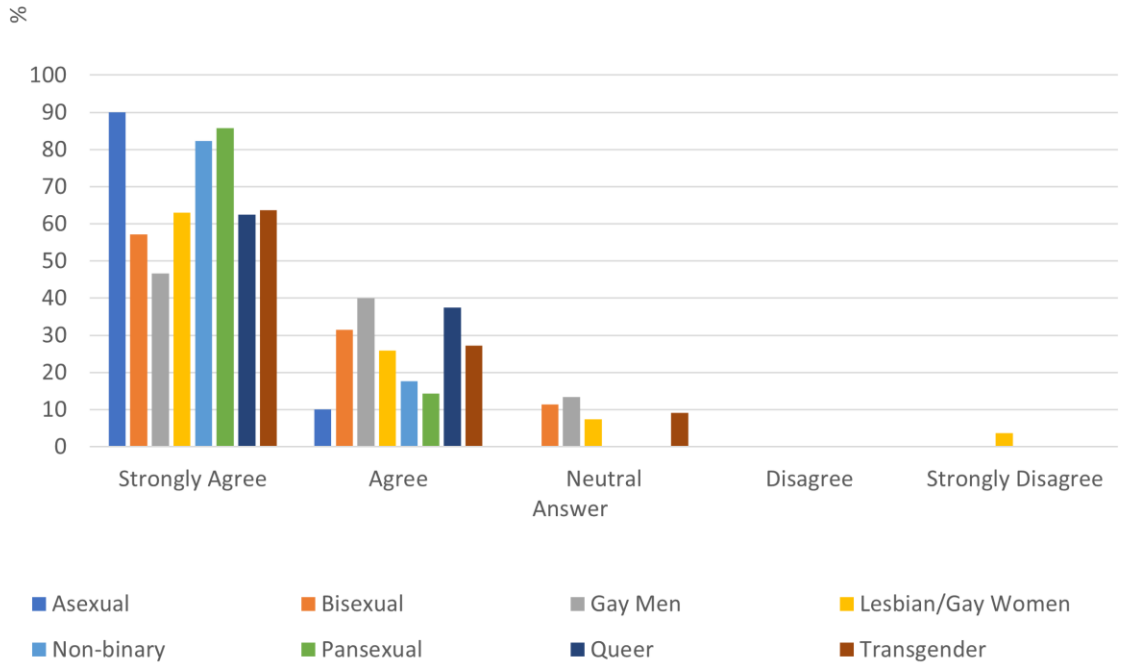
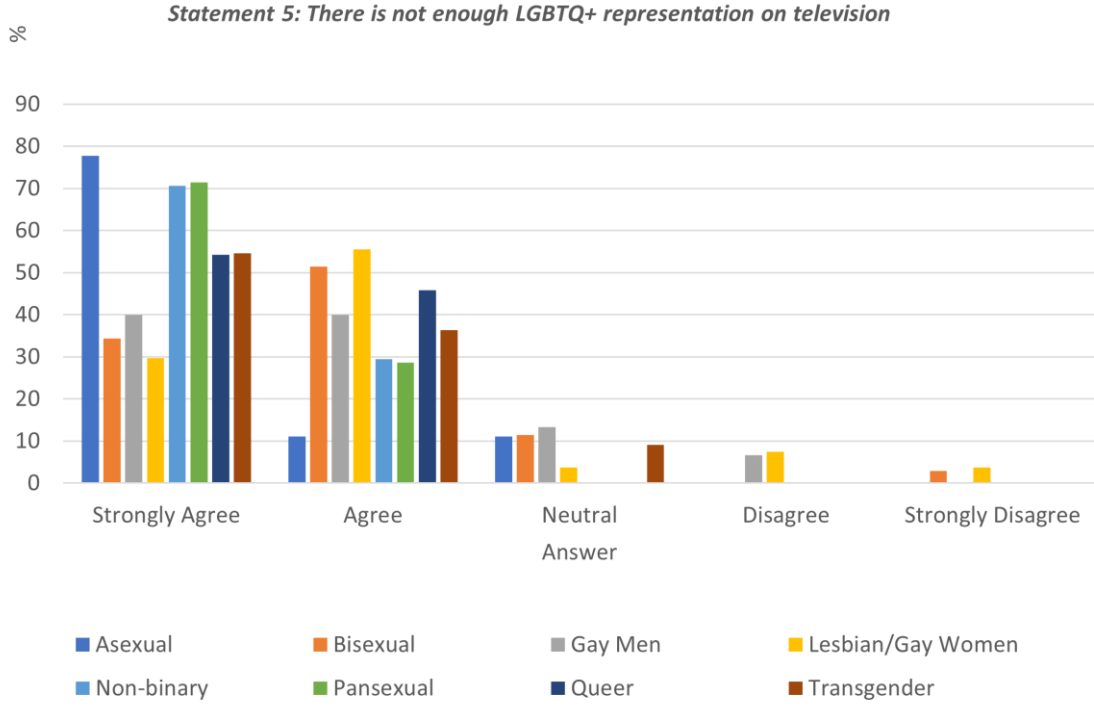


Figure 5.10:
Statement 5: There is not enough LGBTQ+ representation on television



5.3.3.3 Is Representation Realistic?

Statements 4, 8 and 10 were designed to address how realistic participants felt the representation they have seen is.

- Statement 4: I feel fairly represented on television
- Statement 8: I often see people like me represented on television
- Statement 10: The LGBTQ+ representation I have seen on television is realistic

Responses regarding the realism of LGBTQ+ representation were varied. Participants, when asked directly if they felt representation was realistic (Statement 10, Figure 5.11), generally disagreed or felt neutrally, with some, around 30% of asexual, gay men, and pansexual, respondents agreeing. However, when asked if they often saw people like themselves represented on television (Statement 8, Figure 5.12), responses tended more strongly towards disagreement. This suggests some differences between how participants felt the LGBTQ+ community is represented in general and how they themselves are represented specifically. It is also likely that, when answering whether they often see people like themselves on television, participants considered identity factors other than just sexual and/or gender representation, as is exemplified by some of the written responses (Extracts 5.11 and 5.12).

Extract 5.11 (from Questionnaire response):

> When representing LGBTQ+ characters, they more often than not seem to be cisgender, homosexual white people. It is much more unusual to see trans people represented, LGBTQ+ people of colour and other sexual orientations such as bisexual.

Extract 5.12 (from Questionnaire response):

> I don't think LGBTQ+ representation is intersectional enough on TV. I've usually only seen white LGBTQ+ characters. With the exception of some things on Netflix

This is further supported by answers given in response to the statements asking about the inclusivity of LGBTQ+ representation.

In response to Statement 4 (Figure 5.13), 40% of gay men agreed that they felt fairly represented on television, 40% felt neutrally, and 20% disagreed that they were fairly represented. Of participants who identified as queer, however, just over 70% disagreed that they were fairly represented, and just over 60% of pansexuals and bisexuals also disagreed.

This suggests a disparity in the representation of different members of the LGBTQ+ community. This is discussed in Chapter 7.

Figure 5.11:
Statement 10: The LGBTQ+ representation I have seen on television is realistic

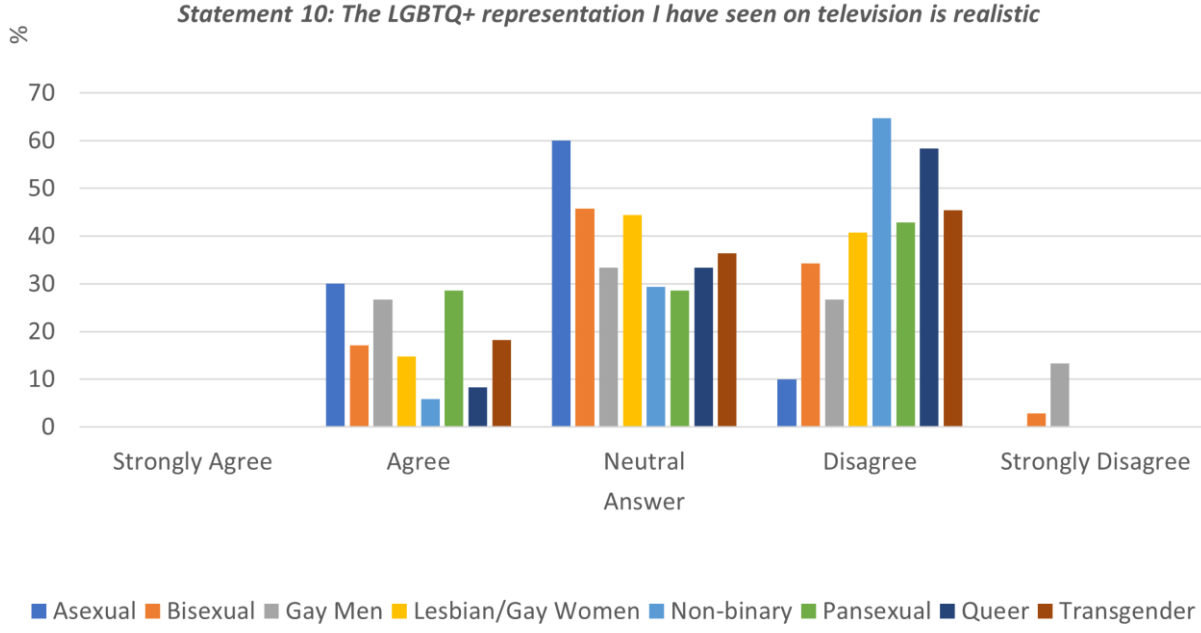
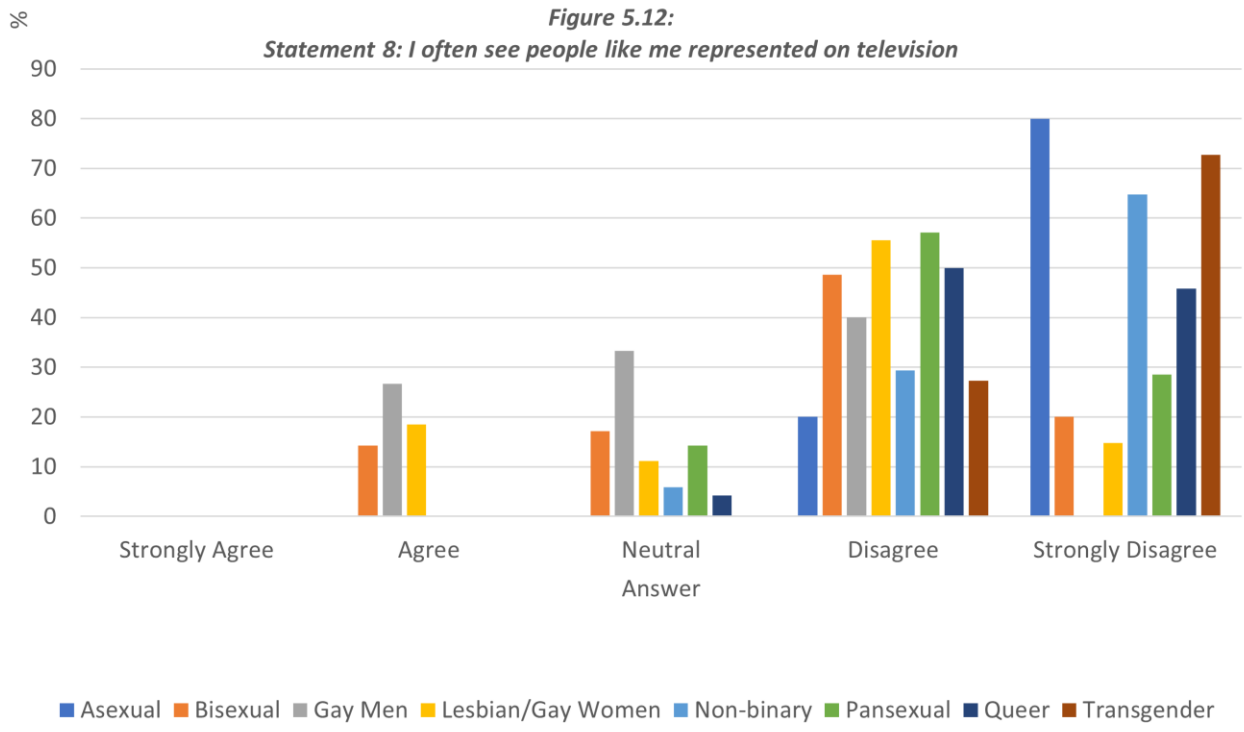
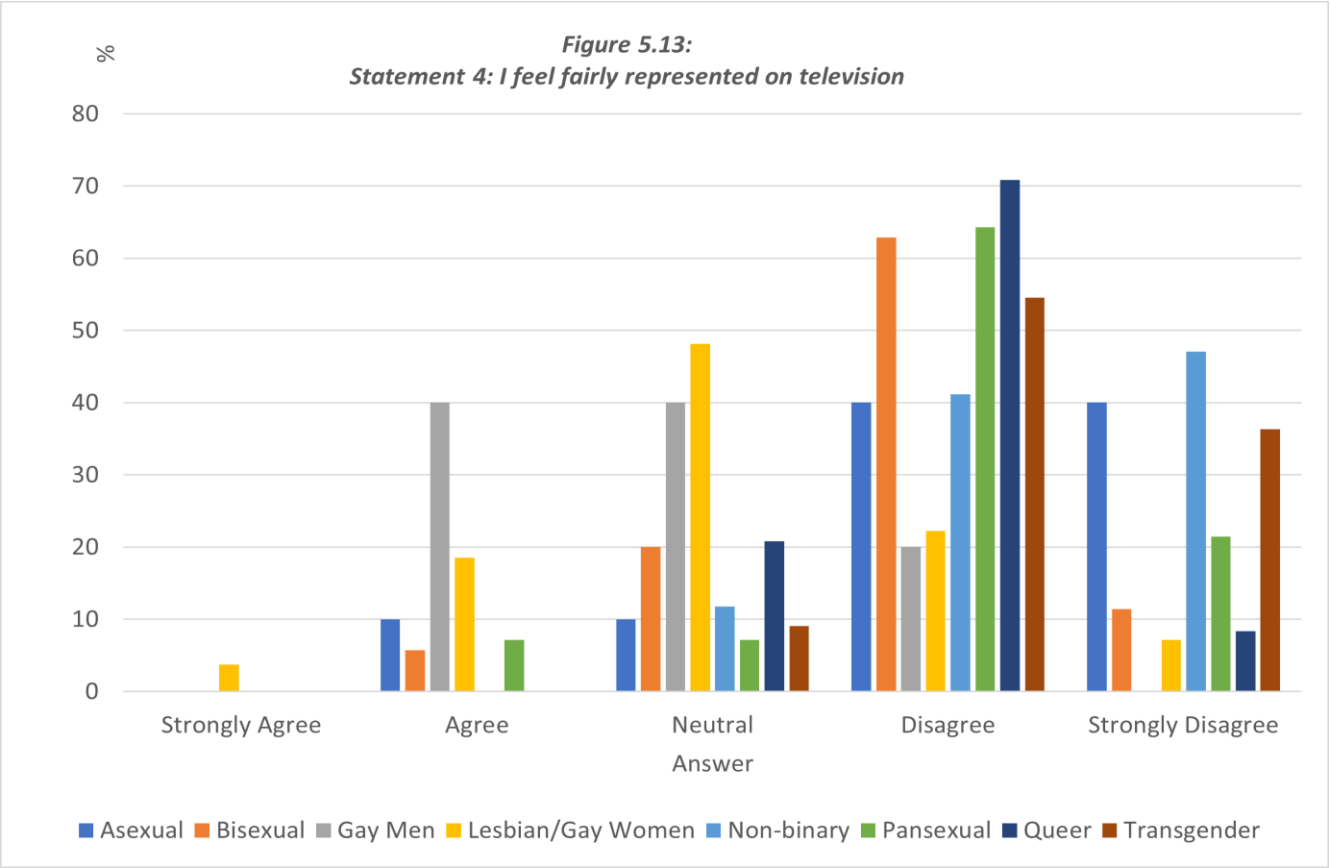


Figure 5.12:
Statement 8: I often see people like me represented on television





5.3.3.4 Is Representation Inclusive?

The final topic addressed with the Likert scale statements was that of inclusive and diverse representation.

- Statement 3: LGBTQ+ representation on television is generally inclusive of all members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Statement 7: Representation on television is equal for all LGBTQ+ genders/sexualities
- Statement 11: LGBTQ+ representation on television needs to be more diverse

When considering the diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ+ representation, the vast majority of participants felt that representation is not inclusive or diverse enough. Within the written responses, participants noted multiple factors that contributed to the lack of diversity in LGBTQ+ representation. Participants noted, for example, that LGBTQ+ representation was not diverse enough in terms of race, gender, age, body type, disability, or relationship type (Extracts 5.13 to 5.15) and that sexual and gender orientations were not represented equally (Extracts 5.16 and 5.17). This critique discussed throughout the following chapters.

Extract 5.13 (from Questionnaire response):

> Bi erasure constant. LGBT+ POC never shown. Transmen never shown. Diverse relationship formats never shown.

Extract 5.14 (from Questionnaire response):

> it's often white, able-bodied, thin, etc people.

Extract 5.15 (from Questionnaire response):

> usual TV such as that on the BBC or Sky tends to be very heterosexual, heteronormative, and very non intersectional. As a gay man, we don't all look like Chris Coffer [*the actor who played Kurt in Glee*]. We're not all white, thin, and hairless twinks.

Extract 5.16 (from Questionnaire response):

> See little about ace, aro, bi/pan, poly, queer people, or about enby/genderqueer trans people.

Extract 5.17 (from Questionnaire response):

> I think my main comment is that although gay cis men and lesbian cis women are generally quite well (if not positively!) represented on TV, the representation of bisexual people is a lot less widespread. However, the representation of transgender people is considerably worse.

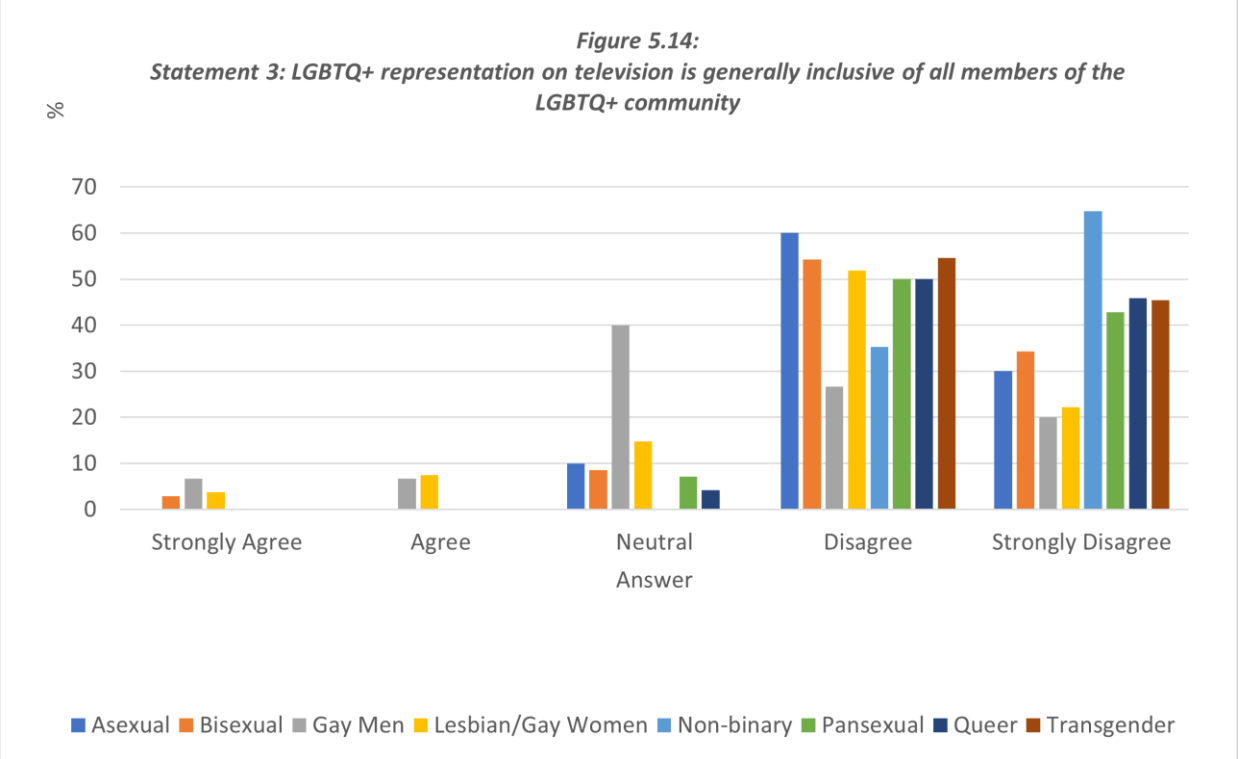


Figure 5.15:
Statement 7: Representation on television is equal for all LGBTQ+ genders/sexualities

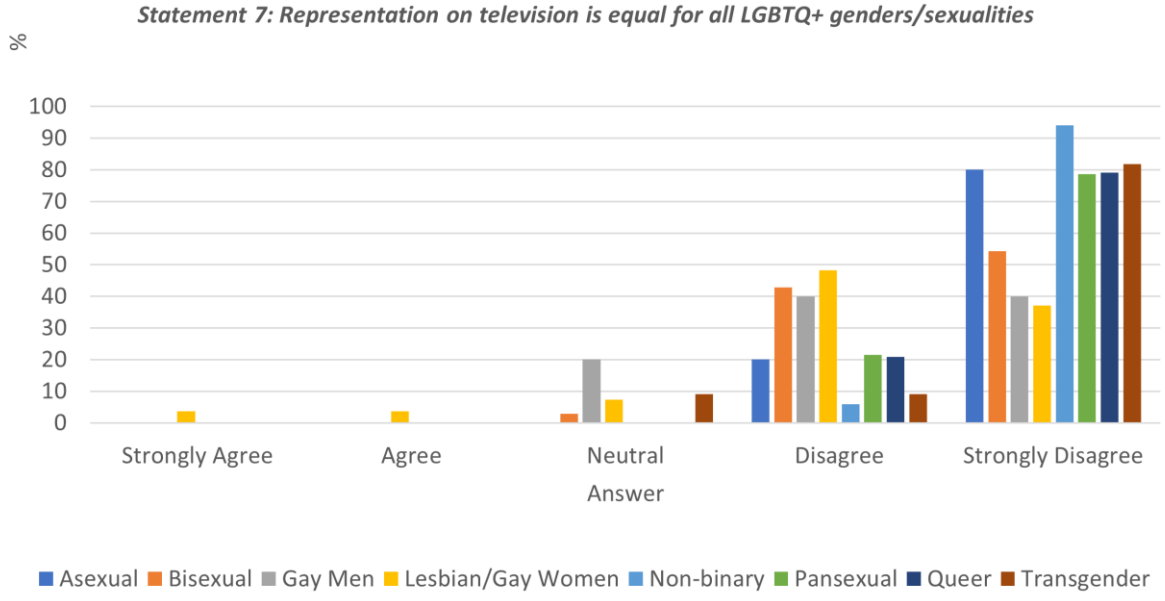
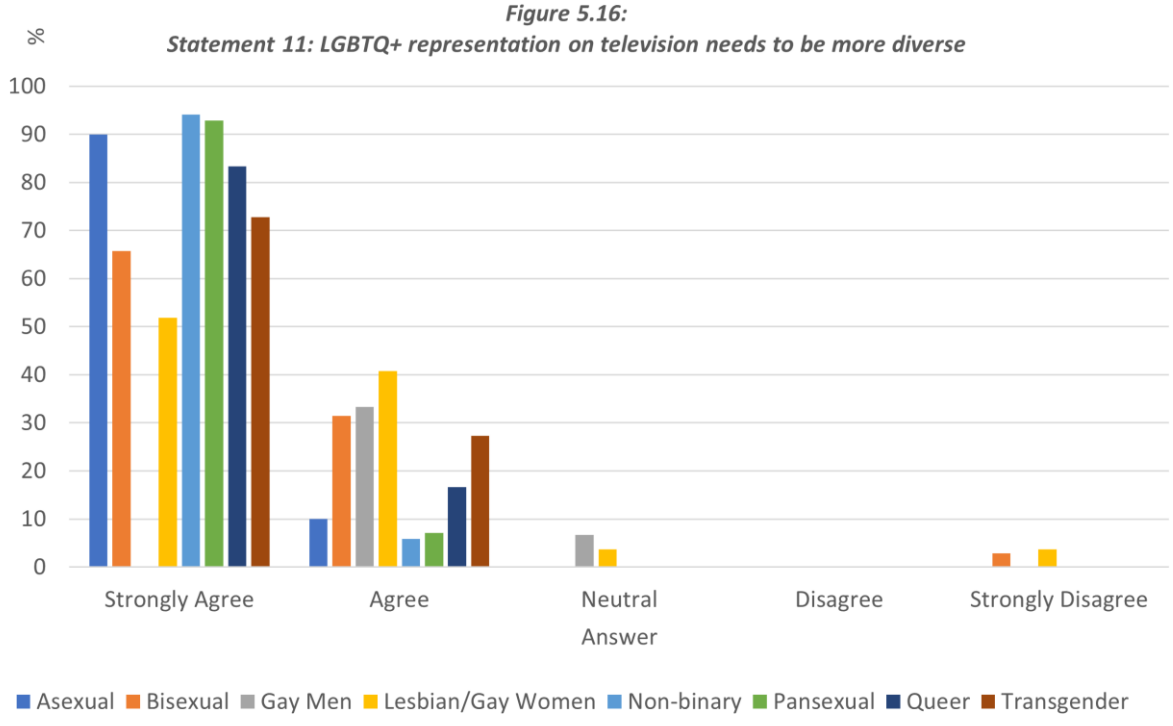


Figure 5.16:
Statement 11: LGBTQ+ representation on television needs to be more diverse



5.4 Summary

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the data gathered for this thesis. The number of instances of evaluative language has been presented with respect to the frameworks used within this study and the questionnaire data has also been considered. The following chapters provide a more detailed analysis of the data. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss participants' construction of Adequation and Distinction, Chapter 8 discusses instances of Authorisation and Illegitimation, and Chapter 9 discusses the use of Authentication and Denaturalisation. Appraisal Theory is drawn upon throughout this analysis and the data presented in this chapter is referred to where relevant.

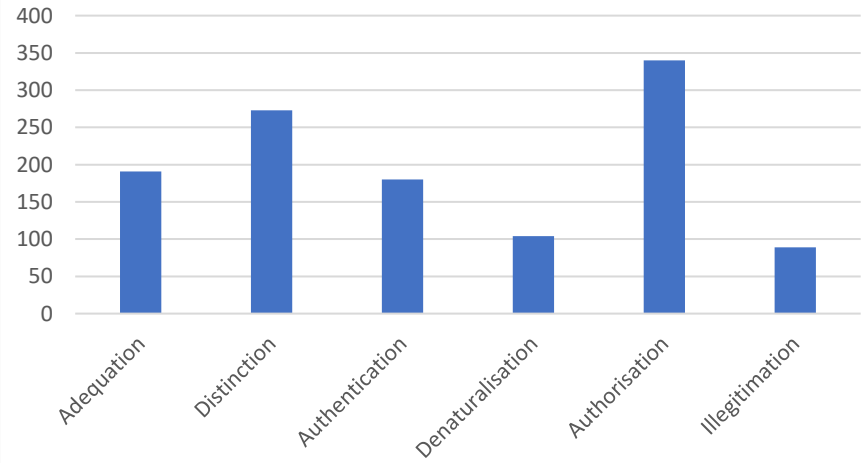
CHAPTER 6: ADEQUATION AND DISTINCTION – VOICES

6.1 Introduction to Chapters 6 and 7

The Tactics of Adequation and Distinction are concerned with the ways in which individuals and groups highlight similarities and differences between their identities. Adequation refers to the creation of 'sufficient sameness between individuals or groups' (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 383), whilst Distinction is concerned with the ways in which individuals or groups 'create and highlight differences' between themselves and other individuals, groups, or social practices (Walz, 2018: 30).

Figure 6.1 demonstrates that as a pair, these categories were drawn upon more than the other tactics with 464 instances counted throughout the data in comparison to the 429 instances of Authorisation and Illegitimation (Chapter 8) and the 248 instances of Authentication and Denaturalisation (Chapter 9).

Figure 6.1: Tactics of Intersubjectivity



Adequation and Distinction were expressed in a number of interesting ways by participants throughout this data. For this reason, these tactics are discussed in two chapters: Chapters 6 and 7. In the present chapter, I discuss the ways in which participants used heteroglossic Engagement to represent others' voices and to suggest alignment with or distance from those represented and their views. In Chapter 7, I then discuss how participants expressed Adequation with and Distinction from real people and fictional characters through their lexical choices. In doing so I consider how participants relate to non-fictional people, to LGBTQ+ characters in general, and to LGBTQ+ characters with the same gender and/or sexual orientations as themselves.

6.2 Adequation, Distinction, and Engagement

The system of Engagement within Appraisal Theory concerns the ways in which a speaker or writer includes or excludes the voices of others within a text (Martin and White, 2005). This system not only encompasses the resources used to introduce different voices into a text, but the degree to which the writer or speaker positions themself as agreeing or disagreeing with those voices. Martin and White (2005: 99) state that texts can be broken into two subsystems of Engagement: 'monoglossic', texts which do not acknowledge other voices; and 'heteroglossic', those which engage with, or at least allow for, other voices.

Utterances within the focus groups were naturally dialogic in that they were made in the context of a discussion involving multiple participants. However, utterances made within the focus groups, and also within the individual interviews, were also often heteroglossic in that participants made reference to the opinions of others who were not involved in the focus group, occasionally by reproducing previous interactions for the other participants.

By reproducing others' voices in this way, participants created a direct link between LGBTQ+ representation and the thoughts and feelings of those outside of the LGBTQ+ community about LGBTQ+ individuals. As is exemplified in Extract 6.1, participants would reproduce statements, either real or hypothetical, demonstrating opinions gained as a direct result of viewing LGBTQ+ representation. In all examples within this chapter underlined words indicate the part of the utterance which is a voicing of another's comment.

Extract 6.1 (from Focus Group 4):

> **NICKY:** there's always a straight guy waiting like yeah kiss her love like salivating you know what I mean

An analysis of such examples revealed an interesting relationship between participants' use of Engagement and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity categories of Adequation and Distinction. Participants would draw on the voices of those outside of the LGBTQ+ community either as a way to parody those individuals and distance their views from those held by the participant reproducing their utterances, or as a way to assimilate others' views with their own to create Adequation between the groups. In this way Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity can be combined to highlight what is happening in these utterances. This is discussed within the following sections.

6.3 Voices

Studies in the field of multilingualism have previously suggested that a multilingual speaker's decision to code switch between languages is linked to the representation of others' viewpoints. For example, Hill (1995: 108) in the well-known study 'The Voices of Don Gabriel' surmised that Don Gabriel would code switch from Mexicano to Spanish when invoking the 'lexicon of dealings for profit, which for Mexicano speakers is drawn entirely from Spanish'. Drawing upon different languages she notes, therefore, is not solely based upon the predominant languages spoken by individuals but upon features such as the morals held by the interlocuter. The analysis of a person's use of code-switching, therefore, can provide insights into the moral stances that person takes as well as their opinion on the morals held by others. It has further been suggested that an individual's use of code-switching may be related to cultural understandings and social hierarchies (Ahearn, 2017), to race, class and gender (Urciuoli, 1996) and to political affiliations (Keane, 2011). Multilinguals may, therefore, draw upon certain languages to attribute opinions to others, distancing themselves from them in the process (Koven, 2016).

The use of differentiated voices within utterances held in only one language has also been discussed. Martin and White's (2005) system of Engagement draws upon Bakhtin's (1981) earlier work into heteroglossia and the dialogic nature of language. The representation of another's voice using linguistic features which vary from the speaker's own, or the creation of 'an artistic image of another's language', is termed 'stylisation' by Bakhtin (1981: 362). Stylisation, he notes, differs from an individual's style in that it involves the recognition of '[t]wo individualized linguistic consciousnesses' and, thus, engages with and draws upon knowledge of other linguistic backgrounds. Rampton (2006: 225) states that the use of a stylised voice in conversation invites listeners to draw on their 'broader understandings of society' to understand what the linguistic choices are representing. He suggests that, in doing so, listeners will need to ask themselves why and how the use of such a voice is relevant in the current context, and whether the representation matches their 'own sense of the language, people and events being modelled' (ibid.).

Rampton (2006: 377) in his study of language use between teenagers in an inner-city school found that participants regularly drew on stylised 'posh' and 'Cockney' voices when interacting. He notes that the use of such stylised voices was more than a 'just surface-level phonological' reproduction, and, in fact, drew upon complex associations with class to

communicate values and negotiate 'social positions and relationships' (ibid: 370). Similarly, Agha (2005: 56) notes that the representation of others' voices 'constitutes a set of directions for locating one's own speech' in relation to others. He further notes that interlocutors can either incorporate other voices into their own 'discursive habits' thus 'bringing their personae into conformity with them' or 'play upon them in various tropes of parody, irony, recognizable hybridity, and the like' (ibid).

Within the present thesis, participants often marked voice contrasts using paralinguistic features such as accent and pitch. Often these altered voices were intentionally comical and provoked laughter and agreement from the other participants. I argue that, in using these voices to distance themselves from others' opinions and to create humour within the focus groups, participants express Adequation with each other and Distinction from those they are quoting. There were three groups which were represented using altered voices. These groups will be referred to as 'straight girls', 'lads, lads, lads', and '*Daily Mail* readers', respectively, drawing on labels given to these groups within interactions by at least one participant. The characteristics being represented by the stylisation of voices for each group are discussed with reference to each group in turn. Each of these three groups were represented using unique features in that they were distinct from the participants' own voices and the stylised voices of the other two groups. Some examples of utterances made using these voice contrasts and the features used to make these contrasts are shown in Tables 6.1. to 6.3.

Group	**Features**	**Examples**
'Straight girls' (Cisgender heterosexual girls and women)	Elongated vowels/vocal fry High rising terminal (uptalk) 'Text' speak (omg, lol) (For further discussion of the perceived relationship between adolescent women and these features, see Fletcher et al., 2005)	**6.2 LAYLA (FG1)**: they've watched Drag Race so they're all <u>oh my god::? I love drag queens wa:::</u> […] but then they're actually not they're like <u>lesbians get from away me I'm not g::ay a:::</u> **6.3 JESSICA (FG2):** there was a group of like thirteen year old girls going <u>omg they're lesbians</u> **6.4 SOPHIA (FG2)**: these straight girls were at pride and they were going <u>what if someone thinks we're lesbian:ns? lol</u>

Table 6.1: Stylisation of 'Straight Girls'

Group	Features	Examples
'Lads lads lads' (Cisgender heterosexual boys and men)	Deep voices Chanting Sexual topics (For further discussion of the perceived relationship between adolescent men and these features, see Curry, 1991)	**6.5 SOPHIA (FG2)**: he's really gross and was like oh yeah she's so fit I would but like it shouldn't be for him right but I guess it was **6.6 NICKY (FG4)**: there's always a straight guy waiting like yeah kiss her love **6.7 ROSE (FG4)**: like when you say to straight dudes on Tinder see you're bi they're immediately like threesome uuuh huuh **6.8 JOHN (FG2)**: I dunno I always feel like my experience of walking down the street everyone's like uh they're holding hands **6.9 REBECCA (FG2)**: yeah it's all very like hot women make out in oil whey **JOHN**: lads lads lads lads lads lads **6.10 RYAN (FG1)**: guys are still so twitchy about it like uh there were gays on the telly

Table 6.2: Stylisation of 'lads lads lads'

Group	Features	Examples
'Daily Mail readers' (Older individuals with conservative views)	Received Pronunciation Features such as tutting and sighing Higher pitch	**6.11 LAYLA (FG1)**: my manager completely brought it up at work she brought the video up and was like look look that's not appropriate **6.12 ROSE (FG4)**: my aunt was like (gasps) he has kids I thought he was bisexual **6.13 CHRIS (FG1)**: my nan was like oh gosh is he a queer **6.14 REBECCA (FG2)**: *Daily Mail* readers were like nooo **6.15 CHARLIE (FG5)**: the *Daily Mail* got so many complaints like (gasps) children may have seen this **6.16 JESSICA (FG2)**: like my mum's friend like this is before I came out and they were like (tuts) did you see that advert pre-watershed I was like what the hell

Table 6.3: Stylisation of 'Daily Mail *Readers'*

6.3.1 Distinction: 'Straight Girls' and 'Lads Lads Lads'

As presented in Table 6.1, participants often represented the group termed 'straight girls' by Sophia (Extract 6.4) by altering their tone to include exaggerated versions of High Rising Terminal (HRT) and vocal fry. They would also often use lexis they did not use elsewhere during the focus groups such as verbalising 'text' speak by using initialisms such as 'OMG' and 'LOL'. When representing the group termed 'lads lads lads', after John's chanting in Extract 6.9, on the other hand, participants used deeper tones, chanting (such as 'whey' /wɛɪ/ and 'lads lads lads', Extract 6.9), and 'grunting' sounds such as 'u:h'.

It is apparent that in altering their voices in these ways, participants are invoking notions of hyperfemininity and hypermasculinity. As Ochs (1992: 340) states few, if any, linguistic features 'directly and exclusively index gender'. However, assumptions made about specific features of language can reveal the 'norms, preferences, and expectations' associated with gender. That is, whilst a person's sex or gender does not determine the way they speak,

assumptions concerning how a person of a specific sex or gender should speak may influence the forms used, or expected to be used, by members of that sex or gender. Bucholtz (2009: 4) suggests that features which come to be 'ideologically linked to broader social meanings via indirect indexicality' in this way are often originally associated with smaller social categories such as mothers, teenagers, or the elderly. It appears from this and from participants' descriptions of the groups they are representing, therefore, that in drawing on these voices, participants are characterising people who are not LGBTQ+: cisgender heterosexual women in the case of 'straight girls' and cisgender heterosexual men in the case of 'lads lads lads'.

Many of the features drawn upon to create these voices are often associated with the speech of the social categories of adolescent women and men. Studies have shown, for example, that HRT and vocal fry are assumed to be indexical of adolescent women (Fletcher et al., 2005), despite the fact that it has been suggested that there is little or no direct link between the use of these features and gender (Ritchart and Arvaniti, 2014). The features drawn upon to represent cisgender heterosexual men are also similar to those that are assumed to be used by adolescent men (Curry, 1991).

The fact that features viewed as indexical of adolescents are drawn upon here is perhaps unsurprising as, firstly, the average age of focus group participants was twenty-two, and, secondly, adolescence is a time in which identity formation, including that of gender expression, is more prevalent than other times of life (Eckert, 2003). Furthermore, previous studies have suggested that assumptions held within a heteronormative environment are that, as LGB+ sexual orientations are viewed as outside the norm, the expression of gender among LGB+ individuals is expected to also be outside what is viewed as the norm (Cameron, 1997; Bilodeau and Renn, 2005). Thus, drawing upon features typically associated with hypermasculine and hyperfeminine adolescence is an efficient way of creating a sense of Distinction between the LGBTQ+ community and cisgender heterosexual men and women.

It is apparent, therefore, that in such instances, participants are performing an identity which they view as separate from their own by drawing upon features which are often assumed to be indexical of groups they view as distinct from themselves. This performative identity is taken to an extreme as stereotypes are drawn upon to clearly mark these voices as different from the participants' own. Following Rampton's (2006) findings, it is likely to be the case these voices index views held by the represented groups as different from those held by the participants themselves.

Further, the use of stereotypically gendered language features serves to mock the represented speakers and, thus, criticise and challenge their stated opinions as ridiculous in a humorous manner whilst simultaneously furthering the sense of Adequation between members of the focus group by creating a shared sense of humour. As noted by Simpson (2003: 2), humour has the capacity to 'help bond, galvanise and sustain human relationships' and, thus, is used to create a sense of Adequation between interlocutors. Laughter and humour, therefore, encodes stance in that it suggests a mutual understanding and alignment between those engaging in it.

The humour created when others' voices are drawn upon by participants within this study, therefore, enables participants to frame these views as evidently incorrect without the need to explicitly lexically evaluate them as such. Such evaluation is clearly successful throughout the focus groups when this technique is used as fellow participants often show support or agreement in criticising the views expressed by the groups being represented, and these representations are never challenged. This is illustrated in the below example wherein Layla's initial representation of some cisgender heterosexual women she encountered at a drag show is supported by Sam's uptake of the change in voice and Chris's explicit agreement with the representation.

Extract 6.2 (from Focus Group 1, reproduced from Table 6.3):

> **LAYLA:** they've watched Drag Race so they're all oh my god::? I love drag queens wa:::
>
> **SAM:** a:::
>
> **CHRIS:** yeah they think they're all in touch with it
>
> **LAYLA:** but then they're actually not they're like lesbians get from away me I'm not g::ay a:::

Interestingly, in this example, Chris states that the cisgender heterosexual women being discussed feel that they are 'in touch' with the LGBTQ+ community after watching *RuPaul's Drag Race*, a popular reality television programme starring drag queens. This could, perhaps be viewed as a positive outcome of television representation as individuals outside of the LGBTQ+ community are, to some extent, shown to be expressing Adequation with those within it; however, participants directly contrast this with the fact that the women are still expressing homophobia by wanting to distance themselves from lesbians. This is further

evidenced by the fact that the same type of vocalisation (a:::) is used when Layla is attributing the homophobic view to the cisgender heterosexual woman in the final turn of the extract and when representing their ostensible love of *Drag Race* in the first, suggesting a link between the two statements and a shared identity across them.

Participants often drew upon the voices of cisgender heterosexual women in this way to represent and challenge the view that members of the LGBTQ+ community were being treated differently by the same individuals. Gay women were perceived negatively as people who the cisgender heterosexual women wished to actively distance themselves from, while gay men were perceived as existing for the entertainment of cisgender heterosexual women who think that they are 'cute' (Extract 6.17). This suggests that a superficial engagement with LGBTQ+ representation is not enough to create positive change. The relationship between representation, superficiality, and real-world impacts is discussed further in Chapter 9.

Extract 6.17 (from Focus Group 5):

> **MICHELLE:** my cousin the other day was like o:: look at that cute gay couple really loudly when two men were holding hands
>
> **ALEX:** eek
>
> **MICHELLE:** right and yet she's still all uncomfortable about me being gay

Notably, as exemplified by Extract 6.18, the 'straight girls' represented by this stylised voice did not always evaluate gay men positively. In Extract 6.18, incongruity between how two gay men are viewed is explicitly noted by Chris and a distinction is drawn between gay men who are viewed by those represented with the stylised voice as 'family friendly' and those who are not. Therefore, it is not simply that one orientation, that of gay men, is approved of by the people being represented while another, in this case lesbian women, is not, but that a judgement is being made about the 'type' of gay man that the 'straight girls' view as acceptable.

Extract 6.18 (from Focus Group 1):

> **CHRIS:** yeah and the guy had his partner up and they [*Chris's cousins*] were like uh look at that queer and it was the same show as Dale Winton
>
> [*laughter*]
>
> **RYAN:** don't worry about him
>
> **CHRIS:** but like
>
> **RYAN:** he's a household name so it's fine
>
> **LAYLA:** he's a safe family friendly queer

Despite the cisgender heterosexual women represented by the 'straight girl' voice invoked by participants often responding positively to part of the LGBTQ+ community, the focus group participants distanced themselves from these views and created Distinction between themselves and the those represented due to their lack of acceptance of other members of the LGBTQ+ community. A similar pattern emerges when participants drew on the second stylised voice to represent 'lads' or cisgender heterosexual men. Often participants used this voice, not when those they were representing were being overtly negative about the LGBTQ+ community, but when they were talking about lesbians, or media depictions of lesbians, in a sexualised manner, as is demonstrated in Examples 6.5 and 6.9 (reproduced from Table 6.2).

Extract 6.5 (from Focus Group 2):

> **SOPHIA:** he's really gross and was like oh yeah she's so fit I would but like it shouldn't be for him right but I guess it was

Extract 6.9 (from Focus Group 2):

> **REBECCA:** yeah it's all very like hot women make out in oil
>
> **JOHN:** lads lads lads lads lads lads
>
> **REBECCA:** yeah exactly

The notion that representation which depicts LGBTQ+ individuals in a way that is designed to appeal to a mass market without taking the considerations of LGBTQ+ individuals into account is criticised here. In Extract 6.9, John overtly draws upon the stereotypical image of cisgender heterosexual men that is invoked by the voices being used by participants by chanting 'lads' in response to Rebecca's criticism of lesbian television representation. This creates a direct link between sexualised lesbian representation and the apparent appeal to a mass market consisting of cisgender heterosexual men as opposed to lesbian women themselves. This relationship is also acknowledged by Sophia in Extract 6.5 as she explicitly states that lesbian representation should not be made to cater towards cisgender heterosexual men.

When participants used heteroglossia to include the above voices within their utterances, paralinguistic features such as tone were drawn upon to distance the original speakers from the participants themselves. The use of these voices serves to express Distinction from those being represented but also to express Adequation between the focus group members, and perhaps the wider LGBTQ+ community by extension. Adequation is created among the focus group members in such instances as, firstly, the parodying of the cisgender heterosexual people they are representing serves to create a shared sense of humour between participants and, secondly, in all instances it is perhaps assumed that the other members of the focus group will agree with their representations of cisgender heterosexual individuals in a sense of shared understanding.

As well as characterising and ridiculing the speakers of the quotations, the change of voice also serves the important function of distancing the speakers from the views expressed as a clear boundary is drawn between the opinions and morals held by the individuals they are representing in this way and those held by the participants themselves. This perhaps suggests that negative representation creates a distance between LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals.

*6.3.2 Distinction: '*Daily Mail *Readers'*

In addition to the representations of 'straight girls' and 'lads lads lads', another set of features were drawn upon to represent a third group viewed as distinct from the participants. The distinguishing characteristics which separated this group from the participants representing them were age, class or status, and political views. Features which were used to represent these groups included the use of Received Pronunciation and paralinguistic features such as tutting and sighing. Participants often drew upon this voice when representing older members of their

families or people associated with positions of power such as managers at work (see, for example Extract 6.11).

Extract 6.11 (from Focus Group 1, reproduced from Table 6.3):

> **LAYLA:** my manager completely brought it up at work she brought the video up and was like look look that's not appropriate

Whilst the previously discussed voices were often used to represent cisgender heterosexual individuals who approved of, or sexualised, a specific aspect of LGBTQ+ representation and the LGBTQ+ community but disliked others, when the voices discussed in this section were drawn upon, it was often to represent – presumably cisgender heterosexual – individuals who thought that all LGBTQ+ representation was immoral or inappropriate. This voice is likely to have been used for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the focus group participants who used this voice were all under thirty and so perhaps age is another factor of identity which is being drawn upon to show group identity. This usage is also evidently influenced by participants' own experiences of homophobia from older family members, as can be seen in Extracts 6.12 and 6.13 (reproduced from Table 6.3).

Extract 6.12 (from Focus Group 4):

> **ROSE:** my aunt was like (gasps) he has kids I thought he was bisexual
>
> **JAY:** cause that's relevant
>
> [*laughter*]
>
> **ROSE:** shouldn't be allowed to have kids clearly

Extract 6.13 (from Focus Group 1):

> **CHRIS:** my nan was like oh gosh is he a queer
>
> **RYAN:** Christ

However, this is not always the case as there are instance when participants are representing others who are not personally known to them. In such instances it is perhaps the case that a link is being drawn between age and conservative values as can be evidenced when speakers are characterised as readers of the right-wing tabloid the *Daily Mail* (Extracts 6.14 and 6.15).

Extract 6.14 (from Focus Group 2):

REBECCA: *Daily Mail* readers were like nooo

JESSICA: oh yeah

REBECCA: you didn't see anything you just heard things

JESSICA: mm

REBECCA: but people lost sleep over it

JESSICA: fuck's sake

Extract 6.15 (from Focus Group 5):

CHARLIE: the *Daily Mail* got so many complaints like (gasps) children may have seen this

ALEX: bitch why are you letting your kid watch TV that late anyways

Instances in which participants use this voice in conjunction with reference to the *Daily Mail* are perhaps where the connection between morals or views and the use of distinct voices is most explicitly made by the participants themselves. As is noted by Toolan (2018: 13), the newspaper read by an individual is an 'indicator of [their] broad political affiliation' and it is 'informative of [their] assumed identity/values' when a person states themselves to be, for example, 'a *Daily Mail* reader'. When drawing upon the voice that participants associate with those they have classified as *Daily Mail* readers, therefore, participants are succinctly invoking the political views and values which may be held by those who self-identify as readers of that newspaper.

As was the case when speakers drew on representations of 'straight girls' and 'lads lads lads' in the previous section, participants sometimes responded to these representations with laughter, thus, creating a sense of Adequation between themselves. However, these representations were more often met with expressions of anger such as a sharpening of tone, cursing (Extract 6.14), insults (Extract 6.15), and sarcasm (Extract 6.12). This is perhaps due to the more overtly homophobic nature of the remarks reproduced in these utterances. Additionally, this could also represent a sense of exhaustion at hearing such views. Ryan's utterance of 'Christ' and Jessica's utterance of 'fuck's sake' at hearing the views expressed

carry a tone of exasperation, but not surprise. Despite the homophobia expressed within the utterances, participants do not respond with surprise or shock that such statements were made, and no further context was required in these instances to explain that the people being represented were homophobic. This, perhaps, suggests a shared experience of such instances and a mutual understanding of the emotions that are evoked in response. The stylisation of the voices drawn upon, in conjunction with the views that are being expressed, is enough to inform the other members of the focus group about the people being represented due to a mutual understanding of the type of person the use of this voice represents. This, again, suggests a level of Adequation with other focus group participants and a shared sense of Distinction from the people represented by the voice drawn upon.

The variation in responses to the representation of 'straight girls' and 'lads lads lads' and the representation of *Daily Mail* readers is perhaps also due to associations of power. As previously stated, this third voice was often used to represent older family members and others in positions of power, for example the manager referred to by Layla in Extract 6.11. The use of RP when stylising this voice further indexes this notion of power. This is in line with Rampton's (2006: 377) study in which participants used stylised 'posh' voices to draw upon complex associations of class, social positions, and relationships. The Distinction created between the participants and this third group is perhaps greater than that between them and the other voices represented as elements of political views and age, as well as gender and sexual orientation, are drawn on to separate these individuals. The cisgender heterosexual men and women represented were usually younger than, or of a similar age to, the participants discussing them and, thus, the power imbalance between these groups is likely to be smaller than that between the participants and the people they are representing with the third stylisation. This could further add to feelings of anger and exasperation as homophobia expressed by people in positions of power is likely to have a greater impact than that expressed by people with less or no power. In these instances, therefore, not only is Distinction expressed, but also an element of Illegitimation. People who are in positions of power, such as older family members and managers, are in a position to be able to provide Authorisation for individuals' identities. Similarly, national newspapers have the ability to influence how certain identities are viewed by their readers and, thus, are also able to Authorise or Illegitimate identities. The extracts presented in this section suggest that participants felt their identities were being Illegitimated by the people represented with their stylised voices. Authorisation and Illegitimation is discussed further in Chapter 8.

6.3.3 Adequation: 'Straight Friends from Work'

Whilst the previous examples demonstrate participants' use of voices to create Distinction between themselves individuals whose views and morals they do not agree with, instances also occurred within the data in which participants represented others' voices in a way that aligned those voices with the stance taken by the participant. In terms of the Engagement system of the Appraisal Framework, they Acknowledge, rather than Distance these views from their own. Instances wherein participants aligned themselves with the views expressed used reporting verbs such as 'say' or 'like' to explicitly mark the words as belonging to someone else in this way however these instances varied from the instances expressing Distinction as no changes of tone, pitch, or accent were drawn upon and, as a result, the voices were integrated into the participants' own. The group discussed within this section is termed 'straight friends from work' after Rebecca's description in Extract 6.19.

Adequation Examples
6.19 REBECCA (FG2): I love it when my straight friends from work are like oh I love that show or I really want those two women to get together and I love that because they're relating to them you know
6.20 JASON (FG1): when they go yeah I love this storyline or I just love it when they say things like that especially when they've not like mentioned that kind of stuff before
6.21 SOPHIA (I4): it starts conversations you know so like I can be like oh yeah I have a crush on her and if they're like oh you like girls I can be like yeah
6.22 CHRIS (FG1): my friend from work goes ah yeah I really like that guy from Torchwood and I'm like oh yeah that's cool [laughs] I didn't really know what to say but it was nice

Table 6.4: Engagement with 'Straight Friends from Work'

In these examples (Table 6.4) a sense of Adequation is created between the participants and those whose voices they are representing as they are not paralinguistically marked as different in the ways in which the previously discussed examples were. Instances where the others'

voices were assimilated with participants' tended to occur when participants were discussing the positive influence representation can have on those outside of the LGBTQ+ community.

The differences in opinion can be highlighted by comparing Extract 6.9 (Table 6.2) and Extract 6.14 (Table 6.3) with Extract 6.19 (Table 6.4). Here, during the same focus group interaction one participant, Rebecca, draws upon the opinions of others at different points. In Extracts 6.9 and 6.14 she changes her tone and pitch to create the voice associated with the 'lads lads lads' and '*Daily Mail* readers' groups respectively, whilst throughout Extract 6.19 her voice remains unchanged. Notably, the difference in content between these examples is that she does not agree with the cisgender heterosexual person's sexualisation of lesbian representation in Extract 6.9 or the *Daily Mail* readers' disapproval of a sex scene between two men in Extract 6.14, whereas she does agree with, and approves of, the way her 'straight friends from work' have responded to representation in Extract 6.19.

Such instances occurred throughout the focus groups wherein the same person who would draw upon a distinct voice to represent undesirable views would also assimilate views into their own utterances when they agreed with them. For instance, Chris uses the voice associated with cisgender heterosexual women when reproducing utterances by his cousins (Extract 6.18), the voice associated with *Daily Mail* readers when reproducing utterances by his nan (Extract 6.13), and no stylised voice when reproducing an utterance by a work friend who states that he likes a bisexual character from *Torchwood* (Extract 6.22).

This demonstrates the fact that the shifting of voices is not simply done to represent others in general, or even specially others of different genders, sexualities, ages, or backgrounds, but occurs specifically so that speakers can distance themselves from opinions with which they do not agree. The assimilation of voices creates a sense of Adequation, therefore, as they are not so overtly separated from participants'.

Another noticeable difference from the Distinction examples was that participants often then relayed their responses to the utterances, reporting a dialogue that had occurred between themselves and the person with whom they were talking (Extracts 6.21 and 6.22, for example). Here, participants demonstrate how positive representation in television helps to create conversations and close gaps between LGBTQ+ and heterosexual viewers with Sophia explicitly acknowledging that representation 'starts conversations' (Extract 6.22). This is furthered by the fact that those who respond positively to LGBTQ+ representation are identified with personal identity markers, for example as 'straight friends from work' (Extract

6.19) or friends who have not 'mentioned that kind of stuff before' (Extract 6.20). This is in contrast with the examples expressing Distinction wherein speakers were often identified with general group identity markers such as 'straight girls' (Extract 6.4) or 'straight dudes' (Extract 6.7). Further, the element of mocking those who are quoted is also not present in these examples as in previous examples. In contrast, participants occasionally expressed positive Affect when referring to the represented individuals and opinions. In Extracts 6.19 and 6.20, for example, participants state that they 'love it' when their friends respond positively to LGBTQ+ representation. Here participants are expressing fairly highly graded Affect: Happiness: affection (Martin and White, 2005: 49). This suggests a connection between the type of representation cisgender heterosexual viewers witness and the interpersonal relationships they may have with LGBTQ+ individuals.

The difference here can be related to the Engagement: heteroglossia categories of dialogically contractive and expansive utterances. Whilst all examples covered in this section are heteroglossic in that they include the representation of voices other than the participants' own, some allow for more potential interaction than others. Dialogic contraction occurs when a viewpoint is acknowledged as belonging to someone other than the writer or speaker themself, but is positioned as to allow no further view (Martin and White, 2005). Dialogic expansion, on the other hand, occurs when the additional viewpoint presents 'space for dialogic alternatives' (ibid: 103). Within this data, instances where Distinction is expressed tend to be represent the voices of the quoted cisgender heterosexual individuals as contractive whereas those which fall into the category of Adequation tend to be expansive in that they are often presented as opening up an opportunity for conversations between the participants and the cisgender heterosexual people to whom they are talking.

Extracts 6.3 and 6.8 which express Distinction, for instance, position cisgender heterosexual people as a large social grouping who have gained shared opinions of LGBTQ+ individuals as a result of negative representation. The utterances made by cisgender heterosexual individuals in such instances are shown to be contractive in that no response from LGBTQ+ individuals is given or allowed for. Extracts 5.21 and 5.22 which express Adequation, on the other hand, position the cisgender heterosexual people represented as individuals who are willing to talk about LGBTQ+ representation with LGBTQ+ individuals and, thus, these utterances are expansive. These extracts are reproduced in Table 6.5.

These examples, therefore, position the positive representation of LGBTQ+ individuals on television as a catalyst to enable and facilitate discussion and recognition between cisgender heterosexual individuals and members of the LGBTQ+ community

Distinction	**Adequation**
Extract 6.3 (FG2): **JESSICA:** there was a group of like thirteen year old girls going <u>omg they're lesbians</u> **Extract 6.8 (FG2):** **JOHN**: I dunno I always feel like my experience of walking down the street everyone's like <u>uh they're holding hands</u>	**Extract 6.21 (I4):** **SOPHIA**: it starts conversations you know so like I can be like oh yeah I have a crush on her and if they're like <u>oh you like girls</u> I can be like yeah **Extract 6.22 (FG1):** **CHRIS**: my friend from work goes <u>ah yeah I really like that guy from Torchwood</u> and I'm like oh yeah that's cool [laughs] I didn't really know what to say but it was nice

Table 6.5: Distinction and Adequation Through Engagement

6.4 Summary

As can be seen from this chapter, participants drew upon paralinguistic features to create and highlight differences between identities. The Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework can here be used in conjunction with Martin and White's system of Engagement, and with sociolinguistic work on voice to better understand the importance participants place on LGBTQ+ media representation in terms of its influence on those outside of the LGBTQ+ community.

It was noted in Chapter 2 that forming parasocial relationships with television characters is a 'normal consequence of television viewing' (Perse and Rubin, 1989: 61) and such relationships can be utilised to reduce prejudice between groups (Schiappa et al., 2007). The expression of Adequation when representing the voices of others who have been positively influenced by representation supports this as it demonstrates that the participants of the focus groups feel that positive representation has an influence on how cisgender heterosexual individuals view them.

Similarly, the expression of Distinction between participants and cisgender heterosexual individuals who hold negative opinions of LGBTQ+ individuals following negative representation demonstrates the power that representation has in creating a divide between these groups. These instances of Adequation and Distinction exemplify the importance of positive representation being included in programmes watched by cisgender heterosexual individuals.

The tactics of Adequation and Distinction are further discussed with reference to specific lexical realisations in the following chapter. A conclusion to both Adequation and Distinction chapters is presented following the discussion in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7: ADEQUATION AND DISTINCTION – (NON-)FICTIONAL INDIVIDUALS

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 discussed the ways in which participants within this study drew on stylised voices, or integrated opinions with their own voices, to express Distinction from, or Adequation with, cisgender heterosexual individuals. It was noted that whether participants expressed Adequation or Distinction was directly linked to how the cisgender heterosexual individuals they were representing responded to LGBTQ+ representation.

This chapter considers the ways in which participants expressed Adequation with and Distinction from individuals and groups through evaluative lexical choices. Participants used evaluative language to express Adequation with or Distinction from both fictional and non-fictional individuals and groups. The recipients of Adequation and/or Distinction were: non-fictional LGBTQ+ people; non-fictional cisgender heterosexual people; and fictional LGBTQ+ characters. The sections of this chapter address each of these in turn. Section 7.4 then summarises the analysis in this chapter and, following this, Section 7.5 provides a conclusion to Chapters 6 and 7.

7.2 Non-fictional People

Unsurprisingly, one of the most common instances in which Adequation and Distinction were expressed was when participants were talking about non-fictional people that they had interacted with. As may be expected, instances of Adequation occurred when participants spoke about other LGBTQ+ individuals; however, there were also many instances in which participants expressed Adequation with cisgender heterosexual individuals.

7.2.1 LGBTQ+ People

Adequation was expressed between participants and other (non-fictional) LGBTQ+ individuals, and such relationships were exclusively evaluated positively within this data. The evaluation of Adequation between LGBTQ+ individuals was graduated particularly positively when participants discussed relationships formed in youth and adolescence. In the below examples, Mo and Layla both assign value to the relationships they made with other LGBTQ+ individuals during their school years. Dotted lines are used to show references to groups and relationships that participants may express Adequation with or Distinction from and double underlines are used to highlight lexical evaluations.

Extract 7.1 (from Focus Group 4):

> **MO:** I feel like being friends with other LGBT people has been important
>
> **JAY:** yeah same
>
> **MO:** yeah I do think the foundations that you make with other LGBT people are definitely shapely – shape – influencing

Extract 7.2 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** I feel as well that we [*Layla and her friendship group*] were quite lucky in that obviously we all gravitated towards each other we were lucky because we had each other and our school was quite open as well but then I was saying like for Jason obviously it would've made more of a difference because-
>
> **JASON:** it was the only thing I had
>
> **LAYLA:** yeah
>
> **JASON:** so I needed that to help me know it [*being gay*] was okay

The positive impact of these relationships is realised through positive Valuation (+val) in Extract 7.1 as they are described as 'important' and 'influencing' (influential). Similarly, in Extract 7.2, Layla describes herself and her schoolfriends as 'lucky'. This acts primarily as a realisation of positive Normality (+norm) as she is expressing that this situation, whilst positive, is perhaps unusual; however, 'lucky' is also expressing +val in this instance as she is stating the importance of her relationships with other LGBTQ+ individuals at school age. As is demonstrated by the above examples, participants evaluated experiences wherein they were able to determine a sense of Adequation with others as a positive experience. This is consistent with previous research concerning the Tactics of Intersubjectivity and LGBTQ+ individuals. For example, participants in Sauntson's (2018) research concerning the school experiences of LGBTQ+ youth positively evaluated their relationships with other LGBTQ+ pupils.

This sense of Adequation is especially found throughout the focus group data in which participants referred to the focus groups in which they were taking part, as well as the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, using the inclusive pronouns 'we' and 'us'. In this way, participants

often aligned themselves with each other both when talking about the experiences and when sharing opinions. Examples of this can be seen in Extracts 7.3 and 7.4.

Extract 7.3 (from Focus Group 3):

> **SELENA:** mm I suppose we are a minority because of our sexual preferences right so I mean in a way you can't really divorce it from that it's who we're attracted to so it's or if we're attracted to anyone so I mean
>
> **ANTHONY:** I think yeah

Extract 7.4 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** it just needs to be like normalised like if you see like you know how we got like excited growing up if there was gay character in a programme

Extract 7.3 particularly demonstrates this sense of Adequation between focus group participants as Selena, a cisgender pan/bisexual woman, uses 'our' to refer to the 'sexual preferences' of everyone in the focus group, and, indeed, within the LGBTQ+ community as a whole. Anthony expresses explicit agreement with this statement. Along with Selena, the focus group consisted of two gay cisgender men, and one demisexual homoromantic non-binary person, thus, not every person within the focus group, and, certainly, not everyone in the LGBTQ+ community, has the same 'sexual preference'. In this instance, participants were showing Adequation with each other and other LGBTQ+ individuals as people who experience non-heteronormative attraction, despite differences in each of their individual orientations.

Notable within the scope of this research specifically was participants' acknowledgement that television characters can act as placeholders for this sense of Adequation when individuals do not have these relationships with LGBTQ+ peers, as is exemplified by Jason's response to Layla's statement about the importance of being friends with other LGBTQ+ individuals (Extract 7.2). The importance representation holds in this sense is further discussed in Chapter 8.

7.2.2 Cisgender Heterosexual People

Participants also occasionally expressed adequation between LGBTQ+ individuals and cisgender heterosexuals. One example of the way in this was achieved, through Engagement

with others' voices, was discussed in Chapter 6. The present section discusses how participants expressed Adequation with cisgender heterosexual people as a whole, rather than with specific cisgender heterosexual people as discussed in Chapter 6.

Instances in which participants expressed Adequation with cisgender heterosexual people in general often served to dispute the notion that LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals are different or should be treated differently. This is present not only in the content of the utterances themselves, but also reflected in the Appraisal system used. In almost all instances in which Adequation, or the desire for Adequation, with cisgender heterosexual people was expressed in this way, words belonging to the subsystem of Normality were used. Findings here are again in line with those noted by Sauntson (2018: 58) in that the focus in such instances was on emphasizing 'participants' perceived similarities between LGBT+ and heterosexual identities' in order to 'minimize the difference' between the groups.

Extract 7.5 (from Focus Group 2):

> **SOPHIA:** we're [*bisexuals*] really not all that different and it'd be better understood and more normalised if there were bisexual characters in stuff

Extract 7.6 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** like we're [*LGBTQ+ individuals*] just normal like other people well what is normal but do you know what I mean

Extract 7.7 (from Focus Group 4):

> **ROSE:** it was literally an hour programme and they had like it was mostly gay men and they were talking about all of these like fantasies and things and I was just like what is the point of this programme it was really bizarre like we're no different from everyone else but it just seems to you know somebody who's not like that okay with like the community they would think it just reinforces in their mind that we're all like sex hungry pests

As is exemplified by Extracts 7.5 to 7.7, Adequation between cisgender heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals was almost exclusively realised with relation to Normality. Whilst, as in the examples expressing Adequation between participants and other LGBTQ+ individuals, the positive realisations ('not all that different', 'normal', 'no different') referred to non-fictional

individuals, it is notable that many evaluations given to fictional television representations of LGBTQ+ individuals were negative ('sex-hungry pests', 'bizzare').

This raises two interesting points. Firstly, the emphasis on Normality here demonstrates the importance placed on diminishing the assumed differences between LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals in a desire to be viewed the same as 'everyone else' (Extract 7.7). Secondly, it suggests a contrast between the relationships that participants want with cisgender heterosexuals and the ones which they believe are occurring as a result of negative LGBTQ+ television representation.

7.2.3 *Individual and Group Identification*

This section provides a discussion of how participants created individual and group identification. The use of Adequation and Distinction in reference to non-fictional individuals throughout this data was complex. Participants notably used inclusive pronouns to refer to the LGBTQ+ community whilst expressing concerns that cisgender heterosexual people view everyone in the LGBTQ+ community as the same (Extract 7.8).

Extract 7.8 (from Focus Group 4):

> **ROSE**: it's like they [*cisgender heterosexual individuals*] think we're [*LGBTQ+ individuals*] all the same and nothing like them

Whilst this may appear contradictory, the ways in which participants expressed individuality and group identity among the data is nuanced and complex. Whether participants expressed Adequation with LGBTQ+ individuals or cisgender heterosexuals depended on the context of the utterance. Participants tended to refer to group identity and express Adequation when discussing shared experiences with other LGBTQ+ individuals and when talking about the benefits of having a community in identity formation (as in Extract 7.2, for example). However, when talking about cisgender heterosexuals' perception of LGBTQ+ people, the desire for individuals to be recognised as individuals and not simply as part of a homogenous group was emphasised (as in Extract 7.6, for example). Participants expressed desires for LGBTQ+ characters, and by extension real people, to be shown as individuals.

This complex relationship between having a group identity whilst also being an individual within that group is perhaps best summarised by participants themselves. Extract 7.9 highlights the importance of an awareness of the viewers of representation. As noted in Chapter 2, and will be further discussed in Chapter 9, LGBTQ+ representation is important in providing a

sense of Adequation for LGBTQ+ individuals to help prevent feelings of isolation, but it is also apparent that having representation in itself is not enough. For the participants, representation also needs to be varied and diverse so that LGBTQ+ people can be viewed as individuals rather than stereotypes.

Extract 7.9 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** I think sort of as LGBT people when we watch it [*stereotypical characters in programmes*] we can see it as like okay we know that's a section we know some people are maybe like that but like obviously everyone's not like that
>
> **CHRIS:** but they're seeing it and thinking we are
>
> **LAYLA:** but someone cishet might see it and be like (.) that's what all gays are like
>
> **CHRIS:** mm
>
> **LAYLA:** like if that's the only stuff they see

7.3 Fictional People

The previous section discussed instances in which participants expressed Adequation and Distinction in relation to real people. This section discusses how participants expressed this with relation to fictional characters. In Section 7.3.1, I briefly comment on the relationship between evaluations of and engagement with media. Section 7.3.2 consists of five further subsections, each considering how participants evaluated representations of their specific sexual and/or gender orientation as, as was noted in Chapter 2, representation can vary between subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community.

7.3.1 LGBTQ+ Television Characters

It is well-established that it is important for marginalised communities to witness representation they can relate to and identify with (see, for example, Oxley and Lucius, 2000). It is necessary, therefore, to consider the extent to which participants feel they could relate to the representation they had witnessed.

Konijn and Hoorn (2005: 131), in their research into viewers' relationships with fictional characters, found that positive responses to characters 'enhanced involvement' whilst negative appraisals 'enhanced distance' between viewers and characters. Similarly, Cohen and Ribak

(2003) found that the relevance of issues and events presented to viewers in a programme directly impacted their levels of enjoyment and involvement. Additionally, as was noted in Chapter 2, audiences are more likely to positively respond to media if they can relate to the characters portrayed within it (Clark, 2014). It is beneficial, therefore, to use Appraisal Theory to analyse how participants evaluated characters in order to determine the levels of Adequation experienced. Again, the combination of Appraisal Theory and Tactics of Intersubjectivity can provide a useful framework here due to the direct link between how a person judges a character and their construction of Adequation with them.

7.3.2 LGBTQ+ Characters by Gender and Sexual Orientation

As has been noted by previous studies, different gender and sexual orientations within the LGBTQ+ community are not represented equally on television (Netzley, 2010; Raley and Lucas, 2006). It is important, therefore, to consider reactions to the representations of specific gender and sexual orientations.

As noted above, there is a relationship between the quality of representation of a character and a viewer's ability to feel Adequation with that character. Chapter 2 suggested that being able to express Adequation with characters is important for two main reasons. Firstly, the ability to relate to fictional characters can help to reduce feelings of estrangement and isolation within marginalised groups (Oxley and Lucius, 2000); and, secondly, positive exposure to LGBTQ+ representation in the media has been found to reduce prejudice as it helps those who do not have any contact with LGBTQ+ people in their day-to-day lives relate them (Schiappa et al., 2006).

It is important, therefore, to analyse the language used by specific groups within the LGBTQ+ community when evaluating representations of their own sexual and/or gender orientation. Appraisal Theory can be drawn upon to determine what is deemed most important to specific groups of people (Martin and White, 2005: 57). This can be done by noting, firstly, what participants chose to evaluate and, secondly, how they did this. This provides a way of unpacking what is viewed as important to participants, the success of the representation they have witnessed, and, thus, whether or not they were able to feel Adequation with the characters they had seen.

7.3.2.1 Gay Men

The following section comprises an analysis of the evaluations made by the gay men who participated within this study. There were twenty-one questionnaire responses made by gay men. Five of these took part in a focus group, and one in an individual interview. Table 7.1 presents some of the evaluations made by gay men throughout this study.

Appraising Item(s)	**Context**	**Subsystem**	**Appraised**	**Source**
overly sexual effeminate	I didn't come out for ages because I didn't want my family to look at me different I was scared that they'd think I was this like overly sexual effeminate guy all of a sudden cause that's all they'd seen	-prop -norm	Gay men (according to participants' family members based on their experience with representation)	John (FG2)
hysterical flamboyant	My parents found it hard to accept me being gay because their image of a gay man was the hysterical, flamboyant, gay that they'd seen on the TV	-norm -norm	Gay men on television	Questionnaire
stereotypically effeminate damaging	almost always stereotypically effeminate representation which can be a damaging message to put out those of us who don't fit that stereotype	-val -val	The representation of gay men	Anthony (FG3)
outstanding diversity	Drag Race is outstanding because it includes a lot of diversity in terms of race and gender presentation	+reac +comp	*RuPaul's Drag Race*	Questionnaire
incredibly realistic powerful	incredibly realistic depiction of being a young gay man in America, and a powerful representation	+val +val	*Beach Rats*	Questionnaire
not inclusive needs	Just not inclusive. There needs to be more gay men of colour	-comp -inc	The representation of gay men	Questionnaire
not inclusive lacks diversity	the majority of representation isn't inclusive and lacks diversity in terms of race, body type, etc…	-comp -comp	The representation of gay men	Questionnaire

Table 7.1: Evaluations Made by Gay (Men) Respondents

As can be seen from Table 7.1, two key points arose from the evaluations made by gay men within this study of the representations of gay men: that representation was often stereotypical,

and that it lacked diversity. The stereotypes critiqued by participants were those which presented gay men as 'overly sexual', 'camp', 'effeminate', 'hysterical', and 'flamboyant'. As noted in Chapter 2, such stereotypes drawing on notions of gender presentation have existed in media since gay men started to be represented and have been critiqued by the community (see, for example, Blashill and Powlishta, 2009). It is evident from Table 7.1 that participants within this study felt that these stereotypes still prevail and account for much of the representation participants had witnessed.

Participants also critiqued representation for lacking diversity in other ways. That is, representation was negatively evaluated for being 'not inclusive', and as 'lack[ing] diversity in terms of race, body type, etc.'. The importance of diverse representation can be further demonstrated with reference to participants' positive evaluations. Representation was praised when it was seen as 'realistic' and 'diverse', with positive valuations such as 'outstanding' and 'powerful' being used to evaluate representation that was viewed as portraying diversity in terms of race and gender presentation (see, for example Extract 7.10). Participants expressed a desire for gay men to be represented as real, multidimensional people. Both examples in Table 7.1 which evaluated media positively did not refer to the fictional television representation that is the subject of this thesis (one respondent was evaluating the film *Beach Rats* and the other was evaluating the reality television programme *RuPaul's Drag Race*). This is still useful for this study, however, as it suggests that the representation of fictional characters on television are perhaps behind representations depicted in film and are not reflective of the real gay men that are seen on reality television programmes. This perhaps provides potential for further research, beyond the scope of the present thesis, comparing these mediums and genres.

Extract 7.10 (from Questionnaire response):

> Drag Race is outstanding because it includes a lot of diversity in terms of race and gender presentation

Participants also critiqued representation by using premodification such as 'just', 'token', and 'only' before 'gay' to describe characters (Extracts 7.11 to 7.13). The use of 'just' and 'only' here negatively evaluates depictions of gay man as lacking nuance when they were defined solely by their sexuality. 'Token', on the other hand, suggests a slightly different but related issue. That is, participants are noting that gay characters are not being included as multidimensional and realistic characters but are instead being used arbitrarily to make a programme appear more inclusive. The inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters in television for this

purpose is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9 with reference to creators' attempted identity constructions as 'accepting'.

Extract 7.11 (from Questionnaire response):

> I hate it when characters are included to just be gay and nothing else. Like that's all there is to their personality. Just gay.

Extract 7.12 (from Questionnaire response):

> Kevin in Riverdale is the epitome of the 'token gay' and his character is only brought out for ridiculous storylines

Extract 7.13 (from Questionnaire response):

> Kurt from Glee. A walking stereotype of a gay man who is defined only by being gay. There is also nothing to his character but his sexuality. No nuance at all.

Representation which was presented as being limited due to its stereotypical nature was often explicitly noted to have negative real-world implications in terms of both how gay men may feel about themselves and how cisgender heterosexual people may view them. One respondent, for example, stated that he felt that the representation of gay men as 'almost always effeminate' can be 'damaging' for gay men who do not fit that stereotype, whilst, in Extract 7.14, Mo recounts how he struggled with his identity in his youth as he thought there was a 'right way' to be gay.

Extract 7.14 (from Focus Group 4):

> **MO:** it's great to have that representation but also I feel like there's certain things like because you see these people and they all seem to live very similar lives it's like there's a right way to be gay and I didn't fit that so it took me a long time to understand what I was

The use of the 'right way' is interesting as it draws upon an element of Social Sanction. This suggests that television has the power to impose regulations upon viewers in terms of how they may or may not express themselves. This is perhaps unsurprising given the noted influence of representation and the importance given to LGBTQ+ representation when a sparsity of this

exists (Oxley and Lucius, 2000). This is discussed further in Chapter 8 where I draw upon the Tactics of Authorisation and Illegitimation to highlight the impact representation can have.

The negative impacts participants felt that stereotypical representations had on cisgender heterosexual individuals' perceptions of them were also discussed. Some participants noted that they were concerned about 'coming out' as they felt family members would judge them based on the representation they had seen (Extract 7.15) and others noted that this stereotypical representation had a direct impact on their family's lack of acceptance (Extract 7.16).

Extract 7.15 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JOHN:** I didn't come out for ages because I didn't want my family to look at me different I was scared that they'd think I was this like overly sexual effeminate guy all of a sudden cause that's all they'd seen

Extract 7.16 (from Questionnaire response):

> My parents found it hard to accept me being gay because their image of a gay man was the hysterical, flamboyant, gay that they'd seen on the TV

The comments made by in Extracts 7.14, 7.15, and 7.16 exemplify an issue noted within the literature. It has been noted that, as Mo states, limited depictions of LGBTQ+ identities within the media contribute to the notion that there is a 'right way' to be gay and that this can lead to LGBTQ+ individuals, especially young LGBTQ+ individuals struggling to understand their own identities (Raley and Lucas, 2006). As noted by participants, such representations also have an impact on how cisgender heterosexual people understand LGBTQ+ people, even if their experience of LGBTQ+ individuals in real life does not line up with the depictions they have seen on television. McInroy and Craig (2017: 43) note in their study that, in response to media which depicts LGBTQ+ individuals in 'stereotypical, misinformed, heterosexist, and/or homophobic' ways, some LGBTQ+ individuals are actively constructing identities 'in opposition to these stereotypes'. This, and my participants' responses suggest, therefore, that representation which depicts a broader and more diverse range of LGBTQ+ people from different backgrounds is required.

7.3.2.2 Lesbians

The following section comprises an analysis of the evaluations made by lesbian participants. Thirty-five lesbian women responded to the questionnaire. Three of these took part in a focus group, and three in an individual interview. One of these interviewees, Celia, did not take part in a focus group interview. Table 7.2 presents some of the evaluations made by lesbians throughout this study.

The evaluations in responses given by lesbian participants tended to focus as much on gender as they did on sexual orientation. This is perhaps unsurprising considering the fact that multiple lesbian respondents noted that content was usually made for 'the male gaze'. The intersection of gender and sexual orientation was present in the two evaluations of lesbian characters which were drawn upon the most: 'sexualised' and 'femme' (Table 7.2).

As noted in Chapter 2, the sexualisation of lesbian characters is something which has often been discussed in the field of LGBTQ+ media representation (Macdonald, 1995; Netzley, 2010). Often participants were not evaluating merely the existence of sex scenes between two women negatively, but the fact that these were designed for men. The relationship between sexuality, gender, and audience consideration is particularly evident in one response, Extract 7.17, in which a participant makes a direct link between the lack of representation of 'boyish looking women' and what is 'palatable for a heterosexual male audience'. This is perhaps taken further by the instance referred to by one questionnaire respondent in which a self-identified lesbian character is not only sexualised but falls in love with a man (Extract 7.18).

Extract 7.17 (from Questionnaire response):

> As a boyish looking woman, there is no representation as I'm not sure this is palatable for a heterosexual male audience.

Extract 7.18 (from Questionnaire response):

> She is hyper-sexualised and inexplicably falls in love with Sherlock even though she identifies as lesbian.

Appraising Item(s)	Context	Subsystem	Appraised	Source
Hyper-sexualised	She is hyper-sexualised and inexplicably falls in love with Sherlock even though she identifies as lesbian.	-val	Irene Adler (lesbian character in BBC's *Sherlock*)	Questionnaire
Sexualised	As a cis woman, I feel well represented, but as a gay woman, I feel like lesbians tend to be more sexualised in media	-val	Lesbian characters	Questionnaire
Attractive to men	depictions of lesbians are normally still attractive to men	-val	Lesbian characters	Rebecca (I3)
Not palatable (for heterosexual male audience)	As a boyish looking woman, there is no representation as I'm not sure this is palatable for a heterosexual male audience.	-val	Boyish lesbian women	Questionnaire
Unhealthily skinny Pretty femme	unhealthily skinny and ultimately pretty femme	-norm -norm	Shane (lesbian character in *The L Word*)	Michelle (FG5)
Femme diversity	always representing femme women they should/could do much better with more diversity	-norm +comp	Lesbian characters	Questionnaire
Loved diverse	I loved the storylines with representations of diverse gender presentation among queer women	+hap +comp	Gender presentation of queer women in *Banana*	Questionnaire
Extremely girly and feminine	Characters are usually extremely girly and feminine. This doesn't reflect the reality of actual lesbian experience.	-norm	Lesbian characters	Questionnaire
'acceptable' feminine	tends to the more 'acceptable' feminine lesbians, rather than everyday people who just happen to be lesbian.	-val	Lesbian characters	Questionnaire
Realistic	contains realistic sex scenes between two women (which are not necessarily choreographed for the male gaze)	+val	Sex scenes in *Orange is the New Black*	Questionnaire
For the male gaze	sex scenes are often shown for the male gaze when it's two women	-val	Sex scenes between two women	Rebecca (FG2)

Table 7.2: Evaluations Made by Lesbian Respondents

It is clear that participants' critiques are more complex than simply disliking the depiction of sexual content between two women, therefore, as it is the way these scenes are presented in order to appeal to men that is being noted as an issue. This is further highlighted by Extract 7.19.

Extract 7.19 (from Focus Group 2):

> **REBECCA:** I liked it because I've not seen anything like that where it shows the relationship in a realistic way
>
> **SOPHIA:** yeah right it's so rare that it seemed like real like the sex was there because it was relevant and their relationship seemed so genuine

Here participants evaluate the depiction of a relationship, and sex scenes, between two women on *Banana*, a programme that aired on E4 in 2015, using positive valuation ('realistic', 'real', and 'genuine'). As was noted in the above analysis of gay men's responses to representation, these participants positively evaluate representation they felt was realistic and that they could relate to. However, Sophia also evaluates this as a 'rare' (-norm) occurrence, demonstrating the need for more representation such as this. This sexualisation of LGBTQ+ individuals in media is discussed further in Chapter 9.

Macdonald (1995: 182) in her study into the representation of women in film noted that even in scenes which could potentially on a surface level be read as empowering such as 'scenes of masturbation or lesbianism' were, in reality, 'employed in contexts that accentuate… the woman's vulnerability'. Furthermore, she argues that lesbian sex scenes were not only theoretically being shown for the male gaze but also literally by being watched by men on screen. She noted that sex scenes involving two women are often shown 'through the eyes of the masculine onlooker' not only through the use of directing and filming to appeal to the male gaze, but also literally, as, often, characters were being watched by men within the programme either with or, more often, without the women's knowledge (Macdonald, 1995: 182). A further problem exists, here, in that, despite Macdonald's research being conducted nearly thirty years ago, lesbian women are still noting the same issues occurring today.

Similarly, participants' observations that lesbian characters tend to be 'pretty', 'femme', and 'attractive to men' suggests that the 'lesbian chic' trend of the 1990s still has relevance today

(Macdonald, 1995). Again, participants responded positively to representation that showed more diversity, often drawing on positive Affect to express how such representation made them feel (Extracts 7.20 and 7.21).

Extract 7.20 (from Questionnaire response):

> I loved seeing non-feminine queer women portrayed in media

Extract 7.21 (from Questionnaire response):

> I loved the storylines with representations of diverse gender presentation among queer women

It is clear from this, therefore, that other factors of identity were also relevant and of concern to participants in their evaluation of representation as, here, gender as well as orientation has been drawn upon in this critique.

7.3.2.3 Bisexuals and Pansexuals

The following analysis comprises the responses made by pansexual and bisexual participants, or participants who are attracted to multiple genders. The discussion for the most part combines the evaluations made by these sexual orientations for three reasons. Firstly, similar points were raised by both groups, secondly, three of the participants attracted to multiple genders identified as both pansexual and bisexual, and, finally, the definitions for these orientations overlap in many ways and can vary from person-to-person. However, these orientations are occasionally discussed separately within this section where relevant.

There were 45 questionnaire responses in total from participants who are attracted to multiple genders. The majority (71%) of these were bisexual with the largest group being bisexual women (17 responses), followed by respondents who identified as bisexual but did not state their gender (7 responses). Five responses were from bisexual non-binary participants and three from bisexual men. In terms of pansexuality, there were five pansexual women and four pansexual non-binary respondents. One pansexual respondent did not state their gender. A further two women identified as both bisexual and pansexual, and one non-binary respondent identified as both bisexual and pansexual. No respondents identified as any other orientation, such as polysexual, denoting attraction to multiple genders. Table 7.3 provides a breakdown of the numbers and percentages of these respondents.

Sexual Orientation	Number		Percentage	
Bisexual	32	**Women** 17	38%	71%
		Men 3	7%	
		Non-binary 5	11%	
		Gender not stated 7	15%	
Pansexual	10	**Women** 5	11%	22%
		Men 0	0%	
		Non-binary 4	9%	
		Gender not stated 1	2%	
Bisexual and Pansexual	3	**Women** 2	4%	7%
		Men 0	0%	
		Non-binary 1	2%	
		Gender not stated 0	0%	

Table 7.3: Gender and Sexual Orientation of Bisexual and Pansexual Respondents

Two notable points came from the analysis of the evaluations made by these participants. Firstly, respondents noted that characters expressing attraction to multiple genders were shown as highly sexual and/or unfaithful to partners (Table 7.4). Secondly, respondents noted that sexualities that involved attraction to multiple genders were erased or their existence was actively denied (Table 7.5).

Table 7.4 presents some examples of participants evaluating characters as being sexualised and/or unfaithful to partners. Such evaluations exclusively referred to bisexuality rather than pansexuality. This is likely to be due to the fact that pansexuality was noted as not being represented at all, and so pansexual characters could not be analysed in this way as participants had not witnessed any examples of such characters. This is discussed in more detail when considering the examples in Table 7.5.

Appraising item(s)	Context	Subsystem	Appraised	Source
sexualised	I feel like bisexual women tend to be more sexualised in media	-val	Bisexual women in media	Sophia (FG2)
unfaithful	Generally most bisexual characters are portrayed as […] unfaithful	-ten	Bisexual characters	Questionnaire
liars cheaters	Storylines that have bisexuals in revolve around them being liars and cheaters who can't make up their minds	-ver -ten	Bisexual characters	Questionnaire
unfaithful	perpetuates the stereotype of bisexuals being unfaithful	-ten	Bisexuals (stereotype)	Questionnaire
mostly negative untrustworthy cheaters	Representation of bisexual women in the media is still mostly negative with the stereotypes of being untrustworthy, cheaters	-val -ver -ten	Bisexual women in the media	Questionnaire
sexualised	it's always focussed on like their sex lives and stuff just really unnecessarily sexualised	-val	Bisexual men in the media	Jay (FG4)
not sexualised heartfelt respected	Korra: She was bisexual but was not sexualized – her relationship with Asami felt heartfelt and respected	+val +val +ten	Korra (bisexual character in *The Legend of Korra*) The relationship between Korra and Asami	Questionnaire
not needlessly sexualised	She's bi, but not needlessly sexualised.	+val	Sarah Lance from Arrow/Legends of Tomorrow	Questionnaire

Table 7.4: Evaluations of Bisexual Characters as Sexualised/Promiscuous

Johnson (2016: 381) notes that, in media, 'female bisexuality is oversexualised and male bisexuality is erased'. Likewise, in the data gathered for this thesis, participants made reference

to bisexual women being sexualised on more occasions than bisexual men, though there were some instances where these evaluations were made about bisexual men (Extract 7.22).

Extract 7.22 (from Focus Group 4):

> **JAY:** I've literally never seen a bisexual male character that doesn't cheat
>
> **ROSE:** mm
>
> **JAY:** it's always focussed on like their sex lives and stuff just really unnecessarily sexualised right

Encouragingly, there were some instances of positive valuation with regard to the sexualisation of bisexual characters. One questionnaire participant, for example, stated that a bisexual character they had seen on the programme *Arrow* was 'not needlessly sexualised', and another stated that a bisexual character from *The Legend of Korra* was also 'not sexualized'. This participant also described a relationship between Korra and another woman as 'heartfelt' (+val) and 'respected' (+ten). Interestingly, the evaluations of 'heartfelt' and 'respected' are almost positioned as antonyms of 'sexualized' by this participant. This perhaps suggests that the sexualisation of characters prevents them from being developed in other ways. This notion is supported by Johnson (2016: 381) who notes that bisexual women are used in media as 'an enticement for male consumers, often at the expense of authenticity'. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that instances wherein bisexual women were shown in a 'heartfelt' and 'respected' relationship that was not 'sexualised' were praised. The relationship between sexualisation and underdeveloped characters is discussed further in Chapter 9.

As can be seen from Table 7.4, when discussing the sexualisation of bisexual characters, participants also drew upon the domain of Judgement, specifically Tenacity (how dependable) and Veracity (how truthful). For example, in evaluations such as 'unfaithful' and 'cheaters'(-ten), 'respected' (+ten), and 'liars' and 'untrustworthy' (-ver). Veracity is a Judgement of Social Sanction and, thus, is related to 'rules, regulations and laws about how to behave' (Martin and White, 2005: 52). Tenacity, a Judgement of Social Esteem, is being used by participants to discuss the dependability of the characters they have seen in their on-screen relationships in terms of their levels of commitment. Thus, this usage also draws upon questions of morality. This is interesting as participants are stating that not only are the characters sexualised, but that they are also represented as behaving in an untrustworthy manner when it comes to sexual relationships. The relationship between bisexual

representation and moral Judgements is perhaps unsurprising given that it has been argued that, in media, 'bisexuality is often used to represent anything but itself [including] characteristics such as duplicitousness, hedonism, etc.' (Eisner, 2013: 76). The real-world consequences of this have also been noted. Ochs (1996: 201), for example, suggests that bisexuals are stereotyped as 'amoral, hedonistic spreaders of disease and disrupters of families' and, more recently, Pollitt and Roberts (2021: 359) note that many bisexual people 'experience monosexist discrimination, often based on distrust and stereotypes of bisexuality'. The fact that participants within this study noted that bisexual characters were presented as 'unfaithful' or 'untrustworthy', therefore, is perhaps unsurprising, but certainly worth noting.

Appraising item(s)	**Context**	**Subsystem**	**Appraised**	**Source**
a phase	shows bisexuality as just a 'phase' for women who will eventually realise she's straight and end up with a man	-val	Bisexuality in the media	Questionnaire
just a phase	'just a phase' that will be grown out of	-val	Bisexuality in the media	Questionnaire
just a phase	Bisexuality is literally always shown as just a phase	-val	Bisexuality in the media	Questionnaire
a phase just not real	Bisexuality and pansexuality is always shown as a phase or as just not real	-val -val	Bisexuality and pansexuality in the media	Questionnaire
unusual	unusual to see bisexual people	-val	Seeing bisexual characters on television	Questionnaire
just non-existent	Pansexual characters are just non-existent	-val	Pansexual characters	Questionnaire
rare	rare to see bi characters on screen	-val	Bisexual characters	Rose (FG4)
less valid	Bisexuality is shown as less valid than other sexualities	-val	Bisexuality on television	Questionnaire
constant	Bi erasure constant	-val	Erasure of bisexuality on television	Questionnaire
never shown	Pansexuality is never shown	-val	Pansexuality	Questionnaire
not legitimate	her identity is seen as not legitimate	-val	Piper's sexuality in *Orange is the New Black*	Jessica (FG2)
actually gay actually straight	Bisexual male characters shown as 'actually gay' and bisexual female characters are shown as 'actually straight'	-val -val	Fictional bisexual men Fictional bisexual women	Questionnaire

Table 7.5: Evaluations of Bisexuality and Pansexuality as Erased

Another way in which participants evaluated bisexual and pansexual representation was by noting its non-existence, or the representation of these identities as less valid than other identities. These evaluations were most commonly made by drawing on Appreciation: Valuation. Valuation is drawn upon by participants to note that bisexual and pansexual identities are represented as 'less valid' or 'not legitimate'. When pansexuality was referred to by participants, it was almost always in this way as participants noted this orientation was presented as 'not real' or was 'never shown' at all.

This is interesting as it perhaps contradicts GLAAD's findings that, in 2018 – the year the data for this thesis was gathered – 27% of LGBTQ+ characters on television were bisexual. However, this may be explained by the fact that GLAAD do not require a character to explicitly identify as bisexual, for example by labelling their identity, to count them in their study. This perhaps leads to a disparity between programmes which ostensibly contain bisexual characters, and those which bisexual and pansexual individuals feel actually constitute representation. The importance of labelling characters with regards to this is discussed in Chapter 8.

The most common evaluation that was made in respect to the legitimacy of bisexuality and pansexuality was that they were presented as 'just a phase' until the character realised they were 'actually gay' or 'actually straight' (Extract 7.23). Johnson (2016: 385) notes that fictional bisexual men, in particular, tend to 'explore their sexuality' only briefly before finding that they were 'really gay all along'. Interestingly, participants in this study noted that fictional bisexual women were represented as being bisexual only until they realised their heterosexuality. Gender appears to have an influence here in that, in both cases, it is assumed that a bisexual person will realise that they are only attracted to men.

Extract 7.23 (from Questionnaire response):

> Bisexual male characters shown as 'actually gay' and bisexual female characters are shown as 'actually straight'

Participants suggest that the erasure of these orientations is two-fold here. Firstly, participants have noted that characters who are attracted to multiple genders are rare in media and, secondly, they have noted that, when these characters are present in media, their sexuality is shown as less valid or legitimate than other identities and, thus, its existence as an orientation in its own right is questioned. This is in line with previous studies into bisexuality in the media, as discussed in Chapter 2.

It is perhaps the case that bisexuality is becoming more positively represented in media as in response to the questions in the questionnaire and focus group interviews which asked participants to name a good example of LGBTQ+ representation that they had witnessed, some bisexual characters were mentioned more than once. Rosa Diaz from *Brooklyn 99* (Extract 7.24) and Korra from *The Legend of Korra* (Extract 7.25), for example, were mentioned in eight questionnaire responses each.

Extract 7.24 (from Questionnaire response):

> The character of Rosa Diaz in Brooklyn nine-nine. It puts equal weight on her relationships with both men and women. It doesn't make her seem any less bisexual when she is with a man.

Extract 7.25 (from Questionnaire response):

> Korra: She was bisexual but was not sexualized – her relationship with Asami felt heartfelt and respected

Extract 7.24 exemplifies an important consideration where the representation of bisexual and pansexual characters is concerned. Rosa Diaz is not evaluated negatively or criticised for being 'actually straight' when depicted in a relationship with a man just as Korra is not evaluated as 'actually gay' for being in a relationship with a woman, in fact, these instances are evaluated positively. The negative evaluations as characters being 'actually gay' or 'actually straight' pertained to the erasure of a character's bisexuality or pansexuality thorough its representation as a 'phase' before their sexual orientation shifts to either gay or straight, rather than to characters who are in a relationship with someone of the same or a different gender to them. This demonstrates that creators can depict bisexual and pansexual characters being in relationships without erasing their orientations.

7.3.2.4 Asexuals and Non-binary People

This section focusses on evaluations made by asexual and non-binary participants. These identities are different from each other, one being a (non-)sexuality, and the other being a gender identity. However, the analysis of the evaluations made by asexual and non-binary respondents is combined here as similar issues were noted by participants about the representations of these identities in media. Firstly, it was noted that these identities are largely excluded from media or 'non-existent', or when they do appear their identities are hinted at

rather than labelled explicitly. Secondly, it was noted that, when these identities were represented, or alluded to, they were positioned as somehow 'alien' or less 'human'.

There were 12 questionnaire responses in total from participants whose orientations fell under the asexual umbrella. The majority of these were asexual (83%) and the rest were demisexual (17%). Table 7.6 details the (non-)sexual orientation, (non-)romantic orientation, and gender of each asexual and demisexual participant. The (non-)romantic orientations of participants are noted here as the majority of asexual, and both the demisexual, participants also stated their (non-) romantic orientation. This was not noted by any other questionnaire respondents and so has not been included in the analysis of any other participants.

In terms of (non-)romantic orientations, two of the asexual participants were aromantic (20%), two were biromantic (20%), two panromantic (20%), one a homoromantic lesbian (10%), and three did not state their romantic orientation (30%). Of the demisexual participants, one was biromantic and the other homoromantic.

In terms of gender, five of the asexual participants were women, three were non-binary, one was a man, and one did not state their gender. Of the demisexual participants, one was non-binary and the other did not state their gender.

'Asexual' was used as an umbrella term to refer to the representations of asexuality and demisexuality by participants, including by the demisexual participants, and so no distinction can be made between the representations of these orientations in the following analysis. 'Asexual' will, therefore, be used as an umbrella term for the rest of this section.

Sexual/non-sexual orientation	Romantic/non-romantic orientation	Gender	Number
Asexual	Aromantic	Man	1
Asexual	Aromantic	Non-binary	1
Asexual	Biromantic	Woman	1
Asexual	Biromantic	Non-binary	1
Asexual	Panromantic	Woman	2
Asexual	Homoromantic (lesbian)	Woman	1
Asexual	Not stated	Woman	1
Asexual	Not stated	Non-binary	1
Asexual	Not stated	Not stated	1
Demisexual	Biromantic	Not stated	1
Demisexual	Homoromantic	Non-binary	1
Total:			**12**

Table 7.6: Orientations of Demi- and Asexual Respondents

There were 27 responses in total from participants whose gender fell under the non-binary umbrella (Table 7.7). The majority (59%) of these were non-binary (16 responses), seven were genderqueer (26%), two were gender fluid (7%), one was gender neutral (4%), and one was agender (4%).

Gender	Number	Percentage
Non-binary	16	59%
Genderqueer	7	26%
Gender fluid	2	7%
Gender neutral	1	4%
Agender	1	4%
Total:	**27**	**100**

Table 7.7: Identities of Non-binary Respondents

Tables 7.8 and 7.9 provide examples of the evaluations used by asexual and non-binary respondents when talking about the representation of asexual and non-binary people respectively.

Appraising item(s)	Context	Subsystem	Appraised	Source
human	Please let asexual characters be human	+norm	(hypothetical) asexual characters	Questionnaire
non-existent	Asexuality on TV is just non-existent	-val	Asexuality on television	Questionnaire
presumed played for laughs	I don't like how Sheldon's presumed asexuality in BBT is played for laughs	-val -val	Sheldon's (from *The Big Bang Theory*) asexuality.	Questionnaire
poor	Representations of the asexual spectrum are poor (I can only think of Sheldon from BBT, so, yeah).	-val	Asexual representation on television	Questionnaire
not relatable not really people	Asexual characters aren't really designed to be relatable. It's almost as if their lack of sexual attraction means they're not really people if that makes sense?	-norm -norm	Asexual characters	Questionnaire
not labelled	If asexuality is present in shows it's not labelled	-val	Asexuality on television	Questionnaire
implied	like Sherlock in the BBC Sherlock programme he's sort of implied to be asexual	-val	Sherlock's (from *BBC Sherlock*) asexuality	Nicky (FG4)
lacking emotions pretty damaging	Asexual people are shown as lacking emotions which is pretty damaging for the ace community I think	-norm -val	Asexual characters Asexual representation	Questionnaire
incapable of feelings	it's almost as if we're [*asexual people*] incapable of feelings	-cap	Asexual people (as represented on television)	Freddie (FG3)

Table 7.8: Evaluations by Asexual Respondents

Appraising item(s)	Context	Subsystem	Appraised	Source
current new unheard of	going back to the Channel 4 thing […] they're trying to sort of catch onto this sort of current thing of non-binary trans people like it's suddenly this new thing in the world that's unheard of	-val -val -val	Non-binary people (according to *Channel 4*)	Sam (FG1)
strange	it's like the world's um not quite caught up with strange people like me so	-norm	Non-binary people (according to the world)	Sam (FG1)
none out there	there's no non-binary representation out there	-val	Non-binary representation	Sam (FG1)
non-existent	enby [*alternate spelling of NB or non-binary*] representation is non existent	-val	Non-binary representation	Questionnaire
especially important	Shows like Steven Universe are especially important, as that has non-binary characters in a kids' TV show, which allows them to be exposed to this a lot earlier	+val	Children's shows such as *Steven Universe* which have non-binary characters	Questionnaire
weird	He [*non-binary character*] is a weird character & this is just treated as being a part of his weirdness	-norm	A non-binary character	Questionnaire
aliens and robots not good	most non-binary representation is aliens and robots which isn't exactly good representation	-val -reac	Most non-binary characters/representation	Alex (I8)
farfetched exotic	Non-binary characters are pitched as farfetched and exotic	-norm -norm	Non-binary characters	Questionnaire
amazing	Elena also later got a non-binary girlfriend, which was amazing.	+reac	A character having a non-binary partner in *One Day at a Time*	Questionnaire
never depicted	Non-binary people are never depicted	-val	Non-binary people	Questionnaire

Table 7.9: Evaluations by Non-binary Respondents

As was the case with bisexual and pansexual participants, asexual and non-binary participants drew on Appreciation: Valuation to note the sparsity of representation. Participants, for

example, noted that asexual representation is ‘severely lacking’ (-val) or ‘non-existent’ (-val), that non-binary representation is ‘unheard of’ (-val) and that non-binary people are ‘never depicted’ (-val) in media. A related critique of asexual and non-binary representation was that their (non-)sexual or gender orientations were rarely labelled, but rather were ‘implied’ (-val) or only ‘presumed’ (-val) by audiences. This has been coded as negative valuation as, as is noted by one asexual questionnaire respondent (Extract 7.26), some people may not be aware of asexuality at all and, thus, explicitly labelling it in television programmes would be worthwhile as it would raise awareness and help normalise it as a (non-)sexuality.

Extract 7.26 (from Questionnaire response):

> It makes it a lot easier to come out if people have already heard of the terms you're using. Most people have never heard of asexuality, for instance. It also normalises these relationships in their eyes, which makes them much more accepting of LGBT+ people in their own lives.

This is also in line with previous studies into the representation of non-binary individuals. Fiani and Han (2018: 187) for example, found that a severe ‘lack of information’ in the media in general about non-binary genders contributed to the non-binary individuals in their study experiencing a ‘delayed understanding’ of their gender. Trans Media Watch (2020) further report that 92% of their non-binary respondents felt that they would have benefited from seeing a visible non-binary role model in the media in their youth.

Another notable observation made by asexual and non-binary participants was that asexual and non-binary characters are often presented or coded as somehow less ‘human’ than other characters. In such instances, participants drew upon Judgement: Normality to note how asexual and non-binary characters are presented as abnormal either by being depicted as ‘weird’ (-norm) or even as non-human species such as ‘aliens and robots’ (-norm). Some participants made this critique explicitly (Extracts 7.27 and 7.28).

Extract 7.27(from Questionnaire response):

> Asexual characters aren’t really designed to be relatable. It’s almost as if their lack of sexual attraction means they’re not really people if that makes sense?

Extract 7.28 (from Interview 8):

> **ALEX:** Most non-binary representation is aliens and robots which isn't exactly good representation

One participant notes that non-binary characters are often depicted as 'farfetched and exotic' (-norm). Furthermore, some asexual participants noted that representing asexual individuals as 'incapable of feelings' (-cap) in media could have real-world consequences and be 'damaging' (-val) for the asexual community (Extract 7.29).

Extract 7.29 (from Focus Group 3):

> **FREDDIE:** It's almost as if we're [*asexual people*] incapable of feelings and that's super damaging because it stops people being able to understand us

It has been noted that Western society enforces 'compulsory sexuality' (Thompson, 2019: 8) and a strict 'sex and gender binary' (Clark et al, 2018: 159) and that any existence outside of these 'normative identities reduces one to being an error of society' (Vijlbrief et al, 2019: 3). Any person who does not experience sexual desire or any person who does not experience gender as a binary disrupts the expected norms. As the existence of asexual and non-binary people challenges these norms of allosexuality and binary gender, they have historically been subject to stigmatisation by those who cannot conceptualise people existing beyond these norms (Vijlbrief et al, 2019). One form this stigmatisation takes is to 'other' those who challenge societal roles which are assumed to be the norm (Sinwell, 2014). Based on the evaluations made by the participants within this study, there is some evidence to suggest that this is happening in media as asexual and non-binary individuals are being portrayed as the 'other' to the extent that they are often presented as less human. This, as one participant (Extract 7.29) notes can have far-reaching and 'damaging' consequences for real asexual and non-binary individuals.

7.3.2.5 Transgender Men and Women

This section discusses evaluations made by transgender participants who are not non-binary (referred to from here as 'transgender participants' for simplicity). There were nineteen questionnaire responses from transgender participants: ten from transgender men, and nine from transgender women. Table 7.10 provides some examples of the evaluations made by transgender respondents.

Appraising item(s)	Context	Subsystem	Appraised	Source
Bad	It's always bad when a trans woman is played by a cis man.	-reac	Transgender women being portrayed by cisgender men	Questionnaire
Don't exist Objects of ridicule	Trans identities either don't exist or are still used as objects of ridicule.	-val -val	Transgender identities in the media	Questionnaire
Lacked nuance Suffering Trauma	all the trans representation I've seen has lacked nuance and reinforced the idea that trans life is just suffering and trauma	-comp -val -val	Transgender representation Transgender life (according to representation)	Jay (FG4)
Good	Boy Meets Girl was good because it featured a transwoman playing a trans part	+reac	*Boy Meets Girl*	Questionnaire
Really rare	trans men are really rare to see in media	-val	Transgender men in media	Ryan (I1)
Caricatures Horribly characterised	Trans characters are either made into caricatures or are horribly characterised	-val -val	Transgender characters	Questionnaire

Table 7.10: Evaluations by Transgender Respondents

As was noted in Chapter 2, McLaren et al (2021) note some key factors to consider when analysing transgender representation. These are: casting, framing, transgender identity, social interaction, violence, the 'born in the wrong body' trope, and romance. All of these were noted by participants within this study. Table 7.11 gives an illustrative example of each of these from the data. These categories, and the evaluations made by participants that fell into them, are discussed later in this section.

McLaren et al. (2021) category	**Example from thesis data**	**Source**
Casting	It’s always bad when a trans woman is played by a cis man.	Questionnaire
Framing	Trans identities either don't exist or are still used as objects of ridicule.	Questionnaire
Transgender identity	I can't imagine ever seeing a trans character whose storyline doesn't revolve around the fact that they're trans.	Questionnaire
Social interaction	She is not being accepted by her parents, who use her deadname, and experiencing some rejection from her girlfriends' lesbian friends	Questionnaire
Violence	all the trans representation I’ve seen has lacked nuance and reinforced the idea that trans life is just suffering and trauma	Jay (FG4)
The ‘born in the wrong body’ trope	Trans people tend to be portrayed within the 'wrong body' discourse and fluidity doesn't make much of an appearance.	Questionnaire
Romance	Boy Meets Girl was good because it featured a transwoman playing a trans part and gave a good example of a transperson in a healthy relationship with a cisgender person. (ie. rather than casting her as undateable)	Questionnaire

Table 7.11: Key Factors in Transgender Representation

In addition to these categories, many transgender participants also noted the sparsity of transgender characters on television. The evaluations made when participants noted this lack of representation were similar to those used by the bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and non-binary participants. That is, they tended to use Appreciation: Valuation to note that transgender characters were 'rare', 'never seen', and 'non-existent'.

It is noteworthy that these evaluations were more often used when referring to transgender men (see Extracts 7.29 and 7.30 for examples).

Extract 7.29 (from Interview 1):

> **RYAN:** trans men are really rare to see in media

Extract 7.30 (from Questionnaire response):

> I have never seen a trans man on TV

Such statements are perhaps supported by the fact that, of the eleven transgender television characters that were mentioned by participants throughout this study, only three (27%) were transgender men. This is similar to GLAAD's *Where We Are on TV* report of 2018 which found that only five (22%) of twenty-two transgender characters were men. This is not to say that transgender women are represented frequently, in fact participants noted that all transgender individuals were underrepresented, but that transgender men are represented even less often.

Extract 7.31 (from Focus Group 4):

> **JAY:** yeah it's like if you wanna tell trans people's stories like you wanna tell it for like profit or whatever then you can use trans people to tell those stories
>
> **ROSE:** yeah
>
> **JAY:** rather than like oh I wanna tell the story of a trans person but I don't really wanna cast one
>
> **ROSE:** yeah
>
> **JAY:** I'll just cast Eddie Redmayne instead and just pop him in a dress

In terms of McLaren et al's (2021) categories, casting was discussed the most by participants in this study. Transgender characters played by cisgender actors were evaluated as 'bad' (-reac)

and ‘damaging’ (-val). The reasons for this were twofold. Firstly, participants noted a level of exploitation that came with including transgender characters to generate viewership without employing real transgender people to portray the characters. This view is best exemplified by an interaction that occurred in one of the focus groups (Extract 7.31). Secondly, participants felt that casting cisgender actors as transgender characters invalidated transgender people by suggesting that being transgender is equivalent to being cisgender and ‘dressing up’ as another gender. This is exemplified, again, in Extract 7.31 and also in Extract 7.32.

Extract 7.32 (from Questionnaire response):

> They [*trans characters*] need to be portrayed by trans actors! Otherwise, when Jared Leto plays a trans woman and then arrives at the Oscars with full beard & wearing a suit, it gives the impression that a transgender woman is actually just a cis man wearing a dress and makeup.

As is the case in Extract 7.32, participants expressed a strong desire (+inc) for transgender actors to play transgender characters. ‘Want’ and ‘need’ was often used to express this desire, suggesting a strong investment in this, further, when transgender characters were played by transgender characters, positive evaluations were used. As can be seen from Extracts 7.33 and 7.34, participants used positive Appreciation: Reaction in such cases.

Extract 7.33 (from Questionnaire response):

> the first use of transgender actors (Riley Carter Millington and Alice Walker) to play transgender characters in (respectively) EastEnders and Hollyoaks in 2015, and Rebecca Root, who played Judy in the first BBC sitcom to feature a transgender actress/character, Boy Meets Girl (also 2015). These were generally <u>good</u> representations.

Extract 7.34 (from Questionnaire response):

> Boy Meets Girl was <u>good</u> because it featured a transwoman playing a trans part and gave a <u>good</u> example of a transperson in a <u>healthy</u> relationship with a cisgender person. (ie. rather than casting her as <u>undateable</u>)

The most positively evaluated of McLaren et al’s categories were social interaction and romance, with participants noting that transgender characters were beginning to be shown

having romantic relationships, rather than being seen as ‘undatable’ (-cap), and having meaningful interactions with other characters. Indeed, Extract 7.34 shows a response in which a specific programme, *Boy Meets Girl*, was evaluated as ‘good’ (+reac) because it included both these factors.

Interestingly, the social interaction did not necessarily need to involve transgender characters having exclusively positive experiences with other characters in order to be evaluated in this way. One questionnaire respondent (Extract 7.35), for example, states that the storyline surrounding Nomi, a transgender character in *Sense8*, was ‘refreshing to watch’ (+reac) despite including interactions in which Nomi is not accepted by family, is deadnamed, and experiences rejection based on her identity as a transgender woman. The respondent attributes this to the fact that such experiences are realistically encountered by transgender people and that these negative experiences do not constitute the entirety of Nomi’s storyline.

Extract 7.35 (from Questionnaire response):

> Nomi is a white trans woman in a relationship with a lesbian woman of colour and, although Nomi's experience as a trans person is part of the storyline (not being accepted by her parents, who use her deadname, and experiencing some rejection from her girlfriends' lesbian friends), this is (a) a pretty realistic representation and (b) it's only an aspect of the storyline. I just found that so refreshing to watch.

As was the case for gay men respondents, transgender participants noted that representations tended to be ‘stereotypical’ (-norm). Such evaluations fell into the categories of framing, ‘born in the wrong body’, and transgender identity. That is, according to participants, these ‘stereotypical’ representations tended to occur when a character’s identity as a transgender person was the only aspect of them that was represented. In such cases, participants noted that transgender characters became ‘caricatures’ and existed as ‘objects of ridicule’ or as the ‘butt of the joke’. Additionally, whenever participants spoke about the ‘born in the wrong body’ trope, they critiqued the lack of nuance that was shown. Such evaluations are exemplified by Extracts 7.36 and 7.37. It appears, therefore, that these factors, all contribute to a lack of diversity and nuance in the representation of transgender people.

Extract 7.36 (from Questionnaire response):

> Trans characters are either made into caricatures or are horribly characterised, to the point where they're the butt of a joke or the only important thing about them is their trans identity.

Extract 7.37 (from Questionnaire response):

> Trans people tend to be portrayed within the 'wrong body' discourse and nuance/fluidity doesn't make much of an appearance.

The last of McLaren et al's (2021) categories is violence. Again, participants noted this as something which had occurred within the media they had witnessed (Extracts 7.38 and 7.39).

Extract 7.38 (from Focus Group 4):

> **JAY:** all the trans representation I've seen has lacked nuance and reinforced the idea that trans life is just suffering and trauma

Extract 7.39 (from Questionnaire response):

> We need stories that do not end tragically.

The violence mentioned by participants almost exclusively referred to transgender characters suffering traumatic events as a result of being transgender. As previously noted, participants did not necessarily want transgender characters to experience no negative interactions, however, an important condition of this was that the characters were shown as diverse and as having lives and interactions beyond the negativity. This sentiment is again present in Extract 7.38 wherein the participant states that the representation they have seen 'reinforced the idea that trans life is just suffering and trauma'. The lack of representation showing transgender people living happy, or even regular, lives can have a detrimental effect on transgender viewers as it suggests that this is not possible for them. Additionally, there is an element of exploitation to this type of representation as it is using hardships faced by transgender people as entertainment.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the ways in which participants in this study expressed Adequation with and Distinction from both real people and fictional characters through their evaluative

lexical choices. Participants expressed a willingness to create Adequation with other LGBTQ+ individuals, especially through the focus group discussions. Notably, they also acknowledged that television characters acted as placeholders for this sense of Adequation when they did not have relationships with real LGBTQ+ individuals.

Participants also discussed a need to minimise differences between themselves and cisgender heterosexual individuals in order to dispute the notion that LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals should be treated differently. As was noted, in the majority of instances in which the desire to create Adequation or to minimise Distinction between LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals was expressed, words belonging to the subsystem of Normality were used. This, firstly, suggested a desire to be accepted within society and, secondly to critique media representations of LGBTQ+ individuals as 'abnormal' and the negative consequences that may occur as a result of this.

In the final part of this section, I discussed the varying ways in which different members of the LGBTQ+ community evaluated representations of their own sexual and/or gender identity. It is clear from this section that groups face some overlapping and some different issues with media representation. Some members, for example pansexual, asexual and non-binary participants, noted that they were largely excluded or erased from media; others, such a transgender participants, noted that they are often seen as the 'butt of jokes'; and others, such as bisexual and lesbian participants, noted that they were often sexualised. A common theme across the groups discussed within this section was that, when they were represented, they felt the representations were stereotypical and lacked nuance. Participants' evaluations suggest that LGBTQ+ representation largely remains within the stages of non-representation and ridicule, therefore (Clark, 1969).

As has been noted throughout this study, media has been shown to be vital in providing representations of people with which marginalised groups can identify. Additionally, it has been noted by participants within this study themselves that television can help to create a sense of Adequation and group belonging when LGBTQ+ individuals do not have anyone they can relate to in their real lives. It is not promising, therefore, that participants within this study felt largely under- or negatively represented on television.

7.5 Conclusions to Chapters 6 and 7

In conclusion, Chapters 6 and 7 have discussed the various ways in which participants aligned themselves and others with, or distanced themselves and others from, other individuals, groups, and representations in the media. Chapter 6 discussed the ways in which participants used heteroglossic Engagement to represent others' voices and to suggest alignment with or distance from those represented and their views. Chapter 7 then considered how participants used lexical realisations of Adequation and Distinction to create alignment with and distinction from non-fictional people, LGBTQ+ characters in general, and LGBTQ+ characters with the same gender and/or sexual orientations as themselves.

It is important to note that participants' expressions of identity in terms of Adequation with and Distinction from cisgender heterosexual individuals was nuanced and complex. Participants did not generally express a desire to be represented as either exactly the same as, or completely different from, cisgender heterosexual individuals, but instead expressed concerns, generally by drawing on the subsystem of Normality, about representation that depicts LGBTQ+ individuals as 'abnormal' or 'weird'.

It is apparent throughout these chapters that television representation was vital in helping participants to navigate their identities and relationships. It is perhaps discouraging that participants largely evaluated the representation they had witnessed negatively. As noted in Chapter 2, one way to decrease prejudice between groups is through the parasocial relationships created through viewers' frequent and positive engagement with television characters. If, as participants suggested throughout this data, LGBTQ+ characters are represented as 'abnormal', these parasocial relationships become harder to achieve as cisgender heterosexual viewers will not see LGBTQ+ individuals as relatable and, thus, Distinction between the groups is increased.

The importance of positive representation is further evident when analysing how participants engaged with other voices. Participants occasionally expressed Adequation with cisgender heterosexual individuals who had been positively influenced by the LGBTQ+ representation they had witnessed, demonstrating further the importance of good representation. These instances of Adequation, promisingly, suggest that some progress may be occurring. Furthermore, there is perhaps some evidence to suggest that some representation may be improving. It is encouraging, for example, that transgender participants noted instances

wherein transgender characters were shown in supportive relationships and that transgender actors are increasingly being cast to play transgender roles.

7.5.1 The Stance Triangle

The relationships created by the evaluations discussed throughout Chapters 6 and 7 can be conceptualised through DuBois' Stance Triangle. Participants aligned and disaligned themselves with other individuals by drawing on how they evaluated LGBTQ+ representation. Figure 7.1 shows the application of the findings within these chapters to DuBois' model.

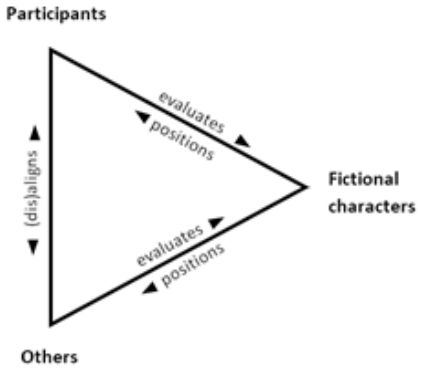


Figure 7.1: Stance Triangle for this Data

This is exemplified by Extract 7.40, reproduced from Chapter 6, in which Rebecca positively evaluates characters in *Orange is the New Black* by noting that cisgender heterosexual individuals are relating to them while aligning herself with her 'straight friends from work' by integrating their voices in with her own, that is, by not using a stylised voice when reproducing their utterances. Here, the two subjects, Rebecca and her friends, are aligned due to their shared positive evaluations of LGBTQ+ characters.

Extract 7.40 (from Focus Group 2):

> **REBECCA:** I love it when my straight friends from work are like oh I love that show or I really want those two women to get together and I love that because they're relating to them you know

Participants would also evaluate real people and either express alignment or disalignment with fictional characters as a result. In Extract 7.41, for example, reproduced from Chapter 6, Sophia

negatively evaluates a cisgender heterosexual man she knows as 'gross' and comments on his sexualisation of a lesbian character.

Extract 7.41 (from Focus Group 2):

> **SOPHIA:** he's really gross and was like oh yeah she's so fit I would but like it shouldn't be for him right but I guess it was

As a result of this she reflects that the lesbian character may have been included for the benefit of men despite the fact that it 'shouldn't be for [them]'. The implication here is that lesbian characters should be 'for' LGBTQ+ viewers and should be relatable to this audience, when, in actuality, this character is not one Sophia feels she can express alignment with due to the character being created to appeal to heterosexual men. Figure 7.2 represents this stance.

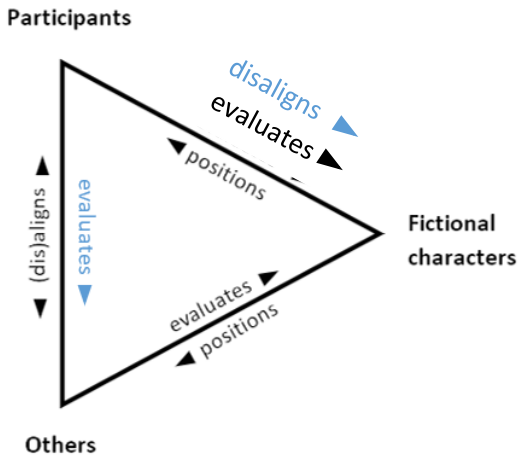


Figure 7.2: Stance Triangle for this Data (Expanded)

As this suggests, the relationships created between the three components of the Stance Triangle – participants, others, and LGBTQ+ representation – were often quite complex. This is further exemplified by Extract 7.41, reproduced from above.

Extract 7.42 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** I think sort of as LGBT people when we watch it [*stereotypical characters in programmes*] we can see it as like okay we know that's a section we know some people are maybe like that but like obviously everyone's not like that
>
> **CHRIS:** but they're seeing it and thinking we are
>
> **LAYLA:** but someone cishet might see it and be like (.) that's what all gays are like
>
> **CHRIS:** mm
>
> **LAYLA:** like if that's the only stuff they see

Here, Layla expresses Adequation between herself and other members of the focus group through the plural pronoun 'we', Distinction between some members of the LGBTQ+ community and others ('some people are like that but obviously everyone's not like that'), and assumed Adequation between all LGBTQ+ people by cisgender heterosexual people ('that's what all gays are like'). She and Chris suggest that stereotypical representation can be responsible for cisgender heterosexual individuals' assumptions about LGBTQ+ individuals which may create Distinction between cisgender heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. They are suggesting that the stances represented in Figure 7.3 which are taken by cisgender heterosexual individuals are a result of stereotypical representation. That is, cisgender heterosexual individuals, as a result of the representation they have witnessed, assume that the LGBTQ+ community must all be aligned with, or the same as, the characters they have seen. Consequently, this creates a divide, or an assumed disalignment, between cisgender heterosexuals and real LGBTQ+ individuals. As was noted in this chapter participants often expressed the importance of creating Adequation between themselves and cisgender heterosexuals and, thus, the stances shown in Figure 7.3 suggest issues with representation.

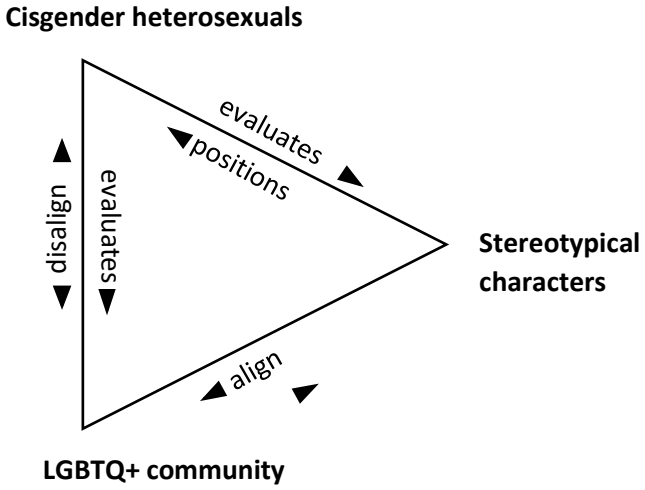


Figure 7.3: Assumed Stances Taken by Cisgender Heterosexual Individuals

In sum, in taking a stance on either fictional characters or real people, participants often aligned themselves with or disaligned themselves from the other. It was also assumed that cisgender heterosexual individuals' evaluations of LGBTQ+ representation would contribute to their stances towards real LGBTQ+ people and whether or not they felt Adequation with, or Distinction from, them.

7.5.2 Recommendations

Considering the discussions in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 the following can be suggested potentially methods of improving LGBTQ+ representation:

1. Include realistic and positive examples of LGBTQ+ characters in mainstream programmes watched by cisgender heterosexual audiences.
2. Include nuanced, non-stereotypical characters in programmes.
3. Do not write queer women for the male gaze.
4. Include underrepresented members of the LGBTQ+ community.
5. Include more asexual and non-binary characters and, when they are included, do not represent them as 'aliens and robots'.
6. When including transgender characters, cast transgender actors to play these roles.

The following chapter discusses the next pair of tactics: Authorisation and Illegitimation.

CHAPTER 8: AUTHORISATION AND ILLEGITIMATION

8.1 Introduction

Authorisation and Illegitimation refer to attempts to legitimate or withdraw power from identities through 'an institutional or other authority' (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 386). As a pair, the categories of Authorisation and Illegitimation were drawn upon in 429 instances, less often than Adequation and Distinction (464 instances) and more often than Authentication and Denaturalisation (284 instances). However, Authorisation alone was invoked by participants 340 times, more often than any of the other categories individually. This appears promising as it may suggest that LGBTQ+ identities are being legitimised within television. An analysis of each instance of Authorisation within the data in combination with Appraisal Theory, however, demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case.

This section discusses the use of Authorisation and Illegitimation within the data with respect to who, or what, is positioned as able to assign legitimation to LGBTQ+ identities. I, firstly, discuss the positioning of television itself as an authority by participants before analysing how participants feel representation could provide legitimation for LGBTQ+ identities. Then, I discuss which characters within programmes are framed as having the authority to legitimise others' identities. Finally, I conclude this chapter and provide recommendations based on the discussion.

8.2 Media Representation and Authority

Authorization and Illegitimation typically refer to attempts to legitimate or withdraw power from identities through 'an institutional or other authority' via practices such as invoking languages associated with such authorities (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 386). In the data gathered for this study, participants notably used Authorization and Illegitimation to construct television as an authority. This section, therefore, discusses the ways in which participants use language to frame television as an authority in identity construction. As discussed in Chapter 2, the media plays a 'central role in shaping the social cognitions of the public at large' (van Dijk, 1993: 242) and, thus, it is unsurprising that the potential authority of television representation was discussed within this data. What is noteworthy is the fact that participants often explicitly recognised representation as having a level of authority within their, and others', lives, and often acknowledged its position as a placeholder for interactions with real-world LGBTQ+ individuals. Participants' awareness of television's impact on their own understanding of their, and others', gender and sexual orientations and recognition of the impacts that such

representation may have on others was something which was given importance throughout all the focus groups and interviews and deemed important within the questionnaire responses.

For example, in the following extract, taken from Focus Group 1, participants equate positive LGBTQ+ representation with gaining approval from their schools when they were younger.

Extract 8.1 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** I feel as well that we [*Layla and her friendship group*] were quite lucky in that obviously we all gravitated towards each other we were lucky because we had each other and our school was quite open as well but then I was saying like for Jason obviously it would've made more of a difference because-
>
> **JASON:** it was the only thing I had
>
> **LAYLA:** yeah
>
> **JASON:** so I needed that to help me know it was okay

Here LGBTQ+ representation is positioned as a substitute for the validation that may come from positions of authority in participants' real lives. A direct parallel is created between the Authorisation which may come from authorities such as school and that which can come from television representation. Whilst Layla states that she and her friends were 'lucky' due to the accepting nature of their school, drawing upon the school environment as a figure of authority, Jason states that, as he did not get this sense of legitimacy from his school, he relied on television as a form of authority for legitimising his identity.

Layla's use of 'open' (+prop) in particular realises the category of Authorisation as it positions her school as being able to make moral judgements about the acceptability of LGBTQ+ students. The notion that schools hold this role for LGBTQ+ students has been previously discussed. Sauntson (2018), for example, upon interviewing LGBTQ+ students found that the students felt that it was possible for their schools to provide Authorisation for their identities, but that they were experiencing the opposite as their identities were being undermined. As a result, Sauntson (2018: 68) notes, there is 'a state of pervasive illegitimation surrounding LGBT+ identities' in the schools attended by her interviewees.

Layla's use of Propriety in this data supports the notion that schools are in a position to legitimise LGBTQ+ students' identities. It suggests that, as a result of her school being 'open' when it came to LGBTQ+ students, her experience was fairly positive. This is promising as it

suggests that some schools may be supporting LGBTQ+ students and helping them to feel legitimised. However, Layla's use of 'lucky' (+norm) suggests that a school being 'open' in a way which legitimises LGBTQ+ students' identities is uncommon enough that the opposite is notable. 'Lucky', here, has been denoted as Judgement: Normality as it is being used to suggest that Layla's experience is rare enough that she conders herself fortunate for having had a positive experience. As was noted by Sauntson (2018) LGBTQ+ students tend to feel that their identities are not being legitimised by their schools. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Layla describes herself as 'lucky' for feeling that she gained a sense of Authorisation from her school as she is aware that it is perhaps outside of the norm for this to be the case for LGBTQ+ students.

As noted in Chapter 7, Layla also refers to herself as 'lucky' in that she had other LGBTQ+ friends at school, thus relating the positive impact gained from knowing other LGBTQ+ youth with that gained from legitimation from the school. Jason and Layla then go on to explicitly state that the television representation to which he had access was a substitute for having a supportive school environment and knowing LGBTQ+ people in real-life. This demonstrates the importance of this representation in terms of helping young LGBTQ+ individuals feel secure as it explicitly states television's position as an authority able to legitimise identities, especially in instances where LGBTQ+ individuals do not receive this authorisation from elsewhere.

The fact that, as noted by Sauntson (2018) and suggested by Layla's use of the term 'lucky', LGBTQ+ students are often not able to receive this level of adequation from their schools demonstrates the importance of television representation in providing this for LGBTQ+ youth. This is further exemplified with an extract from the interview with Jay, a bisexual transgender man.

Extract 8.2 (from Focus Group 4):

> **JAY:** it [*the inclusion of a trans male character in* The L Word] was so important to me because like I didn't know any trans people in real life so I clung to anything that was out there

Further references to television as a form of authority in relation to gender and sexuality appeared throughout the data. As exemplified in the extracts presented in Table 8.1, this was often implicit as the notion that television had this level of authority was assumed and, thus,

the relationship between representation and individual's acceptance of themselves or others was not explicitly explained.

Extract (Authorisation/Illegitimation underlined)	**Authorisation or Illegitimation?**	**What is being il/legitimised?**	**Source**
JOHN: if something's in the media it's the done thing isn't it	Authorisation	Anything in the media	Focus Group 2
CHARLIE: they did it [made *Genderquake*] to make it into a spectacle	Illegitimation	Non-binary identities	Focus Group 5
PABLO: I was happy to see it cause up until that point I hadn't seen anything to sort of- **MICHELLE**: validate **PABLO**: -make sure I am who I am cause seeing that on TV I was like alright there's actually people out there that are the same as me and are living their lives and one day I can be them	Authorisation	Pablo's identity as a gay man	Focus Group 5
RYAN: he's just like seen someone trans and there should be more of that out there on the TV or whatever so more trans kids see other people out there who aren't cis like actually fucking surviving like that's always nice	Authorisation	Transgender identities	Focus Group 1
Representation, including that of normal loving LGBT relationships as opposed to age gaps and tragedy is so important as it helps people coming to terms with their identities to see themselves in a character (that is being displayed to the whole world and telling the world that this is ok) and realise they're not alone.	Authorization	Normal loving LGBT relationships	Questionnaire response
LGBT representation is so important for creating equality in society.	Authorisation	LGBTQ+ identities as equal	Questionnaire response

Table 8.1: Authorisation and Illegitimation

In Extract 8.3, Ryan, a transgender man asserts that, in the absence of knowing other trans people in real life, the representation of transgender people 'going about their daily lives […] surviving' would be beneficial for young transgender people. Indeed, he evaluates the experience of seeing transgender people in real life and on television in the same way as '(always) nice' (+val), arguably assigning the same level of importance to each experience. However, his statement that there 'should be more out there' implies that there is not enough of this representation to have this positive impact.

Extract 8.3 (from Focus Group 1):

> **RYAN:** there's this trans kid on the bus and yesterday when he got off I was like cheers have a good evening and he was like cheers man and I was just like that's nice there's a nice little trans kid who sees someone else being trans and having a job and just going about their daily lives and he's just like seen someone trans and there should be more of that out there on the TV or whatever so more trans kids see other people out who aren't cis like actually fucking surviving like that's always nice

The sentiment that there is not enough representation to create a positive impact occurred throughout the data. Extract 8.4 demonstrates this. Jay, a transgender man, evaluates the transgender representation he has seen as lacking 'nuance' (-comp) and as suggesting that the lives of transgender people are 'traumatic' (-val).

The implication here is that positive representation would help to change these views, perhaps helping transgender viewers to understand their identities in a more positive light as suggested by Ryan in the above extract. As discussed in Chapter 7, transgender lives being represented as only consisting of 'suffering and trauma' was a concern of transgender participants, and is something that has been noted in the wider literature on transgender representation in the media. McLaren et al (2021: 177), for example, note that transgender characters are often shown as 'victims of physical or psychological violence'.

Extract 8.4 (from Focus Group 4):

> **JAY:** All the trans representation I've seen has lacked nuance and reinforced the idea that trans life is just suffering and trauma

As there are numerous instances in which participants either make direct comparisons between the authority of television and the authority of people in their real lives or talk about the ability television has to create or enforce certain viewpoints, it is important to note what it is that participants want from television representation. This is done in the following sections.

8.2.1 Labelling

One way in which participants felt that television media could help provide legitimation for LGBTQ+ identities was through the use of labels. Table 8.2 includes some instances in which participants referred, both in a positive and negative way, to the labelling of LGBTQ+ characters. As was noted in Chapter 7, participants, especially bisexual, pansexual, asexual and non-binary participants, evaluated programmes negatively when they included, or hinted at including, LGBTQ+ characters without explicitly labelling them.

Participant	**Reference to labels**	**Source**
Asexual panromantic woman	If asexuality is present in shows it's not labelled	Questionnaire
Demisexual biromantic woman	like Sherlock in the BBC Sherlock programme he's sort of implied to be asexual	Questionnaire
Asexual homoromantic woman	Sheldon's presumed asexuality in BBT	Questionnaire
Asexual aromantic non-binary person	It would definitely have helped me to have heard someone say 'oh they're asexual'. I just had no idea what I even was.	Questionnaire
Sophia (bisexual woman)	it annoys me so much what characters are shown to like men and women but are never actually called bisexual people always refer to them as gay or straight but not bi like why	Sophia (FG2)
Jessica (bisexual woman)	giving people a word for it can help them know there's more people like them out there	Jessica (FG2)
John (gay man)	I dunno like people don't need to go on and announce that they're straight so it might make it a big thing	John (FG2)
Gay man	I don't like it when they include a character as a token gay character as if as soon as they're known as "the gay character" that's all they are	Questionnaire
Gay man	Gay characters become defined by only their sexuality which can be restrictive in my opinion.	Questionnaire

Table 8.2: Participants' Opinions on Labels

As Sauntson (2018: 65) notes, Illegitimation 'can be enacted through the censoring or ignoring of particular identities' and, thus, it follows that some participants within this data felt their identities were being ignored and therefore not legitimised when they were not labelled. This can perhaps be best exemplified by an interaction that took place in one of the focus group discussions.

Extract 8.5 (from Focus Group 2):

SOPHIA: it annoys me so much what characters are shown to like men and women but are never actually called bisexual people always refer to them as gay or straight but not bi like why

JESSICA: like Piper in-

SOPHIA: -in Orange is the New Black exactly

JESSICA: yeah I don't like that they avoided calling her bi like it's not that weird you can say it

In the above extract, Sophia and Jessica who are both cisgender bisexual women, are discussing the sexual orientation of Piper, a character in *Orange is the New Black* who is shown to be in relationships with men and women. They note that this character has been referred to by labels which fall into the dichotomy of being either gay or straight, but not referred to using a label which allows for her attraction to multiple genders simultaneously. In this interaction, bisexuality is noted to undergo the process of Illegitimation in two ways. Firstly, by avoiding the label of 'bisexual', Illegitimation is enacted as the orientation is ignored and not considered as a viable option for the character's identity. Secondly, by ignoring the label in this way, Jessica suggests that bisexuality is being presented as something 'weird' (-norm) as it is not able to be spoken about in the way that the labels 'straight' and 'gay' are. Jessica further notes that labelling orientations can help develop a sense of community for young LGBTQ+ individuals and, thus, is particularly important in creating a sense of Adequation (Extract 8.6).

Extract 8.6 (from Focus Group 2):

JESSICA: giving people a word for it can help them know there's more people like them out there

As previously noted, this is especially important for LGBTQ+ individuals who may not know of anyone in their real lives who is LGBTQ+ as it can help them to recognise that they are not

alone in their experiences. However, as can be seen from Table 8.2, not all participants felt that labelling characters in this way was important. For example, within the same focus group discussion that Jessica and Sophia were a part of, John, a cisgender gay man, expressed concerns about a character's sexuality becoming 'a big thing'.

Extract 8.7 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JOHN:** I dunno like people don't need to go on and announce that they're straight so it might make it a big thing

The complex relationship between Distinction from and Adequation with cisgender heterosexual individuals was discussed in Chapter 7 wherein it was noted that participants expressed a desire to be represented as 'normal' or 'like everyone else'. It is perhaps the case, therefore, that this is what is being expressed by John in this extract. However, within this study, there tended to be a link between how labels were evaluated and the gender and/or sexual orientation of the person doing the evaluation. Asexual, bisexual and non-binary participants, when mentioning the labelling of characters, tended to express a desire for characters' orientation to be mentioned explicitly. These participants felt that labelling asexual and bisexual characters would 'help' LGBTQ+ viewers by making 'them feel like they're part of something' and stated that not labelling their orientations was akin to 'erasing' their identities, suggesting they were 'weird', or that they should be 'ashamed' of who they are. Gay men, on the other hand, expressed concerns that, in being labelled, characters would become a 'token' character 'defined only by their sexuality'. It was suggested that this may lead to a character's orientation being 'all they are' which could be 'restrictive' (Table 8.2).

These differing evaluations may occur as a result of the different types of representation these groups receive in the media. One of the main concerns expressed by the gay men within this study, as noted in Chapter 7, was that representations of gay men tend to be 'stereotypical' and 'lack nuance'. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that these participants were wary of labels as, in their experience, gay men can easily become tokenised and, therefore, reduced to being 'defined only by their sexuality'. Asexual, bisexual, pansexual, and non-binary participants, on the other hand, were concerned with being erased from media entirely, or, in the case of bisexual and pansexual participants, of their orientations being represented as a 'phase'. From this perspective, labels may be a way of providing legitimation by recognising their validity as orientations. This view can be summarised with reference to one questionnaire respondent's comment on this topic (Extract 8.8).

Extract 8.8 (from Questionnaire response):

> It would definitely have helped me to have heard someone say 'oh `they're asexual'. I just had no idea what I even was.

Clark's (1969) stages of representation can perhaps be drawn upon to further understand this. It would appear that participants' responses varied depending on the level of recognition people with the same orientations as them have received in media. Those who are still largely in the stage of non-representation, in this instance asexual and bisexual participants, felt that labels were important in proving a level of Authorisation. Those who are arguably within the stage of ridicule, however, may associate labels with being stereotyped and tokenised and, thus, are wary of characters being labelled in this way. Thus, it is important to consider the differing needs of members of the LGBTQ+ community, the different types of representation they have witnessed, and the impact this may have on their thoughts about LGBTQ+ representation.

8.2.2 Irrealis Authorisation

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, participants expressed more instances of Authorisation than they did Illegitimation. On a surface level, this is promising as it implies that LGBTQ+ identities are being legitimised by the media. However, often these examples were irrealis. That is, participants spoke of the potential power representation could have in legitimising their identities, rather than any actual instances of legitimation they had seen. This notion that, whilst television has the power to legitimise identities for LGBTQ+ individuals, participants feel this is not happening enough and, as a result, feel as if their identities are being illegitimised instead is common throughout the data and is further discussed in this section.

Labov (1972: 381) explains that events can be evaluated by 'placing them against the background of other events which might have happened, but which did not'. Comparators, including 'negatives, futures, modals, quasimodals, questions, imperatives, or-clauses, superlatives, and comparatives', can be used by speakers to 'consider unrealized possibilities and compare them with the events that did occur', thereby implicitly evaluating those events (Labov, 1972: 387). By noting what did not occur, comparators can be used to express 'the defeat of an expectation that something would happen' (Labov, 1972: 380-81).

An extract from the data collected for the present study which exemplifies this is reproduced below:

Extract 8.9 (from Interview 4):

> **SOPHIA:** it could have been realistic representation but they just made it the cliché that bisexuality was a phase

Here, Sophia evaluates the bisexual representation she is discussing explicitly by referring to it as a cliché and, more implicitly, by comparing the representation which was produced with the unrealised possibility of having 'realistic' (+norm) representation. By setting up an unrealised positive situation, the situation which did occur, in this case the stereotypical representation of bisexuality, is shown in direct comparison, highlighting the issues with the representation through contrast and demonstrating that the negative outcome is not unavoidable or necessary. Sophia is expressing not only a dissatisfaction with the representation she witnessed, but a feeling of being let down by the potential that was not realised in the representation she is evaluating.

Such structures were used by participants to evaluate representation throughout this study. Throughout this data, participants noted representation that could have occurred, or noted positive impacts that would result from better representation, before noting that these ideal representations had not been realised. That this structure is an effective and productive way of evaluating representation can be exemplified by the fact that, in many instances, participants did not need to explicitly evaluate the representation they had witnessed or mention it at all. Instead, the mention of hypothetical representation was enough to implicitly evaluate the reality negatively, as is demonstrated in Extract 8.10.

Extract 8.10 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JESSICA:** he could have been the most talented and the best knight and still be gay

Section 8.2.1.1 discussed further the ways in which participants evaluated representation using discourse structure and lexical items.

8.2.3 Hypothetical-real

As noted in Chapter 3, Martin and White (2005) state that grammatical structures, as well as lexis, can indicate stance. In instances such as those discussed above, it is clear that the structure

of the utterance is aiding in the construction of evaluation. The structure of these can perhaps be most clearly categorised by drawing on Winter's (1994) Hypothetical-real text structure.

Winter (1994: 62) states that Hypothetical-real is a marked structure in that the inclusion of a modal or similar linguistic device signals hypotheticality which, in turn, signals to a reader or listener that the reality, which is in contrast to what has been demonstrated as hypothetical, will follow. In the instances in Table 8.3, below, participants are presenting the hypothetical situation as the ideal and, thus, by contrasting this with the reality, they implicitly evaluate the reality negatively. This is also occasionally followed by more explicit, always negative evaluations of the reality.

Extract 8.10 (from Focus Group 5):

> **CHARLIE:** if there had been more [*representation of LGBTQ+ characters*] I would have understood my sexuality sooner instead of just hating myself

In the example above, Charlie does not explicitly label the representation, or lack of representation, that they had seen as bad or lacking using lexical items, however they are clearly evaluating representation by setting up a hypothetical positive scenario and contrasting this with the reality of what they experienced. The value of the representation, or lack of representation, is clearly being assessed. To analyse this, and related instances such as those presented below in Table 8.3, in detail, therefore, the structure of the utterance, and not just individual lexical items, needs to be considered.

Hypothetical	Real	Source
SOPHIA: if there had been more stuff I would have been able to find out who I was	but I just had it hidden away which sucked really	Focus Group 2
SAM: if there was one non-binary character that's literally all it would take for everyone to just be like "oh okay"	but there's just nothing is there	Focus Group 1
RYAN: if they showed us leading normal lives that would just be good to see	rather than them just focussing on like how we have sex	Focus Group 1
PABLO: if they were to watch an informative like documentary type thing they would be more open to it		Focus Group 5
ALEX: if there was more like non-binary representation out there it'd be nice		Focus Group 5
RYAN: it would be so good if there was decent trans representation out there	but it's all just a bit shit really isn't it	Focus Group 1
NICKY: if there was more representation in TV people would get that you can be asexual but not aromantic		Focus Group 4
ANTHONY: if it was seen more the negativity would lessen it would definitely help		Focus Group 3
JOHN: if there was more stuff it would definitely help homophobes to understand		Focus Group 2
CHARLIE: if there had been more I would have understood my sexuality sooner	instead of just hating myself	Focus Group 5
MO: if this was explained in TV this would really help people that's all that it would take		Focus Group 4
REBECCA: they could have had an absolutely fantastic storyline	but they fucked it	Interview 3
JESSICA: he could have been the most talented and the best knight and still be gay		Focus Group 2
ROSE: it could have been good	but then they screwed it up	Focus Group 4
SOPHIA: it could have been realistic representation	but they just made it the cliché that bisexuality was a phase	Interview 4
JAY: if it [*being transgender*] was more normalised it would let you [*transgender individuals*] consider your options sooner	instead of thinking there's something wrong with you that no one else goes through	Focus Group 4
DEAN: it would have helped me […] it would've been good if it was normalised	but there wasn't much back then	Focus Group 3

Table 8.3: Hypothetical-real

8.2.3.1 Modal Auxiliaries

As previously noted, Labov (1972: 387) states that comparators, such as 'negatives, futures, modals, quasimodals, questions, imperatives, or-clauses, superlatives, and comparatives', can be used to 'consider unrealized possibilities and compare them with the events that did occur'. Participants usually created hypothetical situations by drawing on modals.

Participants used the modal auxiliaries 'could' and 'would' to introduce hypothetical situations. As noted by Martin and White (2005: 54), following Halliday's (1994) analysis of modality and interpersonal metaphor, a connection can be made between interpersonal grammar and Appraisal. They state that modalities of ability and capacity are related to Judgements of Capacity and modalities of inclination are related to Judgements of Tenacity. This is evident in participants' uses of modal auxiliaries.

Generally, 'could' was used to express capacity by suggesting that creators of television programmes had the ability to include positive representation. The representation that was witnessed by participants was then implicitly negatively appraised due to the fact that these possibilities had not been realised, as is the case in Extract 8.11, or evaluated by explicitly comparing it to what was produced (Extracts 8.12 and 8.13).

Extract 8.11 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JESSICA:** he could have been the most talented and the best knight and still be gay

Extract 8.12 (from Focus Group 4):

> **ROSE:** it could have been good but then they screwed it up

Extract 8.13 (from Interview 3):

> **REBECCA:** they could have had an absolutely fantastic storyline but they fucked it

By drawing on elements of Judgement: Capacity in this way, participants were able to intensify their evaluations by critiquing not just the representation they had witnessed, but also the creators of this content by highlighting the fact that they had capability to produce more positive content but that this remained unrealised. This intensification is furthered by the lexical choices used by participants in such structures. Graduation: Force is drawn upon in Extract 8.13, for example, wherein Rebecca notes that a narrative could have been 'absolutely

fantastic'. She then contrasts this with the reality which, she states, was that the writers 'fucked it'. Judgement: Capacity is, again, drawn upon here as Rebecca is negatively evaluating the writers' handling of the narrative by suggesting that they 'fucked it' up. Such criticism places the writers in a position of responsibility and holds them accountable for the unjust representation participants have witnessed, thus, not only criticising the negative representation but also highlighting the fact that such portrayals are not necessary and can be improved. This notion of responsibility is further discussed with reference to the exploitation of LGBTQ+ individuals in Chapter 9.

The modal auxiliary 'would' was also used by participants to express Judgement through hypothetical situations (Extracts 8.14 to 8.16). This modal of inclination is related to lexical realisations of Judgement: Tenacity, how dependable or resolute a person is, and is used to assert how confident speakers feel about an, as yet unrealised, outcome.

Extract 8.14 (from Focus Group 3):

> **ANTHONY:** if it [*same-sex couples on television*] was seen more the negativity would lessen it would definitely help

Extract 8.15 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JOHN:** if there was more stuff [*LGBTQ+ representation*] it would definitely help homophobes to understand

Extract 8.16 (from Focus Group 4):

> **MO:** if this was explained in TV this would really help people

Here participants express the potential positive outcomes of positive representation with a high-level of tenacity through the use of the modal 'would'. Participants, therefore, express confidence that positive representation would have real-world implications of LGBTQ+ individuals. Here, again, the importance of television representation in legitimising LGBTQ+ identities is demonstrated.

Interestingly, as well as noting the importance of representation for LGBTQ+ youth, as was discussed above, participants also noted that representation was important in legitimising LGBTQ+ identities for cisgender heterosexual viewers who may hold homophobic views. Participants, for example, stated that positive representation would 'definitely help' to lessen

homophobic attitudes from those who may not have much exposure to real LGBTQ+ individuals.

These modals expressing tenacity were also used by participants to emphasise the fact that it is possible for writers to create better LGBTQ+ content on television and help legitimise identities. This again places the writers in a position of responsibility as those who are able to legitimise LGBTQ+ identities and, thus, and holds them accountable for the representation participants have witnessed which does not achieve this.

In using this Hypothetical-real structure alongside lexicalised evaluation which asserts what should be changed about representation, participants convey how they feel representation could be improved and note the importance of positive representation in identity construction for LGBTQ+ individuals. Thus, such examples point to the possibility of change whilst also criticising current representation. Such instances, therefore, can be referred to when considering what positive representation might look like for participants.

8.2.3.2 Graduation

As noted above, participants' use of the modal auxiliary 'would' suggests a level of certainty in the outcomes that would be achieved from the hypothetical positive representation they discuss. This certainty is further expressed through participants' Graduation use within these utterances. This is achieved in two ways: firstly, through expressing the ease with which television producers could provide positive representation, and, secondly, through emphasising the benefits that would occur as a result of positive representation.

In the first instance, participants draw on Force: Quantification ('if there was one non-binary character', 'literally all it would take', Extract 8.17) and Force: Intensification ('quite easily', Extract 8.18) to emphasise how simple it would be to produce representation that is better than what they had witnessed. Quantification is used to note that even a small amount of positive representation would make a difference, as can be seen in Sam's utterance reproduced below.

Extract 8.17 (from Focus Group 1):

> **SAM:** if there was one non-binary character that's literally all it would take for everyone to just be like "oh okay" but there's just nothing is there

Extract 8.18 (from Focus Group 5):

> **MICHELLE:** it would be good if all members [*of the LGBTQ+ community*] were equally represented and they could be quite easily

In the second instance, to emphasise the benefits that would occur as a result of positive representation, participants drew mainly on intensification ('so good', 'definitely help', 'really help', 'absolutely fantastic'). Much of the strongest positive evaluation was used here. Participants used Graduation here to state how important they felt these hypothetical examples of representation had the potential to be and to emphasise the positive impacts representation could have. The nature of the positive implication of such representation is discussed in the following section.

8.2.3.3 Positive Valuation

Sauntson (2018: 89) notes that her participants used irrealis positive Valuation to 'ascribe positive value to imagined or hypothetical phenomena and processes' and that these examples 'are a useful indication' of what participants want. In my data, participants' irrealis positive Valuation generally falls into two categories. Firstly, the idea that positive representation should 'help' viewers and, secondly, that it should 'normalise' being LGBTQ+.

In using the positive Valuation of 'help', participants state that seeing more LGBTQ+ representation would be beneficial for both LGBTQ+ people (Extract 8.19) and cisgender heterosexual people (Extract 8.20). Related lexemes that are drawn upon in such utterances include 'explained', 'understand', 'open', and 'supportive'. Here, as was the case in the examples discussed at the beginning of this chapter, participants note the authority held by television representation in terms of legitimising LGBTQ+ identities. Social Sanction is drawn on to assert that television representation plays an important role in helping cisgender heterosexual people accept and support LGBTQ+ people. It is apparent from this, therefore, that representation that provides an accurate depiction of being LGBTQ+ is important to participants and is believed to have far-reaching consequences.

Extract 8.19 (from Focus Group 3):

> **DEAN:** it would have helped me […]it would've been good if it was normalised

Extract 8.20 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JOHN:** if there was more stuff it would definitely help homophobes to understand

This importance is further demonstrated through participants' use of the positive Valuation 'normalised'. Participants express a desire for 'realistic' (+val) representation that depicts LGBTQ+ individuals leading 'normal' (+norm) lives. Again, the focus is on representation that shows viewers what it means to be LGBTQ+, rather than on showing characters that perpetuate negative stereotypes. This is in line with analysis in Chapter 7 in which 'stereotypical' representation was always evaluated negatively.

One way of ensuring that representation is realistic, according to participants, is to include LGBTQ+ individuals in the creative process. This is best highlighted with reference to conversations that occurred within two of the focus group interactions (Extract 8.21 and 8.22).

Extract 8.21 (from Focus Group 5):

> **PABLO:** don't get a straight person to do a gay storyline cause they don't know what it's like
>
> **MICHELLE:** yeah
>
> **ALEX:** mm
>
> **MICHELLE:** yeah absolutely
>
> **ALEX:** give it a bit more
>
> **CHARLIE:** a bit more like realism that's all any of us wants isn't it
>
> **ALEX:** mm
>
> **CHARLIE:** something we can look at and be like that's
>
> representative

Extract 8.22 (from Focus Group 4):

JAY: there's a real possibility of raising even more awareness through interviews and things

NICKY: mm

ROSE: mm

JAY: as well so it's not just through the show like they could like there's other little avenues that they could

NICKY: that's a good point

JAY: like raise awareness

In Extract 8.21, Pablo, a cisgender gay man, states that it is important to hire gay writers when telling narratives surrounding gay people as they 'know what it's like'. Charlie, a genderqueer queer person, then supports and furthers this by stating that this would help create 'realism' and narratives that LGBTQ+ individuals feel are 'representative'. Similarly, in Extract 8.22, Jay, a transgender bisexual man, when talking about casting transgender actors to play transgender characters, states that casting a transgender actor could potentially further help raise awareness though opportunities to talk about their experiences in interviews. In both focus groups, these statements were emphatically supported by the other participants who showed their agreements through their utterances ('mm', 'yeah absolutely', 'yeah definitely', 'that's a good point'). It appears, therefore, that participants do not simply feel that television media plays a role in legitimising LGBTQ+ identities, but that capitalising on this to educate, raise awareness, and provide people with relatable and realistic representations of being LGBTQ+ is one of the key changes that should be made to LGBTQ+ television representation.

8.3 Characters and Authority

While the previous section demonstrated the role of television in legitimising LGBTQ+ identities for viewers, the focus of this section is the Authorisation of identities within programmes themselves. Participants often drew on the domain of Judgment to evaluate representation. Martin and White (2005) note that Judgement is typically used when a person is more personally involved as it is used to evaluate real humans whose behaviours have consequences. Participants drawing on this domain, therefore, implies a level of involvement that suggests they are responding to LGBTQ+ content as more than just passive viewers but are treating the characters as if they are real people. As noted in Chapter 3, this system can be

divided into two subsystems: Judgements expressing Social Esteem and those expressing Social Sanction (Martin and White, 2005: 52). Throughout this data, cisgender heterosexual characters and LGBTQ+ characters were evaluated differently with respect to this. Table 8.4 provides some examples.

Appraising Item	**Subsystem**	**Esteem/Sanction**	**Appraised**	**Source**
Lacking emotions	-norm	Social Esteem	Asexual character	Questionnaire
Incapable of feelings	-cap	Social Esteem	Asexual character	Freddie (FG3)
Normal	+norm	Social Esteem	Asexual character	Questionnaire
Weird	-norm	Social Esteem	Non-binary character	Questionnaire
Respected	+ten	Social Esteem	Bisexual character	Questionnaire
Unfaithful	-ten	Social Esteem	Bisexual character	Questionnaire
Multifaceted	+norm	Social Esteem	Gay man character	Questionnaire
Undatable	-cap	Social Esteem	Transgender character	Questionnaire
Open	+ver	Social Sanction	Cisgender heterosexual characters talking about their transgender daughter	Jessica (FG2)
Accepting	+prop	Social Sanction	Fictional gay man's cisgender heterosexual friendship group	Mo (FG4)
Open	+ver	Social Sanction	Lesbian character's cisgender heterosexual sister	Rebecca (I3)
Really accepting	+prop	Social Sanction	Lesbian character's cisgender heterosexual sister	Rebecca (I3)
Good (morally)	+prop	Social Sanction	Lesbian character's cisgender heterosexual sister	Rebecca (I3)
Open	+ver	Social Sanction	Transgender character's relatives	Charlie (FG5)

Table 8.4: Social Sanction and Social Esteem

As can be seen from Table 8.4, a divide between the subtypes of Social Esteem and Social Sanction was apparent within the evaluations in this data. Social Esteem - how special, capable, or dependable someone is - is related to social network construction, whilst Social Sanction - how honest or ethical someone is - is related to stricter rules and regulations followed by society as a whole and regulated by those in power (Martin and White, 2005: 52).

The examples in Table 8.4 illustrate a notable occurrence present throughout the data as a whole. That is, participants tended to draw on Judgements of Social Esteem when referring to LGBTQ+ characters ('normal', 'weird', 'unfaithful', 'multifaceted') and Judgements of Social Sanction when referring to cisgender heterosexual characters ('open', accepting', 'good').

Martin and White (2005) note that Judgements of Social Esteem tend to be used to evaluate people within a person's social networks, and, thus, to judge people based on their social attractiveness. As this is a valuation used typically to judge friends and to make social networks, this data provides evidence that participants feel able to relate more closely with LGBTQ+ characters. It is perhaps promising, therefore, that some LGBTQ+ characters were being evaluated using positive social esteem. However, it should be noted that many of these evaluations that occurred throughout the data were critiques of the representation participants had witnessed ('undatable', 'incapable of feeling', 'weird', 'unfaithful').

Evaluations related to Social Sanction in this data were more positively weighted. In many instances these were used to positively evaluate cisgender heterosexual characters when they responded positively to LGBTQ+ characters (Extract 8.23).

Extract 8.23 (from Interview 3):

> **REBECCA:** in *Coronation Street* Sophie's sister Rose is like really accepting and good about it

Participants evaluated these characters as 'open' (+ver), 'accepting' (+prop), and 'good' (+prop). Veracity, how honest someone is, and Propriety, how moral someone is, are situated within the field of 'rules, regulations, and laws about how to behave' and, thus, it could be suggested that such Judgements in particular reveal who speakers view as being in a position to authorise or legitimise others (Martin ad White, 2005: 52). The fact that heterosexual characters are often evaluated using these Judgements, therefore, suggests that participants felt these characters were being shown in a position wherein they were able to legitimise LGBTQ+ characters' identities.

This is perhaps unsurprising given that, when LGBTQ+ characters first began to be included in television programmes in a way that was not designed to ridicule them, they were usually included so that main (cisgender heterosexual) characters could have narratives revolving around them learning to accept others (Netzley, 2010). LGBTQ+ characters being used to develop cisgender heterosexual characters in this way was something that was also noted by participants within in this study and is discussed in Chapter 9.

The fact that positive reactions from cisgender heterosexual characters towards LGBTQ+ characters were evaluated positively by participants in this study is interesting. It suggests the importance of not only the positive representations of LGBTQ+ characters themselves, but also of positive reactions from cisgender heterosexual characters within programmes. Due to television's role in providing Authorisation of LGBTQ+ identities not only for LGBTQ+ individuals themselves but also for cisgender heterosexual viewers and as it has been established that television viewers find it easiest to relate to characters that they feel represent themselves in some way (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Bond et al, 2009; Clark, 2014), it could perhaps be argued that, in showing cisgender heterosexual characters responding positively towards LGBTQ+ characters, programmes can serve as an example for cisgender heterosexual viewers who do not have any contact with LGBTQ+ individuals in real life.

However, despite this, these findings may have more negative implications. It may perhaps seem obvious that cisgender heterosexual characters are placed in a position wherein they are able to legitimise LGBTQ+ characters given that LGBTQ+ characters are in the minority and the ability to provide Authorisation may be presumed to be exclusive to those within the majority. However, Bucholtz and Hall (2004: 387) note that the ability to legitimate an identity is not necessarily limited to the dominant group and can in fact be used to challenge dominant power structures. It is possible, in theory, therefore, that, despite being within a minority, LGBTQ+ characters could be depicted as being able to provide Legitimation for other LGBTQ+ characters. The fact that the type of Authorisation demonstrating Social Sanction was mainly attributed to cisgender heterosexual characters by participants perhaps suggests that writers are not challenging the assumed power structures, but enforcing them.

Furthermore, it is interesting that within this data heterosexual characters are being judged on how morally they behave, whilst LGBTQ+ characters are being judged on their personality traits or social behaviour. This reflects underlying issues with television representation of LGBTQ+ characters. Cisgender heterosexual characters are more likely to be presented as

multifaceted characters whilst LGBTQ+ characters are generally confined to one-dimensional or stereotypical representation (Netzley, 2010). As heterosexual characters are more likely to be complex, they are perhaps less likely to be evaluated in terms of Social Esteem as their value as multifaceted characters is assumed. LGBTQ+ characters, on the other hand, are not consistently represented in this way and, thus, participants' focus was on highlighting instances wherein characters needed to be developed into multifaceted individuals. Furthermore, the fact that heterosexual characters were often praised for their acceptance of LGBTQ+ characters, with participants drawing upon Social Sanction, reveals further issues as it suggests that heterosexual characters are being placed in a position above LGBTQ+ characters as they are able to judge and decide whether a character's sexual orientation is 'acceptable' or not.

8.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed who, or what, participants positioned as having the ability to authorise LGBTQ+ identities, how this was done, and whether or not they felt their identities were being legitimised. Firstly, it was established that television was constructed as an authority with the power to legitimise identities by participants. Participants used similar evaluations to refer to both their school environment and television representation where seeking legitimation was concerned. It was suggested by participants that LGBTQ+ representation could legitimise LGBTQ+ identities for both LGBTQ+ individuals themselves and for cisgender heterosexual individuals. It is, therefore, important that LGBTQ+ representation is present and of a good quality.

Secondly, the ways in which participants felt representation could provide legitimation of identities was considered. It was noted in the introduction of this chapter that Authorisation was the most drawn upon tactic in this data but that this did not necessarily suggest that participants felt that identities were being legitimised. This is apparent when using Appraisal Theory to investigate the evaluations made by participants when they are creating Authorisation. This revealed that the majority of evaluations of actual representation were negatively weighted and that the positively weighted evaluations tended to refer to ideal, or irrealis, representation that participants desired. Following this, instances of irrealis Authorisation were considered so that what participants desired in terms of representation could be noted. From this, it became apparent that participants emphasised the importance of realistic representation as they felt this would, firstly, help young LGBTQ+ individuals understand their identities and, secondly, demonstrate what being LGBTQ+ is like for

cisgender heterosexual viewers. The general consensus was that this would help LGBTQ+ identities become normalised, not only in media, but also in real life.

Another point that arose from this analysis was that some participants, namely some bisexual, pansexual, non-binary, and asexual participants, felt that the use of labels would help validate their identities, but that others, namely gay men, were wary of labels due to their experiences of tokenisation. I would suggest that a consideration of this reaction to labelling characters together with the evaluations used within the Hypothetical-real structures could provide some useful insights into how to improve LGBTQ+ representation for participants within this study. Labels are clearly an important way of helping to create a sense of legitimisation for identities which are still largely in Clark's (1969) stage of non-representation. However, it is clearly important that when identities become recognised in media, they do not get confined to the stage of ridicule through representations that stereotype and restrict characters. Creating a diverse, nuanced range of LGBTQ+ characters within media would help avoid this as the association between labels and stereotypes may lesson. This is an observation made by one questionnaire participant when asked to name a good example of LGBTQ+ representation (Extract 8.24).

Extract 8.24 (from Questionnaire response):

> Brooklyn 99. Captain Holt is a gay black man who is married. Rosa Diaz is a bisexual latinx woman. The LGBT+ representation on the show is intersectional, and is an important part of both characters, but doesn't define them. The show acknowledges the reality of homophobia, but steers away from the queer tragedy trope. The sexuality of the characters is never the punchline of a joke.

In the programme the participant is referring to, *Brooklyn Nine-nine*, both characters' orientations are labelled, however both are shown to be nuanced, multidimensional characters who are not defined by their sexuality. The 'reality' of being LGBTQ+ and facing homophobia is acknowledged, but the characters do not exist to present the lives of LGBTQ+ as traumatic. This participant's response also suggests that, within this programme, the LGBTQ+ characters have moved beyond the stage of ridicule as their sexualities are 'never the punchline of a joke'. This is promising as it suggests that characters' orientations can be labelled, and thus afforded some level of validation, and not be confined to stereotypical representation. Perhaps it could

be suggested, therefore, that characters' orientations can be recognised through labels, as long as they are not defined by them.

Finally, in this chapter, it was noted that participants used Judgements differently to refer to cisgender heterosexual characters and LGBTQ+ characters. In this data set, participants tended to draw upon Judgements of Social Sanction when referring to cisgender heterosexual characters and Judgements of Social Esteem when referring to LGBTQ+ characters. I have argued that this suggests that cisgender heterosexual characters are placed in a position of authority wherein they are able to provide or withdraw legitimation for LGBTQ+ characters. This is perhaps positive in some ways as it may provide a template for cisgender heterosexual viewers when interacting with LGBTQ+ individuals in real life. However, it is also perhaps concerning that cisgender heterosexual individuals are viewed as being in this position of power wherein it is up to them whether or not LGBTQ+ individuals are viewed as valid. One way of combatting this may be to include LGBTQ+ characters who validate and support other LGBTQ+ characters in their narratives.

In sum, following evaluations made by participants within this study, this chapter has suggested the following as ways of potentially improving LGBTQ+ representation:

1. Include diverse, nuanced, and multidimensional LGBTQ+ characters
2. Normalise LGBTQ+ characters by giving them narratives beyond their orientations
3. Provide validation for orientations which are rarely seen in media by explicitly referencing and/or labelling them, but ensure that they are not defined only by their LGBTQ+ identities
4. Allow LGBTQ+ characters to validate other LGBTQ+ characters rather than suggesting that LGBTQ+ individuals can only be fully 'accepted' if this is done by cisgender heterosexual individuals

The following chapter discusses the final pair of tactics: Authentication and Denaturalisation.

CHAPTER 9: AUTHENTICATION AND DENATURALISATION

9.1 Introduction

The tactics of Authentication and Denaturalization are concerned with reality and artifice. Authentication refers to the construction of identities as credible and genuine and Denaturalization refers to the construction of identities as of not credible and non-genuine. As a pair, these categories were drawn upon less than the other tactics with 284 instances counted throughout the data in comparison to the 464 instances of Adequation and Distinction and the 429 instances of Authorisation and Illegitimation. Despite the fact that these categories were drawn on less often than the others, an analysis of the ways in which they were used demonstrates the importance of these tactics to participants when discussing representation.

Interestingly, participants questioned the motives of some creators of LGBTQ+ representation. As is discussed in Section 9.2, participants felt that creators would sometimes include LGBTQ+ characters in order to construct an identity as being 'accepting' and 'progressive' while, in actuality, only including these characters for views and monetary gain. It was suggested that this may lead to unrealistic and sometimes damaging representation of LGBTQ+ individuals as 'tools' to be used for the development of cisgender heterosexual characters or to be used to create 'thrilling' and 'illicit' storylines. Section 9.3 then discusses participants' references to emotional responses to LGBTQ+ content with respect to representation's ability to Authenticate or Denaturalise identities.

9.2 Authenticity of Creators

Participants not only discussed the representation they had seen on television, but the motives of companies for including such representation. The motives of companies, producers, directors, and writers (referred to from now on as 'creators') were questioned by participants throughout the data and were associated with the quality of representation produced. A theme throughout the data was that one of the key factors leading to inadequate representation was a lack of sincerity in its creation. Participants constructed creators' identities as inauthentic if they felt the creators were including LGBTQ+ content to create a sense of excitement, for monetary gain, or to give creators a sense of moral superiority for including diversity within their programmes. The representation which occurred as a result of such motives was generally considered to lead to LGBTQ+ characters and relationships being underdeveloped and unrealistic.

Participants critiqued companies for using LGBTQ+ content to appear morally 'good' (+prop) on a surface level whilst not benefitting the LGBTQ+ community in actuality. Such instances connote an element of inauthenticity as LGBTQ+ characters are tokenised to suggest inclusivity or to attract LGBTQ+ viewers without creators being willing to develop these characters. As is exemplified in Extracts 9.1 and 9.2, participants suggested that the creators of some LGBTQ+ representation were attempting to convey themselves in ways which did not authentically represent their motives.

Extract 9.1 (from Focus Group 5):

> **MICHELLE:** I really think people like all of these producers and storywriters and things thinking about it I think they have this like idea of thinking oh look we look so open but actually there's a complete reason why they're writing all these things into storylines and it's not a good it's not coming from like a sincere place it's because they just want-
>
> **PABLO:** -money
>
> **MICHELLE:** yeah exactly exactly
>
> **PABLO:** they just want money
>
> **MICHELLE:** exactly and so it's crap

Extract 9.2 (from Focus Group 1):

> **SAM:** I don't think they're doing it for the right reasons it's still more and shock value based rather than real

In these extracts, participants are questioning the authenticity of the identities that television content creators are presenting to audiences. In Extract 9.1, for example, Michelle draws upon judgements of social sanction when referring to producers, stating that, despite believing they are appearing 'open' (+prop), their motives are not 'good' (+prop) or 'sincere' (+ver). Pablo then adds to this by suggesting that financial reward is the ultimate motive of these producers. Similarly, Sam (Extract 9.2) states that they believe creators are not producing content for the 'right reasons'. 'Right', in this instance, is classified as positive Propriety as Sam is judging the morality behind the inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters.

In both examples, it is suggested that the programme creators mentioned include LGBTQ+ representation as they are attempting to actively curate an identity that is viewed as morally

desirable for exploitative reasons, such as monetary gain or audience appreciation, rather than because they truly believe including LGBTQ+ representation is 'right'. The identities presented by the creators are, therefore, constructed as inauthentic by participants.

In these instances, as well as other examples shown throughout this chapter, a similar pattern of evaluation to that which was discussed in Chapter 8.2.2: Irrealis Authorisation is apparent. Positive evaluations, such as 'good' and 'right', are framed by negative evaluation or devices, such as conjunctions, which distance the assumed 'real' motivations from the inauthentic ones presented by creators. It was noted in Chapter 8 that the use of irrealis Authorisation served to place creators in a position of responsibility wherein it is acknowledged that it is possible for them to create better representation, and thus, they are held accountable for not doing so. Within examples, such as Extracts 9.1 and 9.2, in which participants express Authentication, creators are similarly held accountable, however, these examples perhaps express a greater level of intent of behalf of creators. Creators in these instances are explicitly noted to be responsible for the irrealis situations, that is, they are the ones who are actively creating an inauthentic, irrealis, identity as morally good.

In Extract 9.3, for example, reproduced from Chapter 8, Charlie expresses irrealis Authorisation by suggesting that creators are in a position of authority in that they could have helped Charlie understand their sexuality sooner but that this was not realised as no such representation was produced. Here, the irrealis Authorisation is framed as something that could have happened, but that did not. In comparison, Examples 9.1 and 9.2 above, attribute the irrealis Authentication directly to creators by noting that they are the ones who are actively creating inauthentic, irrealis, identities with no intention of actually realising these through the representation they create.

Extract 9.3 (from Focus Group 5):

> **CHARLIE:** if there had been more I would have understood my sexuality sooner instead of just hating myself

This notion of accountability is further expressed by participants' use of 'just' in many of these instances: 'they just want money' (Extract 9.1), and 'LGBT characters are just included for some weird entertainment factor' (Extract 9.4), for example. In terms of the Appraisal framework, in these instances 'just' acts as a counter-expectational particle to Disclaim. Martin and White (2005: 118) state that such examples are 'maximally contractive' in that, while the other possibilities are recognised, the extent to which they are entertained is minimal. This is

the case in these examples wherein participants allow for other options and, in fact, express desire for these alternatives to occur, before asserting that creators have not allowed these to be realised. As was connoted by the use of modal auxiliaries of capacity noted in Chapter 8, these invoke alternative realities, wherein characters are not used for 'just' monetary gain or attention, note that creators are capable of producing such realities, and contrast this with what is actually produced. It could be argued that representation which is created without the 'right reasons' may still have a positive impact as, irrespective of the motives, LGBTQ+ content is being produced. However, as can be seen from the above examples, and Extract 9.4 below, representation which was created with inauthentic motivations was also criticised as being insincere.

Extract 9.4 (from Interview 7):

> **INTERVIEWER:** can you tell me a bit about the representation you have seen
>
> **CELIA:** it's just stereotypes it's just not sincere is it like LGBT characters are just included for some weird entertainment factor

Motivations for, and consequences of, such representation are further discussed in the following sections.

9.2.1 Rainbow Capitalism

One of the motivations which was cited as being an insincere reason for creating LGBTQ+ representation was the desire to exploit LGBTQ+ characters and relationships in order to attract views from LGBTQ+ individuals looking for representation whilst having no intention of developing these characters or relationships. Participants critiqued creators for using LGBTQ+ representation to attract viewers and, thus, make a profit rather than focussing on the quality of the representation itself, leading to the creation of sensationalist and negative representation (Extracts 9.5 to 9.7 below).

Representation produced as a result of such motives could be viewed as a form of rainbow capitalism as it is perhaps comparable to companies selling pride products for profit without actually benefitting the LGBTQ+ community (Roque Ramirez, 2011). The disparity between the amount of advertising of LGBTQ+ characters and the actual screen time dedicated to them resulted in the authenticity of the representation being questioned by participants as the

inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters was viewed as an advertising technique rather than as positive representation.

Extract 9.5 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JESSICA:** I think as well that for people to understand that it's not okay to (.) to use LGBTQ+ people as a way of um bringing in views and money

Extract 9.6 (from Questionnaire response):

> I wish they'd stop making a big deal of including queer characters only to have them on screen for 0.5 seconds

Extract 9.7 (from Questionnaire response):

> Game of Thrones kept showing two of the female characters kissing in the trailers to create hype but then in the actual show they barely kissed before there was an explosion and then they were never on screen together again

As exemplified in the above examples, often participants commented on the discrepancy between the amount of attention paid to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters in advertising and the screen time that was dedicated to these characters in actuality. Such observations about LGBTQ+ characters' limited screentime are supported by recent findings made by GLAAD. In their study of films released in 2018, they found that, of the 45 LGBTQ+ characters included, 10 were on screen for one to three minutes, and 16 had less than one minute of screen time. Whilst the GLAAD study was focussed on representation in films, it is clear from participants' responses to this study that this issue is also evident within television media.

There has been a progression in LGBTQ+ representation from a complete lack of representation leading to LGBTQ+ viewers searching for what Medurst (1994: 8) terms 'snatched glances' of the potential indication of same-sex attraction, to queerbaiting, 'a strategy by which writers and networks attempt to gain the attention of queer viewers [by] suggesting a queer relationship [before] emphatically denying […] the possibility' in order to remain of interest to a largely cisgender heterosexual audience (Fathallah, 2014: 491).

Comments made by participants within this study perhaps suggest a further shift. It is perhaps the case that the demand for LGBTQ+ inclusion is beginning to outweigh the need to appease the more conservative television viewers by excluding LGBTQ+ representation altogether.

However, the data from this study suggests that, whilst LGBTQ+ relationship may be being realised rather than simply baited, as the motive behind including such relationships is to still to 'gain attention' (Fathallah, 2014: 491) rather than to create meaningful storylines surrounding LGBTQ+ characters, the representation that occurs as a result is still superficial and, ultimately, unsatisfactory.

Interestingly, this shift in representation has led to the semantic broadening of the term 'queerbaiting'. Ng (2017), for example, notes that the term is increasingly applied, not only to unrealised same-sex relationships, but also to canonical but underdeveloped LGBTQ+ characters and relationships. That is, programmes that use LGBTQ+ relationships to attract viewers without intending to develop those relationships or create multidimensional queer characters are seen to be queerbaiting despite technically including queer characters and content.

The use of LGBTQ+ representation in order to gain attention in this manner is perhaps accountable for the sensationalised representation, which was critiqued by participants throughout this study. Sensationalist representation being used to gain attention from viewers is further discussed in Section 9.2.3.

9.2.2 Narrative and Character Development

Some participants within this study criticised creators of media representation for including LGBTQ+ characters in order to develop the story arcs of cisgender heterosexual characters or to develop the narrative as a whole. Again, participants critiqued the producers of such content for constructing an inauthentic identity as accepting and progressive (Extract 9.8).

Extract 9.8 (from Questionnaire response):

> Even some shows that present themselves as progressive really just use queer characters to make things seem more interesting.

As was discussed in Chapter 4, 'interesting', when used in this way, is difficult to categorise in terms of Appraisal Theory. 'Interesting' and other evaluations such as 'exciting', on one level, express positive Appreciation: Reaction as they convey that something is captivating. However, participants in utterances such as Extract 9.8 are not positively evaluating representation they are describing as 'interesting' and, in fact, are suggesting that LGBTQ+ characters and individuals are exploited to a certain extent when they are included to add interest or excitement. There appears to be a second level of evaluation occurring here wherein

participants are suggesting that LGBTQ+ representation should be more than just interesting or exciting and, thus, this evaluation expresses negative Appreciation: Reaction. The contexts in which such evaluations were used suggests that the extent to which this is viewed as either positive or negative is dependent on who is evaluating the representation as such. That is, it is assumed that cisgender heterosexual viewers may positively evaluate this 'interesting' representation as it captures their attention and, likewise, the creators of such media are likely to also view 'interesting' and 'exciting' representation positively. However, the LGBTQ+ participants within this study used such evaluations to critique representation as shallow and exploitative. Within these specific contexts, therefore, these instances are coded as expressing negative, rather than positive, Appreciation: Reaction.

As is exemplified by Extracts 9.9 and 9.10, this evaluation was used to suggest that a character's sexual or gender identity is not simply one part of their more complex identity, but a device which is used to make the plot or character more intriguing to audiences.

Extract 9.9 (from Focus Group 3):

> **SELENA:** people's sexuality is used as an interesting narrative point rather than as something that it just kind of incidental to who they are

Extract 9.10 (from Focus Group 1):

> **LAYLA:** I think sometimes they include us to make stories interesting for straight people
>
> **SAM:** mm

This suggests that LGBTQ+ characters are not included within such programmes to accurately represent the diversity present in society, but that their presence needs to be justified within the wider narrative in a way that is not needed for the inclusion of cisgender heterosexual characters. LGBTQ+ characters in such instances are being used to create intrigue in a narrative or to develop a storyline or other characters. This view is summarised by one questionnaire respondent (Extract 9.11).

Extract 9.11 (from Questionnaire response):

> A lot of times it feels like gay characters are just used to develop other characters. Like their sexuality is a controversial topic that then teaches us about all the straight characters and creates a plot point for that episode. Like in community, when a gay character appears, they're just used to teach us that Piers is homophobic, Shirley is generally accepting but has issues with it because of her religion, and all the other characters see that as wrong and condemn them. But we never find out about that gay character or who they are, they were just used.

This participant describes how in *Community*, a gay character is 'used' to 'develop other characters'. They are present as a tool to reveal information about the cisgender heterosexual characters, whether that be that they are homophobic, partially accepting, or whether they condemn homophobia. It was noted in Chapter 8 that cisgender heterosexual characters were often evaluated by participants using Judgements of Social Sanction and that this was reflective of cisgender heterosexual characters being placed in positions of social authority in which they are able to determine whether an LGBTQ+ character's identity is acceptable or not. The respondent's comments in Extract 9.11 suggest that this may not simply be a coincidence or a reflection of society's power structures, but that some creators are including LGBTQ+ characters specifically for the purpose of demonstrating how accepting, or otherwise, cisgender heterosexual characters are.

A theme which emerges in this analysis is that LGBTQ+ characters are thought by participants to be represented as having a lack of agency. The evaluations discussed in the previous section, as well as the discussion of the evaluations of lesbian participants in Chapter 7, present participants' concerns that characters were being sexualised to create a 'thrill' for a cisgender heterosexual audience, while the extracts presented in this section suggest that LGBTQ+ characters are sometimes being used to develop narratives and cisgender heterosexual characters rather than existing in their own right. A concern underlying these evaluations is that creators of such content are able to construct their programmes and, by extension, their identities as 'moral' or 'progressive' without having to create realistic or positive representations of LGBTQ+ individuals.

9.2.3 Sexualisation

Throughout this data, LGBTQ+ representation was critiqued for being oversexualised as a way to attract viewers and create interest around television shows. Some participants stated that the sexualisation of LGBTQ+ characters was a sign that creators were including LGBTQ+ characters in order to gain attention. Extracts 9.12 and 9.13 exemplify this.

Extract 9.12 (from Focus Group 1):

RYAN: it should be about people's lives rather than just focussing on like them focussing on like how we have sex

LAYLA: mm

SAM: yeah

RYAN: and who we have sex with like just normal shit rather than just being like I dunno this idea that everyone that is LGBTQ+ has like a really like exciting life

LAYLA: it's like they see that and like a little dollar sign thing and then they see their sex lives as even more money and more views and they need to understand that actually we're all people at the end of the day and obviously like sex is a part of life but you know I dunno I dunno do you know what I mean like none of us are actually really exciting are we

RYAN: yeah we don't go to gay clubs and hook up with hot babes every week

LAYLA: like we're just normal like other people well what is normal but do you know what I mean

Extract 9.13 (from Focus Group 4):

> **NICKY:** wouldn't make exciting television if you're not banging anyone clearly
>
> **JAY:** oh my god that's so true it's so based on like who's banging who oh my god that's so true
>
> **ROSE:** I feel like people really do focus on like um everybody like um the sex life of LGBT people

As noted in Chapter 2, this notion of creators of media content including LGBTQ+ characters, with a specific focus on sex, in order to 'titillate' cisgender heterosexual viewers has been discussed within the wider literature (Macdonald, 1995; Netzley, 2010: 979). For example, Macdonald (1995: 184) notes that, during the 1990s, films including LGBTQ+ characters gained a new level of popularity partly due to the fact that viewers found same-sex relationships to be 'thrilling' and 'illicit'.

The above extracts suggest that participants within this study feel that LGBTQ+ representation is still being used in a way to 'thrill' audiences by focussing on LGBTQ+ characters' sex lives. Layla's comments in Extract 9.12 are particularly interesting in this regard. When discussing the sexualisation of LGBTQ+ characters, she states that creators 'need to understand that actually we're [LGBTQ+ individuals] all people', perhaps suggesting that she feels creators do not view LGBTQ+ individuals as 'people' but as tools to gain views and money for their programmes. Here, Affect: Inclination ('need') is used to express a strong desire for Authentication through a recognition of LGBTQ+ individuals as 'normal' 'people'. This Authentication is irrealis as it is contrasted with existing representation which, Layla and Ryan note, presents LGBTQ+ characters as leading 'really exciting' lives involving 'hooking up with hot babes every week' and, as stated by Jay in Extract 9.13, 'who's banging who'. LGBTQ+ characters, and by extension the LGBTQ+ community, are, therefore, represented as unrealistic one-dimensional characters rather than as 'just normal like other people' (Extract 9.12).

9.2.3.1 Representation in Children's Programmes

Another, related, concern that was expressed by some participants within this study was that, presenting LGBTQ+ relationships and individuals as something 'thrilling' or 'illicit', and focussing only on their sex lives, can result in LGBTQ+ characters being viewed as 'inappropriate' (-prop) for children (Extract 9.14 exemplifies this). Further, participants noted

that this can contribute to the narrative that the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals should be hidden from children (Extracts 9.15 and 9.16). This negative Propriety is an interesting contrast to the positive Propriety and Veracity, discussed in Chapter 8, that was drawn upon when participants evaluated cisgender heterosexual characters who were depicted as being 'accepting' of LGBTQ+ characters.

Additionally, the use of negative Propriety present in Extract 9.14 (realised through 'inappropriate') and Extracts 9.15 and 9.16 (realised more implicitly through participants mentioning people in their lives who believe LGBTQ+ identities should be hidden from children) is comparable to evaluations made by participants when using stylised voices to represent *Daily Mail* Readers. In fact, in Extract 9.16, Jessica is drawing on this stylised voice. This is likely not a coincidence as, as noted by Lee (2021: 2-3), the tabloid press, such as *The Daily Mail*, directly contribute to a 'climate of moral panic' about the supposed 'protection of children' from LGBTQ+ individuals. Pavlović and Todd (2015: 251) further note *The Daily Mail's* continuous derision of LGBTQ+ representation as harmful 'Leftie propaganda' which is in opposition to their 'on-going traditionalist position'. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that participants draw on negative Propriety to represent the views of both *Daily Mail* Readers and those who believe children should not be aware of LGBTQ+ identities.

Extract 9.14 (from Questionnaire response):

> There is still an idea that LGBT characters are inappropriate for kids, but actually they could be handled in the same way as hetero romance in kids' film and TV.

Extract 9.15 (from Focus Group 5):

> **CHARLIE:** I think people still have this idea that um that LGBTQ people shouldn't be on kids' TV you know like we're sexual deviants
>
> **ALEX:** mm
>
> **MICHELLE:** yeah like um my aunt won't tell my cousin that I have a girlfriend cause she's apparently too young to know about gays whatever that means
>
> **ALEX:** what the hell

Extract 9.16 (from Focus Group 2):

SOPHIA: Channel 4 are just trying to please this audience that's suddenly appeared out of nowhere supposedly I dunno like they're just trying to be more diverse but it's probably run by people who are straight and cis and who don't know anything about it

JESSICA: I feel like I mean if you look at Channel 4 they always do those programmes that are like about those people who dress up as animals and have sex

[*laughter*]

REBECCA: yeah

JESSICA: and I feel like they're I feel like sometimes their programmes during pride month were really good and then some of them they are coming from a place where they're just trying to get people's intrigue

REBECCA: mm

JESSICA: and I dunno it doesn't seem to be sincere but interestingly I dunno if any of you saw but it was on the um adverts for like um a dating website and um they had a lesbian couple on there who were well I dunno if it was a lesbian couple two females [laughs] and they were making out and I know like my mum's friend this is before I came out and they were like [tuts] did you see that advert pre-watershed I was like what the hell

Within Extracts 9.15 and 9.16, participants make links between the sexualisation of LGBTQ+ individuals in media and the homophobia they have experienced from people in their lives. In Extract 9.16 Jessica moves from noting how programmes focussing on LGBTQ+ individuals are presented in a way that is similar to how some fetishes are presented to telling an anecdote about how her mother's friend felt it was inappropriate for a lesbian couple to be shown before the watershed. Similarly, in Extract 9.15, after Charlie comments that some people believe

LGBTQ+ characters should not be allowed in programmes aimed at children, Michelle notes that her aunt believes her cousin to be 'too young to know about gays'.

This attitude is summarised by DePalma and Jennett (2010: 19) who note that 'the hyper-sexualisation of gay and lesbian identities' and 'the implicit conceptual links between sexual orientation and sexual activity' contribute to the notion that an awareness of LGBTQ+ identities is inappropriate for children. This notion is perpetuated on an institutional level also. As Sauntson (2018: 18) notes, within the context of schools in England specifically, Section 28 of the Local government Act 1988 which 'made it illegal for homosexuality to be "promoted" in schools' has 'resulted in a pervading silence and fear of openly discussing non-heterosexual identities and relationships in school', despite being repealed in 2003. LGBTQ+ identities being excluded from a school context and from media representation aimed at children contributes to a Denaturalisation of LGBTQ+ identities as they are presented as something to be hidden.

In opposition to this view, participants within this study emphasised the importance of including LGBTQ+ characters within children's programmes both for the benefit of LGBTQ+ children and cisgender heterosexual children (Extracts 9.17 to 9.20).

Extract 9.17 (from Questionnaire response):

> I think it is incredibly important that children (regardless of their own identity) learn about diverse gender and sexual identities in order to create a more progressive society.

Extract 9.18 (from Focus Group 5):

> **MICHELLE:** I think one that is a really good example is Steven Universe because it's specifically aimed at kids and it gets a huge audience and it had a lot of diversity in it
>
> **ALEX:** yeah
>
> **MICHELLE:** I really like the way they show gender and sexuality in it in a way kids can understand

Extract 9.19 (from Focus Group 2):

> **JESSICA:** there might be children whose parents are homophobic and the only way they can see gay people is through the programmes they watch and that would make such a difference to them

Extract 9.20 (from Focus Group 2):

> **SOPHIA:** it's really important for helping little queer kids see that they're normal

Positive Appreciation: Valuation and Graduation ('incredibly', 'really', 'such a') is expressed by participants throughout the above extracts to emphasise the importance of including LGBTQ+ characters within children's programmes. In Extract 9.17, taken from a questionnaire response, for example, the respondent states that representation is 'incredibly important' for children, irrespective of their sexuality, in order to create a 'more progressive society'. Similarly, in Extract 9.18, Michelle positively evaluates a programme as 'really good' as it was 'aimed at kids' and included 'diverse gender and sexual identities'. Jessica notes that it is especially important for children who have been raised in an environment wherein homophobia is expressed to see LGBTQ+ characters as this will make 'such a difference to them'. Sophia emphasises the importance of representation for LGBTQ+ children as it may help them to feel 'normal'. As was noted in Chapter 8, participants often constructed hypothetical situations to express how seeing positive representation, especially when they were younger, would have helped to legitimise their identities. It is evident from that discussion, and from the above extracts, that including LGBTQ+ representation in programmes aimed at children and families is important for participants.

9.2.3.2 Sexual Liberation

It is important to note that participants within this data did not express a desire for LGBTQ+ representation to be devoid of any references to sex, as, as stated by Layla in Extract 9.12, 'sex is a part of life' for many individuals. In fact, as will be discussed in Section 9.2.4, some scenes were evaluated positively by participants due to the fact that they included what was considered realistic or authentic sex scenes. When critiquing the inclusion of sex scenes involving LGBTQ+ characters, participants' focus was almost always on either the overt sexualisation of, usually women, characters, as discussed in Chapter 7, or on the use of such scenes, by creators, to 'thrill' audiences at the expense of realistic representation.

As this suggests, comments and discussions surrounding LGBTQ+ representation and sex within this data were complex. Extract 9.21, for example, shows a conversation which occurred in one of the focus groups in which participants discussed the importance of sexual liberation for LGBTQ+ communities historically.

Extract 9.21 (from Focus Group 3):

> **ANTHONY:** do you think I don't know I think that when it comes to LGBT stuff there's always sex involved they really sexualise it so when you say it's not a realistic scenario you know they make it a thing they make a thing out of it
>
> **DEAN:** I mean the question then comes up of is that then an unfair representation of the gay community or is it actually you know I mean you look at pre-war Berlin or something where their form of liberation or identity-based liberation was a pretty intense form of hyper-sexualisation and that was the form of liberation that worked so
>
> **ANTHONY:** so do you think that's how the world perceives LGBT
>
> **SELENA:** mm I suppose we are a minority because of our sexual preferences right so I mean in a way you can't really divorce it from that it's who we're attracted to so it's or if we're attracted to anyone so I mean
>
> **ANTHONY:** I think yeah I think probably like um in the early days they have like a focal point to get people to congregate and I think that's the only place that they can do whatever they want
>
> **FREDDIE:** historically yeah
>
> **SELENA:** historically yeah

Here, Selena suggests that it is perhaps not always possible to divorce LGB+ identities from sex as a person's attraction to certain genders is what makes a person LGB+. Further, Dean argues that hyper-sexualisation has historical importance in LGBTQ+ rights movements. He refers to one of the first gay rights movements, taking place in Berlin prior to the Second World War. The history of LGBTQ+ rights movements and sexual liberation was briefly discussed in Chapter 2. As was noted in that chapter, the relationship between LGBTQ+ movements and sexualisation is one which is complex and nuanced.

Participants in Extract 9.21 note that it is important to recognise the importance sexual freedom played in LGBTQ+ rights movements and to note that this may have had a lasting impact on how the LGBTQ+ community is viewed today. It is not the case, therefore, that participants felt that the topic of sex should be avoided when LGBTQ+ characters appear in television media, or even that no LGBTQ+ characters can be shown to be hyper-sexual but that sex is included in a way that is realistic and authentic. A common theme that arose within the data was that participants did not generally believe that LGBTQ+ characters should not be shown engaging in sexual relationships, but, rather, that LGBTQ+ relationships should, firstly, not be used to 'thrill' or 'titillate' cisgender heterosexual audiences, secondly, not always be depicted as only revolving around sex. Positive evaluations of sex scenes between LGBTQ+ characters are discussed further in the following section.

9.2.4 Authenticity in Writing

Within this data, participants suggested measures that could be taken to ensure authenticity in representation. In Extract 9.16 above, Sophia critiqued representation written by cisgender heterosexual writers who 'don't know anything about' being LGBTQ+, suggesting that this contributes to content that is intended to shock audiences rather than to present realistic representations of the community. It can be inferred from this that content created by LGBTQ+ writers, or by cisgender heterosexual writers who have conducted research to bridge this knowledge gap, might be better received by participants.

Extract 9.1b below consists of Extract 9.1a, included at the beginning of this chapter, and the turns following those utterances. Here Pablo indeed suggests that one potential solution to the aforementioned issues would be to employ LGBTQ+ writers. The other participants in this focus group show high levels of agreement in response to this, with Charlie noting that this would create more realistic representation.

Extract 9.1 (from Focus Group 3; reproduced and extended from above):

MICHELLE: I really think people like all of these producers and storywriters and things thinking about it I think they have this like idea of thinking oh look we look so open but actually there's a complete reason why they're writing all these things into storylines and it's not a good it's not coming from like a sincere place it's because they just want-

PABLO: -money

MICHELLE: yeah exactly exactly

PABLO: they just want money

MICHELLE: exactly and so it's crap

RESEARCHER: is there a way around that do you think

PABLO: don't get a straight person to do a gay storyline cause they don't know what it's like

MICHELLE: yeah

ALEX: mm

MICHELLE: yeah absolutely

ALEX: give it a bit more

CHARLIE: a bit more like realism that's all any of us wants isn't it

ALEX: mm

CHARLIE: something we can look at and be like that's representative

Extract 9.22 (from Focus Group 4):

JAY: if they actually had someone that's been through all that there'd be more authenticity than what we've got now

In Extract 9.22, Jay explicitly states that casting a transgender actor to play a transgender character would add more authenticity to the role. It was noted in Chapter 7 that this was

something that was desired by many of the transgender participants within this study. The Authentication in Jay's utterance is irrealis as, much like the examples if irreal Authorisation discussed in Chapter 8, he notes that desired positive outcomes ('more authenticity', +val) are possible but not currently realised ('than what we've got now', implied -val). Irrealis Authentication is also constructed in Extract 9.1b where Charlie notes that hiring LGBTQ+ writers would lead to representation having more 'realism' (+val) and being 'representative' (+val) of the LGBTQ+ community. In both instances, the Authenticity of the representation is irrealis as it has not been achieved. The actual representation is contrasted with the hypothetical or idealised representation and is evaluated negatively as 'not good' and 'not… sincere'.

As participants noted that hiring LGBTQ+ writers may help to increase the authenticity of the characters that are shown and begin to create a shift from representation for monetary gain to representation for authenticity, it follows that representation which has been created by LGBTQ+ writers may be positively evaluated. This was indeed the case. In the Extract 9.33, participants are discussing a lesbian relationship shown in the Channel 4 programme *Banana* written by lesbian comedian Sue Perkins.

Extract 9.23 (from Focus Group 2):

> **REBECCA:** I liked it because I've not seen anything like that where it shows the relationship in a realistic way
>
> **SOPHIA:** yeah right it's so rare that it seemed like real like the sex was there because it was relevant and their relationship seemed so genuine

Here, terms relating to authenticity are used throughout to positively evaluate the relationship. Rebecca states that the relationship portrayed was 'realistic' (+val) and Sophia adds to this by evaluating it as 'real' (+ver), 'relevant' (+val), and 'genuine' (+ver). Similarly, in Extract 9.24 another LGBTQ+ writer, in this case Russell T Davis, a gay man, is, again, noted to have produced authentic (+norm) content. Mo further states that he believes it is evident when LGBTQ+ characters have been written by an LGBTQ+ writer explicitly acknowledging the link between a writer's sexual orientation and the quality of LGBTQ+ content they produce.

Extract 9.24 (from Focus Group 4):

> **JAY:** did you ever watch Doctor Who when it was Russell T Davis
>
> **MO:** yeah yeah a bit
>
> **JAY:** that was good
>
> **MO:** mm
>
> **JAY:** there were quite a few queer characters in it but they were like just normal characters like the same as the straight ones so that was cool
>
> **MO:** I feel like you can tell when it's been written by someone who's actually gay do you know what I mean
>
> **JAY:** definitely

According to this study, one suggestion for creating authentic representation, therefore, is to hire LGBTQ+ creators and actors when LGBTQ+ characters are included. Some participants noted that authenticity could also be achieved when characters were written by cisgender heterosexual creators as long as those creators researched the topic and consulted with LGBTQ+ individuals (Extract 9.25). The respondent further notes that LGBTQ+ creators should also be given platforms to create content.

Extract 9.25 (from Questionnaire response):

> You want to write an asexual person? Great! Do some research, talk to asexual people, and write one. Straight people shouldn't be afraid to write queer people as long as they do their research properly, and queer people should also be given more space as creators.

9.3 Emotional Responses

Participants' emotional responses, conveyed mainly through their use of Affect or Appreciation, are discussed in this section. As was noted in Chapter 5, participants, when asked about why LGBTQ+ representation is important for LGBTQ+ people, often mentioned how representation can make LGBTQ+ viewers 'feel'. Figure 9.1 shows some of the concordance lines for 'feel' that were presented in Chapter 5. Participants state that, without LGBTQ+ representation, LGBTQ+ individuals might feel that they need to 'hide [their] sexual orientation from others', that it is 'a secret thing to be hidden away', or that they would need to 'pretend to be something they're not'. Here, participants express Affect: insecurity to suggest that a lack of LGBTQ+ representation would result in LGBTQ+ identities being subject to Denaturalisation as LGBTQ+ individuals may feel unable to express themselves for fear of being viewed as 'abnormal'. Similarly, participants noted that experiencing LGBTQ+ representation helps them to feel that they 'can be who [they] are' or to 'come to terms with' their identities as it helps them feel 'normal' and as if they 'actually exist in society'.

Otherwise I'd	feel	isolated, that I might have to hide my sexual orientation from others.
come to terms with their sexuality and	feel	that it isn't a secret thing to be hidden away
It makes LGBT+ people	feel	like they actually exist in society
it helps them	feel	comfortable within themselves as it provides normality
So they	feel	less alone and more normal.
How else can we	feel	normal
which means they start to	feel	unusual/abnormal themselves
positive experience that helps one	feel	less isolated and more "normal".
To help people	feel	less alone and more 'normal'
Makes you	feel	that you can be who you are
it makes people	feel	safer like they don't need to pretend to be something they're not
It makes me	feel	normal
So we can	feel	seen and normal
see others that they can relate to and don't	feel	so abnormal or wrong for their sexual orientation
role models,	feel	part of society
To make themselves	feel	'normal' in a world dominated with heterosexual relationships
It makes you	feel	less alone and come to terms with yourself.
helps your identity	feel	more normalised and can give you confidence

Figure 9.1: Concordance Lines for 'feel'

This use of Affect: insecurity demonstrates the importance of representation to participants as the consequence of a lack of representation is not only that LGBTQ+ individuals might experience negativity from cisgender heterosexual people, such as the sexualisation discussed above, but also may internalise the notion that their identities are something which need to be kept hidden or secret. One of positive outcome of representation that participants noted as particularly important was that it could help LGBTQ+ individuals to feel 'normal' and, thus, able to feel secure in, and able to disclose, their identities.

A further analysis of participants' use of the subsystems of Affect supports this notion. As can be seen from Figure 9.1, and examples presented in Table 9.1, the majority of instances of Affect were positive. Participants more often drew upon Affect when referring to representation they enjoyed than that which they did not. Representation they did not enjoy was more likely to be discussed in terms of Appreciation as participants referred to the real-world impacts negative representation has, largely drawing on Valuation here. Extracts 9.26 and 9.27 contextualise some of the evaluations presented in Table 9.1.

Extract 9.26 (from Focus Group 5):

> **PABLO:** I was obsessed with Skins when I was younger I absolutely loved the way they showed Maxxie kind of just like any of the other characters I'd look forward to it every week

Extract 9.27 (from Interview 3):

> **REBECCA:** I loved Sugar Rush as a teenager Kim was just like yeah I'm gay I'm gay and I definitely needed that then

Extracts 9.28 and 9.29, on the other hand, exemplify participants' use of negative Valuation to evaluate representation they do not like and the real-world impacts they feel such representation has the potential to have.

Extract 9.28 (from Focus Group 3):

> **ANTHONY:** gay men in shows are almost always stereotypically effeminate representation which can be a damaging message to put out those of us who don't fit that stereotype

Extract 9.29 (from Questionnaire response):

> Asexual people are shown as lacking emotions which is pretty damaging for the ace community I think

Appraising Item	Subsystem of Affect
Obsessed	+inc
Loved	+hap
look forward to	+sec
obsessed with	+inc
obsessed with	+inc
obsessed with	+inc
Obsessed	+inc
Excited	+hap
Obsessed	+inc
Secure	+sec
Happ	+inc
Oblivious	-insec
hidden away	-insec
cling on to	+inc
Awkward	-insec
Liked	+hap
Enjoyed	+hap
Loved	+hap
Loved	+hap
Needed	+inc
Happy	+hap
Angers	-dissat
Want	+inc
Nice	+reac
Happy	+hap
annoys me	-dissat
Love	+hap
Love	+hap
Loved	+hap
made me feel sick	-insec
Love	+hap
Cried	+hap
Loved	+hap
Loved	+hap
Enjoyed	+hap
annoys me	-dissat
Hilarious	+hap
Hilarious	+hap
Love	+hap
Love	+hap
Love	+hap
don't like	-hap
Love	+hap

Table 9.1: Positive and Negative Affect

The fact that negative Affect is used much less than positive Affect, and that participants are more likely to draw on negative Appreciation: Valuation when evaluation representation they did not like, perhaps suggests some emotional distance from the negative representations as these are assessed in terms of their value and impact rather than how enjoyable participants found them. The concern when discussing negative representation appears to be largely on the potential wider impact than on being able to engage emotionally with the representation. Even when negative Affect is expressed, as in Extract 9.30, these evaluations are more likely to refer to how participants' emotions relate to the environment participants are situated in, for example how others may react to their orientations, rather than to how participants felt about the representation alone.

Extract 9.30 (from Questionnaire response):

> Otherwise I'd feel isolated, that I might have to hide my sexual orientation from others.

Perhaps due to this, and to the limited amount of positive representation the participants have witnessed, the positive Affect used is, in many instances, graduated using force (for example, 'loved', 'obsessed with', 'needed'). The negative emotions were occasionally strongly graded ('it made me feel sick') but were more often less forceful ('didn't like', 'annoyed me', 'awkward'). This, again, perhaps suggest a level of emotional detachment.

Sauntson (2018: 64) found that the participants in her study saw 'the introduction of more visible and numerous authentication strategies … as being a means of changing' a school environment in which students felt unable to disclose their sexual identity. The statements in Figure 9.1, as well as the discussion thus far in this thesis which has suggested a diverse range of representation is an important factor in avoiding stereotypical representation, suggest that a similar solution could be applied to television representation. That is, a larger, and more realistic, amount of representation would help to normalise and create authentication for LGBTQ+ identities.

The use of positive Affect throughout this data demonstrates participants' desires for representation that results in LGBTQ+ viewers feeling positively about themselves (Table 9.2). Participants, for example, positively evaluated representation that helped them to feel secure in their identities (Extract 9.31), expressed a high level of desire for representation which portrayed LGBTQ+ individuals as 'normal' (Extract 9.32), wanted to see more instances of storylines in which LGBTQ+ characters were able to lead 'happy' lives (Extract 9.33), and felt

unsatisfied with representation that did not show LGBTQ+ positively in the ways they hoped for (Extract 9.34).

Subsystem of Affect	Example	Source
In/security	**Extract 10.7:** It helps us to feel accepted. Like we don't need to hide who we are.	**Questionnaire**
Dis/inclination	**Extract 10.8: LAYLA**: it just needs to be like normalised	**Layla (FG1)**
Un/happiness	**Extract 10.9:** There should be more programmes which show us leading normal lives and being happy.	**Questionnaire**
Dis/satisfaction	**Extract 10.10:** I'm so bored of the same old negative stereotypes	**Questionnaire**

Table 9.2: Affect and Positivity

9.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed the sometimes complex ways in which participants constructed the identities of real people and characters as authentic. It also considered instances of irrealis authentication wherein participants noted the importance of representation in Authenticating identities.

As suggested by the extracts included in this chapter, as well as in Chapter 8, almost all instances of Social Sanction were used in reference to cisgender heterosexual individuals, or to institutions which were largely comprised of cisgender heterosexual individuals. Participants, for example, drew on Social Sanction when evaluating cisgender heterosexual writers ('it's not coming from a good place'), the schools they had attended ('our school was quite open'), and representation created by cisgender heterosexual writers ('it's just insincere').

Throughout this data, participants questioned the motives of some creators of LGBTQ+ representation and constructed these creators' identities as inauthentic as a result. It was suggested by participants that some creators would include LGBTQ+ representation in order to construct an identity as 'open' and 'progressive' when, in actuality, they were including LGBTQ+ characters to generate views and profit. In support of this, some participants noted a discrepancy between the amount of attention paid to promoting the fact that a programme included an LGBTQ+ character and the amount of attention and screen time given to

developing that character. This chapter then compared this to the growing trend of rainbow capitalism in which companies capitalise on LGBTQ+ individuals and allies, especially during pride month, in order to sell products without necessarily contributing to the LGBTQ+ community in additional ways.

One way in which participants felt LGBTQ+ characters were used by creators was to develop narratives, by adding intrigue for cisgender heterosexual audiences, and to develop cisgender heterosexual characters, by using LGBTQ+ characters to show audiences how accepting, or otherwise, the cisgender heterosexual characters are. In such instances, creators were able to include an LGBTQ+ character and, thus, gain any benefits associated with this such as viewership from LGBTQ+ audiences looking for representation, without having to develop that character or include them in the main cast if they were concerned about alienating conservative cisgender heterosexual viewers.

Additionally, participants noted that, in order to maximise the attention an LGBTQ+ character could bring to a programme, creators would often focus on their sex lives and include sex scenes between characters of the same gender in order to 'thrill' and 'titillate' audiences. This was noted to result in negative consequences, such as LGBTQ+ identities being viewed as hyper-sexual and inappropriate for children, suggesting that LGBTQ+ identities should be kept hidden.

Responses in this study also suggest that different groups within the LGBTQ+ community are represented differently and, therefore, require different solutions. Gay men, for example, as was discussed in Chapter 7, were concerned that gay men were often depicted as hypersexual. As was noted in Chapter 2, studies have shown that one serious real-world consequence of such representation is the harassment of gay men due to assumptions made about them being 'promiscuous' (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Banbury, 2004; Rumney, 2010).

Lesbian respondents, as was noted in Chapter 7, expressed concerns about lesbian characters being sexualised for the male gaze with the implication being that gay women exist for men. Again, studies have noted negative consequences of such representation such as the belief that men are entitled to displays of attraction between gay women (Macdonald, 1995). It would seem, therefore, that, despite both representations of sex scenes gay men and lesbians being critiqued by participants as being inauthentic, this inauthenticity occurs in slightly varying ways as either being presented one-dimensionally as promiscuous (as is the case for the representation of gay men) or as being denied agency (as is the case for gay women).

It should also be recognised that not all programmes which included sex scenes between LGBTQ+ characters were evaluated negatively by participants and that, in fact, programmes which contained realistic sex scenes were positively evaluated. Participants within one of the focus group discussions even noted the importance of sexual liberation in LGBTQ+ rights movements and suggested that this should not be overlooked by avoiding any references to sex in representation. Participants' responses to LGBTQ+ sex scenes, overall, can perhaps be best summarised with reference to Layla's statement that 'at the end of the day … sex is a part of life' and Ryan's observations that, although this may be true, 'we don't go to gay clubs and hook up with hot babes every week'.

Finally, participants' emotional responses to LGBTQ+ representation were considered. Participants expressed a desire for representation to be frequent and realistic as this would help LGBTQ+ individuals feel secure in expressing their authentic identities. It was also noted that participants were more likely to express strongly graduated positive Affect when evaluating LGBTQ+ representation they thought was good than they were to express negative Affect when evaluating representation that they viewed as bad. This perhaps suggests that participants are able to relate more strongly to positive examples of representation but feel a level of detachment from negative representation. This is supported by the fact that participants were more likely to evaluate negative representation using Appreciation in order to comment on the potential consequences of this representation. This, in addition to the discussions within this chapter concerning the use of LGBTQ+ characters to create excitement for cisgender heterosexual viewers, suggests that participants feel that LGBTQ+ representation is not always made for them, or with their reactions in mind, but for cisgender heterosexual viewers. This study suggests, therefore, that, in order for LGBTQ+ individuals to be able to relate to characters and feel authentic connections with them, creators need to produce better representation that is made with LGBTQ+ viewers in mind and that does not perpetuate negative stereotypes.

In sum, following participants' evaluations considered within this chapter, the following measures could be taken to improve LGBTQ+ representation:

1. Do not include LGBTQ+ characters to seem 'accepting' or to 'queerbait'. Rather, include characters and storylines that encourage acceptance by allowing them to be three-dimensional realistic characters.
2. Do not use LGBTQ+ characters to 'sell' programmes, unless those characters are fully developed. Develop LGBTQ+ characters and allow them their own narratives as is the case with cisgender heterosexual characters.
3. Allow LGBTQ+ characters to have screentime.
4. Give LGBTQ+ characters agency rather than including them simply to develop a cisgender heterosexual character's narrative.
5. Do not include gratuitous sex scenes between LGBTQ+ characters simply to 'thrill' audiences.
6. Include LGBTQ+ characters in children's programmes.
7. Hire LGBTQ+ writers, actors, and creators.

The following chapter concludes this thesis and discusses the implications of this research.

CHAPTER 10: FINAL DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has investigated responses of LGBTQ+ individuals to the representation of LGBTQ+ characters on television. These responses were analysed using a combination of Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity. This chapter summarises the findings, addresses the research questions (RQs) posed in Chapter 1, provides recommendations based on this analysis, and considers possibilities for further research.

Firstly, in Section 10.2, I briefly discuss how participants within this study positioned television representation as important to identity construction with respect to all three pairs of tactics. Then, in Section 10.3, I answer the RQs addressed by this study by drawing on the relevant findings and analyses. Following this, Section 10.4 outlines some implications for future study. Within this section I, firstly, consider developments and additions to the methodology taken in this study and, secondly, I suggest some areas of interest for further study based on the findings in this thesis. Finally, in Section 10.5, I summarise and give my final conclusions.

10.2 Television's Importance in Identity Construction

Before addressing the RQs, I briefly discuss how participants positioned television representation as important in identity construction within this study. It was noted in Chapter 1 that the representation of LGBTQ+ individuals in the media 'is imperative' in the 'education, validation, and self-esteem of LGBTQ individuals' (Woods and Hardman, 2021: 2). Representations of minority groups have been shown to directly impact how others view those groups, and how members within the groups view themselves (Amy-Chinn, 2012; Cowan and Valentine, 2006; Oxley and Lucius, 2009; Perse and Rubin, 1989; Schiappa et al., 2006). Such views were present within the data collected for this study.

10.2.1. Adequation and Distinction

Television representation was suggested by participants to hold at least some importance in the construction of identities with respect to all three of the pairs of Tactics of Intersubjectivity. Firstly, television was noted to serve as a placeholder for participants in their youth if they did not know any other LGBTQ+ individuals. Participants expressed a sense of Adequation with LGBTQ+ television characters and expressed the importance of this in their own lives.

Whilst seeing LGBTQ+ characters in their youth was noted as important and validating for many of the participants within this study, participants also suggested that negative representation was contributing to a sense of Distinction between themselves and cisgender heterosexual individuals. Participants often used words of negative Normality when noting how they felt television contributed to cisgender heterosexual viewers' opinions of LGBTQ+ individuals and expressed a desire for television to show LGBTQ+ characters as 'normal' and 'like other people'. Participants expressed concern that representation that showed LGBTQ+ people as 'abnormal' would directly impact how cisgender heterosexual people viewed them. This was particularly a concern for asexual and non-binary participants, who noted that asexual and non-binary characters were often portrayed as non-human species.

Adequation and Distinction between cisgender heterosexuals and LGBTQ+ individuals as a result of LGBTQ+ representation was also expressed through participants' use of voices. As noted in Chapter 6, participants drew upon stylised voices to represent cisgender heterosexual individuals who did not support all members of the LGBTQ+ community and integrated cisgender heterosexuals' voices with their own when they had been positively influenced by LGBTQ+ representation.

10.2.2 Authorisation and Illegitimation

Participants suggested that television had the ability to provide Authorisation for their identities in two main ways. Firstly, they used similar language when talking about the authority held by both their schools when they were younger and by television. In Sauntson's (2018) study, LGBTQ+ youth expressed desires for their schools to provide Authentication for their identities and felt that this would have improved their school experience. Participants expressed a similar relationship with their school experiences in this study and also directly compared their school's authority in this sense to the authority they felt television held for them. Participants noted that television was particularly important in this regard when they did not get this sense of Authorisation through their school. As Sauntson (2018: 65) found that her participants expressed 'hardly any examples of actual authorization of LGBT+ identities' from their schools, young LGBTQ+ individuals may be more likely to look for this in television. Unfortunately, as was also the case in Sauntson's data, the majority of instances of Authorisation expressed by participants was irrealis, wherein they expressed a desire to have their identities legitimised by television representation but noted that this did not occur. Irrealis expression are discussed further in relation to the RQs in Section 10.3.2.1.

Secondly, participants used Judgements of Social Sanction when referring to cisgender heterosexual characters to suggest that such characters were placed in a position of authority wherein they were able to legitimise LGBTQ+ characters' identities. Participants' use of this suggested that LGBTQ+ characters were receiving a level of Authentication in such situations. It could further be suggested that cisgender heterosexual viewers could use such reactions as an example of how to respond to any LGBTQ+ individuals' lives. However, it is important that such representations do not fall into the trope of including an LGBTQ+ character to simply to demonstrate how accepting a cisgender heterosexual character is without giving the LGBTQ+ character a narrative of their own, as was discussed in Chapter 9.

10.2.3 Authentication and Denaturalisation

Participants drew on positive Affect to express the importance of authentic representations and such instances are where many of the most heavily graduated instances of Affect appeared throughout this data. Inauthentic representation, on the other hand, appeared to create a sense of personal detachment as participants drew on Appreciation to comment on the potential real-world consequences of this type of representation.

Throughout this data, negative evaluations were often linked to Authentication as participants regularly critiqued representation for being 'unrealistic' and therefore promoting stereotypes. Television in such instances was suggested to have an impact on both how cisgender heterosexual audiences may view LGBTQ+ identities, but also how LGBTQ+ viewers, especially young LGBTQ+ viewers, feel about the validity of their identities. Again, television representation is shown to be important to participants in the construction and understanding of their identities. In fact, as previously noted, it has been suggested by McInroy and Craig (2017: 43) that some LGBTQ+ individuals may be actively constructing their identities in opposition to the negative representation they have seen.

10.3 Addressing the Research Questions

As noted in Chapter 1, this thesis addresses two main research questions. Sections 10.3.1 and 10.3.2 address each question in turn. Section 10.3.1 is organised according to the subsystems of Attitude within the Appraisal Framework and Section 10.3.2 is organised according to some of the notable themes which arose in this analysis.

10.3.1 RQ1: How do LGBTQ+ individuals use language to convey how they feel about the representation of LGBTQ+ individuals in UK and US television media?

By analysing participants' responses using Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework, it has been demonstrated throughout the analysis chapters that participants used language in a variety of ways to evaluate the representation they had seen. Chapters 6 to 9 were structured according to which pairs of tactics participants drew on the most when discussing LGBTQ+ representation. This section is structured according to the subsystems of Attitude participants drew on in order to summarise some of the ways in which participants used language to convey how they feel about the LGBTQ+ representation they have seen. As was noted in Chapter 5, around half of the total instances of Attitude expressed by participants belonged to the system of Appreciation, just under a third Judgement, and the remaining fifth Affect. RQ1 is addressed below through a summary of the key points raised throughout this thesis with respect to instances of Attitude.

As noted in Chapter 5, it is interesting that Valuation was the most used subsystem of Appreciation as it is concerned with matters of worth. It was hypothesised in Chapter 5 that this may demonstrate participants' recognition of the importance of LGBTQ+ media representation as they are assessing, not only whether they found a piece of media enjoyable, but whether it was worthwhile. The analysis in this thesis supports this view. This subsystem was particularly useful in determining what sub-groups within the LGBTQ+ community felt was the most important in terms of the representation of their specific gender and/or sexual orientation.

From the discussion in Chapter 7, it became clear that, whilst participants expressed similar concerns with representation throughout this study, there were instances in which some issues were of more concern to specific groups. The analysis in Chapter 7 suggests that gay men felt they were often tokenised in media and, as a result, the representation of gay men lacked diversity. Lesbians and queer women in general noted that queer women tended to be sexualised on television. Pansexual, asexual, and non-binary participants expressed concerns that their identities were not being portrayed as valid as they tended to be excluded from representation altogether. Bisexual participants were also concerned about this, and noted that their orientation tended to be represented as a phase. Asexual and non-binary participants also expressed a desire to be represented as 'human' as they noted that the majority of characters who were shown as being either non-binary or asexual, or sometimes both, were non-human

species such as aliens and robots. It is clear, therefore, that different groups within the LGBTQ+ community are often represented differently and, thus, this must be taken into account when considering the improvement of LGBTQ+ representation. This is discussed further in when addressing the second research question.

Participants drew on the domain of Judgement in interesting ways as they often used it to evaluate fictional characters as if they were real people, demonstrating the parasocial relationships that can be created through television.

In fact, almost all instances of Social Sanction were used in reference to cisgender heterosexual individuals, or to institutions which were largely comprised of cisgender heterosexual individuals. Participants, for example, drew on Social Sanction when evaluating cisgender heterosexual writers, cisgender heterosexual characters, the schools they had attended, and representation created by cisgender heterosexual writers. I have argued that this suggests a level of authority on behalf of cisgender heterosexual individuals that could be challenged in various ways including through the inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters who validate other characters' identities and through the employment of LGBTQ+ writers and creators of programmes.

The Judgement of Social Esteem which participants drew on the most was Normality. Participants often used this in conjunction with the tactic of Adequation to express a desire for LGBTQ+ individuals to be 'normalised'. Participants drew on this evaluation to suggest that positive and frequent representation would help LGBTQ+ individuals, especially young LGBTQ+ individuals, feel 'normal' rather than alone. Additionally, participants drew on negative Normality to critique depictions that represented LGBTQ+ individuals as 'abnormal' or 'weird' as they felt this would create a sense of Distinction between LGBTQ+ and cisgender heterosexual individuals.

Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrated that participants drew on Capacity in two main ways. Firstly, participants evaluated representations of specific gender or sexual orientation as being '(in)capable' in some way. Asexual participants, for example, critiqued representations of asexual characters that suggested they were incapable of feeling emotions. Transgender participants drew on this to praise representation that showed transgender individuals as capable of having relationships and to critique representation which suggested they were 'undatable'. Secondly, participants expressed Judgements of Capacity through their use of the modal auxiliary 'could'. This was often used to indicate irrealis Authorisation wherein

participants emphasised how simple it would be for creators to include LGBTQ+ representation in their narratives.

It was noted in Chapter 8 that Tenacity was realised in a similar way when participants used the modal auxiliary 'would' to construct hypothetical situations and to indicate how certain they were that representation would have a positive impact. Another notable way in which participants drew on Tenacity, as noted in Chapter 7, was to negatively evaluate representations of bisexual characters as 'unfaithful' as they felt this perpetuated harmful stereotypes.

Affect was the least drawn upon system of Attitude. It was hypothesised in Chapter 5 that this perhaps suggested a level of emotional detachment from participants with regards to LGBTQ+ representation. As was noted in Chapter 9, participants' relationship with representation were more complex than this. Participants expressed high levels of engagement with the representation they had seen when they felt that it was positive. They did, however, express less instances of Affect when discussing negative representation. This perhaps does suggest a level of detachment from this type of representation.

This section has summarised how the first research question was addressed by this study. The following section addresses the second research question and, thus, is concerned with how television representation could be improved according to participants.

10.3.2 RQ2: What does this reveal about how such media could be improved?

This section, which is made up of some notable themes which arose in this thesis, addresses the second of my research questions. Each section provides recommendations as to how representation could be improved based on the responses of participants within this study.

10.3.2.1 Irrealis

Irrealis instances of tactics were used throughout this data to suggest what participants wanted in terms of representation, to suggest that such representation was possible, to hold creators of LGBTQ+ representation accountable for what they produce, and to critique creators if participants felt their motives for creating LGBTQ+ representation was insincere. To do this, participants drew on modals of capacity ('they could have done'), modals of inclination ('it would definitely help'), and modal adjuncts ('if it was normalised') to construct hypotheticals and indicate a shift between their evaluations of the representations they had witnessed, and the representations they would like to witness. To evaluate representation within these hypotheticals, participants drew on a number of linguistic strategies such as Graduation:

quantification (‘literally all it would take’), Graduation: Intensification (‘so good’), Judgements of Social Sanction (‘open’), Judgements of Social Esteem (‘normal’), and positive Valuation (‘realistic’).

Irrealis evaluation was used to note the potential that representation had in terms of contributing towards how people view LGBTQ+ individuals, how they view themselves, and also to critique the intentions of real creators of LGBTQ+ content. In almost all instances, irrealis constructions were used to contrast with the reality participants experienced in order to emphasise where this was lacking. This was further expressed through participants’ use of negative evaluations of the real situations.

These hypothetical situations are a useful point to begin a discussion of how participants felt representation could be improved as, as noted by Sauntson (2018: 89), these ‘are a useful indication’ of what participants themselves view as positive representation. Evaluations drawn upon in these constructions include ‘more’, ‘normal’, ‘informative’, ‘normalised, and ‘realistic’. As was often the case throughout this data, what participants desired from representation varied depending on the current representation of their gender and/or sexual orientation. Participants whose orientations were still largely in Clark’s (1969) stage of non-representation emphasised the importance the inclusion of underrepresented LGBTQ+ characters would have in terms of creating understanding and a sense of validation.

The emphasis in such utterances was on including characters of certain orientations so that viewers, both cisgender heterosexual and LGBTQ+, could be made aware that these orientations exist. Participants noted the importance of such representation in helping people to ‘understand’ that people with these orientations exist, thus, ‘normalising’ these identities. A 2020 study of attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals in Britain reports that only 28% of British adults have heard ‘a great deal’ or a ‘fair amount’ about asexuality and even less (19%) report having heard about pansexuality (Ipsos, 2020: 7). It is clear, therefore, that it is important for orientations currently in the stage of non-representation to be represented in programmes watched by large audiences in order to raise awareness of their existence. A further measure that could be taken to raise awareness of lesser-known groups within the LGBTQ+ community is the explicit labelling of these groups in media. Again, participants from underrepresented groups noted this as important for validating their identities (Chapter 8).

Participants whose orientations were more often represented on television, and, thus who were in the higher stages of Clark’s (1969) model, expressed different desires within their

hypothetical constructions. Participants tended to indicate a desire for representation that showed LGBTQ+ characters as well-rounded and nuanced characters who were not only defined by their orientations.

An analysis of participants' hypothetical structures, therefore, suggests the following changes could be made to improve representation:

- LGBTQ+ characters need to be included in programmes in order to raise awareness of their existence.
- When LGBTQ+ are represented, they need to be shown as multifaceted and realistic people rather than reduced to stereotypes.
- Labels can be used to help validate the identities of underrepresented groups.
- However, it is important that characters do not become defined only by their orientations.

10.3.2.2 Agency

Another common theme which was noted throughout the data was that LGBTQ+ characters, as well as real LGBTQ+ individuals, had their agency removed by cisgender heterosexual creators. Critiques such as these are useful in determining how LGBTQ+ representation can be improved.

Participants often critiqued cisgender heterosexual writers for writing LGBTQ+ storylines without researching what experiences are like for LGBTQ+ people (Chapter 9). This suggests that agency is removed from LGBTQ+ writers and, by extension, LGBTQ+ individuals as a whole as they are unable to tell their own stories. Participants similarly critiqued creators who cast cisgender people to play transgender characters (Chapter 7). This was suggested to be exploitative as cisgender people were profiting from telling 'trans people's stories' without using transgender people themselves to tell those stories. Potential solutions for improving representation in this regard include hiring LGBTQ+ creators and actors, or at least talking to members of the LGBTQ+ community when writing LGBTQ+ characters and doing research into the groups being represented, rather than drawing on stereotypes.

Cisgender heterosexual individuals profiting from LGBTQ+ stories was a common critique throughout these utterances which drew on the notion of agency (Chapter 9). LGBTQ+ characters were noted, for example, to be included in order to bring profit to cisgender heterosexual creators, or to excite cisgender heterosexual audiences, without developing

LGBTQ+ characters' narratives or considering the impacts this may have on LGBTQ+ viewers. Participants expressed concerns that LGBTQ+ identities were being included within media by cisgender heterosexual writers so that those writers could construct their identities as 'open' or 'progressive'. In such instances, LGBTQ+ identities are not recognised as important in their own right, but as tools which can be used for the benefit of cisgender heterosexual people and, thus, agency is removed from LGBTQ+ individuals.

Participants similarly critiqued instances when LGBTQ+ characters were thought to have been included simply to develop the narrative of cisgender heterosexual characters (Chapter 9). Critiques of this nature were particularly negatively grated when it was noted that LGBTQ+ were killed in programmes, that is when the 'bury your gays' trope was used, in order to progress other characters' narratives. As noted in Chapter 7, one notable critique of the representation of LGBTQ+ women was that they were sexualised and written for the male gaze. Participants noted that this removed agency from the characters and from LGBTQ+ women as a whole as it suggested that their orientations existed to please men.

It has been noted within this thesis that labels were evaluated differently by participants. This is clearly a complex issue that needs to be handled sensitively. One way of doing this, perhaps, would be to allow LGBTQ+ characters to be shown having agency over how they define their orientations. Characters, for example, can be shown to be the ones labelling their orientations, can have conversations about whether or not labels are important to them, or can simply choose not to label themselves. A variety of responses to labels would perhaps best represent the views of participants shown in this study. Most importantly, orientations should not be erased from media and should also not be portrayed stereotypically, whether they are directly labelled or not.

A few suggestions for improving representation as a result of such evaluations can be made, and are as follows:

- Creators should consider the implications of the representation they are making and should not 'use' LGBTQ+ characters as a narrative tool, as a way of attracting viewers, or as a way of constructing a 'progressive' identity.
- Have transgender characters be played by transgender actors.
- Queer women should not be positioned in relation to fictional men or be written for men, but should have narratives in their own right. Employ queer women on creative teams to help with this.

- LGBTQ+ characters could be shown validating other LGBTQ+ characters' identities.
- A variety of characters both using and not using labels to identify their orientations need to be represented.
- Orientations should not be erased from media or portrayed stereotypically whether they are labelled or not.

10.3.2.3 Nuance

Another critique which was made by participants throughout this study was that LGBTQ+ characters lacked nuance. Participants expressed desires for representation to be 'diverse', 'nuanced', 'multidimensional', 'realistic', and not 'stereotypical' or 'only' defined by their orientations. Various solutions for improving representation can be gleaned from such evaluations:

- Characters should not be 'only' defined by their orientations, but instead should be shown as nuanced individuals.
- LGBTQ+ characters should be included in narratives that go beyond their orientations.
- Allowing LGBTQ+ characters to have screentime would allow time to develop these characters more fully.
- LGBTQ+ characters' sexualities should not only be revealed to audiences through depictions of their sexual encounters as this will help challenge the notion that LGBTQ+ identities are only related to sex at the expense of any other identity factors.
- Characters should not be hypersexualised to 'thrill' cisgender heterosexual viewers.
- Include LGBTQ+ characters in programmes airing before the watershed, and especially in children's programmes.
- Include a diverse range of characters, not only in terms of sexual or gender orientations, also in terms of different races, abilities, body-types, ages, etc.

10.4 Further Study

This section discusses some implications for future study. Firstly, I discuss limitations and potential developments in the methodology of this study. Then, in Section 10.4.2, I suggest some areas of interest for potential future study.

10.4.1 Methodological Considerations

This section details potential developments and limitations with the methodology of this study. Firstly, despite efforts to distribute the questionnaire to as diverse a range of respondents as possible, almost 70% of respondents were under the age of thirty. This is likely due to the questionnaire mainly being circulated among university students. This also meant that focus group members were also mostly under the age of thirty as they were recruited through the questionnaire. Additionally, 67% of questionnaire respondents were either gay (24%), lesbian (21%), or bisexual (22%) and, thus, conclusions drawn from a general analysis may be skewed towards these orientations. Attempts were made to minimise this potential by analysing responses given by sub-groups within the LGBTQ+ community individually, as in Chapter 7 however future research may benefit from reaching out to other groups, such as asexual or pansexual individuals.

One strength of this thesis is that it focusses on the views of real LGBTQ+ individuals. However, future studies may wish to compare participants' views of representation directly with an analysis of the programmes they are evaluating. As I wanted the focus of this research to be on what participants themselves thought was the most important, I did not ask participants to evaluate specific characters or programmes and, instead, allowed them to evaluate the programmes they had personally seen. Whilst this worked for this study, it may also be of benefit to ask participants to review the same programme so that evaluations can be compared directly in future.

10.4.2 Methodological Contributions

In this section I consider some methodological contributions made by this study. While there exist studies into the importance of LGBTQ+ representation on television, this study is one of the first to analyse the evaluations of LGBTQ+ viewers of this representation. As noted in Chapter 2, previous linguistic studies into LGBTQ+ representation have been largely concerned with the ways in which language is used within the media to construct the sexual identities of characters, while research into the use of language by LGBTQ+ individuals is rarely focussed on the evaluative language used by LGBTQ+ individuals when discussing LGBTQ+ related topics. Scanlon and Lewis (2017: 1007) call for studies 'examining audience responses to representations of LGBTQ+ characters on screen' and this thesis has begun to fill this gap.

This thesis has combined Appraisal Theory and the Tactics of Intersubjectivity framework to investigate this under-researched area. Chapter 4 notes potential limitations with these frameworks and details how I developed them to be applied to the data gathered within this study. The Tactics of Intersubjectivity provide a useful framework for a macro thematic analysis of the data, while Appraisal Theory provides a framework for a micro-linguistic analysis of participants' responses. This study has made a contribution to the fields of language, gender, and sexuality by employing these frameworks to investigate the evaluative language used by participants while acknowledging and utilising the applied nature of linguistic study to use the findings to suggest improvements to LGBTQ+ representation.

10.4.3 Areas of Particular Interest

In this section, I consider some areas discussed within this study that may be of interest for future research in this field. Firstly, participants' use of stylised voices, as discussed in Chapter 6, was particularly interesting and perhaps worthy of further study. It would be interesting to see whether this is something arose as a product of the focus group setting, or if this is something that would occur in more 'natural' language use also. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see if and how such stylised voices are used when individuals are discussing topics other than LGBTQ+ representation, and if they would be used in groups with more diverse age ranges. Potential questions to investigate include: Would other stylised voices be drawn upon? Are these voices context specific? Do they vary between sub-groups within the LGBTQ+ community?

Some suggestions have been made within this study about how labels may be used to help validate identities. However, it was also noted that some members of the LGBTQ+ community were wary of being labelled on television. It would be interesting to conduct a more detailed study into how different groups feel about the use of labels in order to be able to provide further suggestions as to how these could be used when representing LGBTQ+ people in media.

As noted above, participants often noted the need for more diverse representation, including the representation of different races, abilities, body-types, and ages. An in-depth analysis of all of these factors in combination with characters' gender and sexual orientations was beyond the scope of this thesis, but is something which is definitely worthy of further study. This study did not ask participants to provide any personal details other than their gender/sexual orientation, their pronouns, and their age and, thus, participants' evaluations could not be

analysed in respect to any identity characteristics other than these. Again, this would be an interesting point to investigate in future studies.

Finally, it would be interesting to consider what counts as representation for individuals. I say this as my participants' evaluations did not always support findings made by GLAAD's *Where We Are on TV* reports. That is, while GLAAD (2021) report that 28% of LGBTQ+ characters on US television are bisexual, my participants expressed concerns that bisexual characters were not being represented. This disparity can potentially be explained by how representation is characterised as, in many cases, my participants did not feel that they were being represented if their orientations were not explicitly labelled. Some participants, for example, felt that bisexual characters could be assumed to be either gay or straight by the majority of viewers unless they were labelled otherwise. What constitutes representation for different groups, and why, is worthy of future investigation, therefore.

10.5 Summary

This research has combined the fields of media representation, audience reception, and appraisal by analysing the responses of LGBTQ+ individuals to the representation of LGBTQ+ characters. This thesis has aimed to begin to fill the gap in the literature noted by Scanlon and Lewis (2017: 1007) who call for studies 'examining audience responses to representations of LGBTQ+ characters on screen'. To do this, I combined the frameworks of Tactics of Intersubjectivity and Appraisal Theory, as these have previously been proven to be productive when investigating the views of LGBTQ+ individuals (Sauntson, 2018).

This thesis has demonstrated the importance of analysing, not only representation, but groups' responses to this representation and has demonstrated that linguistic analysis is a productive way in which this can be done. I have outlined areas for potential future research and suggested that the representation of LGBTQ+ characters on television is an area which is still worthy of study, despite some recent improvements in this area, as representation is still viewed as important by LGBTQ+ individuals and still needs to be improved.

There is clearly still some way to go to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals reach the same levels of representation already in existence for their cisgender heterosexual counterparts. I have made recommendations as to how the representation of the LGBTQ+ community in general, and of specific sub-groups within this community, could be improved based on the evaluations made by participants in this study. I hope that, with this and other research in this field, representation continues to improve for LGBTQ+ individuals.

I ended each focus group discussion and interview with a question asking participants how they would summarise their views for those in charge of producing representation. It feels apt to end this thesis with the response given by one group of participants to this question.

Extract 10.1 (from Focus Group 1):

> **RESEARCHER: okay so final question if you had one minute with the head of programming for BBC or Channel 4 or any other channel and they said "what would you like to see on television?" what would you say to them?**
>
> **CHRIS:** it sounds really self-obsessed but like more of me I'm just a postman going about my day
>
> **RYAN:** yeah
>
> **CHRIS:** getting a tan
>
> **SAM:** like realistic
>
> **CHRIS:** normalise it like
>
> **RYAN:** yeah
>
> **CHRIS:** not necessarily like put my face on the screen cause I don't really want that but like more yeah
>
> **SAM:** I think that sums it up really nicely cause like a lot of people are like oh gay agenda rahrah but it's just the gay agenda is just wanting to see ourselves as people

CHAPTER 11: REFERENCE LIST

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