

Critically examining narratives and representation
Dominant narratives of masculinity and femininity

In all of these stories we are given particular themes, languages, and ideas of what constitutes reality. We encounter the Mexican worker and her/his family through very particular methods of representation (language, pictures, and themes, for example).

Generally I would like everyone to compare their two narratives – look for similarities and differences in terms of representation, themes, etc. and how they connect to ideals dealing primarily with the American Dream.

Below are some questions I would like all of you to take up in relation to our previous discussions of masculinity and femininity in relation to the American Dream. Be sure to address how particularly embodied individuals work towards the dream in specific ways, while paying attention to what kinds of identities (in relation to gender and sexuality) are excluded in the process. In other words, I want you to address the majority of these questions through the lenses of both gender and sexuality. While it will be easy to discuss the binaries which are evident throughout your sections, I want you to think of other kinds of perspectives which are silenced.

- What kinds of hardships must be endured in order to obtain the dream? Do you see these hardships as gendered in particular ways? If so, how do you know?
- Do the relationships between gender and position in the United States appear to be normal? Why/why not?
- What kinds of binaries do you see at work throughout these stories in terms of sexuality and gender? Which portion of the binary is valued? Which portion is devalued and/or silenced?
- Describe what you might see as the prototypical body throughout the text. (Think here in terms of what kinds of power relations are established mainly through predominant understandings of gender/sexuality).
- What kinds of gendered roles and sexualities appear to be natural? What do these assumptions distort/obscure?
- What constitutes citizenship and who acquires it? Do you see any connections to ideals concerning “the family?”
- Are there alternative versions of what you can be like and/or conflicts/contradictions in terms of both gender and sexuality?
- Can you locate multiple complexities in terms of how gender roles are presented? Do they work with/against particular hegemonic views?
- What are the different kinds of methods/texts which are used in your chapters? Do you see these connected to particular narratives presented? To the overall purpose of the text?