

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLMOUCI

Pedagogická fakulta

Ústav cizích jazyků

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Jiřina Kučerová

Anglický jazyk a historie se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Male and female role models and stereotypes in media

Olomouc 2018

vedoucí práce: Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedenou literaturu a zdroje.

V Olomouci dne 16. 4. 2018

Jiřina Kučerová

Děkuji Mgr. Josefu Nevařilovi, Ph.D. za odborné vedení bakalářské práce, poskytování rad a materiálových podkladů k práci. Dále děkuji respondentům dotazníků potřebných k vypracování praktické části práce za ochotnou spolupráci.

Abstract

This thesis deals with gender specific stereotypes in the behaviour of children's role models. The theoretical part presents the importance of role models in the lives of children and introduces fictional characters portrayed in media as a relevant source of influence on the shaping of young people's minds. The practical part then provides the analysis of characters from six sources based on the gender specific stereotypes commonly connected to their setting and characterisation. Each analysis comments on these stereotypes and decides whether this behaviour has a positive or negative impact on the readers or viewers of the source.

Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Abstract | 4 |
| Table of contents | 5 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| 1 Role models | 7 |
| 1.1 Definition of a role model | 7 |
| 1.1.1 Concerns following role models..... | 8 |
| 1.2 Gender roles..... | 8 |
| 1.3 Gender stereotypes | 9 |
| 2 Role models in media | 11 |
| 2.1 The definition of media | 11 |
| 2.2 Definition of fiction..... | 12 |
| 2.3 Empathy as a bridge between reality and fiction..... | 13 |
| 2.3.1 Definition of empathy..... | 13 |
| 2.3.2 Empathy as a learning tool | 14 |
| 3 Character..... | 15 |
| 3.1 Definition of character..... | 15 |
| 3.2 Types of characters in fiction | 16 |
| 3.3 Stereotyping characters..... | 16 |
| 4 Analysis of fictional characters | 18 |
| 4.1 Selection of characters..... | 18 |
| 4.2 Fictional characters..... | 19 |
| 4.2.1 Fixed gender roles | 20 |
| 4.2.2 Exchanging stereotypes | 21 |
| 4.2.3 Geeks versus masculinity | 25 |
| 4.2.4 A single mother | 27 |
| 4.2.5 A female villain | 31 |
| 4.2.6 Contrasting Life Goals..... | 34 |
| 5 Conclusion | 39 |
| 6 References | 40 |
| 7 Appendices | 43 |
| ANOTACE..... | 46 |

Introduction

Growing up, every child has a role model whom they admire and who shapes their perception of the society. Be it someone they know in real life, e.g. relatives, teachers and friends, or fictional characters from their favourite books and films, or celebrities.

While children may feel they know these people personally, celebrity role models bring potential problems since the way they present themselves in media may not always correspond with their actual real-life behaviour. By contrast, fictional role models do not have any private lives, their portrayal in media is their reality. They cannot hide anything from the readers or viewers and for that, they seem genuine. It is that and the fact that young people consume popular media in their own homes and private settings that makes fictional role models more influential than celebrities.

This thesis focuses on the gender roles and stereotypes portrayed in media. Analysis of popular characters from books, films and television series try to determine which gender related stereotypes they belong to. The aim of this thesis is to determine whether the fictional characters acting as role models have a positive or negative influence on young readers and viewers.

This thesis consists of two parts. The first part serves as an introduction to the theoretical studies about role models, gender roles and gender stereotypes, as well as a brief explanation of the terms used in this thesis.

The second part of this thesis then provides the analysis of selected fictional characters focusing on the use of gender roles and gender specific stereotypes in that particular piece of popular media. Five sources are studied and the characters from each source are compared either with common ideas about the stereotypes they adopt or each other within the source. Trying to establish the truthfulness of these stereotypes and the resemblance of reality in media will help judge whether these role models influence young readers and viewers positively or negatively.

1 Role models

Children, and teens, are influenced by a number of usually adult people. They see themselves in them, they want to be them when they grow up and they feel motivated by them. Role models help them create a path they want to follow, both in a career, and therefore education, or personal life. However, they can also provide motivation towards unhealthy behaviour, such as cheating or skipping school, bullying or substance abuse. Role models therefore act a vital part of shaping the ideas and opinions of young people.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to understand who role models are and what concerns surround their own behaviour.

1.1 Definition of a role model

Robert K. Merton is considered to be the first to create and define the term “role model” (Morgenroth, 2015, p. 23) as “individuals in specific roles who serve as examples of the behaviour associated with this role” (Merton, 1957). And although this term has become widely used by the general public, the contemporary meaning of the term can vary not only from the original meaning Merton defined, but also depending on the user and intended focus group.

While Lockwood (2006, p. 36) defines role models as “individuals who provide an example of the kind of success that one may achieve, and often also provide a template of the behaviours that are needed to achieve such success”, Gauntlett (2002, p. 211) describes them as “someone to look up to and base your character, values and aspirations on”. Both of these definitions make sense and provide a satisfactory explanation in the setting they work with, but in no way do they hold the same meaning or introduce the same information.

Seeing as the definition of a role model is not absolute and undeniable, this thesis will work with a combination of the two stated above and accept possible deflections from the intended understanding. Thekla Morgenroth (2015, p. 79) argues that “there are three recurring, and

interrelated, themes among existing definitions of role models”, categorising them as

- “behavioural models”,
- “representations of the possible” and
- “inspirations”. (ibid)

While behavioural role models show how to perform a skill and achieve a goal, representations of the possible show that the goal is actually attainable and inspirations make it desirable (Morgenroth, 2015).

1.1.1 Concerns following role models

Lockwood, Jordan and Kunda (2002) published a research demonstrating two types of concerns people have when finding role models: “Promotion-focused individuals, who favour a strategy of pursuing desirable outcomes, are most inspired by positive role models, who highlight strategies for achieving success; prevention-focused individuals, who favour a strategy of avoiding undesirable outcomes, are most motivated by negative role models, who highlight strategies for avoiding failure.” (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2002, p. 854) In other words, positive role models motivate people to achieve similarly positive goals, while negative role models usually inspire to avoid similar negativity.

Both of these types can be found in media. Celebrities are often used as artificial role models aiming to “enhance people’s goals and aspirations”, while misfortunes or personal issues of anonymous individuals, such as examples of patients with contagious or infectious diseases or irresponsible drivers, are used to motivate people to try to avoid such unpleasant outcomes (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2002, p. 854).

1.2 Gender roles

For the purpose of this thesis, role models have to be defined depending on their impact on different genders. Gender roles, as explained by CliffsNotes (n.d.), “determine how males and females should think, speak, dress, and interact within the context of society.” In other words,

they can be defined as “a collection of evident and concealed regulations valid for women’s and men’s behaviour and actions, and relationships between them; within gender roles, there are certain jobs, values, duties and responsibilities assigned to women and men” (Gender Management: Slovníček, translated from Czech).

Moore (The Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2001, p. 578) describes gender roles as “sets of attributes, including attitudes, personality traits, abilities, interests, and behaviours that are defined as appropriate for each sex.”

1.3 Gender stereotypes

Another phenomenon tightly connected with role models is stereotyping. Gender stereotypes make frequent occurrence in our society and especially in the media industry.

Cranny-Francis et al. in their study (2003, p. 141) define gender stereotyping as “a radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics. Individuals from the group who do not fit that stereotype are then said to be atypical.” Ranzetti and Curran (2005, p. 20) then summarize gender stereotypes as “simplifying descriptions of what a 'masculine man' or a 'feminine woman' should look like”.

Typical stereotypes for women, according to Moore (2001, p. 579), “include expectations to be domestic, warm, pretty, emotional, dependent, physically weak, and passive”, while men “can be described by words such as unemotional, physically strong, independent, active, and aggressive” (Moore, *ibid*).

Gender stereotyping seldom escapes sexism in its purest form, defined as “commonly describing attitudes, statements, acts, strategies, or methods that lead to the discrimination, marginalization, or oppression of individuals or groups based on their sex” (International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, 2008). If this is applied to gender roles commonly received by children, it can be assumed some harm could be done to their general understanding of the society they find themselves in.

Although the most common assumption is that in-group members (e. g. parents, friends, teachers, etc.) make the best role models (Morgenroth, 2015), this thesis focuses on the role models portrayed in and brought by media and accepted by the consumption of popular literature, and film and television industry.

2 Role models in media

Media has previously influenced and changed society. A case in point being Harriet Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* which is given credit for helping the American Civil War and convincing huge numbers of American citizens that black people deserve rights and transforming their views on slavery (Gottschall, 2012) or George Orwell's *Animal Farm* affecting the way society understood government and politics (Gow, 2012). As was already explained in chapter 1 of this thesis, role models can bring negative effects, e.g. the 1915 film *The Birth of Nation* is said to rekindle racist radicalism in the USA in the shape of newly resurrected KKK (Gottschall, 2012).

In her article for the *Kilter's Information Sheer*, Dr Claire Rush explains that "many young people look to celebrities and to TV shows for a blueprint of what life should be like" (Rush, n.d.). She mentions reality shows as an important demonstration of a very limited portrayal of everyday life. Dr Rush believes that similar programmes bring negative impact on the lives of young people because these role models introduce problematic behaviour and confidence issues at a time of personal growth (Rush, n.d.).

It is, naturally, a matter of what kind of media is consumed. It is important to realise that media resembles real life and negative role models can be found within families or friend groups as well as in television. The same applies to positive role models. This thesis tries to determine which role models brought upon children in media have positive and which have negative influence. This work focuses on fictional role models and for that, the term media and fiction have to be explained, as well as the way fictional role models influence the readers or viewers.

2.1 The definition of media

There is no universal definition of the word medium. According to Marshall McLuhan, that is to be expected because any new type of media shapes the society in its own way. The term medium could be applied to basically anything being used to communicate, however text books

usually distinguish media (or mass media, such as television) from direct types of communication, such as the telephone. Although there is a difference between media and mass media, in the past few years the term mass media became obsolete most likely as a result of the fact that when people talk about media, they almost always mean mass media (Giles, 2010).

According to McQuail (2005), there are four elements which determine mass media:

- 1) intention or need to communicate
- 2) technology for public communication
- 3) social organisation for production and distribution
- 4) controlling mechanisms.

The first two elements could be co-dependent: the creation of a medium may and may not arise from the need for communication, it could also reflect the advance and availability of new technologies. The third and fourth elements are essential for mass diffusion: a company or a number of companies producing hardware and software and some kind of national or international institution which controls the advancement of the technology and monitors its usage (Giles, 2010, p. 14, translated from Czech).

2.2 Definition of fiction

The term fiction unmistakably belongs to the basic terms of literary theory. The word itself has various meanings. According to Dorrit Cohn, “it is connected to

- 1) literature,
- 2) narrating,
- 3) untruth,
- 4) abstract perception.” (Cohn, 2009, p. 16-17).

Understanding literature as fiction is common, everybody knows that literature can bring imaginary people, objects and places. It is natural that fiction is tightly connected with narratives – narrating mediates stories

that are often fictional. Understanding fiction as untruth is correct, although the point of fiction is not to mislead or defraud the reader but rather to share the vision of an imaginary world that is more or less resembling the real one. (Koten, 2013, p. 9, translated from Czech)

2.3 Empathy as a bridge between reality and fiction

After studying the depth in which fiction influences people and why it occurs in the first place, Keith Oatley, a professor in the department of human development and applied psychology at the University of Toronto, believes the reason to be that stories create empathy for their lead characters. It is because readers or listeners relate to their personal struggles and their opinion on certain problems. Fictional stories often work with one's emotions which leads to them having much greater impact than non-fiction (Gow, 2012).

2.3.1 Definition of empathy

According to a research made by Spreng, McKinnon, Mar and Levine in 2009, "empathy is an important component of social cognition that contributes to one's ability to understand and respond adaptively to others' emotions, succeed in emotional communication, and promote prosocial behaviour." The term empathy refers to "the consequences of perceiving the feeling state of another as well as the capacity to do so accurately" (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar and Levine, 2009).

Summarising the above, empathy can be perceived as a reaction to other person's suffering or misfortune not dependent on understanding the circumstances of said misfortune but reliant on understanding the fact that the other person is experiencing said misfortune. While relating to such fate, people have a tendency to act upon their feelings, like comforting the person or providing a solution to their problems. Obviously, that cannot be done with fictional characters and that can lead to the feeling that the issue has not been resolved and can have an impact on our perception of that issue in real life.

2.3.2 Empathy as a learning tool

Professor Oatley, in an article for the online journal *Psychology Today* (2011), states that “engaging with fiction is an empathetic act.” He says that while reading fiction, the reader is entering a simulated world and accepting the characters’ goals and plans the same way they would with people they know in real life. In another article from the same year, he mentions that “in an 1884 magazine article entitled *The art of the novel*, Henry James wrote that a novel is “a direct impression of life.” The main idea behind this is that a book is an artificially created world that resembles reality in certain ways and readers have the capacity and the tendency to accept these conditions as their own and then to apply them in their everyday, real, lives (Psychology Today, 2011).

In another article for the same journal he stated that “people who read more fiction do indeed have better understandings of others” (Oatley, 2010). That could be understood as taking the fictional characters’ experience as their own.

In a study from 2009, Oatley, Mar and Peterson work with two possible explanations of the relation between reading fiction and empathy in real life:

1. While reading fiction, the readers’ brains simulate the same processes as they would with real-world social experience. If repeated enough, this simulation could lead to improving the social skills needed for such situation which could then be used in a similar experience in real life.
2. Another possibility is that while reading fiction, the readers learn concrete social skills from the characters’ behaviour and then accept them as their own (Oatley, Mar, Peterson, 2009).

The first explanation believes that the readers already have these skills before reading, the second believes that they acquire them while reading.

Having established that role models matter for shaping children’s ideas and opinions (see Chapter 1) and how the process works with fictional characters (see Chapter 2), it is now important to explain what precisely is meant by a fictional character and how they get stereotyped.

3 Character

As discussed above, this thesis deals with fictional characters introduced in media. Regardless of the type of media, all fictional characters share some typical attributes and it is important to understand which exactly those are.

Character is one of the major parts of any story – without characters there is no story at all. Characters can be described and categorised by various aspects. (Hood, 2010)

Characterisation allows the readers or consumers of the story to empathize. It is therefore very important for the writer to include characters that would be the most relatable, characters that hold important values which would make the reader sympathise and get emotionally involved with their story, and to avoid creating stereotypical or flat characters. (Bernardo, 2002-2014)

Having established that the influence of fictional character can be significant, the term character now has to be clarified.

3.1 Definition of character

Oatley and Mar in a collaborative study explain: “Psychologically, character is a mental model of an actor in a story. It is abstracted from several sources such as how the person behaves, what the person says about him or herself, and what others say about that person. We also know of “character” as some judgement about a person’s moral disposition in the real-world.” They pointed out Virginia Woolf who in a 1924 essay said that “we are all judges of character and we could not survive in the social world if we were not.” (Oatley, Mar, 2005, p. 189)

3.2 Types of characters in fiction

As was already said, characters can be classified into different categories. The most obvious one being the protagonist and antagonist.

The protagonist is the main character, the hero of the story. They often have to oppose the antagonist, or the main villain of the story. Both of these characters require great development and should be round. Round characters are significantly more interesting than flat ones because it is them who deal with a conflict and are influenced by it. They are supposed to grow and develop throughout the story. (Hood, 2010)

Naturally, this does not mean that flat and static characters are somehow wrong or should not be used. This characterization often pertains to the minor, side characters. Those are used as an auxiliary assistance for the main characters' growth and development. They often remain the same and do not change their attitudes and opinions. They can be very stereotypical, e.g. a fairy grandmother conveniently helping the hero or the foolish minion of the villain. (Hood, 2010)

3.3 Stereotyping characters

Stereotyping characters is one of the potentially negative ways to influence a young reader or viewer. Stereotypes may and may not be based on reality and even if they are, they often exaggerate. Limited or false portrayals of specific characters can bring the easily influenced children to disregard the reality and adopt negative and possibly harmful opinions and views.

Generally, it is the flat characters that are stereotyped easily. It is, in fact, one of the attributes of round characters to define a stereotype, to be interesting and to pique the consumer's interest. That being said, though, it is almost impossible for the readers and consumers of other media not to make stereotypical judgements of the characters.

Growing up in a society heavily influenced by prejudices can create a habit of putting people into virtual boxes based on their appearance or first impressions. It is often not only expected of people do so with fictional characters, but also required. Writers often seek to present

characters in a certain way to make them more relatable and stereotyping them can make them blend into the right category. Orson Scott Card writes in an article for *Writer's Digest* that characters who fit a stereotype appear familiar to readers and that readers tend to not care for understanding the character better. On the other hand, characters who do not fit into a stereotype and somehow resist it are interesting and the readers generally want to know this character better. (Card, 2010)

However, is not only the side characters who get stereotyped. By stereotyping the main characters in the first pages of the book or in the first few minutes of the film or episode, authors can create a tension which gets resolved by surprising the reader or viewer by showing a new trait that defies the stereotype. Overcoming a stereotype is often used as one of the many ways a character can grow and evolve.

Role models are important influences in the development of a young mind. They shape children's opinions and present examples of behaviour which the children perceive and adopt as their own. The theoretical part of this thesis provided reasons why fictional characters hold the same significance as the real life ones and explained how important it is to recognise gender stereotypes. The next part of this thesis focuses on the application of gender stereotypes and gender roles in media and tries to examine different behavioural patterns and responses to gender roles in characters.

4 Analysis of fictional characters

For the purpose of this thesis, a number of characters from popular media were selected to analyse and determine how stereotypical is their behaviour and whether their influence is positive or negative.

While such analysis has to be specific and concrete, this thesis tries to achieve as much universality as possible by analysing characters from different sources (books, films, television shows, and comics) and of different types (protagonists, antagonists, side characters). Obviously, the analysis focuses on stereotypical behaviour that each character exhibits as well as their personal qualities. As this thesis has already acknowledged the influence fictional characters have on readers and consumers (see Chapter 2), this analysis should indicate the outcome of such influence.

4.1 Selection of characters

To assure topicality of the analysis, it was important to establish which characters children come in touch with nowadays. A set of questionnaires (see Figure 1 and 2) were given out in a lower secondary school and while no two responses were the same, a strong pattern showed through the answers. Children from the age of 11 to 15 were asked questions about their favourite books, films and television shows. Opinions of 17 children were gathered. 12 of these attend one lower secondary school in Brno, the rest are children I met at a camp or know as family friends.

The respondents expressed a lack of passion for reading but they all agreed that they have read some of the most universally favourite ones, eg. J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series or C. S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia. Most of them agreed that they would rather watch the film adaptation, if it is possible, and would only read the books when the film series has not produced the newest sequel. In some cases, books are an additional series of adventures for video game characters or a sum up of the background plot of the video game (eg. The World of Warcraft) and a number of respondents agreed they would read those.

A rise in popularity came for comic books, mostly as a result of a very active production of their film adaptations. The Marvel and DC studios seem to produce series of films that are rather popular with the respondents and a few of them expressed interest in reading the comic book versions.

However, film production was not the most popular with this age group. Television shows are an easily accessible means of spending a long time with their favourite characters mostly for their higher number of episodes and shorter time per episode. The respondents agreed that sitcoms and shorter television shows hold their attention better than books or two-hour films. Some respondents expressed better enjoyment in shows that do not depend on a background plot (eg. The Simpsons) but an almost even number agreed they enjoy watching shows with deeper meaning in the background plot (eg. Gilmore Girls). Most of them would prefer a show that holds both – a meaning in the overall story with independent plots for each episode (eg. Friends or The Big Bang Theory).

As for the characters to whom the respondents relate the most, a strong variety of heroism seemed to be the key factor. Be it actual superheroes from comic books or comic book inspired films, or ordinary characters who find themselves in an extraordinary situation, it was very common for the respondents to see themselves in a character who escaped their everyday life for an adventure.

4.2 Fictional characters

The next part of the thesis focuses on the analysis of the selected fictional characters. Each character is set in a different environment and connected to different stereotypes. This chapter introduces common behaviour related to these characters and determines how well the stereotypes apply, if at all, and what potential influence they have on young people.

The results of the survey showed that children of this age group do not enjoy reading as much as watching television, therefore the following analysis focuses mainly on television series. However, this thesis aims to

analyse different types of media and thus the most often mentioned series of books was included, as well as a popular character from the Marvel Universe appearing in comic books and recently a film.

4.2.1 Fixed gender roles

This thesis focuses on gender specific stereotypes. To illustrate what precisely is meant by that, the following subchapter provides an analysis of a popular television series The Simpsons as an excellent example of fixed gender roles.

The Simpsons is an American animated sitcom created by Matt Groening. It premiered in 1989, the 29th season started in 2017 and two more are expected.¹

The series is set in a fictional town named Springfield and follows the everyday lives of Homer and Marge Simpson and their three children, Bart, Lisa and Maggie. It resembles the American society in a light satiric way but often highlights important issues concerning the real world.

The portrayal of the characters of this series is heavily influenced by gender, as well as occupation, race and religion stereotyping. For the purpose of this thesis, the gender roles introduced in this series will be analysed.

The members of the Simpson's family all fit into a role and do not stray from it for the whole series. Homer Simpson is a walking stereotype of a middle aged incompetent father. The only way he contributes to the family is his income while his wife tends to the needs of the household. His interest in beer drinking and lazing about, as well as low intelligence and lack of responsibility only further the point.

Marge Simpson is a stay-at-home mum. As was already mentioned in the previous paragraph, her job is to take care of the well-being of both her husband and her children. It is her who drives the children to school and does the shopping, cooking, cleaning up and other household chores. Her character is the emotional support for the whole family, she often

¹ The Simpsons. IMDb [online]. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0096697/>

dilutes Homer's emotional immaturity when dealing with their children's feelings.

Lisa Simpson is a child prodigy who takes school very seriously and has high expectations of her future life. She is driven by her ambition to change the world, she advocates for important social justice issues, for example feminism, and seeks knowledge, even if it occasionally brings negative impact on her social life.

Bart Simpson is a lazy and careless and often finds himself in trouble. His lack of interest in education does not necessarily show low intelligence but provides a clear vision of his future which will probably be very similar to his father's. Taking this point and Marge and Lisa's characterisation into consideration, it could be assumed that the children as supposed to follow in their parent's footsteps, the son his father's, the daughter her mother's. This clearly shows that the series use pre-set gender roles which are to be repeated by generations.

The Simpsons is a great example of fixed gender roles used in a popular piece of media. The humour of this series relies heavily on stereotyping and although it is not always harmful, it could provide a very limited vision of the modern society. Easily influenced younger viewers of this series might adopt these stereotypes as an illustration of right or proper behaviour and apply them in their real lives which would have a negative impact on their lives.

4.2.2 Exchanging stereotypes

The following subchapter focuses on gender roles and gender stereotypes being used in a different way. While the characters of this series of books do, in fact, adopt stereotypically gender specific behaviour, they change the pattern and behave in a manner usually assigned to the opposite gender.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins is a trilogy of young adult novels dealing with a dystopian futuristic universe in which children aged 12-18 are forced into a highly popular death match. The books deal with more than just the horror of this competition but also politics and revolutions, coming of age in such conditions, love and relationships, etc.

All three books follow Katniss Everdeen, a sixteen-year-old girl from one of the poorest districts of this world. When her younger sister gets selected to be a tribute for the Games, Katniss volunteers in an attempt to save her and effectively turns herself into a sensation. In the past 74 years of these games being held, nobody has ever volunteered, and Katniss' sacrifice is not overlooked, both by the common people who spend their lives working in poor conditions and fearing for their life, and the sponsors who keep this television show running.

As much as first impressions might make it seem, Katniss is not a vulnerable little girl fated to lose her life in the first few hours in the arena. The trilogy portrays Katniss in a very stereotypically masculine way. With illegal hunting trips over a fence separating the districts from deep wilderness of the outside world, Katniss' father has taught her how to handle a bow and arrow, as well as several useful survival skills. Archery and hunting are predominantly male dominant activities not only in fiction but in real life as well.

Katniss is intelligent and independent and more often than not completely unaware of social cues. She is a very strong caretaker (of her family and of Peeta Mellark in the arena) and does not let her emotions take over, usually reluctant to acknowledge her feelings and talk about them. Her previous hardships – her father dying, her mother collapsing under the pressure and herself being in charge of keeping the family alive – have hardened her in a way that undoubtedly helps her during the Games. She does not trust easily and she often refuses help. She is stubborn and unwilling to succumb to what the society expects from her. It is that, at the end, which helps her win the first set of Games. She is not very romantic and her love story with Peeta Mellark and Gale Hawthorne is carefully constructed. The only love she ever shows is towards her sister, Primrose, whom she cares for in a motherly way. Their relationship is one of the very few demonstrations of stereotypically female behaviour.

As the series continues, Katniss is once again made to enter the arena. In the second book, she has accepted her fate as a bringer of change. It is made clear that her defiance to the society has made her a perfect icon for

rebellion and, after she has to go through a second year of the Hunger Games, she reluctantly agrees to be the face of the revolution. It is soon clear that her role is to be passive, though, which is in contrast with everything that she believes in.

As reluctant as she was in the first book to even harm her opponents in the Games, by the end of the second book she adopts a very cold blooded manner and is willing to kill anyone who brought her and her people suffering. And by the end of the third book, she become one with her cause, willing to dispose of people without any second thought, going as far as sacrificing her own colleagues in pursuit of her goal. That goal, naturally, is to kill the President, or as she sees him, the evil mastermind of everything.

That is once again a very stereotypically masculine trait. It is not usually women who are portrayed as cold blooded killers – and if so, then certainly not in good light. Katniss is both a good person and a killer, she is a hero with very debatable motives for her actions. An honour not easily granted to female characters.

In comparison with Katniss, Peeta Mellark is a very feminine character. He is the son of a local baker and his artistic skills from decorating cakes help him with camouflage in the arena. While he is very physically strong, as is brought to the reader's attention in the second book, he has had no previous training of survival skills. Unlike Katniss, he is incapable of physically surviving on his own and relies heavily on her help. He does not know how to hunt or which plants are edible, going as far as nearly poisoning himself with wild berries in search of food and it is only because of her that he does not. He is the damsel in distress of this book series.

He is also very emotionally dependent on Katniss and needs constant reassurance, shamelessly shows vulnerability and expresses his romantic feelings towards her often and clearly, which is a stereotypically feminine way of handling emotion. Katniss not only does not care for these emotions but also, in a stereotypically masculine way, does not even notice.

While he is portrayed with stereotypically feminine qualities, he is not ashamed of them. He is gentle and he wants to show his affections and act in the name of love. His desire to stay exactly who he is later shattered by his capture by the Capitol at the end of the second book. And although the torture he experiences at the hands of the President's people changes him, he never loses his kindness.

That on itself is a very stereotypically feminine trait – to show compassion even through hardship. Katniss has a very different response, she gets even tougher and more ruthless. Comparison of these two characters shows clear patterns in stereotyping masculine and feminine behaviour, although Katniss and Peeta have exchanged labels and role models. If they were to be switched back into their respective gender roles – that is a weak and dependable Katniss and a strong and independent Peeta, the characters would almost seem dull and empty because they would apply to every stereotype surrounding their gender and the trilogy would not earn such a positive response from readers and critics.

It is the main characters what makes a story interesting – because without them there would be no story - and in this case, the heavy portrayal of gender stereotypes in a non-traditional way made all the change. Switching up gender assigned weaknesses and strengths in fiction simply mirrors the real life as it is and helps make characters more relatable to different groups of people, as well as highlights these stereotypes. It would be easy for them to escape the readers notice if they were expected. Nobody would blink an eye reading about a strong man and an emotional woman, only switching these up actually brings attention to the fact that such behaviour is stereotypical and does not necessarily resemble reality.

While Katniss Everdeen might defy stereotypes connected to female protagonists, she very clearly conforms to those connector with male protagonists, and similarly Peeta Mellark might not be the typical masculine hero, he does however accept the role of the damsel in distress rather well. Exchanging stereotypes does not equal defying them but it does give a good example to young readers of the books that in the real

world, women can be strong and fearless and men can be dependent and sensitive.

4.2.3 Geeks versus masculinity

The following subchapter deals with the assumptions surrounding men and masculinity. The characters of this series defy common male stereotypes in a way that creates a new set of them. This subchapter focuses on how exactly and in which ways do they resist stereotypical masculinity and what is the outcome of it.

The Big Bang Theory is an American sitcom created by Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady. It premiered in 2007 and in will finish in 2019 with the total amount of 12 seasons.²

It follows the everyday lives of five main characters - Jim Parsons as Sheldon Cooper, Johnny Galecki as Leonard Hofstadter, Simon Helberg as Howard Wolowitz, Kunal Nayyar as Rajesh Koothrappali and Kaley Cuoco as Penny. Later on in the series, two more characters of significant importance are introduced, Melissa Rauch as Bernadette Rostenkowski and Mayim Bialik as Amy Farrah Fowler.³

The four men are scientists working at the California Institute of Technology. Albeit being individuals with different characterisation, these four characters share a common trait. They are highly stereotyped nerds and geeks with inept social skills and although a great deal of other stereotypes could be found within their individual behaviour, this thesis will focus on the portrayal of nerdiness with regards to general male stereotypes.

In an article for Take It Over, Monisha Srichand (n.d.) describes how common stereotypes are brought upon children. She defines male stereotypes in regards to what boys are taught from young age, such as being strong, brave, etc. She believes boys are taught to develop an interest in sports or household work, as opposed to cooking or cleaning, which she says are being usually taught to girls.

² The Big Bang Theory. IMDb [online]. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0898266/>

³ The Big Bang Theory. IMDb [online]. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0898266/>

Holly Brewer created a list of stereotypes for both men and women (Health Guidance, n.d.). In addition to the stereotypes already mentioned in the previous paragraph, in her article Brewer states being protective and encouraged to pursue jobs that require higher intelligence or muscle, and having hobbies that include cars, video games, and outdoor activities.

All male main characters of the Big Bang Theory series more or less defy these stereotypes. As was already mentioned, they are scientists who spend most of their work days in labs. They do not play any sports or enjoy outdoor activities such as camping or fishing. Their whole lives revolve around science, mainly theoretical physics, and comic books. Reading and discussing comic books is their leisure time activity, as well as playing board and video games.

They do, however, work in a male dominant field. Having higher academic title is often the reason for belittling others and making fun of them. Sheldon Cooper enjoys reminding Howard Wolowitz of lacking a doctoral title and they all collectively joke on the expense of Penny, who is a waitress and an actress with no university education.

Their interest in science and comic books brings along a new set of stereotypes. There is a great deal of assumptions about geeks and nerds and these four characters enforce many of them.

An article for The Game Detective (2015) mentions four common stereotypes about geeks. They state that the assumptions are often negative and explain how unrealistic they are. The typical geek, according to the stereotypes listed in this article, is highly intelligent but without common sense and social skills, unattractive and un-athletic, and inherently sexist.

While the reality might be different, as the author of said article argues, the Big Bang Theory actually enforces this behaviour. Sheldon Cooper in particular is portrayed as a socially inept genius who often hurts the feelings of his friends and colleagues. While the rest of the group is much less insensitive and do not have his intelligence, they often behave in a way that clearly shows their lack of understanding what the rest of the world sees as normal. Their social interactions are often awkward and stilled and they are unable to create and maintain romantic relationships.

The matter of sexism in this series is enhanced by the characterisation. Penny fuels almost every stereotype about women side characters. She is beautiful and, in comparison with the male characters, uneducated. Amy Farrah Fowler is a scientist and therefore highly intelligent, yet she lacks conventional beauty and several social skills, as well as typically feminine hobbies. The only important female character of the series who somehow combines intelligence and attractiveness is Bernadette Rostenkowski.

A good example of the characters being sexist, not the show itself, is the fact that the other men enjoy making fun of Rajesh Koothrappali's feminine side, going as far as calling him girly and weak. He has a hard time communicating with women and often embarrasses himself with an ill-advised and usually offensive joke or catch-phrase. Penny has a job that the men find demeaning and hobbies that they find laughable and she is reminded of that on many occasions.

In conclusion, the four main male characters of this series serve a good purpose in defying general male stereotypes, however, they do so by adopting a new behaviour that feeds into a different set of stereotypes. The article for *The Game Detective* (2015) mentioned in this chapter clearly expresses that these stereotypes are not based on reality and are often perceived as negative. Seeing as *The Big Bang Theory* enforces them, it could be seen as a negative influence on young viewers.

4.2.4 A single mother

This subchapter focuses on specifically female stereotypes concerning parenthood. Seeing as this television series was mentioned quite often in the survey, it is important to see how it influences young people.

Gilmore Girls is a popular American comedy-drama TV series created by Amy Sherman-Palladino, starring Lauren Graham and Alexis Bledel. It ran from 2000-2007 with 7 seasons and the total number of 153 episodes⁴.

The main focus of the series is the relationship between Lorelai Gilmore and her teenage daughter, Rory. Lorelai comes from a high society

⁴ *Gilmore Girls*. IMDb [online]. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0238784/>

family but the controversy around her pregnancy at 16 years old made her escape her parents and start a new life in a small fictional town. The issues of social class and family connections is a strong point of the show, however, it is mostly about the struggles of everyday life, friendships, relationships and personal growth both for Lorelai in her adult life and for Rory as she's attending high school and then university.

The pilot episode opens the series with Rory already in high school and the viewer only knows of Lorelai's past troubles through dialogue. Her first relationship with Christopher Hayden resulted in unexpected pregnancy when they were both 16 years old. Christopher's parents suggested termination of the pregnancy but Lorelai refused and later on refused the wedding her own parents planned. After a year of living with her parents and her baby, she ran away and took a job as a maid in the local Independence Inn where she then built a life for her and Rory.

Lorelai is portrayed as very independent and capable. She worked up to being an executive manager of the Independence Inn while taking care of a child while she herself was basically a child. In the world of fiction, she is a great parent. She brought her daughter up even though she was without the financial aid she would have been granted by her parents. She was not alone for all this, though, as the town is quite a close-knit society where everyone knows everything about the others and they all helped in a way. And Lorelai's parents jump on the first occasion to be involved in their granddaughter's life when Lorelai asks them to.

She also has a great relationship with Rory based on mutual trust and love. They know almost too much about each other and act more like best friends than a mother and daughter. They often help each other with issues surrounding their love lives and personal problems. They rely on each other for emotional support and they have little domestic traditions, such as ordering food and watching TV.

Lorelai is a successful woman. She has a job she loves and is good at, she has a strong and soon to be well educated daughter, she is slowly fixing the relationship with her parents and she has a somehow rich love life. In the world of single parenting, that appears to be a very happy

story. Lorelai defines certain prejudices about single mothers and shows the viewers that it can, actually, be well done.

In an article for *Blunt Moms* (2014), Kae James describes the most frequent stereotypes surrounding single mothers. According to her, it is not uncommon to see single mothers as rejected and sad. At the time when Lorelai got pregnant, her parents had a life prepared for her. For them, the pregnancy was an uncomfortable issue but one that could be very well resolved by marriage. Christopher was willing to marry and build a family with her. However, Lorelai realised that neither one of them were ready for a marriage and refused. Therefore, being single was her choice and she made it considering her position which is one of many ways in which this character resists stereotypical behaviour.

James (2014) states that it is also rather usual to see single mothers as poor or relying heavily on social aids. Had Lorelai stayed in her parent's house, she would have lived a life of privilege and wealth. Because of the pressure put on her to marry and the stigma about single parenthood her parents clearly showed, she decided to live on her own. It was not easy and for the first months after leaving her parent's house, Lorelai actually did live in very poor conditions. However, she is not weak and she made both their lives by working hard and succeeding in a career.

Her relationship with Rory's father is also atypical, according to Kae James' (2014) list of stereotypes. They communicate on friendly terms and Christopher is actively seeking Rory and trying to be a father for her. There are no negative connotations to their meetings, although Lorelai believes Christopher will ever mature and become a family man. At one point, they decide to try for a relationship but his past prevents it as he learns that he is expecting a baby with his previous girlfriend. Regardless, Lorelai does not hate him, as could be expected by the stereotypes surrounding relationships between single mothers and the fathers of the baby that James (2014) describes.

Lorelai does not refuse Christopher to be a part of Rory's life but she also does not expect him to stay for long because she does not believe his promises. She is a single parent for Rory's whole childhood although she is not always a single woman. While dating, Lorelai does not force her

love interests to act as step-fathers for Rory, nor does she expect Rory to treat them as such. Rory already has a foster family out of the whole town and the closest Rory gets to a step-father is Luke Danes who owns a local diner and acts very protectively towards both Rory and Lorelai, and later on becomes Lorelai's love interest.

It is also noteworthy that while single mothers are heavily negatively stereotyped and usually expected to take care of the child, single fathers do not get such treatment. Even in families with both a mother and a father, the jobs are often specifically sorted and not always equal. In an article for Health Line, Jim Walter (2017) lists a set of presumptions surrounding what he calls "mom jobs" and "dad jobs" (Walter, 2017). According to him, it is typically the mother who takes care of cooking, cleaning, washing up, making sure the children are bathed, clothed and asleep or awake on time, while the father usually takes care of financing the family with a steady job, taking care of the household work and driving the family on vacation.

It is obvious that when one of the parents is missing, something else has to be missing too. Taking the previous paragraph of this thesis into consideration, it does seem that if a father is missing, the children are still taken care of although the household might suffer some financial strains. By this equation, however, it would appear that the family simply cannot function if a mother is missing. That might be why single fathers are often seen as heroes who sacrificed their lives for the child and went out of their way to take care of them whilst single mothers do not get any praise for doing the same.

Since the series is about relationships and mainly the familial ones, the gender related stereotypes concerning family behaviour and especially single parents were due examining. This subchapter introduced a great deal of prejudice concerning single mothers. Lorelai Gilmore challenges these stereotypes and proves that while they might be based on some actuality, they do not apply in their entirety. She acts as a representation of the reality that the quality of parenting is not defined by the gender of the parent but rather by the dedication to provide a safe and loving home for the child.

4.2.5 A female villain

The Marvel Universe was mentioned in almost every answer of the survey. Over the years, Marvel Comics have introduced many characters who appeal to both boys and girls, and each child had their own favourite character, usually a supernatural hero. However, this thesis deals with gender specific stereotypes and although most of these heroes fit a certain box, Hela of Asgard defies almost all common assumptions surrounding female villains.

Hela of Asgard is a comic book character from the Marvel Universe. The Marvel Universe is a single reality which connects all works, events and characters from the Marvel Comics published under Marvel Entertainment, LLC.⁵

Hela is based on Norse mythology and set in Asgard amongst other gods such as Odin or Thor. She is a goddess of death and the ruler of the Realms of Hel and Niffleheim. The character first appeared in Journey Into Mystery #102 in 1964 and has been a frequent opponent to Thor⁶. Recently, she appeared in the 2017 film Thor: Ragnarok directed by Taika Waititi and was portrayed by Cate Blanchett.

Hela is a power driven villain. Her main interest is in the souls of the deceased, which she rules, especially the Asgardians known for their strength. Her ambition to collect a greater amount of Asgardian souls is the reason she is most often facing Thor, the God of Thunder and son of Odin. Her desire for Thor's and Odin's souls has led to many encounters, all of which provide examples of the quality of her character.

This thesis has already introduced the importance of empathy in regard of relating to a character personally. Interesting motives for character's actions are the reason readers or viewers connect with the character emotionally. Providing unsatisfactory explanations for the evil behaviour

5 About Marvel: Corporate Information. Marvel [online]. 2017 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://marvel.com/corporate/about/>

6 Hela. The Marvel Universe Wiki [online]. 2018 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://marvel.com/universe/Hela#axzz5AeaYCb8q>

helps establish certain negative stereotypes surrounding female villains. Authors of fiction introducing female villains seek to make a noticeable difference between the villain and the other, nice, women in the story, often to the point of drawing a thick line between these two characteristics. Doing so creates an assumption that the villain cannot be anything else but evil and therefore prevents deeper understanding of her motives.

Shannon A. Thompson in her article *Writing Complex Female Villains* (2015) writes that is it often vengeance connected to romantic relationships that drives female villains. Thompson compares several female characters who act as villains, eg. Victoria from Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series and a nameless antagonist from Lauren Kate's *Teardrop*, and speculates motivation for their behaviour, concluding that more often than not, men play a significant role. She compares female and male villains and states that female villains are generally treated much more harshly and attributes which readers find appealing in male characters are often found unappealing in female characters.

Hela of Asgard is not driven by any previous relationships. Her aim is strength and power and it has very little to do with personal feelings towards the other characters. Her motivation is strongly connected with the nature of her existence – as a goddess of death she naturally must seek out the dying and collect their souls. Although that itself is not evil, she promises destruction and war and she delivers both regardless of the hardships her opponents cause her.

In an article for *U. S. News* (2017), Erica Larsen-Dockray, who teaches a class at the California Institute of the Arts, explains that female villains are more often than not old and unmarried. She describes the typical female villain as an unattractive and bitter figure who always seems angry. Although Larsen-Dockray writes about animated cartoons, her description can be applied to the traditional style of comic books.

Hela has a very specific feature concerning her physical appearance. She is portrayed with one half of her body dead and decayed.⁷ However,

⁷ Hela. *The Marvel Universe Wiki* [online]. 2018 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://marvel.com/universe/Hela#axzz5AeaYCb8q>

this condition is connected to the nature of her powers as a symbol of death. Otherwise, nothing in her portrayal applies to the typical stereotypes described in the previous paragraph. As long as her left side is covered with a cloak, she is young and attractive and has similar features to the rest of the Asgardian women.

She is ruthless and strong. Her touch is fatal to both mortals and Asgardians, although she scarcely leaves her realm to do so.⁸ Her final goal has always been to collect the souls of Odin and Thor, however, there are a number of occasions when she demonstrates willingness to postpone it. For example, during the first meeting with Thor, she allowed both him and Lady Sif to escape, and later on restored the lives of Odin and Thor when the repercussions of their death led to her disadvantage.⁹

In an article for the Hollywood Reporter concerning the 2017 film *Thor: Ragnarok* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Ciara Wardlow (2017) compares Hela with other female villains who have appeared in recent films. Wardlow highlights the lack of deep characterisation of female villains in films and refers to certain stereotypes. According to her, most female villains are either forgettable or boring, and if they hold significant importance, they are either heavily sexualised or degraded into comedic reliefs (Wardlow, 2017).

Hela of Asgard is neither forgettable nor boring. She causes damage that is permanent and of great inconvenience to the protagonists. Her actions matter to the overall plot of every chapter she appears in and although some of her dialogues are entertaining, as is common for most comic book characters, in no way does she exist solely for that purpose. Hela of Asgard continues to remind the readers of Marvel Comics that women are as capable of causing damage as men and that they do not need to use seduction or deception to do so. She follows her nature outright and proudly and usually comes very close to reaching her goal. Her character plays an important role in portraying women as multi-dimensional people.

⁸ Hela. The Marvel Universe Wiki [online]. 2018 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://marvel.com/universe/Hela#axzz5AeaYCb8q>

⁹ Hela (Earth-616). Marvel Database [online]. n.d. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: [http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Hela_\(Earth-616\)](http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Hela_(Earth-616))

4.2.6 Contrasting Life Goals

The following subchapter focuses on the different approach to romantic relationships and different life goals of men and women in a popular television series.

Friends is an American sitcom created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman. It aired from 1994 to 2004 with the total number of 10 seasons starring Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry and David Schwimmer.¹⁰

The series portrays the everyday lives of six friends from various social backgrounds and with various expectations for their future. Ross and Monica Geller and Rachel Green come from upper middle class families. Growing up, they never needed to worry about their financial situation and in the case of Rachel, their future.

Rachel was set to marry a doctor and become a wealthy housewife and it was only her rebellious side that helped her decide to run away and not follow the plans of her family. Coming to the city of New York, where this show is set, she did not have any understanding of the working class society and she had difficulties adapting. She is portrayed as a stereotypical high school cheerleader, a sweetheart whose brains are not as important as her looks.

Ross Geller is a palaeontologist and he does not hesitate to boast about his PhD. On occasion, he uses it as an excuse to put himself above the others and to show that he is clearly to be the most respected. Despite that, his interest in dinosaurs and the pre-historic era often puts him at the receiving end of teasing and jokes. His parents have always supported his every decision and expressed their love for him freely. On the other hand, his sister Monica feels as if she cannot do any good in her parent's eyes.

Throughout the series, Monica manages much more success than her brother yet their mother still finds something which is not to her liking. She was an overweight child and her interest in cuisine led her to becoming a cook, later on a successful chef. However, similarly to Rachel's parents, Monica's mother believes the purpose of women is to

10 Friends. IMDb [online]. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108778/>

get married and often condemns Monica for failing to find a long term relationship, completely overlooking her professional achievements. Monica herself invests a lot of effort into maintaining romantic relationships and dreams of marriage and children. She is also very strict about the order of her living space and she enjoys cleaning.

Chandler Bing's background is unclear since every information he gives about his childhood unmistakably leads to a defining moment which shaped his adult life. When he was in his early teens, his father announced his transsexualism and his wish to transition. His mother became very bitter towards this event and eventually the family broke up. Unable to deal with the situation, Chandler found humour as a way to resolve tense or awkward situations. Although his jokes are often ill-advised, he is known as the funny guy of the group with a side effect of never being taken seriously.

Joey Tribbiani comes from an originally Italian family. He is the only son in a family of many daughters but although he grew up surrounded by women, he was not influenced by femininity. He is the token womaniser of the series, entertaining himself with various short-term relationships and priding himself on his ability to attain them. He is a rather unsuccessful actor and quite often suffers financially, although his food consuming habits might suggest otherwise.

Phoebe Buffay's childhood was tainted by her mother's suicide and living on the street since early teenage years. She behaves in a very untraditional manner, often completely mystifying the others. She likes to play the guitar and her original songs are usually badly composed ballads about her childhood or the events of the show. She is very outspoken, occasionally rude, and has strange beliefs and opinions.

Despite each of these characters undoubtedly belonging to specific boxes – the smart geek, the stupid cheerleader, the romantic housewife, the womaniser actor and the weird hippie – the writers of the show clearly tried to add more dimensions to them. Be it personal growth like in the case of Rachel, Monica or Chandler, although they each had very specific conditions, or personality traits contradicting stereotypes like in the case

of Phoebe, Joey or Ross, each character demonstrates that while said descriptions apply on the surface, the reality is different.

All six characters have interesting storylines and ways to defy the assumptions based on their original introduction, however, for the purpose of this thesis, Monica Geller and Joey Tribbiani will be analysed with regards to their respective views on relationships and their life goals.

Monica Geller is emotional and unafraid to show weakness, as is typical for female characters, however she is also dominant and has strong leadership abilities. She is in charge in her relationship with Chandler, although his own submissive personality plays a role in that, and she leads the kitchen as the chef at work. Monica has traditionally feminine interests, such as cooking and baking, cleaning, or taking care of babies, but she also shows traditionally masculine traits, she enjoys playing American football, remembers wrestling with her brother as a child and is open to try again, she is competitive in games and challenges of any kind and is told to be incredibly physically strong.

Throughout the series, Monica presents herself as strong willed and resolute in her actions. Despite her life goal being getting married and have children, Monica does not sacrifice her own beliefs or the well-being of others to achieve it. When presented with the fact that her long-term boyfriend Richard does not want children and would only have them for her, she decides to terminate the relationship, and with that her possible only chance, rather than make either of them live unhappily.

After marrying Chandler, she believes she reached her ultimate goal of starting a family. Upon finding out they cannot conceive a child, she is devastated but her determination to have children is stronger than their grief and soon enough they find other options to start a family. They decide on a surrogate mother and even though it brings great difficulties, they do not hesitate to give up their own comfort to ensure success. Going to such great lengths to achieve having a family clearly shows that it is, in fact, her life goal, and no matter how masculine she acts or how professionally successful she is, she still belongs to her stereotype.

Joey Tribbiani does not feel any need to prove his complexity by showing any feminine traits. His main interests in life are food and sex and he expresses those needs clearly and without shame. On one hand he is attractive and has great success with women, a fact that he enjoys boasting about to his friends, on the other hand he is rather dull and unintelligent. His habits are almost primitive and his opinions uneducated. Although it might seem that it is Chandler's job, Joey's character serves as the comedic relief.

Joey openly lies about his achievements on his professional resume and that often gets him into awkward situations. If possible, his preferred way of dealing with trouble is trying to seduce his way out of it. He does not aim for long-term relationships, though, as often deals with rejecting the women who do. It is unclear what reaction would the series get if their roles were reversed, as it never happened, however it may be expected that a female protagonist treating her lovers in similar manner to what Joey does would not be warmly accepted in present-day society, let alone in late 1990s and early 2000s when the show aired.

In regards of relationships, he is the exact opposite of Monica. This fact brings a stereotypical portrayal of the conflict between women's life goals, which clearly are to get married and have children, and men's reluctance to do so. To be fair, though, the series did find a way to redeem condoning these stereotypes by introducing Rachel Green's will to put her job before her relationship with Ross Geller, and Ross' desire to get happily married.

Naturally, there are other signs of sexism in the series, mostly manifesting in enforced stereotypes. Rachel Green's main interest is fashion and after working as a waitress, she finally applies for a job in the fashion industry. On the contrary, Ross Geller has a highly respected job as a museum curator and later on university professor of palaeontology. Chandler Bing refuses to acknowledge deeper romantic feelings to the point of most of his relationships failing and both Monica's obvious need of a relationship and Rachel's sensitive feelings are mocked.

For further examples of behaviour that might not seem sexist at first glance but ultimately causes harm to women, Ross's ex-wife's

homosexuality is treated as a joke. Ross is not always agreeable to the fact that two women are bringing up his son, Ben, going as far as forcing Ben to play with supposedly manly toys, such as a plastic dinosaur or a G. I. Joe figurine, when Ben brings a Barbie doll. Chandler's father's transsexualism is also treated as a joke, to the point of being completely dismissed. For example, Chandler still uses masculine pronouns and even his mother likes to remark about it in a ridiculing manner.

The purpose of analysing Monica Geller and Joey Tribbiani and especially examining their different approach to relationships and stereotyped life goals was to bring attention to some of the issues concerning this universally popular television show. The problem with assuming that women inherently want to get married and have children while men do not is that it enhances a sexist stereotype that should long be overcome. While Monica or Joey on their own would not bring much attention to the fact, the contrast between these two characters makes it rather obvious.

Despite being quite conservative in using stereotypes, the series deals with important issues and the characters evolve and grow as the seasons continue. Even if the portrayal of transsexualism and homosexuality is not ideal, it is not completely negative and the introduction of these topics is as important as good representation. The women of the show do in fact have a voice and their own personalities, although limited by their stereotypical characterisation. However, the characters are allowed to realise their sexism or other harmful behaviour and overcome it.

Friends is a show highly dependent on the friendship and mutual respect of its characters and although certain parts of it are outdated, this series could have some positive influence on young viewers. It is important, however, to realise which characterisation is influenced by a negative stereotype and understand that it does not apply in real life.

5 Conclusion

Each of the analysed characters was very specifically chosen to represent a different type of stereotyping. The environment and background differences between these characters ensured that this thesis dealt with a broad variation of examples of gender specific stereotypes presented in media.

The characters from the Hunger Games, Gilmore Girls and Marvel Comics somehow defy the assumptions surrounding their gender or redefine them and serve as excellent examples of the reality. Seeing as most gender stereotypes tend to be sexist and overall a harmful way to perceive people, the fact that these characters not only resist them but also show a different approach has a positive influence on young people.

In the case of the other subjects, the television series The Simpsons, The Big Bang Theory and Friends, the analysis served as a reminder that there are negative ways to present stereotypes in media. Although each of the series has many positive aspects, enforcing these harmful stereotypes is a significant problem with a negative impact on those who would adopt similar assumptions in real life.

It is important to realise that fictional role models have the same impact as those children accept in real life. Adults surrounding children, be it family members, friends or teachers should understand that children are influenced not only by their own behaviour, but also behaviour of the fictional characters that they introduce to them. Similarly to the way adults try to behave in a way that shows a positive example to children and explain which behaviour is wrong and harmful, they should present children with media that reinforces positive and condemns negative behaviour. Presenting negative views in a ridiculing manner should discourage similar behaviour and presenting positive views in a natural way should normalise their existence.

6 References

COHN, Dorrit. Co dělá fikci fikcí. Praha: Academia, 2009. Možné světy. ISBN 978-80-200-1718-5.

COLLINS, Suzanne. The hunger games. New York: Scholastic, 2009. ISBN 978-0-439-02352-8.

GILES, David. Psychologie médií. Praha: Grada, 2012. Z pohledu psychologie. ISBN 978-80-247-3921-2.

JAMES, Henry. The art of fiction. Longman's Magazine, 1884, reprinted in The Portable Henry James. New York: Viking, 1951, Ed. M.D. Zabel, 1391-1418.

KAUFMAN, Michael T. . *New York Times*. New York Times, 2003. Retrieved 11 March 2017.

KOTEN, Jiří. Jak se fikce dělá slovy: pragmatické aspekty vyprávění. Brno: Host, 2013. Teoretická knihovna. ISBN 978-80-7294-846-8.

MOORE, Timothy. "Sex Roles." The Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology. Ed. Bonnie Strickland. 2nd ed. Detroit: Gale, 2001. 578-581.

MORGENROTH, Thekla. How Role Models Affect Role Aspirants' Motivation and Goals. Exeter, 2015. Doctoral thesis. University of Exeter.

Sexism. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Ed. William A. Darity, Jr. 2nd ed. Vol. 7. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008. 473-474.

SPRENG, R. Nathan, Margaret C. MCKINNON, Raymond MAR a Brian LEVINE. The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire: Scale Development and Initial Validation of a Factor-Analytic Solution to Multiple Empathy Measures. *Journal of Personality Assessment*. 2009, 91(1), 62-71.

BERNARDO, Karen. Characterization in Literature. Storybites [online]. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.storybites.com/characterization-in-literature.html>

BREWER, HOLLY. List of Gender Stereotypes. Health Guidance [online]. n.d. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.healthguidance.org/entry/15910/1/List-of-Gender-Stereotypes.html>

CARD, Orson Scott. Stereotyping Your Fictional Characters. *Writer's Digest: write better, get published* [online]. 2010 [cit. 2018-04-09]. Dostupné z: <http://www.writersdigest.com/qp7-migration-books/characters-and-viewpoint-excerpt>

CRANNY-FRANCIS, Anne, et al. *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Female animators break down cartoon-women stereotypes. The U. S. News [online]. 2017 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://www.usnews.com/news/entertainment/articles/2017-01-23/female-animators-break-down-stereotypical-cartoon-women>

FOUR COMMON GEEK STEREOTYPES: MYTHS AND REALITIES. The Game Detective [online]. 2015 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://gamedetective.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/four-common-geek-stereotypes-myths-and-realities/>

Gender Roles. CliffsNotes [online]. [cit. 2017-01-30]. Dostupné z: : <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/sociology/sex-and-gender/gender-roles>

HOOD, Dave. Elements of Fiction: Character. Dave Hood: Find your creative muse [online]. 2010 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://davehood59.wordpress.com/2010/02/01/elements-of-fiction-2/>

JAMES, Kae. Stereotypes of a Single Mother. Blunt Moms [online]. 2014. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.bluntmoms.com/stereotypes-single-mother/>

LOCKWOOD, Penelope, Christian H. JORDAN a Ziva KUNDA. Motivation by Positive or Negative Role Models: Regulatory Focus Determines Who Will Best Inspire Us. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology [online]. 2002, 83(4), 854-864 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/lockwood/PDF/Lockwood%202002%20Motivation.pdf>

MAR, RAYMOND A., JORDAN B. PETERSON a KEITH OATLEY. Exploring the link between reading fiction and empathy: Ruling out individual differences and examining outcomes. Communications 34 [online]. 2009, 407-428 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: http://www.yorku.ca/mar/Mar%20et%20al%202009_reading%20fiction%20and%20empathy.pdf

MOORE, Timothy. Sex roles. The GALE ENCYCLOPEDIA of Psychology [online]. 2nd edition. Farmington Hills, 2001, s. 578-581 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.al-edu.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Gale-Encyclopedia-of-Psychology-2nd-ed.-2001.pdf>

OATLEY, KEITH a RAYMOND A. MAR. EVOLUTIONARY PRE-ADAPTATION AND THE IDEA OF CHARACTER IN FICTION. Journal of Cultural and Evolutionary Psychology [online]. 2005, 3(2), 181-196 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: http://www.yorku.ca/mar/Oatley%20&%20Mar%202005_evolution%20pre-adaptation%20character%20in%20fiction_uncorrected%20proof.pdf

OATLEY, Keith. Does art imitate life? Fictional characters seem real, but they are of the mind. Psychology Today [online]. 2011 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-psychology-fiction/201104/does-art-imitate-life>

OATLEY, Keith. In the Minds of Others. Psychology Today [online]. 2010 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-psychology-fiction/201012/in-the-minds-others>

OATLEY, Keith. Narrative empathy. Psychology Today [online]. 2011 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-psychology-fiction/201109/narrative-empathy>

RUSH, Claire. Media Role Models. Kilter: Information Sheet [online]. n.d. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://www.fyt.org.uk/v2/wp-content/uploads/Media-Role-Models-Claire-Rush.pdf>

SRICHAND, Monisha. Gender Stereotypes. Take It Over [online]. n.d. [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <http://talkitover.in/self/gender-stereotypes>

THOMPSON, Shannon A. Writing Complex Female Villains. SHANNON A THOMPSON [online]. 2015 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://shannonathompson.com/2015/01/05/writing-female-villains/>

WALTER, Jim. Single Dad Goals vs. Single Mom Goals. Health Line [online]. 2017 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/single-mom-vs-single-dad#11>

WARDLOW, Ciara. Movies Need More Female Villains Like This One. The Hollywood Reporter [online]. 2017 [cit. 2018-04-06]. Dostupné z: <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/thor-ragnarok-cate-blanchetts-hela-is-a-remarkable-female-villain-1054937>

7 Appendices

Figure 1: The original version of the questionnaire

Figure 2: The English version of the questionnaire

Figure 1

Tento dotazník se týká mé bakalářské práce, která se zaměřuje na stereotypní chování idolů a populárních postav v médiích a jejich vlivu na žáky základní školy. Prosím o upřímné a pravdivé zodpovězení následujících otázek. Pokud na nějakou otázku nemáte odpověď, napište mi i to. Děkuji.

Ročník:

Zamyslete se nad knihami, které jste četli, a napište mi z nich pět nejdůležitějších. (nejdůležitější z jakéhokoliv důvodu – ať už proto, že mě nejvíce bavila, je v ní moje oblíbená postava, nějakým způsobem mě ovlivnila, četl/a jsem ji víckrát, ...)

Kupujete si pravidelně nějaké časopisy? Jaké?

U filmů bude otázka rozšířenější – chci, abyste mi napsali nejen pět nejdůležitějších filmů, ale ke každému filmu ještě oblíbenou postavu.

Sledujete seriály? Prosím o vypsání jakýchkoliv, které máte rádi, množství nechávám na vás.

(Za seriál považuji cokoliv, co má více dílů v návaznosti do nějaké série, takže samozřejmě i sitcomy a anime.)

a) v televizi sleduji:

b) na internetu sleduji:

Figure 1

This questionnaire is connected to my Bachelor's thesis which deals with stereotypical behaviour of idols and popular characters in media and their influence on pupils of primary and lower secondary schools. Please answer the following questions honestly and truthfully. If you cannot answer, please put that in as well.

Thank you.

Year:

Think about books you have read and write five most important ones.
(most important for any reason – the most enjoyable, contains my favourite character, it influenced my view on something, I read it more than once,

Do you buy any magazines regularly? Which?

The question about films will be a bit extended – write not only five most important ones but also a favourite character from each.

Do you watch television shows? Write any you like no matter the number of them.
(Include anything that creates a series – even sitcoms and anime.)

a) watched in TV:

b) watched online:

ANOTACE

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jméno a příjmení: | Jiřina Kučerová |
| Katedra: | Ústav cizích jazyků |
| Vedoucí práce: | Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D. |
| Rok obhajoby: | 2018 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Název práce: | Mužské a ženské modely chování a stereotypy v médiích |
| Název v angličtině: | Male and female role models and stereotypes in media |
| Anotace práce: | Bakalářská práce se zabývá modely chování pro děti představovaných v médiích a stereotypy, které se vážou k jejich pohlaví. Udává příklad pěti zdrojů, ve kterých charaktery různými způsoby ukazují stereotypní chování a nějak na ně reagují. Posuzuje, které postavy mají pozitivní a které negativní vliv na způsob myšlení mladých lidí. |
| Klíčová slova: | Model chování, stereotyp, vliv na děti, fiktivní postava |
| Anotace v angličtině: | This thesis deals with role models for children portrayed in media and stereotypes connected to their gender. It provides examples from five sources in which the characters show stereotypical behaviour and somehow react to it. It decides whether these characters have a positive or negative influence on a young mind. |
| Klíčová slova v angličtině: | Role model, stereotype, influence on children, fictional character |
| Přílohy vázané v práci: | Příloha 1: Originální verze dotazníků Příloha 2: Anglická verze dotazníků |
| Rozsah práce: | 47 stran |
| Jazyk práce: | angličtina |

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se věnuje modelům chování pro děti a stereotypům specifickým pro jednotlivá pohlaví. Teoretická část této práce uvádí důležitost modelů chování v životě dětí a představuje fiktivní postavy prezentované v médiích jako relevantní zdroj vlivu na způsob myšlení mladých lidí. Praktická část potom představuje analýzy postav z pěti zdrojů zaměřených na tyto stereotypy specifické pro pohlaví, které jsou běžně přisuzovány jejich prostředí a pozadí. Každá analýza komentuje tyto stereotypy a rozhoduje, zda má takové chování pozitivní nebo negativní vliv na čtenáře nebo diváky toho zdroje.