

GENDERED DISCOURSES IN THE AMERICAN TV SITCOM
F.R.I.E.N.D.S

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KUALA LUMPUR

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**GENDERED DISCOURSES IN THE AMERICAN TV SITCOM
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ABSTRACT

The current research concentrates on analysing the gendered discourse in the television (TV) series of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S*, investigating how gender is portrayed as it depicts a representable degree of society today. The proposed findings are information as to how this sitcom reflects the gendered discourses that were common in that time and are still relevant today. This paper considers how sitcom creators want their audiences to be able to relate to what is shown on their programme, making it relatable to the audience, creating the problem of possible bias from the creators supporting stereotypes that only encourages the same mindset amongst society, bringing a need to analyse the sitcoms for discourses presented to the audience. The research utilises 4 episodes chosen from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S*, based on criteria of number of audience views, TV ratings upon airing, and presence of comments with traces of gender in clips of episodes posted on *Youtube*. The episodes were analysed with scenes containing traces of gendered discourses extracted as data, the data is then categorised with the identified gendered discourses. The data is then compared to case studies and examples from journal articles and official news websites to determine if the presented discourses in the sitcom supports or challenge stereotypes held by society. 4 main gendered discourses identified were the Gender Differences discourse, Hegemonic Masculinity discourse, the Compulsory Heterosexuality discourse, the Gender equality discourse, and other discourses also identified were the Dumb Blonde discourse, “the being a woman is an insult” discourse, the Positive Masculinity discourse, and the “women love to gossip” discourse. From the analysis of the data done, it has shown that majority of the discourses found reinforces the normative perceptions of gender, which explains its relatability to many audiences around the world that made it a worldwide success upon airing, though it is worth nothing that

there instances found to also challenge some of the normative perceptions as well, indicating a slow but sure movement towards a more accepting society.

Keywords: Gendered discourse, American TV sitcom, *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*

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ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini menganalisis wacana berjantina dalam siri televisyen (TV) Amerika, *F.R.I.E.N.D.S*, dengan objektif untuk memperhatikan bagaimana jantina digambarkan dalam siri tersebut, kerana wacana jantina yang dipaparkan menggambarkan sebahagian besar masyarakat sekarang. Penemuan yang telah dicadangkan adalah cara-cara sitkom ini mencerminkan wacana jantina yang biasa berlaku pada masa ia dipaparkan di televisyen yang masih relevan hingga kini. Ini mempertimbangkan cara pencipta sitkom ingin penonton-penonton mengaitkan kehidupan mereka dengan apa yang digambarkan dalam siri tersebut sambil mewujudkan kemungkinan penggambaran berat sebelah terhadap wacana jantina tertentu yang merupakan prinsip penulis sitkom yang menyokong stereotaip di kalangan masyarakat. Maka ini tercipta keperluan untuk menganalisis karya dalam kategori sitkom untuk wacana-wacana yang dipaparkan kepada penonton. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan 4 episod yang dipilih dari *F.R.I.E.N.D.S*, berdasarkan kriteria jumlah tontonan penonton, penilaian TV pada masa ianya ditayangkan, dan kehadiran komen yang berunsurkan topik jantina dalam klip-klip episod yang disiarkan di *Youtube*. Episod-episod dianalisis dengan memperhatikan adegan yang ada kewujudan unsur wacana jantina dan memetik unsur-unsur tersebut sebagai data. Data tersebut kemudian dikategorikan dengan wacana jantina yang telah dikenal pasti. Selepas mengenalpasti kategori-kategori data yang dipetik, ia dibandingkan dengan kajian kes dan contoh-contoh dari artikel jurnal dan laman web berita rasmi untuk menentukan adakah wacana yang dikemukakan dalam sitkom menyokong atau mencabar stereotaip yang dipegang oleh masyarakat. 4 wacana jantina utama yang telah dikenal pasti ialah wacana *Gender Differences*, wacana *Hegemonic Masculinity*, wacana *Compulsory Heterosexuality*, wacana *Gender Equality*. Wacana lain yang juga telah dikenalpasti adalah wacana

Dumb Blonde, wacana “menjadi wanita adalah penghinaan”, wacana *Positive Masculinity*, dan wacana “wanita suka bergosip”. Dari analisis data yang telah dilaksanakan, ia menunjukkan bahawa sebahagian besar wacana jantina yang ditemui memperkukuhkan persepsi normatif terhadap jantina, dan juga menunjukkan tahap-tahap yang penonton boleh berkait dengan kehidupan sendiri dengan siri televisyen tersebut, menjadikannya sebab siri ini menjadi sesuatu kejayaan di seluruh dunia. Walaupun begitu, ada juga beberapa adegan yang didapati juga mencabar beberapa persepsi normatif. Penambahbaikan pemikiran masyarakat di media adalah sesuatu proses yang perlahan. Tetapi sahnya ia bertuju ke arah membentuk sebuah masyarakat yang lebih memahami perubahan dunia antara satu sama lain.

Kata Kunci: wacana berjantina, siri televisyen Amerika, *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The current research concentrates on analysing the gendered discourse in the television (TV) series of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S*, investigating how gender is portrayed as it depicts a representable degree of society today. Episodes picked based on a set criterion will be analysed. The proposed findings are information as to how this sitcom reflects the gendered discourse that were common in that time and are still relevant today.

1.2 Gendered discourse and its portrayal on television (TV)

Gendered discourses have always been a part of the lives amongst humanity, even if the term had not been invented at the time. From the times where men were dictated to be hunters of food and women dictated to be gatherers, until today where many a gendered discourse is still ingrained into the very core beliefs amongst society, gendered discourses are part of what society teaches each generation as they grow into communities, building into what we now know as the norm of human behaviour and expectation, with people dictating how each gender should be behaving. Gender has been a matter of concern to many throughout the world, especially in light of the campaign for gender equality, with some researchers looking at how the genders are treated in the workplace, in their own homes, as well as amongst people, with others investigating into how gender is viewed in society as a general. Few, however, investigate the gendered discourses which are portrayed in TV sitcoms.

1.3 Situation Comedy (sitcoms)

Sitcoms – a derived form of the phrase “situation comedy” (Wamsler, 2007) – imitate lives of people, be it their work lives, relationships, or friendships. It satisfies a need in the audience where they get to watch the characters go through similar lives to the

audience's own without the pressure of having to face it themselves. It offers a platform for them to relax and to be able to enjoy easily understood shows. Around the time of the 1990s, sitcoms have become a form of media that took over the forefront position amongst TV entertainment, which has led to the importance of the audience being able to relate between what is happening in their own lives and what is portrayed on television, because producers of TV shows want its audience to be able to see themselves in the characters that are being portrayed (Wamsler, 2007).

This notion dictates that discourses presented in sitcoms reflect to a close degree what the audience themselves practice and believe in their everyday lives, and in particular, stereotypes that they hold onto with regards to gender and how the different genders should behave. With that inference, this research intends to look at the discourse represented in the TV sitcom, *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*, focusing on the aspect of gendered discourse, and how women and men were viewed back when the sitcom aired on the Prime-Time slot on HBO, basing the analysis on speech lines and body language, utilising linguistic and semiotic tools (refer to 3.5.2).

1.4 Research Problem

As stated in section 1.3, sitcom creators want their audiences to be able to relate to what is shown on their programmes. While this means that the shows portray a credible degree of what is happening in their audience's lives, inversely it can mean that how the sitcoms are presented can dictate what the audience believes to be true, because of the basis of how relatable it can be to reality (Wamsler, 2007). This can or may result in the audience accepting the discourses presented in sitcoms without question and leading to them implementing the same discourses in reality. Also, because audiences watch sitcoms to relax, it shows the high probability rate of being exposed to such

shows, which means that sitcoms do have a hand in dictating how the audience will view the world around them.

The problem here would be that if popular sitcoms choose to present situations that supports certain stereotypes (refer to 2.3.5), it will only act to further encourage those stereotypes amongst society as they would have accepted it as fact, instead of a choice of behaviour. For example, if a sitcom presents a character that berates women that acts intelligently but welcomes a woman that acts promiscuously, by utilising support from the canned laughter that is the signature of sitcoms, it would only encourage the stereotype to be held onto even further and leading to creation of more obstacles in the fight for gender equality. Thus, there is a need to analyse popular sitcoms for the discourses that are being presented to the audience, as not only they show a close similarity of what the audience themselves believe in and practice in their own lives, the sitcoms also hold a power of reinforcing how audiences will behave from imitating what they may or may not inadvertently believe is accepted behaviour in society.

1.5 Significance of The Research

The significance to the research is the dynamic of which audiences of popular sitcoms are heavily influenced by the very shows that they choose to watch, resulting in them taking what is shown on the sitcoms at face value and assuming the discourse presented in the shows to be acceptable behaviours in society. As stated in 1.3, not only do sitcoms show that the discourse they present are relatable (refer to 3.5.1) to the audience – which leads to the reason why people would highly value TV sitcoms like *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* –, the fact of its applicability to the audience's lives would mean that they would be using such programmes as a reference of what is the norm of expected social behaviour, which at its essence makes character behaviour and

portrayal an important aspect for analysis, and in this context, with regards to gender discourses portrayed.

The fact that *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* still has an almost cult following now shows that there is still something that the millions of viewers have deemed as highly relatable and applicable to their own lives, not only for the nostalgic value to the devoted 30 to 40-year-old fan base (Pennacchia, 2019), but also to the new generation that binge-watch television shows on streaming platforms like Netflix and HBO Max, who somehow still see a part of themselves in the long-beloved-by-many sitcom. To deem something as relatable would be to state that audiences find many similar principles and values portrayed in the episodes of the sitcom echo their own in reality. Because of the relatability, this allows the audience to feel that whatever choices of speech or behaviour that are made by the characters in the sitcom can be applied in their own lives as well. In other words, this dictates the high applicability from the relatability of the sitcom.

Relating to that, gender equality has become an issue that is fought for by many through the decades, with the First to Fifth Waves of feminism (refer to 2.4) through history until today. Many platforms have been used to spread the notion of gender equality as well as the message of the people fighting for it, not excluding TV programs such as sitcoms and the like. The media has always been dubbed to be one of the platforms with the highest influence on the shaping of beliefs of society. As how a town crier in the past could change the way the people in the town view a certain issue, a TV sitcom can very well heavily influence the way society views how the genders should behave and be treated as people, and added with the sitcom's factors of relatability and applicability of their characters' daily lives and beliefs, it makes sitcoms an even more powerful influence over the minds of its audience, contributing

to the need to analyse what gender discourses this genre of television programme choose to present in their characters' lives.

Hannah Hamad (2018) stated that there was a lack of academic study with this sitcom as the focus of analysis and that it was surprising considering how popular this series is in times of post-feminism. This provided a gap that the current research can fulfill to an extent with regards to the field of discourse analysis with aspects of gender. Daniel Ayliffe (2011) also showed in his study that language amongst men and women differed to that established theories (see Chapter 2.1 to 2.6), which indicates that as time passes, it is important to still look at the different principles and behaviours portrayed by both genders as it has been proven that gender language habits changes with time.

As the notion and beliefs of feminism take its hold on society in this digital age, it would be wise to start from looking at what has been represented as the norm in TV sitcoms for its massive audience before discussing further on other movements or methods that should or can be taken under the fight for gender equality. Because it is a show with a major following from around the world, in theory, it means that people from all around the world find this show relatable (refer to 3.5.1), which indicates either that the show contains many elements that very much echoes the audience's lives, or it contains elements that the audience want to see in their own lives too. With that idea in mind, once proven that this research is applicable (refer to 3.5.1) by showing that the verbal and nonverbal behaviour, along with other modes of semiotics identified (Table 3.2) reflect established gendered discourses (refer to 2.3.5 and 3.4), it can be utilised to create other variations of sitcoms that can help shape the thought of society to move towards a more gender equal community. This can be done through reverse engineering the notion of creating a sitcom, where instead of only presenting

a sitcom that fully reflect society's values, a sitcom production can utilise current society values and adapt them with discourses that are deemed to promote gender equality, such as the Gender Equality discourse established by Sunderland (refer to 3.4.3), and non-binary acceptance. With enough instances and time pass after productions of the adapted sitcoms, it can be logically deduced that society will soon find the values presented on them a norm and start adopting the same values, creating a more accepting and equal community as a whole.

1.6 Rationale for the research

This study intends to identify the gendered discourses found in the popular TV sitcom, *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* and to identify whether or not the discourses support or challenge normative perception of behaviour in society, showing the importance of looking into discourses portrayed by sitcoms to be a valuable resource of reference for the norm and of agenda by the media.

1.6.1 Rationale for using *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is a TV sitcom aiming at portraying lives of 6 people, showing the 6 characters' daily happenings, which indicates that it portrays to a considerable extent what life was for the people at the time of which the show aired. The show, though it first aired in 1994, still holds an almost cult-following until today. Netflix had reportedly invested 100 million dollars (USD) to stream the show on its platform through the year of 2019 (Blackmon, 2019; Michallon, 2019). Later, Netflix has been reported to have lost a bidding war with Warner Bros Inc., with the latter agreeing to invest 85 million dollars (USD) per year for the next 5 years to keep *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* on its streaming platform, HBO Max (Law, 2019).

Many people have been reported to have protested against the removal of the TV show from Netflix, a lot of them voicing their protest on the social media platform Twitter (Galindo, 2019), with some stating that they would be willing to cancel their Netflix subscription with the only reason being that *F.R.I.E.N.D.S* would not be available on the major streaming platform from the year 2020. This shows that many people still treat the three-decade-and-a-half TV show as a staple in their daily TV entertainment. Consequently, this indicates that people still look to the show as some form of reference with their daily life happenings, making it a suitable source of analysis when it comes to referencing what people will refer to as the common acceptable behaviour in society.

As explained in 1.5, *F.R.I.E.N.D.S* is a highly popular sitcom with a global audience that finds the concept relatable (refer to 3.5.1). This makes the sitcom an appropriate choice for analysis of applicability.

1.6.2 Rationale for *F.R.I.E.N.D.S* and gender.

As mentioned in 1.6.1., *F.R.I.E.N.D.S* is a celebrated TV program with audience numbers going into the millions. Airing in the 90's, many of the episodes' elements portrayed jokes with traces of gender, race and body shaming. Compared to the culture of political correctness in the 2000's and 2010's, there seem to be a lower awareness in the 90's. Many news sites have discussed on how many elements in the sitcom would not be accepted if it were made today because of its many race, body shaming and gender orientated aspects of the story and how the characters behave (Koul, 2019) (Bell, 2016) (Kaplan, 2018). This allows the inference that gendered discourses which follows typical stereotypes in society were commonly used in the storyline, making it another note of interest to analyse under gendered discourses research.

1.6.3 Rationale for using case studies evidenced in journal articles and official news

With the campaign of feminism, the term “political correctness” comes up hand in hand in many cases (Mills, 2003). Political correctness relates to this issue through the aspect of how most people these days are known to attempt to sound unoffensive towards one another with the interest of maintaining peace, or at least to ensure that trouble does not occur. For instance, instead of using the term “chairman” in many boardrooms, the term has been changed to “chairperson” to be inclusive of both the genders, likewise with the term “Latino” being replaced with “Latinx” for the same reason. With that notion, there is a risk of a person falsifying data that they provide with regards to their own beliefs just so it would make them sound more politically correct, masking the truth of the actual gendered discourses that they engage in usually on a daily basis.

By using case studies of actual incidents through journal articles and verified newspaper and web articles, it guarantees a good start for comparison with the regards of generating valid data that is applicable with minimal risk of falsified answers for the sake political correctness.

1.7 Research Objectives

With reference to the research problem stated in section 1.3, this research aims to attain the following objectives:

- 1) To identify the gendered discourses that have been represented in the selected episodes from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*
- 2) To analyse how the gendered discourses found in the TV sitcom relates to the discourses already practiced in society.

The limitation is that due to space constraints, only four episodes will be chosen to be analysed for this research.

1.8 Research Questions

The two research questions for this study are as follows:

- 1) What gendered discourses are being represented through and by the main characters?
- 2) How do the gendered discourses reinforce or challenge stereotypes of gender in society?

1.9 Summary

As an overall, this chapter has laid the basis of this research. Section 1.2 and 1.3 discusses the background of the two key terms in this research, which are gendered discourses, and TV sitcoms. Section 1.4 discusses the Research Problem, defining why this research must be conducted, and section 1.5 discusses the significance of conducting this research and to what this research can contribute to in the fight for gender equality. Section 1.6 discusses the rationale of the research, including the rationale for using *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*, relating the sitcom and gender, and also the usage of published journal work. Next, Section 1.7 contains the objectives of which this research is aiming to achieve. And finally, section 1.8 dictates the research questions that this paper will be using as a guide to conduct an analysis with.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the relevant literature pertaining to this research, pertaining the need for this study to be conducted, and the significance of what this research will be able to contribute to the campaign of gender equality. The review will begin from the different aspects under Gender, to Language and Gender Theories (including Gendered Discourses), moving on to Feminism and finally, Masculinity.

2.2 Gender

Gender has been defined many times by researchers, but the consensus is that the notion of gender is dictated by society, observed by behaviour and expression of the individual (Ghosh, 2015), and it does not have constant meaning through the years (Kaur, 2019). Blackstone states in their paper of *Gender and Society* that gender is a notion that has always been misunderstood and constantly gets confused with the term of “sex” (2003). The notion of the terms “gender” and “sex” have always had a huge difference, but to many in society, they hold strong connections between them, even to some points labelling them as the same. To clarify, “gender” is the notion of masculinity and femininity that is dictated or developed by one’s environment or the community that they live in. “Sex” is a term that dictates biological differences that makes an individual a male or female, but it has no dictate on the masculinity nor femininity of a person. While “sex” is defined very objectively and concretely in the genitals that one is born with, “gender” is a fluid term that is dictated by the values that is learned by an individual, taught by their parents or by the environment around them that teaches them what would be considered appropriate ways to behave based on one’s sex (Blackstone, 2003). Looking at aspects of femininity and masculinity (see 2.5), it can be understood that they belong as separate categories away from the

biological aspects of viewing the notion of gender, which means that femininity does not necessarily dictate behaviours only portrayed by women, and masculinity does not necessarily dictate behaviours only portrayed by men, though it has always been associated to be exclusively to each gender. Further aspects will be discussed in this paper (see 2.5), but there are still many that believe femininity and masculinity should be mutually exclusive, and only to that of each gender.

2.2.1 Gender Roles

With the term gender, the notion of “gender roles” comes into tow. Gender roles were first identified by a social scientist named Amy Oakley (as cited in Blackstone, 2003, pg. 336) whom stated that the idea of gender is an aspect that is dictated by social construct because it is an aspect of behaviour that has been socially created by humanity through the ages. Though it is socially constructed, it still carries a reliance that is heavy on the definition of the biological sexes that dictates the differences between a male and a female individual. The proof of the social construct of the notion of gender lies in the fact that though society chooses to dictate traits, status, power, and behaviour of an individual based on their sex, there are still clear differences in expectation amongst the different communities across different borders and geographical locations, not to mention the different cultures of each community. Even within the same community, traits that society assigns towards a gender changes across time, with different cultures and trends influencing what is considered the norm of a gender of the time.

Gender roles are typically assumed to be the position that an individual is expected to step into based on their biological sex. For instance, in traditional terms, men have always been considered to be good leaders, making them perfect candidates for the role of the head of the family, being the one person in the family who financially

provides for their wellbeing, going in line with historical theories that men were hunters and thus hunted for meat to bring home. Contrastingly, women have always been thought to be the more nurturing side of gender, and thus tend to be expected to fill the role of the nurturer in the family at home, expected by society to be housewives, maintaining the upkeep of the house and the children that the family may have. In recent times, however, alternative roles to the traditional of what men and women should be have arisen in recent decades, giving way to different ideas of what gender roles could mean for the individual (Blackstone, 2003). The campaign for gender equality has introduced and fought for the acceptance of said alternative roles to remove the limitation that an individual is gender-bound only by their sex, which by logic inhibits the potential and growth for any community.

Blackstone offers the perspectives on the term of gender roles based on many disciplines, that of the ecological, the biological and the sociological points of view (Blackstone, 2003). As pertaining to the ecological, Blackstone states that under the discipline, the construct of gender roles are developed not only through the teaching of the parents and community of an individual, but also the environment and state of which the individual stays in plays a part in determining a person's position in terms of gender. From the point of view of the biological, as mentioned previously, the gender role of an individual is dictated by their biological sexes, meaning that a male will be more inclined towards the masculine, and a female will be more inclined towards the feminine, though it has been specifically stated that even under the microscope of biology, it does not state that one gender reigns over the other in terms roles or status in society. From the point of the sociological brings a different sense of control when it comes to what gender roles mean to an individual and society. It dictates that the gender roles of an individual are learned through teachings of the

community and the person's environment, and with that notion, inversely one will be able to unlearn them and relearn new roles that is introduced from different sources.

Blackstone (2003) also offered a perspective from the discipline of feminism, where it states that the notion of gender equality is not just to look at how the two genders behave based on their pre-conceived notion of their sex, it is also impertinent to study how the power that an individual holds also affects the status of the person, in particular if they are male or female. An example was given being that because a man is expected to be the breadwinner of a household, should a divorce come to pass, a woman would not be able to sustain herself should the man so chooses to retract all financial support, and thus conceiving the belief that the men hold the influence and power in the family as they come out of a divorce in a better position than women because the former typically do not lose their status nor power in society should their marriages fail.

Gender roles do not only fall into the categories of the household, as they also apply in the category of the workplace (refer to 2.3.2). Many corporate companies hold pre-conceived notions of gender roles, as evidenced by most companies' decision in various countries to only give maternity leave to the mother and not the father, bringing the connotation that companies believe men to not be a fellow caretaker of the new-born child. In connection to this as well, females are usually expected to be in roles of secretaries and clerks, while men are presumed to be suitable for managerial and executive roles in the company. This presumption is conceived from the notion that women care more about the relationships that they form amongst the people in the company while men care more about getting a task done rather than building relations amongst his colleagues (Blackstone, 2003). This causes a segregation that has long been fought against by campaigns of gender equality, an example being many attempts

to rectify what has been known as the wage gap between the two genders when in the same corporate position.

2.2.2 Gender Stereotypes

As Blackstone so aptly states, gender roles are sometimes conceived based on the notion of gender stereotypes, which are overly-simplified sweeping assumptions made about a gender as a whole that has been thought typically to be true and applicable to all belonging to said gender (Blackstone, 2003). Many gender roles have been created based on stereotypes in society. For instance, women are thought to be very emotional, while men are typically thought to have little to no emotion, which leads to the idea that men are more practical and can make better work decisions, and the idea that women are inversely incapable of such decisions. Feminist campaigns have been attempting to offer alternative roles with many case studies finding that the pre-conceived notion of emotions in men and women to be not entirely applicable, with instances of men who were more in touch with their emotions, and women who contrastingly were not.

2.2.3 Gender Identity

Moving from the aspect of gender roles, the gender role orientation, or the gender identity of an individual always comes into discussion. An individual's gender identity could be traditional or non-traditional, depending on what they were exposed to growing up in their environment. If an individual follows the traditional notion of gender identity, they will believe that males and females have their own inclination towards certain behaviours that has been dictated by society to be the norm for each gender. Those who follow the traditional notion tend to be influenced by what has been accepted by generations in their family and community before them that has already been established. Contrastingly, an individual who does not follow the

traditional notion will opine that one's identity of gender should not be dictated by their pre-conceived biological sex, and will proceed to unlearn what society has taught them, and relearn behaviours with egalitarian concepts between the two genders, focusing more on an individual's strengths and weaknesses to move on in their community, rather than the traditional way of judging one's capabilities based on the notion of their sex and the gender roles that traditionally come with it (Blackstone, 2003).

Looking at the idea of "gendered identity" (Mills & Mullany, Language, Gender and Feminism, 2011, p. 50), with regards to the Waves under feminism, the focus of studying gendered identity in the Second Wave of feminism was the female gender, looking into how females identify themselves with playing different expected roles in society, such as being the mother, being a leader, or being the one with the pre-conceived responsible sense of maturity. Mills and Mullany (2011) insist that discussions about the various identities are equally important but did note that the skew of the focus of study in gendered identity was evident towards women. It was only in the Third Wave of feminism that studies and focused importance that also includes men and masculinity came into the fray. Mills and Mullany (2011) state that in terms of logic, it was easy to see why the focus of study under feminism during the Second Wave was concentrating solely on the female gender, as the reason being that feminists need to promote the agenda for a patriarchal society to pay attention to the diversities of women's gendered identities to push for gender equality.

Though the topic of masculinity was not exactly ignored during the Second Wave, feminist linguistic researchers acknowledge that there was a lack of empirically based studies on the aspect of masculinity, which has led to a growth in the number of studies done on the topic in the 1990s (Mills & Mullany, Language, Gender and

Feminism, 2011). Their study states that there is an importance to look at masculinity as an aspect that is “two sides of the same coin” (Mills & Mullany, Language, Gender and Feminism, 2011, p. 51) with the aspect of femininity when it comes to looking at both concepts in the focus of research. As mentioned before this, in the third wave of feminism research, the idea of masculinity being an aspect that also needs investigating emerged, paving the way towards a more objective view of what gender is, and what “gendered discourse” (Sunderland, 2004) can be, not being just only studied from the women’s point of view. According to Coates (as cited in Mills and Mullany, 2006), masculinity is better analysed when it is done in relation to how one looks at femininity as an aspect of research. The notion of masculinity has long been associated with the presence of testosterone, attributing behaviours of aggression, images of battle and warfare to the idea of being masculine. Due to recent developments, however, masculinity has been thought to be going through an identity crisis, where notions of “metro sexuality” and “the lad” (a British concept of the metrosexual term), and the concept of the LGBTQ community emerging as a non-binary norm through society. There is also the trend of women’s emerging involvement of societal issues and changes in notions of feminism that has contributed to said identity crisis.

This had led to more research that concentrate on how masculinity is performed to be able to obtain a more accurate account on how men define themselves on the aspects of their gender identity in contemporary times. Preece (as cited in Mills and Mullany, 2006) conducted a study on university students amongst the “lads” (as it was done in the United Kingdom), who follow non-traditional notions of gendered construct, on how they view their own standing in a position of higher education. Because the students had a lack of social standing with regards to their familial

background from back home, they had shown instances of hegemonic masculinity (further explained in section 2.5 under the subsection of Hegemonic Masculinity) to compensate in the far-from-traditional social ground that they were put in. Money and power also played a part in their behaviour as the financially and educationally superior could get away with what was established to be “laddish” (Mills & Mullany, Language, Gender and Feminism, 2011, p. 51) behaviour as compared to their underprivileged peers who behaved in similar fashions.

Similarly, Queen (as cited in Mills and Mullany, 2006) in their research of lesbian speech, states that lesbian speech tends to be compared with heterosexual speech, usually in a form of a parody and regardless of gender. Halberstam (as cited in Mills and Mullany, 2006), who has attempted in their research to separate the notions of masculinity and men, has surmised that the notion of looking at changes of gender identity is not that it changes and is made to put through acceptance (or rejection) of the community, it is that different aspects from the normal behaviour are usually placed in parodies, made fun of by different individuals for their own various purposes, and it ends up changing what was considered to be the normal to begin with, which puts an interesting point of view to consider when it came to the aspect of the current research where sitcoms are used in terms of projecting gendered discourses.

2.3 Language and Gender Theories

Under the aspect of gender, there are a few theories that have been produced by many gender experts when it came to the behaviours and opinions of the different perspectives of gender.

2.3.1 Theory of “Woman’s Language”

The notion that there is a contrast between the usage of language and the two genders have constantly been a matter of interest to many researchers. In a study done by Robin Lakoff (1973), it states that through the aspect of linguistics, the position of which a woman is viewed upon is reflected in the way that she speaks, is spoken to, and is spoken of, dubbing the whole aspect as “Woman’s language” (Lakoff, 1973, p. 45). It is the belief that women, when talked about is referred to with euphemisms, when treated towards is akin to that of an object, and when talked to is done with a demeanour of conversing with someone of lesser intelligence.

Language is a way that people use to communicate, and language also gives people their identity as well as serving as something for people to identify with. We use language to indicate our interest and our disinterest in the many things that surrounds us, be it indirectly or directly. Similar to how a comedian could use his jokes to gauge the laughter levels of his audience to find out their hidden beliefs, Lakoff’s study states how the linguistic behaviours in individuals could be used as evidence to show the hidden notions of gender roles that exist in the minds of men and women (Lakoff, 1973).

Lakoff emphasises strongly that the reason women behave the way they do currently is due to how they were taught to speak and be treated towards from when they were young. An example of a girl who did not follow the traditional notions of feminine speech was given, showing that if the little girl speaks out of turn when young, she would be chastised by her parents or the people around her, and depending on if she follows the teachings, upon growing up, if she learns how to act expectedly feminine, she would be dubbed as being unable to express clear thoughts – as women are expected to show lack of clarity in thinking and also being unable to be assertive

enough to allow her thoughts to be heard; and if she does not learn how to speak as expected in a feminine manner, she would be labelled as a laughing stock and being unfeminine, thus unworthy of society's attention (Lakoff, 1973). Dubbing it as a choice between being inferior as a woman or inferior as a human, one can understand the frustration of how it seems like women were dealt a bad hand in terms of asserting power and dominance in their lives.

The notion of submerging the personal identity of women in this way has partially contributed to beliefs of hegemonic masculinity in men, which has led to many of the males (and also many a female) in society to continue using the notion that women are beneath men to suppress both women and men who do not fit the traditional category of what they believe to be masculine men but that issue will be further discussed under Masculinity in section 2.5.

One of the defined evidences found in Lakoff's study that women defines colours a lot more specifically than a man would (or should). It states that had a man state a version of a colour that goes off from the typical tangent of the usual red, blue, or yellow (or other basic colours), he would either have to be mocking the woman who said it first, be a homosexual-orientated individual, or to be someone who professionally decorates the inside of a house. This whole aspect stems from the idea that women talk about topics that are irrelevant to practicality of daily life, as the belief goes by only having men decide for the more important decisions in life, leaving women to make the unimportant decisions, such as of colours of the walls. Also comparing the usage of particles between men and women, the specific example stated being the usage of the terms "oh dear" and the expletive "shit", Lakoff states that if given to an average person to give a guess of which term would be used by which gender, the clear answer would show the distinction between a man's usage and a

woman's, though Lakoff does acknowledge that in recent years, women who have developed more respect for themselves – and thus defying the concept of traditional femininity – use expletives such as that mentioned and connoted to be a “man’s language” (Lakoff, 1973, p. 50). Tags, phrasing of questions in a positive light and a show of unwillingness to assert opinion were also found to be some of the traits that define how a woman speaks that differs to that of men.

Moving to how women are referred to in speech, Lakoff discusses about how the term “lady” is used in many context to replace the term of “woman” or “broad” (which also refers to women), comparing the context’s need to be euphemised to that of people using the term of African Americans as compared to the usage of the term “blacks” to refer to people of a certain culture and descent. The need of the term of “woman” needing to be euphemised with the word “lady” is also compared to the latter term’s counterpart, which is “gentleman”, which can be shortened to “gent”. But as there is no full equivalence of “gentleman” to the term “man”, and yet a full equivalence made of a woman to a lady, it shows the discrepancy of which the standards has been set against the female gender when it comes to women being discussed of in conversation. Similarly, terms such as “mistress” and “master” is also discussed of its asymmetry in connotation when used in a sentence. Even though the terms are counterparts of each other gender wise, the meaning that comes with the different terms are clearly different, as one dictates being the leader of a household, or a team, and the other dictates a promiscuous sense of disposition in a woman, i.e. to be someone’s mistress having a lesser connotation as compared to that of being someone’s master (Lakoff, 1973).

As an overall, this indicates there is a notion amongst men and women in society that still carries the belief that to be called a woman is to degrade oneself, be

it on an actual woman, or when a man is referred to with feminine connotations of speech. This shows the possibility that there are gendered discourses in some societies that dictates a man does not speak the same way to a man as compared to a woman, and the discourse that a woman is expected to sound less intelligent when compared against a man.

2.3.2 The Dominance Theory

Under gender as dominance, Zimmerman and West (1975) found through their research that in a mixed-gender conversation, men had the tendency to interrupt a conversation more than women, the latter being more accepting of the changes in conversation.

As referenced in section 2.2.3 under Gender Identity, it has been established that power has always been an aspect that influences how society decides on their acceptance against the non-traditional. In this context however, power and dominance are also the factors that differentiates that between males and females, most particularly so in the workplace as well as in the division of status in the household. As discussed previously in section 2.2, men are presumed to be leaders, and thus the seemingly natural choice to be the head of the household, as men were always thought to be the breadwinners of the family. And as mentioned before, this puts women in a less desirable position if a separation were to occur, as men being the breadwinners would not be losing any power or social status from the divorce. Relating to that, the study done by Zimmerman and West (1975) finds that there are defined, concrete elements as to how men engage in conversations with women while asserting the same notion of power and dominance, indicating speech behavioural patterns that differs with that engaged by women.

Basing their research on a previous model done by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (as cited in Zimmerman & West, 1975) which explained turn-taking processes in a casual conversation, focused on two aspects, which were that only one person should be conversing at a time, and the turn changes as the first speaker is done and vice versa. Zimmerman and West comment that from Sacks et. al. (as cited in Zimmerman & West, 1975)'s model of turn-taking in speech, a limitation shows itself in the idea that all conversations are like clock-work where it is always a turn-taking process, which is evidently not the case in real life conversations. Sacks et. al. (as cited in Zimmerman & West, 1975)'s model of turn-taking in conversation seem to show an idealistic way of continuing a conversation, where when one speaker ends their turn of speaking, the next speaker seem to immediately take their turn to speak, indicating a preparedness that does not seem realistic nor applicable to most conversations in real life.

Zimmerman and West had collected thirty-one conversation recordings from various settings that were deemed applicable for daily casual conversations – with some from drinking establishments, pharmacies, and other publicly accessible areas in a university setting – with considerations for the fact that such conversations would still be done even at the risk of other people overhearing them. From their data, instances of overlap and interruption were found, adding to Sacks et. al.'s model of turn-taking in speech. They had considered the instances to be violating the rules of turn-taking conversation, which does indicate a power-play between the two speakers of each conversation.

Further categorising their data to same-sex conversations and cross-sex conversations is where a major difference is found. Interruptions and overlapping of speech occurs fairly equal between two speakers when they are of the same sex, but

when looking at interruption and overlapping rates between cross-sex conversations, men showed the highest instance of both interrupting and overlapping at over 90% for both types of violations, whereas women only showed a 4% on interruption and no instances of overlapping speech. This indicates that men, when conversing with women, constantly find a need to interrupting or overlap the latter's speech, showing a lack of respect of what was said, or a showing of disregard for the importance of what was said, which – much like Lakoff's Woman's Language (1973) theory – surmises that women's speech is generally of no importance, putting them in a lower regard, and thus nondescript.

Silences were measured as a separate category and women were found to indicate more silences than their male counterparts, in particular, after an interruption occurring in cross-sex conversations. In relation to the interruptions and overlaps taken by the males in a conversation, women indicate a longer silence taken after the male turn of speech is complete, which evidences an interrupted train of thought that had to be recovered. Males in the conversation contrastingly did not indicate much silences even between turn-taking of speech, which might be used to show a seemingly active listening role, such like the “mmm hmm” and “yes dear” from husbands when they are listening to their wives talking to indicate a minimal level of listening (Zimmerman & West, 1975). The lack of extended silences from the male speakers might also indicate a readiness of which to insert a new topic or a new path of topic with the next turn-taking, as compared to the female speakers whose slightly extended silence post-male turn-taking as needing a moment to collect their thoughts, which only served to indicate a more inferior position in a conversation.

Zimmerman and West concluded that males in cross-sex conversations have a skewed control when it came to turn-taking and interrupted turns taken by female

counterparts without worry of any consequences (1975). This indicates that male speakers do not view their female conversation partners as equals and thus disregard the latter's need for completing their turn and their right to topic development in speech. It can be inferred that this is related to Blackstone's theory of the ecological perspective of gender roles in society (Blackstone, 2003) as well as Lakoff's Woman's Language (Lakoff, 1973), where though in recent developments of conversation we find women asserting themselves more, there is still a general sense of belief that because men had always been heralded as leaders and the only gender who seem to have anything of regard to say in conversations, women are then pushed down in positions and regard, not only in macro-institutions but also in micro-institutions where it is akin to the two genders walking the same path but with the females having a lead weight latched onto their ankles, and then are complained to be walking slow, i.e. criticised for being unfeminine, or criticised for not being assertive, damned if they do, and damned if they do not.

2.3.3 The Difference Theory

Deborah Tannen (1991) stated in her difference theory, that there is a difference between the speech usage of men and women, and it starts from childhood, where parents use emotive words with their daughters and verbs with their sons, further pointing out that there are 6 categories of differences that differentiates the sub-cultures that are men and women.

In her book *You Just Don't Understand* (Tannen, 1991), Tannen first described her experience in dealing with a long-distance relationship with her husband, talking about their different reactions towards people who seemed to show concern as to the hardships that they as a couple may be facing being away from each other for long periods of time at a go. Tannen noted that while she welcomed concerns from

people and sometimes responded with complaints about the arrangements she had had to go through to show support for people's concerns for them, her husband, on the other hand, showed contempt towards those who had showed him the same concern as they had showed her. He contrastingly responded with the advantages that he and Tannen had as a long-distance relationship couple, almost with a forceful positive tone. The husband had thought that the people who asked concerning questions were being condescending, while Tannen just felt that people were just trying to be empathetic, a contrasting view in the sense where her husband thinks of the world as a competition, one man against the world in a hierarchy – equating it to how men in general think – and with her thinking that it is just everyone building connections and helping each other out – equating it to how women in general think.

Tannen states that the reason why people communicate is to build some sense of connection to each other, making sure that no one person is disregarded in search of intimacy and solidarity (1991) all the while trying to prevent rejection at any level. It is acknowledged that while women are focused on connection, it is not that they ignore in its entirety chasing after social status and power in their community. Similarly, while men are focused on winning the rat race, it is not that they disregard the importance of building relationships and establishing intimate connections with others. Tannen acknowledges that she and her husband's reactions were not theoretically absolute, as there are many more factors that also influenced how they reacted to said concerned individuals. But this does indicate clearly that there are very distinctive differences in the school of thoughts between that of men and women.

Tannen (1991) discussed on issues regarding intimacy and independence, stating that in a world where people struggle to build connections and prevent rejections, intimacy is one of the main factors that would help people to work towards

gaining social solidarity, and in a world of social status, independence is the main factor to influencing how a person would be viewed upon, as being someone who gives orders as opposed to taking orders would determine someone's superiority in the social hierarchy, noting that women focus on intimacy, while men focus on independence. In moments of possible conflict, women serve to assert their opinions without making the other party wrong, while men serve to assert their opinions because they think they must one-up the other party to win the conversation. Men face issues with having to accept a social hierarchy should they be in a position of subordination, thus have problems with being asked to do something by someone else because it seems to them that they are of inferior position than their counterpart, even in a situation as simple as a wife asking her husband to help, and the man delays the help to maintain an illusion that what he does is of his own free will and not because his wife had asked him to do it. Women, who generally do not face the same issue, do not get as troubled by the idea of completing a work that was asked of by someone else, as they do not see it as the someone who asked trying to assert their control but as someone who truly needs assistance with a particular matter. In the example of the wife asking the husband to help with something, to the woman, if the man takes time to accomplish said thing, she assumes it to be that he does not understand the importance of him having to do it and thus proceeds to ask again, which to the man's mind, only aggravates it further.

Further in, Tannen (1991) discusses about how women and men differ in the sense of seeking comfort from each other when troubles bother them. When a woman is upset, she seeks for other people of whom she thinks can understand and empathise with her problems with the idea that it would help her to not feel alone facing the issue. On the other hand, when a man is upset, he moves to solve the

problem by removing said reason of upset. Tannen emphasises the inequity when it came to the two genders in their ways of trying to gain comfort. If a man helps a woman who is upset about something by suggesting the many solutions that are available, the woman would not only feel uncomfortable, she would also feel like the man does not understand her, and thus upsetting her further. Contrastingly, when a woman tries to offer to listen to a man's problems in hopes of comforting him, instead of making him feel better, it would only serve to aggravate his annoyance or frustration as his problems remain unsolved (Tannen, 1991).

Communication wise, men and women have different purposes when engaging in conversation with another. Going in line with Tannen's views that women focuses on building relations and connections, when in a conversation, a woman moves to serve the same purpose, to build better rapport between speakers and strengthening social ties, thus linguistical tools such as superpolite forms of speech are used when forwarding messages, mainly to avoid possible conflict that may occur. On the other hand, when men converse, they serve to send the message across as simple and quick as possible, to a point where their messages can come across as confrontational, which only serves their purpose of negotiating power play in the social hierarchy. In a related aspect of conflict resolution, women use language that avoid conflict as much as possible to maintain rapport with the other party to prevent from having to burn bridges, as they see the world as everyone trying to achieve a common ground that would serve to everyone's purpose. Men, however, resolves conflict in the similar manner of them sending messages, direct and confrontational, as it would not only allow the other party to directly know their own intentions, but also serves to initiate some negotiation of status, an attempt to gain some sense of superiority.

Though it can be said that Tannen's theory of difference does not apply to absolutely every person, but it does follow a certain pattern that is presented by the majority from each gender. Similar ideas are presented by an author named Mark Gungor, a personality and relationship expert who has worked with thousands of couples in his marriage seminars through recent years, in his book *Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage* (Gungor, 2008). Gungor states the differences in how men and women care for each other and because they do not realise that their own methods of care differ from their significant other, they end up misunderstanding thinking that their partner does not care. Gungor discusses the differences between men and women's brains, focusing on how their minds work. Echoing Tannen's theory that women focus on building relations and men are task-orientated, Gungor states that women's minds are equated to that of a ball of wire, where everything is connected to everything else, whereas men's' minds are equated to be made up of rows of boxes, where each box represents a topic in the man's life, and especially noting that the boxes do not touch each other, to mean that men do not connect between things the way women do. Gungor also presents many other examples as to how women and men think but also assures that he labels it as the masculine and feminine brain, where a man could have a feminine frame of mind and a woman could have a masculine frame of mind, and he does not discount that when working with couples.

In a nutshell, the theory of difference serves to help this research further delve into one of Sunderland's gendered discourse (2004) (which will be discussed further later in this chapter), the Gender Differences discourse, where instances of difference in behaviour and way of thought amongst the characters in the chosen sitcom will be identified with the theory as a guideline.

2.3.4 Performativity Theory

Judith Butler (1990) established the theory of Gender Performativity, first explaining for that an act to be performative is where it creates an effect post-act, and moving on to state that gender to be performative is to understand that a person cannot be a gender until the act known to be gendered is performed.

This connects to the sociocultural theory that gender is now formed by the notion of society, being at the point of birth, a person's gender has not yet been determined, but is taught as they grow up. Butler does not agree with the idea of gender consisting of only two choices, and surmises that the gender does not make the activity, but the activity makes the gender. In her book *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 1990), Butler questions the idea of gender being a social construct, pressing on the notion of how can it be constructed, and stating that gender being a social construct would indicate that society already has pre-determined ideas of what would make the different genders what they are, based on the person's biological sex, thus no matter how much relations are made that gender is based on one's culture, it can still boil down to the thought that the belief that culture has towards gender is created with notions of the person's anatomy.

Butler discusses her take on Simone de Beauvoir's (as cited in Butler, 1990) theory that a woman is not born a woman, but made a woman, which indicates that one would be able to change one's gender based on their choice of the day. Butler notes that because it is surmised that a woman becomes one instead of is born one, it can be deduced that the one who is a woman does not necessarily have to be biologically female, which can bring in the notion that a biologically male person can take up the mantle of being a woman, citing references such as drag performers. Butler feels that gender is a construct that exists before the person, where the notion of gender

has already been pre-determined by different communities and people embody the idea of gender as if the person is merely an instrument playing an interpretation of what the dominant societal norms think are appropriate behaviour. This applies to many situations in our lives, an example being a teenager who is exposed to many forms of media that constantly reinforces society's idea of being of a certain gender, such as magazines talking about how boys should talk to girls and vice versa. This exposure to many reinforcements of notions of what society feels is appropriate for each gender only serves to further manipulate and change the ways of how teens view themselves based on their own gender.

Relating to the applicability of the Butler model to children and notions of gender, it can be inferred that before a child is born, their identity of gender have already been pre-determined. Many a set of parents scramble to quickly find out the gender of their unborn children so that they may pre-prepare items that are gendered so as to minimise the need to explain the baby's gender to friends and family, and as well as serves as a loud signifier of how the child should behave as they grow up in the future, with examples such as buying toys with pre-determined notions of belonging to either a boy (usually blue toys) or a girl (usually pink toys), and giving names that pre-determinedly carries notes of masculinity or femininity, with all that only accomplishing the act of allowing society as a whole to continue serving gendered judgements on the child as they develop into adults.

2.3.5 Gendered Discourses

Leading into gendered discourses, it is worth noting that Mills and Mullany (2011) have stated that as the idea of gender has been associated with the representation and construction of what society has given them, the contexts of which they are discussed in can already be considered as gendered, resulting in a difficulty for men to perform

acts that are considered to be primarily known as feminine behaviour, and also for women to perform acts that are also considered to be primarily known as masculine behaviour. According to Holmes (as cited in Mills and Mullany, 2011), an example would be in the workplace, where assertiveness and leadership have always been associated with being masculine behaviour. Women wanting to step up on the organisation ladder have been known to perform what are primarily known as masculine tendencies. In a similar notion, men who perform more feminine notions of speech have been applauded as it shows empathy, whereas women who use the same feminine ways of interacting have been given negative reactions in the workplace.

Sunderland (2004) states that with gendered discourses, it is known as such as the notion of gender is already part of the action being described, being more significant in meaning than the term “gender-related” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 20) . She states that all and any experience can be deemed to be “gendered” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 21). An example would be where a sport would be considered gendered if one gender is known to do better than the other. A school subject could also be considered gendered if boys are known to fare better than girls, or vice versa. The whole focus of the idea of gendered discourse is that gender can be found everywhere, because it is where people are evaluated by “differently gendered” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 21) terms, putting both genders (or even the non-binary) in positions where they are expected to behave in certain ways that dictates either a feminine or masculine gender. Sunderland discusses her concern about the idea of being gendered instead of how gender is differentiated, combining usage of language and representation of the notion of gender.

Anything that is experienced by an individual can be construed to be gendered, examples being in the workplace, on written texts, when conversing, and through the clothes we wear. All of those situations can be indicated that something

pertaining to the issue of gender is being sent out as a message. Sunderland states that through the eyes of the Difference theory (Tannen, 1991), gendered instances can be signified anywhere. Through the eyes of constructing of gender, it could be in situations such as that of media suggesting that men and women can do things in different ways (Sunderland, 2004). She states that by attempting to identify the differences between the genders, it serves to only to solidify the binary aspect of gender and thus grounding the notion that gender is constitutive. A person's attitude and thoughts towards a situation needs to be recognised before any construction of their identity can be done, which can lead to them discussing and negotiating what is presented about their identity and thus be able to reject or modify the construction and positioning, making the idea of construction of a gender identity to be interactional.

Sunderland (2004) states that gender can be discussed through the aspects of four elements: representation, indexing, performativity, and construction. Looking first at representation of gender, which is a key element in the current paper of analysing gendered discourse in sitcoms, it is usually utilised when the subject in hand is not about the person of which is doing the representing and is usually about the Other. With language in itself being representational, there is no indication that representation itself is given of free will, which leads to questions of identifying the intention with each representation as they are usually done based on pre-existing stereotypes as it involves presenting a version of what audiences would want to see, and it leads to possibility of parties not agreeing on what the issue being represented actually is (Sunderland, 2004).

Moving to indexing of gender, it first indicates that a specific social construct is meaning signalled. Anything can be used to index social construct, in particular, gender. Indexing is involved when an identity is constructed or performed,

as the individual cannot index an identity for themselves. But one notion stands out when considering indexing of gender is that what the Other group believe about the group of which the index is being used upon and represented is always taken as more significant than the actual behavioural patterns that is performed by the group in question, this with the understanding that the speech and behavioural traits used by the group in question is usually different than that of which is being represented or indexed. To the question of performing gender (Sunderland, 2004), it is a concept of which dictates the possibility of a person being able to take up a gender whenever it suits them, which serves to “de-privilege” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 23) the notion of the binary in gender identity. But it is pertinent to note that usually in performativity of gender, it can be done by the individual for the benefit of others as well.

2.3.5.1 Construction of Gendered Discourses

Sunderland (2004) mainly studies the idea that construction of gendered discourse is related to the aspect of “discourse” and “gender”. It is noted that with construction it is stated that the discourses formed would not be completely objective, thus supporting the notion that naming of gendered discourses shows more of the researcher, depending on how the discourses are named. An example would be where if a report was produced on a political event, it would show the writer’s opinion of how said event could have, should have or would have been appropriately constructed. Language itself can be seen as a construction by the people using it and also constructive of the people using it. The research of construction, according to Sunderland (2004), is moving from differentiating the behavioural speech traits amongst men and women to looking at the topic of how gender is being constructed by the individual and institution in their verbal or written form of communication.

Jaworski and Coupland (as cited in Sunderland, 2011) states that a discourse is only labelled as such is due to society's acceptance of its existence (if not all). Gender itself can be "constructed" into texts or discourses that draws on readily available or commonly accepted notions of how the different genders should be, as dictated by society. Sunderland (2004) considered the possibility of expansion in focus from the aspect of mere construction of gender in speech and texts to going beyond the verbal and written forms of communication. She comments that there is a lack in explanation pertaining to many researcher's usage of the term construction, as it would be unsuitable when attempted to be applied to lesser than general situations.

There are three ways Sunderland considers construction of gender going beyond the verbal or written speech forms: construction of gender by the individual or the self, negotiating the construction of one's identity through interactions with others, and looking at construction of identity itself beyond words (Sunderland, 2004). Firstly, self-construction of gendered identities is capable through linguistical means of speech and it is aimed for by the individual. It can only be seen in a more constricted way where the individual ends up producing or obliging the already-established discourses that have already existed. The notion of self-construction can also lead to constructing a gendered identity pertaining to other people, which leads into the aspect of negotiating the construction of one's identity through interacting with others (Sunderland, 2004). Sunderland (2004) states that this aspect is where the identity constructing of the person is not accomplished in conversations referring to that individual, but it is mediated in the same conversation, and it might be influenced by power of the individual in the given social construct. For instance, if one individual feels that he or she is being constructed with negative connotation, he or she will be able to challenge what was discussed and offer alternatives, thus leading to a

negotiation. Sunderland discussed two ways where gendered identity can be constructed with this method. One way would be a person can use a “social category” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 178) – such as that of being a man or a woman – as a claim of their identity, and this leads to them creating new notions within the Gender Difference discourse (Sunderland, 2004). The second way would be where a person can refer to another man or woman, or a group of men or women, in ways that allow a gendered discourse to be easily recognised.

Lastly, going into construction of gender beyond the verbal or written word, Sunderland comments that many researchers through many viewpoints presents different answers as to whether or not construction can go beyond what it has already researched. However, she states that the essential element for construction to go beyond was social constructionism. According to Weatherall (as cited in Sunderland, 2004), it makes gender pertinent and a highly noticeable element in society in language and discourse, adding to the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), discursive psychology and post-structuralism embraces social constructivism, and through their viewpoints construction of gender does take place beyond words spoken or written, as by definition alone, discourse means to be looking beyond spoken or written forms of texts (Sunderland, 2004). (See 3.3 and 3.4 for further notions of gendered discourses)

2.3.5.2 Gendered Discourses in The Media

Construction, performativity, and representation of gender are major aspects to be considered when it relates to the idea of analysing discourses depicted in media. Wober (as cited in Norleen Kamardin, 2009) stated that television shows, referred to under media, provides a readily available discourse, accurately representing use of language. Construction and performance of language in gender can be said to be found in the words and how they are formed, whereas representation focuses more on the

“other” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 24) instead of the individual’s notion of self. A note from Cosslett et. al (as cited in Sunderland, 2004) is that we need to be able to differentiate the representation of gendered discourses that we see in television and other forms of media with what we generally experience. A form of representation on media can be construed through gendered stereotypes, with examples of various TV shows, one of them being a British radio show that featured two individuals as “stereotypical camp gay men” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 24) through an imagined notion of various linguistical features, such as exaggeration of intonation, words, as well as issues more typically associated with ideas of a more feminine man.

Identifying discourses in media brings a few categories to be considered, namely descriptive discourses and interpretive discourses, where under the latter would be another two categories, being general discourse, and gendered discourse, which would be focused on in this current research (Sunderland, 2004). Though there have been many known discourses that has been named as they are, discourses can be named by anyone, taking note of the orientation said individual has towards the issue being reflective on the naming of the discourse. It is good to note that interpretive discourses are generally subjective in that aspect, even if naming can be done conceptually and formally. Some known discourses are such as Wendy Hollway’s “Heterosexuality” discourses (as cited in Sunderland, 2004, p.57) and Justine Coupland and Angie Williams’ discourses of the menopause (as cited in Sunderland, 2004, p.64).

2.3.6 Other Theorists

Holmes (2014) in her work *Language and Gender in the workplace* discusses the many types, and forms of gendered identity when it pertains to the corporate world. She states that gender is an aspect of interaction that is always pertinent in any form of

social construct, and that it is always influencing and is always being influenced by the environment around it, emphasising that though it changes and is subjective to every interaction in different communities, it remains as a presence in the background or foreground, waiting to be presented in any form imaginable. As people find it hard to arrange themselves without any signifier when it comes to aspects of how to behave around a person, society constantly uses the notion of gender as a guide for them to calculate their expectations and pre-determined ideas of how an individual could be referred to, talked to and talked of, and the workplace is no exception to that belief.

Holmes states that there have been many instances of gendered behaviour or instances of construction of a gendered identity in many workplace interactions, such as flirting, swearing, and the like. In studies pertaining to interactions in the workplace, men have been found to dominate in the majority of instances of workplace interactions, and meetings were noted to show a high number of such instances. Men were found to interrupt and had a tendency to take over the turn for speaking over their female colleagues, which led to a domination of the meeting topics during the sessions. This clearly contributed to the current patriarchal sense of organisation in most corporate companies, where men are given the natural presumption of suitability to managerial positions, and in cases where women held the same position, they interacted to downplay the power that they had with the intention to minimise differences between colleagues in hopes of better interactions, serving to further solidify the dominance of men in the corporate world (Holmes, *Language and Gender in the Workplace*, 2014).

Interestingly, in a study done with regards to usage of humour in the workplace, the higher the number of women found in a meeting, the higher the rate of usage of humour language. It relates to another data that states that when interacting

with colleagues in meeting sessions, women tended to encourage with more usage of language that indicates friendliness and wanting to help, whereas men interacted with more direct speech with tones of authority, going in line with the Difference Theory (Tannen, 1991) where men utilised authoritative speech to negotiate power in interactions while women used more interactive speech to encourage rapport building and increase network. Holmes and Stubbe (2003) created a list of feminine and masculine behaviours in speech, where usage of direct speech, using authoritative tones, usage of challenging tones and words, constant interruptions and frequent dominations of talk time are categorised under the masculine section; while usage of indirect speech, using interactional and friendly tones, avoiding language that may instigate conflict and being people-focused are traits that are considered feminine.

Litosseliti (2006) states that while there will always be notions of gender that is related to one's behaviour, be it stemming from biological or sociological views of the topic, a person will also be contributing to said gendering themselves as they grow older and are exposed to more cultures. Typical stereotypes of how encompassed the notion of "man" and "woman" were noted with rationality, activeness, and being providers labelled for men, and inversely women being labelled with emotionality, being passive, and are natural nurturers, in contrast. She discusses the early feminist researcher's model of language that label's women's language as "deficit" (Litosseliti, 2006, p. 28), where through the Dominance theory (Zimmerman & West, 1975) and Difference theory (Tannen, 1991), both can be described to be in a way where women's language lack certain traits as compared to men's language, examples being directness, using tones that indicate confidence and possibly assertiveness. Women are said to use tag questions, hedges, tones that seem to ask for permission or approval, weaker expletives and usage of excessive politeness that shows an inferior status when

compared to the language of men. Women were taught from young to act with feminine decorum, to not show their opinions strongly so as to not impose on others – in particular to men -, to act like “little ladies” (Litosseliti, 2006, p. 29), whereas men were taught as boys to be forthright with their thoughts, to be assertive with their opinions, and to argue when they do not agree with something they hear. However, Litosseliti states that studies such as Lakoff’s “Woman’s Language” (1973) ignores the possible factor that women could be using behaviour traits such as utilising superpolite forms, tags, and hedges to influence others for a better outcome as the latter’s study was based on mostly intuition with a lack of empirical data.

Litosseliti (2006) discusses the notion that though the traits that women use in language make them seem lacking when compared to men, it is not an absolute situation as it might be deemed as a weakness in one culture, but it can also be deemed as a strength in another. This opens the pathway of looking at a culture that does not assume patriarchy as its basis of organisation. There are still matriarchal communities in the world which might value the traits that seem to make women appear deficit in many countries. An example would be the usage of tags, hedges, and minimal responses that are common in women’s language. It can be inferred that though such traits do not necessarily send nor invoke a direct message or response, it does serve similar purposes of getting the same information when needed. For instance, Litosseliti (2006) provided an example of an excerpt of a conversation between a female manager and her subordinates. Hedges and tag questions were used when forwarding thoughts to her colleagues to get her idea of what to do across. The tone of the conversation remained interactive and had no traces of confrontation which seemed to contribute to the ease of answers from the subordinates. The result of the conversation was that though the female manager was the one who presented the

thoughts, it seemed as though the subordinates were the ones who had the same idea before that and were only agreeing with her. Comparing this to an alternate conversation where authoritative speech is used in which negotiation is probably necessary that might have made the listeners feel disgruntled that their own opinions were not agreed to or heard, the female manager's choice of presenting her ideas has accomplished the same result of getting her ideas accepted without the negative feelings felt by her subordinates at the end of the meeting, which indicates that the traits that have been deemed to make women less superior as compared to men may not be the case at all.

Studies done by Coates (1999) and Cameron (1997) have shed some further understanding on the differences within the genders, stating that it is not only between the genders that shows a difference of behaviour traits in speech, there is the factor of age as well. Coates (1999) discusses how young girls do not show the same traits as adult women do, perhaps due to the lack of exposure to the conventions of society, but young girls were found to have speech traits that are similar to that of what had been documented to be masculine speech behaviour, some examples of which were frequent usage of interruption at any point they feel like talking and also recording lesser usage of conversational support such as tags, hedges, and minimal responses. Studies amongst 15-year-old girls then showed traits that were associated with the adult woman with usage of more collaborative conversational traits. However, 15-year-old girls had also shown a flexibility of using more dominant traits of speech when conversing about topics such as of their bodies and referring to themselves with expletives. This has led to questions of whether being at 15 years of age for any female would mean to be a woman's highest point of liberation speech wise.

On the other hand, Cameron's (1997) study, focusing on 21-year-old males, has found that they also show conversational traits that were more applicable to the adult woman, such as using of minimal responses and collaborative speech patterns to further a conversation that they have with their peers, proving that perhaps building network and relations along with instigating competition is to be equally important to the 21-year-old male individual. But Cameron also notes on the fact that though they are more comfortable with using associatively feminine speech traits in their conversations, when it came to topics about women and their homosexual male peers, it still held extreme derogatory tones, which led to some questions by the researcher about whether speech traits should continue to be the focus of feminist research and noted that the focus should be about the content in conversations made by men. Relating to Butler's Performativity theory (Butler, 1990), Cameron noted that her student who performed a research on informal talk of his male friends had a partiality towards his data, stating how she also noticed some parts that did not coincide with what was generally accepted as typical male behaviour in speech. This indicates that Butler's theory applies, as it shows that gender had been pre-assigned in the mind of the student (named Danny) in question of how men should be behaving, causing him to be selective in his reading of data for his study, consequently producing work that was skewed.

2.4 Feminism

Reflecting on recent times, feminism has been a subject that is constantly discussed, an example being Emma Watson's "HeForShe" campaign, that shows that the people are now moving towards the idea of gender equality, creating a whole different idea of discourse that opens opportunities of research by linguists today. Mills and Mullany (2011) explained the wave model of feminism research, focusing on the Second and

Third Wave of Feminism in their book, *Language, Gender and Feminism*. The key idea to research under feminism and language has been to change the way people think about their use of language and how others show representation on how male and female contexts are being used in language. Mills and Mullany (2011) has surmised feminist linguistic studies to be as doing research that focuses on investigating what language represents in “creating, sustaining and / or perpetuating” with women and people of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Queer) community under the aspect of discrimination and gender relations which are unequal.

Looking into the wave models of feminism research, the Second Wave and Third Wave of feminism research has shown an interesting movement of the notion on how it has come to change the views of society. In the Second Wave, the core idea was to show a gaping difference between men and women, and later explaining why the differences exist. The Dominance Theory (Zimmerman & West, 1975) and the Difference Theory (Tannen, 1991) (see 2.3.2. and 2.3.3) are one of the most prominent researches done that support the Second Wave. It caused a huge lack of diversity among the groups, as research would be describing mainly men and women as whole homogenous groups, instead of showing that there could be other factors that affect the idea of gendered relations. Mills and Mullany (2011) state that Second Wave researchers needs to consider the idea of other factors in society that affect gendered notions, and should not be instigating the differences and instead should be investigating them. In Third Wave Feminism, researches focuses on what has been said to lack in the Second Wave, going into the point of view of masculinity (where before the idea of femininity and the woman’s point of view have been solely concentrated on) and men, and with the recent resurgence of the notion that gender not being binary, the idea of “queer” and marginal societies are also being delved into.

Connell's work on masculinity as diverse aspects brings light to the Third Wave's notion, looking at various versions of masculinity, and understanding the differences between true masculinity and its evolution (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005). It should be noted that Mills and Mullany (2011) state that Second Wave and Third Wave feminism should not be viewed as a linear singularity, but instead be viewed as overlapping constituents where the suitability of aspect being researched would be subjective to the core of how the Second and Third Wave has been focusing.

The idea of feminism being a focus of research is still needed because the world still has a high influx of issues where women are still being considered as part of the minority in positions of power and stability. The "glass ceiling", the notion of a lack of progress where women have yet thought to break, has been renamed to be a "concrete ceiling" instead (Johnson N. M., 2006). According to Mills and Mullany (2011), many of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNUDHR) continue to be broken, ignored, and violated in many contexts, leaving the thought that the idea of feminism, though changed through the years, remains an aspect that needs to be researched on and fought for.

2.5 Masculinity

The aspect of feminism came with the ideologies that relates to masculinity. Connell (2005) wrote in her book *Masculinities* that the notion of masculinity is diverse and varied with different communities. Her study of masculinity could be applied to various fields to build a more comprehensive knowledge base to help guide understanding towards the topic. Some of the fields that masculinity relates to and contribute in various ways are the education field, where understanding masculinity and its diversity would help youths in schools form identities as well as aid in school discipline; health, of which is relevant to the safety of boys; violence, where

knowledge of the field allows reduction or prevention in domestic or sexual abuse cases; fathering, looking at obstacles that men face when it came to standards of traditional masculinity and also to create and develop improved ways in fathering; and, counselling, where studies focus on psychotherapy in men.

An example that Connell gave to how people dictated the different genders was where the general culture that women ask for directions when they do not know their way, while men insist on not doing that. It is later understood that men had seen information gathering as a criterion for a certain hierarchy, and thus should they ask another person for help they would be forcing themselves to admit that they are inferior to the other. According to research, one of the first attempts to give a definition to what defines masculinity was through looking at male sex roles, dating back to the late 19th century where debates arose on sex differences between the genders. One of the ways that researchers back then dictated the differences was the rule that women were not allowed to study because it was deemed that their brains would not have been well-equipped to take on the hardships that came with academic study, on top of having to be wives and mothers at home. This thought was not only challenged and went thoroughly against by women attending North American universities, they continued research to find further differences between the different genders. This led to more research into the notion during the 19th century, covering aspects such as mental capabilities, emotions and attitudes, character traits, and personal interests. The term “sex role” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 22) was then formed and later to be used in normal contexts. The notion that masculinity changes with time became the core theme for research published in American social science journals in the 1950s. An example of one such research was written by a Hellen Harker (as cited in Connell, 2005) stating that at one point men were expected to show high levels of social skills,

while expected to be a “sturdy oak” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 23), a term believed to be very commonly used to the point of cliché in the 1970s.

2.5.1 True Masculinity

Debates about masculinity and change meeting counter arguments at every point was due to the belief that men could not change, making attempts to change it too risky, or at least pointless to make. Society’s culture believes that there is a fixed meaning to the term masculinity, using terms such as “real men” and “natural men” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 45). The aspect of masculinity was then thought to be directly related to their bodies, be it the body’s capabilities – relating to drives and actions, leading to examples such as rape, violence, or its limitations – pertaining to caring for children and well as tolerance for the homosexual. In the 1970s, the debate that evolution was the reason between the differences in the sexes arose again, which led to ideas that because men are descended from hunter species from the past, their bodies are “bearers of masculinity” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 46) whose genes inherit natural tendencies such as aggression, having hierarchies, having family lives, being sexually promiscuous, and forming gentlemen’s associations.

Many researches that have been conducted on sex differences later found that there were not many differences between the sexes at all. On the categories where they found some differences, the data difference was too small to be significant. The theory of natural masculinity needed a very strong sense of tenacity to support its hypotheses. But as there were evidence of data where communities show the opposite - in this context being communities where rape did not exist, communities where homosexual activities were considered normal at certain points of a person’s life, communities where the mother figures in the family were not the only ones leading in

child care, and communities where men did not normally, if at all, show aggression – the theory cannot hold much weight.

2.5.2 Hegemonic Masculinity

The idea of hegemony is where a group claims and sustains a position of leadership in social lives, when related to masculinity, basically gave to the idea that one form of masculinity took precedence over other varieties, in terms of culture (Connell, Masculinities, 2005). Hegemony in masculinity gives a guarantee to men being the dominant party, while the women are subordinated. Hegemony relates to overall dominance in a culture. Homosexual men being subordinated by straight men are documented in many examples, such as street and legal violence, political, cultural and economic discrimination, and many forms of abuse as well. There are also instances of other heterosexual men that did not fit the ideal notion of masculinity expelled from the community, constantly hurled derogatory words such as: ladyfingers, cream puff, mother's boy, and sissy, where the terms' symbolic usage of underlying feminine tones cannot be denied (Connell, Masculinities, 2005).

2.5.3 Definitions and other relations of Masculinity

Researchers used four different strategies to attempt at defining what masculinity was: the essentialist strategy, the positivist strategy, the normative strategy, and the semiotic strategy. Essentialists at its core picks a trait that they define to be the core of masculinity, for example, risk-taking, or tendency to violence. Lionel Tiger (as cited in Connell, 2005) states that true masculinity has its ties to the concealed connection between males and war, which comes from hardships and heavy burdens. A flaw in this strategy is that the choice of trait to define masculinity is subjective to the individual, and thus making it slightly more unreliable. A positivist searches for hard facts to define masculinity as what men truly are, backing their claim with

psychological research with statistical data that shows the discrepancies between the two genders. A couple of weakness that came with this strategy were that defining the term as the way a man would empirically dictate the term to not be used on a female is more inclined towards being masculine, and also it bases its ideas on assumptions made about both the genders to begin with.

The normative strategy deviates a little from the positivist, where instead of defining masculinity as what men empirically are, the normative defines the term to essentially be what men should be at their core. The normative strategy allows men to be different according to what they believe individually what men should be, but also bringing the same weak point as the essentialist, where subjectivity does come into play. The semiotics basically just defines masculinity as not feminine, which shows its reliance on the definition of what makes femininity.

Connell believed that rather to focus on fully defining what is masculinity, she looked at the ways and social connections through which males and females lead lives with gendered connotations. Connell has since found 4 relations among masculinity, which were hegemony (referenced in 2.5.2), subordination, complicity, and marginalisation. Under subordination, it states that men who do not have the desired traits, in this context to men's lack of heterosexuality, would so be viewed as inferior to straight men. Complicity includes men that do not in essence perform the activities as listed in the two other relations previously but reap the benefits from the general notion of patriarchy and subordination of women. Referencing the normative strategy's definition of masculinity, many men do not fit into that definition, where hegemony suits completely. The actual number of men that fully practice hegemonic masculinity cultures are very little. But to the ideas of which a man can cheer for his favourite sports team as compared to a man who actually gets into the grit of the sport,

a man who does not subscribe to the culture of hegemony in masculinity still reaps the benefits when it comes to subordination of other men and women, and because these are men who also respects the women in their families, take their fair share of household chores and the like, it would be easy for them to think that those who fight under the banner of feminism to be women who subscribe to the culture of misandry. Finally, marginalisation looks at the division between gender, race, and class of each community, where notions of black and white masculinity are considered to be related to each other, where one would be the basis of the other's version of what masculinity should be, an example being sport stars who were black becoming the epitome of toughness in masculine terms for white men, and instances of hegemonic masculinity in the white community becoming the basis of oppressing and terrorising black people that became the framework for how the latter defines masculinity as a whole.

2.6 Previous studies on *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*

Encompassing both discussions of femininity and masculinity, Hannah Hammad (2018) explained that *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* had received a relatively average amount of scholarly writing as compared to other notable TV shows, which was odd considering how much the sitcom still sits on the forefront of pop culture amongst millennials. She also stated that *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* showed many of the familiar discourses that was common to post-femininity, which only served more of a reason to question as to why it was not featured more in written papers.

Hammad discussed on the many discourses that were portrayed by the characters in the sitcom, stating some examples such as the discourse of domestic obsession in women, the discourse of the runaway bride, and discourse that challenges metrosexuality, the idea that there are new ways to look at how men can deal with other, and challenges towards men and women towards mother and fatherhood.

With the discourse of domestic obsession, Hamad (2018) discusses how Monica was portrayed in a way that made her mindset seem neo-traditionalistic, which her deep obsession with having a boyfriend / husband, and also with domestic labour. Monica had been portrayed through the series as a person who is highly insecure with the fact that it was hard for her to get a boyfriend and ultimately a husband, and it was only made worse by her mother, who constantly seemed to berate her or undermine her where necessary. One particular episode that was mentioned in Hamad's analysis was "The One with All the Wedding Dresses" (S4E20), where Monica was depicted to be happily wearing a wedding dress that belonged to her then-future sister-in-law, Emily Waltham, while also wearing a pair of kitchen gloves and holding a dish-washing sponge. From a post-feminism standpoint, this both supported and challenged the ideas of what a woman could or can do with a sense of neo-traditionalism, boosting the notion that a woman can both be modern-thinking and still want to settle down with a man while being deliriously happy when doing all the housework.

Rachel Green, another character in the TV show, was stated to portray the runaway bride discourse in the TV show (Hamad, 2018). At the start of the series, Rachel was seen starting from a very low point in her life, after having run away from marrying a rich orthodontist that she did not have affection for – also being forced to live without her father's money in the process. Through the sitcom, audience would be able to see how Rachel developed from someone who turned away from a lavish life that was handed to her on a silver platter, to a woman who owned a highly successful career, had a daughter of her own, all without having to be married to another man. Hamad (2018) states that Rachel's whole journey was a semiotic tool that iconically depicted the liberated version of the notion of femininity, taking major steps away from what was an autocratic form of patriarchy. However, the fact that

Rachel was shown to make the choice of sacrificing a huge opportunity in her career to be with Ross was noted to seem to fulfil a sense of pacifying the conservativeness of the genre of sitcoms.

On the aspect of challenging masculinity, Hamad believed that Joey seemed to be the character that accepted the versatility of his own masculinity and is most at ease with his own self (Hamad, 2018). This was reflected in the episode “The One with Joey’s Bag” (S5E3) where Joey seemingly happily carrying a unisex handbag that Rachel had recommended to him in an attempt to get him to dress better for an audition Joey had. Even though Chandler and Ross had teased Joey about the bag later on, Hamad states that it is important to note that both efforts of supporting and challenging the sense of masculinity that was portrayed in the sitcom were done with humour, perhaps intended to be a shy from a direct portrayal of either the liberal or the conservative mindset, allowing more people to be able to accept the existence of either concepts.

On the overall, Hamad’s paper fills the void that is the absence of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*’s being the focus of a scholarly writing (Hamad, 2018), touching on many known gender discourses that were portrayed in the sitcom, showing how it can be applied to the post-feminism point of view.

Lastly, one more notable work that utilises the sitcom as a focus for linguistical research was the paper by Daniel Ayliffe (2011). Ayliffe (2011) corpus linguistic research focused on the notion that females speak more “women’s language” and is more restricted in the sense of linguistics, with the paper aiming to prove investigate if the speech found in the sitcom of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* supports or challenges that idea. Ayliffe has found that from the sitcom, the men and women speak differently

depending on the gender of the person they were conversing with. There was also no evidence found that the female characters spoke “women’s language” (Lakoff, 1973) and were not limited in their sense of linguistics when it came to conversation, although men were found to have a wider and more creative use of vocabulary when conversing. In contrast of the notion where women spoke more politely, instances of women using more forbidden words and intensifiers far exceeded that of their male counterparts, whereas instances of usage of hedges and empty adjectives along with number of questions asked were equal across the two genders (Ayyilife, 2011).

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, 5 areas of related aspects of this research has been explored. Section 2.2 discussed the many definitions of gender, gender roles, gender stereotypes, and gender identities, with section 2.3 having explored the many gender theories that exist to date, including the Dominance Theory, the Difference Theory, Performativity theory, and the main focus of this research, Gendered Discourses. Section 2.4 discussed feminism as a whole as it is the key to many feminist linguistic researches and section 2.5 explored the different facets of masculinity. Lastly, section 2.6 discusses the previous studies done on the sitcom based on aspects of gender and linguistics.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the conceptual background and framework on which this research is based on. Discussion begins from the conceptual framework of this paper, and it continues with the background of discourse analysis pertaining to gender. Discourses that have already been identified by gender theorists and its relation to this research as well as other identified discourses from the data is referenced. In the last section, the design of this research is explained.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Tannen (1991) and her work on the theory of Difference in gender has shown that there is a difference in which men and women are perceived to behave and treated. Zimmerman and West's (1975) theory of Dominance states that there is a language that men uses to dominate over women, but it can also be inferred that men see themselves to be more inferior over women as well based on content of their speech. Relating to this, Cameron (1997) has explained that a focus towards more than how are things spoken need to be taken up, noting that researchers should look at content that men engage in instead of just how they engage the topics as it indicates instances of hegemony. Combining the ideas of the many researchers, it infers that there is a need to look at topic of speech - not only how it is spoken, with attention given to the different approaches that men and women take with regards to certain issues that dictates a gendered notion.

Sunderland (2004) states that any action can be gendered so long there is an indication that one gender is associated more with a particular activity. This allows a more spread out approach that is taken by this current research, where the focus would not only be on linguistical methods of identifying discourses but is also combined with

semiotics. Butler's Performativity theory in gender (1990) goes in line with Sunderland's theory as it indicates that a gendered identity in the form of performativity can be taken up by anyone of any gender, resulting in a possibility to identify a gendered discourse in any setting regardless of existing stereotypes that may or may not be applicable in the sitcom chosen. Baker's work also delved into whether or not there was a specific language for women and men, breaking down into the non-binary categories such as homosexual individuals, having stated that the world had pre-made notions as to what gender was, and that people have had a hard time because they were put up against said expectations, giving the example of when presented with muffins labelled "male" and "female" (big and small respectively), men find it hard to choose between the muffins as choosing either one would have labelled them with either being a homosexual, or someone who conforms to societal norms out of fear (Baker, 2008).

3.3 Discourse Analysis and Identification of Gendered Discourses

Sunderland has described identifying discourse in any form of source as "discourse spotting" (2004, p. 32) and explains that discourse identified within a source has to be able to be described, and may or may not already have an existing title for it. For instance, many gendered discourses have already been identified through many academic fields, with many of them named with a critical analysis of their purpose and named through the researcher's interpretation of the source. Sunderland suggests that looking at the discourse themselves as a way to perceive the surroundings is good starting point on identifying them, noting that from a researcher's analysis point of view, a discourse can be discerned from the demeanour of which people speak and write (Sunderland, 2004). Although looking at verbal and written speech forms does show an absolute form of the discourse, it is possible to reference it to interpretations

made by the audience and they have the potential to contain practical inferences for deconstruction of discourse (Sunderland, 2004).

Sunderland (2004) notes that an existence of a discourse can only be determined by its social acceptability and provisional recognisability, as individuals generally do not identify with any discourse in a straight forward manner, stating how researchers can look at aspects that give notions of a certain discourse. It is also important to note that different researchers and analysts will be interpreting discourses in various ways that may differ from one another as a particular source always has the potential to contain several discourses in one sitting. Sunderland advocates that there can always be traces of gender in discourses, as people generally cannot or would not recognise a gendered notion in a discourse in its entirety, as recognition of a discourse would take multiple instances of communication that lead to acceptance of a new norm.

“People do not . . . recognise a discourse . . . in any straightforward way . . . Not only is it not identified or named, and is not self-evident or visible as a discrete chunk of a given text, it can never be ‘there’ in its entirety. What is there are certain linguistic features: ‘marks on a page’, words spoken or even people’s memories of previous conversations . . . which – if sufficient and coherent – may suggest that they are ‘traces’ of a particular discourse. (Sunderland, 2004, p. 28)

As discussed in 2.3.5, Sunderland believes that identification and naming of the discourses to be highly subjective and explains that the final product of a named gendered discourse says more of the researcher than perhaps of the actual instance in question. She also states that discourses should be focused based on the functionality within a situation, as discourses can be opposing each other, be mutually exclusive, be overlapping of each other, and even be mutually supportive of each other. As a result,

studies that relate and focus on conflicting discourses that causes complications of the topic at hand can be done. Thus, discourses as an analysis should be looked at with context in mind.

3.4 Types of Gendered Discourses

The following are instances of recognised gendered discourses identified by the many researchers in gender. The 4 main gendered discourses under the subsections 3.4.1 to 3.4.4 will be the main reference for the purposes of identification of gendered discourses in this current research. The gendered discourses mentioned from 3.4.1 to 3.4.4 are discourses that have been frequently mentioned in research of many gender theorists (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005) (Rich, 1980) (Baker, 2008), where Sunderland's work in particular advocates the existence of all four gendered discourses (Sunderland, 2004).

3.4.1 Gender Differences Discourse

Sunderland (2004) explains that the Gender Differences discourse encompasses the differences that are identified and associated with each gender, building on the Difference theory (Tannen, 1991) where men and women were found to have certain speech behaviour traits that construct their gender identity. It is explained to encompass the more commonly understood elements that have been accepted in society to be particular traits that belong to one gender. An instance for this discourse could be where women better in exams than men (Sunderland, 2004).

3.4.2 Hegemonic Masculinity Discourse

Hegemonic Masculinity belongs to part of Connell's theory of gender order (2005), dictating many versions of masculinities that vary across cultures and time in history. As referenced in Section 2.5.2, hegemonic masculinity discusses the dominant subject

positioning that has been held by men due to the many notions of traits that depict a seemingly superior position over women and also men who do not fit the ideal of being a “real man”. Hegemony does not only include men who sees women as beneath their stature, it also includes women who agree with the school of thought found in hegemonic masculinity, as well as men who, though they respect women and do not see them to be beneath their own stature, views gender equality, or feminism, as unnecessary, going in line with Connell’s (2005) explanation that hegemonic men includes people who do not practice the same degrading behaviour but also enjoys the benefits that comes naturally with the dominant male subject positioning with no qualms of actual situations of gender inequality in the world.

3.4.3 Gender Equality Discourse

Gender Equality, which is the true form of feminism, is a discourse that is a variation of Sunderland’s “Gender equality is now achieved” (Sunderland, 2004, p. 44) discourse, with the latter discourse showing a more triumphant nature where the female gender has finally shown to be equal to the other, whereas the former discourse dictates a more neutral perception as the world is being more exposed to the necessity of an equality between the genders. The discourse is interpreted in this research to include notions of either gender believing that there should be an equal division of labour, an equal expectation of merits (or demerits), and an equal belief of success and failure, between the two genders.

3.4.4 Compulsory Heterosexuality Discourse

Adrienne Rich’s theory of Compulsory Heterosexuality (1980), as a discourse, includes notions of a woman’s attraction towards a man to be inevitable, a woman not being attracted to a man being an insult to said man which allows him to feel that he has been awarded a right to show his displeasure, and if a woman was found to be

attracted to another woman, it is only to spite a man who is interested in her. This discourse builds on some traces of the Dominance theory (Zimmerman & West, 1975) and the general school of thought that men are superior to women, allowing men to subjugate them in whatever manner deemed appropriate by the former.

3.4.5 Other identified discourses

It is inferred that there will be other discourses identified based on the different situations presented in the sitcom, with reference to Sunderland's (2004) notion that gendered discourses can be found in any environment or situation that is associated with one gender. Scenes in the series were taken apart to analyse to investigate if there is a trace or a pattern that emerges for an identification of a discourse to be possible.

The identified gendered discourses are as follows: The Dumb Blonde discourse, the "Being a woman is an insult" discourse", the Positive Masculinity discourse, and the "Women love to gossip" discourse. The discourses were identified based on patterned behaviour portrayed by the characters across the selected 4 episodes. Sources that support the existence of the discourse are used to show the validity, and they are then used to determine if they support or challenge stereotypes in society.

3.5 Research Design

The conceptual framework for this research is based on a few steps, the first stage being the need to understand how the media views gender as media portrayal heavily influences how society dictates what gender is to be. Next, after identifying a suitable form of media (this being the TV show *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*, a show watched by millions), it continues with the identification of gendered discourses found based on analysing linguistic and semiotic tools portrayed by the characters in the episodes. With the data

extracted, comparisons will be made if they reinforce or challenge current perceptions towards the notion of gender.

Gender representation is crucial to change the mindset of society as to what the gendered discourses are, and the media remains as one of the most prominent form of spreading information that it has allowed gender stereotypes to almost embed in people's mindsets.

3.5.1 Data

In this study, 4 episodes are chosen from F.R.I.E.N.D.S, a show set in New York city, aired from 1994 to 2004, with 6 main characters: Ross, Chandler, Joey, Monica, Rachel, and Phoebe, and a general airtime of about 25 minutes per episode.

The 4 episodes are as follows:

Episode list and title	First air date	Total US viewers	<i>YouTube</i> views	Airtime
1) Season 3 Episode 4 (S3E4): The One with the Metaphorical Tunnel	October 10, 1996	26.1 million (Dan G., 1997)	1.7 million (Favourite Videos, 2016)	23 minutes 50 seconds
2) Season 5 Episode 13 (S5E13): The One with Joey's Bag	February 4, 1999	24.9 million (Dan G., 1999)	2.1 million (Favourite Videos, 2016)	23 minutes 31 seconds
3) Season 6 Episode 8 (S6E8): The One with Ross' Teeth	November 18, 1999	22.1 million (Dan G., 2000)	2.3 million (Mikelis Baltruks, 2009)	22 minutes 18 seconds
4) Season 9 Episode 6 (S9E6): The One with the Male Nanny	November 7, 2002	27.51 million (Dan G., 2003)	1.7 million (Favourite Videos, 2016) (Favourite Videos, 2016)	31 minutes 56 seconds

Table 3.1 The List of Episodes Chosen for the current study

The 4 episodes are chosen based on the existence of the distinctive gendered behaviour established in Sunderland's work on gendered discourses (2004) – Gendered Differences, Masculinity, Gender Equality, and Compulsory Heterosexuality, among others – which will be the main references for data extraction, considering total number of views on *YouTube* (clips from the episodes cut and published) (refer to Table 3.1) compared to other episodes, along with the existence of posted comments on gender roles and stereotypes (Images 3.5.1 – 3.5.4) on the social media site.

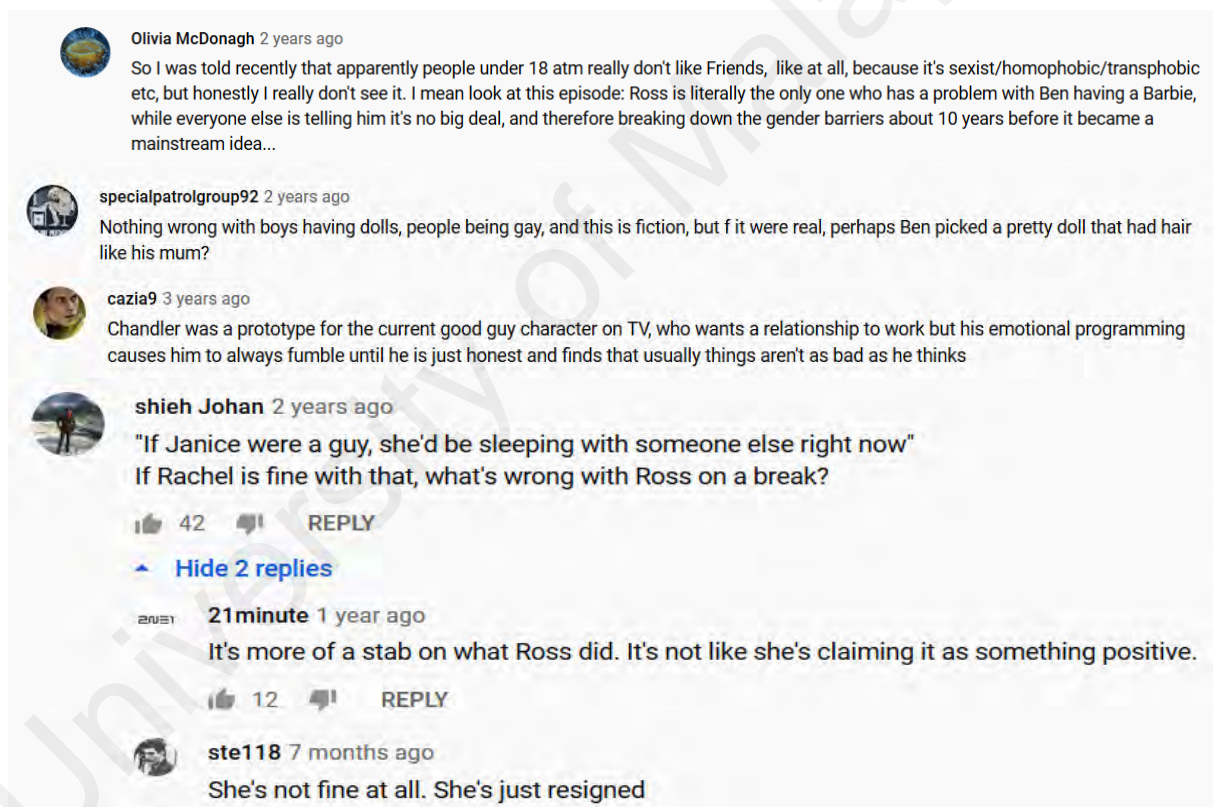


Image 3.5.1 Examples of *Youtube* comments with traces of gender for S3E14 (Favourite Videos, 2016) (Favourite Videos, 2016)

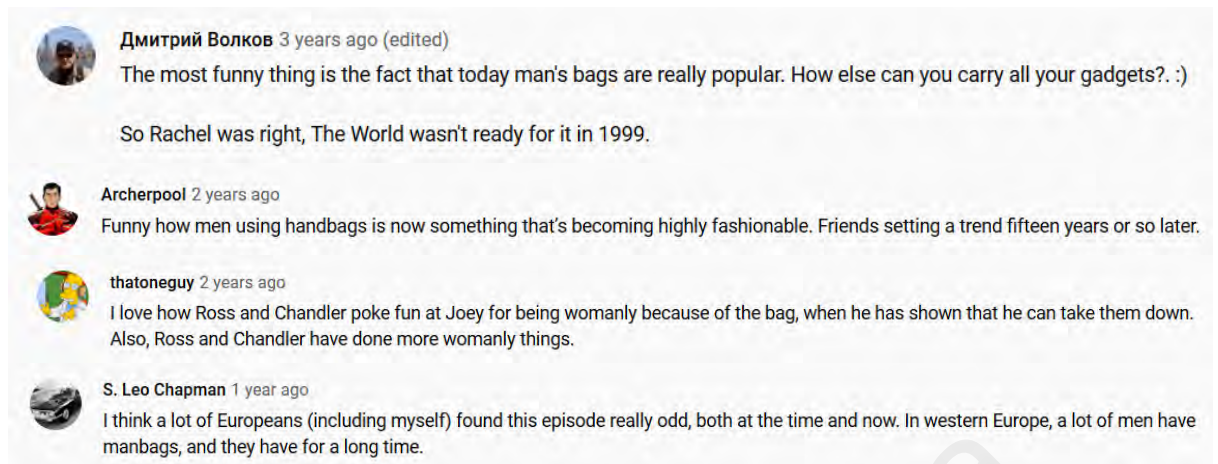


Image 3.5.2 Examples of *Youtube* comments with traces of gender for S5E13 (Favourite Videos, 2016)

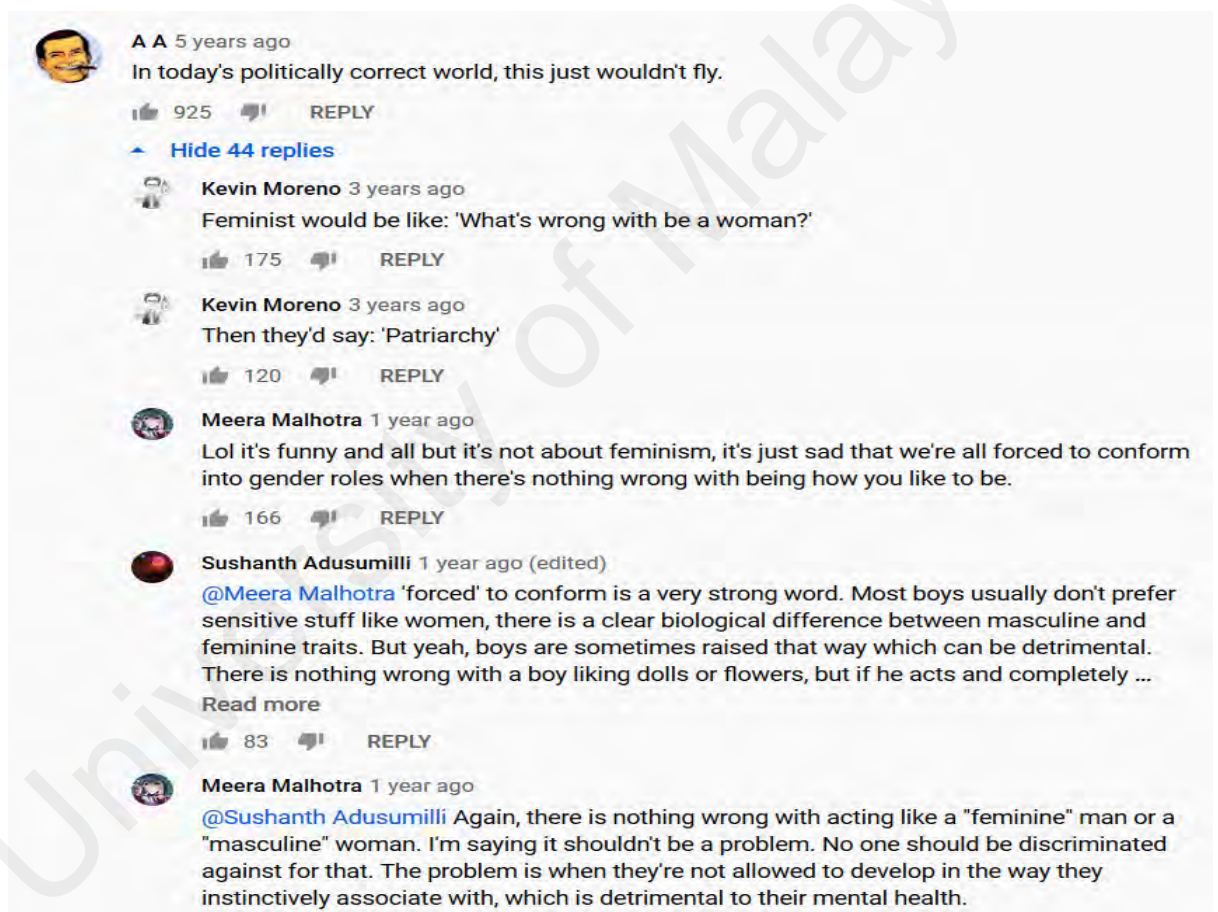


Image 3.5.3 Examples of *Youtube* comments with traces of gender for S6E8 (Mikaelis Baltruks, 2009)

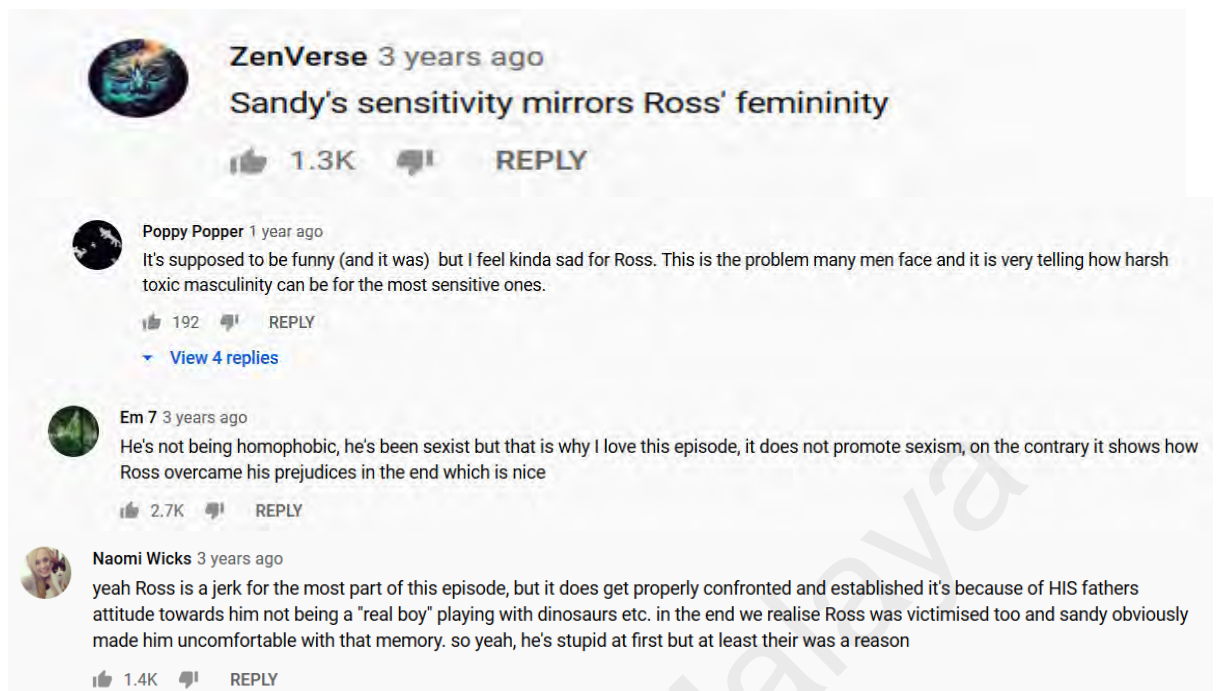


Image 3.5.4 Examples of *Youtube* comments with traces of gender for S9E4 (Favourite Videos, 2016) (Favourite Videos, 2016)

The number of viewers has been established by the Nielsen Media Research company (The Nielsen Company (US), LLC, 2020), a known firm in the United States that measures the number of audiences of each TV show produced. It is important to note that one caveat with this interpretation of Sunderland's gendered discourses (2004) - basing also on the information extracted from the Nielsen TV ratings (2020) - is that they are Western or the US specific in nature. Thus, notions of relatability explained in this paper must be made with that limitation in mind.

3.5.2 Coding and Analysis

Multimodality is defined as the use of different modes of semiotics in creating meaning and pathways towards communication (Van Leeuwen, 2015). This research has adopted a multimodal concept for discourse analysis, where both the spoken word and non-verbal gestures of communication will be extracted as data (Table 3.2). An example of data in this instance when applied to the concept of multimodality is if a spoken word or phrase (linguistics) is extracted from a situation, the character's

intonation, voice clarity and body language (semiotics) would also be analysed together to investigate the meaning that is formed. Van Leeuwen states that this would allow not only the concept of utilising discourse analysis theories, theories from art and design can also be borrowed to better help identify meanings from the different modes of semiotics (2015).

Gendered discourses (refer to 2.3.5) are formed when there is the notion of gender that has been associated with a certain word, phrase, object or situation. As how the colour and the word “pink” (Maglaty, 2011) had been associated with one gender or another in historical to the present times, linguistic and semiotic resources that have one gender tagged to it by association is considered to be gendered. Another example would be the behaviour of playing the field. The behaviour of playing the field had always been a matter of debate amongst societies, where in males it was seen as normal though not positive and in females it was seen with a more negative light than their male counterparts. In modern terms, males who plays the field are now called “fuccbois” (Gilbert-Lurie, 2015) and girls who do the same are labelled as “sluts” (Cambridge University Press, 2020). While the term “fuccboi” can be both taken as an insult and something to be proud of – depending on the situation, the derogatory term “slut” can only be taken negatively, which indicates a bias towards on gender compared to the other. This creates the gendered discourse that it is “normal” for boys to play the field, but it was not normal for girls to do the same (Riley, 2015).

From the episodes chosen in 3.5.1, every behaviour or pattern portrayed by the characters that contains traces or notions of gender were noted down. Examples of such data can refer to Table 3.2. They were then further analysed through the use of linguistic and semiotic tools to discern if there were any focus that indicated a gender-specific patterned behaviour or expectation of behaviour. The following data was then

cross referenced through the identified gendered discourses for any overlap. Any data that did not fit with the 4 main discourses were then crossed referenced with each other to discern any other possible discourses through patterned behaviour. When applicability of the data to the discourses was ensured, evidences were then gathered through published journal articles and official new sites (for reliability of data) for instances that showed either support or challenge to normative or popular perceptions of gender.

Gendered discourses have been concluded from the data extracted with linguistic and semiotic tools (1st RQ) (Table 3.2) and compared to existing stereotypes in society (2nd RQ).

Linguistic and Semiotic Tools	Explanation
Lexical Items with gendered nuances	Nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs that are often gendered in usage. Example: pink, pretty, tiny, baby*
Visual artefacts	Certain items shown that are often gendered in usage. Example: ballet slippers, flowers, paintings, potpourri*
Behaviour with gendered nuances	Behaviour shown that is often gendered in usage. Example: enjoying knitting, enjoying arranging of flowers, using makeup, hammering up dry wall, having pillow fights*

*All examples given in Table 3.2 are based on words or phrases extracted from the 4 episodes analysed for this paper.

All of the examples were chosen based on situations in the episodes where the characters have utilised the terms or phrases with intention to refer to one specific gender's self, characteristics or general behaviour, which allow them to be "gendered" (Sunderland, 2004).

Table 3.2 Linguistic and Semiotic Tools and their explanations

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, Section 3.1 introduced the main breakdowns of the chapter while Section 3.2 contains the theoretical framework of this research. Next, Section 3.3. discussed the methods to identify gendered discourses in discourse analysis. Then, Section 3.4 listed and explained the existing gendered discourses that will be used as reference points for this research along with explaining the possibility of identifying other gendered discourses according to the different episodes. And lastly, Section 3.5 explained the design of this research, with the list of episodes chosen, details on how the episodes were chosen for study, how the data will be extracted, how the data will be coded and analysed, and what linguistic and semiotic tools will be used for the analysis of gendered discourses.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the data collected from the 4 episodes chosen (listed in Section 3.5) and explores instances of real-life incidents and cultures, comparing the two to analyse an applicability of sitcom's representation of gendered discourses. Firstly, the discourse of Gendered Differences will be discussed, followed by Hegemonic Masculinity, then Compulsory Heterosexuality, and subsequently, Gender Equality. Other identified discourses such as the Positive Masculinity discourse, the "Being a woman is an insult" discourse, the Dumb Blonde discourse, and the "Women love to gossip" discourse will then be discussed as a separate category.

4.2 Gender Differences Discourse

As referenced in Section 3.4.1, the Gender Difference discourse looks into established differences in socially expected behaviours among men and women. In the four episodes there are various evidence that indicate the discourse being drawn on and produced by the main characters in the sitcom. There are also instances where the discourse is recognised by a character.

In the Season 6 Episode 8 (S6E8): "The One with Ross' Teeth" (Halvorson, 1999), Chandler came into Joey's apartment, asking to survey his (Chandler's) old room (as Chandler and Joey had been housemates before the former moved in with his then-girlfriend Monica), and later was appalled to find how Janine had turned his room into a "girl thing" (Image 4.2.1, 1-8) (S6E8, 0:00:38) and goes on in an incredulous manner in pointing out other "girl things" in the apartment, such as the "pretty pink pillow" (Image 4.2.2, 2) (S6E8, 0:00:45) and the "tiny little box, that's too small to put anything in" (Image 4.2.2, 3) (S6E8, 0:00:48) (0:00:06-0:01:15).



Image 4.2.1 Chandler going into Janine's room (S6E8)



Image 4.2.2 Chandler surveying Joey's living room (S6E8)

Janine's room could be seen decorated with multiple flowers and floral prints (Image 4.2.1, 1-2, 4-8) on the bed, curtains, and dressing table. There is also a pair of ballet slippers hanging on the door (Image 4.2.1, 3), showing that Janine is a dancer. Flowers and ballet dancing have always been generally associated with the female gender, rather than the male. The famous choreographer George Balanchine was quoted to say that dancers are equated to flowers, along with the quote of "Ballet is Woman" (Croce, 2019), which explains the inclination towards flowers and ballet and the female gender.

In Season 3 Episode 4 (S3E4), The One with the Metaphorical Tunnel (Zuckerman, 1996), nearing the end, Monica makes a statement of wondering why was Ross being frustrated about his son playing with a Barbie doll, and added that

Ross used to dress up in their mother's clothes, with the "big hat", "pearls", and the "little pink handbag" (Image 4.2.3), giving a very stereotypical notion of what mothers wore, indicating that the terms are associated with the feminine gender, resulting in Ross attempting to deny Monica's claim.



Image 4.2.3 Monica: The big hat, the pearls, the little pick handbag. (S3E4)

This indicates the "gender differences" discourse (Sunderland, 2004), showing a significant difference in the way gender has been viewed by society, the difference encompassing, for most, what the different genders are all about. In this context, Chandler states that the terms "pretty" and "pink" indicates a more feminine notion, as well as "tiny", "little", and "too small to put anything in", referencing to the idea that only girls can be referred as pretty, pink being a girl's colour, and also women's handbags being thought to have only a decorative purpose. Chandler also

states that Joey would end up having his fingers soaked in “stuff” and his head under a blow dryer, referencing to manicures and hair salon visits that have been typically associated to being a woman, if the latter continues to allow Janine to decorate the apartment. Ross denying having worn female clothes when he was a child shows that the idea of being associated with the female gender in that aspect was appalling.

The colour pink has always been generally thought to be a “girl” colour, with the idea starting right before World War I (Maglaty, 2011). Under the gendered differences discourse, there has always been notions that there are different things that were meant for one specific gender, in this case, colour. Although in recent years, people are challenging that notion – one of the most notable examples being Toys R Us’ move to abolish the idea that pink is for girls and blue is for boys (Brennan, 2015) – it is evident that Chandler still holds the thought that only females can be associated with the colour pink. Consequently, it fits to the idea that to be a masculine man, one cannot be associated with pink and “pretty”. As mentioned in Section 2.5, masculinity has always been associated with ideas of battle, warfare and testosterone (Sunderland, 2004), leading to notions that masculine men are generally violent, make loud noises – with reference to Joey’s grunt (Image 4.2.3) – and do not associate themselves with small and dainty items.



Image 4.2.3 Joey grunting “mmm” (S6E8)

It is important to note that there was a time before when colours and clothes were considered gender neutral. According to an article by the Smithsonian Museum, Franklin Roosevelt had been pictured to wear a dress, and with other notable data, it showed that children back in the year of 1884 wore dresses up to the age of 7, also the year where they get their first haircut (Maglaty, 2011). So, aspects of dress that are feminine today, such as having long hair, and putting on a dress, and in turn, using colours to dictate gender, were not evident back in history. Post-World War I when people started to want to know and show the gender of their new-borns, pop culture had taken a while to decide what colour signified which gender. There was a time when pink was considered to signify boys, and blue signified girls, with the reasoning being that pink was a strong colour, and blue is “soft and dainty” (Maglaty, 2011),

being more suitable for females. After that, around the 1980's, came a time where gender-neutral clothes became back in trend. Due to marketing and advertisements, parents were led to believe that the more you personalised for your baby the better, and parents who have felt that they missed out on the coloured-personalisation of clothing in their childhood became adamant in dressing their new-borns in the gender-signifying coloured clothing.

The *F.R.I.E.N.D.S* TV show's airing was in the year 1994, which shows an accurate run of how society at that moment had a big notion of pink signifying girls, and blue signifying boys. With recent developments, and with the arrival of non-binary gender aspects, the colours signifying gender are becoming more fluid, an example would be where pink is used by companies now to aim at the metrosexual male market (Thompson, 2004), instead of only the female market.

In S6E8, Monica barges into the apartment to ask Chandler to join her "hemming the new dust ruffle" (S6E8, 0:01:18, Image 4.2.4).



Image 4.2.4 Monica coming into the apartment (S6E8)

Hemming dust ruffles is known as a craft activity, which is generally associated with females. It is meant to show a contrast against Chandler's rants to Joey about being a man right before she showed up in the scene. Chandler's opinion of crafts will later again be shown in another scene (Image 4.2.5).



Image 4.2.5 Chandler and Monica making potpourri sachets. (S6E8)

Further in the episode, Chandler again shows frustration at Joey liking to do certain craft activities, such as potpourri (image 4.2.6, 2), knitting potholders (image 4.2.6, 1), making flower arrangements, and allowing the painting of a baby and the watering can to still be in the apartment, stuttering at Joey with “You have dead flowers!” (S6E8, 0:15:55) and “you have a picture of a baby dressed in flowers!” (S6E8, 0:15:56). These statements indicate that there is a notion that knitting and having paintings of “cute babies” and “watering cans” are associated with being feminine. Flower arranging is also deemed to be a woman’s activity in this episode, with Chandler exclaiming later in the episode “You’re arranging flowers!” (S6E8, 0:15:51; Image 4.2.7), not being able to accept that Joey was teaching Monica how to improve her arrangement skills.



Image 4.2.6 Joey enjoying knitting potholders and smelling potpourri on the kitchen table. (S6E8)



Image 4.2.7 Chandler: You're arranging flowers! (S6E8, 0:15:51)

Research has shown that floral themed items have always been associated with females, with allowances recently for the male gender with certain crafts, such as the written craft or wood work (Scullin, 2019). In a research by Almamari (2015), it states that the female gender still dominates some of the craft areas. But it does show that men are slowly coming into the forefront in the field of crafting. Similarly, in the world today, trendy retail stores like *Cotton On*, *Terranova*, and *Marks and Spencer* still heavily feature floral prints in the lines of women clothing, whereas the same cannot be said for the men's line. Although floral prints on men's clothes are starting to come up in recent trends, with fashion sites now teaching men the stylish way of donning a floral shirt (Fashionbeans Editors, 2019), floral motifs still remain largely associated with the female gender. Perhaps with the slight changes of florals moving

into the men's line seen in the past few years, a new direction is forming towards the notion that flowers should only be associated with females.

Under S3E4, Ross's ex-wife Carol and her current partner Susan brought his son Ben over to Monica's apartment so that Ross can watch over him. Upon seeing that Ben was holding onto a Barbie doll, Ross started to question why his son would be holding a doll (Image 4.2.8, Image 4.2.9, S3E4, 0:04:48 – 0:05:02).



Image 4.2.8 Ross: And here's his... Barbie? (S3E4)



Image 4.2.9 Ross: What's my boy doing with a Barbie? (S3E4)

Carol and Susan explained that not only had Ben picked it out of the toy store on his own - with no influence from either of his mothers, Ben also treated the Barbie like a “security blanket”, an item commonly used among babies and small children as a transition item (Cale, 2018) while growing up.

Susan: He carries it everywhere, it's like a security blanket, but with ski boots and a kicky beret.

-Excerpt 4.2.1 (S3E4, 0:05:06 – 0:05:11)

Ross continued to be in a state of disbelief and repeated the question he asked before, with Susan and Carol attempting to challenge his thoughts about the young boy having a doll. Later when the two women left, Ross attempted to persuade

his son to play with other toys, some of the suggested ones being a “monster truck” and a “dino soldier” (S3E4, 0:05:38 – 0:05:54).



Image 4.2.10 Ross: Give daddy the Barbie! (S3E4)



Image 4.2.11 Ross: Don't you want to play with a monster truck? **makes car noises** (S3E4)



Image 4.2.12 Ross: How about a Dino Soldier? **Makes pterodactyl noises** (S3E4)

This indicates that Ross thinks that Barbies, or “dolls” are meant for girls to play with, while boys are meant to play with toys like soldiers or cars. This is an instance of where children’s toys are deemed to be gendered. Gendered toys have been a culture of society for many a decade, with research saying that the notion in parents to have gendered toys for their children in recent years to be more embedded than it was five decades ago (Sweet, 2014). Sweet suggests that as compared to 50 years ago when gender discrimination and sexism were the norm in society, gendered marketing in toy advertisements were more salient in the adverts done in the 20th century. In a research titled *The Gender Marketing of Toys: An Analysis of Color and Type of Toy on the Disney Store Website* by Carol J. Auster (2012), it is shown that the company has presented toys such as buildings, cars, weapons, and action figures labelled under “boys only”, and pastel-coloured toys, dolls, jewellery, and toys that had a domestic orientation labelled as “girls only”.

Disney is one of the world’s biggest companies in media and has a nett worth of USD\$130 billion (Hoffower, 2020), with many of its productions leading it to being a household name in the average family. Gendered marketing in the Disney Store Website has only served to embed further the notion that boys and girls should only be playing with certain types of toys and not the other. Ross’ attitude towards his son’s doll is an evidence of that. Ross later tries to persuade Ben to drop the Barbie doll and to replace the doll with what he thought was the male equivalent, G.I. Joe, an action figure.



Image 4.2.13 Ross: Real American hero. I'm G.I. Joe! (S3E4)



Image 4.2.14 Ross: Drop the Barbie! Drop the Barbie! (S3E4)

Rachel, Carol, and Susan however had shown an indifference towards Ben playing with the doll. Carol and Susan had shown no indication of a negative impression when they explained to Ross about Ben choosing the toy himself, with Susan challenging Ross' idea by almost purposefully misunderstanding Ross' reasoning for not wanting Ben to play with the Barbie doll (Images 4.2.15 – 4.2.18). Rachel showed her indifference by snapping at Ross and judging him in the latter's attempts to dissuade the young boy of holding onto the Barbie doll (Images 4.2.19 – 4.2.20).



Image 4.2.15 Carol: He picked it out of the toy store himself, he loves it. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.16 Susan: He carries it everywhere, it's like a security blanket, but with ski boots and a kicky beret. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.17 Susan: So he's got a doll? So what? (S3E4)



Image 4.2.18 Susan: Unless you're afraid he's gonna grow up and be in show business. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.19 Rachel: Ross, you are so pathetic. Why can't your son just play with his doll? (S3E4)



Image 4.2.20 Rachel: G.I. Joe? Do you really think he's gonna fall for that? (S3E4)

This indicates that their attitudes challenge the embedded discourse in society that there is a gender difference in the toys of children, in contrast to Ross' evident aversion to the same idea.

Monica also later shows the same indifference to Ben playing with a Barbie doll by adding that Ross used to dress up like a woman, singing songs while drinking imaginary tea.



Image 4.2.21 Monica: What are you being such a weenie for? So he has a Barbie, big deal. You used to dress up like a woman. (S3E4)

It is something to note that the characters who show indifference towards the gendered notion of toys are women. Perhaps this could be showing that women tend to be more generally accepting of the idea that boys being able to play with Barbie dolls, which shows yet another difference between the two genders at their level of acceptance. This closely relates to how boys and men have been taught to view their own masculinity, which will be further discussed in section 4.2 under Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell, Hegemonic Masculinities, Gender and Male Health, 2015).

Dating attitudes have also been indicated to have gendered differences. In S3E4, Chandler had commitment issues while dating Janice, his on-again-off-again girlfriend through the early seasons of the series. He showed fear when the relationship started to seem a little serious, leading Monica and Rachel to exclaim their frustration what they deemed to be a “guy thing” (Excerpt 4.2.2).

Chandler: No, it's like all of a sudden, we were this couple. And this alarm started going off in

my head: 'Run for your life! Get out of the building!'

Rachel: Men are unbelievable. Janice just thought that she was giving you chicken, not scary chicken.

Monica: What is it with you people?! I mean, the minute you start to feel something, you have to run away?

Chandler: I know, that, (looks at her fake chest, and loses his train of thought, temporarily) that's why I don't want to go tonight, I'm afraid I'm going to say something stupid.

Monica: Oh, you mean like that guy thing where you act mean and distant until you get us to break up with you.

Joey: Hey, you know about that?!

-Excerpt 4.2.2 (S3E4 0:07:17 – 0:07:45)



Image 4.2.15 Chandler: No, it's like all of a sudden, we were this couple. And this alarm started going off in my head: 'Run for your life! Get out of the building!' (S3E4)



Image 4.2.16 Rachel: Men are unbelievable. Janice just thought that she was giving you chicken, not scary chicken. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.17 Monica: What is it with you people (men)?! I mean, the minute you start to feel something, you have to run away? (S3E4)



Image 4.2.18 Monica: Oh, you mean like that guy thing where you act mean and distant until you get us to break up with you. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.19 Joey: Hey, you know about that?! (S3E4)

This shows clearly that there is a difference as to how women and men approach dating. Monica stated frustratedly that men have a “guy thing” that they do when emotions become a factor in relationships (Image 4.2.17). Chandler acknowledged her statement as a reply, which indicates that it is a common thing that men do when it comes to the realm of dating, being afraid of commitment. Monica’s frustration at the implication shows that instead of being afraid of emotional commitment, women generally want a relationship to have said element.

Studies in commitment levels between the genders has progressed as such that many researches have been done on the subject. Edwards and Johnson’s research on relational commitment and gender (1991) indicates that females showed significantly higher levels of commitment compared to their male counterparts in a study that includes one hundred and fifty-two subjects. In this *F.R.I.E.N.D.S*, sexual relations are also interpreted differently by the characters, and in many a context in the series, it is discussed to be an integral part of a relationship, regardless of the commitment levels to each other. In a study done by Darren W. Dahl, Jaideep Sengupta, Kathleen D. Vohs (2009), it states that women view sexual relations to be closely linked to relational commitment, while men seem to view sex as a means to an end. This supports Chandler and Joey’s statements acknowledging that men seem to run from emotional commitment in relationships (See 2.5.1).

An attitude that was also indicated is that men are generally “mean” and “distant” (S3E4, 0:07:40) while women are “needy” and “clingy” (S3E4, 0:13:36). Monica stated to Chandler that men have a habit of acting “mean” and “distant” (Image 4.2.18). Later in the same episode, Chandler and Janice was showing an opposite of what Monica had previously stated to be the usual behaviour among men

and women. Janice was shown to be the one that was afraid of commitment, and Chandler became the one that was afraid to lose his girlfriend. Things took an ironic turn in that situation. Perhaps it could be surmised that the situation was flipped to show how much a difference it would be when the men became the ones who wanted commitment, but the women became the one who did not. It is also comical how Rachel and Monica advised Chandler on how to handle the damage that he had done by showing that he wanted commitment (as how they had indicated that women would do) by telling him things to do that echoes similarly to what they themselves would have done if they were in the same situation. So, in this context, the situation is flipped where what Monica and Rachel thought women should be, became the man instead, and yet advice were given as if Chandler were the woman in the situation (Image 4.2.20). Contrastingly to what Monica had said about men earlier, Chandler stated that he became “needy” and “clingy” (Image 4.2.22, S3E4, 0:13:36), to show how a woman would have been had the situation not be flipped.



Image 4.2.20 Chandler: So, I finally catch up to her and she says this relationship is going too fast and we have to slow down. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.21 Monica and Rachel grimacing and sympathising with what Chandler was going through. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.22 Chandler: Then I got all needy and clingy. (S3E4)

In the context of Chandler and Janice's flip-from-the-usual situation, there are many discourses that has also been indicated to be gendered. Rachel and Monica advising Chandler as if they would to another woman in the same situation, told him that he should not be calling Janice so that he would not seem "too eager". This implies that normally when men do not want to be eager, they delay calling the girl. This is depicted in many other similar TV sitcoms such as *How I Met Your Mother* (Fryman, 2005 - 2014), who has a major viewership ratings with 12.9 million viewers upon the end of its nine-season run, and also a constantly watched series on Netflix, and *Sex and the City* (King, 1998). Chandler at a point commented that the ice-cream they gave him to taste horrible, which led to Monica stating that when one (indicating to herself, and perhaps implying about women in general) get "screwed over" (S3E4, 0:14:15) all the time, one has to switch to low-fat ice-cream. This implies a discourse that women are the ones generally getting made a fool of in dating.

Chandler followed Rachel and Monica's initial advice to be aloof while pretending to meet Janice by accident in a grocery store, of which he later messes up even further, which led to him running out of the store, relating the story to the two women once again. Monica and Rachel were consoling Chandler with the better ice-cream, indicating that his case was now deemed as unsavable, when Janice unexpectedly called back. Chandler asked for their advice once again on how to proceed, and Monica and Rachel both said that the situation was "unprecedented" (S3E4, 0:20:51), because had they (being women) messed things up the way Chandler had done with Janice, they stated that "a man would never call" (S3E4, 0:20:53).

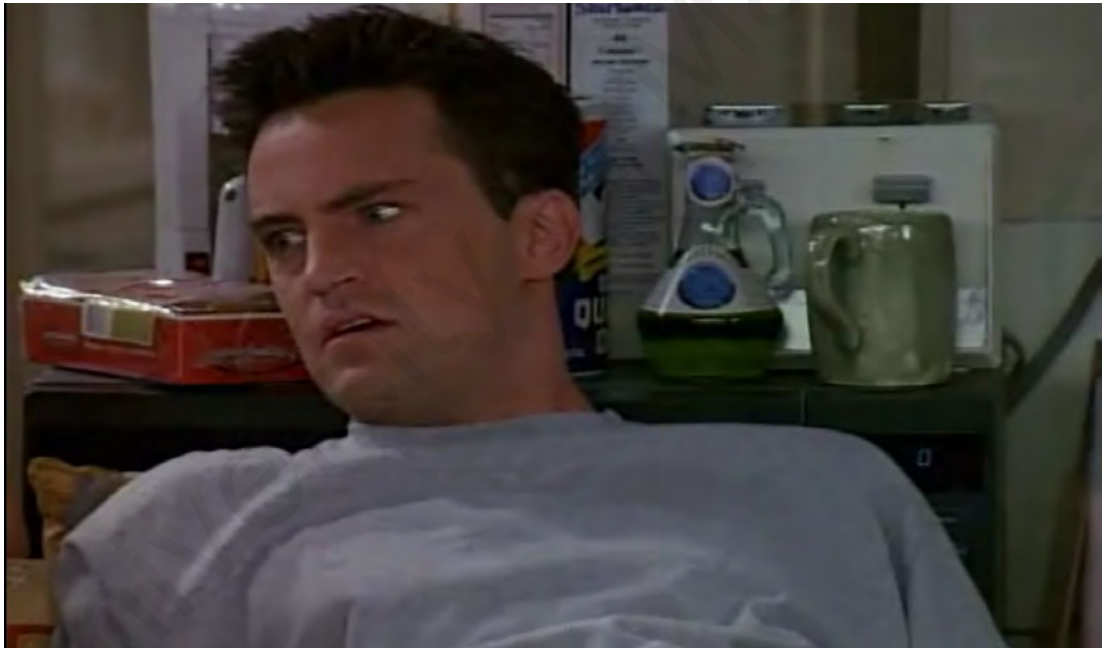


Image 4.2.23 Chandler: It's time for the good ice-cream now right? (S3E4)



Image 4.2.24 Monica: It's time. (S3E4)

University of



Image 4.2.25 Janice calls unexpectedly. (S3E4)



Image 4.2.26 Chandler: (answering phone) Hello. Hi, Janice! Can you hold on for a second? Okay. (to Monica and Rachel) Okay, what do I do? (S3E4)



Image 4.2.27 Rachel: Shhh...I don't know what to do, this is totally unprecedented.

Monica: If-if-if we ever did what you did a man would never call. (S3E4)

This shows that there is a difference in the way the different genders were thought to behave when it comes to treating people they want to date. In a paper written by Veronica Hefner titled *From Love at First Sight to Soul Mate: The Influence of Romantic Ideals in Popular Films on Young People's Beliefs about Relationships* (2013), society has the tendency to take and emulate romantic ideals and challenges that they see on romantic comedies (such as that of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*) into their lives. As such, it is possible to infer that the general male and female would also be taking the scene where Monica and Rachel gave advice to Chandler (from a woman's point of view) to be how it is supposed to be done.

According to Rachel Greenwald (2010), a qualitative interview study was done on 1000 men on their point of view on the world of dating. It states that it is a

common occurrence to have men not call back to the women that they previously had interest in. The study delves into the reasoning and the specific elements that has caused them to not call back, which shows that what was happening with Chandler and Janice (albeit in a flipped situation, as supported with Monica and Rachel's statements) does represent to a very close degree what society seems to deem as the norm even until today. However, when looked upon in a different point of view, the fact that Chandler and Janice's situation was done in contrary to what Monica and Rachel had implied through the whole episode was perhaps to show that the opposite can also be the case, challenging the notion that a specific gender is associated with certain behaviours in dating.

Next, in Season 9 Episode 6, *The One with the Male Nanny* (S9E6) (Bright, 2002), Ross and Rachel were in the midst of hiring a nanny for their new-born daughter, Emma. After a series of potential nanny candidates that were deemed unsuitable, came a male candidate named Sandy, who has a Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education, and a 3-year experience working with a previous family (Image 4.2.28).



Image 4.2.28 Sandy the nanny (S9E6)

After introductions, Sandy showed himself to be a sensitive soul, one of the instances being that he showed Rachel and Ross how he understood the pain of a parent having to leave the child at home while going to work. Ross, however, immediately showed hostility after listening to Sandy's heartfelt explanation (Image 4.2.29).



Image 4.2.29 Ross' look of disbelief at Sandy's behaviour. (S9E6)

Ross expressed many opinions in this episode, but one of the biggest one with regards to the gender differences discourse was that he stated that being a nanny was not a job for men. After Sandy left post-interview, Ross stated to Rachel, “What kind of job is that for a man? A nanny?”, which clearly shows his prejudice of how men should not be taking on roles as the sensitive caretaker of children, which is also an irony as Ross was the father to Emma, which in theory should make him shoulder at least half the responsibility of caring for his daughter. Ross also asked if Sandy was “gay” (S9E6, 0:10:26), and that he had to “be at least bi” (S9E6, 0:13:25) – bi referring to the term bisexual, insinuating that he feels that only men with the inclination to date men – either homosexuals or bisexuals – could be suitable for a nannying job, which leads to the inference that masculine men should not be nannies, while feminine men or women in general are suitable for the job description. He equated men wanting to be nannies to women wanting to be “kings”, which Rachel immediately challenged, showing that she disagrees with his opinion of what a man should and could be.

Later in the same episode, Ross shows further evidence on how different he thought masculine men should be. He came back from work to find Sandy and Rachel crying from the former having told her the whole story of how he proposed to his fiancée, Delia, which Rachel found to be beautiful and touching (Image 4.2.30).



Image 4.2.30 Ross coming home seeing Rachel and Sandy in a crying session. (S9E6)

Upon hearing the reason of why he found the mother to his child and the new nanny they just hired crying on the couch, Ross showed further hostility and got Rachel to talk to him in the kitchen privately. Ross went on to either state or insinuate that he thought that Sandy was too feminine. One example was Ross stating that he (Sandy) has cried more in their house than Ross himself had ever done, which shows that Ross thought that crying is only for women, not for men, or what he views to be masculine men (Image 4.2.31).



Image 4.2.31 Ross complained about Sandy to Rachel. (S9E6)

As they were in the kitchen, Ross reached for some madeleines that were on the counter and commented that they were “amazing” (S9E6, 0:18:28). Rachel explained that Sandy made them during the day, and Ross immediately blanched and stated that he thinks that men should not be making “delicate French cookies” (S9E6, 0:18:42), and if they do make cookies it should be “butch manly cookies with chunks” (S9E6, 0:18:43; Image 4.2.32).



Image 4.2.32 Ross: This...this is exactly what I'm talking about. (S9E6)

This shows that there is a notion of gender difference of when it comes to how men were supposed to behave to show masculinity, comparable to instances found in S6E8 where Chandler berated Joey for similar issues. Ross stated that he feels that he himself is a sensitive guy (insinuated to be something that he is mildly proud of, also insinuated to be because girls find sensitivity in guys to be endearing and a plus point), but that Sandy was “too sensitive”, showing that men were allowed to be sensitive, but not the sort where a man feels his emotions too much too often. As if to prove Ross’ point, when Rachel challenges Ross asking what he meant by “too sensitive”, the scene breaks to Sandy playing *Greensleeves* on the recorder as a lullaby for Emma (Image 4.2.33), which Rachel shows appreciation for, but Ross was shown to find the act revolting (Image 4.2.34).



Image 4.2.33 Sandy playing the recorder to Emma. (S9E6)



Image 4.2.34 Rachel and Ross looked on, the former with appreciation the latter with annoyance. (S9E6)

Ross heads to Monica's apartment later to tell her about their new hire. Monica showed that she was supportive of the new nanny and showed no reaction to

the fact that he was a man, which indicates that she too did not share Ross' notion that men should not be nannies (Image 4.2.35).



Image 4.2.35 Monica saying that she thinks it's great that they have a new male nanny. (S9E6)

Ross then stated to her how Sandy “plays the recorder”, “recites poetry” and “makes madeleines” (S9E6, 0:20:45), which evidenced how he felt that every one of the stated activities were not meant for a man to do, indicating the discourse. Joey came into the apartment too and Ross immediately turned to him, hoping that he could get Joey to agree, to which Joey did, stating how he thought a man being a nanny was “weird”, comparing it to a woman who wants to be a “penis model” (which earned him an eyeroll from Monica who clearly thought that it was a nonsensical comparison) (Image 4.2.36). It shows that Joey, much like Ross, initially thought that men should not be holding feminine jobs such as being nanny. Chandler later comes back to the apartment, and Ross turns to Chandler explaining the same issue, of which Chandler

joked how though he is okay with a man being a “man-ny” (S9E6, 0:22:46; Image 4.2.37)) (a pun on the word male nanny), but he drew the line at being a “male wet-nurse” (S9E6, 0:23:00), which brings into the issue of how some careers are dictated by genders. Examples would be, as Chandler and Ross have stated, nannies, teachers, engineers, and a few other professions.



Image 4.2.36 Joey: (looks surprised) Really...? Guys do that...? That's... weird... (S9E6)



Image 4.2.37 Chandler: You got a man who's a nanny...? You got a manny...? (S9E6)

In current society, there are many careers that have a gendered connotation to its job description. Nursing positions, for an instance, were always thought to be held by women because it is a common stereotype that women were always thought to be more nurturing and compassionate (Christov-Moore, et al., 2014). But recently, there has been more and more countries offering scholarships to men who are interested in doing nursing, because contrary to what society seem to believe, nursing is not only about emotionally caring for a patient. Nursing includes a series of physically taxing job descriptions such as moving unconscious patients and dealing with violence from patients, to mention a few, which would benefit from having male nurses around on duty, not ignoring the fact that men are have been found to be able to show compassion and be as nurturing as women. Some examples of organisations offering scholarships for male nursing in the world are such as the American Association for Men in Nursing (n.d.), the Army Nurse Corps Association (offering

scholarships for military men who wants to be nurses) (2020), and the Emergency Nurses Association (2020).

Physically speaking, men are unable to be wet-nurses, as it would require a lactating breast, which basically limits it to be a woman's job. But wet nursing aside, society has created many gendered connotations to certain careers, limiting one gender or the other from participating in such jobs. Another example would be in education where more females could be found as compared to males, for similar reasons as that of nursing, women being naturally more nurturing and compassionate. This is a common occurrence in most societies where even parents are more comfortable when a female teacher is teaching their children, thinking that male teachers would increase the risk of their children being mishandled. A study that was done on male elementary teachers focusing on their experiences teaching in a primary level show that male teachers gets more scrutiny as compared to their female counterparts when they come into contact with children (Sargent, 2000). They also experience issues when it comes to having to define the term of being a "male role model" with regards to the children they teach. Comparatively, a research done by Andrea Meltzer and James McNulty (2011) states that male professors who were found to be nurturing were given better evaluations as compared to female professors who were also nurturing. This goes in line with Ross' statement emphasising that he is sensitive (even though he thought that Sandy was being "too sensitive"), being a college professor at the point of speaking, because he clearly knew that it was a plus point for male teachers who were also seen to be nurturing.

In another scene, Sandy takes out educational puppets to entertain Emma (Image 4.2.38), and Ross challenged him by asking how the puppets would be useful

to a two-month old baby (Image 4.2.39). Sandy explained that according to studies he read about, the colours and movement were good for the baby's brain development, while the whimsical factor of the puppets were mainly for the adults, which only made Ross annoyed further. This shows that he felt that puppets were too an issue when it comes to being held by a man.



Image 4.2.38 Sandy: Well, please welcome... The Snufflebumps... Who wants to be Mr. Wigglemunch and who's gonna be the Grumpus? (S9E6)



Image 4.2.39 Ross: Okay, okay... How exactly is a two-month old supposed to appreciate puppets? (S9E6)

At this point in the episode, Joey had already met Sandy before Ross came home from work, and upon coming back home, Ross found Sandy teaching Joey how to play *Hot Cross Buns* and *Three Blind Mice* on the recorder (Image 4.2.40). When Joey excitedly wanted to show Ross what he learned that day, Ross snapped at him, ruining the mood (Image 4.2.41). This evidences how Ross felt that playing the recorder to children's songs were also not what a masculine man should do, and thus making it for the feminine man and women only, dictating a gender differences discourse.



Image 4.2.40 [Scene: Ross walks in the hallway to his apartment and stops in front of his own door. Now he hears two recorders playing a song. When he enters, Sandy and Joey are playing the recorder and Rachel listens.] (S9E6)



Image 4.2.41 Ross: (looks angrily at Joey and points at him) I swear to God...! (Joey is in shock) (S9E6)

Contrastingly, when Ross showed his annoyance at Sandy explaining about the puppets to him, Joey in turn got annoyed at Ross for being so hostile, and immediately volunteered to take on the role of Mr. Wigglemunch, one of the puppets, and showed a face to Ross, showing that he did not like how Ross was treating his

new friend (Image 4.2.42-4.2.44). This evidences how Joey did not actually have a pre-determined discourse in his thoughts that a man should not be as sensitive and nurturing as Sandy, though he had earlier stated otherwise, probably an evidence of society's influence on how a man should think that way. This also goes in line with Joey's disposition from S6E8 on how he had no issues with liking femininely gendered activities.



Image 4.2.42 Joey sees Ross' annoyed expression. (S9E6)



Image 4.2.43 Joey: I wanna be Mr. Wigglemunch. (S9E6)



Image 4.2.44 Joey makes a "there" nod to Ross. (S9E6)

4.2.1 Summary

As a conclusion for section 4.2, it is clear that Chandler and Ross had shown many instances that produced, drew on, or recognised the Gender Differences discourse, i.e. dictating that men cannot be nannies, boys cannot be playing with Barbie dolls, stating that other men cannot like feminine items, and that craft items are only for women. The women in general showed lesser recognition of the discourse, though with some exceptions, i.e. being okay with boys playing with dolls, accepting that men can be nannies, and accepting that men can also enjoy crafting. Joey falls in the middle, where he drew on some instances, such as being repelled by commitment, and initially thinking that men being nannies were weird; and rejects the discourse in other instances, i.e. showing support to Sandy being a nanny, as well as liking activities and things that have been associated with the female gender.

It is also found that the instances of the gender differences discourse both challenge and support the stereotypes that currently exists, but for the most part support what is currently happening in the world.

4.3 Hegemonic Masculinity Discourse

It is important to note that under the field of study, the term is known as harmful masculinity (American Psychological Association, APA, 2018) under the field of psychology and it is known under the fields of linguistics and gender studies as hegemonic masculinity (Connell, *Hegemonic Masculinities, Gender and Male Health*, 2015). While both the terms are lexically different, they carry the same essence of a conservatively prescribed way of enacting masculinity (refer to Section 2.5).



Image 4.3.1 Joey looking confused when Chandler starts asking him to “defend” himself. (S6E8)

Throughout the show, Joey is usually depicted to be a man of low intelligence with various scenes constantly emphasising that (Image 4.3.1). Chandler had insisted that Joey must “defend” himself (S6E8, 0:00:06 – 0:01:15; Image 4.3.2), meaning that Joey must defend his sense of masculinity.

Chandler: Yes, talk to her. Be a man.

Joey: I’m a man.

Chandler: Defend yourself.

- (Excerpt 4.3.1: S6 E8, 0:01:10 – 0:01:14)



Image 4.3.2 Chandler: “Defend yourself” (S6E8)

It can be perhaps viewed as an irony that Joey, the one that has been portrayed as the “dumb friend” (Koerner, 2017), prior to Chandler’s statements, did not see an issue with Janine decorating the apartment to her liking (S6E8, 0:00:40) and he did not have the slightest thought that his own sense of masculinity was at all challenged (Image 4.3.1). Chandler, on the other hand, showed a fear of his sense of masculinity disappearing when it came to the issue of his old room in Joey’s apartment (Image 4.3.3).



Image 4.3.3 Chandler looking afraid / worried as he talks to Joey about defending his place as a man in the apartment. (S6E8)

Chandler continuedly showed signs of hemogenic masculinity (Connell, Hegemonic Masculinities, Gender and Male Health, 2015) through the episode, admitting later in the same episode that he had issues with doing more feminine chores through the day, telling Monica that he needed to the “man thing” for him to feel better again (S6E8, 0:11:40 – 0:12:22), implying that he had been too feminine for his own comfort, and that he needed to reassure his own sense of masculinity to feel better.

Chandler: I feel like I’ve really gotten in touch with my feminine side enough today. You know. In fact I think we’re two sachets away from becoming a lesbian couple.

Monica: You know what? This has been kind of a girlie day. You’re right, I’m sorry.

Chandler: Nah, Nah, it’s okay. I feel like I need to be in guy place. You know, do kind of like a man thing.

- (Excerpt 4.3.2, S6E8 - 0:11:40 – 0:12:22)



**Image 4.3.4 Chandler: “We’re two sachets away from being a lesbian couple”.
(S6E8)**



**Image 4.3.5 Chandler: “I feel like I need to be in a guy place. You know, do
kind of like a man thing.” (S6E8)**

Chandler expressed the notion that if a man does too many “feminine” activities, it decreases his value as a man, with his stating that he “needs” (excerpt 4.3.2) to be in a “guy place” (excerpt 4.3.2), which is what stemmed the idea of a hegemonic masculinity. He also stated the phrase “two sachets away from being a lesbian couple” (S6E8, 0:11:52; Image 4.3.4), indicating his thought process that making too many craft items will make him a woman, which degraded his own sense of value, showing that he felt that being a woman is lesser than being a man. Later in the scene, Chandler had gotten visibly shocked (image 4.3.6) when Monica revealed to him that when girls hang out, they “don’t have pillow fights” in their “underwear” (S6E8, 0:12:14 – 0:12:17), which showed that it is also a stereotype that hegemonic males have about women.



Image 4.3.6 Chandler visibly shocked when Monica says girls do not have pillow fights in their underwear. (S6E8)

This shows a trend that is also happening on social media, where the idea of hegemonic or harmful masculinity is taking over, especially in the light of change

in masculine culture. According to Wall and Kristjanson (as cited in APA, 2018), the ideal form of the social construct that is masculinism is formed around the aspects of heterosexuality, lack of sensitivity when it comes to emotions, being self-sufficient, being tough as a general demeanour and stoicism. Chandler's frustrations when it came to watching Joey enjoy arts and crafts (S6E8, 0:12:28 – 0:12:36; Images 4.3.7, 4.3.8, 4.3.9), as well as upon watching Ross using makeup (to cover his over-whitened teeth)(Images 4.3.10, 4.3.11), depicted a typical notion of a man needing to "be a man" before he can be dignified in his actions.

Women are also seen to support the discourse by accepting what was generally thought to be acceptable behaviour in hegemonic males, and this can be seen in Monica apologising for getting Chandler to do household chores that the latter had stated to be getting him too "in touch with his feminine side" (Excerpt 4.3.2). Her apology showed that women too allow the behaviour to be a norm by encouraging the school of thought that men should not be doing too many activities that were feminine, acknowledging that activities such as making potpourri with old pantyhose as "girlie", solidifying Chandler's justification that he needed to be in a "guy place" (Excerpt 4.3.2, Image 4.3.5). It showed that not only males were expected to maintain their masculinity by doing "guy" things among people of their own gender, the same expectations were placed on them by the female gender. It indicated that the discourse of hegemonic masculinity was embedded into the norm of society at the time of showing, and along with the fact that the TV show remains to be a popular choice of viewing even in current societies, it does dictate how perhaps the current generation might view hegemonic behaviour to be a norm still in this supposedly progressive era of acceptance.



Image 4.3.7 Chandler walking into Joey's apartment (S6E8)



Image 4.3.8 Joey and Janine knitting potholders (circled) (S6E8)



Image 4.3.9 Chandler: No thanks, Josephine. (S6E8, 0:12:36)



Image 4.3.10 Chandler entering Ross' apartment to see the latter using make up to hide his overly whitened teeth. (S6E8)



Image 4.3.11 Chandler: “Oh my God, where are all the men?!” (S6E8)

Chandler’s exclamation of “where are all the men?” (S6E8, 0:12:48; Image 4.3.11) again showed his disbelief that his male friends were all doing activities he associated with women only – Joey and his crafts, Ross and his makeup. His insult to Joey of sarcastically saying “no thanks Josephine” (S6E8, 0:12:36, Image 4.3.9) showed that his view of Joey had diminished, mocking the fact that Joey was knitting potholders – another craft activity – by calling him the female counterpart of his complete first name, Joseph, which was Josephine. This showed another indication where Chandler used a female associated term to insult, which then showed his opinion of where women stood as compared to men. Chandler’s “where are all the men?” was used to insult Ross indirectly, showing that he saw that there was no man in the room (apart from himself) as Ross was using makeup, an activity Chandler associated with being a woman, or being feminine, a trait Chandler evidently thought a man should not have.

Further in the episode, Chandler again went into Joey's apartment, intending to admonish Joey for his recent feminine actions. Chandler bumped into Joey teaching Monica how to arrange flowers in a pot (Image 4.3.12, 1-2).

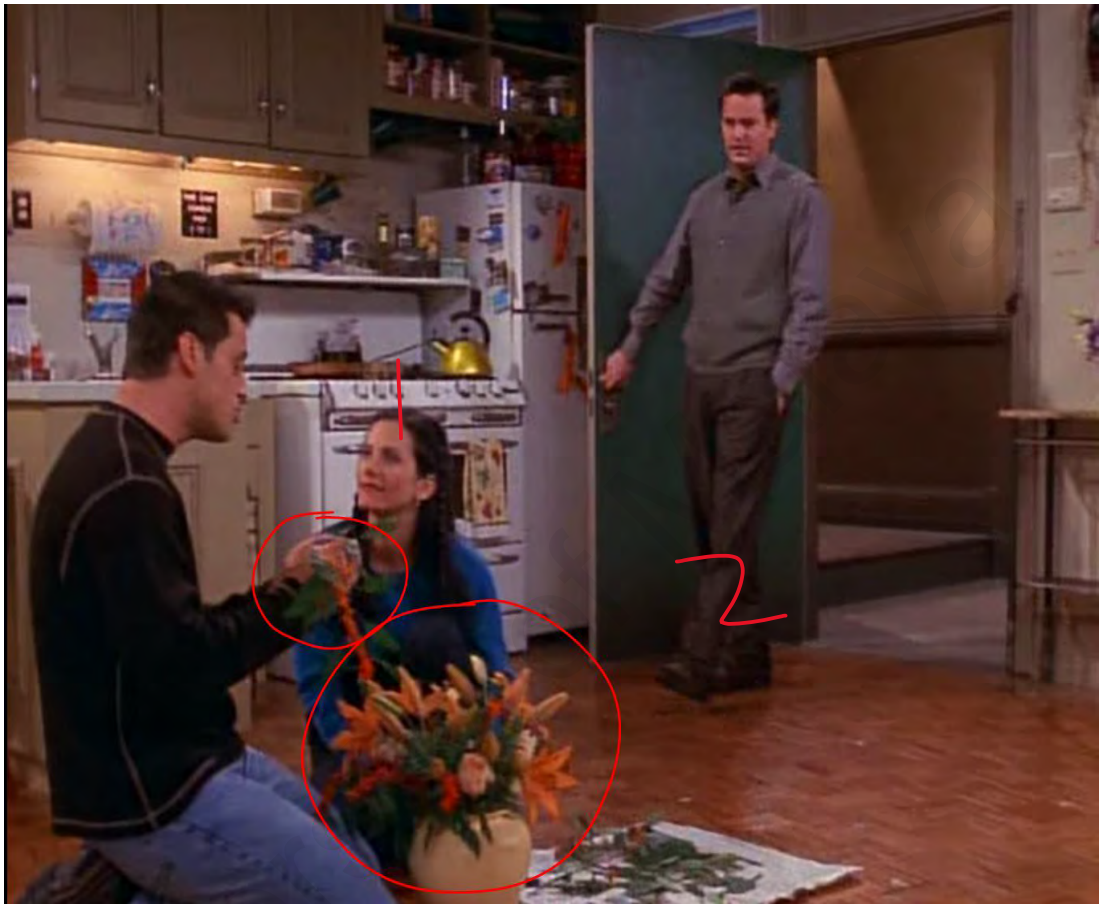


Image 4.3.12 Chandler walking in to see Joey teaching Monica about flower arrangement (circled). (S6E8)



Image 4.3.13 Chandler: I need to talk to the girl with the flowers. (S6E8)

Chandler then asked Monica if he could “talk to the girl with the flowers” (S6E8, 0:15:33), with a choked-up tone, indicating sarcastic insult using the term “girl” and “flowers”, again at Joey, showing again the notion that he associated being feminine as a downgrade from being masculine as a man. A little later Joey stated to Monica that he loved birds, and Chandler almost immediately snapped after he shut the door with “what is the matter with you?” (S6E8, 0:15:48; Image 4.3.14), continually showing his opinion that for a man to act feminine would indicate that there was something wrong with said man. This relates to the discourse of Gender Differences in Section 4.2, where the notion of birds and flowers are indicated to be aspects related only to the female gender (according to Chandler).



Image 4.3.14 Chandler: What is the matter with you? (S6E8)

Chandler: You're turning into a woman.

Joey: No, I'm not. (whiny tone) Why would you say that? That's just mean.

...

Joey: It's not what you said. It's the way you said it....

(shocked face) Oh My God, I'm a woman!!!

- (Excerpt 4.3.3: S6E8, 0:15:47 – 0:16:33)



Image 4.3.15 Chandler: You got dead flowers! (S6E8, 0:15:55)



Image 4.3.16 Chandler: You got a picture of a baby dressed like flowers! (S6E8, 0:15:56)

Chandler was seen to splutter and frustrate once again over the things found in Joey's apartment, from the potpourri, to the painting of a baby dressed in flowers. It was evident that Chandler found himself unable to accept that Joey was enjoying feminine activities, projecting his own opinion – which was that men should not be doing feminine activities to prevent them from being women – on to Joey, another indication representing hegemonic masculinity. Further in the scene, Joey, being influenced by Chandler, and most probably with the intention of showing a difference between the demeanour of the different genders, started whining about why Chandler would say that he was a woman, as it was “mean” (excerpt 4.3.3). This showed that the general society at the time already had the notion that a man to be called a woman was considered an insult. At the end, Joey even said in shock “Oh my God, I’m a woman!”, solidifying the stereotype (Image 4.3.17).

The deliberate showing of Joey's change of demeanour from his usual acceptance of everything to showing of being offended by Chandler's words showed perhaps a mocking of how different society thinks women should be as compared to men, ridiculing how women was thought to generally act, by being fussy without a legitimate reason, and whining with a high pitched vocal tone.



Image 4.3.17 Joey: Oh my God, I'm a woman! (S6E8)

Chandler had been portrayed through the whole series to seem to have grown up in a rather unconventional family, with a promiscuous mother, and a father who turned out to be a transgender who was then having a relationship with their house pool boy (Schwimmer, 1994-2003). Chandler's struggles with maintaining his sense of masculinity led back to his familial background, where his own father did not follow the "ideal" notion of what the patriarchal sense of masculinity implies (Chandler's father is a transgender woman) (Schwimmer, 1994-2003). Chandler was bullied a lot while growing up, added with the fact that he was named "Chandler" (joked through the series as being a girl's name), and with a middle name of "Muriel" (depicted in the series to be a typical elderly female name).

These situations are accurate representations of the hegemonic masculinity discourse that is prevalent still in society, where bullying happens to boys because

they do not follow the typical notion of being masculine. A notable recent example would be a case where a nine-year-old boy was beaten up, “homophobically abused” (Whitehead, 2019) and bullied for his love of musical theatre, a hobby that Chandler Bing as a character might have also found too feminine for his taste. The child, named Charlie, had expressed sadness stating that it showed what society thought that a boy like him should not be doing (Whitehead, 2019). A research had also been done to observe the life of a Vietnamese boy to determine that his school bullying cases were gendered (Horton, 2018). Additionally, an 11-year-old boy named Michael Morone was also found to be bullied in his school for being a fan of the widely known show *My Little Pony*, a show many view to be for girls only (Le Coz, 2014). The bullying led to Morone’s attempt at suicide, which had resulted in his current vegetative state. This portrayal of masculinity, as how Chandler presented it, showed how society believed how men should be behaving: being appalled at other men who loves what they personally feel to be “only-women” items, such as makeup and craft hobbies.

In Connell’s book “*Masculinities*” (2005), a subject named “Eel” and “Gary” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 105) in Connell’s study stated that they had issues with homosexual men. Eel, whose brother was also a homosexual, was forced to act like what was accepted as the heterosexual behaviour when he was around Eel and his friends and went back to his “normal” behaviour when they were not around, all to avoid getting hassled, and having neither Eel nor their mum getting hassled. Eel had also stated that he and his friends favoured going to a street where homosexual men were known to be in general to heckle them. This showed a conditioned school of thought that for men to be masculine, they had to show that they react negatively to anything that was deemed to be lesser than masculine at the point of time, an example

was to be sexually orientated towards men instead of women, closely relating this to compulsory heterosexuality, which will be discussed further in this paper under 4.4.

In S3E4, as mentioned in section 4.2, Ross showed a considerably unhealthy amount of negative reaction when it came to his son Ben playing with a Barbie doll. Upon revealing to Ross that Ben saw the Barbie as a security blanket, Ross remained shortly in a state of disbelief, which showed how much of importance he viewed growing up to be a masculine man is for a boy. Ross indicated his way of thought that went along the line of having feminine toys will lessen the value of masculinity in a man, which led to Ross' efforts of trying to persuade Ben to go back to what he felt to be more masculine toys such as action figures and monster trucks. He also suggested a dinosaur soldier as a substitute for the Barbie doll, which showed a slight case of irony, as being a palaeontologist – which is a person who is an expert in the field of fossil animals and plants, especially, in Ross' context, dinosaurs – had made Ross the butt of a lot of jokes along the 10 seasons of this TV series, with all the main characters having made fun of how boring his job and interest was at least once every season. But evidently, even after being the source of many a humoured jab, Ross still felt that it was a better substitute toy than a Barbie doll, which clearly showed his priorities of which how men in that time viewed maintaining one's masculinity.

In an article written by Endendjik, et. al. (2014), it showed that fathers had shown to be more particular when it comes to mentioning of gender stereotypes in reading of picture books as compared to when mothers did it with their children. Mothers used more positive comments when it came to the content of the books, as compared to the fathers who reiterated and solidified the gender stereotypes found. This was evident in Ben's case as a child. His mothers (both his birth mother and

stepmother) showed a positive reaction to his wanting to hold on to a Barbie doll when they were at the store buying toys. This showed that both Susan and Carol were able to accept quickly with no resistance to boys wanting to play with more feminine toys. Of course, noting that Susan and Carol's relationship challenged the typical notion of a heterosexual pair, their acceptance could also been seen as a consequential result of that particular situation, where they themselves did not follow the norm, so they would not be bothered should anyone else, let alone their son, not follow the ways of typical society.

In Ross' case however, it showed that he had a more fragile sense of his own masculinity, that seemed to be challenged by an extension of himself, which was his son. Not only did Ross not accept Ben having the Barbie doll, he evidently thought that his son's against-the-norm choice of toy was the result of having two homosexual women raise him, and this was challenged by Susan when she asked Ross if he thought it was only a problem because Ben was being raised by two mothers (Image 4.3.18). Ross then seem to have realised what he unintentionally revealed to his ex-wife and her current partner that he reeled himself in much later by pretending to be okay with the whole situation with a "You know what it's fine. If you're okay with the Barbie thing, so am I" (S3E4, Image 4.3.19, 0:05:35), only to start with the conditioning of Ben's choices when the two women left the apartment.



Image 4.3.18 Carol: This doesn't have anything to do with the fact that he is being raised by two women, does it? (S3E4)



Image 4.3.19 Ross: You know what it's fine. If you're okay with the *Barbie* thing, so am I. (S3E4)

Much later in the same episode (S3E4), referencing to the point where Monica revealed that Ross dressed up as a woman when he was a child (Section 4.1, Image 4.3.21), Monica enjoyed telling him the items he wore while dressing up (Image 4.3.3). Ross, who could not remember the event initially attempted to protest its existence (Image 4.3.20 – 4.3.21). It was only until Monica reminded him the name that he had his family call him back then – “Bea”, which was a name with feminine notions as per the context of the scene (Image 4.3.22) – that Ross’ face expression changed upon remembering (Image 4.3.23), showing his state of being appalled at himself for even having that experience as a child.



Image 4.3.20 Ross denying ever having tried on women’s clothes while Carol and Susan looked on. (S3E4)



Image 4.3.21 Ross: Okay, you are totally making this up. (S3E4)



Image 4.3.22 Monica: How can you not remember? You made us call you...Bea. (S3E4)



Image 4.3.23 Ross: (remembering) Oh God. (S3E4)

Ross' expression (Image 4.3.23) dictated that he felt embarrassed at the event. Monica, Carol and Susan moved to laugh at the event, not from the fact that a boy dressed up in women's clothes was funny, but because Ross had insisted on his own opinions that boys should not be playing with Barbie dolls (or basically being a woman), and then to have it known that he himself indulged in similar activities when he was a child, they laughed. But Ross evidently felt that his value as a man has been lessened because of the event as he moved to hide in the bathroom when Monica mentioned that he had apparently invented a song to go with his dressing-up activities.

Monica: Wasn't there a little song?

Carol: Oh please God, let there be a song.

Ross: There was no song. (to Monica) There was no song!

Monica: (singing) *'I am Bea.'*

Ross: Okay.

Monica: *'I drink tea.'*

Ross: Okay, that's, that's

enough. (retreats to the bathroom)

Monica: '....*Won't you, won't you, won't you....*'

Ross: (coming out of the bathroom) Won't you dance around with me.

Monica: A-ha!!! (they all start laughing, as Ross hides in the bathroom)

-Excerpt 4.3.4 (S3E4, 0:22:57 – 0:23:20)



Image 4.3.24 Monica: Wasn't there a little song? (S3E4)



Image 4.3.25 Carol: Oh please God, let there be a song. (S3E4)



Image 4.3.26 Monica (Starts singing the song) (S3E4)



Image 4.3.27 Ross starts running into the bathroom to hide. (S3E4)



Image 4.3.28 Ross comes out of the bathroom to finish the song for Monica when she couldn't remember the last line of his song. (S3E4)

It did seem humorous when things seemed to go the opposite of what Ross had expected to happen (or remember, for this context), but this was what boys and men generally go through in terms of expecting to live up to their standards of masculinity. As evidenced in Connell's study (2005), boys were taught and expected to end up in ways that only served to enhance their sense of masculinity, just so they would be able to live a life with no hassling from their peers, some to the point of not knowing why they act a certain way when asked. When found to be acting a way less than ideal in the sense of masculinity, they are bullied, harassed, and vilified to the point of harming their self-worth and self-esteem. In this particular context, even though Monica, Carol, and Susan had no issues with boys being feminine, and had only laughed because it was watching tables turn for Ross, it would have served to only support the discourse of hegemonic masculinity, as Ross would have taken it as he was being made fun of because he had dressed himself in women's clothes. To add to the humour, the episode had even shown an end credits scene where Ross as a child was depicted in the exact scene of Monica's description (with items referenced in section 4.2), singing the song Monica imitated (Image 4.3.29).



Image 4.3.29 Ross as a child in his mother's clothing, wearing the "big hat", and "pearls", and pouring tea. (S3E4)

Joey, on the other hand, showed almost the opposite of what Chandler and Ross were portraying. For a few moments in S6E8, in some scenes, Joey had shown that he was easily influenced by how Chandler had stated how the former should have acted, i.e. "this is not Joey" (S6E8, 0:16:01). But for most of the episode, Joey had shown that even as a man who deemed himself to be sufficiently masculine – Joey had been portrayed generally as the "dumb" friend who always gets the girl, with notable mentions on his sexual prowess instating his status as a "man's man" – he had no issues delving into what Chandler had declared to be a "girl thing" (S6E8, 0:00:38). He was seen to enjoy activities such as knitting potholders, arranging flowers – and while even capable of giving Monica tips to better her arrangement skills (S6E8, 0:15:19 – 0:15:26) – and sniffing potpourri with his housemate Janine (S6E8, 0:06:36).

At the end of the episode, Joey tried to get Janine to keep the apartment living room “a guy place” (S6E8, 0:21:31; Image 4.3.30), having been influenced by Chandler.



Image 4.3.30 Joey: The living room has to remain a guy...place. (S6E8, 0:21:28 – 0:21:32)

However, his innate thoughts were revealed when he seemed to not be able to resist getting her to place some of the stuff in his room, like the painting of the baby (Image 4.3.31) and of the watering can (Image 4.3.32), along with a couple of the “little tiny boxes” (Image 4.3.33).



Image 4.3.31 Joey: You could, uh, put the picture of the famous baby in my room. I mean, if you want to. (S6E8, 0:21:50)



Image 4.3.32 Joey: And, uhh, maybe the watering can there. (S6E8, 0:21:57)



Image 4.3.33 Joey: And a couple of these little tiny boxes. (S6E8, 0:22:01)

Joey agrees in the end when Janine asks indulgently if he wanted all the things to be in his room instead (S6E8, 0:21:20 – 0:22:09; Images 4.3.34, 4.3.35).

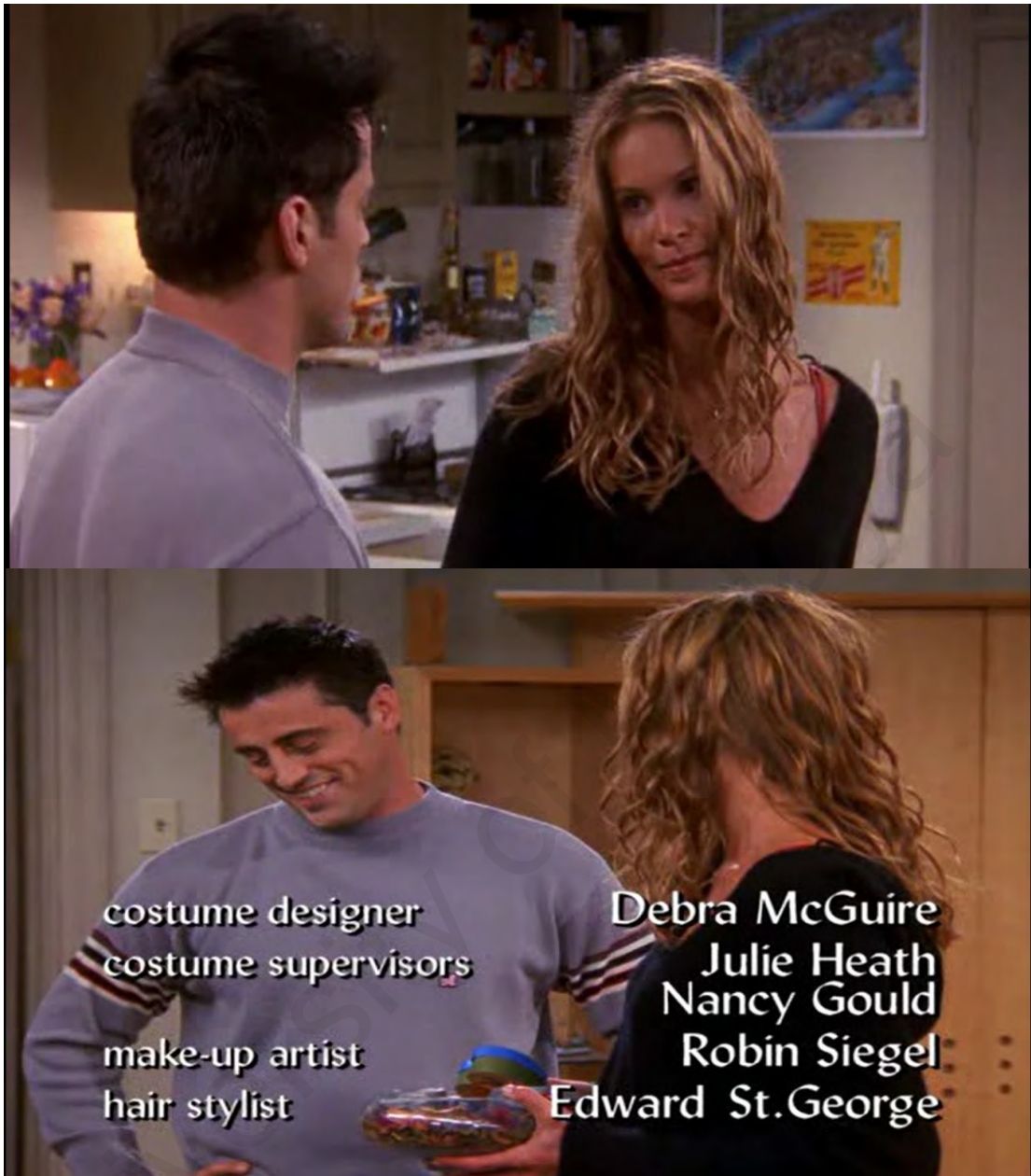


Image 4.3.34; Image 4.3.35 Janine: Do you want me to put it all in your room; Joey: Okay. (S6E8)

Joey's acceptance of feminine activities, not seeing them as a threat to his masculinity, depicted where the current society is aiming to head towards, a more accepting society as a hold, especially on men. With the case of the nine-year-old Charlie being bullied, famous West End actors and actresses rallied on the social media, Twitter, to show their support for Charlie and his passion, reminding everyone that just because a man happened to like something that is generally deemed to be feminine, it does not mean that it is wrong. This gradual change of views is showing

that perhaps the patriarchal ideal of masculinity is moving towards a more accepting, and a more equal idea of how things are “supposed to be” done.

According to Connell (2005), their subjects of study also showed a gradual sense of Alfred Adler’s theory that was termed as “masculine protest” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 109), where in certain cases, a few men were able to show that they were more comfortable with certain notions that challenged the stereotypical idea of gender, i.e. having their wives get better jobs while the husbands took care of the home and kids (Jack Harley, a man with history of crime and violence (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 109)) and not feel any unease about not enjoying something that was deemed to make the individual more masculine, i.e. sports (Mal Walton states that he does not care for sport, calling it “boring” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 111)). Connell stated that this idea of masculine protest had no straight path of development, but it was within observance of the stereotypical view of being male, as well as with respect to women, having gender equality views on the different sexes as well as showing affection towards children, and also an acceptance on what was generally deemed to be feminine by society when done or preferred by men. Although evidently there are still many cases of hegemonic masculinity that is still occurring everywhere, along with other stereotypes that comes with society, it is still good to note that even in the 90’s when this show was created, the characters were still portrayed with a small element of countering the typical idea of a man having to maintain a certain sense of masculinity, in this context, Joey. And this leads to the inference that perhaps in the twenty-first century that is the next decade, society is moving to be slightly more accepting and encouraging of men and not putting them up to upholding what are evidently outdated notion what makes a man a man.

In S5E13 (Mancuso, 1999), Joey could also be seen to be very accepting of the idea that he looked good with the shoulder bag that Rachel recommended. Joey was going to audition for a role of a “cool, suave” (S5E13, 0:02:43) character that was a “real clothes-horse” (S5E13, 0:02:46), and he got himself a top-hat in hopes of standing out during the audition, thinking that the people going to the audition was going to be wearing “ultra-hip, high-fashion stuff” (S5E13, 0:02:50, Image 4.3.35).



Image 4.3.35 Joey explaining to Ross and Chandler (off-screen) about his top hat. (S5E13)

Chandler in particular began to make jokes about the top hat making Joey a magician and Ross was no less in showing his incredulity at Joey’s choice of accessory, which indicated that perhaps men in general had an issue when another man showed different preferences when it came to fashion. Rachel later offered Joey to pick out clothes for him and ended up pairing Joey with a unisex shoulder bag at the fitting (Image 4.3.36).



Image 4.3.36 Rachel attempts to convince Joey of the unisex bag while Joey grimaces (S5E13)

Joey's reluctance to hold onto the bag at first showed hints of hegemonic masculinity, where anything that was (again) deemed to be related to the feminine taste was immediately rejected. This goes in line with Connell's research where it stated that men generally get ostracised by whom they viewed as "real men" (Connell, Masculinities, 2005) when they show instances of having interests that relates to or is directly connotated with female preferences.



Image 4.3.37 Joey: Looks like a woman's purse. (S5E13)

Rachel insisted on Joey trying it on and took a magazine to show him that many men were photographed to be holding the bag. Joey protested when pictures flipped to women holding the same bag. This was another evidence to men immediately having negative connotations when it came to having accessories that related to femininity. According to the semiotic definition in Connell (2005) as referenced in section 2.5, some researcher defined that masculinity was essentially non-feminine, which explained the case of Joey and his aversion towards having anything that was female-gendered.

This brings to the forefront the topic of metro sexuality, a branch of masculinity that consist of males who are conscious of how they dress and how they groom themselves, a slight tangent to the typical definition of how men define masculinity. The origin of the term comes from an article written in *The Independent* in 1994 by a columnist Mark Simpson, titled *Here come the mirror men*. The article

recognises a branch of men that are more verse with contents presented the media, more self-centred, and more anxious about how people view them, leading to the term of being “metrosexual” being used by the public (as evidenced in 21.5K articles published online and a million Google hits as of May 2009 (Hall & Gough, 2011)). Debates were sparked where on one end, the self-identified metrosexuals stated that they were the definition of what masculinity is, with the addition of self-respect, while men who identify themselves as “real men” (Hall & Gough, 2011) argued that metrosexuality had traits which has blurred symbols that connotated to femininity, and thus lack the authenticity of being masculine.

In the scene, Joey put on the bag on his shoulders a while later and found himself liking how he looked in the mirror, although he did emphasise on himself being a man a little more than necessary.

Rachel: Okay, it's missing something. Ooh, I know! Umm, okay. (Goes and grabs a bag, that looks like a purse, and shows it to Joey.)

Joey: Really? A purse?

Rachel: It's not a purse! It's a shoulder bag.

Joey: It looks like a women's purse.

Rachel: No Joey, look. Trust me, all the men are wearing them in the spring catalog. Look. (Shows him.) See look, **men**, carrying the bag.

Joey: See look, **women**, carrying the bag. (He puts it on his shoulder and looks at himself in the mirror and likes what he sees.) But it is odd how a women's purse looks good on me, a man.

Rachel: Exactly! Unisex!

-Excerpt 4.3.5 (S5E13, 0:04:52 – 0:05:35)



Image 4.3.38 Joey: But it is odd how a women's purse looks good on me, a man. (S5E13)

From Excerpt 4.3.5, note that Joey stated how he “a man” looked good with a woman’s bag. The need to emphasise on his role as a man evidenced how he followed the school of thought that went under hegemony, where he feared being ridiculed, and as a result felt inferior because he liked what he saw as a woman’s bag on him. His fears were also proven true later when Chandler and Ross proceeded to make fun of him for having the bag, even though Rachel insisted that it looked good.

(As he walks past both Chandler and Ross notice the bag and stare at each other in shock.)

Chandler: Wow! You look just like your son Mrs. Tribbiani!

Joey: What? Are you referring to my man's bag? At first, I thought it just looked good, but it's practical too. Check it out! It's got compartments for all your stuff! Your wallet, your keys, your address book.

Ross: Your make-up?

...

Joey: All right relax, look I'll pay you with the money from the acting job I am definitely gonna get thanks to you.

Ross: What's the part, Auntie Mame?

Rachel: Hey, don't listen to them. I think it's sexy.

-Excerpt 4.3.6, Excerpt 4.3.7 (S5E13,
0:07:06 – 0:07:34; 0:07:56 – 0:08:07)



Image 4.3.39 Chandler: Wow! You look just like your son Mrs. Tribbiani!

(S5E13)



Image 4.3.40 Joey: What? Are you referring to my man's bag? (S5E13)



Image 4.3.41 Ross: Your make-up? (S5E13)



Image 4.3.42 Ross: What's the part, Aunty Mame? (S5E13)



Image 4.3.43 Chandler smirks at Ross' joke about Aunty Mame. (S5E13)



Image 4.3.44 Rachel: Hey, don't listen to them. I think it's sexy. (S5E13)

Chandler insulted Joey by calling him “Mrs. Tribbiani”, similar to his way of calling Joey “Josephine” from S6E8, indicating that by calling him a woman’s name it made Joey inferior as compared to himself. In Excerpt 4.3.7, when Joey showed excitement that the shoulder bag was going to get him his next audition, Ross joked and made fun of the role by saying “Auntie Mame”, referencing the 1958 movie with the same title, featuring a flamboyant main female character. Echoing Connell’s study (2005) of Hegemony as a relation to masculinity, Chandler and Ross both used names with female or feminine symbolism when insulting people that did not behave as befit the essence of a masculine man, in this context, Joey with a shoulder bag that apparently carried feminine connotations. Ross added in with a “your make-up” after, indicating that he thought the term “make-up” was only for women, and if a man carried any, it made him lesser of a man. Discussing under the relation of complicity, Chandler and Ross had shown a generally healthy respect for women in their lives, at

some points even showing a slight fear for some of them (Phoebe when she playfully threatened either one, or even Monica when she went on her cleaning sprees). They generally did not subscribe to the camp of subordination of women under the hegemonic masculinity banner. But they also benefit from certain elements when it came to hegemony and the maintaining of patriarchy in their community, thus allowing them the leeway to discriminate against other men who showed any elements of femininity.

In S9E6, as referenced to 4.2, Ross showed high hostility towards Sandy who was working for him and Rachel as a male nanny, taking care of Emma their two-month old daughter. Ross's hostility towards Sandy started at the point where the latter finished explaining to Rachel how parents felt when they must leave their child behind. Ross started with the question asking if Sandy was gay, which Rachel then reprimanded him for. This showed aggression when facing feminine men, which came under the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. As stated in Connell (2005), men who saw themselves as masculine were naturally aggressive towards men whom they saw as less than masculine, or basically feminine in nature. Many men in society find themselves unable to believe that men could show compassion nor image of being nurturing, as how Sandy had shown it, as a lot of them believe that by showing such traits it would make them less valuable or less masculine as a man, causing them to be inferior.

As stated in 4.2, Ross also said that Sandy must be "at least" (S9E6, 0:13:25) a bisexual when Sandy started crying, showing happiness at himself being hired. While Sandy's reaction may have been made purposely excessive as it is a sit-com, but it did indicate the hegemonic thinking that if a man cried often, he was not a real

man, which was evidenced by Ross asking Sandy if he was gay or if he was a bisexual, in addition to the hostility that he had shown Sandy. This section brought forth the question of why Ross as an individual man would need to be hostile or aggressive when he saw another man having feminine traits, when the latter's choice of career or even circumstances cultivating his personality had no influence on Ross' own choices whatsoever. Connell (2005)'s book showed that men act collectively as a community, as well as an individual, which could explain why Ross felt the need to indirectly protest through his anger towards Sandy's behaviour. There were many more instances from Ross that showed hegemonic masculinity towards Sandy.

Going into the scene where Ross was enjoying the madeleine that Sandy had baked while the former was at work. Ross was clearly enjoying the pastry, but upon finding out that it was made by a man, Ross immediately blanched and reacted negatively to what he initially thought to be "amazing" (S9E6, 0:18:28). It was an irony with how he enjoyed the madeleine even while berating to Rachel about Sandy not baking "butch" cookies, as what he apparently thought a man should be baking. So, to Ross, it was not okay for a man to bake "delicate French cookies", but he seemed to find no issue when it came to the act of enjoying the cookie itself, commenting later to Monica that it tasted "lighter than air" (S9E6, 0:20:57). This was a stereotype among men in society that went in line with the notion that a woman's place was in the kitchen, and it led to the idea that it was okay for men to enjoy "delicate" food because women were the ones who are supposedly cooking them for them. It added to the irony yet again when Ross was telling Monica about Sandy, stating that he "bakes madeleines" in a very forced tone (Image 4.3.45).



Image 4.3.45 Ross: Oh really? Did she tell you he plays the recorder, recites poetry and bakes Madeleines? (S9E6)

The reason for Ross' aggression and hostility towards Sandy's personality and skills became apparent much later in the episode when Ross sat Sandy down to inform the latter of his being let go. Instead of being angry, Sandy was understanding, and showed compassion to Ross' reasonings, stating that the latter had all the rights to being "happy" to whomever that came into his home. This showed a contrast to Ross' actions, which did surprise him. Sandy asked Ross to explain what were the issues that Ross had with his work, to which Ross admitted that he knew it was not Sandy's problem, and the real underlying dilemma was with himself. This showed that perhaps Ross was after all a sensitive man, as he himself did put it. Ross later explained to Sandy that his father was rough with him growing up, berating him when he was playing with his dinosaurs when he was a child with sentences such as "what are you doing with those things? What's wrong with you? Why aren't you outside playing like a real boy?" (S9E6, 0:32:50). Ross expressed that he felt that perhaps his own father had thought that he was too sensitive was growing up, which might have led to his

current state of aggression when he encountered men who were more feminine (Images 4.3.46 – 4.3.47).



Image 4.3.46 Sandy: No, none at all. You need to be happy with whoever is in your home... Although if you don't mind telling me, what was your problem? Maybe it's something I can work on in the future. (S9E6)



Image 4.3.47 Ross: No, you know, it's uhm... nothing you did, it's... it's uhm... my issue. (S9E6)

This brings to light how boys are taught to feel insecure when it comes to their own emotions and interests, are scolded when they show any sense of lack of masculinity, leading to each generation growing up with hegemonic way of life, feeling insecure with their own selves so much that they have to displace their insecurity onto other men who feel comfortable to be feminine, such as Sandy. Ross later broke down crying onto Sandy's shoulders after understanding, finally, the reason to his own hostility towards the latter. It was not only the men that carried the hegemonic masculinity notion, however. Rachel, upon seeing Ross crying to Sandy, came out from her room holding Emma, telling her daughter that she was going to grow up to be a "big girl just like daddy" (S9E6, 0:33:26; Image 4.3.48), referring to Ross being a girl just because he was crying. Perhaps the comment was just to spite Ross' actions in the episode after raising a big fuss about how he did not feel comfortable with Sandy, even though Rachel loved Sandy as a nanny, causing Rachel to feel a little vehement with her statement. But if looked at objectively, Rachel's comment also supported hegemonic men's notions about how men who cried are basically acting like girls, as if being emotional was only a female thing to do.



Image 4.3.48 Ross crying onto Sandy's shoulders. (S9E6)

It showed that men are not the only ones who uphold a society's discourse under gender. Hegemonic masculinity had been a stereotyped section of society and not only it is taught down the generation from fathers to sons, it is also enforced by mothers to their daughters as well as their sons, as evident in Rachel's case to Emma. It was also perhaps a symbolism that at the start of the sitcom, Ross was portrayed to look like the typical "nerd", a term first mentioned in a Dr. Seuss book (Geisel, 1950), a man with excessively gel-ed up bowl-cut of hair (as joked many a time by Rachel, Chandler, and even Monica along the many seasons) who is supposedly smart because he has a PhD in Palaeontology, and had a penchant for dinosaurs and dinosaur toys (dinosaurs being the reason why he got the PhD). In the later seasons, as depicted in S9E6, Ross carried a more rugged look, with swept-up hair (with lesser hair gel, apparently), showing more consciousness towards his dressing, depicting a change in levels of masculinity across the 10 seasons of the TV show. In relation to S9E6,

perhaps the seeming change of levels in masculinity was a symbolism for when a man was deemed to be more masculine was when he adopted a more hegemonic school of thought when it came to his own sense of masculinity.

4.3.1 Summary

To conclude this sub-section of 4.2, there are instances of both men and women producing and drawing on the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Chandler and Ross showed a high-level of anger and discomfort when they witnessed their own gender behave less than what they perceive to be masculine, and they mock other men as well for the same reason, deeming them inferior for acting like women. This could be inferred to originate from their difficult childhoods with both their fathers causing some sort of trauma, causing an insecurity in their own sense of masculinity, leading to bullying of others when they do not behave like “real men”. Women are also found with instances that recognises the discourse, i.e. Monica’s apology to Chandler for making him do feminine activities, and Rachel’s mocking of Ross’ show of emotion. There was evidence of resistance to the discourse, with Monica, Rachel, Susan and Carol chastising Ross on his opinion regarding boys and Barbie dolls.

Comparing with stereotypes in reality, a lot of the instances of the discourse showed a support for a toxic masculinity stereotype, with examples such as the belief that boys should not like feminine activities and boys should not be working in feminine associated careers. On the other hand, communities in real life are starting to show changes to the stereotypes themselves by showing support to boys who are bullied for those very reasons.

4.4 Compulsory Heterosexuality Discourse

As explained in Section 3.4.4, “Compulsory heterosexuality” is a term coined by Adrienne Rich (1980) in the article “*Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*”. The term was also mentioned in R.W. Connell’s book “*Masculinity*” (2005), defining the theory as women being forced to make themselves available in sexual terms to men, who were also generally expected to have a “stick-it-up-them” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 103) enthusiasm when it came to sexual relations with women.

In Season 6 Episode 8’s scene, Ross expressed interest in Monica’s assistant chef, Hilary, with Ross stating that she could not stop staring at him while he was at Monica’s restaurant (S6E8, Image 4.4.1, 0:02:05 – 0:02:18).



Image 4.4.1 Ross: Your hot new assistant chef Hilary? (S6E8)

His sister went on to clarify that Hillary did not, in fact, “stare” at Ross, but looked at him “only once” (S6E8, Image 4.4.2, 0:02:18 – 0:02:23) because Ross was coincidentally in Hillary way at that point.



Image 4.4.2 Monica: No, the one who looked at you once because you got in her way. (S6E8)

Ross continued by stating that he still thought that Hillary was attracted to him, somewhat ignoring Monica’s explanation (S6E8, 0:02:23 – 0:02:27).



Image 4.4.3 Ross: Still, I could tell she was into me. (S6E8)

This shows that Ross assumed that a woman's look inevitably meant that she would eventually fall for him if he tried to go after her, which portrayed a worrying phenomenon that is happening in society today.

Sunderland (2004) stated that there is a group of people that enforces the traditional notion among males that women's interest in the male gender is inevitable (also see 3.4.4). This has caused many issues for women, where men have been assuming attraction from women who merely passes them by on pavements, and getting violent when said attraction was not returned, with the most recent news reporting that a man had shot a woman's 10-month-old baby in the head just because she rejected him (Sacks, 2019). Ross' statement may not be a violent reaction as per the news, but it indicated a direction that showed his natural assumption that a woman was interested in him just because she gave him a look (that he had interpreted to be staring). Joey's eyeroll a little later (S6E8, Image 4.4.4, 0:02:26) shows that he did not

share that idea, challenging the associated idea that Ross had presented with his statement, showing, perhaps, an against towards the compulsory heterosexuality discourse.



Image 4.4.4 Joey's eyeroll (S6E8)

Rachel's ridicule of Ross' statement with a "does she have a wedding dress" (Image 4.4.5) also showed an agreement with Joey, again challenging Ross' assumption that Hillary was attracted to him. This indicated that perhaps the writers of the show wanted to dictate that the society was moving away from the traditional notion of a compulsory attraction from females to males.



Image 4.4.5 Rachel: Oooh, are you setting up Ross with someone? Does she have a wedding dress? (S6E8)

On a related point, Rachel's and Monica's sarcastic statements (S6E8, Image 4.4.5; Image 4.4.6, 0:02:29 – 0:02:33), joking about Ross only dating to marry, brought the context that Ross had been on dates thinking that it had to end up in marriage, not only assuming that women who look at him must be interested in him. In addition, Joey found it frustrating by stating that Ross had a problem by being fixated on the idea of marrying "the One" (S6E8, 0:02:43 – 0:02:49).



Image 4.4.6 Monica: Okay I'll do it (introduce Hillary to Ross), as long as you promise you won't marry her. (S6E8)



Image 4.4.7 Ross: But what if she's the One? (S6E8)



Image 4.4.8 Joey: Man, you have a problem! (S6E8)

Many a female has fallen victim to the assumed idea that at some point their attraction will be bound to a man. This leads back to the discourse of hegemonic masculinity as well, with men feeling that their sense of masculinity is challenged if a female rejects their advances, resorting to violence and aggression to mitigate the feelings of inadequacy in being what society has deemed acceptable as a man. An article from Metro News UK (Horley, 2017) reports an incident where a 60-year-old woman in the United Kingdom (UK) got beaten up by a man in his twenties, who had previously followed her through the Tube (UK's railway system) after a rejected attempt to "chat" her up. Malaysian newspaper, The Star also reported of an incident where another man in his twenties attacked a woman with a stun gun after she had rejected him in Seoul, Korea (The Star, 2018). With these instances happening in society now, Ross' attitude towards one look given by Hillary takes a more serious aspect under the discourse of compulsory heterosexuality. It did not support the notion that men were supposed to behave in that way, as Rachel, Monica, and Joey moved to

show Ross that he was being delusional. But it did show a reflection of what society had as a potential to become with that one assumption of inevitable attraction from women towards men.

Male subjects in Connell's study stated a very clear hatred towards women, with one of them calling the women in his life derogatory names such as "bitch" (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 104) and "give her the shits" (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 104). The researchers question why women put up with such behaviour in men, and the conclusion that came was that there seemed to be a lack of available alternatives. Men were also expected to follow a certain notion of maintaining their sense of masculinity. The issue had since known to affect the way men saw their own bodies, and as well as how they conducted themselves around other men. One of the subjects named "Mal Walton" (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005, p. 104) stated that after knowing by accident the joys of masturbation, he had since stopped after reading an article that stated if a male masturbates too much he would not enjoy sexual intercourse with women, and thus conditioning him to stop. This showed that men are being pushed towards heterosexuality.

On a slightly related note, from the view of the female gender, Rich stated in her study that homosexuality in women were deemed by society to be women who were bitter about men's behaviour in general and not because of them being naturally inclined to sexually orientate towards women, showing how the idea of compulsory heterosexuality had been embedded into the minds of society as women liking women only to spite men (Rich, 1980). The idea of homosexuality was also explored in the case of Ross, where his ex-wife, Carol had divorced him because she had found out later in their marriage that she was homosexual and was more inclined to date a female friend of hers, Susan Bunch. This had been known throughout the series as an essential

part of the show that has influenced Ross to be the way he was through the series. Not being able to accept that his wife left him for another woman, he had shown constant dislike whenever around Susan (Schwimmer, 1994-2003), implying the idea of his disbelief that a woman would leave him because of another woman, causing major jealousy and insecurity issues with his later relationships with Rachel and various other women.

4.4.1 Summary

To summarise this sub-section of 4.4, Ross was shown to have an instance where he assumed a woman's interest in him just from one insignificant encounter. Through newspaper articles, it had been found that this supported a stereotype that some men hold in reality, thinking that a woman's interest in them was inevitable, leading to cases where men felt like they had a right to exact revenge on any woman who rejected their affections.

4.5 Gender Equality Discourse

The discourse of gender equality encompasses notions of an equal division of labour, positive and negative expectations, and also positive and negative consequences amongst the two genders.

One instance of this discourse was shown briefly in this Season 6 Episode 8. Earlier in the episode, and referenced in section 4.2, Monica came into Joey's apartment to ask Chandler to "hem the new dust ruffle", and Chandler submissively answered, "be right there sweetums" (S6E8, Image 4.2.4, 0:01:16 – 0:01:21). This shows an idea of gender equality, where Monica expected Chandler to hem their new dust ruffle, an act still thought to be feminine by Chandler's reply of "a totally different

situation” (S6E8, 0:01:23) to Joey, referring to how he was not allowed to hold the skewed thought around Monica in fear of her reaction.

The gender equality discourse was shown in Chandler’s reaction to Monica’s request, though probably more of fear towards Monica’s reaction rather than believing that the genders were to share menial household chores equally. This moved towards a more fourth wave feminism notion of equality among the genders, which challenges the tradition notion that the woman should be the one completing household chores. The notion of gender equality has been a big aspect in the fourth-wave feminist movement, which has started around the year 2012 (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019), instigating movements such as #MeToo, a movement to help show support to survivors of sexual violence, in particular to black women and other women of colour from low wealth communities, and the International Women’s Strike in 2018. Though Chandler was seen to show a negative attitude about himself helping with household chores, the fact Monica showed positive indication towards the activity was helping to challenge the traditional stereotype (The One with Ross’s Teeth, 0:01:16 – 0:01:21).

In S3E4, an instance of the notion of gender equality is where Monica, Rachel, Carol, and Susan having no issues with Ben playing with his Barbie doll. In a world where boys were told that only action figures were appropriate for their gender, this episode showed a step forward in how parents should be behaving around their children. As mentioned in section 4.2 and 4.3, Carol and Susan, as Ben’s mother and foster mother, allowed Ben to pick out a Barbie doll at the toy store with no qualms about the issue. This showed that along with how they themselves were different from society, they were also moving towards the notion that if girls could play with Barbie

dolls with no discrimination, then boys should not be getting any discrimination from the same choice of activity. Monica and Rachel, who were portrayed to be heterosexual (as opposed to Carol and Susan) were also seen to be perfectly okay with Ben and his choice of toy, to the point of even chastising and snapping at Ross when he was trying to persuade Ben to let go of his Barbie.

Joey's portrayal in S6E8 of liking what was portrayed to be feminine activities, referenced in section 4.2 and 4.3, such as knitting potholders, flower arrangement, liking paintings of babies and watering cans, also served as a representation of gender equality. Related to the idea of Ben and his Barbie doll, Joey showing that he was perfectly comfortable with enjoying activities known in the show to be feminine gave the notion to viewers that it was okay for men to be doing feminine activities as it should not decrease their value of a man just because they liked them, as women themselves were not made fun of for doing the same activities. Chandler's reaction was challenging the discourse of gender equality but Joey's innate preferences in the end did show that even as a man who was depicted to be rather the ideal masculine man (Joey has been portrayed to be very good in sexual intercourse - a criteria mentioned in Connell's study to be a key element to show masculinity (2005) – as well as someone who loved to go on dates with multiple women at a time – another criteria that has been mentioned to be what makes a man more of a man (Connell, *Masculinities*, 2005)), he was very comfortable with his living space being decorated with feminine elements, and as well as enjoyed activities that were deemed to be too feminine for the masculine man (i.e. Chandler).

In S3E4, Chandler and Janine's relationship were portrayed to be a flipped notion from what Monica and Rachel had mentioned to be the norm in dating

(referenced in section 4.2). It could also be said to represent a considerable degree of gender equality, as it did show that not only men had the fear of commitment, women also had it when compromising situations come into play. The scenes also showed Chandler to be pining after Janine, as how women were generally thought to be doing when a man did not want to communicate with her, which can lead to the inference that perhaps it was also normal for society to expect that a guy could also be burdened with emotional issues, and not just continue with the discourse that only women deal with emotional issues in dating.

The instances where gender equality was portrayed was relatively less as compared to more skewed discourses. It fit into the history of how gender equality was made popular by feminists around the world. News of gender equality protests arose around the 21st century, focusing on closing the wage gap between the genders (Fox, 2019), having equal opportunities for men and women, getting more paternity leave (which governments today are working to approve in many countries, many of which have obtained at least a two-week leave – it goes up to a year when in Japan and South Korea (Gharib, 2018)), protesting against domestic violence, rallying for abortion rights, and the like. It will be much later in the seasons of the TV show where the characters were portrayed to have more sense of gender equality, such as the entering of Professor Charlie Wheeler, a female palaeontology expert, and with Phoebe individually deciding that she was going to help her brother by being a surrogate to him and his wife (implying that she had control of what she wants to do with her own body) (Schwimmer, 1994-2003).

4.5.1 Summary

There were a fair number of instances shown in the 4 episodes of gender equality, which indicates the possibility that even in the time when the show aired on Primetime, to a certain degree, the writers were trying to show that biasness should be set aside. Comparing to instances in reality, more and more people seem to be taking up the mantel of gender equality and hopefully with time, humanity will be able to see an equalised subject positioning amongst the two genders.

4.6 Other Discourses

Apart from the 4 main discourses that have been discussed and analysed in sections 4.2 – 4.5, there were also other discourse portrayed by the characters that established related but relatively separate notions from the main discourse discussed previously.

4.6.1 Positive Masculinity

One of them was the discourse of positive masculinity. Much related to the discourse discussed under Hegemonic Masculinity in section 4.3, as well as to some parts mentioned in Gender Equality under section 4.5, there were evidence of positive masculinity. Joey in S6E8 was a presence of positivity in the aspect of masculinity. His character being able to be comfortable doing activities that were thought to be feminine promotes a sense of positive masculinity that had only been prominently evident in studies from the 2010s, though also mentioned in Connell's book (2005). In a study done by Time Lomas (2013), it stated that despite having researchers discuss about the diversity in masculinity and being masculine, the idea of masculinity was always discussed in a very one-directional manner, of which a horde of toxic traits will be related to the topic at one point or another. However, masculinity has since

then started to be discussed with more positivity than before, paving the way more men to defy the traditional norm of how men were dictated to behave, creating more healthy behaviour for men to follow. It was said that behaviours categorised as hegemonic masculinity established in the present study was harmful to mental and physical health. Lomas' study used the basis that men were viewed as a general problem in society, be it because of their dominance over women causing detrimental effects or having a lesser-desired result when the issue relates to women, examples being in education and in health. Using that notion, Lomas looked at how detrimental it was to health when men were expected to act "as men" (Lomas, 2013, p. 169), and researches on empirical data of men being able to pave way for healthier ways for them to be masculine without having to follow entirely the traditional idea of being masculine.

As discussed in section 4.3 previously, Joey had shown a considerable amount of acceptance, tolerance, and even liking for activities considered to be feminine, in contrast to Chandler's constant spluttering and frustration at seeing his male peers doing or enjoying those activities. Joey had shown that he had no confidence issues, even when he had to teach Monica about making her flower arrangements "fresher" (S6E8, 0:15:22 – 0:15:26). It did not make him feel that he was any more a woman than any other man, or to be more accurate, gender did not come to his thoughts at all when it came to enjoying those activities, which showed positive masculinity. In the same episode, as mentioned earlier in section 4.2, Monica was seen to be supporting the idea of hegemonic masculinity. However, in the scene where Joey taught her to improve for flower arrangement skills, she had no qualms learning from him, without having her ego be offended (and by context, Monica

having one of the biggest egos among the 6 main characters when it came to being the best at things, this is highly significant).

In S3E4 was when Chandler showed a different persona, an irony when compared to his incessant need to be masculine in S6E8, of being more feminine when it came to his relationship with Janice. The fact that he could put down his ego to ask for Rachel and Monica for dating advice (which by traditional notions of masculinity would be where the man asks for advice only from his male peers to seem more masculine, and even then it cannot be too often or a man would be seen as too emotional) would show a sense of positive masculinity. He was not afraid to show his emotions, and to also take up Monica and Rachel's advice, in trying to show more commitment to Janice, thinking that it would be the key to solidifying their relationship.

In S5E13, Rachel recommended Joey a shoulder bag for his audition (refer to 4.3, Image 4.3.5, pp. 153), this showed that she saw no issue with a man carrying a bag, showing support for positive masculinity. Carrying a shoulder bag was considered gendered by Chandler and Ross's relentless teasing upon them seeing Joey holding onto it later, insulting the latter by saying that he was his mother, which indicates that there was a consensus amongst the characters that a shoulder bag is meant for women only. Joey too showed that he was very comfortable with the bag despite many jokes made by Chandler and Ross about it being a woman's purse. This showed an instance of a man being comfortable with delving into being well-dressed and fashionable, bringing the term of "metrosexuality" (Hall & Gough, 2011) into play.

4.6.2 “Being A Woman Is an Insult” Discourse

This discourse builds from the idea from section 4.3, Hegemonic Masculinity, but did serve as a separate discourse because it was not only the men who showed evidence of having the idea. As discussed previously, Ross and Chandler had both showed indications that being a woman was beneath being a man, with Joey showing the one evidence as well when he was under influence by Chandler’s hegemonic persuasions.

In multiple instances in S6E8, Chandler constantly showed how if men ended up acting like women, it would make them lesser. A notable example would be how Chandler insulted Joey by referring to him with “Josephine” as explained before to be a female version of Joey’s full name of “Joseph”, indicating that being a woman would be the insult in that context. Another example was when Ross used make up to cover up his over-whitened teeth, Chandler loudly exclaimed “where are all the men?!” (S6E8, 0:12:48, Image 4.3.10), indicating once again that by using make up meant that you were a woman, and that would mean that it would be an insult to one being a man. Ross too had the same notion as he was reluctant to use the makeup when Monica suggested it as an option to pull the attention away from his over-whitened teeth. This gave indication that men had been generally taught from young that acting feminine and using feminine-associated products will cause them to be laughed at, made fun of, bullied, and the like, shown in reality in cases such as the nine-year old Charlie and eleven-year old Michael Morone (referenced in 4.3).

In S9E6, Ross showed similar hegemonic behaviour upon witnessing Sandy, their hired nanny, acting sensitive and behaving in a feminine manner. Later when Sandy had a talk with Ross to find out the source of his insecurity and aggression when it came to Sandy’s behaviour, Ross too revealed that it was because of how his father brought him up and proceeded to cry upon Sandy’s shoulder. Rachel then said to

Emma upon seeing Ross' crying that she would grow up to be a "big girl" just like her daddy (S9E6, 0:33:28), also supporting the discourse that to call a man a girl was to make him inferior than he was.

4.6.3 Dumb Blonde Discourse

Through the years, blonde-haired women have always been stereotyped in movies and TV shows, with subtypes of blondes such as the "blonde bombshell", the "ice cold blonde" and the "dumb blonde", with the terms originating from Kuhn and Radstone's book *The Women's Companion to International Film* (1994). Focusing on the third subtype, which is the dumb blonde, was a discourse that had been used in many instances in *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* The character which emulated that discourse was Phoebe Buffay. Kuhn and Radstone defined a dumb blonde to be a blond-haired woman with a natural sense of sensuality and an unusually high levels of general ignorance (1994), which Phoebe portrayed in general as a character trope.

In S3E4, there was a scene where Joey came into the coffee house and snapped at Chandler about not passing him a message about an audition that Joey was supposed to be at. Chandler denied ever having gotten the message when Phoebe interrupted with a very accusingly forced tone, accusing of Chandler insisting that it was him who took the message (Image 4.6.3.1). Joey reacted confusedly at her statement, and she immediately admitted that she was the culprit who took the message but forgot to give it to him because she was playing hide-and-seek when the call came and was panicking because she had not found a place to hide for the game.



Image 4.6.3.1 Phoebe trying to defend herself about not having given Joey the message. (S3E4)



Image 4.6.3.2 Phoebe showing Joey how she has everything written on her hand. (S3E4)

The way that the conversation was portrayed gave Phoebe an air of ignorance, causing her friends to sometimes view her beliefs and words in a very sceptical way. Phoebe as a character was very resourceful, having had to survive on

her own ever since her mother committed suicide when she was very young. So, Phoebe had had to survive on the streets, working odd jobs, and at one point in one of the episodes, she talked about how she used to rob people at knife point to survive. Her background differed to that of the rest of her friends, causing her to portray behaviour, beliefs, and routines slightly out of the ordinary, a lot of the times of which showed her to be ignorant of things. In S3E4, even though she had caused Joey to lose a chance to audition the first-time round, she immediately had an idea to pretend to be an agent manager to trick the directors into allowing Joey to go for the audition, which indicated her resourcefulness.

In S6E8, Phoebe asked Rachel if she could use the photocopy machine at Bloomingdale's, Rachel's old workplace, apparently not knowing that Rachel had changed her job for a while. Phoebe then congratulated her for apparently having a new job. This instance showed that Phoebe had an air of not paying attention a lot, which contributed to her image of being ignorant of things. The image was further supported later when Phoebe went to Rachel's actual workplace at Ralph Lauren's to photocopy her flyers and ended up making out with whom she thought was Ralph Lauren, who turned out to be Kenny the Copy Boy.



Image 4.6.3.3 Phoebe happily telling Rachel about making out with “Ralph Lauren”. (S6E8)



Image 4.6.3.4 Phoebe: What am I supposed to do? Ask every guy I make out with if he's married? (Rachel looks at her.) No, yeah, I should. (S6E8)

Before “Ralph Lauren” identity was revealed much later in the episode, Rachel reminded Phoebe that the actual Ralph Lauren was married. Phoebe then defended her actions of kissing the guy by stating was she supposed to be making sure if the men she kisses were married or not (Excerpt 4.6.3.1).

[Scene: Rachel's office, Phoebe hands Rachel a key card.]

Phoebe: Thank you.

Rachel: Sure.

Phoebe: Now you will not believe this, but I was in the copy room, making copies, and Ralph Lauren came in.

Rachel: Oh my God. Did you talk to him?

Phoebe: Yeah a little. He seems really nice. Good kisser.

Rachel: What? What!?! You kissed him?

Phoebe: Totally.

Rachel: (Gasps) Phoebe are you serious?

Phoebe: Yeah. I was just in there. He introduced himself and the next thing I know, we're making out. You know.

Rachel: Phoebe, I mean, you do know he's married?

Phoebe: No!

Rachel: Phoebe...

Phoebe: What am I supposed to do? Ask every guy I make out with if he's married? (Rachel looks at her.) No, yeah, I should.

-Excerpt 4.6.3.1; Image 4.6.3.3 – 4.6.3.4

This instance indicates Phoebe's promiscuous nature and sensuality with men, but also her ignorance, which had been known to be something that agreed with masculine men (Kuhn & Radstone, 1994). Phoebe was portrayed to only know the Ralph Lauren name, but not how the man looks like, allowing a boy half the actual Lauren's age to take advantage of Phoebe's cluelessness to make a sexually connotated move on her, of which she did not reject but enjoyed.

In S9E6, at the start of the episode, Phoebe was spending time with her boyfriend Mike, enjoying their moment holding hands. Her coffee came and she wanted to tear open a pack of sugar but was unable to because her one hand was still holding onto Mike's. Not wanting to let his hand go, she compromised by putting his hand on her breast while she mixed her sugar into her drink, and canned laughter sounds followed (Image 4.6.3.5). This indicated that Phoebe's way with men, allowing them to have their way with her being used as humour points, indicates the dumb blonde discourse once more.



Image 4.6.3.5 Phoebe putting Mike's hand on her breast to wait for her mixing her coffee. (S9E3)

The dumb blonde discourse is still being used in many communities as a form of humour. One research on dumb blonde jokes stated that most of such themed humour are aimed at women, though blonde men receive some flak about it at times (Thomas, 1997). It stated that people with blonde hair have been a big focus of the media, with many famous icons having blonde hair, such as Marilyn Monroe - who had always presented herself with a very sensual child-like breathy voice that was her signature, and Pamela Anderson, who had been found to quote to "like" (as cited in Thomas, 1997) the image of being a dumb blonde as she thought that there was nothing for her to live up to, thus allowing her to constantly surprise people. In a paper written by Jay L. Zagorsky (2016), IQ levels of blonde-haired women and men were studied, comparing to people of other hair colours (black, red, brown). It was found that blonde-haired people had higher IQs than that of their brunette and ginger counterparts, and were more likely to be geniuses and less likely to be have below average IQ scores

(Zagorsky, Are Blondes Really Dumb?, 2016). In an article written by the same researcher, it stated that though there was no guarantee that blondes would have higher IQ levels than the others, it could be said that they had at least equal IQ levels to most, suggesting that the dumb blonde stereotype was only just that (Zagorsky, No joke: Blondes aren't dumb, science says, 2016).

4.6.4 Women Love to Gossip Discourse

It has always been a stereotype that only women like to gossip in many communities, especially in workplaces and during all-women meet ups. The TV sitcom showed instances of the discourse in S6E8 when Rachel and her boss Kim were waiting in an elevator together. Rachel, wanting to get into her boss' good favours as every one of her attempt to interest the latter into a conversation was for nought, thought that the knowledge of Phoebe kissing Ralph Lauren (referenced in Section 4.6.3) would be an interesting bit of information to divulge (Image 4.6.4.1 – 4.6.4.2).



Image 4.6.4.1 Rachel attempting to get into Kim's good books. (S6E8)



Image 4.6.4.2 Kim not bothering with Rachel, giving only one-worded answers. (S6E8)

As she had accurately presumed, upon hearing about the gossip that Ralph Lauren had been “fooling around with somebody in the copy room” (S6E8, 0:07:22), Kim went to the extent of pressing the emergency button in the elevator to stop it from moving just so she could hear the gossip from Rachel uninterrupted, which was drastic in nature (Image 4.6.4.3 – 4.6.4.4). This suggested the notion that women would do anything for a good gossip session.



Image 4.6.4.3 Kim pressing the emergency button for the elevator to listen to gossip. (S6E8)



Image 4.6.4.4 Kim's excited expression upon hearing good gossip. (S6E8)

According to a study done by Levin and Arluke (1985), women had a higher tendency to gossip compared to men, and were more likely to gossip about people who were close to them. But it also showed that the topics that both men and women gossip about were the same, using the same derogatory tone of voice in their language usage when gossiping (Levin & Arluke, 1985). This indicated that women had a higher possibility to engage in gossip compared to their male counterparts, but it did not discount the fact that men also engaged in gossip with their peers. There were many instances of gossiping sessions between Joey, Chandler and Ross across the many episodes of the sitcom, but none so drastic as the scene shown with Rachel and Kim.

The extension of that scene progressed after Rachel found out that Phoebe made out with the Kenny the Copy Boy and tried to correct the info that she gave Kim in the same elevator a day later, with Kim showing disbelief thinking that Rachel was the one who made out with Ralph Lauren and was trying to cover it up so that Rachel

could get Kim's job. The actual Ralph Lauren went into the elevator at that moment, and after he went out, Kim concluded from the "sexual tension" (S6E8, 0:13:44) – quoted here only because the audience knew that it was non-existent, only a misperception by Kim for her own gossip benefit and for the purposes of humour – that she felt in the elevator that Rachel was lying about her attempt to correct the story (Image 4.6.4.5). It indicated that Kim would take any indication to make it suit her own insecurities and lashed at Rachel for it, even though the audience knew fully that it was not Rachel's intention to do so when correcting her story.



Image 4.6.4.5 Ralph's first appearance, with Kim thinking that there was sexual tension, when there was none. (S6E8)

Much later, to salvage her relationship with her boss, and knowing that the facts of the story did not matter to Kim, Rachel lied to her saying that she herself and Ralph were an item but that the latter had broken up with her because he was married, adding that Rachel herself would not ever be better than Kim at her job. Kim did not believe her until Ralph came into the elevator once again, demeanour no different than

that of the previous day's, and upon him stepping out, Kim announced that Ralph was so cold to Rachel that her story must have been true (Image 4.6.4.6). The irony lies in how Kim believed in a gossip piece that was not real, and yet chose to disbelieve the actual truth of the story. Kim's whole behaviour of choosing to believe in falsehoods rather than factual stories supports the discourse that women love to gossip, whether or not the situation of an event that they are gossiping about be factual or false.



Image 4.6.4.6 Ralph's second appearance, with Kim not thinking that Ralph was cold to Rachel. (S6E8)

4.6.5 Summary

To summarise the section of 4.6, there were 4 more discourses apart from the main references of the 4 discourses (Sections 4.2-4.5), Positive Masculinity, "Being a Woman is an Insult" discourse, the Dumb Blonde discourse, and the "Women Love to Gossip" discourse, all but one which seem to have support some form of stereotypes in reality. From the four discourses in this sub-chapter, there was a trend of still seeing women as more irrelevant and inferior as compared to masculine men, in particular with the Dumb Blonde discourse and the "Being a Woman is an Insult" discourse. The

“Women Love to Gossip” discourse only seemed to serve the notion that women get excited about irrelevant topics, i.e. who is kissing who. Only the Positive Masculinity discourse proves to bring a note of positivity into the fray, which showed a challenge of what stereotype that already exist in society.

4.7 Summary of chapter

In this chapter, Section 4.1 has introduced what this chapter contains. Moving on, Section 4.2 to 4.5 each described data obtained from the four main discourses, which were the Gender Differences discourse, Hegemonic Masculinity discourse, the Compulsory Heterosexuality discourse, and the Gender Equality discourse. Lastly, Section 4.5 discussed other discourses that were identified through the 4 episodes chosen, which were the Positive Masculinity discourse, the “being a woman is an insult” discourse, the dumb blonde discourse, and the “women love to gossip” discourse.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusive findings of this research, starting with the summary of the findings, giving a conclusion on Gendered Discourses, recommending pathways for future research,

5.2 Summary of Findings

From the data extracted from the TV sitcom of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*, the main gendered discourses found were the following: the Gender Differences discourse, the Hegemonic Masculinity discourse, the Compulsory Heterosexuality Discourse, and the Gender Equality discourse, along with a few other discourses with minor amount of instances, such as the Positive Masculinity discourse, the Being a Woman in an Insult discourse, Women Love Gossiping discourse, and the Dumb Blonde discourse. From the analysis of the data done, it has shown that majority of the discourses found reinforces the normative perceptions of gender, which explains its relatability to many audiences around the world that made it a worldwide success upon airing, and now one of the most-streamed shows in Netflix, soon-to-be taken over by HBO Max. There were instances that challenged what society is moving towards, such as under Hegemonic Masculinity, society seems to be moving towards a more accepting and understanding of the different varieties in masculinity. But it will take more time for society to full reach the level of acceptance that fully challenges the notion of a Hegemonic man.

The first Research Question (RQ) to this paper is “What gendered discourses are being represented through and by the main characters?”. Through this study, the gendered discourse identified are the Gender Differences discourse, the Hegemonic Masculinity discourse, the Compulsory Heterosexuality Discourse, and

the Gender Equality discourse, along with a few other discourses with minor number of instances, such as the Positive Masculinity discourse, the Being a Woman in an Insult discourse, Women Love Gossiping discourse, and the Dumb Blonde discourse.

The second RQ of this research states “How do the gendered discourses reinforce or challenge stereotypes of gender in society?”. In the aspect of the Gender Differences discourse, it reinforced many stereotypes by showing the character’s aversion or preference towards a certain object, activity, or traits in a person, differentiating by gender. There were also instances where it did challenge the stereotypes, as at points other characters showed indifference or a negative reaction when one character dictated a supposedly must-be difference that categorised the two genders.

Under the aspect of Hegemonic Masculinity, it reinforced a lot of stereotypes and prejudices that society already had about women, and the masculinity of men, some of the examples being how Joey being feminine being an issue with both Chandler and Ross on many occasions, and also other characters having feminine traits or choices being an issue to Ross. The women in the sitcom however generally challenged the notion of hegemony among men, showing that women were perhaps more accepting of men having feminine traits, as opposed to how men think that they need to be masculine to be respected by women and men both. The discourse of Positive Masculinity helped to spread more awareness amongst communities of the different varieties of masculinity, challenging the stereotypes of hegemonic masculinity that is still apparent in many communities. Much like how not all women are the same, men should not be judged with the same ruler either.

With Compulsory Heterosexuality, it reinforced a stereotype that many men still hold in their school of thought, being that a woman must show interest in the male gender when the males in question show interest in them. This phenomenon is rampant still among many societies, where women are being harmed because they rejected the advances of some men, to the extent where some end up being killed because of the notion.

Under Gender Equality, it challenged many stereotypes that are currently being fought against in many protests and battles by both women and men across the world. Gender equality dictates that the two genders should be treated equality, and not to be discriminated pay or preference wise just based on reasons pertaining to gender. Most communities who still currently hold a very patriarchal sense of management still needs more time to reach the point of truly accepting that the genders are equal by notion of rights, and thus by showing instances of gender equality, it will help society move towards a more equal ground in the future.

5.3 Conclusion on Gendered Discourses

Sunderland's theory on gendered discourses still remains an applicable method of identifying, or "spotting" (Sunderland, 2004, p. 32), discourses that are gendered. As the world moves to be more politically correct with their terms, and moved to be more accepting of the non-binary in gender, it would be good for feminist linguistic researchers to move towards more flexible or inclusive methods of defining what makes a discourse gendered that constructs the gender identity of an individual. With examples of a rise in trend of the "metrosexual" man as well as of women rising up in corporate positions in this time of age, it is evident that the world is slowly inching towards a more inclusive school of thought pertaining to gender and gendered discourses. It is very much possible that people will see a world where masculinity

and femininity are no longer defined through a biological nor ecological perspective, and only defined by the actions that an individual takes with no worry of the negative backlash that tends to occur even now when a person goes against what society believes is appropriate for their gender, and the improvement of acceptance of the non-binary and culture of gender equality will definitely provide more pathways for gender research to advance differently from what it was.

5.4 Future Research

A recommendation for future studies would be to analyse with empirical data on the identified gendered discourses' applicability in different communities and across cultures, to differentiate between the varied societies that exist around the world, as the sitcom was made with perhaps a Western audience in mind. It would be an interesting note to see if the same applies to a non-Western audience.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, Section 5.1 introduces the content within, while Section 5.2 summarises the full findings of this paper, including the Research Questions of this research with answers to the questions. Next, Section 5.3 discusses conclusions made about the topic of gendered discourses. And lastly, Section 5.4 then explains about recommendations for future research based on this study that can be conducted to further understand gendered discourses in TV sitcoms.

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