THE OCCURRENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN DUTCH CHILDREN’S BOOKS

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Abstract

In western social civilisation gender inequality has received awareness since the 1960s. As a result the influence of children literature on children’s gender perception has been studied by numerous researchers. It has been indicated that books can influence a child’s view on gender from a young age onwards. While reading, children identify with characters in books and relate them to role models in real life. The portrayal of society’s existing gender stereotypes are reproduced in children’s books and this could affect a child’s understanding of what is expected from males and females in society. These expectations can influence a child’s aspirations and enhance gender inequality. The aim of this thesis was to look into the occurrence and development of gender stereotypes in Dutch children’s books and determine whether gender stereotypes were still as present as shown by research in the past. This was done by examining the thirty most sold, borrowed and awarded books read by children between the ages 4 and 12 in The Netherlands in 2015/16. Analysis of acquired data revealed that females are significantly underrepresented in titles, covers, illustrations and as main and additional characters. Furthermore, in pictures male characters were portrayed significantly more often outside than inside, whereas the reverse was true for females. Additionally, females showed significantly more stereotypically behaviours and characteristics, mostly in the relationships and role patterns seen in households, along with inconsistency in social and professional models. The findings suggest that it is of great importance for caregivers, educators, publishers and authors to be aware of the disproportionate gendered picture children are painted. Even though there is still a long way to go before gender equality is reached in the Netherlands, the situation has improved over the past decades. If we want to reach gender parity and an equable society it would be beneficial for the next generations to believe they are not restricted by their gender in what they want to achieve. De-gendering children’s literature is one way to enhance these believes.
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1. Introduction

In western social civilisation the dispute over gender inequality has gained awareness since the 1960s and is still very present today.\(^1\) In what started as a civil rights matter, we can now ponder over the characteristics and qualities that categorize our gender, and to what degree these traits are developed through external influences. It can be argued that certain Dutch laws and the media keep gender inequality trends in place but equally as important is realising what tendencies we encourage as a society. Often unconsciously we associate certain occupations or even behavioural characteristics to roles we expect to see from males and females. These expectations originate and develop throughout early childhood.

Children learn through the observation of others, through the guidance of their parents or guardians, their peers and the vast sources of media they are later exposed to. Research indicates that the role of children’s literature, whether books are read by children themselves or read to them, significantly influences their gender perceptions from a young age onwards.\(^2\) Literature reflects the norms and values of society; gender inequality is reflected in children’s books through the traditional behaviours, characteristics and roles of women and men. While reading and observing, they identify with characters in books, reflecting and relating them to role models in reality. That is why the portrayal of gender stereotypes in children’s books has implications that affect understandings of what is expected from males and females in society and of children right now.

Studies have shown that in many books read by children, women are underrepresented and portrayed following a stereotypical view.\(^3\) As a result, these expectations can influence a child’s aspirations and strengthen the current gender inequality in the Netherlands. We are acclimatised into a society where men and woman play a certain role in aspects of their

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\(^1\) Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben, “Gender Development”, p.3.

\(^2\) Trepanier-Street and Romatowski, “The Influence of Children's Literature”, p.158.

personal, social and professional lives, based on their preconceived gender typecasts. By investigating the sources of gender stereotypes to which children are exposed, in this case the books they commonly read, we can better understand the process of how we develop opinions on gender equality.

The aim of this thesis is to look into the occurrence and development of gender stereotypes in Dutch children’s books. This will be done by firstly providing an overview of gender theory and how gender stereotypes are established and develop within children. After having critically investigated existing research, I will then present my study’s methodological approach and research results. Next, my data will be analysed and discussed focusing on patterns currently seen in the thirty most commonly read children’s books in The Netherlands in 2015-2016. Finally, this thesis will be concluded with implications and recommendations.
2. Gender, development and society

2.1. Prominent gender theories

Before the 1960s, a strict role division between men and women was in place in the Netherlands. This however changed when work by social theorists and feminists, condemning this inequality, gained increasing attention. The earliest activists of this time condemned the usage of the term ‘sex’ when referring to men, women, boys and girls. They argued the term greater emphasised ‘sex roles’ within society, and encouraged “cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity.” As a result, the term ‘gender’ was established and eventually commonly used. The work and theories of 20th century scholars marked the first steps towards gender role divisions being less common within Dutch society. The concepts disputed during this time can still hold relevance today.

Simone de Beauvoir argued that the concept of gender is historically created, not biologically inherited but based on contrasts; “humanity is divided into two classes of individuals whose clothes, faces, bodies, smiles, gaits, interests, and occupations are manifestly different. Perhaps these differences are superficial, perhaps they are destined to disappear. What is certain is that they do most obviously exist.” Linda Nicholson explains this by giving the example of an empty coat rack which represents a biologically given body, upon the body “differing cultural artefacts, specifically those of personality and behaviour, are thrown or superimposed.” Due to these differing cultural artefacts, two different types of people, two genders come into existence. Nevertheless, De Beauvoir refers to the relationship between the two as not being like “two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without

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4 Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben, “Gender Development“, p.3.
5 De Beauvoir, “Introduction woman as Other“.
6 Nicholson, Interpreting Gender, p.80-81.
reciprocity.” In other words there is ‘the One’ and ‘the Other’, ‘the One’, the man “defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being”, “she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.”

Judith Butler agrees with De Beauvoir in the relation between the two genders being socially constructed. When growing up, we learn about the norms and values of a society, aspects of how to behave and what is normal or expected are based heavily on gender. “Gender is seen as a performance in which the individual agent acts out a certain script which is internalized in society.” The act is in “accord with certain sanctions and proscriptions” and is therefore “clearly not a fully individual matter.” This script which all individual agents follow while basing characteristics on gender as a historical category is reproduced via discourse, as Michel Foucault argues. He emphasized that it is “impossible to escape discourse, it is a power structure to which all human beings are subjects on the one hand and actors on the other. Even though this form of power limits us, we do continue reproducing it: “the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power.” The social construction of gender as a category results in, as Joan Wallach Scott argues, the construction of “ideas about appropriate roles for women and men. It is a way of referring to the exclusively social origins of the subjective identities of men and women. Gender is, in this definition, a social category imposed on a sexed body.”

The problem does not lie in the development of characters that follow these socially expected categories, but in the ridicule and sense of being an outcast if you do not, creating a society

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7 De Beauvoir, “Introduction woman as Other”.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p.526.
12 Foucault, “power/knowledge: Selected interviews”.
13 Ibid.
15 Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’ p.1056.
where personalities can develop a sense of identity, but within the socially accepted boundaries of a preconceived gender split.

The books children read play a significant role in conveying the norms and values of our society. When books follow the same script used in society in portraying their male and female characters in a certain way, the individual agent, the child, will follow this script. When for example in many of the books a child reads that mothers are the ones in the kitchen, a little boy might feel like this is only for girls and even though he might like cooking he will refrain from doing it in order to follow the script, the norm. Nevertheless, as Judith Butler would probably argue, enjoying the act of baking apple-pie does not automatically make this boy ‘a girl’. When women are portrayed in books as having to rely on men, since men are the ones who do the ‘important’ repair jobs in the household and earn the money, De Beauvoir’s theory is reflected showing that men are ‘the Ones’ having to take care of ‘the Other’. This is how already existing gender stereotypes are reproduced through books. The ‘scripts’ are conserved via discourse and produced from generation to generation.

2.2 Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes in books teach children how to live up to the expectations related to their sex. Lippmann was the first to use and define the term stereotype as “cognitive structures that were integral parts of the individuals’ personality and served to explain or rationalize her or his social standing.”\textsuperscript{16} He argued that instead of forming our own opinion about people, we use stereotypes that are defined by our culture to judge others.\textsuperscript{17} In his opinion, stereotypes almost seem like “biological facts” since they are “so consistently and authoritatively transmitted in each generation from parent to child.”\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} Hamilton, Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior”, p.3.
\textsuperscript{17} Lipmann, “Public Opinion”, p.81.
\textsuperscript{18} Lipmann, “Public Opinion”, p.83.
Today the following definition is widely used in the field of psychology; “stereotypes are necessary and normal schemas used to process social information about categories of people.”¹⁹ Stereotypes are often used to help us paint an immediate picture of a person when we come across them, but at the same time an individual’s qualities are ignored and this could result in negative outcomes such as social injustice in the form of discrimination for example. Half way through the 20th century, sex and gender stereotyping became a topic of research, whereas previously, racial stereotyping was the main focus. Sex and gender stereotypes can be defined as “a set of beliefs about the personal characteristics of women and men which is shared by the members of some group.”²⁰

Psychologists categorise distinctions of common stereotypes in two ways; explicit and implicit.²¹ Explicit stereotypes are publicly expressed or part of our conscious thoughts; what we tell other people about certain people or groups, or private thoughts that we are aware of. Implicit stereotypes on the other hand, “reflect the continuing influence of past experience and learned associations and are unconscious and automatic. They are the remaining influence of explicit beliefs that, although consciously abandoned or rejected, continue to influence cognition and perception.”²²

In addition to developing stereotypes, human beings foster certain ‘attitudes’; a person’s stance towards something based on evaluating and judging whether something is good or bad as well as attractive or unattractive. Attitudes can also be divided; “implicit attitudes (i.e., attitudes to which people do not initially have conscious access and whose activation cannot be controlled) can be distinguished from explicit attitudes (i.e., attitudes that people can report and whose expression can be consciously controlled).”²⁴ For example, one

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¹⁹ Macrae et al., “Stereotypes and Stereotyping”, p.280.  
²⁰ Ashmore and Del Boca, “Sex Stereotypes and Implicit Personality Theory”, p.221.  
²² White and White, Implicit and Explicit Occupational Gender Stereotypes”, p.259-260.  
²³ Ibid.,p.259-260.  
may believe that men and women can both participate in science and technology, but implicit automatic associations show that we often have preconceived ideas that link men to science and women to arts. Due to these unconscious associations, girls might actually refrain from going into the field of science.

Gender stereotypes and attitudes result from learned mental patterns of gender inequality, starting in early years of development and are then carried into adult life and play a major role in the formation of gender equality. The main reason for this is that they promote “an asymmetrical vision of women and men (girls and boys) in society and the unequal distribution of power and resources among them in all spheres and at all stages of life.”

2.3 Gender development

It is important that we understand the effects of how and when gender stereotypes are established within children. Developmental science tells us that there are differences in the genetic makeup between males and females. Studies have shown that from early infancy onwards, girls and boys are seen to behave in a somewhat different way from each other. Early examples of this can be as simple as different facial expression commonly used by boys and girls, but as we develop, these differences become more apparent, most notably in areas such as “physical and mental health, physical development, cognitive development and socio-emotional development.” The earliest examples of dissimilarities either shown or encouraged upon children can be through parents or caregivers, who often treat baby girls and baby boys differently, ranging from the colour of decoration for their bedroom or later onto the toys and activities they are encouraged to do. This differentiation and categorization carries on into adulthood whereby the wider society continues to base expectations on gender.

Nosak et al., “National differences in gender–science stereotypes”.


Gray and Bjorklund, Psychology, p.479.

Ibid.,p.479.
Appearances or behaviours of young children can be considered as biologically inherited characteristics, occurring simply because of our natural genetic composition. However, the components of what makes us who we are, either through our own eyes or through the opinions of others, is also influenced and engineered by the surroundings and culture we are in, especially in the crucial stages of childhood development.

A major part of development takes place through children’s observation of the people around them. Bandura referred to this as vicarious learning, children identify with parents and peers and actively imitate actions and behaviours they observe without being told to do so.\textsuperscript{29} Noticing certain traits and how they are perceived, we are thought to “eventually come to the understanding that one's gender is a constant and meaningful human attribute.”\textsuperscript{30} Research has shown that in the western world; six-months-old babies are able to tell the difference between the voices of men and women, and most infants of nine months can distinguish between photographs of women and men.\textsuperscript{31} Around the stage of their first birthday, studies show infants are able to observe the associations between men and women and determine particular characteristics relating to gender in voices and photographs they hear and see.\textsuperscript{32} By the time they can talk, children of about the age of 2.5 years, are able to classify themselves and others according to their biological gender.\textsuperscript{33} By the age of 3 years they normally show a clear preference by affiliating themselves and spending more time with their own sex.\textsuperscript{34} An example of this is that children are shown to less frequently play with the opposite sex.\textsuperscript{35} By the age of 4, children have often learned and practiced gender-related prejudices and stereotypes based on their own culture as well as identifying themselves within a certain

\begin{footnotes}
\item[29] Bandura and Hudson, “Identification as a process of incidental learning”, p.311.
\item[31] Martin and Ruble, “Children’s search for gender clues”, p.69.
\item[32] Ibid.,p.69.
\item[33] Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben, “Gender Development”, p.5.
\item[34] Martin and Ruble, “Children’s search for gender clues”, p.68.
\item[35] Feldman and Gray, “Some Educational Benefits of Freely Chosen Age Mixing”.
\end{footnotes}
gender group. This then leads to broad assumptions based on stereotypical qualities, with children starting to primarily use a person’s sex while forming impressions and judging others. In doing so, children naturally follow these guidelines through their own persona by “adapting their own behavior to them, hereby differentiating the sexes further.”

Gender inequality is conserved through naturally recurring behavioral patterns which are then reinforced via socialization and the traditions of the environment in which children develop. Educators, students and parents alike, commonly debate where the balance is struck between the influences of these traits we are born with, the impact of our immediate social surroundings, and most importantly the people and culture that shape our beliefs. Ultimately, caregivers and teachers normally have the biggest impact on our childhood development and have an even bigger influence on the literature we are exposed to from a young age. It is important these significant role models understand are aware of the messages literature conveys and the possible effects it may have in terms of developing biases.

2.4 Gender inequality in the Netherlands

Over the past 55 years, the attitudes of Dutch society have become more inclusive towards the roles of women. From the 1960s onwards, the Dutch government started to work on decreasing gender inequality; women’s rights received attention and certain laws were imposed to promote equality. Since then, much progress has been made towards recognising the equality between women and men; laws have been implemented to avoid employers hiring people based on their gender, allowing more employment of women, a closer

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37 Martin and Ruble, “Children’s search for gender clues”, p.68.
38 Ibid.
correspondence of wages between women and men and a better access to education for women?.

The Global Gender Gap report of 2016 shows gender-based disparities of 144 countries including the Netherlands, who are in 16th place in the rankings of how much progress and improvements they have made over time. The Index “benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, education, health and political criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups.” It is of importance to stress that this index does not rank countries based on their level of development but solely focuses on how wide the existing gender gaps are. Ranking 16th out of 144 countries, one could argue that this is not so bad. Nevertheless, an average score of 0.756 means that gender-based disparities are still very present in the Dutch society.

In the sector of education, the Netherlands is doing very well, so much so that 7% more women than men continue onto higher education. Health wise there are no disparities between men and women at all. There is however a persistent gap in terms of economics and politics. Women participate less in the labour force; 74% of women against 85% of men. When looking at full and part time jobs it becomes clear that 64% of women have part time jobs whereas this is the case for 30% of men. The proportion of unpaid work per day for women is 55% and 27% for men. In general women earn 52% less than men and when men and women perform the same jobs, women earn on average 32% less than men. It also comes to the fore that when looking at positions such as “legislators, senior officials, and managers” in 2006 only 26% of these positions were performed by women and this is exactly the same as in 2016. When looking at positions in politics, women are still underrepresented too. In 2016, 37% of the parliament was made up of women, this was the exact same number as in

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39 Rijksoverheid, “De verschillen tussen vrouwen en mannen worden kleiner”.
41 Ibid.
42 World economic forum, “Measuring the global gender gap”.

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2006. Example roles for both girls and boys are set when they observe that little more than $1/3$ of the parliament consist of women and that $3/4$ of the managing positions are occupied by men, this might result in girls having the idea that it is much more likely for a man to get a higher position than for a woman. Furthermore, when you know you are not likely to earn the same wages as your male counterpart when performing the same job just because of your sex is both not motivational and not rational. Following the rational choice theory “all action is fundamentally ‘rational’ in character and people calculate the likely costs and benefits of any action before deciding what to do.”

These data demonstrate that gender inequality is still present in the Netherlands. On a more positive note, the numbers mentioned above show that implementing laws and policies can have major consequences. For example in the first ever published Global Gender Gap report in 2006 only 56% of women participated in the labour force against 73% of men. Whereas in 2016, as mentioned previously, 74% of women and 85% of men played an active role in the Dutch labour force. This means that the female to male ratio went up from 0.77 to 0.87, hereby coming closer to parity. Policies implemented by the Dutch government aimed at increasing the amount of working females by stimulating companies to come to agreements about more flexible work times, maternal leaves and financial compensations regarding childcare.

Interestingly, even though as mentioned before the number of women in parliament remained stable within those ten years, women performing ministerial positions increased

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49 Rijksoverheid, “Vrouwen aan het werk”.

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from 36% in 2006 to 47% last year.\textsuperscript{50} These numbers show that in 10 years’ time women’s role in the labour force increased and more women became ministers.

What is moreover striking is that when examining the percentage of women working as ‘professional and technical workers’ it can be observed that in 2006 the female to male ratio was 0.92 and in 2016 0.95, this almost reaches parity. Research showed that in the Netherlands in particular the differences between girls and boys in “the choice of subjects, study and career” are bigger than in other European countries.\textsuperscript{51} This could be due to the fact that girls are taught to believe that they are not supposed to aim for a career in technology or science. Technological subjects are still heavily male dominated which can negatively impact the prospects of females striving for a beta career. Choices regarding the examination package are made during adolescence, the time when conforming to the social norm is at its peak for most adolescents.\textsuperscript{52} Deviating from the norm is often seen as bad for your social reputation and that is why ‘safe’ choices are made even though on the long run this might not be what someone wants. It has to be noted that within this category of ‘professional and technical workers’, teachers, professional care workers, heath (associate) professionals and information and communications technicians and professionals are included.\textsuperscript{53} Perhaps this explains the high number of girls in this field of occupations.

To make societies more gender equal it is important that people become aware of the impact stereotypical beliefs can have. By focusing on children, changes can be made in the perceptions of our future generations and if done thoroughly, this could have a major influence on the development of a more gender equal society. Studies show that implicit stereotyping can be altered via media. An example of this is when looking at racial stereotyping, research proves that when white “viewers saw negative, stereotypical African

\textsuperscript{50} World Economic Forum, “The Global Gender Gap Report 2006 and 2016”.
\textsuperscript{51} Weerd, de and Rommes, “To bèta or not to bèta?”, p.63.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p.64.
American media personalities, they reported greater stereotypical beliefs, more internal attributions, increased hostile feelings, and an overall lack of support for affirmative action policies as compared to when they saw counter stereotypical, positive African American media characters.”^54 Exposure to the latter actually reduced implicit prejudice.\(^55\) Similarly, women taking on roles in media traditionally performed by men, could influence existing implicit gender stereotypes.

Despite technological advancements having changed the way young people are taught at school, books are still a major part of children’s early education. 99% of the Dutch population is literate and the first skill children learn at school is reading.\(^56\) Technology is often thought to have catastrophic effects on literature, nevertheless, people still seem to read a lot; the general book sales in the Netherlands over 2016 were 441 million Euros. The sales of children’s books during the Sinterklaas period in particular, increased with 23.4% in comparison to the previous year.\(^57\) When powerful stereotypical gender norms are conveyed through books to young children, it is hard to paint these children another picture in regards to gender equality.

### 2.5 Policy recommendations in Europe

In 2013, the European Parliament published a report on gender inequality and how this is held in place via the European media. In this report it was stressed that “stereotypes in advertising on children's television programmes are a particular problem because of their potential impact on gender socialisation and, subsequently, children's views of themselves, of their family members and of the outside world.”^58

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55 Ibid.
56 IndexMundi, "Netherlands Literacy".
57 CPNB, “Boek meest populaire sinterklaas cadeau”.
This report used the definition of Lorber to explain gender stereotyping as “the process through which gender roles are perpetuated in the socialisation of individuals. It refers to preconceived ideas, whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Gender stereotyping forces individuals in adhering to a predetermined gender role just because of their sex and regardless of their natural predispositions.”\(^{59}\)

In other words, gender stereotyping is defining ourselves or judging others based on whether they are male or female and predetermining expectations on how they should act based on whichever gender they appear to be. This report by the European parliament was based on “the largest and longest longitudinal study” called “The Global Media Monitoring Project promoted by the United Nations, whose data have been collected every 5 years since 1995” and is based on 76 countries.\(^{60}\) In 2010 based on this report, the European parliament pointed out that women’s voices are underrepresented in the media; “the news give a male-centred view of the world as far as concerns both the contents produced by the media and the producers (reporters or presenters) of the news themselves.”\(^{61}\) And when they are portrayed women are still “invisible as active participants in work outside the household.”\(^{62}\) As argued previously, different forms of media influence children’s’ perception of what society is like, the gender roles of adults and therefore also what is expected of the child itself.

For example, when children watch the news or a television series in which women only perform household chores and fathers go to their work in the morning and come back in the evening they might think this is the norm they have to live up to. Consequently, this might influence the choices these children make in life. They may not follow their passions but instead try to adhere to the norm; a girl might give up on her dream to become a fireman and a

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p.20.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., p.20.
\(^{62}\) Ibid., p.20.
boy might give up on his dream to become a hairdresser. This can influence their public and private lives in terms of happiness. Not only is their happiness affected, but also the society that surrounds them, how many potentially fantastic careers have been crushed before they even started because of pressures to adhere to a preconceived idea of what is realistic or normal?

To avoid this, “the Council of the European Union adopted the Conclusions on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in Society.” These conclusions state that research on the matter has to be promoted, gender stereotypes have to be removed from policies, education and in particular the media. They also insist that advertising messages “which are contrary to human dignity and which convey gender stereotypes” through different types of media should stop. Books read for pleasure by children are not mentioned in this report but it nevertheless seems of great importance to look into these too. Especially because books can have the same effects on children as television programmes; they can indoctrinate children with the norm they have to follow.

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64 Ibid., p.42.
65 Ibid., p.43.
3. Gender in children’s books

3.1 Research on children’s books

Since the 1960s, the interest in analysing the importance of children’s books has increased due to societal developments such as the second feminist wave and hippie, peace and environment movements. Ideas about the upbringing of children and the vision on children in general have changed. “Many parents with a critical vision on society, started to see children’s books as the ideal way during the upbringing to create societal awareness in children.” Since the earliest known forms of children’s literature in the 1740’s, it has been “imbricated with material culture, and reading and play were seen through the lens of gender.”

The 1970s brought the realisation that most children’s books had been written along these conservative lines. In regards to the portrayal of gender, much research on male and female characters in children’s books occurred during this period. Weitzman and colleagues wrote one of the first and most influential researches on the topic. They focused on award-winning picture books read to preschool children from the age of 0 until around 6 years old in the United States. Often these books are read multiple times due to their accessibility and often low number of pages. The research showed that women and girls were underrepresented in these picture books, especially as main characters but also in titles and on illustrations. They found a ratio of “11 pictures of males for every one picture of a female” and when including “animals with obvious gender identities, the bias is even greater. The ratio of male to female animals is 95:1.” Furthermore, girls were found more often indoors than boys.

“While boys play in the real world outdoors, girls sit and watch them-cut off from that world

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67 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.,p.1132.
by the window porch or fence around their homes.”

Erikson referred to this as the “conception of the masculine outer space and the feminine inner space.”

Weitzman et al., also found that the book characters adhered to the standard gender stereotypes of the society at that time. For example, boys were portrayed as more important, less emotional, active, strong, aggressive and self-confident whereas girls were seen as secondary characters, often pretty and small, highly emotional, passive, dependent, submissive, ready to serve others and constantly happy. Key summarised this in 1971 as "boys do, girls are.” Domestically, the books depicted men doing repair work and women taking care of the household and the children. Another research by Crabb and Bielwaski showed that household artefacts were much more often portrayed in the hands of women than in those of men. Males performed a more diverse range of occupations and often times, ones that were seen as more important such as being a doctor, whereas there was less variety in jobs performed by female characters and often they took in the assistant roles such as nurse or secretary. Men were expected to be physically stronger and tall while women seemed small and weak. The research by Weitzman et al., was followed by the publication of An Annotated Bibliography of Nonsexist Picture Books for Children in 1973 by the Women’s Action Alliance. This list consisted of non-stereotypical books portraying for example women in non-traditional labour roles.

Janice McCabe, a professor of sociology, analysed “the representation of males and females in the titles and central characters of 5,618 children’s books published throughout the

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63 Ibid.
67 Crabb and Bielwaski, “The social representation of material culture and gender”, p.74.
69 Meijers, “Tiffany Dop, bats veur de kop”, p.10
Results showed that in titles males were represented almost twice as much as females, main characters were 1.6 times as likely to be male and central animal characters were almost three times as likely to be male. Similar results were recorded in a 1977 research in the Netherlands by Tota Kuyt. She looked into two hundred books written for children in the first grade of primary school and found that “there were many more boys and men represented in books than girls and women and the main characters were male three out of four times. She signalled that the roles children and adults played in books were generally traditional.” Examples are that females were portrayed as fearful and often had to be helped. A study by Williams et al., that replicated the Weitzman research in 1987 showed again that books portrayed males and females stereotypically. In addition to existing behavioural categories they found that males are more likely to be aggressive, “competitive, persistent and creative.”

All over the world, researchers found with similar results showing that women and girls played a minor role in children’s literature. Again in 1977, Dahrendorf argued that books are used in a psychological way “to push women in certain standard patterns while at the same time expecting them to take on these standard values.” It was widely agreed that change had to be brought about in children’s books. Fairy tales specifically came under attack during the 1970s for portraying the princesses as passive, helpless beings therefore keeping the stereotypes alive. It was no longer solely the task of teachers and parents “to pay attention to what books their children were reading but moreover publishers had to avoid reaffirming stereotypes”, consequently feminist publishers came into being. In a later study

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80 McCabe et al., "Gender In Twentieth-Century Children's Books", p.197.
81 McCabe et al., "Gender In Twentieth-Century Children's Books", p.197 and 209.
82 Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p.27.
83 Ibid.
86 Ibid., 7-8.
87 Ibid., p.6.
by Kortenhaus and Demarest it came to the fore that girls were much more often portrayed in a nurturing pro-social role than boys.\textsuperscript{88} Furthermore, they argued that between 1960-1980 boys were portrayed outside three times as much as girls on illustrations.\textsuperscript{89} This is related to men having a job and women performing the household chores.

Current research such as the one by Hamilton et al., in 2006 shows similar results; male female ratio and characters with gender stereotypical roles are still present in children’s books read today. They focussed on two hundred award winning and top sold picture books in 2001 in the United States. What is interesting about their study is that these researchers were the first to identify a relation between the author’s sex and “the disparity between numbers of female and male main and title characters”.\textsuperscript{90} They found that “under-representation of female characters is due to male authors alone” whereas previously done research showed both male and female writers were as likely to prefer male characters.\textsuperscript{91}

A research focussing on Belgium published in 2006 by Vera Hoorens, showed that men and boys often perform the role of main characters and women and girls the role of side characters in popular picture books read by Belgian children. Even though male and female characters were portrayed on the covers almost equally and more titles contained a female name, the main characters often turned out to be male.\textsuperscript{92} Hoorens argued that “the ‘default’ main character is male”, people widely assume that the most important character is male and therefore a name only has to be mentioned in the title when “the book deviates from the ‘normal situation’.”\textsuperscript{93} She moreover found that fathers were often portrayed as the ‘funny ones’ whereas mothers were serious and managed the household.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{88} Kortenhaus and Demarest, “Gender Role Stereotyping in Children’s Literature”, p.230.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Hamilton et al., “Gender Stereotyping and Under-representation of Female Characters”, p.763.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} Hoorens, “Als er geen naam op staat, gaat het over jongens”, p.25.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p.24.
Most existing research is done on picture books read by children in the United States during the 20th century. Also the majority of recently performed studies, such as the one by Hoorens, focussed on illustrations in picture books. Nevertheless, text underneath pictures or text in books aimed at older children without illustrations also create and develop gender stereotypes. For that reason it is of important to look into these books and how they could possibly influence children’s view on gender.

3.2 A study of gender in children’s books in the Netherlands

Recent research by Vera Haket in 2015 focused on the thirty most sold, most borrowed and most awarded books of the years 2012/13 for the age groups 4-6, 6-9 and 9-12. Five main themes / results came to the fore in her work:

1) Boys and men are still more present than girls and women in books, nevertheless, the difference is smaller than the results of Weitzman, forty years earlier showed. When solely looking at books for young children, 4-6 years old, women are underrepresented more than in books for older children. When analysing main characters, Haket found that 53% of the main characters was male and 23% was female.\textsuperscript{95}

2) When examining the behaviour of the characters in more depth, Haket found a lot has changed since the end of the 70s. Girls are depicted as more pro-active than before, while boys are also portrayed as scared, clumsy and insecure (as long as they eventually fix their problems themselves). Caring about one’s appearance, however, continues to be more important for girls and the hero of a story is often a boy/man.\textsuperscript{96}

3) In books meant for older children, female characters seem to be mainly occupied with gaining popularity with other girls, or being liked by boys because of their appearance. Boys

\textsuperscript{95}Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p.32-36.
\textsuperscript{96}Ibid.,p.32-34.
also focus to a certain extent on popularity and friendship but they are much less occupied with their own looks and their female counterparts.  

4) Some change occurred in the portrayal of parents in children’s books since the 70s. Mothers are not portrayed as plain as before and fathers are not depicted any longer as only being adventurous. They do sometimes spend time with their children; they help them out with making sandwiches for example. In general however, the parental characters have not changed much. Dads barely do anything in the household, but read the newspaper and they are being served at the table. Mothers always seem to be at home, taking care of the children and the household. Dads are funny, while mothers are practical and considerate and do not only call the children but also the fathers to order.  

5) The variety of occupations practiced by men is still much bigger than that of women in books read by children today. In some books, however, ‘traditional male occupations’ such as doctors, mayors and lawyer are performed by women. Certain occupations like administrative and fashion are still strongly related to women.  

This research by Haket showed that some change has occurred between the portrayal of gender in children’s books in the 20th century and books currently read by children. Girls seem to show more pro-active behaviour and boys are also insecure and fearful. There is some consistency in the fact that boys are portrayed more often, girls seem to care more about their appearance and their social ties than boys, parents are mostly still adhering to the traditional norms and men practice a wider variety of professions than women.

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97 Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p.32-34.  
98 Ibid.  
99 Ibid.
3.3 The effects of gendered book characters on children

It has been proven by a variety of studies that children’s books can have an effect on the assumptions of children and their behaviour. In 1978 for example, Lutes-Duncley made pre-schoolers listen to a story about boys and girls who helped out in an orphanage. Some children heard a very stereotypical story in which the boys were building and painting and the girls cleaning and cooking. Other children heard a contra-stereotypical story in which the girls were the ones building and painting and the boys were cleaning and cooking. Both groups of children had to choose a couple of times between two activities, one stereotypical boys activity and one stereotypical girls activity. Children who had heard the contra-stereotypical story choose a non-stereotypical activity more often than children who heard the stereotypical story or no story at all. Another study by Trepanier-Street and Romatowski in 1999 “consisted of the reading (across a 2-month period) of six selected children's books focusing on non-stereotypic gender roles and activities and the implementation of book related activities.” The results showed that “after the reading of non-stereotypic literature, more children judged the occupations as appropriate for both men and women. This was true for both boys and girls.” More recent research on this topic was done in 2009 by Karniol and Gal-Disegni. Their study “examined the impact of gender-fair and gender-stereotyped basal readers on 1st-grade children’s gender stereotypes.” Basal readers are textbooks used to teach reading. Their results showed that children using the gender-fair basal reader “saw more activities as appropriate for both sexes” and “judged more activities stereotypically associated with females as appropriate for both males and females alike.”

In a study of last year by Earles, two derivative books were developed in which the male hero was switched for a female and the other way around. These books were read to 114

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100 Hoorens, “Als er geen naam op staat, gaat het over jongens”, p.28.
102 Ibid., p.158
104 Ibid.
pre-school children. The researcher found that these children often made contradicting observations since the books did not reflect the worlds they were used to. Due to the ‘unusual’ switch in gender roles some books were rejected as unbelievable. It was also shown that in the story of a female pirate the main character was seen as having less “bodily ability and freedom” than when the pirate was a male. Earles argued that when looking at gender stereotypes children actively take part in reproducing these. She advocated for giving children “the educational tools to understand how meanings and objects impact their choices.”

3.4 The current study

In summary, existing research shows that towards the end of the 20th century children’s books read in the Netherlands were still very much based on traditional gender stereotypes. Studies by Hoorens and Haket demonstrate that over time certain gender-related portrayals have become less common while others are still intact. Not much research has been done outside of the United States and most of the existing research is outdated. To be able to create an accurate and concrete picture of the gender trend within children’s books over time it would be useful to perform a certain study on a yearly base. Following up Haket, this research aims to examine gender stereotyping in children’s books read by Dutch children in 2015/16. This will be done by creating a coding system that can be repeated by others.

The research question that will be answered is: how is gender portrayed in the most sold, most borrowed and most awarded children’s books for the ages 4-6, 6-9, and 9-12 in the years 2015/16 in the Netherlands? And how does this compare to Haket’s results of 2012/13?

106 Ibid., p.384.
107 Ibid., p.384.
108 Ibid., p.385.
109 Ibid., p.385.
I hypothesise that not much will have changed in the short amount of time between Haket’s research and this current study. Since gender in books did receive increased attention in the past year, it might be possible that there is a wider variety in occupations or more of a gender equal division in household tasks performed by adults portrayed in the recently published books. I do not however envision that character traits, traditionally seen as stereotypically feminine and masculine, will have become less present in children’s books over the past two / three years.
4. Methodology

As founder of ‘Zo-ook’, a foundation striving for “bigger diversity in children’s books and other media; Diversity in role patterns, Diversity in ethnicity, Diversity in family models”\(^\text{110}\), Vera Haket carried out the previously mentioned research on gender diversity in children’s books read in 2012/13. In conjunction with this foundation, I will analyse the presence of common gender representations in the thirty most sold, borrowed and awarded books read by children between four and twelve years old in the Netherlands in 2015/16. Using a coding system developed and customised to what I believe to be relevant themes, but based on Haket’s classification used in 2015 in combination with categories used by other mentioned researchers such as Weitzman et al., these books will be analysed and recorded on four different levels, explained in section 4.2.

By using a standardised coding system that can be used again, this research could then be repeated on a yearly basis to create a clear picture of the development/change in gender stereotypes in books read by children in the Netherlands. This research is in effect, a modern adaptation of what is out there in the sense that it is about books read by children in the Netherlands and focuses on literature currently read so not outdated. Its purpose is to show the current gender picture that is painted in children’s books that influences children and what implications they may have. The relevance lies in the advancements of awareness on the issue, even since 2013 when similar work took place.

4.1 Materials

Data were derived by coding the thirty most sold, most borrowed and most awarded children’s books for the age groups: 4-6, 6-9 and 9-12 years old.

\(^{110}\) Foundation ‘zo-ook’.
The most sold books were found by making use of CPNB (Stichting Collectieve Propoganda van het Nederlandse Boek). CPNB announced the top 10 most sold books of 2016 based on the sales date of retailers.\textsuperscript{111} For more detailed information see appendix A.

The most borrowed books were found via CNPB and foundation Leenrecht. The CPNB announced the top 10 most sold books of 2016 “based on the lend details of public libraries collected by the foundation ‘Leenrecht’.”\textsuperscript{112} For more detailed information see Appendix A.

The most awarded books are the ones that won a Griffel or Kinderjuryprijs. The Griffel awards (national award for the top 3 best written books) are handed out yearly by a jury made up of five adults, to the best children’s books of the previous year. The Griffels for the books published in 2016 will only be handed out later this year. Additionally, the children’s jury prizes of 2016 could not be taken into account either since their results will be published in September of this year.\textsuperscript{113} For more detailed information see Appendix A.

Literature published throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} century and books written by both Dutch and international authors were included. An important criterion was that more than half of the book had to be based on a story with characters. This could be fiction, non-fiction, fairy tales and stories with animals. Books without a storyline based on characters, informative books, and poetry were excluded from this research. There was found to be an overlap between the most sold, most borrowed and most awarded books and sometimes authors of one series of books dominated the list. When this was the case only the book highest on the list was included in this study.

For the complete list of the most sold, borrowed and awarded books see Appendix A. For the final list of the thirty analysed books used within this study see Appendix B.

\textsuperscript{111} CPNB, “Best verkochte boeken 19jan17”.
\textsuperscript{112} CPNB, “Meest uitgeleende boeken 19jan2017”.
\textsuperscript{113} CPNB, “Jochem Myjer en Tosca Menten”.

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4.2 Procedure

For twenty-eight of the thirty books the first fifty pages of each book were read, analysed and coded. For the books consisting of short stories, two books out of the thirty, the first ten stories were read, analysed and coded. The study was divided in four parts, the aim of the first section was to provide a general analysis of the books. When taking the book of the shelf what are the first impressions related to sex and gender a child gets when observing the title and the cover of the book? And when browsing through it what sex and gender references will the child observe? For the purpose of these visual interpretations, sex references were denoted as ‘Male’ or ‘Female’; this could range from any man or woman of any age, and also animals or make believe beings depicting a sex. The second part of this study focussed on a general analysis of the characters the child comes across while reading. What sex do the main and additional characters have and is there a relation between the different age categories for which the books were written and the sex of the characters? Furthermore, when examining the main characters and the sex of the author can a relation be observed? The third section of the research concentrated on an in-depth analysis of the characters in relation to behavioural categories commonly associated with masculine and feminine gender. These categories were based on research done by authors mentioned in the previous sections of this thesis such as Weitzmann, Turner-Bowker, Crabb and Bielwaski, Clark et al., Meijers, McCabe et al., Kortenhaus and Demarest, Hamilton et al., Hoorens and Haket. The last part of the study aimed at analysing occupations performed by males and females throughout the books. The parents and grandparents were analysed into more detail regarding their household chores.

Four research stages:

1) General analysis of the books; title, cover, location and illustrations.
   - Publication dates were recorded.
• Each title was coded as containing a reference to sex; male or female, both or unidentifiable. This could either be a name related to sex or a reference related to a job or a role such as a prince/princess.

• Each cover was coded as portraying a reference to sex; male or female, both or unidentifiable. Furthermore, these characters were coded as human(s) and non-human(s) (witches were seen as humans, giants, monsters, werewolves etc on the other hand, are non-human).

• The identified characters portrayed on the cover were coded as finding themselves outside or inside.

• When looking at the illustrations throughout the analysed pages, these were coded as portraying male or female characters and depicting these characters outside or inside. The analysis is restricted to characters that have an identifiable sex either male or female. Additionally, only the illustrations portraying a single identifiable sex were included, illustrations with a mix of both male and female characters were left out. Furthermore, only the images with an identifiable location were analysed, unidentifiable backgrounds were left out. At first all illustrations were analysed, an example of this is when Tijs was portrayed outside on page 1, 2, 5, 8 etc. each page was counted, the same was done for the inside portrayals. Due to the fact that most books have the same character portrayed outside several times throughout the book, these characters outbalanced the results. To correct for this, a second test was done. This test primarily focused on the portrayal of each individual character and its location outside / inside throughout the book. Here, not how often Tijs was portrayed outside but whether Tijs was depicted outside or inside at all was examined.
2) General analysis of the characters.

• Main characters were determined through the storyline. They were coded male, female or unidentifiable. Furthermore, they were coded as human(s) and non-human(s) same rules as mentioned previously were applied.

• The number of books published for each age category (4-6, 6-9 and 9-12) was noted down. This in combination with the amount of previously coded male and female main characters presented in the books made it possible to look into the relation between books written for a certain age and the presence of male / female main character(s).

• The sex of each author was written down. This in combination with the amount of previously coded male and female main characters presented in the books made it possible to look into the relation between books written by male / female authors and the sex of the main character(s).

• Additional characters were determined through the storyline. They were coded male, female or unidentifiable. Furthermore, they were coded as human(s) and non-human(s), same rules as mentioned previously were applied.

• The previously acquired number of books published for each age category (4-6, 6-9 and 9-12) in combination with the amount of previously coded male and female additional characters presented in the books made it possible to look into the relation between books written for a certain age and the presence of male / female additional characters.

3) In-depth analysis of all the characters mentioned in the books.

The main focus was on behavioural categories, these categories are all based on the previously referenced studies mentioned in part 3.1 of this thesis. There it was argued
that behavioural categories are often found to be associated with a specific gender, traditionally seen. The following categories are used in this study, see also Appendix C. Each sentence in the fifty pages or first ten stories was analysed; when a word related to one of the behavioural categories was mentioned, this was tallied in combination with the gender of the character associated with this word. An example of this is the amount of times Tijs portrayed sadness.

Table 1. An overview of the behavioural categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural categories</th>
<th>Definition based on Oxford Dictionary</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Commonly associated with:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-active / Directive / independent;</td>
<td>“Creating or controlling a situation rather than just responding to it after it has happened”, “the management or guidance of operations.”</td>
<td>Being explorative, adventurous, going to the rescue, giving orders, taking the lead, making decisions, running away from home, searching, being curious, climbing, jumping, asking the way, reacting to what the situation requires.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive / Submissive / Dependent;</td>
<td>“Acting in response to a situation or the authority/will of others rather than creating or controlling it.”</td>
<td>Waiting for others to decide, being passive, following orders.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-social;</td>
<td>“Relating to or denoting behaviour which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship.”</td>
<td>Being cooperative, nurturing, serving, apologising, bringing presents, not leaving behind, comforting, cuddling, giving a kiss, positive nicknames.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social;</td>
<td>“Contrary to the laws and customs of society, in a way that causes annoyance and disapproval in others.”</td>
<td>Being aggressive, fighting, bullying, name-calling, doing things behind someone’s back, being bossy, disobeying, lying, whining, yelling, screaming to others.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative;</td>
<td>“Relating to or involving the use of the imagination or original ideas to create something.”</td>
<td>Drawing, crafting, making plans, using materials for new purposes, building a hut, creative cooking.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny;</td>
<td>“Causing laughter or amusement; humorous.”</td>
<td>Winking, joking, tickling.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious;</td>
<td>“Acting or speaking sincerely and in earnest, rather than in a joking or half-hearted manner.”</td>
<td>Stern, serious behaviour.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness;</td>
<td>“The condition or quality of being sad.”</td>
<td>Crying, pouring out ones heart.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness;</td>
<td>“The state of being happy.”</td>
<td>Cheering, being happy, being excited, celebrating.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful;</td>
<td>“Feeling or showing fear or anxiety.”</td>
<td>Being scared, fast beating heart, nervous, getting jitters</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger;</td>
<td>“A strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility.”</td>
<td>Screaming (when it is not to others), kicking or hitting a wall, being very annoyed.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring about appearance;</td>
<td>Caring about “the way that someone or something looks.”</td>
<td>Talking about looks, hair, make-up, shoes, dying hair, painting nails.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically strong;</td>
<td>“Having the power to move heavy weights or perform other physically demanding tasks.”</td>
<td>Going to the gym, being referred to as strong, muscular, lifting something or someone.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically weak;</td>
<td>“Lacking the power to perform physically demanding tasks; having little physical strength or energy.”</td>
<td>Small, no muscles.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) In-depth analysis of the relation between the mentioned occupations and the characters throughout the analysed pages and the relation between the mentioned household chores and the parents and grandparents. Every time a profession was mentioned this was noted down in combination with the sex of the character performing this job. Additionally, all the mentioned professions were divided over occupational sectors to look into the relation between the number of male / female characters present in a certain sector and the possible relation between ‘important’ or ‘less important’ professions and the character performing these occupations.
Every time a household chore was mentioned in relation to parents or grandparents this was noted down in combination with the sex of the character performing this chore. All the mentioned chores were grouped to look into which sex most often prepares food for example.

For the coding form that was used, see Appendix C. To assess whether this coding system could be reliably used by independent raters, my supervisor Judi Mesman and I both analysed the same book ‘Tijs en de eenhoorn’ on all four research categories to make sure the coding set was replicable and resulted in similar outcomes. This proved to be the case.
5. Results

Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. Quantitative analyses included Pearson’s Chi-Square Test, Paired Samples Tests, T-tests and T-tests for Equality of Means. Significant data and patterns are shown in the graphs and tables below.

5.1 General analysis

Year of publication

Out of the thirty books, three books were published in 2016, fifteen in 2015, three in 2014, one in 2012 and one in 2011. Four books were published between 2000 and 2010 namely two in 2009, one in 2006 and one in 2000. Three books were published during the 20th century, two in 1982 and one in 1953.

Titles and covers

*Figure 1* shows that twenty-one books had a title not indicating a specific sex. Five of the thirty books had a title referring to males such as *Bas en Daan graven een gat* (Bas and Daan are digging a hole). Generally Bas and Daan are seen as two typical male names. Two titles referred to females; *Lotte and Roos. Samen ben je niet alleen* (Lotte and Roos. Together you are not alone). Again, Lotte and Roos are two typically female names. *Naar opa en oma pannenkoek* (to grandad and grandma pancake) is an example of the two books that had titles with both male and female references in the title.

When looking at the book covers, see *Figure 2*, of the thirty analysed books it became clear that six of them had no illustrations referencing to sex, with *Suikerspin* (Cotton candy) being an obvious example, only portraying a Guinea pig, cotton candy and a cigarette. Fourteen covers such as that of *Ben’s boot* (Ben’s boat), which shows a little boy and his father, had either one or several male characters, making this the majority category. One or multiple female characters were on the covers of three of the books; for instance the book *Hoe
overleef ik de brugklas (how do I survive the first year of high school), portrayed a girl behind her desk. Seven out of the thirty books showed both female and male character(s) on the cover. *Jip and Janneke* is an example of this showing both a little boy and girl.

Figure 1. Male/female characters shown in the titles
Figure 2. Male/female characters shown on the cover

Next, the relation between the title and the cover was observed. See Figure 3, six out of the twenty-one books with an unidentifiable title also had unidentifiable covers, three showing female character(s) and another three having a combination of both male and females. Nine of the books had male character(s) on the covers, five of which being human, one non-human, and much like *De gorgels*, three displayed both male humans and non-humans.
When looking at the seven books that had both a male and female reference on their covers, we see as shown in the Figure 4 below that four of these books have more male than female characters portrayed on the covers and one book has more female than male characters. Two books have an equal number, both having one male and one female character on the cover.

The location of the cover picture is also a significant part of data collected in the research, especially when considering certain connotations that link male or females with typically being in a certain place; women predominantly being depicted indoors for example.
When looking at the locations depicted on the cover of the books, twelve did not show an identifiable location, most of the times these covers just had a background colour. Thirteen covers portrayed an outside location, ten of which showing male characters, two depicting gender unidentifiable characters, one with a mix of both male and female characters and no books solely portrayed females. Five books illustrated an inside location, one with male character(s), two with female character(s) and one showing a mix of male and female characters.

Figure 5. Are characters on the covers portrayed outdoors or indoors?

Figure 6. Sex of characters that were portrayed outdoors

Figure 7. Sex of characters that were portrayed indoors

Character location illustrations

The first test was based on all illustrations (N = 288) throughout the first fifty pages or first ten stories of each book. As previously mentioned illustrations were coded as portraying male or female characters and depicting these characters outside or inside. Results show, see
Table 2, that males are portrayed significantly more often outside than inside and females are portrayed significantly more inside than outside.

Table 2. Frequency of male/female characters portrayed outdoors/indoors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outside</th>
<th>Inside</th>
<th>Test result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>N = 188</td>
<td>N = 65</td>
<td>$X^2 = P&lt;0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>N = 10</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
<td>$X^2 = P&lt;0.001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the second test was to examine each individual character and whether they were portrayed outside or inside at all (N = 288). When only looking at examples of being outside, results show that 76% of the male characters and 43% of the female characters are portrayed outside at least once throughout the books, 83% of the female characters are seen to be inside at least once throughout the books, this being the case for 44% of the males. To examine whether these results were significant a paired sample T-test was used to examine whether within their own sex-group, males and females were portrayed more often in- or outside. Results showed that men were portrayed outside significantly more often 76% than inside 44%. T(89) = 3.50, p < .01. Furthermore, women were portrayed significantly more often inside 84% than outside 43%. T (34) = - 3.06, p < 0.1.

Table 3. Frequency of single characters portrayed outdoors/indoors one time throughout the book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outside (%)</th>
<th>Inside (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68 (75.6)</td>
<td>40 (44.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15 (42.9)</td>
<td>29 (82.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Sex of the main and additional characters

See Figure 8, seventeen books (57%) had a male main character. Of these male main characters thirteen were human and four were non-human. Nine books (30%) had a female main character. All of these characters were humans. Four books (13%) had both a male and a female main character. Of these mixed main characters three books consisted of humans and one book had a female human character and a male non-human character.

Figure 8. Sex of main characters

The sex of the authors was also recorded, see Figure 9, confirming an equal distribution of 15 male and females as the writers of the thirty books. When looking into the relation between the authors’ and the main characters’ gender, the fifteen male authors wrote eleven books with a male main character, two books with a female main character and two books with both a male and female main character. Of the fifteen female authors seven
authors chose a female main character, six chose a male main character and two books had both a male and female main character.

Figure 9. Relation between author's sex and main characters' sex

Most children’s books state the appropriate age category for which they are intended. The possible relation between main characters being males more often in books for younger children was examined, see Figure 10. In the category aimed at 4-6 year olds there are five books with human male main characters and two books with both a human male and a human female main character. In the category 6-9 years old there are four books with a human male main character, three books with a non-human male main character and four books with a human female main character. In the category 9-12 years old there are four books with human male main characters, one book with a non-human male main character, five books with human female main characters, one book with both a human male and a human female main character and one book with a human female main character and a non-human male main character.
In the first fifty pages of the twenty-eight books and the first ten stories of the other two analysed books, which were a collection of short stories, there were four hundred and sixty additional characters observed with an identifiable sex. The fourteen unidentifiable characters were ignored for the purpose of this study. Two hundred and sixty-six (59.6%) of the additional characters were male, two hundred and thirty being humans and thirty-three non-humans. Hundred and eighty (40.4%) of the additional characters were female, hundred seventy one of which were humans and nine were non-humans.
When looking at the relation between the age category for which these books were written and the sex of the additional characters, results in Figure 12 show that in age category 4-6 years old there were twenty-seven male humans, three male non-humans, nine female humans and one female non-human. In the category 6-9 years old there are seventy-five male humans, twenty-two male non-humans, seventy-eight female humans and eight female non-humans. In the category 9-12 years old there were one hundred and twenty-eight male humans, eight male non-humans, eighty-four female humans and no female non-humans.

Figure 12. Sex of additional characters for recommended age categories

5.3 Behavioural categories, all referenced characters

The behaviour of the characters with an identifiable sex throughout the books based on the previously mentioned behavioural categories (see Appendix C) was analysed, as well as the amount of times a male or female portrayed certain stereotypical behaviour. See Table 4 below for the results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural categories</th>
<th>Male (N = 282)</th>
<th>Female (N = 186)</th>
<th>P-value t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-active/ directive / independent</td>
<td>Mean 1.29</td>
<td>Mean 1.38</td>
<td>Ns 0.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 3.33</td>
<td>SD 3.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive/ submissive / dependent</td>
<td>Mean 0.15</td>
<td>Mean 0.16</td>
<td>Ns 0.954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.67</td>
<td>SD 0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-social</td>
<td>Mean 0.43</td>
<td>Mean 0.73</td>
<td>P&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 1.30</td>
<td>SD 1.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social</td>
<td>Mean 0.80</td>
<td>Mean 1.02</td>
<td>Ns 0.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 2.08</td>
<td>SD 5.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Mean 0.16</td>
<td>Mean 0.17</td>
<td>Ns 0.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.83</td>
<td>SD 0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Mean 0.33</td>
<td>Mean 0.14</td>
<td>Ns 0.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 1.53</td>
<td>SD 0.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Mean 0.02</td>
<td>Mean 0.06</td>
<td>Ns 0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.16</td>
<td>SD 0.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Mean 0.17</td>
<td>Mean 0.20</td>
<td>Ns 0.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.79</td>
<td>SD 0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Mean 0.17</td>
<td>Mean 0.24</td>
<td>Ns 0.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.57</td>
<td>SD 1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Mean 0.27</td>
<td>Mean 0.33</td>
<td>Ns 0.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 1.35</td>
<td>SD 1.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Mean 0.28</td>
<td>Mean 0.42</td>
<td>Ns 0.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.96</td>
<td>SD 1.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring about appearance</td>
<td>Mean 0.07</td>
<td>Mean 0.27</td>
<td>P &lt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 0.58</td>
<td>SD 1.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physically strong  
Mean 0.32  
SD 1.11
Mean 0.01  
SD 0.10
P < 0.001

Physically weak  
Mean 0.05  
SD 0.27
Mean 0.02  
SD 0.18
Ns 0.274

Based on the results, three behavioural categories showed significant differences between male and female characters. Pro-social (p<0.05), caring about appearance (p<0.05) and physically strong (p<0.01).

Next, two categories were created, a category based on behavioural characteristics commonly associated with masculinity; pro-active, anti-social, creative, funny, anger and physically strong and a category related to femininity; reactive, pro-social, serious, sadness, happiness, fear, caring about appearance and physically weak. How males score on both the masculine and feminine categories and how females score on both categories was tested. It was shown that female characters scored significantly throughout the books on the behavioural categories that are traditionally seen as feminine. Male characters, however, were not portrayed significantly masculine.

Table 5. Results of feminine and masculine behavioural categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>T-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminine behavioural categories</td>
<td>M 0.61</td>
<td>M 0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 1.08</td>
<td>SD 1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine behavioural categories</td>
<td>M 0.96</td>
<td>M 0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 1.19</td>
<td>SD 1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 In-depth analysis: character occupations and household chores

Occupations

Results show that in the thirty analysed books men perform fifty-two different kinds of occupations, 60% of the total amount of jobs referenced in the books compared to thirty-five types performed by women, making up the subsequent 40%.

When analysing the mentioned occupations based on common sector categorizations, it comes to the fore that both sexes are regularly present in the educational related roles. Both males and females are also evenly represented in scientific occupations such as biologists, psychologists and researchers. Furthermore, servants or maids are performed by both males and females too. When looking at big differences in occupational fields between both sexes, it is shown that male characters are very present in the sector of police or armed / special services; seven books have male policemen and one book has a duo formed by a male and a female policeman. Along the same lines, males dominate the several examples of a security guard, as well as regularly leading in examples of governing positions like a leader of a country, a general or a mayor whereas we only see one queen and one princess. Similarly, ‘high jobs’ such as CEO are fulfilled in three books by males and in none by females. Males are also regularly portrayed in books working in the field of sports, performing jobs such as ski instructor, kick box trainer and diver. Only in one book are female snowboarders portrayed. Female characters are however very prominently present in the field of ‘social work and care’ and additionally more likely to perform secretarial work.
It is shown when zooming in to three specific occupational sectors; ‘medicine’, ‘education’ and ‘retail’ that in six books a male character performed the role of doctor in comparison to one book having a female character mentioned to be a doctor. Females were nurses in three books and in one book there was a male nurse. Ten books mentioned a female teacher and seven books a male teacher in the educational sector. In four books (deputy) principles were referred to as being male, whereas this role was taken up by a female once. When looking at shop owners we find men owning businesses in five books. What is interesting is that of those shops one is a knitting shop, one is a fashion shop, one is a shop that sells a lot of different things, the fourth one is a restaurant and the last one a hairdresser. Women were found to be business owners in three books, one woman owning a snack bar, another a needle shop and the third a clothing shop.
Household chores

When looking at the roles of the parents and grandparent in the household the thirty analysed books showed that especially activities related to making food were frequently mentioned. Especially females were often found in the kitchen baking pies and preparing hot chocolate whereas males were most likely to make sandwiches; in one of the books the father got take away food. When looking into which parent gives the children orders to do things it was found that most of the times this is the mother, whereas repair work in and outside of the house was seen to be the father’s job as shown in nine of the books. Fathers were most likely to use tools and build things whether mothers sewed, examples of which in three books. Mothers were also portrayed to prepare the children for school by combing their hair and helping them dress as well as making more comments related to the growth of children or
puberty. In two of the books mothers did the laundry even though the dads had made the clothes dirty. Both parents seem to take up the role of driver of the children. They also both put children to bed and are seen to equally do groceries.
6. Discussion

The results of this study show that, on first sight, males are more prominently represented on the covers of books most popularly read by children in the Netherlands. In conjunction with previously mentioned researches, when first picking up the book, children see males more frequently on covers and in titles, and again, continue to mostly see them as the dominant figures throughout the rest of the books. This reflects the views of society in the sense of storytelling or even labelling a certain role or profession. We tend to use male figures when telling jokes or simply describing our daily routines; the unspecific or unnamed characters within these accounts are more often than not male or at least we assume they are, thus replicating the trends in these results, and backing up further the claims of Hoorens, who argues men are ‘default’ characters.\textsuperscript{114} It has to be pointed out that this could be due to the fact that in the Dutch language no word for a single character with an unspecified gender exists. In English the word ‘they’ can be used when referring to this. However, in this research it was moreover shown that even when there was no reference to them in titles, cover illustrations present the presumed importance of male characters within its storyline, thus making the whole outer appearance of the majority of books male dominated.

When analysing the locations of characters portrayed on the cover and illustrations related to the gendered characters it was shown that men are portrayed significantly more outside and women more inside; a finding also reported by Weitzman et al., Erikson and Kortenhaus and Demarest, who noticed the similar trends of woman taking care of household

\textsuperscript{114} Hoorens, “Als er geen naam op staat, gaat het over jongens”, p.25.
duties and men predominately outside working or repairing.\textsuperscript{115} Considering the learning and development processes already discussed, children could assume they should imitate these trends, and equally, feel they are limited to the actions they are possibly influenced by through identifying conventional gender roles.

When looking at the main characters, again the findings support the conclusions of other studies that females are underrepresented in children’s books. McCabe’s research showed that “main characters were 1.6 times as likely to be male than female”, Kuyt’s 1.3 times more likely and in Haket’s, 2.3 times.\textsuperscript{116} The current study shows main characters are 1.9 times as likely to be male, rather than female, proving that an abundance of male characters are more likely to be seen in the thirty most popular books in the Netherlands of 2016, comparable to results reported by Kuyt’s research in 1977 and also by McCabe, which concentrated on the most popular books of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. These statistics are surprising, given the assumed increases in the general levels of awareness of gender inequality in recent years. When looking at the additional characters it was shown that they were 1.5 times as likely to be male. As a result of characters being male dominant, children may make their own assumptions towards the level of importance between male and females. Again going back to the strategies of imitating, children could look towards females in a more detrimental way, simply because they do not have an equal account of representation. This could be applicable to how girls stereotype themselves within their expected gender roles, but also through the eyes of boys who could develop a sense of supremacy, or even feel a certain pressure to live up to the prominent roles they read about. By the same notion, a feeling of inferiority could develop within girls, with the possibility of this leading to a lack of ambition, due to the imbalance of role models.

\textsuperscript{116}McCabe et al., "Gender In Twentieth-Century Children's Books", p.209. Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p.27 and 36.
When looking at non-human characters, the findings are again congruent with previous studies that showed that non-humans were much more likely to be males. This could be due to the fact that these previous studies solely focused on picture books, which are more likely to contain drawings of fictional characters. Backing up the theory of prominent made up characters automatically being male, we see all four non-human main characters being male. Additionally, the majority of additional characters were male. Despite the smaller quantity of examples, conclusions could be drawn from the fact that in non-human examples, all the main characters are male, as well as the majority of the additional characters.

When analysing the trends related to the suggested age of the reader, these were similar to the research of Haket in the sense that there is a constant disproportion between male and female characters throughout.  

Another part of this research looked into possible trends in the sex of the author and whether or not this has any impact on the sex of their main character, especially when reflecting on the theories of having the male default character and whether or not this is dependent or shows patterns towards the sex of the writer. This research is congruent with research done by Hamilton et al., that found a relation between the sex of the author and the underrepresentation of female characters. This thesis showed that male authors wrote more books with male main characters whereas female authors did not favour female nor male main characters. Here again we see the tendency to use male characters as the default cast, but in this case, less frequently when the author is female. Perhaps it is the case that female authors do not favour male characters any longer or they might have the feeling it is not necessary per se to use a male as main character in order to make a book more appealing.

The results of the current study show that females are significantly portrayed as having feminine behavioural characteristics. Males did not significantly portray more masculine

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117 Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p. 32-34.
118 Hamilton et al., “Gender Stereotyping and Under-representation of Female Characters”, p.763.
characteristics than females, however, the results were almost significant \((p = .055)\). During the 20\(^{th}\) century it was argued by Weitzman that boys were often portrayed to be physically strong and girls pro-social and caring about their appearance, similar trends were collected in this research. In many of the books analysed during this study, the size of the male character or his strength was emphasized or the ideal male was illustrated such as in the book *De gruwelijke generaal* (the cruel general) “a president had to be a strong, big, tough man, a good president was a real man.” \(^{119}\) In most books however, it was not explicitly mentioned that girls find their appearance important and boys do not. Nevertheless, implicitly the message is conveyed that it is normal for a girl to do this and not for a boy. Haket research also showed that girls were more likely to care more about their appearance, but she did point out that in more recent books, boys showed more feelings of fear, alongside girls being more proactive and less limited in their undertakings. \(^{120}\)

When looking at occupations, the current research showed that women seem to work less than men. This is in congruence with the numbers showed in the Global Gender Gap report; women in the Netherlands are still underrepresented in the labour force. \(^{121}\) Moreover, of the men and women mentioned to have a profession in the books, men perform a wider variety of jobs. This was similar to previously done studies such as by Weitzman et al., who not only pointed this out, but also concluded that males often times performed jobs “that were seen as more important.” \(^{122}\) This study showed similar outcomes; with males more likely to conduct the role of doctor, CEO or headmaster, whereas females “took in the assistant roles such as nurse or secretary.” \(^{123}\) The Global governance report also pointed out that women are underrepresented as “legislators, senior officials, and managers” and in politics. \(^{124}\) This trend

\(^{120}\) Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p. 32-34.
\(^{123}\) Ibid.
is reflected in the books read by children in the Netherlands. The pattern seen in governance roles like mayors, policemen or royalty are again male dominated, posing the theory that a male character is the ‘default’ when casting authoritative figures.\textsuperscript{125} Women occasionally did perform higher functioning roles, nevertheless, definitely not as often as males, following the same pattern stressed by Haket.\textsuperscript{126} In the book \textit{Gips} the main character is talking to a male nurse in the hospital, she asks him the following; “do they call you a nurse sometimes, as a joke?” in response the man nods.\textsuperscript{127} When reading this, the stereotype of boys being doctors and girls being nurses is reaffirmed. Similarly, most police officers are men, with the only exception being in the book \textit{Lotte en Roos} where two policemen are standing in front of the door “a man and a woman.”\textsuperscript{128} When almost solely reading about male policemen girls could dismiss their dreams of one day becoming a member of the police force since she is not of the ‘right’ gender and moreover, it could also lead to children seeing females in these roles as strange.

In terms of unemployment, interestingly in the book \textit{Suikerspin} it is explicitly mentioned that the father does not have a job whereas in most of the other books it is not specifically mentioned that mothers do not have a job. What was striking was that one book mentioned the following; “my dad was the one who stayed at home so that my mom could get her teaching license.”\textsuperscript{129} This indicates that this is seen as out of the ordinary, whereas when it is the mother who stays at home, it is expected and therefore, not worthwhile to point out explicitly.

As was also shown by Weitzman, books mostly depicted women taking care of the household and children while men took care of the repair work.\textsuperscript{130} This is still very much the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125}Hoorens, “Als er geen naam op staat, gaat het over jongens”, p.25.
\item \textsuperscript{126}Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”, p.32-34.
\item \textsuperscript{127}Woltz, “Gips” p.22.
\item \textsuperscript{128}Smithuis, “Lotte en Roos. Samen ben je niet alleen”, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{129}Holm, “de veertiende goudvis”, p.40.
\item \textsuperscript{130}Weitzman, “Sex-Role Socialization in Picture Books”, p.1131-1145.
\end{itemize}
case today even though fathers can be found in the kitchen every now and then and they do also drive children to school or leisurely activities. In terms of behavioural traits, fathers were mostly painted as less serious and playful figures, whereas mothers are shown as more strict and authoritative, a trend replicated in the work of Hoorens and Haket.\textsuperscript{131} In \textit{Ben’s boot}, for example, the main character says “his dad joked around every now and then but his mother did not, she was always very serious.”\textsuperscript{132} Haket also pointed out that mothers call both children and the father to order, this came to the fore in this study too. An example of this is that in \textit{de gorgels}, a pile of books has fallen in the father’s office. As a response mother says “for once tidy up properly, you are so sloppy.”\textsuperscript{133} Repercussions of this could lead to children seeing their parents through similar guidelines, expecting their mother to be strict and father a more joking figure.

All in all, disparities in gender remain present in the most popular books read by children in the Netherlands in 2015/16. The trends seen in the results mostly follow the stereotypical gender roles present within everyday domains of Dutch society like households, occupations and character behaviour.

### 6.1 Limitations and recommendations

Through analysing and discussing the results, it became clear that additional research is necessary to determine how big a role children’s literature actually plays in children developing a point of view on gender roles. Since it came to the fore that females are still underrepresented in Dutch children’s literature today, it would be useful to perform more studies in order to observe what effects these disproportionate representations of female and males characters have on children.

\textsuperscript{131} Hoorens, “Als er geen naam op staat, gaat het over jongens”, p.24, Haket, “Mama snijdt een komkommer, papa leest de krant”p.32-34.

\textsuperscript{132} Koolwijk, “Ben’s boot”, p.20.

\textsuperscript{133} Myjer, “De gorgels”, p.28.
The current research only provided a snapshot of the literature currently read by children in the Netherlands. Not only was the number of books, thirty, limited, the time frame on which it focused - two years - was short. This research can be seen as a guideline to further studies, when repeated on a yearly basis outcomes can be compared over a longer period of time and changes in portrayal will become visible. It will be of great value to keep a close eye on the occurrence and development of gender stereotypes in children’s books. Furthermore, most of the previously done studies focussed on different elements, this makes it difficult to compare results accurately. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to make use of a replicable coding scheme such as the one provided in this thesis to be able to measure, observe and compare concrete data in the future.

As mentioned earlier, when this study took place, the first six months of 2017, the awards by both the jury of the Griffel and Kinderjury for the year 2016 were not handed out yet and as a result could not be taken into account. Hence, it would be better to conduct a study like this after the awards have been handed out to make sure all the data used is accurate.

Additionally, only the first fifty pages of twenty-eight books were read and of two books only the first ten chapters. For that reason, making claims about the books as a whole and the change that occurred over the years need to be made with caution. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, when this study is repeated yearly it will be possible to observe a trend.

Furthermore, this research is restricted to western societies since in many countries in the non-western world children are not exposed to books as often as in the Netherlands. It would be interesting however, to look into the impact children’s books could possibly have on decreasing gender inequality in more gender unequal countries outside of the western world. Nevertheless, in many European societies research like this does not exist yet, since it would be relatively easy to conduct these it would perhaps be best to start here.
7. Implications

As the results of this study have shown, females were underrepresented in the children’s literature and often behaved in a traditional stereotypical manner. Women performed a smaller variety of jobs than men and even though men do play a bigger role in the household, it is still seen to be the main task of women to take care of the children. That representations and implicit messages present in children’s books can majorly impact them was shown by Trepanier-Street and Romatowski, who argued that “children’s literature can positively influence gender attitudes.”\footnote{Trepanier-Street and Romatowski, “The Influence of Children's Literature”, p.158.} It is the explicit societal goal of the Netherlands to create a more gender-equitable society. It seems however contradictory that children are still constantly confronted with implicit gender unequal messages in the books they read. They might hear from their friends at school that most mothers work, nevertheless, when reading a books they are painted the picture that it is mostly fathers who leave the house. When striving for gender equality, one of the first steps that can be undertaken is giving little girls and boys the feeling that they are equal and can achieve the same in life without being restricted by their gender. Self-evidently, books reflect society and by solely changing narratives without getting to the roots, the main problem of gender inequality within society, stereotypical and traditional trends will carry on. Nevertheless, for children who do come in contact with books regularly, more gender equal books could perhaps make a change.

Results showed that female authors were less biased when choosing the gender of their main character(s). It might be the case that when there are more female authors, a more equal representation of the genders in children’s books will occur. Not only, should girls be stimulated to write their stories down it would moreover be valuable if male writers would
use female characters more often. When it becomes the norm that females are as adventurous and as likely to be a superhero for example this might result in the occurrence of more female main characters in literature.

The assumptions drawn from the statistics suggests more attention should be paid towards the underrepresentation of females and the traditional stereotypical behaviour they are made to portray in children’s books. This year, Belgium’s youth book month called ‘MVX’, focussed on creating awareness that books influence children who are growing up and try to make sense of the world. This perfectly summarizes what this thesis wanted to show; all the stories presented to a child matter. It is of great importance that caregivers, authors, teachers, publishers and the like, are aware of this and ask themselves the question whether the picture we paint our youth is the vision of society we want them to grow up with. It should be carefully selected what children read and in the case of authors, they should be aware of what impact their writing could have.

What could also make a change is when parents take more responsibility by looking into the content of what books children read. In 2014 a parent-led campaign called ‘let books be books’ ‘took off in the UK. These are parents “asking retailers, booksellers and manufacturers to sort and label books by theme, rather than by gender, and let the children decide which books they enjoy best.” Children should not be forced into having to behave in a certain way, play with particular toys and read boys according to their gender. It should be up to every individual child to choose with what they want to play or what they want to read in order for them to make their own observations on the world, without the inclination to imitate unequal norms. This campaign has proven to be successful in the UK, many authors and publishers supported this initiative. A similar initiatives should occur in other countries.

136 Let toys be toys. “let books be books about”.
8. Conclusion

How children’s literature portrays social society has been a debated topic since the 1960s. Generally, we see old fashioned gender roles and behaviour in the books read by children in the western world, even those of which were written within the last few years. Some of the behaviour and general events in the storytelling of literature could be seen as examples of gender inequality, a theme still commonly read by children today. Data provided by this study supports this claim with regards to the most popularly read books in the Netherlands in 2015/16, confirming common patterns also found in the similar research by Weitzmann, Turner-Bowker, Crabb and Bielwaski, Clark et al., Meijers, McCabe et al., Kortenhaus and Demarest, Hamilton et al., Hoorens and Haket.

In summary, this study showed that children in the Netherlands between the age 4 and 12 most commonly read books in 2015/16 that underrepresented female characters. Despite the raised awareness and decreased levels in disparity of gender inequality seen in society in recent decades, we still find children in the Netherlands predominantly reading about characters often behaving in a traditionally stereotypical way, mostly in relation to role patterns in households, along with inconsistencies in their social and professional lives. The substantial use of male characters in roles of authority and respected positions may be associated with the argument Hoorens interestingly pointed out; male characters have become the ‘default’ when casting and scripting in these books.¹³⁷ This may be a subconscious decision, but as touched upon previously, this automatic thinking routine is clearly common in the wider societies general way of thinking. As the introduction and literature review explains, along with the possible effects elaborated on in the discussion, the issue of gender inequality is very much present still in the Netherlands and the outcomes of this study are an

¹³⁷ Hoorens, “Als er geen naam op staat, gaat het over jongens”, p.25.
example of how the next generation may be influenced in their ‘default’ thinking through the characters they imitate and classify in regards to gender.

Showing other pictures and narratives in literature will self-evidently not result in gender equality but giving children of both genders more of the sense that even though they are labelled differently, they still have the same possibilities and chances in life, while simultaneously emphasising that they do not have to adhere to the expectations and stereotypes created by society, can result in a more equable situation. If we want to implement this, it should be reflected in the books children read, especially in the crucial early years of development where imitation of the people observed is highly influential. Until we see a gender equable society, children will continue to use traditional stereotypical role models of their own gender to look up to and strive to replicate. This research and that of which referenced, shows the prominence of these examples, as well as the imbalance of their comparable status that continues to be imbalanced in favour of males.

It is fair and imaginable to envisage a shift to a more balanced and accurate reflection of a growing demand for equality gender patterns in society, mirrored in children’s literature. To achieve this, it is of immense importance for caregivers, educators, publishers and authors to be aware of the disproportionate gendered picture children are painted in the books they read. If we want to reach gender parity and an equable society it would be beneficial for the next generations to believe they are not restricted by their gender in what they want to achieve. De-gendering children’s literature is one way to enhance these believes, this might for example result in more male teachers and nurses, female scientists and who knows maybe in a couple of year the first Dutch female prime minister. Nevertheless, this is not enough. Females should be more visible in the media in non-stereotypical ways, they should receive equal wages and it has to be emphasised that both father and mother have the same potential to be a good parent.
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and Family Development, by Quaiser-Pohl, Claudia. Münster ; München [u.a.]: Waxmann.


Williams, J. Allen Jr.; Vernon, JoEtta; Williams, Martha C.; and Malecha, Karen. 1987."Sex role socialization in picture books; an update”. Sociology Department, Faculty Publications. Paper 8.


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http://www.kinderjury.nl/nieuws/jochem-myjer-en-tosca-menten-winnen-prijs-van-de-nederlandse-kinderjury

http://www.leenrecht.nl/nl/Over-Stichting-Leenrecht
Appendices


Most sold:
On the 19th of January 2017, the CPNB announced the top 10 most sold books of 2016. This list was “based on the sales date of retailers collected by research institute GfK, requested by foundation market research ‘Boekenvak’ (KvB-SMB). Data from publishers and the book club ECI were also included in the research. These data portrayed the sales within the Netherlands regardless of the distribution channel. The list consisted of public books from Dutch and Flemish publishers with a minimum price of € 3,50 and were all written in Dutch. Sales records included multiple editions of the same title; paperbacks, mid-price with audio books etc. The eBook sales were added to the paper editions.”

Child and youth books translated for the ages 4-12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry Potter en het vervloekte kind. Deel een en twee</td>
<td>J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne &amp; John Tiffany</td>
<td>De Harmonie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een loser 10. Ff offline</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 65 verdiepingen</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagboek van een muts 10. Puppy love</td>
<td>Rachel Renée Russell</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagboek van een muts 9. Houd de dief!</td>
<td>Rachel Renée Russell</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 13 verdiepingen</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De GVR</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasia XI</td>
<td>Geronimo Stilton</td>
<td>De Wakkere Muis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupsje Nootgenoeg</td>
<td>Eric Carle</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De heksen</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138 CPNB, “Best verkochte boeken 19jan2017”.

72
Child and youth books Dutch language for the ages 4-12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De Gorgels</td>
<td>Jochem Myjer</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We hebben er een geitje bij!</td>
<td>Marjet Huiberts</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jip en Janneke</td>
<td>Annie M.G. Schmidt</td>
<td>Querido Kinderboek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De wereld van de Gorgels</td>
<td>Jochem Myjer</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naar oma en opa Pannenkoek</td>
<td>Vivian den Hollander</td>
<td>Van Holkema &amp; Warendorf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most borrowed:

On the 19th of January 2017, the CPNB announced the top 10 most sold books of 2016. This list was “based on the lend details of public libraries collected by foundation ‘Leenrecht’, within the context of the law for lending and rental rights. The libraries provided these rent details to Leenrecht. The total of rented books represented the total of rents within Dutch public libraries. The list consisted of common available Dutch books. Data of the titles of borrowed books with multiple editions in the library were added up. The rental of e-Books were added up to the paper editions thanks to the royal library.”

Top 10 child and youth books translated for the ages 4-12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Geen paniek!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Niet te doen!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Zwaar de klos!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Bekijk het maar!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser.</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Gedumpt</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Een hondenleven</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Flutvakantie</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 13 verdiepingen</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 52 verdiepingen</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

139 CPNB, “Meest uitgeleende boeken 19jan2017”.
Top 10 child and youth books Dutch language for the ages 4-12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weerwolvenfeest</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolfje Weerwolfje</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumme de mumnie en de gouden scarabee</td>
<td>Tosca Menten</td>
<td>Van Goor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolfje Sneeuwwolfje</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mees Kees. Op kamp</td>
<td>Mirjam Oldenhave</td>
<td>Ploegsma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weerwolfnachtbaan</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weerwolfgeheimen</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoe overleef ik de brugklas?</td>
<td>Francine Oomen</td>
<td>Querido Kinderboek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We hebben er een geitje bij!</td>
<td>Marjet Huiberts</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeerMonster</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most awarded:

The most awarded books won a Griffel or Kinderjuryprijs. The Griffel awards (national award for the top 3 best written books) are handed out yearly to the best children’s books of the previous year. The jury of the Griffel consisted of five adults who work in the field of books such as librarians at the children’s department or reviewers of children’s books. In 2016, the jury consisted of Margreet Ruardi (chair), Martijn Blijleven, Adry Prade, Nathalie Scheffer and Nina Schouten.140 “They read 182 books published in 2015”.141 Their results for books published in 2016 will only be announced in the second half of 2017, therefore these could not be taken into account during this research.

In addition to Griffels handed out by adults, there was also a jury made up of children handing out ‘Kinderjury’ awards. These prize-winning books regularly overlap with the ones that received a Griffel. Nevertheless, this is not the case all of the time. One of the explanations for this given by de Vries is that adults refer to classics which are not well-known to children.142 The children’s jury will only publish their results of last years’ best books in September of this year, therefore their decisions for the year 2016 could not be taken into account during this study.

140 Leesplein, “Juryrapport Griffels 2016”.
141 Leesplein, “Juryrapport Griffels 2016”.
142 De vries, “Wat zegt de kinderjury?”.
The Jury report Griffels 2016 shows that the following books have been awarded:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of award</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gouden Griffel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gips</td>
<td>Anna Woltz.</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>Tijs en de eenthoorn</td>
<td>Imme Dros</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>Kom uit die kraan!!</td>
<td>Tjibbe Veldkamp</td>
<td>Lemniscaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>Mooi boek</td>
<td>Joke van Leeuwen</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>De tuin van de walvis</td>
<td>Toon Tellegen</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>&gt;9</td>
<td>Groter dan de lucht, erger dan de zon</td>
<td>Daan Remmerts de Vries</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Een aap op de we</td>
<td>Joukje Akveld</td>
<td>Hoogland &amp; Van Klaveren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Stem op de okapi</td>
<td>Edward van de Vendel</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffel</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Nooit denk ik aan niets</td>
<td>Hans &amp; Monique Hagen</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilveren Griffels</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Rond vierkant vierkant rond</td>
<td>Ted van Liershout</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>Bas en Daan graven een gat</td>
<td>Mac Barnett</td>
<td>Hoogland &amp; Van Klaveren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>Wat zou jij doen?</td>
<td>Guido van Genechten</td>
<td>Clavis Uitgeverij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>Het boek zonder tekeningen</td>
<td>B.J. Novak</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>Bens boot</td>
<td>Pieter Koelwijk</td>
<td>Lemniscaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>De zee kwam door de brievenbus</td>
<td>Selma Noort</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>Lotte &amp; Roos. Samen ben je niet alleen</td>
<td>Marieke Smithuis</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&gt;9</td>
<td>Spijkerzwijgen</td>
<td>Simon van der Geest</td>
<td>Querido’s Kinderboeken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&gt;9</td>
<td>De veertiende goudvis</td>
<td>Jennifer L. Holm</td>
<td>Hoogland &amp; Van Klaveren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>&gt;9</td>
<td>Suikerspin</td>
<td>Derk Visser</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>De blauwe vinvvis</td>
<td>Jenni Desmond.</td>
<td>Lemniscaat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Steve Jobs. Waanzinnig goed</td>
<td>Jessic Hartland</td>
<td>Luitingh-Sijthoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Van oerknal tot robot. Alles heeft een begin</td>
<td>Marc ter Horst.</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlag en Wimpel</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>In een skootje ben ik een bootje</td>
<td>Bette Westerla</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children’s Jury:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinderjury</td>
<td>6 to 9</td>
<td>De Gorgels</td>
<td>Jochem Myjer</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinderjury</td>
<td>10 to 12</td>
<td>Dummie de mummie en de drums van Massoeba</td>
<td>Tosca Menten</td>
<td>Van Goor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Pluim van de Senaat</td>
<td>6 to 9</td>
<td>Botje</td>
<td>Jannieke Schotveld</td>
<td>Van Hoolkema &amp; Warendorf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Pluim van de Senaat</td>
<td>10 to 12</td>
<td>De gruwelijke generaal</td>
<td>Jozua Douglas</td>
<td>De Fontein</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below the books that were removed from the list because less than half of the text was based on a story with characters:

---

143 Leesplein, “Juryrapport Griffels 2016”.
144 Kinderjury, “Jochem Myjer en Tosca Menten winnen prijs”.

75
Below the books that were removed because they were part of the same series:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dagboek van een muts 9. Houd de dief!</td>
<td>Rachel Renée Russell</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 65 verdiepingen</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 52 verdiepingen</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Lannoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Niet te doen!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Zwaar de klos!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Bekijk het maar!</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Gedumpt</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Een hondenleven</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Flutvakantie</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>De Fontein Jeugd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weerwolfnachtbaan</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weerwolfgeheimen</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeerMonster</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below the book that was found on the list twice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We hebben er een geitje bij!</td>
<td>Marjet Huiberts</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below the book for children younger than four years old:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rupsje Nooitgenoeg</td>
<td>Eric Carle</td>
<td>Gottmer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B. Final list of the 30 analysed books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Illustrator cover</th>
<th>Illustrator images</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Translated by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gips</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Anna Woltz.</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tijs en de eenhoorn</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Imme Dros</td>
<td>Annemarie van Haeringen</td>
<td>Annemarie van Haeringen</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kom uit die kraan!!</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Tjibbe Veldkamp</td>
<td>Alice Hoogstad</td>
<td>Alice Hoogstad</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De tuin van de walvis</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Toon Tellegen</td>
<td>Harrie Geelen</td>
<td>Harrie Geelen</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groter dan de lucht, erger dan de zon</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Daan Remmerts de Vries</td>
<td>Moker Design</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bas en Daan graven een gat</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Mac Barnett</td>
<td>Jon Klassen</td>
<td>Jon Klassen</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Berd Ruttenberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wat zou jij doen?</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Guido van Genuchten</td>
<td>Guido van Genuchten</td>
<td>Guido van Genuchten</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bens boot</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Pieter Koolvijk</td>
<td>Linde Faas</td>
<td>Linde Faas</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De zee kwam door de brievenbus</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Selma Noort</td>
<td>Nanja Toebak</td>
<td>Martijn van der Linden</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotte &amp; Roos. Samen ben je niet alleen</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Marieke Smithuis</td>
<td>Annet Schaap</td>
<td>Annet Schaap</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spijkzwijgen</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Jennifer L. Holm</td>
<td>Tad Carpenter</td>
<td>Ted Carpenter</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Jan Henkes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suikerspin</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Derk Visser</td>
<td>Marlies Visser</td>
<td>Marlies Visser</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Gorgels</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Jochem Myjer</td>
<td>Rick de Haas</td>
<td>Rick de Haas</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummie de mummie en de drums van Massoeba</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Tosca Menten</td>
<td>Elly Hees</td>
<td>Elly Hees</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botje</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Janneke Schotveld</td>
<td>Petra Gerritsen</td>
<td>Annet Schaap</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De gruwelijke generaal</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Jouza Douglas</td>
<td>Elly Hees</td>
<td>Elly Hees</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mees Kees. Op kamp</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Mirjam Oldenhave</td>
<td>Rick de Haas</td>
<td>Rick de Haas</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoe overleef ik de brugklas?</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Francine Oomen</td>
<td>Annet Schaap</td>
<td>Annet Schaap</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weerwohrenfeest</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Paul van Loon</td>
<td>Hugo van Look</td>
<td>Hugo van Look</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het leven van een Loser. Geen paniek!</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>Jeff Kinney</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Hanneke Majoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De waanzinnige boomhut van 13 verdiepingen</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Andy Griffiths &amp; Terry Denton</td>
<td>Terry Denton</td>
<td>Terry Denton</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Edward van de Vendel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jip en Janneke</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Annie M.G. Schmidt</td>
<td>Fiep Westendorp</td>
<td>Fiep Westendorp</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naar oma en opa Pannenkoek</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Vivian den Hollander</td>
<td>Dagmar Stam</td>
<td>Dagmar Stam</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Potter en het vervloekte kind. Deel een twee</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne &amp; John Tiffany</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De GVR</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>Quentin Blake</td>
<td>Quentin Blake</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Hubert Vriesendorp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasia XI</td>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>Elisabetta Dami</td>
<td>Silvia Bigolin and Christian Alprandi</td>
<td>Silvia Bigolin etc</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Loes Randazzo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De heksen</td>
<td>9-12 years old</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>Quentin Blake</td>
<td>Quentin Blake</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Hubert Vriesendorp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We hebben er een geitje bij</td>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>Marjet Huberts</td>
<td>Iris Deppe</td>
<td>Iris Deppe</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C. Coding system for the children's books

Coding System Children’s Books

Form:

1. General analysis books

   Title of the books:

   - Does the title contain references to the character’s sex?
     Male reference M-R
     Female reference F-R
     Reference to Both Both-R
     No reference Unid-R

   Examples:
   Male: *Tijs en de eenhoorn*
   Female: *Lotte & Roos. Samen ben je niet alleen*
   Both: *Naar oma en opa Pannenkoek*
   Unidentifiable: *Kom uit die kraan*

   Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covers of books

- Only count when the sex of the character portrayed is really clear. When the sex of humans / non-humans is unidentifiable on the cover do cc

   Example:
   *Tijs en de eenhoorn*, Tijs is clearly a boy, unicorn’s sex is unidentifiable reading the text, therefore the cover of the book falls in the category ‘human sex portrayed, male.

   - Identifiable sex yes / no
     - If no
   - No characters present ; UNID-C
   - Location; Inside/ Outside / Unidentifiable
Continue to ‘the illustrations in the book section’

- If yes continue here

- Sex
  Male – M-C
  Female – F-C
  Both – Both-C

- Location character(s)
  Inside-L
  Outside-L
  Unidentifiable-L

  - Inside; in a room/ house / school / church
    When the character finds itself inside and is looking out of the window this counts as inside.
    Example:
    P.4 & 5 of Tijs en de eenhoorn.

  - Outside; in a city / nature etc.
    Example:
    De Gorgels where the main character finds himself on the beach.
    Being inside a vehicle or tent is also counted as being outside.
    Example:
    Mees kees. Op kamp, where the children sleep in tents.

  - Unidentifiable; no location visible.
    Example: the cover of De heksen shows a yellow background.

Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>M-C</th>
<th>F-C</th>
<th>BOT H-C</th>
<th>UNID-C</th>
<th>OUT-L</th>
<th>IN-L</th>
<th>UNID-L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Illustrations inside of the book

- Code per page. When on one page we see the same character three times we count this as one.

- Link it to the text underneath.
  Example:
  In Tijs en de eenhoorn the reader finds out on p.1 that de eenhoorn is a male so we count him as male on every picture.
- We only could characters that are really present on the illustrations. When we do not see the character but it is mentioned in the text underneath do not count this here, this is the illustration part.

- When we do not see the whole character but only hands or feet we do code this when we have seen the full body previously and recognise it.

- Only characters that are ‘alive’ are count. No stuffed animals when they do not have a ‘soul/spirit’ such as the teddybear in *Tijs en de eenhoorn*. When a toy is able to move or talk we do count them such as the robot in *Botje*.

- Identifiable sex yes / no
  - If *no*
  - No characters present ; UNID-C

- Location; Inside/Outside/Unidentifiable

  Continue to ‘the illustrations in the book section’

  - If *yes* continue here

- Sex
  - Male character – M-C
  - Female character – F-C
  - Both male and female character(s) – Both-C

- Location character(s)
  - Inside location – IN-L
  - Outside location – OUT-L
  - Unidentifiable location – UNID-L

Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILLUSTRATIONS</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>M-C</th>
<th>F-C</th>
<th>BOT</th>
<th>UNID-C</th>
<th>OUT-L</th>
<th>IN-L</th>
<th>UNID-L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80
2. General analysis characters

- What sex do the main character(s) have based on the name and reference words such as he/she?
- What is the relation between the age categories for which the books were written and the number of male and female main characters presented in the books?
- What sex does the author have?

Main characters;
Title
Age category - AC
Male main character - M-MC
Female main character – F-MC
Both sexes main characters – B-MC
Human – H
Non-human – NH
Mix of humans and non-humans – Mix H-NH
Male author- M-A
Female author – F-A

Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN CHARACTERS</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>M-MC</th>
<th>F-MC</th>
<th>B-MC</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>NH</th>
<th>Mix H-NH</th>
<th>M-A</th>
<th>F-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- What sex do the additional character(s) have based on the name and reference words such as he/she?
- What is the relation between the age categories for which the books were written and the number of male and female main characters presented in the books?

Additional characters;
Title
Age category - AC
Male additional character human – M-AH
Male additional character non-human – M-ANH
Female additional character human – F-AH
Female additional character human – F-ANH
Unidentifiable gender of the character(s) - UNID

Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>M-AH</th>
<th>M-ANH</th>
<th>F-AH</th>
<th>F-ANH</th>
<th>UNID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


3. **In-depth analysis all characters**

   Behavioural categories guidelines:

   - All definitions are taken from the Oxford dictionary.
   - Focus mainly on text. When illustrations differs a lot from text take this into account, note this down.
   - Tally per sentence; When in one sentence ‘he kept crying, crying, crying’ count this once. When after the dot in the next sentence the following is stated; “even though he received a hug, he kept crying”, we count this again.
   - When someone thinks about climbing a tower but does not actually do it we count this as pro-active behaviour.

   **Definitions of categories taken from Oxford dictionary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural categories</th>
<th>Definition based on Oxford Dictionary</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Commonly associated with:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro-active / Directive / independent;</strong></td>
<td>“Creating or controlling a situation rather than just responding to it after it has happened”, “the management or guidance of operations.”</td>
<td>Being explorative, adventurous, going to the rescue, giving orders, taking the lead, making decisions, running away from home, searching, being curious, climbing, jumping, asking the way, reacting to what the situation requires.</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reactive / Submissive / Dependent;</strong></td>
<td>“Acting in response to a situation or the authority/ will of others rather than creating or controlling it.”</td>
<td>Waiting for others to decide, being passive, following orders.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro-social;</strong></td>
<td>“Relating to or denoting behaviour which is positive, helpful, and intended to promote social acceptance and friendship.”</td>
<td>Being cooperative, nurturing, serving, apologising, bringing presents, not leaving behind, comforting, cuddling, giving a kiss, positive nicknames.</td>
<td>Women / girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-social;</strong></td>
<td>“Contrary to the laws”</td>
<td>Being aggressive,</td>
<td>Men / boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>and customs of society, in a way that causes annoyance and disapproval in others.</strong></td>
<td><strong>fighting, bullying, name-calling, doing things behind someone’s back, being bossy, disobeying, lying, whining, yelling, screaming to others.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Relating to or involving the use of the imagination or original ideas to create something.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Drawing, crafting, making plans, using materials for new purposes, building a hut, creative cooking.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Men / boys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funny;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Causing laughter or amusement; humorous.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Winking, joking, tickling.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Men / boys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serious;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Acting or speaking sincerely and in earnest, rather than in a joking or half-hearted manner.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Stern, serious behaviour.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women / girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sadness;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“The condition or quality of being sad.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Crying, pouring out one’s heart.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women / girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Happiness;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“The state of being happy.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cheering, being happy, being excited, celebrating.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women / girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fearful;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Feeling or showing fear or anxiety.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Being scared, fast beating heart, nervous, getting jitters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women / girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anger;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“A strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Screaming (when it is not to others), kicking or hitting a wall, being very annoyed.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Men / boys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring about appearance;</strong></td>
<td><strong>Caring about “the way that someone or something looks.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Talking about looks, hair, make-up, shoes, dyeing hair, painting nails.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women / girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physically strong;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Having the power to move heavy weights or perform other physically demanding tasks.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Going to the gym, being referred to as strong, muscular, lifting something or someone.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Men / boys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physically weak;</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Lacking the power to perform physically demanding tasks; having little physical strength or energy.”</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Small, no muscles.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women / girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. In-depth analysis characters and relation to occupations and household

**Occupations**

- How many different occupations are mentioned for men and women?

- What types of occupations do men and women perform?

- Tally once when an occupation is mentioned rather than the amount of times it was shown. In the book *Gips* for example, there were several male doctors and several female nurses. For the purpose of data collection, this would be cited as one count for male doctors and one count for female nurses in the occupation segment.

Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Title book</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Title book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Household:**

- Which household chores are performed and by who?

Tally:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household chores</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing food / drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairing / making things in the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing / picking up child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering child to do something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing laundry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting to bed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing / knitting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screaming during a sports match of the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making comments about growth / puberty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for school, telling what to wear / combing hair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>