

# Gender Literary Theory

## Stereotyping The Female Character

by Rain Lee



How does Nickelodeon's sitcom  
"Sam & Cat" undermine gender  
stereotypes?

# What is the Gender Literary Theory?

## **PURDUE OWL'S DEFINITION:**

**The Gender Literary Theory, also known as Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theory, or, more broadly, by the politics of feminism. It uses feminist principles and ideology to critique the language of literature.**

## **PERSONAL DEFINITION:**

**A theory that shows how gender-centric stereotypes are undermined.**

# SAM & Cat



# Background of the TV Show

- 18 Year Old Samantha Puckett & Cat Valentine, portrayed by Jennette McCurdy and Ariana Grande spend the senior years of their high school lives together and live together as well. They run a babysitting business to generate income.
- The series is a continued spinoff from Nickelodeon's *iCarly* and *Victorious*.
- Released in October 2014 (Malaysia) with its finale airing in late 2016 (Malaysia), it attracted the attention of many now grown up *iCarly* (2007-2012) and *Victorious* (2008-2013) fans.
- The audience of this show have been too busy paying attention the character Cat's extremely comical and low IQ like behaviour, and Sam's extra-violent behaviour. They are too engrossed in the jokes and fun that they can't see what the show is actually trying to do.







# Red-haired vs. Blonde Characters

- All the red haired characters are powerful, strong, determined, brave, streetwise and turn out successful almost all of the time.
- If you've noticed, at the start of *Wonder Woman* (2017), her hair is completely black and her clothing is all white. However, as the movie proceeds and she becomes more confident, her clothing is all red and her hair starts to have a reddish tone.
- All the blonde haired characters are comical, crazy, foolish and can't seem to get things right the first time they do them.
- In *White Chicks* (2004), the two protagonists, who are FBI agents, are said and shown to be the best agents in that division and they never make mistakes. However, the moment after they put on their blonde girl wigs, they start messing up and fail to carry out their plans properly.



# The Dumb Blonde and the Fiery Redhead

- Blonde women have been typically considered pretty and attractive historically. But there came a saying that stated “A woman can only have beauty or brains.”
- Cultural appropriation in the United States have caused people to stereotype blondes and assume that they rely on beauty instead of intelligence to get men. (Encyclopedia of Hair, Page 255, Sherrow, Victoria p 1996.)
- “Dumb blondes” will make irrational statements and try to prove that they’re smarter than others. They will usually take longer than usual to get things and mess up.
- In almost every piece of media, the colour red is associated with positiveness, aggressiveness, determination and success.
- A trait often seen in Japanese Anime as well as Movies like *The Hunger Games* and Disney’s *Brave* is that red haired or sometimes, red clothed characters tend to be strong, outgoing, outspoken and they aren’t afraid to do anything.
- “Fiery Redheads” will always find a way to do things and no matter what, be successful in the end. Although, they may lack confidence sometimes.



# How is this female stereotype undermined in *Sam & Cat*?

- Cat, despite being red haired, holds the traits of the stereotypical dumb blonde.
  - She constantly messes up, and can't even do everyday things properly.
  - She accidentally locks herself in a safe, can't even look things up online properly and somehow, *accidentally* stole money out of an ATM. She even jumped into a vat of tuna fish.
  - Fascinated by a shoe she found by the roadside, she spends a whole day searching for the other one to complete the pair.
- Sam, despite being blonde haired, holds the traits of the stereotypical fiery red girl.
  - She does what she wants, and her personality is extremely violent.
  - She rescued Cat out of a garbage truck's chute, and she also saved Cat's grandmother from injury multiple times. Throughout the series, she is portrayed as one who always succeeds in everything she does.
  - When Cat found a shoe that she was fascinated with by the roadside, Sam managed to find the other shoe instantly, but Cat refused to listen to her. Cat even mocked her idea of buying a new pair online and said

# 99%

Of people fall for stereotypes and believe them.

# Gender stereotypes

Not sure why they exist.

I couldn't find the meme picture  
for this so here's the meme.

Insert Picture Here



“Deep down inside, we’re all the same.  
We all have the same emotions.”

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-Michael Jackson-  
*1958-2009*

# Works Cited

Victoria Sherrow. *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History*. Page 149-255, 1996

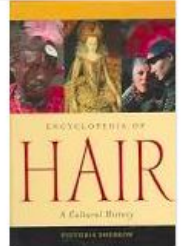
TVTropes Staff. "Fiery Redhead." *TV Tropes.com*, TVTropes, Inc., 25 June 2014

"Literary Theories". Purdue Owl 2009.



## Encyclopedia of hair

Book by Victoria Sherrow



[Preview book](#)

3.6/5  
[Goodreads](#)

3.6/5  
[AbeBooks](#)

Examines the ways in which hair has served as a signifier of class, gender, ethnicity, conformity/non-comforty, authority, and power throughout history. ... [Google Books](#)

**Originally published:** 1996

**Author:** [Victoria Sherrow](#)

**Editor:** [Victoria Sherrow](#)

No one is smarter than the other.  
Everyone is equal.  
We're people for a reason.  
Equity is important.

# Thank You

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