

Trailer park boys

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



1. A summary of the article In April 2004, Trailer Park Boys series about three Canadian petty criminals started its fourth season to the joy of their loyal fans. Which is more, the show crossed the borders for the first time in its history as it debuted on BBC America TV channel. The article was issued 9 days before this actually happened, therefore it tackled the questions of whether or not this launch will be successful and why, and whether the three characters will be able to find a response in the souls of the USA citizens. One thing was certain: the success of Trailer Park Boys will depend mostly on its three characters (Ricky, Bubbles and Julian), and the story plot itself will play a secondary part. The interesting thing about this trio is that they represent a certain paradox, being, on the one hand, “ quintessentially Canadian”, and on the other, the embodiment of the universal human qualities. Spending their time doing things that are very Canadian, at the same time, there is nothing about them that might be called exclusively Canadian, and consequently it is possible to claim that the characters are not solely determined by the country they originate from. Yet they surely have this touch of “ Canadian air” that makes them alluring to the audience and adds a spicy note to the series. One more thing that makes the three main characters good for the comedy is their low status, as according to the popular opinion its easier for most people to relate to someone who is struggling through his or her life rather than someone who is rich and has everything he can wish for. Such “ underdog” characters, according to Dan Brown, go back to Greek comedy, and they evoke sympathy since they are not hurting anyone apart from those “ deserving” it – such as the government or insurance companies. Such characters seem to resonate with

“ the Robin Hood feeling” many people have rooted in their hearts.

If we talk about the story itself, the way it is presented and structured is also supposed to contribute to the show’s success in the United States. Trailer Park Boys is presented as a pseudo-documentary – which is due to budgetary constraints yet is likely to stop the audience from surfing the channels once they come across the show. As a result, the series turns out to be quite cheap to shoot and at the same time interesting for people who watch it. It is also important that a lot of rude, curse and obscene words have been bleeped from the plot lines – they simply would not work for the Americans.

2. My perception of the argument expressed in the article

To me, the argumentation of Dan Brown, the author of the article, seems pretty fair. I totally agree with the fact that the characters of any series are the main factor of its success among the audience. I just thought of the example of one of America’s most famous sitcoms – Friends, whose success can mostly be attributed to the alluring nature of its main six characters. Pretty much anyone who enjoyed watching Friends associated himself or herself with one of them (Rachel, Chandler, Joey, Monica, Ross or Phoebe). And although the plot itself was great and hilariously funny as well, it surely held the second place. One of the advantages of Friends, however, is that the six main characters were all different – as in gender, social status, way of life, outlook, etc. Consequently, it is much easier for every single fan to associate himself or herself with one of them, and it is no wonder that there have even been multiple “ tests” online that allowed to determine “ which of Friends you are”. Whereas here in Trailer Park Boys all three characters are

more or less the same – three guys, three petty criminals, all of them coming from the lower social background. I tend to disagree with the author of the article as for the fact that the audience is attracted to those characters coming from the lower background – it really depends on the aspirations and perception of life of every person watching the series. If for example I come from a lower social background but I like to think – and in fact I strongly believe that I deserve and better life and will become a millionaire – why would I associate myself with someone who is OK with the way his life goes and does not make any attempts to change his lifestyle and become successful? It seems to me that for America this rule about low-class characters does not work fully. Look at the success of the Beverly Hills 90210, or Melrose Place, or Dynasty...Looks like Americans, vice versa, prefer to associate themselves with the rich and successful characters – perhaps due to the flourishing of the concept of “ American dream”? And it seems to me I have an idea of why this happens... In the movie called The Secret, the core idea of which is the law of attraction (i. e. we attract to our lives everything we believe in and desire), it is stated that in order to get something attracted into our lives we have to live with the deep feeling that we already have it. And who knows – maybe by watching series about the rich and successful people and associating ourselves with them we make our way to success in the real life? Here of course the pseudo-documentary style of the movie will come in handy as it will allow to deeper associate ourselves with those to the other side of the TV screen...

3. Discussion questions

1. What do you think of the idea that the concept of American dream shaped

he attitude of many people towards the film and series characters, and they prefer to associate themselves with the rich and successful characters rather than sympathise with the “ underdogs”?

2. Or maybe this is not determined by the nation but solely by each person’s outlook and aspirations?

3. Is it true that the pseudo-documentary character of the story makes it easier for people to associate with it, and why?