

Abstract

This Master's thesis is intended to shed a light on the female gaze in contemporary Anglo-American televisual narratives, which involves examining the sexual objectification of male bodies and female identification evident in the narratives as a way to counteract the dominating male gaze within forms of spectatorship. This is conducted in search of gender equality through a focus on the empowered female viewer. Thus, this thesis is a contribution to extensive debates within the vast and continuously evolving field of feminism. Previously, the female gaze has been examined in connection with the way that narratives would portray female characters in ways that differed from traditional, passive portrayals, or traditionally fetishized depictions. In relation to this, the main arguments connected to the female gaze have usually been concerned with removing sexual objectifications from representations of women. Furthermore, male bodies have mostly been examined in relation to the way that they have been considered a spectacle along with the manner in which they represent masculinity (which seemingly excludes sexual objectification).

For that reason, three television series in the form of *Poldark* (2015-), *Outlander* (2014-), and *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-) have been analyzed using theories of psychoanalysis, film and television, feminism, and pornography. During the analysis, I have found men to be sexually objectified while similarly being portrayed as both active and passive. In connection with this, they were also emotionally appealing and portrayed with their own agency and subjectivity. On the other hand, female characters were portrayed as engaging in voyeuristic gazes along with fetishistic gazes in order to establish their own subjectivity and female identification. In connection with these active gaze of female characters, these characters are often positioned as female spectators, intended as vessels for female television viewers. This position as vessel combined with the elevated focus on these female characters' portrayal of activity, agency and subjectivity, it seems that the aim of the shows was to appeal to female viewers through a female point of view. Furthermore, the analysis is incredibly influenced by the way that this subjectivity and female identification was illustrated their active sexuality both in terms of cunnilingus and one-night-stands. Furthermore, sexual violence, a generally female theme, was analyzed in terms of the way that it portrayed the significance of power relations, which physical strength cannot subside. Hence, men and women must stand the same grounds in relation to protecting active sexuality and rebuffing sexual violence.

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The Pleasures of Gazing: An Examination of the Female Gaze in Television

1.0 Introduction

For many years, the focus of analyzing spectators' gaze onto cinema and **television** screens pertained to the fact that these screens featured images of women whose sole purpose was to function as decorative supporting characters and **sexual objects** to male protagonists, who carried the narrative, and male cinema spectators. For that reason, the main purpose of feminist approaches towards gazing within film was to analyze the ways that this "male gaze"¹ dominated Hollywood cinema. However, women as well as men are viewers of film and **television**, taking pleasure in the images displayed on the screen. Women look at other women, but they also look at men. For that reason, the matter of who is gazing at who, how they gaze, and what they see become interesting. This study turns the focus further towards **television** series directed towards female audiences and also examines the position for the **female spectator**.

Throughout the past decades, research on the **female gaze** has focused on mainly examining the way that women are represented in the popular media for female viewers and audiences. Hence that research mostly concerns the way that women gaze at other women while, at the same time, it is arguing in favor of ridding the concept of gazing from subject/object dichotomies. However, what happens when we turn the structures of gazing upside down, and men are turned into **sexual objects** for a **female spectator**, a **female gaze**? This reversal does not exclude the previously mentioned positions of **identification** for **female spectators**. Consequently, this study examines positions of identification with female characters and expressions of sexuality and sexual desire connected to the objectifications of male bodies in three extremely popular and contemporary **television** series in order to analyze possible opportunities for any type of powerful female spectator. For that reason, this thesis functions as a

¹ This concept was originally labelled by Laura Mulvey in her influential 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". Mulvey's essay is still thought-provoking for television as well as cinema because this kind of gaze on women's bodies is still present.

contribution to an already existing, long-lived, and comprehensive debate concerning the empowered woman and gender equality. These considerations have led to the following research question, which will guide the rest of this thesis:

In what way is the female gaze in relation to the sexual objectification of male bodies and female identification employed in selected contemporary Anglo-American televisual narratives?

These selected **television** series from Anglo-American culture consist of *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), *Outlander* (2014-), and *Poldark* (2015-). The series *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-) is created by showrunner Melissa Rosenberg and based on the eponymous comic book character originally created by Michael Bendis and Michael Gaydos for the Marvel Universe (Strom n.pag.). Yet, in terms of the series production, casting and broadcasting, *Marvel Television* joined forces with *Netflix*. Moreover, all episodes premiered on *Netflix's* streaming services on November 20th 2015 while this streaming service provides the only access to the series (Petski n.pag.). *Outlander* (2014-) is developed by Ronald D. Moore based on the book series created by Diana Gabaldon. The **television** series initially premiered on the American **television** network and Video on Demand streaming services, *Starz*, and is a Anglo-American collaboration (Andreeva n.pag.). *Poldark* (2015-) is created and written by Debbie Horsfield, and it is based on a series of books authored by Winston Graham. The **television** series initially aired on BBC One (Ensor n.pag.), but it is now also available on other streaming services. This thesis will take into account season 1 and 2 of *Poldark* (2015-). Additionally, these exact narratives have been chosen because they pose fascinating examples of strong female protagonists clearly capable expressing sexuality, sexual desire, and gazing at male bodies – all three series hereby present female gazing as a central theme. Furthermore, a woman has been involved somewhere in the creational steps for these series (either as script writer, author, or showrunner), which in my opinion is a great preliminary for the development of a **female gaze** within **television**. Additionally, the **female gaze** has been analyzed before through varying objects of analysis and varying approaches. For that reason, the following sub-section within this introduction is going to work as a critical commentary on previous analyses of the **female gaze**.

1.1 Academic Context

As mentioned, the **female gaze** has been analyzed by scholars already, and for that reason this section serves contextual purposes and provides discussions of previous analyses that examine different aspects of **female gazing** across different media, here including film and **television**. The chosen scholarly analyses are only a handful amongst a vast scholarly field, and they have been chosen through a considerable process of selection. Also, they have been selected due to being predominantly practical in their approach to this field, but also extremely contributive with their findings. In this context, it is necessary to mention that some of the sources also cover material from the eighties since the thoughts on the **female gaze** as a criticism to the male gaze originated mainly in that decade. Additionally, it is vital to concede that these analyses are incredibly diverse in terms of media and genres as they deal with objects of analysis ranging from the action genre to *Sex and the City* (television series 1998-2004; film franchise 2008-2010). Despite the diversity in range though, the sources deal with ‘female texts’ and demonstrate different perspectives that contribute to a further understanding of the **female gaze**. This section has been divided into two sub-sections each focusing on a thematic area pertaining to the **female gaze**, and the material has been chronologically arranged in terms of year of publication within each theme. The first section discusses works focusing on representations of women and female characters in popular media while the second section focuses on **masculinity** and its connection to men as **sexual objects** of a **female gaze**.

1.1.1 The Female Gaze in Popular Media

Works by scholars attempting to speculate on, and create a place for, a **female spectator** while arguing for a **female gaze** to emerge have taken their grounds. One of the early and primary essays that emerged on this phenomenon stems from Lorraine Gamman. Her essay, “Watching the Detectives: the Enigma of the Female Gaze” analyzes the way that a female gaze is present in **television**. In this essay, she comments on the role of female crime solvers in detective TV-series/shows of the 1960s-1980s, and she criticizes their typical portrayals as **sexual objects** and images of male fetishized fantasies (8-11). Gamman contends that even though many shows featured a female lead, these were still primarily targeted towards a male audience and maintained a general lack of varied gender performances (8-14).

In an attempt to counter the typicality of the male gaze, her essay mainly discusses the 1980’s detective series *Cagney and Lacey* (1981-1988) and its appeal to a female audience through its depiction

of female friendship, solidarity, partnership, and its round characters (14). Here, she argues that the female leads are each other's opposites while the male characters are shown as individuals with emotions and opinions as well. Gamman takes delight in the portrayal of police women with dissimilar personalities, each balancing different working and family lives (14). Evidently, this series is appealing to female viewers exactly because the narrative is constructed in such a way as to incorporate perspectives and ideas from several subject positions thereby presenting several possibilities of **identification** for **female spectators** (15, 23). In relation to this, Gamman stresses that in *Cagney and Lacey* (1981-1988), the **female gaze** is derived primarily from the female leads' point of view, and they "articulate it via witty put-downs of male aspirations for total control" (15). Obviously, she equates the **female gaze** with the rejection of patriarchal ideology through mockery. From this perspective, she utilizes the thoughts of Julia Kristeva in relation to "strategies of resistance that subvert those gender identities which define 'woman' as marginal in a male dominated world" (16), and claims that the characters' mocking of sexist superior officers is such a strategy that also works to disrupt the male gaze (17). She concludes that this **television** show, and others of its kind, provides opportunity to challenge patriarchal and stereotypical gender portrayals in conventional **television** formats (26). Nevertheless, now that we are in the subject of representations of women, it seems vital to approach a character that have been scrutinized a great deal by feminist scholars – namely the female protagonist of action movies.

Gladys Knight has analyzed what she has termed female action heroes inherent in film, comics and **television** between the 1960s and 2010s.² Knight has devoted a chapter of this book to each of the 25 female heroes whom she is analyzing, and her focus lies with the depictions of strong female heroes ranging from resourceful secret agents, detectives, supernatural/mythical warriors to women with superpowers. Besides the fact that she has chosen extra-ordinary female characters, these are also women who do not conform to conventions of heterosexuality and being white.³ This, for Knight, is a deliberate

² Here, it seems interesting to comment on her choice of using the term "female hero" as opposed to "heroine", of which the latter term is employed by both Yvonne Tasker and Nicola Rehling below. Even though Knight does not explain why she is using "female hero", it is possible that this is rooted in the perception that "heroine" is typically connected to the traditional weak female character that constantly needs saving by a male hero – a representation of women that Knight is attempting to shed.

³ These characters and therefore their portrayals as women in general vary quite a lot in terms of race, marital status, and age.

attempt to indicate diversity for women and to add to the positive portrayals of modern women (Knight xi). Additionally, she stresses that the purpose of her book is not to promote an opinion in which one sex and/or gender is superior than the other, but to shed light on the sociological factors and issues arising in relation to the female action hero (xii). In order to set the context for each female hero, she provides an account for each included hero's origin in terms of origin story, historical contexts and the personal aspects of the developers that led them to create these heroes.

Furthermore, Knight discusses the female heroes' skills, their villains, and their general outer appearances that are involved in making these tough and independent women crucial towards positive portrayals of women in the further development of popular culture.⁴ Ultimately, she considers this a contribution to the varying fields of feminism opting for different and varying portrayals of independent and resourceful women. Knight's analysis differs from this study as she does not focus on the way that women or these heroes **gaze** and does not go into detail about the way at which they are gazed. But, she does focus on their representations and the way that they both conform to and differ from traditional gender representations, and this brings relevant perspectives to the kind of **gaze** with which women **gaze** at each other in the search for possible ideals or means of identification. These female heroes do carry similarities to the ones centered in the **television** series chosen as my objects of analysis.

Jeffrey A. Brown has conducted several studies on the same kind of female hero, which is centered in Knight's study.⁵ In his 2011-book, *Dangerous Curves: Action Heroines, Gender, Fetishism, and Popular Culture*, Brown takes an investigative look on the action heroines, which has developed in the decades between the 1970's and the early 2010's.⁶ Slightly differently than Knight though, he carries a huge focus on the female leads in narrative series where the characters are rounder and less likely to

⁴ Moreover, she emphasizes the significance of the clothing attire of the female heroes, specifically naming these attires "power suits" as that connotes same kind of "confidence and authority" connected to the suits of the business world (ix) – something these women also exude.

⁵ However, he maintains the use of the (action) "heroine" of popular culture.

⁶ Here, he examines the gender portrayals of characters from the world of female detectives, women with mortal combat skills, along with girls in cartoons and women with superpowers (n.pag.). His main focus lies with representations of women in Hollywood film, but, like Knight, he also manages to incorporate analyses of other media such as video games, comics and other types of literature featuring the action heroine.

succumb to punishment for their own investigative look. He investigates a change in perceptions of feminism beginning with the second wave up to the recent ideas of post-feminism (n.pag.).

Through these areas of feminism, Brown proceeds to fields of gender performativity and **sexual objectification** in relation to the image of the dominatrix and sexual fetishism. However, the part, which is most relevant for this thesis, is his focus on the way that the action heroine herself **gazes**, or “glares” as Brown puts it, on her exterior surroundings. She looks without fear of punishment and has the abilities “to see and know” without accepting “a masochistic position”, submission (Brown n.pag.).⁷ Through his analysis, he establishes the female action hero in her leading protagonist role as not just a spectacle, but also a “looker” through a “dominant point of view within the narrative” (Brown n.pag.). Thus, action heroines are found to be objectified, sexualized, and the object of the male gaze, like other typical female characters, but when they “turn the tables” on the male characters, they are not punished in the previous patriarchal sense (Brown n.pag.). The heroines are quite similar to the film noir femme fatales with their sexual trickery and seduction, however, they, unlike the femme fatales, always come off as victorious (Brown n.pag.). The action heroine functions as both **sexual object** and subject, but if the male characters treat her only as an object of their visual pleasure, she will in turn punish them. Nevertheless, he argues that a continuing presence of the male gaze within action movies containing female protagonists exists. With this he ultimately implies that even though action heroines are given more agency, they are still sexualized – which to Brown is equated with negativity (n.pag.).

However, the topics and subjects examined in this book once again emerge in his 2015 book *Beyond Bombshells: The new Action Heroine in Popular Culture*. This book however branches slightly differently in comparison to the previous book. In *Beyond Bombshells*, he focuses more on analyzing the “narrative variables that have developed and influence how the action heroine is understood as an emblematic character type” and the ways that these action heroines are putting a new light on the cultural definitions of **femininity** (7). He initiates his analysis with the theme of male and female **sexual objectification** through explicit sexual violence- and torture scenes and argues that the scenes play on the **spectators’** sadomasochistic pleasures. In this context, he discusses the element of rape and torture on both male and female heroes, taking male leads in action movies along with heroines such as *the*

⁷ He bases this chapter on the character-analyses of movie and series narratives of e.g. *The Bionic Woman* (1976-1978), *Barbwire* (1996), *Alias* (2001-2006), *Catwoman* (2004), *Cagney and Lacey* (1981-1988).

Avengers' Black Widow and Lisbeth Salander (of *The Girls with the Dragon Tattoo*, 2011) as his focal points. Through his findings he makes it clear that male torture scenes are about establishing **masculinity** and strength as traits of heroism whereas the torture of heroines is equally about sexualizing the strong female characters and emphasizing their **femininity** (32-34).

According to Brown, when the heroine is a part of an all-male team, she usually appears as a **sexual object** in the sense that her tasks to function as a flirtatious and distracting element while the rest of the team finishes the job – she herself becomes a threat to **masculinity** (61). Furthermore, Brown writes that there might lie “a powerful fantasy of escapism or redemption in a postfeminist sense” in the constructed images of teenage heroines doing backflips and “handling machine guns against slimy men” (23). However, he further points out that this needs to be comprehended in a larger cultural context related to the media in which “young women are still treated simultaneously as innocents in need of protection and blossoming sex objects” (23). Lastly, it should be mentioned that he maintains that the female body or female form remains unaltered, and that the characteristics of the female hero remain those of sexual manipulation instead of physical brutality and muscular strength (239). However, since analyses of the representations of women along with women’s accompanying looks have been discussed, the following section will focus on analyses that have examined male bodies and **masculinity** as the objects of (erotic) gazes.

1.1.2 Gazing and Representations of Masculinity

A study on **masculinity** and bodies exists in the work of Yvonne Tasker. In her book, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* from 1993, Tasker examines portrayals of bodies and genders in 1980’s action movies while attempting to argue that visual pleasure carries the same amount of significance as narrative resolution (5-6). She claims that, within action cinema, form and content are combined as the audience desires to follow the narrative while desiring to stop and gaze at details (6). She focuses on the aspect of **masculinity** and the way that the muscular body of both male and female characters may provide visual pleasure for the spectating audience in terms of the narrative.

In connection with muscularity and the general representation of male and female bodies, Tasker criticizes the stable gender binary and subject/object dichotomy (male/masculine subject and female/feminine object) that is mainly associated with the male gaze (115). Furthermore, in relation to male bodybuilding culture of action film, she discusses a **feminization** in the sense that they are obsessed

with body-looks (hence the beauty of the male body) along with a **masculinity** connected to strength and empowerment (111-118). According to Tasker, it is vital to understand that the muscular male hero and his body both represent and are produced by the continuous and unstable relationship between reasserting and parodying “masculinist values” in terms of hegemonic **masculinity** (109).⁸

However, muscularity and bodybuilding are not the only factors that have previously been examined in relation to **masculinity** and the male body. In the early 1990s, Steve Cohan published his essay, “‘Feminizing the Song-And-Dance Man’: Fred Astaire and the spectacle of **masculinity** in the Hollywood musical” offering an analysis specifically on the way that the male body and **masculinity** may be spectacles in Hollywood musicals. Cohan begins his essay with the statement that the Hollywood musical genre differs from other genres because it provides both men and women to center “in showstopping numbers”, which ultimately challenges gender binaries (46). Cohan further states that the male performer during his dance-performances “connotes”, in the Mulveyan sense, “**to-be-looked-at-ness**” and therefore is placed in the feminine end of the binary gender-spectrum (47). However, to Cohan, the male musical performer is not simply an object of an erotic gaze and he is not simply feminized (47). By analyzing Fred Astaire and his “showstopping” performances opposite different female co-stars, Cohan reaches the conclusion that Astaire is a masculine spectacle on which a female star is **gazing**, but, with a **gaze** of idealization and aspiration (49-51, 59-60).

Eventually Astaire’s performance became associated with the song-and-dance talent to such an extent that “his star image was consistently represented by metonymies of his body, the source of his talent and charisma, throughout his career, most notably so during the 1950s when a shot of his legs [...], or his top hat [...], or even his voice [...], could serve instantly to signal his star identity in a film” (Cohan 62). The fact that he featured as spectacle in film and performed as ‘Fred Astaire’ created authentication of his star persona (Cohan 62). Cohan is ultimately arguing that even if this actor is the object of an erotic gaze in Hollywood musicals then that does not necessarily entail feminization, instead Astaire simply displays an alternative **masculinity** than that of the usual male pin-up model (62). Cohan’s analysis of Fred Astaire in “showstopping” performances contributes to the perspective of the **female gaze** in the sense that in certain movies or genres an erotic **gaze** is allowed on the spectacle of the male body, to

⁸ From this perspective, she provides insights on borders of gender binaries and discusses the hyper muscular action genre as a complex response to the commercial construction of the “new man” who emerged in the 80s (1, 121).

which Astaire's female co-stars often **gaze** upon his moving body (60-64). This leaves room for the articulation of the **female gaze** in terms of illuminating a female desire through the looks of female characters.

Adam Knee, on the other hand, wrote an essay on **masculinity** and gazing in relation to Clint Eastwood called "The Dialectic of Female Power and Male Hysteria in *Play Misty for Me*." With this essay, Knee analyzes Clint Eastwood in the representation of the character, the DJ David Garver, who is being stalked by an obsessive woman (87). Within this film, Garver becomes a sight of contradictions in relation to **masculinity** (87). Somewhat similar to Cohan's analysis of Fred Astaire, Eastwood's character is made the object of a female character's **gaze** directly establishing an **active female gaze**. However, here, as this narrative is constructed apart from the narrative genre of Hollywood musicals, it therefore also implies a different kind of spectacle. Nevertheless, Knee uses the political and historical background of the movie's filming and release in order to discuss Eastwood's gender portrayal while comparing this role to Eastwood's previous jaw-biting roles in westerns (90). Knee analyzes the power of the female character and her success in subduing and undermining the male character's power through diminishing his pleasure of gazing while she constantly follows him and watches him from a distance which eventually results in an attempted murder on Eastwood's character (90-102). Knee claims that the roles of gazing are reversed and that the female character herself appears as an attack on male dominated ways of gazing exactly through the display of the male character's unease with being positioned as a feminine object in the subject/object dichotomy (90-102). Even though this actively gazing female character is eventually killed off, Knee's analysis does help to find traces of a more powerful **female spectator** within film as it is clear that the gazing stalker holds power over her object.

Nicola Rehling similarly discusses bodies on display, however, her focus lies with the commodity objectification of white heterosexual male bodies ranging from different depictions of actor's bodies presented through film, **television**, and advertising. Rehling comments on the emergence of general varieties of representations of **masculinity** and men as "sex objects" (n.pag.).⁹ From this point of departure, she proceeds to comment on the undressed body of John Travolta in *Staying Alive* (1983) and

⁹ Generally, she touches upon the male body display in a variety film and television series within different genres and draws heavily on the above-mentioned research of Tasker's. But, like Cohan, Rehling also touches upon the portrayal of **masculinity** and the male body in song-and-dance/ musical movies.

the ensuing fetishization of his body in the media. She epitomizes a general trend in the media and advertising in which the measurable inches on every aspect of specific actors' body are speculated (Rehling n.pag.). According to Rehling, a direct reversal of the male gaze in which men and/or male bodies were not so much depicted as desiring subjects as they were the objects of the female leads' desire occurred in the blockbuster film *Thelma and Louise* (1991), and the **television** series and later film franchise, *Sex and the City* (series 1998-2004; film franchise 2008-2010). Specifically regarding *Sex and the City* (series 1998-2004; film franchise 2008-2010), she writes that it was the “audacious screening of **active** female desire, its frank, female-authored dialogues about sex, and its graphic sex scenes filmed from a female point of view” that really appealed to the a female audience (Rehling n.pag.; my emphasis).¹⁰ In connection with this display of female desire, she points out that the focus on the scrutiny of the female body is now being applied to men's bodies as well, which puts forward a different form of **masculinity**.¹¹

On the other hand, Rehling also touches upon the field of action movies. Here, she argues that action movies also pose interesting examples of the male body as fragmented, fetishized, and as spectacle. She writes that the male body becomes a spectacle as “it moves through time and space” while performing impeccable, almost impossible, and heroic achievements (Rehling n.pag.). Furthermore, Rehling parallels the male bodies of action film with advertising in the sense that they are both “marked by [their] hardness, rendered through tautening of muscles required for the handling of guns, [...] or the demonstration of physical prowess that the narratives demand” (Rehling n.pag.). However, even though the camera fragments the male bodies in action film, it is quite different from the way that the camera lingers over and **sexually objectifies** the female body. In relation to male action heroes' bodies, the focus is on “flexed muscles or fetishizing phallic weaponry” (Rehling n.pag.).¹²

¹⁰ Similarly, she connects this to the gender role-reversal in the 1997 movie *The Full Monty*, in which unemployed British steelworkers decide to make money off stripping for a female audience (Rehling n.pag.), while discussing the way that this movie deals with the anxieties that are usually connected to the display/fetishization of the male body and general penis size (Rehling n.pag.).

¹¹ Here, her statement is nearing the arguments of both Cohan and Knee.

¹² Rehling then moves on to discussing the epic genre, in which she claims that “physical prowess, and bodily display constitute essential signifiers of white male power,” (Rehling n.pag.). She writes that the epic genre displays the former glory of imperialism and hegemonic **masculinity** through which the imperial body is represented in the usual setting of history. She

Ultimately, every source in this subsection points towards a sort of unease in relation to the male body being displayed as the object of a **sexually objectifying gaze** by a **female spectator**. This unease is associated with the fact that conventional codes of gender related subject/object dichotomies dictate that the object of the **gaze** must be feminine, which, as a result, causes the male body to be considered **feminized** when it appears as sexualized for the **gaze**. However, what can be derived from this is the fact that there is a certain derogatory discourse concerning the state of being the **sexual object** of another person's **gaze**, and in relation to the concepts of "female" and "**feminine**" – especially when this regards the subject of power relations. But, through that debate, it is also derivable that these subject/object dichotomies are not straightforward affairs since, as the scholarly material point out, the state of being the object of the gaze does not necessarily imply **femininity** nor the lack of **masculinity**.

Nevertheless, in light of the differing sources in each sub-section and these sources' diverse ranges towards illuminating the **female gaze**, my thesis deals with the **female gaze** in the same manner as some of these sources. Similar to Brown, I will be working with the concepts of **sexual objectification** and the manner in which the prominent female characters and/or heroines themselves **gaze** at male bodies. In connection with the heroines' gazes, I am, like Cohan and Knee, also examining the way that male characters and their bodies are turned into **sexual objects** for **female spectators' gazes**. In prolongation hereof, I am dealing with **sexual objectification** of male bodies in relation to sexual violence and assault. As already mentioned further above, I am examining female **identification** in televisual culture with specific television series as my objects of analysis, and, akin to Knight's and Gamman's approaches, this

further criticizes the fact that the historical and/or fantasy settings of these movies allow "a return to a white **masculinity** unchallenged by gendered or raced others" because the movies in this genre are marginal in their use of people of color (Rehling n.pag.). However, in relation to the way the white male body is displayed within this genre, she compares the critical perceptions of the display of bodies of both Russel Crowe in *Gladiator* and Brad Pitt in *Troy*. In *Gladiator*, Crowe was not pumped up in similar manner as the models of advertising that usually functions as ornament, similarly Rehling claims that Crowe was not fetishized by the camera. Hence Crowe's display of **masculinity** was applauded because, according to Rehling, it signaled the desire to go back to a "physical **masculinity**" that is unblemished by commodification (Rehling n.pag.). On the other hand, Rehling comments that the display of Pitt's body and **masculinity** was attacked by the press for being feminine and homoerotic because the camera tended to fetishize his body while the narrative provided constant excuses for him to appear undressed (n.pag.). Ultimately, Rehling is criticizing the fact that Crowe was applauded for his performance for a male gaze while Pitt was criticized for the commodification of his body due to his non-alignment with a traditional male gaze (n.pag.).

involves looking into the way that the female characters of my objects of analysis are positively portrayed, and the way that they deal with female themes.

In the same manner as Knight desires to look at sociological factors concerning the female action hero, but not to advocate a stance in which one sex is considered better than the other, I too examine aspects of female protagonists. However, my focus is not on sociological factors, but rather on the female spectator within and beyond the televisual narrative – more specifically, the empowered **female spectator**, who does not seek female supremacy but someone who seeks gender equality and a variety of **identifications** and **sexual objects**.¹³ On an overall comment, these chosen analyses mainly focus on the political and cultural dimensions of the female and male gaze. They therefore also lack the perspectives of the psychoanalytical theories originally associated with this kind theory. I too am focusing on the cultural aspects of this kind of gaze, but I am also implementing some of the original psychoanalytical concepts, such as **scopophilia** and **voyeurism**, which are connected to the pleasures of gazing.

Nevertheless, in order to examine the research question posed in the beginning of this introduction-chapter, the thesis has been given the following structure: the purpose of the chapter following this introduction is to account for the methodological considerations that has risen during the progression of this study on the **female gaze**. The third chapter will present the theoretical material that is necessary for understanding the **female gaze** with its roots in psychoanalytical theory that forms the basis for the further analysis of the narratives. I will account for considerations from theorists of film and **television** such as Laura Mulvey, Elizabeth Cowie, and David Rodowick, and I will also be supplementing with theories closer related to sexual imagery and pornography in the form of Richard Dyer and Clarissa Smith. However, this will also be briefly placed within feminism and a general positive view on sex. Within the fourth chapter these theoretical tools are applied to the selected **television** narratives, and the **female gaze** in terms of overall concepts such as the **female spectator**, **female identification**, and **sexual objectification** of male bodies is examined. The final chapter, Conclusion, will conclude on the research question posed in the introduction and hereby contain the most vital and interesting points of the thesis. Furthermore, such considerations regarding scholarly analyses and my own thesis leads towards the

¹³ Hence the sexualization of the female sex is not necessarily considered offensive, however this is not further examined in this thesis its focus is on the heterosexual **female gaze**.

following methodological chapter, which provides a more specific account of the way that I intend to approach and examine the **female gaze**.

2.0 Methodology

As mentioned above, the purpose of this chapter is to account for the methodological considerations that has risen throughout the progression of this study on the female gaze within **television** series. First of all, it is necessary to comment on the difference between the sources incorporated in the introduction and the type of material utilized as the theoretical ground in the theory section. The articles/books in my introduction and the articles/books in my theory differ because the formers sources are more practical in their approach to their chosen objects of analysis while the latter are more theoretical in their approach to the field and in their objects of analysis. When dealing with the theories of gendered gazing, there are a few ways to approach any investigation of the **female gaze** and the place for a female spectator. However, my chosen direction involves analyzing objectification and identification, and the ways that they interconnect. Also, my approach involves examining the **sexual objectification** of male bodies by any type of female spectator within and outside of the **television** series.

By using the Mulveyan account of film studies as a starting point, there is an obvious relation to the use of psychoanalysis. However, as has been discovered through this working process and the appropriation towards **television** studies, there are limitations to the use of psychoanalysis, and for that reason the borrowing of theoretical and analytical tools from fields of feminism and cultural analysis in the form of pornography is necessary in addition to psychoanalysis. While doing this I am using a mixture of gaze theory within film theory. This involves using Mulveyan terms, however in a modified framework that is more in touch with present day and adapted to television.

Moreover, in order to apply the theoretical concepts to my objects of analysis in the form of recent **television** serials *Outlander* (2014-), *Poldark* (2015-), and *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), and for the purpose of creating a response to the research question, an approach of textual analysis and close readings is utilized along with comparisons between the narratives. Generally, I am focusing primarily on the first season of each television show while occasionally referring to seasons 2 of *Outlander* (2014-) and *Poldark* (2015-). For the purpose of achieving a proper reader comprehension, all key concepts are highlighted using bold throughout the thesis. Furthermore, for the sake of my general argument and in order to approach this in relation to the achievement of gender equality, I have chosen to employ strategic

essentialism in the sense that I am knowingly disregarding class and racial differences of both male and female characters in this study. Nevertheless, the following section will present the theoretical tools necessary for analyzing aspects of the **female gaze**.

3.0 Theory

As mentioned in the introduction, the intention with this thesis-chapter is to present the theoretical material concerning the **female gaze**. Compared to the sources included in the introduction-chapter, the material in this theory-chapter are generally more theoretical in relation to approaching gendered gazing – here including the **female gaze**. In the following theoretical section, terms such as **female gaze** and **female spectator** will arise, which, even though they seem very similar, they actually cover different things. A **female spectator** is a female person who is a gazing and/or assuming a spectating position whereas the **female gaze** is a certain way of viewing things on screen that deals with female subject matters, e.g. **sexual objectification** of male bodies or other female themes and/or issues such as female sexuality or the subjection of sexual violence. Nevertheless, in terms of structure, this chapter is divided into three main sub-sections that each focuses on illuminating aspects of feminism, psychoanalysis, and pornography, which are essential for understanding the perspectives of the **female gaze**. The first sub-section presents seemingly controversial feminist opinions in the form of Christina Hoff Sommers and Camille Paglia with their views on sex and patriarchy.

The second section focuses on psychoanalytical aspects of gendered **gazing** in terms of visual pleasure and **identification**. This involves using theorists such as psychoanalytical theorists Laura Mulvey, Elizabeth Cowie, and David Rodowick. For that reason, the section is heavily influenced by the original theorization of the male gaze and its psychoanalytical premise, which also involves returning to Freudian theory and concepts. However, the section also features further perspectives on such theorizations and concepts in order for the concepts etc. to be applicable to the **female spectator** and the **female gaze**. Every single theorist mentioned in this section incorporates a political and cultural dimension to supplement their psychoanalytic theorizations, which is also highly influential on my use of the theory. Even though gendered **gazing** is originally theorized in relation to the cinema, its transferability to television will also be discussed through the use of scholars in television culture, John Fiske and Helen Wheatley.

Moreover, the third section will comprise aspects of pornography in order to present factors concerning the sexualization and display of the male body for **female spectators**. This involves using Richard Dyer, John Fiske, Clarissa Smith, whom the latter specifically deals with pornography for women. However, before getting to the theorization of the **female gaze**, it is interesting to turn to the feminist perspectives regarding the breakdown or death of the patriarchal dominance that is normally associated with the male gaze – these perspectives will be presented in the following section.

3.1 *Sex-positive Feminism and the Death of Patriarchy*

According to a branch of feminist writings of the 1990's, patriarchy has reached its end or at least it is very close to such an endeavor (Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism?* 260). These same feminists therefore also criticize the premise of what they term “victim feminism” in which women are generally considered weak victims of patriarchy without any social agency (Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism?* 244). (Self-proclaimed) Feminists such as Christine Hoff Sommers and Camille Paglia are voices on this matter. Sommers argues in favor of “equality and equal access for women” along with “fair treatment and without discrimination”, and she believes that there is no need for gynocentrism to reach these goals (*Who Stole Feminism?* 22). She also stresses that it is patronizing towards women to still consider them as subjects of forced subordination without heard opinions (*Who Stole Feminism?* 260). Patriarchal domination is no longer present in the west and feminist revolutions are no longer relevant (Sommers, *Freedom Feminists* 71-72).

On a further note, Camille Paglia argues that women are able to do what they want, but with social agency comes social danger (*Sex, Art and American Culture* 50-54). However, she is also a strong believer in the aspect of personal responsibility, and she states that women should be free to risk that social danger (65). Additionally, she believes women to have an immense sexual power which should not be forgotten (*Sex, Art and American Culture* 50-54) because, as she states, “[m]an has traditionally ruled the social sphere; feminism tells him to move over and share his power. But woman rules the sexual and emotional sphere, and there she has no rival” (*Vamps and Tramps* 31). Women rule the sexual sphere by having leverage. Men want sex from them to such an extent that they will do practically anything to get it, and that makes women sexually powerful (*Vamps and Tramps* 32, 57).

When applying these considerations to the gaze in **television**, there are essentially two ways of achieving gender and sexual equality – either through eliminating completely the sexualized gaze, or by

turning towards a more positive idea of sex while welcoming the **sexually objectifying gaze** on both female and male bodies. As Sommers declares, sexuality always has been, and will continue to be, a part of nature (*Who Stole Feminism?* 264), hence it should not be ignored nor be pretended not to exist. Here, feminism holds a positive view on sex. Sex positive feminism can be found once again in the form of Paglia, who holds that “[t]he ultimate law of the sexual arena is personal responsibility and self-defense. [...] I say to women: get down in the dirt, in the realm of the sense. Fight for your territory, hour by hour. Take your blows like men” (*Vamps and Tramps* 23-24). Paglia seems to be advocating a stance in which women fight back and provide the same opportunities for themselves as are available for men. So, in an attempt to transfer this preliminary advocacy onto the field of gendered and sexualized gazing, I am arguing that women should commence their own in equal manner instead of attempting to eliminate **sexual objectification** altogether.

It is through this understanding of gender equality through sex-positivism that the **female gaze** becomes immensely significant because it helps to promote a sexualized gaze by a woman on male bodies. This leads to the following theoretical considerations on gendered gazing which will begin by approaching Laura Mulvey’s critical theorization of the (male) gaze in her essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”. At first glance, it may seem unusual to turn to this theorization considering the fact that she originally advocated a change in dominant culture that involved getting rid of **sexually objectifying gazes** in order to achieve equality between the sexes. However, in light of Sommers’ and Paglia’s views, advocating a **sexually objectifying gaze** on male bodies is simply another form of achieving gender equality springing from the same basis of wanting to move forward from a tendency in which one sex is one-sidedly used for the (sexual) pleasure of the other.

3.2 Pleasurable Looking: Sexual Objectification, the Male Gaze and the Female Spectator

Unlike the previous section that specifically centered on feminism and the achievement of gender equality, this section will present concepts more specifically related to general **gazing** and the **female spectator**. In relation to gazing and the screen, Mulvey argues that film and cinema is pleasurable for the **spectators** – she establishes her argument through the psychoanalytic, Freudian term “**scopophilia**” (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204). Freud himself originally termed **scopophilia** as the “pleasure in looking” (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 157), in which the eye is somewhat similar to an erotogenic zone (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 169). He considered an erotogenic zone to be somewhere

on the skin or a part of a mucous membrane that, when applied some kind of stimuli, conjures up a pleasurable and satisfactory feeling with “a particular quality” (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 183). However, **scopophilia** also exists as a sexual “component instinct” – a drive sometimes working apart from erotogenic zones (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 192). In connection with this drive, the instinct of **scopophilia** is closely tied to **sexual objects** – a **sexual object** is defined by Freud as the person or inanimate object to which someone feels sexual attraction (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 135-136).

According to Freud, the development of **scopophilia** is also connected to the simultaneous development of the child’s “instinct for knowledge” in the sense that the child uses **scopophilia** to obtain mastery and a sense of control through obtaining knowledge (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 194). Furthermore, this instinct for knowledge initially arises in relation to questions relating to sexuality (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 194). In such cases, pleasure itself is specifically derived from looking at another person or an object whereto the person or object becomes an object of the subject’s sexual stimulation, hence it is pleasurable to look at the **sexual object** (Freud, “Three Essays on Sexuality” 192; Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema 204-205”; Cowie 172). Also, through **scopophilia**, the **sexual object** is also subjected “to a controlling and curious gaze” that wishes to investigate this object (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204). Obviously, Freud discussed watching **sexual objects** in relation to the general ‘in real life’ sexual development within people, but, this is also relevant for watching **sexual objects** of screen.

When the spectator is watching a **sexual object** on screen, then this object is also subjected to a gaze that investigates and controls, which in turn is pleasurable for the spectator. However, in the same sense, there may also be pleasure in being the receiver of a look (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204), which means that a person may derive pleasure (perhaps even sexual pleasure) through the knowledge that they themselves are being watched, that they are the object of another person’s sexual stimulation. Hence, the notion of **scopophilia** is also closely connected to the concepts of **voyeurism** and exhibitionism. **Voyeurism** denotes the desire and satisfaction in seeing and investigating the forbidden, private or hidden such as the presence or absence of the penis, while exhibitionism alternately denotes the desire and satisfaction in exposing these private bodily parts (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204). According to Mulvey, the pleasure in looking at an object or the pleasure in being the object of a look is rooted in children’s general **voyeuristic** and exhibitionist desires (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204).

In relation to **voyeurism** and its connection to the cinema screen, Mulvey states that film itself is constructed as “a hermetically sealed world” unfolding “indifferent to the presence of the audience” while it plays on the audience’s **voyeuristic** fantasy and simultaneously creates a feeling of **voyeuristic** separation (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204-205). Additionally, within a cinema auditorium, the lit-up screen and the surrounding darkness give the **spectators** a sense of isolation making them feel as if they are watching and experiencing this movie-world in solitude, which only helps to create the **voyeuristic** separation (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204-205). In this manner, the **spectators** are entrenched individually in “an illusion of looking in on a private world” (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 204-205). During the cinema experience, the **spectator** is therefore placed in a situation of **voyeurism**.

Fiske, who has examined the pleasures of **television** and is one of the most prominent voices hereon, argues that a lot of Mulvey’s arguments works quite well for the sphere of cinema, but, there are a few problems in transferring this to the sphere of **television** (226). He reasons that the **television** screen, which is placed “in the family living room in the middle of ordinary life” does not reproduce the same **voyeurism** that is reproduced in the cinema because television is much more interactive than **voyeuristic** (226). Moreover, the segmentation in episodes of the **television** narratives airing on a fixed time slot on weekly basis produce a different kind of dimension, in which the viewers “are less subjected to the positioning of the realist narrative” (226). Here, it is quite obvious that Fiske considers **television** a family activity with no possibility for the spectator or viewer to watch in privacy, while he believes **television** programs to be much more dependent on its viewers’ reception for its own further development (226-227).

These are valuable points in relation to **television**, but, **television** broadcast has more digital platforms nowadays, and in light of this Julie D’Acci adds some valuable points. D’Acci reports that **television** is subjected to a constantly evolving change with its “transmogrifying into digital signals, and cable and internet delivery” (91). Today in 2017, this can only be considered true in light of popular online streaming services such as *Netflix*, *HBO*, *Now TV*, and Amazon Prime, which all contribute to the broadcasting of **television** series and film albeit slightly differently than actual **television** channels (Wheatley 9). According to Helen Wheatley, who has examined spectacle in television and the applicability of film and cinematic theory to television, these streaming services do make it possible to recreate the private sphere of the darkness of the cinema (204-206). And here, it can be made even more

private through the ability to pause, rewind, and using individual headphones where it is literally possible to engage yourself in an intense and deeply focused viewing position (204-206). Since the series are constantly available for online access, the viewers may also watch whenever they wish. They are not bound by a specific timeslot and do not have to fear missing any episodes.

Moreover, it is also possible for the spectator to watch several episodes in a row,¹⁴ which allows the spectator to entrench himself/herself even deeper into the illusion of watching a private world. In my opinion, these streaming services thereby share very similar characteristics of both the primetime **television** experience and the cinematic experience. For that reason, the concepts of cinematic **spectator** and **television viewer** seem to blend and create a different viewing experience for **television**. Through all of this, **television** series available online equally become a site of pleasure. All of this is especially relevant in relation *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-) as *Netflix* provides the access this show thereby making Mulvey's theory applicable. Hence, I am following Helen Wheatley's suggestion that Mulvey's arguments should not be disregarded in its applicability in terms of the televisual, rather they should be adapted (204). For that reason, the arguments will in large parts still be applicable in relation to **scopophilia** (in the sense of gaining pleasure from watching a **sexual object**), and **voyeurism**. However, in connection with this new **viewer** experience, it is possible to argue that the **television viewer** is equally a **television** spectator, however, in order to distinguish between the conception of an in-text (**female**) **spectator** and the person watching the **television** screen, (**female**) **viewer**¹⁵ will continue to refer to the person watching the **television** screen even though they too may be able to deeply entrench themselves in the private narrative world on the screen. Furthermore, the viewer which is dealt with in this study is an implied spectator that may take up any position (s)he likes, and this does not necessarily reflect my personal views.

Despite the fact that some of Mulvey's points in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in relation to **voyeurism**, and **scopophilia** apply to **television** as well, her argument generally revolves around the fact that the gaze is connected to male subjectivity, male pleasure, and the image of the woman and

¹⁴ The generally known phenomenon of binge-watching.

¹⁵ **Female spectator** and **female viewer** are of course specifically used when the argumentation regards the female spectator within the series and the female viewer watching the television screen.

castration.¹⁶ Mulvey has drawn a parallel between the psychoanalytical account of subject formation in relation to castration and the observation within film that women's bodies in terms of representation have been used for the pleasure of men (Cowie 168). From this perspective, and in light of the previously mentioned **voyeurism** and sense of pleasure of watching another person in a **sexually objectified** manner, it seems vital to mention Mulvey's well-known term of "**connoting to-be-looked-at-ness**" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 206; my emphasis). Mulvey states that patriarchal society is politically and culturally dominated by an "imbalance" of the sexes in which looking, and its ensuing pleasure, is divided between **passive** female and **active** male ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative" 206). Woman stands as a **passive** and eroticized object specifically for the gaze of a man (thus, the male gaze), and film narratives often contain the display of the woman as spectacle ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 206). Mulvey writes that in both reality and film

The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to **connote to-be-looked-at-ness**. (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 206; my emphasis)

The woman becomes the **passive** object of an **active** male gaze as she is dressed (perhaps even undressed) in skimpy clothes while presented in erotic poses intentionally inviting the male gaze, which she ultimately accepts. Here Mulvey clearly criticizes patriarchal society, and its resultant constant erotic and objectifying looks on the female body because women are diminished to simple objects that has no other function than attracting and containing the gaze of the male subject. As mentioned previously, this is due to man controlling the narrative progression and the fantasy of the film – he becomes the vessel through which the spectator looks and acts out fantasy (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 207).

Mulvey blames this on patriarchal ideology in which the male body and figure is not subjected to **sexual objectification** as "man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like" (207). Hence, unlike the female body, the male body is not **sexually objectified** or subjected to a **voyeuristic gaze** because the

¹⁶ For further elaboration on the image of the woman and its significance within psychoanalysis in relation to castration anxieties, and the "law of the father" and the "symbolic" please see Appendix A.

heterosexual man, who holds power, is not interested in looking at the undressed and eroticized male body. Here, a specific kind of **scopophilia** is in question – namely **active scopophilia** – which involves that the subject’s “erotic identity” is detached from the “erotic identity” of the objects (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 206). In connection with this, it is appropriate to mention that in Freud’s thinking within psychoanalysis and patriarchy, **masculinity** is typically associated with **activity** while **femininity** typically is associated with **passivity** (Freud, “Three Essays on Sexuality” 219-220; Freud, “Femininity” 114-115; Dyer 110).¹⁷ Here, it is crucial to note that power is normally associated with the holder of the gaze while the recipient of the gaze is considered powerless – something which is also related to the **active/passive** dichotomy in which looking/gazing is **active** and therefore powerful, while in contrast the recipient of looks/gazes are **passive** and therefore powerless (Dyer 109).

In relation to this element of power, it is interesting that Mulvey comments on the presence of different kinds of gazes in connection with the screen. According to Mulvey, there are three kinds of gazes. One is the look provided by the camera as it films the events which occurs in front of it (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 211). The second kind of look stems from the audience watching the screen whereas the third stems from the characters as they look at each other within the “illusion” of the screen-narrative (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 211).¹⁸ Thus, we are dealing with the woman as a pleasurable erotic object for the characters on screen while on another level she also appears as the erotic object for the spectator watching the screen, and she is therefore subjected to a sexualized and controlling gaze both on and off the screen (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 207).¹⁹

¹⁷ Interestingly, Freud himself began to believe this pairing to be deficient as both sexes contained huge parts of both **masculinity** and **femininity**. In connection with this, he also mentioned that women were placed under societal pressure to suppress their **masculinity**, something he also believes to be appropriate (“Femininity” 114-116). This leads to the general perception that Freud himself advocated patriarchal control. I will return to this aspect **masculinity** and **femininity** further below in the main text.

¹⁸ Even though Mulvey specifically discusses this in relation to the cinema screen, these are characteristics that, in my opinion, are shared between cinema, film, and **television** – except for the fact that **television** viewers are not necessarily sitting together, they are scattered in their own homes.

¹⁹ A part of this is connected to the narcissistic pleasure of identifying with the objects and subjects on screen and identifying with look of the camera as it watches the subjects and objects on screen (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 205-206).

In connection with the gaze through the camera, the female body may also be subjected to **fetishistic scopophilia** (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 208). Fetishism is typically identified as a disavowal of the woman’s missing penis within male psychology (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 208).²⁰ However, Freud also claims that **fetishism** is equally present in “normal love” (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 153-154), which, in my opinion, seems to cover general sexual attraction rather than actual love due to the element of the focus on the body parts. In film, and in **television, fetishization** is illustrated by stylized and fragmented bodies in the form of close-ups or cropping of parts of the body, e.g. women’s eyes, legs, their backsides, and their hair (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 209; Fiske 225).

Practically every inch of the female body can be subjected to this kind fragmentation, and in a way the camera “worships” these body parts in order to enhance their significance as separated from the body of the subject (Fiske 225). The female body is thereby construed only as an object detached from personality and personal feelings (Fiske 253). As opposed to **voyeurism** though, **fetishistic scopophilia** is able to “exist outside linear time as the erotic is focussed on the look alone” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 208). The eroticized body fragments are incorporated to attract the look, and therefore the fetishistic fragmentation is able to disrupt time and narrative. Through this, the female body is also included in the male spectators’ fantasy both voluntarily and involuntarily due to the exhibitionist-like-display of her body. Essentially all of this is associated to subjecting someone to an encompassing power within a limited time span, in which the woman is subjected to the power of the male spectator. These characteristics can indeed be transferred to the male body as well, but this will not be discussed just yet. I will return to this aspect of the **fetishized/fragmented** male body further below as it carries

²⁰ The pleasurable look by male spectators on the woman’s body is also faced with a “threatening content” in the form of the reminder of the castration threat due to her lack of a physical phallus, the penis (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 206-208). One way of dealing with this for the male spectator is **voyeurism**, which, here, involves an investigation of this “original trauma” and “demystifying her mystery” of castration (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 208). According to Mulvey, another way of dealing with the woman’s image, the castration threat, and the woman’s her guilt is disavowal through fetishistic scopophilia, which involves building up the physical appeal of the sexual object in which it is transformed into an element bringing satisfaction in itself (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 208). Here, it is the female body that is fetishized in order to diminish or defuse her threat and to compensate for the missing penis (Fiske 225; Cowie 203). Of course, this does not apply for the **fetishization** of the male body.

greater relevance there. However, the following section will discuss scopophilia in connection with identification as this is necessary before returning to further elements of **sexual objectification** and **fetishization** of male bodies within **female gazing**.

3.2.1 Identification and the Female Spectator

As mentioned above, even though film and cinema provide **scopophilic** pleasure through watching a sexualized object, it also works on another level, in which Mulvey argues that scopophilia is linked more closely to “narcissism and the constitution of the ego” (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 205-206). She writes that the instinct of looking and its curious, controlling gaze is also combined “with a fascination with likeness and recognition” in relation to the people and characters who are present on screen (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 205). Here, we are dealing with a narcissistic pleasure that, in cinema, is made possible through the general focus on the way that humans – faces, bodies and emotions – are ingrained in the film space and stories (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 205). Nevertheless, this type of fascination and recognition is, Mulvey argues, similar to the psychologic processes of identification and ego formation that occurs for the very young, pre-oedipal child when it recognizes its own reflection in the mirror (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 207). Here, she is drawing upon the Lacanian conception of the “mirror stage” occurring in the stages of early (pre-oedipal) childhood (“The Mirror Stage” 57-58). Mulvey claims that this sense of “mirror stage” fascination in relation the relationship between image and self-image brings “joyous recognition” to cinema spectators as well (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 205). Here, this fascination is powerful enough to allow the spectating subject to temporarily lose its ego and forget who (s)he is, while it, at the same time, in fact reinforces this ego quite similarly to the child’s recognition in the “mirror stage” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 205; Cowie 89). Thus, the subject regresses to a state similar to the original “mirror stage”.

Yet, in relation to **television**, John Fiske argues that this Lacanian psychoanalytic account of subject formation, on which Mulvey bases her account, proves less appropriate because Lacan theorizes his concepts “the law of the father” and the “symbolic” to be parts of unchanging nature (60-61). In connection with this, Fiske points out that through this claim of nature and Lacan’s phallogentrism, the former concepts are eliminated from any type of cultural and social change – but as mentioned already, television is much more dependent on reflecting this constantly changing culture than is cinema (60-61).

From this perspective, and by following Feuer, Fiske states that **television** viewers have moved past the Oedipal complex and are therefore socialized, and for that reason, he dismisses Lacan's theorization on this matter and calls for other theories of subjectivity within **television** (61). Wheatley backs up Fiske's claim and states that there is a different form of fascination at play in **television** due to its proximity and somewhat smaller screens that does not "allow temporary loss of ego" that seems so crucial for the resemblance of the mirror stage (mis)recognition (Wheatley 206; Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 205). According to Wheatley, this fascination is more closely related to a "fantasy" of seeing more of someone else (205) – this strongly resembles the aspects of **voyeurism** and sexual desire mentioned above, thus, **voyeurism** is also played upon in **television**.

However, in light of this theoretical chapter's previous section on sex-positivism and equality between the sexes resulting in the death of patriarchy, it is vital to criticize the limitations of Mulvey's account. In his work, *The Difficulty of Difference*, David Rodowick points out that Mulvey does not take into account the gazing of a female spectator. Rodowick comments that her work deals with questions regarding "the specificity of the female body-image, rather than the specificity of the female look or feminine identification [...]" (15). Rodowick deduces here that "questions of signification and identification in film are structured by a system of binary division and exclusion devolving from that body" (15). He points out that, in Mulvey's theory, identification is limited through the display of the female body because of the attempts to disavow the threat of castration that the female body poses. Hence, the subjectivity offered as identification within the filmic narrative is only considered pleasurable for the male or masculine spectator since any female spectator would have no reason to fear or disavow castration as she is already castrated.²¹

Another point of Rodowick's criticism includes the fact that Mulvey's account denies the male character/protagonist the possibility of functioning as an erotic sexualized object for female and male spectators (11). He states that there is "no distinction between identification and object-choice where **active** sexual aims may be directed towards the male figure" in her account (Rodowick 11; my emphasis). In her book, *Representing the Woman: Cinema and Psychoanalysis*, Elizabeth Cowie agrees with

²¹ Criticizing Mulvey's point of argument, Rodowick very rigidly puts forward the manner in which her argument is typically comprehended. Hence Rodowick believes Mulvey's argument is comprised by the fact that women only identify with the female bodies displayed (either you want to be her) while men only identify with the male protagonist (or you want to have her).

Rodowick's criticism and also points to the lack in Mulvey's representative use of the notion of scopophilia. Cowie believes that scopophilia, and thus "visual pleasure", is rather complicated as it "always implies specularising the object, whether another human being, an inanimate object, or a part of another human being, or even a part of oneself" (170). This means that visual pleasure involves gazing at an object whether it is a person, fragments of this person, or inanimate object, which is then followed by the gazing subject internalizing these impressions independently from sex and gender. Furthermore, as opposed to Mulvey, Cowie states that this is not limited to men only but applies to women as well: "As a result it does imply an active mastery involving a distancing of subject and object in which the object is controlled by a look, but only so far, for the [screen] subject is also always looked at and as a result the 'omnipotent gaze' is unstable, difficult to sustain" (Cowie 170). Hence, both men and women occupy the same space as object and subjects of the gaze regardless of the omnipotent gaze of the narrative's protagonist. Thus, any male protagonist may similarly be subjected to the **female spectator's gaze**. In relation to this, Cowie states that "**active scopophilia**" is a powerful drive for both men and women and it does not necessarily imply a failure of being feminine (194; my emphasis).

Interestingly, Mulvey made some revisions to her original view in which identification is limited to the male spectator in her essay "Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". Here, she addresses some of her own blind spots for the purpose of discussing identification for a **female spectator**. In this revision, her approach moves away from psychoanalytic identification and instead moves towards textual analysis as she focuses on the way that identification is made further possible through the directive of the narrative – thus treating her objects of analysis as texts. This provides some interesting points in relation to female identification processes with both a hero and a heroine that, because of the textual analysis approach, works for **television** as well. From this sense of direction, Mulvey argues for a way in which it might be possible for a female spectator to relate to pleasures still directed towards masculine identification when the text of the screen narrative is influenced by a female protagonist ("Afterthoughts" 122-123). Additionally, Mulvey touches upon sexuality as she turns her focus towards heroines struggling between "**passive femininity**" and "regressive **masculinity**" in pursuit of achieving a fixed sexual identity ("Afterthoughts" 123; my emphases). She claims that this same struggle between **femininity** and **masculinity** occurs within the **female spectator** when she accepts a sense of **masculinization** and identifies with the **active** or male hero – "difficulty of sexual difference" is created

(“Afterthoughts” 123). Thus, she is claiming that the **female spectator** takes up a position of gazing that involves a **masculinization**.

As mentioned, Mulvey bases this claim of a **masculinized female spectator** on the Freudian beliefs that **masculinity** is developed in the phallic phase equally for both girls and boys (“Afterthoughts” 123). According to Freud, the female clitoris is the cause of excitation in girls in the exact same way as the penis is the source of excitation for boys during childhood – thus, due to these similar traits of excitation, Freud believes that the sexual activity of girls has masculine characteristics in childhood and that the libido is generally “of a masculine nature” (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 219; “The Sexual Theories of Children” 217). Here, it is necessary to point out that Freud uses masculine to denote the libido being instinctively **active**, which causes **femininity** to oppositely take up the position of being **passive** (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 219-220; Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 124). However, as mentioned, the girl’s path through the oedipal complex and her realization of castration (dissimilar genitals) occurs differently and is more complicated in comparison with boy’s castration complex because the girl’s Oedipal complex is a secondary formation as it can only be activated through a disruption between the child and its pre-Oedipal relationship to the mother (Freud, “Anatomical Sex-Distinction” 251; Zakin n.pag.).

This disruption is brought on by the girl’s envy for the penis because, in the phallic phase, when a girl discovers the penis, she immediately accepts the penis and becomes equally interested in it as boys are, but, the girls also become envious of it and its size in comparison with her own genitals – this envy initiates a wish or desire to possess the penis for herself (“The Sexual Theories of Children” 218; “Three Essays on Sexuality” 195; “Anatomical Sex-Distinction” 252). In his lecture on the girl’s path towards **femininity**, Freud further elaborates on the girl’s dealings with castration and her entrance to the Oedipal complex. Here he maintains that there is a turning point in the girl’s development when she discovers the boy’s penis and her own castration, but also adds that this discovery has three possible outcomes (“Femininity” 126). The first developmental direction leads towards sexual inhibition or neurosis. Moreover, this direction involves the fact that the girl has enjoyed her masculine sexual activity with her sexual wishes directed towards her mother previous to this discovery, but now, due to the discovery and her ensuing penis envy, she loses this enjoyment (“Femininity” 126).

According to Freud, the little girl’s “self-love” is compromised by the boy’s much larger penis causing her to renounce “her masturbatory satisfaction from her clitoris”, which is followed by a rejection

of her love for the mother and a repression of the girl's own sexual practices in total ("Femininity" 126). At first, the girl believes that it is she alone that is castrated, but she "gradually extends it to other females and finally to her mother as well" ("Femininity" 126-127). Furthermore, Freud states that the girl blames her mother for the lack of a penis and thereby begins to abandon the mother as love-object because her love was for the phallic mother, not the castrated and lacking mother. Instead the girl turns towards her father as love-object with the beliefs that he might give her the penis, which the mother was unable or unwilling to give ("Anatomical Sex-Distinction" 254; "Femininity" 126; Zakin n.pag.). Consequently, by having the father, the girl believes that she has the penis.

The second developmental direction leads to "a **masculinity** complex", in which the girl very rebelliously refuses to accept her castration thereby also clinging to the activities of that, which Freud has labelled her masculine libido ("Femininity" 126, 129-130; my emphasis). Furthermore, Freud claims that the girl "takes refuge in an identification with her phallic mother or her father" while avoiding passivity ("Femininity" 130). The third and final developmental direction leads towards what Freud has called "normal **femininity**", which is somewhat similar to the first development and involves turning towards the father and abandoning the mother, and increasingly repressing her **masculinity** when reaching puberty ("Femininity" 126; "Three Essays on Sexuality" 219-220; "The Sexual Theories of Children" 217; my emphasis). However, this normalcy is only established if sexuality is not completely repressed – in the sense that the zone for sexual activity has shifted from clitoris to vagina ("Three Essays on Sexuality" 221; "Femininity" 128)²² – and if the wish for the penis is replaced with a wish for a baby from the father ("Femininity" 128). In connection with the girl's change of wish, Freud claims that the girl's libido changes position and moves further towards "the penis child"; here, the girl forfeits her wish for the penis "and puts in place of it a wish for a child" (Anatomical Sex-Distinction 255-256). Here, Freud believes that the girl will stop desiring a penis of her own and replace it with a desire of having a baby – this makes her turn towards the father in the search of a love-object, and making her mother "the object of her jealousy" ("Anatomical Sex-Distinction" 256).

This wish for a baby from the father simultaneously enhances the girl's hostility and jealousy towards the mother since the girl begins to view her mother as a rival in the sense that the mother receives

²² Nevertheless, it is here necessary to remember that this idea of "normal femininity" is a result of Freud's phallogocentric point of view advocating patriarchal control.

everything that the girl desires from the father (“Femininity” 129). Zakin further adds that the father is no threat for the girl as she is already castrated, but he is able to promise a “refuge from loss” – the loss that is “represented by the mother who bears this loss and who is at fault for the girl’s own” (Zakin n.pag.). Moreover, Freud states that **femininity** is attributed a greater portion of narcissism – something that influences women’s choice of love object in the sense that being loved “is a stronger need” than the act of loving someone (“Femininity” 132). This leads Zakin to deduce that for the girl on her Oedipal trajectory, it is the father that “stands for the virile capacity of desire itself, which she herself lacks but might reclaim through another man’s provision of the opportunity to have a child”, hence **femininity** is equally “realized as the desire to be the object of masculine desire” in the girl’s Oedipal complex trajectory (Zakin). By conforming to **femininity** and identifying with her mother, the girl becomes like the mother, which in turn will make her desirable for the man because that reignites the love he had for the mother (Freud, “Femininity” 134). However, Freud adds that any individual will contain and display aspects of **masculinity** and **femininity**, and **passivity** and **activity** despite the individual’s sex (“Three Essays on Sexuality” 219-220; “Anatomical Sex-Distinction” 258). Hence, women shift between **passive** and **active**, but, following the path of “normal **femininity**” ultimately leads to an “increasing repression of ‘the **active**’” (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 124; my emphasis).

Furthermore, Mulvey connects the Freudian account of the girl’s path to **femininity** to Hollywood films saying that whenever **female spectators** watch film that offer identification with a masculine and “**active** point of view” they are enabled to embrace the once repressed part of their sexuality (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 124; my emphasis). The **female spectator** may unconsciously relish in the action unfolding in front of her along with the sense of “control over the diegetic world” that is achieved through the identification with the narrative’s hero/heroine (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 122-123). Evidently, when following this train of thought, it seems that the only possible way that a woman might experience pleasure while watching screen narratives with male protagonists, or **active** female protagonists, is through a temporary discovery of the once repressed **masculinity**. This is heavily dependent on the fact that the ego desires to position itself in an **active** manner (“Afterthoughts” 125) – which is made possible through the employment of fantasy.

According to Mulvey, the narrative structure pushing for identification with a masculine protagonist reignites a sense of **masculinity**, a so called “fantasy of action” for the female spectator – a fantasy of female agency and activity, which patriarchy dictates that the female spectator must repress

for the purpose of following the path of correct or “normal **femininity**” (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 129; Freud, “Femininity” 126; my emphasis). In relation to the sense of **activity** and female **masculinization**, this has immense importance for the achievement of gender equality and **female gazing**. According to Mulvey, “The memory of the ‘masculine’ phase has its own romantic attraction, a last-ditch resistance, in which the power of **masculinity** can be used as postponement against the power of patriarchy” (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 129). As mentioned earlier, Freud used a “metaphor of **masculinity**” to denote “**activity**”, and for that reason **activity** is key in the creation of gender equality.

However, Freud’s statement that “we ought rather to recognize this wish for a penis as being *par excellence* a feminine one” (“Femininity” 129; original emphasis) leads Cowie to state that **femininity** is more accurately defined by the wish to undo castration (226). From this train of thought, she also claims that the second and third pathways of **femininity** are not that different from each other as they both arise in the wish for the penis – here these paths become ways in which the women may regain a penis, possibly symbolically. Hence, in Cowie’s opinion, the third pathway is simply a version of the second pathway, in which the wish for the penis has gone through a “process of substitution” for a symbolic penis or phallus. First the girl wanted the father’s penis, then a child from him and eventually a child from another man as substitution (226). Ultimately this means that the girl’s **masculinity** complex can be equally aligned femininity as “normal **femininity**” because the girls/women are initially driven into the paths by their wish for a penis so that they can undo castration and gain a sense of power. Thus, **femininity** is instead multifaceted. As mentioned previously, Cowie stated that **active scopophilia** was associated with **femininity**, and this argument of **masculinity** complex being an equal part of **femininity** forms the basis for that statement. Thus, **activity** does not eliminate **femininity**, nor does **femininity** eliminate **activity**. Hence the different forms of **femininity** are relevant for female identification. The following section returns to the aspect of sexual objectification, however, this time, it is specifically directed towards male bodies.

3.3 Masculinity and the Eroticization of Male Bodies

Even though the previous section focused mostly on psychoanalytically inspired theories regarding women being **sexually objectified** by male subjects while creating a place for the identification of female spectators, this section focuses on the theoretical aspects of the male featuring as a **sexual object** for the **female spectator’s gaze**. This involves somewhat stepping away from the specific details within

psychoanalytic theory, yet, on a more cultural level, still using concepts that are connected to that framework. This section will utilize John Fiske, Richard Dyer and Clarissa Smith²³ as main theorists on **masculinity** and the perception of male bodies. Fiske states that images offering direct “**voyeuristic**” pleasure of the display of undressed male bodies for the **female gaze** can be found in the media – mostly magazines containing images, in pin-up or star portrait form, of actors featured in melodramas and soap operas (186-187). Such images involve “close-ups of the face” and/or of muscular male actors or “hunks”, as he calls them, “posed with bare torsos” (187).

Richard Dyer has analyzed male pin-up images, pornography, advertising, star portraits in his often-cited work, *Only Entertainment*. Here he writes that there is a certain instability in relation to the male body being displayed as sexual spectacle (109). This instability is brought on by the maintenance of power relations exemplified through **muscularity**, **active** and **passive** factors concerning **gazes** along with the interplay of the phallus and power (109). As already mentioned above, power and activity are associated with the one who gazes, while weakness/powerlessness and passivity are associated with the person who is the object of the gaze (Dyer 109). This is the main reason for sexualized male bodies to stir up such disconcerting effects because suddenly the male body would be subjected to the same power that dominates the female body above in Mulvey’s theorization.²⁴

²³ It may seem peculiar to include Clarissa Smith as a theoretical text on pornography due to her restricted focus on only one medium, the pornographic magazine *For Women* (published 1992-1995). Yet, I think her book does provide interesting insights to a theoretical point of view because as she states: “This book isn’t simply an analysis of a single text. Rather it attempts to marry a number of seemingly incompatible ways of thinking about production, consumption and textual formations to facilitate an engagement in wider debates around pornography including its imputed harmful or liberating effects and notions of pornography as an inherently ‘male’ form” (Smith 12). Ultimately to prove that women look and desire in the same capacity as men, she approaches pornography, female sexual desire and exposure of the naked male body from a specifically female point of view.

²⁴ In connection with this, Tasker highlights and attacks feminist film criticism for mapping a “heightened narrative of male power and female powerlessness” onto the cinema (116), and on this matter, Jeffrey Brown acknowledges that this division of power exists in cinema, film, television and other media as well. Yet, he also acknowledges that there is an increasing recognition that conceptions such as “victimizer”, “victim”, “powerless”, and “powerful” are, and should be, detached from conceptions of male and female (*Beyond Bombshells* 18, 50-54). He argues that themes such as rape and sexual violence are beginning to be portrayed more and more as detestable and something that may occur to both men and women and therefore becomes a responsibility for men, women, heroes, and heroines (*Beyond Bombshells* 50-54).

Nevertheless, Dyer claims that patterns of eye-contact in relation to the male actor's or model's own looks are incredibly interesting as these are involved in attempts to disavow the powerful and controlling gaze to which these bodies are subjected whenever male bodies are offered seemingly as sexualized and erotic spectacles (109). Dyer stresses that this is not simply whether the male model looks back at the spectators, rather it is the manner in which he looks or does not look back at the spectators that is interesting in relation to these power relations of gazing (104). He states that there are three traditional ways in which the male model may look. When the male model is not looking at into the camera, he might look "off", which signals an interest that is not connected to the spectator, but rather toward something that, for the spectator, is not present in the image (104). Another option for the male model is to look up into the air. This signals a presence of the mind or spirituality in which his body might be presented for the gaze of others, but his mind is focused on more important things (104). This also suggest a strive upwards, or at least a strive away from the inferiority of being the object of a **female spectator's gaze** (Dyer 104).

Yet, whenever the male model does look at the spectator, Dyer states that it often seems as if he is staring at them to assert himself and to cross any boundaries posed by the camera and/or the **spectator's gaze** (109). In relation to these boundaries, Dyer also points out a difference between male and female models. In instances in which a female model gazes back into the camera towards the **spectator**, she does so with a smile to accompany her **gaze** – and does not cross the boundaries of the camera or the **spectator's gaze** (109). This smile is most likely supposed to be understood as joyful and perhaps flirtatious. This, according to Dyer, does not occur for the male model as his stare seems rather penetrating, even castrating, through its crossing of camera boundaries. Yet, as mentioned already, women have no fear of castration nor penetration because they are already castrated, hence it seems that we are dealing with a disavowal of any possible homoeroticism instead of the actual **female spectator's gaze**. In relation to this, Dyer writes that male pin-ups or images of undressed male bodies generally are considered ineffective for women exactly because of the model's attempts to deny the look, and because the contents of these images seem to be a configuration of male sexuality disguised as an appeal to female sexuality (109).

However, in direct reproach with Dyer's assertions of the functions of eye-contact, Clarissa Smith states that these have changed as a result of the male body generally becoming more available for the **female gaze**. In continuation hereof, she claims that the "full-on stare, the looking up and looking off"

beyond the camera and spectator are not only attempts of “disavowals of the fact of being looked at” (Smith, *One for the Girls!* 183) – rather she turns to the proposition that these kinds of looks on the part of the model are instead allowing, even inviting, the spectator to consider the male body as “being the object of curiosity” (*One for the Girls!* 183) – obviously placing this in a situation similar to **voyeurism** and the investigation of the **sexual object**, perhaps investigating phallic mystery.

As already hinted upon, eye-contact is not the only aspect of the display of male bodies that is related to the dynamics of power relations. “**Muscularity**” is an extremely important factor for surrounding the male body with a sense of power and activity. As stated by Dyer, “**muscularity**” is a product of activity and work on the muscles of the body, and it is therefore linked to the achievement of hardness and strength, and thereby also physical power (114-116). Tasker adds that “**muscularity**” signifies abilities of decision making in addition to strength and hardness (149).²⁵ Thus, according to Dyer, the possibility for male muscular development is generally perceived as the grounds for domination of other people, both male and female, and for this reason, **muscularity** is one of the highest valued factors when it comes to the evaluation and admiration of male bodies (114). Ultimately, Dyer points out that muscles and **muscularity** convey the achievement of both the power and beauty of a man’s body (116), and also functions to assert or regain control of the male in the image. This, in his opinion, is used similar to the patterns of eye-contact to somewhat undermine any control a “**female spectator**” might have over the male in the image.

Dyer adds that in line with maintaining this idea of **masculinity** being tied to activity and power, men in erotic images are often **active** and “doing something” (110). Even if the male model per se is not actually involved in an activity of any sorts, he is still flexing and hardening his muscles and body while posing in a manner that makes him seem as if he is about to act or become **active** (Dyer 110). In connection with this feature of muscularity, Clarissa Smith further elaborates that the body can both be appreciated in relation to the work that has been necessary to achieve the result of the “built body”, which here involves the formation of the muscles, the way the veins are marked on the body and other bodily

²⁵ A crucial part of Tasker’s investigation includes the female body in action movies, and, in this context, she introduces the term “musculinity” (3). This term is used by Tasker to denote “the extent to which a physical definition of **masculinity** in terms of a developed musculature is not limited to the male body within representation” (3). Ultimately, she proves that representations of well-developed muscular bodies and “**muscularity**” are not dependent on or necessarily limited to a male body.

characteristics (*One for the Girls!* 183). But, in connection with these marked body characteristics, this body can be considered sexualized, sexy, or both, hence **muscularity** is not simply connected to domination (*One for the Girls!* 183).

Furthermore, on some accounts stressing the “masculine power” in images of men, Smith comments that “[t]he problem with accounts which stress the assertion of masculine power in the image is that they look beyond what is in the image to the fact of ‘male-ness’ beneath – it is an image of a man therefore it cannot be anything other than an expression of innate manliness” (*One for the Girls!* 184). Clearly Smith is annoyed by the disregard of the function of the erotic within such images for the female readers and viewers. She accuses a specific set of beliefs of taking place in the sense that if the picture is of a man then his **masculinity** must be the main focus for a male spectator. Smith points out that they seem to forget that the spectator – perhaps a female spectator, no less – might view this body as an object of sexual desire.

However, Fiske states that the adaption of undressed bodies and close-ups is simply a way of making “masculine pleasure available for women” (Fiske 187). In Fiske’s statement, he seems to believe that these images are simply involved in upholding a subject/object dichotomy, in which the male has become the object. In this context, Fiske considers soap operas and secondary media as valuable sources of information on the male as object of the **female gaze** as he claims these to be providing pornographic material ingrained with attractive and appealing men aimed exactly towards a female audience (184). The images of soap opera actors in the press evoke something resembling a sort of feminine version of men’s pornographic fantasy with fragmented bodily images (187). According to Fiske, “the male hunk” features as a fantasy to the **female spectator** in a manner that is analogous to the pornographic fantasy for the masculine or male spectator; here it seems that Fiske is working from a perception in which porn (and not simply sexual or erotic material) is only or usually aimed towards male spectators (186). Therefore, his use of “feminine” is questionable. Although, there is a chance that it might simply be used in order to denote a difference in sexuality and sexual attraction between men and women, or male and female, and retaining the male/masculine-female/feminine dichotomy.

Furthermore, he claims that a vital difference between the appeal of the images of undressed men and women lies in the fact that the sexuality of the desired male “hunk” is not necessarily confined to his body. In female oriented programs such as soap operas, the desired male’s sexuality is equally “often contextualized into his relationships and interpersonal style” (Fiske 186). Thus, what creates the sexual

desirability of the male as eroticized **sexual object** is not his body but rather his personality and his behavior in (love) relationships. The sense of eroticism and sexual arousal of the male as object is brought on by the fact that he can commit to a relationship, while similarly in relation to sexual ‘love’ acts, it is the representation of these acts being the result of love and affection in the relationships that is appealing – hence Fiske claims that the male is more something of an erotic subject than object (Fiske 186). Such argumentation is according to Smith still present in debates regarding female erotic engagement with images of Hollywood actors and she criticizes this attitude in which “female sexuality is not as body or nudity obsessed as male sexuality” (*One for the Girls!* 184). She takes issue with the idea that any response a woman might have to the eroticism of a male actor is based on the emotional aspects of his appeal instead of his physical attractiveness (*One for the Girls!* 184). She stresses the dissatisfaction with the idea that women are unable or unwilling to gaze erotically at male bodies unless there is an emotional appeal equally presented. Here, it seems vital to mention that Sommers has expressed similar views on this matter stating that women are able to treat men as “sex-objects” with the same amount of keenness as men have for treating women as “sex-objects” (*Who Stole Feminism?* 264).

Furthermore, Smith argues that whenever women look, or **gaze**, at the display of male bodies in sexual and pornographic imagery, they “engage with a set of proposals about the male body, of its ability to represent and perform sexual feeling, physical and emotional and to enable a sense of sexual presence and possibility” (Smith, *One for the Girls!* 184). Thus, Smith is stressing that the display of the male body is the center of a variety of appeals. Here, it is evident she is arguing for a combination of both emotional aspects and physical, bodily aspects, in which the physical appeal can be alluring and enjoyed, yet also perceived as further enhanced by any kind of emotional appeal found in any narrative context of the image (which amounts to dialog and narrative progression in the chosen **television** series). However, the displayed male body is absolutely the center, and that is the most vital point.

Nevertheless, pin-up-like images or shots featuring nude or semi-nude male bodies may also be found in film, **television**, and/or advertising exhibiting the same kind of objectification (something the following analysis will prove in relation to **television**). Moreover, this provides the window to which women look at parts of men’s bodies as well, which does allude to a sexual display and **fetishization** of the male body. Here, the question arises as to which male body parts are looked at and **fetishized** by women. According to Smith, women look at every aspect of the male body as parts of his whole image, but, they are able to focus in the parts of the male model’s body, which they like and then ignore the parts

they dislike (“Fellas in Fully Frontal Frolics” 143-144; *One for the Girls* 165-169). Thus women look at the male face, his torso, his arms, his buttocks, and even his penis (Smith, *One for the Girls* 165-169).

Nevertheless, on the subject matter of power and hardness, Dyer turns to the phallus for further elaboration. Following the Lacanian view, in which the phallus is really a signification of power (Sharpe n.pag.), Dyer adds that it is no coincidence that the “penis has provided the model for” the phallus as “symbol of male power” (116). In his view, any phallic symbol continues to be understood as symbols of “ultimate male power” exactly because only male bodies are in physical possession of the penis (116). However, one of the most important points of Dyer’s argument concerning the power relations inherent in images of male bodies is the accentuation of the fact that “the penis isn’t a patch on the phallus” (116). The penis and phallus are not the same thing because the phallus involves a mystique to which it is impossible for the penis to measure up (116). The penis in itself can never embody the symbolic power that the phallus holds. According to Dyer, this is the exact reason for the use of phallic imagery, and the hardened muscles and jaws etc. in relation to images of fully dressed male models because these are all attempting to reach that “embodiment of phallic mystique” (116). In connection with this mystique, Dyer points out that the limp penis of the male nude model is even more compromised as it “can never match up to the mystique that has kept it hidden from view ...” (116). However, these conditions of the displayed penis are no better for the aroused, erect penis. As Dyer writes “even the erect penis often looks awkward, stuck on to the man’s body as if it is not a part of him” (Dyer 116). However, Smith assigns a special significance to the display of the penis. Smith claims that the display of the penis is extremely important for women in terms of facilitating fantasy and creating equality in relation to the exposure of bodies whenever they view sexuality explicit material (“Fellas in Fully Frontal Frolics” 137; *One for the Girls* 165-169). Now that the theoretical material has been accounted for, it is time to turn to examining the chosen objects of analysis, which is the purpose of the following thesis-chapter. Within the following chapter, the three chosen television series will be analyzed in accordance with these theories.

4.0 Analysis

As mentioned above, the purpose of this section is to apply the theoretical concepts introduced in the previous chapter to **television** series *Outlander* (2014-), *Poldark* (2015-), and *Marvel’s Jessica Jones* (2015-). As stated in the introduction, this chapter focuses on examining the **female gaze** here

including the **sexual objectification** of male bodies and **female/feminine identification** in all three series. For the reason of conducting this sort of analysis, this chapter has structurally been divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the aforementioned **sexual objectification** and **fetishizing** of the bodies of prominent male characters present in the three series. Moreover, the second section is focused on examining **female/feminine identification** in relation to the portrayal of female subjectivity and sexuality through the female characters' positions as **female spectators**. This involves examining the manner in which **voyeurism** and/or **voyeuristic gazes** is employed by **female spectators** in the form of female characters. Lastly, the way in which sexual violence becomes a spectacle in terms of male nudity and homoeroticism is examined in the third section.

Fetishistic Gazes and Sexual Objectification of Male Bodies

As mentioned previously, this section will examine the way that male bodies are established as **sexual objects** and hereby subjected to **sexual objectification** and **fetishistic gazes** for **female viewers**. This involves examining the portrayals and bodies of male characters in the series, in which most of the focus rests with the Luke Cage (*Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-)), Ross Poldark (*Poldark* (2015-)), and Jamie Fraser (*Outlander* (2014-)). This involves examining the way that the characters display **connoting to-be-looked-at-ness**, **muscularity**, and facial expressions along with **activity** and **passivity**, when they are undressed.

During a sex-scene between the lead protagonist of *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), Jessica Jones, and her fellow super-body, there is an interesting display of Luke's body (S01E03, 00:01:45-00:03:04). There is a sense of investigation here, and a sense of **fetishism** by the camera due to the close-up of his abdomen. Moreover, as is also evident in this scene, Luke Cage possess a great deal of **muscularity**, which is evident through the large biceps and chiseled abs. Obviously, Luke is signifying strength and hardness, the latter which equally parallels the impregnability of his skin. As Dyer stated that **muscularity** conveys power and beauty of the male body (114-116), clearly his muscularity is immense. In connection with Luke's physical appearance, it should be noted that Luke Cage's super strength is equally reflected in his **muscularity** while Jessica's is not – her body is quite slim and there are no traces of any **muscularity**. Yet, she clearly proves a match for his super strength, and can even be said to be overpowering him while she is restraining him. The element that makes this incident extremely valuable is the fact that the camera shifts between Cage's undressed body and Jessica's eyes scrolling up and down

his body clearly assessing it and showing her **desire** of him as **sexual object**. Her sexual desire is obvious as she lifts up his shirt showing just his abs while the camera is put next to her eyes – as if the camera objectifies through her eyes. There is no uncertainty that Jessica is equally established as taking pleasure in gazing and hereby investigating Luke’s body. This is especially illustrated as she afterwards rips off his shirt and literally feels his body while gazing up close, which makes her sexual desire for his body even more explicit. Here, Luke is displayed for the pleasure of Jessica and ultimately the audience as well. Another interesting factor here regards Jessica’s restraint of Cage, pressing him against the wall, seemingly making him immovable. This instance is important because we are clearly shown a direct reversal of the conventional onscreen subject/object dichotomy, in which the male used to take up the role of the **active** subject gazing on the **passive** female **sexual object**. Furthermore, as Luke carries a smile on his face during Jessica’s restraint of him, the **viewers** may deduce that he is enjoying being **passive**, and **sexually objectified**.

Nevertheless, the **sexual objectification** of him is further brought up through Trish Walker’s comment about him when she attempts to make Jones admit that she finds Cage attractive: “you can’t say he’s not hot”, to which Jessica answers: “Fine, he’s hot” (S01E12, 00:29:44-00:29:46). Here, we are not only shown the sexual attraction from Jones’ point of view, we are also specifically told of it. Furthermore, this articulation of Cage’s attractiveness is accompanied by Cage appearing in the back of the image shirtless and with only a towel covering his lower body (S01E12, 00:37:45), thus signaling another **fetishization** of his torso. Since Walker’s statement is quickly followed by Cage’s lack of clothing, it seems that this display of his body is included mostly for the sake of the **viewers’** pleasure, or perhaps for them to see and judge for themselves.

Furthermore, police officer Will Simpson also appears as **sexual object** during this series. Like Cage, he is presented as **muscular**, however not as pumped up muscular as Cage. The audience is shown him undressed to his under-garments post coitus moving towards the dressed Jessica and Trish while attempting to engage in their conversation about ways of capturing Kilgrave, however, the interesting factor is that he does not directly look into the camera (S01E05, 00:13:20-00:13:35). Clearly, Simpson is looking continuously past the camera while this transpires, never into it, which therefore gives power to the **spectator** allowing him to become an eroticized object specifically for a sexualized **gaze**. However, it is also vital to mention that his facial expression is rather stern while his jaw is clenched, and his arms begins to cross resultantly making his biceps seem larger, even though he is only in the

presence of two women. This could be an indication of an attempt to assert a sense of dominance even though he is currently in a state of **passivity**. During their conversation Simpson, Trish and Jessica, the camera is facing Simpson, clearly centering him as the **sexual object** of the **female spectator's gaze**. Here, it seems more important to show Simpson's upper body than it is to show the emotional investment by the different parties involved in the planning of the capture. Furthermore, he would have had plenty of time to dress himself before his entrance into the two women's company, which only supports the argumentation that his role is to appear mainly as **sexual object** for the viewers.

Furthermore, Daniel Murphy has critically examined *Marvel's Jessica Jones*' (2015-) gender politics and its acclaim as a "politically operative" and progressive feminist text in his article, "Jessica Jones and Gendered Forms of Seeing". Here, Murphy comments, similarly to the findings above in this thesis, "that the shirtless scenes featuring Luke and Simpson do work to objectify male bodies" and that those scenes "are marked and contained as such: exhibitiv body shots bracketed in the narrative" (n.pag.). This quote brings forward the manner in which these bodies **connote to-be-looked-at-ness** because as Murphy is indicating, there is no uncertainty regarding the manner in which Luke Cage and Will Simpson are displayed – clearly their bodies are both displayed for the specific purpose of being **sexually objectified**, most likely for a **female viewer** since the women in these shots are dressed in clothes that cover them up.

Ross Poldark is similarly **sexually objectified**. he possesses a beautiful body, but not over-excessive, which still indicates functionality and approachability. This is especially evident in a few scenes in which the viewers are allowed access his to body because the fact is that Ross takes his clothes off more than once. Through this, it is quite evident that his body is **fetishized** through the repetition of the focus on his undressed torso. One of the first instances, in which Ross and his body are offered as a **sexual object** occurs during his dip in the sea (S01E02, 00:29:27-00:30:00). In this situation, the **spectators** are shown his clothes lying on the ground (00:29:36-00:29:39), which works to tease them, to plant in their imagination that Ross is currently naked in the water, for the specific purpose of building up their expectations and desire to see his exposed body. Sure enough, a few moments later, as Ross is revealed to be naked in the sea, there is a clear shot of his back followed by a glimpse of his buttocks as he begins to swim. However, the swimming scene is not the only time Ross' body is displayed in a revealing manner. Another such scene is the scything-scene, in which, as the name indicates, Ross is scything shirtless on a hot summer's day. Interestingly, from Demelza's position in the field, she is seeing

him mostly from his back, and not as much his face as the **spectators** are. His back is also one of the visible aspects of the beach scene. As mentioned in the theory section, woman look at every aspect of the male body, including the back (Smith, “Fellas in Fully Frontal Frolics” 137; *One for the Girls* 165-169). Furthermore, through the repetition of shots of his back, it seems that Ross back is **fetishized**.

However, **activity** is another important factor that these shots of Ross have in common – he is swimming, and scything. As also mentioned in the theory section, Dyer states that **muscularity** on a male body is connected to signaling **activity** and power and that men in erotic images are often “doing something” and/or flexing his muscles – even while not doing anything (110-116). This is also applicable in relation to the display of Ross’ body because these situations feature him working or using his body in an “**active**” manner. Even as Ross is interrupted by his Jud and pauses for a small break, Ross is still holding the scythe. In this context, the scythe functions to testify that even though he is currently “**passive**”, he is about to be **active** in a moment, he is about the wield his physical strength. He is both **active** and **passive** at the same time. Furthermore, Ross’ jaw is hardened, and his facial expression is rather stern and aggressive as if to disavow any controlling gazes that might rest on his body (Dyer 110-116). As if he is attempting to maintain a sense of power over his body.

The fact that Ross is engaged in **activity** such as swimming and scything helps to accentuate the straining and work that has caused his body’s muscular development – as if the viewers are meant to appreciate his **muscularity** and the fact during this work, his body is still developing its musculature. Thus, while Ross is displaying **activity** and further building his **muscularity**, the **viewers** are also invited to gaze at him in appreciation of his body. Additionally, these elements of work-**activity** help to establish a diegetic, narratively justifiable reason for making him **connote to-be-looked-at-ness**. During the bodily **activity**, the viewers are meant to admire and desire Ross exactly because of the way he is able to facilitate his scything-**activity** through the flexing of his muscles. This exemplifies Clarissa Smith’s point that the **active** muscular male body is equally presented as a factor in regard to **sexual objectification** (*One for the Girls!* 183), and accentuates Ross’ state of “**connoting to-be-looked-at-ness**”.

In relation to Ross’ appearance and displaying of **connoting “to-be-looked-at-ness”** in the swimming scene and the scything scene, Wheatley states that Ross takes up the position as “a silent image” (215-216). She proceeds with stating that in the same manner as female characters traditionally “‘freeze the flow’ [...] in moments of erotic contemplation’ [...], in these repeated moments of dialogue-less slow motion, erotic contemplation of Ross Poldark as the central figure of desire in the series is

shown” (215-216). Ross definitely takes up a position of a certain eroticism connected to the way that he is displayed in slow-motion while scything.²⁶ Furthermore, this and that this is exactly what makes the viewers realize the aforementioned muscularity and the work to achieve muscularity. As she compares the display and eroticism of Ross to the traditional representation of women, she brings forward the vital point of gender role reversal, in which a female viewer might be gazing. Yet, there is a slight difference between the traditional representation of women, and the one of Ross analyzed here. Ross still maintains some dignity. He may be an object, but not, as has been established, completely **passivized**. This proves Cowie’s statement that there is a constant oscillation in which the asserted narrative subject may also be the object of an erotic gaze (170). However, in comparison with the analysis of Cage and Simpson above and the fact that the narrative flow is disrupted by the slow motion in relation to the display of Ross, the **sexual objectification** of him appears different and more explicit as opposed to Cage and Simpson above, even though Cage’s **fetishizing** is equally influenced by lack of dialogue.

Similar to the above-analyzed male characters, Jamie Fraser is also an interesting case in relation to the way that his body is displayed. In her essay, “Gazing at Jamie Fraser”, Aracili Lopez, who has analyzed the **sexual objectification** of Jamie, comments that for the viewers, “[...] Jamie Fraser unintentionally presents himself as an attractive Scottish man with blue eyes and [...] with and athletic-warrior-like build, a beautiful smile, and a jawline that could glass” and he is also “[a]ble to wield a large sword with ease” (Lopez 45). In this quote, Lopez puts forward the essence of Jamie’s appearance and his appeal – exactly that which assists in labelling him as **sexual object** for the series lead female protagonist and ultimately the **female viewers** of this television series. Nevertheless, the characteristics just mentioned by Lopez e.g. the “beautiful smile”, the “jawline that could cut glass”, and his “athletic-warrior-like build” are all closely connected to the display of dominance used to undermine any control

²⁶ In connection with the **sexual objectification** of Ross for female viewers, it should be mentioned that Ross is also **sexually objectified** on another occasion, but while still fully dressed. During a dance, several female guests scroll their eyes up and down Ross assessing him and his body (S01E02, 00:16:03-00:16:06; Wheatley 243). Thus, he is the object of **female spectators’ gazes**. As mentioned in the introduction, Cohan found in his analysis of the manner in which Fred Astaire was made the object of **female spectators’ gazes** that those **gazes** were of idealization and aspiration (49-51, 59-60). However, the women’s gazes on Ross in *Poldark* (2015-) are quite dissimilar to those gazes of idealization and aspiration, these gazes indicate that the women are aggressively pursuing Ross and evaluating him for their own pleasure (S01E02, 00:16:03-00:16:06).

or power a spectator, here **female spectator**, has over the male in the image, or, as is in this case, on the television screen (Dyer 116). Especially the latter two traits are significant for the associations of **muscularity**, and **activity**. Jamie is signifying strength and the ability to defend – he is a protector.

In one of the most interesting instances in the series regarding the **sexual objectification** of Jamie, the physical elements mentioned above are specifically evident. The instance in question occurs in relation to the consummation of Claire and Jamie's marriage. Jennifer Phillips, who has written an essay on the gendered gazes present in *Outlander* (2014-), states that Jamie is **sexually objectified** and **fetishized** in this episode through the fact that “much screen time [...] is taken up with slow, meandering shots of Jamie's shirtless torso” (175). This is particularly evident in this episode. Jamie removes his clothes enabling the viewers to look at his body. Through the fragmentation of his body in the form of close-ups of his chest proceeding to his buttocks, Jamie's body is being **fetishized** by the camera. Similar to Wheatley's comments in relation to Ross Poldark above, Jamie is also subjected to “dialogue-less” display of his body that equally establishes his **connoting to-be-looked-at-ness** and slows down the narrative progression. In relation to the *Outlander*-franchise, Jamie and gender roles, Michelle Jones has made an observation that, even though she only discusses the novels of the *Outlander*-franchise (1991-2014) as a romance narrative, also applies to the **television** series. She writes that gender roles are reversed, “making the male the **sexual object**, a much more **passive** figure, and the prize of the quest” (72; my emphases). Like this analysis has touched upon previously, the narratives may display gender role and subject/object dichotomy reversals, but, in my opinion that should by no means be degraded because it still supplies valuable material for the display of desire. However, another thing, which it can be deduced through the above analysis that both the characters of Ross Poldark and Jamie Fraser, and their respective actors have in common is the fact even though their bodies are **fetishized** and subjected to **sexual objectification**, the characters are not completely **passivized**, and they are not ridded of their subjectivity.

Femininity, Identification, and Female sexuality

This section examines the ways that the female characters of the three series deal with **femininity**, along with the manner in which this affects **female viewers**. This includes the manner in which the female characters employ **voyeuristic gazes**. Furthermore, **active** female sexuality will also be analyzed

in this section. All the series that has been chosen feature women with characteristics of resourcefulness, the fulfilling of personal goals, and ingenuity. Hence there are several common characteristics with the process of “**masculinization**” which Mulvey claims is inherent in the **female spectator** and often exemplified through the **active** female protagonists (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 123-124). Hence, they are women who are caught in the oscillation between two types of **femininity** – “the **masculinity** complex” and “normal **femininity**”. The latter is in many ways present as an outward pressure pertaining to specific conduct. The ego desires to fantasize itself in an **active** manner, which makes it easy for a **female viewer** to take up these positions of identification as they seem **active** in relation to expressing their desire (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 129).

Hidden Pleasures: Female Voyeurism and Female Subjectivity

This section focuses on the representation of women gazing at male bodies and the way that this accentuates the creation of female subjectivity within these **television** shows. This section will take a point of departure in Claire Randall Fraser (*Outlander* (2014-)), Demelza Poldark (*Poldark* (2015-)), and Jessica Jones (*Marvel’s Jessica Jones* (2015-)) and hereby analyze the manner in which they employ a **voyeuristic gaze**. This section is dependent on the findings on the display of the male form/body in the previous analysis-section, but the significance lies with the ways that these **voyeuristic gazes** are presented within each series.

As shown in the analytical section above on the **sexual objectification** and **fetishizing** of male bodies, Ross Poldark is displayed for the purpose of inviting **viewers** to gaze at his body in the swimming scene and the scything scene. However, this is not just evident in relation to the specific manner in which Ross’ body is displayed in terms of “erotic contemplation” (Wheatley 215-216). Another crucial element in relation to these scenes is the fact that they are accompanied by Demelza’s presence – a presence that carries immense significance for the way that the display of Ross’ body should be perceived by the viewers. In relation to the swimming scene, Demelza is shown positioning herself on a nearby cliff to lurk in the grass watching as Ross arrives on the beach (S01E02, 00:29:27-00:29:29). Later, as strands of grass are sticking up in front of the lens each time the camera shifts to shots of Ross (S01E02, 00:29:49; Wheatley 215), the **viewers** know that the camera is providing them with Demelza’s point of view as Ross is caught in this private and intimate moment of solitude bathing in the sea unaware of her presence

– this delivers the effect that the **viewers** are gazing through her eyes, reproducing and sharing her point of view and her **voyeuristic gaze**.

Furthermore, as shots of Demelza in profile reveal that she is taking up the position indulging in **voyeurism**, the viewers are shown that her facial expression includes an intense stare while her mouth is open, which makes her appear rather dumbfounded and idiotic (S01E02, 00:29:57-00:30:00). Even though, Demelza's facial expression is anything but flattering, it is indicative of her deep fascination. Moreover, these traits regarding Demelza's presence and **voyeuristic gaze** are equally found in the scything scene where Demelza is shown gazing at Ross is scything in the field (S01E03, 00:51:54-00:52:20). In truth, what is of utmost importance in this relationship between **spectator** and male **sexual object** is exactly the fact that the shots in these two scenes show a **female spectator** gazing with deep and intense **scopophilic** fascination on this male body, which in turn emphasizes the beauty of this undressed male body and its role as **sexual object**. These are all elements that helps to establish and gratify the fact that Ross is connoting "**to-be-looked-at-ness**" for the **viewers** as well since Demelza is so engaged and enraptured in gazing at Ross that she is hardly able to stop both times. Thus, it entices the **spectators** to look, to gaze at Ross erotically while Demelza is specifically set up as a vessel for this kind of **scopophilia**.

In Helen Wheatley's analysis of female desire and male intentional erotic spectacle in *Poldark* (2015-), she labels this form of viewer positioning as quite interesting in relation to the expression and articulation of female desire exactly because it demonstrates at whom the viewers should be gazing, and the manner in which they should be gazing (214). Moreover, Wheatley claims that Demelza's gaze is rather "covert" and unbeknownst to any of the other characters – this she explains as being rooted in, and enforced by, Ross' and Demelza's class differences (215). Even though the point of this analysis is not to include specific class related points of analysis, it is still interesting to draw on Wheatley's argument of the presence of a concealed female desiring gaze in *Poldark* (2015-). The interest does not lie with the diegetic reasons for the desiring gaze's covertness, rather the significance for the **female viewers**. Wheatley terms Demelza's gaze as a "brazen gaze" that is specifically carried for the viewers, in which Ross Poldark is intentionally established as the erotic, **sexual object** (214-215). Hence the fact that it is a female person facilitating these gazes on Ross', and that there is such a focus on making her presence and her intense, fixated fascination visible, is extremely valuable for the televisual exploration of female desire and sexuality. It is interesting because the **female viewers** are provided with a feminist perspective

in relation to portraying a woman as a sexual being with **active** sexual desires – desires that urge both Demelza and the **female viewer** to continue to investigate and express her sexuality.

Similar to Demelza's **voyeurism**, both Jessica and Claire are equally influenced by this form of gazing, and it too carries great importance for their lives. As her private investigative job consists of her taking pictures of other people without their knowledge, or as she vivaciously puts it: "I stand in dark alleys and wait to take pictures of people boning" (S01E01, 00:24:50-00:24:52), Jessica Jones is a clear **voyeur**. This is especially illustrated within the first episode when the viewers are shown two people engaging in sexual intercourse while the image replicates the mechanism of a camera snapping photos of them (S01E01, 00:01:25-00:02:08). Even though it seems as if the **television viewer** is positioned in the point of view of the camera, (s)he is in fact placed in Jessica's point of view because she is taking the pictures – hence the **viewer** is positioned to experience through Jessica's eyes, which, like the **viewers** saw above with Demelza, ultimately transfers Jessica's initial **voyeuristic gaze** onto the **viewer**. However, this sense of transferred **voyeurism** is further enhanced for the **viewer** in this instance. As Jessica actually sits in an alley at night while the picture-taking transpires, the darkness of the night adds even further to the **voyeuristic** separation both for Jessica and the **viewer**. This sort of parallels the same aspect of **voyeurism** that Mulvey claimed to be created in the cinematic auditorium of "looking in on a hermetically sealed world" ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 204-205).

Amusingly, in a following shot, Jessica sounds disgruntled when she voices that her clients often accuse her of "getting off on ruining their shitty lives" (S01E01, 00:02:25). Obviously, she is accused of taking a satisfactory pleasure in secretly gazing at people who are oblivious to her presence, and subsequently enjoying watching the misfortune unfold that co-occurs for the involved parties. Even if she is not sexually aroused by exposing her clients' illicit affairs, she does take pleasure in subjecting people to her **voyeuristic gaze**. Here, it is vital to turn to Luke Cage as she subjects him to her **voyeuristic gaze** – she secretly waits for him and takes pictures of him and his mistress in an intimate sexual moment (S01E01, 00:10:09-00:10:30). The interesting aspect here is that these pictures and this **gaze** have not been commissioned by any client (S01E02, 00:03:38). They are resultant something different – possibly her own **voyeuristic** fascination and desire to see more of him. Thus, Jessica's capabilities of employing an investigating and **voyeuristic gaze** is established very early in the series, and the viewers are given a preview of the object that will be further explored through her **gaze** later in the series. Hence Luke Cage

is established as the (**sexual**) **object** that is the recipient of her **voyeuristic gaze** – because Luke Cage is figured continuously throughout the series as sexually objectified.

During the performance of a highland pagan ritual in the very first episode (00:30:21-00:31:45), *Outlander*'s (2014-) Claire is also involved in a situation of intense fascination, but in this instance, Claire's fascination is not about establishing a **sexual object** for both herself and the viewers as in the cases of both Demelza Poldark and Jessica Jones. Yet, it is about establishing Claire's **scopophillic** pleasures. During the performance, the viewers are shown through a shot-reverse-shot both Claire's face and the performance of highland women dancing around in cloaks with torches. During this time, Claire's facial expression reveals that she is absolutely mesmerized by the sight of this "spectacle" as she labelled it beforehand (00:29:40). Nevertheless, the intense fascination and mesmerization is equally articulated in Claire's narration: "They should have been ridiculous – and perhaps they were, parading in circles on top of a hill. But the hairs on the back my neck prickled at the sight, and some small voice inside me warned me. I wasn't supposed to be here. I was an unwelcomed **voyeur** to something ancient and powerful" (S01E01, 00:31:24-00:31:45; my emphasis). Most interestingly, Claire is describing herself as "an unwelcomed **voyeur**", and, as mentioned in the theory section, **voyeurism** denotes the desire and satisfaction in seeing and investigating the forbidden and private or hidden originally sparked by children's discovery of different genitals and the subsequent desire to investigate this sexual difference (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 204). Like we saw above with Demelza as she watched her **sexual object**, Ross, with little or no clothes from afar, which also pertained to her sexuality.

However, in connection with Claire's **voyeuristic gaze**, this gaze is not directly sparked by any difference in genital awareness or sexuality, rather, it is sparked by difference in cultural practice pertaining to the highland paganism unfolding before her in the form of a ritual, which seems to awaken a subsequent desire to investigate this unknown highland culture and pagan ritual.²⁷ Moreover, Claire is experiencing the effects of her **voyeuristic gaze** on this spectacle on the tiniest spaces on her body, which further accentuates the thrill of her secrecy and her thrill as **voyeur**. In connection with this thrill and her prickling neck hair, this "ancient and powerful" (00:31:45) ritual is drawing her in. Claire clearly feels

²⁷ Arguably, these are aspects that could be tied to themes of nationality and class as Claire is an English woman thrown into 18th century Scottish culture, however this will not be dealt with since (as mentioned in the methodology-chapter) an analysis hereof would prove too extensive for this thesis.

captivated by the ritual, she is not able to look away and does not want to avert her gaze. She is being drawn towards the stones and their pagan magic. and her connection to the highland paganism, which sends her back in time – a stranger from the future. Claire knows that watching this ritual will be the start of a change in her, yet, she is ignoring her own warnings. simultaneously pulling her away from being Mrs. Frank Randall, from being his wife, and to find herself.

At first, this does not seem to have any relevance for expressing Claire's sexuality in the same manner as **voyeurism** and/or **voyeuristic gazes** did for Demelza and Jessica above. But it does have relevance for her sexuality and her time travel as the event takes place at the same spot that carries her back in time. In relation to Claire, her **voyeuristic gaze** is not about establishing a **sexual object**, but rather about triggering something inside her and establishing her destiny.

Even though Claire's **voyeuristic gaze** here is indicative of her role in the fulfilment of her own destiny and this gaze did not seem to be initiated by, or linked to, her sexuality – which seemed to stray from the theory – on another occasion, her gaze does take on investigative characteristics when it comes to sexuality and her choice of sexual objects. In relation to the above-examined **sexual objectification** and **fetishistic** representation of Jamie in connection with the consummation of Jamie's and Claire's wedding, there are additional intriguing aspects which are vital for the analysis of the **female gaze**. As Phillips remarks in relation to this scene “the focus need not be on the object's physical beauty” (175). She hereby puts forward another aspect of the **female gaze** that is extremely crucial in relation to Claire's gaze – namely the creation of female agency and **activity**. In this scene, through Claire's commands: “Take off your shirt. I want to look at you” (S01E07, 00:41:05), this is about what she wants... As mentioned above in relation to the **sexual objectification** through the **fetishization** of Jamie's body, the camera crops his chest and buttocks, and in connection with this Claire literally investigates Jamie Fraser and his naked body prior to intercourse. Undeniably, Claire inspects his body and she enjoys it. However, in connection with this **fetishization**, it is vital to mention that it is in fact Claire, who, by the use of her hand as she glides her hand across his motionless body, is guiding the camera's movement and the **viewer** attention. “[...] there is an unmistakable representation of Claire's internal subjectivity, her enjoyment and arousal and the anticipation of their mutual sexual pleasure” (Phillips 175). Here, it is interesting to note that not only does the audience see Claire gazing at Jamie's body, the audience also sees which parts of his body that she is gazing. Claire is hereby constructed as the diegetic vessel that manages to combine a diegetic **fetishistic gaze** for the non-diegetic **viewers**.

As has been established, in this episode where their wedding and subsequent consummation is depicted, Jamie is much more **passive** while Claire takes on **active** characteristics. Author and blogger, Jenny Trout, has made a similar observation in relation to Claire's and Jamie's dynamics in this scene. She writes "When the two finally seal the deal, it's fumbling, fast, and for Claire, disappointing; not only is Jamie younger than his wife, but he's a virgin as well. It's up to Claire to teach him how to be her lover [...]" (Trout n.pag.). This pinpoints the fact that Claire takes on the role of educating Jamie in the ways of 'love'.

However, there is an interesting twist as Claire is finished inspecting Jamie and he utters the following words: "Well then. Fair's fair. Take off yours as well" (S01E07, 00:42:26-00:42:29). Even though Jamie has just functioned as an eroticized **sexual object**, he is here able to demonstrate that he is also able to function as more than that. As Helen Wheatley points out, the gaze is not one sided, Jaime is not a simple **passive sexual object** of the gaze, he maintains his agency (218). Here, he is not just an object, he is also a gazing subject. Thus, Jamie is not the only one to be investigated – Claire is also being subjected to a somewhat **voyeuristic**, investigative, partially **fetishistic**, gaze. However, this specifically investigative gaze is only reserved for Jaime and not the viewers. The viewers are not shown the same number of **fetishizing** close-ups of Claire's body in this specific instance through the camera. Make no mistake though, there is still quite a substantial emphasis on maintaining Claire's breasts in the shot that should not be ignored. But, this is not in the same quite distinctive **fetishizing** manner as with Jamie's body – specifically in relation to his chest and buttocks in this specific episode. Here, they both gaze and inspect each other's bodies. However, Claire is allowed her pleasure first, leaving Jamie more vulnerable than her. In the Phillips-quote above, she stresses the focus on mutual sexual enjoyment, which puts forward both of their subjectivities and both of their pleasures – subjectivity and pleasure is not one-sided.

However, there are other aspects in relation to his sexual desirability beyond the physical appearance of his body. He also possesses personal characteristics that makes him seem rather devoted in his relationship with Claire. Prior to their consummation, Jamie reassuringly tells her that "You needn't be afraid of me, Claire. I wasna planning to suddenly force myself on you" (S01E07, 00:06:31-00:06:35). Within this quote, there is a certain sincerity and affection that cannot be missed. Moreover, he similarly denies himself the opportunity of becoming a rapist even though he legally would have been allowed to force her to engage in sexual activity. This is quite a decent character trait. In this context, it seems vital

to include in this analysis the fact Jamie declares his total devotion to Claire in the following quote: “you have my name, my clan, my family, and if necessary, the protection of my body as well” (S01E07, 00:09:03-00:09:17). With this utterance, Jamie is giving every bit of himself to her because of their marriage vows. He will defend her in anyway – give his body to save hers. The latter part concerning Jamie giving up his body for the sake of Claire will be dealt with in greater detail later in this analysis in relation to Black Jack Randall’s later rape of Jamie in the series.

The development of these characteristics is incredibly exemplary of Fiske’s observations that what creates the sexual desirability of the male object is his emotional appeal and “interpersonal style” (186). In this specific instance, Jamie’s emotional appeal is both created and enhanced by his willingness to play a mutual part in the creation of physical attraction leading up to their sexual union – both in relation to his **active** engagement in creating a desire for Claire in their marriage and his understanding of Claire’s reluctance to immediately consummate the marriage before creating an emotional connection. For the **female viewer**, this means that... On the other hand, some might argue that Jamie’s sexual agency and subjectivity has to remain present in order to maintain a sense of sexual power with Jamie in which he has the last word, and is able to divert the erotic gaze on him back to Claire. This instead makes Claire the object of the erotic gaze..

Feminine Identification and The Pressure of Patriarchy:

The purpose of this section is to analyze the way that the character carries narrative-fantasy-**identification** for the **spectator** on the basis of the analytical section above and demonstrate the manner in which Jessica Jones is struggling with **femininity** through her dealings with Kilgrave. Marc O’Day states that narratives revolving around the main character of a female action hero, such as the female superhero, are often set in societies in which “sick patriarchal men” are established as the villains (208). One of the specific traits of the physical appearance of Kilgrave is his distinctive purple suit that is very telling about his characteristics as inherently patriarchal. Tim Edwards, lecturer in sociology at the university of Leicester, has studied the developments of men’s fashion and its expressions of **masculinity**, sexuality, and power. He writes that the suit is an indispensable form of clothing for men, and it signifies tradition, social power, and it is a “potent symbol of success” (20-22). Therefore, the suit also accentuates expressions of power highly connected to traditional patterns of male domination

(Edwards 18-22). Furthermore, Edwards states that historically purple was a very expensive color to produce, and for that reason, it was favored in the 17-18 century by royalty and the church (18) – institutions generally associated with patriarchal rule. Thus, the color purple has carried with it a sense of decadence and power, which is also associated with patriarchy. Hence, Kilgrave’s preferred choice of clothing – his purple suit – further aids the interpretation that he embodies patriarchal values.

It is quite interesting that culture critic for the *Guardian*, Lily Loofbourow, compares this to an addiction and labels Jessica as Kilgrave’s “heroin(e)” (n.pag.). There definitely is an obsession with making her conform to an anti-feminist/patriarchal version of **femininity** – also an obsession with breaking her down.

. When applying these terms to Jessica Jones, it is evident that she experiences this oscillation between “the **masculinity** complex” and an outwards pressure to conform to the patriarchally preferred “normal **femininity**”. Here, Kilgrave embodies the patriarchal values that wants Jessica to conform to “normal **femininity**”. However, here there is a slight difference because Jessica is not struggling with grasping or choosing a “stable sexual identity” (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts” 124) as much as trying to shed the specific **passivity** and **feminization** that Kilgrave attempts to impose on her. This is about her struggle to break free from his influence. She is comfortable with her **active** sexuality, but he continues to force her to submit to the path of **passive, normal femininity** and sexuality that suits him in his quest for power and domination. In the Mulveyan account there seems to be **active** sexuality and then there is culture and society expecting a conformity to a certain type of femininity. Kilgrave does not just expect her to do this, he brain-washes her and controls her into doing this. In this show, he functions as an embodiment of patriarchy attempting to force traditional femininity down on women’s heads, here exemplified through Jessica.

When he realizes that his superpowers of mind control are ineffective on her, he turns to other forms of mind control involving that of psychological manipulation. This involves Kilgrave meticulously positioning himself as a father figure towards Jessica, which is illustrated by his purchase of her childhood home, and restores it to an exact replica of when she lived there. As Murphy states “[...] Kilgrave’s deluded strategy to win back Jessica’s affections—he buys and restores her childhood home, trying to playact her father-as-lover and coerce her into the role of dependent, childlike sex object—offers a terrifying and straightforward articulation of patriarchy’s governing logic.” (Murphy n.pag.). This can only be deduced as an attempt to place her in a state of regressed penis envy turned into the

substitution for the **penis/phallus** (Cowie 236-245). Kilgrave is attempting to make her desire a moment of fulfilled feminine Oedipal desire, in which he, as a substitute for the father, is the one who can grant her an access to the phallus. His constant efforts of trying to dress her further expresses this role. In the previously analyzed quote, Kilgrave states that she has “an appalling sense of fashion, but that can be remedied” (S01E05, 00:37:28-00:37:31), which indicates that she does not and should have a say regarding clothing. In his perception, she is a thing with which he should be able to do anything he pleases, regardless of her wants and desires. He wants her to dress up for him and embrace the **femininity** that suits patriarchy, so that he may maintain a sense of power from her submission. Furthermore, he is trying to possess her through possessing her desire, and this is most evident through the revelation that he has been controlling Luke Cage. Murphy states that

“Even though she's not at fault for her transgressions against Luke, as she was under mind-control, Jessica demurely assents to Luke's gesture. She is enraged later when she (and we, the audience) find that Luke's expression of commitment is really Kilgrave speaking through Luke. Kilgrave has essentially tricked Jessica into wanting to be forgiven by her rapist. This development only "works" as a twist because the initial moment with Luke is presented as a tender, romantic exchange between two damaged people we the audience have come to like and whom we know struggle to express their feelings. This is the 'desirable' formal union of the two likable, heteronormative characters in a moment of mutual vulnerability. Jessica's assent to Luke is genuine – her response allows what is presented as a favorable and viable future, at least until the arrangement is unmasked as patriarchy-in-disguise.” (Murphy n.pag.).

Moreover, in connection with this disguise, the series induces an interesting message: that patriarchy is itself responsible for a construction of sensitive **masculinity** in order to give women what they want, so that men can have women and once again attempt to have them conform to patriarchal desires. This gives the impression that even though women seem to control their own lives and are making their own choices, patriarchy is not far away – it can easily be revived. Hence feminism is an ongoing fight that must not be forgotten regardless of women's current situation. Otherwise, patriarchy will reemerge.

As previously mentioned, Murphy states that through the use of “exhibitive body shots bracketed in the narrative” both Luke Cage and Will Simpson were **sexually objectified**. Yet, in relation to these “exhibitive body shots”, it is vital to mention that he refuses to clarify if, or if not, he believes these

fetishizings and **sexual objectifications** of the male bodies, super or not, are incorporated to provide responses to “domineering gazes” (Murphy n.pag.). Here, he is obviously referring to the conceptualization of the male gaze and its subject/object dichotomy in which one sex (the female/**feminine**) is one-sidedly displayed for the pleasure of the other (male/**masculine**).

In this context, Murphy finds it curious that these shots have been incorporated since Jessica is constantly attempting to shed Kilgrave’s controlling male gaze. Evidently, Murphy seems rather negatively inclined to the idea of **sexual objectification** through isolation and disruption of the narrative for both male and female bodies. However, Murphy may have a point here – a certain hypocrisy does seem to be present in relation to the show dealing with the attempt to get rid of Kilgrave’s, and therefore patriarchy’s, **scopophilia** and controlling gaze while continuing to employ **sexual objectification** of male bodies. However, Kilgrave’s gaze is not the actual problem in terms of his and Jessica’s interactions, rather it is his controlling nature. The ultimate empowering sight is the fact that she eventually kills him (S01E12, 00:38:18-00:50:00), which conveys the message that if women continue to choose to fight against their oppressors, they will eventually have the opportunity to defeat oppression, and Jessica has defeated her patriarchal oppressor. Patriarchy is dead.

Active Female Sexuality

This section will continue to examine an aspect of **female/feminine identification**. However, here the focus turns even further towards portrayals of **active** female sexuality and sexual practice – first, this involves examining the sexual practice of cunnilingus. However, the situations express dissimilar emphases in relation to bodily exposure and display of character activity towards identification. Both *Marvel’s Jessica Jones* (2015-) and *Outlander* (2014-) feature scenes in which a female character receives cunnilingus, however, the ways that these instances female pleasure are featured and displayed differ from each other.

In *Marvel’s Jessica Jones* (2015-) Trish receives cunnilingus from police officer Will Simpson. Beginning with a close-up of her face, it first appears as if she is in pain, however, as this is quickly followed by facial expressions and noises of joy, the scenario quickly takes the form of displaying sexual pleasure (S01E05, 00:12:10-00:12:26). Interestingly to observe though, this is a one-sided performance in which the woman, here Trish Walker, is centered. More accurately, her pleasure is centered – obviously providing a “fantasy”-scenario of a sexual nature, in which the **female viewer** is carried by

the narrative in order to identify with the emotions displayed by Walker and her position as the recipient of sexual pleasure through cunnilingus. Furthermore, Trish's body is not exposed, which is interesting since this means that sexual objectification of her body is avoided even though it would have made sense to include it in this instance since they are engaging in sexual activities.

During this activity, Simpson is hidden away by blanket and it is quite obvious that he is there to supply her with pleasure. In relation to both Trish, and her **active** female sexuality through cunnilingus, it is appropriate to draw a parallel to Clarissa Smith's analysis of a pornographic texts, in which she found that the "worship of the woman is made clear through the motif of cunnilingus" (Smith, *One for the Girls!* 208). Furthermore, female pleasure and "the worship of the woman" (Smith, *One for the Girls!* 208) through cunnilingus also occurs in *Outlander* (2014-), and this worship can be argued as being even further emphasized here as Claire actually receives cunnilingus more than once, and by more than one man. During the outing to a castle ruin, Claire attempts to seduce her husband. At first when Claire pulls up her dress revealing her girdle while her first husband, Frank Randall, exclaims: "Why Mrs. Randall, I do believe you've left your undergarments at home" (S01E01,00:17:37-00:17:40), it seems as if Claire is about to follow the traditional pattern of women "**connoting to-be-looked-at-ness**" and hereby offer her body for the purpose of enticing male sexual fantasy. Yet, as Claire presses down on Frank's head and places her knees on his shoulders while she remains dressed, the **viewers** realize that this scene is different from any conventionally **sexually objectifying** and **fetishistic** depiction of female characters. As Trout states about this scene, "[...] it focuses entirely on her pleasure" (n.pag.).

For that reason, this instance of cunnilingus marks the **active** subjectivity of Claire and her clear comfort in her own **active** sexuality – this is quite similar to the subjectivity expressed through the manner in which *she* **sexually objectifies** Jamie on their wedding night. Ultimately, there is an emphasis on both Claire's subjectivity and her sexual desire. For the **female spectator**, this is an empowering sight because here Claire is in control of the situation. She is determined to get her pleasure and she pursues it. Furthermore, the intimate aspect of the sexual escapade between Frank and Claire is additionally heightened for the **viewers** since the camera is positioned as if it is in the corner of the room, as if gazing slightly from a distance and in secrecy within the image (S01E01, 00:18:12). As Trout states, "it feels like **voyeurism**. It looks like sex that anyone could be having" (Trout n.pag.; my emphasis). Because of Claire's quickness, relaxedness, and Frank's willingness to participate, the viewers clearly are looking

in on what could be a private moment between any couple. Hence, a part of this feeling of **voyeurism** is simultaneously conjured through their mutual desire for each other.

As has been mentioned previously, this is not the only time that Claire receives cunnilingus by a husband of hers. Unlike the previous scene with Frank, and the scene featuring Trish Walker in *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), there is a larger display of nudity on the part of Claire when she receives cunnilingus from Jamie. However, there are different aspect that needs to be addressed on this matter. Here, it seems that the intention with this scene is to further emphasize the fact that *she* is being pleased even more than the previous instance (S01E10, 00:02:22-00:03:46). During this act, the camera seems to zoom in on her breast, especially her erect nipple. This focus on Claire's nipple has the purpose of highlighting that Claire is aroused and satisfied, most likely to show that she is feeling this pleasure specifically for her with her whole body.

On the other hand, *Outlander* (2014-) is not limited to a one-sided performance in relation to oral sex, it also provides perspective on male pleasure and orgasm. This occurs in relation to Claire's performance of fellatio on Jamie (S01E07, 00:45:29-00:45:42). While Smith found cunnilingus to be the "worship of the woman" in her pornographic objects of analysis (Smith, *One for the Girls* 208) – something which is also exemplified through the performance of cunnilingus on Trish and Claire – she also found fellatio and the initiative thereof, to be used to signal female action and the taking of control of the sexual **activity** (Smith, *One for the Girls!* 208). Here, similar to the previously mentioned close up of Trish's face, the camera reveals Jamie's pleasure through his facial expression, and further emphasizes it through a close up of his face. Yet, here the close-up of Jamie's face has a different, but specific, effect. As Trout states about Jamie's reaction to Claire's fellatio on him, "[...] when Claire performs fellatio on Jamie, the audience sees the sexual awakening and inexperienced wonder of the male partner, in contrast to the usual depiction of a vulnerable woman's introduction her own sexuality" (Trout n.pag.). Claire's performance equally signals skill and sexual experience, in which Claire is guiding Jamie into the world of sexuality while emphasizing the fact that they are both enjoying their sexual life.

However, this portrayal of fellatio puts further perspective on the two instances of cunnilingus in *Outlander* (2014-). Ultimately *Outlander* (2014-) seems to focus on the orgasmic, pleasurable expressions by whomever is pleased – this is not restricted to simply one type of subjectivity or sexed body. In comparison with *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), this is interesting as the latter only displays

cunnilingus and thus solely focuses on female sexuality and pleasure. Clearly, this points towards an aim in advocating **active** female sexuality and female pleasure in *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-). Because *Outlander* (2014-) shows instances of both fellatio and cunnilingus (with a slightly larger amount in representation on the latter), it similarly conveys an emphasis on female sexuality and female pleasure, but also male pleasure. Hence there is a message of equality in relation male and female sexuality – both parties should feel sexual satisfaction in sexual relationships and sexual unity – none of each expression of sexuality should be one sided.

Regarding the explicitly sexual content and general focus on female pleasure and sexuality in *Outlander* (2014-), Trout writes that “[f]emale sexuality isn’t demonized, and engaging in sex doesn’t diminish Claire as a character. *Outlander* is the rare **television** drama that shows us a woman who is sexually experienced without being the villain of the piece, and a man who sees her desire and pleasure as a participatory experience, rather than an object to edify his own importance” (Trout n.pag.). The same thing is equally applicable for both *Poldark* (2015-) and *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-).

Generally, active female sexuality is applauded in the three shows. However, in relation to *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), the situation is slightly different. Female sexuality is applauded, yet, as mentioned Kilgrave remains a harrowing force continuously trying to gain control of her sexuality. he continues to exist as a representation of the burdensome aspects of patriarchy trying to regain control of female sexuality.

Even though *Poldark* (2015-) does not feature any instances of oral sex, this **television** series does display other aspects of female sexuality that are worth examining. An important factor in relation to Demelza’s **voyeuristic gazes** above and Ross’ deliberate display as **sexual object** of **active** sexual desires is the fact that Demelza and Ross engage in sexual intercourse in between these two instances of Demelza’s **voyeurism**. Interestingly, under the pretense of needing help to unfasten the dress she is wearing, even though she was perfectly capable of fastening it by herself (S01E03, 00:47:26), it is evident that Demelza approaches Ross’ bedroom in order to actively pursue the intercourse. She also makes her intentions explicit for both Ross and the **viewers** as she lets him touch her body inside the dress while replying: “Then let it be true” when Ross points out that this behavior will make already existing rumors about the two of them and any sexual relationship true (S01E03, 00:48:41).

Furthermore, as the **viewers** are aware that her father has ordered her to return to Illogan, it is derivable that Demelza has intended her and Ross’ sexual relationship to be a single event – a one-night

stand. This is further supported by the fact that she sneaks out of Ross' room the next morning attempting not to wake him (S01E03, 00:49:28-00:49:42), while later in the same episode she leaves without informing him of her intended departure (S01E03, 00:55:56-00:56:30) even though, as her employer, he probably deserved to have been notified. Thus, these are precisely characteristics of one-night stands. Hence, as shown in an above analysis section, Demelza has **sexually objectified** Ross, but she has also used him for her own pleasure in order to satisfy her sexual desire. In connection with this sexual satisfaction, it is vital to turn to Brenda Cooper's 2001 article "Unapologetic Women" concerning **feminine** spectatorship in *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002), which found that Ally McBeal's choice of having a one-night stand to be Ally's assertion of taking control of her sexuality and her own right to be an **active** initiator in her relationships with men (424).

This same point can be made of Demelza and her choice to sleep with Ross. Here, Demelza is **actively** pursuing her sexual desire and establishing her own ability and right to **actively gaze** and **actively** engage in sexual relationships. Moreover, this indicates less emotional attachment on Demelza's part, and provides her with an air of, and awareness of, being in control of the situation. This further parallels Camille Paglia's beliefs that women rule the sexual sphere (*Vamps and Tramps* 31) by the fact that Ross was so easily seduced. However, as the scything scene occurs before her departure, yet after their night together, the scything scene has served more than one purpose both for Demelza as a **female spectator**, and for the **viewers** who have watched this episode of *Poldark* (2015-).

What is equally interesting during this event is the fact that Ross seems hesitant at first about engaging in their sexual intercourse. Most likely, this is connected to his obliviousness regarding the orders of her relocation – hence, to Ross this is not just a one-night stand. He is aware that if he were to sleep with Demelza, it would bring a future consequence with it since she is in his employment, hence he blames his hesitation on the fear of rumors. However, the fact that she might depart after their night together does not seem to have crossed his mind, and for that reason he seems equally surprised and distressed by her departure, which ultimately results in him chasing after her and marrying her. Thus, because of Demelza's gaze, her **active** sexuality, and her ability and willingness to pursue her desire, she is rewarded with Ross through marriage (of course, this deduction of Ross being her reward is supposed to be understood in relation to some historical context in the sense that in the 18th century marriage was generally considered a reward and a means for a woman to gain financial security). Yet, it is also possible to deduce something different from this sudden marriage-solution: Ross refuses to be a simple **sexual**

object usable for one-night stand for Demelza. For that reason, Ross has established himself, in his relationship with Demelza, as more than a **sexual object** for her pleasure through their marriage.

However, perspectives on **active** female sexuality and its relation to gazing are also illustrated in relation to the married Keren Daniel's sexual pursuit of Dr. Dwight Enys (S01E06). When Demelza confronts Keren with the rumors of Keren's "roving eye" (S01E06, 00:18:02), Keren does not roll over for village gossip nor Demelza's disapproving comments. Through Keren's aggressive tone in her reply: "And whose business is it where my eye delight[s]?" (S01E03, 00:18:02-00:18:05), it is evident that she clearly takes offence to this confrontation. Quickly, the issue regarding **gazing** becomes a metaphor for the **active** pursuit of sexual relationships. However, as is also derivable from this quote, Keren's offence does not actually concern Demelza's accusation of a "roving eye", but rather the behavioral restrictions she is now being imposed by the society of village folk through this accusation.

She is being socially restricted in relation to **scopophilia** and choice of **sexual object**, yet, Keren is convinced that she should be allowed to control her own **gaze** and sexuality without any interference from this community. Furthermore, it is rather interesting that Demelza is conducting this confrontation considering her own **voyeuristic** and **sexual objectifying gazes** on Ross. This reveals a certain hypocrisy regarding who is allowed to gaze and when are they allowed. Keren's potentially **active scopophilia** is frowned upon after she has entered marriage – probably because Keren has turned her gaze towards someone other than her husband. Hence, in due ponderance, it seems that the crucial difference lies in their marriage-statuses. Thus, this series sends the message that **active scopophilia** and the pursuit of **active** sexual relationships such as one-night stands and the defiance of monogamy should be prohibited when marriage is entered, but not while unmarried. In any case, this would seem as if *Poldark* (2015-) was advocating a restriction on female sexuality, which would prove rather problematic in relation to exploration of the **female gaze**.

Nevertheless, sexuality and **active scopophilia** emerges once again in the series – this time between Ross and Demelza, in which it is further discussed as an equal right between both men and women. This is evident when Ross asks Demelza the following rhetorical question: "What man does not occasionally look at another woman – or woman occasionally look at another man?" (S02E03, 00:55:47-00:55:57). Here a "look" does not just mean a "look" in their discussion – it is a sexually charged look nearing a **sexually objectifying gaze**, perhaps not as intense as the actual instances of **sexually objectifying gazes** already analyzed in relation to Demelza and Ross. Nevertheless, in this quote, he clearly acknowledges

that both men and women partake in **scopophilia** and hereby **sexual objectification**. This is crucial because not only does he acknowledge that he himself gazes at other women, but he also acknowledges that he himself is the **sexual object** of **female spectators' gazes** and that his wife gazes at other men. This is one of the reasons why Ross is more than just a **sexual object** – he is advocating an equal stance between male and female sexuality.

Rape as Spectacle and Male Nudity

Whereas the focal points of the other analytical sections rested with the female characters' subjectivity, sexual desire, and the **sexual objectification** of male bodies, the focal point here is further related to physical contact between men. The aim here is to analyze the specific kind of spectacle as created by the circumstances regarding the physical and mental struggles of sexual violence. In *Outlander* (2014-), attempted rape occurs on several occasions, however the female characters of this series often escape it either by being saved by a male character or by actively, and sometimes violently, saving themselves from the situation. Men, however, are not shown to escape the clutches of sexual violence. Hence the sexual violence, which will be analyzed here is 'the rape scenario' conducted by the villainous Black Jack Randall on Jamie Fraser occurring over several shots/scenes including flashbacks over two episodes "Wentworth Prison" and "To Ransom a Man's Soul". This brutal rape of the hero of the show has been much debated and is also referred to as highly unlike anything that has previously been shown in film or **television** (Phillips 171). Moreover, this scene has been selected because it features a great deal of male nudity, which would normally lay the ground for **sexual objectification** and **fetishistic** representations of the male body. However, in this case, as will be shown, the **sexual objectification** is intermingled and disrupted by physical abuse and the shedding of blood since Jamie is physically and mentally tortured for most of this rape. In connection with this, it is necessary to concede that section will draw on the section on sexual objectification. However, the kind of sexuality that is displayed here is triggered by power relations and related to brutality rather than female subjectivity.

Once again, the **spectators** are able to appreciate Jamie's athletic, muscular form. On this matter, Michelle Jones claims that the **female gaze** is gratified by the **sexual objectification** of Jamie's body "through Jack Randall's violent assault on Jamie at Wentworth Prison, both with the rape and torture, and the brutal flogging" (80; my emphasis). Thus, this rape scene provides a deliberate excuse to put an

extra and deeper focus on the exposure and “**sexual objectification**” of both Black Jack Randall’s and Jamie’s bodies. This is especially evident in episode 16 “To Ransom a Man’s Soul” where the viewers find Jamie being embraced by Black Jack Randall sitting behind him while both feature exposed torsos. In this shot, Black Jack Randall even directs the viewers gaze through the clear view that he himself is looking at Jamie’s undressed torso while uttering: “Dear God, you are a magnificent creature” (S01E16, 00:13:01). Clearly, he is referring to Jamie’s impressive and muscular physique that is emphasized as Randal holds him up. Not only do the **spectators** see Black Jack Randall gazing, they also see exactly the **sexual object** upon which he is gazing. Randall’s utterance is loaded with the expression of sexual desire and not of **identification**. A position of sexual desire that can easily be taken up by any person who might feel an attraction for this male body – the **female spectator**/viewer. Thus, for the **female spectator**, there is a certain air of identification present. However, Randall also addresses Jamie directly acknowledging him some kind of subjectivity.

Jennifer Phillips describes parts of the rape as follows: “In terms of sexual assault, not only is Jamie forced to perform sexual acts on Randall, who forces Jamie’s hand onto his penis, but Randall also takes control of Jamie’s body, caressing and licking the scars Randall once inflicted” (171). Black Jack Randall does attempt to assume power over Jamie’s body through the general rape. However, exactly when Black Jack Randall is licking and caressingly touching Jamie’s scars on his back (S01E15, 00:48:55-00:49:55), he is carrying out these acts in an extremely affectionate manner – as if he is attempting to show characteristics of being Jamie’s lover – not his rapist. Thus, there is more at play than simple power relations. Hence this scene continues to feature explicit eroticism on the part of a male character, these are not disavowed. There is a clear display of homoeroticism. Jamie is forcibly being penetrated by Randall, he is **passivized**, his vulnerability and emotional state is on display. The **spectators** see Jamie’s distraught face in a close up – thus, the **spectators** are invited to identify with Jamie’s emotions, which illustrates the oscillation between object of the gaze and subject (Cowie 170), however, here, it functions in the reverse because Jamie is being processed as both object and subject. The only possible explanation lies in the fact that this is not intended for the male heterosexual **spectator**, rather it is for the homosexual male **spectator** or the heterosexual **female spectator**. This scene of Randall’s and Jaime’s battle seems to contradict any assertion that the involved male bodies are not characterized as objects for erotic **female gazes** because clearly there is more to it than an aim of creating male subjectivity for a heterosexual male gaze.

The fact that Jamie agrees to submit himself to Randall's physical violence to save Claire only adds to his brave demeanor and his emotional appeal. However, Jamie's willing submission has severe consequences, which lead to the second dimension of this sadistic and slightly erotic spectacle. This part of the spectacle/narration pertains to the breaking down of Jamie's mental stability, which is vital for the display of homoeroticism. As the previous signs of caressing were established as adding softening dimensions to this rape scene, they also serve other purposes within the actual narrative. They are used as part of tactics by Randall to break down Jamie's mental barriers and stability – to make him feel sexual satisfaction by Randall's touch through the beliefs that Claire is with him. However, also by creating connections in Jamie's mind between Randall's touch and feelings of pain relief. These tactics do prove successful since eventually Jamie is deluded into thinking that he is with Claire, and that he is experiencing the sexual connectivity with her. Jamie lets his barriers down towards Randall and does in fact come to enjoy the sexual **activity** with Randall. Ultimately, it is the revelation of Claire's presence as an illusion that leads to Jamie's mental defeat for allowing Randall to manipulate him. As Jamie states about the sexual acts that Randall performed on Jamie: "he made love to me" (S01E16, 00:40:38) and "I couldn't help myself. It felt so good not to be in pain" (S01E16, 00:45:59-00:46:02). This suggests that an emotional connection was established between the two of them, even on Jamie's part, and that, as Lopez states, "Randall made Jamie question his very sexual identity and come to feel something for his captor" (51). This has a very interesting effect as Jamie's expression of enjoyment removes the brutality of the rape and his defeat, and ultimately emphasizes some of the eroticism that is expressed by Randall, including what seems to be empathy and compassion coming from Randall, and the guilt that Jamie subsequently experiences for feeling sexual pleasure with someone other than Claire. This further emphasizes Randall's erotic desire and enhances the emotional connection which Randall feels.

Furthermore, it is interesting that this is the only time in any of these series that the viewers are presented with homosexual sex. In her analysis on female desire and **sexual objectification** of male bodies, Helen Wheatley criticizes this rape as being a negative portrayal of homosexual sex by saying that "the programme's representation of gay male sexuality as predatory and/or sadistic is deeply problematic" (219). Leach takes a similar stance when she states that the realistic representation of sexual violence and torture "[...] results in further demonizing the gay character in that the sex itself is presented as repulsive, not only because it's rape, but also because it's gay sex that is being forced on a straight man" (147). In truth, the fact that Black Jack Randall exerts sexual violence and torture by forcing

homosexual sex on a heterosexual man does establish a predatory and ruthless characterization of Randall. However, it seems that both Wheatley and Leach are confusing the negative and specifically sadistic portrayal of Black Jack Randall with the portrayal of homosexuality. They seem to be troubled by the possibility that it is his homosexual tendencies that causes this characterization. But, in my opinion, this incredibly negative portrayal of him is not a direct result of his possible homosexuality or engagement in homosexual acts – the negative portrayal is linked to Randall’s willingness to subject sexual acts and violence on an individual against his or her own will. Both Wheatley’s and Leach’s issues with any possible negative portrayal of homosexuality are of course understandable had Black Jack Randall only attempted rape on male characters, but he does in fact also attempt rape on Jenny, Jamie’s sister. However, because she laughed at his flaccid penis, he was unable to get an erection to carry out her rape (S01E12, 00:12:50-00:15:02), hence the fact that he is unsuccessful is further related to power relations than it is homosexuality.

Generally it seems that general endurance of pain, strength, and power is somewhat put together into a fetish for Randall. If his targets/victims lack power then that means that he has power, and if they have power then he does not. In this context, Black Jack is taking pleasure in inflicting pain on other people and rendering them powerless. As Michelle Jones points out in relation to the novel, which is once again applicable to the series, Randall does not identify as homosexual, what matters to him is not the sex of the person, it is the personality that counts (Jones 78-80). It is the sense of physical and mental strength that matters for Randall because he sees it as a challenge to break apart both aspects of the human being in question. Randall’s rape of Jamie is most certainly disturbing, but that has nothing to do with the portrayal of sex between two men as much it does with exemplifying the psychological power Randall seems to have over Jamie when he is forcing him to participate unwillingly in sexual acts. The homosexual sex simply becomes a means for a terrifying end – this would have been the same had a woman raped a man, or a man raped a woman. Both Wheatley and Leach are also forgetting that Randall is not brutal throughout the entire event – and that the homoeroticism is more connected to Randall’s display of affection than it is the actual rape. In part, I disagree with their views because, as mentioned already, Jamie does seem to feel pleasure during this molestation, and Randall seems very affectionate towards Jamie.

Nevertheless, this rape also demeans Jamie’s muscular/physical strength, and invites the perspective that physical and mental strength does not carry equal weight. In connection with this, the

muscular strength connected to phallic power and the display of **masculinity** is undermined as well. According to Leach, general viewers have become so accustomed to seeing portrayals of women suffering from sexual violence that the thought of men being raped is petrifying (148-149). The fact that the most elaborate and brutal rape-scenario in *Outlander* (2014-; S01E15-16) shies away from featuring the conventional scenario of a woman being raped, is therefore extremely interesting and perhaps also intensifying for the resultant spectacle occurring in relation to this rape. As Leach states “It is difficult for us to imagine that this kind of man could actually become a victim of sexual violence – and so we keep waiting for the situation to turn around in Jamie’s favor and maybe that’s what makes us able to keep watching the horror unfold. [...]” (148-149). Furthermore, the matter of rape happening to men, physically strong and masculine men no less, and not just women, is also applauded by Leach (147-149). Of course, not in the sense that she likes seeing people being mentally and physically abused rather because it puts forward sexual violence and power relations. According to Leach, “[...] being a victim doesn’t mean the person was weak or blameworthy because he or she “let it happen”. It means there was a situation where the victim had no control and was powerless” (148-149).

Furthermore, another interesting aspect regarding this scene is the fact this is one of very few times in the series that the viewers are shown full-frontal male nudity, even the penis. This is the second time that Randall’s penis is revealed during the series. The issue of the penis will be further dealt with in the following sub-section.

The Phallus and The Penis

As mentioned in the theory section, Clarissa Smith proved through the examination of pornographic magazines of men and through debates concerning the display of the penis that women do take pleasure in seeing the eroticized man’s penis because it enables sexual fantasy (“Fellas in Fully Frontal Frolics” 137). Hence, a **female spectator** might take pleasure in seeing the penis in this series as well, and enjoy the steps towards increasing full-frontal male nudity. Interestingly though, it is Randall’s penis, the villain, that is shown in *Outlander* (2014-) and not Jamie’s. This is a general feature for these three series dramas because neither *Marvel’s Jessica Jones* (2015-) nor *Poldark* (2015-) show the penis of Jamie, Ross, or Luke. Furthermore, Randall’s penis is flaccid, not erect. The absence of the Jamie’s, Ross’ or Luke’s penises along with the presence of the villain’s soft penis could be attributed to the power

of phallic mystery, to which the limp or flaccid penis can never live up thereby causing its general concealment (Dyer 16).

From this perspective, Jamie's, Ross', Luke's, and even Simpson's penises are able to retain some of their phallic mystery, and therefore also a sense of phallic power. However, a noteworthy aspect includes the fact that unlike *Outlander* (2014-), *Poldark* (2015-) and *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-) do not show the penis of their villains. However, *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-) does approach the issue of its villain's penis through Jessica's comment to Kilgrave: "oh, you mean that slim jim in your pants" (S01E09, 00:19:27-00:19:29). In this instance Jessica is attempting to provoke Kilgrave through contesting the physical size of his phallic signifier, the penis. Hence it could be argued that while Randall's flaccid penis is shown, and Kilgrave's penis is mocked, their phallic mystery is diminished, and so is their phallic patriarchal power.

This is further evidenced by the fact that the first time Randall's penis is shown occurs during the attempted rape on Jenny Fraser (later Murray), Jamie's sister. Here, Randall's penis is also flaccid, and, due to her laughter, he is unable to achieve an erection – something, which he is obviously quite dependent on in order to carry out the rape. Thus Dyer's statement that the penis cannot live up to the mystique of the phallus (here phallus is considered power) is proven valuable here. And in this case, Jenny carries the power and control of the situation because she denies Randall the possibility of using his phallic power, which thereby renders him powerless.

Ultimately, the revelation of Randall's penis and the mocking of Kilgrave's penis has a special significance for the **female gaze** because, here, the penises are not shown or mentioned for the pleasure of the **female spectator** – it is used to expose the villains and rid them of their sense of power and control. That which has been protected through phallic mystery is now exposed – making patriarchy and patriarchal power incredibly weak. For the **female gaze**, this is extremely positive. However, specifically in relation to the display of Randall's penis in the rape scene, he does not seem that deprived of power, especially in comparison to the worn-out Jamie lying on the floor – here it illustrates the violence that his penis, and therefore his phallic power, is able to create. He arises as the victor. Hence there are ambiguities present in relation to his penis – but we now know that phallic power can be lost.

5.0 Conclusion

Within this final chapter of this thesis, I aspire to answer the research question that was posed in the introduction. This involves summing up my findings and the most crucial points of the analysis in relation to examining the way that a female gaze in relation to the **sexual objectification** of male bodies, and female/feminine identification has been employed in *Outlander* (2014-), *Poldark* (2015-), and *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-). Through the use of an approach comprised of a mixture of psychoanalysis, film and television studies, feminism and pornography and with a complex theoretical conceptualization, the results of this thesis are quite empowering for **female viewers**.

In relation to the examination of **sexual objectification** of male bodies, the findings of this thesis include the fact that men's bodies are fetishized, and displayed in order to be looked at by **female viewers**. Ultimately, this in many ways exhibit gender role reversals. In connection with this reversal, female characters are shown **sexually objectifying** these male bodies for the specific purpose of guiding the **female viewers' voyeuristic and fetishistic gazes**. Furthermore, their engagement in such gazes equally illustrated these female characters' individual agency and activity. However, as previously mentioned, what is important in this gender role reversal is the fact that this is not actually a complete reversal. The male bodies are most certainly displayed for sexual purposes, but there is an equal focus on creating individual and sexual subjectivity for the male characters as well. In relation to female subjectivity, femininity and female identification, the lead female characters take on incredibly active characteristics, which is especially illustrated through their active sexual practices. These women are themselves in control of initiating their sexuality, and in connection with this, their sexual pleasure is often emphasized in the narratives.

Sexual violence is equally a huge theme within these three series, however it is only in *Outlander* (2014-) that it is illustrated quite graphically. In connection with this sexual violence, there is another gender role reversal, in which Jamie, a strong, powerful and muscular characters is subjected to the brutal rape of Black Jack Randall. This ultimately shows that physical strength and mental strength are two different things, and that men and women are both able to be raped. In connection with this, both Black Jack Randall and Kilgrave are shown to pose serious threats to the male and female characters in *Outlander* (2014-) and *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (2015-), however, in relation to their display of patriarchal power, their phallic power is questioned. This is done through the mocking and degrading of their penises. The female viewer is further empowered by the death of the ultimate patriarchal figure,

Kilgrave, which ultimately sends the general message that patriarchy is defeated, and women can be active and free.

6.0 Appendix

Sexual Difference and The Image of the Woman

As mentioned in the theory chapter, and supported through the block quote below, Mulvey constructs her theorization of spectatorship from the image of the woman as being pleasurable, yet also possibly evoking castration anxiety for male spectators (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 202-203). Mulvey takes her point of departure in the image of the woman and the woman’s subsequent role in relation “to forming the patriarchal unconscious” of society and the way that this is rooted in sexual difference (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 202). This is evident in the opening paragraphs of Mulvey’s essay, in which she calls attention to the significance of the image of the woman and the contradictions inherent in phallogentrism. Mulvey writes that phallogentrism, even as patriarchal society favors the agency of the man in favor of the women, it is simultaneously dependent on “the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world” (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 202). Mulvey continues to stress that it is the woman’s lack that “produces the phallus as a symbolic presence” and “it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies” (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 202). This Mulvey elaborates in the following quote:

“[...] she first symbolizes the castration threat by her real absence of a penis and second thereby raises her child into the symbolic. Once this has been achieved, her meaning in the process is at an end, it does not last into the world of law and language except as a memory which oscillates between memory of maternal plentitude and memory of lack. [...] Woman’s desire is subjected to her image as bearer of the bleeding wound, she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it. She turns her child into the signifier of her own desire to possess a penis (the condition, she imagines, of entry into the symbolic). Either she must gracefully give way to the word, the Name of the Father and the Law, or else struggle to keep her child down with her in the half-light of the imaginary.” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema 202-203)

However, in order to comment on the Mulveyan utilization of castration and the Oedipal complex in order to construct her theorization of the cinematic male gaze, it is necessary to return to both Freud, Lacan, and their definitions of castration and the Oedipal complex and the way that they interrelate. This is done in order to account for a deeper understanding of Freudian and Lacanian before returning to the image of the woman and her significance within gendered gazing.

Nevertheless, the following section will discuss Freud's theorization of the child's path ways through the oedipal complex since the development of subjectivity and identification is dependent on the child's awareness of sexual difference and its subsequent path through the oedipal complex, which is also constitutive for the way that the male gaze is constructed within film (Cowie 75). As Emily Zakin comments regarding Freud's development of his theory of sexual difference and the oedipal complex, "sexual difference is centrally concerned with psychical reality rather than material reality, with the realm of fantasy rather than nature or culture. The Oedipal story is the story of psychic development, the story of how we become subjects and in becoming subjects, how we become sexually differentiated" (n.pag.). For Zakin, subjectivity is heavily dependent on the child's discovery of sexual difference and the path through the Oedipal complex. However, she also labels the Oedipal complex a fantasy – a fantasy constructed to explain sexual difference as it is initiated by castration which also comes to justify patriarchy (n.pag.).

Freud himself discussed castration and the Oedipal complex in several of his writings, yet, his accounts altered through the progression of his research. The works of Freud's that will be drawn upon here are "The Sexual Theories of Children", "Anatomical Sex-Distinction", "Three Essays on Sexuality", "Genital Organization of Children", "The Ego and The Id", and "Femininity". Furthermore, I will also draw on a few other scholars whose fields of interest lies with Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, but not necessarily the gaze within film or television. I will use Emily Zakin and Elizabeth Cowie for further elaborations and perspectives on these conceptions.

Freud on the Oedipal Complex, Castration, and Penis Envy

Before entering the oedipal complex, the child, both boy and girl, is attached to its mother which means that in the pre-oedipal stages, regardless of its sex, the child exhibits traits of one **active** libido – hence neither the boy nor girl have yet experienced sexual differentiation (Zakin n.pag.). In connection with this, Freud claims that there is only one libido and that it is masculine as the mother is the child's first (love/sexual) object (for Freud the desire for the mother is masculine and **active**). In the same manner, he ascribes the clitoral sexual activity of the little girl as masculine and associates it with the boy's penis. Freud writes that the clitoris behaves like a penis and "is the seat of excitations" – something which needs to be repressed in puberty in order for the girl's masculine sexuality to be rejected leading her to become the woman (Freud, "The Sexual Theories of Children" 217). Nevertheless, as already

mentioned by Zakin, “[i]t is not until children pass through the Oedipal Complex that they can properly be said to have a genital organization since this is acquired through a relation to castration and is the last stage in sexual development (following oral, anal, and phallic stages)” (n.pag.). However, castration has different outcomes for both the boy and the girl – for the boy, it means the dissolution of the oedipal complex, while for the girl, it means entrance into the oedipal complex (Freud, “Anatomical Sex-Distinction” 256).

In his work, “The Ego and The Id”, Freud explains that castration threat by the father is rooted in the fact that the young boy at an early age develops an “object-cathexis for his mother” while at the same time identifying himself with his father (31). However, this begins to change when “the boy’s sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense” (“The Ego and The Id”, 31). Now the boy starts to consider his father an obstacle to these sexual wishes, and the boy is now entering the oedipal complex. The boy feels increasingly hostile towards his father and begins wishing to get rid of him in order to take the father’s place with the mother (Freud, “The Ego and The Id” 31-32). In this context, Freud defined castration threat in boys as the fear and actual threat of having the boy’s penis cut off due to the masturbatory pleasure arising from the desire of the mother (“The Sexual Theories of Children” 216-217; Zakin n.pag.).

According to Freud, boys are from a very early age extremely interested in their penises and therefore pay a lot of attention to it and also attribute the existence of the penis to both men and women (“The Sexual Theories of Children” 218; “Three Essays on Sexuality” 195; “Infantile Genital Organization” 144-145). However, the first time the boy sees female genitals and realizes that the girl does not have a penis, he believes her to have had the penis but also that it has subsequently been removed. According to Freud, the boy attributes this loss to her guilty behavior of indulging in masturbation – the behavior in which the boy himself indulged (“Infantile Genital Organization” 144). Yet, the boy begins to believe that if the girl does not possess the penis then she must have lost it, which means that the boy may come to lose it as well (Freud, “Femininity” 125). Here, the boy believes his father is a threat for in terms of removing the boy’s penis as punishment for the boy desiring the mother. Hence the boy must give up his sexual desires for his mother, which he ultimately does so as the previously mentioned identification with the father is still manifested in the boy, and through this identification with the father, the boy is left with a promise that he will eventually find a sexual love

object of his own, which is similar to the mother (Freud, “The Ego and The Id” 32; Zakin n.pag.). Lacan, of course, has altered this perception of castration, which will be discussed in the following section.

Lacan, Castration, Law of the Father, and the Phallus

Lacan believes that castration is rooted somewhat differently in relation to the Oedipus complex through the more symbolic penis – the phallus, which functions as a signifier of power and maneuverability (Sharpe N.pag.). From Freud’s perspective, only women are considered castrated and men are subjected to the constant threat of castration (Zakin n.pag.). Lacan opposes this conception with the view that both men and women are castrated in the sense that they are deprived of the phallus.

Zakin explains the Lacanian castration as taking place “[...] when the child recognizes lack in the mother and her maternal omnipotence is annulled. The mother, for the child, ceases to be the all-powerful provider of every satisfaction as she herself is a desiring being deprived of satisfaction” (Zakin n.pag.). Hence, the child, both male and female, supposedly believes that the mother desires to have the phallus, and therefore the child desires to become this phallus because the child desires to model itself from the mother’s desire (Sharpe N.pag.). Nevertheless, according to Lacan, eventually the child’s desire of being the mother’s desire is somewhat thwarted forever by the father, thus the male and/or female child’s subsequent abandonment of desiring to be the mother’s phallic extension is Lacan’s conception of castration (Sharpe N.pag.). Moreover, the resolution of the Oedipal complex is achieved through the child’s “acceptance of its castration” (Sharpe N.pag.). Furthermore, the child sees the father as both its rival and threat while regarding their mutual relationship a “struggle” (n.pag.). Regardless, the child will eventually lose the struggle, but so much depends on whether this loss is perceived as embarrassing for the child or if they are able to resolve this through “the founding of a pact between the parties” that is made binding by the creation and fixation “of mutually recognised Law” (Sharpe N.pag.). Lacan calls this “law” “the Name of the Father”, and it is highly connected to Lacan’s concept of “The Symbolic” or “The Symbolic Order” – referring to the way that society, and linguistic and societal interactions work, and it is therefore the traditions, norms, institutions, and laws of society and culture – often mutually recognized among people in society (Sheridan 279; Sharpe N.pag.; Johnston N.pag.).

In relation to castration and the Name of the Father, the child has to realize that it is not the father’s physical attributes that satisfies and/or “orders the desire of the mother”, but that the mother’s urges are controlled and “tamed” by this Law of the Name of the Father (Sharpe N.pag.). As a representative of

mutually recognized social conventions that too are recognized by the mother as she is a socialized being, this “symbolic father” intervenes in the child’s (Oedipal) relationship with its mother (Sharpe N.pag.). Cowie explains this entrance into the symbolic order as the child realizing that it is not, and does not fulfill, the mother’s desire while the child in fact does accept its own “insufficiency in being” (202-203). Castration threat is therefore mostly motivated by child’s own fantasy as a form of disavowal when it realizes that its desire towards its mother cannot be fulfilled (Cowie 202-203). Nevertheless, when the child accepts these social laws, it consents to stop trying to fulfill the mother’s desire of the phallus, and hopefully gains the comforting knowledge that the child itself will eventually get its own substitute for the mother as love-object if it follows the social rules (Sharpe N.pag.).

In Lacan’s theorization, “there is no sexual difference prior to representation” as men and women reach a position of sexuality through navigating the oedipal complex and “by submitting to castration, also called the phallic function, and thereby entering into signification” (Zakin n.pag.). According to Zakin, this is the exact spot in which Lacan’s “phallocentrism” and patriarchal support becomes evident as he ascribes the phallus with such a significance in relation to sexual difference and the development of subjectivity. Zakin writes that, for Lacan, the phallus “is responsible for the child’s passage from immersion in perceptual immediacy to a representational domain in which the world takes on meaning” (n.pag.). The phallus is not connected to any physical organ of the body – it is a signifier to which every single human being is castrated (Zakin n.pag.). The Law of the Father, and its “non” makes the child aware that it is not the mother’s phallus, nor can it fulfil her desire, which ultimately “conveys the message that the child too is lacking or desiring” (Zakin n.pag.). From this perspective, Lacan distinguishes between **femininity** and **masculinity** in the relation to the signification of the phallus. **Femininity** is characterized as “a ‘seeming to be’ [...] in the attempt to be the phallus that one is not (to be the object of desire)” while **masculinity** is characterized as “a ‘seeming to have’ [...] in the attempt to have the phallus that one does not have (to possess the object of desire)” (Zakin n.pag.). However, both men and women continue to lack the phallus – either in not being the phallus or in not having it” (Zakin n.pag.). Ultimately, as Zakin writes, “while Lacan centers human experience not on the supposed biological fixity of anatomical distinctions, but on a representational economy, the phallus retains its associations with **masculinity** and remains the focal point of sexual identity” (n.pag.)

However, in the introductory quote to this appendix, it seems that Mulvey is saying that it is the mother that projects on to her child the desire of being an extended phallus, and not the child itself that has this desire of being her phallus – as if to say that that is the only type of meaning the woman has is the one that is connected to her child through her role as nurturer. However, Mulvey might simply be trying to express the fact the woman’s contribution to societal structures is to simply appear as a symbol or prize that needs to be won by the father and then forfeited by her child in order for the child to emerge into these structures. Hence her physically absent penis places her in a position of inferiority. This is obviously backed up by her further reference to the Lacanian concepts. In order to support her own argument, Mulvey maintains an essentialist reading of both Freud and Lacan, which is rooted in these theorists own phallogocentric theorization.

This integration into social rules for the child is also, for Mulvey at least, the end of the woman’s meaning of anything else than the memory of castration and lack. Evidently, due to her actual lack of a penis, the woman becomes a symbol of the castration threat (“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 202). The woman’s body and her image may be a reminder of the castration threat posed by the father in relation to both the fear of losing the physical penis and the subjects own insufficiency regarding the mother’s desire (208). Hence her body is a place of anxiety and unpleasure (208), and serves an incredibly limited purpose because once she has served the function of being a “representation of castration” for the (male) child, “her meaning is ‘at an end’” (Cowie 170). Woman is bound “by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them in the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” 203). Once again, we are dealing with the Lacanian order of the symbolic.

The meaning Mulvey claims the woman to bear is sexual difference, exactly because the woman is marked by the absence of the penis, the physical evidence of the castration complex – the castration complex that is “essential for the organisation of entrance to the symbolic order and the law of the father” (208). Evidently, Mulvey is articulating the fact that there are more dimensions inscribed in sexual difference. The boy needs to realize that the mother is physically lacking the penis, and, in order to gain the social agency that comprises the symbolic, the subject must possess the physical penis. Hence what Mulvey is trying to express is that woman have no other meaning than the fact that she lacks social power because she lacks a penis. In turn, when seeing that the penis is absent, the boy may be reminded of the

castration threat and his lack of power when up against these social laws. The same social laws and cultural domination signify cinema and film production according to Mulvey's beliefs.

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