Independence, Empowerment and Intersectionality: Female Representation in the Post-Network Era

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Throughout time, the representation of females in mass media has undergone a significant change. The woman on screen has shifted from being marginalized, heavily sexualized and made passive in the narrative to a independent, empowered female with success in careers and life. Today, in television's second Golden Age - as Robert J. Thompson argues - the need for more content from consumers and the technology to produce and distribute it has created a bigger and safer space for female representation in our Post-Network Era. Consequently, the female representation has risen not only in numbers but also in distinctiveness from one another. This very notion is the epitome of this thesis; the question of how a female character in the Post-Network Era is portrayed. Thus, this thesis aims to answer the following question: "*Considering how female characters in cinematic arts have undergone change from being subjected to male gaze to postfeminist icons, how are female television characters portrayed in the Post-Network Television Era?*". To answer this research question, the thesis will make use of qualitative, textual methods to analyze three series within the Post-Network Era containing female leads as well as complex narratives: *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019), *Broad City* (2014-2019) and *Grace and Frankie* (2015-). The three series, containing distinct female character types, are analyzed through an array of theories; seen in the thesis' use of classic feminist film criticism, such as Mulvey and Kaplan, as well as recent feminist television criticism and postfeminism by scholars such as Lotz and Gill. The use of both classic and new media theory is helpful in illustrating how recent female characters both correlate and contradict inherent patriarchal and sexualizing structures in contemporary television, and thus show both positive changes as well as structures still connoting to Mulvey's idea of female characters in 1975. The thesis found that in the case of the three series, only one - *Jane the Virgin* - showed instances of females being subjected to a scopophilic male gaze, while the female leads of *Grace and Frankie* and *Broad City* either were non-sexualized or poked fun at the male gaze. The

female characters were shown to be portrayed as active and engaging in the narratives of the series; showing female spectatorship as according to Kaplan in all three series. Additionally, it was established that all women contained traits of postfeminist notions; as the women all pursue the aspect of careers, the series removes itself from earlier female portrayals and the stereotype of 'the housewife'. Furthermore, the female characters all showed sexual independence and freedom as they engaged in their dating lives actively and selectively. Perhaps most importantly, two of the three series illustrated post-postfeminist traits through their incorporation of intersectional issues; *Broad City* deals with, for instance, issues relating to race and the LGBT+ community, while *Grace and Frankie* contains characters of age and narratives expressing issues with and from age. As such, the thesis establishes female representations in the three complex series from the Post-Network Television Era as deviating from earlier representations of female characters in cinematic arts with their postfeminist and post-postfeminist notions. We argue that this change in female characters and their representations stem from the vast possibilities the Post-Network Era has brought to television and that the broad array of independent women on screen will only continue to grow.

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Introduction

In today's society, TV has become the most regularly reporting medium and mass entertainment in present-day American culture (Anderson, Lorch, Field, Collins & Nathan, 1986, p. 1024). The medium is now established as a part of the everyday household and a leisure activity with American teens and adolescents spending on average five hours a day watching television and Europeans 3.5 hours a day - with exclusive viewing being up to 70% of the total TV time (Frey, Benesch & Stutzer, 2007, p. 5). As active individuals, the viewers are anticipated to distinguish what is right and wrong and from their own perspective to make sense of the world that surrounds them. For the viewers, the media space of television is used to gain access to information about familiar concepts as for instance representation of gender, sexual norms and so on.

Within decades women's representation in mass media has grown to be of even greater importance, not only how they are omitted but also how they are stereotypically placed within society. In their essay "Women and Media: A Critical Introduction" Carolyn M. Byerly and Karen Ross state that "(…) popular media such as film, television, newspapers, and magazines continue to frame (in every sense of the word) women within a narrow repertoire of types that bear little or no relation to how real women live their lives" (2006, p. 18).

In the 1970s and 1980s the post-feminist concept of *feminist television criticism* was partly born, as it developed itself from a political concept in the 1960s to "(…) its own discursive practice", challenging struggles as for instance the representation of women in mass media (Brunsdon & Spiegel, 2008, p. 6). In their book "Feminist Television Criticism", Brunsdon and Spiegel state that feminist television criticism pursuit to understand the numerous pressures that are put on texts by "(…) the industry, by writers and producers, by the people who interpret them, by censorship or regulation, and by the larger discursive and social context in which programmes circulate" such as female representation (p. 12). One of the scholars who sought to challenge the mindset was feminist film theorist, Laura Mulvey and her notion of mainstream television and film "(…) present[ing] women as visual objects of male pleasure" by investigating specific genres that were aimed at women (p. 6). The females drawn to the theory were largely supporters to second-wave feminism and the representation of the working girl/new woman in the sitcom and drama genres, which incorporated the aspect of narrative dilemmas (p. 1; 4). However, it was not only to challenge objectification that feminist film criticism wanted to achieve but also to avoid the female destiny of 'just becoming a housewife' by questioning the two spheres of 'private' and 'public' life "(…) with the housewife in the private space of the home and politics as a public and male domain" (p. 1; 7). For Brunsdon and Spiegel, feminist film criticism underwent its most apparent shift by establishing the post-feminist girl character and her grasp of girliness, popular culture and consumer lifestyle (p. 12).

With the changes in television - technologically and culturally - the rise of the Post-Network Era in the 21st century had a significant change for viewers, who now can choose for themselves *when*, *where* and *what* to watch (Lotz, 2014, p. 2). As the technical aspects of television became more advanced and the selection of programs more expanding, storytelling had to change the format as well – thus giving birth to the term *Complex TV*, also referred to as *Quality television* (Mittell,

2015, p. 2). Scholar Robert J. Thompson acknowledges that while "(...) no one can say exactly what "Quality television" means", there are some indicators for what complexity in television contains (Thompson, 1997, p. 12-13). For instance, the group "Viewers for Quality Television" - an organization meant to encourage production and broadcasting of complex television series - characterize quality television as the following:

> A quality series enlightens, enriches, challenges, involves and confronts. It dares to risks, it's honest and illuminating, it appeals to the intellect and touches the emotions. It requires concentration and attention, and it provokes thought. Characterization is explored. And usually a quality comedy will touch the funny bone and the heart (...). (as cited in Thompson, 1997, p. 13)

Thompson further goes on to characterize complex, quality series - for instance by noting how the shows "(...) defy standard generic parameters and define new narrative territory", contain creators with more independence and creative influence, have young, up-scale and well-educated viewers and consists of large ensemble casts (p. 13-14). Additionally, Quality TV mixes genres and relies on memory, as it often it serialized and refers to previous episodes (p. 14-15). Complexity in television series is also seen through complex writing, controversial subjects, and self-consciousness as it references to high and popular culture as well as TV itself (p. 15). As such, complexity in television can be seen through elements such as deviation from earlier modes of television in terms of genre, cast, and narration, as well as the acknowledgment of the viewer as intelligent and able to rely on memory. In her book "Redesigning Women" (2006), Television scholar Amanda D. Lotz examines the concept of female representation after the Network Era, showing a correlation between positive female representation in television and complex television (Lotz, 2006). Thus, feminist television criticism has risen as the complexity in female characters rose as well.

The notion of female characters being of more importance and being represented more positively through the rise of complex television and the Post-Network Era is interesting, as it indicates a significant change for female representation in media and creates the need for more feminist television criticism. In 2019, most shows arguably contain characteristics of quality television, and there has been a significant rise of female leads breaking the stereotypical aspect of 'a housewife', living complex lives outside of their households. Therefore, the need for examining female characters continues to be of importance, as showing positive changes in female representation is just as meaningful as displaying females correlating to earlier patriarchal and objectifying structures. Thus, this thesis will explore this very notion of a positive change in female representation in television by answering the following problem statement: "*Considering how female characters in cinematic arts have undergone change from being subjected to male gaze to postfeminist icons, how are female television characters portrayed in the Post-Network Television Era?*". To answer the problem statement, the thesis will examine three contemporary and complex television series from the Post-Network Era containing female leads; the American telenovela *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019), the Netflix comedy *Grace and Frankie* (2015-) and the Comedy Central series *Broad City* (2014-2019). The examination of the three series will be made with the use of, for instance, theories on spectatorship from scholars such as Laura Mulvey and E. Ann Kaplan, as well as postfeminist television criticism such as Amanda Lotz, Rosalind Gill, and Carolyn M. Byerly & Karen Ross.

Theory

Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema (1975)

Historically, feminist film criticism was developed through the rise of second-wave feminism and women's studies in the 1960s and 1970s. In the beginning, the field was based almost solely on sociological theory – mostly analyzing the way in which women are portrayed in film and how those portrayals relate to power structures and historical contexts of women's place in society, by for instance examining stereotypes in film. Today, feminist film critics still examine these matters, but the field has broadened and included other theories and outlooks on women in film, helping to understand of for instance the psychology of how women are portrayed due to general patriarchal structures in film. Generally, feminist film critics argue how the inclusion of psychoanalysis into the field originates with Laura Mulvey and her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" published in 1975 – which some argue as being one of the most important works in the field to this day, for many reasons.

Mulvey's intention with the 1975 text originates from her interest in images, spectatorship and 'erotic ways of looking" in relation to psychoanalysis – that is, examining how the representation of female characters can be explained through psychological patterns and not solely sociological theory. Thus, Mulvey argues how "psychoanalytical theory is (…) appropriate here as a political weapon, demonstrating the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form" (Mulvey, p. 6). Psychoanalysis can be a political weapon due to the fact that it explains human mentality and the unconscious; explaining unconscious processes that, for instance, create patriarchal structures that can create awareness, thus serving as a political weapon as it highlights problems. Mulvey begins her essay by describing the notion of *phallocentrism*: an ideology representing the phallus, the male sexual organ, as a central element in the organization of the social world and the signifier thereof. In Mulvey's mind, the paradox of phallocentrism is how it depends

on “the image of the castrated woman to giver order and meaning to its world” (ibid.). Furthermore, she argues that “it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies” (ibid.). Thus, as according to Mulvey, the woman’s importance is in signifying the male other in our patriarchal culture:

> (…) bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning. (p. 7)

Mulvey’s arguments were groundbreaking – not only in film theory but across critical traditions in feminist research, as it showed inherently patriarchal structures in fictional works.

Deriving from her criticism of a ‘dominant patriarchal order’ in mainstream film, Mulvey’s main idea with “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema” is to unveil the psychological aspects of the male spectatorship, as she believes “analyzing pleasure, or beauty, destroys it” (p. 8). This dominant patriarchal order in which Mulvey seeks to destroy upholds what later is coined as ‘the male gaze’ in film: which can be explained through the term “male spectatorship”. According to Mulvey, the male spectatorship is constructed through two different things in cinema; the first being the construction of the male ego. This construction is controlled by for instance narcissistic tendencies, in which the spectator – that is, the male watcher of the cinematic experience – forms identification with the male character. This creates Mulvey’s term “the bearer of the look of the spectator” (p. 12), where the man, through the identification with the male lead, becomes the hero of the story as he takes on the male lead’s persona: “Camera technology (…) and camera movements (…), combined with invisible editing (demanded by realism) all tend to blur the limits of screen space. The male protagonist is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which he articulates the look and creates the action” (p. 13).

Furthermore, he "(…) controls the film phantasy" and "(…) can never bear the burden of sexual objectification (...) [as he] is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like (p. 12). Another aspect of the male spectatorship is *scopophilia,* a term that Mulvey describes as "taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (ibid.). These psychological aspects of the male spectatorship are what create 'the male gaze' – the looks which the male gives the female character, taking her as a prisoner of scopophilia. According to Mulvey, there are three different looks to be made by the male in regards to the female character: (1) the look or gaze of the camera, (2) the looks between the characters and (3) the look of the spectator. The first is defined by camera movements, an example being a close-up following the female character's legs, and the last – the look of the spectator – is constituted by the first two, due to the male spectator's identification with the male lead (p. 6-18).

The aforementioned notion of the woman as the bearer of meaning – and not the maker of meaning – is an important notion in understanding Mulvey's essay and viewpoints, as it refers to the woman on screen as being a passive bearer of meaning, not the one who drives the narrative forward. A classic example of this notion is the Bond girls – she bears meaning for James Bond as he is supposed to 'win' her love and sexual favors; though, James Bond, as the *maker of meaning*, is the one who drives the narrative forward. Thus, the Bond girl exemplifies Mulvey's opinion of patriarchal structures in film; the woman as the signifier, the bearer of meaning – the man as the maker of meaning, the hero, the one who drives the narrative forward. Mulvey further argues how female figurines in film does not have the slightest importance, as she has only two positions to take; the first being an "(…) erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium", as described with the example above of a classic Bond girl (p. 11). Even as the main character of a movie, Mulvey argues that she is still passive – in this instance, the supporting male character steps out and drives the narrative forward – thus, even

as the lead character, the female is never the sole reason for the progression of a narrative (p. 13-14). Furthermore, Mulvey argues how the presence of woman visually may "(…) freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation (p. 11). The female may be elegant and sexualized, but as she falls in love with the male character and becomes his, she loses her elegant and sexual characteristics (p. 13). Additionally, when she becomes the property of the male character, she inherently is obtained by the male spectator as well through his narcissistic identification with the male lead.

Watching Dallas (1985)

Mulvey's essay is considered by many as one of the most significant works in the field of feminist film criticism, but for different reasons; some feminist film critics agree fully with Mulvey's viewpoints, others do not. As mentioned in the section above, Mulvey used her essay as a political weapon. That, along with herself being a feminist avant-garde filmmaker at the time of publishing (a genre of film that Mulvey does *not* critique and claims to uphold more positive structures of power in relation to female characters in film), can be argued as showing clear bias in "Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema" – and many feminist film critics, including herself later on, have critiqued the essay and its viewpoints. One of Mulvey's critics, Ien Ang, proposes another way of studying spectatorship in cinematic arts in her essay *Watching Dallas* from 1985.

In her study, Ang questions the methodology of the psychoanalytical, textual analysis of a female character, which Mulvey proposed in 1975. If the universal truth in terms of spectatorship is Mulvey's proposal of the term, it suggests a passive spectatorship for the female spectator (shown in the sexualization of female characters as well as a lack of female characters driving the narrative), and an active one for the male spectator (him identifying with the male character and taking the female as a sexual prisoner). Thus, by default, the female spectator cannot derive pleasure from her spectatorship as with the male spectator. But for Ang and other feminist film

critics, this position has its limitations; it comes from a scholarly viewpoint, uses scholarly texts and knowledge and thus ignores the majority of actual audience members and their experience as spectators. Thus, Ang's study derives from an interest in seeing what actual female audience members might experience when interacting with a certain visual narrative – in this case, the popular soap opera *Dallas*.

In the study, Ang receives letters from a group of diverse female fans of the show *Dallas*. In the letters, the women account for why they enjoy watching the show (p. 9-12). The letters showed how the women found the show pleasurable for different reasons – most significantly though, the fans took pleasure from the positions of power and glamorous lifestyles of the female characters within the story. Additionally, pleasure derived from Ang's notion of the emotional realism of the soap genre – which, for the female fans, was noted as characters to identify with: "the pleasures of *Dallas* in the recognition of ideas that fit in with the viewer's imaginative world. They can "lose" themselves in *Dallas* because the program symbolizes a structure of feeling which connects up with the ways in which they encounter life" (p. 82-83). Ang then argues how the world of Dallas creates a world in which the viewers can indulge themselves into and receive pleasure from; suggesting activeness in the spectatorship of women regardless of whether or not they drive the narrative forward or is subjected to voyeuristic male gazes. Ang's arguments would not have been accepted by Mulvey, most likely due to Ang's neglect in terms of patriarchal, cultural structures in film, something Mulvey relies solely upon. Ang additionally argues her opinion on 'popular pleasure' as stemming from identifying oneself with a world or characters, or to integrate it into everyday life: "(…) popular pleasure is first and foremost a pleasure of recognition" (p. 20). Thus, Ang's opinion on deriving pleasure from visual narratives stems from identification and integration into real life – and not merely from being the hero of the story or not being subjected to male gazes, as Mulvey would have suggested. Of course, Ang's methodological approach is quite different from Mulvey's

textual, qualitative and psychoanalytical approach. While Mulvey surely forgets that the viewers of mainstream film are regular (and not scholarly) people, Ang - with her ethnographical approach – seems to not care about whether or not the female characters of Dallas are passive or active in terms of driving the narrative forward, which can be regarded and argued as an important aspect of a positive female representation. The ethnographical approach thus ignores cultural structures in film and media, while the close analysis of patriarchal structures ignores the empirical spectator. In this thesis, the analysis of cultural structures is chosen to be the most significant one due to several reasons: firstly, we believe structures of looking, pleasure and roles are significant in order to analyze whether or not a character is subjected to being an object created of patriarchy. Secondly, while we acknowledge how the views of an empirical spectator are forgotten, we also acknowledge the notion of how empirical spectators may not even be aware of patriarchal structures in film and media. Thus, it seems as if the empirical spectators in ethnographical approaches cannot say much on how female characters are subjected to cultural, patriarchal structures – which is a key factor in answering the problem statement of this thesis.

The Female Spectator: Contexts and Directions (1989)

As shown in Ien Ang's study of Dallas, much disagreement in *how* to analyze female spectatorship arose the following years after Mulvey's study took place. Scholars Mary Ann Doane and Janet Bergstrom, in their study "The Female Spectator: Contexts and Directions" (1989), address different issues with the methodology of the textual, psychoanalytical and qualitative analysis as proposed by Mulvey. One significant methodological challenge, as argued by Bergstrom and Doane, stems from cultural differences in the people decoding certain texts: "(…) different geographical [contexts] often illuminate the extent to which theory is inflected by national and cultural determinations" (Bergstrom & Doane, p. 14). Bergstrom and Doane additionally argues how the context *when* decoding a texts is significant too; the scholars quote fellow feminist film

critic Giuliana Bruno, who is of Italian descent and thus show a different outlook on the female spectatorship: "Questions such as female spectatorship arise, are formed, developed and defined within a specific cultural framework, at particular historical junctures. (…) the terms of discourse are culturally defined and not easily transferable from one culture to another" (as cited in Bergstrom and Doane, p. 14). Thus, this methodological problem shows that while Mulvey's idea of female spectatorship may have been a 'universal truth' for her own culture, people of other cultures may never agree due to the fact that culture is significant in decoding texts.

For Bergstrom and Doane, not only cultural differences are a methodological problem; the format is significant too. The scholars argue that transferring methods from a field to another – or, as they call it, "methodological borrowing" may be problematic: "Because the initial work on female spectatorship was largely produced in relation to an analysis of the classical Hollywood text theorized as closed and homogeneous and with respect to a binary opposition between that text and a more or less open avant-garde, the fragmented flow and intensive commodification associated with television pose major difficulties for methodological borrowing" (p. 14). Though, as shown in the methodology section of this thesis, we argue how that transfer from cinema to television is less problematic methodologically for this study – especially in the case of the post-network television shows selected for analysis. Additionally, Bergstrom and Doane critique the use of ethnographical methods as used by Ang.

From the Male Gaze to the Female Spectator (1994)

Jackie Stacey's 1994 study "From the Male Gaze to the Female Spectator" shows exactly how important Mulvey's arguments from 1975 is; she argues they have given evidence to feminist film critics of an inherent patriarchal structure in visual narratives. Though, in Stacey's mind, the famous essay has also shed light on methodological problems and limitations in the field. Thus, Stacey joins the abovementioned scholars in agreeing on the apparent limitations of Mulvey's 1975 study.

Stacey, much like Ien Ang, argues how the textual, psychoanalytical analysis ignores and dismisses real audience members of the cinematic experience. For Stacey, one of the main issues with Mulvey's thesis – as well as works from other scholars – is the term *spectator*, as there seems to be no consensus among scholars in defining the term. In addition, Stacey observes how most work within the field of feminists film criticism is the aforementioned psychoanalytical, textual analysis based on Mulvey's work. Stacey's issue with the preference of this methodological standpoint stems from the belief that it ignores what she refers to as the *empirical spectator*; that is, the actual audience member in a theater: Typical of much feminist psychoanalytic film criticism, both writers dismiss the question of how women in the audience watch films as uninteresting or irrelevant to debates about female spectatorship. Mary Ann Doane's claim that the female spectator is 'a concept and not a person' suggests a rather troubling division between film theory and cinema audiences" (Stacey, 1994, p. 56). Contrary to Bergstrom and Doane, and similar to Ien Ang, Stacey finds ethnographical approaches known from television studies (such as audience readings, interviews and more) are a helpful tool when analyzing passive or active female spectatorships (p. 57-58). Additionally, Stacey also found how television studies can benefit from the psychoanalytical approach examining the representation of a female character; an approach that can be argued as lacking from Ien Ang's study of *Dallas*. Thus, Stacey proposes a mixture of the two: "I would argue that it is only by combining theories (…) that the full complexity of the pleasures of the cinema can be understood" (p. 74). Lastly, Stacey notes that weaknesses and strengths arise from all types of methodological strategies: "(...) female spectatorship, rather than being a single, unified theoretical category, with little or no connection to history or to women in the cinema audience, can be understood here as a changing, dynamic and historically specific category" (Stacey, p. 76).

Women and Film (1990)

Like Mulvey, E. Ann Kaplan uses the psychoanalytical approach to her studies regarding cinema in her 1990 book "Women and Film". Showing significant progress in feminist film criticism, Kaplan challenges Mulvey's idea of spectatorship while using the same methodology. Kaplan introduces her study by stating how the gaze is not inherently constructed around the male – and that women are able to adopt and 'own' the gaze, too (Kaplan, 1990, p. 25). Kaplan states how "Nearly all fantasies have the dominance-submission pattern, with the woman in the latter place" (p. 26). Though, while she agrees how women often are placed in the submissive category – and thus, obtains passive spectatorship – she does argue how women are able to adopt the 'male position' of dominance. There may still be a difference in the gaze even if the female is to take on the dominant role: "(...) men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession which is lacking in the female gaze. Women receive and return a gaze, but cannot act upon it" (p. 31).

Kaplan, in many situations, agrees with Mulvey's outlook on the marginalized female character upheld by patriarchal structures. She agrees on cinema constructing females with the notion "to-be-looked-at-ness" (as argued by Mulvey) only for the cause of manipulation, which results in the female character ending up as merely a comical element to the narrative. Indeed, Kaplan herself states how the female character is "(…) assigned [as the] object, she is the recipient of male desire, passively appearing rather than acting" (p. 25-26). Thus, as a result, Kaplan states the woman cannot be assigned the central role of the film. She believes there lies a certain worthlessness surrounding women, enhanced by stereotypes in film; powerless and victimized ones are depicted solely as "(…) silent, absent, and marginal" (p. 34).

One of the key questions and discussion points of Kaplan's study is whether or not the female spectator can position themselves in a truly *dominant position*, or if they adopt the *masculine*

dominant position – that is, the question of whether female spectators can create their *own* female dominant position or if they just adopt a masculine one. Kaplan observes society's obsession with the myth of sex being divided as "masculine" and "feminine"; nonetheless, another observation by Kaplan notes a more distinct mannerism in terms of a "female gaze". She notes how " [the male sex] have been starting to get used as sexual object to a woman who controlled the film's action and as the object of "female" desire" (p. 28-29). Kaplan's observation creates her argument that the voyeuristic gaze also applies to the female sex, taking over the male position that carries it. Thus, in Kaplan's mind, the male-dominant and female-submissive structures can be taken over by both sexes, adopting each other's positions (p. 31). Additionally, her viewpoints show a critique of Mulvey's idea that only women are able to carry sexual objectification – and not be the central and driving part of a narrative.

While, in Kaplan's mind, both sexes can take on any of the two positions, there are some limitations – which answers the question of whether or not female spectators create a *female* dominant position or just takes on the male position. Kaplan begins this argument by stating that: "(…) dominance-submissive patterns are apparently a crucial part of both male and female sexuality as constructed in western civilization" (p. 28). In this construction of western civilization, women are sexually attracted to men of authority positions - men who possess more status than the woman herself. According to Kaplan, if the man steps out of the traditional role of authority, controlling the film's narrative and voyeuristic gazes – and instead adopts the passive, submissive role inherent to the female – the women have to take over his former position. She instead becomes the "bearer of the look of the spectator", the driving force of gaze, narrative, and action – all to keep the inherent dominant-submissive structure, etched into western civilization, intact. As a result, typical looks and mannerisms of both the male and female are changed; he becomes passive, submissive and loses his attractiveness in losing his authority. Likewise, the woman loses her

characteristics as kind, motherly, beautiful and with a delightful personality; instead, she becomes ambitious and powerful, taking on the role of authority and status – but with the negative that she becomes manipulating and cold (p. 29). Thus, as Kaplan notes, the female can in this position 'own' the gaze – but has to adopt the "male" position (p. 30). As a result, an active spectatorship is possible to female spectators, even if they merely adopt a male dominant position. Lastly, a key argument by Kaplan is that all women – both gay and straight - have lesbian fantasies in which they can adopt both positions; the one dominated, and the one who dominates other women. When adopting the dominant position, a fantasy creates pleasure for the female spectator, thus establishing another type of active female spectatorship.

It is important to note the differences in object of scholars such as Mulvey, Kaplan and, Ang. One one side, Mulvey, Kaplan and Doane focus on studying texts and their cultural structures with their focus on for instance the dominant/submissive patterns outlined from textual analysis – they do not necessarily care about living, breathing viewers. While Doane does not fully agree on Mulvey's methodology, she still argues that gaze and spectators are a concept and not a person, showing her object of analysis is similar to that of Mulvey and Kaplan. On the other side, scholars such as Ang with her study on *Dallas* show difference in object by focusing on ethnographical approaches and the aforementioned forgotten living, breathing viewers. Despite their differences in objects, they do not necessarily disagree on the fact that women on screen are marginalized and objectified – they just disagree on what should be the object of analysis.

The Women's Programs (2006)

In 2006, media scholar Amanda D. Lotz identified with her book "Redesigning Women" the portrayal of the 'new' new woman in tv-series. She argued of the 'new' new woman as women containing career competence, female success both personally and academically, lacking of romantic partner, yearning for 'Mr. Right' and longing over yet-to-be-found or lost love (Lotz,

2006, p. 1). In her book, Lotz describes the portrayal of the 'new' new woman as a character who embodies a mixture of success and vulnerability such as Ally McBeal in the series entitled the same (Lotz, 2006, p. 1). In comparison to the previous female characters in tv-series, Ally gained success in the area of career in which the former new women (formed in the 1970s and 1980s) "(…) fought to secure" through sitcoms, as the working women of that time became the top consumers of TV (p. 1; 26). Thusly, the 'new' new woman in comparison to the new woman of the 1970s and 1980s focuses more on the aspect of gaining female career success while lacking a romantic partner.

For Lotz, the 1970s "(…) rise of female-centered, if not somewhat feminist, sitcoms (…)" and the depiction of the 'working woman' – or the 'new woman' – were important criterions for the futural representations of gender and its norms (p. 8). With a higher income than the average housewife and being "(…) a more independently minded female generation", the career woman became a more desirable target and a 'good business' for the advertisers of the time, as the women were in control of their own income. Women were willing to spend more money on TV in their time of independence; the result of this created more radical discourse and depiction of television women, hence the illustration of the professional, career-minded female character - the 'new' new woman (p. 8; 10). By concentrating on the female audience as a target group, the broadcast networks and cable programs had moved from being fixated on a broad scale to a more niche-specific audience, which, in the end, proved to be a profitable choice (p. 10). This was an effect of a change in television historically and technologically, as the multi-channel transition brought upon loads of cable channels, forcing networks and channels to not focus on creating television for a homogenous mass audience (Lotz, 2014, p. 24). However, Lotz mentions that the shift "(…) [was] not particularly designed or intended to directly advance women; rather, women have been the primary beneficiaries of the shift to niche audiences because of the degree to which they are an identifiable audience subset of substantial size" (Lotz, 2006, p. 24). Whilst the shift to a niche

audience supposedly were to target the overall audience and not just women, the possibility of identification with characters in the programs were a big part of the series development for success; to include young, single characters, senior professionals both with complicated personal relationships and melodramatic storylines of loss (p. 27). It allowed depictions of "the balance of home and family as more complicated and as an ongoing process of negotiation" (Lotz, 2001, p. 108).

Female Centered Dramas (2006)

According to Lotz (2006), the media space is the "(…) place where the cultural meanings and representations of modern femininity are forged, fought over, and understood", thus enhancing why tv-series that focus on the portrayal of the female character is an important aspect to recognize (Lotz, 2006, p. 35). The female-centered drama, as argued by Lotz, is outlined as the 'women's programs' by commonly being "(…) preferred by female audiences" and excludes the so-called 'buddy tradition' of pairing a female and male character in a non-romantic relationship (p. 30; 35). In her book "Redesigning Women" (2006), Lotz illustrates the dominant genre of the female-centered dramas being that of *comedies*, usually half-hour shows, where the "(…) series construct their narratives around one or more female protagonists, regardless of whether the audience – intended or hailed – is predominately female" (ibid.). The most common and dominant of the female-centered dramas is, as stated by Lotz, the *comedic drama*.

The 'New' New Woman in Comedic Dramas (2006)

The comedic drama materialized in the 1990s, where networks and cable channels "(…) continued the tradition of the new-woman character type" as they depicted strong, professional, career women, though too displaying the female's dating experiences and their sexuality (Lotz, 2006, p. 32-33; 89). As argued by Lotz, the comedic drama "(…) construct narratives around a

multiplicity of female characters", thereby not only focusing on a single female and her specific characteristics but of multiple women with different – whilst at the same time similar – goals in life (p. 92). This is exactly why Lotz argues how comedy often is "(...) providing the most prevalent site for finding feminist perspectives on television" (Lotz, 2001, p. 6). Arguably, the comedic element in comedy series often let "unruly" and heterogenous characters arise, creating a 'safe space' for all types of characters and letting a broad array of women on the screen – as the shows are meant to be humorous, the characters within them are allowed to not be perfect and without flaws, creating that safe space in comedy series in which the viewer accept the unruliness due to its humorous point of view.

In "Redesigning Women" (2006), Lotz establishes that the characterization of the 'new' new woman in the late 1990s, early 2000s and later on all focused around the three aspects of *dating*, *marriage* and *career opportunities* (Lotz, 2006, p. 95). In elaboration of this, she states the fact that "(…) examination of the stories told by comedic dramas reveals that the primary challenge for these women is not finding a relationship so much as finding the right one (…)" – the 'quest' for a partner becomes a selective and active process where the female characters frequently refuses any eligible bachelors (p. 109). Thus, the search for love becomes an independent choice wherin female characters are allowed to be selective. Though whilst the 'new' new woman series establish stories about "(…) young, unmarried women who (…) struggle with the social pressure to marry and wonder whether a suitable companion even exist", the dismissal of the aforementioned eligible bachelors causes the females in comedic dramas to pursuit their 'urgency for family' someplace else – hence committing fully to either their own children or, as Lotz argues, a female peer (p. 92; 89). The 1990s portrayal of the 'new' new woman revolves around three primary narrative subject matters in comedic dramas; her status as *single*, *the inclusion of her dating-life* and *being in search for suitable partner* - concluding the portrayal of the female as a self-reliant woman which separates

her from former female character depictions in other genres, as they, mostly, lack the "(…) trademark of independence" (p. 108). An interesting notion then arises from Lotz's arguments of the 'new' new woman in television: the fact that these independent women can drive the narrative, contradictory of earlier female depictions in cinematic arts. Thus, the 'new' new woman arguably is a television character that is allowed to be the forwarder and the one who controls the narrative.

Moreover, in correlation with Lotz' notion of career opportunities, she acknowledges that although the careers are not notably consequential to the narrative of the series, "(…) the fact that the series allow [the women] careers, depict them as talented, and suggest that they pursue work as more than a pastime (…)" shows positive change for female representation as former depictions of females showed lack of independence (p. 95). For the comedic drama, the focus for the depiction of the new female character in the genre was that of work outside the home and of being single, in which the characters get liberation from marriages, "(…) which [up until now had] limited the stories about the women" (p. 89; 99). Furthermore, the genre showed growing visibility of divorced and widowed female characters, which refitted the outline of the 'new' new woman (p. 89).

With the series' adoption in terms of narrative conventions, the stories of comedic dramas became noticeable and different from other genres, as the series were "(…) mixing episodic and serial plots, blending humor and drama, incorporating first-person narration, and utilizing parody" (p. 92). The flaws and weaknesses that was incorporated into the female character depiction - human imperfections - equips a richness of what Lotz states as 'contemporary characterizations', bringing the audience closer with the female characters as "(…) the complicated lives depicted indicate more about contemporary female reality than a flawless role model might" (p. 173). While a flawless role model on screen – a character possessing beauty, the perfect body, success in career and success in love and family – may be considered 'feminist' by some, it is arguably not: the reasoning for why a flawed character is significant is because no real woman is without flaws.

Thus, the flaws in a character become something, which the viewer can identify with as well as something that represents real women.

The historical representation of women as unemployed mothers and wives made room for improvement, making the single, working woman a positive contrast for female characterization in TV (ibid.). Though whilst the single, working woman is considered the modern day portrayal of females, one might argue - as Lotz does - that it "(…) establishes a new construct of what women should be, rather than increasing the uninhabitability of confining gender roles" (ibid.). Confining gender roles, as argued by Lotz, accuses women of not being able to have a committed, romantic and meaningful relationship along with success in their careers (ibid.).

An interesting notion to point out is Lotz's difference from earlier approaches in terms of media studies. Contrary to for instance Mulvey and Kaplan, who regarded individual works of cinema as carrying out cultural structures, Lotz uses "(…) a media studies approach which regards the entirety of TV as a social space where power and hierarchy are negotiated and produced" (S. Christiansen, personal communication, March 12, 2019). Thus, Lotz believes new series – and their more positive representations of women – emerge through cultural, financial and technological advances in the scope of television, not from aesthetic and political advances as Mulvey would argue or from uses and gratifications in viewers as Ang would propose (ibid.).

The 'New' New Woman in Melodrama and Soap Opera (2006-2008)

Whilst the female-centered dramas, such as comedic dramas, is said to be the most favored of the women's programs, one must also look to the genres of *melodramas* and *soap operas*; they too play a role in the evolution of the 'new' new woman's portrayal in contemporary TV. The melodrama is, according to author and feminist A. Kuhn, "(…) one of the defining generic features of the woman's picture as (…) it [is the] construction of narratives motivated by female desire and processes of spectator identification governed by female point of view" (Kuhn, 1984, p. 225).

Though, as argued by Ang, as the programs devoir to draw in a heterogeneous audience, "(…) it will include a wider range of themes, scenes, and plots" commonly acknowledged by the male audience, along with the incorporation of male characters (Ang, 1990, p. 238).

Considering the explicit depiction of the modern female character, the melodramatic woman occurring in melodramas and soap operas must, according to Ang, "(…) at times face the unsolvable dilemmas inherent in the lives of modern women: how to combine love and work; how to compete with the boys; how to deal with growing older" (1990, p. 244-245). This enhances the illustration made by Lotz of the characterization of the 'new' new woman – as outlined in previous sections. In addition, Ang states how the significant component of the current female portrayal formed by the melodrama is that of the female caving into a sense of powerlessness, as this will strengthen the bond between the female audience and the female characters (p. 245). In their book "Women and Media: A Critical Introduction" (2006), professors C. M. Byerly and K. Ross state that the flawed female individuals – someone never wholly bad nor good – are, like mentioned by Ang and Lotz, the key element to successful identification between the female audience and the women of the series, as the "(…) struggle with complexities of impossible lives" makes the female characters more humanized and relatable (p. 22). Thus, as noted by several scholars, the concept of 'flaws' becomes an important aspect in postfeminism, as it makes the characters relatable and a representation of a real woman, as no woman is perfect and without flaws.

Strong women with leading roles have since the late 1990s and beginning of the 2000s been a solid part of the popular women's programs and as argued by Byerly, female representation in television today has certainly grown positively (p. 35). Still, while the positive portrayal of the female role in TV has increased, there are still women in today's society who "(…) experience actual prejudice and discrimination in terms of unequal treatment, unequal pay, and unequal value

in real life (…)" (ibid.). While the media remains one of the most influential platforms out there, they – according to Byerly – pursue to interpret this discrimination (ibid.).

Postfeminism – Elements of Sensibility (2006-2008)

With the birth of *postfeminism* in the 1980s, the term has since then proved to act against some of the feminist tendencies materialized by the second- and third-wave feminism. During the last three decades, it has established itself as a key term in the critical vocabulary of feminism and is, according to Gill, outlined by proposing a connection to Third Wave and referring to a historical shift in feminism – being that of a time 'after' the Second Wave (Gill, 2016, p. 612-613). Amanda Lotz, in her article "Postfeminist Television Criticism: Rehabilitating Critical Terms and Identifying Postfeminist Attributes" from 2001, states how "Conversations about third-wave feminism and postfeminism remain difficult due to the lack of shared understanding of what the terms delineate", making the term "largely useless unless the user first states his or her definition" (Lotz, 2001, p. 106). For Lotz, the term "postfeminism" and its relation to feminism is divided internationally; Australian, British and U.S. feminist media scholars each understand its complexity differently (Lotz, 2006, p. 174). This notion is why, according to Gill (2007), postfeminism should be "(…) conceived of as a sensibility" (Gill, 2007, p. 148). For Gill, postfeminism subsists both in anti-feminist and feminist mindsets whilst also relating to and coexist with age, class, sexuality, and ethnicity; widening its horizon in correlation to earlier feminist aspects of the female depiction in tv-series (Gill, 2007, p. 149). To that extension, K. Boyle states that "(…) the female protagonist ha[s] a specific relation to femininity, being neither trapped in femininity (pre-feminist), nor rejecting of it (feminist), but, rather, using it to their own advantage in the workplace and the bedroom" (Boyle, 2005, p. 177). This can be seen in, for instance, using female sexuality and femininity to achieve successful careers or to deceive a male character (ibid.). Still, whilst this aspect might offer the female characters an advantage, this form of 'objectivity' can be said to

correlate to Mulvey's concept of the 'male gaze', as Boyle illustrates that appearance and clothing can be concerning in the display of female appearance, as it converts into a "(…) marker of their worth" - consequently shaping them as objects of desire (p. 178). In spite of this, Boyle argues that postfeminism manages to not only objectify the female sex but also mock male masculinity, as the term is "(…) designed to let men (and patriarchy) off the hook, either by celebrating men's feminism or by turning individual men into objects of fun and derision (…)" (p. 179).

Lotz argues in her 2001 study how postfeminist analysis of a media text is often confined into three different categories; a focus on female characters (for instance, analyzing the 'unruly woman' on television), a formal analysis of narrative strategies and issues dealing with feminist ideas, and lastly the examination of feminist discourse in texts (Lotz, 2001, p. 109). In terms of feminist discourse, Lotz states the following: "Scholars generally concur that feminist discourse is predominantly found in the comedy genre because of narrative and generic qualities that both introduce and then contain potentially subversive content" (p. 111). As with the aforementioned 'safe space' in comedies for the depiction of unruly and flawed female characters, comedy likewise is a safe space for feminist discourse, as the humorous qualities of the genre make it possible for subversive content to be accepted.

Lotz states how "No one character emerges as the unflawed poster woman for contemporary feminist", noting that complexity is rather indicated from a broad array of representations of women, and examining "the intricacy of these images provide a much more productive route for feminist media criticism" instead of categorizing what a feminist character is (p. 114). Rather, Lotz argues, postfeminist works better as a critical tool "when it can be used simply to identify ideas evident in texts" (p. 115). Lotz then goes on to highlight postfeminist attributes in contemporary series "that indicate an underlying postfeminist perspective" (ibid.). The first attribute is marked by Lotz as narratives that *explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit* - she argues how

shows that exhibit this may construct female characters showing complexity as well as being distinct from one another, despite "the commonality of womanhood" (ibid.). Related to that, postfeminism "(...) critiques oppression or discrimination based on other aspects of one's identity" (ibid.). This type of attribute appears in texts as a critique - and sometimes exploration - of homophobic, racist and classist behaviors (p. 116). Another attribute is found "(...) in *depictions of varied feminist solutions and loose organizations of activism*" (Ibid). According to Lotz, television may represent this by "depicting varied feminist solutions to an oppressive situation, or even varied feminist outlooks on cultural issues" (ibid.). Representations of this aspect are seen in female character's questioning of a power structure or "providing evidence of more than one way to challenge the oppressor" (ibid.). The next attribute is to *deconstruct binary categories of gender and sexuality, instead viewing these categories as flexible and indistinct* (ibid.). According to Lotz, this attribute appears in television "(...) as "playing" with gender constructions, or raising the performative or mutable nature of gender and sexuality" (ibid.). Lotz notes how this attribute draws from perspectives made by theorists such as Judith Butler - who, with her text "Gender Trouble" from 1990 examined gender and sex as fluid as well as being a culturally, socially and politically framed "gender performance". The last attribute is, according to Lotz, evident in *the way situations illustrating the contemporary struggles faced by women and feminists are raised and examined within series* (ibid.). She further argues how this attribute may be seen through fully debated topics, or "(...) simply themes and ideas raised within texts" - for instance, scholar Probyn notes how the 1980 trope of "(...) the ticking biological clock received significant consideration in television texts" (as cited in Lotz, 2001, p. 116-117).

Similar to Lotz's attributes of postfeminist ideas in media, the article "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility" (2007) by R. Gill provide eight different substantial features of the discourse of postfeminism - with only four of them included in this paper due to lacking

relevance from the latter four. These substantial features can be applied to the portrayal of the 'new' new woman in modern TV and especially women's programs (p. 149).

Femininity as a bodily property

In the early 1970s, Mulvey established her concept of the 'male gaze' in which the female characters in mainstream film were sexually objectified by the gaze of the male – audience, camera, and male characters, creating passive spectatorship (Mulvey, 1999). Though, as the representations of the sexual objectification of female characters in modern TV have improved subsequently, postfeminism along with its media culture has enacted this concept to its own advantage. According to Gill, the definition of femininity is that of a 'bodily property', with the body as a woman's ultimate source of power, making the concept of a sexual body connotated positively (Gill, 2007, p. 149). For postfeminism, the "(…) possession of a 'sexy body' is presented as women's key (if not sole) source of identity"; if not possessed with a perfect body, the female is as according to Gill at risk of 'failing' – an attractive and seductive body is the portrayal of a successful life (p. 149-150).

The Sexualization of Culture

The women of the postfeminist era is "(…) responsible for producing themselves as desirable heterosexual subjects as well as pleasing men sexually [yet also] protecting against pregnancy (…) and taking care of men's self-esteem", illustrating the sole role of the females as caretakers of men and their personal issues, while men's only speculation in life is to 'get a shag' (Gill, 2007, p. 151).

From Sex Object to Desiring Sexual Subject

In relation to the first feature of 'femininity as bodily property' and the concept of 'male gaze', Gill further elaborates this aspect with "(…) women are not straight-forwardly objectified but are

portrayed as an active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so" (Gill, 2007, p. 151). Hence, shifting the focus to a narcissistic gaze from earlier gazes – that of the judgmental and external male gaze – becomes apparent (ibid.). Yet, Gill states that only the young, slim and elegant women who desire sex with men are acknowledged as the 'desiring, active sexual subjects', concluding that older women with aging signs along with 'heavier' women never can be seen as admirable (p. 152).

Individualism, Choice, and Empowerment

For Gill, one of the most important aspects of postfeminism in western media culture is the "(…) notion of choice, of 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself' (…)" with everything in life to be elected freely (Gill, 2007, p. 153). For her, postfeminism's view on a woman's choice of dressing up admirable and deliberately sexual has nothing to do with the attraction of the opposite sex. Gill argues how it is wrongly thought of "(…) that 'you' would be doing this to please a man, and [attempting to] 'leaving him wanting more' (…)", but instead is done voluntarily by the woman to gain self-confidence (p. 154-155). Moreover, she establishes that a woman's dating and sexual choices are to be acknowledged as individually chosen by the respective female, and not something 'she must engage in' in order to please that of the male sex (p. 154).

The recent years of media growth in the Western countries have demonstrated that the feminist debate has shifted from taking place outside the media space, into becoming a central aspect in it (Gill, 2007, p. 161). By suturing the anti-feminist and feminist concepts, postfeminism has composed and strengthened the idea of female individualism, yet, at the same time, it has given space to problematic notions of femininity; as women still yearn for a white wedding or taking a husband's name in marriage, these aspects in the real lives of real women are forgotten (p. 162). For

the postfeminist facet, the "(…) postfeministic heroines are often much more active protagonists than their counterparts in the popular culture from the 1970s and 1980s. They value autonomy, bodily integrity and the freedom to make individual choices" (ibid.). However, the deliberate exclusion of the Second Wave feminism "(…) [suggests] that it represents the 'return of the repressed'; the pleasures of (…) traditional femininity" reviving the concept of the male gaze (ibid.). The postfeminist women then are subjected to a discourse of "(…) 'can-do girl power', yet on the other hand, their bodies are powerfully reinscribed as sexual objects, (…)" hence weaving together the so-called feminist and anti-feminist mindsets as aforementioned by Gill (p. 163).

Post-Postfeminism (2016)

Even though Gill established in her article "Post-postfeminism?: New Feminist Visibilities in Postfeminist Times" (2016) that the postfeminist movement is "(…) a long way from being post-postfeminism", one might ask *what* precisely needs to change in order for the movement to authorize itself as *post-postfeminism*? (Gill, 2016, p. 626). The most realistic aspects of post-postfeminism for Gill centers around the fact that it "(…) remains central to debates about "quality television," particularly in the US, which has evolved since the 1990s into a site of rich and complex representations of gender" – already visible in post-network television series such as *Veep* (p. 620).

Moreover, she also mentions that whilst postfeminism, up until now, largely has been focused on the privileged women of society along with the youthful, white and Western women, the concept of post-postfeminism intends to further embody intersectional relations such as *ethnic and black women* as well as *older and middle-aged females* (p. 619-620). For Gill, the concept of age is especially a serious matter to favor, as it focuses to "build feminist solidarities across and between generations" in the perception that feminism affects everybody and not just one specific group of

women (p. 625). By that, if Gills assertions are valid, one can conclude that for the postfeminist era to move into a post-postfeminist age, it has to build bridges among a broad variety of women.

Methodology

This master's thesis takes its roots in the qualitative study of textual analysis in order to answer the projects' problem statement: "*Considering how female characters in cinematic arts have undergone change from being subjected to male gaze to postfeminist icons, how are female television characters portrayed in the Post-Network Television Era?*". Though the thesis focuses on female representation in contemporary television shows, the research in this thesis is based on the qualitative in-depth approach of specific elements in a text, as seen in the textual analysis. Alan McKee, in his study *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*, states that "Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other humans make sense of the world" (McKee, 2003, p. 1). McKee further argues how we, as researchers, "(…) interpret texts (…) in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them" (ibid.). Thus, as McKee claims, the reasoning for textual analysis is to make an educated guess as to how people may interpret said text. In the case of our thesis, the in-depth textual analysis is a way in which we can research female representation in the chosen texts – or, television shows – in order to understand the female representations, decode the way in which the female characters are constructed, and lastly make sense of what they signify.

Of course, there are both possibilities and limitations of our qualitative textual analysis on female representations in contemporary television – scholars such as Ien Ang would perhaps comment on the actual viewers, saying this thesis is forgetting them as it does not make use of ethnographic approaches in which real-life subjects are observed. In Ang's study of *Dallas*, she made use of letters from viewers to support her claims of female representation, spectatorship, and pleasure – as can be seen in this thesis' theory section. Though, as Ang relies on the letters of her subjects, their account of how they interpret the show is not very detailed – which poses the biggest problem of an ethnographic approach in textual analysis in these author's opinion: the lack of detail.

As McKee states on the qualitative versus ethnographic analysis: "You can know in detail how a small number of people watch a program; or you can know in a more abstract way how lots of people watch" (p. 3). In this thesis, a focus will be on the detailed qualitative analysis for several reasons: firstly, as researchers, we firmly believe in the 'power of' a detailed analysis, as it shows the chosen television series' representation of female characters in a detailed manner and analyses every small part of the texts. Nothing is forgotten – and it does not rely on the knowledge of viewers writing letters. While Ang is certainly right that academia can sometimes 'forget' the actual empirical spectator at home, there is a reason as to why the detailed analysis in these authors' opinion is still a stronger bet: most viewers do not have the same academic knowledge of feminism and postfeminism, power structures, structures of scopophilia and gazes and more, which of course is the position of this thesis. In order to say something about how the female characters in this thesis' texts are represented in terms of dominant/submissive structures and postfeminism, the detailed textual analysis most likely says more about these manners than letters from viewers of the shows would. While this thesis does not bring in ethnographic methods for the above-mentioned reasons, it should be noted how the thesis does bring in theories on audience engagement and viewer experience, though not systematically with data collection as Ang did with her letters on *Dallas*. Thus, this thesis has positioned itself in the qualitative textual analysis in which a detailed interpretation is an outcome – though, any ethnographic research based on the qualitative research of this thesis would definitely be both interesting as well as welcomed.

This thesis uses both knowledge of classic feminist research as well as contemporary views on postfeminism in order to position itself in the field. Classical texts such as Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* from 1975 are described and used in both the theory section as well as in the analysis sections of this thesis. Though, as the thesis will show, texts such as Mulvey's known text is both relevant and irrelevant at the same time – irrelevant due to the fact that it has

long been known as extremely one-sided and no longer a good representation of females in cinematic arts, as the female characters have come a long way. Indeed, there are still examples today of female characters fitting well into the structure of Mulvey, but the text is still outdated and not a representation of most female characters – Mulvey herself even critiqued her own views as she revisited *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* later on. Though, this thesis still utilizes Mulvey's classic text for several reasons: firstly, it is in these authors' opinion the most significant text ever made in feminist film criticism as it gives a basic knowledge of power structures on film. Secondly, this thesis utilizes the text for showing how the contemporary female characters in the texts actually contradict Mulvey's idea of the female character – thus, Mulvey's opinion, while outdated, still is significant due to the fact that it shows a possible development and progress for women in film and television.

Postfeminist views on television are significant in this thesis, as they show contemporary views of women in television – contrary to the more classical and older texts outlined in the theory section, which are often used for base-knowledge as well as showing contradictions and progress for female characters. The scholars and texts used for postfeminist theoretical knowledge in this thesis show how television shows construct themselves as postfeminist, as well as traits to look for when analyzing the shows. Thus, one might ask: what is the significance of using both texts from scholars such as Mulvey and postfeminist text, especially if one knows that Mulvey's ideas are somewhat outdated? Well, for one, as described above, Mulvey's ideas can be used to show progress and contradictions. Secondly, postfeminist criticism does not really concern itself with dominant/submissive structures and pleasures of looking, as scholars such as Mulvey and Kaplan did in their studies; the mixture of classical feminist film criticism and postfeminist ideas in television as a theoretical outline thus concern itself and addresses both – which, in the opinion of these authors, gives a nuanced analysis of contemporary characters.

The above methodological discussion about the field in which this thesis operates poses a question about formats: how can one use theoretical knowledge concerning itself around cinema for the analysis of television texts? Scholars such as Mulvey and Kaplan outlined their ideas and knowledge through analysis of cinema – and thus one may argue how these texts cannot be used to analyze television, as they are a completely different format. Of course, it is true how television is a different format – but there are reasons as to why these texts can still be used as knowledge to operate oneself within the analysis of a television show. Firstly, television stems from cinema – the format is inherently cinematic and stems from technological advances in which the television became a household standard, creating the television shows. Thus, as everything cinematic – television, games and much more is derived and arisen from cinema, one can in these authors opinion easily transfer the theoretical knowledge to television. Secondly, there are other aspects within the analysis of film vs. television in which the transfer of theoretical knowledge of cinema to television does not work – as in the case of narrative analysis, where most television shows exhibit a different narrative structure than cinema due to the fact that television shows are shorter in format as well as they often exhibit serial elements which creates cliff hangers and so forth, whereas cinema often exhibit the feeling of closure at the end of a story. In the case of female representation, these troubles of transferring do not really exist, as the women on screen still can be subjected to gazes or show criticism of power structures whether the women exist in a half-hour television format or a classic one-and-a-half hour cinematic one. Thus, in this thesis, both knowledge of women in cinema and women in television is used for the analysis of the contemporary female characters shown in the chosen texts.

One thing this methodological section has to concern itself with is the fact that all chosen texts for analysis – *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019)*, Grace and Frankie* (2015-now) as well as *Broad City* (2014-2019) – all contain elements of comedy. Of course, while they do not all exhibit purely the

genre of comedy as in the case of *Broad City*, they all have at least the comedic genre in them, as *Jane the Virgin* and *Grace and Frankie* are hybrid-genres with comedy. One question to arise is whether or not this show bias in the thesis outlined – and while some may argue that it is a bias towards the comedic genre, there is reasoning as to why these texts are interesting to look at. Firstly, all three shows exhibit untraditional women – *Jane the Virgin*, an American comedy-telenovela, exhibit representation of women in the case of Latinex culture. With *Grace and Frankie*, the two women are different due to their age; something postfeminist critics have commented on being underrepresented in the case of female representation. Lastly, *Broad City* exhibits young, Jewish characters with *LGBT*+ ties. Thus, the choice of texts is based more on the broad array of women than the genre – though, as Lotz argued in her texts on postfeminist criticism, comedy is "(…) providing the most prevalent site for finding feminist perspectives on television" (Lotz, 2001, p. 6). In Lotz' mind, the comedic elements of series lets 'unruly' and heterogenous characters arise – allowing a broad array of women to find their way to the screen. This thesis could have chosen texts in which the female characters are visibly marginalized, gazed upon and a burden of sexual objectification – though the texts are chosen from a standpoint of wanting to analyze different types of women, hoping that the texts will exhibit a positive change in female representation.

Analyses

Jane the Virgin (2014-2019) – Opening Scenes and the Framework

The show *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019) created by Jennie Snyder Urman and distributed by The CW, revolves around the Latina character Jane Villanueva who is accidentally artificially inseminated with the sperm of Rafael Solano. The series, an American telenovela, shows Jane as she struggles with the curveballs life throws at her. The following section will analyze the pilot thoroughly in order to establish the framework of the show.

Female Objectification and Active Female Spectatorship in *Jane the Virgin*'s pilot

Considering the aspect of Mulvey's male gaze, with diegetic flute music playing over the scene of the first episode of *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019) titled "Prologue", the spectator's first glance of the show's main character Jane is a ten-year-old version of her, standing with a white flower in her hand – a symbol of her, for now, intact virginity according to her grandmother, Alba ("Prologue", 00:15-00:23). Due to her young age being the first the audience identifies with, she is not at first sexualized; conflicting with former depictions of female characters on television. Additionally, with the camera movements gliding away from her instead of following her figure and with no male characters present in the scene, this notion further enhances the aspect of non-sexualization.

Though, whilst the audience's first look at Jane is her as a ten-year-old, the 'narrator' of the series establishes the fact that "Our story begins 13 and a half years ago", concluding that Jane in the present time must be twenty-three years of age – an age in which it is appropriate for her to be sexualized.

The camera cuts to present time where the audience's first glimpse of adult Jane, a Latina woman, presents her to connote with the notion of sexualization and Mulvey's concept of scopophilia due to the camera lingering with a close-up of her bare legs which then moves up along

her body – the camera turns into the look of the spectator (Mulvey, 1975; "Prologue", 01:30-01:49). Furthermore, the scene's lighting is focused on Jane's face and upper body thus enhancing the sexualization of her.

Likewise, another example of her objectification is the presence of the male character Michael, one of the two main male love-interests of the series, who kisses Jane heftily on a bed while their hands wander over each others' bodies – the male spectator takes, in the series, the position of Michael thereby himself becoming the 'lover' of Jane (ibid.). In the scene Jane wears a short denim skirt cut open on the side and a V-necked, white, see-through top, which moreover - through the show of her skin - adds to her status of Mulvey's concept "to-be-looked-at-ness". Though this outfit is not the only one establishing her of Mulvey's notion in the episode, as she appears in multiple colored outfits mostly displaying skin; first, her waitress dress is green, blue and tight fitting with halter neck, which helps to enhance her female curves (26:00-26:10). As the lighting consists of mostly natural lighting and there are no editing nor camera movements lingering on Jane, her clothing is the only example of sexualization. Lastly, in the episode's last scene, she is depicted in a bright yellow dress, high heels and colorful jewelry including make-up (36:51-37:07). While the lighting from the windows of the police station in this romantic proposal scene enhances her feminine and beautiful features, the regular dolly camera movement cannot be said to sexualize Jane; instead, it seems to further state the romantic atmosphere of Jane's proposal to Michael.

The pilot episode of *Jane the Virgin* does not only sexualize the protagonist Jane but also that of her mother Xiomara and the female character Petra. Xiomara does, like Jane, appear in the first scene where she is sitting astride on a bed painting her nails in short denim shorts, a low-cut denim bib shirt wearing heavy make-up and fake nails (00:42-00:52). When Xiomara, a Latina woman, first is established, the audience hears her complain about Alba's lesson to Jane about her virginity with "Really, Mom? But this is so lame". This comment, as well as her way of sitting astride, along

with her appearance, gives the audience an idea of Xiomara being immature and not living up to the role as a responsible mother - she still acts like a teenager even though she is depicted to be twenty-six at the time.

As the pilot cuts to present day, the audience realizes that even though Xiomara at the time is thirty-nine years old, she still eroticizes herself through her way of dressing atypical for her age – such examples consists of a sparkly, silver sequin low-cut shirt, short denim shorts, a short sequin skirt, a low-cut maroon-colored shirt with sequin and a necklace showing her cleavage (15:28; 23:48-23:55). At the same time, she is always wearing a heavy layer of make-up. Additionally, in the scene in which Jane and Xiomara ride on the bus with Xiamora wearing the silver sequin top, the lighting from the left hits her chest area and as the top's sequins sparkle it accentuates her cleavage, drawing attention towards her breasts (15:28-15:49). Like with Jane, Xiomara is heavily sexualized through Mulvey's concept of scopophilia at the end of the episode – while performing, the camera lingers up her body in a close-up showing her dressed in a short sequin silver, low-cut dress (32:15-33:23). Additionally, the spotlight on her during the performance draws attention to her and her sequined dress which sparkles - drawing the eyes to her body. With the lighting and camera movement during the performance, Xiomara is sexualized and becomes the burden of objectification as well as the male gaze.

Moving along to the character of Petra, she too is connoted with Mulvey's "to-be-looked-at-ness" and becomes an erotic object for the male spectator in the pilot episode as they take the position of the male characters engaging with Petra. The audience's first glance of Petra is about three and a half minutes into the episode where she is talking to Rafael Solano – the other of the two main male love-interests of the show. She is presented as a white woman with a skinny body and long blond hair in a green, tight dress wearing make-up, which includes a bright pink lipstick (03:28). During the scene, she is flirting with Rafael, and she ends up seemingly performing oral

sex on him as she bows down towards his crotch and out of the camera's sight - only further stated with the look of Rafael's face (03:28-03:58). During this conversation, Petra is objectified through the male gaze as she freezes the flow of action and the male spectator takes on the position of Rafael, resulting in pleasure for the male spectator. Moreover, the camera is placed solely over the shoulder of Rafael with no shot-reverse-shots; with the sole focus on the flirty Petra, it furthers the male spectator taking on the position of Rafael. Other examples of her display as an eroticized object for the male characters' gaze and thus the male spectator, is the appearance of her talking to Rafael in a short, silk nightdress with a light purple kimono along with being naked in bed with the male character Roman Zazo – her lover (25:25-25:58; 28:54-29:31). In the latter example, the camera shows the naked Petra in a close-up shot while at the same time enhancing the features of her face and chest by placing the light in front of the character. Lastly, she attracts the male gaze by appearing in colorful clothing, high heels, short shorts, and low-cut or opened shirts, consequently sexualizing herself due to show of skin (34:46; 17:09; 11:25).

With Petra's depiction of being young, elegantly dressed and having a slim body along with her desires for sex – having a lover – she contains all traits for Gill's notion of an "desiring, active sexual subject", portraying her as a female character of the postfeminist era (28:54-29:25; Gill, 2007). Additionally, through her desire of sex with Roman Zazo, she declines Gill's notion of the "male sex being the only one 'in desire of a shag'" (2007, p. 151). Additionally, Petra connotes well with K. Boyle's notion of postfeminist "female characters using their sexuality for their own advantage". In the pilot, Petra clearly is using her sexuality as well as her charm to save her marriage with Rafael; not from love, but from wanting to cash in the ten million dollars Petra will receive after five years of marriage, as stated in their prenuptial agreement. This is seen in the scene in which Petra is naked in bed with Roman Zazo - the narrator freezes the story and reveals Petra's agenda is to be married to Rafael long enough to receive the ten million - leading the viewer to

believe all of her nice efforts towards Rafael is to deceive him and receive the money (29:10-29:30). With the glamorous lifestyle as the wife of a hotel owner together with her abundance of clothing, jewelry and living in a penthouse, the lifestyle of Petra connotes with Ang' description of active female spectatorship – the female spectator gets pleasure in identifying with the glamorous lifestyle, as mentioned in her study of the show *Dallas* (1985).

The last female character to present in the paper is the grandmother, Alba. Out of the four main female characters of the show, Alba is the only one not portraying the concept of "to-be-looked-at-ness" in the episode, even though her clothing style is colorful like the rest of the female characters. Through Gill's notion of postfeminism, it is argued that the non-sexualization of Alba is caused by her age and she can therefore not be seen as 'attractive' or 'admirable' for the male spectator. When first introducing Alba, who of course is Latina as well, she is explaining to Jane of what will happen if she has sexual intercourse – Jane is to crumble up a beautiful flower thereby 'destroying' it and it is explained that the same will happen to her 'virginity' if she ever decides to have sex. She is portrayed in a turquoise cardigan with a purple/rose-pink shirt with flower print and has short, brown hair – what can be said to be an appropriate outfit for a more elderly woman ("Prologue", 00:26-00:35). When the pilot moves along to the present day, Alba is seen wearing two different outfits; a pink t-shirt, loose, brown pants and a turquoise cardigan with flower print – much like a hospital pullover – and a long pink cardigan with a beige colored dress (02:16-02:27; 22:38-22:44). Her appearance does not let her show any skin nor exposing her female curves, establishing herself as non-sexualized. Furthermore, there are no specific elements of editing, lighting nor camera movement that makes her sexualized for that of the male gaze. With her lack of eroticized traits in the pilot, it boosts interest in whether Alba will appear as a non-sexualized object during the entirety of the show or if she will deviate from this aspect.

Whilst the three out of the four female characters in *Jane the Virgin* is said to connote with Mulvey's concept of "to-be-looked-at-ness" and is predominantly sexualized by the male gaze, one might argue that their way of dressing is done for themselves and not for that of the male characters. As Gill mentioned, the body of the postfeminist woman is her "sole source of identity to gain self-confidence and success in life" (Gill, 2007, p. 149-150). Yet, as Petra is a married woman and Jane is dating Michael, the two females can be said to dress up for the pleasure of their husband, lover, and boyfriend and thus not for themselves. This notion thereby places Xiomara as the only female character who is giving power to a narcissistic gaze (p. 151).

As specified in the theory section of the paper, Mulvey states that the visual presence of a woman only works against the progress of the storyline and is thereby not able to engage as an active persona nor have an active role within the narrative (1975, p. 13-14). Yet, in *Jane the Virgin*, several female actions go against this concept and therefore portray that there is active female spectatorship presence. The biggest act of active female spectatorship does not transpire in the pilot episode from one of the four main female characters of the show but from the character of Luisa, Jane's doctor and Rafael's sister; she accidentally inseminates Jane with Rafael's sperm, hereby making her pregnant despite never having had sex – henceforth the name of the series ("Prologue", 09:39-11:19). Because of this action, Luisa contradicts Mulvey's notion of passive females who, in the narrative, only freeze the flow of action as she forwards the narrative by throwing Jane her first curveball (Mulvey, 1975, p. 11). Of course, it should be noted that the telenovela genre generally consists of twist and turns for the characters, which then arises the notion of whether the actions of Luisa is due to genre conventions or simply her being the forwarder of the narrative. Furthermore, as Mulvey never discussed contemporary television, the contradiction seen in the case of Luisa can be argued to be due to the general change in cinematic arts and the rise of television.

Nonetheless, whilst the biggest performance of active female spectatorship is visible through a female 'side character', the forward driven narrative can likewise be seen in the main female characters, yet, through more modest actions – it is to be noted that the female characters are, in the pilot episode, more passive than active minded. From the beginning of the episode and throughout the narrative Jane has confirmed Mulvey's concept of women only to freeze the flow of action by declining sex both with Michael but also by turning down Michael proposal ("Prologue", 01:30-01:46; 20-59-21:03). Yet, by declining sex with Michael she also contradicts Gill's notion of "sexualization of culture"; that females are to please men sexually (2007, p. 151). Because of this sentiment, Jane is essentially seen as a character who does not drive the narrative forward.

Still, at the end of the episode Jane steps out of her passivity and actively engages in Kaplan's notion of female spectatorship in two ways by forwarding the narrative; first she proposes to Michael thereby taking over what Kaplan said to be the dominant male position ("Prologue", 37:07-39:05). Additionally, her notion of forwarding the narrative is established when stating, "(…) I'm having the baby. And we're giving it to the father (…)" (ibid.). At the same time, Jane too contradicts the beliefs of a woman losing her beautiful characteristics because of her takeover of the dominant male position noted by Kaplan – the appearance of Jane in the scene is her dressing up for Michael, showing off her glamorous female characteristics instead of losing them. The active female spectatorship is hereby noted in two ways; in comparison to Ang's idea of active female spectatorship happening through the spectator's identification with glamorous lifestyles, Kaplan focuses on the way the female characters of the show forward the narrative thus not freezing the flow of action as Mulvey believed.

Active female spectatorship is, like Jane, too visible through Petra and Alba. In the episode Petra brings Rafael's sperm to Luisa's office to get inseminated without Rafael knowing thereby causing the mix-up in which Jane becomes pregnant instead of her – through her actions Petra

forwards the narrative causing the main conflict of the episode, connoting with Kaplan's idea of an active spectatorship (11:21-11:54). When Petra figures out that Jane is pregnant with what was supposed to be her child, she calls Luisa and threatens her to tell Jane about that sample being Rafael's only sperm sample due to cancer "(…) And in exchange I'll convince your brother not to report you to the medical board" (31:08-31:15). She does this in hope of Luisa convincing Jane to keep the baby in order to save her marriage to Rafael and thereby receive the mentioned ten million dollars as stated in the prenuptial agreement. Later on, the episode reveals that this statement was a part of the reason for Jane keeping the baby - thus, Petra shows herself as a forwarder of the narrative, taking on the male/dominant position as Kaplan argued to be possible for female characters (34:04-34:15).

After Jane has spoken to Rafael and told her that she is going to give up the baby, she comes home to find Alba in her bedroom who believes Jane had sex. Alba then tells Jane about her mother's pregnancy with her and how she told Xiomara to get an abortion, yet regretting it afterward as "(…) you have become the best part of my life. And this will be the best part of your life too" (29:39-31:02). Because of this, Jane, along with her knowing that it was Rafael's only sample of sperm, decides to keep the baby – as such, Alba helped bring the narrative forward, contradicting Mulvey and engaging in active female spectatorship as proposed by Kaplan.

Postfeminist Notions in the Pilot of *Jane the Virgin*

Throughout the entirety of *Jane the Virgin*, the aspects of *dating*, *marriage* and *career opportunities* constitute a large part of the storyline; placing the female characters in the role of the 'new' new woman (Lotz, 2006). The first concept *dating* is established already from the beginning of the pilot with Jane and Michael kissing both inside and outside the house – the two characters are assumingly in a relationship with each other, which later on is verified by Jane's best friend Lina mentioning to Jane; "You've been dating for two years" ("Prologue", 01:30-02:12; 04:27).

Additionally, the series provides the *career* facet through the character of Jane as well. Throughout the pilot, she is seen working as a waitress at the Marbella, the hotel Rafael owns, but is likewise depicted as a university student who wants to become a teacher and a writer; "I haven't gotten my teachers degree yet"; "I'm a teacher. I'm a writer?" (04:24-06:53; 04:25; 27:23-27:31). Lastly, Lotz' aspect of *marriage* is displayed in the episode by Petra and her marriage to Rafael. When first meeting Rafael and Petra, the series does not establish them as a married couple; however, at the celebration for Rafael's return Petra holds a toast to him and mentions "(…) To my husband. Welcome back, babe" (00:07:24).

Whilst the pilot episode mostly focuses on the aspect of Mulvey's male gaze, Kaplan's idea of active female spectatorship and Lotz' three main aspects, other sentiments by Lotz, Gill, and Ang are noticeable as well. To bring the audience closer with the female characters, the series has merged Lotz' idea of flaws and Ang' notion of powerlessness into the depictions of the women, visible through the character Jane. The first example of flawed characteristics of the women in the show is the portrayal of Jane waking up to her alarm with her head squished down her pillow (08:42-08:50). The scene is set to eliminate the feminine features of Jane, hereby showing her as a 'normal' person waking up with messy hair - instead of waking up looking beautiful with perfect hair and makeup, as is often illustrated in films and television. Moreover, Jane is not only seen as a flawed character but is also a 'victim' to a sense of powerlessness as she becomes pregnant against her own free will through accidental insemination – her entire life is forever changed from instances she cannot control (17:47-18:02).

As Lotz mentioned in her book "Redesigning Women" (2006) the female characters, if not married or dating, can pursuit their "urgency for family elsewhere" such as their children and perhaps grandchildren. As visible in the pilot, neither Xiomara nor Alba have male characters in their lives thus committing fully to spending time with each other and Jane. Several examples

establish Lotz' notion of such; first, the three women spend a lot of quality time with each other watching telenovelas and secondly, Xiomara acts more like a best friend to Jane than a mother – sleeping in Jane's room and having discussion of sex, dating and such with her daughter (02:14-02:58; 08:03; 14:24-15:02).

Objectification of Male Characters in *Jane the Virgin*

With the establishment of the male characters Michael and Rafael in *Jane the Virgin*, the show indicates Ang's idea of most programs devoir to draw in a heterogeneous audience (1990, p. 238). For the thesis in general, the portrayal of the diverse range of male characters plays a significant role, as they go against the stereotypical representations of men, illustrating a more postfeminist mindset. Earlier feminists such as Mulvey never dealt with this concept, as it was not in her interest to do so - her main concern was the female representations. The thesis thereby incorporates male characters in all three analyses, as the inclusion of male characters is significant in showing structures and relations in terms of the male and female representation.

With Jane getting objectified by Michael at the beginning of the episode by his gaze, he too gets eroticized by the female audience, connoting well with Kaplan's notion that males too can be the burden of objectification, declining Mulvey's idea of the male never to be "burden of sexual objectification" (Kaplan, 1990; Mulvey, 1975). At his introduction, Michael and Jane are heftily kissing on a bed with him wearing brown pants and an open light blue shirt, which shows his stomach and six pack ("Prologue", 01:32-01:52). He has blond, brown hair, blue eyes and is somewhat tall. He is thereby not only erotized by Jane as a sexual object but also by the camera and thus also the female spectator, as the female spectator identifies herself with the female characters of the show - establishing the female gaze. Additionally, the lighting, as seen with Jane, focuses on their faces and Michaels bare chest, hereby further enhancing his sexualized features for the female

gaze. Moreover, Michael gets sexually objectified by Jane at the end of the episode with her saying, "I don't love you because you are incredibly sexy" ("Prologue", 38:30).

As with Michael, Rafael does likewise get objectified by a female character of the episode thereby giving visual pleasure to the female spectator. The scene takes place with Rafael panicking about having lost his only sample of sperm to become a father and is sitting in his bedroom without a shirt on – here he is getting looked upon by Petra (25:24-25:57). Additionally, his objectification is intensified by a light source from outside the window placed in front of Rafael - the source highlights his face and chest throughout the scene. With her gaze on him – thereby also the female spectator's gaze – he becomes the visual pleasure of both, making him the burden of objectification. Though while one might say that the glamorous characteristics of the male characters could be argued to help the male spectator to confirm his ego, the characteristics of Rafael and Michael seems to be for the female spectator to gaze upon, hereby creating Kaplan's idea of the 'female gaze' (Kaplan, 1990).

An Intersectional Comedic-Drama

The visibility of *Jane the Virgin* being a tv-series of the postfeminist era is already evident within the first forty-five seconds of the pilot, where three out of the four main female characters are introduced; Jane, her mother Xiomara and her grandmother Alba – all Latina women, showing representation for that specific minority ("Prologue"). With the inclusion of multiple female characters, all being Latinas, and at the same time by including elderly women, the tv-series settles itself as a post-postfeminist comedy-drama by embodying the concepts of intersectionality as the series represent a marginalized minority (Lotz, 2006; Gill, 2016). The tv-series can, besides the comedic elements throughout, be noted as a comedic drama through Jane's episode of visualizing her favorite telenovela star, Rogelio De La Vega – later to be known as Jane's father – during the hospital scene; comedic dramas, according to Lotz, use "(…) character's conversations with

themselves and imaginary people, and fantasy sequences (…)" which the series acknowledges several times throughout the series ("Prologue", 18:15-18:42; Lotz, 2006, p. 90).

Jane the Virgin - A Summary of the Pilot

To summarize, the pilot of *Jane the Virgin* showed a framework in which the female characters were sexualized and victims of scopophilia - seen mostly through objectifying outfits and gazes. Moreover, instances in which the male character becomes the bearer of the look of the spectator are visible; seen in, for instance, the scene in which Petra performs oral sex on Rafael. Thus, the pilot of *Jane the Virgin* shows a classic patriarchal structure in cinematic arts as according to Mulvey, though it also contradicts her notions through instances of active female spectatorship, objectification of male characters and postfeminist notions. For instance, female characters such as Luisa, Jane, and Petra are shown to forward the narrative and consequently position themselves in a dominant/male position as argued as possible for female characters by Kaplan. Kaplan further noted how male characters are able to be objectified as well - this notion is seen through the gazes of Petra and Jane sexualizing Rafael and Michael. Lastly, postfeminist ideas were shown to be important in *Jane the Virgin*; Lotz's notion of *dating*, *marriage* and *career opportunities* seems detrimental to the framework of the pilot. This is seen through Jane and Petra's respective relationships, as well as their careers. Other postfeminist notions by Boyle, Lotz, and Ang are visible, such as Petra using her sexuality for her own advances and powerlessness and flaws in the character Jane. Thus, the pilot of *Jane the Virgin* shows a framework in which the female characters are both subjected to the male gaze and able to forward the narrative through dominance, as well as illustrating contemporary postfeminist characteristics. In the extension of this, the following section will analyze the rest of the series in order to answer the question of whether or not the pilot's framework is continued throughout, as well as whether or not the characters go through change.

Moving On: *Jane the Virgin*: The Depiction of a Postfeminist- and Post-Postfeminist TV-Show

With the establishment of the pilot episodes' framework and of what to expect from the show, the following analysis will elaborate on the aspects of female spectatorship and female representation throughout the comprehensive seasons, in order to examine whether or not the framework is representative of the rest of the series, as well as researching change in characters and representations. But whilst the female characters of the show affirmed most of the scholars remarks in the pilot, it is important to note J. Mittell's argument of the pilot's framework not always tends to stick to what is later on enabled in the series as a whole – thereby concluding that a change of both character and style can be visible (Mittell, 2015, p. 61).

A Continued Objectification

The analysis of the pilot showed that three out of the four main women of the show connoted with Mulvey's arguments of female characters being of visual pleasure for the male gaze, with Alba being the only woman with no eroticized features due to her old age ("Prologue"). With the progression of the series, the notion of the females' objectification is illustrated even further though there are a few deviations as well. For the show's protagonist, Jane appears as an eroticized object for the visual pleasure of the male gaze during most of the series, however, she is at the same time being in constant flux due to her later on marriage with Michael.

Her continuation of objectification is exemplified in instances such as "Chapter Sixty-Two"; when dating Fabian, she is portrayed in a short, low-cut and barebacked, tangerine-colored dress wearing a heavy coat of make-up with her hair tied up, knocking on Fabian's door (21:53-21:58). Fabian opens the door and the camera shifts to his point-of-view; as Fabian moves his head down towards her feet - giving her the elevator eyes - a cut to a close-up to her feet reveals the camera as 'his eyes' and as the camera lingers up her body, it constitutes the male character as the bearer of

the look of the spectator. Jane, thus, becomes a victim of Mulvey's notion of scopophilia. Moreover, the soft lighting in the scene creates shadows and highlights on Jane's body, enhancing the feminine features of her. Last, an interesting notion to look at, is Jane's own wish to be objectified by the male character, Fabian; "But I just want to make sure you're not into me just because of my brains. I mean are you interested in the other side of me? (…) I mean the whole body. Are you attracted to me?" ("Sixty-Two", 08:14-08:30). Whilst one might think that the female characters are yearning to get out of the sexualized and objectified male gaze, the opposite seems to be apparent for Jane.

As mentioned, Jane marries Michael and this strips her of sexual appeal - her appearance becomes casual and plain in the examples of sneakers, a light blue hoodie, and white pants along with blue bib overalls and a plain t-shirt with sneakers ("Chapter Forty-Seven", 23:17; "Chapter Sixty-Eight", 24:15). By marrying Michael, Jane loses her feminine and beautiful characteristics as argued of Kaplan to happen to female characters as they wed. Consequently, while Jane is shown above to connote with Mulvey's notion of female characters, Jane contradicts her by also appearing as non-sexualized as she gets married to Michael.

Throughout the entire series, Xiomara and Petra continue to become erotic objects for the visual pleasure of the male gaze as well. As mentioned in the pilot analysis, Xiomara appears to dress younger than her age even though she is a mother. However, an assumption for this might be that she has never been married and therefore is still portrayed to contain sexual characteristics and elegance. Xiomara is in the series seen wearing colorful outfits with mostly a low-cut front to show off her cleavage; for instance, she is seen appearing in a short, bright green dress with a low-cut front showing off her breasts, sexualizing her and subjecting her to the male gaze ("Chapter Six", 12:58). However, as one might think she would lose her sexual appeal and elegance after marrying Rogelio, this does not seem to be the case and she continues to be objectified for the male gaze

throughout. Because of this notion, Gill's statement of "empowerment and individualistic choices" comes to mind, as Xiomara is dressing up sexually for her own self-confidence and not for that of pleasing a man (Gill, 2007, p. 154-155). Furthermore, the notion that Xiomara is seen mostly in skimpy outfits can be argued to have a logical argument: the series is set in Miami, a place in which the heat prevents its residents from wearing too much clothing. Though in comparison to her daughter Jane, who is mostly seen appearing in less sexualized clothing, the revealing outfits cannot be explained as being solely from the Miami heat. Yet, whilst Xiomara keeps up her sexual appeal after marriage, she loses it when diagnosed with breast cancer – she becomes imperfect and therefore the male gaze desexualizes her. An example of this, is her portrayal in a blue cardigan, a teal colored t-shirt and loose pants with messy hair and no makeup ("Chapter Eighty", 23:13-23:52). In the respective scene, the colors are toned down and color-graded with a slight blue hue - making the scene more cold and serious - while at the same time focusing on mid shots and medium close-ups of Xiomara and her exhausted and desexualized face.

Like with Xiomara, Petra does not lose her sexual appeal nor her status as an eroticized woman throughout the entirety of the series. What makes Petra differ from the rest of the female characters of the show is her way of using her sexualized body to her own advantage as K. Boyle mentioned (Boyle, 2007, p. 149). In "Chapter Five", "Chapter Seven" and "Chapter Nineteen" Petra uses her sexual body to deceive Rafael, Lachlan and Roman Zazo - in order to achieve staying married to Rafael, like in the pilot, to take down Rafael and to escape from her captivity ("Five", 24:10-24:53; "Seven", 34:19-35:17, "Nineteen", 12:34-13:11). The scenes do not only comply with Boyle but also that of Gill's notion of "men's only speculation in life is to 'want a shag'", as Rafael, Lachlan, and Roman, without much hesitation, do not resist Petra's 'invitation' to sex (Gill, 2007, p. 151).

The most interesting female character to look at when discussing Mulvey's idea of objectification and the male gaze is the change Alba undergoes. With examples such as Jane losing

her sexual appeal and elegant characteristics when becoming married, Alba, on the other hand, becomes sexualized when dating. During the first one and a half seasons, Alba continues to be non-sexualized due to her age and her status as a widowed woman. Like in the pilot episode, her outfits cover her body and henceforth does not constitute a male gaze ("Chapter Two", 21:12; "Chapter Thirty-Seven", 10:53). Yet, this notion changes as she starts dating; when dating Jorge, she is sexualized as she wears a tight-fitting blue dress showing her breasts, wearing a heavy-load of make-up and sparkly jewelry ("Chapter Fifty-Eight", 21:21-21:32). While depicting Alba in her outfit, the camera reveals her as it lingers from her feet to her face, making her the burden of objectification. Additionally, the soft lighting on her highlights her curves, subjecting her body to that of the male gaze. By being sexualized, Alba consequently contradicts Gill's notion of women of age not being admirable and a source of sexuality. The sexualization of Alba as she begins dating - as well as the non-sexualization of Jane as she becomes married - furthermore rises a notion in mind: that the show follows an inherently patriarchal structure, wherein the women who become unavailable due to marriage cannot be attractive, while the woman who becomes 'available' is thus suddenly attractive and sexualized.

A Career Minded Active Female Spectatorship

Whilst the pilot of *Jane the Virgin* indicated that the women of the show in some parts drive the narrative forward hereby establishing active female spectatorship, the concept is likewise visible during the rest of the series, with the women engaging in the concept through their *career decisions*. This then contradicts Mulvey in her statement of women only freezing the flow of action along with no role of driving the narrative forward (1975, p. 11-14). Additionally, by driving the narrative forward, the females are said to take over the male dominant position consequently creating the notion of Kaplan's active female spectatorship (1990, p. 31). As the forwarding of the narrative is done mainly through career choices and advances, a notion comes to mind: that the female

characters have to behave like men in order to forward the narrative, constituting Kaplan's notion of women not being able to have a dominant/female position but instead being able to take on the dominant/male position. Though, with 'career' being the main drive of the female narratives, the notion likewise affirms with Lotz' third aspect of the characterization of the 'new' new woman thereby placing all four women in the category hereof (2006, p. 95).

The biggest narrative drive and engagement with the active female spectatorship is through Jane and her struggles to become a published book author. The first active engagement that the audience sees of Jane driving the narrative forward is when submitting her stories to online magazines and after years of trying, she finally gets positive feedback from Cincinnati Review ("Chapter Nine", 02:07-02:29). Afterward, Jane forwards the narrative by signing up for grad school - which she, after a struggle with the admission process, later succeeds in ("Chapter Twenty-Two", 16:34-17:30; "Chapter Twenty-Five", 08:11-08:34).

After having had a fling with her advisor Professor Chavez, Jane gets assigned a new advisor, Professor M. Donaldson who helps her grow as a writer after a lot of confrontations - resulting in a push in the narrative of Jane's ambitions of becoming a published author ("Thirty-Seven", 03:55-05:35). After Jane finishes her first draft of her thesis, she gets a job as a publishers assistant in the hope of getting published herself in the future; "To actually stop waitressing. Move on to the next phase, you know? Publishing and then hopefully, published" ("Chapter Fifty-Three", 02:42-03:05; "Chapter Fifty-Four", 05:22-07:06; 38:36-38:44). During the second half of season three Jane, after much consideration, finally gives her book draft to her boss, which, later on, proves to be the turning point for Jane, as she, after having gotten the seventh showcase slot for a book reading, gets a phone call who lets her know that "A publisher wants to buy [her] novel about Michael" ("Chapter Fifty-Five", 40:24-40:54). In "Chapter Seventy" Jane becomes a "(…) published freaking author!" though her book fails and she gets dropped by her publishers (03:11-03:32; "Chapter

Seventy-Three"). After the failure of her book, Jane goes through hardships but ultimately end up starting to write again, pushing the narrative of her dreams forward ("Eighty", 02:11-02:51; "Chapter Eighty-One", 35:30-36:15). With Jane taking over the male dominant position of driving the narrative forward, Kaplan stated that the woman would lose her beautiful, feminine and motherly characteristics, though this is not seen in the case of Jane. Throughout the show, Jane keeps her motherly role by taking care of her son as well as keep her femininity and beauty.

Xiomara interacts with the active female spectatorship through her engagement of establishing the career of her dreams – a dance studio. The audience's first glimpse of her working as a dance instructor is in "Chapter Seven" where she is teaching ten little girls hip hop (09:02-09:14). In season three, Xiomara decides to give up on her dream of a dance studio due to financial issues but when admitting to Rogelio that she loves teaching dance, Rogelio asks, "Then, why the hell are you giving it up?" ("Chapter Forty-Nine", 33:55-36:50). This statement makes her, through an inner-monologue musical number, take the active decision of opening a dance studio where she "(…) can be my own boss, I won't be stuck in an office all day, I can teach how I want, there's room to grow" (ibid.). After ups and downs with the business, Xiomara ultimately confesses to Rogelio, "I've decided to close the studio" - making an active decision and thus showing active female spectatorship as she decides to close the business and instead take on the position of just a dance teacher ("Seventy-Three", 37:28-38:06).

The third female character who engages in active female spectatorship is Alba. Throughout the series, the audience learns that Alba "(…) was a nurse back in Venezuela" and is now working as a home nurse for an elderly American woman ("Chapter Thirty", 16:14-16:19; "Chapter Forty-Eight", 02:32; 26:04-26:48). Though, after having had a heartfelt conversation with Xiomara, Alba chooses to quit her job as a caretaker and actively seeks a new job as a Gift Shop Worker at the Marbella ("Forty-Eight", 32:12-32:21; 38:36-38:48). The other way that Alba drives the narrative

forward is her engagement in actively seeking American citizenship. During the first season, the spectators realize, because of Alba's hospitalization, that she is "(…) in this country illegally" ("Chapter Ten", 18:53). Because of Alba always being worried about getting deported, she decides to apply for her Green Card, which she knows comes with a risk (34:31-34:38). This action is said to be the most important of active female spectatorship that Alba makes throughout the show as she, because of this action, can apply for American citizenship later on. In the end of "Chapter Thirty" Alba receives her Green Card and continues to apply for citizenship by taking the citizenship test at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which she passes with 100% ("Thirty", 40:41-40:54; "Chapter Seventy-Nine", 34:11-36:24). The fourth season ends with Alba attending the official citizenship ceremony in "Chapter Eighty-One" hereby establishing her as an American citizen (20:42-21:26).

Like with the former women in *Jane the Virgin*, Petra likewise engages in the active female spectatorship through her commitment to run and own the Marbella hotel. At first, Petra's action towards her goal is not an active one, as she receives 33% of the Marbella share holds from her ex-fiancé Milos hence becoming the co-owner of the hotel ("Chapter Thirteen", 38:23-39:10). Yet, later on, she engages actively as she scams Luisa, making her assign voting-rights to Petra while Luisa goes away to an ashram – Petra then becomes the main shareholder and the face of the Marbella ("Chapter Fourteen", 34:39-36:04). Through this action, Petra connotes well with Kaplan's notion of females in the male/dominant position becoming cold and manipulative. This notion of manipulative and cold behavior is carried throughout the series - for instance, to secure her role as the co-owner of the hotel, she releases a sex tape of herself and Lachlan, yet making it seems as if her private files were stolen and the tape then leaked ("Chapter Fifteen", 30:57-31:48). Still, it is not Petra's drive of the narrative that secures her the role as the boss of the Marbella in the end; it is the action of Rafael going to jail for covering up his father's art theft that makes Petra the

main shareholder. However, when getting out of jail Rafael decides to "(…) letting her take the lead. The hotel's succeeding because of her rebranding idea", showing that Petra does have career competence as she leads the hotel successfully ("Fifty-Five", 10:14-10:20). Thus, in conclusion, Petra ends up achieving her career goal of being the co-owner and main shareholder of the Marbella through a somewhat active female spectatorship.

Another example of Petra carrying out active female spectatorship and exhibiting manipulative behavior is by getting herself pregnant. After overhearing that Rafael had been manipulating her to believe he had feelings for her so that she would leave the Marbella and his life, Petra goes to the fertility clinic and acts as his wife to steal his second sperm sample ("Twenty-Two", 36:15-39:03). She then, later on, uses the sample on herself and becomes pregnant with twins, resulting in her achieving the option to stay at the Marbella as she bears Rafael's children ("Chapter Twenty-Eight", 18:45-19:00).

Postfeminist Notions in *Jane the Virgin*

As emphasized in the analysis of the pilot episode, Lotz' aspects of *dating*, *marriage*, and *career opportunities* are widely incorporated in the series. Whilst all three facets are included, the biggest and most visible aspect is that of "dating". With the female characters constantly being in new relationships or breaking up, the show seems to verify Lotz' consideration of the 'new' new woman engaging in a selective and "active process in the 'quest' for a partner" hereby "refusing several eligible bachelors" (2006, p. 109). Furthermore, the female characters choose whom they are dating by individual choice, therefore "not dating just in order to please that of the male sex" – the notion then confirms Gill in her 2007 article (p. 154).

To exhibit how much the "dating" and "marriage" aspects are apparent in the series, one could go over only the main storylines in the seasons in terms of the aspect. For instance, in the pilot episode, Jane is dating Michael though she quickly sees Rafael as a love interest as the season

moves along - and begins dating him after breaking up with Michael (“Prologue”; “Six”; “Seven”). Nearing the end of the first season, Rafael breaks up with Jane, and a love triangle between all three characters begins - which occurs until the middle of season two when she initiates a fling with her Professor (“Chapter Eighteen”; “Chapter Thirty-Three”; “Chapter Thirty-Four”). Coincidently, Michael then fights for their relationship; the two begin dating once more, which ultimately end in their marriage (“Thirty-Four”; “Chapter Forty-Four”). After Michael dies, Jane exhibits postfeminist notions of single women dating casually and refusing eligible bachelors - seen in, for instance, her dating of Fabian and Adam (“Sixty-Two”; “Seventy”). While dating Fabian and Adam respectively, Jane actively seeks out sexual intercourse with them both, contradicting Gill in her notion of “men being the only one wanting ‘a shag’” and females only to be caretakers of men and their personal issues (“Sixty-Two”; “Chapter Sixty-Seven”). Surprisingly, her seeking of sexual intercourse with Fabian results in failure as she finds out he is saving himself for marriage - making a reference to Jane’s own virtue at the beginning of the series, as well as showing a flipped structure with Jane being the one seeking intercourse and Fabian being the one resisting due to virtue (“Chapter Sixty-One”; 07:53-08:22). Eventually, Jane ends up with Rafael - the father of her child and her love interest from the beginning of the series (“Seventy-Three”).

The aspects of “dating” and “marriage” are too visible in the characters Xiomara, Alba, and Petra. Xiomara’s most significant dating storyline is with Rogelio - the father of Jane - whom she has many ups and downs with. For instance, they have several flings as well as breakups due to for instance Xiomara not wanting kids - the two, however, end up getting married after realizing they cannot live without each other (“Thirty-Four”, 37:38-38:22; “Sixty-One”). In their relationship, Xiomara actively engages in sexual acts with Rogelio for her own pleasure, showing contradiction of Gill’s notion of women merely being the “caretakers of men” and “men’s only speculation being ‘to get a shag’” by actively seeking sexual pleasure herself. Additionally, Xiomara, through her

marriage to Rogelio, gains access to a wealthy and glamorous lifestyle, creating a form of active female spectatorship as Ang mentioned in her studies of the tv-show *Dallas* (1985), wherein the female spectator takes pleasure in the glamorous lifestyle. Alba, who is showed as a non-sexualized widower in the pilot, is in the series seen dating three respective male characters - Pablo, Edward, and Jorge ("Chapter Twenty"; "Chapter Thirty-Eight"; "Chapter Fifty-Nine"). As a result, Alba makes a change in the series as she dates eligible bachelors and refuses them as well - complying with Lotz' notion of the dating aspect while also contradicting Gill's argument of women of age not being attractive and admirable. Alba too confirms the notion of women "wanting a shag". In season two, when shortly seeing Pablo, the show indirectly portrays them having had sex; Pablo walks out of Alba's bedroom at the Marbella one morning and later on, Alba states to Xiomara and Jane that the reason she slept with him was that "(…) I was horny" thereby contradicting Gill's views ("Thirty-Eight", 02:52-03:40; 30:40). Alba ultimately ends up marrying Jorge, though not from the love between the two but from making sure Jorge gets a Green Card ("Eighty-One", 29:53-30:11). For Petra, after her divorce from Rafael, she is seen dating many love interests such as her ex-fiancée Lachlan, the next-door hotel owner Chuck as well as Rafael once more ("Chapter Eleven"; "Chapter Fifty-Seven"; "Chapter Sixty-Three"). Ultimately, Petra ends up dating the woman Jane Ramos, which establishes Petra as bisexual when she falls in love with J.R. ("Chapter Seventy-Six"). As such, *Jane the Virgin* includes the postfeminist notion of "deconstructing binary categories of gender and sexuality", noted by Lotz, and thereby challenges the notions of hetero- and homosexuality (2001, p. 116). Additionally, the "marriage" concept is also apparent in her marriage to Milos - though, it should be noted that Milos forces Petra to marry her, which does not necessarily connote with the postfeminist notions of marriage as Petra is trapped in her relationship with Milos out of her will ("Chapter Twenty-Seven", 04:48-05:50). With the establishment of Lotz' aspect of "marriage", the notion furthermore illustrates Gill's statement of "women still yearn for a

white wedding or taking a husband's name in marriage" (Gill, 2007, p. 162). The examples in the show where this is portrayed are Jane, Xiomara and Petra in white wedding dresses along with Xiomara taking the last name 'De La Vega' ("Forty-Four", 25:27; "Twenty-Seven", 31:46; "Fifty-Four", 11:39; "Chapter Sixty-Six", 34:20).

The last aspect by Lotz' to consider is that of "career". As mentioned earlier, the women forward narratives especially by the choices they make in terms of their careers. As such, the aspect of "career" is extremely visible as the females are actively engaging in their jobs, as with Jane's writing, Xiomara getting her own dance studio and Petra's ambitions of getting ownership of the Marbella. Though, it should be noted how in most cases, the female character's jobs are gendered. Firstly, Alba is at first a home care nurse, which is considered a gendered career, as nurses consist of mostly women. Secondly, Xiomara is a dance instructor for children, which seems to be gendered as well. Lastly, Jane is a romance novel writer and a waitress - both gendered jobs. The show makes a reference to the popular - and postfeminist - tv-series *Sex and the City* in Jane getting the opportunity to write a guest column for the online magazine *Cosmopolitan*; Carrie Bradshaw herself is a love advice columnist, considered a gendered job position - Jane even illustrates herself as "I am so Carrie Bradshaw" ("Sixty-Two", 02:05-02:40). In the case of Petra, the only one with a position - a hotel owner - that cannot be said to be 'the job of a woman', there may be a reason for why she is the only female main character with a career that may be gendered, but as 'male'. As mentioned earlier, Petra is the only one which can be considered manipulative and cold as she takes on the dominant/male position. Contrary to the other characters, she fully connotes with Kaplan's idea of a female taking on the male position, losing her motherly characteristics and becoming manipulative and cold through her ambitions - characteristics that are needed for the position as the hotel owner and manager ("Thirty-Seven", 37:15-38:19; "Fifty-Three", 07:41-08:29).

As mentioned earlier, the females of the series contradict Gill's notion of females being the sole caretakers of men while the men only seek sexual endeavors; though the women are not necessarily the sole caretakers of the male characters, there are instances in which the females are taking on this position - especially in the case of Jane. When Rafael's father dies in season one, Jane steps up to help him with his sorrow; "And, look, you don't have to tell me the way you're feeling right now. I-I just want you to know that you can. That you can trust me with whatever you're feeling or thinking" thus comforting him with his personal issues ("Fifteen", 39:16-39:27). Later on, Jane decides to help Rafael find his birth mother by telling him "(…) You can look for her" in which they start the search on Rafael's laptop hereafter making Jane, once again, deal with Rafael's issues ("Chapter Sixteen", 40:44-41:34). Lastly, Jane is portrayed as caretaker of the male sex in "Chapter Forty-Six" when Michael gets shot and needs caretaking. With the male nurse at the hospital stating; "You're gonna have help at home, right?" Jane mentions that "Oh, yeah, yeah, my-my grandma's a home health care worker. We will be staying with her and my mom for the first few weeks" thereby stating that they all are going to be caretakers for Michael (03:09-03:20). The scenario is later depicted in Jane helping Michael putting on clothes and fetching him food (12:32; 09:40-09:53; 12:31-12:36). While the fact that Jane is at times in the position of the caretaker, correlating with Gill's notion, it cannot be considered all negative; even when she is in the male/dominant position, Jane never loses her kind and motherly characteristics as Kaplan noted of the structure - showing kindness of character in Jane even when positioned as the forwarder.

In the pilot episode it was noted that Xiomara, Jane and Alba pursuit their "urgency for a family in each other", as children and grandchildren, and whilst this too is portrayed for the rest of season one, the upcoming paragraph will distinguish how the show furthermore incorporates the idea of finding a family in a female peer (Lotz, 2006, p. 89). In season three, with Rafael making the decision of going to jail and Michael passing away, leaves Petra and Jane alone with their kids.

With the incomplete family structure and missing of males figure, Jane and Petra get pushed together by their fear of being alone; “So let’s check in on each other, okay? Once a week. We’ll get the kids together, because they’re siblings, and we’ll just make sure that everything’s okay” thereby finding a family in each other (“Fifty-Five”, 38:47-39:32). The aspect of the two characters being a family is likewise established after Rafael returns from prison by Petra mentioning “And regardless, you can’t cancel brunch. It happens with or without Rafael. ‘Cause it was never about him” (“Seventy-Three”, 36:35-36:43).

Jane the Virgin further indicates Lotz and Ang’s idea of flawed and powerless female depictions and how this brings the characters closer to the audience through Xiomara and Petra in season four (Ang, 1990, p. 245; Lotz, 2006, p. 173). During a dance competition, Xiomara falls over and hurts her ribs, however, after an X-ray scan of her chest she gets the news of a lump in her breast (“Seventy-Six”, 41:18-41:33). She is then diagnosed with breast cancer thereby becoming a flawed but at the same time powerless character due her condition and the side effects that come with it – the exhaustion of chemo and losing one of her breast (“Chapter Seventy-Seven”; “Eighty”, 22:31-23:24; “Seventy-Nine”, 03:04-03:08). Because of her diagnose, Xiomara is brought closer to the spectators who take on her pain as their own consequently sharing an emotional bond. The vulnerable and flawed side of Petra is displayed when she breaks down in front of her lawyer, J.R., and states, “And I’m just so tired, honestly, of just having to.. always be on my guard” in which she worries about her daughters safety (“Chapter Seventy-Four”, 18:00-18:35). Another example of the show’s portrayal of Petra being a flawed individual is her having heartbreak, therefore, wearing yoga pants, an oversized t-shirt, messy hair and eating pickles out of a jar in bed (“Chapter Seventy-Eight”, 38:32-38:44). By this example, Petra and the audience gets drawn in closer with one another, as most spectators of the show can be discussed to have had heartbreak themselves.

The next aspect in which the analysis will take into consideration is Kaplan's establishment of "lesbian fantasies", in which the woman adopts both the dominant and dominated position - as well as Gill's notion of post-postfeminist texts also including minorities, touching upon intersectionality (Kaplan, 1990; Gill, 2016). For Jane, her own lesbian fantasies are displayed in "Chapter Sixty-Nine". While trying to cope with the fact that Adam is bisexual and Jane stating "(…) I'm not into women", Adam challenges her mindset by elaborating "Maybe. Or maybe you just haven't explored that side of yourself" thus leading Jane into a lesbian fantasy (13:39-13:44). Through her fantasy she shares a sexual look with the waitress at the restaurant that her and Adam are dining at and later on with Lina whom she leans in and try to kiss hereby making Lina state "Were you gonna kiss me?" with Jane stating "Yeah, I was" (13:52-14:02; 34:09-35:34). At the end of the scene the two ends up sharing a kiss with Lina mentioning "Any more and you couldn't handle it" consequently establishing Kaplan's notion of lesbian fantasies. Through the sexual looks Jane shares with the waitress and Lina, she is established in the dominant position, yet when sharing a kiss with Lina, she transfers position and becomes the dominated.

In "Chapter Seventy-Four" Petra too affirms the notion of Kaplan's lesbian fantasy, as she in a sex dream is being dominated by Jane Ramos (40:20-40:56). The scene builds proof to Petra being bisexual, which is elaborated by the narrator; "Whoa, that's one kind of sexual awakening" (40:54-40:56). Additionally, she is placed in the dominated position as Jane Ramos kisses her in a parking lot and in her bedroom ("Seventy-Six", 14:37-14:54; "Seventy-Eight", 39:38-40:03). Additionally, Petra's sexual awakening in the form of her bisexuality and relationship with J.R. exemplifies how the show exhibits commentary on intersectionality through their representation of the LGBT+ community. The same notion arises with Luisa - the lesbian character is a representation of said intersectionalized minority.

Lastly, one must also take a look at how the series further incorporates situations of "contemporary struggles that women and feminists are struggling with". The series first example of this is *male gaze*, with Jane mentioning to her mother "When women hook up, it's looked at as sexy, but men are immediately marginalized because our whole culture revolves around the male gaze" ("Sixty-Nine", 14:28-14:33). Along with the 'male gaze', the series covers the concept of the *Bechdel test* through Jane's new advisor mentioning about Jane's thesis; "Just as long as it passes the Bechdel Test, okay? (…) Because otherwise, barf" ("Thirty-Seven", 04:54-05:35). Due to the struggle of gender bias still being a huge problem in today's society, the series, by recognizing it in its narrative, proves that it connotes to feminism and exhibit commentary on contemporary feminist struggles. The series even made fun of itself for not passing the test with Xiomara, Jane and Alba discussing Pablo and Michael's parents (10:28-10:50). Additionally, the series takes up the contemporary struggles of women *not trusting the male authority* by once again, portraying the theme of gender bias with Jane stating about her new male editor; "I was just expecting a woman, because.." ("Fifty-Seven", 03:35-04:05). After this statement, Rafael responds with "You trust women more than men (…) You only trust female authority figures. It's a pattern" whereas he exemplifies it with Jane not even considering to hire Alex as a male aide for Mateo but instead choosing the girl, Carly (ibid.). Thus, the show makes a commentary on the bias happening in feminism in which females reject the male sex completely - in a way, Rafael is 'let off the hook' in terms of patriarchy by showing the hypocrisy of her mannerisms, connoting well with Boyle's notion of "men being let off the hook" in postfeminist television shows. At last the series takes up the conflict of *patriarchy* with Jane's advisor professor Donaldson commenting on the subject as she helps Jane get into her wedding dress: "I feel like I'm locking you into the patriarchy as I do this" ("Forty-Four", 18:43-18:47). Another example is when Jorge is forcing Alba to take the late-shift at the gift shop thereby making Xiomara exclaim "He can't do that! Who the hell does he think

he is?" with the narrator elaborating "Uh, apparently every man in a position of power in the whole entire world (…)" ("Seventy-Three", 13:19-13:41).

Objectification, Mockery, and Bisexuality - Further Establishment of the Male Characters in *Jane the Virgin*

With Michael and Rafael being the primary male characters in the pilot episode of *Jane the Virgin*, several other men are also introduced throughout the series, even further connoting with Ang's idea of a programs devotion to draw in a heterogeneous audience by the introduction of male characters for male spectators to identify and constitute one's ego in (1990, p. 238). Like mentioned in the pilot episode, Rafael signifies with Mulvey's establishment of "to-be-looked-at-ness" and is established as an erotic object for the female gaze as noted by Kaplan. When being single, Rafael is portrayed as an erotic object and sexualized for the female gaze. There are several examples of how Rafael connotes with Mulvey's idea of "to-be-looked-at-ness" and scopophilia such as him appearing without a shirt on thereby showing off his body for the camera, the female characters, and the female spectator. Some example hereof is when trying to trick Jane's stepsisters hence taking off his shirt and his sweating body in the heat-tent ("Six", 23:47-23:58; "Fifty-Three", 26:33). In the first example, the scene is shot in slow motion, making the camera focus on his well-trained body for the pleasure of the female gaze. Moreover, a fill light from the right hitting Rafael's shoulders and chest enhances his physical features and attractiveness for the female spectator. The scenes furthermore all contain female characters gazing upon Rafael thusly making him an erotic object for them and the female spectator as well - sexualizing him through the female gaze. However, Rafael is not only sexualized for that of the female gaze but also appears more non-sexualized when dating Jane, illustrated in more casual and plain outfits with blue denim jeans and a grey t-shirt - though, it should be noted that the change in fashion and appearance considerably is due to the fact that Rafael has lost his shares in the hotel and all his money, resulting him to tone

down on expenses and luxuries such as nice clothing ("Chapter Seventy-Five", 12:30). As such, Rafael is put in the female/submissive position as he loses his shares and money; shown through the broke Rafael becoming less attractive through his loss of authority, as argued by Kaplan of male characters in the female/submissive position. Unlike Rafael, who is sexualized as well as non-sexualized throughout the show, Michael is consequently not subjected to these notions; Michael does not appear subjected to the female gaze nor put in the female/submissive position, losing his attractiveness and authority - instead, it seems as if he is put in a neutral position in terms of sexualization and non-sexualization.

The next character the analysis will look upon is that of Jane's father and Xiomara's husband, Rogelio. Through the character of Rogelio, the show has decided to mock the male masculinity as Boyle noted in her article by portraying Rogelio with what is said to be feminine characteristics and appearance (2005, p. 179). When the audience first is introduced to Rogelio in "Chapter Two" he is seen wearing purple pants and a white shirt with a pink and blue flower-pattern (13:16). By appearing in colorful outfits with feminine prints on them, his masculinity is toned down as patterns usually are seen to be a feminine way of portrayal. His feminine depiction is further established through his appearance in yet another white shirt with baby-blue flower patterns and a strong pink shirt with white pants ("Seventy-Five", 4:49; "Fifty-Seven", 33:05). Furthermore, his masculinity is mocked through multiple actions; such as getting a pedicure with Xiomara, stating "I had Botox this morning (…)" during Xiomara's proposal and by sending gift baskets to women as an apology ("Chapter Seventy-Two", 24:48-26:24; "Sixty-One", 37:37; "Chapter Three", 16:27-17:31). By giving the character Rogelio feminine characteristics through costumes and mannerisms, the show manages to mock the male masculinity, much as Boyle argued of postfeminist television shows.

In *Jane the Virgin*, it is not only Rogelio who gets mocked for his traits of femininity. The male character of Fabian is likewise made into an object of fun and derision, once again confirming

Boyle's statement (2005, p. 179). First of all, the character of Fabian is depicted as a stupid male individual who has no intellect. This is seen in the example of Fabian telling Jane "You know that this was based on a true story. There really was a Queen Elizabeth" whereas Jane's answer consists of "*Is*. There still is one" ("Sixty-One", 07:17-07:22). Additionally, Fabian mentions after an argument with Jane that he "(…) Googled "Madonna-whore paradigm" and "reductive"" after her mentioning the terms, once again, appearing foolish ("Sixty-Two", 36:10-36:12). Furthermore, as he is portrayed as childish and unintelligent, Fabian arguably is put in a female/submissive position from his lack of authority, connoting with Kaplan's notion of males in the female position. The most important role Fabian plays in the series is his portrayal as an object of fun and a sexual object for Jane, confirming Kaplan in her statement of the male sex to be objectified; "I just wanted a fling (…) I just really wanted to have sex with you" ("Sixty-Two", 36:24-36:41). When Fabian first is introduced in the series the audience and Jane sees him as a muscular, Asian man with short brown hair and brown eyes appearing with no shirt only to view his tanned and sweaty body ("Fifty-Nine", 41:11-42:00). By making the scene in slow-motion, the spectator gets a longer view of Fabian's well-trained body, subjecting him to the female gaze. Furthermore, the lighting in the sequence draws attention to his muscles and his sweating body, and a blurry effect from editing creates a dreamy atmosphere. This notion further establishes Fabian as a victim of scopophilia as the camera, the female character Jane and the spectator linger their gazes on him, connoting well with Kaplan's idea of how male characters also can be objectified as Fabian is subjected to gazes, much like women in film as according to Mulvey. His status as "to-be-looked-at-ness" is likewise visible through the notion of him walking out of his trailer only wearing sunglasses and blue jeans ("Chapter Sixty", 11:16-11:44). With the scene placed outside, the natural and soft lighting creates both shadows and highlights which accentuate the muscles on his body for Jane and the female spectator to objectify.

The last male character to consider in *Jane the Virgin* is Jane's first boyfriend, Adam. While Adam in the series is not portrayed as merely a sexual object for the female gaze, his status as *bisexual* is what makes his character interesting to examine ("Sixty-Seven", 03:54-05:00). Through his role as a bisexual man, the series once again incorporates Lotz' notion of "deconstructing binary categories of gender and sexuality" commonly found in postfeminist television where it challenges notions of hetero- and homosexuality (2001, p. 116). Thus, the series - as mentioned in the case of Petra and her bisexuality - concerns itself with intersectionalized minorities such as the LGBT+ community with its depiction of Adam and his sexuality. When Jane first realizes that Adam is bisexual she freaks out and tries to deny that it is a problem for their relationship, explaining to her mother "I'm completely hung up on it. And I don't want to be", though later on, she tries to understand Adam's situation and what bisexuality is; "Is being bisexual a stop? O-On your way to coming out as gay?" ("Sixty-Nine", 14:19-14:21; 38:23-38:30). Because of this notion, the series shows commentary - with Jane's somewhat ignorant comment on bisexuality - on the ignorance in society on the subject of sexuality. As such, the show furthermore seems to connote well with Lotz's idea of postfeminist television showing "(...) critiques [of] oppression or discrimination based on other aspects of one's identity" by exploring a somewhat homophobic behavior from Jane (Lotz, 2001, p. 115).

The last aspect to note when analyzing the male characters of *Jane the Virgin* is the fact that all five male characters are intertwined sexually or romantically with the series' women thereby affirming Lotz in her statement of female-centered dramas "excluding the so-called 'buddy-tradition'" (2006, 30; 35). With the buddy-tradition, a male and a female character are paired as friends with no romantic connection - this definitely is not the case of the telenovela *Jane the Virgin*, as all male characters are intertwined romantically with female characters. Even as Jane and Rafael try to enable a friendship for the sake of their son, Mateo and later on becomes best friends

after Michael dies, with Jane telling Rafael that "You're kind of my best friend, you know that?" - they still are romantically involved with each other several times and even start dating again after Michael's death ("Fifty-Five", 34:46-34:49, " Seventy-Two").

Jane The Virgin - An Overview

To summarize, the analysis of the show as a whole showed both instances of following the framework as well as changes of the same. For instance, traditional male gaze as proposed by Mulvey in 1975 is still apparent in the contemporary television series - seen in examples such as Jane and Alba being subjected to sexualization as a result of the constitution of the male gaze through looks and lingering camera movements. Though, active female spectatorship as proposed by Kaplan is apparent too; visible by the female characters forwarding the narrative through career choices such as Jane progressing the narrative of her achievements as an author as well as Petra's focus on becoming the owner of the Marbella. Nevertheless, as with Petra, all female characters did not become manipulative and cold through them taking over the male/dominant position as forwarders. Kaplan further mentioned how lesbian fantasies arise in cinematic arts - in *Jane the Virgin*, this too is constituted through examples such as the sequence of Jane's lesbian fantasy with her best friend Lina - showing a deviation from the pilot in which the lesbian fantasy is not apparent.

The female characters, like in the pilot, showed characteristics connoting with postfeminist tendencies in television - for instance, Jane exhibits the notion of women being the caretakers of men made by Gill, shown in her caring for both Rafael and Michael. The urgency of a family found elsewhere as proposed in the pilot follows the series throughout, though the framework of this notion expands as Jane and Petra suddenly find themselves having children with the same man - as such, Jane and Petra both find 'family' in a respective female peer. With their flawed characteristics and inclusion of complex and, at times, impossible lives, the female and male characters of *Jane the*

Virgin proves to connote with Byerly and Ross in their notion of making the characters more relatable and humanized, bringing them closer to the female audience, as well as the Lotz' notion of flawed characters being of important for the same reason. By becoming artificially inseminated, Jane ends up in a complex, impossible and powerless family structure, which includes her, Rafael, Petra and Michael all merged together through unnatural incidents. Petra shows a deviation from her 'perfect' image and thus the framework of the pilot as she goes through heartbreak - showing flawed characteristics as she is portrayed in the state of powerlessness with messy hair and eating pickles out of a jar in bed. Other postfeminist notions in the series include the show's portrayal of contemporary struggles for feminists, as noted as a postfeminist attribute by Lotz. This is illustrated through Jane's commentary on male gaze, patriarchy and not trusting male authority, showing the series as aware of such struggles. Lastly, the inclusion of intersectionalized minorities such as Latinex culture as well as the LGBT+ community show how *Jane the Virgin* critiques oppression and discrimination, argued by Lotz as another postfeminist attribute.

As a series, *Jane the Virgin* has a lot of focus on female success both in their personal and workspace life. With the constant active process of dating it shows the women all dream of finding "Mr. Right" and are in constant pine of having 'lost love' as well. The female characters, and especially Jane, face dilemmas of combining work and love, Alba deals with the conflict of dating and growing older, and Petra struggle with competing against the males when it comes to running the Marbella. The notions all support Ang in her statement of the melodramatic woman's portrayal - which, of course, is a given due to *Jane the Virgin* is a telenovela; as such, it incorporates the melodramatic genre. Likewise, the visibility of divorced and widowed female characters; such as Petra being divorced and Jane and Alba being widows, affirms that the series supports the concept of the 'new' new woman mentioned by Lotz.

Broad City (2014-2019): The Pilot and Its Framework

Broad City (2014 – 2019) is an American situational comedy on Comedy Central, created and starred by Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson. The two female comedians met each other at the well-known Upright Citizens Brigade, a famous improvisational sketch comedy group, and created a web-series by the same name in 2010, in which they play fictionalized versions of themselves. When Amy Poehler - a Saturday Night Live and Parks and Recreation alumni - heard about the web-series, she began mentoring Glazer and Jacobson and helped them in producing the show for a television format. The following section will serve as a detailed analysis of the pilot premiering on Comedy Central on January 22nd 2014, in order to present the framework of the show further on.

The opening shot of the pilot shows a post-it saying "Tuesday 7 AM", and in the next shot, the post-it is revealed to be sitting on a vibrator in the hands of the character Abbi (who has not yet been named) ("What a Wonderful World", 00:00-00:06). Cut to the character Ilana – also unnamed – listening to a trap/hip-hop song, rocking back and forth and video messaging Abbi on her laptop (00:06-01:02). They talk, and Abbi suddenly realizes Ilana is having sex with the character Lincoln, who is now a part of their conversation (01:03-01:28). This opening scene is extremely significant in terms of explaining the show's framework; the vibrator and Ilana being unbothered by having sex while calling Abbi shows a framework of sexual liberation and freedom, a common theme in the series itself as well as in postfeminism. In terms of the show, the opening scene additionally shows the complexity and profoundness of Ilana and Abbi's friendship, which will later be shown to be a cornerstone of the series. While Abbi is slightly bothered by knowing Lincoln is, as stated by the character, 'inside of' Ilana, she is not so bothered by the call that she hangs up – she merely states that perhaps they can call each other while not having sex, showing a friendship in which intimacy and personal situations are shared between the two (ibid.). After the video call, Lincoln asks Ilana 'what they are doing' in terms of their relationship – if they are dating or just hooking up (01:28-

01:42). Clearly bothered by the question, she answers that it is 'purely physical' – here, the traditional script has been flipped, showing non-correlation to Gill's notion of postfeminist women as still being "caretakers of men" and the "man's only speculation as to "get a shag'" (Gill, 2007, p. 151). Instead, Lincoln is shown as the one in search of a relationship, while Ilana's only speculation seemingly is to be pleased sexually. As a result, Ilana furthermore exhibits postfeminist behavior of sexual empowerment and sexual choices being individually chosen by the respective female as noted by Gill (p. 154). Though, with Ilana being half-naked on top of Lincoln, it can also be argued that Ilana is – as Gill similarly noted – portrayed as "an active, desiring sexual subject who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so" (p. 151). Either way, it seems as if this opening scene exemplifies the theme of sexual liberation in the lives of the 20-something characters Ilana and Abbi.

In 1975, Mulvey presented her idea of the female character in cinema, stating that the female is always sexualized and an object of scopophilia for the male spectator. Furthermore, she stated how the women *never* could be the sole driving force of the narrative, and how the presence of a woman on screen resulted in her freezing the flow of action. Thus, the woman on screen – in her eyes – was passive, a character only made to further the male protagonist. While Mulvey indeed only argued for cinema, and not television, female characters on television traditionally followed this cinematic construct. Today, much change has been made – which can be seen in the case of *Broad City*, which in many ways contradicts the arguments made by Mulvey. For instance, the two female protagonists Ilana and Abbi are, as Mulvey argued of male protagonists, the *forwarders of the narrative*. In the pilot episode, it can be seen through numerous examples; as Ilana learns she is not going to get paid, she decides to skip work – and, as later shown, also decides to steal office supplies from her workplace ("Wonderful World", 02:50-03:50; 06:07-07:31). By doing so, she forwards the narrative in which the two women try to make ends meet in terms of paying their weed dealer by

selling the stolen supplies. Additionally, the two women try to further earn money by putting on a show in Central Park – while it does not go well due to their lacking musical talents, they are clearly forwarding the narrative of "trying to survive and get paid" by scamming, hustling and doing weird things to receive a bit of cash (13:00-14:18). The forwarding of this narrative is seen again through their job of cleaning a man's apartment in underwear – while degrading, and Abbi first resisting to Ilana's idea, the two women do end up cleaning the man's apartment in their underwear (15:12-18:25). This example, again, shows some forwarding of the narrative made by the two female characters – as well as a willingness to degrade themselves in order to progress the pilot's narrative. This willingness to degrade themselves is an interesting notion; in Mulvey's mind, female characters are constructed as perfect, beautiful, sexual and a prize for the man to take. Here, the judgment of the women and their actions show how they are, indeed, not perfect. Additionally, in the scene in which Abbi and Ilana clean in their underwear, their clothing tells a story: the underwear is not sexy lingerie – in fact, the briefs and bras do not match and can be argued to not be the most flattering choices of underwear. It shows *normalcy*; two regular women who are not wearing sexy lingerie under their regular clothes, as most women do not wear matching and sexy lingerie in their day-to-day. Furthermore, the two women do not have the perfect skinny and toned body as often shown in cinema in which the female is constructed for scopophilia – they have normal body types. The scene shows that they are not perfect, as well as it downplays the sexual objectification able for the male viewer – due to several reasons: first of all, their clothing and bodies as exemplified above does not really construct a sexual vibe, and there are no camera movements, editing or lighting constructing a moment of freezing the flow. In one example, Ilana is bending forward while cleaning, though we only see it from the front and not the back – and as we see it from the front, we also see the man creepily watching her from behind a chair, making her uncomfortable (16:46-16:51). This notion of them uncomfortably cleaning in their underwear and

trying to cover themselves while the creepy man-baby watches, is extremely interesting: it creates a humorous but uncomfortable situation. Thus, while the women are in their underwear – and potentially could be a burden of sexual objectification – it seems as if the sexual objectification for a male spectator 'fizzles out' as the women clearly are extremely uncomfortable and not liking the situation. In case of traditional examples in which the sexual female freezes the flow of action, her mannerisms and looks upon the male-constructed scopophilia and sexual objectification – but in the case of this scene, their uncomfortableness and the somewhat predatory behavior of the man hiring them strongly downplays the "sexy" of the scene. As the scene, both narratively and in terms of cinematic element, is not created to be sexy, Ilana and Abbi cleaning in their underwear seems to be just a comical choice and perhaps a subtle comment on liberation of the female body – additionally, it removes the possibility of scopophilia from a male spectator with the creepiness of the situation. Indeed, with the creepy gazes from the man-baby, the show speaks out scopophilia and the male gaze; indicating that the creators of the show know of Mulvey's thesis, which is likely due to the fact that creators Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson holds bachelor's degrees in respectively Psychology and General Fine Arts.

The notion of *Broad City* challenging Mulvey's idea of sexual objectification of female characters is apparent in other instances of the pilot episode. Going back to the opening scene of the show, wherein Ilana is having sex with Lincoln as she is on a video call with Abbi, the same notion as in the cleaning scene arises: that while the scene *could* be sexual and create satisfaction for a male spectator, it is not constructed as such but as a comical element. Both Abbi and the viewer does not know of Ilana having sex with Lincoln until later in the scene, and when Abbie and the viewer realize the sexual act, it becomes uncomfortable due to Abbi unknowingly and without consent watches them have sex. The scene is not constructed as a "sex scene" between Ilana and Lincoln, which of course would have made Ilana an object of sexual objectification – instead, it is

constructed as uncomfortable and humorous for the viewer. Abbi holding a vibrator is another example of *Broad City* challenging classic feminist notions of female characters. A female character holding a vibrator could have had a sexual tone and feel if it were constructed as such, making the female character the burden of sexual objectification for the male spectator. Though, in the case of *Broad City*, it becomes non-sexualized as the show makes it clear how the post-it notes refer to Abbi's scheduling of her masturbation (00:00-01:02). The not-so-spontaneous Abbi and her scheduling of masturbation again seem to be constructed merely as a comical element, and the scheduling itself may also downplay the sexual manner of the masturbation act. Moreover, elements of mise-en-scene such as camera movements, editing choices, lighting and especially setting do not really construct sexualization. Thus, even when the women are being sexual, the situations are constructed as comical and not for sexual objectification.

As noted in the theory section, scholar Ien Ang took note of women deriving pleasure from watching the soap opera *Dallas* – this pleasure stemmed from watching the female characters' glamorous lifestyles, one which the female spectators enjoyed. As a result, Ang argued how this created active female spectatorship and how activeness in spectatorship did not have to arise from forwarding the story or being non-sexualized, but merely from pleasure. From analyzing the framework – or, pilot – of *Broad City*, one cannot argue how Ang's idea of active female spectatorship is present in the series. Abbi and Ilana, as stated above, are not rich and glamorous – they steal office supplies in order to buy marijuana, they play drums on buckets in Central Park in order to receive a few extra bucks and they clean a creepy and disturbing man's apartment in their underwear – which, of course, is not expensive lingerie, but randomly picked cheap and comfortable underwear. They live in old and dirty apartments which they barely can afford and they work dreadful jobs – in short, Abbi and Ilana are the complete opposite of the glamorous women in *Dallas*. Though, Ang noted how *pleasure* was the key component to active spectatorship. If female

spectators can derive pleasure from identifying with the glamorous lifestyles of women on screen, one must assume there can also be derived pleasure from identifying with the not-so-glamourous lifestyles of Abbi and Ilana. Abbi and Ilana are in many ways relatable for the common, young woman in their 20's: not having fully figured out life, working poor jobs, financial distress, and trouble with love. They have to make ends meet and go through lengths to survive – something which may be even more relatable to many than rich and glamorous lifestyles. In *Broad City*, the women cannot lose themselves in the lifestyles of Abbi and Ilana – but they can relate to the lifestyles, and perhaps derive pleasure from the notion of female characters being just like them. Likewise, as noted above, the creators seem to be aware of the male gaze due to the fact that the pilot humorously undermines and mock the male gaze as in the example of the cleaning scene. As such, it seems evident that viewers can derive pleasure from such clear mocking of traditional patriarchal structures.

Scholar E. Ann Kaplan took, as described in the theory section, a very different approach to investigating female spectatorship. Contradicting Mulvey, Kaplan noted how female characters are able to take on the male, dominant position which turns the female character into the protagonist and forwarder of the story. Though Kaplan also stated how the dominant-submissive structure has to be kept intact – and a female character taking on the dominant role of the narrative will in return put the male character in the submissive position. When that happens, the woman loses her beautiful and sympathetic characteristics, while the male becomes powerless, desexualized and unintelligent. In the pilot, four male characters are great examples of how the male character can take on a submissive role. For instance, as described above regarding the opening of the pilot, Lincoln is the one being taken advantage of in terms of his and Ilana's relationship – he is the one yearning for a romantic relationship, while Ilana in returns wants to maintain her sexual freedom and wants purely a physical relationship with Lincoln. He becomes the powerless man being taken

advantage of by the dominant Ilana, and thus, he takes on a submissive role as Ilana is the decider of the narrative that is their relationship.

Abbi's boss Trey exemplifies another type of male submissive character. As Abbi scams her boss for a day off – by leading him to believe that she may have AIDS and needs to see her doctor for results – the kind Trey immediately gives her the day off due to his naïve behavior and personality: "Abbi, you gotta get those results! (…) Don't worry about the pubes! Get your results!" (05:19-05:48). While humorous, during the scene we see a dominant/submissive pattern in which Abbi – by manipulating her boss – forwards the story and is an example of a woman losing her sympathetic qualities, while the male character Trey is submissive and powerless due to his own naivety and unintelligence.

The third male character in the pilot to note is Matt, Abbi's roommate. When Abbi and Ilana go to Abbi's apartment to scour for money or things to sell, the viewer is introduced to Matt (07:37-10:18). Matt, playing video games in his introductory scene, is shown as a lazy, poorly and too casually dressed – in all, Matt is constructed as unattractive. Furthermore, as the scene goes on, Abbi confronts him with eating all her cheese which she has clearly marked with her name, to which he replies: "Maybe in the future if you do that put [the mark] on like, all six sides (…)" (07:53-08:35). Furthermore, it is shown how he has clogged the toilet without fixing it while the two women were away (08:37-09:00) Thus, as Matt is portrayed as being unintelligent, lazy, childish unattractive and annoying, he is put in a submissive position, while the two dominant women further the narrative.

Abbi's neighbor is the fourth male creating an interesting notion – as the two women leave Abbi's apartment, they meet her neighbor (10:17-11:06). In this scene, there is a clear situation of gazes happening – with romantic music in the background, Abbi gazes upon her neighbor, and he returns the gaze. In this scene, the neighbor is clearly sexualized, and though he clearly returns the

gazes, there is one interesting notion to discuss: the fact that it seems as if their romantic situation is a part of Abbi's fantasy, and that he may not - in reality - be returning the gazes. The notion that the neighbor's gazes on Abbi are merely a part of her fantasy is indicated by three things. First, the camera movements, slow motion, and music construct a "fantasy" setting in which the viewer is led to believe that it is all in Abbi's mind. Secondly, Ilana's facial expressions show that Abbi is clearly acting in an embarrassing way – indicating that the gazes from the neighbor and the romantic interaction the two are having may only be in Abbi's fantasy. Lastly, as Matt interrupts the fantasy, the neighbor merely walks into his own apartment, not saying anything – which may indicate how the neighbor is trying to escape an embarrassing situation. If one takes the standpoint of the gazes being only a construct of Abbi's fantasy, Abbi clearly puts herself in a dominant situation with the neighbor being submissive – she sexualizes him, and in her fantasy, he gazes back. The neighbor is the prisoner of her scopophilia – he becomes powerless and submissive, burdened by objectification by Abbi. The reason for the importance of analyzing the male characters is due to the fact that postfeminism still contends stereotypical representations of men; while Mulvey did not interest herself with male representation, postfeminism does and thus the male characters are of importance in this thesis, too.

Broad City's pilot definitely exhibits postfeminist ideas. While the show's characters may not show the 'working woman' in the sense of a successful career-minded woman, other ideas of the 'new' new woman as according to Lotz is definitely apparent (Lotz, 2001). The women are independent, single but with complicated relationships – as in the case of Ilana's relationship with Lincoln. Though, where Ilana and Abbi seem to fit postfeminism is their flawed characters – one aspect which Lotz definitely saw as postfeminist or as a characterization of the 'new' new woman. Abbi and Ilana are *clearly* flawed; their decisions and behavior span from morally corrupt, as in the case of stealing office supplies or making your boss believe you have AIDS, to just dumb and

outrageous as in the case of the half-naked cleaning. The females do not represent a perfect and polished image; they do not act accordingly to the expectation and assumptions of female behavior, such as acting politely and connoting "to-be-looked-at-ness". Their flaws are an example of what Lotz regards as 'contemporary characterizations' which brings the audience closer with Abbi and Ilana: "the complicated lives depicted indicate more about contemporary female reality than a flawless role model might" (p. 173). Thus, their flaws indeed make them more relatable, as suggested above in regards to Ien Ang and the possibility that females may derive pleasure from the relatability of Abbi and Ilana – an opinion which C.M. Byerly and K. Ross agrees upon. In their study *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*, they state that the flawed individuals – someone who is not wholly bad but not wholly good either – is key to identification with the female spectator, and that a "(…) struggle with complexities of impossible lives" makes female characters humanized as well as relatable (Byerly and Ross, 2006, p. 22). Thus, an important framework of *Broad City*'s pilot, the flawed female characters, is an important part of postfeminism as well.

Lotz, in her 2001 study, argued how "No one character emerges as the unflawed poster woman for contemporary feminist" (Lotz, 2001, p. 114). Instead, she argued how a broad array of representations is what indicates complexity and postfeminist ideas on television. Because women are so different, a setback would be to pinpoint and characterize what a feminist character is supposed to be. The idea of postfeminist television correlating to a broad array of women is interesting, as well as significant in *Broad City*. In the show, the two women – though they both make bad, flawed choices – are very different. Ilana is the 'leader' and what Lotz would categorize as the 'unruly woman'; as seen in the opening scene, she is careless both towards Abbi and Lincoln as she calls Abbi while having sex (00:00-01:28). She is a social butterfly, very energetic and free-spirited. In terms of Abbi, she is 'the follower' of Ilana's crazy scheme, which creates crazy situations for her – as in the case of the cleaning scene (15:12-18:25). Abbi is less impulsive than

Ilana, something we can draw out from the fact that she schedules her masturbation session (00:00-01:02). Though she makes bad decisions, she definitely can be considered as 'the nice girl' when compared to Ilana and is often affected by Ilana's leadership. As Lotz argues in her 2001 study, one attribute in television that indicates "(…) an underlying postfeminist perspective" is exhibiting female characters showing complexity as well as being distinct from one another despite "the commonality of womanhood" (Lotz, 2001, p. 115). Thus, as shown above, one can argue that Broad City exhibits this type of postfeminist attribute due to the differences between the two women. Additionally, it seems as if the characters show complexity as well in the series. For instance, when Ilana tells Lincoln that their relationship is "purely physical", the viewer gets a feeling that she is actually not saying what she wants – that she may want a relationship, but is scared to say so 01:28-01:42).

Another of Lotz' attributes in postfeminist television is the exploration of homophobic, racist and classist behaviors (Lotz, 2001, p. 116). This type of attribute is definitely apparent in Broad City – when Abbi and Ilana are in the store trying to sell the stolen office supplies, the two women discuss slavery and Afro-American culture, criticizing racist behaviors and thoughts through their discussion about a song (06:33-07:00). While the scene becomes awkward due to the fact that the cashier – an Afro-American woman – has overheard their entire conversation, nevertheless, the show exhibits critique and exploration of racist behaviors by showing characters which do the same.

Scholar Gill argued that the notion of "(…) choice, of 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself'" with everything to be elected freely, is one of the most important aspects of postfeminist media culture (Gill, 2007, p. 153). This very notion is key to *Broad City*'s framework: as stated several times in this analysis section, the women of the series are free and careless. Abbi and Ilana do whatever they want in several manners – they steal office supplies and they scam their bosses in order to get what they want. In terms of sexuality, Ilana has her physical, casual relationship with

Lincoln in which she has no concern for his feelings – and where she gets what she wants without having the restraints of an exclusive relationship. While this may seem like a 'mean' behavior from Ilana, it – as Gill would put it – establishes how a woman's dating and sexual choices are individual and free, and not, in particular, a decision to please that of the male sex (p. 154).

A Summarize of *Broad City*'s Pilot

To summarize, *Broad City*'s pilot episode exhibits interesting notions when considering both classic feminist film criticism and postfeminist values. As shown, the series contradicts Mulvey's ideas of the male gaze with the woman in the passive position. Here, Ilana and Abbi are the forwarders of the story, and the male characters revolving them become submissive instead – correlating well with Kaplan's notion of a dominant/submissive structure being kept intact. In scenes where they are being sexual such as the opening scene and the cleaning scene, they are portrayed as non-sexual as the scenes become humorous and uncomfortable. The two women act carelessly, ruthlessly and without remorse as they hustle and scam their way through the episode, showing typical cinematic male behaviorism. Additionally, in terms of postfeminist ideas, the two women are examples of key elements in postfeminism. For instance, the idea of freedom of choice which Abbi and Ilana exhibit in all their life choices seems to correlate well with postfeminist attributes – they are being themselves, doing whatever they want and showing no remorse. The two characters show two very different women, and as such show postfeminist attributes of exhibiting a broad array of women on screen. In short, the two women are exactly what Lotz describes as 'the unruly woman' in comedy series – they are careless and obnoxious, but also very funny. The female character's careless behavior and mannerisms, though, seems to be allowed due to the show being explicitly a comedy series - the genre has long been noted by scholars to be the most accepting in terms of feminist discourse as well as subversive content, as noted by Lotz (Lotz, 2001, p. 111). While the women of *Broad City* does not have glamorous lives, it seems the spectator can identify

with the normalcy of their lives instead - showing a contrast to famous postfeminist female characters, often portrayed as successful women with financial stability and stability in careers. The pilot of *Broad City* thus shows a framework of two unruly women in their 20's, trying to survive by scamming and hustling, acting carelessly and freely in everything they do. In the next section of this analysis, the show will be analyzed in whole in order to examine other interesting feminist ideas and attributes in the show, whether or not the pilot's framework is true for the entire series, as well as whether or not Abbi and Ilana change and evolves.

Further On: Examining *Broad City*

Successful pilots, according to television scholar Jason Mittell, "(…) announce what they are, providing a template for both the producers and viewers to move forward within the ongoing series" (Mittell 2015, p. 61). In terms of Broad City, the pilot showed two female friends as forwarders of the narrative, men in a submissive position as well as many postfeminist ideas. Thus, the following analysis will research whether or not this framework is true for the rest of the series in order to see whether or not the postfeminist show continues as such, and whether or not the two characters go through change.

Male Gaze and the Lack of Same in *Broad City*

The analysis of *Broad City* showed a lack of traditional male gaze as according to Mulvey – and instead, it showed how the two women were indeed in a male position. This notion is carried through the remainder of the series, creating the idea that the two creators Abbi Jacobson and Ilana Glazer may have knowledge of traditional female positions in cinema and television – and thus is conscious of this notion in their creation of *Broad City*.

Mulvey stated how the female character in cinema is passive, sexualized and – in the manner of narrative – only there to freeze the film's flow of action. The objectification, in Mulvey's mind, is seen through elements such as clothing and setting, camera movements, editing, lighting and much more. In the case of *Broad City*, the two women are not subjected to this patriarchal structure of cinematic arts – the two women are never subjected to a camera's lingering, and no lighting or editing sexualizes them throughout the show's five series. In terms of clothing, Abbi typically is seen in clothing which, as opposed to Ilana, can be considered quite conservative: she typically never wears clothing with low cuts and cleavage, and usually is dressed in a way in which her body is not accentuated – with, perhaps, the exception of her infamous blue body-con dress she buys in episode five of the first series, one she will further wear for almost every special occasion

throughout the series ("Fattest Asses", 07:18-08:15). While accentuating her body, the blue dress is not stressed as an objectification with the help of camera movements, editing, and lighting – and, as will be discussed later in this analysis, has a different purpose than sexualizing Abbi and her body; it becomes an iconic reference to the struggles of finding Mr. Right.

As mentioned, Ilana is in terms of clothing and appearance less conservative or traditional than Abbi. Ilana, often seen in crop-tops and without bras, can be argued to dress in a more sexualized manner. Though, in the case of Ilana, it seems important to distinguish dressing 'sexually' and the idea of objectification from one another. In the opinion of this author, the two are distinguishable, and there are reasons as to why Ilana – even though often seen in skimpy outfits and 'free nipples' – is not necessarily objectifying. One reason is the aforementioned technical aspects of cinema, such as camera movements, editing, and lighting – as there are none of these elements stressing the rather sexual clothing, it deflates the objectification. Another reason is how Ilana carries it; Ilana is inherently a third-wave feminist, and thus one can argue how she must be a believer of women being able to carry any form of clothing without having to be objectified and be a prisoner of scopophilia. Further, Ilana – as will be discussed much more in detailed later in this analysis – is not a traditional 'perfect' female character; she behaves how she wants and carries herself with both extreme confidence and very vulgar behavior. In the opinion of this author, her vulgar and male behaviorism downplays the objectification of her. She is at times crude and gross – as in the episode in which she defecates in her own leotard ("Just the Tips", 13:25-15:00). While the leotard can be considered extremely sexual as it only covers her nipples, the circumstances around it – such as making her own brother watch her try it on, as well as later defecating in it at a house party – downplays the possibility of objectification of her.

A male spectator may, of course, take pleasure in looking at the two women on screen – though, it seems inevitable that the pleasure is later destroyed by the comical circumstances surrounding the

two women – such as in the case of Ilana defecating in her leotard. Thus, in terms of the traditional position of female characters as described Mulvey, there is not much to notice or concern oneself within *Broad City* – not much else than how Abbi and Ilana often contradict the ideas of Mulvey. The notion of them contradicting Mulvey will be discussed further in the following section of this analysis, showing how the two women are in the dominant position, the forwarders of the story and the ones who – instead of being objectified – objectify others.

The Pleasures of a Glamorous Life – and the Lack Thereof in *Broad City*

In the pilot, it was stated how there were not many instances in which viewers could take pleasure in the lifestyles of Abbi and Ilana, like viewers of *Dallas* did as according to Ang. Instead, it was suggested how viewers may have taken pleasure in the very unglamorous but relatable lives of Abbi and Ilana. This notion is something which follows the women in the series throughout – the women do not suddenly become rich and glamorous, and the struggle of their 20's keep following them till the series' conclusion in season five. There are many instances in which the not-so-glamorous lifestyles prevail and the females are struggling with coping with the New York City lifestyle – that is, having to work unglamorous jobs in order to pay for an unglamorous apartment with bed bugs and faulty plumbing. For instance, Abbi and Ilana must scour for a free air conditioner during the heat in order for Abbi to not be completely drenched in sweat – and so they steal one from a dormitory ("In Heat"). In season four, Ilana is helpless as bedbugs infest her and roommate Jamie's apartment – as the exterminator comes, she tells them that: "I can't guarantee that I can get them out, however, I can guarantee that I can't" ("Bedbugs", 11:26-11:34). Another episode includes Abbi's landlord telling her that she cannot flush toilet paper anymore, and has to get a separate bucket for the used toilet paper – leaving her distressed with the fact that the plumbing is so faulty that she has to buy what she herself dubs as a "shitbucket" ("SheWork and S… Bucket"). Thus, these unglamorous situations following the characters throughout their

storyline show that the viewers of *Broad City* cannot take pleasure from watching the show in the exact same manner as with the women watching *Dallas.* Only in one instance does Ilana and Abbi live a glamorous lifestyle – in the episode in which they are house-sitting for the rich woman whose son Ilana babysits ("House-Sitting"). Here, Ilana and Abbi correlate with the viewers of *Dallas* by taking pleasure in the lifestyle of the rich woman. The contrast between their lives and the rich woman's life are shown through the laundry room – Abbi, Ilana, Lincoln, and Jamie all use the fancy laundry machines, and as the overuse of the machines sets the house on fire, the rich woman calls Ilana and says "(…) she didn't even know there was a laundry room" ("House-Sitting", 20:25-20:30). If comparing this representation of a glamorous lifestyle to that of the tv-series *Sex and the City*, the facet is that of two different perspectives. Whereas the show *Sex and the City* focus on eating at fancy restaurants, buying designer materials and going on expensive holidays, *Broad City* instead illustrates the notion of a glamorous lifestyle in having a fancy laundry room. Though this glamorous life is only apparent in one episode, and for the remainder of the series, the two women deal with bedbugs and "shitbuckets". In relation to *Sex and the City* – a commonly known postfeminist series that correlates well with female pleasure from glamorous lifestyles – the show takes the notion postfeminism to new heights, in which the female spectator instead takes pleasure from Abbi and Ilana's non-glamorous lifestyle. Additionally, the show comments on how females must always appear glamorous and perfect by showing two characters that are not – something earlier postfeminist shows could not do. Thus, as suggested in the analysis of the pilot episode, it is possible that these unglamorous and often relatable situations are something in which viewers can take pleasure in; in relating to these characters and seeing characters on TV being exactly as unlucky, unglamorous and normal as oneself.

Dominant Forwarders and Submissive Males: The Structure of *Broad City*

As shown in the pilot episode, Abbi and Ilana are the forwarders of the story and the ones who control the narrative. Furthermore, the male characters were put in a submissive position where they either are sexualized or unattractive, unintelligent and lazy individuals. Thus, the pilot upheld the dominant-submissive structure which Kaplan noted were always to be kept intact, placing Abbi and Ilana in the male dominant position. This structure, as will be shown in the following section, is kept intact through the remainder of the series – with one exception. Furthermore, the lesbian fantasy Kaplan noted to be a structural element in cinematic arts is very much apparent in the series.

Starting with Abbi and Ilana as the forwarders of the story, the two women always drive forward the narrative within an episode. *Broad City* is a typical sitcom in which every episode has its own story arc, with only a few elements being serialized – such as the relationships between the characters as well as references to earlier episodes. Thus, every episode has a new story arc to follow, and throughout the series, the two women are central to the stories as well as the forwarders of the narratives. For instance, the story of Abbi and neighbor Jeremy is a story arc that follows the women all through season one and until the middle of season two. In one episode, Jeremy asks Abbi to sign for a package for him, and she agrees – when she goes to the store and misses the package, Abbi forwards the narrative of claiming the package before Jeremy notices it, hoping he will invite her over due to her doing him a favor (“Working Girls”). As she scours through most of Manhattan to claim the package, Abbi is shown as the forwarder of the story. Similarly, in an episode in which the gang is gathered in Abbi’s apartment during a hurricane, Abbi and Ilana forward the narrative of Abbi and Jeremy in several ways; one being removing Abbi’s feces (“Hurricane Wanda”). As the toilet is clogged, and Jeremy knocks on the door to join, Abbi panics as she does not want Jeremy to see her feces in the toilet (07:00-07:45). Thus, Abbi calls in Ilana to help her, and as Ilana promises to remove the feces for her, the two women are seen as forwarders of the episode’s narrative

(08:00-09:24). Following the incident with the feces, the two women try different things in order to make the relationship between Jeremy and Abbi happen, such as a through a game of truth and dare – though, Ilana screws the game up for Abbi as her dare for Abbi becomes too aggressive: "I dare you to suck Jeremy's dick!" (12:25-12:50). In the end, Jeremy and Abbi finally agree to go on a date, after Abbi leaves him a voicemail during her intoxication from pain medication due to her having wisdom teeth removed ("Wisdom Teeth"). During the date, the two have sex, and Jeremy asks Abbi to 'peg him' with a strap-on dildo – Abbi is reluctant, but after calling Ilana who convinces her to do it, she 'pegs' Jeremy ("Knockoffs", 6:50-9:23). Though, while Jeremy is at work, Abbi mistakenly puts the dildo in the dishwasher, destroying it – and while she panics, she does forward the narrative of replacing the dildo with an exact copy. As she tries to 'peg' Jeremy the following night with the new dildo, he discovers that Abbi has bought a knockoff: "Wait, what is that? (…) mine was a Shinjo, that's like a cheap knockoff (…) it's just that a Shinjo is custom made for my body" (16:30-19:45). Evidently, the knockoff dildo creates an argument, and the two break up. What can be drawn from the story of Jeremy and Abbi – one of the shows' longer story arcs – is that both Abbi and Ilana are the forwarders of the narrative of their relationship, shown through their schemes and plots to bring the two together. Secondly, Jeremy is not removed from the submissive position he was put in during the pilot episode – the submissive position can be argued to be further stated by the fact that Abbi 'pegs' him with the strap-on dildo, making her dominant. Though, the pegging may not be constructed as to put Jeremy in a submissive position – it may be a way for *Broad City* to show postfeminist views of sexuality – something which will be discussed later on in this analysis.

One very significant story arc in *Broad City* is the narrative of their own lives and dreams – Abbi, as the viewer is introduced to very early on, is an aspiring artist. As the series progresses, the viewers see Abbi trying to forward her own narrative of becoming an artist through several

instances – one of them being her first "gallery showing" during the fourth episode of season one. In this episode, Abbi invites Ilana and Lincoln to go see her first gallery opening, though as they arrive, Ilana realizes that the opening is merely Abbi's drawings being shown in a sandwich shop ("The Lockout", 13:05-13:20). Another episode features the story of how Abbi's illustration is sold for 8000 dollars – a success which she thrives on until she finds out the illustration is being used without her knowledge for a dating site named "SelectDate", meant for only white people ("Apartment Hunters", 15:20-16:03). As the series progresses, not much more happens in terms of Abbi's art – until the fifth and final season, where Abbi finally decides to forward the narrative of doing what she loves. Here, she decides to apply to an art residency in Colorado, and receives it – creating tension between the two women as Abbi is forced to move to Colorado ("Shenanigans"; "Sleep No More"). Ilana too forwards the story of her own narrative as the series is wrapped up – throughout the series, the viewers have known Ilana as a much more open-minded, airheaded and flighty woman as compared to Abbi – seemingly not with any goal in life. As Ilana figures out her dreams of being a psychologist, she applies to and get into master's degree in psychology – and, in true Ilana style, throws away acceptance letters from the Ivy League schools Yale, Cornell, and Dartmouth, only focusing on the letter from public university Hunter College – which, in real life, is known for having notable female alumni as well as a broad cultural student life ("Shenanigans", 02:27-03:04). The women forwarding the story of their own dreams and success is important, not only for the characters themselves – but it also serves as a wrap-up of the series' overall storyline about two women who are unconditional friends, as the two now have to live in separate states and overcome the fact that they cannot always depend on each other.

In the analysis of *Broad City*'s pilot, it was shown how the male characters are in a submissive position due to either objectification from the female characters or due to their unintelligent, lazy and unattractive traits. While there is a change for the male characters, some stay in their

submissive position – like with the above example of Jeremy. One male character who stays submissive is Matt, otherwise known in the series as Bevers. Bevers stays exactly how he is portrayed in the pilot episode: unattractive, unintelligent and lazy – someone which the female spectator is not going to use for visual pleasure. For instance, Bevers keep behaving in a way that is not socially acceptable – such as walking around half naked with Abbi there while asking her about his missing underwear ("Pu$$y Weed", 00:40-01:35). Additionally, Bevers is caught masturbating in the living room of their apartment as Abbi walks in on him – which ultimately make her search for a new apartment ("Apartment Hunters", 02:15-03:30). These types of situations in which Bevers put himself in makes him repulsive and aggravating, something which arguably keeps him in the submissive position while not being sexualized or a burden of objectification. Though, in the first episode of the fourth season, which serves as a flashback to 2011 when Abbi and Ilana meet, Bevers is extremely different – the episode also serves as the meeting between Bevers and Abbi, in which they discuss his role as a guest in the apartment ("Sliding Doors"). In the scene in which Bevers meet Abbi for the first time, Bevers is shown to be well-trained and extremely attractive – even bouncing his pecs in his chest in front of her (07:35-8:59). Of course, the scene is clearly made with CGI with the actors' head on top of another body, though the contrast serves as a comical element – especially as he uses his charms and attractiveness to scam the struck Abbi into allowing to stay as long as he wants and eat all her food without paying. Thus, even when Bevers is attractive, he still exhibits the behavior which will later make him unattractive, lazy and aggravating.

Lincoln is one of the male characters who exhibit a change in position. As stated in the pilot, Lincoln is in a submissive position due to the nature of their relationship; Lincoln being in love with Ilana, and Ilana wanting only a physical relationship. Their relationship stays in that same position during much of the series – him asking whether or not they should be exclusive, and her ignoring his request. Their relationship status as 'sex buddies' stay the same until the eighth episode of the

third season, when Lincoln breaks up with Ilana due to him having met another woman and him wanting to have a monogamous relationship with said woman: “Ilana, I love you, but I wanna be in a relationship, and you wanna do other stuff. Which is fine, it’s cool, but we want different things, so I gotta move on” (“Burning Bridges”, 06:05-08:15). This scene is an extremely important one for the male character Lincoln – until now, he has let Ilana be the one in charge of their relationship, ignoring his own feelings and going with her flow. Furthermore, the scene shows a reversal in the conventional structure of females being the ones seeking a committed relationship while the males are not. Though, as he breaks up with Ilana, Lincoln takes charge of his own life and what he wants – removing himself from the submissive position he is put in by Ilana. After the breakup, Ilana is seemingly heartbroken about his decision – shown later in the same episode as she cries to Abbi about their breakup: “Lincoln broke up with me – whatever that means, you know. He met some beautiful queen (…) no, a queen like us (…) now he wants to be monogamous with her, and he should, he deserves whatever he wants. And he doesn’t even wanna be friends, you know, he never really did. I just never heard it” (22:07-23:43). Later, at the abovementioned party at which Ilana defecates her leotard, Lincoln does freeze the flow of action as she sees him (“Just the Tips”, 12:40-13:45). The flow seems to be not frozen due to erotic contemplation, but instead in romantic contemplation, furthered by the romantic music as well as the lack of technical aspects understating eroticism on Lincoln. In fact, the moment Ilana defecates is the moment in which Lincoln introduces his new girlfriend to her. In a later episode, as Ilana learns that Lincoln is single again, she takes the step to be in a monogamous relationship with him despite her polyamorous lifestyle (“Florida”). Thus, after the breakup between them, as well as them getting back together, Lincoln is shown is suddenly being the one in charge of the relationship – that is, taking charge of his own wants and needs and letting Ilana follow if she wants. By stating to Ilana what he wants, he is removed from the submissive position. Though, while he is no longer in a submissive position, he

does not become dominant due to several reasons: for one, he is not the forwarder of any narrative besides their relationship, and he does not objectify female characters by using them as objects of sexualization.

Like Lincoln, Trey also exhibits change which removes him from the submissive position he is put in during the pilot episode; actually, that change happens simultaneously with Lincoln's during the same episode of Ilana and Lincoln breaking up. In much of the series, Trey is shown as the submissive and unintelligent – but kind-hearted – male character which Abbi can scam whenever she desires. For instance, Abbi once again scams Trey by telling him she is sick in order for her to retrieve the package for Jeremy ("Working Girls", 03:44-04:37). The kind-hearted – but unintelligent – Trey, of course, believes Abbi, showing his submissive state. The same happens as he invites Abbi and Ilana to a party – as they think the party is boring, Abbi scams Trey again in order to leave by telling him she has a tapeworm ("Hashtag FOMO" 07:04-07:55). He later calls her, confronting her with an Instagram photo of her at another party – to which she replies that the picture is a 'throwback' from another party, and he believes her once again (11:45-12:52). The fact that Trey is so easily scammed by Abbi exhibit a structure of him being submissive and her being in a dominant position in which she can do whatever she likes. Indeed, as Ilana finds out Trey was previously a pornographic actor by the name of Kirk Steele, Abbi uses the information to blackmail him into being a trainer instead of a cleaner – which he allows her to do, as he is scared of being fired ("Kirk Steele", 06:00-08:30). Again, Abbi is shown as the dominant character, while Trey is submissive – the latter being supported in the episode's outro which features one of the Kirk Steele videos, in which Trey is shown in a pornographic setting (19:47-20:55). In the Kirk Steele video, Trey is sexualized due to his naked body and pornographic behavior, though the objectification and visual pleasure are downplayed from the comical elements surrounding the video – and as such, it seems as if the video becomes more humorous than sexualizing.

In terms of the submissive position Trey is in, as the story progresses, change happens: Abbi and Trey have an awkward kiss, and they later have sex as he protects Abbi after she has a break-in at her apartment ("Rat-Pack", 06:03-06:59; "B&B-NYC", 18:42-18:57). After that, the two go on a date, though Abbi keeps the relationship from Ilana due to her embarrassment about dating Trey – keeping Trey in a submissive position ("Burning Bridges"). Though, as Abbi finally tells Ilana what is going on – during the date with Trey – Trey accidentally overhears Abbi calling him "a joke" and saying she is embarrassed (22:10-22:40). Though, as he overhears her saying that, Trey – much like Lincoln – takes charge and speaks up. He stands up to Abbi and walks away – removing him from the submissive position Abbi puts him in. Thus, during that exact episode, both Trey and Lincoln remove themselves from the submissive state they are put in by the dominant women, leaving them heartbroken and vulnerable.

Another interesting male character in *Broad City* is Jamié, Ilana's roommate and best friend – while he is quickly introduced as their weed dealer in the pilot episode, much is not known about him until later on. Jamié, besides being Guatemalan, is a gay man. In the aforementioned flashback episode in which Abbi and Ilana meet, Jamié and Ilana are in a relationship – which becomes extremely comical as the viewer knows from the three previous seasons that Jamié is gay ("Sliding Doors", 11:32-11:52). An interesting notion with Jamié is his homosexuality – he is never sexualized or objectified by the women in the series due to his homosexuality, and unlike Bevers, Jamié is never unattractive, lazy and unintelligent – thus, it is arguable how he is never put in a submissive position. He is not really in a dominant position either; he does not forward narratives, though he does objectify other males in the story – seen in, for instance, the episode in which he helps Ilana by reaching her lost passport to her while on roller-skates ("Getting There", 13:07-13:27). In that scene, Jamié acts as if he is tripping on the roller-skates as four attractive males run past him, tricking them into grabbing him and holding him tight: "Ay, my brakes! Hold me closer,

closer, closer!" (ibid.). Thus, the character Jamie is interesting due to the fact that he arguably is neither submissive or dominant, most likely due to his sexuality and the women's inability to sexualize him.

While the above mentioned male characters are not really sexualized and objectified by neither the female characters or female spectators, there are male characters which are clearly objectified by Abbi and Ilana. In one instance, the women objectify a group of men playing basketball while rating them – Ilana thinking they are rating their dick sizes, Abbi thinking they are rating their looks: "Abbi, why wouldn't we be rating them on their dick size? It's all I can see! Those b-ball shorts are God's gift!" ("The Last Supper", 00:00-01:00). In this scene, there are definite female gazes happening – Ilana and Abbi are clearly staring and objectifying them while the camera is focusing on the crotches of the male characters playing basketball, showing the outlines of their penises through the shorts. Thus, the traditional roles are flipped; Abbi and Ilana become the ones objectifying and gazing upon the males, who are the burden of the women's objectification. This notion is commented on by the male characters themselves: "Hey ladies – your staring is making some of the guys feel uncomfortable" (01:02-01:13). Here, *Broad City* shows a commentary on the sexualization and objectification of characters in cinema and television by creating the scenario in which Abbi and Ilana exhibit the female version of a traditional male gaze. Other scenarios in which they objectify men are seen as the two are going to a dog wedding at Central Park – as they come across attractive men, they objectify them by talking about them in a sexual manner as well as yelling obscene things at them, such as Ilana yelling "Wanna fuck?" ("The Matrix", 07:11-08:20). Instances like these are seen in *Broad City*, though not often – as objectification is rare in the show, with this being the only two instances where the objectification happens without the consent of the male characters being burdened by it. Other scenes in which the men are objectified, such as the scene in which Ilana has sex with an attractive bisexual man, happens in a scenario in which the

male character has consented to a sexual act: “Daaaamn! That penis is PINK!” (“Stolen Phone”, 04:45-05:34). In this scenario, her eyes are clearly lingering on the male characters’ body and sexualizing him. Funnily enough, as he tells her he is bisexual, this does not change the objectification happening: “That is true masculinity, you are truly evolved – and I am truly wet” (ibid.). All in all, while there are two instances throughout five seasons in which the women objectify male characters and exhibit a female gaze without the male characters’ consent, other instances of objectification and scopophilia happens in instances in which the males are consensual – and like with the above example, the sexualization is often downplayed by the comical surroundings.

Kaplan noted in her 1990 study how lesbian fantasies often surround the female position in cinematic arts, creating scopophilia – and this is true for *Broad City*, at least for the characters. Throughout the series, Ilana’s lesbian fantasies about Abbi is constructed as a key element for their friendship as well as a running joke, with Abbi having to cope with the fact that Ilana has fantasies about them. The first instance in which Ilana exhibit this fantasy is in the second episode of the first season, in which she, in a weirdly sexual manner, keeps touching Abbi while making out with Lincoln in his dentist office (“Pu$$y Weed”, 16:20-16:55). Ilana is also heartbroken when she finds out Abbi has kissed a girl once while in college: “You said that if you were ever gonna do same-sex experimentation, it was gonna be with ME!” (“Destination: Wedding”, 13:35-14:25). As Abbi tells her she has never said that, Ilana answers that “(…) it has been implied”. In an episode in which the two girls play basketball with a group of boys, Ilana tries to put two fingers up Abbi’s bottom – and while Abbi is clearly offended by Ilana doing that without her consent, Ilana is taking pleasure from it (“Co-Op”, 00:40-01:10). Thus, as shown in the examples above, Ilana clearly has a lesbian fantasy surrounding her relationship with Abbi – which is a key element throughout the series. Though, while the lesbian fantasy as according to Kaplan is present, it works differently in the

series – the fantasy is not constructed as being for the pleasure of the female spectator and is not furthered by female gazes by Ilana. Furthermore, Abbi rejects the gaze by being visibly uncomfortable with Ilana's fantasy. Lastly, there are no camera movements, editing, and lighting advancing a female gaze for the spectator. Instead, it serves as an extremely comical – and sometimes uncomfortable – element and running joke in the series.

Postfeminist Ideas and Critiques of Oppression in *Broad City*

Lotz, in her studies on the 'new' new woman in the late 1990s and early 2000s, argued how this type of character was characterized by the three aspects of *dating, marriage* and *career opportunities* (Lotz, 2006, p. 95). Here, we saw single female characters who were successful in life with career competence and financial freedom, but with struggles in terms of finding 'Mr. Right' through dating: "(…) young, unmarried women who (…) struggle with the social pressure to marry and wonder whether a suitable companion even exists" (p. 92). In terms of the success and career competence, these values are not necessarily reproduced in *Broad City*. As mentioned, the women are not in positions in which they possess their dream jobs – the two women, most often, are struggling to make ends meet. For instance, Abbi works at the gym Solstice as a cleaner, and only as she blackmails Trey is she allowed to teach a class instead of cleaning pubes, puke and toilets ("Kirk Steele"). Similarly, Ilana works at Deals! Deals! Deals!, a job she has no interest in – causing her to sleep her way through work or even hiring unpaid interns in order for them to do her job for her ("Mochalatta Chills", 06:06-07:00). Though, there are moments in the series in which the women are doing well – like in the case of Abbi cashing an 8000 dollar check for an illustration she sold, later revealed to be for a dating site only for white people with no interest in meeting people of other ethnicities ("Apartment Hunters", 15:20-16:03). Ilana also receives a taste of success as she is employed as a high-end waiter, making so many tips that she splurges on expensive clothing, nails and gifts for loved ones ("Just the Tips"; "Bedbugs"). Though the success

is cut short as her cash from tips becomes infested with bedbugs and she has not put the money in the bank ("Bedbugs", 11:00-11:35; 12:36-13:23). While there are moments like these in which the women obtain some sort of success in terms of career, for the most part, they are struggling and working awful jobs to make ends meet – showing some contradiction in terms of Lotz' idea of the 'new' new woman.

As mentioned, Lotz also found how the 'new' new woman in television often was a character struggling to find "Mr. Right", being pressured by society to marry but still refusing eligible bachelors along the way. This notion holds both true and wrong in terms of *Broad City* – firstly, Abbi is the character we see date a lot of people in her search for an eligible partner. As mentioned earlier, her 'hunt' for Jeremy is a story arc which follows the women until the middle of season two, where they finally date and have sexual relations – but break up due to the situation in which Abbi destroys Jeremy's dildo ("Knockoffs"). She tries several measures along the way to reel him in – for instance with the aforementioned example of Abbi trying to retrieve the lost package for Jeremy, in which she travels far and wide to try and get it for him ("Working Girls"). Similarly, when Abbi meets an eligible bachelor at a bar who says he will text her, and she loses her phone, she tracks the phone and scours the whole of Manhattan to get it – just to be able to answer the guy's text ("Stolen Phone"). In the episode, Abbi forwards the narrative of her stolen phone, and ends up succeeding and finding it; and as she goes on a date with her eligible bachelor, she finds out through boring small talk that he is not so eligible after all, resulting in Abbi 'refusing' him as a possible partner (16:55-17:42). While Abbi refuses him as an eligible partner, she does still manage to take him home and have sexual relations with him (18:10-19:10). Ilana is an interesting character in the case of Lotz's idea of the 'new' new woman struggling with pressures from society to marry and to find Mr. Right – as she fiercely contradicts it. While she does love Lincoln and is – at a small point – in a monogamous relationship with him, she labels herself as a "polyamorous queen" and, in

most of the series, has many different sexual partners. These sexual partners are not due to her wanting to find an eligible bachelor – first of all, Ilana is queer, so it is just as likely that she will with a woman is as with a man. Secondly, as she clearly states during her and Lincoln's relationship renegotiation during the last season, she does not yearn for marriage and kids: "Lincoln, I'm only twenty-seven – what am I, a child bride? You know, I don't know that I never want it, I just definitely don't want it right now (…) at this point, I can't move on this" ("Artsy Fartsy", 13:05-14:10). Thus, her agenda with dating is never due to wanting a partner for life, but for sexual pleasure – showing a very different type of outlook than as opposed to Lotz' idea of the 'new' new woman. Though, as Lotz further noted, the struggle of finding eligible bachelors – whom in the dating process often are refused through a selective process by the female character – turns the female character to pursue her urgency for a family someplace else (p. 89). Often, those situations are seen through the characters committing fully to either having children by themselves or a female peer. The two women definitely exhibit a selective process in their dating life, and the urgency for a family is seen through the friendship between them, one which will be touched upon later in this analysis.

As C.M. Byerly and K. Ross proposed, female characters become humanized and relatable when the viewers see them (…) struggle with complexities of impossible lives" (Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 22). This notion is something in which *Broad City* exemplifies – the struggle of an impossible life. The two women live in New York, notable for being one of the most expensive cities to live in throughout the world. As Abbi and Ilana struggle to be able to pay rent or other necessities, the viewer relates to the feeling of powerlessness happening to them. This is shown in the many examples of them scheming and hustling in order to keep their heads above water – for instance, in one episode, Abbi is seen trying to recycle bottles for seven dollars during her unemployment as she struggles financially ("Bedbugs", 01:49-02:09). In the same episode, she is robbed – and while the

robber holds her at gunpoint at an ATM while she empties her bank account, the robber ends up lecturing her on financial responsibilities after he sees her credit balance: “Oh my god, is this a joke? (…) That’s your total equity? 347 dollars? Are you kidding me? You gotta keep more money in your bank account than that! What if there’s an emergency? What if the economy suddenly tanks? (…) You clearly are living beyond your means – can you even afford that bag?” (14:20-15:50). While serving as a hilarious scene, the robber’s lecturing of Abbi’s total equity serves as an example of how the women are often struggling with the complexity of their New York City life – a key element in the series throughout.

Gill noted how postfeminist female characters often are portrayed as an active, desiring sexual subject “(…) who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interest to do so” (Gill, 2007, p. 151). This notion is apparent in *Broad City* throughout – as mentioned earlier, Abbi most often is seen in rather traditional and ‘conservative’ outfits compared to her counterpart Ilana. When Abbi does dress up - showing legs, curves and cleavage - it is most often in her chase of a sexual or romantic partner, and thus her outfits correlate well with Gill’s notion of it being a “liberated interest to do so”. For instance, Abbi’s aforementioned iconic blue dress is formfitting, showing curves, cleavage, and her legs – and when she wears it, it is in her chase for Mr. Right and to gain a romantic partner. Though, while it can be said that the blue dress is ‘for a man’, it is a liberated choice she makes to help her own scheme, and not constructed as an instance of her being the burden of objectification from male gazes. Ironically, in the episode in which she goes on a date with Trey, she tells Bevers that she is only interested in having a physical relationship with Trey, and wants to be dressed to connote that idea (“Burning Bridges”, 10:32-11:26). Bevers helps her connote that notion through her outfit, and they end up choosing the blue dress – which ends up being an ironic statement on her unsuccessfulness of finding a romantic partner while wearing the blue dress. Ilana, with her very provocative clothing,

exhibit Gill's notion too – her clothing style is mostly crop tops showing her belly, short skirts and no bra. Ilana, being an ultra-feminist of the third wave, definitely exhibit the idea of her sexual clothing as individualism, choice and empowerment – and in her own liberated interest. Her choice of no bra, for instance, is not made for her own objectification to the male gaze, but for feminist reasons: "I took off my bra cause I was like feeling like loose and oppressed, and I just wanted to chill" ("Burning Bridges", 24:20-24:40). Thus, the behavior and mindset of Ilana and Abbi shows that their clothing choices are not due to objectification, but their own liberated interests – a choice they make not to please a man, but to gain self-confidence in their endeavors, fitting well with Gill's idea that dressing sexual is wrongly thought of being something to please a male character or male spectator (Gill, 2007, p. 154-155).

Gill also noted how dating and sexual choices are to be acknowledged as individually chosen by the female characters – not just something which she must engage in to please the male sex (p. 154). This postfeminist notion is very much so apparent in *Broad City*. For instance, in the case of Abbi, she fully expresses how she does not want anything but a physical relationship with Trey, showing her individual choice as well as an unwillingness to go with Trey's wishes of a romantic relationship. In the episode in which the gang is house-sitting, Abbi invites over a former teacher whom she recently reconnected with. As the two become intimate, the teacher admits how he found Abbi attractive when she was his student at age 17 – and tries to roleplay that she is 17 during sex ("House-Sitting", 17:51-18:45). Abbi, of course, is disgusted by his behavior – and stops the sexual act. Thus, the series shows a character who does not engage in the teachers' creepy fantasy just to please him, exhibiting a character fitting well with Gill's notion of sexual choices being acknowledged as individually chosen. Here, Abbi explicitly refuses the sexualization of her from the teacher due to the expectations from him of her having to act like her 17-year-old self and be sexualized as a teenager. Ilana, too, exhibits the notion of sexual empowerment – especially in the

case of her relationship with Lincoln. As the two become monogamous, with Ilana struggling with the term 'forever', they agree on doing it for a year before revisiting the terms of their relationship ("House-Sitting", 16:45-17:46). In the fifth season, the two are shown revisiting those exact terms – and as Lincoln states that kids and marriage for him is non-negotiable, the two break up due to their very different points of view on sex and relationships, with Ilana stating that she is not meant for monogamous relationships: "I'm meant to be a polyamorous queen" ("Artsy Fartsy", 18:50-20:24). Here, Ilana shows how she too is a character who chooses her own dating and sexual experiences, not confining herself to a traditional relationship just to please that of the male sex. Thus, the two women show characters fitting well into Gill's notion of dating and sex in postfeminist characters.

Scholar K. Boyle argued how postfeminism somehow manages to mock male masculinity as the term is "(…) designed to let men (and patriarchy) off the hook by either celebrating men's feminism or by turning individual men into objects of fun and derision (…)" (Boyle, 2005, 179). This statement definitely holds true in the case of *Broad City* – especially in the case of the character Bevers. Bevers is, as described earlier in this analysis, portrayed as unintelligent and unattractive. Though, as should also be noted, he is *fun* as well – his personality, behavior, and social incompetence as he walks around either half-naked or entirely naked in the presence of Abbi and Ilana, as well as him masturbating in the communal living spaces, is definitely designed as a character to ridicule and mock. One instance, in particular, show how *Broad City* celebrates men's feminism and lets males off the hook is shown when Ilana calls herself a "cum queen" in a crazy and vulgar rant – resulting in Bevers, who additionally is in his underwear, asking Abbi: "Am I allowed to behave that way?" ("Witches", 01:00-03:16). The incident is, of course, a commentary on how Ilana behaves in a very inappropriate manner which is not exactly correlating to feminist ideals, and Bevers showing – even though he questions it – a clear understanding of how *not* to behave around women. The scene can also be argued to let men off the hook by exhibiting a female

character who does not herself show appropriate behavior, and the male character questioning such behavior. The celebration of men's feminism is also shown in Lincoln as the gang is going to a dog wedding – here, Lincoln calls Ilana to ensure she remembers the dogs' rings: "I'm not patronizing you, but did you remember the rings?" ("The Matrix", 04:45-05:18). Clearly, with his relationship with the very feminist Ilana, he starts the question by stating he is not patronizing her as to not step on her toes. This scene shows a male character being aware of the micro-aggressions which sometimes is exhibited through patriarchal behavior in men – and thus, celebrates men's feminism.

As mentioned, Lotz argued in her 2001 study that "(…) no one character emerges as the unflawed poster woman for contemporary feminist", noting how complexity is shown through a representation of different types of women and how these narratives "explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit" (Lotz, 2001, p. 114-116). As argued in the pilot, the two women are very different both in terms of their behavior and personalities – and the personality traits described in the analysis of the pilot holds true for the rest of the series: Ilana especially shows the contrast between the two women with her flamboyant, confident and queer personality as opposed to the sweet, calm and low-key Abbi. Though, one thing is certain – they are both inherently flawed and are not perfect. Their behavior shows two women who scam their way through life in order to achieve whatever they want – shown for instance in the episode in which Abbi blackmails Trey in order to become a trainer ("Kirk Steele"). Another instance of Abbi showing a flawed character is shown through the two women trying to find a free air-conditioner after Abbi's date passes out from heat during sex ("In Heat"). In the episode, the two women discuss Abbi's sexual encounter, and as Ilana asks her whether or not she 'finished' after he passes out, and Abbi admits to 'finishing', they both realize that Abbi raped her sexual partner: "Oh my god, I raped him dude, I raped male Stacey!" (07:52-8:23). In the same episode, the two go to a dormitory to steal an air-conditioner, and Abbi finds out the guy she is kissing is only sixteen – making her what she considers as a "(…)

repeated sex offender" (18:20-19:12). Ilana too is careless and flawed – never working at her job at Deals! Deals! Deals! as she comes and goes as she likes – as well as getting a comment on proper workplace attire and sexual harassment, both of which she is guilty ("Working Girls", 02:37-03:42). Thus, the two women exhibit very flawed, different and distinct characters – which is what Lotz would consider as a postfeminist trait, perhaps with the exception of rape and being a sex offender.

Lotz further argued how a trait of postfeminist television is seen through critique or commentary of for instance homophobia, racism, elitism and so forth: "[postfeminism] critiques oppression or discrimination based on other aspects of one's identity" (Lotz, 2001, p. 116). This trait is arguably one of the most distinctive traits of postfeminism in *Broad City* – the show exhibit a broad array of characters from different backgrounds and with different identities. For instance, Ilana and Abbi are both Jewish, and in terms of sexuality, Ilana is queer as well as polyamorous, as stated earlier. Abbi too goes through a change in the last season of the show as she suddenly begins dating a woman by the name of Leslie – who later breaks up with Abbi due to her not being adult enough ("Artsy Fartsy"; "Lost and Found"). Ilana's roommate and friend Jamié is of Guatemalan descent as well as a gay man, Lincoln is of Afro-American heritage, and Ilana's brother Elliot is a Jewish gay man. Thus, just by the roster of characters, there is arguably seen a critique of oppression and discrimination through the representation of a broad array of characters. Furthermore, the show exhibits many comments on racism, homophobia, transphobia and so forth – as well as a representation of many minorities. In one episode, Jamié – while helping Ilana with her back-acne – comments on Ilana's earrings which say "Latina": "I say this because I love you so much. There's something you do which I see a lot of white people do, and it's kind of like cultural appropriation (…) like for example, you know those earrings that you have that say 'Latina'? (…) They look beautiful on you, but you're not Latina, mi amor. So it's almost like you're stealing the identity from people who fought hard against colonial structures. So in a way, it's almost like, you are the

colonist – you see?" ("Rat Pack", 20:05-20:40). Here, Jamié comments on the oppression of his people and even use the terms 'cultural appropriation' as well as 'colonial structures' – a clear statement from *Broad City* and a critique on racism as Jamié confronts Ilana on the problems with her cultural appropriation. In another episode, Ilana shows her slightly racist behavior as she, during Jamié's celebration of becoming an American Citizen, talks about Jewish ancestry in New York with Abbi, Lincoln, and Jamie: "It's unbelievable that we live in a city where our ancestors passed through Ellis Island" ("Citizen Ship", 00:50-01:06). As Lincoln says "Yeah… Mine didn't", Ilana realizes her not-so-politically correct statement, serving as a comment on racism and oppression.

Other examples of how *Broad City* critiques the oppression of minorities is seen through their positive representations of said minorities – especially through the LGBT+ community. As mentioned, the character roster speaks for itself in terms of positive representation, but there are many instances in which they introduce characters and references to minorities. For instance, the employer of Ilana in the restaurant in which she has success is RuPaul, known for his drag and the show *RuPaul's Drag Race*. As she is employed by the character Marcell played by RuPaul, references to the famous show which has popularized drag culture is made, as Marcell tells Ilana: "Don't fuck it up!" ("Twaining Day", 10:27-11:10). The phrase "Don't fuck it up" is, of course, a reference to *RuPaul's Drag Race*, and perhaps one of his – and the show's – most famous quotes. Thus, as shown, *Broad City* is a show which deals with critiques of racist, homophobic and elitist behavior, as well as a show which represents minorities positively.

Other traits Lotz highlights as postfeminist is, of course, commentary on feminism by depicting feminist solutions as well as illustrating "contemporary struggles faced by women and feminists" (Lotz, 2001, p. 116). One great example of both depicting feminist solutions as well as illustrating contemporary struggles is when the two women are on an airline. Here, Abbi gets her period but has forgotten to pack tampons. Here, they discuss the struggles of periods, and after discussing how

perhaps homeless women have to choose between buying food or tampons, Abbi and Ilana states how they should be free for all women – and that the reason why they aren't free must be because "(…) the government hates women" ("Jews on a Plane", 8:35-8:56). In this example, the two women raise questions about a contemporary struggle for women and depict a solution for it as well by stating an obvious solution – that tampons should be free.

As shown in the sections above, *Broad City* concerns itself with intersectional issues through the representation of characters of Latinex and Afro-American heritage, Jewish heritage and LGBT+ community members as well as the struggles the characters endure due to this issue - as seen in, for instance, Jamié's comment on the oppression of his people, but also the storyline of him becoming an American citizen and the struggles he has faced ("Citizen Ship"). As Gill noted in her 2016 article, the way in which post-postfeminism and intersectionality are intertwined is that post-postfeminism embodies the intersectional relations much more than postfeminism did - though postfeminism did concern itself with the concept (Gill, 2016, p. 619-520). As such, *Broad City* exemplifies not only postfeminist attributes but post-postfeminist ones, too. With the show's focus on intersectional issues, it distances itself from earlier portrayals of characters in television, connoting well with Gill's notion of indications of a post-postfeminist era; the show exemplifies building bridges among a broad array of women - and men - which for Gill was the missing element in order for television to truly evolve into a post-postfeminist era (p. 625).

In the western world, where women have now gained for instance the rights to vote, rights to work and rights for abortion, many feminists now deal with the struggles of micro-aggressions. Commentary on these micro-aggressions are seen in *Broad City* – one example being a man talking to Abbi and Ilana on the street: "You girls are so pretty, you should smile" ("St. Marks", 01:10-01:21). Their response, now a well-known GIF, to is to use both middle fingers to turn their frown upside down. His comment is, first of all, an objectification of the women; secondly, it is a great

example of the micro-aggressions women deal with in our contemporary society – unnecessary comments about women's looks and also how they should behave. *Broad City* also critiques male predatory behavior as they exemplify how this behavior may look like – shown in, for instance, the episode in which the girls are locked out of Ilana's apartment ("The Lockout"). Here, they order a locksmith to come and open their door, but as he arrives, he exemplifies extreme predatory and creepy behavior by for instance rubbing himself against a door sexually and hitting on them – which results in them having him lock them into another apartment in the building, in order to not let him know where they are staying (04:05-05:45).

Broad City also exemplifies the glorification of feminism and women through several things: Ilana's famous quote "Yas Queen" is a term she uses many times in her empowerment of women she encounters. Furthermore, many references are made to postfeminist texts, and the show also represents women of power. Postfeminist shows, such as *Sex and the City*, are referenced several times – in the fifth season, a reference to the character Carrie Bradshaw is made as Ilana writes an essay, and the scene is constructed exactly as scenes in *Sex and the City* in which Carrie would write ("Lost and Found", 19:55-20:54). A big representation of powerful women is seen in the third season when Hillary Clinton is a guest star – there, Ilana is seen working as a volunteer for the Hillary Clinton campaign, though she quits when she finds out how the job is unpaid ("2016"). When the two women are about the leave the campaign office, Hillary Clinton walks in – and the two women flip out. Abbi, Ilana, and Mrs. Clinton has a discussion about assuming the gender of a 'tube man', the inflatable advertising products often seen in front of car dealerships in the States; Ilana states how she assumed the tube man is a man, and Hillary answers: "Oh, no no – it's a she" (19:10-20:56). Of course, the inclusion of Hillary Clinton in *Broad City* is a political statement, showing the two creators' political agenda – though it is also a positive representation of powerful women, as Hillary Clinton arguably is one of America's most powerful women, and arguably one

of the most successful women in the political world. Furthermore, with Clinton's statement about "(…) it's a she", the show makes a powerful statement about feminism and gender.

Lastly, one thing to note about *Broad City* is the friendship of Ilana and Abbi. As earlier mentioned, the women's urgency for a family is seen through their friendship, as their peers – each other – take on that role. The creators themselves have stated – in the behind the scenes part of the tenth episode of the fourth season, in which the two characters have their 'friendiversary' – how they made a show about two women who are unconditional friends that are women ("Friendiversary", 22:17-23:04). As such, as described in the analysis of the pilot, the show's key element can be said to be that of *female solidarity* - a female friendship that is unconditional and not based on competition of the male sex. In the five seasons of *Broad City*, the women are each other's best friends, partners, and soulmates – even stating that from time to time. The significance of their friendship is distinctively shown in the final three episodes of series, as Abbi is going away for her residency. Here, we see a storyline in which the women now suddenly struggle with the idea of them now living in the same city, and being apart from each other. Furthermore, during the series finale, it is stated by Abbi Ilana how the two empower each other, make each other better and give each other confidence in life as the two stand on a bridge: "This is still gonna be the most beautiful, deep, real, cool and hot, meaningful, important relationship of my life (…) [I'm] not as cool as when I'm with you" ("Broad City", 8:26-10:58). The wrap-up of the show during the final episode shows just how meaningful the relationship between the two women is. Simultaneously, the show throughout the series exhibits the meaningfulness of women and friendship – something which is inarguably the most postfeminist and meaningful part of the show in terms of representation of women in contemporary television.

Broad City - A Summary

The analysis of *Broad City* as a whole showed both correlations and deviations from the pilot's framework. Like in the pilot, the women keep their carefree and morally dubious behavior throughout the series as they continuously scam everyone, especially the male characters surrounding them, to achieve their needs and wants in life - putting the male characters in the submissive position as in the case of the character Trey and Abbi's continuous scamming of him. As mentioned in the pilot, the notion "(...) of 'being oneself' and 'pleasing oneself'" made by Gill is extremely important to *Broad City*'s framework, and shown in many examples above, the framework continues for the rest of the series (Gill, 2007, p. 153). In the analysis of the pilot, Abbi and Ilana's friendship is mentioned as a cornerstone to the show's framework. The two women are portrayed, by the creators themselves, as two women with an unconditional friendship. As mentioned earlier, the notion of female solidarity is important to *Broad City*, as the two do not compete. For television, these unconditional and uncompetitive female friendships are important, as females often are represented as competing in order to "win the male", which does not represent nor promote female friendships as supportive and giving. Abbi and Ilana, like with the pilot, are furthermore shown to be the forwarders of the narratives in most instances - whether that be small storylines such as Ilana forwarding the mission of removing Abbi's poop in the episode "Hurricane Wanda", or bigger story arches such as Ilana and Lincoln's relationship being controlled by the likes of Ilana.

As mentioned in the analysis of the pilot, the women are not sexualized for that of the male gaze - even when naked, in their underwear or performing sexual acts, the lack of technical elements such as camera movements and gazes seem to not constitute the construction of a male gaze - though as noted several times, the awkwardness and hilariousness of the situations deflate the sexualization, as in the pilot's cleaning episode. This notion carries throughout the rest of the series;

seen in, for instance, Abbi 'pegging' Jeremy - the awkwardness of the situation along with the lack of technical elements and gazes constructing sexualization deflates the possibility of an objectifying male gaze.

The men, like in the pilot, seems to be put in a submissive position - Lincoln is in much of the series powerless in terms of his and Ilana's relationship, Bevers keeps being portrayed as unintelligent and unattractive and Trey is submissive from his unintelligence and naïveness leading him to be scammed. Though contrary to the pilot, the men especially show a change from the framework as they remove themselves from the female/submissive position - for instance, Lincoln stands up for himself and his need for a committed relationship, and as he breaks up with Ilana, he becomes dominant in the narrative of their relationship. Trey too stands up to Abbi as he accidentally hears her calling him a joke, removing him from the submissive position as well as Abbi no longer can manipulate him. As such, the continuation of the series shows a deviation from the framework, in which the men remove themselves from being submissive - something which can be argued to be postfeminist, as postfeminism stands up against stereotypical male representation.

The show continued showing post-feminist attributes such as sexual empowerment and sexual choices being a liberated and independent choice for the female - with the women shown to have many flings, both male and female as in the case of Ilana. Other postfeminist attributes such as their flawed characteristics were a framework from the pilot which carried throughout the series - creating a character to identify with, as the 'normalcy' (as with their unmatching underwear in the pilot) of their lives and their non-perfect image brings the audience closer, as no real woman can be considered perfect and without flaws. A deviation from the pilot is *Broad City*'s, which expands more and more as the series progresses, is the inclusion of issues of intersectionality. By representing characters of ethnic minorities - such as Lincoln and Jamié - and other intersectionalized communities as well as their respective struggles, the show exhibit key post-

postfeminist attributes as according to Gill. This attribute is carried throughout the show, and only further increases as the series progress - expanding the framework of the pilot.

Grace and Frankie (2015-) – The Pilot and Framework of a Postfeminist and Post-postfeminist Representation of Aged Women

The next and last tv-series which this thesis is to analyze is *Grace and Frankie* (2015-), produced by Marta Kauffman and Howard J. Morries and distributed by Netflix. Just like the former analysis of *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019) and *Broad City* (2014-2019), the upcoming analysis will draw on the same methods. The series focuses on the two women Grace Hanson and Frankie Bergstein whose husbands leave them due to their love for each other, thereby forcing the two women to live together and learn how to cope and cooperate with the dilemma of being single in their seventies. Like with the other analyses of the thesis, the following sections will analyze the pilot episode thoroughly in order to examine the framework of the series.

A Sexualized Older Woman and a Somewhat Active Female Spectatorship

In the pilot episode titled "The End" (2015), the two main female characters are introduced within the first minute and a half of the episode. When the audience first gets a glimpse of Grace she is wearing a tight-fitting black dress with a V-cut front, a black belt and pearl jewelry (00:59-02:10). Her hair is styled and she is seen wearing makeup – coral lipstick, blush, foundation, and dark pink eyeshadow. Out of the two women, Grace's appearance seems to connote with Mulvey's idea of sexual objectification due to her tight fitted dress, enhancing Grace's female curves along with the show of her skin due to the V-cut line (Mulvey, 1975). Though, while connoting with the term "to-be-looked-at-ness", no camera movements, lighting or editing is used to further sexualize and objectify any of the female characters of the show. Moreover, Grace seems to connote with the aspect of "femininity as a bodily property", mentioned by Gill in her 2007 article, with Grace unconsciously knowing that a 'sexy body' is presented as the key source of identity and a portrayal to success in life; when asked by Frankie "What do you use to sop up sauce with?", Grace answers "I don't eat sauce", illustrating that she takes care of her body by not eating unhealthy (2007, p.

149-150; "End", 01:27-01:31). With Grace being an object for the male gaze and thereby the male spectator, the female is said to confront Gill in her idea of "(…) older women with aging signs (…) can never be seen as admirable", depicting her as a desiring sexual subject instead of an objectified object – as such, she makes way for a narcissistic gaze (2007, p. 151-152). For Frankie, she is not sexualized for that of the male gaze due to her more covered up appearance and therefore conflicts with Mulvey and her statement of women only appearing as erotic objects within the narrative. Nonetheless, with the depiction of Grace as a sexualized object for the male gaze, it then likewise decline Mulvey's statement of women losing their elegant and sexual characteristics when becoming married (1975, p. 13).

In elaboration of this, Vivian Sobchack illustrates in her book *Carnal Thoughts. Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004) the notion of age and women. At first, Sobchack states that ageism is distinguished between the *image* and *body* consequently elaborating that a woman's mindset might be young but her body is old and falling apart (Sobchack, 2004, p. 36). This notion is especially visible in *Grace and Frankie* where the two bodies of the protagonists are breaking down due to ageism while their mindsets are young – seen in "The Bachelor Party" with Grace and Frankie going out clubbing ("Bachelor Party"). Because of the respective mindset, an aging woman "(…) deceives herself into thinking she is still young enough to wear makeup" thus continuing her objectification of for example the male gaze even though she could dismiss it – the notion is portrayed through the female character of Grace and her objectified appearance as mentioned earlier (Sobchack, 2004, p. 37). However, what Sobchack furthermore points out is that, as an elderly woman, she (herself) has "(…) become aware (…) of an increasing inability to see myself with any real objectivity at all (…)" hereby illustrating that even though aging women might try to portray themselves more sexually for that of the male sex by for instance wearing makeup and fitted dresses, like Grace in *Grace and Frankie* ("End"), they still, in their own self-image, feel old and

horrid (Sobchack, 2004, p. 38). Additionally, throughout the decades, an adjustment was made to the female sex from that of focusing on an *attitude* to that of an *image* – consequently illustrating that women should focus on "(…) wit, a diet, furious exercise, good makeup, a new hairdo, and a Donna Karan little black dress" instead of how to behave (p. 51). Also here is the show of *Grace and Frankie* relevant as especially Grace, as seen in the pilot episode, is characterized with five out of the six examples; wit, being on a diet, a styled hairdo, a little black dress and good makeup ("End"). The futuristic goal for the older women is, according to Sobchack, to maintain the cultural status quo by depicting the youthful female desires in combination with the "unnatural" middle-aged female flesh – which the tv-series of *Grace and Frankie* is an excellent example hereof as the two females do not let their age stop them from achieving youthful goals like founding their own company in the middle of their seventies, as will be described later on (Sobchack, 2004, p. 42; "The Coup"). Moreover, Sobchack refers to feminist Simone de Beauvoir and her book *The Second Sex* (1949) by quoting: "Woman is haunted by the horror of growing old", stating that it is necessary for a woman to be attractive and to please a man, due to the process of age and the destruction of her look will make her "(…) feel the fatal touch of death itself" (cited in Sobchack, p. 42). This certainly connotes well with Grace's representation; a woman seemingly denying age, causing her to fixate on her outer appearance in order to escape the horrors of growing old.

Not only the horrors of growing old shown through Grace's fixation on her appearance is what the women deal with due to their age - with the core characters of the show being women in their seventies, but postfeminist notions related to their age is also occurring in the pilot. For instance, the series introduces itself as a post-postfeminist tv-series as it connotes with Gill's notion of age being of importance to build "(…) feminist solidarities across and between generations" (Gill, 2016, p. 625). Furthermore, by illustrating Frankie in need of medicine due to sudden back pains, *Grace and Frankie* portrays Ang's theme of "dealing with growing older", eliminating the idea that only

melodramas or soap operas can depict the concept ("End", 26:27-27:37; 1990, p. 244-245). The notion of age and having to deal with growing older will later show to be an important part of *Grace and Frankie*'s framework.

Another interesting notion about the two women is how Grace loses her erotized appearance after hearing about her divorce but also how Frankie becomes even more casual in her outfits. At first, Frankie is seen wearing an orange and black patterned bandana, teal and yellow shirt which is covered up with a red and pink kimono and lastly multi-colored harem pants ("End", 08:43-09:49). Afterward, her outfit consists of a turquoise colored caftan dress with a V-cut front and beige pattern along with a turquoise and yellow necklace, pearl earrings, turquoise bracelet and big rings (10:04-10:18). Even though her outfits are still colorful, Frankie continues to cover up her body in looser outfits for the male gaze and male spectator thus becoming more non-sexualized due to her lack of showing female curves and skin – she distances herself even further from sexualization in comparison to the first example.

Grace desexualizes herself for the male gaze when taking off her false eyelashes and her hair extensions hereby illustrating her as a more 'natural' character with imperfections who is not to be indicated as a flawless role model (06:25-06:48; Lotz, 2007, p. 173). Later on, she is further distancing herself from the eroticized objectification by wearing a plain, light brown shirt, black jeans and a thick, baggy brown cardigan in matching the color of her shirt ("End", 11:43; 17:40).

The female character Brianna does likewise connote with Mulvey's idea of "to-be-looked-at-ness" due to her appearance in a bordeaux blazer, a dark brown t-shirt, black jeans, a golden necklace with a green pearl and black and white sneakers together with a make-up covered face including a bright pink lipstick (11:42-11:48). Moreover, she has short blond hair with highlights and appears to be in her thirties.

Her sister, Mallory – whom the analysis, later on, establishes as a married woman – is somewhat non-sexualized for that of the male gaze as her outfit consists of dark blue jeans, a plain white t-shirt and a long, earthy brown colored cardigan (ibid.). In comparison to Brianna, she has long blond hair, which is not dyed and her make-up is more natural and toned down. She too is in her thirties. Because of her more casual styled outfit, her neutral make-up look and the fact that she is not wearing any accessories - as well as the abovementioned notion of the women in the pilot not being subjected to lingering camera movements, lighting accentuating feminine body features and so forth - it makes her not at all objectified for that of the male gaze.

As it will be established later on in the analysis, the only male characters visible within the episode is that of Grace and Frankie's ex-husbands, Robert and Sol, and Frankie's two sons, Coyote and Bud. Because of this notion, Mulvey's idea of scopophilia is dismissed as the status of Robert and Sol being homosexual and Coyote and Bud being Frankie's kids exclude the idea of them objectifying the female characters erotically - from the lack of a male character taking the female characters into erotic objects of pleasure, the four characters do not 'bear the look of the spectator' through gazes. Additionally, the missing lingering of camera movements on the female characters along with no technical aspects such as lighting and editing making them seem more sexual for that of the male gaze decline objectification of the female characters. This notion of missing technical aspects constituting male gazes is seen throughout the pilot; which then connote the notion made by Gill that women of age cannot be seen as admirable, as there are no male characters or camera to constitute male gazes on Grace and Frankie for the male spectator.

For the series' two characters, their engagement into Kaplan's active female spectatorship is not visible during the pilot's first scene, as they passively watch while Robert tells them "I'm leaving you. And he's leaving you.. (…) I'm in love with Sol. Sol and I are in love (…) We want to get married" (03:38-05:17). However, the scene actually proves to be the only time the women are

placed in the submissive position as they for the rest of the episode drives the narrative forward and employ active female spectatorship. However, with the women being more active throughout the narrative, this does not reject Mulvey's notion but simply implies that a change has happened in tv-series throughout the decades thereby making the females more active-minded within the narrative. The active female spectatorship is evident from when Grace proclaims, "I gotta get out of this house" whereas both her and Frankie end up moving into their shared beach house; "You mean in my house? This is my house, too" (16:12; 18:49-22:19). This decision proves to be the most important for the two female characters because of the strong connection and bonding the women share later on. With the women engaging in active female spectatorship Kaplan noted that if they were to take over the dominant position they would lose their sympathetic characteristics. This notion is evident in Grace and Frankie as they, when meeting up at the beach house, start fighting and lash out on one another in "Oh, sure you can. People expect this kind of thing from you" and "I lost my best friend. You don't even like Robert" (22:33-23:26). Additionally, Ang's statement of active female spectatorship can be applied to the scene with a few extensions. Though it is to be noted that while Kaplan believed the active female spectatorship comes from the activeness of the female characters within the narrative, Ang's notion comes from the female spectator engaging actively with the female character's lifestyle of the show – by watching the series (Ang, 1985). Ang's notion can be transferred to Grace with her living in a grand house with Robert, her co-owning a beach house and driving in an Audi along with her recognition at the supermarket due to her face being on a hair product – the female spectators take the glamorous lifestyle of Grace and take it to be their own ("End", 14:37; 21:30; 17:42-17:53). However, it is to be noted that even with all the glamorous substances surrounding Grace, the divorce, which forces her to move to the beach house with Frankie, seems to strip some of the glamorousness from her 'perfect life', complicating Ang's argument of a glamorous lifestyle of the female characters though not wholly removing the

concept. As the notion of 'divorce' shows imperfectness and complication, the glamorous of Grace's life is dampened despite her still having material luxuries.

Grace and Frankie - A Postfeminist Focus

The next concept in which the analysis will take into consideration is Lotz' characterization of the 'new' new woman with a focus on the aspects of *dating*, *marriage* and *career opportunities* (2006, p. 95). Nevertheless, it is only the facet of "marriage" that seems to be visible within the pilot episode. This aspect is first established during the first scene where Robert and Sol tell Grace and Frankie, "I'm leaving you. And he's leaving you..", concluding that they want a divorce ("End", 3:40-03:46). Afterward, the facet is illustrated through the female character of Mallory who, when appearing at brunch, is asked, "Where are Mitch and the kids?" thereby implying that Mallory is married and has kids (11:43).

In 2006 Lotz established in her book that the 'new' new woman contains characteristics of longing over lost love (2006, p. 1). In the series, this notion is portrayed through the character of Frankie through her statement, "Because.. I'm heartbroken" when sitting at the beach crying next to Grace due to "I lost my best friend" ("End", 30:07-30:21; 23:00). Another example of her longing over lost love is when smoking and eating ice cream with alcohol on top at the beach house (18:49-19:12). In addition, the latter example can be seen as a flawed characteristic of Frankie - she is drowning her sorrows in marijuana, sugar, and liquor due to heartbreak, exposing herself to the audience thus bringing them closer together – an example similar to that of Petra and her heartbreak in *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019).

With the establishment of Frankie as a flawed female character, she, however, is not the only woman who is depicting flaw in the episode. Along with her, Grace shows signs of the facet as well by appearing as a light alcoholic who is constantly seen drinking; at the restaurant ordering "(…) a vodka martini, straight up. Very dry, please. And two olives on the side" together with at home

when grabbing a whole bottle after hearing about the divorce and at the beach house pouring herself a drink ("End", 01:33-01:37; 05:22-05:25; 22:37-22:53). She thereby illustrates imperfections or what Lotz stated as "contemporary characterizations" bringing herself closer to the audience like Frankie. However, in elaboration of this, an interesting notion to point out is how the overconsumption of alcohol stands in contrast to her 'healthy lifestyle' mentioned earlier in the analysis – her statement of not eating sauce. Beyond their flawed characteristics, Grace and Frankie too employ a sense of Ang's concept of powerlessness which, once again, tightens the bonds to the spectators even further. With their husbands getting married to each other, Grace and Frankie are victims and powerless to the outcome of the situation. Their expression of this form of powerlessness is illustrated when Frankie sarcastic tells her sons, "I've always dreamed that I would spend my remaining years alone" and Grace telling Robert, "I'm feeling like the last 40 years have been a fraud" (11:24-11:26; 07:26-07:29).

Through their forced commitment to each other, Grace and Frankie bond over their mutual situation of their husbands coming out as gay and in a relationship with each other (30:55-34:11). At the end of the episode, the two share an emotional conversation; Frankie explains, "I guess I should've known something wasn't.. But I couldn't.. I ignored it." and Grace affirms this with "I walked into Robert's study yesterday.. (…) It was right there, in front of my face the whole time" (31:42-32:09). Even with their different personalities, the two find comfort in one another, affirming Lotz in her notion of the female character committing to a female peer through the "pursuit of a family elsewhere" (2006, p. 89).

The last aspect to look at in the pilot episode regarding the female characters is how they enact Lotz' idea of "explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit" in her 2001 article (p. 115). Even though the women have in common that their husbands left them to get married to each other, the two females have, as mentioned earlier, quite different personalities hence making them distinct

from one another. Their distinction is illustrated in how they separately cope with the situation; Frankie decides to go on a 'vision quest' whereas Grace just wants to be left alone in a dark room feeling sorry for herself ("End", 19:50-21:26; 26:09-26:25). In addition, their differences can be seen in Grace asking Frankie, "I'm angry. Why aren't you angry?" and her answer being "Because that's not me. That's you" (29:40-29:46). Grace even states, "This is why I hate being around you! You're reckless! You leave drugs around, and your hippy-dippy attitude and that "everybody should follow their heart" crap and "everybody'll be just fine!"" hereby implying that Grace is nothing like that (28:24-28:39). The way in which the examples imply the "diverse relations to power women inhabit" is due to their respective strengths, weaknesses, and complexities thus illustrating how female characters are complex from one another even though the women share the commonality of womanhood.

Non-Sexualized, Mocked, and Flawed Male Characters in *Grace and Frankie*'s pilot

The show *Grace and Frankie* does not only incorporate female characters but also male characters, affirming Ang's statement of programs devoir to draw in the heterogeneous audience (1990, p. 238). Like mentioned in the former two analyses the incorporation of male characters in the thesis is of great importance due to several reasons; for once, they show correlations with or deviance from classic patriarchal structures. Secondly, postfeminism goes against stereotypical - and wrongful - representations of the male sex, something Mulvey did not interest herself with. Just like with Grace and Frankie, Robert and Sol are portrayed to be characters in their seventies thereby enhancing the aspect of the series being embodied in the era of post-postfeminism. However, one might state that due to their high age, the aspect of objectification is dismissed. Furthermore, the fact that they are homosexual removes the objectification of them. When the two male characters first appear in the show Robert is seen wearing a white shirt, a black vest and a beige suit with squares and black pants and Sol appears in a dark grey, woolen blazer with a form of lumberjack

shirt in the color red, blue and green, a yellow and red tie and dark beige pants ("End", 02:14-02:22). Their outfits may appear as professional and somewhat sexual, but their age and their homosexuality dismiss a female gaze. Later on, when Robert changes into dark blue denim jeans and a black t-shirt and Sol wears a light teal colored shirt with a blue cardigan they are both releasing themselves from the female gaze due to their old age (10:29; 10:56).

With Robert and Sol being the two main male characters of the show, the series includes two other male characters as well; Bud (Nwabudike) and Coyote. They are both adoptive sons of Frankie and Sol and appear for the first time about ten minutes into the narrative. Coyote is, in the series, established as a white man in his thirties and is first seen wearing a dark leather jacket, a black t-shirt and light brown pants (10:00-10:08). Even though his appearance sounds somewhat appealing to the female gaze, Coyote is portrayed as half bald, stripping him of as an erotized object. The other male character, Bud is also in his thirties and is of African-American descent (ibid.). He appears in a form of lumberjack shirt in the color white, red and blue, a dark blue woolen vest, a brown belt, and beige pants. By being portrayed in a woolen vest and a bright mixed-up colored shirt he does not appeal to that of the female gaze hereby avoiding objectification. Thusly, due to none of the male characters being sexualized nor objectified in the pilot episode by the female gaze, the notion of male objectification, as Kaplan mentioned, is declined (1990).

With Grace and Frankie taking over the male/dominant position when engaging in active female spectatorship, one must assume the male characters would take over the female/submissive position, as Kaplan noted how the structure should always be kept intact. Though, the male characters do not seem to be in the female/submissive position; they are not sexualized for that of the female characters, the camera or the spectator, as shown above. Furthermore, they are not portrayed as lazy, unattractive and unintelligent, as with for instance Bevers in *Broad City* (2014-2019) - they are, for the most, successful men with their lives in order. For instance, in the series,

their careers are mentioned - when Grace and Frankie first discuss Robert and Sol, Frankie mentions, “I have a very strong sense that this is the night they announce their retirement” and later on Grace asks “Something happen at the office?” (“End”, 01:55-02:00; 02:45). The two are then established to work together in the same company - later in the series revealed to be a lawyer’s office. It too should be noted that Robert and Sol may be the biggest forwarders of the pilot - they are the ones to take Grace and Frankie to dinner and tell them about their affair and ask for divorces, forcing Grace and Frankie together. As such, in the pilot, Robert and Sol forward the story arc following the rest of the series. Thus, the males, with their success, lack of objectification and forwarding of the main storyline cannot be argued to hold the female position of submissiveness, challenging Kaplan’s notion of the structure having to be kept intact.

The last two approaches this analysis will discuss in terms of male characters is how the pilot episode “mocks male masculinity” as Boyle noted, as well as Lotz’ aspect of “flaws” (Boyle, 2005, p. 179; Lotz, 2006, p. 173). The series mock the male masculinity in Robert as he receives a chair with Ryan Gosling’s face printed on the seat - Robert mentions that “It’s a joke. Between me and Sol. A private joke” consequently being of sexual - and homosexual - characteristics (“End”, 15:24-15:37). Thereby, it does only giving way to their feminine traits but also stripping away their masculinity (15:24-15:30). The notion of Lotz’s flawed characteristics does not only appear in Grace and Frankie but also that of the male character, Coyote. After getting told that their parents are splitting up, Coyote explains to his mother that, “What professor scores coke off a student? (…) I was as low as you could get” consequently establishing him as a recovering drug addict, bringing him closer with the spectator through his flawed character and the “contemporary characterization” as argued by Lotz (14:02-14:12; 2006, p. 173).

The Framework of *Grace and Frankie* - A Summary

From the pilot analysis the framework of *Grace and Frankie* establishes that while the female characters Brianna and Grace did connote with the term "to-be-looked-at-ness" by Mulvey, neither of the women were sexualized through the camera movements, editing, and lighting. That, along with the notion of the males being unavailable as the bearer of the look of the spectator - due to them being either gay or the children or siblings of the female characters - does not constitute a male gaze for the male spectator, as only the appearance of some of the female characters connoted with Mulvey's idea of the female character and structures of looking.

By taking matters into their own hands in moving to the beach house, Grace and Frankie drive the narrative forward hereby establishing Kaplan's notion of active female spectatorship. Additionally, by incorporating Grace's glamorous lifestyle of expensive materialistic goods in for instance her house with Robert and the fact that she is being recognized in a supermarket, the series incorporates what Ang noted as "popular pleasure" - mentioned in her analysis of *Dallas* - where the female spectators take pleasure in identifying with Grace and her captivating lifestyle.

Kaplan's arguments of the male/dominant and female/passive structure having to be kept intact were challenged as the male characters showed no signs of taking a female/passive position. The male characters were not sexualized for that of the female gaze and they are depicted as successful and not passive and unattractive. Furthermore, Robert and Sol were shown to be the forwarders of the overall storyline of the two women going through a divorce and being forced together, as they are the ones to initiate the story. As such, with the women being the main forwarders of the story, the males cannot be said to uphold the structure Kaplan argued as having to be kept intact, as they cannot be considered in the female/passive position.

The pilot episode further incorporates postfeminist and post-postfeminist mindsets such as "flawed characteristics" with Frankie drowning her sorrows from heartbreak and Grace as a light

alcoholic. Ang's concept of "powerlessness" is likewise visible as the two women are helpless in the situation faced by their, now, ex-husbands. By their forced commitment to one another together with their distinct personalities, Lotz' aspects of "urgency for family elsewhere" and "explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit" are illustrated as well. The women were also shown to deal with the notion of age; for instance, "the horrors of growing old", as noted by Sobchack, forces Grace to fixate on her outer appearance to stay young and able for objectification. Furthermore, as Frankie "deals with growing older" through her back pain, the series' pilot shows postfeminist traits in which women of age and what follows is significant for the story, as noted by Ang. With the notion of age being important in the pilot, the pilot thus indicates a post-postfeminist series concerning itself with intersectional issues, one that will be explored more in the analysis of the series as a whole.

Grace and Frankie (2015-) - A Further Representation of Postfeminist and Post-postfeminist Aged Women

Male Gaze and the Dismissal of Such

As it was mentioned in the pilot analysis, the notion of Mulvey's *scopophilia* was dismissed due to the male characters being homosexual or Frankie's sons. The pilot analysis too illustrated that technical aspects such as lighting, lingering camera movements and editing did not portray the female characters in an erotic way. For the rest of the series, the episodes likewise reject the notion of erotic technical facets and scopophilia as most of the tv-series focuses on the female characters' former partners, their kids, and family in general. Additionally, even throughout the female characters' dating experiences, the idea of objectification is dismissed. An example of which this is noticed is in "The Sex", where Grace gets ready to have sex with her present boyfriend Roy ("Sex", 10:06-10:45). Even with some romantic diegetic music added to the mood and a quick camera lingering - though not being long enough to become eroticized - from her bare legs along her body, the series instead of portraying Grace as confident female character wearing a sexy, silky nightgown, illustrates the situation as awkward and non-sexual for the male gaze. The awkwardness is established by displaying her insecure of her sexuality while trying to find a sexual position, showing her flabby arms and while doing a head twirl, she exclaims, "Ah! Oh, my neck" (ibid.).

Another example in which the notion of male gaze is dismissed is Grace's meeting with Byron, Frankie's art student ("Sex", 20:30-23:35). Even with Byron's intense and sexualized gaze upon Grace, the facet of scopophilia is rejected due to the missing lingering of the camera movement upon her, leaving out the gaze of the male spectator (ibid.). Furthermore, the editing of the scene only uses cross-cutting along with no enhanced lighting on Grace except what is supposed to be 'natural' coming from the windows – this likewise dismisses the idea of objectification. Moreover,

while embracing each other, the camera shoots from the hallway and from a mid-shot behind them instead of a close-up, leaving out the erotic features of the technical aspects as well.

When discussing the aspect of the female characters' objectification of the male gaze because of their appearance, the notion illustrated in the pilot episode is transferred to the rest of the series. Grace continues to wear clothing of eroticized featuristics such as a black striped, tight-fitted blazer with a white shirt underneath, pearl jewelry and a thick coat of make-up ("The Other Vibrator", 10:09). Additionally, Frankie is portrayed in a non-sexual way; seen by wearing a black and grey kimono with a green t-shirt and dark blue pants ("The Expiration Date", 03:09). Like with Grace and Frankie, Brianna and Mallory maintain their sexualized and non-sexualized portrayal as well, though after getting divorced Mallory appears in more sexualized clothing; an example of this is long black fabric pants with a sky blue shirt tied with a bow front along with more make-up and styled hair ("The Aide", 23:10).

Active Female Spectatorship in *Grace and Frankie*

Throughout the entirety of the series, the female characters, like in the pilot episode, engage in several actions of active female spectatorship (driving the narrative forward); affirming Kaplan's notion of women taking over the male dominant position but it also, because of this, then rejects Mulvey in her statement of females not being able to drive the narrative forward and only to freeze the flow of action (Kaplan, 1990; Mulvey, 1975). For Grace and Frankie, their second engagement in active female spectatorship is depicted in the episode "The Dinner" when Grace states, "I've made a life decision (…) I'm going back to work! (…) To my company", pushing the narrative forward ("Dinner", 05:40-06:05). Nonetheless, while Grace actively tries to drive the narrative forward her actions are frozen by Brianna who declines her offer to go back to work; "I can't, because.. Because if you're here, no one will see me" (11:28-11:33). In the episode, Frankie too tries to actively push the narrative forward by applying for a job as an art teacher at a living facility

(10:38-10:46). However, like Grace, her engagement in the active female spectatorship is frozen due to the manager mistaking her for a new resident and not an art teacher (13:36-14:10).

Another example of Grace driving the narrative forward is by signing up to become a mentor for a young troubled woman ("The Chicken", 04:13-05:01). When telling Frankie about her decision she mentions, "I need a purpose and this might be it" where after she starts to mentor the young woman in how to behave, act properly and dress (08:27; 09:08-12:07; 13:01-13:55). Yet, whilst Grace tries to help the girl find a job, the mentoring ends in disaster with the young woman indicating to Grace, "All this, this is too much pressure for one person. I think you need to focus all that energy and instead of finding me a job, go find yourself one" which makes Grace realize that "I do need to find something to do"; an indicator for her later actions of active female spectatorship (24:04-24:12; 26:11).

Furthermore, the female character of Brianna engages in the active female spectatorship as well by telling her boyfriend Barry not to give his sperm to his lesbian friends; "I know it's a fuck-ton to ask of you. So don't do it" ("The Ceremony", 13:08-13:57). Because of this notion she gives him an ultimatum, however, when realizing how much this means for Barry, she agrees to let him do it; "I've never been the generous one in a relationship before" (23:48-23:51). Her active spectatorship continues when confronting the two lesbians after backing out of their deal, explaining to them, "Barry has never once hogged the bed. He rubs my feet at least three times a week of his own volition. He calls his mother once a week even though she's insufferable (…) And should you need another person in that village, Barry will be there" ("The Video", 24:07-27:12). Her confrontation makes the lesbian couple reevaluate their choice hereby agreeing to use Barry's sperm for pregnancy.

Brianna's active female spectatorship is likewise visible through Ang's notion of glamorous lifestyle by living in what one might conclude to be an expensive house due to the costly inventory

and her status as the CEO of the *Say Grace* company; "You'd still be CEO" – the female spectators identify with the life of Brianna, incorporating active female spectatorship ("The Spelling Bee", 11:43-14:37; 27:56-29:31; "Dinner", 09:34). In comparison to Kaplan's idea of active female spectatorship – where the female spectator takes on the role of the female character through identification – Ang's notion of the active female spectatorship is instead synonymous with taking pleasure from seeing the glamorous lives of female characters, which happens in the case of Brianna.

The next example of active female spectatorship is visible in the episode "The Road Trip" where Frankie loses her drivers license due to expiration, leading her to actively engage in Kaplan's female spectatorship by retaking the test (13:27-15:39; "The Test", 03:55). Even after having failed the test three times she continues to apply for it, hence finally getting a new license at the end of the episode titled "The Test" though with restrictions; "(…) I-I passed the written test, but my eyes are… meh. So no nighttime driving, no freeways" (26:58-27:21). Another establishment of Frankie engaging in active female spectatorship is when deciding, with persuasion and acceptance from Grace, to move to Santa Fe with Jacob; "You should go. Yeah" ("The Sign" 30:06-30:13). However, in the episode titled "The Scavengender Hunt", she explains to Grace that, "I'm not happy in Santa Fe!" and ends up telling Jacob that she is moving back to Grace; "I'm breaking up with Santa Fe" (18:51; 22:41).

The two most significant representations of Grace and Frankie driving the narrative forward in the series are when breaking out of their retirement home to regain their beach house and secondly the founding of their own company. In "The Home" Brianna, Mallory, Coyote and Bud come to talk to their mothers about assisted living to make them reconsider moving (02:12-06:05). The kids trick their mothers by mentioning that "I know when we hear stories like "Frankie got lost in Mexico," it sounds all cute and funny" (…) I know when you hear Mom hit a cop car with a

scooter, it sounds absolutely hilarious. But it's not cute or funny. It's scary" thereby giving Grace and Frankie a guilty conscience for the respective other thus leading them to move into the assisted home (08:12- 08:23; 09:15-10:08). Nevertheless, their active spectatorship begins when they decide to break into a storage closet for their confiscated stuff but at the same time realizing that "We have been *Parent Trapped*" by their kids (21:51-23:59; 23:27). Afterward, Grace and Frankie steal a golf cart to go back to their old house only to realize that it has been sold (24:25-25:23; 26:32-28:32). Nonetheless, whilst the house has been sold, this does not stop the women of breaking into it and actively protesting to get it back; "No! We're not going anywhere (…) We're not leaving here again (…) We're having ourselves a nice, old-fashioned squat. We are taking our house back" ("The House", 03:26-04:51; 24:10-27:24). In "The Squat" Grace and Frankie drive the narrative forward by trying to figure out who the new owner of their house is; "Any luck? Nope. You? Fingers crossed" along with continuing squatting in order to "(…) wear them down till they give up" (10:05-10:45; 12:50-13:42; 16:24-16:31). When the new owner, a famous singer named Kareena G, shows up Frankie and Grace persuade her to let them keep the house by explaining to her, "Okay. I know where she should go. Santa Fe (…) You don't wanna waste your time being someplace you don't wanna be", resulting in her moving and Frankie stating "We got our house back" (24:10-26:39). As such, Grace and Frankie actively engages in Mulvey's idea of driving the narrative forward and not freezing the flow of action.

As mentioned above, the second example of the most significant actions of active female spectatorship is when founding their own company to "(…) mak[e] vibrators for women with arthritis" ("Coup", 24:45). The first step to get their business named *'Vybrant'* started, is loaning money from the bank, however, their application is rejected due to "He's not gonna give us a loan because he thinks we're too old" - leading Grace to say "Ageist. Ageist bullshit" ("The Art Show", 01:15-04:46). Whilst the women still do not have any money to start their business, they continue

with product development, holding meetings and thus, in the end, becoming official "businesswomen" ("The Incubator", 00:58-01:47). Additionally, the women actively seek out a meeting with a business incubator at the company *'Ner'd'* but gets rejected too due to the company being "(…) a tech company" (13:14-18:29). After getting rejected multiple times because of their age, Brianna steps in to loan Grace and Frankie the money, mentioning a condition to Frankie that "(…) your partner can never know that the money came from me" (23:47-23:50). Thus, even though Grace and Frankie do not push forward the narrative in the situation, it is still driven by a female character hereby creating active female spectatorship. In "The Focus Group" their prototypes arrive and in order to test them out, they invite older women – with positive results (00:47-02:56; 27:17-28:43). The drive of the narrative continues later on with Grace setting up a Skype meeting with a website organizer in order to get their own private website and to become commercialized – their business becomes visible on the *Flapper* website; "We're the top story on their website!" ("The Floor", 25:28-26:02; 00:48-01:46). After a big meeting with the company *'Purple Orchid'*, Grace and Frankie turn down a big business opportunity, as the company wants to sell its products by portraying Grace and Frankie to be younger than they are – this aspect goes against what Grace and Frankie believe in due to "We can't play a part in erasing the very women we made this for" ("The Alert", 30:59-31:19). Nonetheless, whilst the women believe that they are now on their own, a notification from their website displays that they "(…) got 5,219 pre-orders on [their] website" thus making them successful businesswomen (31:20-31:40).

Grace and Frankie - A Post- and Post-Postfeminist Focus

The most important notion of the post-postfeminist era that *Grace and Frankie* illustrate is the concept of *age* – especially the portrayal of "older women" and their struggle with "growing older" (Ang, 1990, p. 244-245). By incorporating this, as already mentioned in the pilot analysis, the show establishes itself to operate as a post- and post-postfeminist tv-series "build[ing] feminist

solidarities across and between generations" and at the same time widening the horizon to earlier feminist facets of female depiction in tv-series (Gill 2016, p. 625; Gill, 2007, p. 149).

During the first season of *Grace and Frankie*, the show depicts one scene in which the aspect of age is noticeable. The example is established in "The Dinner" with Frankie getting mistaken for a potential new resident at the '*La Jolla Living Facility'* instead of a new art teacher; "You're not Myrna Rosenblum, are you? I was supposed to give her a new resident's tour at two o'clock" thus becoming a 'victim' of age stereotyping ("Dinner", 13:41-13:47). As a response, Frankie exclaims, "Do I look like I need a bed with a motor? (…) I am young (…) My joints are supple" (13:51-14:12). Here, the show illustrates commentary on ageism and connote well with Lotz's notion of shows critiquing oppression based on one's identity (Lotz, 2001, p. 115). In season two, Bud and Coyote want their mom to consider "(…) stop driving" as she keeps forgetting things in which she responds, "No, I'm not like what's-her-name in that movie with that guy (…) you want me to (…) live the rest of my life as a shut-in? (…) Why don't you just put me in a home (…)" – Frankie believes that her liberty vanishes ("Test", 16:56-18:00). As such, the show presents real and inevitable struggles by women of age.

Moving on to season three, the entire episode of "The Floor" dedicates itself to the concept of "age" and "struggle of getting older" by illustrating Grace and Frankie hurting their backs hence being stuck on the floor in their beach house. Grace mentions, "I expect this kind of thing from my wrists and my ankles and my knees.. and my hips. But my back was never like those assholes" hereby portraying the conflict of age ("Floor", 04:10-04:18). Moreover, she elaborates on the concept by stating, "I'm old!" due to the fact that "How can I run a business when I can't even get off the floor?" (22:03-22:16). The next example of 'age' and 'being old' in season three is portrayed in "The Alert" when Bud comes to the beach house with Panic Alerts for Grace and Frankie from all of their kids, however, the two women dismiss them by stating "No one in this house is wearing

a Panic Alert" (05:10-07:38). Nonetheless, Frankie starts wearing it due to "We wouldn't have had to do all the crawling to the phone if I had one of these" whereas Grace just states; "But when everybody sees these around our necks, they're going to look at us and say, "Oh, poor old lady, she lives all alone. She has medical conditions"" (09:48-10:21). Though, after a few incidents of wearing them without answering the call, they both decide it is not for them with the explanation that "Maybe these just provide a nice excuse for kids to not check in with their parents as much" (26:01-26:06).

In the episode "The Hinge" Grace is seen struggling knee pain though she will not admit to getting help with the explanation, "Once you start asking other people to do things that you used to do, it's just an indoor slide into the geriatric ward" (02:03-02:54). Additionally, the concept of injuries happening with age is mentioned by Frankie who asks Grace, "Have you given any more thought to a replacement? (…) For your knee" (03:00-03:04). When Grace has to go to the DIY store for a hinge the employer of the store mentions, "(…) for our differently-abled shoppers' convenience, our scooter station is right there" though Grace dismisses this with, "I'm not a scooter-cart person. Do I look like a scooter-cart person?" – with her injury and her age the employer stereotypes her (10:24-10:35). However, after walking down the aisles for a while she decides to submit to her injury and takes a scooter-cart (18:41-19:28). At the end of the episode, she admits to Barry, "It's like my body is just.. slipping away", illustrating Gill's notion once more (28:29-28:31). With her knee acting up Grace finally decides to have knee replacement surgery, which is depicted as successful in "The Knee" ("The Lockdown", 04:52-04:54; "Knee"). Still, because of her surgery, she is portrayed as helpless during the entire episode with Nick, Frankie and her daughters helping her out.

The last scenario of "growing older" in the fourth season is Grace and Frankie ending up at the retirement home after their kids arrive at the beach house with a list of 'Signs Your Parents May Be

Ready for Assisted Living!' ("Home", 02:55-04:08). During the episode, "The Home", the series portrays examples of growing older and age such as; "Has your parent suffered a recent physical setback? (…) Have you noticed changes in your parent's coordination? (…) [and] does your loved one have trouble getting up from a seated position?" (ibid.). Because the women fit into all of these characteristics, they end up in an assisted living – nonetheless, they end up leaving the place in the end as they do not themselves feel old enough (09:22-24:21).

The last example of the concept being illustrated is in "The Crosswalk" with Frankie and Joan-Margaret trying to cross a road as the "(…) light is too short for anyone over 60" which for Frankie is "Ageism" (09:37-09:43). To change the time of the crossroad light, Frankie sets up a pedestrian traffic test, though to get more time she invites all of her elderly friends to cross (17:49-22:38). Grace comes to help thus making them add three seconds to the light (27:06-28:30). The show, through its humorous commentary on how pedestrian crossroad lights are too fast for elderly people, shows an exploration of the theme of age and critique of discrimination.

In addition to the concept of "age" and "growing older", Sobchack quotes the American writer Susan Sontag about the issue of age and women: "(…) it is particularly women who experience growing older with distaste and even shame" thereby illustrating that the concern of age is of less importance to that of the male sex (as cited in Sobchack, p. 37). For Grace and Frankie, their issue of growing older is illustrated with shame as seen when receiving the Panic Alerts and when placed in the assisted living ("Alert"; "Home"). Sobchack likewise states that the middle-aged woman usually represses and silence her own ageism (2004, p. 51). This statement seems to be true for the series *Grace and Frankie*, as the two female protagonists try to repress their age in their continuation of working with *Vybrant* and by dating several male characters – though, as mentioned earlier, the females are constantly being reminded of growing older (p. 51).

Looking at the depictions of middle-aged women in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the elderly woman was placed in fantasy, horror and sci-fi as scary women, though as the world of media started to place women as central figures, it at the same time made "(…) the narrative explicitly foreground age (…)" to a more positive connotation for the audience (p. 40-41; 46). Where the culture in the past had a "(…) disgust for the older woman as a physical being (…)" and underscored "ageism" and "the last bastion of sexism", the present, when looking at tv-series such as *Grace and Frankie*, welcomes the middle-aged woman into its depictions in cinema and TV (p. 41). The above-mentioned scenarios of Grace and Frankie dealing with "age" and "growing older" are of great significance to *Grace and Frankie*; the women in their 70s represent a minority in television as they deal with many issues related to age and growing older. As noted by Gill, shows dealing with intersectional issues such as age can be considered post-postfeminist, as postfeminist shows mainly had a focus on young, white, single females. By including the aspects, the show not only portrays the notion of intersectionality but also that of illustrating representations of groups of women who were stigmatized and excluded in television.

Having described the most significant concept visible in *Grace and* Frankie, the next section of the analysis will move on to elaborate on how the characters of Grace and Frankie, as *female peers*, commit fully to one another, as best friends, in the "urgency of a family elsewhere" – as mentioned in the pilot analysis (Lotz, 2006, p. 89). With the first establishment of this seen in the pilot analysis, the series further elaborates on the concept throughout the entirety of *Grace and Frankie*. First of all, the two females are living together, depicting a form of family – they are constantly doing things together hereby not leaving each other's side. This relationship is portrayed when Jacob decides to move to Santa Fe and he asks Frankie to go with him hence making Frankie tell Grace that, "This is a big deal. For both of us" as the two have become a family and now Frankie is 'breaking them up' ("The Labels", 25:24-25:28). As such, the two form a friendship in which they

seek out the "urgency of a family in a female peer" as was argued by Lotz after the divorces break up their previous family structures.

Moreover, their relationship as a family is illustrated in "The Musical". Grace calls Frankie's doctor to ask for guidance in whether or not Frankie should travel to Santa Fe thereby frustrating Frankie, "You don't get to call my doctor. You're not my mother. You're not my husband" though Grace replies with "I thought I was watching you die right in front of me. I was terrified that I was losing my best friend. I did what I was supposed to do for somebody that I care about" ("Musical", 23:53-25:42). The elaboration of Grace and Frankie's commitment to each other is furthermore established by Grace when setting up a hot air balloon tour for Frankie, as that was the vision for her future; "I picture myself in a hot air balloon (…) I want to fly freely. I want to soar" ("Sign", 27:26-30:35; "Labels", 25:43-25:58). Lastly, the two female characters being one united family are significantly visible in "The Tremor" with Nick stating that; "You and Frankie are a package deal, and I'm cool with that" and in "The Alternative" when Grace mentions to Frankie, "You're my best friend and my partner, and I – I need you" ("Tremor", 25:51-25:54; "Alternative", 26:56-27:01).

The relationship and female commitment that Grace and Frankie have to each other do also make way for Kaplan's notion of "lesbian fantasies" (1990). For Frankie, she inherits what Kaplan believed to be the dominant position whereas Grace is portrayed in the dominated position – throughout the tv-series, these positions are fixed. The first illustration is depicted in Frankie asking Grace "You want me to do stuff to you?" and later on in season five when Frankie asks; "I suppose it's too much to hope for "you show me yours, I'll show you mine", making Grace answer "You wanna have sex with me or what?" ("The Burglary", 21:03; "Squat", 18:13-18:18). Additionally, the tendency is mentioned in season five with Frankie proclaiming in their video, "Don't we sometimes sneak into each other's bedrooms at night to kiss each other on the mouth?" ("Video", 29:22-29:28). Although, while there are references to lesbian tendencies, it should be noted that

these tendencies are different from Kaplan's idea of it; as the tendencies are not constructed as a 'fantasy' in which camera movements, lighting, and editing connote scopophilia, it is - like in the case of Ilana's lesbian tendencies in *Broad City* (2014-2019) - done as a humorous element from the open-minded and non-conservative Frankie.

Whilst the pilot episode solely focused on the aspect of Lotz' aspect of "marriage", the show consequently promotes all three aspects later on – though with marriage as the least noticeable. In the pilot analysis, Mallory was established to be married to Mitch, however, their marriage ends with Mallory demanding a divorce after seeing her father so happy with Sol ("Sign"). The other example of marriage is Grace's impulsive decision to marry Nick ("Alternative"). Nonetheless, whilst Grace and Mallory are the only females to illustrate the notion of marriage within the series, Frankie too incorporates a part of the facet by mentioning her not liking her last name: "It was an unfortunate last name. It's the only reason I took Sol's" thus contributing to Gill's postfeminist notion of women that even though they are individual and empowering human beings, they still take a husband's name in marriage ("Road Trip", 02:09-02:13).

The second most important aspect of the 'new' new woman portrayal by Lotz is "career opportunities", in which all female characters of the show participate. At first, the show establishes Grace as a businesswoman in the episode "The Elevator" with a flashback to when Grace was running '*Say Grace'* (05:21-24:34). Afterward, Grace goes back to help Brianna with the company ("Aide"). On top of her business career with Brianna at '*Say Grace'* she too operates as co-CEO of '*Vybrant'* with Frankie. Frankie does likewise incorporate the facet of career opportunities in her establishment as an art teacher for ex-convicts and later on as a selling artist ("The Funeral"; "Art Show"). Moreover, she is the co-CEO of '*Vybrant'* with Grace. Brianna too connotes with the aspect of career opportunities by being the CEO of '*Say Grace'* after Grace retired - the notion is further elaborated in the previous paragraph ("Dinner"). After her divorce, Mallory looks for a job

"Because I'm going crazy at home and I need adult stimulation" hence applying for one at '*Say Grace'* which she gets as an intern ("The Landline", 06:06-07:04). As such, the women in the series are shown to be women with career competence, correlating well with Lotz' idea of the 'new' new woman.

The last and most significant aspect is that of "dating", which also incorporates the notion of contradicting Gill in her idea of men being the only individuals to seek out 'a shag' or 'a fling' with the opposite sex, as the female characters of the show actively engage in sexual intercourse. In the episode "The Earthquake" Grace comes home from a miserable date only to find one of Frankie's art students, Byron, in her kitchen eating a sandwich (21:20-23:32). The two have a short fling together with them embracing one another and ending up on the kitchen table for a short period of time before Grace dismisses him (22:39-23:30). In the following episode, "The Spelling Bee", Grace starts to date her longtime friend Guy, which they continue to do so until at the end of season two – the two also engage in sexual intercourse in "The Sex", affirming Gill's idea. In the episode "The Secrets" Byron shows up once more to tell Grace goodbye and they end up having a long and passionate kiss – this leads to Grace breaking up with Guy as she realizes she does not love him (04:39-05:52; "The Vows", 02:05). At the beginning of season two Grace goes to see Phil Milstein who asks her on a date in "The Anchor" – still, their relationship ends as Grace feels guilty for Phil's wife who is suffering from Alzheimer's ("Road Trip"; "Anchor"; "The Loophole"). While dating, Grace seeks out sexual intercourse with Phil, affirming that females desire 'a shag' ("Loophole", 06:03-06:47). In season three Grace goes on a date Nick Skolka who is the CEO of the company '*Omni Tech'* who Grace and Frankie try to sue for stealing their vibrator product ("Sign", 22:21-25:09). Their relationship is for Grace first explained as, "It's just casual between me and Nick" though after a heartfelt conversation with Robert she realizes that she needs to take every chance she got thus publicly announcing her relationship with Nick for her friends ("House",

19:49; “Landline”, 26:08-26:47). With Grace mentioning, “Yes” to Frankie’s question of “Has he been inside you?” Grace once again seeks out sexual intercourse and ‘a shag’ with the male sex as mentioned earlier (“House”, 19:52-20:02). The two end up dating again until Nick asks, “Marry me (…) I love you. And I want to spend the rest of my life with you” concluding in them getting engaged (“The Wedding”, 25:44-26:06). Grace, with her many partners throughout the series, exemplify Lotz’s idea of the ‘new’ new woman as she dates as well as refuses several eligible bachelors in her yearn for ‘Mr. Right’. Moreover, the female character of Grace is seen to incorporate Ang’s notion of females being trapped in unsolvable dilemmas such as *combine love and work* in her statement, “I don’t have time for [dating], I’m too busy with my new business” along with telling Sol when he asks about her dating life; “I’ve got Vybrant. I’ve got Frankie. This is enough for me” – Grace dismisses the idea of love while running a business (“Art Show”, 17:42-17:45; “Labels”, 15:25-15:32).

Throughout the series, Frankie only dates one male character, Jacob. Their relationship starts in “The Chicken” with Frankie mentioning, “I like you. I really do” where after she kisses Jacob and they decide to go slow with their relationship (24:47-25:51). Their relationship ends with Jacob breaking them up in “The Knee” after figuring out that long-distance relationship did not work out (“Knee”, 25:42-26:39). Like with Grace, Frankie too goes out to search for ‘a shag’, declining Gill that only men seek out sexual intercourse with women. Firstly, at the end of season one, Frankie ends up sleeping with Sol and secondly, in season five, she goes on and sleeps with a former friend, Leo; “You want to come to my yurt? Hell yes”, “Fuck him, right? Yep. Pretty much” (“Vows”, 17:11-17:45; “The Retreat”, 22:12; 30:48-30:52). As such, Frankie - as well as Grace - show women with sexual independence and choices, a postfeminist trait in television.

Brianna too is a female character who declines Gill’s statement by having casual sex with a lot of men as well as show sexual independence and freedom. This is established when Bud mentions;

"What time will Racist Dave be here?" with Brianna answering, "First of all, Border Patrol Dave" ("Spelling Bee", 04:07-04:10). Bud further elaborates on Brianna's sexual desires with "(…) It's the second time you're sleeping with him?" with Brianna mentioning this being her second date with the man (04:23). Moreover, she becomes a sexual active subject when having casual sex with Dutch from '*SD Dog Rescue'* (27:58-29:25). She too engages in sexual intercourse with an escort in ("The Gun", 27:21-27:36). Nonetheless, whilst Brianna actively engages in her sexual life she likewise engages in a serious relationship with the accountant at her company named Barry – whom she officially starts dating in "The Secrets" (10:24-13:21; 19:50-20:25). With a lot of hiccups in their relationship the two find their way back together after Brianna goes to Baltimore to see Barry in "The Apology" thus leading up to Brianna telling Frankie that "Well, actually, Barry moved in a week ago" ("The Lodger", 22:06-22:09). Brianna then exemplifies the typical 'new' new woman; a woman containing - as mentioned earlier - career competence while dating in order to find Mr. Right.

The last character to portray Lotz notion of "dating" and contradicting Gill's notion is Mallory. Mallory, like the former female characters, is an active sexual subject seeking 'a shag' by the series mentioning her and Coyote to have had sexual intercourse in "Can you imagine me with a 9-year-old? (…) That was a fun summer" ("Elevator", 14:11-14:18). Additionally, she gossips to Brianna about her date, Dan whom she "(…) had sex [with] on his roof (…) and on his washer, and on his dryer and on his Nordic Track" ("Wedding", 15:37-15:42). Nonetheless, whilst she has sexual intercourse with Dan, the two become an official couple when Mallory takes him to Bud's wedding and states to Brianna about their respective male partners; "I guess we have a type" (16:12). As such, the four female characters of the show all respectively yearn for Mr. Right and in their search for him, they engage in an active and selective quest (Lotz, 2006, p. 95; 109). As a result, two out of

the four female characters end up finding their perfect match at the end of season five; Grace is seen marrying Nick and Brianna is moving forward with Barry by letting him move in.

Another of Lotz' postfeminist concepts in which the pilot analysis illustrated is that of "flaw" (Lotz, 2006, p. 173). With Grace and Frankie portrayed as flawed individuals in Frankie being heartbroken and Grace being a light alcoholic, the series in its entirety further elaborates on the latter aspect during several examples; at the funeral for Robert and Sol's law firm partner, at Robert and Sol's house and when stating "I'd like a martini, please. And then, I'd like a pitcher of martinis" ("Funeral", 15:38; "The Vitamix", 22:16; "Expiration Date", 21:16-21:20). Furthermore, Grace's flaws in terms of drinking are seen in "The Bender", with her heartbreak after breaking up with Phil – her hair is messy and she is wearing no makeup (06:28-08:47). She goes to a bar to drown her sorrows and ends up getting insanely drunk hence making a fool of herself in front of Frankie, Jacob, Coyote, and Bud by telling them; "I don't want to feel!" (08:51-16:56; 18:47-20:55). Because of these examples, the episode is personifying Grace to be a flawed character hereby stripping away the idea of her as a flawless role model along with making her more realistic for the spectators. The last example of Grace as a flawed character is when asking Brianna, "When you were a kid, you felt loved, right? I mean, you know, unconditionally" with Brianna responding, "Uh, well, no, Mom. That's not really your strong suit. But it makes sense. You're not very unconditional with yourself" ("The Party", 24:47-25:09). The scene illustrates that Grace does not truly love herself nor knows how to love others unconditionally - portraying a huge flaw in her character as her children perceive her as not having given them unconditional love.

Like Frankie showed heartbreak in the pilot episode she too depicts flaws in other ways in the rest of the series. For instance, in the episode "The Boar", Frankie swallows her pride when apologizing to Robert for sleeping with Sol; "I know better than anyone what being cheated on feel

like and I… I regret doing it to you" – her cheating with Sol shows imperfections and flaws in her character, especially due to her knowing how painful the process is (25:38-27:58).

Like Grace and Frankie, Brianna too is established as a flawed character in the example of letting her strong guard down when apologizing to Barry for not telling about the bad situation of the company in the example, "Because you fell for a badass CEO, not a total fuck-up. You're not a total fuck-up. For the record, I fell for "trash can Brianna." (…) [because] you walked right into a trash can (…)" ("The Death Stick", 20:51-22:44). Because of this – Brianna walking into a trash can – she illustrates imperfections and not an unflawed role model, furthermore bringing her closer to the audience by stating; "Good things can happen when you allow yourself to be human" (ibid.). As such, Brianna is portrayed as humanized, making her more relatable. Additionally, Brianna tries to hide her flaws for the rest of the world by having a whole day to watch sad dog movies and cry; "Every year, once a year, I allow myself a single, annual cry" ("Retreat", 09:02-10:37; 25:47-26:10). She tries to hide the fact that she cries, thereby being flawed, for Coyote by telling him the DVD's are "Yes. It's porn", however, he figures out the truth consequently making her flawed characteristics visible for him and the audience (ibid.). Brianna's fear of showing emotions and weakness can moreover be argued as a flaw, especially with the notion of her having her guards up when dating, creating problems in relationships as she has an unwillingness to share. The last female character to portray flaw is Mallory. When talking to Bud she mentions, "(…) I've been a little busy having my whole life fall apart" after her divorce with her ex-husband, Mitch ("The Pop-Ups", 22:42-22:49). Much of Mallory's storyline concerns itself with adapting from the loss of a marriage and having to find her own identity as a newly single mother. Thusly, the divorce portrays her to contain flaws as she struggles with the complexities of her new life; as a result, her divorce makes her more human for the spectator.

The series furthermore incorporates a postfeminist concept in Boyle's notion of a female character to deceive a male by "using her femininity to own advantage" (2005, p. 177). In "The Other Vibrator" Nick states to Grace, "Has anyone ever told you you have beautiful eyes?" thus sexualizing her for the male gaze, yet Grace uses this statement to her own advantage by stating with a grin on her face to her lawyer, "I got this" thereby dismissing her ("Other Vibrator", 15:56-16:06). Afterward, Grace starts flirting with Nick, however, Frankie ruins it by stating, "Us sitting on this table was a power thing, not a sex thing" (19:23-21:38). When driving home with Frankie, Grace explains to her, "I'm mad at you because I had him exactly where I wanted him (…) Oh, I know how to handle guys like that. I've been doing it my whole life" (23:39-23:52). The example then illustrates that Grace was conscious of her actions of luring Nick in with her own femininity thereby deceiving him.

To wind up the female characters of *Grace and* Frankie, the last paragraph of the analysis will elaborate on Lotz' attributes in postfeminist television as stated in her 2001 article (2001, p. 116-117). Firstly, the tv-series takes up the attribute of "illustrating the contemporary struggles faced by women and feminists are raised and examined within series" in the example of Brianna stating, "And pubic hair might be making a comeback, there's just so very, very much of it" to Frankie's cover illustration thereby making Frankie proclaim, "Alas, our rigid Western standards of beauty" ("Chicken", 05:31-05:40). With Frankie's comment, the show illustrates and comments on how our contemporary society has created unattainable beauty standards for women. Another example illustrates Grace and Frankie, as elderly women, to be forced to accept help in receiving a Panic Alert ("Alarm"). The struggle they face as women in comparison to Robert and Sol are that even with Robert having had a heart attack he did not get pushed into wearing a Panic Alert by his kids whilst Grace and Frankie after one incident did. Additionally, Grace and Frankie are thrust into getting an aide to help them out while, once again; Robert and Sol are not – another example of

female struggle ("Aide"). As such, the show - through Grace and Frankie - comments on the double standards they occur as elders, portraying specific struggles faced by elderly women.

The next attribute in which the series incorporates is "explore the diverse relations to power women inhabit" by constructing Grace and Frankie as distinct characters from one another - an elaboration to the pilot analysis. The biggest illustration of the facet is Grace pointing out Frankie's personality characteristics – these are meant to be seen as critique and exploration instead of positive traits. The first example is portrayed in season one with Frankie stating, "I'm just like you… but with a better personality" where after Grace exclaims, "Well. Certainly bigger" – the tone of Grace being judgmental makes the statement become a critique instead of connoting to something positive ("The Fall", 21:50-21:55). Moreover, Grace mentions several examples in which she criticizes Frankie such as; "You bully me into feelings" and "You are the least private person in the world!" ("Bender", 20:23; "Incubator", 03:35). The character of Frankie too portrays an example in which she critiques Grace and her personality. In "The Tremor" Frankie states to Grace, "(…) where did I go so wrong to have such a comfortable life with you? (…) I mean, my God, I'm a businesswoman! Agh, it makes me gag", criticizing Grace as she has been a businesswoman her whole life by first founding '*Say Grace'* and then co-founding '*Vybrant'* ("Tremor", 12:44-13:03). Consequently, as mentioned earlier in the pilot analysis, the two female characters, even with their shared commonality of womanhood, show differences in strengths and weaknesses as well as complexity in their personalities.

Male Characters in *Grace and Frankie* - Non-Sexualization, Flaws, and Men's Feminism

Continuing to the male characters of the show, the pilot established Robert and Sol as non-sexualized due to their status as older men along with them being gay. Moreover, the pilot analysis portrayed Coyote and Bud to be non-sexualized because of Coyote's baldness and Bud's odd and

not so masculine way in appearance. The upcoming analysis will elaborate on the fact that the four main male characters continue to be non-sexualized throughout the entirety of the tv-series.

First, the masculine appearance of Robert in comparison to Sol implies that he is the more masculine character in their relationship. However, with Sol having been married to Frankie, his appearance does also reflect the same 1970s hippie era, implying that his appearance is masculine for some of the older female spectators of that time. The implication of Robert dressing more masculine than Sol is to be established in "The Sex" with him appearing in dark blue denim jeans with a brown belt and a dark olive t-shirt tucked down in his jeans (03:29-03:50). In the same scene, Sol is wearing a baby blue shirt with a grey woolen cardigan (ibid.). Furthermore, in "The Focus Group" Robert is seen wearing a blue cardigan, and a white and light blue shirt whereas Sol appears in an orange and red multi-patterned shirt, which has a 1970s style to it (05:49). However, whilst their appearance might seem to be masculine in style, the fact that the two are gay makes them non-sexualized for the female gaze.

The character of Bud too is established as non-sexualized due to his odd style of clothing. In "The Credit Cards" he is seen wearing an olive green suit and a dark pink shirt with blue squares and a black tie ("Credit Cards", 30:31). In season three, he is depicted in a knitted, grey and woolen cardigan with a ziplock, a white shirt with multicolored stripes on and a dark teal colored tie with swans on it ("Incubator", 25:35). Additionally, his outfit consists of black pants, a white shirt and a black and yellow woolen west ("The Pharmacy", 15:11).

In "The Wish" Coyote is seen in a grey leather jacket, a navy blue shirt and beige pants ("Wish", 11:56). Furthermore, in season five, his outfit consists of dark brown pants, a brown corduroy Mac-Mor jacket with a salmon-colored pattern, shirt and a pink striped tie ("The Website", 13:09). With his still half baldness and his 1970s style of outfits, Coyote is likewise non-sexualized for the female gaze to look upon. Another character who is non-sexualized for the female spectator is

Barry. When the audience first is introduced to the male character he is depicted in beige pants with a light purple patterned shirt with a dark purple tie ("The Invitation", 17:02-18:08). He is a white male in his mid-thirties wearing glasses and has ruffled brown hair – he is established as the accountant of '*Say Grace'*; with his line of work, ruffled hair and glasses he appears awkward and dorky (ibid.). Later on, in "The Art Show" he appears in a light purple shirt with a dark blue and green tie and has a full-grown beard and, again, glasses and ruffled hair (20:37). The example, once again, establishes him to be non-sexualized for the female spectator.

However, whilst the series contains more non-sexualized male character than sexualized, the series does incorporate males in which are objectified for the female gaze hereby affirming Kaplan's notion of men to be objectified as well as females (Kaplan, 1990). The two male characters of Byron and Roy become sexualized for the female characters of the show. First, Frankie mentions, "(…) I have to admit, he is a looker. I would not want to sexualize a student but you're welcome to, go ahead" while talking about Byron with Grace whereas Grace elaborates, "His eyes are really intoxicating (…) A young Robert Shaw (…)" ("Secrets", 07:35-08:05). The male character of Roy becomes objectified by Brianna when appearing naked in Sol and Robert's house ("House", 04:53-06:13). When seeing his naked body Brianna states "I would like to turn away. My body is not moving" and when Bud tries to cover up Roy's body, Brianna exclaims, "Bud, no" (ibid.). Additionally, when Roy mentions he cannot find his pants Brianna mentions, "Don't be sorry" (ibid.). Because of these notions and Brianna's intense gaze on Roy, she sexualizes him for the female spectator as well, making him a victim of scopophilia (Kaplan, 1990; Mulvey, 1975). Additionally, the scene includes technical aspects to enhance Roy's sexual characteristics in a small amount of backlighting which consequently is sharpening the features of Roy's body (ibid.). As such, the show exemplifies male characters who constitute the pleasure of looking for the female characters and thus the female spectators as well.

Next up, the analysis will discuss how the series further elaborates on Lotz' notion of "flaw" through male characters. As the analysis of the pilot episode concluded, Coyote contained imperfections and flaws through his drug addiction. His status as a flawed character is implied further on in the series by Mallory asking, "Coyote's out of rehab?" and the fact that he goes to AA meetings ("Credit Cards", 18:57; "Labels", 00:47-04:15). Other flaws in the male characters are seen through instances such as Robert being extremely competitive and extremely focused on his own ambition, creating conflicts between himself and Sol - as he receives an award at "The Tappys" for his performances at the local theater, he thanks everyone except Sol, creating issues in their relationship ("The Tappys"). Thus, the pilot framework of flawed characters continues in the rest of the series.

The last concept in which the analysis will discuss is how the male character of Robert portrays the aspect of "celebrating men's feminism" and "mocking the male masculinity" as noted by Boyle (2005, p. 179). Starting in "The Other Vibrator" Robert begins acting in a 'Gay Theatre Group' consequently establishing himself in what is seen as a feminine activity due to the dancing and singing (16:19-16:45). The show premieres during "The Musical" with Robert being the lead role (02:25-03:31; 14:04-14:57). However, whilst the notion of performing in a musical might seem to illustrate the facet of "mocking male masculinity", the male character of Robert through his homosexuality contains a feminine side; the notion thereby instead seems to celebrate men's feminism.

Grace and Frankie - An Overview

From the analysis of the show as a whole, the series saw a correlation to the pilot episode's framework as well as an expansion of the same. For instance, the sexualization of a female character as Mulvey described was not apparent in the show - while some of the characters bring up the notion of sexualization through for instance clothing and appearance, many aspects of Mulvey's

idea of the female character and her sexualization was lacking. Technical elements such as camera movements lingering, soft lighting highlighting feminine features and editing were not noticeable, and as the main male characters are either gay or related by blood to the female characters, there are no elements constituting a male gaze upon the women in the story. As such, like with the pilot, the notion of scopophilia and sexualization is mostly rejected due to lacking technical facets as well as lack of male characters being 'the bearer of the look of the spectator'. Though, as noted, the reason for the lack of sexualization in Grace and Frankie may be due to the notion of age, as women of age are, as argued by Gill, not portrayed as admirable. Likewise, the non-sexualization of the main male characters in the pilot continues throughout the entirety of the series. Though, while the main male characters of the show are either homosexual or relatives to the female characters, other supporting male characters such as the minor male characters Byron and Roy were sexualized and objectified by female characters of the show, establishing Kaplan's notion of the female gaze.

As established in the pilot, the two women Grace and Frankie are the main forwarders of the storyline, as they deal with the effects of their now broken marriages. Though, in the pilot analysis, it was mentioned how Robert and Sol are the ones driving the main story arc forward as they come out as gay as well as ask for divorces, which then forces Grace and Frankie together. After the pilot, the women take over as the sole forwarders as they continue on dealing with the story arc created by Sol and Robert in the pilot - seen in, for instance, Grace and Frankie founding their own vibrator company and breaking out of their assisted living.

The pilot episode further illustrated postfeminist and post-postfeminist mindsets which also are of great significance for the rest of *Grace and Frankie*. The most important notion of the series' framework, which only seems to expand throughout the rest of the series, is that of "age" and "dealing with growing older"; the show exemplifies this by incorporating situations such as Grace and Frankie hurting their backs and getting stuck on the floor all day, instances such as receiving

Panic Alerts and Frankie getting told by her sons to give up driving. As such, the show exhibit post-postfeminist notion as it deals with intersectionalized issues; in the case of Grace and Frankie, the series represents the issues stemming from age, and it represents members of the LGBT+ community through Sol and Robert. Another postfeminist concept in which *Grace and Frankie* elaborates on is that of seeking an "urgency for family elsewhere" as Grace and Frankie, as female peers, do everything together - including living under the same roof. Their relationship, as well as the fact that they are described by Nick as a 'package deal' and by Grace as 'best friends and partners', shows a female friendship in which the need for family is fulfilled. Moreover, the show contradicted Gill in her statement that only the male sex was actively "seeking a shag" as Grace, Frankie, Mallory, and Brianna all engaged in sexual acts through dating male characters - which also connoted well with Lotz' notion of postfeminist women and the 'new' new woman. The notion of "flaws" was, like in the pilot, apparent in the series as a whole for both male and female characters; Grace, for instance, upholds the framework of her alcoholism stated in the pilot. Coyote too upholds his framework of flaws from the pilot as a recovering drug addict, shown in him engaging in rehab and AA meetings. Other characters containing the concept of "flaws" are that of Frankie and Robert. For Frankie, flaws in character are exposed through her sleeping with Sol after his engagement to Robert; for Robert, his flaw is seen through his competitiveness and egocentric personality as he forgets to thank the supportive Sol when winning a Tappy award. The last postfeminist concept is seen in the pilot episode's framework, which the tv-series further elaborates on, is that of Lotz' exploring "(...) the diverse relations to power women inhabit"; the differences between Grace and Frankie noted in the pilot only expands throughout, as the two women are just inherently different. Though they share the commonality of womanhood, their differences stand out throughout the remainder of the series - Grace being a somewhat conservative businesswoman and Frankie with her open-minded and liberal mindset.

While the series mostly correlate or expand the framework noted in the pilot, other postfeminist notions are introduced later on as well. One notion is the show illustrating "(...) contemporary struggles faced by women and feminists", a postfeminist attribute as posed by Lotz. This is, for instance, seen through the show commenting on pubic hair and how it is upheld to a beauty standard in the Western world. As such, the show is exemplifying and commenting on a contemporary struggle for women - the fact that women are still upheld to an impossible beauty standard in which even pubic hair is included. Lastly, *Grace and Frankie* incorporates the concept of "celebrating men's feminism" through the positive representation of Robert's feminine side as he stars in musicals. Thereby, as shown, the series mostly upholds and expands its framework while also incorporating more postfeminist ideas. Though, more importantly, the show exhibits a story about female solidarity and friendship overcoming immense struggles with age and heartbreak through the support of each other.

Discussion

The Similarities and Differences of *Jane the Virgin*, *Grace and Frankie* and *Broad City*

The analyses of the three series *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019), *Grace and Frankie* (2015-) and *Broad City* (2014-2019) showed three very different sets of female representation. The women in the series all showed both differences and similarities in the representation of them – thus, this discussion section will begin with comparing the shows, in order to see if there are specific traits of feminism in these contemporary shows that can be argued to also be traits of contemporary female characters in Post-Network television.

In the analyses, we found that the male gaze was both apparent and something which was contradicted. For instance, with *Jane the Virgin*, all female characters were at some point objectified and sexualized, with the camera sometimes lingering over their bodies – though, the women were also shown to not be passive in terms of who controls the narrative. For *Grace and Frankie*, some of the female characters were sexualized where others were de-sexualized, though technical elements such as camera movements, editing, and lighting did not create the burden of objectification for the women. In *Broad City*, it was found that while the two women are sexual in their behavior and mannerisms, the possibility for pleasure of looking in a male spectator was removed due to several reasons: the comedic element, in which the 'sexual situations' become awkward and embarrassing, as well as the fact that camera movements and so forth does not construct male gaze. Thus, with the three series, the instances in which male gaze is apparent can mostly be found in *Jane the Virgin* – something which may not be surprising when considering that the show is an American telenovela, a format in which romance and sexuality are of key importance.

In terms of active female spectatorship as proposed with Kaplan, all three shows exhibit women that are the forwarders of their respective narratives – Jane, the protagonist of *Jane the Virgin*, along with the other female characters, all show instances throughout in which they are the forwarders of the narrative; Jane, for instance, continuously forward the narrative of both her own love life as well as her book. With *Grace and Frankie*, the same notion arises – the two women are definitely the forwarders of their narrative as they choose to live with each other after their husbands leaving them, as well as when they take their lives into their own hands as they create their own vibrator line. The notion of Grace and Frankie creating their own vibrator line is especially interesting when looking at the history of the vibrator; not only does the vibrator allow for female pleasure, it initially was created to cure 'hysteria' in women - which was seen as a disease in women (Saul, 2006, p. 51-52). As such, the vibrator has a long historical and cultural significance for women as well as a significance in *Grace and Frankie* - the notion that the two older women create a company in which female independent pleasure is of importance is interesting, as it deviates from the 'housewife' stereotype in which the businesses of older women mostly concerns itself with selling marmalade and salsas. With *Broad City*, the notion of the female characters being in the active/male position as the forwarders of the story is apparent, too – here, the two women are active as they forward every storyline of every episode. Kaplan also noted how lesbian fantasies are constructed as the women take over the dominant position – the lesbian fantasies are seen in, for instance, Petra's relationship to Jane Ramos in *Jane the Virgin*, and Ilana's obvious fantasies about Abbi in *Broad City*. With the notion in mind that all female characters take over the dominant/male position, one might ask: is there even room for a true, active female position? As Kaplan argued in her 1990 study on the female gaze, the female character does not take over a dominant/female position, but rather the male/dominant position. They do so in order to keep the dominant/male and passive/female structure; Kaplan argued of the inherently patriarchal

structure that it should always be kept intact. Keeping the patriarchal structure intact is seen in many instances, as it also applies to the men of the story – for instance, as argued in the analysis of *Broad City*, the male characters are submissive and passive while Abbi and Ilana reign as the ones in the dominant position. The women show characteristics of taking over the male position; they become dominant, manipulative and ambitious, while the men become passive, unintelligent and unattractive. As so, the structure is intact as the women take over the male position and the males are subjected to the passive and objectifying position of female – showing how there is no room for a true, female dominant position, even for a show like *Broad City* which is very conscious about roles of females and other postfeminist ideas.

Many postfeminist notions were apparent in the three series – both correlating and contradicting to them. For instance, postfeminist television has, in the opinion of scholars, not exemplified older women with aging signs as admirable. In the case of the series of this thesis, this notion does not hold water – both Alba from *Jane the Virgin* and Grace in *Grace and Frankie* are shown as admirable objects for male characters, thus contradicting the idea that older women never can be admirable. Similarly, postfeminist shows often represent minorities in television – which holds true for all series. In *Jane the Virgin*, the show represents Latinex culture with many of their main characters. In *Grace and Frankie*, the show represents age and the notion of "growing older", something which is not represented much in television. In *Broad City*, most minorities are represented positively, though the biggest representation of minorities being LGBT+ representations – which can be seen in the two female characters themselves, supporting characters as well as political commentary throughout. From the representations of intersectionalized minorities in these complex television series, a notion arises; it seems as if the Post-Network Era has helped broaden postfeminism, as it makes way for niche targeting and thus a more narrow audience, which creates the need for female leads with specific issues relating to real-life issues of

audience members in order to create identification for viewers that did not have representation before.

According to Lotz, "career", "marriage", and "dating" is of huge importance when discussing the postfeminist shows, arguing that the three elements are the most significant. While none of these elements were of extreme importance in *Broad City*, the notions of career and dating were of much bigger importance in *Jane the Virgin* and *Grace and Frankie*. With Jane, much of her overall storyline concerns itself with love and dating, as she navigates through relationships in order to find her "Mr. Right". Jane furthermore deals with the concept of "career" as she struggles to accomplish her goal of becoming a published author. With Grace and Frankie, the "dating" aspect is of huge importance as the two women are left by their respective husbands and now has to find love elsewhere, creating many difficulties for them as they have to return to the dating scene so late in life. In terms of careers, the two also exhibit women trying to navigate their own vibrator business and being quite successful with it. With both *Grace and Frankie* and *Jane the Virgin*, the notion of "career" and the exploration of the same is important, as women having careers and being successful in such is important in female representation; it shows independence, deviation from traditional patriarchal structures in which women were merely housewives.

Other postfeminist ideas were apparent in all three shows – using femininity as an advantage, female characters being the ones only wanting 'a shag' and not a relationship, illustrating contemporary struggles faced by women and feminists, settling the urgency of family elsewhere, and women with flaws, imperfections, many difficulties. Though, as much as these shows were similar – with female characters in the active/male position and showing postfeminist traits – they are very different, too. *Jane the Virgin* exhibit a romantic storyline of a young Latina woman who is dealt with some difficult cards in life and must rise herself up from her own powerlessness. *Grace and Frankie* represent the aging women as well as the type of obstacles that come with age. *Broad*

City shows the not-so-glamorous lives of two young – and very queer – women struggling with making ends meet and finding their purpose. The similarities and differences of the three shows in terms of female representation then pose a question: does these three contemporary series with female leads suggests how postfeminism, as well as the distance from traditional female representations, has infiltrated Post-Network television?

Post-Network Television and Its Influence on Postfeminist Characteristics in Television

To understand how the Post-Network Era may have an influence on the rise of a broad array of female characters, one must also understand the innovations and technological advances that created the Post-Network Era. This concept in television's term was coined – and popularized – by Amanda D. Lotz, with other notable scholars such as Jason Mittell studying the complexity of such Post-Network series. In her work "The Television Will Be Revolutionized" from 2014, Lotz explains the historical and technological advances which characterize contemporary television series.

The Post-Network Era followed earlier times in television, which Lotz coins as *The Network Era* and *The Multi-Channel Transition* (Lotz, 2014, p. 8). The first period, The Network Era, was characterized by for instance families owning just one television and only a few networks providing entertainment for viewers. This meant that with the limited options of only "The Big Three" (ABC, NBC and CBS), television shows were meant to be enjoyable for everyone despite differences in ethnicity, age, gender, culture and so forth: "This was the era of *broadcasting*, in which networks selected programs that would reach a heterogeneous mass culture, but still directed their address to white middle class" (p. 24). With the multi-channel transition, cable television arrived, creating more channels than just the three networks; here, niche programming began its course, as the viewer suddenly had many options and were given consumer control (p. 25-26). As such, women

were suddenly of interest in the marketing, leading to three different channels which were specifically designed for a female audience – Lifetime, Oxygen and WE (p. 27).

The Post-Network era is characterized by a difference in the use of the television medium, as well as a fragmented audience – in the end of the multi-channel transition, after DVR's and other technologies had been created, there was "(…) no singular behavior or mode of viewing, and this variability only continues to increase as the post-network era develops" (p. 29). Consumption of television has only risen with technologies such as streaming sites. Furthermore, the fragmentation of audiences due to the abundance of channels at the end of The Multi-Channel transition has only risen in the Post-Network Era as streaming sites as narrowcasting has taken over (p. 32-34). As a contrast to The Network Era, where The Big Three had to create programs for a heterogeneous mass audience, the content creators of the Post-Network Era instead caters to specific audiences in order to please niche audiences and different minorities. Not only the cable channels and streaming sites have offered these broad characters and niche programming – the networks, while still trying to cater to a broader audience, have also been pressured to change their ways in order to please the ever-changing demands of the audiences. With the niche targeting and many ways of consuming television in the Post-Network Era, the advance of niche programs has happened, creating the possibility of a broader array of characters. Furthermore, the increase in consumption of television has created the need for more content, which then generates a broadening and inclusion of different types of shows, characters and target audiences. Of course, this broadening then affects a representation of women, too; as such, the television series of our contemporary era and post-feminist ideas become more intertwined than earlier. These changes created better circumstances for women on the screen - female-centered dramas, as argued by Lotz, has been a stable in programming since the multi-channel transition, as seen in shows such as *Ally McBeal*, *Sex and the City*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Desperate Housewives* and many, many more (Lotz, 2006, p. 1-2).

As argued by Lotz – and presented in the theory section – these postfeminist leads are considered successful, professional and career-minded, empowered and flawed (p. 3). While many of the above examples has catered white middle-class women, the contemporary shows of our time have created a broader array of women on screen – not just the white, career-minded single woman. The three series of this thesis themselves shows just how broad the female representations of contemporary – and popular – programming the Post-Network Era exhibit: *Jane the Virgin* with its Latinex representation through an American telenovela, *Grace and Frankie* with representations of age and growing older, and *Broad City* with its young, Jewish and queer characters. Other popular programs show a similar broadness in the representation of females – the extremely popular Netflix Original *Orange Is The New Black* (2013-), which revolves around imprisoned women, show a broad array of female characters from different cultures, ages, ethnicities, and sexualities, while all having imprisonment in common. Popular shows such as *Veep* (2012-2019), *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* (2015-2019), *Modern Family* (2009-)*, The Good Place* (2016-), and many more show a very broad representation of strong female leads on both streaming sites and networks. They are women of color, female Vice Presidents, unruly and 'bad' women, women who have been subjected to abuse and much more. The notion of this broader array of women in the Post-Network Era creates an interesting idea for reflection: Is it culture which shapes television, or television that shapes culture? In this thesis, we argue how it is a give-and-take, how both instances are possible; changes in culture, such as the wider acceptance of LGBT+ culture, is definitely a factor of how characters relating to these issues are created and put on screen - creating the notion of "culture shaping television". Likewise, there are instances of television shows shaping culture - the show *RuPaul's Drag Race* (2009-) is a great example hereof. The reality-competition show has popularized drag, a culture which earlier was hidden from the public eye and subjected to being lived through night clubs and underground ballroom scenes. With the creation of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, drag culture has

now been popularized and is considered a part of popular culture, even gaining its own "DragCon". As such, the question of causation in terms of culture shaping television or television shaping culture seems to be a mutual concession.

The thesis proposed the following problem statement: "*Considering how female characters in cinematic arts have undergone change from being subjected to male gaze to postfeminist icons, how are female television characters portrayed in the Post-Network Television Era?*". To answer this question, one must consider the following: the three shows of this thesis – as well as the other above examples – while extremely successful today, would most likely never have been shown during the network era despite the shows' complexity. The advances for women in television could not have happened without the technological and cultural advances of television which created viewer control, niche programming and different modes of viewing. Without these advances, shows today would have still been subjected to the confines of The Network Era, in which shows needed to cater a heterogeneous audience – and female-centered shows would have never been as broad and different as they are today. *Broad City* shows signs of Quality TV through for instance controversial subjects, self-consciousness and referencing popular culture - but the show would have been too ranchy, unruly and queer to be considered a viable choice for a heterogeneous mass audience during The Network Era. *Grace and Frankie*, through its seriality and different ensemble of cast, show complexity and correlation with the quality series of the Post-Network Era; though in the Network Era, it would be too specific and niche for the heterogeneous audience, as it represents women of age. Likewise, *Jane the Virgin*, with its Latinex cultural representation, would be sacked during the Network Era due to the networks primary target being the white middle-class - nevertheless, in our contemporary times, the show exhibit complexity through its viewers relying tremendously on their memory, as well as for instance its mix of the genres telenovela and comedy. As such, the answer to the thesis' problem statement – that is, the question of how the Post-Network television era has had

a change in the portrayal of female television – can be summarized to the following: the technological and cultural advances which created the niche programming and complexity in contemporary storytelling, and thus, the broad representations of female characters. These advances in technology, culture and viewer experience created both the possibility and need of female leads that represent different groups of women. The Post-Network Era caters to all people and all interests, and thus female characters in television have undergone the change from being supportive characters meant only as an object of desire for a male spectator and male character, into female leads who are de-sexualized and active forwarders of narratives. While it may be argued that there is no room for an active/female position due to an inherently patriarchal structure, as described above, the conditions for women on screen has definitely been bettered and improved – an improvement which cannot be argued to not be influenced by the advances of our Post-Network Era. This improvement, while still being subjected to a male/dominant and female/passive structure, is still positive for the representations of women; it gives a female audience a strong female lead to relate to and identify with – much like male spectators has had in their strong male characters throughout the history of cinematic arts.

Conclusion

The Post-Network Era in which television currently resides has undoubtedly had an effect on not only the complexity of television series but also that of the representation of the female character. The industry changes arising from growing use of the medium as well as technological advances created the need for more content than ever before made; a need that has made niche targeting and creativity a priority in television. As such, female representation has changed as well, and as shown in the discussion, the idea of a postfeminist television character has broadened since the time of *Sex and the City*. Postfeminism and the Post-Network Era, we argue, are intertwined; the female representation expands with the need for a broader array of women created by a Post-Network Era.

The thesis sought out to answer the following problem statement: "*Considering how female characters in cinematic arts have undergone change from being subjected to male gaze to postfeminist icons, how are female television characters portrayed in the Post-Network Television Era?*". To answer this question, the three series - *Jane the Virgin* (2014-2019)*, Broad City* (2014-2019) and *Grace and Frankie* (2015-) - were analyzed through several theoretical outlooks on the woman in media by the help of for instance both classical feminist film criticism from scholars such as Mulvey and Kaplan, as well as postfeminist television criticism from scholars such as Lotz, Gill and Byerly & Ross. As noted in the discussion section, comparisons of the leading female characters in three series showed both similarities and differences in female representation. The classic female spectatorship as proposed by Mulvey was contradicted in all cases as the females showed active forwarding of the narratives, though, in the case of *Jane the Virgin*, the women were subjected to scopophilia and the male gaze. Kaplan's notion of inherent structures having to be kept intact was seen in *Broad City*, where the females were dominant and the males passive - in the case of *Jane the Virgin* and *Grace and Frankie*, these structures were denied as both males and females were not in a passive position. Many postfeminist notions were also noticeable in the three series;

for instance, all three series incorporated the postfeminist notion of urgency for family elsewhere by bonding with a female peer. Additionally, *Broad City* exemplified many commentaries on issues for women and marginalized communities, *Jane the Virgin* showed a correlation to Lotz's idea of the 'new' new woman with Jane engaging in her career and dating life as a key theme and *Grace and Frankie* too showed women employing in their careers as a central theme. Thus, the series establishes the notion of how feminist television criticism sought to challenge the destiny of women 'only to become housewives' as they move out of the 'private' sphere.

Though, what seemed to be the most interesting notion from the analysis of the three series was the idea of intersectionality being of importance in the narratives, showing post-postfeminist traits. While *Jane the Virgin* deals with Latinex culture, the issues stemming from being a part of the culture was not shown to be a theme in the series, and as such, the show does not correlate with post-postfeminist traits. Though, with *Broad City*, the immense commentary and self-reflection of marginalized communities showed a series in which intersectionality is of importance, especially in terms of LGBT+ culture but also in terms of race, religion and so forth. In *Grace and Frankie*, the whole notion of age shows a series dealing with intersectionalized communities - besides the two women being of age, many issues stemming from age are a key theme and huge part of the narrative. Again, we argue that these post-postfeminist traits would have never happened without the development of women happening in the Post-Network Era; as the female representation has expanded through the advances in technology and culture, so has the idea of the post-feminist television character.

To conclude on the thesis' problem statement - that is, the question of female television characters are portrayed in the Post-Network Era - the female character in our contemporary society stands out from earlier representations of women. The female character now is not necessarily marginalized and subjected to being a passive sexual object - like in the case of this thesis' three

series - instead, the female character takes action, is independent and empowered. Furthermore, the female character of the Post-Network Era is self-reflecting and comments on both the struggles of women, politics and popular culture. Lastly, the contemporary female character deals with intersectionality - showing representation for all types of women everywhere instead of only the young, white, middle-class woman. The female character of the Post-Network Era broadens the lineup of women on screen as well as the possibility of identification with characters for all types of women. Though, more importantly, the female character broadens the perspective of women everywhere; something which is needed in a time in which people still are subjected to gendered stereotypes. This development from a time in which the female was merely a character created to further the story of the male into a time in which women are allowed to be forwarders of narrative and representations of intersectionalized communities is a long time coming. Now that our contemporary culture allows this female representation, it seems inevitable that the broadening of such female portrayals will only keep advancing - an advancement that will be riveting to follow in the upcoming years of television.

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