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The Media Representation of Fictional Gay and Lesbian Characters on Television

A Qualitative Analysis of U.S. TV-series regarding Heteronormativity

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ABSTRACT

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There has been an increase in the portrayal of gay characters in several television series during the last decades, however they are still depicted in an odd way, derived from the heteronormative approach. Television programs constantly show that heterosexuality is the prevailing standard and that people that do not adapt to this heteronormative morale are regarded as eccentric and do not fit in American society. This study aims to contribute to an understanding of how the media representation of fictional gay and lesbian characters in U.S. TV-series persists heteronormativity. The theory explores different influencing factors and characteristics of heteronormativity related concepts coming from gender and sex theories. Consequently, these characteristics and elements of the literature will be identified and set side by side.

As a method a theoretical conceptual framework, in the context of a qualitative content analysis, is conducted in order to investigate the characteristics and elements of the gays and lesbians in the selected TV-series. Hereby analytical tools were used of this conceptual framework in order to understand the characteristics and elements of gendered stereotype, sexual aspects, villain/victim and life-style in scene dialog texts. The findings suggest that the four series have different ways of depicting the characteristics and elements of how the gay and lesbian characters are represented. Regarding the findings within characteristics: life-style aspects, gendered stereotypes and sexual depiction the heteronormativity is still persisting the American series. Some findings are supporting the arguments of the research review, however several findings are challenging the arguments of the previous research.

Keywords: TV representation, gay, lesbian, gender, sex, heteronormativity, U.S., content analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

According to a news article of Guerrasio (2017), a drive-in movie theatre in the United States will not screen the Disney movie 'Beauty and the Beast' because of a gay character appearing in the movie. This illustrates the attitude towards homosexuality in the United States. Despite the success of the gay liberation movement in the early 1970's (Bronski, 2012), when myriad political organisations sprang up that promoted equal civil rights for gay people, much opposition remains. This opposition has for example resulted in the cancellation of the broadcast of a Disney movie, because the director of this movie, Bill Condon, announced the movie includes an 'exclusively gay moment'. The film has been frequently criticised, among other things about the fact that homosexuality should not be taught (Guerrasio, 2017).

1.1 BACKGROUND LGBT

Research shows that Americans are mainly conservative about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgenders (LGBT) and therefore their rights are not legally supported equally in all states (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009). Right wing political parties, cultural conservatives and several religious groups believe in general that, by trying to challenge and redefine age-old concepts of marriage and family, homosexuals are a threat to the very foundations of American society (Bronski, 2012). A survey of Pew Research Center (2013) showed that the acceptance of homosexuality in the United States is poor in comparison with other Western countries. Just 60% of all Americans think that homosexuality is acceptable, compared with 88% in Spain, 87% in Germany, 80% in Canada and 77% in France. Compared to these similar wealthy developed countries, public opinion regarding homosexuality can be characterised as conservative based on the above-mentioned figures. This conservatism is derived from the dominant religious puritan thought in the United States that states only heterosexuality is normal (Bronski, 2012).

Although after the American Revolution (1775-1783) church and state were officially separated, citizens demanded protection from the government against immorality such as slavery, dueling, gambling, adultery, prostitution, drunkenness and homosexuality. This resulted in the Washington Sodomy Law of 1893 (Atkins, 2003). Against this background, the American society developed into a 'heteronormative' society, based on the assumption that attraction and relationships between one man and one woman are the only normal form of sexuality. Berlant and Warner (1998, p.548) define heteronormativity as: *"the institutions, structures of understanding and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent that is, organized as a sexuality but also privileged."* Whereas most conservative people do not actively want to prejudice or harm homosexual people because of their sexuality, they do regard them as 'less normal' and therefore treat them differently.

In the next section the influence of the media on this heteronormative attitude will be further explained. This study will conduct a qualitative content analysis of four U.S. prime-time series with three episodes for each show for the empirical study.

From here on, this thesis will only focus on the representation of gay and lesbian people. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, according to media organisation GLAAD (2016) the number of gay and lesbian characters has increased in visibility during the last decades and this group is overrepresented on television in comparison with bisexuals and transgender characters. Secondly, the representation of gays and lesbians in the media does not always reflect reality (stereotyping) (GLAAD, 2016). Focusing only on this part of the LGBT group will provide a more nuanced picture of the group.

1.2 THE MEDIA AND THE GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE

One of the most influential media forms in popular culture is television, a medium that plays an active role in shaping and defining cultural groups. Especially mainstream media, in particular television, are powerful in the United States when it comes to the representations of minorities. According to Rothenberg (2007, p. 51) it has *"the power to stereotype the elderly, ethnic groups, gays and lesbians and the institutionalized and, thus, in contributing to the self-image of many viewers."* However, portrayals of gay and lesbian people on television tend to be biased and suffer from a very one-sided perspective on society (Rothenberg, 2007). The media landscape in the U.S. is dominated by the following television channels: CNN, ABC, NBC and FOX whereby FOX is well known because of the conservative points of view and opinions it offers a platform to (GLAAD, 2016). These channels broadcast popular television series that feature gay (leading) characters, like for example *Will and Grace* (1998), *Queer as Folk* (2000) and *Glee* (2009). Most of the time these series stereotype gay and lesbian characters, for example depicting gay male characters in a very feminine way or portraying lesbians as masculine characters (GLAAD, 2016). This does not imply that these television series are anti-homosexual, but that heterosexual relationships are taken as reference to what is considered 'normal' and gay and lesbian characters are often portrayed in a deviant way (Fisher, Hill, Grube & Gruber, 2007).

Whereas there has been an increase in the portrayal of gay characters in several television series during the last decades, they are still depicted in an odd way, derived from the heteronormative approach. The sitcom series *Will and Grace* for example has leading gay characters, Will and Jack, but they are portrayed mainly as the stereotype gay person, one as the masculine and the other as the feminine gay. This specific depiction of gay characters

persists the heteronormative construction that currently dominates in television series, and as a consequence American society (GLAAD, 2016).

As well as reinforcing longstanding taboos, television can also help lifting them. However, Fisher et al. (2007) explain that despite the lifting of some longstanding taboos over the last several decades, the vast majority of representations of television series are still heterosexual and heteronormative. Thereby, the depictions of sexual issues associated with homosexual characters are relatively rare because this is not considered as 'normal'. It is noticeable that gay and lesbian people on television are often portrayed as unique or different rather than as individuals sharing the same norms and values as heterosexuals, like for example a positive appreciation of marriage and children, or the same kind of physical display of affection as heterosexual couples. Gays and lesbians are still portrayed as people who do not fit the heteronormative norms (not heterosexual) and are considered to be rather odd (Fisher et al., 2007).

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the increase in media portrayals of gay and lesbian people, it is striking that the overall media culture in the United States is still dominantly heteronormative and therefore persists the longstanding taboos regarding homosexuality. Television programs constantly show that heterosexuality is the prevailing standard and that people that do not adapt to this heteronormative morale are regarded as eccentric and do not fit in American society. Although several studies like for example from scholars Gross (2002) and Dhaenens (2013) have been conducted on heteronormativity and the media, there still is a research gap concerning how media representation of fictional gay and lesbian characters in current/recent American television series contributes to the heteronormativity.

2. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.1 RESEARCH AIM

This study aims to contribute to an understanding of how the media representation of fictional gay and lesbian characters in U.S. TV-series persists heteronormativity. This will be realised by analysing the dialogs of specific episodes and scenes of four TV-series, *Modern Family*, *The Fosters*, *How To Get Away With Murder* and *The New Normal* in order to gain insight into the representation of gays and lesbians in these series and how this possibly contributes to the persisting heteronormative standard.

In order to achieve this goal, heteronormativity, gender and sex theories will be studied in relation to heteronormativity, combined with television theories, in order to comprehend how the representation of gay and lesbian characters in TV-series influences heteronormativity. This will lead to a theoretical conceptual framework, which provides the empirical tools that will be used during the practical section of the research. Thereby, this study contributes to the fields of communication and media research, and gender/sex studies.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The elements of the research problem and research aim are translated into as compact and specific as possible for three research questions (Baarda & Goede, 2006):

Research Questions:

1. What are the characteristics of TV representations of gay and lesbian people in recent and current TV-series in the Unites States?

2. How is the interaction represented between heterosexual and gay and lesbian characters in recent and current American TV-series?

3. What factors contribute to the persistence of heteronormativity in American TV-series?

2.3 SOCIETAL IMPORTANCE

This study can contribute to the amelioration of heteronormativity in society. According to Berlant and Warner (1998) heteronormativity can lead to discrimination and stigmatization. This has to do with deviant forms of sexuality and gender, which makes self-expression difficult for gay and lesbian people when the expression does not conform to the norm.

3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In previous research on media representation and heteronormativity two themes can be distinguished: homosexuality in the United States and media representations of gays and lesbians in the United States. Firstly, the emergence of lesbian and gay studies in the academic world will be discussed in chronological order, starting in the 1950s. Secondly, a few studies and publications will be discussed that focus on the role of the media regarding the representation of gay and lesbian people in television series. This knowledge is needed in order to gain a better insight into how gay people are represented in American media, television in particular, whereby defining aspects (negative/positive) of this representation will be picked out. This is important in order to find out in what ways the media representation of gay and lesbian people in the media influences the heteronormativity in American society. The following studies map the field in which this research belongs. Finally, when the above-mentioned themes in academic literature are thoroughly explored, this will lead to the development of a theoretical framework for the empirical study.

3.1 PREVIOUS STUDIES ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES

In the study *The Prime Time Closet: A History of Gays and Lesbians on TV* Triopino (2002) examined the historical context of homosexuality in the United States before gays and lesbians were represented on television. Triopino (2002) states that *"homosexuals became a more visible minority after World War II in the American society"* (p. 15), but mainly in a negative way. Triopino (2002) discusses that after gay men completed their military service many of them headed to gay friendly cities such as New York and San Francisco instead of returning to small town life. Gay bars and hangouts, open for business in many big cities, offered their patrons a place to socialise and be part of a community. Although visibility increased of homosexuals in general, this was because of the negative way they were referred to by heterosexuals like for example fags, dykes, deviants, and sex perverts (Triopine, 2002).

Gross (2002) complements the above-mentioned process by stating that *"a half century ago homosexuality was still the love that nobody dared to speak of and therefore gay people were a minority"* (p. 14). It is common that the term minority concerns ethnic and racial minorities, but according to Gross (2002) it is also applied to gays and lesbians, especially when it comes to traditional roles of men and women. Gross (2002) explains that *"people's conceptions of masculinity and femininity, of the 'normal' and 'natural' attributes and responsibilities of men and women within patterns of roles in sexual identities"* (p. 12), these are derived from these norms. Gross (2002) describes the 'normal' gender-role system that people learn from a very young age where heteronormative perspectives are the standards. He states: *"The maintenance of the 'normal' gender-role system requires that people learn a*

set of expectations that channel their beliefs about what is proper for men and women" (Gross, 2002, p. 13). This also concerned norms, roles and relationship regarding parenting in certain different roles (Wilchins, 2004).

3.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES ABOUT GAYS AND LESBIANS AND THE TV REPRESENTATION

In its recent annual report media organisation GLAAD (2016) states that the number of gay and lesbian characters counted on scripted prime-time series increased during the past twenty years. However, several scholars such as Gross (2002) and Dhaenens (2013), argue that the representation of gays and lesbians in the media has been mostly negative, reflecting intolerance of homosexuals. In order to gain more insight in this matter this section addresses several studies and publications regarding the representation of gays and lesbians in the media and in particular on television.

Tropiano (2002) shows that in the mid-1950s, locally produced talk shows were the first to introduce the taboo subject homosexuality in the United States. In the decades that followed, talk shows such as *Donahue* and *Oprah* discussed a specific topic or issue regarding homosexuals, but their audiences still mainly perceived homosexuality as a social problem (Tropiano, 2002). Moreover, Steiner, Fejes and Petrich (1993) in *Invisibility, homophobia and heterosexism: Lesbians, gays and the media*) reviewed the events of the so-called Stonewall Riots in New York that took place in 1969. With the start of the aids epidemic in the early 1980s homosexual people were negatively portrayed, but this was also a reason for the media to pay attention to this issue to lead to an awareness of homophobia (Steiner et al., 1993). Another milestone for gays and lesbians is discussed by Down (2001) in the study *Ellen, Television, and the Politics of Gay and Lesbian Visibility*. Hereby the coming out of Ellen Degeneres on television in 1997 is examined. Dow (2001) mentions that by stating that gay people would, from that moment on, no longer remain invisible, Ms. DeGeneres opened the prime-time closet door (Dow, 2001). However, she concludes that despite this pioneering statement still many Americans did not react positively on the coming out of Ellen Degeneres and thereby the (positive) representation of homosexuality on television. This even affected her career, because no job or project was offered to her in the first three years after her coming out (Dow, 2001). However, Dow (2001) contends that as a result of Ms. DeGeneres coming out U.S. television networks and production companies started to depict non-heterosexual characters in television series (Dow, 2001). Nonetheless, the heteronormative norms remain dominant in mainstream American television series after 1997 (Chambers, 2009). This is demonstrated by GLAAD (2016), which tracks the presence of gay and lesbian characters in TV-series and researches its visibility on U.S. television. Dominant prime-time series with portrayals of gays and lesbians are for example *Will and Grace* (1998), *Queer As*

Folk (2000), *Glee* (2014) and *Looking* (2014). Although the number of gay and lesbian characters on prime-time television is increasing, the representation of this group does not always reflect reality (GLAAD, 2016).

The scholars below have investigated which aspects and characteristics of gay and lesbian characters are portrayed in several television series over the past years. This group is stereotyped as for example, helpless gay victims or gay villains and excessively shows a sexual way or lack of it. Also, portrayals of a heteronormative lifestyle, such as marriage and having children, are often missing. These above-mentioned characteristics will be further explained below, in order to explain how they influence the possibly persisting heteronormativity on television.

Characteristic: Gendered stereotype

One of the characteristics in the study *Reinventing Privilege: The New (Gay) Man in Contemporary Popular Media* that Shugart (2003) pointed out was that gay and lesbian characters are almost always stereotyped, gay men as effeminate and lesbians as masculine, like for example in *Will and Grace* (1998) and *Glee* (2009). Battles and Hilton-Morrow (2002) explored how *Will & Grace* situates the potentially controversial issue of homosexuality within a safe environment. The character Will is a more masculine type, sensible and career-driven and the other leading character, Jack, is more feminine, promiscuous and youth-obsessed (Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002). The same stereotypes are used in the TV-series Glee, where according to Dhaenens (2013) one of the leading characters, Kurt, is depicted as a very feminine type, characterised by a high singing voice and love of fashion. However, he is depicted with a boyfriend at some point in the series, which overcomes and represents the normalization of relationships between same-sex couples (Dhaenens, 2013). Nevertheless, stereotyped elements in the characters persist the heteronormativity in the above-mentioned series (Chambers, 2009). Where gay characters are portrayed in as much realistic social contexts, they are still dealing with stereotypical perceptions according to Gross (2002).

Characteristics: Victimisation

Dhaenens (2013) examined the representation of gay teens in the American musical series *Glee*. One of the striking things he found out was that gay characters are portrayed as the victim (Dhaenens, 2013). For example, in featuring different and conflicting perspectives in the experience and expression of sexual desires among gay teens, the series explores sexual diversity among gay teens and questions the hegemonic and one-sided discourse of the helpless gay teen victim. Whereas heterosexual couples are depicted as the happy people,

their gay counterparts are victimised by nearly dying of AIDS, hate crimes or suicide. For instance, the TV-series *Glee* corresponds to an academic demand for an exploration and acknowledgment of counter-narratives in which gay teens are not only represented as suffering and self-loathing, but also as happy, self-confident, and able to position themselves beyond the boundaries of the heterosexual matrix (Dhaenens, 2013).

Characteristics: Villain

Chambers (2009) describes that gay characters in American TV-series are also frequently represented as the villain character: *"stigmatized as deviant, silly or evil"* (Triopino, 2002, p. 69). According to Triopino (2002) these fictional representations depict homosexuals as violent and being a bad person. According to Chambers (2009) gay villains are normally stereotypically masculine whereby the audience does not know the character is gay, although in the TV-series *Dexter* (2006) the villain, Isaak, reveals his homosexuality to Dexter. In another TV-series *The Wire* (2002) the Omar is gay villain and the brilliant man where his homosexuality brings out the best in him (Chambers, 2009).

Characteristics: Depicted in a sexual/no sexual depiction at all

In TV-series such as *Queer As Folk* and *Looking* gay and lesbian are depicted to a sexual representation (Chambers, 2009). This is examined by Brown (2002) who argues how mainstream media, such as television, magazines, movies and music play a role in the increasing awareness of sexuality in popular culture. *Queer As Folk* and *Looking* depict gays and lesbians in a very sexual way, for example many scenes are shown with sensual make out, sex and kissing (Chambers, 2009). Another example is the TV-series *The L Word* (2004) that centers on a group of lesbian friends and their romantic and sexual entanglements. Chambers (2009) mentions that where once having one lesbian in a television show was rare, in *The L Word* it is considered to be normal to show the audience explicit lesbian kissing and sex scenes. However, *The L Word* probably is an exception, because popular mainstream series such as *Will and Grace* and *Glee* are still hardly showing homosexual sex scenes, whereas sex between hetero couples is frequently shown. Although in both series Oxford between same-sex couples is shown, sexual scenes are a rarity. These sexual contents may cause awareness about other possibilities of sexual behaviour, but this does not always shed gay and lesbian people in a positive light because they will be associated with only sexual scenes and as a result contribute to the heteronormativity (Brown, 2002). As Triopino (2002) described in chapter three, gay men were referred to sex perverts by heterosexuals after the World War 2. On the other hand, scholar Bond (2014) thinks different about the sexual depiction of gays and lesbians. Based on his content analysis of sexual instances of gays and lesbian on television, film and music, states that gay and lesbian sexual depiction in media

may serve useful for understanding how exposure of this may influence people with the LGBT community (Bond, 2014).

Characteristics: Depicting equality rights (marriage, children)

According to Brown (2002) there is a lack of family representation or same-sex couples with children in the portrayal of gay and lesbian in television series. Most of the series have a lack of gay and lesbian representation regarding the organisation of their lifestyle. For instance, same-sex couples with children are almost never part of these series. Several studies showed that children raised by same-sex parents fare equally well when compared to children raised by heterosexual parents. Marks (2012) discussed in his study that the American Psychological Association (APA) issued the following quote about gay parenting: *"Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents"* (p. 735). As such, the lack of same-sex couples with children in television series can be seen as a misrepresentation of reality (Marks, 2012).

Dhaenens (2012) discussed the fact that many media scholars argue that the representation of gay men and lesbian characters is most likely guided by heteronormativity. From different gender and sex theory these scholars state that television takes part in the reiteration of a binary, rigid and hierarchical perspective on biological sex, gender and sexuality. However, Dhaenens (2012) also agrees with Becker (2006, as cited in Dhaenens, 2012) who considers that television can confront or defy normative assumptions about sexuality.

Most of the research that has been conducted in the field of gender and sex studies in combination with media and communication makes clear that heteronormativity is in a way still dominantly present in the media representation of gay and lesbian people. Several studies examined how television represented gays and lesbians where different stereotype characteristics came out. Hereby several aspects, factors and indicators can be distinguished: the portraying as mainly gendered stereotype, helpless gay victim, gay villain and sexual or lack of it. Apart from these stereotypes elements that have been contributed to queer theory and representation of gays and lesbians, scholars, like for example Gross (2002) and Dhaenens (2013), concluded as well that the media is expressing heteronormative standards. This study will contribute to fill the gap of the representation of fictional gay and lesbian characters in recent and current television series in the U.S. in relation to heteronormativity. Furthermore, general lifestyle aspects such as marriage as children were hardly represented. These different aspects are selected from these previous studies in order to bring a theoretical framework and analytical concepts in relation to heteronormativity (gender, sex and binary) for the next chapter.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

The explored studies and publications in the research review have led to the development of a theoretical conceptual framework for the empirical study. This chapter goes through four steps. Firstly, the definitions of heteronormativity will be shown whereby one definition will be stipulated as guidance through this study. Secondly, different influencing factors and characteristics of heteronormativity related concepts coming from gender and sex theories will be explored. Consequently, the characteristics and elements of the literature will be identified and set side by side in television representations theory. Lastly, a theoretical conceptual framework will be announced, which will form the basis and as a method for the empirical research and will be used as an analytical tool in the field research for analysing the possible persistence of heteronormativity in the selected TV-series.

4.1 DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPT OF HETERONORMATIVITY

The essence of heteronormativity is the assumption that attraction and relationships between genders, male and female, are the only normal form of sexuality (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p. 548): *"the institutions, structures of understanding and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent that is, organized as a sexuality but also privileged."* Rich (1980) theorised the term 'compulsory heterosexuality'. The word compulsory means obligatory and heterosexuality means the assumption that all romantic relationships are between a man and a woman (Rich, 1980). Generally Rich (1980) includes examples such as, sex, sexual education books that only discuss heterosexuality and secular organisations that assume that everyone is heterosexual (Rich, 1980).

Herz and Johansson (2015) use the concept of heteronormativity as a tool to investigate how sexuality is expressed and performed. However, it is extended to society and targets the whole societal institution of heterosexuality. For example, if you want to get married, institutions assume that your sexuality is heterosexual (Herz & Johansson, 2015). Kitzinger (2005) describes that social institutions, such as marriage and family are organised around different-sex pairings and that same-sex couples are a 'variation on' or an 'alternative to' the heterosexual couple. Kitzinger (2005) uses the following definition of heteronormativity (p. 478) *"interpersonal practices that derive from and reinforce a set of taken-for-granted presumptions relating to sex and gender"*. Thus, it is not only about the possible acceptable sexual behaviour, but as Halperin (2012, p. 24) states: *"heterosexuality remains a social and cultural norm, that heterosexuality retains the power of heteronormativity."*

According to Herz and Johansson (2015) the concept of heteronormativity can be approached in two ways. Firstly, by describing how sexual practices are embedded in social

situations and why they do or do not fit into the normative gender and sex binary. Secondly, by describing that heteronormativity focuses on general aspects of a life-style, such as marriage and children (Ward and Schneider, 2009a, as cited in Herz & Johansson, 2015). The first approach is seen on television when you see heterosexual couples or sexual scenes between a man and a woman. The second approach is expressed on television whenever there is a traditional family or a man doing a proposal to a woman.

4.2 CHARACTERISTICS AND ELEMENTS IN GENDER AND SEX CONCEPTS

Based on the above-mentioned definitions and views of heteronormativity there will be one definition stipulated as guidance through this study: *"a societal hierarchical system that privileges and sanctions individuals based on presumed binaries of gender and sexuality; as a system it defines and enforces beliefs and practices about what is 'normal' in everyday life"* (Russell, McGuire, & Russell, 2012a, p. 188, as cited in Herz & Johansson, 2015, p. 1013). This definition relates to the research problem of this study whereby heteronormativity is regarded as a system where gays and lesbians who do not 'fit in' behave according to an 'acceptable' and 'given' societal system and this is publicly displayed in the media. Heteronormativity places an emphasis on the heterosexual alignment of biological sex (body), sexuality (affection), gender identity (mental) and gender roles (social function) (Lovaas & Jenkins, 2007). In relation to heteronormativity, different concepts of gender and sex will be discussed below in order to identify the characteristics and elements of the literature.

Moving on, gender and sex are terms that are expressed daily in the American media. The term gender will first be defined by explaining the differences between the terms 'gender' and 'sex'. The majority of people think that the terms gender and sex are synonyms (Gentile, 1993). However, according to sociological research and definitions and many scholars active in other fields of study, there is a distinction between sex and gender. Acker (1992) refers to the term 'sex' as signifying *"differences between female and male bodies"* (p. 565). These are physical or physiological differences in males, females or intersex (a combination of both), including primary sex characteristics, reproductive system, and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity (Gentile, 1993). The term 'gender' on the other hand refers to *"the social construction of identities and role dividing societies into women and men"* (Acker, 1992, p. 565), meaning that gender is socially constructed in characteristics of men and women, such as norms, roles and relationships. Gender involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society expects. To sum it up, sex refers to biological differences while gender refers to socio-cultural differences (Acker, 1992).

Wilchins (2004) argues different characteristics between sex and gender. The characteristics related to sex are that, for example, males have testicles and females have ovaries and generally, males have a deeper voice than females (Wilchins, 2004). The characteristics related to gender are, for example, that women have long hair and men short, women often contribute more to household chores than men do or are less well represented in certain professions because women prefer careers as teacher or nurse which are considered to be more suitable for women while corporate careers are more appropriate for men, although women are now breaking these barriers (Giddens, 2009). Furthermore, gender can be interpreted differently all over the world. Cultural norms vary and so do the gender roles. For instance, in India, it is normal for Sikh men to have long locks while in some matriarchal societies in Africa, women are supposed to provide for the family while men take care of the kids and household (Gentile, 1993). However, gender roles are not fixed and sometimes reversed over time in society. As an example, high-heeled shoes today are considered feminine in Western societies. But they were initially designed for upper-class men to use during hunting on horseback. This perception of high-heeled shoes changed over time and is now considered feminine due to social norms (Giddens, 2009).

The above-mentioned different characteristics of sex and gender are clearly visible in the traditional gender roles and differences portrayed in American media. This connects to the idea of heteronormativity that gender refers to the shared set of expectations and norms linked to how women and men should behave (Gentile, 1993). Consequently, representations of gay and lesbian people encounter these characteristics in gender and sex roles. Gay and lesbian people seem to break from traditional masculinity or femininity when showing stereotypes in the media, because according to Madon (1997) the general perception is that gay and lesbian people are meeting these requirements and the media shows that by depicting stereotypes. However, Kurtz (1999) argues that there are gay men who do not perceive themselves to be feminine and value traditional masculinity. For example, a gay couple depicted in the media shows that one is the masculine man and the other the (more) feminine man. This all depends on social constructions (Kurtz, 1999).

4.2.1 HETERONORMATIVITY IN THE CONCEPT OF GENDER PERFORMATIVITY

According to Acker (1993) gender is a social construct where roles and identities are divided between men and women as discussed in the previous section. Butler (1999) uses the concept 'performativity' for the construction of gender theories. The idea of performativity according to the view of Butler (1999) is that *"gender proves to be performance, that is constituting the identity purported to be"* (p. 25), meaning that gender is an act, a doing. Connell (1995) also points out in his theory about gender and identities: *"'masculine' and some men 'feminine',*

or some actions and attitudes 'masculine' or 'feminine', regardless of who displays them" (p. 69). This can be referred to in the stereotyped gay and lesbian characters in television series. For instance, the character Kurt of *Glee* has a strong passion for singing and dancing and brings this into practice (Dhaenens, 2013). In the media and LGBT community, effeminate types of men can also be referred to with the term *twink* (Oxford Dictionary, 2017).

4.2.2 GENDER BINARY

Chambers (2009) emphasises the rule to conform to 'the system of binary gender'. The concept of gender binary is that masculinity and femininity are the only two categories with impassable boundaries (Markman, 2011). Often people think that these are the only two gender identities. Everyone is either a man that is longing for a 'feminine woman' or a woman that is longing for 'masculine man'. However, in reality, everyone can have both male and female skills. It is more about the way to express and demonstrate gender (Markman, 2011). Unlike the internal experience of gender identity, gender expression is all about the external characteristics and how a person presents its gender. This could be the way people dress, apply make-up, express themselves through body language etc. These expressions are strongly emphasised by the media. Gay men, for example, are frequently expressed with feminine characteristics in a stereotype matter, such as dressing well, exaggerated extravagance and high-pitched voices (Chambers, 2009). For instance, like the character Emmett Honeycut of *Queer As Folk* who is an effeminate man (Gross, 2012). Battles and Hilton-Morrow (2002) theorise that the effeminate, flamboyant gay character is brought along as a 'foil' to the more masculine gay character in order to make him more acceptable for the heterosexual audience.

4.2.3 SEXUALITY BINARY

The sexuality binary points out that heterosexuality is 'normal' and other forms of sexual behaviour abnormal (Chambers, 2009). On television, the assumptions of TV characters are mostly depicted as heterosexuals, but in several series where gay and lesbian characters do appear, they are most often portrayed as sexually driven (Chambers, 2009). For instance, the character Bryan Kinney of *Queer As Folk* is a masculine gay man who is mainly portrayed as the sex-addict in the series (GLAAD, 2016).

4.2.4 LIFE-STYLE

According to Herz and Johansson (2015) heteronormativity is more focused on an extended notion, it concerns life issues such as lifestyle, family and other possible forms of life regarding the heteronormative standard. For instance, when people who define themselves as lesbian or gay decide to start a family with their partner and child(ren) and perhaps also

get married, they may consequently adopt a heterosexual lifestyle (Herz and Johansson, 2015). Meaning that people can live a less compulsory social form such as child-raising, generational succession, caretaking, shared living space, shared finances, property ownership, and private life (Herz and Johansson, 2015). Warner (1999) calls this the 'totalizing tendency' of heteronormativity. These characteristics have always been depicted in television series and especially shows for children by showing traditional families and heterosexual couples (Tropiano, 2002).

4.3 CHARACTERISTICS AND ELEMENTS AND TV REPRESENTATION THEORY

Theorist Stuart Hall (1997) describes representation as the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture through the use of language, signs and images, which stand for or represent things (Hall, 1997). As has been mentioned before, television plays an active role in shaping and defining cultural groups. Television can portray certain groups but, portrayals on television tend to be biased and suffer from a very one-sided perspective on society (Rothenberg, 2007). Gay and lesbian characters in television series are depicted in different ways based on the above-mentioned factors of gender/sex binary and general lifestyle in context of the heteronormativity. When depicting fictional characters of the gay and lesbian group, it is common to show different characteristics and elements. As has been discussed before in the previous chapter, the characteristics of the representation of gay and lesbian people in series vary greatly. Now all these characteristics will be explained side to side.

The gendered stereotype of gays and lesbians is frequently depicted on television, as Rothenberg (2007) mentioned that television has an active role in shaping and defining cultural groups and therefore the power to stereotype the gays and lesbians (Rothenberg, 2007). Tropiano (2002) described 'types' of gay and lesbian characters as stereotype in television series: the stereotypical effeminate type of gay men. They are often depicted as having feminine gestures, being sassy, fashion-conscious, having high-pitched voices and a fashionable sense of clothes. Lesbian stereotypes characters in series are stereotypical masculine types of women. They are often depicted as rough, having masculine gestures, short hair, wearing baggy clothes, and playing (masculine) sports (Tropiano, 2002). For instance, the series *Queer As Folk* depicts the stereotype different types of characters. For example, a lesbian couple, Lindsey and Melanie, both have feminine and masculine characteristics, even though Lindsey, who works at a gallery, appears to be more feminine than Melanie, who is a lawyer (GLAAD, 2016). Another characteristic is the sexual depiction of gay and lesbian characters. Scholars have argued that the visibility of gay men and lesbians in the media is not the problem. *Queer As Folk* and *Looking* are depicted in a very sexual way

(many scenes with sensual making out, sex, kissing etc.) However, series such as *Will and Grace* and *Glee* are nearly never showing this in any form while their heterosexual counterparts have plenty sexual scenes, although in both series there are several aspects of romance between the same-sex couples (GLAAD, 2016).

Finally, a theoretical conceptual framework has been formed. The characteristics and elements of the theoretical dimension framework are the following: gendered stereotype, sexual aspects, villain/victim and life-style. This framework will be used as analytical tools for the analysing the series. How and why this is conducted will be discussed in the chapter: Method and Material.

5. METHOD AND MATERIAL

This chapter will explain the methodological approach of the fieldwork. This will justify the use of approach and also present and exemplify the material and analysis. The samples, instruments and process will also be discussed. Moreover, this chapter also demonstrates the validity and reliability of the analysis.

5.1 QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This research is a qualitative research because this study aims to capture the representation of a certain minority group (gays and lesbians) and relates to the understanding how television series contribute to the heteronormativity in American society. Qualitative research is a method that normally emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012). In order to understand the media representation of fictional gay and lesbian characters in regard to heteronormativity, a theoretical conceptual framework in the context of a qualitative content analysis is conducted. This investigates the characteristics and elements of the gays and lesbians in the selected TV-series. A content analysis *"has become a standard procedure of text analysis within social sciences"* (Mayrin, 2014, p. 365). Bryman (2012) describes that qualitative content analysis is *"probably the most prevalent approach to the qualitative analysis of documents"* and that it *"comprises a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed"* (p.392). This is exactly what has been done, understanding different factors of heteronormativity television series, which is documented on for example online video on demand platforms, such as Netflix. The qualitative content analysis is based on the characteristics of the theoretical conceptual framework in the chapter theoretical framework and concepts. This framework is used as an analytical tool to comprehend and explore the characteristics and elements as well the texts as the visual elements of the scene dialogs. The model shows a four-dimensional framework. The following characteristics of the theoretical dimension framework are: gendered stereotype, sexual aspects, villain/victim and life-style. All characteristics are based and compiled on the identification of the literature and the relationship among the theoretical concepts. The first dimension is gendered stereotype, it is used as an analytical tool to analyse whether the characters are masculine or feminine in a way that might reinforce the heteronormativity, such men that are interested in football. The second dimension is sexual depiction, this is used in order to analyse the general intimacy between the couples, such as a kiss or other sexual aspects. Third, the deviant aspect which is used from a villain and/or victim perspective to analyse the whether the characters are depicted as a side-kick, negative or evil character. Last, the depiction of life-style concerns life-aspects, such as marriage or children. This will be used in order to analyse whether the characters are facing problems or challenging the heteronormativity in any other way

regarding the life-style. An overview of the theoretical conceptual framework can be seen in the next paragraph 5.2.

5.2 THEORETICAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (ANALYTICAL TOOL)

Heteronormativity	**Gendered stereotype**	**Masculine or feminine**	**The man / woman has feminine interests: fashion, shopping** **The man / woman has masculine interests: sports, career** **The appearance of the man / woman is masculine or feminine (clothes, hair, voice)**
	Sexual depiction	**Excluding the possibility of same sex desire**	**The same-sex couple has intimacy by kissing, hugging etc.** **The same-sex couple has sexual activities**
	Deviant aspect	**Villain or helpless gay victim**	**The evil or side-kick character**
	Depiction of life-style	**Marriage, children and ambitions**	**Starting a family** **Raising children** **Career**

The concept of heteronormativity was operationalised, compiled and used the stipulated definition of Herz and Johansson (2015), which is distinguished into two approaches. Hereby different discussed characteristics are used through concepts, such as gender and sex binary of heteronormativity. The theoretical conceptual framework shows first the term heteronormativity whereby four dimensions are divided. Consequently the different sub-dimensions are described. These are compiled and translated into the characteristics and elements based on the literature that has been examined. These characteristics and elements are tools to analyse the series that carry or defy heteronormative norms. Furthermore, this theoretical conceptual framework is used explore the visual elements of the scene dialogs. These are for example the physical features, appearance, such as body, hair, clothes, voice, skin, and movement and behavioral cues, such as manners, gestures and deportment.

5.3 SAMPLE

Four American prime-time series were selected with three episodes for each show (12 in total) for the empirical study. A strategic sampling has been done for this study. This sampling is based on a purposive sampling whereby the goal is to sample the TV-series in a strategic way in order to those that are sampled are relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). The selection of the TV-time series *"is criterion based"* (Mason, 2002;

Patton, 2002, as cited in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 78). The series are selected because they have particular features and characteristics, which are based on the research review in chapter two and these are the criteria that enabled detailed exploration and understanding of every research question. Firstly, the criterion is that each of the series has to contain at least one same-sex couple. Hereby there had to be at least two series with a gay male and lesbian couple to represent gay and lesbian characters. Secondly, is that there are heterosexual characters as counterparts in order to analyze the dialogs between the non-heterosexual and heterosexual characters. Finally, in at least two of the four series there had to be a family formation. Moreover, the series cannot be older than 2013 or must be still running, because this study is exclusively focused on recent or current series with its trends and development.

The following series meet all the aforementioned criteria: *Modern Family* (2009 – present), *The Fosters* (2013 – present), *How To Get Away With Murder* (2014 – present) and *The New Normal* (2013). These series are from ABC (American Broadcasting Company), ABC Family and NBC (National Broadcasting Company). These series were found through the media organisation GLAAD that provides an annual report with the analysis of the number of LGBTQ characters on cable networks and streaming (GLAAD, 2016).

The reasons for selecting specific episodes were mainly that these episodes include scenes that reflect diverse situations that involve situations such as marriage, parenting, family matters and sexual depictions. Regarding the amount, there were three episodes analysed of each series (12 episodes in total). This amount was sufficient in order to analyze effectively and expeditiously. Bryman (2012) provides a reason for determining the sample size: *"the sample should not be so large that it is difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis"* (Onwuegbuzie & Collins 2007a, as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 425). For an achieved saturation it is important that the size of a sample is able to support convincing conclusions and is engaged in a balancing act (Bryman, 2012). And while analysing the four series, similar situations in scenes that constantly appeared, this is all needed in order to gain insight and understanding of the meaning in the portrayal of gays and lesbians in these series and the way this contributes to heteronormativity. Actual transcripts of dialogs and texts are written over by using and watching specific scenes of only where the gay and lesbian characters appear and when they have scenes with their heterosexual characters, which implicitly or explicitly provides necessary evidence of characteristics through the gay and lesbian characters. This qualitative research, however, cannot be generalised. Instead, by analysing these series a better and clearer picture on the heteronormative influences on the portrayal of gay and lesbian characters was sought. The following episodes below are selected throughout different seasons of the complete series in order to represent a nuanced picture of the gay and lesbian characters:

1. *Modern Family*, object of studies: Season 01, episode 01 *Pilot*, Season 02, episode 26 *The Kiss* and Season 05, episode 22 *Message received*. Object of study (series characters): Mitchell Pritchett and Cameron Tucker. **2. *The Fosters***, object of studies: Season 01, episode 06 *Saturday*, Season 01, episode 10 *I Do*, Season 02, episode 14 *Mother Nature*. Object of study (series characters): Stef Foster and Lena Adams. **3. *How To Get Away With Murder***, object of studies: Season 01, episode 04 *Let's Get to Scooping*, Season 01, episode 02 *It's all her Fault*, Season 02, episode 01 *It's Time to Move On*. Object of study (series characters): Connor Walsh, Oliver Hampton, Annelise Keating and Eve Rothlow. **4. *The New Normal***, Object of studies: Season 01, episode 01 *Pilot*, Season 01, episode 10 *The XY Factor* and Season 01, episode 21 *Finding Name-O*. Object of study (series characters): Bryan Collins and David Murray

5.4 DATA COLLECTION

The next step after the sampling was to retrieve the four TV-series. The only and fastest possibility was to retrieve the four series from the web via a laptop. The series were watched by utilizing Netflix, which is the leading provider of video on-demand and streaming video online in the United States (Landau, 2016). Hereby the search field was used for finding the series. The search terms were one or two words of the title of the series must be typed in order to find the series on Netflix. For the series *The New Normal* for example, it was: 'The New...'' and then all the related series appeared by typing these words in the search field. The data from the analysed scenes of the episodes are watched through several times in order to discover the findings and set into categories. The related parts of the texts of the dialogs in the episodes are coded. Therefore the texts of the dialogs were transcribed in parts.

5.5 VALIDITY

Validity should say something about the design of the research and the value of the researcher's interpretations as a result of the research. It is important that the conclusions are valid in relation to the aim of this study. To ensure the validity of this research, the two different forms of validity: external and internal validity, were taken into account.

Internal validity concerns the extent to which the methods and techniques of this research ensure that the results and conclusions are really the intended phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). For this qualitative field research internal validity was ensured by carefully creating a theoretical conceptual framework to answer each of the research questions. This framework is based on the findings from the research review chapter that were used as basis for the theoretical analytical tools for analysing the series (see chapter three, figure 3.4). These framework tools are based on the literature review with the correct dimensions and factors. Theoretical tools were used in to contribute to the explanation of the texts and semiotic

features. While analysing, it was taken into account that the tools of the theoretical conceptual framework might have issues of internal validity referring to the coherence and consistency of an interpretive argument through the series. In general there were no major influences of interpretational problems. Some outcomes can seem subjective, but they are mostly consistent and coherent with the theoretical analytical tools. Thereby this study was as open as possible to other critical insights and arguments regarding the representation of gay and lesbian characters in the United States. External validity is the extent to which the research results are generalizable to situations other than those in the research (Bryman, 2012). This was guaranteed within this qualitative research by selecting series from a research media organisation, GLAAD, which writes analyses of American prime-time series with gay and lesbian characters. The sample is based on the purposive sampling and is selected by the criteria: same-sex couple with a gay male and lesbian couple, heterosexual characters as encounters and a family formation.

5.6 RELIABILITY

This section focuses on factors that have played a role in the reliability of the overall research in different ways. This is a case of accidental delusions. Certain things that may not have gone well, and will possibly affect reliability, will be explained here. It is important to demonstrate that this research can be repeated with the same results. While observing the scenes of the series, the following factors were fixed to ensure the reliability: no background noises, stable Internet connection and headphones. The observation was depended on the Internet, thus whenever the connection was bad this interrupted the observation. Therefore the series were first completely loaded before playing and analysed in order to avoid this technical problem. Another factor was the location. This has to be done in quite place without people. This was either at home or in a study room in the library. The big strength of this study is that the episodes can be analysed all over again because it is fixed on the Internet.

5.7 PROCESS

As a subscriber of the Netflix, there were no major problems with accessing the series. The selected episodes of the four series are watched several times in order to gather as much material as is needed for the analysis. Hereby the most essential parts of dialogue were transcribed for the analysis section. Three episodes per series were analysed. Firstly, this was started with *Modern Family* whereby typewritten copies were made of specific scenes featuring the characters Mitchell and Cameron and/or when they were with other characters. Texts between dialogs and non-verbal language were positioned under observation. The episodes were classified into scenes. Next, the transcript of each scene was retrieved manually. These steps were also undertaken for the other three series.

6. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter the findings of the empirical study are presented and analysed. The findings are categorised based on the theoretical conceptual framework. Firstly, different texts of the scene dialogs coming from the four series are presented and analysed. Hereby every presented scene dialog is analysed with its meanings and interpretations. Secondly, a brief summary and assessed previous research will follow. Hereby both the scholar's argument and the presented evidence will be discussed in order to see if there are any inconsistencies or problems with the logic of evidence regarding the factors that possibly contribute to the persistence of heteronormativity. Furthermore, it will be taken into account that the outcomes of the series: *Modern Family, The Fosters, How To Get Away With Murder* and *The New Normal* are been presented and analysed separately.

6.1 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: MODERN FAMILY

On Modern Family, there are two gay male leading characters, namely the couple Cameron and Mitchell. In the three episodes of *Modern Family* that have been analysed, (S01E01) *Pilot*, (S02EP26) *The Kiss* and (S05EP22) *Message received*, I have found and identified the following results regarding the characteristics/elements of gay and lesbian characters. These characteristics are divided into categories: lifestyle, gendered stereotype and sexual aspects. The scenes below are presented and analysed per category.

Characteristics of lifestyle

In S01E01 *Pilot* Cameron and Mitchell just adopted a daughter in Vietnam. In an airplane scene Mitchell and Cameron just boarded a plane on the way back home to the U.S. with their adopted daughter. Mitchell is just seated in the plane with Lily (the daughter) on his lap while Cameron is not appearing in the scene yet. Random passengers give compliments about how cute the child is and how lucky he and his wife are. Then Cameron shows up and the passengers look a bit flabbergasted that the second parent is a second father and not a mother for the child. Mitchell stands up to let the people know that the child will be filled with love regardless the sex of the parents.

This airplane dialogue scene depicts that people are not (yet) used to see a family formation of two fathers and a child. When one of the passengers mentioned that Mitchell and his 'wife' must be so lucky, this was a heteronormative assumption. Mitchell is a male, which automatically assumes that the partner is a female and mother of the child. As soon as Cameron appeared the passengers' reaction was expressed through their shocked faces and by silence because Mitchell and Cameron do not meet the performance of the traditional gender and conformity to the traditional family unit. This is in conjunction with the findings

that were presented in the literature in the chapter research review where Dhaenens (2012) discussed that fictional characters can confront and defy normative assumptions about sexuality. This is demonstrated in the following scene where Mitchell stands up for his sexuality in a plane:

Random passenger:	Look at that baby with those cream puffs.
Mitchell:	Okay. Excuse me. Excuse me. This baby would have been grown up in a crowded orphanage if it wasn't for us, 'cream puffs'. And you what? A note to all of you who judge…
Cameron:	Mitchell!
Mitchell:	Hear this. Love knows no race, creed or gender. And shame on you, you small minded, ignorant few…
Cameron:	Mitchell!

The next scene begins when Mitchell tells Cameron that he never told his family they were adopting a baby because he is afraid that they would say something judgmental. But then Cameron says that he invited Mitchell's family over for dinner in order to announce the adoption of a child. In the evening when the family is coming, Jay, the father of Mitchell, always announces himself before walking into any room in the house of Mitchell and Cameron in order to make sure that does not have to see them kissing. The minute that Mitchell is telling the big news about the child to the family, Jay is warning Mitchell that having a child is not a good idea. Jay says that children need a mother. While the literature review confirmed by The American Psychological Association (APA) that gay parents are no disadvantages in any respect relative to children (Marks, 2012). See the following dialog below:

Mitchell:	Anyway, so about a year ago, Cam and I started feeling this longing, you know for something more, like, uh, maybe a baby?
Jay:	Ooh, that's a bad idea.
Mitchell:	What do you mean 'bad idea'?
Jay:	Well, kids need a mother. I mean if you two guys are bored, get a dog.
Mitchell:	Okay, we're not bored dad.
Gloria:	I support you, Mitchell. Even though you are not my son.
Claire:	I think what dad is trying to say is that, Mitchell, you're a little uptight. Kids bring chaos and you don't handle it well.
Mitchell:	That's not what dad is saying. That's what you're saying. And it's insulting in a whole different way.

This scene dialogue depicts the family's frustrations with the unmet performance and conformity to the traditional family unit. Here it is noticeable that father, Jay, and Claire (sister of Mitchell) are having a discussion about why Mitchell should not take a child. This might give the impression that Jay and Claire are not 100 % supportive the child's wish of Mitchell. Even though the family loves Mitchell, they do not seem to act in that way in this

particular instance. Especially Jay, the slightly conservative father of Mitchell and Claire, is not used to the fact that two men want to adopt a child. This conservatism is expressed in the dialogs by telling: '*Well, kids need a mother*'. This refers to a heterosexual lifestyle where heteronormativity is encouraged. After that, Jay added to that that Mitchell and Cameron could take a dog if they are bored. Jay is without knowing hurting Mitchell by simply saying that they are bored, meaning that they are not allowed to take a child if it was for Jay. The wife of Jay commented in the meantime the following: '*I support you, Mitchell. Even though you are not my son*'. This shows that the support of Gloria without even being the mother of Mitchell can normalise this. The scene can be reflected on the discussed literature in the chapter research review where Gross (2012) explained roles of men and women and the conceptions of the 'normal' and 'natural' attributes and responsibilities of men and women within patterns of roles. Clearly this scene concerns common life issues, in particular of the decision of taking children, in an alternative setting but is not stimulated because of the unconscious heteronormative standard assumptions.

In S05EP22 *Message Received* Mitchell and Cameron are preparing themselves for their wedding. In this episode Jay admits that even though he wants his son to be happy, but something keeps him from being too enthusiastic about a gay marriage. See the following dialog between Mitchell and Jay:

Jay:	Fine. I admit it. This whole wedding thing is weird to me.
Mitchell:	Wow.
Jay	Now, see, why do you get to be you, but I don't get to be me? See, I didn't choose to be uncomfortable. I was born this way.
Mitchell:	Are you really throwing a gay anthem in our face right now?
Jay:	Oh, damn it. Give me some credit. You know how far I've come. I mean, what more do you want from me?
Mitchell:	You know what, dad? You do... You do get to be you. If it really makes you that uncomfortable, then... Don't come to the wedding.
Cameron:	Mitchell
Mitchell:	No! No, see? We're scaling back already.
[Mitchel and Cameron are leaving Jay's house]	

This scene provides an example of a sexual identity confrontation where the father, Jay, of a gay son that cannot understand what Mitchell's identity as a gay man actually means on a practical level. In the dialog scene Jay admits that the wedding is weird to him: "*This whole wedding thing is weird to me*". The words 'this whole' says a lot about how Jay feels about the wedding of Mitchell and Cameron. He does not fully support the marriage of a same-sex couple yet. Also, this means that Jay is not accepting the life-style Mitchell has if he is not supporting the wedding. This scene is forcing him to see the situation through a new lens other than the heteronormative standard of a common marriage. While Mitchell says the line

'Don't come to the wedding' he starts to cry a bit, because it shows that he is struggling and is standing up for his own identity.

Gendered stereotype

In the scene of S01E01 Mitchell and Cameron just arrived home with their new adopted daughter from Vietnam. Mitchell is worried about the fact that Lilly barely slept in the plane and says that there were only women in the orphanage and that maybe she only can fall asleep when she feels a women's shape. After Cameron agrees with that, but then Mitchell hands over the baby to Cameron. Cameron feels a little weird and insulted after Mitchell handed the baby over to him, meaning having the assumption that he is associated with feminine nature. This scene dialogue depicts that Cameron's character reflects gendered stereotypes that characterise feminine and masculine types in a practical situation which can be referred to the literature of Shugart (2003) where he pointed out that gay characters are almost always stereotyped, gay men as effeminate. Cameron's partner, Mitchell, is assuming that the baby will be comforted if he hands her over to Cameron simply because Mitchell might think that he is the 'female' in the couple. See the following dialog below:

Mitchell:	This doesn't worry you? She barely slept on the plane and she is still wide awake.
Cameron:	Oh, stop worrying.
Mitchell:	I can't. That orphanage was all women. Maybe she can't fall asleep unless she feels a woman's shape.
Cameron:	I guess that's possible.
Mitchell:	So here. [Handing over the baby to Cameron]
Cameron:	What the hell is that supposed to mean?

In the next scene in S03EP19 Cameron has a bet with Mitchell that can succeed to get a woman's number at the bar after flirting with her. In this scene Cameron fools a woman at the bar (Katie) into believing that he is heterosexual so he can prove to Mitchell that he can get anyone, even women. After Cameron gets the number, he feels guilty towards Katie. He admits he is gay, but Katie states: *'I know you're gay. It's obvious. The way you talk and walk and dress and your theatrical hand gestures'.* This is depicted by the following dialog:

Katie:	I mean, you know, it's just. No, why are you telling me? I mean, I know you're gay. It's obvious.
Cameron:	Well, it's not that... it's not that obvious.
Katie:	Well, yeah. The way you talk and walk and dress and your theatrical hand gestures.
Cameron:	I do not have theatrical hand gestures. Okay, maybe I am moderately expressive. But why would you give me your number?
Katie:	Oh, because I want a gay friend, someone I can dish with, give me guy advice, and I can shop with.
Cameron:	Those are totally offensive stereotypes.

Depiction of sexual aspects

In S02EP26 *The Kiss*, Mitchell is having trouble with kissing Cameron in public. In the scene where Cameron and Mitchell are shopping, Cameron is in the fitting room to try different shirts while Mitchell is waiting with Lilly and is almost bored. In the following dialog Cameron wants to kiss Mitchell:

Mitchell: Cam, you can't go wrong here. Everything you've tried on looks great. I love you in both of them.
Cameron: Oh, you're so nice to me.
[Cameron wants to kiss Mitchell, Mitchell turns his face]

In overall there is a lack of physical affection between Mitchell and Cameron over the three analysed episodes. The portrayal of all the scenes was that Mitchell and Cameron are not physically affectionate towards each other. They are rarely exchanging any form of physical affection. In this scene the central theme of the episode was the depiction of Mitchell's discomfort with public displays of affection. This is the only episode where Mitchell and Cameron kiss each other, which is shown subtle in the end of the episode on the background with the rest of the family. In the scene dialog above Cameron tries to kiss Mitchell, but he avoids him. Moreover, based on the analysed episode it is notable that other heterosexual characters, Phil and Claire, and, Gloria and Jay, do have frequently depictions of at least physical affection.

The physical features and appearance:

Mitchell and Cameron were in comparison to their heterosexual male counterparts better dressed in the analysed scenes. In the scenes it was noticeable that Mitchell wears shirts with a pullover and tie, in several scenes he has casual formal clothes. As for Cameron he has a similar taste with Mitchell and dresses in almost every scene a properly outfit. Furthermore, when hearing the voice of both Mitchell and Cameron, Mitchell has more a neutral sound of voice while Cameron's voice is close the typical high-pitch voice. In the scenes when he is discussing with Mitchell, he responds quite dramatic. When it comes to their appearance, Mitchell has a beard and more facial hair in general than his partner Cameron. See appendix 9.5.1 for a screenshot of the characters.

6.2 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: THE FOSTERS

On *The Fosters,* there are two lesbian leading characters, the couple Lena and Stef. In these three episodes I have analysed, (S01E06) *Saturday*, (S01EP10) *I Do* and (S02EP14) *Mother Nature*, I have found the following results regarding the characteristics and elements of gay

and lesbian characters. These characteristics and elements are divided into the following categories: life-style, gendered stereotype and sexual aspects.

Characteristics of lifestyle

In S01EP06 *Saturday* in the scene Stef is at her father's house, Frank, where their conversation was about the youth of Stef when she was a teenager. At the time Frank forced her to talk a priest. Frank says that he never understood why she stopped to go to church. Stef reminds him that he had sent her to see a priest because she was caught 'cuddling' with another girl on the couch. She said that Frank just locked her up in a room with a man who proceeded to tell her that being gay was a sin. Jay's response to that was that he only was pushing her in the right direction. See the following dialog:

Frank:	I didn't want you to make wrong choices. I'm just saying! You had a husband, and a son. And you still left Mike for Lena. You had everything, and made the choice to be gay.
Stef:	It's not a... Oh, my God. Ok, let's pretend it is a choice, Dad. At the end of the day, who I love shouldn't be an issue for you, or anyone else. I have an amazing family. Lena is an amazing woman, whom I absolutely adore. So, yeah. I made a choice. I made a choice to be happy, Dad.

In the scene dialog above you can see that Stef expresses her frustration with the conservative behaviour of her father, Frank. At first they were talking about the church, which turned into another topic about Stef's sexuality and how she was challenging the way Frank handled it. Frank mentioned that he did not want Stef to make wrong choices. Hereby he affirms that he wants her to follow the traditional norms of marriage and sexuality; he hereby refers back to the time when Stef had a husband and a son. This dialog ends with the arguments of Stef by saying that when it comes to happiness, she made a choice to be happy.

Next, in the dinner scene Frank gives his opinion about marriages. This scene perpetuates what Markman (2011) argues that there are only two categories (male and female) with impassable boundaries. Here he expresses his heteronormative opinions on marriages. This strongly emphasises and challenges to the lesbian characters the heteronormativity which off Stef's father who confronts them with other guests during a casual dinner. This scene depicts the strict and conservative father of Stef who clearly believes that marriage is only between a man and woman where religious reasons are the motivation Frank's difficulty in accepting the relationship of Lena and Stef.

Frank:	I believe that marriage is between a man and a woman.
Stef:	All right, Dad.
Lena:	This is supposed to be a nice dinner, not a religious symposium.

In s01EP10 there is a heavy emotional scene between Stef and her Father Frank. Stef and Lena are busy preparing their wedding. However, she does not feel comfortable getting married. Stef comes to her father's house and tells him that she has been really embarrassed about the wedding and was not able to enjoy one single solitary second of it. There is a voice in her head that keeps telling her that it is not right what she is doing. But she feels weird, because she loves her girlfriend, and the fact the two women stand up in front of friends and family promising to love each other. She then says that it is because of her father, she realised that the voice in her head is her dad.

Stef: I don't want that voice at my wedding, dad. I don't want it there. And I don't I don't want you there. There shouldn't be anyone there who is not 100 percent happy to be there. So, if you can't get behind this wedding and I mean really, really behind it, dad then I don't think you should come and that's...

The line of the scene above the character Stef is emotionally expressing herself and tells everything that she is struggling about regarding the marriage. This scene is similar to the scene in *Modern Family* in S05EP22 *Message Received* where Mitchell had a discussion with his father about the wedding and where Mitchell finally said that should not come if cannot support him. Frank was initially planning to attend the wedding of Stef and Lena. But in this scene Stef initiates by coming to her father's house and explaining that it is better for him not to come as long as he is unable to fully support the marriage. Here it is noticeable that Stef finds it very hard to disinvite her own father while she owns her identity at the same. This scene shows in a way that there is nothing wrong with Stef's sexual orientation.

Gendered stereotype

In a gendered example the scene in S02EP14 *Mother Nature* shows Stef and Lena having an argument with tension over their respective parenting roles. Stef and Lena are on a camping trip with their children to have a family-bonding expedition. The scene of the argument between Lena and Stef starts when one of the children, Jesus, got caught for putting a tattoo placed on his belly with the name of his girlfriend. Stef and Lena get mad about this and are arguing with each other on how they should parent their foster son. Stef feels in this scene the more masculine figure of the two, which is something often associated with masculinity and even close to heteronormativity:

Lena: Honey.
Stef: That's great. Please don't 'honey' me. And please stop making me feel like I have to be the disciplinarian 'dad' in this family.

Lena: That's awfully heteronormative thinking.

Although the dialog above shows heteronormativity in terms of gender roles, it also depicts that heteronormative thinking is not the right mentality by the text of Lena *'That's awfully heteronormative thinking'*. This scene shows that Stef is the more strict and tough mother while Lena is the more passive and sympathetic mother.

Depiction of sexual aspects

Looking at the scenes of the three episodes, the sexual aspects of the lesbian characters Lena and Stef are depicted frequently. This depiction is more showing the intimacy to a well-functioned relationship of the two women. Over the three analysed episodes, they show frequently kissing scenes, such as a kiss before sleeping or during breakfast. Also, there were scenes that demonstrate cuddles and other physical contact in bed between Lena and Stef.

The physical features and appearance:

Based on the analysed scenes Lena and Stef both have a specific style in clothing while Lena has a more fashionable sense, and Stef the more casual clothes but still both feminine. Stef also appears often in her work clothes, because she is a police officer. It is not clear whether Lena's more fashionable clothes style has to do with her 'gendered stereotype role' as in the more feminine type of the couple. Furthermore, they both have long hair, which depicts them as the feminine characteristics of women. See appendix 9.5.2 for a screenshot of the characters.

6.3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER

On *How To Get Away With Murder,* there are two gay leading characters and two leading lesbian characters, the gay couple: Connor and Oliver and the lesbian characters: Annelise and Eve. In the three episodes of How To Get Away With Murder I have analysed, S01EP04 *Let's Get to Scooping*, (S01EP07) *He Deserved to Die* and S02EP01 *It's Time to Move* I have found and identified the following results regarding the characteristics and elements of gay and lesbian characters. These characteristics and elements are divided into categories; lifestyle, gendered stereotype and sexual aspects.

Gendered stereotype

In a scene in S01EP02 *It's all her Fault* Connor comes to the apartment of Oliver to treat him on a dinner as reward for the time when Oliver helped him out for this boss at work. But Oliver thinks he just came to have sex with him. The following text depicts that Oliver might be the effeminate type of the two by saying the word *twink,* which has been stated in the

literature review (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). However, after Oliver rejected Connor by closing the door on him, he reconsiders the offer of sex by saying: *'Okay. But tonight, I do you'*.

Oliver: You really think I'm that desperate? That you can buy me some takeout and bat your eyes and I'll get down on my knees like some sad twink.

Depiction of sexual aspects

Connor comes before starting to go to work to the apartment of Oliver just to have sex. Oliver says that he has to go to work and is worried that Connor might be a sex addict. Connor responds to that with: *'We're young, red-blooded, American males. Let's not turn sex into a bad thing'*. Oliver asks him if they can do something other than sex like for example crosswords or breakfast that actual couples do. In this scene it is clear that Oliver is ready to take their 'relationship' to the next level. However, it seems that Connor is clearly not ready for a serious relationship by answering:

Connor: Couples? What's next? We change our relationship status on Facebook? I meet your mom?

After this dialog they eventually end up having sex. This scene depicts an intense sexual driven moment between two gay male characters, however this seems to be reduced by the characters Oliver who suggests to do non-sex activities which normalised the relationship between Connor and Oliver.

In another episode S02EP01 *It's Time to Move On* Oliver just recently did the STD (sexually transmitted diseases) test and turned out to be HIV-positive. Connor is still longing to have sex with him with the right medicines, but Oliver is afraid to do it. Connor says it is no big deal, Oliver react after that it is a big deal for him:

Oliver: You have two more weeks before it works, not to mention you can't know for sure if you really want this.
Connor: By "this," do you mean you? Because I do know that. Look, I'm not going to leave you just because of something that's not that big of a deal anymore.
Oliver: It is a big deal! Okay, maybe... Maybe not for you, but for me it's a big deal.

This scene depicts the way Oliver deals with aids and that he finds it very hard to maintain his relationship with Connor under these circumstances. This issue refers to the literature review where homosexuals were discussed in the media regarding the aids epidemic (Steiner, 1993). But it also reflects on the literature where Dhaenens (2013) argued the aspect of

victimisation. This is depicted in self-loathing of Oliver and at the same time he is conflicting with the sexual interaction he has with Connor. In this same episode there are two other leading characters who are lesbians: Annelise and Eve. Annelise comes to the apartment of Eve in tears. Eve was comforting Annelise and they were bringing up good old memories. Eve then says that she will put Annelise to bed, then Annalise starts kissing her:

Annalise: I'm so sorry.
Eve: No. Don't you dare apologize. I lied. I think about you every day.

The scenes above mainly depicted the sexual side of the characters. Chambers (2009) and Bond (2014) are talking past each other when it comes to the sexual depiction of gay and lesbian characters. Chambers (2009) concludes that gays and lesbians receive a bad reputation of this while Bond (2014) think this is good for the audience to be confronted with in order to the contribution of their understanding. A result of the sexual activities Connor even has a sexually transmitted infection, which sets the tone of victimised gay person.

The physical features and appearance:
Based on the analysed the scenes the couple Connor and Oliver does not seem to fulfill the elements of a stereotype gay character on television. However, they are both dressed very well, but this is due to their role in series as Connor as a Law student and Oliver as working man in the IT department. As for Annelise and Eve, they both wear fancy clothes, this also relates to their profession as an attorney and law professor. See appendix 9.5.3 and 9.5.4 for a screenshot of the characters.

6.4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: THE NEW NORMAL

On, *The New Normal* there are two gay male leading characters, the couple: Bryan and David. In the three episodes of The New Normal I have analysed, S01EP01 *Pilot*, (S01EP07), S01EP10 *The XY Factor* and S01EP21 *Finding Name-O*, I have found and identified the following results regarding the characteristics and elements of gay and lesbian characters. These characteristics and elements are divided into categories; lifestyle, gendered stereotype and sexual aspects.

Characteristics of lifestyle
In S01EP01 Pilot, David and Bryan decides to have a baby. In the scene where David and Bryan are discussing about having a baby and David seems to have second thoughts about it. David says that his father screwed him up as a child and wonders what two fathers would do to a child:

| David: | You really think it's such a good idea to bring a kid into the world with such a non-traditional family? |
| Bryan: | I know somebody else from a non-traditional family. |

The scene dialog above depicts how the couple discusses whether it is good for the child to be raised by two fathers. David states the word 'non-traditional family'. A non-traditional family can mean any form outside the father and mother family. There are no personal details of persons etc. Having this scene scripted with this word can easily generalise a group of people. This would have a different effect if David had mentioned two fathers, which makes it more personal. This leads to the subtle question whether it is good to bring a child in a heteronormative world where the non-traditional family is not a part of the norm.

In the next scene you can see, Jane, mother of the daughter (Goldie) who signed herself up as a surrogate. Jane does not want Goldie to the surrogate of David and Bryan. The dialog below depicts a confrontation of the mother who is not supporting gay rights regarding having children:

| David: | Listen, ma'am, I know it's a lot to digest, but my partner and I cannot have a child the traditional way, and Goldie here wants to carry ours for us. |
| Jane: | You are not growing one of her kind of eggs in my granddaughter. |

Gendered stereotype

In S01EP10 *The XY Factor* David starts in this episode that when he was a boy, he had all these expectations of what his adult life would look like. For example, David and his son playing catch in the yard while his wife, Shannen Doherty from 90210, brings lemonade.

| David: | When I was a boy, I had all these expectations of what my adult life would look like.
My son and I playing catch in the yard while my wife, Shannen Doherty from 90210, brings us lemonade. |
| Shannen: | You boys look like you've worked up a manly thirst. |

In the scene David mentioned that even though he did not end up marrying Brenda Walsh and fell in love with Bryan Collins instead, one constant has stayed the same: David never stopped dreaming of having a son. In this episode Bryan and David accidentally discover the baby's gender. They are having a boy. David's wish for the gender was a boy while Bryan was longing for a daughter. In this episode David is fantasizing about doing sport activities with his son such as football and decorating the baby room with male flourishes (blue walls, baseball etc.). This refers to the literature review where maintenance of the 'normal' gender-role system requires that people learn a set of expectations that channel their beliefs about

what is proper for men and women. This regards the parenting in certain different roles (Wilchins, 2004).

In another scene where David is coaching his football team, Bryan is watching on the side and talking to two other women. These two women are talking about this American doll store for girls. Bryan is overhearing the conversation between them and asks if it is mandatory that he brings an actual daughter to get in. As a response to that the women started to laugh at him:

Woman 2:   Oh, my God, I just got Finley the cutest pink leg braces for her differently-abled doll.
Bryan: Is it true that they have a little salon there where the girls and the dolls get their hair done in tandem?
[Women nod their face]
Bryan: Is it mandatory that I bring an actual daughter to get in?
[women laughing]

The scene dialog above depicts that people assume specific expectations from men and women. Gay male men with interests in 'typical women' activities' such as going to the 'American Girl Doll' story with their daughter is something what is common for a mother to do with her daughter, which is rooted in the American society. Bryan seems to challenge this norm of expectation whereas Giddens (2009) discussed that men and women are now breaking these barriers of these expectations of society.

Based on the next analysed scene Bryan has a serious conversation with David about him feeling excluded already. While David is setting up the new baby room and turns it into a real boy room, Bryan gets uncomfortable.

Bryan: David, as innovative as the color blue and sporting goods are for a boy's room, they just sort of mar my overall design scheme, so...
Bryan: David, if we did the room your way, the only thing new in here would be the baby.
David: It's just one shelf. We'll still have plenty of room for your precious design.
Bryan: Precious, you mean 'girly'? Look, you're not the only one who had expectations, okay?

While David says that Bryan has room for this *'precious design'* Bryan feels offended by his partner. As a response to that he says: *Precious, you mean 'girly'?* The scene above depicts a confrontation of both expectations of David and Bryan for their future baby. During the process of preparation the characteristics and elements of their personality becomes visible by putting baseballs and Marvel superhero toys in the room that David puts there. This makes clear that David is associated with the masculine gay type, while Bryan feels left out

because he does not conform to this norm, because he had other plans in minds. In this scene he even said that he wished for a girl instead of a boy in order to share his interests with a girl who you assume of that she will have feminine interests, which is exactly what David is doing for the boy.

In the episode S01EP21 *Finding Name-O* there is a scene where David suggests that Bryan invites his mother to their wedding:

David:	No. I was wondering how you felt about inviting your mother.
Bryan:	I feel conflicted?
David:	Look, I know it's been a little chilly between you two, but you were working on it, you opened a dialogue, it's starting to thaw. Don't you think she should be here?
Bryan:	David, I want our wedding day to be about positivity, and love, and rented trumpeter swans, and not any kind of tensions between my mother and I.
David:	Okay, but she's your mom.

This scene above has the same message as the scenes that Mitchell, *Modern Family*, and Stef, *The Fosters* had. David does not have the best relationship with his mother. He states: '*I want our wedding day to be about positivity, and love*'. This described that the relationship between Bryan and his mother might not be the best. Although it is unclear why Bryan wishes not his mother to attend his wedding, Bryan says: '*David, I want our wedding day to be about positivity, and love, and rented trumpeter swans, and not any kind of tensions between my mother and I*'. This text suggests that the mother does not bring positive spirit to the wedding, but only tensions. This can indicate that Bryan was confronted with his sexual identity with his mother.

Depiction of sexual aspects
Based on the three episodes the sexual aspects of David and Bryan are depicted frequently and is depicted in intimate physical affection. This depiction is similar to the relationship of Lena and Stef, *The Foster*. Over the three analysed episodes, they show frequent kissing scenes, such as a kiss before sleeping or before going to work.

The physical features and appearance:
Based on the analysed the scenes it is worth noting that the couple Bryan and David have different characteristics in looks. Bryan's appearance fulfills most of the criteria of a stereotype gay man on television (see appendix 9.5.5). On the screenshot picture you can see Bryan (left) and David (right) sitting on a bench. Bryan wears clothes, such as a blazer and a collared shirt while David wears a leather jacket, sweater with ordinary jeans.

6.5 BRIEF ANALYSIS AND ASSESSED PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Having presented and analysed the results, the four series have different ways of depicting the characteristics and elements of how the gay and lesbian characters are represented. Regarding the findings within characteristics: life-style aspects, gendered stereotypes and sexual depiction, some findings are supporting the arguments of the research review, however several findings are challenging the arguments of the previous research. As has been discussed in the research review, scholars Gross (2012) and Dhaenens (2013) argued that the representation of gays and lesbians in the media in the last 20 years has been mostly negative, whereby was mentioned that heterosexuals often referred gays and lesbians in a negative way. However, this research finds that several of these arguments are not consistent with the findings that have been presented. For example, Tropiano (2002) mentioned that gays and lesbians are often referred to with derogatory terms such as fags or dykes. The presented evidence does not show this form of expression at all. The victimisation of gay and lesbian characters was not expressed in the way that Dhaenens (2013) examined in his analysis of the characters in the series *Glee*. Also, Brown (2002) argued that TV-representation has a lack of gay family representation or same-sex couples with children. Concerning the characters Mitchell and Cameron, and Lena and Stef, this finding has at least to be nuanced. The results suggest that they are portrayed in a family nuclear (married) and have children. Mitchell and Cameron, and Lena and Stef are portrayed in a heteronormative life-style as most heterosexual characters, such as starting a family with children, getting legally married, have successful careers and maintain contact with most of the heterosexual family members. Also, the characters David and Bryan were represented as characters that were planning to have a child. Despite of the assumption that this evidence could be a progress of trends and development in the representation in media, this is still not convincing enough as to cover the positive representation concerning the specific characteristics that have been identified in the analysis. First, in the analysis it seems that not everyone approves some decisions of the characters' life-style. As for Mitchel in *Modern Family* as well for Stef in *The Fosters,* they are not comfortable with their sexual identity when they are confronted with the struggles regarding their preference for same-sex relationships by their fathers.

Concerning gender stereotypes the gay male characters Cameron in *Modern Family* and Bryan in *The New Normal* seem to be depicted as the effeminate type of man. For example, the findings suggest this stereotype at the moment when Mitchell hands over their adopted baby to Cameron because Cameron assumes the baby would be more at ease with a feminine type. The same pattern is visible when Bryan is depicted as a father who wants to do girly activities with a daughter instead of a son. This is a reflection of Shugart (2003) where he

pointed out that effeminate gay characters are frequently reflected as having feminine interests. The lesbian characters Lena and Stef, and Annelise and Eve are however depicted as contradictory to conceptions of femininity and conventional roles of women as has been pointed out by Dhaenens (2013). They all have feminine characteristics such as having long hair, being dressed well etc. Nevertheless, Lena was depicted as the strict and disciplined mother, which gives the impression that she has the role of a father when it comes to conforming to stereotypical gender roles. These stereotyped characters reinforce the certain parenting roles of 'dad' and 'mom' in the relationship. Because of these stereotypical characteristics of the characters they were depicted in certain gender roles. This refers to the literature of Wilchins (2004) where he talked about the different kind of roles in parenting. Next, it was noteworthy that in the analysed episodes Cameron and Mitchell were depicted as an asexual couple while their heterosexual counterparts share some physical affection for each other. Lena and Stef, and David and Bryan however, do share some physical affection with each other while the series are not overloaded with sexual scenes at the same time. In comparison to the characters in *How To Get Away With Murder* the gay and lesbian characters are mostly depicted in a more relatively intimate way in addition to sex scenes between same-sex couples. The scenes with the gay and lesbian characters in *How To Get Away With Murder* are mostly sexually driven between Connor and Oliver, and Annelise and Eve. Connor's relationships are depicted as somewhat physical by showing some kissing and a few sex scenes with many different men over the episodes. This is based on the finding when Connor visits Oliver at his apartment simply for sex. This reflects on the literature of Chambers (2009) where stated gay and lesbian characters have the image of a sexual representation on television, which mostly is negative. Scholar Bond (2014) however, seems not to agree with this statement and argues that sexual depiction can contribute to the understanding of sexuality of the audience towards gay and lesbian people. Connor, however, was struggling with his sexual transmitted disease HIV, which depicted him as the gay victim of the series. Moreover, the series does not set a tone that the sexual non-binary is weird or exclusive or that a homosexual relationship is given no more or less weight than any other relationship within the series. There are as many sexual scenes between heterosexuals as non-heterosexuals. Gay and lesbian characters are depicted in only a sexual way, which can influence or contribute to the heteronormativity that serious relationships are aimed only for the heterosexuals.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the conclusions of this study will be presented, including the answering of the research questions. In discussing and answering the research questions, conclusions can be drawn regarding the media representation of fictional gay and lesbian characters in the four prime-time series. The findings of the analysis will be connected with the theoretical concepts that were examined in chapter four, mainly from gender and sex concepts.

7.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

1. What are the characteristics of TV representation of gay and lesbian people in TV-series in the Unites States?

Based on the findings of the analysis the most noteworthy characteristics fall under the gendered stereotype, characteristics of life-style and sexual depiction. First, most of the characters represent a gendered stereotype whereby Cameron, *Modern Family*, and David, *The New Normal* in general are the effeminate type, because it appears that Cameron and Bryan fulfill the discussed indicators as Tropiano (2002) described such as being fashion-conscious, having a high pitched voice and interests in feminine hobby's. These feminine expressions coincide with the theoretical concept of the system of gender binary (Chambers, 2009) where gender expression was argued and these feminine characteristics in a stereotype matter were notable. Despite the fact of these stereotype characters, based on the analysis Connor, *How To Get Away With Murder* and David, *The New Normal* are more a masculine type of gay man, which normalise the roles of the characters and where no attention is being paid to the sexual preference of being gay. This also counted for the lesbian characters who were represented with mainly feminine characteristics. This reflects on the concept of Kurtz (1999) who argued that there are gay men who do not perceive themselves to be feminine and value traditional masculinity. And the gendered stereotyping can also be explained by the concept of gender performativity (Butler, 1999). Gender is more the performance. As for the appearance, most of the analysed gay and lesbian characters do not fulfill the stereotype appearance, men have short hair, beard etc. and the women have long hair etc. however several gay male characters are represented in a very fashionable way (tie, blazer etc.). Regarding the life-style characteristics, generally the gay and lesbian characters are represented with life-style elements such as the storylines surrounding adoption and marriage. However, this is still rife with judgemental and heteronormative views coming from the heterosexual counterparts in the series whereby Jay (*Modern Family*), Frank, *The Fosters*, and Jane, *The New Normal* are represented as the conservative characters who are not even fully supporting the sexuality of their children.

The equal sexual depiction of both gay and lesbian characters is not the norm yet. There is either too much sex or rarely showed physical affection with merely a kiss. However, the theoretical concept of sexual binary (Chambers, 2009) confirms that gay and lesbian characters are depicted in a very sexual way. The characters Connor and Oliver were mostly depicted in sex scenes. This interferes with theoretical view of Chamber (2009), but does consist with the theoretical view of Bond (2014) who argues that these depictions of gay and lesbian people are the norm. Chambers' (2009) perspective is that this is mostly damaging the image of gay and lesbian people and reinforces heteronormativity. Based on the findings of the analysis, this only is valid for the series *How To Get Away With Murder*. Next, the villain characteristics seem not to be represented based on the analysed series. But on the contrary, the analysis found out that Oliver tackles on his HIV. This represents the victimisation of a gay character dealing with sexually transmitted disease as a result of the sexual activities.

7.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

2. How is the interaction represented between heterosexual and gay and lesbian characters in recent and current American TV-series?

The representation of the interaction between heterosexual and gay and lesbian characters is in general depicted in a way where family members and friends were still in contact with each other regardless the sexuality of the gay and lesbian characters. However, since these relationships are strong, it is also powerful to depict disagreements and confrontation between the heterosexual and non-heterosexual character. The gay and lesbian characters challenge their sexuality with some of their own family members. It was notable that it was almost always the one of the parents who cannot accept the sexuality of their son or daughter. They are not supportive when big life decisions have to be made, such as adoption or marriage as has been described by Herz and Johansson (2015) with the theoretical concept of heteronormativity. Other than these life-style characteristics, marriage and children, there were no heteronormative aspects found within the interaction between the heterosexual and non-heterosexual characters.

7.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

3. What factors contribute to the persistence of heteronormativity in TV-series?

Generally the series give the impression and assumption that Mitchell and Cameron, Bryan and David, Lena and Stef, Connor and Oliver, and Annelise and Eve are, successful (career) and happy characters (family) on prime-time television. Their representation as a married couple and having children is a notable development in media representation as Warner (1999) had introduced this concept in the form of totalizing tendency. However, there are

several important factors that currently still contribute to the persistence of heteronormativity. The first is within the characteristics of life-style, at least one member of the family (heterosexual counterparts) is dealing, struggling or even not accepting all the life decisions that are made by the gay and lesbian characters. These family members are either the mother or father of the gay or lesbian character. This issue was concerning either marriage or children (adopting or surrogate). The reason why they cannot accept the sexuality of their son or daughter was not always clear, but they are represented as the conservative and stereotypically older persons with mentalities that were formed during times in which homosexuality was a taboo. They hence assume and hope that their children follow a traditional path of life. This factor confirms scholar Rich's (1980) concept of 'compulsory heterosexuality' whereby he explains that everyone is educated from a heterosexual perspective, for example sexual education books in high schools. A second factor is the gendered stereotype whereby at least one person of the couple is the 'man' or the 'woman' involving men and women's typical tasks and interests. This factor illustrates that even same-sex couples persist the narrative of the heteronormative standard. This has been argued by theoretical concepts of Herz and Johansson (2015) whereby even when gays or lesbians decide to take children and get married, they are consequently adopting a heterosexual lifestyle (for example, gender roles), which thus perpetuates in a way the heteronormativity in the series.

7.4 DISCUSSION AND MAIN CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that the four series made some positive progress in representing the gay and lesbian characters in a nuclear family, being the parents of their own children and having successful careers, the representation of these characters still persists dominantly heteronormative ideas which reflect on gendered stereotypes, depiction of life-style and sexual depiction. Based on the empirical study there were strong and notable characteristics. The outcomes of this study were better than expected since the fact that the theoretical framework gave the impression that the representation of the heteronormativity would increase on different levels. Television can send forward the message that gay and lesbian people are just like everyone else and can show this by series that are reflecting reality.

Based on the analysed series, it is concluded that in the U.S. heteronormative roles persist as the mainstream media culture in television is still dominantly present in some series. *Modern Family* and *The New Normal* have specific stereotype gay male characters that react in typical ways when they are confronted with their sexuality. Their situations in the series correspond to the theoretical concept of gender binary that emphasises the rule to conform to the system of binary gender (Chambers, 2009). Several characters, like Cameron and Bryan,

are largely based on gender binarity, hence reinforcing heteronormativity. The assumption and/or expectation that there is a boy and a girl role in same-sex relationships perpetuates the heteronormativity in the series. Either way, the fictional characters represented in a different way. The findings of the theoretical chapter that lesbian characters have masculine characteristics do not agree with the results of this study of the lesbian characters. Scholar Madon (1997) for example, mentioned lesbian people are generally meeting stereotypical requirements, which is depicted by the media. Lena and Stef proof the opposite and were represented in a neutral feminine way, although Stef was depicted with masculine elements (dad role, police officer). This however matches with what Butler (1999) stated with the concept of gender performativity for the construction of gender theories.

Characteristics, such as sex and other forms of psychical affections of gays and lesbians are an essential part of the picture but is either under or overrepresented in the series. *Modern Family* has no display of Cameron and Mitchell getting intimate while their heterosexual counterparts do. *The Fosters* and *The New Normal* were the two series that succeeded to depict the psychical affections between the partners in a more realistic way by frequently showing some kisses and making out. Connor and Oliver, and Annelise and Eve are represented in a sexual way, but this is equally portrayed with their heterosexual counterparts. Chambers (2009) argued that characters that are overrepresented in sexual scenes might influence the heteronormativity in the series and that creates the impression that serious relationships are not meant for homosexuals or even that other forms of sexual behaviour are abnormal. Bond (2014) however, has a more optimistic perspective that this contributes to the understanding of viewers about the sexuality. Either way, the concept of sexuality binary is not yet well expressed and represented among the gay and lesbian characters. When it comes to gendered stereotypes most of the gay male characters are represented conform to the common stereotypical characteristics that are known in mainstream media. This is mainly represented in the expression of the gender roles and can be reflected on the concept of gender binary of Markman (2011) and Chambers (2009) is that masculinity and femininity are the only two categories with impassable boundaries. It appears that within the same-sex couples there is a male and female role. The concept of gender binary among same-sex couples reinforces the heteronormativity on television. Yet female dominance was depicted in all lesbian characters that did almost not show masculine characteristics. Except the gay male characters, lesbian characters are better represented in a way that not necessarily depicts the common stereotype elements of a lesbian in the media.

In the analysis it also appears that not all heterosexual characters approve the decisions within the homosexual characters' life-style. Both gay and lesbian characters are confronted with their sexual identity by either the father or the mother. This aligns with the concepts of

gender performativity (Butler, 1999), gender binary and sexuality binary (Chambers, 2009) and the concept of compulsory heteronormativity (Rich, 1980). The definition of heteronormativity is in several scenes strongly expressed whereby the heterosexual character confronts the gay or lesbian character. Presumed binaries of gender and sexuality are still persisting heteronormativity when the heterosexual characters are not supporting equality in marriage and children for same-sex couples.

Television series in general may constantly portray that heterosexuality is the prevailing standard, but essential progress has been made whereby gay and lesbian characters can be normalised by series that represents gay marriage, adoption by same-sex couples, decent frequent physical affection etc. This new perspective can change the theory of Rothenberg (2007) that only a one-side perspective of society is shown by television. These characteristics decrease the influence of heteronormative views in American series.

In conclusion, there is currently still a strong representation of heteronormative examples in television series, which reinforces the persistence of heteronormativity, despite of all the trends towards progress and tolerance that have been achieved in American media throughout the years. It might take some years until the gay and lesbian characters will fit into behavioural expectations that are in line with an acceptable and given societal system and will be publicly displayed in the media.

The study achieved to understand at least a small amount of American series regarding to how gay and lesbian characters were somehow influenced regarding heteronormativity. This study can offer empirical knowledge to the field of both communication and media research and gender and sex studies. In particular for the heteronormative representation of heterosexual TV characters, whereby these characters accept that same-sex couples marry and have children. Therefore gay and lesbian characters should be represented as 'ordinary' people without those stereotyped characteristics and elements. A recommendation for future research is to investigate the findings of the characteristics of this study and possibly examine how audiences (heterosexual people) in the United States perceive the persistence of heteronormativity in mainstream media or in the medium television. A qualitative study with a focus group (heterosexuals) may yield good results.

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9. APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTS

9.1 TRANSCRIPTS EPISODES: MODERN FAMILY

1. S01EP01 Pilot

Airplane scene:

Mitchell:	Who is a good girl? Who is that? Who's that? [talking to a baby]
Random passenger 1:	Oh, she's adorable.
Mitchell:	Oh, thank you.
Random passenger 2:	Hi, precious.
Mitchell:	Hello. Hi, hi.
Mitchell:	Uh, we just, - uh - We adapted her from Vietnam. And we're bringing her home for the first time, huh?
Random passenger 2 (Man):	She's an angel. You and your wife must be thrilled.

[Cameron shows up and those passengers look a bit flabbergasted that it is a man and not woman as parent for the child]

Cameron:	So, what are we talking about?
[Awkward silence]	
Mitchell:	
	You saw that right? Everybody flawning over Lily and then you walk on and suddenly it's all ''Ooh, Skymall. I gotta buy a motorized tie rack.''
	All right, you know, I'm gonna give the speech.
Cameron:	You are not giving the speech. You're gonna be stuck with these people for the next five hours.
Mitchell:	Okay, you're right, you're right. Okay, I'm sorry.
Random passenger 3:	Look at that baby with those cream puffs.
Mitchell:	Okay. Excuse me. Excuse me. This baby would have been grown up in a crowded orphanage if it wasn't for us, ''cream puffs''. And you what? A note to all of you who judge...
Cameron:	Mitchell!
Mitchell:	Hear this. Love knows no race, creed or gender. And shame on you, you small minded, ignorant few..
Cameron:	Mitchell
Mitchell:	What?
Cameron: [Whispers]:	She's got the creampuffs

Coming home with baby scene:

Mitchell:	This doesn't worry you? She barely slept on the plane and she is still wide awake.
Cameron:	Oh, stop worrying.
Mitchell:	I can't. That orphanage was all women. Maybe she can't fall asleep unless she feels a woman's shape.
Cameron:	I guess that's possible.
Mitchell:	So here. [Handing over the baby to Cameron]
Cameron:	What the hell is that supposed to mean?

Dinner with the family scene:

[Doorbell rings]

Jay:	Knock, knock. We're here. Coming in!
Mitchell:	Don't worry dad. Nothing gay going on here. May I take your multicolored coat and bejeweled cap?
Jay:	Yes. So how was your trip?
Mitchell:	It was good. It was good actually. But ehm, about that, I have something I need to tell you guys. We didn't just go to Vietnam for pleasure. We kind of have some big news.
Jay:	Oh God, if Cam comes out here with boobs, I'm leaving.
Claire:	Dad.
Mitchell:	Anyway, so about a year ago, Cam and I started feeling this longing, you know for something more, like, uh, maybe a baby?
Jay:	Ooh, that's a bad idea.
Mitchell:	What do you mean ''bad idea''?
Jay:	Well, kids need a mother. I mean if you two guys are bored, get a dog.
Mitchell:	Okay, we're not bored dad.
Gloria:	I support you, Mitchell. Even though you are not my son.
Claire:	I think what dad is trying to say is that, Mitchell, you're a little uptight. Kids bring chaos and you don't handle it well.
Mitchell:	That's not what dad is saying. That's what you're saying. And it's insulting in a whole different way.
Phil:	Okay, people. Let's all ''chillax''.
Alex:	Hey. Where is uncle Cameron?
Mitchell:	Thank you. Thank you. Someone who is not insulting me notices that he's not here.
Jay:	Oh, so that's the big announcement, huh? You two broke up. Well, a baby wasn't gonna help that anyway. And let me tell you. You're better off, he was a bit of a drama queen.
Mitchell:	No. No. No. Stop, stop. No. You come into my house and you insult me and my boyfriend who, is by the way not that dramatic... [Lion King – circle of life song starts and Cameron comes in with the baby]
Mitchell:	We adapted a baby. Her name is Lily.
Cameron:	Exciting!
Mitchell:	Just turn it off.
Cameron:	I can't turn it off. It's who I am.
Mitchell:	The music.
Cameron:	Oh, yes, the music. Come say hi to Lily.
Gloria:	The little princess.
Haley:	So cute!

S02EP26 The Kiss

Shopping scene

Cameron:	Okay, what do you think?
Mitchell:	I like it.
Cameron:	But you don't love it.
Mitchell:	No, I do. I love it.
Cameron:	As much as you do the other one?
Mitchell:	Ooh.
Cameron:	The house is on fire. I only have time to grab one shirt. Which one do I take?
Mitchell:	The correct answer is to take Lily.
Cameron:	After that.

Mitchell:	Okay, the blue one.
Cameron:	Because the grey one, washes me out.
Mitchell:	Cam, you can't go wrong here. Everything you've tried on looks great. I love you in both of them.
Cameron:	Oh, you're so nice to me.

[Cameron wants to kiss Mitchell, Mitchell turns his face]

Home scene

Mitchell:	Oh! I'll say it again. I love you in paisley.
Cameron:	Ooh, let me lock the door and and draw the curtains.
Mitchell:	What does that mean?
Cameron:	Doesn't mean anything.
Mitchell:	Good.
Cameron:	You know exactly what it means. You won't kiss me in front of other people because you're ashamed of who you are. And yes, I went there.
Mitchell:	Okay, you can't say ''yes I went there'' when you go there all the time. And by the way, I'm the one who makes speeches on airplanes every time someone looks at us weird. I'm the one who gives my dad hell when he refers to you as my ''friend''.
Mitchell:	That's different.
Cameron:	That's confrontation. But you know what takes real strength?
Mitchell:	Whining?
Cameron:	Affection.
Mitchell:	Oh, this is insane. Buying a shirt, it's not a kiss worthy moment.
Cameron:	Oh, I didn't know there was an official list. Tell us, what is on the list.
Mitchell:	I'll tell you what's not on the list. Finding jalapeno-stuffed oils, making the light on Maple, every time we see a VW.
Cameron:	You don't like kiss-buggy?
Mitchell:	It's not a real game. It's just another way for you to be needy, and I don't appreciate you making me feel bad because I can't live up to your impossible standards. Nobody kisses at a bowling alley.
Cameron:	I almost got a turkey.

S05EP22 Message Received

Jay's house scene:

Jay:	Can I ask you a question? Why are you having such a big thing anyway?
Mitchell:	Well, because we're only getting married once.
Jay:	I'm just saying, why do you need to make into a spectacle?
Mitchell:	A spectacle?
Jay:	This could be the universe's way of telling you to bring it down a notch. Invite your family, your friend Pepper, and, what's his name, the flouncy one? Uh, L'David.
Mitchell:	I don't have a flouncy friend named L'David, dad.
Cameron:	Do you mean L'Michael or J'Marcus? I'm not sure who you're referring to.
Jay:	Whatever. I'm just saying keep it small. Why pay all that money for people you barely know?
Mitchell:	Oh, oh, you mean like any of your friends?
Jay:	Oh, please, you don't want any of my friends there.
Mitchell:	Really? Because I've been asking for a list for months now. So who doesn't want them there... me or you?
Jay:	Why are you getting upset?

Mitchell:	Because, dad, if this was Claire's wedding, you would be all over it. You'd be wanting to have it at your club. You'd be inviting all your friends.
Jay:	Oh, please! I wasn't that thrilled when Claire got married, either.
Gloria:	"Either"? For God's sake, just stop talking.
Jay:	Everybody back off. I don't think I'm out of line suggesting my friends don't want to see a father-son dance at a big gay wedding.
Mitchell:	There is no father-son dance, dad.
Jay:	I don't know what things go on there. Do I walk you down the aisle? Does someone throw a bouquet? I mean, I'm just saying, I don't know how this stuff plays out with my guys from the club.
Mitchell:	Oh, you mean the guys who sit around the locker room watching football naked? No! No! See, this isn't about them. This is about you. You are the one that's uncomfortable here.
Jay:	Fine. I admit it. This whole wedding thing is weird to me.
Mitchell:	Wow.
Jay:	Now, see, why do you get to be you, but I don't get to be me? See, I didn't choose to be uncomfortable. I was born this way.
Mitchell:	Are you really throwing a gay anthem in our face right now?
Jay:	Oh, damn it. Give me some credit. You know how far I've come. I mean, what more do you want from me?
Mitchell:	You know what, dad? You do... You do get to be you. If it really makes you that uncomfortable, then... Don't come to the wedding.
Gloria:	Ay.
Cameron:	Mitchell
Mitchell:	No! No, see? We're scaling back already.

[Mitchel and Cameron are leaving Jay's house]

9.2 TRANSCRIPTS EPISODES: THE FOSTERS

S01EP06 Saturday

Dad's home scene:

Stef:	Your grandson wants to go to church camp. Catholic church camp.
Frank:	Catholic? You're not raising the kids Catholic, are you?
Stef:	Please, Dad. You know we don't do church.
Frank:	Don't you think they need a church though? A good Christian church? I never understood why you stopped.
Stef:	You're kidding, right?
Frank:	What?
Stef:	You never understood why I stopped? I know you remember Tess, Tess Brown, my friend from high school?
Frank:	Yeah. Her.
Stef:	Her. You sent me to see a youth minister because you caught us "cuddling" on the couch. Even though we weren't doing anything.
Frank:	Was only trying to help.
Stef:	How? You never talked to me about it. You never asked me anything. All you did was lock me in a room with some man, who proceeded to tell me that being gay was a sin.
Frank:	I was being a parent, I was pushing you in the right direction.
Stef:	Well, I was completely humiliated.
Frank:	That's why you stopped going to church? One meeting 20 years ago?
Stef:	How could I ever go back, Dad?

Frank:	I didn't want you to make wrong choices. I'm just saying! You had a husband, and a son. And you still left Mike for Lena. You had everything, and made the choice to be gay.
Stef:	It's not a... Oh, my God. Ok, let's pretend it is a choice, Dad. At the end of the day, who I love shouldn't be an issue for you, or anyone else. I have an amazing family. Lena is an amazing woman, whom I absolutely adore. So, yeah. I made a choice. I made a choice to be happy, Dad.
Frank:	I don't want to get into this right now.
Stef:	You're welcome for the groceries, Dad.

2. Dinner scene:

Guests:	With all due respect, everybody does. Or else I could sell you Lexi's hand in marriage.
	Or you could stone me to death for contradicting you. And no one wants that, do they?
	But, I have to ask you, you sit at this table and you call these people family, but you don't think your daughter has a right to marry Lena?
Frank:	I believe that marriage is between a man and a woman.
Stef:	All right, Dad.
Lena:	This is supposed to be a nice dinner, not a religious symposium.
Jesus:	You guys, there's nothing anyone could say to change the way I feel about my family.
	I don't want to go to the stupid camp if it's going to cause World War III. But seriously, Moms, have some faith in me.

S01EP10 'I Do'

1. Dad's home scene:

Frank:	So, why the drop by? I already told your mother I was coming tomorrow.
Stef:	Yeah, I know about that. I think mom forced your hand on that and that's not what I...
Frank:	Well, don't blame your mother. She can't help herself.
Stef:	I've been really embarrassed about this wedding. I haven't been able to enjoy one single solitary second of it. This voice in my head keeps telling me it's not right what we're doing. Two women standing up in front of friends and family promising to love each other forever. That's wrong. How screwed up is that? I'm embarrassed by my own wedding? How is that even possible? I love Lena and my family, more than I have loved anything ever in my life. How can I possibly be even the slightest bit uncomfortable putting that out in the world to see? And I realised that voice, that voice it's not mine. It's yours, dad. It's yours, and I'm done. I'm done listening to it.
	And I don't want that voice at my wedding, dad. I don't want it there.
	And I don't I don't want you there. There shouldn't be anyone there who is not 100 percent happy to be there. So, if you can't get behind this wedding and I mean really, really behind it, dad then I don't think you should come and that's...

S02EP14 'Mother Nature'

1. Camping scene:

Mariana:	Well, as long as Jesus is sharing everybody's secrets, did he tell you the one about his tattoo?
Stef:	What?!

[Jesus shows his Tattoo]

	Oh, my God. That is huge! When did you get that?
Jesus:	At the Mexican street festival.
Lena:	You got this at a street festival?
Stef:	Do you have any idea how lucky you are? It could have gotten infected! You could've gotten hepatitis.
Lena:	They didn't card you?
Jesus:	The guy just took my money. That's it.
Stef:	OK, who? Because this is a crime, Jesus. It's a crime. Who?
Jesus:	Mom, it's not like I got his card or anything.
Stef:	You don't even know his name?!
Lena:	Honey.
Stef:	That's great. Please don't "honey" me. And please stop making me feel like I have to be the disciplinarian "dad" in this family.
Lena:	That is awfully heteronormative thinking.
Stef: [laughs]	This is the time and place to have that conversation.
Jesus:[sighs]	So are we done, or ?
Stef:	No! We are not! Why would you do this?!
Jesus:	Cause I wanted to show Hayley how much I liked her.
Lena:	Honey, that is what jewelry is for!

9.3 TRANSCRIPTS EPISODES: HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER

S01EP04 'Let's Get to Scooping'

Oliver's home scene:

Connor:	Take off your clothes.
Oliver:	Did you run over here?
Connor:	Yeah. Now take off your clothes.
Oliver:	I have to go to work, and I'm a little worried that you might be a sex addict.
Connor:	Oh.
Oliver:	There's this book I read about this, "The Velvet Rage. " - It's really….
Connor:	We're young, red-blooded, American males. Let's not turn sex into a bad thing.
Oliver:	I'm just saying, why don't we do something normal for once, that is not sex? Like have breakfast. Or do the crosswords or whatever it is that actual couples do.
Connor:	Couples? What's next? We change our relationship status on Facebook? I meet your mom?
Oliver:	That is not what I meant. You I …know that… That that we're not, like You know what? I'll just take off my clothes. We'll have sex as long as you ignore what I just said.
Connor:	No. No, no, no, no. Watching you freak out is way more fun.
Oliver:	Stop looking at me!

S01EP07 'He Deserved to Die'

Court building scene:
[Connor walks to Julian]

Connor:	Julian.
Julian:	You remembered.

Connor:	Here's what I think. There's a bar across the street. Let me buy you a drink, and if I prove worthy of your time, we move into dinner.
Julian:	A date.
Connor:	Yeah. A date.
Julian:	So, you also forgot that I have a boyfriend.
Connor:	Well, this couldn't get any more embarrassing.
Julian:	Relax. We met on humpr. I barely remember, too.
Connor:	How about I make you remember?
[Connor and Julian having sex in the restrooms]	
Julian:	Okay. Now I definitely remember.

S02EP01 'It's Time to Move On'

Home Oliver scene:

Olivior:	So, Annalise wants you to trick their lawyer - into making a mistake in court.
Connor:	Oliver.
Oliver:	So she can then swoop in and represent the two crazies who tied up and shot their parents in cold blood?
Connor:	Hey.
Oliver:	You know they did it, right? I mean, they claim they didn't hear anything, but they were inside the house at the time of the murder.
Connor:	Look up, damn it!
Oliver:	Connor, no! We have to wait.
Connor:	Yeah, for sex sex, but we can do other stuff.
Oliver:	I can't.
Connor:	Well, can you at least help a brother out?
Oliver:	Oh, so this wasn't about us at all. This was about you getting off.
Connor:	No.
Oliver:	And here I was, so generously trying to help you do your job.
Connor:	My job's a train wreck right now, and, yes, I admit it. My penis is really craving an orgasm. I'm sorry.
Oliver:	You don't get it. I'm not going to be able to enjoy any sex if I'm worried I'm putting you in danger.
Connor:	I'm on prep.
Oliver:	You have two more weeks before it works, not to mention you can't know for sure if you really want this.
Connor:	By "this," do you mean you? Because I do know that. Look, I'm not going to leave you just because of something that's not that big of a deal anymore.
Oliver:	It is a big deal! Okay, maybe... Maybe not for you, but for me it's a big deal.
Connor:	I'm sorry. I just I really want to be here, more than anything, even if that means being celibate for 14 more days.
Oliver:	Well, 13 days. You took your first pill at 9:30 last Sunday, so technically, it's 13 days from now, not 14.

Eve's home scene:

Eve:	Let's get you a drink.
Annalise:	You live here alone?
Eve:	You didn't come here to ask me about my personal life.
Annalise:	You were right. I ruin people.
Eve:	You mean Nate?
Annalise:	Everyone.
Eve:	That's a little melodramatic, don't you think?

Annalise:	Only if you don't know me.
Eve:	I know you Even if it's been a long time.
Annalise:	Well, I was the same back then. I did it to you.
Eve:	You did not ruin me.
Annalise:	I hurt you.
Eve:	It's all part of the game, right? And I'm doing okay. I don't sit here thinking about you every day, crying into my pillow how you left me for your therapist. Hell, at least you married him.
Eve:	We had our fun, too. Remember those dinner parties at Al's, dancing all night at that Brazilian bar? You were fun, Annalise.
Annalise:	I was, wasn't I?
Eve:	Okay. Um, let's put you to bed. I set up the guest room.
[Eve and Annalise start kissing each other]	
Annalise:	I'm so sorry.
Eve:	No. Don't you dare apologize. I lied. I think about you every day.
[Continue kissing]	

9.4 TRANSCRIPTS EPISODES: THE NEW NORMAL

S01EP01 'Pilot'

Park scene:

David:	I don't know. My dad screwed me up pretty good. What do you think two dads would do to a kid? You really think it's such a good idea to bring a kid into the world with such a nontraditional family?
Bryan:	I know somebody else from a nontraditional family. A Halfrican-American who was raised by a grandma. And that person seems to be doing just fine.
David:	Oh, yeah. Barack Obama.
Bryan:	No. Mariah Carey, but your example works, too. Look around. Your definition of traditional might need a refresh. Check her out. She's old enough to be their grandmother, but she wanted them so badly, she dusted off her dinosaur eggs. Face it, honey. Abnormal is the new normal.

Hospital scene:

Goldie:	How how'd you find me?
Jane:	I have been hot on your trail for days. There is a giant homosexual elephant in the room.
David:	Listen, ma'am, I know it's a lot to digest, but my partner and I cannot have a child the traditional way, and Goldie here wants to carry ours for us.
Jane:	You are not growing one of her kind of eggs in my granddaughter.
Goldie:	Nana, I want to help this family.
Jane:	I feel like I just ate a gay stew right before I fell asleep. This is a nightmare. Goldie, have you lost your damn mind? What are you doing, helping these salami-smokers?
David:	Wow.
Bryan:	That's a good one. That's new.
Jane:	It is so wrong, and have you even thought about what kind of message you are sending your daughter?
Goldie:	That you can be whatever you want to be no matter how many people tell you that you're nothing.

Jane:	It is not normal.

S01EP10 'The XY Factor'

1. Dream scene:
[David's daydreaming]

David:	When I was a boy, I had all these expectations of what my adult life would look like. My son and I playing catch in the yard while my wife, Shannen Doherty from 90210, brings us lemonade.
Shannen:	You boys look like you've worked up a manly thirst.
David and son:	Wow! Fresh-squeezed lemonade! Thanks, Mom.
David:	Thanks, hon.
David:	But expectations and reality can wind up being two very different

things.

[Bryan bringing lemonade in a kitchen apron]

Bryan:	You boys look like you worked up a manly thirst.
David and son:	Wow. Fresh-squeezed lemonade. Thanks, Dad.
David:	Thanks, hon.

Kitchen scene:

Bryan:	We need to talk. Come on.
David:	Okay, all right. What's going on?
Bryan:	Well, remember how we decided not to find out the gender of the baby? Well, let's just say that Goldie, hormones raging, clearly not thinking, maybe accidentally let the vagina or penis cat out of the bag.
David:	What are you saying? You know what we're having?
Bryan:	Would you, in this hypothetical scenario, want to know? No.
David:	No way. It's the last...
Bryan:	It's a boy. Are you mad that I told you?
David:	Mad. No. I'm I'm not mad. I'm so happy. We're having a boy. We're having a boy! Oh, Bryan: I know. My instinct was to lift something, too.

[David walking to his friend]

David:	You guys, we're having a boy! (cheering, whooping, laughing) Yes. Yeah! Yeah! Come on.
David:	Oh, my God, it is so weird! Just last week, I was online looking at jungle gym forts, and I totally bookmarked, like, ten of them, right? And now we can get one, and get rid of that stupid Mexican birdbath!
Bryan:	Oh, actually, that's a vintage Monterey-tiled fountain with a slumbering Latino garden figure.
David:	Oh, my God, and my old Encyclopedia Brown books! You know the ones where he solves mysteries? And light saber fights! We can totally have broom light saber fights!
David's friend:	Oh, dude, you can totally sign him up for pee-wee football.

Football scene:

David:	Hold 'em down, come on! Take him down! Take him down! Good tackle! [whistle blows]

[Bryan is watching on the side with some women]

Bryan:	How long do these games last?
Woman 1:	Usually an entire bottle of wine. They're brutal.

	We sit out here for two hours every weekend, baking in the heat, letting the sun fry up our collagen. Give me a bank-account busting trip to the American Girl doll store any day.
Woman 2:	Oh, my God, I just got Finley the cutest pink leg braces for her differently-abled doll.
Bryan:	Is it true that they have a little salon there where the girls and the dolls get their hair done in tandem?
[Women nod their face]	
Bryan:	Is it mandatory that I bring an actual daughter to get in?
[women laughing]	

Setting up the baby room scene:

Bryan:	What is all this?
David:	Oh, they're the curtains that Goldie made. Aren't they great? I figured since we know we're having a boy, we don't have to go gender-neutral anymore. We can add some male flourishes. Oh, look. Baseballs. Each one of them from an actual World Series. I've been collecting them since I was a kid.
Bryan:	David, if we did the room your way, the only thing new in here would be the baby.
David:	It's just one shelf. We'll still have plenty of room for your precious design.
Bryan:	Precious you mean "girly"? Look, you're not the only one who had expectations, okay? I mean, what if we had a girl? What would you do with your male flourishes then?
David:	Why are you getting so upset?
Bryan:	I want our baby to love me as much as he loves you. And I'm afraid he's only gonna be into the things that you're into, and then we won't be able to relate on anything at all. I'm his dad, too, David, and I don't want him calling me "Mom," or "Lady Dad" or "Auntie Bry Bry.

S01EP21 'Finding Name-O'

1. Bedroom scene:

David:	Yeah. So there is something that I would like at our wedding that I've been a little scared to ask for.
Bryan:	No, you cannot do your Gollum impression when you put the ring on my finger.
David:	No. I was wondering how you felt about inviting your mother.
Bryan:	I feel conflicted?
David:	Look, I know it's been a little chilly between you two, but you were working on it, you opened a dialogue, it's starting to thaw. Don't you think she should be here?
Bryan:	David, I want our wedding day to be about positivity, and love, and rented trumpeter swans, and not any kind of tensions between my mother and I.
David:	Okay, but she's your mom.
Bryan:	Why would I want to share our wedding day our perfect day to celebrate our love with her?
David:	Because your love wants you to.
Bryan:	Fine.
David:	Yeah?
Bryan:	But no pretzel bread.
David:	Agreed. Now Give me a kiss, my precious.

9.5 SCREENSHOTS OF CHARACTERS

9.5.1 Modern Family S01EP01 Pilot
Mitchell (left) and Cameron (right)

9.5.2 The Fosters S01EP01 Pilot
Stef (left) and Lena (right)

9.5.3 How To Get Away With Murder S02EP01
Eve (left) and Annelise (right)

9.5.4 How To Get Away With Murder S01EP0
Connor (left) and Oliver (right)

9.5.5 The New Normal S01EP01 Pilot
Bryan (left) and David (right)