

Age representations of older women in TV fiction. *Fleabag* as a case study

Representaciones etarias de las mujeres mayores en la ficción audiovisual. Fleabag como caso de estudio



Almudena Mata-Núñez. Researcher in the Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the University of Seville, under the University Teacher Training Programme (FPU). She holds a degree in Journalism and in Audiovisual Communication, for which she obtained the Seville City Hall Award, the Real Maestranza de Caballería Award and the Extraordinary End of Studies Award. She holds a master's degree in Linguistic, Literary and Cultural Studies (US), in Cinematography (UCO) and in Gender Studies (UNED). She is a member of the Research Group on Image, Audiovisual Media and Communication History at the University of Seville. Her research focuses on audiovisual narrative, gender studies and mass culture.

University of Sevilla, Spain

amnunez@us.es

ORCID: 000-0002-9051-2397

Received: 07/02/2023 - Accepted: 04/07/2023 - Early access: 28/09/2023 - Published: 01/01/2024

Recibido: 07/02/2023 - Aceptado: 04/07/2023 - En edición: 28/09/2023 - Publicado: 01/01/2024

Abstract:

Following research on the representation of older adults in media discourse and discoveries about their sexuality, this paper presents a narrative analysis from a critical feminist perspective of the series *Fleabag*. Specifically, the study focuses on the character of the Godmother, a middle-aged woman who stands out for her overtly sexual discourse. The aim is to test the narrative construction of older women in audiovisual fiction in relation to the device of sexuality (Foucault, 1977). To do so, an analysis matrix has been designed based on previous works such as those by Casetti and Di Chio (2009), López Téllez and Cuenca García (2005) and Guarinos Galán (2018), among others. The results of the analysis show that the character is written as a middle-aged woman who does not comply with social gender expectations, largely due to the characterisation of her sexual activity

Resumen:

Siguiendo las investigaciones sobre la representación de los adultos mayores en el discurso mediático y los descubrimientos sobre su sexualidad, este trabajo presenta un análisis narrativo desde una perspectiva crítica feminista de la serie Fleabag (Waller-Bridge, 2016-2019). En concreto, el estudio se centra en el personaje de la Madrina, una mujer de mediana edad que destaca por un discurso abiertamente sexual. Se pretende comprobar cuál es la construcción narrativa que se ofrece de las mujeres adultas mayores en la ficción audiovisual en relación con el dispositivo de sexualidad (Foucault, 1977). Para ello, se ha diseñado una matriz de análisis propia a partir de trabajos previos como los de Casetti y Di Chio (2009), López Téllez y Cuenca García (2005) y Guarinos Galán (2018), entre otros. Los resultados del análisis muestran que el personaje se construye como una mujer de mediana edad que no cumple las expec-

How to cite this article:

Mata-Núñez, A. (2024). Age representations of older women in TV fiction. *Fleabag* as a case study. *Doxa Comunicación*, 38, pp. 227-245.

<https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n38a1921>



This content is published under Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License. International License CC BY-NC 4.0

in phenomenological, formal and abstract perspectives. Her discourse on sex challenges the codes of power associated with gender and places the character in the position of the villain of the story.

Keywords:

Fleabag; sexuality; older women; feminism; ageism.

tativas sociales de género, en gran medida, debido a la caracterización de su actividad sexual en las perspectivas fenomenológica, formal y abstracta. Su discurso sobre el sexo desafía los códigos de poder asociados al género y colocan al personaje en la posición de villano del relato.

Palabras clave

Fleabag; sexualidad; mujeres mayores; feminismo; edadismo.

1. Introduction

Gender stereotypes affect media representation of men and women, as they are conceived as beliefs in the adaptation to social roles according to the sex of individuals. Through them, the processes of socialisation differentiated between men and women are understood as natural, with women being constrained by the ideas of submission to men and the ideal of motherhood (Castillo-Mayén and Montes-Berges, 2014). The rise of tv series for digital platforms has increased the amount of content aimed at female audiences, so it should be asked whether «feminism and the mobilisation in favour of women's empowerment have an influence on the audience, and in particular on women» (Gavilán, Martínez-Navarro and Ayestarán, 2019, p. 368). For this reason, we will explore the representation of sexuality in older women in television fiction and focus on a specific case study: the series *Fleabag*, broadcast on BBC 3 between 2016 and 2019.

The series consists of two seasons of six 25 minute-episodes. It is a sitcom that fits in with those of the 1970s that confronted the escapism of the previous era by resorting to «darker topics at the time, such as racism, feminism or class struggle» (Yebra Romero, 2021, p. 21). Written by and starring Phoebe Waller-Bridge, *Fleabag* is the story of a woman in her thirties who is unable to maintain healthy bonds with both her family and her lovers. After the deaths of her mother and her best friend, Fleabag must cope with loneliness while trying to maintain emotional ties with her sister, Claire (Sian Clifford), and her father (Bill Paterson), who has rebuilt his life with his daughters' godmother (Olivia Colman).

Overall, the series has won over notable scholarly attention, especially for the use of the gaze and on-camera speech that the protagonist uses to connect with viewers (Jaarsma, 2022; Wilson, 2022, Beaumont, 2021; Gibbons and Whiteley, 2021; van de Ven, 2021a, 2021b; Rocha Antunes, 2020; Shuster, 2020; Woods, 2019). *Fleabag* addresses an imaginary audience that follows her everywhere, while these glances at the camera are configured as marks of implied narrator and spectator, a striking and unusual device in traditional audiovisual narrative.

Other analyses have addressed the construction of characters in *Fleabag*, focusing on its protagonist (Bassil-Morozow, 2020; Rodríguez Cruz, 2019), whose representation fits Woods' (2019) typology of the precarious young woman, who speaks of a type of comedies starring white, middle-class women who suffer from a fragile economic and social situation, leading to physical and emotional abjection. Part of the comic aspect of these narratives is based on the disruption of gender through the behaviour of the female characters according to social norms naturalised as masculine (Woods, 2019).

This research focuses on the character of the Godmother, who, after the death of her friend, Fleabag's mother, begins a relationship with Fleabag's father. The Godmother is a middle-aged, physically independent, white, upper-middle class,

woman, linked to the artistic world –her profession is not physically demanding–, who has cultural knowledge and social recognition as an artist. From a more generic question such as «What is the representation of older women in the audiovisual media?», it is possible to draw attention to two more specific objectives:

1. To analyse the character of the Godmother in *Fleabag* from a sexuality-driven discourse.
2. To clarify the type of representation of this character from a feminist perspective.

These research objectives necessarily imply opting for an intersectional perspective that considers the social significance of what it means to bring aspects related to gender together in the same individual identity, eroticism linked to femininity, age, ethnic origin, and social class. The starting hypothesis is that the sexuality of a young woman will not be interpreted in the same way as that of an older one and, in turn, among the latter, white, European women from a high social class will not find themselves in the same circumstances as those from developing countries, who suffer racial discrimination and whose belonging to the working class obliges them to focus their physical efforts on the economic support of their families, and who suffer from illnesses and ailments in a more intense way than other women in affluent positions.

Among the many negative stereotypes that Agulló Tomás (2001) identifies around the image of older women in cinema is that of women who have ceased to be objects of sexual desire, an idea that fits in with the demonisation of older female characters who continue to maintain an active sexual life that, supposedly, does not correspond to them. This construction of the female body is the result of the patriarchal structure¹ in audiovisual discourse, which creates an image of women as an ideal that is usually associated with the male vision (Mulvey, 1989). The foundations of Feminist Film Theory are based on the identification of the female body as an object of consumption for the gaze of the male-heterosexual spectator (Bernárdez Rodal, 2015). In this sense, Mulvey (2019) considers as feminist those works that not only narrate stories in which women occupy new roles, but also modify in the narrative mechanisms of meaning, for example, through the alteration of the order and time of the story.

Previous research on the relationship between media and the elderly highlights the progressive ageing of the population, the drop in the birth rate and the increase in life expectancy due, among other factors, to socio-health improvements that allow a better quality of life and the massive incorporation of women into the labour market (Vives Barceló, Sánchez-Prieto and Torres Olías, 2020). Articles such as those by Mancebo-Aracil and Ramos-Soler (2015) note the audiovisual under-representation of people over 50, to which is added the lack of interest in the academic world in researching age discourses. This is what some authors point out as invisibility within the forms adopted by the symbolic violence exercised by the media (Vives Barceló et al., 2020). The most common studies are those that question the representation of older people in advertising, given that they are part of a social group with purchasing power (Mancebo-Aracil, 2014; Ramos Soler and Papí Gálvez, 2012). In this way, it is reported that poor or negative representation in the media «can not only affect the way older people perceive themselves, but can also have an oppressive effect on their mental well-being» (Vives Barceló et al., 2020, p. 93), in addition to the perception that other social groups will have of them according to what the media show. Tous-Rovirosa et al. (2013) highlight in their literature review that women over 60 only represent 4% of the characters in American series.

¹ Patriarchy is a social, cultural and political structure that shapes most societies in the West. Patriarchal representations and the macho attitudes derived from them can be performed by both men and women who have internalised these symbolic schemes.

Belonging to an age group «makes it possible to predict certain attributes, styles (or even more markedly, “cultures”), group interests, values and even feelings» (Morganroth Gullette and Molinari Tato, 2010, p. 80), so that, without a critical perspective, age can be taken as a totalising category. Older adults are a group that, having retired from productive activities, are also consumers of audiovisual products, so it would be convenient to incorporate figures with whom they can identify. However, characters over the age of 50 are rarely protagonists of the fictions in which they appear, and, on occasions, they are linked to fiction genres such as medical dramas because it is understood as natural to link these individuals with illnesses caused by advanced age (Mancebo-Aracil and Ramos-Soler, 2015). López Téllez and Cuenca García (2005) explain that old age is a modern construct, and that ageing has to do with physical transformations rather than with a specific age. Age is considered a social concept that includes chronological, physiological, social, and psychological dimensions, all of which are conditioned by the gender perception of the subjects (Ramos Toro, 2018).

The starting hypothesis of this paper is that the characterisation of the Godmother’s sexuality in *Fleabag* influences the role she occupies in the story, positioning her as an antagonist. In this case, the research focuses on an older character as opposed to others who are considered young, but without belonging to the group we would call the third age. Rather, it could be argued that the character of the Godmother falls into the middle-aged segment, around the age of 50. Although she is not an old woman, her age distances her from the protagonist because she belongs to a younger generation. Morganroth Gullette and Molinari Tato (2010) stress, precisely, that «middle age has no distinctive boundaries: it is dangerously malleable» (p. 80), although it is taken for granted that she is a female character affected by menopause and the social imaginary that this entails, especially in the implications for sexual relations between older people.

In line with Ramos Toro (2018), we will talk about older women in relation to ageing as a process and not a stage, so that the age range is extended to ages prior to 60-65 years. Old age is no longer a period of physical and mental decline thanks to the increase in life expectancy, so the stereotypes associated with people over 50 should be critically analysed. Freixas Farré (2008) refers to the term coined by Butler (1969) as ageism, understood as a stereotype of discrimination against the elderly, «in such a way that they cease to be seen as human beings, to place them in a mental container that identifies old age with pejorative elements such as illness, diminished mental capacities, ugliness, dependence, isolation, poverty and depression» (Freixas Farré, 2008, p. 43). Thus, the image of old age is not only a rejection of older people, but also of the ageing process (Pinazo Hernandis, 2013). This negative association with the concept of old age is even more pronounced in the case of women, who face double discrimination based on age and gender. Age implies a cultural construct that affects both young and old people, establishes a social hierarchy and, «in old age, confers a loss of power, authority and status on all those designated as “old”» (Freixas Farré, 2008, p. 51).

1.1. Sexuality and age representation

Sexuality is marked by the socialisation of the body and the significance given to it (Bourdieu, 2000). The «sale» of the body takes from a social structure for its maintenance, which is why it is necessary for sexuality to be present in the collective imaginary. The narrative created by the media is understood as eminently patriarchal, leading to the creation of an image of women at the disposal of men, whether as objects of pleasure or in a maternal role.

The social meaning of bodies is differentiated according to gender identification, and the female body is required to be sexually attractive in accordance with the beauty canon. Women's bodies can be modified (perfected) through the purchase and application of products and processes that ensure the preservation of their youth and conformity to the attractiveness standards. Wolf (1991) defines the beauty myth as a «violent reaction against feminism, which uses images of female beauty as a political weapon to curb women's progress» (p. 14); that is, a form of social control that occupies the subconscious of all women, who strive to achieve a physical ideal that marks their social value. Although this myth is related to a certain appearance of the body, the qualities valued depend on socio-historical contexts. Today, attractiveness is identified with young, slim, yet curvy women, with erogenous areas conveniently highlighted through make-up or plastic surgery. The attributes associated with this canon are «merely symbols of female behaviour that the period deems desirable: the beauty myth always actually prescribes behaviour rather than appearance» (Wolf, 1991, p. 17).

This association of beauty with youth implies the rejection of ageing processes by women, which greatly affects sexual practice in maturity, as «feeling the loss of attractiveness often implies not acting freely in the search for the satisfaction of sexual desires and needs» (Freixas Farré et al., 2010, p. 41). For this reason, it is necessary to study the sexuality of older women, the consequences of the lack of affective-sexual education and the physical changes produced by age (Freixas Farré, 2008). This is a particularly important issue, given that «many older people do not even consider the legitimacy of maintaining a satisfactory sex life, with the full right to sexual exchange and pleasure. Society, as well as other health professionals, do not talk about or attend to this area» (Martínez Riera, 2017, p. 61).

In this sense, sexuality is linked to knowledge and discourses that govern bodies, the normativity that determines power relationships and subjectivity, insofar as each individual defines their identity through their conception as a subject. These three attributes intertwine in what is identified as the «dispositif», which was conceptualised with the birth of bourgeois capitalism in order to adapt family relations to a new productive system. The dispositif refers to the morality that has marked the development and understanding of sexual relations in the West and has consequently mediated the performance of bodies. To understand sex as an act of indecency is to enshrine social silence around it, and to support cultural manifestations that act as prohibition. Knowledge, then, will be directly linked to power and the transgression of norms of conduct. For this reason, it is considered that the simple discourse on sexuality implies a rupture with the imposed order, since «if sex is repressed, that is, destined to prohibition, non-existence and silence, the mere fact of talking about it, and of talking about its repression, possesses an air of deliberate transgression» (Foucault, 1977, p. 13).

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that discourses on sex have multiplied, thus it is necessary to question where they are being produced from. For Foucault (1977), this proliferation stems from power itself, as there is an «institutional incitement to talk about sex, and increasingly so; obstinacy of the instances of power in hearing about sex and in making it talk about the mode of explicit articulation and infinitely accumulated detail» (p. 26). It is not only important how much is said about a subject, but what is said about it and its intention. When institutionalised discourses such as the law regulate sex –legal unions, marriages, conceptualisation of the family, etc.– an imaginary about what is acceptable and permitted materialises in each society. Those who find themselves on the margins of these norms will be judged for their sexuality according to their rupture with heteronormativity. To a greater or lesser extent, non-monogamous relationships, non-heterosexual relationships, and all those that involve some kind of codified philia will be judged.

Sexuality links gender, eroticism, affection, love, and pleasure with «thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, practical activities, roles and relationships» (Badenes-Sastre et al., 2017, p. 26). As far as female sexuality is concerned, it «has invariably been defined in contrast as much as in relation to the male» (de Lauretis, 1996, p. 21); that is, its conceptualisation continues the pattern of identifying sexuality with heterosexual practices «and specifically penetration» (de Lauretis, 1996, p. 22). Traditionally, the only approach to female sexuality has been through its link with the reproduction of the species, although, in many cases, the male gaze rejects motherhood as a source of erotic desire.

The end of women's reproductive cycle does not prevent them from continuing to maintain a sexually active life, since, despite the fact that body changes due to ageing can cause problems in maintaining sexual relations, research confirms that sexuality is present throughout the life of human beings, although it is expressed «in different ways during the life cycle» (Sierra et al., 2014, p. 65). In this way, maturity can be understood as a period of greater personal enrichment, «where creativity can occupy a more important place in the life of the older person, once they have been freed from family and work responsibilities carried out in previous stages of their lives» (Molina-Luque et al., 2018, p. 45). It has been found that the most common sexual practices among older adults are vaginal sex, oral sex and mutual masturbation, while «anal sex and cybersex are occasional practices» (Freixas-Farré and Luque-Salas, 2014, p. 216). However, «there are differences in old age due to sexual orientation and gender identity motivated by the discrimination suffered» (García Albertos, 2018, p. 126), so it is not possible to generalise about sexual and social behaviour of older adults.

Opposite to popular belief, sexual desire does not disappear with age, but rather in adulthood there is usually a transposition of the activity maintained in youth (Árraga Barrios and Montiel, 2013; Freixas Farré et al., 2010; Fernández Hernández et al., 2006). Moreover, the decrease in sexual activity is due to socio-cultural elements that affect personal relationships, couple relationships, the psychological situation of each individual and other circumstantial aspects (Freixas Farré, Luque Salas and Reina Giménez, 2010). According to empirical studies on sexuality in older people, this depends mainly on the existence of a stable partner and sexual desire (Fernández Hernández et al., 2006). Thus, it can be stated that «sexual functioning is determined, in addition to physiological factors, by affective, cognitive and behavioural skills related to sexuality» (Sierra et al., 2014, p. 65). Regarding the link between diseases and low sexual activity, researchers have not found a clear relationship, except in cases where women have suffered from cancer (Fernández Hernández et al., 2006).

If older age has been symbolically and culturally associated with physical decay, it is not surprising that sexuality is a practice denied to older people. The rejection of sexuality in these age groups translates into a repulsion towards older bodies, which are not welcome on screens' images. As some authors denounce, women's bodies are framed in a process of decadence based on their relationship with menopause, wrinkles or grey hair (Freixas Farré, 2008). This conception of the ageing body leads to the assumption that older people cannot be attractive and that, consequently, sexual desire must disappear, as it is considered inappropriate for such bodies (Freixas-Farré and Luque-Salas, 2009). Insofar as youth establishes the ideal of beauty, «the physical signs of ageing are a sign of personal failure» (Freixas Farré, 2008, p. 53). Women are condemned to look young their whole lives to be socially accepted, something that does not cease to matter until the age of 80, when they finally value their own longevity (Ramos Toro, 2018).

2. Methodology

This research uses narrative analysis of audiovisual products to study the characters of a specific work. Casetti and Di Chio (2009) propose a classification in which characters are included in the group of existing characters, understood as all the elements present in a story. Specifically, characters are distinguished from other due to the anagrammatic criterion, which implies that they have a name of their own; the criterion of relevance, determined according to their presence in the story; and another criterion of focus of attention in the narrative (Casetti and Di Chio, 2009). Based on these initial considerations, this paper proposes an analysis of the character as an existent, taking into account attributes on the psychology of fictional characters pointed out by other authors, as well as our own categories derived from the theoretical examination set out above. For their study of older characters in television series, López Téllez and Cuenca García (2005) mainly use the actantial analysis of the characters to determine the role they play in the plot. The authors also study the socio-demographic features of the character, which would be equivalent to their characterisation as a person from a phenomenological perspective (Casetti and Di Chio, 2009); the relationship with the space they occupy, the events and plots in which they participate and their position within the actantial scheme. If we broaden this vision, in addition to the phenomenological perspective, we can add the formal perspective, which considers the characters in terms of the role they assume in the narrative, and the abstract perspective, which refers to the actantial schema. This triple perspective of analysis is the one proposed by Guarinos Galán (2018) in her study of the ageing character. In her research on old age in film, Pinazo Hernandis (2013) focuses on content analysis and distinguishes two major thematic blocks. On the one hand, life events related to social changes, which include retirement, widowhood, the empty nest syndrome, and the proximity of death, one's own or someone else's. On the other hand, there are social relations, among which two types are distinguished: sexual-affective and family relations.

Following previous research, it is proposed an analysis of the character from the triple narrative perspective, as a person, role, and actor. Considering the theoretical framework set out above, this research is based on the perspective of Gender Studies, which makes it necessary to add categories that refer to gender stereotypes and inequalities. To this end, an original analysis sheet has been created, based on the considerations of the aforementioned studies.

Table 1. Analysis sheet

Character		
Scenario		
Space		
Phenomenological perspective		
Age		
Marital status		
Physical appearance		
Psychology	Caring responsibilities	
	Relationships	Family
		Friendship
		Sorority
	Profession	
	Sexuality	
	Archetypes	
Formal perspective		
Role	Active	
	Passive	
Abstract perspective		
Actant type		

Source: prepared by the author based on Casetti and Di Chio (2009), López Téllez and Cuenca García (2005) and Guarinos Galán (2018)

As for the object of study, the character of the Godmother from *Fleabag* has been taken as a sample of middle-aged female characters with their own development in fiction. In this case, although she is a secondary character, she is not negligible, as «a secondary character can play several roles in a story, including helping to define the role of the protagonist, conveying the main theme of the story, and contributing to the development of the story» (Seger, 2011, p. 110). The corpus of study consists of the two seasons of the series, of six episodes each, which represent the entire production. Although all the complete episodes

have been visualised, the character of the Godmother appears in nine of them, four of which she is present almost throughout the entire story, while in the remaining five she participates in specific scenes².

3. Results and discussion

When applying the narrative analysis to the characters in the *Fleabag* series, it stands out that few characters meet the anagrammatic criterion, as most of them are unnamed. The names of the protagonist's sister, her husband and stepson are known, but the rest of the characters are identified by nicknames or, sometimes, no form of address is ever mentioned. The most notable is the case of Fleabag, which is assumed as a nickname simply because it is the title of the series, and she is the main character. In this work, the character of the Godmother, who doesn't have a name, and who is known because of her family status related to Fleabag, is analysed.

The Godmother is a secondary character who appears in nine of the twelve episodes of the series. In four of them, she is present for almost the entire story, while in the remaining five she participates in specific scenes. She is a figure who usually appears in different parts of the family home, carrying out different activities, or in celebrations that bring together all the characters, although these meetings are also held in public places such as restaurants. In general, the spaces in which this character is shown have to do with the family and link her to the domestic sphere. In turn, both the room she uses as a studio and the exhibition frame her in the artistic world. It is noteworthy that, inside the house, she has her own room that connects her with the outside world through her artistic creation, which she also exhibits publicly. We are, therefore, dealing with a character established on the frontier between public and private space, the latter being the place where she creates the identity that she later shows to the outside world.

Considering the phenomenological perspective, which encompasses the character in her construction as a person, it is understood that the character of the Godmother is a middle-aged woman, although it is not specified at any point how old she is. The actress who plays her, Olivia Colman, was about 41 years old at the beginning of the series, while Bill Paterson, her fictional partner, was 70. In fiction, the character of the Godmother was a friend of Claire and Fleabag's mother, so it can be assumed that they were a similar age, which implies that the age of the couple must be close. However, in the second season it is said that the Godmother was a student of Fleabag's mother, so this would explain why she was a little younger than her.

2 In the first episode of the first season, she's seen near the end, when the protagonist breaks into her father's house in the early hours of the morning, and she is painting in the room she uses as a studio. She next appears in the third episode, in some scenes at Claire's birthday party. Episodes five and six, devoted to the anniversary meal of the mother's death and the Sexhibition, respectively, have the most screen time for the Godmother, as she appears throughout. As for the second season, something similar happens in the first episode, in which the whole family reunites for dinner to celebrate the engagement of the Godmother and the Father, as well as in the last episode, dedicated to the wedding between them. In the second episode, the character is present in the posing sequence for the portrait she paints of Claire and Fleabag; in the fourth episode she appears in the flashbacks that talk about the mother's funeral and, in the fifth, only in the beginning, when she has a fit of rage because the priest informs them that he will not be able to officiate at their wedding.

For this reason, if the Father is in his 60s³, we might think that the Godmother is in her 50s. These considerations lead to think that a younger actress had been chosen for a middle age character, thus denying the ageing image of women in fiction, since, although the character may be older, her physical appearance is that of someone ten years younger. This categorisation of actresses over 40 coincides with the protest of many of them when they point out that, when they reach a certain age, the usual roles end for them and they are typecast early on as mothers and grandmothers.

As for the Godmother's marital status, she is a woman with a partner, the Father, whom she marries in the last chapter of the series. It is never mentioned whether she had been married before, although she does talk about having had other partners. Her physical appearance is that of an older adult woman with a youthful look. She always wears a broad smile that contrasts with many hurtful comments she makes, especially to Fleabag. Her hair style changes over time: when Fleabag's mother dies, she wears her hair long and curly, then in mid-lengths, and in the last season, she wears a more masculine cut. She usually accompanies her hairstyle with colourful scarves or headaddresses of various kinds. Her appearance is completed with loose-fitting clothes with quirky designs that highlight her artistic profile. She is not a particularly slim woman or interested in the beauty canon but she has her own style and a body that is normative for the age she represents.

The psychological construction of the character is interesting, since, to a certain extent, it determines the role she occupies in the narrative. Firstly, as far as care work is concerned, it is not shown on the series, even though the character is mostly framed in the domestic space. There is only one mention in a dialogue with Fleabag in the last episode, in which she asks her to respect the wedding, as she will be the one to take care of Father when he is older. In other words, she is willing to commit to a dependent person when the time comes. As far as family relationships are concerned, these are the most important for this character, since her narrative participation depends on her bond with the Father, through whom she becomes stepmother. Her relationship with her stepdaughters is stormy, especially with the protagonist. Although she tries to appear good-natured, the Godmother cannot stand Fleabag and her comments towards her are always derogatory and ironic. She criticises her physical appearance, that of her companions, her sexual activity, her work, and even paints her backwards in the portrait she gives to her father as a wedding gift.

The Godmother's friendships are almost non-existent, as only slight glimpses are shown in the wedding episode, although she had previously mentioned her friends in the second episode of the second season. As Claire and Fleabag pose for the portrait she is painting, she brings up the subject of abortion, which the protagonist claims to have undergone to cover for her sister, and compares it to those of her supposed friends, only one of whom eventually had children, something she says she regrets. This conversation is used by the sisters to ask why she never had them, to which she replies that she is still thinking about it, which works as a comic line, as it is implied that, due to her age, the Godmother can no longer have children. In any case, the Godmother is not shown having any kind of relationship with characters other than Fleabag's father. However, on her wedding day, she introduces several guests as her friends. Most of them are much younger than her, and the only thing they have in common is that they belong to different social groups usually oppressed and marginalised by their ethnic background, sexual

3 In the script of the first episode, just before the appearance of the Father on the scene, a note indicates that he is an «exhausted man in his fifties» (Waller-Bridge, 2019, p. 27).

orientation, or physical abilities. When introducing them to her family, she doesn't say anything about their jobs but their sexual orientations or physical diversities, as if they were rare pieces in an art collection. Moreover, it is implied that her social circle is very alternative, composed of very interesting and unconventional people.

In the case of her relationships with other women, they are limited to those with Claire and Fleabag, as well as with the memory of their mother. While she is kind to Claire, her relationship with Fleabag and their mother is one of total competitiveness, mainly to gain power in the family, as well as the love of the Father. Love is a particularly important theme, as both Fleabag and the Godmother hold the ideal that it is necessary to have a partner to be happy. This is why the Godmother continually attacks her stepdaughter, telling her that she is going to be alone all her life, while reminding her that she has found love with the Father⁴. Therefore, although her artistic work speaks, in a certain way, of the liberation of women, it is not possible to affirm that she exercises sorority in her private life. Rather, the Godmother perceives other women as obstacles to achieving her goals, mainly that of getting the man she desires. This therefore places her on the plane of neoliberal postfeminism⁵.

In her relationship with Fleabag, there is a key element that runs throughout the series: the statue of a limbless, naked female body that Fleabag steals from the Godmother's study in the first episode. In this sequence, the figure is described as «the expression of how women are subtle warriors», who do not need to use force for what they want, as they are satisfied with their «innate femininity»⁶ (Waller-Bridge, 2019, p. 29). In their first interaction, the Godmother explains that the figure is of an important economic value, so the protagonist steals it to bother her stepmother and, at the same time, get some much-needed money. The statue is a symbol of female sexuality, but also of the absent mother, as the Godmother later explains that she modelled it on her.

The statue depicts a nude cisgender woman, identifiable by her breasts, those that the protagonist's mother had lost to breast cancer, which ultimately led to her death. The breasts, as a symbol of motherhood, anticipate the total physical loss of the mother's body, and the connection to the daughters (Wilson-Scott, 2020). The figure of the mother is thus quite conspicuously absent, as it determines Fleabag's relationship with her godmother/stepmother. The effigy of the torso visually occupies the space of the mother's absent body and is a link between Fleabag and his godmother. Initially, it is placed in the Godmother's study, within the family space, which has been reclaimed by the stepmother. The mother's presence has been reduced to

4 At the gathering on the anniversary of the mother's death, the Godmother tells the theme of her exhibition, and explains how lucky she is to be with a sexually active man who will touch her until the end of her days, adding that Claire can also enjoy that privilege, but not her sister. «I'm very lucky. I will be touched until the day I die. And so will you, Claire. It's really all that humans want. Is to be loved. And to be touched» (Waller-Bridge, 2019, p. 149).

5 Martínez-Jiménez (2021) defines neoliberal postfeminism as «a new and particular economic-cultural narrative that aspires to (re)articulate the ideas, values, emotions and practices of "women" [...] to the (re)production needs of neoliberal capitalism in the face of feminist counter-hegemonic possibilities. The neoliberal postfeminist discourse thus exposes a powerful performative value whereby our ideas and, above all, what we do with them would be aimed at sustaining a way of life, a way of understanding and doing things that simply does not disturb and even greases neoliberal legitimacy, containing and returning feminisms themselves to the margins of the excessive and radical» (p. 376).

6 «Godmother: Yes. She's actually an expression of how women are subtle warriors... strong at heart. You know, we don't have to use muscular force to get what we want. We just need to use our-
Fleabag: Tits.
Godmother: Innate femininity.
Fleabag: Tits don't get you anywhere these days. Trust me».

a mere decorative object stripped of face and voice, inert on a shelf. Fleabag, who is forbidden to access the places of her childhood home, steals the statue and, with it, the maternal role usurped by her godmother (Wilson-Scott, 2020).

This piece is undoubtedly an essential element in the relationship between Fleabag and her godmother, as, in addition to being the object of dispute during several chapters, it becomes the main piece in the Godmother's artistic exhibition, the Sexhibition, where the statue ends up becoming a symbol of disputed power between the two women. Having been stolen by Fleabag, the Godmother does not have the piece to include it in her exhibition. She takes advantage of its absence to explain that, like many other women, she has been dispossessed of her freedom and her body. Her work *A Woman Robbed* represents how women are stripped of their social value and, with this discourse, she denounces the oppression of women, positioning herself as a feminist leader⁷. What could have been a victory for Fleabag by restoring her mother's value, ends up being reversed in the exhibition when the Godmother places herself in the role of victim.

As Wilson-Scott (2020) explains, it is precisely the deprivation of the statue/mother that is evident in this sequence, although it is clear that this does not prevent the Godmother from occupying her space; indeed, she uses the incident to gain greater prominence over the absent figure. Fleabag may have stolen the piece from her, but she has stolen «her home and her family» (Wilson-Scott, 2020, p. 279). It is not until the last episode of the series that it is discovered that the piece was based on Fleabag's mother, as the Godmother offers this information when the protagonist returns the statue to her as a wedding gift. In this conversation, the artist assures her that she is happy to have the figure back in her house. However, she ignores the fact that it is the house of another woman, the one she had taken as a model.

At the same time, the presence of the statue is a reminder of the Godmother's profession, as she is an artist who has achieved success with her exhibition on sex, which has travelled to different countries. Sexuality, then, is not limited to the private sphere, but achieves public relevance through artistic expression. In general, the Godmother's attitude towards sex is very positive, as she speaks openly about it and makes it the central motif of her work. Although there are no references to specific practices, she does mention the existence of uninterrupted sexual activity, of which she is quite proud, in contrast to her refusal of the same behaviour on Fleabag, as she does not have a steady partner.

More explicitly, in the Sexhibition, the Godmother says that she had her first orgasm at the age of 11 accidentally in a bidet, which is part of the exhibition. Later, when talking about one of her paintings that she donated to the parish raffle, she reveals that she had an orgasm when she finished it. In this sense, it could be pointed out that her body enjoys pleasure, even though it is met with the mark of age that determines the end of procreation, that is, social functionality. Opposite to this display of sexuality, she is not a sexualised female character in terms of image, since she is part of an age group removed from the ideal of beauty, so she will not be considered a desirable subject. In contrast to this conceptualisation, the Godmother's explicit discourse on sex breaks the taboo of age and reclaims the capacity of adult women to enjoy an active sexuality.

In addition to those mentioned above, two other pieces stand out in the Sexhibition: a plaster figure of Harry, Fleabag's ex-boyfriend, who is shown naked and emasculated, and a wall on which his penis is displayed. Presented as if they were trophies,

7 «In fact her brutal snatching made me think of all the women of the world who have been robbed of their freedom, of their happiness and, in the saddest of cases, of their bodies. So in many ways, I have to thank the thief, for creating my most profound piece of work to date. *A Woman Robbed*» (Waller-Bridge, 2019, p. 169).

about twenty different men's penises can be seen on a wall. This shows off the Godmother's power through sex as a method of control and dominance over men. The Godmother asks Fleabag if she is able to recognise the Father's, to which she responds by selecting the correct penis. This visibly upsets the Godmother, as she considered this knowledge as part of her power over her stepdaughter. In this social and intra-familial power struggle, there is also a place for economic power, as the Godmother uses her sexuality, associated with the fight for women's rights, to sell her pieces and achieve the fame she identifies with success. Her references to the struggle of women are diluted in her egocentrism, as it is clear that she is not interested in defending a common cause, but in placing herself at the centre⁸.

Regarding the phenomenological perspective, it is worth noting the construction of the character psychology by resorting to narrative archetypes. In this case, the union of two opposing archetypes is easily identifiable: on the one hand, the fairy godmother who, in fairy tales, takes care of princes or princesses who are orphaned and abandoned, and on the other hand, the archetype of the wicked stepmother who compete with the children for the love of the father. For Wilson-Scott (2020), Fleabag's story fits the fairy tale mould perfectly, as she is an orphaned daughter, cared for by her father, and ends up being expelled from the family home and condemned to servitude to the wicked stepmother. From the very first episode of the series there are explicit references to this stereotype when the Godmother appears on the scene for the first time and Fleabag introduces her by saying that «she's not an evil stepmother. She's just a cunt». (Waller-Bridge, 2019, p. 28).

Saidel (2020) notes that the Godmother embodies a narrative duality between two stereotypes: that of the wicked stepmother and that of the wise man or mentor, as the teacher and protector of the main character. This symbolism is mainly established in relation to the figure of the absent mother, whose unseen presence is the only family link (Wilson-Scott, 2020). In contrast to the conception of the maternal as a loving element, Fleabag's godmother stands as the personification of competitiveness for the father's affection. Her power increases throughout the series, until the relationship culminates in marriage, replacing the protagonist's mother entirely. Although she occupies the mother's space, it is obvious that she rejects the maternal role, as hers is an imposed motherhood that does not belong to her.

Likewise, because of this artificial maternity, the character is not affected by the changes that many women suffer, which de Sa Vieira Abuchaim and Aparecida Silva (2006) identify with the physical change of the body, the assumption of new family roles, the focus on children, and the mental division between feeling like a mother and feeling like a woman. This linking of the feminine with motherhood meant that women's sexual activity had a reproductive purpose and not one of enjoyment. In other words, there is a denial of pleasure for women who are mothers, as it is understood that they owe it to their children and partners, leaving their own satisfaction in last place. In this case, the Godmother is not a real mother, so she can claim sexual pleasure for herself. This is a mutual influence, as this practice distances her from the maternal ideal and therefore from the positive perception of her stepdaughters.

Taking the formal perspective of analysis into account, it can be stated that the Godmother is an active and influential character, as she motivates the progress of secondary plots, especially through her interactions with Fleabag and the Father.

8 «Well, I think it's important for women of all ages to see how my body has changed over the years. I think they have to have a healthy perspective – on my body» (Waller-Bridge, 2019, p. 149).

This is particularly evident in her initiative in speaking up and raising uncomfortable questions for other characters, as well as in her eagerness to incite confrontation with Fleabag. She is a character who tries to control the behaviour of others, who constantly interrupts to talk about and place herself at the centre of any conversation, and who inquires intimate details of other characters' lives. In the fourth episode of the second season, the flashbacks to the funeral of Fleabag's mother show her proactive approach to the Father in the church where the deceased was still present. Her insistence is what allows her to get what she wants, as she does not give up until she gets it, mainly in terms of social recognition as an artist and in her relationship with Father.

Finally, in the acting scheme, the main character occupies the role of the subject, since it is her story that is told, it is she who is followed by the camera, and who leads the narrative. What drives her story is the search for happiness and stability, as well as the desire not to feel alone, which, in the first season, she achieves through multiple sexual relationships, while in the second, with a love story. She would also be the target, although the supporting characters, such as her sister and her father, would benefit from the change too. Facing the protagonist's determination to be happy is the Godmother, her main opponent, who fights to take over the family's power. This identification as the subject's opponent places the character in the realm of villains, as «by definition, the villain is the evil character who confronts the main character. Generally, villains are antagonists, although not all antagonists are villains» (Seger, 2011, p. 122).

The Godmother embodies a somewhat passive-aggressive villain role, with hurtful comments disguised with smiles. On many occasions, women who transgress gender norms are seen as bad (women) and therefore often play the role of antagonist in the story, as they overthrow the expected social images of women (Pérez Béjar, García Pérez and Mata-Núñez, 2021). As de la Mata Agudo and Blanco Carmona (2022) argue, the lack of maternal instinct, the interest in power and the fixation on money are traits common to female characters traditionally conceived as villains, and these psychological aspects are evident in the character of the Godmother. In their analysis of animated films aimed at children, these authors detect that female characters who contradict gender expectations and acquire attributes associated with masculinity are identified as villains, usually in the form of witches, stepmothers and prostitutes (de la Mata Agudo and Blanco Carmona, 2022). Following these considerations, it can be affirmed that the Godmother does not adhere to the ideal of traditional femininity, on the contrary, she is interested in character traits associated with men, such as power and the rejection of family care, which links her directly to the archetype of the godmother as villain.

4. Conclusions

Having applied the narrative analysis to the character of the Godmother in *Fleabag*, we have been able to verify that, despite being a secondary character, she has a notable presence in the series. From a phenomenological perspective, the Godmother is an older woman with a youthful appearance, both because of her artistic and alternative style, and because of the lack of ageing features for a woman of her age group. What is shown by the choice of an actress much younger than her character and almost 30 years younger than the actor who plays her partner in fiction, is the impossibility for women to look old and distanced from the beauty canon associated with youth. Although the character is that of a middle-aged woman, her visual

representation does not coincide. This would mean showing a physical appearance marked by the passage of time in a much more evident way, as it happens with the character of the Father.

In terms of the character's psychology, the family relationships that categorise her as godmother and stepmother stand out. Her interaction with her partner's daughters shows that she is a competitive and power-hungry woman, which instigates rejection of the character in a story told from Fleabag's perspective. In other words, the story tends to be favourable to the protagonist, with viewers empathising with or rejecting the characters she accepts or disowns, respectively. The family relationships depicted are stormy and depend, to a large extent, on the interaction between different types of women. The Godmother seeks to assert herself over Claire and Fleabag by gaining the love of the Father, since, for her, ultimate success is to be with a man, following the myth of heterosexual romantic love. Although in her artistic work she presents herself as a feminist, she cannot be considered as such, since she does not practice sorority, or support other women in her daily life.

The Godmother would be closer to the ideas of neoliberal postfeminism, not only because of her relationships with other women, but also because of the way she presents her sexuality publicly. Through the dispute over the statue of the naked woman, it can be seen that the character sexualises the female body to achieve different objectives. She uses women's sexual liberation to sell, achieve notoriety and reach power, which contrasts with her denunciation of the fact that women have been deprived of the possibility of openly enjoying their bodies. Contrary to these oppressions that keep female sexuality to the most private sphere, she does maintain an active sex life which she proclaims publicly, helping to break the taboo of sex for older women. However, her image is not sexualised, as she is not a young woman who conforms to the beauty canon, showing a body marked by age, but one that enjoys pleasure.

The analysis has also shown that she is an active character, who makes things happen and does not wait to be influenced by others. The Godmother causes all kinds of conflicts and confrontations, because she takes the initiative to get what she wants, putting her desires before other's needs. Opposite to what one might expect from gender expectations, she is not a submissive woman, but one with a very sharp personality, who does not rest until she gets what she wants. This breach from social expectations of what it is to be a woman influences the character's identification as a villain. Furthermore, from the most abstract line of analysis, the Godmother fits into the category of the subject's opponent, as she prevents the subject from achieving her aims, while in the series continuous attacks by the Godmother on Fleabag are shown, which undermine her morale and cause family disputes that harm the protagonist.

To sum up, from the three perspectives of narrative analysis applied, the Godmother does not conform to social expectations of women. She is a disruptive character, which is greatly influenced by her characterisation as an older woman with erotic interests, as her uninterrupted sexual activity revokes gender expectations and identifies her as a villain. Sexual and affective activity would be, in this case, a rejectable aspect of the character, who, because of her age, would not be socially entitled to an active sexual life. On the opposite side is the protagonist of the series, a young woman who turns constantly to sex, enjoys her body and shares her erotic thoughts with the viewers without being judged for it. For these reasons, the initial hypothesis can be confirmed, as there is a certain demonisation of sexual relations in older women and their public communication. If the fact that a young woman addressing mass audiences on a taboo subject like sex breaks with social norms, for an older character to

deal with sexuality from such perspectives implies an even greater transgression. In this sense, the Godmother's discourse is precisely the one that most challenges the devices of power.

Undoubtedly, this work left out many theoretical aspects of feminism whose analysis in audiovisual products would be equally interesting. In this sense, it would be convenient to consider a future longitudinal study covering a more extensive corpus over time, as well as the possibility of including other categories that would enrich the analysis, such as skin colour or the social class of the characters represented on screen.

5. Acknowledgments

The English version of this article has been reviewed by Lucía Alarcón Reyes.

6. Conflict of interest

The author certifies that there is not any conflict of interest with the matter discussed in this paper.

7. Bibliographic references

- Agulló Tomás, M. S. (2001). En tercer plano. Estereotipos, cine y mujeres mayores. En Muñoz, B. (Coord.). *Medios de comunicación, mujeres y cambio cultural* (pp. 245-276). Dirección General de la Mujer de la Comunidad de Madrid.
- Árraga Barrios, M.; Montiel A., N. (2013). Salud, cine y educación sexual para adultos mayores. *Omnia*, 19(3), 86-97. <https://acortar.link/DCin1K>
- Badenes-Sastre, M., Castro Calvo, J. y Ballester-Arnal, R. (2017). Principales creencias sexuales disfuncionales en mayores. *Ágora de salud*, IV, 25-33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6035/agorasalut.2017.4.3>
- Bassil-Morozow, H. (2020). Persona and rebellion in trickster narratives. Case study. *Fleabag. Persona Studies*, 30-42. <https://acortar.link/BkgYwI>
- Beaumont, J. (2021). Phoebe Waller-Bridge's *Fleabag(s)*: direct address and narrative control from stage to small screen. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(2), 103-119. <https://acortar.link/UEdplX>
- Bernárdez Rodal, A. (2015). *Mujeres en medio(s). Propuestas para analizar la comunicación masiva con perspectiva de género*. Editorial Fundamentos.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *La dominación masculina*. Anagrama.
- Butler, R. (1969). Ageism: Another form of bigotry. *The Gerontologist*, 9, 243-246. <https://acortar.link/ubmz22>
- Casetti, F. y Di Chio, F. (2009). *Cómo analizar un film*. Paidós.
- Castillo-Mayén, R. y Montes-Berges, B. (2014). Análisis de los estereotipos de género actuales. *Anales de psicología*, 30(3), 1044-1060. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.138981>
- de Lauretis, T. (1996). La tecnología del género. *Revista Mora*, 2, 6-34. <https://acortar.link/JxvhxW>

- de la Mata Agudo, C. y Blanco Carmona, M. (2022). La bruja, la prostituta y la madrastra. Tres villanas en el cine para la infancia. En Bandrés Goldáraz, E.; Diez Ros, R. y Aránguez Sánchez, T. (Coords.). *Feminismos aplicados. Un enfoque desde la educación, género, violencia estructural y los movimientos sociales* (pp. 618-634). Dykinson.
- de Sa Vieira Abuchaim, E. y Aparecida Silva, I. (2006). Vivenciando la lactancia y la sexualidad en la maternidad: "Dividiéndose entre ser madre y mujer". *Ciência, Cuidado e Saúde Maringá*, 5(2), 220-228. <https://acortar.link/zdxA1g>
- Fernández Hernández, M., Gaviria Cano, M. N., Muñoz González, F., Miguel Calvo, I., Coll Torres, E. y Fuentes Ferrer, M. E. (2006). Sexualidad en las mujeres mayores. *Atención Primaria*, 37(9), 504-509. <https://doi.org/10.1157/13089099>
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Historia de la sexualidad I. La voluntad de saber*. Siglo XXI editores.
- Freixas Farré, A. (2008). La vida de las mujeres mayores a la luz de la investigación gerontológica feminista. *Anuario de Psicología*, 39(1), 41-57. <https://acortartu.link/s7hl0>
- Freixas-Farré, A. y Luque-Salas, B. (2014). La sexualidad de las mujeres mayores. Perspectiva evolutiva y psicosocial. *Anuario de Psicología*, 44(2), 213-228. <https://acortar.link/gqSVMk>
- Freixas-Farré, A. y Luque-Salas, B. (2009). El secreto mejor guardado: la sexualidad de las mujeres mayores. *Política y Sociedad*, 46(1 y 2), 191-203. <https://acortartu.link/v7wgd>
- Freixas Farré, A., Luque Salas, B. y Reina Giménez, A. (2010). Secretos y silencios en torno a la sexualidad de las mujeres mayores. *Debate Feminista*, 42, 35-51. <https://acortartu.link/h0jsx>
- García Albertos, M. (2018). Mayores y diversidad sexual. Entre la visibilidad y el derecho a la indiferencia. *Revista Prisma Social*, 21, 123-148. <https://acortartu.link/mdc39>
- Gavilán, D., Martínez-Navarro, G. y Ayestarán, R. (2019). Las mujeres en las series de ficción: el punto de vista de las mujeres. *Investigaciones Feministas* 10(2), 367-384. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/infe.66499>
- Gibbons, A. y Whiteley, S. (2021). Do worlds have (fourth) walls?: A Text World Theory approach to direct address in *Fleabag*. *Language and Literature*, 30(2), 105-126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947020983202>
- Guarinos Galán, V. (2018). Envejecimiento (de tópicos) activo(s) en el cine español de las décadas del "bienestar". *Área Abierta. Revista de comunicación audiovisual y publicitaria*, 19(1), 59-73. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/ARAB.61154>
- Jaarsma, A. S. (2022). Fleabag's Pedagogy of the Gimmick. *Open Philosophy*, 5, 90-104. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opphil-2020-0156>
- López Téllez, J. A. y Cuenca García, F. A. (2005). Ficción televisiva y representación generacional: modelos de tercera edad en las series nacionales. *Comunicar*, 25. <https://acortar.link/qbuezw>
- Mancebo-Aracil, J. F. (2014). Mayores, publicidad y medios de comunicación. Una revisión teórica. *Historia y Comunicación Social*, 19, 573-588. http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev_HICS.2014.v19.45050
- Mancebo-Aracil, J. F. y Ramos-Soler, I. (2015). Las personas mayores en la ficción televisiva: el caso de Hospital Central. *Opción*, 31(6), 1006-1021. <https://acortar.link/1mv67p>
- Martínez-Jiménez, L. (2021). Postfeminismo neoliberal: una propuesta de (re)conceptualización desde los estudios culturales feministas. *Revista de Investigaciones Feministas* 12(2), 371-381. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/infe.73049>

- Martínez Riera, J. R. (2017). Las personas mayores a través del cine. *Gerokomos*, 28(2), 56-62. <https://acortartu.link/m6du2>
- Molina-Luque, F.; Casado Gual, N. y Sanvicén-Torné, P. (2018). Mujeres mayores también activas, creativas y fuertes: Modelos para romper estereotipos. *Revista Prisma Social*, 21, 43-74. <https://acortartu.link/r0cmh>
- Morganroth Gullette, M. y Molinari Tato, A. (2010). Los estudios etarios como estudios culturales Más allá del *slice-of-life*. *Debate Feminista*, 42, 79-108. <https://acortartu.link/zyyhc>
- Mulvey, L. (1989). *Visual and other pleasures*. Palgrave.
- Mulvey, L. (2019). *Afterimages: on cinema, women and changing times*. Reaktion Books.
- Pérez Béjar, V., García Pérez, J. y Mata-Núñez, A. (2021). El discurso del villano: Alicia Sierra en *La casa de papel*. En Fuentes Rodríguez, C. (Coord.), *Argumentación y discursos* (pp. 149-181). Arco/Libros-La Muralla.
- Pinazo Hernandis, S. (2013). Reflexionando sobre la vejez a través del cine. Una aproximación incompleta. *Informació psicológica*, 105, 91-109. <https://acortartu.link/i7tpd>
- Ramos Soler, I. y Papí Gálvez, N. (2012). Personas mayores y publicidad. Representaciones de género en televisión. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 18, 753-762. http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev_ESMP.2012.v18.40954
- Ramos Toro, M. (2018). Estudio etnográfico sobre el envejecer de las mujeres mayores desde una perspectiva de género y de curso vital. *Revista Prisma Social*, 21, 75-107. <https://acortartu.link/ftwsq>
- Rocha Antunes, L. (2020). *Fleabag* and self-reflexivity: Breaking the fourth wall of a woman's inner world. *Revista Tropos: Comunicação, Sociedade e Cultura*, 9(1), 1-16. <https://acortartu.link/jn03m>
- Rodríguez Cruz, I. (2019). *Fleabag (Waller-Bridge y Bradbeer, 2016) ante la problemática del sujeto posfeminista*. Trabajo fin de máster. Universitat Jaume I.
- Saidel, E. (2020). *Fleabag*, Jane the Virgin, and Feminist Media on Television's Textual Edges. *Cinephile*, 14(1), 6-13. <https://acortartu.link/x6wcq>
- Seger, L. (2011). *Cómo crear personajes inolvidables: guía práctica para el desarrollo de personajes en cine, televisión, publicidad, novelas y narraciones cortas*. Paidós.
- Shuster, M. (2020). *Fleabag*, Modernism, and New Television. *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 51(3), 324-336. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cras-2020-013>
- Sierra, J. C., Vallejo-Medina, P., Santos-Iglesias, P., Moyano, N., Reina Granados, M. y Sánchez-Fuentes, M. del M. (2014). Funcionamiento sexual en personas mayores. Influencia de la edad y de factores psicosexuales. *Revista Internacional de Andrología*, 12(2), 64-70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.androl.2013.10.002>
- Tous-Rovirosa, A.; Meso Ayerdi, K. y Simelio Sola, N. (2013). The Representation of Women's Roles in Television Series in Spain. Analysis of the Basque and Catalan Cases. *Communication & Society*, 26(3), 67-97. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.26.36070>
- Van de Ven, I. (2021a). Here, yet always there: How *Fleabag* uses Intimacy as Distraction. *DiggIt Magazine*. <https://acortartu.link/3fW9GE>

- Van de Ven, I. (2021b). Intimate distractions: Fleabag's manipulations of audience attention. *Continuum*, 35(3), 455-467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2021.1889465>
- Vives Barceló, M., Sánchez-Prieto, L. y Torres Olías, M. (2020). Consumo televisivo y autopercepción en las personas mayores. *Gerokomos*, 31(2), 92-97. <https://acortartu.link/iwe1q>
- Waller-Bridge, P. (2019). *Fleabag. The scriptures*. Sceptre.
- Wilson, A. (2022). Where did you go?! Trans-diegetic address and formal innovation in Phoebe Waller-Bridge's television series *Fleabag*. *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 17(4) 415-435. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17496020221108923>
- Wilson-Scott, J. (2020). Both absent and omnipresent: the dead mother in *Fleabag*. *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(2), 273-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1546207>
- Wolf, N. (1991). *El mito de la belleza*. Emecé.
- Woods, F. (2019). Too Close for Comfort: Direct Address and the Affective Pull of the Confessional Comic Woman in Chewing Gum and *Fleabag*. *Communication Culture & Critique*, 12, 194-212. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcz014>
- Yebra Romero, J. (2021). *De Friends a Fleabag: la evolución de la comedia de ficción televisiva*. Laertes.