



**THE REPRESENTATION OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
WOMEN AND GENDER ROLE  
IN TV SERIES *GROWN-ISH* SEASON 1**

**A THESIS**

In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the S-1 Degree Majoring American Cultural Studies  
in English Department  
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

Submitted by:

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2020**

## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis entitled “The Representation of African-American Women and African-American Gender Role in TV Series *Grown-ish* Season 1” by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains also that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone’s paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, September 2020

Fatimah Azzahra

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

You fail only if you stop writing

-- **Ray Bradbury**

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending

-- **C.S. Lewis**

It is never too late. If it is too late, it is better too late than never.

-- **Fatimah Azzahra**

*This thesis is dedicated to*

*Myself and my parents*

*For believing in me.*

APPROVAL

THE REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN AND  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN GENDER ROLE IN TV SERIES *GROWN-ISH*  
SEASON 1

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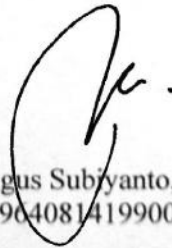
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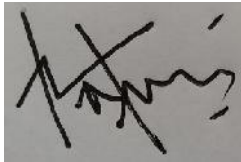
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I realize that his thesis is still far from perfect. I, therefore will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this thesis better.

Finally, I expect that this thesis will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about African-American women and African-American gender roles in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century television Series.

Semarang, September 22<sup>th</sup> 2020

Fatimah Azzahra

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## ABSTRACT

Controlling images of the representation of African-American women have been in the media for a long time and the lack of concern regarding African-American gender roles in the media should be a bigger issue. This thesis focused on the existence of controlling images of African-American women in young adult characters in recent popular television series and how African-American gender role is portrayed in the series. This thesis uses Black feminists' thoughts and black scholars' thoughts in TV series *Grown-ish* Season 1. To analyze the story, the writer uses a library research method to gather the data and information that support the analysis. This thesis finds that controlling images of African-American women implicitly maintain their portrayal in the series. Furthermore, this study finds that African-American gender roles show some differences from the existing conservative gender roles.

Keywords: African-American, Young, Women, Gender Roles, *Grown-ish*

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In history, African-American women have been dealing with inequality from their male counterparts in the African-American community, and white women in their struggle for womanhood. African-American women have been frequently left out from any social movements in the black community, such as the Black Liberation Movement, the Black Power Movement, and a more recent one, the Black Lives Matter Movement (Staton, 2019: 23). African-American women have been contributing to every movement, yet their roles were often overlooked. In the Black Power Movement, African-American women lead various black nationalist organizations, one of them is the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. They are leading this organization while fighting against the sexism of the male members. African-American women continued to fight for a lot of issues such as gender identity, classism, racism, and sexism. They founded new organizations such as The Third World Women's Alliance and the Combahee River Collective. African-American women also played roles in the Modern Civil Rights Movement where they were the backbone of it from small towns to the national movement. While Cole and Haniff (2007: 25) put it in their research that black women's studies scholar has been facing challenges while working with white women as allies in political struggle, and women's studies as colleagues. Staton (2019: 23) states that

both identities, being black and being a woman, are impossible to separate. She also emphasizes how the intersect of both, being a woman and being black, has created a new identity that is oppressed in two different forms.

When people live together in a society, there is always an organic hierarchical order. The hierarchical order is socially constructed and is determined by the inequality every group faces. This group is divided by race and gender. Lewis (1977: 343) elaborates inequality as something created from a group's inability to access power and resources in a socially arranged hierarchical order, which is usually demonstrated in the exclusion of a group from public life. Rosaldo (1974: 17-42) in Lewis (1977: 341) suggests a model of female inequality consisting of three points. Firstly, men are universally superior to women; second, women are relegated to the domestic sphere while men play a dominant role in their participation in public life; and lastly, contrasting participation of men and women in public life proposes a universal male authority over female and put a higher value in men over women's roles. From the point above, female inequality is inseparable from male/female activity in the public sphere. Because of racism, African-American women naturally fills the position subordinate to white women in society. Thus, African-American women occupy the last tier in socially constructed hierarchical order.

The hierarchical order in society often puts African-American in a subordinate position to the White Americans, due to the history of slavery. In the wider society, slavery coexisted with male dominance. This makes Black men a potential threat to the established order of White superiority. To prevent that, laws

were developed that specifically denied Black men's prerogatives as a normal adult. Hidden punishment such as lynching and sexual exploitation of Black women further intensified Black male powerlessness (Lewis, 1977: 341). This has forced African-Americans to conform to White Americans' customs while denying theirs. Lawrence-Webb, et.al. (2004: 626) states African-Americans define their roles in a different way than traditional gender roles. Where they do not emphasize their masculinity nor femininity. The African-American way of gender role is not commonly known, as they do not get decent representation in popular culture. Representation in popular culture, to be seen as adequate, must include values, culture, and noticeable identifying factors of a group of people represented on screen. A representation can influence the ideology surrounding your body, including your own ideology. This effect suggests that representation can be indicative of the ability to own the display of your own body (Staton, 2019: 13). A failure to portray an adequate representation could lead to misinterpretation, one of misinterpretation could be in a form of stereotypical representation. The stereotypical representation will describe the representation of black characters that align with stereotypical caricatures as described by Bogle and Ferris in Staton (2019: 15). Collins (2000: 69) stated that images and representation are tools “designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life.”

In the television series produced by Yara Shahidi, *Grown-ish*, most of the main characters are African-American. This series starts airing in 2018 on Freeform television network. In the series, there are five representations of African-

Americans, three of whom are female and the other two are male. These characters are accompanied by other three characters, each from different backgrounds and ethnicity. With this in mind, the series is expected to adequately represent African-American in popular culture. Thus, both topics of the study should provide some insight into how the media presents African-American nowadays.

### **1.2 Scope of the Study**

This study will discuss two topics, which are the intrinsic aspect of the TV series *Grown-ish* Season 1 and the representation of African-Americans in the series. To analyze the representation, the writer will focus on African-American women representation and African-American gender roles.

### **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this research are as follows:

1. To identify the intrinsic aspects of the TV series *Grown-ish*, such as characteristics, setting, and conflicts.
2. To analyze how three African American women characters are represented in TV series *Grown-ish*.
3. To describe how gender roles between African American students are played by each female character.

### **1.4 Methods of the Study**

The writer used two methods of study in conducting this research. The methods of study are used to gather information and analyze the data. The first is the method of research and the second is the method of approach.

#### **1.4.1 Method of Research**

In gathering the data, the writer watches the first season of the TV series, *Grown-ish*, that was aired in 2018. This data is used as primary data. For the secondary data, the writer uses library research to gather data from online and offline sources. Library research as explains by Mary W. George “involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point.” (2008: 6). These sources come in books, e-books, articles, journals, previous studies, and other sources related to the series and the study.

#### **1.4.2 Method of Approach**

To analyze the data, the writer uses a sociological method of approach. The writer uses this approach "the scientific study of human society and social interactions. Sociology attempts to understand the forces that operate throughout society—forces that mold individuals, shape their behavior, and, thus, determine social events." (Tischler, 2007: 4). The sociological approach is used to find and elaborate representation of African-American women and to analyze the gender role of African-American characters in the first season of TV series *Grown-ish*.

#### **1.5 Previous Studies**

To ensure that this research has not been done and to fill the gap in the research field on this topic, the writer will provide researches done before this study. All in which concern similar topics with this study. Those are as follows:

The first study written by Torri Allyce Staton in her Dissertation, *Does Representation Really Matter? Black Undergraduate Women's Stories of Identity*,

*Academic Achievement, and (Dis)Connections with Black Female Characters in Popular Culture* observes how the representation of black women in popular culture is affecting them in their everyday lives by having an open-ended interview with university students that fulfill the criteria for her research. This research found that every woman connected to black actresses and black female characters in different types of roles for racial and academic affirmation, and that popular culture has influenced their development in racial and academic identities.

In another study with title *The Impact of 21st Century Television Representation on Women of Color: Colorism Myth or Reality*, Alisha Renae Erves examines the way colorism impacts the representation of young women of color in 21st-century television shows. This study focuses on the effects colorism has on an individual's idea of beauty and self-esteem, and how young women are portrayed. In her study, Erves analyses five television programs (*Black-ish*, *Dear White People*, *Empire*, *Grown-ish*, and *The Charmichael Show*). From this study, it is found that colorism has a direct impact on women of color's self-esteem and how they are perceived. Similar to Erves' research, a study by Denissa Lalitya in the title *The Modern Representation of African-American Woman Based on The Character of Olivia Pope in TV Series' Scandal Season 1*, talks about the lack of display of African-American actresses in representing positive characters of black women in film and television program in the US. It also observes stereotype images that stick to black women, to understand their existence in modern television. In her study, Lalitya found that Olivia Pope, as the main character in the series, brings a positive representation of a black woman as a strong, firm, and brave woman.

The last study performed by Valerie N. Adams-Bass, Keisha L. Bentley-Edwards, and Howard C. Stevenson having the title of *That's Not Me I See on TV...: African American Youth Interpret Media Images of Black Females* which discuss on how African American youth in general, male and female, view images of black women that the media shows every day. This study involves respondents ranging from high school students until the undergraduates.

From earlier researches above, although some studies are observing the same series or using similar topics, no study specifically examines how women characters in the series *Grown-ish* are represented and how African-American characters display their gender role.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The organization of this study consists of the following chapters below:

### **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

This first chapter contains five sub-chapter. Those are the background of the study, research questions, the purpose of study, previous studies, and the organization of the study.

### **CHAPTER II LITERARY REVIEW**

This chapter comprises two parts: a synopsis of the series and the biography of the writer of the series used in this study.

### **CHAPTER III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter covers the theoretical review to explain the narrative and cinematic elements of the series in chapter four.

**CHAPTER IV      DISCUSSION**

This chapter is the main chapter in this writing since it contains the discussion on data from the series. Narrative elements and cinematic elements are analyzed using theories suitable for the topic.

**CHAPTER V      CONCLUSION**

This last chapter entails the overall summary of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERARY REVIEW**

Emerson (2002: 116) stated we need to closely analyze the role that popular culture has in youngsters' lives that elaborate the significance of mass media as a contributor to the sociological theory in which it stands as a social institution, and how it portrays and reproduce ideologies of race, class, and gender within it.

#### **2.1 Synopsis**

The series *Grown-ish* focus on Zoey Johnsons' college life (acted by Yara Shahidi) as an extension of the series *Black-ish*. In her college life, Zoey has several close friends. They are Luca Hall (acted by Luka Sabbat) who is a mixed-race male of African-American and Caucasian-American parents, Aaron Jackson (acted by Trevor Jackson) who is an African-American male senior, Nomi Segal (acted by Emily Arlook), a Jewish-American female who has not come out to her family for being bisexual, Ana Torres (acted by Francia Raisa), a conservative Cuban-Dominican descent and Zoey's roommate, Vivek Shah (acted by Jordan Buhat) an Indian-American engineering student who deals drug at school to support his materialistic lifestyle, and Jazz and Sky Foster (acted by Chloe and Halle Bailey, respectively), twin athletes of African-American parents.

In the first episode, all main characters gather in the same night class except for Ana. All students in their class were asked to write down their reason for taking the night class. All of the main characters tell the real reason for taking the night

class but they decided to put drones as their excuse because their truth is too risky to put out. In this first episode, Zoey and Ana were not in good terms because Zoey left Ana when she drank too much and vomited at a party. Later in the episode, Zoey's original roommate moved out of their room, and Ana becomes Zoey's new roommate. Further, into the series, Zoey and Ana finally resolve their issue. They tell each other secrets and stories that bring them closer. After this, Ana starts hanging out with the other main characters.

During her fight with Ana, Zoey is struggling with how to cope with her new college routine. Everyone around her seems to have found their way of managing schoolwork, relationships, and party life. As to how Luca burns weed to keep his mind chill over the stress, how Vivek and Nomi take "study pill" to help them tackle school works, and how Ana chooses to not join any party to have enough sleep. Zoey was unable to choose her way. She tells herself that smoking weed and taking pills are not her thing, but her friends were not buying it. Vivek then gave Zoey some study pills to try. This leads her to new romantic relationships with both Aaron and Luca.

Since the first time Zoey see Aaron, she knew she has a crush on him. Aaron is a senior activist student who self-proclaimed himself as a "woke" person. Zoey tries to lure Aaron into liking her by bumping to him at some places, she knows he is going to be there by stalking. Then, things escalate when he sent her the first "U Up?" text. While having a relationship with Aaron, Zoey also hangs out with Luca from time to time. They share similar interests in fashion, music, and lifestyle. Zoey can go out with both of them because they despise each other, and although they

take the same class, they barely talk. Everything is going well with Zoey having a relationship with both Aaron and Luca until she accidentally taking both of their calls at the same time. They both argue and are in disbelief of her action, then left her.

After breaking up with both of them, Zoey finds new love with basketball athlete student, Cash Mooney (acted by Da' Vinchi). Everything is going well with both of them, but Zoey becomes distant from her friends. She was busy with Cash that her friends feel left out. This time, Nomi had trouble with her sexuality for dating a presumably straight guy, Big Dave (acted by Barrett Carnahan). Nomi later finds out Big Dave is bisexual, and she cannot get over the image of her boyfriend being with another guy. Nomi has tried several times to talk to Zoey about her problem, but she is never available. Nomi then tells her problem to Ana who is available at that time. During Nomi's problem, Zoey faces her problem of getting proposed on national television, without her consent. Cash told the sports newscaster that he will not go pro without Zoey by his side, implying that Zoey will follow wherever he goes. This sparks a lot of confusion in Zoey. Her mother, Bow Johnson (acted by Tracee Ellis Ross) comes to her dorm because she has been unreachable, and Bow started questioning her daughter about what happened with Cash. This put more pressure on Zoey, and she then snapped to her friends during Vivek's birthday party. After coming clean to Cash that she will not give up her future to follow him to the pro league, the pair split up. The break up was anything but easy for Zoey, she spent days and even weeks couped up in her room, not changing her clothes, taking a shower nor washing her hair.

In the next episode, Zoey got accepted to an internship at Teen Vogue, together with Luca. This episode highlights how society is addicted to social media and how it could ruin your career and even your life when you do not use it wisely. In short, after accidentally posting a selfie with a confidential project of Teen Vogue, she got replaced with Luca and her career in Teen Vogue is no longer safe. Ana and Nomi both got suspended and kicked off of social media for spreading hate words, and Aaron accidentally clicks on spam accounts and is now auto-tweeting on controversial topics.

After clearing out and taking responsibility for their activities online, another problem arises. This time, with drugs. Vivek has been dealing drugs since the start of the semester, and tonight the major drug dealer on the campus was shot dead. Since then, other dealers have been laying low and stopped dealing, except Vivek. He monopolized the whole campus, making him an A-lister. He hung out with the richest kids on campus. Just minutes from not feeling like the poor kid, Vivek got jumped by some other students, and Zoey helped him out of the mess. She lied to the police and Vivek's parents.

The following episode focuses on a list of sexual hierarchy. Jazz and Sky argue how black women are at the bottom of the list, while everyone else questions it. They give facts from popular culture and what image that sends out to the public. In this episode, people start talking about their race and stereotypes. While tackling the subject of race, Ana starts bringing her political views on the table. On the day Hawkins Hall is going on a protest for defending their right as a safe place, Ana and Aaron got into argument about Ana's political views. She said her people are being

oppressed, and Aaron, Nomi, Sky, and Jazz disagree, telling her that conservatives women are safe everywhere they go. This problem split the group, and Ana had her own protest going on the same day as Hawkins. The supposedly peaceful protest turns violent when Ana started throwing hands at Aaron, and this causes the Dean to remove all safe places on campus. After pushing her friends to talk things out, Zoey tried to convince the Dean to permit all the safe places. She shows him that everyone could co-exist together in peace and harmony.

On two last episodes of the series, Zoey is back getting caught on a love triangle with Luca and Aaron. The girls are telling her not to ask them in person and to just give them hints and asks them subtly. Things got messier when on the prom night, both guys confess their feelings to her. Then, when Zoey was going to bed, Cash comes knocking at her door, asking for a second chance. Now, Zoey is caught up between three guys, and she has no idea whom to choose. The next day, each guy talks to her friends, Luca to Nomi, Aaron to Ana, and Cash to Sky and Jazz. Each of them convinced her friends and make things even more complicated. The girls put Zoey on spot, asking her to choose one of them using the drinking game 'fuck-marry-kill' to ease things out. As the discussion gets crazier, Zoey removes herself and walked around the campus to think. By the end of the night, she talked to Cash, the first love she decided to let go. She talked to Aaron, someone who challenges her, and she is going to hold on to their friendship. Then proceed visiting Luca's room, and stayed the night

## 2.2 Biography of the Writer

Kenya Barris is a television producer and screenwriter. He was born on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1974 in Inglewood, California, USA. Barris started his career from the bottom of the ladder, pulling himself out of poverty. Until today, Barris has produced sixteen entertainment production and has contributed his writing skill to 24 different projects. From all his hard work, Kanye Barris has collected his net worth to \$75 million. He is also a graduate of Clark Atlanta University. Some of his notable works are television series Black-ish and #BlackAF, also a movie with title Girls Trip. Barris is also a co-creator of one of the most well-known modeling competition, America's Next Top Model.

[\(https://peoplepill.com/people/kenya-barris/\)](https://peoplepill.com/people/kenya-barris/)

[\(https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1244069/\)](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1244069/)

[\(https://people.com/tv/blackish-creator-writer-kenya-barris-life-story-interview/\)](https://people.com/tv/blackish-creator-writer-kenya-barris-life-story-interview/)

## CHAPTER III

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Narrative Element

##### 3.1.1 Intrinsic Aspects

Fulton (2005: 226) states narrative is positioned to give structure to information and events that already have meanings to their audience. It can be found in all-new stories as a basic structuring principle. Just as Fulton emphasizes the importance of narrative in a story, Abrams (1999: 173) mentioned parts of narrative elements that are a functioning part of forming a story. Abrams (1999: 173) mentioned five narrative elements, such as theme, setting, character, dialog, and conflict.

##### 3.1.1.1 Theme

According to Abrams (1999: 170) in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 7<sup>th</sup> Edition:

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with "motif," but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader.

##### 3.1.1.2 Character

Kennedy and Gioia (2007: 74) elaborate on character as presumably an imagined person who inhabits a story. Human personalities that become familiar to

us. Characters of a story do not have to be human, but they always act and think like humans to reach the audience.

#### **3.1.1.3 Setting**

The physical environment of a story, where it took place, the time it happens, the weather condition when it happens, and social background that explains the behavior of social life in the story are several elements that build setting. All of these elements, especially the latter, usually derive from real-life events that inspire the story. As Welles and Warren (1956: 131) explain the social setting has a connection with the system of social life which contains many problems in complex scopes. It consists of habits, costumes, religion, ideology, and the way of thinking.

#### **3.1.1.4 Dialogue**

Abrams (1999: 32) describes dialogue as distinctive ways of how a character as a person in a dramatic or narrative work expresses themselves. Which contains particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the person said. As a character is interpreted by the reader on how they are represented.

#### **3.1.1.5 Conflict**

Conflict is the struggle growing out of the interplay of two opposing forces in a plot that creates a tenseness that must be ended. Conflict also determines how a plot moves between individual possible worlds and between the possible worlds and textual actual world. Conflict can be divided into two types, which are internal conflict and external conflict. Internal conflict as stated by Mayer (1990: 46) is a

moral or psychological issue the protagonist has within them, that most times accompany external conflict. Whereas, Mayer (1990: 46) elaborates external conflict happens when one or several characters are in a contradictory situation between them and others, such as other characters, society, nature, or all of those.

### **3.1.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

#### **3.1.2.1 Controlling Images of African American Women**

Collins (2000: 5) in her book *Black Feminist Thought* stated,

Controlling images applied to black women that originated during the slave era attest to the ideological dimension of US black women's oppression. Ideology refers to the body of ideas reflecting the interest of a group of people. Within US culture, racist, and sexist ideologies permeate the social structure to such a degree that they become hegemonic, that has seen as natural, normal, and inevitable.

Collins (2000: 5) further elaborates her thought suggesting that people in the US assume African-American women to own certain qualities to justify oppression. Controlling images such as mammies, jezebels, and breeder women of slavery to the smiling aunt jemimas on pancake mix boxes, pervasive black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture are negative stereotypes applied to African-American women. These stereotypes are fundamental to black women's oppression.

In research conducted by Waley-Jean, the finding on how European-American students view African-American women is close in describing the negative stereotypes above. The participants of this research "*endorsed the belief that African American women were loud, talkative, aggressive, antagonistic, unmannerly, argumentative, and straightforward*" (Waley-Jean, 2009: 72). They

also viewed African American women to hold more negative traits than general American women.

In this paper, the writer uses three common negative stereotypes clinging on African-American women in popular culture. According to Adam-Bass, et al. (2014: 80) these stereotypes are mammy-the asexual, happy, obese, dark-black mother figure; jezebel-the shameless, over sexual, schemer; and sapphire-the rude, loud, and overbearing emasculator. These images are elaborated to grasp more representation in recent popular culture.

### **1. The Mammy**

As the oldest stereotypes, this image of a faithful, obedient, and domestic servant does not appear in recent popular culture as much since slavery ended long ago. This does not mean the qualities a mammy possesses do not appear in recent popular culture. The traits of a mammy might be portrayed in other ways from a character in popular culture nowadays.

As Windsor, Dunlap, and Golub (2012: 292) state in their research,

today, the mammy image persists as the overweight, happy, lazy, and stupid African-American woman who is not capable of performing well in meaningful employment positions.

### **2. The Sapphire**

The next negative stereotype attaches to African-American women is the sapphire or the matriarch. This character possesses traits that could be described as a failed mammy, such as hostile, nagging, aggressive, and unfeminine. Often, the

sapphire has a primary goal to castigate her African American husband. She also portrayed as a woman who "*emasculated her African American male partner, who left or refused to marry her, thus leaving her as well as his children to flounder in poverty*" (Waley-Jean, 2009: 71).

### **3. The Jezebel**

The last negative stereotype that will be used in this paper is the jezebel, or the whore, or the crack whore. This character is portrayed as a sexually promiscuous, immoral person that cannot control her lust for her oppressor. The jezebel stereotype was commonly used to justify "*the horrific and sickening sexual terrorism that African American women suffered from slaveholders, their sons, male relatives, and overseers*" (Waley-Jean, 2009: 70). Although this image is not commonly used in recent popular culture to justify the sin of African American oppressors anymore, the traits of jezebel could still be seen presented in African-American characters. This character in recent popular culture usually portrays African American women as insatiable sex freaks.

#### **3.1.2.2 African-American Gender Role**

Common gender role has been putting men largely involved in economic support of a family and women as emotional support. In acting on her role, women must provide love, emotional support, and companionship, and her "*primary obligation to her children and spouse is to provide a well-kept home, emotional*

*support, and nurturance*” (Simon, 1995: 186). Yet, this is not the case for African-American. As Burgess (1994: 393) elaborates in her research,

African women came to the US primarily as workers; familial and spousal roles for African American women were redeveloped to accommodate the slave owner... African American women are expected to work and maintain families.... The secondary roles did not resemble the traditional, established nuclear family.

Further, Burgess (1994: 395) explains the adaptation African-American has to make in their gender role to fulfill their duty as slaves. Which included,

(a) the development of multiple roles for males and females, (b) the blurring of what appears to have been socially distinct roles in African society, (c) a variation of roles parallel to mainstream society for assimilative purposes, or effective, (d) continued use of real and adoptive kin networks to survive if one or both parents were sold.

Burgess (1994: 397) also elaborates on how African men and women have neutrality as a significant part of their gender roles. Unlike the common European gender role, African-American women and their role development do not place them at home. Yet, the inherent prejudices and unawareness have encouraged one standard to be adopted for family and gender-specific behavior. This results in a narrow, unidimensional perspective on the role of women and men in society.

Nevertheless, the definitions that are present in society have limited the role gender is accepted to take. This also allowed labels to be attached to those who do not have a choice in performing them as a matter of survival and expectation. Burgess (1994: 399) also suggests that recent terminology reflects role overload, role conflict, and quality time hardly presents a closer to reality picture than older research presented by scholars who may have taken a less than objective approach

in the effort of their research. Burgess also describes how African-American is defined by society,

as African American men and women, the expectation was more clearly defined by society. To not work outside the home was considered deviant for African American women. The willingness of society to accept the role of African American women as workers, mothers, and spouses somehow decreased in value when identical roles performed by other women were not viewed similarly. (Burgess, 1994: 400)

### 3.2 Cinematic Elements

#### 3.2.1 Camera Distance

According to Nelmes (2012: 93), camera distance (shot) is a range of shots that show apparent distance from the camera to the object; it is easily defined following the framing of the human form. Furthermore, Nelmes elaborates on six types of shots, which are as follows:



Picture 1. Camera Distance  
(from The 'Grammar' of Television and Film)

#### 1. Extreme Close-up

Extreme close-up is used to shoot the smallest part of the human body such as eyes, lips, ear, nose (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 191).

## **2. Close-up**

According to Bordwell & Thompson (2008: 191), a close-up is a shot that only shows one part of the object such as head, hands, feet, small objects; to emphasize the detail of expression and gesture significantly.

## **3. Medium shot**

Medium shot according to Bordwell & Thompson (2008: 191) is used to capture the human figure from the waist up, to show the gesture and expression of the object more visible. This shot is commonly used to show the characters speaking to each other.

## **4. Medium-long shot**

A medium-long shot is when the camera shot the human figure from knees up (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 191). This shot does not show a detailed part of the object.

## **5. Long shot**

According to Bordwell & Thompson (2008: 191), a long shot is when the object is noticeable but the background is still dominant. It is used to present and focus the objects with the background of the setting.

## **6. Extreme long shot**

An extreme long shot is when objects are shot very far from the camera, making the objects look little. Bordwell & Thompson (2008: 191) elaborate this as framing for landscapes, bird's eye view of cities, and other vistas.

### **3.2.2 Mise-en-scene**

In the original French, *mise-en-scene* (pronounce Meez-Ahn-sen) means “putting into the scene,” and it was first applied to the practice of directing plays. Bordwell & Thompson (2008: 112) elaborates that film scholars, extending the term to film direction, use the term to signify to the director's control over what appears in the film that overlaps with the art of the theater: setting, lighting, costumes, and the behavior of the figures. In controlling the mise-en-scene, the director stages the event for the camera.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Narrative Elements**

##### **4.1.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

###### **4.1.1.1 Theme**

The series *Grown-ish* is an American series which portrays the struggle of being young adults in a world that already put huge expectations on adolescent life. Their struggle in the modern world comes from a lot of different sources. The advanced technology of today gets them in trouble for the smallest mistakes, and the rules of young adulthood get them clueless in overcoming difficult times.

This series also brings up the theme of racial identity since the main characters are from several different ethnic groups. In the racial identity theme, they also comment about classes in society, like Zoey, the protagonist in the series comes from a wealthy and stable African-American family, while most of the African-American characters do not. These differences had them in a sore spot with each other at times, yet they focus on the important things and merge their differences to keep their friendship.

#### 4.1.1.2 Characters

##### 1. Zoey Johnson



Picture 2. Zoey calls her father  
(Episode 1, 00:01:18)



Picture 3. Zoey gets verified  
(Episode 6, 00:07:06)

Zoey is an African American female student and the main character whose story narrates the series. She is the daughter of a successful and high-class African American couple, Andre and Rainbow Johnson. With the wealth, her parents give to her and her siblings, Zoey has been acquainted with privileged life since childhood. She started as a selfish, shallow, narcissist but gradually improve herself. Zoey had to face a lot of challenges that push her out of her comfort zone. Accompany by her new friends, Zoey go through her first journey to adulthood where she is able to mature herself.

##### 2. Luka Jae Hall



Picture 4. Luka smoking weed  
(Episode 1, 00:13:25)



Picture 5. Luka talks to Zoey  
(Episode 2,00:13:04)

Luka is one of two African American male student characters that appear in the series. He is a fashionista that gives off a relaxed, laid-back attitude and out-of-the-box ideas. Luka is also one of Zoey's love interest, putting him in a love quarrel with Aaron and Cash. In confronting his competition on chasing Zoey, Luka often argues with Aaron, as they also take the same night class together. Most of the time, Luka will voice his opinion in a straight forward way and is not scared to put other people in an awkward or uncomfortable situation.

### 3. Aaron Jackson



Picture 6. Aaron showing off his buttons  
(Episode 1, 00:06:55)



Picture 7. Aaron searching for jobs  
(Episode 4, 00:20:44)

He is the only sophomore taking the same night class as the other characters, except Anna. Aaron is an African American male student who actively promotes and participates in campaigns and protests to spread awareness of things related to equality. He is also one of Zoey's love interest. Aaron is depicted as someone with strong beliefs

#### 4. Nomi Segal



Picture 8. Nomi cursing  
(Episode 1, 00:05:49)



Picture 9. Nomi on a date  
(Episode 5, 00:08:26)

Nomi is a progressive Jewish American female student who loves Rottweilers and moshing at Swedish metal band concerts. She seems aggressive and cold-hearted at first but is truly a nice and compassionate person. As she identifies herself as bi, Nomi has an interest in sexualities and at times vocally promotes LGBTQ+s equality. Although she is a liberated person outside, at home, she is still a closeted bi. Nomi is afraid of being seen differently by her family for not being straight.

#### 5. Analisa Patricia Torres



Picture 10. Ana's family  
(Episode 1, 00:14:10)



Picture 11. Ana zoning out  
(Episode 5, 00:03:51)

Analisa Torres is a Latina of Cuban descent who lives in Miami. She is a devout catholic and republican who is secretly in love with Obama. Ana is also Zoey's roommate in the series. Often, Ana is shown as a confident and proud

Latina, but she is also naïve and is easily distracted. Once, Ana got into an argument with Aaron over her political views as a conservative republican. This disagreement got messy when their peaceful protest for safe spaces become physical.

## 6. Vivek Shah



Picture 12. Vivek's achievement  
(Episode 1, 00:12:04)



Picture 13. Vivek dealing drugs  
(Episode 1, 00:11:55)

He is a male student of Asian descent of Gujarati Indian who refers to himself as V-Dig or V-Digital. He was a brilliant student and has received a National merit scholarship. Despite his background of being born to a devout Hindu family, Vivek has a dream to follow the footsteps of his hero, Drake. Vivek comes from a poor family, and his dad is a cab driver. Since his family cannot provide him the life he wanted, Vivek started dealing drugs to support his lifestyle. This got Vivek in a bad place after being reckless for continue dealing after one of the biggest dealers in campus got shot.

## 7. Jazlyn Foster



Picture 14. Jazz and sky at class  
(Episode 1, 00:06:26)



Picture 15. Jazz telling her relationship status  
(Episode 12, 00:03:55)

Jazlyn or often called Jazz is the older twin of Sky. She is one of Cal U's track recruit. Jazz is sharing her room dorm with her twin sister in the same building as Zoey and Ana. In the series, Jazz is often sharing her honest thought in a brutal and straight forward manner. She is a short-tempered and bold person. Although being an athlete, Jazz does not have wealth to her. This pushes her and her sister to find a way to earn more money, which then leads them to sell their sponsor's merchandise. But, their small hustle comes to an end when the Dean of student finds out and tells them that their business might jeopardize the university's sponsorship with a certain brand.

## 8. Skyler Foster



Picture 16. The twins greet Dean Parker  
(Episode 1, 00:12:45)



Picture 17. Sky laughs at Jazz's story  
(Episode 10, 00:17:47)

Sky is the younger sister of Jazz, who is also a college athlete. They both are university track recruits. Opposite to Jazz, Sky does not put herself on the spot as much. She seems calmer and more content than her sister. Despite her calm upbringing, Sky has a direct approach to confronting her problem and is not afraid to voice her opinion and needs when needed. She also has a strong will and belief in herself and her choices.

#### 4.1.1.3 Setting

Setting in the first season of *Grown-ish* mostly take place around campus. The scene is taken a lot at the dorm especially Ana and Zoey's room, where the girls often hang there. They also spend a lot of time at the Hawkins Hall, where Aaron and Luka stays. Then, Prof. Telphy's night class, as most of them are taking the night class. The other two places in the series are the campus common area, and Titanium, which is the campus bar. The series time setting is today's modern society as shows by all the high-tech gadgets the characters use in their daily life.



Picture 18. The gang hangs out at Titanium (Episode 4, 00:09:01)



Picture 19. The girls walking through campus (Episode 3, 00:20:26)



Picture 20. The gang discuss on going to a party  
(Episode 7, 00:19:47)



Picture 21. The night class  
(Episode 1, 00:05:40)



Picture 22. The girls hanging out  
(Episode 4, 00:03:07)

#### 4.1.1.4 Dialogue

The following is an example of dialogue in the series where several people are included. In this example, four people are conversing while there are six people in the room where this conversation takes place. The four people talking are Zoey, Nomi, Jazz, and Sky. In this dialogue, they are talking about Zoey's relationship with Aaron, who has been texting her only at night.

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| Zoey | : Okay, guys, I need your help. Aaron sent me a...<br>"U up?" text.  |
| Jazz | : Unh-unh, I know she ain't dragged us out of our<br>rooms for that. |
| Sky  | : No, 'cause that would be crazy. And she is not a<br>crazy person   |
| Jazz | : But yet, here we are.  |

Zoey : Look, I'm sorry I pulled you two away from "Basketball Wives."

Jazz : We were watching "Big Bang Theory," you racist [Bleep].

Zoey : Oh

Jazz : You feel good about yourself?

Zoey : Not really. Look, this is the fourth "U up?" he sent me this week, and I don't know. I'm just a little concerned. Am I becoming his "U up?" bitch?

Nomi : I mean, if you're lucky.

Zoey : I'm being seious.

Nomi : No, so am I. I mean, she's my "U up?" bitch, and it's been... spectacular.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 3, 00:02:29-00:03:05)*

The next example of dialogue is a dialogue that is happening between only two characters in the series. The following is a dialogue between Aaron and Vivek. In this dialogue, they are discussing what a "nudie bank" is and what sexual interaction means with several secret codes in conversation.

Aaron : I'm totally stressing right now, man. Why hasn't she texted me back?

Vivek : Maybe she thought the sex was garbage.

Aaron : No, we didn't smash.

Vivek : You said you "hooked up."

Aaron : No, I said we "messed around."

Vivek : Oh, so you got some top-shelf action.

Aaron : No, if I had done that, I would have said, "We just kicked it." You act like you've been here before, man, please.

Vivek : This is why I don't mess with texting. It leaves things too open for interpretation. This is why I just fire off dong pics.

Aaron : Pics? W... how many pics do you have?

Vivek : Well, depends. Are you talking, like, straight-on? You know, from the side?

Aaron : Dude, why? I just... I feel like there's nothing pretty about, you know, your appendage.

Vivek : Oh, I disagree. With strategic manscaping, solid lighting... your dick'll bring a woman to tears. The good kind. I'm like, laying out the blueprint for how I've put together one of the best nudie banks in the game.

Aaron : Dude, what are you saying to me right now? A "nudie bank" is not a collection of nudes you send to chicks. It's a collection of nudes that chicks send to you.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 3, 00:04:46-00:05:47)*

#### **4.1.1.5 Conflict**

Internal conflict in the first season of the series is between Zoey and herself when she has to decide whether or not she will join Cash on his journey to the professional league. Everyone was shocked when Cash asked Zoey to accompany him throughout his professional career on national television since they are both still new to adulthood. Zoey is getting pressure all around. Her family and friends keep on asking her final decision and judging her for it. Especially since Cash is her first love, Zoey was hesitant leaving him. However, she does not want to give up her dreams and all the hard work she did getting into university. Although there was a moment where she broke up with Cash, eventually, Cash comes back and once again asks her to come with him. In which the choice Zoey has made regarding her love triangle situation becomes the end of the first season.

While the external conflict is Zoey's love triangle between her, Luka, Aaron, and Cash. This conflict becomes the highlight throughout the whole season since Zoey keeps getting involved with either of them. Before she met Cash, Zoey had romantic relationships with both Aaron and Luka at the same time but losing both of them at the same time too. After she met Cash, at first, her romantic relationship was monogamous and she only has to think about her problem with him without any distraction from neither Luka nor Aaron. Further, in the series, Aaron and Luka confess their feelings for her, giving her a big headache to make a decision. In the end, Zoey chooses Luka as her only boyfriend, and they become exclusive after that.

#### **4.1.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

##### **4.1.2.1 Controlling Images of African American Women**

In analyzing this series and finding answers to the second and third points in the purpose of the study, the author will use controlling images of African American Women as elaborated in the third chapter. Three characters identified as African American female students that will be used in studying these images. While the other two non-African American female students' characters will be used in this subchapter as a comparison.

###### **4.1.2.1.1 The Mammy**

The mammy is one of the oldest controlling images that is attached to African American women. This image is used to represent an old black woman who takes care of her master's children. In which case, the master of mammy is always white. In this series, Zoey is shown taking care of her friends for their junior formal

by buying them accessories to go with their outfit. In making sure her friends have the perfect accessories, Zoey put herself in a caregiver position letting her friends appointed her to do the job.



Picture 23. Zoey telling Luka about being appointed stylist (Episode 12, 00:06:05)

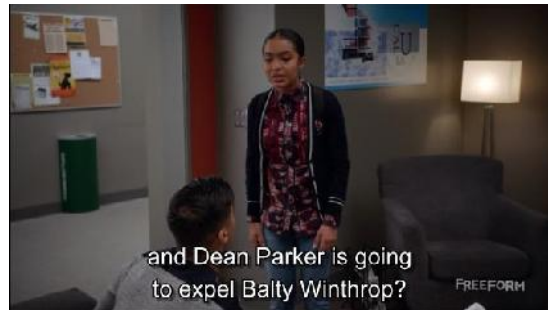
Luka : Who's Nomi?  
Zoey : The girl you sit next to in Professor Telphy's class.  
Luka : If you say so. Why are you getting her a purse?  
Zoey : Oh, I was, uh, appointed stylist by the girls for freshman formal, so eBay... I find the perfect piece for each of them, and then I walk away looking like a hero.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 12, 00:05:56-00:06:12)*

The dialogue above shows the scene where Zoey told Luka that she is helping girls by being their appointed stylist to the formal. By being the stylist, Zoey will be rewarded with a feeling of achievement for taking good care of their wardrobe. Although there is no explanation in the series on who takes care of the budget for purchasing the accessories, there is also no scene showing the girls paying back Zoey for the items. This accentuates how Zoey took the role of the caregiver by not charging the girls for their accessories.

On another occasion, Zoey helped Vivek covering his accident after getting jumped while doing a transaction. Zoey already voices her disagreement on Vivek

dealing cocaine, but he did not take it well and asks Zoey to mind her own business. By doing so, Zoey took the part of being a caregiver to Vivek. Especially when she lied to Vivek's parents, helping him clean up the mess he got into.



Picture 24. Zoey warning Vivek  
(Episode 9, 00:13:28)

- Vivek : You know, Balty calls me his party concierge.
- Zoey : Balty. As in Balty Winthrop. You think anything happens and Dean Parker is going to expel Balty Winthrop? No! No, because his family built this school and you're the brown kid on financial aid who's gonna take the fall. To them, you're disposable.
- Vivek : Zoey, you're being really extra.
- Zoey : No. God, no. I'm being your friend, and those guys are not your friends. I-I grew up around rich assholes like that. I know when someone's being used.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 9, 00:13:20-00:13:46)*

The role of mammy is also repeated in another scene where Zoey has to be the one taking care of her friends' argument. In this event, Zoey has to help Aaron and Ana finding common ground to their opposing argument about safe spaces. While trying to help them, Aaron scolded Zoey for being a shallow, selfish, and ignorant girl. Despite getting scolded, Zoey keeps on trying to fix the problem between the two and pushes her feelings aside for other priorities.

Aaron : Wait, so you want a safe space for Conservatives?

Ana : Yeah.

Aaron : No. Forget everything I just told you. And your slogan should be "Get the hell out of here." Alright?

Ana : ... Wait, so you were fine with me fighting for a Latina safe space, but not for conservatives?

Aaron : Yeah. You don't need a safe space. Your safe space is congress.

Jazz : The White House.

Sky : Every Reddit thread.

Aaron : AM radio stations.

Nomi : Basically any Cracker Barrel

Aaron : ... It's, like, why? Anyway, the point is, everywhere I go in America, I feel like I'm at a NASCAR race. So, I actually need a safe space.

Ana : Well, I'm not feeling very safe right now, because the second I said "conservative" you jumped down my throat!

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 11, 00:06:54-00:07:20)*



Picture 25. Zoey trying to break the argument  
(Episode 11, 00:07:25)



Picture 26. Ana and Aaron got in a fight  
(Episode 11, 00:12:12)



Picture 27. Aaron scolds Zoey  
(Episode 11, 00:16:48)

The other characteristic of the mammy that appear in the series is when Zoey is failing to do her part of being a good student being the equivalent to the mammy portrayal as being incapable of her meaningful employment. This depiction acts in the earlier episode when Zoey is still trying to adapt to her new status as university students while her other friends seem to have found their way of coping mechanisms. This situation got Zoey into a mess of postponing her university tasks and not delivering her best work while she dabbles with parties and boys. This problem is then solved by her taking illegal study pills from Vivek as shown in picture 28. where Zoey just took the pill to work on her paper.



Picture 28. Zoey popped a study pill  
(Episode 2, 00:09:45)



Picture 29. Zoey got removed from assistant  
(Episode 8, 00:17:24)

Elaine : Zoey. What were you thinking?

Zoey : Elaine, I am so sorry. I screwed up big-time, but it was late. I was tired, and we had just finished the preliminary layout, and it looked good...

Elaine : Okay, I'm gonna stop you right there. I asked you not to embarrass me... And that's exactly what you did... That little selfie you posted damaged an invaluable advertiser relationship. And now since you basically scooped us, we're gonna miss out on a major exclusive. You're off my desk. And let's be clear... I'm being very lenient here.

Zoey : Yes, thank you.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 8, 00:17:14-00:17:46)*

Above is the dialogue between Zoey and Elaine, editor-in-chief for Teen Vogue, about Zoey's little selfie accident. This dialogue and picture 29. shows Zoey's problem of not able to perform well in meaningful employment. Zoey accidentally posts an unrevealed collection costing the magazine to lose an invaluable advertiser relationship and major exclusive scoop. Although she has been off social media since started on Teen Vogue as an assistant to editor-in-chief in the magazine, she still messed up after a long day of working on the preliminary layout.

The other trait of the mammy that Zoey own is being faithful to one of her love interest in the series, Cash Mooney, who is a basketball student-athlete. In the sixth episode of the series, Zoey is very occupied with her romantic relationship that she leaves her friends feeling left out and on one point she decided to leave her family and friends to come with Cash to go pro. Although in the end, she did not take that decision because Cash did not want to burden Zoey with the life-changing decision yet. Her choice to give everything up for him is still an act only a faithful person could take. The following is Zoey and Cash's dialogue on them going together.

Zoey	: Is that what you want? For me to let you off the hook?
Cash	: I just want things to be easy.
Zoey	: Yeah, and they can be easy if you're 100% sure of what you want. You're 100% sure, yeah?... Oh, my God. You gotta be kidding me.
Cash	: Look, Zo, I love you. You know that. And if this was a year from now and I knew where I was and

what my life was like there, I'd be able to give you a heads-up about what you're stepping into.

Zoey : And why the hell didn't you think of that before you asked me to go with you on national television?!

Cash : Because I meant it!

Zoey : Do you still?

Cash : Yes, but...

Zoey : No! No buts, because "but" isn't good enough for a huge, life-changing decision! I was about to leave my family and my home!

Cash : I know. I know and I'm sorry. I'm just as confused as you are. This whole thing is new to me and... I-I don't know what to expect. And I...

Zoey : Neither do I, but I was willing to take the chance.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 6, 00:17:48-00:18:44)*

#### **4.1.2.1.2 The Sapphire**

The sapphire is as mentioned in the previous chapter, is commonly described as a failed mammy. She is a mean, hateful, and bitter woman who is having a hard time sympathizing with other people. Sapphire will often complain and irritates others by criticizing and scolding them especially their male African American counterparts. In the series, these traits of sapphire could be seen since the first episode. The first episode highlights Zoey's first friendship with Ana and how she failed her in their first university party together.

Zoey and Ana went to the party together and has a lot of fun. Then, the fun stopped when Ana vomit in the kiddie pool, and Zoey was too embarrassed to help her out of the pool. Zoey left the party with some of her senior friends she knew from high school. This act she did reflect the failed mammy traits, where she did not take care of her friend when she needed to. As seen in picture 30., Ana was holding out her hand as a gesture looking for help, and in picture 31. shows Zoey left with her friends, leaving Ana on her own at the party.



Picture 30. Ana asking Zoey for help  
(Episode 1, 00:15:54)



Picture 31. Zoey leaving Ana at a party  
(Episode 1, 00:16:00)

The twins, Jazz, and Sky also portray traits of a sapphire where they fight a lot and often being mean to each other. They can be seen being bitter and hateful over trivial stuff and complain a lot in several episodes. Jazz is often saying aggressively mean words to others. Sky also acts in emasculating a male African American student, Doug, when she confronts him about being with white girls. As seen in the pictures below



Picture 32. The twins argue on choosing classes (Episode 1, 00:12:52)



Picture 33. Jazz got defensive (Episode 4, 00:03:49)



Picture 34. Jazz, Sky, and Ana scolds Zoey (Episode 5, 00:17:34)

In picture 32. Jazz and Sky are seen arguing about not wanting to be in the same class together. While in picture 33. Jazz got aggressive and called Zoey a bitch, and in picture 34. Jazz, Sky, and Ana scolds Zoey for being too busy with Cash. In the tenth episode, Jazz and Sky complaints about the slow semester they are having. Jazz and Sky explain to their friends how there is a list of who gets more attention on the dating game.

- Sky : You get it now, right? The list doesn't lie.
- Ana : I didn't put myself on the list though.
- Jazz : No, but your hips, your lips, and your ass did. Everybody's always checking for the girl who looks black, but no one wants the girl who actually is.
- Sky : Which is why everyone's suddenly getting lip injections and ass shots
- Jazz : And wearing cornrows and rockin' Timbs.

Nomi : Yeah, but do you know why it's like this? Have you ever asked one of these guys?

Sky : No. the fact that we would even have to ask is crazy. It makes it seem like we're the problem.

After explaining how the list works and how people are classified in it. Jazz complain to a waiter about her drink tasting weird and she would like him to change her drink for a new one. This conversation does not end well since her friends accuse her as being hard to please and assume her slow semester might be because of her attitude.



Picture 35. Sky getting annoyed (Episode 10, 00:10:18)



Picture 36. Sky confronts Doug (Episode 10, 00:16:07)

Jazz : Am I crazy for sending the drink back?

Ana : You often send your drink back

Jazz : So, what, am I not supposed to get what I paid for?

Nomi : Okay, look, I'm just gonna say it. We're all friends, right? We can be honest with each other. Do you think this might have something to do with the fact that black guys are...

Sky : ... You're about to insinuate that this is why black guys aren't checkin' for us, aren't you?

Jazz : See, normally I would call you a bitch right now, but since you're questioning my attitude, I will hold it.

Sky : And honestly, Nomi, no one returns more drinks than you.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 10, 00:09:52-00:10:31)*

After the whole argument about sending drinks back, Sky confronts Doug for only checking white girls on campus. Sky got upset by finding her sister, Jazz, talking to a white guy and she starts laying out all the trouble Jazz will have to go through if she decided to be with him. Jazz got angry and left Sky in the bar, while she went out with the guy. Sky then walks to Doug and asks him why he is always seen with white girls around campus.

Sky : Can I ask you a question?

Doug : Um, okay?

Sky : What's up with you and white girls?

Doug : You serious?

Sky : Yeah. I've seen you around campus, and all I ever see you is with white girls. I wanna know why.

Doug : Okay. Because I can?

Sky : Wow.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 10, 00:15:54-00:16:16)*

#### **4.1.2.1.3 The Jezebel**

The controlling image of Jezebel is described as an immoral woman who has several sexual partners and is an insatiable sex freak. This description does not appear as straight forward as it can be in the series. All African American women in the series show some traits to this image in a subtle way. Zoey dating two guys at the same time, Luka and Aaron. Although she did not perform sex with either of them while dating, her action on messing around with two guys could still be in the same category as being sexually promiscuous for having two partners. As shown in picture 38. Zoey is having face time with Aaron on her phone when Luka called her

skype on her laptop. She accidentally picks up Luka’s skype call and he and Aaron got into an argument. Then, they both hang up on her and Zoey ended up being single.



Picture 37. Ana and Jazz discuss third hookup (Episode 3, 00:06:16)



Picture 38. Zoey calling Luka and Aaron (Episode 3, 00:18:36)

In another scene, in picture 37., Jazz is telling her friends that she had a sexual encounter they refer to as third base whilst being in the fifth grade. Whereas Ana did not take third base as how Jazz describes it. This assumes that Jazz, as an African American woman has greater sexual needs and shows them much earlier in life than Ana, a Hispanic woman. Below is the dialogue Ana and Jazz had discussing the definition of a third hookup.

Ana : What are you saying right now?!

Jazz : What I’m saying is that when it gets to that point, anything goes.

Ana : No! A third hookup means top stuff only... shirt off, bra on.

Jazz : Maybe in fifth grade.

Sky : Wait, fifth grade?

Jazz : Yeah, remember little Rico? Mm-hmm

(*Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 13, 00:06:05-00:06:17*)

The other event where the twins show their needs for sexual partners is how they complain about having a slow semester. While Ana, who is Hispanic, was never shown having any sexual relationship during the whole first season, and seem to have no problem with it. This emphasizes African American women's stereotype as an insatiable sex freaks for wanting to express their lust more often than their peers.

Jazz : Okay, for real, is there something in the water around here? Was there some event, some movie, some Drake song that said black guys should stop dating black girls? ...I'm just starting to think this shit is a problem

Sky : ...Facts. In high school, dudes were always checkin' for us.

Vivek : Yeah, but didn't you go to like South Central High? I'm just saying that we're at a primarily white institution. There's a much smaller pool of black guys here.

Jazz : Yeah, and some of the pool are gay, most of the athletes like white girls, and we're left with very few options.

Sky : Who don't seem to be checkin' for us... But why do I have to open up? Why should we have to change what we want? I like what I like.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 10, 00:01:37-00:03:05)*

#### **4.1.2.2 African-American Gender Role**

The African American gender role has some differences to the traditional gender role where the mother used to stay at home and care for the children while the father went to work and support the family's economy. Although there has been some shift in modern-day gender roles, African American gender roles had shifted

long before. Since African Americans went to the United States to work, both males and females, this remains embedded in African American culture. Both genders might also deal with multiple roles causing them to have more neutrality in their roles. However, there are still some roles that are parallel to mainstream society to achieve assimilation in African American households.

There are some examples of how African American women in the series take on double roles in their daily lives. One of the evidences is Zoey's mother, Rainbow, who works as a doctor but still maintains her role as a caregiver to her children. While Zoey's father only called to check up on her once during the whole season.



Picture 39. Bow waiting Zoey in her dorm room (Episode 6, 00:11:05)



Picture 40. Bow telling Zoey to not give up on her dreams for Cash (Episode 6, 00:13:43)

In picture 39, Rainbow, Zoey's mother, is seen sitting on a chair inside Zoey's dorm. Bow went to Zoey's dorm to check up on her and take care of her children after Cash implicitly proposes Zoey on national television. While in picture 40, Bow is telling Zoey how she has such high hopes for her and how she had worked so hard on raising her whilst working as a doctor.

Another double role taken by an African American female character is when Zoey decided to tutor Cash. By taking the tutoring job, Zoey also gives Cash emotional support which is usually acted by a mother. In other words, Zoey is working while also being a mother. As seen in picture 41. Where Zoey and Cash are on their tutoring hour, yet Cash is telling Zoey his story, which is not a part of tutoring.



Picture 41. Zoey tutoring Cash  
(Episode 4, 00:05:51)



Picture 42. Aaron asks Zoey to help  
(Episode 2, 00:16:50)

On another occasion, a role that is parallel to the mainstream society where a woman is used to tend houses and will do the domestic work reflects on one of Hawkin's house party. In picture 42. Aaron asks Zoey to help him distribute the party cup because he has something else to do. Without Zoey's agreement, Aaron left her with the cup assuming she will do it willfully. Below is the dialogue taking place at the scene in picture 42.

Zoey : You know, Aaron, I know the past couple weeks have been hectic, but I'm really happy that...

Aaron : Whoa, this party's getting crazy. Um, would you do me a favor and pass out cups?

Zoey : Wait, but I'm wondering...

Aaron : Thank you so much.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 2, 00:16:40-00:16:50)*

The other point that appears on the series is how Jazz and Sky as female athletes have multiple roles just as Zoey and her mother have double roles. As female athletes, Jazz and Sky has to maintain their professionalism by practicing according to their schedule which takes most of their day. In addition to that, because they are college athletes, they also have to do well in school to act on their sole as a student. In doing so, they have differences with a male college athlete, in this case, Cash Mooney. Cash is also a college athlete, yet, to cope with school work, he gets a private tutor appointed by the Dean of the Student, while Jazz and Sky were never appointed one. On top of having two roles to maintain already, the twins have one other role, that is being a role model. In which they have to maintain a good image to them. As to how their father put it, no one wants a ratchet-ass girl on the front of the cereal box.



Picture 43. The twins explain the need to maintain good image (Episode 1, 00:18:05)



Picture 44. Female athletes getting judge in a lot of aspects (Episode 1, 00:06:45)

The following dialogue takes place when the gang is talking about female athletes and how they should take care of a lot of stuff. Jazz and Sky being young African American athletes, have such a big burden on their shoulders to succeed not just for themselves but also for their community. Since if they fail, their whole community will also get judged for failing to present successful athletes.

Zoey : Despite their Simi Valley accent, the twins from Tyler Perry's "The Shining" were actually from the hood. They were also Cal U's hottest track recruits, which meant there were judged about everything, just like the young, black, female athletes who came before them were scrutinized about their speed, their bodies, even their edges.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 1, 00:06:26-00:06:45)*

Zoey : What do you mean, "Why?" because people's opinions matter.

Aaron : Yeah, but why?

Zoey : Well, I mean, bec... these don't feel like questions any logical human has to answer.

Sky : Caring what people think is me and Jazz's whole life. It's why we live this fake-ass front.

Jazz : Yeah, if we don't make it, we end up back in the hood, jerking off some guy who sells incense and tube socks behind the donut shop.

*(Grown-ish Season 1 Episode 1, 00:17:50-00:18:08)*

In maintaining a good image, Jazz and Sky have their mindset on traditional roles for women, which is calm, sweet, friendly, and feminine. This also reflects on the series every time other female characters are having difficulty in their romantic relationship, especially Zoey's. Jazz and Sky's role in holding on to a good female image is to conform to mainstream society by hiding their real selves.

## 4.2 Cinematic Elements

### 4.2.1 Camera Distance

#### 4.2.1.1 Extreme Close-up



Picture 45. Zoey's eye  
(Episode 1, 00:01:28)



Picture 46. Aaron's ducktail  
(Episode 1, 00:07:16)

In both picture 45 and picture 46, the camera used an extreme close-up to emphasize certain things. On the left, picture 45, it emphasizes movement from one part of the face. In this instance, it shows Zoey's eye-opening up from a sleep, which symbolizes her growing up. While the picture on the right, picture 46, it focuses on one part of the body. This picture shows Aaron's ducktail which confuses Zoey as how he keeps the ducktail despite it being one of the hardest things to pull off, fashion-wise.

#### 4.2.1.2 Close-up



Picture 47. Zoey judging Prof. Telphy  
(Episode 1, 00:04:20)



Picture 48. Aaron saying freshmen  
(Episode 2, 00:07:09)

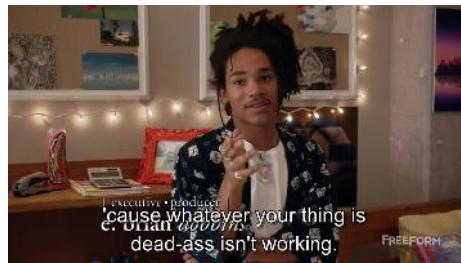
For the close-up, the series uses it to show different facial expressions the characters did. When this happens, there are times where a narrative shows the

meaning of their facial expression. Although it does not appear all the time, the facial expression can be interpreted clearly. Another time a close-up shot is used in the series when a flashback occurs and there is one or more detail to be captured. In picture 48, Zoey is trying to remember what Aaron said when he invited her, Nomi, and Vivek to a restaurant.

#### 4.2.1.3 Medium shot



Picture 49, Aaron at an exhibit  
(Episode 2, 00:04:33)



Picture 50. Luca at Zoey's room  
(Episode 2, 00:02:17)

In picture 49, Aaron is standing in front of some photos in an exhibit he helped set up. In using a medium shot, it helps to explain the location Aaron is in while still showing how his facial expression is. His facial expression needs to be shown to tell the audience how he is feeling nervous about the work he did. In picture 50, it shows Luca holding his weed blunt while conversing with Zoey in her room. The shot is used to give information about Luca's "medication" as a replacement for him saying weed blunt or joint.

#### 4.2.1.4 Medium-long shot



Picture 51. Prof. Telphy night class  
(Episode 1, 00:05:15)



Picture 52. Zoey in her room  
(Episode 2, 00:18:14)

In the series, medium long-shots can be seen quite frequently because it is used to capture a lot of events. In picture 51, the viewer can see Professor Telphy talking to his student in the classroom. This shot can be used to explain where Nomi and Luca sit in the classroom. While picture 52, shows Zoey coming back from a party at midnight. The information of the time is collected from the clock behind her and also the ambiance of the room.

#### 4.2.1.5 Long shot



Picture 53. Zoey calling her dad  
(Episode 1, 00:00:20)



Picture 54. Freaknik  
(Episode 1, 00:00:51)

Picture 53 captured Zoey talking to her dad on the phone from her dorm room. This shot is used to explain where Zoey's location is and why her father cries on the phone. On the right, picture 54, viewer can see Andre Johnson, Zoey's father,

at a party when he went to university. This shot is used to portray how the party was chaotic and wild.

#### 4.2.1.6 Extreme long shot



Picture 55. Nomi at concert  
(Episode 1, 00:06:05)



Picture 56. Vivek's dream  
(Episode 1, 00:08:37)

The last shot that is discussed on this study is the extreme long shot. This shot is used to emphasize the surrounding or background of an object. In picture 55, Nomi is seen crowd-surfing in a Swedish death metal concert. This shot is used to elaborate on her being an unconventional Jew. In the second picture, picture 56, Vivek's dream of being the future Drake is captured. The shot shows how Vivek's dream is not common to an Indian-Gujarati born. To emphasize the rareness of this event, pictures of two possible role model Vivek could have chosen.

#### 4.2.2 Mise-en-scene



Picture 57. Nomi as Jewish  
(Episode 1, 00:05:57)



Picture 58. Zoey and Luca in warehouse  
(Episode 3, 00:14:16)

There is a lot of mise-en-scene in the series, a few examples of those areas shown in pictures 57 and picture 58. In picture 57, there is no color to give the feeling of seriousness while talking about a contrasting character. Nomi, the girl whose parts of the body could be seen in the picture is not a traditional Jewish girl. Thus, in using the black and white color, the viewer gets to feel the contrast even more and could also get that the scene is an actual event that happened in the past. Although in the picture we can only see parts of some objects, there is enough information portrayed. The viewer could clearly see Nomi having her bat mitzvah while wearing a *kippah*, which is not traditional for females. She also is seen holding a lash, which further on the series, a dog could be seen standing next to her. This also is a rare occasion in any ceremonial event.

In the next picture, picture 58, the viewer could see Luca and Zoey walking inside a warehouse. The viewer could not know the warehouse is abandoned if Zoey did not say it, since from the mise-en-scene there is no visible sign of the warehouse being abandoned. In doing so, the ambiance of the shot is not grimy and scary, rather it gives a bit of a mysterious yet safe environment. In this shot, Luca and Zoey could be seen wearing casual attire, emphasizing them not going to an unsafe and dangerous place. This keeps the viewer from thinking something bad is about to happen. The lighting in the shot is enough to make everything seem clear, so the viewer is sure there will not be any harm done in the scene. The hue of the lighting is dominantly blue; this gives the impression of the event happening at night since it radiates a cool feeling.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, controlling images of African American women in recent popular media has a significant decrease in negative representation and has shifted the way they portray these images. Although some traits of the controlling images still appear on several occasions, it has become better than the latter representation in older television series. In the television *Grown-ish*, the Mammy is shown a lot more times than the Jezebel and the Sapphire images. No character possesses one entirety of the controlling images in this series, each character only shows some traits of the images.

As for the gender role of African American in this series, a few traits of how African American used to share the role between both genders still reflects through the female character. Most of which the female character will perform double or multiple roles while the male counterparts only perform one role. Although there is also one male student-athlete in the series, he gets a lot of help in performing his role while the female athletes do not.

This series has shown big progress in how the popular media represents African American women and the characters are quite diverse. However, the media could start introducing more minorities in other series and work even harder to let other minority groups earn their place in the popular media. Especially in representing minorities as how the statistics in real life is.

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