

“Try again, fail better”

Detecting the intersectionality of white female
protagonist in *Weeds*

Master's thesis

Eveliina Salomaa

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
December 2012

Tiedekunta – Faculty	Laitos – Department
Humanistinen tiedekunta	Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author	
Eveliina Salomaa	
Työn nimi – Title	
TRY AGAIN, FAIL BETTER.	
Detecting the intersectionality of white female protagonist in Weeds	
Oppiaine – Subject	Työn laji – Level
englanti	Pro gradu -tutkielma
Aika – Month and year	Sivumäärä – Number of pages
December 2012	88
Tiivistelmä – Abstract	
<p>Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää kuinka televisiosarja <i>Weedsin</i> naispäähahmon identiteetti rakentuu intersektiävistä subjektipositioista. Subjektipositioilla tarkoitetaan positioita kuten luokka tai sukupuoli, joiden kautta yksilö kohtaa maailman ja joiden kautta hänet määritellään. Tutkimusaineistona on käytetty televisiosarja <i>Weedsin</i> kaikkia kahdeksaa tuotantokautta, jotta identiteetin rakentuminen prosessina voidaan hahmottaa selvemmin. Televisiosarja <i>Weeds</i> (2005-2012) keskittyy marijuanaa välittävään yksinhuoltajaäitiin ja hänen perheeseensä. Sarja on esimerkillinen tutkimuskohde intersektionaaliselle analyysille sillä se nostaa esille monia yhteiskunnan epäkohtia ja esittää päähenkilönaisen tavalla, joka ei ole ollut komediasarjoille tyypillistä.</p> <p>Tutkimuskohde tuo ilmi intersektionaalisuuden mahdollisuuden myös sellaisten yksilöiden osalta, jotka eivät näytä stereotypisesti syrjityiltä. Toisin sanoen, myös etuoikeutetuilta vaikuttavat yksilöt voivat kokea moniperusteista syrjintää. Analyysi keskittyy tarkastelemaan <i>Weedsin</i> päähenkilön positioita luokan, sukupuolen, seksuaalisuuden ja etnisyyden suhteen. Nämä subjektipositiot valikoituvat analysoitavaksi sillä ne tulevat selvästi esiin jo itse tutkimusaineistossa ja vaikuttavat vahvasti <i>Weedsin</i> päähenkilön identiteetin rakentumiseen.</p> <p>Analyysi toteutettiin tarkastelemalla televisiosarjan sellaisia kohtauksia, jotka toistuvat tai ovat erityisen merkittäviä Nancyn identiteetin rakentumisen kannalta. Analyysi tarkastelee sitä, kuinka henkilöhahmojen välinen vuorovaikutus, kehonkieli, puhuvat ja konteksti rakentavat Nancyn identiteettiä. Analyysi tuo esille sen, kuinka eri subjektipositiot voivat toimia samanaikaisesti sekä syrjäyttävinä että voimauttavina. Identiteetti rakentuu performoitujen subjektipositioiden kautta niin, että sekä yksilö itse että hänen kanssaan vuorovaikutuksessa olevat ihmiset ovat mukana identiteetin rakentamisessa.</p> <p>Tutkimus valjastaa performatiivisuuden ja intersektionaalisuuden käsitteet analyysin työkaluiksi ja tuo esille intersektionaalisen analyysin tarpeen myös stereotypisesti etuoikeutettujen kohdalla. Mediatekstin analysointi intersektionaalisesta näkökulmasta tarjoaa tietoa siitä, millaisia identiteettejä media luo ja kuinka ne heijastelevat yhteiskunnan arvoja ja toisaalta vaikuttavat niihin.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords intersectionality, identity, media, television, gender,	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository Aallon lukusali	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	7
2	21st CENTURY FEMINISM- POST/NEO OR THIRD-WAVE FEMINISIM ?.....	9
	2.1 Feminisms today.....	9
	2.2 Summary.....	10
3	INTERSECTIONALITY.....	11
	3.1 The concept of intersectionality.....	11
	3.2 Post-structuralism and intersectionality.....	14
	3.3 Criticisms of intersectionality.....	15
	3.4 Summary.....	16
4	POSITIONING SELF AND GENDER.....	16
	4.1 Identity and positioning self.....	17
	4.2 Gender.....	19
	4.3 Summary.....	20
5	ON TELEVISION, GENDER AND PERFORMATIVITY.....	21
	5.1 Quality Television.....	21
	5.2 Feminism seen on television.....	23
	5.3 Gilmore Girls as class-refugees.....	26
	5.4 Ally the working girl.....	27
	5.5 Performing Buffy.....	28
	5.6 Summary.....	31
6	FOCUSING ON WEEDS.....	32
	6.1 Weeds and Wire- constructing gangster identity.....	32
	6.2 Everybody Loves Raymond meets Weeds- sitcom rules.....	33
	6.3 Summary.....	36
7	RESEARCH SET-UP.....	36
	7.1 Aims and research questions.....	36
	7.2 Data.....	38
	7.2.1 Season summaries.....	39
	7.3 Dealing with the Data.....	42
8	ANALYSIS.....	44
	8.1 The beginning of the series.....	44

8.2 Doing business.....	49
8.2.1 White lady.....	49
8.2.2 Violence.....	56
8.3 Fleeing class.....	60
8.4 Being a mother.....	65
8.5 Sexual encounters.....	71
8.6 The season finale.....	75
8.7 Summary.....	78
9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	85
APPENDIX.....	87

1 INTRODUCTION

Identity is constituted of several intertwining components. For example, gender, class and ethnicity are "positions", which are constantly present in one's identity. Individuals belong to several subject positions at the same time and cannot situate themselves freely into one and exclude the others when needed. The concept of intersectionality takes into consideration the several social positions which may intersect in a person. When the possibility of social positions intersecting with one another is considered, the construction of identity becomes more evident and the contradictions inside one's identity can be detected. That is to say, for example, a person is not only white or poor or homosexual, but she/he might be white and poor and homosexual. Each of the social positions has an effect on the other social positions in which a person belongs to.

The images and ideas which media produces of gender, class and ethnicity affect the way in which people think about these features and themselves. Television represents gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and other social positions constantly from selected points of view, producing quite coherent images of different kinds of identities. By studying identity construction in television narratives from the intersectional point of view, one can reveal the dominant ideologies and values behind the produced identities and focus on who are the privileged and who the subordinated ones. When the norms, values and ideologies are revealed, we can also understand better ourselves, the society and how identity construction is affected by several factors.

In the era of globalisation, television is still vital to the construction of cultural identities since it distributes across the globe a variety of representations of class, race, gender, age and sex with which we identify or struggle against. The relationship between globalisation, television and cultural identities is a complex one in which a range of competing identities are in play. Cultural and social conditions regulate and impose norms on sexuality and gender which are then represented on television and other media (Barker 1999). Cultures have different ideas of sexuality and gender and therefore the representation of these may vary also on TV (Barker 1999).

Weeds is a very controversial series and discusses drugs very openly, so the settings of the series differs from many other series that have a protagonist-mother. Questions of ethnicity, class and religion are also relevant to the series, as well as general issues such as illegal immigration, superdiversity, family dynamics and coping with the death of one family member. The series also touches upon questions such as what is suitable for women, what is a family, how racial stereotypes are constructed, economic crisis and how it affects a family. *Weeds* is, moreover, a narrative of how a woman who was previously a housewife can provide for the family and deal with the loss of status and sinking in the social hierarchy. In addition, the series presents a highly diverse community of people and brings forth the effects of globalisation and how people deal with it. The variety of current topics and even political matters make *Weeds* an interesting research material for studying identity construction from the intersectional perspective.

The present study concentrates on the construction of an intersectional identity in the TV series *Weeds*. Since Nancy is in several subject positions, both oppressed and privileged, the series provides a chance to do intersectional analysis and find out how different subject positions intertwine. Recognising intersecting social positions in a white protagonist also reveals how individuals are not simply either privileged or subordinated. The analysis has been conducted by observing recurring themes in *Weeds* and analysing them with the help of the concepts of intersectionality and performativity.

The three following chapters elaborate the important concepts for the present study and provide background information of the field in which the present study belongs. Chapters 5 and 6 introduce then relevant previous research on television, gender and *Weeds*. In chapter 7 the research set up is clarified by introducing in detail the data, method and research questions. Chapter 8 presents the analysis in detail and finally chapter 9 concludes the present study and discusses the results of the analysis.

2 21st CENTURY FEMINISM- POST/NEO OR THIRD-WAVE FEMINISM ?

Because *Weeds* is a 21st century series, it has been on TV only in the post-feminist/neo-feminist/third wave feminist- time. In this chapter I outline the field of feminism today. Firstly, the concepts of post-feminism and third-wave feminism are explained and then I clarify the ideas of neo-feminism. Since today the field of feminism is not coherent but includes several kinds of feminisms, introducing three major feminisms clarifies the current state of feminism and helps to situate the present study into the field of feminism.

2.1 Feminisms today

Mills and Mullany (2011:10) clarify the concept of post-feminism by stating that post-feminism sees women as a mass, hence making political acts concerning gender, ethnicity or class, difficult. In addition, Mills and Mullany (2011:10) note that the post-feminist culture promotes consumer culture and urges women to concentrate on themselves as individuals. Important post-feminist include for instance Rosalind Gill, Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz. Mills and Mullany (2011) have studied language, gender and the role of feminism in contemporary English- speaking society. Mills and Mullany (2011:10) argue that feminism is still needed and simply by critiquing the term "post-feminism" can one take part in the current sexual politics. Unlike post-feminism, third-wave feminism concentrates on the diversity in terms of gender identities and acknowledges the differences amongst groups of women or men (Mills and Mullany 2011:15). Mills and Mullany (2011:15) state that third-wave feminism has also emphasised the examination of other relevant social identity variables alongside with gender. Concentrating on gender inequalities has actually been a dominant feature in third wave feminist approaches during the last years (Mills and Mullany 2011:16). Central third wave feminists include Naomi Wolf and Elle Green.

Neo-feminism differs from post-feminism and third-wave feminism drastically. Neo-feminism can be understood as a set of practices and discourses that define certain positions or "identities" that have developed in the post- World War II in USA and

Western Europe (Radner 2011:7).Radner (2011:7) suggests that, for example, “girliness” and “girl” have been reclaimed by feminine culture as a new ideal promising continual change and self-improvement as a sign of individual agency. Sexuality and sexual encounters can now be seen as a way of empowering self rather than ruining one's reputation (Radner 2011:7). Radner (2011) has studied several “girly films” from neo-feminist perspective. Neo- feminism presents consumer culture as a way of expressing and confirming oneself for women. Neo-feminism constitutes a very attractive version of feminine culture in terms of the needs and designs of the media that dominates contemporary scene (Radner 2011:3). Radner (2011:5) claims that neo-feminism has proved (through *Sex and The City* movie etc.) to be more successful in providing models for women seeking to confront the complexities of contemporary culture- in particular, changing expectations about gender-defined roles- than feminism itself. Radner (2011:9) argues that neo-feminism shares its' goals with neo-liberalism rather than with second-wave feminism though both emphasise the need for financial autonomy for women. Neo-feminism highlights the individual fulfilment and identity construction through independent work as well as through consumerism (Radner 2011:11). Radner (2011) emphasises that the rise of a single- girl came along with neo-feminism, bringing focus on more liberated sexuality, individual choice and working girls.

Though *Weeds* may have been produced as a neo-feminist series since it presents a single working girl as the protagonist, it does not have to be read or studied as one. As the present study is interested in the intersecting subject positions, approaching the data also from the third-wave feminist perspective is more appealing than considering it only from the neo-feminist angle. The present study does not commit to being purely third wave feminist or neo-feminist study but recognises both as influential feminisim in today's society and media culture.

2.2 Summary

In this chapter the feminisms of today were discussed. I briefly clarified the concepts of post-feminism, neo-feminism and third-wave feminism to introduce the field of feminist studies today and portray how there are several ways of approaching the idea of

feminism. This was done also in order to situate the present study into the field of feminist studies.

3 INTERSECTIONALITY

In this chapter I will firstly introduce the concept of intersectionality and discuss the varying understandings of intersectionality. To fully understand how intersectional theory has been constructed and what the concept implies, a study by Crenshaw is discussed in greater detail. Secondly, I will present criticism of intersectional theory. Finally, the perspective of the present study on intersectionality will be clarified. Since the concept of intersectionality is not self-explanatory an effort is done here to provide sufficient amount of background information for one to be able to understand how the present study utilises the concept.

3.1 The concept of intersectionality

Intersectional theory is mainly used in social sciences and the term was first introduced by Crenshaw in 1988 (Harjunen 2010). The initial idea is that individuals usually have several, intersecting and piling features that strongly define them, their social positions and status. These define the individual's life and experience of world. Power is in central focus when intersectionality is discussed since different positions have different kind of hierarchical power (Harjunen 2010). Everything is a result of the use of power. Intersections are not only personal experiences but also always political questions (Harjunen 2010). Intersections are always visible on personal and political, societal as well as on institutional levels. Intersecting positions can include as race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or nationality. There are both privileged and unprivileged positions and an individual can be in both at the same time (Harjunen 2010). In regards to gender, being a man is traditionally considered to be a privileged position and being a woman is seen as the oppressed position. In regards to race, being white is considered to be a privileged position while being non-white sets one in an oppressed position. Whether a position is privileged or not is often dependent on the cultural context. For example, the main character in *Weeds*, Nancy, is at least in the positions of being a woman, white, middle-class, drug-dealer and single-mother, all of which can be

reasons to be discriminated. Being white is a category that is usually seen to be non-discriminated, whereas being a woman is discriminated.

Crenshaw (1994) divided the concept into structural intersectionality and political intersectionality. In her research, structural intersectionality refers to the social position of black women at the intersections of different subject positions, which affect the experience of domestic violence and rape (Crenshaw 1994). This location of black women make their experiences of violence dramatically different from that of white women. Political intersectionality, on the other hand, deals with the political dimension of marginalising the issue of violence against the women of colour. Crenshaw (1994:5) explains that women of colour often belong to groups that pursue conflicting political agendas. The experiences of racism among the women of colour are often not equivalent to those of men of colour and, on the other hand, the experiences of sexism are not parallel to experiences of white women (Crenshaw 1994:5). Because women of colour are so marginalised, Crenshaw (1994:12) argues that they cannot link their experiences with those of other women. This leads to feelings of isolation and therefore increases the silence surrounding the violence against women of colour. Although Crenshaw concentrated on women of colour, her research is still relevant for the present study. The women who Crenshaw studied were marginalised in several manners, which applies for Nancy as well although she is white. Having an intersectional identity and being marginalised within many categories connects Nancy to the women of colour studied by Crenshaw.

Crenshaw (1994:1) argues that the experiences of women who are faced with violence are products of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism. Women have intersectional identities, because they are women and people of colour in discourses that consider one or the other of these categories (Crenshaw 1994:2). Therefore, women of colour are marginalised within both categories. Crenshaw (1994) argues that race and gender intersect in the processes that shape both structural and political aspects of violence against women of colour. She highlights that when the construction of social world is in consideration, the multiple grounds of identity need to be taken into account (Crenshaw 1994:2). While studying the violence against black women, Crenshaw (1994) discovered that even the class dimension is not independent of race and gender, since economic situations also played important role in defining the experiences of violence.

She simplifies this by stating that race, gender and class are connected because being a woman of colour strongly related to poverty. However, Crenshaw (1994) argues that besides gender, class and race, there are also other power intersections, which affect the experiences of women of colour. She gives an example of immigrant women, whose experiences are strongly affected by their status as immigrants that cannot be reduced to economic class.

Crenshaw (1994:12) suggest that intersectionality offers a way of navigating between the tension that is build up between multiple identities and the continuing necessity of group politics. Crenshaw (1994:12) supports the post-modernist idea that categories which we consider natural are actually socially constructed in a linguistic economy of difference. Crenshaw (1994:13) argues that to state that race or gender are socially constructed categories is not to say that they would not have significance in our world. On the contrary, Crenshaw (1994:13) sees that power and meanings are attached to different categories, which leads to processes of subordination. By studying the relationship of power and different categories, the processes of subordination could be revealed. Crenshaw (1994:13) also states that even the actual process of categorisation is an exercise of power. However, even subordinate people can be part of the categorisation process and Crenshaw (1994:13) notes that identity is also a site of resistance for the members of different subordinated groups. By this, Crenshaw (1994:13) means that the identity categories can also be used to empower oneself.

Christensen et al. (2012:115) studied intersectionality in life-story narratives from the perspective of locality and belonging. Both belonging to a place as well as being mobile can be seen as important issues that frame a person's life. Christensen et al. (2012:115) argue that the dynamic movement, voluntary or forced, between security and continuity is central in people's lives particularly in today's' society. Migration, globalisation, multiculturalism and transnationality have increased drastically and therefore they affect the relationship of belonging and mobility effectively as well. Christensen et al. (2012:115) concentrated on both belonging to an ethnic majority or minority group as well as belonging to places between the ethnic groups. In other words, belonging to places and being mobile are relevant for the members of the majority and the minority though the power relations involved are different. The

purpose of this approach is to include also the privileged and unmarked in the research (Christensen et al. 2012:115).

On the whole, through the awareness of intersectionality, differences among people can be then better understood and grounded. Understanding intersectionality may also give tools for negotiating the ways in which differences can be expressed in constructing group politics (Crenshaw 1994:15). The understanding of intersectionality is also particularly important when studying superdiverse societies in which people do not clearly belong to one specific subject position anymore, but instead to several positions that intersect with each other.

3.2 Post-structuralism and intersectionality

Lykke (2010) notes that Crenshaw compared intersectionality to crossroads but although the metaphor is well describing, it does not suit an analysis aiming to study the way in which subjects are constructed discursively in and between different identity markers and social categories (Lykke 2010:73). One suggestion how this can be done is made by feminist post-structuralists, who investigate the construction of subjectivities in discourses that intertwine together narratives for example of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality. (Lykke 2010:73). Lykke (2010:73) states that in the post-structuralist view, all the different social categories are seen to be equally important and penetrating each other so that the categories cannot be separated even analytically. This does not mean, however, that the categories could not be analysed, on the contrary, the fact that the categories are intertwined has just to be considered throughout the analysis. Moreover, post-structuralist feminists emphasise that “it should not be considered a given from the outset of the analysis which categorisations are taken up and prioritised at the level of the everyday life experience of the subjects” (Lykke 2010:73). In addition, Lykke (2010:73) argues that post-structuralist feminists consider intersectionality to be “done” since subjects “do” the social categories such as race and gender in communicative practices (Lykke 2010). To say that race, ethnicity, gender or nationality are done, is to engage with the idea of performativity too. In this way, the post-structuralist view of intersectionality coincides well with Butler's idea of performing gender. As social categories, such as age, race and class, are seen to be performed, they can be seen as being constructed in the similar manner as gender is seen

in Butler's theory of performativity. Intersectionality is, in other words, performed and all the intersecting social positions are constructed in performance.

Lykke (2010) emphasises that the feminist theorising of intersectionality today is very diverse. Different takes on intersectionality approach the concept according to their own take on feminist studies and therefore the views of intersectionality are multiple. Lykke (2010:82) also states that the traditional view of intersectionality often leaves out categories and normatively concentrates on some (race, gender, ethnicity). Because of this it is important to reflect the status and interrelatedness of the categories in the analytical practices. Lykke (2010) argues that gender is in interplay with other social variables all the time and that all the social variables are historically and socially constructed. In addition, she thinks that the stereotypes of these variables should be deconstructed (Lykke 2010:87). Along the ideas suggested by Lykke, although the present study concentrates on the social positions normatively studied in intersectional analysis, the aim here is to bring forth the interrelatedness of the categories and showcase how privilege and oppression can co-exist. Like Lykke (2010) and the post-structuralist view on intersectionality, the present study recognises all social categories as important and as discursively constructed.

3.3 Criticisms of intersectionality

Intersectionality has been criticised by for example Nash (2008) for concentrating so fully on black women's experiences and that it has disregarded other identities and their possible intersectionality. Nash (2008:10) states that though some feminist researchers claim that intersectionality refers to all subject positions (race, gender, ethnicity etc.), most of the studies done on intersectionality have, in reality, focused on the marginalised subjects. Identities which are considered to be even partially privileged or imagined have been excluded from the intersectional studies (Nash 2008:10). Nash (2008:11) argues that intersectional theorists have thus neglected to study how privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level.

Nash (2008) emphasises, in contrast, that all identities are constructed of several intersecting “vectors of power” and therefore intersectional studies should recognise the

ways in which dominance and subordination work to constitute subjects' experiences of personhood (Nash 2008:10). She (2008:11) argues that

“If intersectionality theory purports to provide a general theory of identity, it must grapple with whether intersectionality actually captures the ways in which subjects experience subjectivity or strategically deploy identity”.

Nash's (2008) criticism of the study of intersectionality identifies, in fact, well the place of the present study. The object of my research, Nancy, is a subject who is in both privileged and oppressed positions. Moreover, Nancy starts off from a position that is almost purely privileged but over time she gets more and more oppressed through the structures of the society and the events of her life. In other words, the present study recognises how privilege and oppression can co-constitute individual identity.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the concept of intersectionality and presented different theories of it, including the initial theory of intersectionality by Crenshaw (1994). In this study, however, I chose to concentrate on the post-structuralist feminist view of intersectionality because it aligns with the idea of performativity, which will be discussed in next chapter. I discussed also the ways in which intersectionality has been criticised and with the help of Nash's (2008) arguments, indicated the place of my study in the field of intersectional research.

4 POSITIONING SELF AND GENDER

In this chapter the concepts of identity, subject position and gender are elaborated on and connected to the idea of intersectionality. Firstly, the concept of identity and subject position are discussed and defined and then gender is brought into focus. Gender is discussed here separately from class, ethnicity and sexuality because I want to clarify what I mean when using this term. In addition, the approach to gender will also be used looking at other social categories in this study.

4.1 Identity and positioning self

Barker (1999:169) has defined identities as discursive constructions. They are descriptions of ourselves with which we identify and in which we emotionally invest. Barker (1999:168) questions the assumption of identity being something that we possess and argues that identity is not something that we own, but, rather, we are made of our attitudes and beliefs. Identities are social constructions and therefore they are the ones that “construe us through the imposition of power and the identifications of the psyche” (Barker 1999:168). A similar view is suggested by Rossi (2008) who argues that identity cannot be chosen freely. However, Rossi's (2008) approach to identity emphasises even more the social nature of identity.

More specifically, Rossi (2008:30) has looked at identity with the help of the idea of “belonging”. By this, Rossi (2008) refers to the sense of belonging together and on the other hand to the feeling of difference from other people. Being involved in these different relationships is in Rossi's opinion an important part of being a person. By observing identity from this perspective, the meaning of relationships, being connected and constructing identity through social interaction, is emphasised. Belonging to a group as well as being excluded from a group are both seen to be as important in identity work (Rossi 2008: 30). Being able to connect to discourses, practices or locations can also be part of “belonging”. Rossi (2008:30) sees that the possibility to belong to a political group(s) can be an important opportunity also in regards to identity. Rossi (2008:30) argues that this taking part in a political group, also connects identity and intersectionality.

Rossi (2008:30) argues that people are often defined “from the outside” by putting them into different socio-cultural identity-positions against their will and this can cause problems. On the other hand, Anton and Peterson (2003:407) define subject position as a person's place from which he/she encounters the world. A subject position also “implies that a person's perspective on things relates to where that person is coming from” (Anton and Peterson 2003:407). Because people have different standpoints, they see and experience things in different ways. Anton and Peterson (2003) have

categorised subject position into two types. The first type of Anton and Peterson (2003:407) call a structural subject position. Structural subject position is based on cultural or institutional categories and characteristics. Structural subject positions include, for example, people who are grouped by role or relationship status (e.g., sons, bosses) and people who share more apparent characteristics or affiliations (e.g., men, Asians) (Anton and Peterson 2003:408). Structural subject positions may change over time and across cultures. For example, what a "mother" means may vary according to the social and historical moment. Some of the structural subject positions are based on more apparent characteristics, such as race and sex, and define therefore clearly person's location in each category (Anton and Peterson 2003:408). In other words, people are seen as for example black or white, male or female. Anton and Peterson (2003:408) also note that those who share the same social status in particular culture (majority, minority) are included also in the same structural subject positions.

The second type of subject position is existential subject position (Anton and Peterson 2003:409). It comes visible through personal contact, interaction and other experiences. People who may share existential subject positions do not necessarily share structural location (Anton and Peterson 2003:409). Anton and Peterson (2003:409) note that many of the existential subject positions are based on the level of personal names and refer to, for instance, to those individuals one calls friends, associates or peers.

Anton and Peterson (2003) point out well how structural subject position affect the way in which people are portrayed or seen at particular times. I suggest that the concept of subject position and particularly structural subject position, is important when studying intersectionality in regards to identity construction in a current television series. TV series reflect societal values and power-relations and, therefore, also the characters belong to subject positions that are defined by the society and the present time. Rossi (2008) has argued, however, that using the concept of identity, when doing intersectional analysis is useful. As previously discussed, by approaching identity through the idea of "belonging" the social aspect of constructing identity, the importance of social interaction and relationships can be taken into consideration. The construction of Nancy's identity will be therefore analysed from two perspectives; the social interaction (identity) and the society's structures that affect a person's experiences (subject position). By using both the concept of identity and subject positions I thus

intend to conduct intersectional analysis that can grasp the both sides of identity construction.

4.2 Gender

As a starting point for the term gender, I have taken Judith Butler's idea of the sex/gender distinction, according to which gender is not dependent on the biological sex, but is rather something that is constantly constructed in performance (Butler 1990). According to Butler (2006:21) sex can be known only through gender and although gender is constructed in action, there is nothing that precedes gender. Butler (2006:21) continues that the body is an effect of genders, which can be accepted only within the existing cultural norms, laws and values. In addition, Butler (2006:91) states that the subject is done by gender and it is the effect, rather than the cause, of a discourse which is always there first. To elaborate, biological sex does not, according to Butler, precede gender and therefore biological sex does not determine gender.

Gender is not something a person is, but rather something a person does (Butler 2006:91). Gender is not therefore stable, but fluid, and it cannot be divided into two, that is, there are more than two genders instead. Butler (1990:80) thought that it is the actions that define the individual, not the individual who determines the actions. Butler (1990) relied heavily on the concept of performativity. This concept means that both language and the body create reality and that this creation is based on repetition. Butler (1990:10) emphasises that the focus should be on how we perform and repeat our gender, not on what the acts of performing gender are. The rules that affect our thinking of what is feminine and masculine are not solid, nor facts. Instead, they are dependent on power-relations and politics (Butler 2006:93). Our culture and politics determine which genders and sexualities can even be understood or accepted (Butler 1990:69). Butler (2006:93) also points out that people who do their gender “incorrectly” are often punished by cultures and laws which aim to maintain a stable distinction between the masculine and the feminine, the sex and the body, homosexual and heterosexual. Butler (1990) wanted to bring forth the forces that produce the gender that is taken for granted. Gender is not based on a “natural sex” but rather constructed through power relations and performed actions.

Furthermore, Butler (2004:198) states that for her, performativity is about bodily acts, not just speech acts. It is through performativity that dominant and non-dominant gender norms are equalised (Butler 2004:209). Butler (2004:218) argues that, when gender is seen as performative, it follows that the reality of gender is itself produced as an effect of the performance. Through the practice of gender performativity, one not only sees how the norms that control reality are reproduced, but comprehends one of the mechanisms by which reality is reproduced and modified. (Butler 2004:218).

It has been suggested by Mills and Mullany (2011:167) that Butler's term "gender" should be understood as a verb rather than a noun. In addition, they propose that feminist linguistic analysis should outline more clearly the range of possibilities for performing gender. Mills and Mullany (2011:167) see the way in which individuals perform their gender identity and have their gender identity restricted or enabled by certain community of practices to be a critical topic of further studies. The notion that gender is not only performed by individuals, but that the boundaries of what is possible for individuals are mapped out by groups of people is an important revision of Butler's work (Mills and Mullany 2011:167).

The idea that gender is constructed through performance can be applied into other social positions, too. In other words, such social positions as race, age, class and nationality can be performed as well. When all social positions are seen to be "done" they can also be analysed in a similar manner to how Butler has analysed gender. With regards to intersectional analysis, this means that all intersecting positions are constructed in performance and, therefore, they can be analysed by observing the actions that are taken by the individual. It should be noted, however, that societal structures often affect unconsciously the actions by an individual and that all social interaction is considered to be "action" as well.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the concepts of identity, subject position and gender. Identity and subject position were defined so that the concepts complement each other, instead

of overlapping. In addition, I indicated how identity and subject position connect with intersectionality. At last, I presented the concept of gender and clarified what I mean with the term and introduced the idea of performativity with the help of Butler's (2004) theory. The concept of performativity will be discussed more in relation to television narratives when a study by Cover (2004) is introduced in the following chapter. Since the present study concentrates on the construction of an intersectional identity, it is important to define first what is meant with the concepts of identity, subject position and gender. Understanding of the concepts also helps to understand how they can be used methodologically.

5 ON TELEVISION, GENDER AND PERFORMATIVITY

To give an idea of the field in which the present study is situated, in this chapter I discuss relevant research on gender and intersectionality on television. Firstly, I will discuss the context of quality television because *Weeds* represents quality television. Secondly the role of feminisim on television is discussed. Then I move on to discuss studies on three television series, each of which presents a female protagonist. These studies showcase how female protagonists are presented on TV and which kinds of identities the presented women have.

5.1 Quality Television

Bourdaa (2011) has studied construction and de-construction of seriality in quality television. She states that the new rules in television production, cable channels and the development of the use of new technologies in cultural practices affected the development of quality television in the early 2000s (2011:33). Bourdaa (2011:34) also says that quality television series should re-work existing genres, have ambition in visual effects and in the way the series is filmed as well as include a complex, serialised narrative mode. Bourdaa (2011:34) finds complex narratives and the notion of seriality to be the main ingredients of successful fictional genres.

In addition, Bourdaa (2011:34) states that in the last few years, new cable channels have emerged (in American television) to compete with HBO, Showtime being one of them.

This has also increased the competition between television series. Because cable channels are not that regulated as network channels, showrunners and producers have more freedom and therefore they can create more complex series and discuss contradictory topics (Bourdaa 2011:34). Bourdaa (2011:34) adds that cable channels can also always order a full season of one series, since they do not have to be concerned about the audience number, on which series on network channels are dependent on.

Bourdaa (2011:35) explains that TV series in America are designed to be broadcast every week from September to May on networks, and at any time during the year on cable channels. Networks are dependent on audience numbers and advertisements, whereas cable channels are free of both concerns (Bourdaa 2011:35). Cable channels, on the other hand, are only concerned with the number of subscriptions. Bourdaa (2011:35) argues that these differences are important for the notions of seriality and narrative complexity since cable channels do not have to be afraid of cancellations due to a decrease in audience number. Bourdaa (2011:36) adds that the nature of Quality TV series actually forces viewers to remember details of the narrative in order to be able to follow the series. Producers help viewers to remember essential things with the "previously on" sequence that is being displayed at the beginning of each episode (Bourdaa 2011:36). In addition to the complexity of the narrative, the continuity of the stories keeps the viewers interested (Bourdaa 2011:36). Continuity is reinforced by cliff-hangers which will make sure that the TV viewers will stay engaged in the show (Bourdaa 2011: 37).

With the help of the newest technology and the Internet, fans of TV series have become more and more involved with the series and deconstruct the seriality by choosing when and where to watch the series (Bourdaa 2011:38). Because of the new technologies and the Internet, producers started to develop more complex narratives and seriality became a common feature in American shows to ensure the audience's interest (Bourdaa 2011:38). Bourdaa (2011:40) argues that today, all TV series, from science fiction of *Fringe*, to *Gossip Girl*, *How I met your mother* and *The Big Bang Theory*, are serialised and include complex narratives that requires the viewers to be engaged with the series. With the help of the different media platforms, TV viewers can free themselves from TV schedule, record and collect episodes and watch them when they want (Bourdaa 2011:40).

5.2 Feminism seen on television

Press (2009) has studied current television series such as *Sex and the City* and argues that the current TV presents a third-wave-influenced feminism rather than post-feminism. TV series of today represent race, sexuality and the choices that women make between work and family, in a more varied way than before (Press 2009:139). Press (2009:140) discusses the iconic cultural and scholarly importance of televised representations of women and claims that the representations of family and gender on television in this new post-network era are still culturally significant, though not as much as they were in television's golden age, in the 1950's America. Press (2009) goes through the development of television series from the 1950's to these days, explaining how the representation of families and women have changed during that time.

In the 1970's, images of working women became acceptable for the first time in the history of television (Press 2009:143). Before that, women were strongly connected to family and home, being housewives, mothers and homemakers. The period starting from the 1970's is called the post-network era, since the dominance of network television started to shatter (Press 2009:143). In the 1980's and 1990's, the representations of women focused on women making choices, usually between work and family (Press 2009:144). Press (2009: 144) argues that along with the emergence of cable television, also post-feminist television created a new space for representations of women. Post-feminism critiqued the ideals of the second-wave feminism, but it was the third-wave feminism (from 1980 onwards) that spotted the white, middle-class and heterosexual biases of the second-wave feminism (Press 2009:145). Press (2009) takes a look *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) in regards to these biases. *Sex and the City* concentrates on the lives of four women in New York City, highlighting the search of Mr Right though all the women are very successful in work life. The emphasis of finding the right guy is so strong, Press (2009:145) argues, that it undermines the way women's careers might be seen to support feminist values.

In third-wave feminism there is an attempt at trying to preserve the "essence" of feminism, while concentrating on the points that the second-wave feminism failed to

address, such as the diversity of ethnicity, race, class and sexuality (Press 2009:145). For instance, *Sex and the City* has applied a third-wave feminist perspective in the obvious sexiness of the leading female characters. However, all the women are upper-middle-class, educated, white and beautiful, which undermines the ideas of third-wave feminist television, since no real diversity is present in the representations (Press 2009:145). Press (2009) discusses also *The Wire*, a series representing the drug dealing genre, in which there are different kinds of women. The series presents motherhood in a highly unconventional way which is, Press (2009) says, very new to the prime time television. For example, the character De'Londa Brice urges her teenage son to skip school and join the family drug business. In *The Wire* there is also an African American lesbian police officer and her lover, who add into the unconventional characters in *The Wire*. Press (2009:146) also discusses *Weeds* briefly, arguing that the series break new ground in its representation of drug use and dealing among the white middle class suburbia though the series does focus on a thin, beautiful woman.

Press (2009: 147) claims that shows like *Sex and the City*, *The Wire* and *The Weeds* are examples of "narrow-casting" which is dominating television in the post-network era. Narrow-casting refers to the way of selecting beautiful, thin, white people to the leading roles so that for example real ethnic diversity is not shown on television series. Though the series show diversity in their plots and themes, presenting openly lesbian women and drug dealing as a career, the portrayals of women still remain rather conventional, presenting only conventionally beautiful women as the protagonists (Press 2009: 147). However, these series still create some possibilities for the diversity of images of women, work and family, that was never possible during the "golden era" of television (Press 2009: 147). These exceptional series and their influence is even highlighted when compared to other series that keep following the old conventions.

Further, Press (2009) explains that, while early television offered only a narrow set of images of women, the increase in working women in the 1960's and 1970's was reflected on TV too. Everything changed again in the post-network era when post-feminism critiqued the achievements of feminism and presented women yearning for love and family instead of fulfilling career (Press 2009: 148). The current television showcases a third-wave-influenced feminism (from 1980 onwards) that continues where post-feminism left off. Since the western societies and the cultures in which we live are

still ambivalent about feminism for women, the most successful series reflect this ambivalence. In a way, this can be seen as the celebration of diversity that characterises third-wave feminism (Press 2009:148). Prime time television does not, however, allow much diversity for portrayals of women but continues to present white, thin and conventionally beautiful images of women even when the portrayals have become sexually and racially more diverse (Press 2009:148). In addition, Press (2009:148) suggests that we may have moved beyond the nostalgia for the 1950's life, to a new sophistication in our willingness to consider choices women continue to make between their different roles in work and home. If this is the case, Press (2009:148) argues, television may have a rather dynamic role in making possible this change of mood. Importantly, Press (2009:148) discusses whether television continues to reflect the core values of our culture even today and argues that if so, the diversity of portrayals may be the key to relevance in a hybrid culture. The varying portrayals on TV might be playing increasingly important role for women and minority groups in our culture (Press 2009:148). Television has been able to maintain its position as the most used medium even today and so it plays a central cultural role in the western society (Press 2009:148).

The protagonist of *Weeds* may be a result of narrow casting according to Press (2009), but the choices which Nancy makes between work and home represent individual choices and do not follow the conventions of 1950's housewives. Though the protagonist Nancy is white, thin and beautiful she is represented also in ways which show her "flaws" and question the advantages of being white. Her social class changes from upper to working class during the series and this is not conventional in television narratives. The women of *Weeds* all have, in fact, quite unconventional roles and they represent women of different colours and looks. *Weeds* is also an example of how representations of single-parenting and especially motherhood are also becoming more varied on today's television. Unlike Press (2009), I, however, argue that *Weeds'* cast is not result of narrow-casting. In the same way as Press (2009), I will consider television's role in relevance to hybrid culture and suggest that *Weeds* could be seen as an example of a hybrid culture, a superdiverse culture, in which people's nationalities and social positions are complex on several levels.

5.3 Gilmore Girls as class-refugees

Although *Gilmore Girls* may not represent quality TV in the sense in which Bourdaa (2011) defined quality TV, the series belongs to set of television series presenting single working mother and therefore provides an example of TV series with a strong female protagonist to which Nancy can be compared. *Gilmore Girls* is well known from its' complex dialogues and several intertextual references.

Hall (2009:94) states that *Gilmore Girls* provides a space for considering the nature of motherhood and family in the “popular sphere”, proposing that television representations and political representations do not always match. Lorelai, one of the two main characters in *Gilmore Girls*, is a rich white woman whose parents are highly privileged. Hall (2009:94) argues that Lorelai's background explains her role both as a “hip mama” and “an exemplar of family values”. Through portraying Lorelai as a heroine, *Gilmore Girls* rationalises the discussions about the controversies surrounding teen pregnancy, single motherhood and the welfare state in the today's' United States.

Rossi (2011) has studied intersectionality in regards to class, gender and sexuality in *Gilmore Girls* while observing also the bodily effects of the series. Rossi (2011:86) states that though *Gilmore Girls* is “an ambiguously normative product of popular culture” the representations of upper-class privilege are often parodic and there are also some sexually ambiguously coded characters. The representations of the white upper-class parents of the class-refugee Lorelai are repeatedly ridiculed by their stiffness. Rossi (2011:88) states that it is the grandparent's classed genders that restrict their life and behaviour. On the other hand, Lorelai and her daughter are represented as living a life without “bourgeois restrictions”. Rossi (2011:88) suggests that *Gilmore Girls* has a certain “anti-attitude”, anti-class hierarchy and anti-normativity which are seen through the representations of the characters. In *Gilmore Girls*, the social classes are built constantly but they are not permanent (Rossi 2011:90). Rossi (2011:90) finds Lorelai and her daughter Rory to be “daughters of privilege”, who are strongly connected to the upper social class, no matter how hard Lorelai tries to deny it. Lorelai is represented as a “single, unwed middle-class mother” who is not able to pay for her daughters education and has to ask help from her parents (Rossi 2011:90). The tension between the social

classes is build up at the same time with the tension between the characters of a different class (Rossi 2011).

Rossi (2011:92) found that the series presents single people surprisingly content with their lives. Lorelai is seen as being satisfied with her life as an unwed single mother for a long time and every attempt to get married is ruined usually by herself (Rossi 2011: 92). Though many of the characters are single, their heterosexuality is hardly questioned. All in all, the representations of sexuality are only vague in *Gilmore Girls* (Rossi 2011:94). Rossi (2011:94) proposes that actually, one of the rare signs of "reality" in the series is the clear distinction between the male and the female characters. Compared to *Weeds*, the setting of the *Gilmore Girls* is quite different. However, both represent female protagonists to be content with being single so both series represent the protagonist as a single working girl who is content with being single. The tension connected to class differences is also visible in both *Gilmore Girls* and *Weeds*.

5.4 Ally the working girl

Saresma (1999:4) argues that media can be abusive towards certain groups. This means that the media can provide and exclude certain subject positions from the audience as well as emphasise particular discourses, while it diminishes others. Cultural products represent society and are in interaction with it at the same time. Saresma (1999) discusses what kind of image of gender difference and femininity is created in *Ally McBeal* and studies the subject positions which the series offers for a female audience. Saresma tries to find out whether the series is feminine or not (1999:4). Since *Ally McBeal* concentrates on a law firm, which is commonly considered to be a masculine field, discussing the series provides an other example besides *Weeds* of how women operate in a male dominated field and how women are represented in it.

According to Saresma (1999:5) it is difficult to say what genre *Ally McBeal* represents. The series discusses topics that are commonly considered to be feminine, such as love, friendship and having kids. Relationships are emphasised instead of actions, which makes the series feminine. On the other hand, the workplace and the co-workers are in

the focus all the time. In addition, the series does not follow conventional narrative patterns, but includes absurd scenes and parodies. Still, it is very mainstream. The private and the public sphere of life are intimately tied together, even most of the lawsuits concern relationship problems (Saresma 1999:6).

Saresma (1999:6) considers the basic narrative of *Ally McBeal* very simple; Ally wants a man and a family, to be happy. The series follows the typical norms of romantic fiction that is meant for women. Ally feels lonely and unhappy, she is a professional lawyer, but it is not enough for her (Saresma 1999:7). Saresma (1999:7) states that marriage is presented as the ultimate goal, happiness and perfection for women. The heterosexual matriarch is strongly in power in the serial though women are seen working all the time (Saresma 1999:7). The series turns out to be very conservative in regards to marriage and reproduces ideas according to which women cannot be happy without a husband (Saresma 1999:7). Saresma (1999:7) argues that working is presented as something that Ally does, because she has no husband. While sexuality is discussed openly in the series, homosexuality is brought up with a twist usually, like a joke (Saresma 1999:8). In addition, although in the main cast there are people from different ethnic backgrounds, they are represented in a stereotypical way (Saresma 1999:8). However, normality is, Saresma (1999:11) points out, questioned, since not only women but also men are from time to time hysterical and in the need of therapy. According to Saresma (1999:14), in order to be a feminist series, *Ally McBeal* should represent gender difference from the point of view of a woman, being aware that there is an unsymmetrical power relationship between men and women. The series does, however, challenge the ways that gender is presented in TV-series and provides more subject positions for women than most series (Saresma 1999:14).

5.5 Performing Buffy

Identity construction in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has been the focus in Cover's study (2004). Though *Buffy* is an example of a TV series aimed for younger viewers and includes elements of fantasy, the identity of the protagonist constructs in a way which is interesting in relevance for the present study. Cover (2004) discusses *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* with the help of Butler's theory of performativity which provides useful

information of the concept of performativity as well and showcases how performativity can be applied methodologically.

Using Butler's idea of performativity, Cover (2004) shows how Butler's theory of performativity provides a set of understandings of the ways in which identities are constructed in the discourse. However, Cover (2004) points out that the idea of performativity has not been used in the analysis of contemporary media and therefore Cover's (2004) article aims to develop a way in which to "analyse character development, change and transformation in contemporary television series". Cover (2004) argues that because questions of identity and selfhood have received lot of attention in contemporary, post-modern western cultures, it is important to study how these questions are reflected in contemporary television, and to develop new ways of analysing television characters in terms of identity.

Cover (2004) uses Butler's theory of performativity, because it sees "identity as non-voluntarist play, invoking the language of act and theatrics within the constraints of discursively-given." Cover (2004) clarifies Butler's theory by dividing it into four points that are relevant to the study of television characters. First, the self is the result of performance, which is constituted of language, discourse and culture. Second, the self is performed again and again as a process which follows discursively-given set of norms. Performance creates an illusion of a stable subject hood. Third, though the self is constituted in discourse, it can be re-constituted in the encounter with different discursive arrangements. Fourth, there is a cultural demand for stable, coherent self. Only a coherent subject can be an active participant in society and the coherence itself requires combining the sense of self and belonging to several identity categories (Cover 2004).

Cover (2004) also introduces four factors that have to be taken into consideration when analysing television character through the theory of performativity. The first factor includes the ways in which a character is performed in relation to the available language and discourse material of the series. Secondly Cover (2004) asserts the impossibility of setting foundation for the character's identity. The ways in which identity foundation is denied or asserted depends on the genre. For instance, *Friends* rely on episodic closure through identity resolution, meaning that in each episode, identity has to be re-

articulated in the closure. However, Cover (2004) argues that more recent series represent identity more as a process. Thirdly, character change and development should be seen as a transformation of the performative self. Transformation happens when a character's identity has broken the rule of coherence or is faced with a new, similar or unpleasant difference, or otherness. A new relationship, new characters and new settings are often related to transformation. Fourthly, the ways in which a character's behaviour, moral codes and attitudes are presented repeatedly as the means with which the character is maintained as coherent. A disruption in the coherence of characters' subjectivity, as well as encounters with other characters in individual episodes may alter a character's identity over a longer period of time (Cover 2004). This change can be seen through personality, character relationships, physical attributes and moral codes of behaviour (Cover 2004).

Cover (2004) argues that with the new television narratives, identities should be explored in the construction of the series as series and not in individual episodes. For example, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the story arcs extend from each season to other, and so the character development (change) can be seen properly only in the long run (Cover 2004). The first step for analysis for Cover (2004) is to concentrate on the language that the character uses, what kind of communicative appearances the character has in her/his use etc. Language is seen therefore as performative, and its use affects the construction of identity. Cover (2004) argues then that identities on television narrative are constructed and performed in a through encounters with the spatial and temporal structures of the show and with other characters, elements and ideas.

In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Buffy has to come to terms with her double-identity; as a superhero, and as a normal teenager. Cover (2004) notes that Buffy's normal life includes schooling and consumption that are co-ordinates of performative identity, which provide her sense of self and stability whereas the super hero-status obscures and instabilities her identity. Despite her attempt to reject her superhero identity, Buffy fails in it. Cover (2004) argues that only an analysis that focuses on several seasons of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* can identify this identity transformation as a process. Hence, according to Cover (2004), because the television series of today have story arcs that continue for several seasons, identity has to be analysed not only within one episode but also as it is played out across an entire series. Isolating only one episode and studying it

from identity perspective would be even more difficult than observing longer narratives, Cover (2004) argues.

Character change can be mostly depicted in scenes where characters are confronted with new situations, categories and configurations of being (Cover 2004). Cover (2004) has observed how in *Buffy* and *Angel* (spin-off from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) subjects deal with a long-term recognition of unstable identity. Characters seek to find coherence that is driven by the cultural imperative of coherence that is required for social participation. Subjective coherence is strongly driven by the generic patterns of television production since series are traditionally defined through continuity, either in repetitive episodic closure, continuity of character, history or setting across the serial (Cover 2004).

Cover's (2004) argument for studying the whole series instead of just a single episode provides grounds for the data of the present study as well. As identity construction is in focus, the longer narratives and character change as well as relationships play important role and could not be taken into account if only few episodes were analysed. Cover's notions of language being performative and that transformation can be often detected as a character is confronted with new situations are also very relevant for the present study.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter previous relevant studies on gender, class and performativity on TV were discussed in order to outline the research field and give an outlook on similar previous studies. The concept of quality television was clarified by introducing Bourdaa's (2011) study. This was done to clarify how quality television series, in which *Weeds* belongs, are structured and broadcasted. Previous studies on gender, television and intersectionality were then discussed by presenting studies done on television series with female protagonists. Rossi (2011) studied *Gilmore Girls* and intersectionality and Saresma (1999) concentrated on gender in *Ally McBeal*. *Gilmore Girls* and *Ally* both present working women in different ways and, therefore, provide points of comparison for *Weeds*. The final part of the chapter concentrated on Cover's (2004) study on performativity and how the concept can be used to analyse television narratives, in Cover's study the data being from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Cover's study provided

actual examples of how performativity can be utilised in a research method and how identity construction as a process can be studied in a television narrative.

6 FOCUSING ON *WEEDS*

Despite the fact that *Weeds* has not been studied on its' own widely, it has been compared to other series in a few studies. In this chapter previous studies concentrating *Weeds* are presented and discussed in relation to the present study.

6.1 *Weeds* and *Wire*- constructing gangster identity

Long (2008) compared the TV series *The Wire* and *Weeds* as representatives of the drug dealing genre. Long (2008:93) studied three seasons of *Weeds* as an example of the dealing genre and investigated Nancy's identity as a female gangster. Since Long's study concentrates partially on Nancy's identity, it can either challenge or support the results of the present study.

In Long's study, *Weeds* is taken as a sitcom rather than as a drama serial, and it is argued that instead of a proper closure, each episode ends with a cliff-hanger though each episode is constructed on one central event. Moreover, Long (2008:100) explains that each episode of *Weeds* concentrates on an event that tells something about the characters' identities and supports the choice of dealing drugs as a profession. Long (2008:16) presents *Weeds* as a serialised sitcom that breaks the dealing genre conventions by focusing on a white middle-class woman who lives in an suburban area. By placing a white woman as the dealer, the series breaks the gender and race expectations that are related to the dealing genre. Long (2008:106) argues that the series concentrates on Nancy's struggles on maintaining both the family and her business, drawing from the feminist sitcom tradition. Nancy builds her identity on her dealing career and gains therefore a gangster identity that enables her to act in situations which she encounters because of her job (Long 2008:116). This transformation does not, Long (2008) emphasises, make Nancy more masculine. By representing Nancy as a gangster

the series also shows how Nancy's whiteness can be both a benefit and a burden to her when she acts in a field that is conventionally governed by other ethnic groups (Long 2008). In fact, the gangster identity enables Nancy to fight against the patriarchal forces that are in power in the middle-class society as well as in the dealing business (Long 2008:104).

Nancy is shown to struggle to hold on to the middle-class lifestyle and to the suburban ideals when she gets deeper and deeper into the dealing business and realises that her former lifestyle and ideals are now a burden. Nancy's identity is neither traditionally feminine nor masculine but that her gangster identity represents reworking of gendered performance (Long 2008:116). Long (2008:106) also emphasises that Nancy's relationship to being a mother changes drastically during the three seasons. In the very beginning of the series, she regards her being a mother, rather than a drug dealer as her primary role (Long 2008:106). Moreover, Long (2008) argues that during the first two seasons, *Weeds* tries to maintain a resemblance of a nuclear family through Nancy's new boyfriends and husbands, but later on she liberates herself from the patriarchal oppressions that the husbands represent. In season three, Long (2008:111) argues, Nancy becomes more a gangster which also allows her more freedom. Through this evolving identity, Nancy gains more confidence which is shown for example, in her more authoritative speech and financial success (Long 2008). In addition, Nancy starts protecting her sons by using her gangster status and the connections she has made through her job (Long 2008:118). Long (2008:118) concludes that after adopting a gangster identity, Nancy has not become a worse mother, on the contrary, her ability to provide and protect her family has increased though she has less time for traditional family life.

6.2 Everybody Loves Raymond meets Weeds- sitcom rules

Hertel (2010) compares *Everybody loves Raymond* and *Weeds* as examples of sitcoms, *Raymond* is a traditional and *Weeds* a sitcom breaking the rules. Since *Weeds* has no time nor spatial constraints and it includes a diverse cast. As a result, it can discuss topics that have not been traditionally discussed in sitcoms. Hertel (2010:2) clarifies that the sitcom was first focused on white, nuclear families. Sitcoms were created to meet

the needs of advertisement companies, and, because after the World War Two the audience was not interested anymore in the old type of series (Hertel 2010:3). Before that, nuclear family was in centre (Hertel 2010:6). Only in the 1990's a few sitcoms started to concentrate on broken families and single, career-oriented people. Still, the sitcoms were restricted to few locations and did not vary from each other that much. The original family sitcom survived from 1950's to 1990's almost intact, proof found in *Everybody loves Raymond*, for example (Hertel 2010:7)

Hertel (2010:8) argues that Nancy Botwin connects two cultures because she is supplied by lower-middle class African American family and uses this connection to earn and provide for her children. Nancy differs from typical television portraits of drug dealers in being a representative of an upper-class white woman who deals in a suburbia. Hertel (2010:15) sees *Weeds* as a pioneer for cable sitcoms. Unlike typical American sitcoms, *Weeds* is not restricted to one place of scene but introduces several homes and a variety of venues of action. For example, as the show lets the viewers inside Heylia's (African American) house. This also makes *Weeds* multi-cultural since it lets the viewers inside Heylia's house (African American). In Hertel's (2010:15) words, "Weeds ability to merge spatial settings to create a mosaic backdrop for a half-hour sitcom represents a potential new wave for family sitcom."

In addition, Hertel (2010:16) points out that *Weeds* has been shot differently from previous traditional sitcoms. The series completely lacks the characters that would represent stereotypical paternal figures who guide the children. Hertel (2010:19) argues that the series makes it clear in the very first episode that Nancy's experience as a single mother will be difficult, since Nancy has no support from other people. One of the most important plot lines of the series is Nancy's interactions with the illegal drug underworld that rewrites the heroine prototype; this in attempts to avoid becoming the oldest Gap employee in Northern California (Hertel 2010:19). Further, since *Weeds* does not have a laugh track, it allows more time for building up the script around punch lines (Hertel 2010:26). *Weeds* makes use of freedom of language too, giving space for more open joke structure and racially fuelled language, which makes the series a target for criticism and accusations of race stereotyping (Hertel 2010:26).

Hertel (2010:24) argues that there is no household hierarchy in the Botwin family since the head of the family, Judah, has died. By presenting a dysfunctional family with a single mother, *Weeds* distinguishes itself from other sitcoms. In addition, *Weeds* episodes include a lot of sex, no matter which characters are in focus. This was made possible by previous cable programs such as Showtime's *The L Word* (2004-2009) and HBO's *Oz* (Hertel 2010:22). Celia's family, on the other hand, is used as a means of social satire. Celia is, at the beginning of the series, the leader of Agrestic's Parent-Teacher Association, representing a close-minded person who wants to make Agrestic a drug-free place (Hertel 2010:27). Hertel (2010:27) argues that *Weeds* employs these stereotypical caricatures as a critique of American suburban lifestyle. In this, parental meetings with the close-minded mothers are the cornerstone to *Weeds'* satirical quality (Hertel 2010: 27).

Hertel (2010) explains that network sitcoms and cable sitcoms dominate in different fields. *Weeds* introduced a dysfunctional family in the middle of drug dealing business and destructive behaviour, that still could get sympathy (Hertel 2010:31). Hertel (2010:31) argues that benefiting from the change in TV- world, started by *The Sopranos* and quality TV, *Weeds* blossomed into a series that went beyond the sitcom dynamics in its values, structure and outlook of the 21st century American family. In Hertel's (2010:31) view, Nancy knows she cannot follow the footsteps of the 1950's sitcom moms and settles to be the mom she is. Hertel (2010:31) highlights a scene from *Weeds* to accentuate Nancy's character:

"When asked by Shane if he could be home schooled to avoid drama, Nancy responds with refreshing honesty ; "Honey, If I had my way, none of us would ever leave the house. But that's not healthy, so no."

Hertel (2010:30) concludes that *Weeds* has paved the way for a new wave of sitcoms, for example *Nurse Jackie* and *The United States of Tara*, both profiling strong female leads. Although Hertel (2010) sees Nancy as a strong female protagonist, she undermines Nancy's role as a provider, while arguing that Nancy is not the head of the family. By pointing out that Nancy cannot even make popcorn, Hertel (2010) emphasises how Nancy is not an ideal mother either. Being a strong female character comes then to imply that a female cannot be both a strong character and a good mother. By setting *Nurse Jackie* and *The United States of Tara* as examples of the series that have come after *Weeds*, Hertel (2010) only emphasises the idea of strong female

characters being unfit mothers since both these series present strong females who are not perfect mothers. Being a strong female character does not, however, lead automatically to being a bad mother.

6.3 Summary

Two studies comparing *Weeds* with other series were discussed in this chapter. Long (2008) compared *Weeds* and *The Wire*, bringing into focus the construction of particular gangster identity and how dealing is presented as an profession. Hertel (2010), on the other hand, discussed *Weeds* in comparison to *Everybody Loves Raymond*, paying attention to the characteristics of typical sitcoms. These previous studies on *Weeds* showcase how the series has been studied before. The need for the present study also came clear by reviewing the previous studies because the previous researches did not provide any results of the construction of an intersectional identity.

7 RESEARCH SET-UP

In this chapter I clarify the aims of the present study and introduce the research questions. The data of the study is also introduced in detail and the method of analysis is clarified. The reasons for selecting the particular data, analysis method and point of view are also discussed in this chapter.

7.1 Aims and research questions

The present study draws on and combines gender studies, feminist media studies as well as studies on television narratives and identity. Relevant previous research comes from television and film studies as well as from gender studies. The analysis aims at investigating intersectionality in the series. Since the data is from a television series, I want to take the multimodality of it into account and observe not only the language but also what is done and the visual features of the data. Though *Weeds* has been on air since 2005, only few studies have been published of it. Mills and Mullany (2011) have

suggested that further studies on language, gender and age, as well as on language, gender and ethnicity should be conducted. For these aforementioned reasons, my study fills a gap. In addition, *Weeds* is a popular series and has caught media's attention so it is worth studying. The publicity of the show is due to the following factors. Firstly, the series presents drug dealing as a profession of a white middle-class woman and, secondly, it presents openly how several people, even kids, use drugs. Thirdly, the series is quite controversial, radically differing from other prime time series. Fourthly the leading actress Mary Louise Parker has gained a lot of publicity by herself and promoted the series in that way, too. The more popular a series is, the more it has power and effect on people.

The main research question of the present study is the following:

How is the intersectionality of Nancy's identity constructed in television series *Weeds* ?

To have a clear focus for my analysis, the research question has been divided into more specific analysis questions that guide the analysis.

How do other characters construct Nancy's intersectional identity in their talk and action ?

How does Nancy construct her own intersectional identity in her talk and action?

How do the situations and character actions construct Nancy's identity as intersectional and reflect the identity construction as a process ?

I am interested in the construction of Nancy's identity from the intersectional point of view. Therefore the analysis will be conducted as an intersectional analysis and the supporting research questions will be used to determine the intersecting identity-positions and observe the identity construction as a process. It is precisely because of the male- dominance in the series that it is interesting to find out, how a woman navigates in this kind of environment, how her femininity changes or does not change when she has to deal with the men's manners and act in their world as a powerful opponent. To be able to analyse Nancy's identity from several aspects, the matter of how others define Nancy and how Nancy defines herself are both relevant. In addition, how the characters' actions are performed is important for the present study, since all the

identity positions are considered to be performed in action as well as in talk. Since the data includes scenes from all the eight seasons, it is my intention to concentrate on the repeating scenes and study if there is any change in Nancy's identity during the span of eight seasons. Because intersectionality is the focus of the analysis, Nancy's gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality will be the subject positions in focus and their intersections will be determined.

7.2 Data

Weeds is an American television series created by Jenji Kohan. *Weeds* started running on Showtime cable network in August 2005 and ended in USA in September 2012 after eight seasons (Showtime 2.9.2012). Because it includes violence, drugs and sex, the series is broadcast in late-night. The intended audience consist mostly of young adults and adults, not children. As was shown above, *Weeds* combines features from several genres, including drama, comedy and crime. The series also combines features of a TV-series and serial. Each episode has a sort of closure, a cliff-hanger, which suggests that the same plot keeps on going in the next episode. On the other hand, each episode has something individual in them, and some story lines are fitted just into one episode. Every episode starts with a recap of past events, reminding the audience of particular events that are relevant to the current episode. The series' main character is Nancy Botwin, a single-mother in her 30s or 40s, who deals marijuana and takes care of her family. Nancy has two sons, Silas and Shane, who are in the first season small children but grow up during the series. In addition to the boys, also Nancy's ex-brother-in-law Andy is part of the immediate family. A family friend, Doug, also becomes a part of the family during the series. The cast consists mostly of men but, in addition to Nancy, there are two important female characters in the series; Celia, an unfit mother, and Isabelle, Celia's younger, lesbian daughter.

The opening sequence of the series for the first three seasons and for other occasional episodes as well as the Season Eight, is Little Boxes. It was first recorded by Malvena Reynold's in 1963 (Wellman 2001:10). The title "little boxes" refers to the massive amount of suburbs which were built in the 60's and in which each house was a replica of the other (Wellman 2001:10). The song also criticises and satirises the created

community in which people belong to different little groups in which they communicate with each other and know their place in the hierarchy (Wellman 2001:10). The song is appropriate for *Weeds* and is fittingly combined with the opening of the episodes, showing a little-boxes suburbia, white, homogenous people jogging, children playing, black cars leaving the suburbs, men in suits getting coffee from a coffee house and so forth. The opening sequence makes clear that each individual in this environment is just like the next one and that they aren't even real individuals. Each day follows the same as the last one, and people have their routines. Because the displayed people are exact copies of one another, the criticism is also clear, they have no uniqueness, "they are all the same"

There are altogether seven important male characters; Shane, Silas, Doug (family friend), Andy, Dean (Celia's ex/husband), Conrad, Sanjay (works for Nancy) who are present in almost each of the seven seasons. In addition to the regular male characters, there are several other male characters in different seasons, who play important roles. In contrast, there are only two females (Nancy, Celia) who are as frequently seen as the central female characters. Besides the two female characters, there are only five other females (Isabelle, Heylia, Vaneeta, Jill, Lupita) who are seen from time to time during the seven seasons. Because of the small number of the important female characters, it is interesting to observe and see, how they navigate in a setting that is predominantly male. Even the households are dominated by men and this is accentuated by the fact that even Nancy's third child (Stevie) is a boy. Although the series includes many central male characters, Nancy is still very clearly the protagonist and Celia is seen as a very strong character as well.

7.2.1 Season summaries

In the beginning of the series, the Botwins live in California, in the made-up city of Agrestic, in the suburbia. Nancy's husband Judah has recently died and Nancy starts dealing marijuana in order to be able to provide for the family and maintain the same lifestyle they had before her husband died. Nancy has never worked before, but now she is the one who is responsible for providing for the family. Nancy gets familiar with Heylia and Conrad who teach her the drug business. Shane and Silas are both at school,

Silas being a popular, handsome guy who always finds a girl, Shane being the weirdo with few friends.

In the second season Nancy marries a DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) officer Peter as a business arrangement. Silas gets his current girlfriend pregnant and Celia and Doug Wilson (family friend) compete to get into the city council. At the same time, Nancy and Conrad keep flirting and develop MILF (Mother I would Like to Fuck) -weed, keeping everything secret from Peter. However, Peter finds out the business and eventually ends up killed. Nancy gets into trouble because Silas steals all the weed and she ends up owing to other drug-dealer gangsters.

In Season Three, Nancy runs up against the competing drug dealers and gets to know Guillermo, a major drug dealer who fancies Nancy. Because the family is from time to time in a financial crisis, Nancy lets Silas deal and discovers that the boy is good at it. After that dealing is like a family business. Nancy needs protection from motorbike drug dealers and so Guillermo lights up their marijuana field, causing a massive fire in the whole city of Agrestic. Nancy then makes sure her house will burn down and flees with the boys and Andy.

In Season Four, Nancy and the family live in California, in the city of Ren Mar, near the border of Mexico, in Judah's fathers' house. Nancy gets the business running soon with the Mexican mob and meets Esteban, the drug-king/ mayor of Mexico, who soon becomes her boyfriend. Silas starts dating a woman twice his age and launches a drug business of his own in her cheese shop. Even Shane starts dealing dime bags. When police interrogates everybody about the grow house in Agrestic, they agree to say that Celia was the boss, so Celia goes to jail for a while. Meanwhile, Andy and Doug start smuggling people over the border of Mexico. Nancy works in a maternity shop that actually just hides a drug tunnel to Mexico. Celia gets free and ends up working in the maternity shop too and becomes an addict. Nancy is bored with honest work and ends up making a deal with FBI, revealing the tunnel to the officials. At this point, Nancy could get killed but saves herself and the family by revealing that she is expecting Esteban's child.

In Season Five Esteban and Nancy start living together and get married. Nancy panics when she realises that Esteban will have her killed after the baby is born, so she runs away with Andy's help and has the baby in a local hospital. Silas and Doug open a medical marijuana dispensary and Celia tries dealing too. However, family happiness does not last long when Pilar, Esteban's manager, starts controlling the relationship. In the season finale, Pilar hosts a party and threatens Nancy and her boys and ends up dead in a pool after Shane smacks her with a mallet.

In the sixth season, Nancy, Andy, Doug and the boys are on the run again. They live in a recreational vehicle and drive far away from the Mexican border, trying to widen the gap between them and the Mexican mafia. Finally they end up living in Nancy's old math teacher's home and Silas finds out that Judah was not his biological father. When the family tries to leave the country, Esteban catches up with them and Nancy leaves behind with Stevie (the new born baby) and saves herself from Esteban by admitting to the police that she was the one to kill Pilar.

Season Seven begins with Nancy getting out of the prison. She has had a relationship with her cellmate Zoya. Nancy goes to a half-way house and starts the drug business again, this time pairing up with Zoya's brother, an Ukrainian man Demetri. The boys, Andy and Doug fly from Copenhagen to reunite with Nancy. Silas and Nancy control the business until they end up in a mother-son argument. Silas sleeps with Emma, a competing dealer, who messes up Nancy's business completely. Shane interns in NYPD (New York Police Department) and eliminates the competition with the help of the police. Stevie, Nancy's and Esteban's baby boy, has been living with Nancy's sister Jill, who now wants the custody so Nancy contacts a lawyer and starts fighting back. In the season finale, Nancy, Jill, Andy, Doug, Shane, Silas and Jill's twin girls all dine together and raise a glass for their new, complicated family. Somebody is aiming at them with a gun from a hiding place and a gun shot is heard as the season ends.

In Season Eight, Nancy has been shot to the head and tries to recover from it. The Botwin household is now the Botwin-Price-Grey household since Nancy's sister and her children, as well as Doug and Andy live in the same house. The extended family lives in the city of Old Sandwich in Connecticut in the suburbia. Nancy decides that the family will get a new start and therefore she quits being a dealer. However, while watching

Stevie playing football, Nancy gets to know a man who is a sales representative for drugs and Nancy ends up being a “legal” dealer of synthetic marijuana pills. Nancy is, yet again, selling weed but this time it is somewhat legal. Also Silas is recruited for the company to grow weed while Shane goes through the Police Academy. Nancy and Silas , however, finally leave the business with better opportunities in sight. In the final episode of Season Eight, ten years has passed, Nancy runs a successful chain of cafes selling marijuana desserts legally and the boys live their own lives, separate from Nancy.

7.3 Dealing with the Data

The data of the present study was gathered by watching the eight seasons of *Weeds* and taking notes of each episode. Based on the notes, I narrowed down the amount of data to include only episodes that contain something that clearly defines Nancy's identity. This narrowed down the data to approximately 40 episodes. The next step required a new viewing of the remaining 40 episodes. This time, I concentrated on finding scenes that are repeated in one way or another during the whole period of eight seasons. Besides the repeating scenes, I picked out scenes from the very first episode of the series as well from the last episode of the series in order to be able to showcase how identity is constructed as a process. Because the repetition of actions is one of the central ideas of performativity, looking at the repeating scenes and structures provides most data for studying Nancy's identity construction. I will be focusing on the intersecting social positions of gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity. I have ended up with these positions since they are visible in the series and play relevant role considering Nancy's identity.

After making notes of the selected scenes, I used ready-made subtitles (<http://www.allsubs.org> 8.6.2012) to structure transcripts of the example scenes. In order to ensure the correctness of the transcripts I have modified the ready-made subtitles to correspond precisely with the spoken text of the scenes. I then categorised the scenes so that all the scenes which were most important regarding gender, sexuality, ethnicity or class were in the same category. In addition to categorising the scenes according to the intersecting positions, I categorised them by the theme of the scene.

The categorising was done in order to ensure a good selection of repeating scenes as well as scenes including enough material of each intersecting position. After the categorising, I used the elaborated research questions to guide the analysis.

I analysed the transcripts of the example scenes by paying attention to the used language, expressions and the roles of the participants. As Cover (2004) pointed out, language is performative and therefore the language repertoire that a character has strongly defines the character's identity. Watching the example scenes repeatedly besides reading the transcripts was important thorough the analysis. After the analysis of the used language and expressions was completed, the attention moved on to how things were said and what kind of facial or bodily expressions were present. Finally, the actions, locations and looks of the characters were analysed. During the whole analysis the idea of intersectionality and how it is evident in the scenes was kept in focus. In other words, everything was approached from the intersectional point of view, keeping in mind that subject positions are performed and everything that a character does is part of the performance. Each example scene was considered from each subject position's perspective, that is, how gender, class, sexuality and ethnicity are performed as separate subject positions and then how they intersect in several ways. Each intersection was analysed separately, that is, how gender intersects with class and ethnicity and sexuality, how class intersects with ethnicity, sexuality and gender and so fort, doing similar procedure for each observed subject position.

After analysing each example scene I detected connections between the scenes, in other words, I looked for similarities and detected the recurring themes and actions inside the actual repeating scenes. This was done in order to bring forth the performative nature of identity construction and the importance of repetition.

Since identity construction takes place on several levels, it is important to note that relationships are also part of constructing Nancy's identity, particularly her sexuality and feminine identity. Nancy is defined by the people with whom she has relationships, that is, how she acts with them and what sort of positions she takes in these relationships. The other characters also reflect something of Nancy's identity. Relationships are therefore one way of how other people define Nancy. Visuality, such as looks and gestures are also part of the construction of identity and were taken into consideration.

In terms of visibility, Nancy defines herself through her looks but also other characters define Nancy through commenting Nancy's looks. It should be noted here too that the actions which Nancy performs are often results of the ways in which the society's structures affect individuals' life.

It is my hypothesis that already in the first episode of *Weeds* and in the few first scenes, the dominant features of Nancy's identity are at least slightly visible. Though the spatial scenes and the relationships change during the seven seasons, Nancy works with the same identity material that she has already in the season one. However, the volume of her actions and how she and others define her, change during the time and therefore also her identity evolves throughout the series. The point is that already in the first season, the presentation of Nancy's identity hints about what is coming in the future.

8 ANALYSIS

In this chapter the analysis of the data is being presented. The analysis is structured according to the themes that repeat in the scenes of the series; 'Doing business', 'Fleeing class', 'Being a mother' and 'Sexual encounters'. First, I will discuss the opening of the series and present the starting point for Nancy's identity construction. The following chapters concentrate on the analysis relevant social positions of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class. The intersections of these social positions will be considered throughout the analysis. Finally, I will discuss the way in which Nancy's identity is portrayed in the final season of the series, that is, the Season Eight. The examples in the chapters following 8.2 illustrate typical scenes in the series.

8.1 The beginning of the series

The first episode of *Weeds* gives an outline of both Nancy's identity and the spatial context of the first season. In the first scene, Nancy is being presented as the head of the Healthy Children's Committee, giving a speech. Parents sitting in the back row are gossiping about Nancy and thus portray how others define Nancy at this stage of the series.

Example 1

Season 1 Episode 1

Mother 1	I think she got a little Boty between the eyes.
Mother 2	She probably treated herself, poor thing. My husband dropped dead, I'd suck out...lift up and inject anything that moved.
	...
Mother 1	She's got the big bag. Guess he left her pretty well fixed, huh?
Mother 3	I heard there was nothing. They spent all that money on the new kitchen. Have you seen it? It turned out gorgeous.
Celia	So give yourselves a round of applause, everyone.
Mother 3	I wonder how she's getting by.
Mother 1	Nancy, we were all just saying how much we love your purse.

Women at the back of the room evaluate Nancy's looks, suspect that she has taken Botox, and wonder how much money she has left after Judah died. In these ways, they are defining Nancy's identity as a widow but not in a nice manner. Clearly, Nancy does not belong to their group of friends. This is evident, because the women talk about Nancy, not with her and they only guess about her situation as nobody actually knows how Nancy is doing. This first scene is powerful in the sense that it is the first time the spectator sees Nancy. Here the presented identity is not one of a dealer but one of a widow and an upper-middle class mother. Hence Nancy is here defined mostly through the positions of the mother and widow, which are both connected to her gender identity as well as to her relationships. Further, the situation (parenting meeting) defines Nancy as a parent and the discussion between other mothers define her as a widow. The discussion between the mothers also reveals Nancy's social class, "Guess he left her pretty well fixed, huh?", "They spent all that money on the new kitchen". Nancy's looks also support this since she is made up and wearing clothes that are appropriate for an upper-middle-class mother. A lot of her cleavage is shown and she has expensive looking jewellery and a bag. Nancy's looks make her fit the the surroundings and emphasise her belonging to the presented parental group. Nancy smiles a lot even though there is an argument going on and she is very calm in her expressions of emotion.

However, the very next scene breaks this image by showing Nancy in Heylia's house, where weed is visible and dealing is set as the main business. In this scene it also comes clear that the bag is fake. The fake bag might represent how Nancy's portrayal in the first scene is also actually fake.

Example 2 Season 1 Episode 1

Nancy	Hey, that bag looks a little small.
A guy	You did not just say that.
Heylia	Bitch, I can eyeball an ounce from outer space with my glasses cracked.
Heylia	All acting like you know. Writing checks your ass can't cash.
Conrad	You never question Heylia's eyeballing. That's the Rain Man of weed.
Heylia	Amen.
Nancy	I apologise, I'm still new at this. I stand corrected.
Heylia	Stand? You on your knees corrected.- Getting all beside herself. Gonna come up in my house, tell me about my business? Girl, you need to recognise.
Nancy	All right, all right. Fine. I'm a bitch-ass bitch. Give me a little respect. I'm the biggest game in the private community of Agrestic.
Heylia	Drugs sell themselves, biscuit. You ain't shit. You still ain't shit. How much you got there? Take that crap off my money. You not giving me a present. You're paying me for weed.
Nancy	Excuse me for trying to bring a little beauty into an ugly world.

Nancy is the only white person in the scene, others being African American and somehow related to each other or are at least family friends. Nancy is defined in this scene by the other characters with name calling (girl, biscuit, dumb-ass white bitch) and by positioning her as the one who does not belong to the set. For example, she is not given a seat at the table. By calling Nancy as "biscuit", Heylia defines Nancy as something small and cute, it is a pet name in other words. Similar name calling is visible in other episodes as well. When the other characters call Nancy by names and particularly by pet names, she is put into an inferior position compared to the other characters. This is interesting, since at this stage of the series, Nancy is still a representative of the upper-middle-class and therefore part of a higher social class than Heylia or the other characters in the aforementioned scene. Being a representative of a higher social class works against Nancy here because it makes her different from the others.

Nancy's attitude to drug business is still quite naïve at this point and her status as a newbie is confirmed by not only her actions and expressions, but also by the other characters. After Nancy says “hey, that bag looks a little small”, everybody stares at her and then burst into laughter. Because Nancy is being laughed at, she is positioned as the outsider and as the one who has no respect from the other characters. As Nancy says “Fine. I'm a bitch- ass bitch” the other characters burst into laughter again, pointing out how Nancy cannot really make up a proper insult yet. Being an outsider is also supported by the setting of the scene; Nancy stays standing by the window while others sit by the table or move freely in the scene. Nancy sips cola from a glass and keeps to her distance to the other characters. She does not take much space and acts like a visitor, that is, she seems to be a bit unaware how to act and where to locate herself in the room. Nancy does not laugh with the other characters either and seems to be unable to laugh at herself. The last line in the extract, “Excuse me for trying to bring a little beauty into an ugly world” also tells a lot about Nancy's attitude to drug business. She tries to sugar coat dealing and brings forth her femininity through wrapping the money with a nice ribbon. Connecting these feminine features to drug business is a way of constructing Nancy's identity. Nancy herself emphasises her femininity and gender here by appealing to aesthetics. The way in which Nancy hands the money for Heylia is also important. Nancy makes it a big deal, plays with the money and hands it over like a gift. Nancy also moves around very femininely, keeps her hands close to her body, observes the situation and tries to belong to the group by taking part into the conversation.

In example (2) Heylia is in a position of a boss and Nancy acts as the employee. This is shown, for example, by Heylia's use of very strong language and in calling Nancy as a bitch and saying that Nancy “ain't shit”. Heylia thus constructs Nancy's identity through very negative expressions. Heylia's way of using language is justified by her position as the “boss” and her ethnicity. Like the other African-American characters, Heylia uses a lot of African-American vernacular, which differs from Nancy's' speech a lot. In addition, Nancy's speech is grammatically more correct than that of the black characters, Nancy does not use such strong expressions as the other characters in examples two and three. In the example (3), there is actually some ironical joking about stereotypes.

Example 3

Season 1 Episode 1

Nancy	It's stupid to buy a kid expensive shoes. He'll outgrow them in a day.
Conrad	You calling black people stupid?
Nancy	And lazy, and they also steal.
Heylia	But we sings and dances real good.
Conrad	White people steal. Enron, World Com. They be stealing billions of dollars, flush it through some overseas bank account... ..then sit on the beach and count they money.
Heylia	Somebody been listening to the good Reverend Sharpton.
Nancy	Maybe black people need to start stealing a little bit bigger.
Conrad	Maybe fucking so.

It is Conrad who initiates the topic by overreacting to Nancy's statement about buying expensive shoes to children. Though this kind of argument might be a serious one, here Nancy and Heylia joke about the stereotypes. When Heylia says “but we sings and dances real good” she brings clearly forth the ironic mode of the conversation. The structure of her utterance is also meaningful here: Heylia uses the plural personal pronoun “we” but the third person singular form of the verbs. Heylia tries here to emphasise the stereotypical way in which black people are thought to talk since she is also being very loud compared to others. Also Conrad's first turn in example (3) illustrates African American Vernacular since he has eliminated the use of “are” from the question “You calling black people stupid?”. Only the last two turns in this conversation hint that there might be some kind of real argument or irritation behind the joking when Nancy says “Maybe black people need to start stealing a little bit bigger” Conrad replies “Maybe fucking so”, ending the discussion. The discussion reflects the contradictory settings of the series. An effort is made to deconstruct stereotypes by presenting people of colour in multiple ways and by joking directly about the stereotypes. At the same time, however, some of the characters keep confirming the stereotypical beliefs and attitudes towards people of colour. For instance, in this scene, all the black people have been involved in drug business for a long time, in one way or another. In the discussion, Nancy is strongly defined by other characters as a white person, as the one who does not belong to the group.

The contrast between scenes (1) and (2) is drastic and brings forth how Nancy operates between several social positions, such as ethnicity, class and gender. At this point, Nancy is still predominantly still member of the upper middle class. Since the whole

series opens with this kind of a clear contrast between the “two worlds” I argue that the matter of social class and how a woman can deal with the change in her social position is quite important throughout the series. The pilot also presents well how Nancy navigates between the two worlds, showing how it is difficult to say in which category she belongs.

8.2 Doing business

In this chapter, aspects of the drug business are considered in relation to intersecting subject positions. Firstly, I discuss the importance of ethnicity in the illicit business and how being white is not always the superior position. Secondly, the acts of violence and the relation of violence and drug business are considered here.

8.2.1 White lady

Example 4

Season 1 Episode 5

(bullets shoot through window into the kitchen. Everybody ducks down except Nancy, who has to be pulled down.)

Heylia	Shit. Everybody all right?
Vaneeta	Yeah.
Conrad	I'm cool.
	Snowflake.
	Snowflake?
Vaneeta	She's in shock. Slap her.
Conrad	I ain't slapping no white woman.
Heylia	Move, I'll do it.
Nancy	No, I'm okay!
Conrad	You sure?
Nancy	Yeah.
	Yeah.
Heylia	All right, let's clean this shit up.
Nancy	Is somebody gonna call the police?
Heylia	Baby, that probably was the police.

This is the one of the first instance of dealing and violence in the series and therefore it is the first time that Nancy has to react to these. When the shooting happens, all of the black characters duck down and pull out a gun while Nancy stands still and has to be pulled down. Afterwards she is not able to stand up by herself. The distinction between the characters is clear here: black people who have been involved in drug business for a

long time see this situation as normal, whereas Nancy, a white upper class newbie in drug business, is completely paralysed by the situation. Since the situation is strange to Nancy and she lacks the knowledge on how to act, it is the location that mostly defines Nancy in this scene. Nancy is seen out of place and therefore she cannot act and she lacks the appropriate knowledge. Nancy's body movements, gestures and facial expressions are also part of the performance of identity. Nancy smiles nervously, lacks control of her own body and restricts her movements to a small space. As she lies on the floor, she is not able to stand up by herself but she is helped up. She seems to be in complete shock and lacks therefore the ability to act.

To the rest of the characters in this scene, calling Nancy with different names (“white lady”, “white girl”, “snowflake”, “Barbie”) is a way of defining Nancy's gender identity and social place. In this scene it is also a specific method for pointing out Nancy's ethnicity and therefore her intersectional position. Name calling is done by the other characters so it is an example of how other people and the environment categorise and define Nancy's identity. Being clueless and a newbie in the drug business is shown in Nancy's inability to react correctly to the shooting incident as well as in her avoidance of conflict situations.

The last utterance in this scene by Nancy, “Is somebody gonna call the police”, shows how perplexed Nancy is. She smiles nervously and keeps her hands to her sides, seeming very upset. Nancy has temporarily forgot that they are doing illicit business and calling the police would get them into trouble. Nancy has now faced something that she cannot cope with yet and is only starting to realise that drug business is dangerous. As Heylia answers to Nancy “Baby, that probably was the police” she voices out how ridiculous Nancy's suggestion of calling the police is. Nancy and the other characters in the scene are the criminals, but Nancy has not yet fully realised that. Facing violence has clearly come as a surprise to Nancy and she cannot hide it.

Example 5

Season 1 Episode 5

Nancy	I'm telling you, they could've been killed. When bottles fall from the sky like that, it's like little torpedoes. And they were everywhere. Coke in the
-------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

carpet,they were stuck in the walls...furniture was destroyed. It was a mess.

Heylia Please, that white girl gonna make out like Halliburton.

Vaneeta How much you want for this stuff?

Nancy No, nothing,she was giving it away, "so..."

Vaneeta Like I'm some charity case that needs your free white lady hand-me-downs?

Nancy No! I thought...

Conrad You got no problem going to church|and getting free cheese.

Vaneeta Heylia makes me go down there.

Heylia First of all, I don't make you do shit, little girl.

Heylia And second of all, I ain't ashamed.If it's free, it's me. And I don't turn down nothing but my collar.Third, don't act like|you don't like free cheese...just because this white child's here. Fuck her!

Nancy Yeah, fuck me.

Vaneeta No, I mean...I'll take them, since you brought them.

Conrad This is for you, snowflake.This is my special blend.I call this here Clark Kent. Just sniff this, right here. Sniff that.Sniff good, huh?Yo, you smoke this shit, and you wanna just....rip your clothes off in a phone booth and fight crime. I'm serious. Take that.Yo, just give a brother his keys, you can roll.

Heylia It's a big day! Barbie getting her dream car back.

Nancy I know.

Conrad I added a little twist to it for you.

..

Heylia Hey! Hey!Stop all that damn arguing.
This is a house of peace.

Telling a story about the soda pops and not finding her own place in Heylia's house are ways in which Nancy constructs her own identity and defines herself as belonging to the upper social class and to an other ethnic group. Nancy has brought old baby clothes for Vaneeta,, to which Vaneeta reacts by saying “Like I'm some charity case that needs your free white lady hand-me-downs?”. Bringing clothes for Vaneeta's unborn baby shows how Nancy wants to be nice and help a future mother. Vaneeta, however, is first offended by the act, since she sees Nancy only as a representative of the upper class white people who have more money. Nancy has not even considered the possibility of someone taking the act of kindness as a insult and is therefore perplexed by Vaneeta's words. Nancy takes a step back as if to emphasise how astonished she is by Vaneeta's reaction. It is clear that Nancy is rather unaware of the social classes.

In Season (3), episode (3), Nancy is confronted again with a situation in which her whiteness, gender and class intersect with the drug dealing business. In this example, Nancy enters a shady bar where all the people present are Spanish-speaking, non-white men. Nancy walks up counter but the bartender does not speak English, instead, Guillermo (a drug dealer) starts talking with Nancy.

Example 6

Season 3 episode 3

Nancy	Hola U-Turn sent me, I'm supposed to pick up a package. U-Turn... para obtengo el paquete..Any chance you speak French?
Guillermo	Ven aqui! You say U-Turn sends you?
Nancy	Yeah, U-Turn, he sent me, I'm supposed to pick up a package. Will you please tell him to open the door?
Guillermo	What's the matter? You don't speak Spanish?
Nancy	No, I don't.
Guillermo	How can you live in Los Angeles and not know Spanish? We're almost half the population here. Por ejemplo, if I told you... Conozco a este hombre que se llama U-Turn. Would you not like that?
Nancy	Well, that depends. What does that mean?
Guillermo	It means that maybe I do know this man who calls himself U-Turn.
Nancy	Then maybe you also have a package for me.
Guillermo	Maybe... I do.
Nancy	I have to be in court right now, so, let's just pretend that I reached for it another few times, and each time, you grabbed it away, so... Where does that leave us?
Guillermo	You ever get something for nothing in your life? I don't think so, and... it ain't gonna happen for the first time here.

When Nancy enters the scene, she makes it clear that she is following somebody's orders "U-Turn send me". She tries to say something in Spanish but fails. Nancy is represented here as insecure, she smiles and speaks softly so as not to irritate anyone. As a man locks the door, Nancy gets even more nervous and asks "Will you please tell him to open the door". Since Nancy does not speak Spanish, she cannot even communicate with anyone else than Guillermo in the scene. The inability to communicate makes Nancy rather passive and subordinate compared to Guillermo. Also Nancy's gender is emphasised in the scene since she is the only woman in the scene and since she acts in a highly feminine way, that is, smiling a lot, trying to be nice and taking only a small space in the scene. In addition, Nancy keeps sipping a cold Starbucks coffee drink from a plastic take-away cup through a straw, which makes her look even more girlish.

Later in the scene (see Appendix 1) Guillermo demands Nancy to dance. By making Nancy to do something and requiring the dance to be rather sexual, Guillermo tries to humiliate Nancy and show how he is in charge of the situation. Nancy's gender acts here strongly as a disadvantage, since she is required to use her femininity and beautiful looks to get the work done. At first, Nancy tries to dance in a rather small way, only making small movements. This does not please Guillermo, so Nancy states "Hold your horses Pedro", and climbs on to the pool table to dance. By saying "Hold your horses Pedro" Nancy finally shows some ability to be active and take charge. By calling Guillermo as "Pedro", she refers to the stereotype of Spanish speaking men being all called as "Pedro" and makes also fun of Guillermo at the same time. On the pool table, Nancy dances in a very sexual way, taking a lot of space. As Nancy realises that she has to dance as Guillermo wishes, she takes control and uses her sexuality to attract Guillermo so that he will give the package to Nancy. Nancy gets very close to Guillermo, being almost pressed against him and only then she and the music stop. Guillermo is pleased and gives Nancy the package. Using sexuality and gender as a tool to accomplish something becomes to work both for and against Nancy. On the one hand, she can use her looks and get what she needs, but, on the other hand, her business partners may require her to act in a certain way only because she is an attractive female, which puts Nancy in a subordinate position.

Nancy's status as a representative of the upper middle class is also clearly visible in this example. Nancy knows French, which she has learnt at school, but no Spanish, a language that is actually spoken in the area. Guillermo says "How can you live in Los Angeles and not know Spanish? We're almost half the population here", pointing out how Nancy does not belong to this group of "us", instead, he refers to people whose native language is Spanish and who are either Mexican or Latino. Since Nancy does not know Spanish, Guillermo implies that Nancy is quite separate from "half the population" in Los Angeles. In other words, Nancy lives in the white society of Los Angeles. Not knowing Spanish also contributes to the way in which Nancy is disadvantaged in this scene, emphasising her Anglo whiteness.

At times, however, Nancy's whiteness comes to act as an advantage for her in the drug business, though sometimes it also defines what kind of jobs Nancy can do. In season (3), episode (3), that is, in the same episode discussed above, Nancy owes money to U-

turn, a fellow drug dealer and is forced to work for him. Nancy is not able to decide herself what she will do, since she is in an inferior position compared to U-turn, a black dealer man. From now on, Nancy is regularly given jobs which require being white and preferably a woman. In the example, Nancy is visiting U-Turn, having a Starbucks take-away coffee with her, wearing a revealing black top, tight jeans and she has her hair nicely done.

Example 7

Season 3 episode 3

U-Turn	Lady brings me 7 Grand. What'd I do with 7 Grand? You'd wipe your ass with 7 Grand. This is bullshit. Marvin, go pick up one of her kids, and break his leg.
Nancy	That's all I've got. I'm waiting on some... pay pal payments. I promise I'll have more for you to wipe your ass with, soon.
U-Turn	You go work this off and trade.
Nancy	What kind of trade?
U-Turn	White... slave trade. Here. Go there. Tell'em I sent you. They gonna give you a package. Bring the package back to me.
Nancy	A package of what?
U-Turn	Package of whatever the fuck I tell you to pick up, bitch.
Nancy	You don't have to yell at me! When do you need it?
U-Turn	Right now.
Nancy	My son's being sentenced today.
U-Turn	That's just sad. You know, you should really get him in one of those after school programs, instead of letting him all run wild and shit.
Nancy	I'm glad you understand.
U-Turn	I don't understand a shit! Move some stuff around.
Nancy	I'll do my best.

Compared to the scene in season (1), here Nancy talks back and is actively part of the discussion, though she does not have anything to say of her assignments. Nancy does look, however, quite lost and intimidated. Her tone of voice is soft and she seems a bit out of breath. Nancy keeps sipping her Starbucks take-away, as if distracting herself from the situation. Nancy's body gestures undermine therefore her activeness, although she is clearly more active in this scene than before. Nancy's activeness is particularly visible when she says “You don't have to yell at me!”, defending herself. Here Nancy has adopted the gangster identity already partly so she is not afraid to speak. This point was made also by Long (2008) who noted that Nancy adopts a gangster identity during season (3).

At first, U-Turn calls Nancy a lady at first, but then sends her off to do “white slave work”, signalling that he does not consider Nancy to be a lady but that the term was

actually used as an insult. The kind of business that Nancy does defines not only her class but also her gender and ethnicity. Nancy's skills as a dealer are not taken into consideration here, but she is just seen as a pretty face to do a job. Being white and a woman make Nancy a good worker since she differs from other dealers and will not be killed as easily as the others. In fact, the fact that one cannot hit or kill a white woman or commit a crime in front of a white woman is mentioned several times during the series. Nancy's ethnicity works therefore both for and against her: it protects her life while forcing her to do dangerous jobs. Being a female drug dealer makes Nancy also a woman who works in a masculine field, emphasising her femininity and sexuality at times a great deal.

U-Turn threatens Nancy's children by saying "Marvin, go pick up one of her kids, and break his leg". Being a mother puts Nancy in disadvantage here since she can be blackmailed easily by threatening her children. As Nancy says "My son's being sentenced today" she also confesses not being a perfect mother. With the statement she also tries to get sympathy from U-Turn and more time for the given job assignment. Nancy does not, however, panic as U-Turn makes his threat. U-Turn gives Nancy some parenting advice, making the situation quite ironical, one would not take parenting advice from a criminal usually. In addition, U-Turn criticises Nancy's way of being a mother by saying "That's just sad. You know, you should really get him in one of those after school programs, instead of letting him all run wild and shit. " By evaluating Nancy's skills as a mother, but not as a drug-dealer, U-Turn connects Nancy's personal life to her job.

In season (4), episode (1), Nancy and Guillermo meet on a hill next to the Mexican border. They discuss their business deal and what Nancy's role is in it. They hardly look at each other, instead they stare at the border. Nancy is wearing a leather jacket, jeans, delicate jewellery and high heels. She has her messy hair in pigtails. Both Guillermo and Nancy stand rather still, they only turn to each other from time to time and smile a lot. Nancy is very firm and calm in her statements and the power-relation between the two seems to be rather equal in this scene since they negotiate as equals.

Example 8

Season (4) episode (1)

Nancy Listen, I'm still unclear. What's my job here?
 Guillermo Your job is to be a pretty american lady. Think you can handle it?
 And there's big money in it if you do it real good.
 Nancy Big, big money?
 Guillermo Phew, man, I'm two years from retirement myself.
 Nancy I won't bring heroin.
 Guillermo You got some arbitrary rules you live by. But you're standing
 here, aren't you?
 Nancy I won't bring heroin.
 Guillermo All right, then you bring in lots and lots of mota. you're still
 gonna make lots and lots of cash.
 Nancy And retire, right?

In season (4), episode (1), it is Guillermo who finally says it out loud: Nancy's job is to “be a pretty American lady”. Nancy's business partners take advantage of her ethnicity, gender and looks, since it is rare for someone like Nancy to be involved with the dealing business. Though Nancy will earn a lot of money by just being herself, she insists on not trafficking heroin. By stating “ I won't bring heroine” Nancy points out how she now has some power over her job assignments. By repeating the statement she also shows how she makes her own decisions and is now more aware of the business. Guillermo points out to Nancy that “You got some arbitrary rules you live by.” Although Nancy has been a drug dealer now for almost four seasons, she still does not want to get involved with hard drugs, only weed. Nancy being against drugs is brought up also previously in the series as she discusses with her children. Being a mother may therefore be the reason for dealing only weed, a “soft drug”. This is tolerated by Guillermo since Nancy is such an advantage for his business and she would be difficult to replace. Since Nancy is a mother, her sense of morality may be higher than that of other drug-dealers and therefore she wants to stay away from hard drugs. Nancy may be able to justify her career choice with the fact that she deals only marijuana, which is natural and organic.

8.2.2 Violence

In episode (1) of *Weeds*, Nancy is at a soccer game with her neighbour Celia. Nancy is wearing highly ordinary clothes (a long sleeved white T-shirt with print and khaki pants) and she looks very natural, that is, her hair is down and a bit messy and she is not wearing visible make up. The scene is very stereotypical, creating an image of soccer mothers. However, Nancy deals at the game too. In addition, when a boy chases Shane,

Nancy trips him in order to save Shane from getting into a real fight. This is a first instance of the many cases in which Nancy is seen physically defending her sons. Although the act here is not a very violent one, it is still clearly a defending act and harms the boy. In such acts of violence, Nancy's gender, class and ethnicity are all in question, since it is not considered to be typical for a white, upper-class woman to be physically violent.

In season (3), episode (12), a change takes place in Nancy's attitude towards violence. From now on, Nancy does not accept every insult without consequences. The scene happens in Nancy's nice kitchen. The kitchen still which defines Nancy as a mother and as an upper-class woman living in a good neighbourhood.

Example 9

Season 3 Episode 12

(Nancy grasps a knife and pushes Celia on the kitchen counter, holding the knife on her throat.)

Nancy	Okay. In my line of work, I realise... that I'm susceptible to blackmail, shakedowns... Whatever you want to call it. And up to now, I've been accommodating the extortionists in my life. But today. Call it bad timing, call it karma... I've reached a tipping point... A critical mass, if you will. And I'm done. No more. So, Celia... If you go to the police... If you continue to threaten me or my family in any way... I will kill you. I will kill you. I will end your life.
Shane	Mom! (yelps)
Nancy	Shane! Say hello to Mrs Hodes.
Celia	You are a fucking sociopath.
Nancy	Thanks for stopping by.
Shane	Were you really going to kill her?
Nancy	She threatened mommy. And we can't have that. So I had to scare her.
Shane	This is kind of how it's gonna be from now on.
Nancy	Yeah. I think it is.

This is one of the many cases in which Nancy uses violence against Celia. Since Celia is not a business partner, but a neighbour, using violence against her might be easier for Nancy; Celia is not used to violence, since she is just a housewife and not a dealer. However, Celia tries to blackmail Nancy, which causes Nancy to threaten her. Nancy talks to Celia in a soft voice, being very close to Celia and stroking her hair. Though Nancy is angry, she does not yell, but keeps her tone of voice low and keeps calm. In her first turn in the example, Nancy uses expressions such as “susceptible to blackmail”,

“accommodating the extortionists” and “a critical mass”. Using these kinds of expressions emphasises Nancy's belonging to the upper middle-class – the expressions are rather formal and academic. Using these expressions is quite appropriate in the scene, because Celia belongs to the same social class and therefore understands the used language well.

Nancy is wearing a fancy top and has nice jewellery on, hair tied in a knot. In short, she looks beautiful and feminine. Her feminine looks do not diminish her ability to use violence and, on the other hand, the violent act does not make her look any less feminine. When Shane enters, Nancy does not panic, but urges Shane to greet Celia like a good mother, which is rather ironical, after all, she is holding a knife at Celia's throat. Nancy has taken control of her physical power and explains that “She threatened mommy. And we can't have that.” Since Nancy calls herself as a “mommy” in this scene, she positions herself as a mother, rather than a drug dealer, although the act of violence would suit the position of a drug dealer better. Being a drug-dealer may have, however, enabled this kind of behaviour. As Shane says “This is kind of how it's gonna be from now on” and Nancy replies “Yeah. I think it is.” it is made clear that from now on, Nancy's career as a drug dealer is more visible for the family and that acts of violence come with the business. In other words, being a drug dealer may have empowered Nancy to act in ways which were not possible for her before.

Example 10

Season 4 Episode 5

Guillermo	But that's my name. How you know my name? How she know my name?
Celia	I don't want to die!
Guillermo	How you fucking know my name?
Nancy	She's with me.
Guillermo	Is that right? What's her name?
Celia	It's Celia.
A guy	He wasn't talking to you.
Nancy	She's my backup. Fucking bitch was supposed to stay in the car!
Guillermo	Why am I hearing about this now?
Nancy	I don't know. Why didn't you tell me about not putting drugs in my car or Lento the criminal or the Tijuana police? Isn't that how it works around here... nobody tells anybody anything?
Guillermo	Why she taking pictures?
Nancy	I don't know. Very good question. Give me that. Why are you taking pictures? Why are you taking pictures?

Celia	I was... scrap booking?
A guy	Damn!
Nancy	Nobody hits my fucking crew. That's my job!
Guillermo	That gun's loaded, Blanca.
Nancy	You hear that, fucko? Gun's loaded. Back off, man. Back away. Celia, get in the fucking Prius.

Compared to the scene in example (4), here Nancy shows activeness and an ability to think on her feet. Guillermo's men have found Celia outside his warehouse, taking pictures and Celia is now in danger to get killed. Nancy is first shown to be quite astonished to see Celia but she quickly realises how to act and save the situation. Nancy starts yelling to Celia, calling her “fucking bitch” to demonstrate how she is the boss and Celia a misbehaving employee. Nancy even yells to Guillermo, complaining about her previous assignment “Why didn't you tell me about putting drugs in my car or Lento the criminal or the Tijuana Police”. Nancy is able to yell at Guillermo, take the gun from him and even hit Celia with the gun (“Nobody hits my fucking crew. That's my job!”) because she has got used to the world of drug dealing and has witnessed violence before. Nancy's use of speech is now more authoritative and she is familiar with the “drug business lingo”. Nancy has the status of a dealer and, though she works for Guillermo, she is not afraid of speaking her mind. Nancy does not represent upper-middle class anymore, she is part of the same world as the other dealers, in other words, she belongs to the group of drug dealers now, she is not an outsider anymore. As Nancy's social class has changed, so has her tendencies to use violence. Despite the fact that Nancy has always been ready to defend her family, the changes in social class can be seen in Nancy's ways of using her physical strength, too.

Nancy takes more space in example (10) than before, she moves in the place quite freely and makes big gestures. Hitting Celia and a man with the gun, pointing with the gun at Guillermo's crew and being loud signal how Nancy has got used to violence and knows how to act. Although Nancy is being more active and violent, she still looks rather feminine and is shown to smile uncomfortably at times, signalling that she feels a bit out of place. In this scene, Nancy is wearing a fitting leather jacket, tight jeans and her hair is open and undone. This look is not the most typical for Nancy, but it makes moving around easy.

As Nancy becomes a member of lower social classes, she is not restricted by the environment that much, instead, her environment includes more danger and violence, which might encourage Nancy to be more active and use her physical power to defend herself and her family in every possible way. As the upper social class does not restrict Nancy's behaviour anymore, she becomes empowered. This does not mean, however, that Nancy becomes more violent from season to season. Being white still means that people of other ethnic groups do not interfere with Nancy easily and that for others, Nancy represents a person of the upper social classes, although she does not belong to them anymore. For example, in the example (4) a black character refuses to slap “a white lady”, and the same occurs several times during the series. Being white protects Nancy from some acts of violence though her descending in social classes has increased the possibility of facing violence. Being able to use physical power and be violent repeatedly produces a woman who is not restricted by the stereotypical assumption a feminine woman. At the same time, Nancy's looks stay feminine thorough the series, although her style varies so the acts of violence do not change her looks, that is, she does not become more masculine.

Since Nancy and Celia have fought before, being violent towards Celia is not a new thing for Nancy. Nancy saves Celia from Guillermo by being the one who hits Celia, and therefore the meaning of the conducted violence is two fold. Firstly, it showcases Nancy's abilities and power to Guillermo and, secondly, it saves Celia's life. However, during the span of eight seasons, Nancy does not ever really hit a man or physically fight with one. She does slap her sons and shoots Cesar to his leg, but most of her acts of violence are done to other women. For instance, Nancy is seen to fight with Celia and Heylia several times. She also argues with her sister Jill as well as with Peter's ex-wife and Pilar. Other women might be more equal in physical fights and therefore Nancy has some chance of winning the fights. In addition, fighting with the same sex may be easier than fighting with men, since Nancy and other men usually have some kind of sexual tension between them. The men in *Weeds* are, in addition, usually physically stronger than Nancy so fighting with them would not be sensible for Nancy. Nancy's gender therefore restricts her acts of violence.

8.3 Fleeing class

Through each crisis and change in the place of habitation and home, Nancy's class changes. By fleeing and changing her place of living, Nancy thus moves from one social class to another, always sifting from an upper class to a lower one. During the first three seasons, Nancy lives in Agrestic, in a big house in a nice upper-middle class neighbourhood. When the family moves to Ren Mar, into Nancy's late husband's childhood home, Nancy's social class goes down to the working class. While living in Esteban's house Nancy navigates between the upper class and the working class, after which she is defined by having no home and being clearly working class, if not lower. When she is in jail and after that in a half-way house, Nancy's social position is lower than ever, she is actually outside the class system entirely. At the very end of season (7), there is a hint, however, that Nancy could be climbing up in the social order again. The family moves to the city of Old Sandwich and lives in a big house, in the suburbia. At the end of the season (8) Nancy is again a member of upper-middle class, if not higher.

In the beginning of season (6), Nancy is ready to flee to save herself and her family from the Mexican mafia, especially from Esteban. In this scene, Nancy is wearing a black cocktail dress and strong make up. She does not look afraid, instead, she pulls out items which they will need on the run and orders Lupita, the housemaid, to pack too.

Example 11

Season 6 Episode 1

Nancy	Well, pack up you, pack up baby. We need to be out of here in five. Not coming back.
Lupita	¿Que paso?
Nancy	Muy muy malo vamos ahora rápido .Why am I fucking talking Spanish to you?
Lupita	Make. Go. Do now. Baby things. We're leaving.
Nancy	Hey, you wait a minute. I like this one. We both have that fiery Latin thing going on. And you better not let anything happen to this baby. You hear me?
Lupita	Gonna do my best.
Nancy	Crazy lady.

Nancy	How did you do that?
Lupita	I work for you. I'm always ready to flee. You should know yourself better.

Nancy

Will you call the goons and tell them we all went to the movies or something, so there's no weirdness at the gate? You know, in español. Senora. In español.

Lupita has been Nancy's housekeeper and babysitter already from the beginning of the series and now she has been taking care of Stevie. Lupita is Latino and speaks Spanish better than English. As Nancy enters the house, Lupita asks what the party was like. Nancy empties the fridge from formula, seeming to be very anxious to leave. Lupita asks “¿Que paso?” to which Nancy is now able to answer in Spanish with only a bit of hesitation “Muy muy malo, vamos ahora rápido”. As Nancy's social class has changed to a lower one, and as she has been a dealer for a longer time, she has also learned some Spanish. Nancy does, however, switch back to English by stating “ Why am I fucking talking Spanish to you?” This expression shows how Nancy has got used to using strong language. Since Lupita works for Nancy, she defines Nancy as part of the upper-middle class and therefore Nancy should not speak Spanish to Lupita but Lupita should speak English to Nancy. Lupita calls Nancy as “Crazy lady”, confirming the gap between her social status and Nancy's, Nancy being still a lady for her. Lupita does not though say this in front of Nancy but only when Nancy has climbed upstairs.

As Nancy returns downstairs with several bags with her, she finds Lupita all ready with only few bags and the baby. Nancy is astonished but Lupita replies “I work for you. I'm always ready to flee. You should know yourself better.” By this, Lupita means that Nancy always gets into trouble and one has to be ready to flee if working for her. As this statement is repeated in several other scenes by other characters, it may also imply, that people think they know Nancy better than Nancy herself. Expecting Nancy to get into trouble is also a way of defining Nancy.

In season (6), episode (2), the Botwins take new names and attempt to begin a new life. This is done because the family has fled from Esteban and now they are on the run, trying to hide. With this change, Nancy's social class as well as her looks and her job all change. She gets a wig, begins to work as a chamber maid in a hotel and starts preparing hash. The change in Nancy's looks and name also reflects the change in Nancy's identity. She is, once again, a single parent as well as a mother of a new born baby. By trying to change her identity Nancy tries to escape from her past and get rid of her old social positions. Example (12) is one of the many in which Nancy tries to

change her identity or use a fake name. In this scene, the family stands in a park, around a trash can and burn their old id's. Nancy is carrying Stevie, wearing a black skirt and a top.

Example 12

Season 6 Episode 2

Andy	Ladies and gentlemen, the Newman family. Good. Okay, hold hands.
Nancy	Let's go. We get it.
Andy	Yeah.
Andy	Well, we're not a minion anyway.
Nancy	The Newmans will succeed where the Botwins failed. They will live a normal life. They will find jobs. They will go to school. They will have hobbies. They will live a quiet, under-the-radar life. The Newmans will be a family.
Silas	What if I'm having second thoughts about being Mike?
Nancy	It's too late, Michael. We're out of Hooters gift cards.

As Nancy lists things which the Newmans will do, at the same time she is saying that the Botwins failed in all of them. By being the one to give the speech and define the Newman family, Nancy takes the position of the head of the family. As Nancy says “They will go to school”, she almost bursts in tears since she wants her boys to get a good future and education. Nancy does not, however, cry, but continues in a stable voice, looking decisive and appearing certain of her statements. After her speech, she throws confetti over the family and smiles. As Silas asks “What if I'm having second thoughts about being Mike?” Nancy answers, rather ironically, “It's too late, Michael. We're out of Hooters gift cards”(The family paid the fake id's partially with hooter gift cards). Because of their mother, the children have to accept having new names and identities. The statement also emphasises Nancy's role as the head of the family. Nancy attempts to have a “normal” life, including a normal job, having hobbies and getting her children going to school. Nancy hopes to live a life away from her past. Being on the run, however, makes it clear that the Botwins cannot have a normal life easily.

Since Nancy and the family are on the run, their social status is also rather unclear. They do not have a home nor long standing jobs, which are usually required to be included in working class at least. Being basically homeless and detected by FBI as well as the Mexican mafia make the example scene and Nancy's turns rather humorous. Nancy hopes for the best, but the possibility of her having a normal life is far-fetched. However, by changing their names and place of inhabitancy Nancy tries to change herself too. Although the effort is a good one, she finally ends up dealing again, since it is the only thing she knows. Though the family has fled from their home and given up their old identities, Nancy is still a drug dealer, now perhaps more than ever since she does not have a home or status of a upper-middle class housewife any more. Being on the run creates a situation in which Nancy can "escape" the pressure of a specific social class since, there is no business deals or home to define her.

In the beginning of season (7) in episode (2), Nancy speaks directly about her social position and constructs her identity through this narration. She has just got out from the prison and has fled from the half-way house for a few hours. Nancy is willing to start the dealing business again. She meets with Demetri, who is Zoya's brother and a potential business partner. Zoya, in turn, was Nancy's girlfriend in jail. In this scene, Nancy is wearing clothes borrowed from the half-way house, that is, she is not wearing her own clothes and looks a bit ridiculous in the 80's bright blue jacket suit. Wearing somebody else's clothes emphasises how Nancy is out of place in her life now, having no home, no proper status. As Nancy goes to meet Demetri, she loses the jacket, wearing then only a deep plunged black top with high waist blue skirt. She has strong eye make up and her hair has been curled in waves.

Example 13

Season 7 Episode 2

Nancy	Hi. I'm Nancy. I'm Zoya's
Demetri	I know who you are.
Nancy	I was hoping we could make a trade.
Demetri	You were hoping or Zoya was hoping?
Nancy	I'm here as a free agent.
	...
Nancy	I hear you get great shit from Afghanistan.
	...
Nancy	I figure 40, 50 pounds should be enough to start..After I move that, we can talk about opening up a permanent pipeline. We split 70/30. How does that sound?

Demetri It sounds like you got a lot of plans.
 Nancy No. I have no plans. I-I have, uh, a halfway house that wants
 25% of an imaginary salary. I have a family that decided to
 ambush me this morning. I have a 4-year-old who thinks I'm his
 aunt. Social status lower than homeless people and crack addicts.
 No. No, I have no plans.
 Demetri One pound. That's all I can get. One. Zero if you don't bring me
 that suitcase. And 60/40.
 Nancy What choice do I have?

In this scene, Nancy is the one who leads the negotiation and seems to be in control of the business. In other words, Nancy is the one who makes the business proposal, explains what she has on her mind and how the deal would work. “I figure 40,50 pounds should be enough to start. After I move that, we can talk about opening up a permanent pipeline. We split 70/30. How does that sound?”. Still, Nancy's social standing is at this time very low “Social status lower than homeless people and crack addicts.”, so she is desperate to start earning again and does not argue with the deal. Stating the social status out loud makes the situation very real. Nancy, who started out as a upper-middle class wife, is now an ex-inmate with no home or a job, in a new city in somebody else's clothes. Self-narration is used here to describe Nancy's social position from Nancy's point of view, which is rather unusual in *Weeds*. Now that she is not upper middle class, she is more at the same level with other partners in crime and knows how the business works. Nancy is more experienced, not a newbie anymore. She has also adopted a way of talking and acting that works well with the other drug dealers. Nancy speaks in a very matter of fact tone showing not much emotions. She is also much more calm than previously, her body movements are relaxed and there is no sign of the nervous smile, which was seen in several previous examples.

Despite the change of scenery, living in a half-way house and being unemployed and basically homeless define Nancy's class from the outside, in scene (13), Nancy voices out how she experiences her social status. What is interesting is that she tells it again to an almost stranger, potential business partner, and not her family or friends. Nancy even feels that her family “decided to ambush her”, showing how she does not feel strongly connected to the unit of family at the moment. Instead Nancy sees herself as outside the family. Previously family has been her reason for dealing, since Nancy has been the provider, but now she explains dealing as an attempt at upgrading her social status. However, getting her 4-year-old son back requires her to start earning quickly and improving her social status so her child acts at least as a partial motivator for dealing. Nancy's reason for confessing to Demetri is simple, by making herself seen as both a

professional dealer as well as a woman in a desperate situation she makes the business proposal sound more tempting.

8.4 Being a mother

Nancy's motherhood acts, firstly, as the reason for dealing, then it becomes the reason for using physical violence and, thirdly, it sends her to prison. During the series, there are several mother and son discussions in which Nancy's roles as both the mother and the dealer are portrayed well. In addition, the relationship between the sons and the mother is well reflected in these scenes. Being a mother is often presented as the most important thing for Nancy, and, therefore, it strongly defines her identity. Being a mother is part of being a woman, but it also connects to class as well as to sexuality and therefore I concentrate on the mother and son discussion here.

In season (2), Silas has got her current girlfriend pregnant and Nancy discusses the situation with Silas. Nancy indicates that she is in the superior position and gets to ask the question since she is the mother. Being a mother gives Nancy authority over her children. Example (14) illustrates a typical discussion, where Nancy is purely in the position of a mother and Silas in the position of a son. Nancy and Silas sit in Nancy's bedroom. Nancy looks stern and is wearing a baby blue long sleeve t-shirt.

Example 14

Season 2 Episode 5

Nancy	I ask the questions.
Silas	Alright.
Nancy	I'm the mother.
Silas	Okay.
Nancy	How did this happen?
Silas	You don't wanna hear it.
Nancy	Oh, but I really do.
Silas	If I had to bet, I'd tell you it was 3 weeks ago in my room, doggy style, when I pulled out the condom was gone. Megan has really strong muscles, must have sucked it...
Nancy	Stop! Stop! Stop!
Silas	You asked. Wanna be the cool mom.
Nancy	No. No, I don't. Million things in this world I wanna be. Cool mom...nowhere on that list.

Silas

I hope grandma is on that list.

Though Nancy is not the most traditional mother, she denies wanting to be “the cool mom”. However, the relationship between Silas and Nancy is quite good here, which is shown in the way in which Silas tells in detail how he got the girl pregnant. If the relationship between Nancy and Silas was distant, this kind of discussion would not occur. Since Nancy's children can confess to her even about sex, Nancy gets the role of “cool mom”, whether she want or not. However, since Silas describes the situation in such a detail, he might actually be ironical here, wanting to make Nancy uncomfortable. Nancy's eyes are seen to wander around as Silas tells about the sex positions and she seems rather shocked that Silas actually talks like that to her. Talking about sex is also a recurrent theme in the mother and son discussions in *Weeds*. Being able to talk with her sons about sex makes Nancy a mother who is not afraid of confronting also uncomfortable topics with her sons. In the beginning of season (2), Nancy is still, however, a representative of the upper middle class and is seen at home with her children a lot. Being a mother is therefore at this point very separate position of being a drug-dealer.

In season (3), in contrast, Silas is already part of the drug business, being involved in both growing and selling. In episode (11) from season (3), Nancy and Silas have another mother and son discussion in which Nancy talks first as the boss and then as the mother. The relationship between Nancy and Silas has changed and they are no longer only a mother and son, but they are also a boss and an employee. Keeping these two sides of the relationship separate is, however, difficult, which can be seen in how Silas and Nancy address each other through the conversation. The conversation takes place in Nancy's bathroom and bedroom, Nancy wearing a robe and having a glass of wine in her hand. Nancy is getting ready for a bath, lighting up candles. It is typical of Nancy to wear revealing clothes and have a glass of wine when having these mother and son discussions. In fact, Nancy's bathroom is several times the place where meaningful discussions happen.

Example 15

Season 3 Episode 11

Silas

Mom, we got to get rid of Tara.

Nancy Really?
 Silas She's untrustworthy.
 Nancy Last I counted,she was right on. And she wraps her money in those cute little Jesus ribbons. I'm thinking she's a keeper.
 Silas Look,i know you said not to involve Tara.
 Nancy That's right,I did.
 Silas And i know that you were worried that i would maybe break up with her.
 Nancy Let me guess --I was psychic?
 Silas You were right. Okay,you were right,and i was wrong. I get it. I got it. But we need to get rid of her.
 Nancy No,my dear. You need to suck it up and make nice.
 Silas So,that's it? You're picking her over me? Why can't you back me up for once?
 Nancy This is not your mommy talking. This is your boss. So I suggest you listen to now.
 Silas What?
 Nancy Tara's my top earner. And when you bring in what she brings in without getting emotional or fucking up, You can make demands. But until then ,keep your head down and learn. She stays... And you get over it. Now... As your mother... I am sorry it's not working out between the two of you. I'm sorry if she hurt you. Little bitch. You're too good for her. And I love you very much. And you could use a hair cut.

Silas begins the discussion by addressing Nancy as “mom” to which Nancy replies as if responding to this title “mom”. However, in the middle of the conversation, Nancy says “This is not your mommy talking. This is your boss.” By stating this, Nancy wants to separate the business and family from each other as Silas has been clearly emotionally invested in Tara and needs his emotions to affect the business decisions. Nancy has previously warned Silas about getting involved with Tara and now Silas has to admit that she was right. When Nancy says “Let me guess-- I was psychic?” she is being ironical and not very considerate of her son's feelings. As Nancy takes the position of the mother, she makes it clear by saying “ As your mother..”. After this, she expresses her emotions and shows sympathy to Silas. Nancy even comes rather close to Silas at this point of the conversation to emphasise her role as a loving mother. Nancy expresses love towards her son and even makes a remark about having a haircut, which is rather humorous and ironical. Nancy talks to Silas in a soft voice as she is in the position of mother, as boss, she is more neutral and calm. The distinction between being in the position of a boss and a mother is quite clear, even the physical distance between Silas and Nancy during the discussion varies depending on Nancy's position. Silas tries to define Nancy as his mother through the conversation, for example “You're picking her over me? Why can't you back me up for once?”, so it is only Nancy who makes the

distinctions in her position and places herself clearly within two different positions in this scene.

In Season (6), Episode (7), Nancy and the family are visiting an amusement park. Nancy and Shane have a talk about Shane being still a child and Nancy wanting to still raise him, no matter if he's in his teens already. Shane has killed a woman at the end of the Season Five and the family is now on the run. Nancy is wearing a large sun hat and a light top and denim skirt. Shane and Nancy are playing a game in the amusement park and discuss.

Example 16

Season 6 Episode 7

Shane	Like you?
Nancy	What? No, that's not...
Shane	We're the same.
 Nancy	 Okay. Don't try to tell me what I am. All right? I know what I am. I've been what I am a lot longer than you've been what you maybe are. And even if you are "like me," you're still a boy. Smart, so smart, but a little lost. And, Shane, listen, it's my job to make sure you don't turn out to be a psychopath. Okay? So if that means dragging you to some amusement park or slapping you on the head every time you say "cunt" or "bitch" or "mother fucking cunt," I'm gonna fucking do it, okay? Because I'm still your mom. And I haven't finished trying to be your mom. Okay?

Nancy talks about parenting as her “job”, which she has done also before. By referring to parenting as a job, Nancy emphasises the importance of motherhood for her- it is her first job, everything else comes after. By using the word “job” Nancy also expresses how being a mother is a responsibility and something that she has to do. As Shane suggests that “ We're the same”, Nancy gets defensive and annoyed. Her hand gestures get bigger and she turns to Shane. Nancy says “Don't try to tell me what I am. All right? I know what I am.” Though this statement is meant for her son, it tells a lot about Nancy. By expressing this, Nancy defines herself and excludes any definition of her done by others. Nancy puts her hand around Shane's shoulders and start walking with him, lowering her voice as she explains to Shane what she means. Being “like me” refers here to being a criminal or being involved in illicit business at least. Shane feels that he and Nancy are “the same” since he has committed a crime now too. They stop as Nancy says “ And Shane, listen..” Nancy tries still to protect Shane and “make sure

you don't turn out to be a psychopath”, showing how she knows that Shane has not turned out as a perfect son but she is at least trying to raise him to be a good person.

Nancy uses very vivid tone of voice and rapid gestures as she explains the ways in which she tries “to make sure you don't turn out to be a psychopath”. As she notes that she doesn't like Shane swearing, “slapping you on the head every time you say “cunt”, she ends the statement with “I'm gonna fucking do it, okay”, making the situation rather ironic. By using strong language to teach her son not to swear shows well what kind of a mother Nancy is. She means well but does not perhaps realise that she acts as an example for the boys. Nancy wants Shane to choose his own path, and not to become criminal like her. Nancy makes it clear that she still has morals and will to raise Shane as she says “ And I haven't finished trying to be your mom.”

Example (17) reflects the same idea as in example (11). Nancy is willing to change, again, and wants the whole family to change. This time, however, the will to change relates to Nancy's accident. Nancy has been shot and, she has lost part of her memory, and needs rehabilitation to be able to walk by herself. Example (17) is from season (8), episode (2). Nancy is still in hospital and discovers that a dealer clown charges extra from the sick people. Shane and Nancy have a discussion in the hospital hallway.

Example 17

Season 8 Episode 2

Nancy	Was I like that? A douche? A- a gouge-y clown douche?
Shane	Well, at least your customers weren't sick.
Nancy	Sickness is relative. I think I was a bad person. I don't want to be like that any more.
Shane	Okay. Good for you.
Nancy	N- no. No. Good for all of us. We're not gonna be like that any more. That was the "before" Botwins. Now... We're the "after" Botwins, like those people on the weight-loss ads. "Before"... unhappy. "Now"... Lovely and better dressed... With our hair done too 'cause we're... we're feeling good about ourselves, right? You notice how they're only ever smiling in the "after" photos? The smiling makes a big difference. Let me see you smile, honey. Come on. Really?
Shane	Mom, this is dumb.

Nancy looks older and vulnerable in this example. Her eyes wander around, facial expressions reflecting sadness, hope and happiness in turn. She seems to be very distant from her old gangster-identity, of which she talks like she does not remember it at all. Nancy is wearing a colourful t-shirt, shorts and pink knee stockings, in other words, she does not look like herself. She is not able to walk without support yet and has a bandage on her forehead. Nancy talks in a rather soft voice too, emphasising her weakness and tiredness. By stating that “I think I was a bad person. I don't want to be like that any more” , Nancy voices out a need to change herself. However, by talking about herself, she actually means that the whole family should change, “We're not gonna be like that any more. That was the “before” Botwins.” The idea of changing the whole family is similar to her wish, illustrated in example (10). Nancy seems to think that, although her children are almost adults, they are still so strongly connected to her that they will change as she does. By smiling a lot, Nancy tries to convince Shane and tries to get Shane to smile, too “Let me see you smile, honey. Come on.” As Shane struggles to get a real smile on his face, Nancy seems disappointed.

Being a mother and drug-dealer at the same time is a struggle for Nancy since what is right or wrong depends on the position (mother or drug-dealer). Nancy starts dealing in order to be a better mother and to be able to provide for the family. However, the drug dealing business starts quickly taking more and more of Nancy's time, and the children do not get to spend time with their mother. The drug dealing also puts the whole family in danger several times, so Nancy's decision to start dealing as a way of earning does not profit the family that much. The social class of the whole family does, however, change because of Nancy's career choice. However, Nancy's ways of parenting stay roughly the same throughout the series, since, already from the beginning she has used drastic measurements to protect her children. Nancy also expresses love for her children in each season in a similar manner. Likewise, Nancy's attitude towards drugs in general stays the same: she does not approve hard drugs and makes sure that her children know that drugs are wrong, and that the drug business is dangerous.

8.5 Sexual encounters

In episode (6) of season (1), the opening and closing scenes depict Nancy's sexuality and her yearning for her late husband. The definition of sexuality is here done by Nancy herself, not by others. It is shown how she tries to masturbate in the first scene of the

episode and in the last scene how she watches a videotape of her and her husband while sitting on the floor in her bath robe, almost bursting into tears. Missing her husband is depicted as something very private, it is only the scenes in the bedroom that tell about Nancy's yearning. Although Nancy is a widow, it is clearly not something that she wants to define her. However, Judah is hardly even mentioned by Nancy, although the death of her husband is referred to several times in the series, especially in the first season. After this scene, Nancy's sexuality becomes to be dealt with in a very different way.

In several scenes, Nancy is seen having sex with men with whom she does not have a relationship. On the other hand, Nancy gets married twice during the span of eight seasons and has long relationships with them, though it could be argued that the relationships are based on business agreements. Firstly, Nancy marries Peter in season (2) because in this way she will avoid getting into jail: Peter provides protection for her as long as she tells him about other dealers in the neighbourhood. In season (5), Nancy marries Esteban, because she is pregnant and marrying Esteban will provide her protection.

Sex is usually depicted as rough and it is not considered as "love making". However, although typically it is the man who is depicted to have the power in aggressive sex, in the sex scenes of *Weeds*, it is clearly Nancy who makes the first move and is in control of the situation. Sex happens most often in places where also business meetings happen. As Nancy's social class descends, the number of her sexual partners increases, though she never cheats, nor dates several men at the same time. Not having to keep up an image of a good upper-middle class mother may, in fact, provide Nancy more freedom to express her sexuality.

In season (3), episode (10), Nancy has sex with her current boss, Sullivan, who has also been dating Celia. The scene takes place in Sullivan's office after Nancy has entered in a little black dress, wearing make up and having high heels on. Nancy sits at the table and raises one of her legs on the table, bringing her high heeled shoe in focus and revealing a lot of bare skin.

Example 18

Season 3 Episode 10

Nancy	So fire me instead.
Sullivan	But I like you. You're a shitty assistant, but your skin's like milk, and you're almost as smart as I am.
Nancy	If you make this easy for me, let me steal all the office supplies I want, we can do it on the table before I go.
Sullivan	You would have been a killer in business if you hadn't pissed away all your potential on the mommy track.
Nancy	Yeah. I guess it wasn't meant to be. Look at you, anal. Shouldn't you just sweep everything off and ravage me like a real man?
Sullivan	I spent the whole day organising this shit. You bitch !
Nancy	Oh yeah, I'm bad. Punish me!

In this scene extract Nancy is the one who makes the suggestion of having sex quite casually, without any romantic reference. In fact, she suggests sex as a part of her resigning. By being the one who makes the initiative and who even urges Sullivan by saying “Shouldn't you just sweep everything off and ravage me like a real man?”, Nancy clearly controls the situation and defines herself as a woman who gets what she wants. Nancy even makes it clear by her aforementioned question that she likes “a real man”. Since the men with whom Nancy has sexual encounters are all in one way or another dangerous, they come to define Nancy as a person who does not settle for ordinary but seeks excitement. Having sex with these men may also be strategic for Nancy, since it helps her to make deals with the men. Though Nancy may use sex as a tool, she is usually shown to enjoy the sex.

Sullivan defines Nancy in the example as “a shitty assistant”, “having skin like milk”, “almost as smart as me”, “potentially a killer in business”, “a mommy” and “a bitch”. With these definitions, Sullivan constructs Nancy's identity as a beautiful and smart white woman who is also desirable. Nancy's subject positions as a woman, mother and a white person intersect in this Sullivan's definition. By pointing out that Nancy has “skin like milk” Sullivan makes a comment about not only Nancy's skin tone but also the feel of her skin. That is to say, Nancy's skin is perfect in Sullivan's opinion. Sullivan also states “if you hadn't pissed away all your potential on the mommy track”, pointing out how being a mother has ruined Nancy's chances in the business world. Although Nancy is a mother, it has not, however, ruined her sexiness, but only her business chances in Sullivan's opinion. The fact that Nancy has barely any education reflects in Sullivan's comment “You're a shitty assistant” since Nancy is not qualified for being an

assistant and has not done her job well. Being “a bitch” is in this context only positive, Nancy seeks to be a bitch in order to get Sullivan have sex with her and Sullivan does not seem to mind the way in which Nancy acts.

Although Nancy is presented as heterosexual for most of the time, there are also hints of fluid sexuality and in season (7), for example, Nancy is seen to have a relationship with her cellmate. Nancy's reasons for having a relationship with a woman may be questionable, but because she is seen to have sexual encounters and a relationship with a woman, her sexuality comes to be defined as non-heterosexual. This does not, however, seem to be a meaningful thing in the series, since Nancy still has sexual encounters with men and the question of her sexual orientation is not discussed much. Being potentially bisexual does not therefore place Nancy automatically in a subordinate position. Since Nancy used her sexuality to gain something from a woman, the reason for this relationship and encounter may be same as the reasons for the other sexual encounters. The meaning of the sex of the partner diminishes as sex is seen as way of using power. Though the idea of Nancy being bisexual is not discussed in the series, the possibility of bisexuality is visible for the viewer since Nancy has relationships with men and a woman.

In season (7), episode (8), Nancy and Zoya are clearly hinted having sex, although the act is not shown. Afterwards Nancy goes to Demetri's bedroom and has sex with him, and this time the act is shown. Nancy's fluid sexuality is hinted and although the relationship between her and Zoya is real, Nancy is never seen to really have sex with Zoya. In this way, the narration of the series diminishes Nancy's potential bisexuality by emphasising the heterosexual encounters and hiding the homosexual ones. In the scene in which the sex between Nancy and Zoya is hinted at, Zoya is represented as being in the more powerful position than Nancy. Nancy is sitting on a couch in Demetri's apartment, looking perplexed since she has just realised that Zoya is out of prison. Nancy is wearing a blue, revealing dress and has her hair down.

Example 19

Season 7 Episode 8

Nancy	How did you get out?
Zoya	I can make deals, too.Go to your room, little boy, and take your shit with you!
Demetri	Hee-haw!

Nancy	Uh! H-he smelled like you.
Zoya	He is not me. What happened to our dream, Nancitchka?
Nancy	Huh?
Zoya	Vermont?
Nancy	I-I just needed to make a little money...
Zoya	Who do you belong to? Nancitchka... Tell me. Who?
Nancy	You.
Zoya	Good answer.

As Zoya orders Demetri to go into another room, she takes a knife and reaches Nancy. Zoya grasps Nancy from hair and is very close to her, keeping the knife against her skin as if it was sensual. Zoya does not want to hear any explanations from Nancy, instead, she silences her by putting her hand on Nancy's mouth and asks “Who do you belong to?”, making sure that Nancy is still her lover. As Zoya starts caressing Nancy, Demetri is seen to open the door slightly and watching. Demetri and Nancy keep eye contact as Nancy answers to Zoya's question “You”. Nancy is rather immobile during the whole scene, she is first kissed by Demetri, then almost threatened by Zoya and then Zoya starts caressing her, leading to sex. Both Demetri and Zoya thus do things to Nancy, Nancy is not seen as the active participant in this scene. Since Nancy does not know how to act, so she does not act at all. Being more passive than her sexual partner is not typical for Nancy, on the contrary. Since being passive is not typical for Nancy, it is very meaningful. Being still and touched by others, not taking charge is a sign of surrendering to the situation and losing power.

It seems that, as Nancy encounters another powerful woman, she is not automatically in the power position. Nancy's stereotypically heterosexual looks do not provide her power over Zoya though Zoya is attracted to Nancy. Zoya calls Nancy as “Nancitchka”, a pet name, signalling that Nancy is “hers”. In the example scene Zoya is, however, dominant mainly because she has found Nancy kissing with Demetri and is therefore angry with Nancy. Zoya is portrayed as a criminal, more than Nancy since Nancy is astonished of how she got out.

Nancy's sexuality could define her as a unfit-woman, a woman with questionable morals, but in *Weeds*, Nancy uses sex both as a way of surviving and to gain pleasure for herself. In this her behaviour aligns with neo-feminism, which sees that women have become more independent and liberated through activeness in sex (Radner 2011). In *Weeds* there is no time when Nancy would have sex just because the man wants it. Sex

and sexuality connect strongly to power, and therefore Nancy's sexuality puts her into a powerful social position. She is seen as liberated with her sexuality, every man seems to want her and Nancy uses it as a negotiating tool in several drug business meetings.

8.6 The season finale

The last episode of *Weeds* begins with a similar scene as the first episode of the series. Nancy is at a PTA meeting and parents in the room are gossiping about her. Most of the parents present are men, Nancy being therefore very distinct character in the scene. Nancy is, however, wearing a flimsy, colourful dress and sipping a cold coffee drink so she looks the same as in the previous seasons and not like an upper-class lady. Nancy has, however, climbed back to the upper middle-class and is clearly older now. She seems relaxed, but frustrated, since the PTA meeting is not going well and the topic is stupid from Nancy's point of view. The situation is therefore rather similar to the first episode of *Weeds*.

Example 20

Season 8 Episode 1

Father3	Is that the widow?
Father2	Yep. She was married to that rabbi who went over the cliff on Avernous Road.
Father3	Oh.
Father2	Swerved to avoid a bear.
Father3	I heard about that.
Father1	...protects against concussions.
Father2	She's the one who owns all those stores.
Nancy	They're hot and sweaty and expensive, and you can't properly hear in them.
Father3	She's rich and thin.
Father2	Your wife's rich.
Father3	My wife's a potato.

As Nancy stands in front of the classroom, arguing against the head of the PTA, two men, sitting in the classroom, gossip about Nancy. Nancy's husband has died so she is a widow again. Unlike in the first episode of *Weeds*, in this example, the definition done by the parents is positive and factual. The fathers see Nancy as “rich and thin”, as someone whom they desire. Nancy is known to own “all those stores”, the men are not just guessing what or how Nancy is doing. Nancy has worked her way back to the same

social class from which she began. Now she is, in fact, doing better than in the very beginning of the series since she owns a chain of legal marijuana cafes. Nancy can now provide for her family. Nancy is, however, judged because of this (see Appendix 2) since she is only present at the PTA when some decision affects her son. Nancy is defined by the leader of the PTA as a bad mother since she does not participate in PTA as much as the other parents do. Although Nancy is not a dealer anymore, and although she is able to provide for her family, she is still not good enough mother in the eyes of the PTA. Being a successful, working woman intersects in this scene with being a good mother. The ironical thing is that all the other parents in the example (19) are men who seem to have time to attend PTA meetings all the time. It is usually the men who are absent from these kinds of events, for instance, in example (1) all the parents present were female.

As the first scene of the last episode of *Weeds* is very similar to the first scene in the last episode of *Weeds* the series seems to be left off where it started, although the circumstances are rather different. When considering the meaningfulness of repetition in relevance to identity construction, the emergence of highly similar scene at the very end and very beginning of the series is important. As identity is seen to be constructed as a process, a comparison between the first and last episode reveals well the features which have either stayed the same or changed in Nancy during the span of eight seasons.

The most visible change has happened in Nancy's looks. Having small wrinkles on her face reveals that Nancy is much older in the last episode than in the first. Nancy's hairstyle is also rather different. In example (1) Nancy's hair has very dark, shiny and well set, whereas in example (20) her hair does not look so shiny anymore and she has some lighter stripes, which makes her look older too. Her choices in example (20) are rather casual and typical of Nancy, a colourful flimsy dress, whereas in the first example Nancy wore clothes that suit an upper-middle class soccer mother. However, in both of these examples Nancy is part of the upper-middle-class, so the change in style reflects also Nancy's personal style and ageing, not only her social class.

As for Nancy's embodied actions and actions are concerned, in both examples she tries to act for the benefit of her children, but fails to do so since other members of PTA disagree. Nancy smiles a lot, talks in a soft tone of voice and though she is involved in a

argument, she does not argue per se, she discusses. In the Example (20) Nancy is, however, more relaxed since she sips her coffee drink and her smile is more relaxed than in the first example. In both examples the head of the PTA criticises Nancy as a parent, so the other characters define Nancy as a bad mother in both of these examples. In addition, in both Examples (1 and 20) it is the other parents who define Nancy as a widow. Nancy herself does not define herself as a widow during the series more than once as she watched the video about her and her husband as discussed in 8.5. As all the characters present in both of the discussed examples are white, Nancy does not differ from them in that way.

8.7 Summary

Chapter (8) showcased the way in which Nancy and the other characters interactions construct Nancy's identity. In addition to talk, also actions as well as embodied actions were shown to be part of the process of constructing identity. The data was analysed with the help of several examples from each season of *Weeds*. The intersectionality of the protagonist was kept in focus while discussing different kinds of scenes, all of which were typical scenes for the series. First, the beginning of the series was analysed and then focus moved on to scenes which concentrate on drug business. The scenes focusing on drug business were also particularly important in relevance to ethnicity so the subject position of being a white female dealer was discussed in 8.2.1. Since drug business forces Nancy to face more violence, the acts of violence and how Nancy becomes to adopt a gangster identity was discussed in 8.2.2. In 8.3 scenes including clear evidence of changes in social class were analysed. Mother and son discussions were then brought in focus in 8.4 and Nancy's positions as a mother and a drug dealer were analysed. Nancy's sexuality and ways of using sex as a tool was analysed with the help of examples in 8.4. Finally, the season finale of the season eight was introduced and discussed in relevance to the first episode of *Weeds*.

The analysis revealed that for Nancy, being white is actually quite often a subordinate subject position. Nancy's gender, on the other hand, worked as a privilege more often than not. Being white and female did not prevent Nancy from using physical violence although it may have prevented her from fighting physically with men. Changes in

social class made Nancy's subject position usually more subordinated and had an effect on her other subject positions, too. Nancy's ways of mothering did not change drastically during the series though her status as a drug dealer became more dominant at times. Nancy's sexuality became more fluid during the span of eight seasons, reflecting also the changes in her social class.

9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at finding out how the intersectional identity of a female protagonist *Nancy* is constructed. The data included all 8 seasons of *Weeds* and in the analysis 20 scene extracts were analysed in detail with the help of the concepts of performativity, subject position and intersectionality.

Being white and a representative of upper-middle class is usually a privileged subject position. However, when a person faces situations in which white upper-middle class people rarely operate, the subject position ceases to be privileged. In *Weeds*, Nancy operates at first between two worlds; one in which her status as a white upper-middle class woman is a benefit and makes her fit into the social group and surroundings. In the other world, being white upper-middle class woman makes Nancy distinct from others and sets her in a subordinate position. Also Long (2008) found that in an environment that is usually governed by other ethnic groups Nancy's whiteness is a disadvantage. Since a certain social position can place a person into both subordinated and privileged position, depending on the society's structures, there cannot be said to be such subject positions that would always be either subordinated or privileged. Nancy moves from a position that is commonly considered to be privileged to such positions that are more and more subordinated in several ways. As subject positions are performed all the time, the ways in which the positions are performed construct Nancy's identity constantly.

As exemplified in the analysis chapter, Nancy's subject positions intersect in several ways. It is difficult to concentrate only on class, since ethnicity is strongly connected to class and on the other hand, being a woman is connected to both class and ethnicity. One is never just of some ethnicity but a gendered representative of an ethnic group. Being a white woman in drug business is a benefit and a disadvantage. After descending

in the social ladder, Nancy becomes more accepted though she is still as white and as feminine as before. A change that occurs only in one social position may therefore interestingly affect the way in which the other subject positions are perceived as well though the performance of the other subject positions would stay the same. In *Weeds*, sexuality and gender are connected strongly, as well as class and sexuality. Being free from restrictions set by the upper class, Nancy feels more liberated with her sexuality. Society's structures therefore affect individual's actions a lot. Expectations of a particular social class guide the behaviour of a person and may even restrict person's actions. In Rossi's (2011) study on *Gilmore Girls* the female protagonist was also seen to act more freely, not minding society's opinions once she was liberated from the expectations of upper social class. Identity construction is therefore clearly affected by the other characters, individual choice as well as the society's structures.

Although Long (2008) depicts well Nancy's gangster identity "evolution" the analysed data restricts the conclusions drastically. Because Nancy gives birth to a new baby in season (6), her motherhood does not actually diminish at any stage. In Long's (2008) view Nancy's female gangster identity becomes primary compared to the mother-identity but as identity construction is studied with the concepts of subject position and intersectionality in the present study, evaluating the identities seems needless. As discussed before, a post-structuralist view on intersectionality considers that all the social variables are as penetrating and important, therefore comparison between the importance of different variables is needless here. More than becoming affirmatively the female gangster than the mother, Nancy is a female and a woman all the time and therefore the construction of gangster identity is only part of the construction of Nancy's identity. Nancy has never been a conventional mother and she has been judged as a mother throughout all the seasons of *Weeds*, although she has always loved her sons very much, as could be seen in the example scenes in 8.4. Unlike Hertel (2010), I argue that Nancy is also clearly the head of the family since she makes often decision for the whole family. Being a mother has never diminished Nancy's sexuality and through the example scenes (6, 17) it became actually evident that motherhood was seen to only ruin Nancy's career options and make dealing even more dangerous since it is not only Nancy who is threatened but also her family. As Nancy has repeatedly represented a loving mother, her subject position as a mother defined her strongly. On the other hand, Nancy is presented as sexually active woman. As a result, these two subject positions do

not exclude each other in *Weeds*, in contrast, *Weeds* provides a subject position of a mother who can also be sexually desirable woman.

Both Hertel (2010) and Long (2008) considered Nancy's position as a white drug dealer to be exceptional as well. Hertel (2010) argues that Nancy is a new kind of a heroine for television series while Long (2008) states that since the series concentrates on Nancy maintaining both family and work, it draws from the feminist sitcom tradition. Reasons for dealing do not matter after the beginning of the series that much, since being a dealer becomes a part of Nancy's identity, it is not questioned as a way of earning since it is also a part of who she is. Being a dealer enables more acts of violence although Nancy has protected her sons also previously actively. Protecting her children is the most valid reason for Nancy to use violence, being a drug dealer makes it only more acceptable for her in the face of the society. The acts of violence are present throughout the series, although the volume changes. It is my argument, therefore, that Nancy does not become more violent as she adapts the gangster identity, but that she just becomes more active and the acts of violence become slightly more aggressive. Nancy also adapts new expressions and an appropriate way of talking within the drug dealer scene. Nancy's femininity does not diminish at any point either so activeness and femininity do not exclude each other in *Weeds*. Also Long (2008) found that Nancy's femininity did not diminish after she adapted the gangster identity. Therefore, *Weeds* does, in its' own way, provide new subject positions for women and challenge the ways in which women are typically presented on Television.

Nancy's style changes drastically during the series, reflecting the change in her social standing. Besides reflecting social class, having a personal style and sipping take away coffee constantly are signs of visible consumerism. Neo-feminism sees consumerism as a way of constructing one's identity as well, since it supports individual choice (Radner 2011). The take away cups are a sign of belonging to upper social class since after Nancy descends in the social ladders, she is no longer seen to carry a take away coffee drinks with her so often. It could be argued therefore that consumerism is visible also in Nancy's identity construction. In the beginning, Nancy dresses like an upper middle class soccer mom; jeans, pastel colours, relaxed clothing, simple tops. After Nancy adapts to the drug dealing scene more, her style changes to more relaxed and sexy; jeans and flimsy tops, a lot of silk and light fabrics. Nancy starts wearing more revealing clothes,

small dresses with vibrant colours, very high heels and more make up. Emphasising sexuality can be seen as a strategic tool which helps Nancy to navigate in the male-dominated field. Nancy also uses sex as a tool to gain something, she is active in getting sex. Nancy's sexuality is also represented as fluid since she has a relationship also with a woman.

Being an outsider or belonging to a group is also a strong strategical tool of constructing identity. Rossi (2008) discussed the idea of belonging to a group or being excluded from one as important part of identity work. Nancy was seen in the example scenes often as the outsider, particularly in the beginning of the series. Nancy was first seen to be an outsider in the PTA meeting as well as in Heylia's house. Afterwards she becomes more familiar with the drug dealing scene and starts sort of belonging to the group of drug dealers though her ethnicity and gender make her distinct from the other dealers. Being constantly an outsider in one way or another defines Nancy's identity strongly. Operating between two worlds sets Nancy in a position in which she does not completely belong into either of these worlds. Hertel (2010) did, however, argue that Nancy connects these two worlds together by operating between them. Although Nancy does connect the two worlds, she is left in between for a long time. Not belonging to a groups makes an individual subordinate compared to the people who clearly belong to a certain group. Nancy belongs only strongly to her family but as she goes to jail she is detached from her family. It is interesting to note that not belonging strongly defines Nancy's identity construction and brings forth clearly how the intersecting subject positions either separate or attach one to a particular group.

The initial hypothesis of mine was that all the features of Nancy's identity can be detected already in the very beginning of the series. However, the analysis of the eight seasons of *Weeds* revealed that at least the ways in which Nancy's sexuality is performed changes, in other words Nancy's sexuality becomes more fluid. As Cover (2004) suggested, transformation in a character's identity often happens as the character is faced with a drastic change, new setting or new people. Being in jail might be seen as the reason for the change in Nancy's sexuality since the setting as well as the people are completely new for Nancy. Although being in jail is a new setting for Nancy, the overall reason for change in Nancy's sexuality is caused by the change in her social class. The society's structures affect Nancy so that as she no longer belongs to the upper social

classes, she is not restricted that much, the most visible change being in Nancy's sexual behaviour. Since Nancy has descended in the social ladders already before getting into jail, she has been sexually liberated for a while already before having a relationship with a woman. Other points of transformation can be also detected in *Weeds* and often they are voiced out by Nancy's need to change (Examples 19 and 11). However, Nancy's will to change often changes her temporarily only. Though the ways in which Nancy's subject position intersect change during the span of eight seasons, Nancy's identity stays rather coherent throughout the series. She is constantly a mother, a drug dealer and a sexually active, white woman though her social class, place of inhabitancy and relationships change.

The data of the present study were interestingly also discovered to support mainly the neo-feminist perspective since the protagonist represents a working “single girl” and the construction of identity is presented to happen a lot through independent work. In addition, the importance of consumer culture, liberated sexuality and individual choice are repeating themes in the data. Following the ideals of neo-feminism, the series does not judge the protagonist, at least not constantly, by her several sexual encounters, huge wardrobe or will to provide for her family. Since the series seem to promote mostly neo-feminism in its representation of the female protagonist, it may also reflect the western society's perspective on feminism today. Consumerism and individualism are clearly values in both reality and in the series.

Due to the limited selection of example scenes, the present study captures only the most evident intersecting subject positions and concentrates on them in relevance to the identity construction. A broader selection of example scenes and a more in-depth analysis would have provided results on the now excluded subject positions including, for example, religion, age, marital status or nationality. Concentrating on other female characters in addition to Nancy would have provided also more examples on how *Weeds* represents women and what kind of subject positions the series provides for women. *Weeds* would also provide, for example, enough data also for concentrating purely on fluid sexuality since the cast includes characters who are gay, lesbian and something in between. Because the concept of intersectionality has not been used very widely in studies concentrating on television series or on the media in general, more studies utilising the concept are needed. Studies on how intersectional analysis can be

conducted and how intersectionality can be used as a concept in analysis are still needed as well. Connecting performativity and intersectionality in this study is something that has not yet been widely done so considering the performativity of subject positions and how that connects to intersectionality should be discussed as well in future studies.

Although situations and locations change, the female protagonist of *Weeds* finds herself in a similar position at the end of the series as in the beginning. Understanding how different subject positions have an effect on each other and how complex intersections can be, is, therefore, important in this context. Categorising Nancy as a drug dealer or mother does not reveal the actual position from which she encounters the world, instead it excludes considering how her ethnicity or for example class affect her experiences. To understand someone's identity construction is to understand her experiences, actions, relationships and thoughts. Being privileged is not a permanent position.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allsubs.org. <http://www.allsubs.org//search-subtitle/weeds+/20> (10 Mar 2012)
- Anton C. and V. Peterson (2003): Who said what: Subject positions, rhetorical strategies and good faith, *Communication Studies*, 54(4), 403-419.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10510970309363300> (10 May 2012)
- Barker, C.1999. *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bourdaa, M. 2011. Quality TV: construction and de-construction of seriality in *Previously on. TV series in the third golden age of television*. Biblioteca de la facultad de Comunicacion de la Universidad de Sevilla, 33-43.
<http://fama2.us.es/fco/previouslyon/01.pdf> (12. Apr 2012)
- Butler, J. 1990 . *Hankala sukupuoli*. Tampere, Gaudeamus.
- Butler J. 2004. *Undoing gender*. Routledge
- Butler J. and S. Salih (eds.) 2006. *The Judith Butler Reader*. Blackwell publishing.
- Cover, R. 2004. From Butler to Buffy: Notes Towards a Strategy for Identity Analysis in Contemporary Television Narrative. *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 4(2), n. pag. <http://reconstruction.eserver.org/042/cover.htm>
 (12 Mar 2012)
- Crenshaw, W.1994. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color in M. Fineman and Mykitiuk (eds.), *The Public Nature of Private Violence*. New York: Routledge, 93-118.
- Christensen, A and S. Jensen 2012. Doing Intersectional Analysis: Methodological Implications for Qualitative Research. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 20(2), 109-125
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2012.673505>
- Hall, A and A. Hall. 2009 *Mommy Angst : Motherhood in American Popular Culture* . Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 94.
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/jyvaskyla/Doc?id=10356252&ppg=113>
- Harjunen, Hannele. 2010. A lecture in the course Yhteiskunta ja sukupuoli: feministinen teoria ja intersektionaalinen analyysi. Univeristy of Jyväskylä. 21.9.2010
- Hertel, B. 2010. *Planting the seeds: "weeds", cables influence and the evolution of the family sitcom*. Long Island University, The Brooklyn Center.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/305225232?accountid=11774> (8 May 2012)

- Long, Amy. 2008. *Dealing with drugs: Gender, Genre, And seriality in The Wire and Weeds* University of Florida. 2008 Master's thesis.
http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0022225/long_a.pdf (18 Jun 2012)
- Lykke, N. 2010. *Feminist Studies A guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Mills, S. and L. Mullany. 2011. *Language, gender and feminism*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Nash, J. 2008 Re-thinking intersectionality, *Feminist Review*, 89(1), 1–15.
- Press, A. 2009. Gender and Family in Television's Golden Age and Beyond. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625 (1), 139-150. <http://ann.sagepub.com/content/625/1/139> (12 Dec 2011)
- Radner, H. 2011. *Neo-feminist Cinema. Girly Films, Chick Flick and Consumer Cultrure*. New York: Routledge.
- Rossi, L. 2008. Identiteetti, queer ja intersektionaalisuus: hankala yhtälö? in *Kulttuurintutkimus*. 25 (1), 27-37.
- Saresma, Tuija. 1999. Kiehtova ja ärsyttävä Ally McBeal. Televisiosarjan feminististä luentaa. *Kulttuurin tutkimus* 16 (2), 3–15 .
- Showtime: Weeds. <http://www.sho.com/site/weeds/about.sho> (28.11.2011)
- Weeds Season One DVD 2005. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Two DVD 2007. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Three DVD 2007. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Four DVD 2008. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Five DVD 2009. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Six DVD 2011. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Seven DVD 2012. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Weeds Season Eight DVD 2012. Produced by Jenji Kohan.
- Wellman, B. 2011. *Little Boxes, Glocalization and Networked Individualism*.
<http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~wellman/publications/littleboxes/littlebox.PDF>
 (6 Jun 2012)

“try again, fail better” is said by Nancy in Season Seven, Episode Three.

APPENDIX

1.

Nancy What do you want?
 Guillermo I want you to do the brick dance for me.
 Nancy A brick dance?
 Guillermo You must dance to the Great God of Mota. And if
 you do it right, then you get your brick.
 Nancy And if I refuse?
 Guillermo No baila, no brick.
 (Nancy starts dancing)
 Guillermo This is not a real brick dance.
 (Nancy changes dance style)
 Guillermo Man, that's a shot of cheap tequila dance. Now,
 show me a real brick dance! Now, what, that's a...
 a loose joint dance at best.
 Guillermo You know what? I've been way too sweet with
 you. If you'll not do a real brick dance for me,
 then I cannot give you the brick.
 Nancy Hold your horses, Pedro.

 (Nancy puts on music, climbs on the pool table
 and starts dancing in a sexy manner)
 Guillermo My name is Guillermo, not Pedro. That was a
 very nice brick dance. Tell your friend U-Turn,
 you tell him he's a lawn jockey now. Hasta luego.
 Nancy Yeah. Adios.

2.

Nancy A smoothie maker
Father1 Look, we're all here every day giving our time to
the school.
Father 2 Who's her kid?
Father 3 Steve Bloom.
Father 1 Now suddenly there's an issue that affects your
kid, and you show up?
Nancy Yes. I'm here to argue for the interests of my
child.
Father 2 I think the rabbi adopted him.

Nancy Our children are in middle school. They don't
need us here every single day.
Father1 Okay, well, I'd like to put it to a vote.
Father 3 I wonder if she's lonely.