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Master's Thesis

**Redefining Respectability:
Feminist Narratives and Genre in
Fleabag (2016-2019)**

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Abstract

Scholarly discourse on female representation in contemporary television has increasingly examined portrayals of female protagonists who challenge traditional gender norms. However, there is still significant room to explore how “difficult women” and complex narratives actively disrupt conventional stereotypes, navigate societal expectations, and reclaim narrative authority. Through the lens of feminist theory and with a focus on narrative composition, this research provides a fresh perspective on how contemporary television reshapes portrayals of femininity and autonomy, offering new insights into the evolving representation of women who resist traditional gender roles.

In the dramedy *Fleabag* (2016-2019), the protagonist, Fleabag, subverts the “respectable woman” ideal, discussed by authors like Beverley Skeggs and Hillevi Ganetz, and instead embraces moral ambiguity, sexual autonomy, and emotional complexity. By using techniques that are characteristic of what Jason Mittell described as “Complex TV” as well as specific conventions of the dramedy genre, *Fleabag* offers a vibrant examination of femininity and the societal pressures women face. This research answers the following question: How does *Fleabag*'s portrayal of the female protagonist challenge traditional gender stereotypes regarding femininity and sexuality, particularly in contrast to the concept of the “respectable woman” as outlined by Skeggs and Ganetz?

The representation of Fleabag has been presented through textual analysis. By focusing on narrative techniques and Fleabag’s character complexity, this analysis revealed how the series subverts conventional gender norms and disrupts the rigid binaries of the “respectable woman” through its use of narrative complexity, direct address, and the mix between humor and drama. “Complex TV” techniques foster empathy and moral allegiance by immersing viewers in Fleabag’s internal world and moral struggles. The dramedy genre challenges stereotypes by using humor for the construction of emotional depth to critique societal norms like gender roles and societal expectations and navigate controversial topics such as sexuality, mental health, and moral ambiguity.

Fleabag’s unapologetic sexual autonomy, emotional vulnerability, and refusal to conform to societal expectations offer a multifaceted portrayal of femininity, challenging traditional portrayals of women in media and providing a critique of the societal frameworks that seek to confine them. In doing so, *Fleabag* redefines the space for female characters, presenting a protagonist who is neither confined to the role of the “respectable woman” nor condemned for her complexity and contradictions.

Keywords: *Complex TV - Dramedy - Difficult women - Respectable woman - Narrative techniques - Femininity and Sexuality*

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Introduction

"I sometimes worry that I wouldn't be such a feminist if I had bigger tits."¹

Fleabag (2016-2019), created by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, is a British dramedy series centered around a flawed, sexually liberated, and emotionally conflicted woman, known only as Fleabag. The quote above, spoken by Fleabag, critiques societal expectations surrounding femininity and sexuality. It highlights Fleabag's awareness of the pressure to conform to idealized feminine traits. The humor in the quote shows the series' use of wit and self-satire. This statement also emphasizes how a woman's value is frequently shaped by her appearance, highlighting the ridiculousness of such standards and their effect on self-worth. Fleabag uses humor to challenge these social conventions while also addressing the inner struggles that many women have while trying to strike a balance between their feminist beliefs and the expectations of society.

Fleabag struggles with grief, guilt, and difficult relationships while also dealing with society's expectations of femininity, morality, and sexuality. The dramedy genre's fusion of comedy and drama enables Fleabag to humorously and emotionally examine subjects like gender conventions and social pressures. *Fleabag* is a character-driven series, which is defined by David Bordwell as a narrative primarily centered around internal struggles, motivations, and interactions rather than external events.² Bordwell argues that such narratives reveal characters' inner worlds, offering social insights.³ Fleabag has a tendency to suppress her emotions, which limits her vulnerability toward other characters, but she exposes her inner world to the audience through fourth-wall breaks. By presenting Fleabag as a morally dubious, unabashedly sexual, and emotionally complex female protagonist who challenges rigid standards of femininity, the series critiques the ideal of the "respectable woman," as outlined by Beverley Skeggs.⁴ By doing so, *Fleabag* initiates space for critical conversations about female identity, sexual agency, and media portrayal.

This study places *Fleabag* in the context of current debates on representation, agency, and gender performativity, positioned at the intersection of feminist media critique and narrative innovation. By utilizing tools of "Complex TV" and the dramedy genre, such as character-driven plots, emotional depth, and disruptive narrative techniques, the series exemplifies a reimagining of the "difficult woman," a concept articulated by Hohenstein and

¹ Phoebe Waller-Bridge as Fleabag in *Fleabag, Episode #2.4*, directed by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, aired May 17, 2019 (Prime Video, 2019), 00.03.18–00.03.25.

² David Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 89.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London: Sage, 1997), 5-7.

Thalman to describe female characters who defy societal expectations through moral ambiguity, emotional complexity, and self-determination.⁵ This thesis argues that *Fleabag* not only disrupts the construct of the "respectable woman," offering a layered exploration of flawed and autonomous femininity, but also questions the need for female characters to conform to stereotypes of likability or redemption.

Existing feminist scholarship on *Fleabag*, such as Faye Woods' analysis of the series' viewer inclusion, highlights how direct address complicates traditional narrative forms and audience participation.⁶ Woods argues that the interplay between intimacy and detachment in the series draws the audience into *Fleabag*'s world while also unsettling their alignment with her actions and decisions.⁷ While Woods' study acknowledges the innovative use of direct address, it does not explore its implications for feminist redefinitions of narrative authority and autonomy, focusing on "difficult women" in dramedies. *Fleabag* offers a unique lens to examine how feminist media challenges the "respectable woman" ideal and confronts certain conventional forms of gender performativity. *Fleabag* doesn't disrupt the concept that gender is performed; she disrupts the expectations of how that performance should look, particularly the expectations placed on women to conform to traditional notions of respectability. This research will answer the question: How does *Fleabag*'s portrayal of the female protagonist challenge traditional gender stereotypes regarding femininity and sexuality, particularly in contrast to the concept of the "respectable woman" as outlined by Skeggs and Ganetz? By focusing on how *Fleabag* intertwines feminist critiques, narrative innovation, and the complexities of the dramedy genre, this thesis aims to add to the evolving conversation on representation of femininity in contemporary media.

⁵ Svenja Hohenstein and Katharina Thalman, "Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series," *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik* 67, no. 2 (2019): 113, <https://doi.org/10.1515/zaa-2019-0012>.

⁶ Faye Woods, "Too Close for Comfort: Direct Address and the Affective Pull of the Confessional Comic Woman in Chewing Gum and *Fleabag*," *Communication Culture & Critique* 12, no. 2 (2019): 197, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcz014>.

⁷ Woods, "Too Close for Comfort: Direct Address and the Affective Pull of the Confessional Comic Woman in Chewing Gum and *Fleabag*," 198-199.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework consisting of the concepts of "Complex TV" and "difficult women" is presented in order to comprehend how the female protagonist subverts conventional gender norms and the ideal of the "respectable woman." To analyze *Fleabag's* use of genre-specific elements, dramedy is also addressed. I base the importance of my framework on Beverley Skeggs' concept of the "respectable woman," which provides a foundational framework for understanding the social norms *Fleabag* both challenges and subverts.

Skeggs first introduced the concept of the "respectable woman" as the passive, obedient woman, a form of culturally defined femininity.⁸ According to Skeggs' concept, respectability comes from being heterosexually passive yet striving for marriage and a family.⁹ Behaviors like dressing and speaking "appropriately" distinguish respectable women from the non-respectable, who risk being judged or marginalized.¹⁰ Hillevi Ganetz expands on this concept, arguing that femininity must adhere to rigid norms with only one alternative: the sexually active, masculine woman.¹¹ A man is always seen as a man as long as there is at least one male signifier, whereas a woman is not seen as a woman if she shows just one male dominant sign.¹² Ganetz notes that men can express fluid masculinities, but it is nonexistent for women to express a similar fluidity.¹³ When a woman shows a male-dominant characteristic, such as being sexually active, she is immediately identified as a masculine woman.¹⁴ Both Skeggs and Ganetz highlight how these boundaries work as a means of social control where a woman can be framed as either "good" or "bad" based on their adherence to the boundaries.¹⁵ Media representations often reinforce these ideals, portraying women who conform as good while stigmatizing those who don't. *Fleabag* challenges this by embracing messiness, sexual autonomy, and moral ambiguity, offering a portrayal of womanhood that creates space for imperfection and self-exploration. While the concept of the "respectable woman" emphasizes the social expectations placed on women to conform, these representations are heavily influenced by the "male gaze."

⁸ Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London: Sage, 1997), 5-7.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Hillevi Ganetz, "Fame Factory: Performing Gender and Sexuality in Talent Reality Television," *Culture Unbound* 3, no. 3 (2011): 410-11, <https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.113401>.

¹² Hillevi Ganetz, "Fame Factory: Performing Gender and Sexuality in Talent Reality Television," 411.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*, 6.; Ganetz, "Fame Factory: Performing Gender and Sexuality in Talent Reality Television," 411-412.

In *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey critiques the “male gaze,” a way of looking used in film, objectifying women to reinforce gender power structures.¹⁶ Drawing on Sigmund Freud’s concept of scopophilia, Mulvey explains how cinema often objectifies women, highlighting their physique while denying them narrative agency.¹⁷ However, Rosalind Gill has noted how the rise of post-feminist media texts challenges these traditional portrayals by centering female perspectives and desires.¹⁸ Post-feminist media, as defined by Gill, reflect feminist ideals but often undercut them by suggesting that women can now achieve equality on an individual level, making feminism seem unnecessary.¹⁹ Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity forms a critique on how media can shape and reinforce socially constructed performances of gender.²⁰ Similarly, Mulvey critiques the “male gaze” and exposes how the media encourages traditional gender roles.²¹ Butler highlights how media representations play a significant role in framing gender as a social construct, shaped and challenged by repeated actions and expectations.²² Butler argues that the identity of gender is formed through a performance of repeated behaviors, such as movements or speech, rather than tied to biological sex, making it fluid yet constrained by societal norms.²³ However, Butler posits that change is possible by disrupting or altering these repetitive patterns, transforming gender identity over time.²⁴ This theory provides a framework for understanding how representations in media can affect socially constructed performances of gender, which is especially relevant considering the evolution of “Complex TV,” a concept coined by Jason Mittell.²⁵

Complex TV

Since the 1990s, television productions have undergone significant transformations in aesthetics, narrative structures, and character portrayals. The rise of serial formats has replaced episodic series, leading to extended storylines and character arcs. Mittell argues that this shift often includes experimentation with non-linear, non-chronological storytelling

¹⁶ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1 October 1975): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>.

¹⁷ Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 10-11.

¹⁸ Gill, *Gender and the Media*, 1-6.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender, 527.

²¹ Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 8.

²² Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender, 527.

²³ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 522-526, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3207893>.

²⁴ Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” 520.

²⁵ Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 17–54.

through prolepses and flashbacks.²⁶ Contemporary TV shows showcase more self-reflexivity, highlighting the medium's storytelling techniques.²⁷ Svenja Hohenstein and Katharina Thalmann agree with Mittell that TV shows are continuously showing more complexity, incorporating tools and techniques traditionally associated with big-screen filmmaking.²⁸ With the transition to serial narration, television showrunners and writers now have greater flexibility and opportunity to explore character development. This evolution, termed “Complex TV,” has given rise to multi-dimensional, dynamic, and morally ambivalent characters.²⁹ Roberta Pearson describes such characters, whether they are male or female, as elaborated characters rather than developed characters.³⁰ Pearson argues that this differs from a developed character because character development usually involves the protagonist experiencing personal growth, attaining a heightened level of self-awareness, and confronting pivotal life-altering choices.³¹ An elaborated character is equally engaging and complex, but they don't inherently change over time.³² As a result of these elaborated characters, audiences can not only align with them but also are, according to Mittell, able to develop a sense of allegiance.³³ This involves a moral assessment of aligned characters, encouraging viewers to connect with their beliefs and values and fostering emotional engagement with their stories.³⁴ Viewer alignment is a structured process determined by how much the program focuses on the protagonist.³⁵

Mittell argues that complex narratives empower characters to inhabit more depth, granting them narrative authority and agency within their own stories.³⁶ In *Fleabag*, this agency is visible through her addressing the audience, a narrative choice that allows her to become both the subject and author of her own story. This technique of breaking the fourth wall, or “direct address,” is explained by Michele Hilmes as when characters directly acknowledge the camera or viewer, such as when characters in fictional dramas deliver a

²⁶ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 18-19.

²⁷ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 23-25.

²⁸ Svenja Hohenstein and Katharina Thalmann, “Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series,” *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik* 67, no. 2 (2019): 115, <https://doi.org/10.1515/zaa-2019-0012>.

²⁹ Jason Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 142-143.

³⁰ Roberta Pearson, “Anatomising Gilbert Grissom The Structure and Function of the Televisual Character,” in *Reading CSI* (I.B.Tauris, 2007), 55–56, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755696208.ch-003>.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Ibidem.

³³ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 134.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Isabel Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives* (Abingdon, Oxon; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 23, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031598>.

³⁶ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 142-143.

short monologue or give a quick wink directly to the audience.³⁷ Theorists Dorothee Birke and Robyn Warhol argue that direct address in contemporary TV has become a trend that enables complex forms of audience engagement, particularly in shows that seek to deconstruct traditional gender roles.³⁸ Tom Brown outlines that it is often assumed that direct address disrupts the illusion of the storyworld and can distance the viewer from the fiction by acknowledging the presence of the camera.³⁹ However, it can also strengthen our connection to the narrative.⁴⁰ Faye Woods argues that the impact of Fleabag's direct address goes beyond breaking the illusion of narrative; it complicates the audience's experience by shifting between moments of deep intimacy and abrupt disconnection.⁴¹ Woods describes this as an "intricate dance of closeness and detachment" that shifts viewers' engagement with the narrative, alternating between alignment with Fleabag and a sense of discomfort from her often-unfiltered confessions.⁴² By using direct address to reveal inner thoughts and to reveal flaws, Fleabag can be defined as a "difficult woman."

Difficult Women

The concept of "difficult women," as outlined by Hohenstein and Thalmann, aligns closely with "Complex TV" techniques for deepening and diversifying character portrayals. According to them, "difficult women" are female characters who cannot be easily categorized.⁴³ They are characters who showcase a large variety of, often contradicting, personality traits.⁴⁴ These "difficult women" defy traditional norms of femininity by embracing moral ambiguity, emotional complexity, and self-determination, standing in strong contrast to the passive compliance of the "respectable woman." Series with "difficult women" use techniques from "Complex TV" to explore issues of gender and representation, creating a feminist perspective that challenges stereotypes.⁴⁵ According to Margaret Tally, the term "difficult women" is a deliberate twist on the concept of "difficult men," popularized by Brett

³⁷ Michele Hilmes, "The Television Apparatus: Direct Address," *Journal of Film and Video* 37, no. 4 (1985): 28.

³⁸ Dorothee Birke and Robyn Warhol, "Multimodal You: Playing with Direct Address in Contemporary Narrative Television," in *How to Do Things with Narrative: Cognitive and Diachronic Perspectives*, ed. Birte Christ, Jan Alber, and Greta Olson, Narratologia; v. 60 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 141–55, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110569957>.

³⁹ Tom Brown, *Breaking the Fourth Wall: Direct Address in the Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), X.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Woods, "Too Close for Comfort: Direct Address and the Affective Pull of the Confessional Comic Woman in Chewing Gum and Fleabag," 197.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Hohenstein and Thalmann, "Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series," 113.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

Martin's book, *Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution*, which examines complex male characters on cable television.⁴⁶ Martin describes these complex male protagonists as “difficult men” because they are morally ambiguous, emotionally troubled, and often both deeply flawed and highly compelling.⁴⁷ These characters challenge traditional ideas of heroism and likability, as they often pursue morally dubious actions driven by complex motivations.⁴⁸ In their article, *Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series*, Hohenstein and Thalmann argue that because of pioneering television series highlighting “difficult women” (like *Jane the Virgin* and *The Handmaid’s Tale*), more and more varied portrayals of women have appeared on television as a result of their popularity.⁴⁹ This shift has brought more women’s perspectives into conversations about rights, control over their own bodies, and abuses of male power, encouraging the male-dominated TV industry to reflect on its own practices.⁵⁰

Isabel Pinedo analyzes how the narratives around “difficult women” are constructed through a female gaze.⁵¹ Pinedo explains the female gaze as a textually constructed mode of viewing that positions the narrative from a female perspective, emphasizing female empowerment both within the story and in the viewing experience.⁵² The female gaze focuses on female desire and autonomy, recognizing sexuality as a crucial aspect of female subjectivity and agency, affirming the legitimacy of female sexual pleasure and freedom.⁵³ The narrative should systematically reject the limiting spectrum imposed by stereotypes, aiming to broaden the range of representations.⁵⁴ Pinedo argues that for stories to genuinely challenge norms, they must not only feature complex female characters but also be created by women and address issues relevant to marginalized voices.⁵⁵ For a show to actually counter mainstream perspectives, she suggests, it should place one or more female

⁴⁶ Margaret Tally, *The Rise of the Anti-Heroine in TV’s Third Golden Age* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 3,

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1407458>.

⁴⁷ Brett Martin, *Difficult Men Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution: From the Sopranos and the Wire to Mad Men and Breaking Bad* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 2013): 62-63,

<https://doi.org/10.5040/9780571343409>.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Hohenstein and Thalmann, “Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series,” 113.

⁵⁰ Hohenstein and Thalmann, “Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series,” 114.

⁵¹ Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 22-23.

⁵² Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 22-23.

⁵³ Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 23.

⁵⁴ Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 22.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

characters at the narrative's core, making them the driving force behind the story.⁵⁶ The narrative should explore women's experiences, constructing storylines firmly rooted in the intricate social realities of women's lives, where the unfolding events aim to illuminate the societal influences shaping women's experiences.⁵⁷ Shows focused on these "difficult women" place the female protagonist's perspective at the forefront, directing our understanding of events. This includes topics like conflicts between work and family, as well as confronting microaggressions in her day-to-day life.⁵⁸ The narrative views sexuality as a key element of subjectivity, and the main character does not have to adhere to conventional feminine appearance standards.⁵⁹

The anti-heroine represents a significant manifestation of the "difficult woman." While all anti-heroines are "difficult women," not all "difficult women" are anti-heroines. Anti-heroines, as Mette Kramer describes, blend virtues with flaws, embodying the complexities of modern womanhood while actively challenging conventional ideas of morality and heroism.⁶⁰ Within the dramedy framework, anti-heroines use wit and emotional depth to confront societal expectations.⁶¹ Building on this trend, Pinedo observes a wider shift over the past decade, where feminist politics have surfaced in an increasing number of television series, characterized by emancipatory goals for women.⁶² These shows often center around "difficult women" to the extent that they form an evident programming trend.⁶³ This content is intentionally crafted to resonate with and appeal to a female audience.⁶⁴ This programming trend is connected to the trend identified by Amanda Lotz regarding female-oriented shows that aired from the mid-90s through the 2000s. Lotz argues that this content, focused on women and created for women, was initiated by the cable narrowcasting strategy aimed at targeting more niche markets.⁶⁵ Lotz describes the protagonists as desiring and empathetic heroines.⁶⁶

Pinedo moves away from using the term "heroines" and instead chooses the terms "female hero" and "female antihero," alongside their male equivalents, "male hero" and

⁵⁶ Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 22.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ Kramer, "Humour, Emotional Well-Being and the Anti-Heroine in Modern Dramedy," 45.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

⁶² Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 13.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ Amanda Lotz, "Fighting for Families and Femininity: The Hybrid Narratives of the Action Drama," in *Redesigning Women: Television after the Network Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 79.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

"male antihero."⁶⁷ This choice aims to convey that both male and female characters can fulfill the narrative function of the hero. The hero, traditionally seen as the active agent driving the story, is someone who takes action and influences events.⁶⁸ On the other hand, the narrative function of the heroine is often passive, being the recipient of actions, with things done to her.⁶⁹ In contrast, the female hero takes charge of her own salvation. This shift in terminology is a deliberate attempt to challenge the gendered association of the hero with an exclusively male domain.⁷⁰ What distinguishes the female antihero from the male antihero is that her sins typically do not escalate to the same extremes as those of her male counterparts.⁷¹ The key difference between the female antihero and the "difficult woman" hero lies in the degree of harm they are willing to inflict on others. The antihero may intentionally cause serious harm, either through action or neglect.⁷² In contrast, the "difficult woman" who isn't a full antihero disrupts traditional feminine norms unapologetically and consistently.⁷³ She is bold, assertive, ambitious, often more focused on career than on motherhood, and can come across as unlikable.⁷⁴

In the essay *Not Here to Make Friends*, Roxane Gay addresses the intense scrutiny faced by unlikeable female characters in critical conversations.⁷⁵ She questions why these characters, who refuse to conform to social expectations of likability, provoke such strong reactions: why must women on screen make themselves likable, and therefore acceptable, to society?⁷⁶ Gay argues that value shouldn't be determined by a character's moral standing or conformity, but by characters who make mistakes, act selfishly, and express unsavory emotions without the need for redemption or justification.⁷⁷ Kameron Hurley agrees with Gay's sentiments in *In Defense of Unlikeable Women*, pointing out the ever-existing double standard that holds female characters to a higher moral standard than male characters.⁷⁸ Traits like complexity, assertiveness, and even selfishness are qualities that are celebrated in male characters yet seen as faults in their female counterparts. Hurley explains that male

⁶⁷ Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 30.

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

⁶⁹ Ibidem.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 16.

⁷² Pinedo, *Difficult Women on Television Drama: The Gender Politics of Complex Women in Serial Narratives*, 17.

⁷³ Ibidem.

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Roxane Gay, *Bad Feminist: Essays*, First edition (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), 76-78.

⁷⁶ Ibidem.

⁷⁷ Gay, *Bad Feminist: Essays*, 82.

⁷⁸ Kameron Hurley, "In Defense of Unlikable Women," accessed 5 November 2024, <https://imakeupworlds.com/index.php/2014/01/in-defense-of-unlikable-women-guest-post-by-kameron-hurley/>.

protagonists are typically accepted as flawed, while female characters are expected to show restraint and kindness.⁷⁹ Those who defy these expectations, especially those who are strong without overt vulnerability or remorse, risk being dismissed as unlikable or unwelcome on screen.⁸⁰

Margaret Tally also casts doubt on whether television is genuinely experiencing a "golden age" in terms of portraying female antiheroes.⁸¹ While female actresses are gaining more opportunities to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, female antiheroes continue to grapple with cultural expectations that do not constrain their male counterparts, the antiheroes.⁸² Female antiheroes frequently find themselves compelled to justify their unconventional actions and experience guilt for making choices perceived as selfish or morally questionable.⁸³ According to Jason Mittell, men are often respected and admired for traits such as harshness, ego-boosting, and an unwavering drive for success.⁸⁴ In contrast, women are frequently portrayed in nurturing, self-sacrificing roles, viewed as objects of action rather than as empowered agents.⁸⁵ When women do assert strong agency, they are often perceived as unlikable.⁸⁶ This cultural stereotype results in a backlash against assertive and morally ambiguous female characters, often labeling them as unsympathetic rather than recognizing their charisma comparable to the typical male antiheroes.⁸⁷ Together, these critiques underscore the need for female antiheroes who are unapologetically complex, whose flaws and contradictions mirror human experience without the constraints of likability or redemption. Characters like these push against traditional boundaries, challenging audiences to accept their messiness and reminding us that flawed women have as much place in storytelling as flawed men. This push aligns with the dramedy genre, which provides a perfect narrative framework for exploring the fluidity of human experience.

Dramedy

The dramedy genre has gained a lot of popularity over the years, but this televisual format is nothing new. Monika Bednarek explains that the genre emerged in the eighties, where the rise of television series like *Moonlighting* (1985-1989) and *Hooperman* (1987-1989) required

⁷⁹ Ibidem.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ Tally, *The Rise of the Anti-Heroine in TV's Third Golden Age*, 10.

⁸² Ibidem.

⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁴ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 150.

⁸⁵ Ibidem.

⁸⁶ Ibidem.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

a fitting genre.⁸⁸ Mittel also places the shift towards more complex narratives in television series at the same time.⁸⁹ The dramedy genre and rise of narrative complexity are not inherently interlinked, but they do exemplify the trend of complexer television productions in the eighties. In the so-called “Peak TV era,” starting in 1999, dramedy has continued to increase in popularity.⁹⁰ Julia Havas and Maria Sulimma argue that the growing interest in these dramedies signals the efforts of television companies to link to two textual practices.⁹¹ The first practice entails the highlighting of the differences between drama and comedy aesthetics, which occur on a textual and a paratextual level. This showcases how dramedy can balance the contrast between the two genres, not only in the text itself—narrative and characters for example—but also in the marketing techniques that are used by the companies.⁹² By highlighting this juxtaposition of mixing serious tones with humorous ones, the dramedy genre sets itself apart and shows a true blend of the two.⁹³ The second practice involves engagement with identity politics.⁹⁴ The dramedy genre often focuses on how characters navigate their identities within the larger social and political struggles context; think of issues around race, class, and gender.⁹⁵ By making these struggles a central topic in the narrative, the dramedy genre is able to reflect on and critique public discourse about such topics, showcasing how they can shape people’s experiences.⁹⁶

The dramedy genre is a powerful medium for layered storytelling, by blending drama and comedy, it offers a unique exploration of emotional depth and humor, making it very well-suited for narratives that challenge societal norms. According to Mette Kramer, this genre-blending is a tool to relieve tension building from unresolved conflicts faced by characters.⁹⁷ The dramedy genre enriches character portrayals and enables characters to navigate personal dilemmas. This two-toned genre reflects the complexities of real-life

⁸⁸ Monika Bednarek, “The Language of Fictional Television: A Case Study of the “dramedy” *Gilmore Girls*,” *English Text Construction* 4, no. 1 (2011): 57, <https://doi.org/10.1075/etc.4.1.04bed>.

⁸⁹ Jason Mittell, “Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television,” *The Velvet Light Trap* 58, no. 1 (2006): 32, <https://doi.org/10.1353/vlt.2006.0032>.

⁹⁰ Megan Garber et al., “Have We Reached “Peak TV”?,” *The Atlantic*, 12 August 2015, accessed 8 Januari 2025, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/08/have-we-reached-peak-tv/401009/>.

⁹¹ Julia Havas and Maria Sulimma, “Through the Gaps of My Fingers: Genre, Femininity, and Cringe Aesthetics in Dramedy Television,” *Television & New Media* 21, no. 1 (2020): 76, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476418777838>.

⁹² Ibidem.

⁹³ Ibidem.

⁹⁴ Ibidem.

⁹⁵ Havas and Sulimma, “Through the Gaps of My Fingers: Genre, Femininity, and Cringe Aesthetics in Dramedy Television,” 79.

⁹⁶ Ibidem.

⁹⁷ Mette Kramer, “Humour, Emotional Well-Being and the Anti-Heroine in Modern Dramedy,” *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 9, no. 1 (2019): 41, https://doi.org/10.1386/jsca.9.1.39_1.

experiences and fosters a deeper connection with the audience.⁹⁸ According to Joy Press, dramedy's flexible nature allows a range of emotions to coexist, making it ideal for exploring complex social dynamics.⁹⁹ This flexibility allows characters to voice their frustrations and navigate societal expectations, encouraging viewers to connect with their struggles.¹⁰⁰

According to Kramer, laughing at someone has links to feeling superiority over someone, the 'laugher' shows an unsympathetic and even aggressive stance towards the person they're laughing at.¹⁰¹ Laughing with someone, however, is more of a social act. It shows some kind of sympathy but can still come across as aggressive in some way.¹⁰² Kramer argues that humour can offer viewers a feeling of safe engagement with the protagonist, which allows them to safely explore and reassess emotional scenarios, making them less overwhelming or intimidating.¹⁰³ The use of comedy lets viewers connect with the characters on screen by laughing with them, which fosters empathy.¹⁰⁴ Other times, the viewers will also laugh at the characters when they make missteps for example, this then allows the viewer to confront the more problematic aspects or a certain situation or behaviour.¹⁰⁵ This interplay of laughing modes can show the viewer situations from a different angle, opening up space for new insights or interpretations of the unfolding events.¹⁰⁶

The gendered nature of comedy and drama has been widely discussed in scholarly work. Kathleen Rowe Karlyn points out that dramas have historically had fewer female leads, showing a cultural divide between the serious nature of drama and the lighter tone of comedy.¹⁰⁷ Feminism's influence on television has led to an increase in women-centered comedies but less so in dramas.¹⁰⁸ Havas and Sulimma argue that contemporary dramedies challenge this dualism by presenting progressive themes and showcasing the complexities of gender representation.¹⁰⁹ They give the example of the usage of cringe scenes or

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ Joy Press, "Meet the Dramedy Queens: The Women Who Built TV's New Golden Age," *The Guardian*, 5 March 2018, sec. Television & radio, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/mar/05/meet-the-dramedy-queens-the-women-built-tvs-new-golden-age-derry-girls-insecure-catastrophe>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁰¹ Kramer, "Humour, Emotional Well-Being and the Anti-Heroine in Modern Dramedy," 43-44.

¹⁰² Ibidem.

¹⁰³ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁷ Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*, 1st ed., Texas Film Studies Series (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁹ Havas and Sulimma, "Through the Gaps of My Fingers: Genre, Femininity, and Cringe Aesthetics in Dramedy Television," 77.

storylines in dramedies.¹¹⁰ Cringeworthy moments that highlight characters' flaws or problematic aspects of their social environment serve an important function in narrative and aesthetics.¹¹¹ These uncomfortable or embarrassing scenes do not only make viewers cringe for the sake of comedy, they are oftentimes used to draw attention to larger issues in society or politics, adding depth and relevance to the storyline.¹¹² Havas and Sulimma argue that these awkward moments can help the development of complex characters.¹¹³ This can result in the protagonists being displayed as "antiheroes."¹¹⁴ Using cringe aesthetics in series aligns a show with the traditions of quality television, where main characters almost always reflect real-life complexity.¹¹⁵

This theoretical framework has explored the theoretical underpinnings necessary to analyze *Fleabag* as a feminist text that challenges traditional gender norms. Drawing from the concepts of the "respectable woman" and the "difficult woman," it has positioned *Fleabag* as a series that employs the tools of "Complex TV" and the dramedy genre to question and subvert cultural stereotypes surrounding femininity. By examining the intersections of narrative form, feminist critiques, and cultural identity, this chapter has set the stage for analyzing how *Fleabag* uses its narrative techniques to explore and disrupt rigid gender expectations. The following analysis will address the ways in which *Fleabag* employs the conventions of the dramedy genre and "Complex TV" to critique societal norms and redefine representations of modern womanhood, pushing the boundaries of both narrative form and feminist media critique. To deepen this exploration, the following sub-questions will guide the analysis:

1. In what ways does *Fleabag's* use of Complex TV techniques contribute to the subversion of traditional gender stereotypes and the critique of the "respectable woman" ideal?
2. How does *Fleabag* utilize the conventions of dramedy to navigate complex and potentially controversial topics related to femininity, sexuality, and societal expectations?

¹¹⁰ Havas and Sulimma, "Through the Gaps of My Fingers: Genre, Femininity, and Cringe Aesthetics in Dramedy Television," 80.

¹¹¹ Ibidem.

¹¹² Ibidem.

¹¹³ Ibidem.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem.

Method

To answer the question of how *Fleabag's* portrayal of the female protagonist challenges traditional gender stereotypes regarding femininity and sexuality, this research will evaluate *Fleabag* as a full text, examining the character of Fleabag through the concepts discussed in the theoretical framework. Therefore, I have selected the entire series, both seasons one and two, as a corpus, as this will allow me to best find patterns in the representation of Fleabag's behavior and the narrative techniques.

First, I will use textual analysis following Richard Dyer's approach, using the three-step model of description, contextualization, and interpretation.¹¹⁶ This model provides a structured way to analyze *Fleabag* both at the level of individual scenes and as a broader cultural text. The task of description involves closely examining the narrative and narrative techniques of the series, a process that is crucial for capturing focus, grounding interpretations in the material itself, and using language to identify patterns within the text.¹¹⁷ Building on this, Dyer emphasizes the importance of contextualization, which involves two levels: first, situating the narrative within the broader framework of the film, and second, considering the cultural conventions that shape the production.¹¹⁸ Finally, interpretation entails analyzing and ascribing meaning to the described elements, exploring possible interpretations, symbolism, and themes that emerge within the film.¹¹⁹ Butler outlines, within the realm of descriptive stylistics, the same three steps as Dyer. As a result of using these three steps, a deeper understanding can be achieved by carefully watching and listening to the film or a specific part of it.¹²⁰ While Dyer's analysis is based on the medium of film, Butler argues that film analysis can be used for contemporary television series.¹²¹ Both scholars underscore the significance of initially describing the visual and auditory components observed in a segment.¹²² By moving from a close reading of individual scenes to a broader cultural analysis, this approach allows for uncovering insights into how *Fleabag* addresses social issues tied to gender expectations, particularly around femininity and sexuality. This shift from a microscopic to a macroscopic level allows for a rich and layered interpretation on how Fleabag's complexity resists conventional ideals of respectability, offering a portrayal

¹¹⁶ Richard Dyer, "The Persistence of Textual Analysis," in *The Richard Dyer Reader*, ed. Glyn Davis and Jaap Kooijman (London; Bloomsbury, 2023), 402, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781839023200..>

¹¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹¹⁹ Dyer, "The Persistence of Textual Analysis," 402, 403.

¹²⁰ Dyer, "The Persistence of Textual Analysis," 411.

¹²¹ Jeremy Butler, "Dare We Look Closely at Television?," in *Television Style* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 1–2.

¹²² Butler, "Dare We Look Closely at Television?," 4.

that disrupts normative narratives about women's roles and identities.

I will answer my questions through qualitative textual analysis with a protocol focused on narrative techniques and character complexity. First, I will make a segmentation of the entire series, through which I can identify the main narrative in *Fleabag*. This will act as a general guide for the chronological order of events in the plot, forming a base for my protocol. As this research uses a theory-driven approach, I base my protocol on the theoretical framework in this thesis. The categories in the protocol are place, action, narrative techniques, dramedy conventions, and camera framing. Place: to describe the physical setting of the scene. Action: to describe the narrative in the specific scene, highlighting the parts in the scene where Fleabag breaks the fourth wall by marking the bold. Narrative techniques: to focus on storytelling methods like direct address, narration, and flashbacks to show how the story is told. Dramedy conventions: to explain why or how Fleabag uses humor, shows emotional depth, or includes viewers. Camera framing: to indicate the visual level of closeness that the camera holds towards the characters, reflecting intimacy or detachment in the scenes. The complete protocol with categories and details can be found in the appendix.

Each scene was documented in detail, noting the key events, actions, and dialogues that drive the narrative. The results were documented and organized to identify recurring patterns and themes. After completing this initial analysis using the protocol, I examined the data for recurring patterns. For example, moments of sarcasm during emotional scenes, flashbacks to traumatic past events during Fleabag's current struggles, and the interplay between humor and vulnerability. Based on these patterns, I selected key scenes and moments for further analysis. For the selection of scenes and moments, I provided a description and visual context in the analysis. I have retrieved the most important elements by using specific examples of scenes or moments in scenes. The examples involved an examination of Fleabag's actions, choices, and interpersonal dynamics, especially in scenes that reveal her autonomy, internal conflicts, and responses to societal pressures. The scenes used as examples in the analysis are selected based on their relevance to the concept of the "respectable woman." These scenes emphasize Fleabag's agency, showcase her sexual autonomy, humor, and vulnerability, as well as her moments of internal conflict. This analysis will also assess how *Fleabag's* narrative techniques position the viewer to sympathize with her, even in morally ambiguous situations. I documented the ways in which fourth-wall breaks, confessions, and moments of vulnerability invite viewers to align with her perspective and question societal standards. I then interpreted the scene, linking it to the theoretical framework discussed earlier. This step involved examining the examples within the dramedy genre, highlighting how humor and emotional depth allow for a layered

portrayal of her character. In this final step, the theory will join the case study and allow me to, in the end, draw a conclusion.

A limitation of this method is that it focuses on the text itself, leaving external factors, such as audience reception, production context, or real-world events, unexplored in their relevance to the series. The contextualization aspect of the three-step model helps to address some of these concerns; however, this analysis remains centered on the content of the series itself. Lastly, there is the scope of this analysis to consider. By focusing on specific scenes or aspects of scenes that highlight Fleabag's agency, sexual autonomy, and internal conflict, there is a risk of overlooking other aspects of the series that may also contribute to the portrayal of femininity and sexuality. Despite these limitations, this method allows for an in-depth exploration of *Fleabag's* portrayal of gender and sexuality, offering valuable insights into how the show subverts conventional stereotypes and engages with feminist discourse.

Analysis

Narrative techniques in *Fleabag*

Character-driven plotlines

Fleabag revolves around a deeply introspective narrative about Fleabag's struggles. The storyline is not driven by external events alone but focuses mostly on Fleabag's emotional vulnerabilities, inherent contradictions, and battles with societal expectations. Her struggles are intricately woven into the series' structure, reflecting how her internal conflicts shape her interactions and choices. For instance, in the first season, the narrative slowly reveals the source of Fleabag's guilt over the death of her best friend Boo. In the final scene of the first episode in season one, Fleabag tells her cab driver about Boo and that she died because she accidentally killed herself.¹²³ She explains she wanted to get injured, not die, when she found out her boyfriend cheated on her.¹²⁴ Through careful storytelling, viewers finally learn that Fleabag is the person Boo's boyfriend cheated with.¹²⁵



Figure 1: Episode 6, Scene 21, Claire says she can't trust Fleabag because of what she did to Boo (Screenshot by Laura Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784TI>)

¹²³ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 19.

¹²⁴ Ibidem.

¹²⁵ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 6, scene 21-44.

Rather than presenting this betrayal as a dramatic, external event driving the plot, the series unfolds it through fragmented flashbacks of Boo, moments before she kills herself and Fleabag's self-reflection in present-day interactions and struggles.



Figure 2: Episode 2, Scene 12, Flashback of Boo standing in front of the bike lane (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784T/>)

This technique immerses the audience in her psychological turmoil, framing the story as an exploration of guilt, grief, and self-perception rather than a simple cause-and-effect narrative. This focus on Fleabag's internal conflict highlights the hallmarks of character-driven storytelling in *Fleabag*. Her guilt manifests in subtle ways: her inability to form meaningful connections, her sarcastic deflections, and her reliance on humor as a coping mechanism. By centering these emotional consequences, the series shifts the narrative's focus from external plot mechanics to the intricacies of Fleabag's internal world. Similarly, in season two, we continue to delve into Fleabag's attempts to reconcile love, faith, and loss. Her burgeoning relationship with the Priest is less about romance in the traditional sense and more about her search for connection and meaning. The unresolved grief from her mother's death and her difficult relationship with her father further complicate her emotional journey. These plotlines foreground her internal battles, illustrating how her attempts to navigate societal expectations of femininity and respectability often leave her conflicted and vulnerable.

The use of morally ambiguous protagonists, a trend in “Complex TV,” typically centers on male characters like the famous examples of Tony Soprano (*The Sopranos*) or Walter White (*Breaking Bad*). *Fleabag*, however, applies this approach to a female character, challenging gendered expectations of morality and behavior. While male antiheroes are often admired for their ruthlessness and ambition, female antiheroes, such as Fleabag, must navigate societal backlash for their defiance of norms. This aligns with Tally’s argument that female antiheroes continuously need to justify their actions and inhabit a feeling of guilt for the choices they make.¹²⁶ This disparity also reflects Mittell’s observation that assertive and morally ambiguous female characters, like Fleabag, are often labeled as unsympathetic or unlikeable, despite expressing similar charismatic traits as their male counterparts.¹²⁷

By focusing on Fleabag’s personal conflicts and moments of vulnerability, the series complicates a simplistic notion of female empowerment. Rather than portraying empowerment as a straightforward rejection of societal norms, *Fleabag* highlights the psychological and emotional toll of resisting traditional femininity. Fleabag’s journey is not one of triumph over adversity but one of learning to embrace her imperfections and contradictions. The series’ final conclusion in season two does not provide the traditional closure or a clear victory for the protagonist. Instead, it presents a moment of quiet self-acceptance. After Fleabag expresses her love for the Priest, and he replies agreeingly, the Priest still chooses god over her.¹²⁸ Fleabag looks at the camera and softly smiles.¹²⁹ After the Priest has left, she stands up and starts walking, looking back at the camera and shaking her head, leaving the camera behind.¹³⁰ Fleabag saying goodbye to the audience signals her decision to reclaim her sense of self. This poignant ending underscores the series’ character-driven approach, where growth and introspection take precedence over achieving tangible goals or resolutions.

Through its character-driven plotlines, *Fleabag* offers a critique of the “respectable woman” ideal. The affair and its aftermath place her at odds with societal norms of loyalty, friendship, and femininity. Yet the series does not seek to redeem her in the eyes of others; instead, it presents her guilt and vulnerability as integral to her humanity. Mittell’s concept of viewer alignment is particularly relevant here, as the audience’s connection to Fleabag is built on a moral evaluation of her character rather than on external achievements.¹³¹ As the main protagonist, Fleabag is given more screen time and occupies more screen space than

¹²⁶ Tally, *The Rise of the Anti-Heroine in TV’s Third Golden Age*, 10.

¹²⁷ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 150.

¹²⁸ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 6, scene 16.

¹²⁹ Ibidem.

¹³⁰ Ibidem.

¹³¹ Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, 134.

the other characters because the narrative follows her experiences. This is evident in scenes such as the mindfulness training where the participants are asked to think about something they can't let go of, a moment of tension, where Fleabag is framed in close-ups to focus on her expressions during vulnerable moments.¹³²



Figure 3: Episode 4, Scene 15, Fleabag is doing a mindfulness training where she is asked to think of something they can't let go of. Fleabag dismisses the thought. (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 14-01-2025, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784T/>)

As well as in this same episode when Fleabag sneaks into the male-only retreat to see why they are shouting female slurs, where over-the-shoulder shots position the audience to see events through Fleabag's perspective.¹³³

¹³² See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 4, scene 15.

¹³³ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 4, scene 8.



Figure 4: Episode 4, Scene 8, Fleabag enters a room where men are shouting female slurs. It is a retreat for men to get better. They are doing an exercise where they learn how to talk correctly to women. (Screenshot by Laorea Hidma, made on 14-01-2025, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784T/>)

Additionally, the first-person narration during her direct address, such as in the scene where Martin rushes into her café, asking for help on what to give Claire for her birthday. He claims not to be drunk, but Fleabag turns around to face the camera and tells the viewer he is always drunk.¹³⁴ Moments like these reveal Fleabag's inner thoughts and emotions.

¹³⁴ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 3, scene 7.



Figure 5: Episode 3, Scene 7, Martin enters the café asking for help. He claims not to be drunk; Fleabag tells the camera he always is. (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 14-01-2025, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784TI>)

This approach offers the audience a glimpse into her inner world, evokes sympathy, and promotes a feeling of alignment. This alignment fosters a sense of emotional investment, encouraging viewers to empathize with her struggles and reflect on broader societal dynamics. The series' focus on Fleabag's emotional vulnerabilities and personal conflicts offers a raw, honest portrayal of a woman navigating societal norms and self-discovery. In doing so, *Fleabag* not only challenges the "respectable woman" ideal but also reshapes media representations of femininity and empowerment. This emphasis on introspection and character growth demonstrated the transformative potential of "Complex TV" to explore and critique the complexities of contemporary womanhood.

Fragmented storytelling

The fragmented narrative structure of *Fleabag* is characterized by flashbacks, nonlinear storytelling, and self-referential moments. By deliberately disrupting linear storytelling conventions, the series underscores the complexities of Fleabag's female identity and resists reductive portrayals of women as archetypes. The use of flashbacks in *Fleabag* enriches the narrative by gradually revealing how Fleabag's past traumas and relationships shape her present actions and perceptions. As mentioned earlier, the flashbacks leading up to Boo's death unfold gradually, creating a layered exploration of guilt and grief. At first, the viewer only has the information that Boo's boyfriend cheated on her and Fleabag misses her

very much.¹³⁵ Only in the final episode of season one does the viewer find out that Fleabag was the one he cheated with.¹³⁶



Figure 3: Episode 6, Scene 26, Boo telling Fleabag that her boyfriend cheated on her (Screenshot by Lairea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784T/>)



Figure 4: Episode 6, Scene 38, Fleabag is kissing Boo's boyfriend (Screenshot by Lairea Hidma,

¹³⁵ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 19.; Season 1, episode 3, scene 17.

¹³⁶ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 6, scene 21-44.

made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784Tl>)

The slow revelation of her affair with Boo's boyfriend complicates the audience's understanding of her character, forcing viewers to grapple with her moral ambiguity while also empathizing with her pain.¹³⁷ In the second season, there is a similar approach to the narrative, where fragmented glimpses into Fleabag's past reveal how unresolved grief continues to influence her resistance to societal expectations of femininity and intimacy. In the first episode of the second season, Fleabag is explaining to the audience how she is trying to be a better person. Flashbacks of working out, saying no to casual sex, eating healthy, and laughing with friends flash by, which indicate her character growth.¹³⁸ She continues to sarcastically say that she is not even thinking about Boo's death or her sister's husband trying to kiss her in the previous season.¹³⁹ These moments are also presented as flashbacks throughout her monologue. This use of fragmented storytelling not only mirrors Fleabag's fractured sense of self but also reflects the non-linear nature of grief and personal growth. The fragmented narrative highlights the contradictions and fluidity of Fleabag's identity, portraying her as someone who both challenges societal norms and is shaped by them. This duality portrays Fleabag as someone striving to conform to societal norms while simultaneously exposing her inability to escape the repercussions of her past. It underscores her resistance to neat categorization, showing her as both a flawed human being shaped by trauma and someone actively pushing against traditional roles and expectations.

While the first season uses fifty flashbacks, the second season only uses thirty. Season one uses the same flashback of Boo standing in front of the bike lane many times throughout the season, while the second season mainly focuses on one specific flashback moment, her mother's funeral. This moment is jump-started by a scene where Fleabag is talking to the Priest, who asks many questions about her. She tries to hold him off, but he keeps digging. When he strikes a nerve asking about her mother, Fleabag tells him to leave.¹⁴⁰ Scenes follow where the viewer follows Fleabag home in present-time, who is trying to avoid the camera. These moments are intermixed with flashbacks to her mom's funeral.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 6, scene 21-44.

¹³⁸ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 1, scene 5-12.

¹³⁹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 1, scene 13-16.

¹⁴⁰ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 4, scene 14.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 4, scene 15-30.



Figure 5: Episode 4, Scene 19, Fleabag is walking home. She tries to avoid the camera (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6IFBSP913V9JHNA9>)



Figure 6: Episode 4, Scene 20, Funeral guest tells Fleabag and Claire that their mom was spectacular (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6IFBSP913V9JHNA9>)

These flashbacks revolve around Fleabag trying to grieve in an “acceptable” manner. She is trying to not look pretty during the funeral, and she is told off for being able to eat

during the wake.¹⁴² The flashbacks result in two vulnerable moments, one in which she cries with her father reminiscing, and the other where she is crying with Boo, who tells her to give her the love she has for her mom because it needs to go somewhere.¹⁴³ The fragmented glimpses from her past, juxtaposed with her current state and inability to talk about her mother's passing with the Priest, underscore the complexity of her emotional journey. These moments are not presented as isolated events but are interwoven with her present struggles, emphasizing how the past continually shapes her choices and perceptions.

By disrupting linear storytelling, the series offers a deeply introspective portrayal of Fleabag that defies traditional archetypes. The nonlinear structure, marked by flashbacks, enriches the narrative by revealing how past traumas, relationships, and societal expectations shape Fleabag's identity. Through this approach, *Fleabag* challenges the audience to engage with the complexities of contemporary womanhood, presenting a protagonist whose contradictions and vulnerabilities reflect the realities of navigating societal norms and personal growth.

Direct address

One of the most defining narrative techniques in *Fleabag* is its use of direct address, where Fleabag frequently breaks the fourth wall to engage directly with the audience. The direct address in *Fleabag* positions Fleabag as both the subject and the narrator of her story. By speaking directly to the audience, Fleabag dismantles the traditional voyeuristic framework often associated with female characters in media, known as the "male gaze." This narrative style underscores Mulvey's critique on the "male gaze" and its objectification of women.¹⁴⁴ By breaking the fourth wall, Fleabag is not a passive object being observed; she becomes an active participant in shaping her own story. Fleabag's direct eye contact with the audience reclaims the power of the gaze, shifting it from an external, objectifying perspective to an internal, self-determined one. This allows her to provide commentary on her experiences, highlight societal hypocrisies, and reveal her vulnerabilities in a manner that is both intimate and self-aware. These dynamics align with Woods' idea of alternating between closeness and detachment, which shifts the alignment between the viewer and Fleabag and allows her to deepen her autonomy as a "difficult woman."¹⁴⁵ Butler's theory of gender performativity is also highlighted in *Fleabag*, as these constructed performances are often

¹⁴² Ibidem.

¹⁴³ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 4, scene 30, 32.

¹⁴⁴ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 8.

¹⁴⁵ Woods, "Too Close for Comfort: Direct Address and the Affective Pull of the Confessional Comic Woman in Chewing Gum and Fleabag," 197.

disrupted through Fleabag's fourth wall breaks, where she candidly acknowledges her desires, flaws, and messiness.¹⁴⁶

In season one, Fleabag mostly uses direct address to interpret the world around her, offering witty, self-deprecating asides that invite viewers into her internal world. The series starts off with Fleabag waiting for her booty call at home, pretending like she just got home herself. She tells the camera she got out of bed, drank a whole bottle of wine, and had to shave everything for this.¹⁴⁷ After the intro credits, Fleabag is on the bus, a guy known as Bus Rodent strikes up a conversation with her as they both leave. Fleabag laughs at him but tells the camera she hates herself for doing so.¹⁴⁸

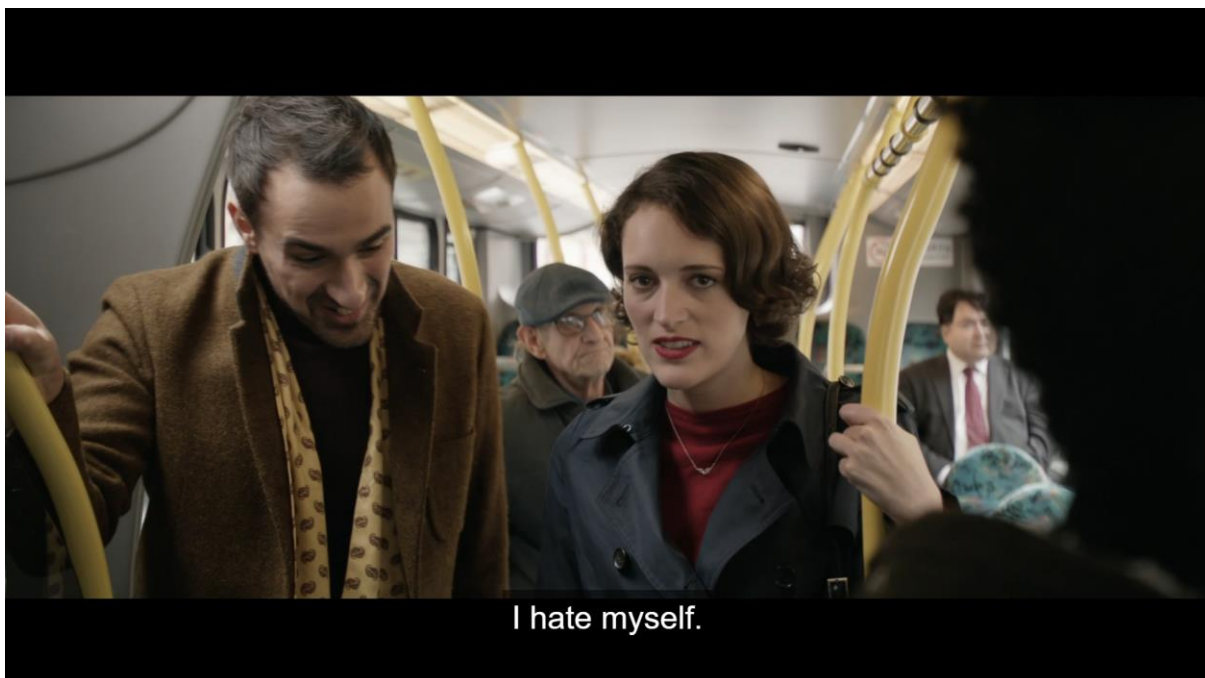


Figure 7: Episode 1, Scene 4, Fleabag tells the camera she hates herself after laughing with the Bus Rodent (Screenshot by Laura Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784TI>)

This technique not only builds a connection with the audience, letting them into her inner world, but also establishes her as a subjective narrator, one who selectively reveals and conceals aspects of her story to maintain control.

Direct address plays a central role in shaping the audience's moral alignment with Fleabag. The interplay between intimacy and detachment in Fleabag's direct address adds another layer of narrative complexity. By breaking the fourth wall, she offers viewers direct access to her inner world, creating a sense of intimacy and trust. This connection

¹⁴⁶ Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 522-526.

¹⁴⁷ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 1.

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 4.

encourages the audience to see events from her perspective, even as they might question her choices. This dynamic challenges traditional audience expectations, forcing viewers to reconcile their empathy for Fleabag with their discomfort at her actions. At the end of the first season, when Fleabag's affair is exposed, the audience seems to come too close, and Fleabag tries to literally get away from the viewers.¹⁴⁹ She tries to get away from the camera, but the camera pushes her back.¹⁵⁰



Figure 8: Episode 6, Scene 29, Fleabag falls into the coatrack after the camera pushes her back (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784T/>)

This indicates a level of closeness that almost places the viewer into Fleabag's actual experience. At this point, the dynamic with the audience seems to change, as Fleabag no longer wants to give the sense of intimacy by letting the viewer in. She is now actively trying to keep them out of her life. After this conflict, Fleabag does not break the fourth wall again. This indicates that Fleabag does not want to let the audience into her life at that point. Even in the final scene, where the Bank Manager helps her with her loan, Fleabag is not looking at the viewer, keeping this moment for herself.

In the second season, Fleabag seems to have rekindled her relationship with the audience, as she is back breaking the fourth wall. During the second episode, she is at a therapy session, and when her counsellor asks if Fleabag has friends, she winks at the

¹⁴⁹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 23,25,27.

¹⁵⁰ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 6, scene 29.

camera.¹⁵¹ She says her friends are always there and looks at the camera again.¹⁵² This intimate dynamic starts to shift as the Priest becomes aware of her fourth-wall breaks, marking a pivotal moment in her relationship with the audience. The Priest asks Fleabag where she is going when she breaks the fourth wall.¹⁵³ His acknowledgment of her direct address introduces a layer of complexity, signaling Fleabag's growing inability to maintain control of her own narrative. It is also a sign of the Priest getting close to Fleabag and seeing her for who she is. This moment reflects her internal struggle with vulnerability and authenticity, emphasizing the evolving nature of her relationship with herself and with the viewers. This interplay becomes even more pronounced as Fleabag's direct address keeps revealing her growing emotional vulnerability. Her relationship with the Priest intensifies her internal conflict, and her fourth-wall breaks begin to blur the boundary between performer and participant. The Priest keeps noticing when Fleabag breaks the fourth wall.¹⁵⁴



Figure 9: Episode 4, Scene 14, the Priest breaks the fourth wall after noticing that Fleabag does it. (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6lFBSP913V9JHNA9>)

His recognition of her direct address destabilizes the audience's role, breaking the illusion of an untouchable narrator. Similar to the first season, Fleabag starts to pull away from the audience. Where in the first season this was due to a feeling of shame, in the

¹⁵¹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 2, scene 18.

¹⁵² Ibidem.

¹⁵³ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 3, scene 14.

¹⁵⁴ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 4, scene 5, 14.; Season 2, episode 5, scene 13.

second season it seems that Fleabag wants to keep vulnerable moments to herself because they are hers and not for the viewer to intrude on. This is highlighted during her most vulnerable moments with the Priest, where Fleabag pushes the camera away, diverting the audience's eye.¹⁵⁵ After this moment, Fleabag has limited fourth wall breaks; they are diluted to stolen glances at the camera or a quick joke. The definite finale of the series is established when Fleabag eventually shakes her head at the camera, signaling the audience to stay behind and to no longer follow her.¹⁵⁶ She walks away, and the camera stays still, signifying Fleabag has finally broken loose from the constraints of the audience.

In *Fleabag*, the fourth wall breaks function as a powerful narrative technique that develops with the protagonist's emotional journey, shifting from a means of connection to one of detachment. Her direct engagement with the audience highlights the performative aspects of her identity, offering a critique of the pressures women face to conform to ideals of respectability and empowerment. Initially, Fleabag's frequent fourth-wall breaks offer a humorous and self-deprecating lens through which she navigates her chaotic life, drawing the audience into her world as confidants. This dynamic establishes a sense of control over her narrative, allowing her to frame her experiences on her own terms. This disrupts traditional storytelling conventions that often confine female characters to passive roles. However, as her emotional vulnerability deepens, the boundaries between performer and participant begin to blur. The Priest's awareness of her fourth-wall breaks destabilizes the once-private dialogue between Fleabag and the audience, mirroring her internal conflict as she grapples with authenticity and intimacy. By the series' end, Fleabag's decision to break this connection reflects her newfound autonomy and emotional self-possession. This concluding act reclaims her narrative agency, marking a departure from performative vulnerability and a step toward self-defined identity. By doing this, Fleabag redefines the traditional use of direct address and critiques the voyeuristic nature of audience engagement.

¹⁵⁵ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 5, scene 14.

¹⁵⁶ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 6, scene 16.

Conventions of the dramedy genre

Emotional Depth

Fleabag balances humor with intense emotions, which creates an exploration of serious topics without diminishing the comedic aspect of the series. From the first episode on, *Fleabag* establishes a protagonist who defies the societal ideal of the "respectable woman." In episode one, Fleabag's interaction with her sister Claire at a feminist lecture illustrates this tension. Fleabag explains to the audience that her dad gives her and her sister tickets to feminist lectures as a way to avoid addressing their mother's death.¹⁵⁷ Her sarcastic tone exposes her disapproval of her dad's behavior. Fleabag introduces Claire to the audience with biting humor: "uptight and beautiful and probably anorexic, but clothes look awesome on her."¹⁵⁸ This sharp remark highlights their strained relationship and also exposes Fleabag's tendency to divert discomfort through wit. In this same scene, Fleabag tells the camera she needs to ask Claire for money, but she finds this impossible.¹⁵⁹ Her reluctance to ask Claire for financial help, despite clearly needing it, further underscores their relationship and the emotional complexity at play. This tension between humor and unspoken grief over their mother's death and other struggles complicates the expectation that women should remain emotionally controlled. Fleabag's raw messiness contrasts with Claire's composed demeanor, creating a contrast between two versions of femininity: the emotionally restrained, "respectable" woman and the unfiltered, vulnerable woman. Fleabag's refusal to conform to the respectable ideal positions her as someone who embodies both societal defiance and emotional depth. By using humor to mask her pain, she navigates through life in a way that is both relatable and challenging, which demonstrates how women often perform different versions of themselves to meet expectations. Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which posits that gender is shaped through repeated actions, is central to understanding Fleabag's journey.¹⁶⁰ Throughout the series, Fleabag consciously performs different versions of herself, humorous, defiant, and vulnerable, depending on her social context. The series' use of fourth-wall breaks makes this performativity explicit. By directly addressing the audience, Fleabag reveals a gap between her public performance and her private unrest, which critiques the strict binaries of femininity that label women as either "respectable" or "not respectable."

¹⁵⁷ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 8.

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁵⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁰ Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 520.

One of the most powerful moments of vulnerability occurs in season two, episode four, when Fleabag sits on a confession stool with the Priest.¹⁶¹ He asks her to talk to him. Fleabag initially hesitates, using humor to deflect by making a joke about the confessional setting. Her voice is sarcastic and light at this moment. However, she soon breaks down, voice cracking and sounding soft, admitting to lying about a miscarriage, stealing, and feeling lost in life.¹⁶² This scene quickly shifts from humor to raw emotional exposure, coming to a climax when Fleabag admits, “I want someone to tell me how to live my life.”¹⁶³



Figure 10: Episode 4, Scene 35, Fleabag in the confession stool, using sarcasm (Screenshot by Laureia Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6IFBSP913V9JHNA9>)

¹⁶¹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 4, scene 35-37.

¹⁶² Ibidem.

¹⁶³ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 4, scene 37.



Figure 11: Episode 4, Scene 35, Fleabag in the confession stool, showing vulnerability (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6IFBSP913V9JHNA9>)

In this moment, Fleabag's comedic attitude drops entirely, leaving her stripped of pretense. Her vulnerability challenges pressures to maintain control and perfection, which shows that her emotional depth does not diminish her but instead humanizes her. The Priest's response, kissing her and then abruptly stopping, complicates this openness even further. Their kiss is fueled with desire and conflict, but when the holy painting drops down from the wall, their kiss is interrupted.¹⁶⁴ This symbolizes the weight of societal and religious expectations. Fleabag's quick glance into the camera acts as an acknowledgment of the emotional confusion, underscoring her internal conflict.

Fleabag's grief over her mother and best friend Boo is a recurring emotional thread in the series' dramedy narrative. Fleabag doesn't handle these losses with melodrama but they are infused into her humor. For instance, in a flashback to Boo, Fleabag remembers them laughing together about a joke, a lighthearted reminder of their relationship.¹⁶⁵ Or when Fleabag visits her mother's grave with Claire, she tells the camera that her mom's breast amputation due to cancer was especially awful because she had such amazing boobs.¹⁶⁶ By blending humor with grief, the series presents a protagonist who rejects oversimplified representations of femininity. Fleabag is not defined by her emotional pain or her humor

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁵ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 11.

¹⁶⁶ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 3, scene 3.

alone but by the interplay of both. This emotional complexity is further emphasized by the show's rapid tonal shifts. A comedic scene can seamlessly transition into an emotionally charged moment, such as the breakdown in the confession booth or the strained interactions with Claire. Fleabag's quick handling of these transitions distinguishes the series from other feminist dramedies like *Girls* or *Transparent*, offering a multifaceted portrayal of femininity that engages the audience without turning to over-the-top drama or a lecturing feeling.

Fleabag's use of emotional depth within the dramedy genre subverts traditional gender norms and challenges the ideal of the "respectable woman." The juxtaposing of humor with moments of raw vulnerability in the series presents a multi-dimensional protagonist who navigates grief, guilt, and societal pressure with honesty and complexity. Through her emotional openness with the audience, Fleabag creates room for a more flexible, authentic portrayal of femininity. By blending comedy with emotional depth, *Fleabag* not only entertains but also provokes thought, encouraging viewers to reconsider societal norms surrounding women's emotional expression and identity.

The Use of Humor and Satire as Feminist Critique

Fleabag often uses humor as a defense mechanism, which shields her from harsh realities. One recurring example is Fleabag's self-deprecating humor. In the first episode of season one, when Fleabag and Claire attend the feminist lecture, the speaker asks who in the room would trade five years of their lives for the perfect body.¹⁶⁷ Fleabag and Claire are the only ones to raise their hands, a bold act that immediately sets them apart from the rest of the room.¹⁶⁸ Fleabag then breaks the fourth wall, whispering, "We are bad feminists," using self-deprecating humor to expose the tension between societal pressures on women's bodies and feminist ideals. This moment not only highlights Fleabag's internal conflict but also critiques the unrealistic standards imposed on women. By admitting this seemingly "anti-feminist" desire, Fleabag uses humor to navigate her vulnerability, acknowledging the absurdity of societal expectations while also revealing the emotional toll they take. Through this blend of satire and honesty, the show challenges the strict boundaries of feminism and respectability.

Satire in *Fleabag* is often directed at the performative aspects of gender roles. The silent retreat scene in season one is a prime example, where Fleabag's irreverent behavior mocks the hyper-controlled environment designed to reinforce idealized femininity through silence, modesty, and submission.¹⁶⁹ During the explanation of the retreat's goals, such as

¹⁶⁷ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 1, scene 12.

¹⁶⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 4, scene 3,6,7,17.

women should not speak and their thoughts should remain trapped inside, Fleabag looks disagreeingly at the retreat leader.¹⁷⁰ Fleabag tries to ask what they should do in case of emergency, but the leader dismisses her question, which leaves Fleabag frowning.¹⁷¹ The retreat's absurd exercises, which require women to engage in performative acts of control and menial tasks, are disrupted by Fleabag's candidness and resistance. One of the tasks is cutting grass with nail clippers. Fleabag's disagreement is evident by her facial expressions towards the camera.¹⁷²



Figure 12: Episode 4, Scene 7, Fleabag grimaces at the camera whilst cutting grass with nail clippers (Screenshot by Laurea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0OB9NDUVQKFRSYRSCHT2A784T/>)

Her rebellion underscores the rigidity of these norms, using humor to expose their impracticality. Similarly, in season two, the satirical tone extends to family dynamics, particularly in scenes like the engagement dinner for Fleabag's father and godmother.¹⁷³ Awkward, tension-filled exchanges are laced with humorous remarks that highlight their performative nature. When Fleabag is having a smoke outside of the restaurant, her father joins her and notes that she is not being her naughty self. When he asks why not, she jokingly says, because it does not matter.¹⁷⁴ She means that her actions do not make an impact on them, even if she tries to do so. Fleabag's witty commentary during these

¹⁷⁰ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 4, scene 6.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem.

¹⁷² See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 4, scene 7.

¹⁷³ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 1, scene 19-29.

¹⁷⁴ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 1, scene 28.

moments, such as her observations on everyone's attempt at forced civility at the table, transforms simple social interactions into a broader critique of how women are expected to behave in public and familial settings, often at the cost of their authenticity.

By blending comedy with raw emotional intensity, the series reclaims agency over the female experience, using humor both as a shield against societal judgment and as a weapon to dismantle harmful gender norms. Fleabag's ability to navigate between humor and serious reflection creates a multi-dimensional critique of femininity. For instance, her satirical take on family expectations is mixed with moments of emotional vulnerability, such as her confession in season two, where she feels lost and unsure of how to live her life. These moments reveal the emotional toll of resisting societal norms, while humor provides a way to process and challenge these pressures. By integrating humor into these serious themes, *Fleabag* dismantles the binary between "respectable" and "non-respectable" women, offering a more flexible, complex portrayal of modern femininity. This fusion of humor and feminist critique makes *Fleabag* a groundbreaking dramedy and positions it as a powerful commentary on the evolving role of women in society.

Sexual Autonomy and the Challenge to Respectability

In *Fleabag*, sexual autonomy is both the focus of the narrative and a vehicle for critiquing societal norms surrounding respectability. Through its dramedy format, the series dismantles traditional ideals of modesty, morality, and female behavior. Fleabag unapologetically embraces her sexual desires, challenging the culturally ingrained notion that women must adhere to certain passive standards to be considered "respectable." Fleabag's approach to her sexuality is marked by candor and humor, subverting the societal expectation that women should remain modest or restrained. Her witty, irreverent commentary on topics such as her body and sexual encounters directly challenges the cultural tendency to objectify women while simultaneously expecting them to be demure. For example, in season one, after Harry, her on-and-off-again boyfriend, has broken up with Fleabag, she is sitting on the toilet talking to the audience.¹⁷⁵ She thinks about all the people she can have sex with now that she is single. She dryly claims not to be obsessed with sex; she just can't stop thinking about it. She explains that it is about "the moment you realize someone wants your body, not so much the feeling of it."¹⁷⁶ This humorously addresses the male gaze, undermining its power by reclaiming her own narrative. This moment not only critiques the objectification of women's bodies but also invites the audience to reflect on how societal standards of female beauty are both constructed and internalized. Fleabag's casual,

¹⁷⁵ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 1, episode 2, scene 10.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

unapologetic attitude toward discussing her sexual experiences and desires contrasts sharply with the traditional portrayal of women as sexually passive or morally constrained. The “respectable woman” as introduced by Skeggs, is a passive and obedient woman who is heterosexually passive yet striving for marriage and a family.¹⁷⁷ By not obliging to these norms, Fleabag highlights the tension between female sexual agency and societal judgment, flipping the script on respectability and modesty. In doing so, the series uses humor to deconstruct these restrictive standards, making its feminist critique more accessible and engaging.

Drawing on Skeggs and Ganetz’s concept of the “respectable woman,” Fleabag critiques the archetype of the stoic, controlled, and morally upright woman through satire and self-awareness. Respectability, often linked to modest behavior, emotional restraint, and adherence to societal norms, is consistently mocked and subverted throughout the series. In the first season, Fleabag is continuously having casual sex, not wanting to commit or have a serious relationship in any way. In the second season, this behavior changes when she starts to like the Priest. Fleabag is googling about celibacy; she sighs at the results that come up and looks into the camera shyly.¹⁷⁸ Episode five of the second season is a pivotal exploration of sexual autonomy and the tension between desire and societal respectability. In a similar manner as the first episode of the first season, Fleabag is standing at the door, waiting on a booty call.¹⁷⁹ Fleabag’s decision to wait for her misogynistic lawyer in nothing but lingerie and a coat exemplifies her unapologetic embrace of her sexual autonomy, which sharply contrasts with the traditional ideals of modesty and moral restraint. By telling the audience, “I’m waiting for my misogynist lawyer to get me to stop thinking about the Priest,” Fleabag uses humor to navigate her complex desires, showcasing how she resists societal expectations to suppress or regulate female sexuality.¹⁸⁰ This is slightly different from the first season because she is now using this booty call as a distraction from her actual desire. When the Priest unexpectedly arrives, the encounter shifts from humorous anticipation to emotional complexity. He bursts out into a confession that he cannot have sex with her because it would lead to love and destroy his life with God juxtaposing his spiritual commitments against their attraction, further complicating the notion of respectability. After his monologue, Fleabag tells the camera that they are going to have sex. The priest then asks Fleabag this.¹⁸¹ Fleabag’s silent nodding to the Priest disrupts the traditional power

¹⁷⁷ Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*, 5-7.

¹⁷⁸ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 2, scene 5.

¹⁷⁹ See Appendix, Protocol 2: Season 2, episode 5, scene 13.

¹⁸⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁸¹ Ibidem.

dynamics of desire, shifting control to her and breaking the barrier between societal expectation and personal autonomy.

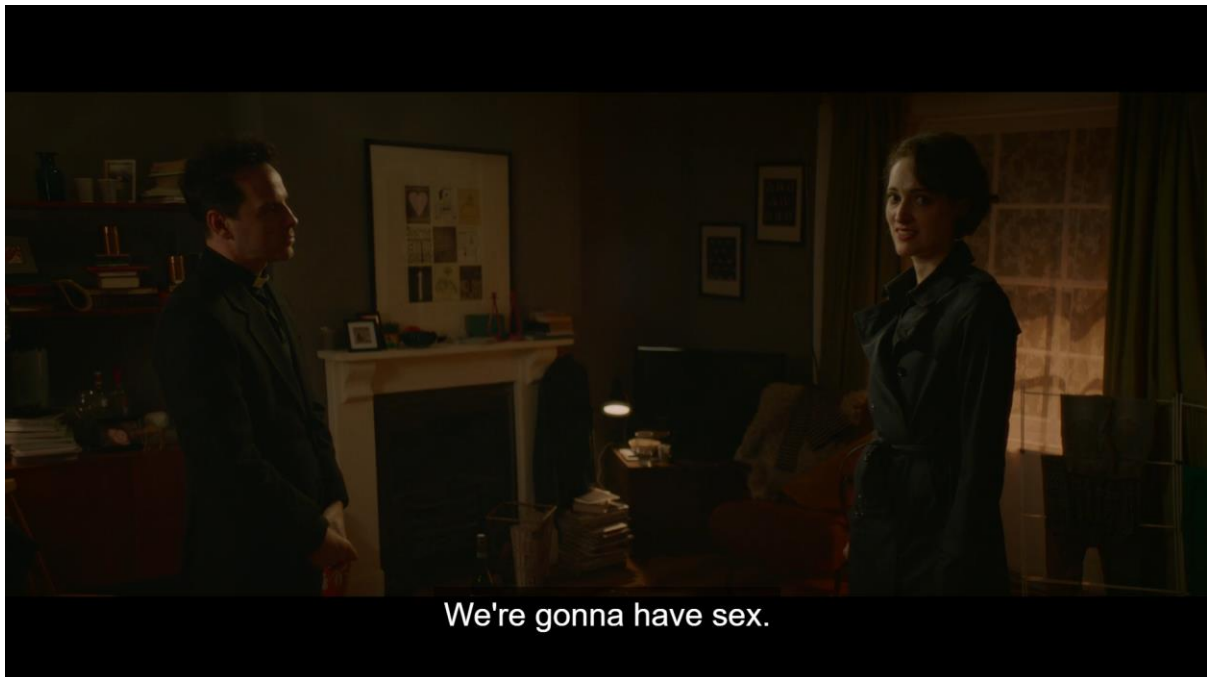


Figure 13: Episode 5, Scene 13, Fleabag tells the camera they're going to have sex (Screenshot by Lairea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6IFBSP913V9JHNA9>)

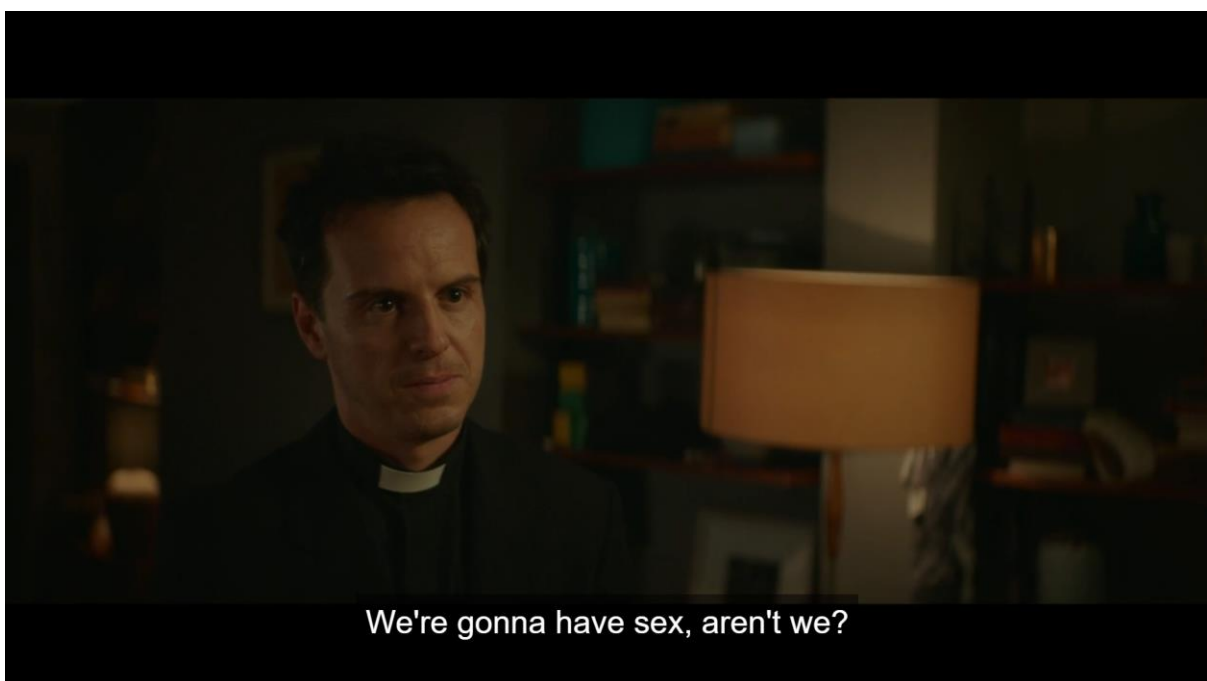


Figure 14: Episode 5, Scene 13, the Priest asks Fleabag if they're going to have sex (Screenshot by Lairea Hidma, made on 6-12-2024, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/nl/detail/Fleabag/0IQZNFU5SG6IFBSP913V9JHNA9>)

The Priest's reaction to her lingerie, his surprise, and their ensuing kiss symbolize the collision between religious repression and human desire.¹⁸² The swelling choir music amplifies this tension, adding a layer of irony as a sacred element is intertwined with their forbidden act.¹⁸³ Through this scene, Fleabag not only challenges the notion of a "respectable woman" who must prioritize modesty and moral restraint, but it also critiques the unrealistic divide between sexuality and virtue. The dramedy format allows this confrontation to feel both deeply human and provocatively subversive, inviting viewers to reconsider the societal frameworks that define respectability, love, and faith.

Fleabag's character exemplifies the anti-heroine and offers a departure from the binary portrayal of women as either "good" or "bad," often seen in traditional narratives. Her flaws make her human and challenge the expectation that women must conform to rigid standards in order to be respected. Through her unapologetic embrace of her imperfections, Fleabag resists the trope of the likable female protagonist, instead offering a complex and ambiguous portrayal of contemporary femininity. Fleabag's open expression of her desires and struggles goes against the societal expectation that women must suppress their sexuality to be respected. Through her candidness, she challenges the notion that sexual autonomy is incompatible with emotional depth or moral integrity.

¹⁸² Ibidem.

¹⁸³ Ibidem.

Conclusion

“That’s the very reason why they put rubbers on the ends of pencils. ... Because people make mistakes.”¹⁸⁴

This thesis has aimed to answer the following question: How does *Fleabag*'s portrayal of the female protagonist challenge traditional gender stereotypes regarding femininity and sexuality, particularly in contrast to the concept of the “respectable woman” as outlined by Skeggs and Ganetz? Through textual analysis based on Richard Dyer’s three-step model, the representation of Fleabag’s behavior and the narrative techniques have been examined. By focusing on “Complex TV” techniques and the use of the dramedy genre, the analysis revealed how the series subverts conventional gender norms and disrupts the rigid binaries of the “respectable woman” through its use of narrative complexity, direct address, and the mix between humor and drama. Fleabag resembles the opposite of the conventional ideal of the “respectable woman.” Rather than conforming to rigid standards, Fleabag is unapologetic about her sexual autonomy, emotional complexity, and flaws, which offers a more authentic and layered representation of womanhood. Her frank approach to sexuality, from casual flings to more complicated emotional entanglements, stands in opposition to the archetype of the sexually passive woman. Fleabag actively expresses and explores her sexuality on her own terms, demonstrating that sexual autonomy and respectability are not mutually exclusive.

Fleabag’s use of direct address serves as a key mechanism for dismantling traditional portrayals of femininity and sexuality. By breaking the fourth wall, Fleabag directly engages with the audience, which creates a feeling of intimacy and allows her to reclaim narrative control. Because of this, she is no longer a passive object for the male gaze and instead takes ownership of her story. Being the main character, Fleabag is given more screen time and occupies more screen space than any of the other characters. She is often framed in close-ups, there are many point-of-view/over-the-shoulder shots, and the first-person narration during fourth wall breaks reveals her inner thoughts and emotions. This approach offers the audience a glimpse into her inner world, evokes sympathy, and promotes a feeling of alignment. This subverts the traditional male-dominated storytelling framework and also highlights the performative nature of gender. Fleabag’s continuous engagement with the audience evolves to mirror her emotional complexity as her journey progresses. *Fleabag* does not reduce its main character to a simplistic figure of triumph over gendered norms, but instead emphasizes the nonlinear process of self-discovery and

¹⁸⁴ Jenny Rainsford as Boo in *Fleabag*, Episode #1.6, directed by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, aired February 10, 2017 (Prime Video, 2017) 00.01.46–00.01.56.

autonomy. Autonomy is often positioned as strength or showing independence; Fleabag shows her autonomy through vulnerability, creating an intimate connection whilst challenging traditional notions of power. Initially, Fleabag's direct address offers a sense of self-satirical humor and control over her narrative, but as she faces deeper vulnerabilities, her direct interactions with the audience become more guarded, which exemplifies her struggle with letting people get close.

In contrast to the "respectable woman" ideal, Fleabag cannot be neatly categorized or redeemed. She is not just a "difficult woman" who challenges social norms by being defiant or unlikable; *Fleabag* goes beyond this by portraying its protagonist as someone who is not defined solely by this rebellion against societal expectations but rather as a whole person whose imperfections and contradictions make her human. Fleabag's internal journey presents how her past traumas and societal pressures shape her identity and decisions. This nonlinear narrative refuses to simplify her character into a set of acceptable behaviors. Instead, it rejects the expectation that women must strive for likability, asking the audience to engage with the messy, often painful process of self-discovery, challenging viewers to reflect on their own assumptions about femininity and sexuality.

The dramedy format of *Fleabag* also plays a crucial role in disrupting traditional portrayals of women. By balancing humor with emotional depth, the series makes room for vulnerability and rebellion to coexist. Fleabag's interactions with other characters, particularly the Priest, highlight the tension between societal expectations and her actual reality of grief, guilt, and desire. During these moments, humor is both a shield and a weapon, allowing her to deflect judgment while also exposing the flawed foundations of respectability assumptions. This ability to navigate between humor and raw emotional moments allows *Fleabag* to challenge the notion that women must be either morally upright or fully liberated in order to be respected. In the end, *Fleabag* offers a feminist reimaging of the "respectable woman" ideal, challenging the "good" versus "bad" binary that often restricts how women are portrayed.

However, it is important to recognize that this thesis has primarily focused on *Fleabag's* textual representation of femininity and sexuality, specifically in relation to the "respectable woman" concept. While this analysis offers a deep exploration of narrative techniques and Fleabag's character complexity, it does not fully consider the broader social, cultural, and historical contexts that influence the series. A more comprehensive approach could examine how factors such as class, race, and societal expectations of gender further shape the protagonist's experiences and the audience's reception of her character. Expanding the research to include audience reception studies could provide insight into how different viewer demographics interpret Fleabag's challenge to traditional gender roles and its subversion of femininity. Additionally, examining the reception of feminist media from

diverse audiences, considering factors like age, location, and cultural background, could offer more insights into how feminist themes are understood and challenged across different demographic groups. By broadening the scope of research to include these external and contextual influences, scholars could engage in a more holistic analysis of the complex and evolving representations of femininity in contemporary television.

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List of figures

Figure	Source	Description
Cover Page	Image accessed via IMDb. "Fleabag." Internet Movie Database. Accessed December 2, 2024. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5687612/mediaviewer/rm1985897984/ .	Screenshot of Fleabag looking at the camera whilst in church.
1	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.6. 00.15.20, Prime.	Claire says she can't trust Fleabag because of what she did to Boo.
2	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.2. 00.06.13, Prime.	Boo is standing in front of the bike lane.
3	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.4. 00.13.52, Prime.	Fleabag is doing a mindfulness training where she is asked to think of something they can't let go of. Fleabag dismisses the thought.
4	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.4. 00.08.48, Prime.	Fleabag enters a room where men are shouting female slurs. It is a retreat for men to get better. They are doing an exercise where they learn how to talk correctly to women.
5	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.3. 00.08.48, Prime.	Martin enters the café, asking for help. He claims not to be drunk; Fleabag tells the camera he always is.

6	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.6. 00.15.26, Prime.	Boo is telling Fleabag that her boyfriend cheated on her.
7	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.6. 00.16.19, Prime.	Fleabag is kissing Boo's boyfriend.
8	<i>Fleabag</i> , 2.4. 00.07.24, Prime.	Fleabag is walking home. She tries to avoid the camera.
9	<i>Fleabag</i> , 2.4. 00.07.32, Prime.	Funeral guest tells Fleabag and Claire that their mom was spectacular.
10	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.1. 00.03.47, Prime.	Fleabag tells the camera she hates herself after laughing with the Bus Rodent.
11	<i>Fleabag</i> , 1.6. 00.15.56, Prime.	Fleabag falls into the coatrack after the camera pushes her back.
12	<i>Fleabag</i> , 2.4. 00.06.10, Prime.	The Priest breaks the fourth wall after noticing that Fleabag does it.
13	<i>Fleabag</i> , 2.4. 00.20.24, Prime.	Fleabag in the confession stool, using sarcasm.
14	<i>Fleabag</i> , 2.4. 00.23.21, Prime.	Fleabag in the confession stool, showing vulnerability.
15	<i>Fleabag</i> 1.4. 00.07.40, Prime.	Fleabag grimaces at the camera whilst cutting grass with nail clippers.
16	<i>Fleabag</i> 2.5. 00.20.38, Prime.	Fleabag tells the camera they're going to have sex.

17

Fleabag 2.5. 00.21.09, Prime.

The Priest asks Fleabag if they're going to have sex.

Appendix

Segmentation

Season 1
Episode 1
Fleabag has a one-night stand with Arsehole Guy before picking up another man on the bus, Bus Rodent, to whom she recounts how she split from her regular boyfriend, Harry. After being refused a business loan by Bank Manager for her failing café, she meets and argues with her high-achieving sister, Claire, at a feminist lecture. She visits her father and godmother (who is now in a relationship with her father), from whose home studio she steals a sculpture of a woman's torso. On a taxi ride home, she recounts how her best friend Boo (with whom she started the café) accidentally killed herself after her boyfriend cheated on her.
Episode 2
Fleabag tries to sell the stolen statue to Claire's art dealer husband, Martin. She runs into Arsehole Guy, but the awkward sex that ensues makes her run back to her emotionally fragile, on-and-off boyfriend, Harry. Harry leaves her for good, however, after she scares him in the shower and after he discovers that she has been lying about giving up masturbation.
Episode 3
Fleabag helps Martin buy a present for Claire, who is organizing her own surprise birthday party. She reconnects with Bus Rodent and takes him to the party. To Fleabag's shock, Martin gives the stolen sculpture to Claire. Later, a drunken Martin attempts to kiss Fleabag but is rebuffed.
Episode 4
Courtesy of their father, Fleabag and Claire reluctantly visit a female-only silent retreat, where they frequently break the rule of silence. Fleabag admits to Claire that she stole the sculpture, and Claire asks her to return it. At the retreat, Fleabag runs into Bank Manager, who is attending a neighbouring workshop following a sexual harassment scandal at work.

The two bond over their shared unhappiness. Claire reveals that she has been promoted to a lucrative position in Finland but considers turning it down for the sake of her family. Fleabag attempts to persuade her to take the job by telling her of Martin's behavior at the party.

Episode 5

On the anniversary of their mother's death, Fleabag and Claire return to their family home for the annual memorial lunch. Fleabag takes the opportunity to restore the sculpture to her godmother's studio. Things get heated, and plans are being made for the godmother's "sex-hibition." Claire re-steals the sculpture for Fleabag, after which Fleabag rekindles her relationship with Arsehole Guy.

Episode 6

Fleabag goes to the "sex-hibition" and finds that she was invited to act as a waitress; she makes a scene in response. She is dumped by Arsehole Guy and then discovers that Harry has a new girlfriend. To Fleabag's surprise, Claire has turned down the Finland offer and decides to stay with Martin, who has convinced her that Fleabag made the move at the party. Their confrontation triggers a flashback, revealing that Fleabag was the woman with whom Boo's boyfriend cheated. After being turned away by her father, a heartbroken and guilt-ridden Fleabag contemplates suicide but is stopped by Bank Manager, who happens to pass by. After listening to her confession, Bank Manager decides to offer her another shot at the business loan for the café.

Season 2

Episode 1

The season starts in medias res. Fleabag is cleaning her bloodied nose in a bathroom; she tells the audience it is a love story. Having cut ties with her family and taking steps to improve her life after the events of series one, Fleabag returns after one year to join an uncomfortable family dinner, celebrating her father's engagement. She finds herself intrigued by the priest, who is to officiate at the wedding. Claire has a miscarriage during the dinner but refuses to inform anyone or seek medical help. Fleabag covers for her by claiming the miscarriage. Martin's flippant attitude angers Fleabag, who initiates a physical fight with him. Back in the bathroom, where Fleabag cleans her bloodied nose. The sisters proceed to go to a hospital in a cab.

Episode 2

To Claire's surprise, Fleabag's café is now a thriving business. The sisters visit their family, where Fleabag is once again treated dismissively by their stepmother to be. Claire reveals that Martin is planning to press charges against Fleabag for assault, but she arranges legal advice for Fleabag. Fleabag goes to a mental health counseling session, which affirms her desire for the priest. She connects with him, helps him out at a garden party, and attempts to flirt with him.

Episode 3

Fleabag helps with an award event at Claire's work, where she discovers Claire's crush on a Finnish colleague, Klare. The event almost ends in disaster but Fleabag manages to salvage the situation. Claire remains angry at her nonetheless. Fleabag has a profound conversation with Claire's co-worker Belinda at a bar. She continues to flirt with the priest, but he remains unwilling to violate his vows of celibacy. In a moment of metafiction, the priest begins to notice Fleabag breaking the fourth wall.

Episode 4

The priest and Fleabag's pleasant day together ends on an unhappy note when she rebuffs his attempt at getting to know her more and helping with her troubles. During their conversation, the priest continuously notices her breaking the fourth wall. She looks back on her painful memories of her mother's funeral. She also tries to run away from the audience, not wanting to let anyone get too close. At night, Fleabag goes to pray at the church, where she meets the drunken priest, and they establish a closer bond. After Fleabag's confession, they succumb to a moment of passion, but the priest has second thoughts and is unable to carry through.

Episode 5

The priest informs the family that he is no longer able to officiate at the wedding before telling Fleabag not to visit his church again. Claire falls into a state of panic after having second thoughts about her new haircut. Fleabag comforts her, and Claire is further reassured when Klare declares he loves her new look. Fleabag covers for Claire and argues with Martin, who is concerned that Claire is considering leaving him. Fleabag gets a visit from the priest, who reveals his feelings for her are more than physical. The two have sex, and Fleabag pushes the audience away.

Episode 6

On the day of the wedding, Fleabag and the priest wake up together. At the garden wedding, Fleabag returns the stolen sculpture to her godmother, who reveals the figure was based on Fleabag's mother. Claire reveals to Martin the truth about her miscarriage before begging him to leave her. Fleabag persuades Claire to go after Klare and helps her father through the wedding. After the ceremony, the priest and Fleabag admit their love for each other at a bus stop, but he states that he has chosen God after Fleabag asks, "It's God, isn't it?". The two break up on amicable terms. Fleabag sees a fox and points it towards the priest. She then walks away, leaving the audience behind at the bus stop.

Protocol

(Series accessed via Prime Video)

Season 1						
			Narrative			Visual
Ep.	Sc.	Place	Action	Narrative techniques	Dramedy conventions	Camera framing
1	1	Fleabag's house	<p>Fleabag is at home, waiting for her booty call, pretending she just got home herself. She tells the camera she had to get drunk and shave everything for this.</p> <p>The guy arrives. They have sex.</p> <p>The next morning, the guy tells her she was the first he has done it this way with anyone. It is a moving moment. He leaves.</p>	<p>Direct address</p> <p>Own narrator of events.</p>	<p>Uses humor to explain something about her actions.</p> <p>Looks at the camera during intimate moments to include the viewer.</p>	Medium close shot
	2	Café	Fleabag wonders if she has a large asshole.	Direct address	Uses humor to express worries.	Medium shot
	3		Credits			
	4	Bus	<p>Fleabag is reading the paper. She makes eye contact with a passenger. He has huge teeth. Fleabag looks away.</p> <p>The teeth guy, known as Bus Rodent, strikes up a conversation with her as they leave. Fleabag laughs, but tells the camera she hates herself.</p> <p>He asks for her number. Fleabag tells him she just broke up with her ex. He asks how that happened.</p>	Direct address	Includes viewer into story by stealing glances expressing her emotions	Medium close shot

5	Fleabag's house	<p>Fleabag is watching Obama's speech in bed. Her boyfriend, Harry, is sleeping next to her. She starts masturbating. Harry wakes up. Fleabag denies masturbating. He knows she is lying.</p> <p>He says she won't get him back, She tells the camera she will. Harry packs his things and leaves.</p>	Flashback / Direct address		Medium close shot
6	Bus	<p>Fleabag tells him Harry was amazing. The Bus Rodent laughs as he thinks it is a joke. He gets her number. He tells her he'll treat her dirty.</p> <p>Fleabag smiles at the camera.</p> <p>He tells her it was a joke.</p> <p>Fleabag looks disappointed to the camera.</p> <p>Fleabag looks at her phone and starts running.</p>	Direct address	Includes viewer into story by stealing glances expressing her emotions	Medium shot to wide shot as she leaves
7	Bank Manager's office	<p>Fleabag has an appointment for a loan. The manager tells her he thought the application was funny. That was not Fleabag's intention. He tells her they have not been able to help any women-led businesses since a sexual harassment case.</p> <p>Fleabag is panting, when asked if she is alright she explains she had to run to make the appointment so she is hot.</p> <p>The manager continues the conversation and Fleabag takes her shirt off. She is only wearing a bra. The Bank Manager tells her off.</p> <p>Fleabag explains she thought she was wearing a top underneath. He doesn't believe her.</p> <p>She tells her she would never try to shag him. He is offended and asks her to leave.</p> <p>They insult each other.</p>			<p>Medium wide shot to medium shot</p> <p>Medium close shots of Fleabag</p>
8	Feminist lecture	<p>Fleabag meets her sister, Claire, at the lecture. She introduces her to the camera as "uptight and beautiful and probably anorexic, but clothes look awesome on her."</p> <p>Fleabag makes a joke about their deceased mother.</p> <p>Fleabag tells the camera that her dad deals with the loss of their mom by buying them tickets to feminist lectures, start fucking their</p>	Direct address	Uses humor to say/explain controversial things	Medium close shot

		<p>godmother and stop calling. Fleabag takes off her coat, she is wearing a top from her sister. As she explains to the camera. Her sister notices this, there is tension. Claire tries to make conversation, Fleabag dismisses this. She tells the camera she needs to ask for money, but she can't. She tries to, but she fails. She tells Claire business is good.</p>			
9	Café	A single customer comes into the otherwise empty café. He doesn't order anything and plugs in all of his electric devices.	Flashback		wide shot
10	Feminist lecture	Fleabag tells her she broke up with Harry. Claire tells her off. Fleabag makes a joke about her in return and Claire gets angry. Fleabag complains about her underwear.			Medium close shot
11	Clothing store	Fleabag is in a fitting room with her best friend Boo. Boo tells her she is wearing an awful outfit but their Fleabag's own clothes. They get into a playful argument.	Flashback		
12	Feminist lecture	Claire tells her off for her underwear being cheap. Fleabag looks upset. The lecture starts. The speaker asks who in the room would trade five years of their lives for the perfect body. Only Claire and Fleabag raise their hands. Fleabag whispers "We are bad feminists." Claire wants her top back.		Uses humor to say controversial things	Medium shot of the women, wide shot of the lecture.
13	Outside of lecture	Fleabag returns the top. Claire tries to hug her, but Fleabag slaps her because she got scared of it. Claire asks if she wants to go for a drink. Fleabag tells her she has plans. They say goodbye. Fleabag asks a random passerby to go for a drink. Fleabag gets a text from the Bus Rodent.		Making a moving moment funny by acting socially inept. Explains their bond.	Medium shot
14	Restaurant	Fleabag is on a date. He talks a lot, she is not interested. He goes to the bathroom, she tries to steal money. He returns suddenly, Fleabag looks at the camera shamefully. Fleabag asks if he wants to go to her place. He	Direct address	Including the viewer by showing underlying emotions.	Medium shot to medium close shot

		dismisses this. Fleabag is upset. She leaves. He gives her the money he thinks she dropped. She takes it. She walks away with the same shameful look to the camera.			
15	Bus stop	A drunk woman falls over. Fleabag helps her up and calls her a cab. The woman thinks she is a man, Fleabag looks at the camera. Fleabag wants to go home with her, the woman gets upset and pushes her away, leaving in the cab.	Direct address	Including the viewer by showing underlying emotions.	Medium close shot
16	Café	Boo closes the café. They drink wine and sing together.	Flashback	Happy, vulnerable moment	Wide shot to medium shot
17	Bus stop	Fleabag says fuck it.	Direct address		Medium close shot
18	Dad's house	Fleabag shouts through a letterbox. She tells the camera it's fine. Her dad opens the door. Her dad calls her a cab. Her dad asks her to not go upstairs, but she does. She opens the door to her godmother's studio and tells the camera she is a cunt. They make awkward conversation about her work and a golden sculpture. Her dad calls Fleabag down. Fleabag leaves.	Direct address	Her vulnerable moment gets shut down by parent. Opens up anyway but gets shut down by a joke. Uses humor to say controversial things.	Close shot during direct address. Rest is medium shot
19	Cab	The cab driver asks her about the café. Fleabag goes on to explain that she opened it with Boo, but that she is dead now, because she accidentally killed herself. She explains she wanted to get injured, not die, when she found out her boyfriend cheated on her. The driver stays silent. Fleabag opens her coat and reveals the golden statue she stole. She looks into the camera and smiles.	Direct address	Dryly explaining a horrible accident. Even laughing softly.	Medium close shot. Shot closes in on her during the end when she breaks the fourth wall.

	20		End credits			
2	1	Subway	Sail music is heard. Everytime the music has a dropbeat, the passengers scream in agony. Fleabag looks around. She tells the camera she must be getting her period.	Direct address		Medium shot. Close shot of Fleabag during direct address.
	2	Credits				
	3	Claire's house	Fleabag rings the bell. Claire is surprised as to why she is there. Fleabag needs to speak to Martin, Claire's husband. Martin looks caught. Fleabag says to the camera that he is watching porn. Fleabag asks Claire to leave and tells her Martin is organizing her surprise birthday party. Claire leaves. Martin is annoyed that he now has to organize the party. Fleabag asks if he deals in sculptures. He takes the sculpture and will sell it for her. Fleabag asks him not to tell Claire, otherwise she'll tell on him for watching porn. He leaves the room. Fleabag checks his laptop and sees a necklace with the name Claire on it. She scoffs. At the door Claire asks how it is with Harry. She tells her he is packing his things. Claire is sorry for her because he used to make her laugh. Fleabag tells the camera he also used to say things like...	Direct address	Including the viewer by showing underlying emotions and thoughts.	Medium shot
	4	Fleabag's house	Harry tells her she is different, she can keep up.	Flashback		Medium close shot
	5	Claire's house	Claire tells her she liked Harry.			Medium shot
	6	Fleabag's house	Fleabag walks into an empty apartment. She tells the camera that she admires his commitment.	Direct address	Sarcastic humor to explain past events.	Wide shot

7	Fleabag's house	Harry is crying on the floor, cleaning.	Flashback		Medium shot
8	Fleabag's house	She says that she's considered timing a breakup for when it needs to be cleaned.	Direct address	Sarcastic humor to explain past events.	Medium shot
9	Fleabag's house	Harry and Fleabag are watching a film in bed. Fleabag wipes her finger on a dusty nightstand. She breaks up with Harry.	Flashback		Medium shot
10	Fleabag's house	She tells the camera he always leaves a dino figure. To come back for. She thinks about all the people she can have sex with now. She claims not to be obsessed, just can't stop thinking about it. "The moment you realize someone wants your body, not so much the feeling of it."	Direct address	Explaining the viewer some backstory. Uses a dry tone to say controversial and vulnerable things.	Medium shot
11	Street	Fleabag tells herself she looks amazing. A man walks past, Fleabag thinks he wants her. He says "Walk of shame" Fleabag is embarrassed and almost gets hit by a bike.	Direct address	Expresses high confidence in herself, gets put down by a man. Looks sad afterwards.	Camera follows around her into medium close shot. Over the shoulder shot into Fleabag's perspective
12	Bike lane	Boo standing in front of the bike lane.	Flashback / direct address		Medium wide shot
13	Café	Fleabag is trying to attract the attention of a customer. He is not interested. He buys a sandwich. Fleabag asks way too much money, blames London. The guy picks up a picture frame of Boo and Fleabag. He asks where she recognizes her from.			

14	Bike lane	Boo standing in front of the bike lane.	Flashback		Wide shot
15	Café	She tells the camera her death hit the papers. She tells the guy she used to work here. He leaves. She tells the camera that the next man gets ridden to death. Her dad walks in. Not ideal, she says. He asks about the missing sculpture. She denies. Her dad leaves. Two fit girls walk in asking for risotto. She looks into the camera	Direct address	Explaining past events. Sarcastically expressing desires. Sarcastic smiling at camera.	Over the shoulder shot, Fleabag looks back at the camera. Medium shot.
16	Supermarket	Fleabag buys premade risotto and large tampons. She glances at the camera shyly. She bumps into Arsehole Guy. They agree to meet up later. Fleabag expresses her excitement.	Direct address	Expressing emotions.	Medium shot
17	Café	Fleabag is heating up the risotto. The two girls talk about their bodies and that one girl has to leave her boyfriend because she doesn't want to ruin her body for a baby with him. Fleabag looks at the camera judging the girls. They scream as they see the guinea pig, they leave. Fleabag introduces the guinea pig, Hillary.	Direct address	Expressing opinions, not voiced. Explaining backstory.	Medium and over the shoulder shots
18	Café	Fleabag gifts Boo the guinea pig.	Flashback		Medium shot
19	Café	Fleabag puts the guinea pig back into his cage and she explains how the café turned into a guinea pig café.	Direct address		Medium shot
20	Café	Boo hangs up a picture of a guinea pig.	Flashback		Medium shot
21	Café	Fleabag reminisces. She wants a drink.	Direct address	Wants to drown her emotions out.	Medium shot
22	Arsehole	Fleabag looks at the camera with a content face. Fleabag gets fed ham	Direct address	Looks at the camera	Wide shot

	Guy's house	by him and they kiss. They are in the bath asking deep questions. Fleabag continuously looks at the camera explaining what's going on. He asks if she ever feels lonely, she admits yes. They have sex again and he continuously mentions her tiny breasts. Fleabag tells the camera it is a bit much. She tells the camera she misses her ex, but she won't call him.		during intimate moments to include the viewer. Narrator of her story. Vulnerable moment where she admits loneliness, immediately after, humor is used.	Medium close shot in the bath.
23	Restaurant	She met up with Harry. He left a musical to come see her. He was with a girl, Fleabag looks at the camera when he says that. Fleabag brought the dino figurine with her to give back. Harry does not want to get back together.	Direct address	Expressing emotions	Medium close over the shoulder shot. Medium shots.
24	Fleabag's house	Harry and Fleabag have sex. Harry tells her he missed her. Fleabag tells the camera about better sex she has had.	Direct address		Medium close shot
25	Fleabag's house	She has sex with an older guy. She looks smug at the camera.	Flashback / direct address	Expressing emotion	
26	Fleabag's house	She tells the camera she masturbates about that all the time. She starts masturbating during the sex with Harry. She pushes him away. The next morning, Harry mentions he wants them to stop masturbating. He also wants them to surprise each other every day. Fleabag looks at the camera confused. He leaves.	Direct address	Admitting controversial things using a dry tone. Expressing emotions.	Medium close shot.
27	Café	Claire walks in. Fleabag makes her a sandwich and tells her she can puke it up after. Claire talks about the surprise party because she wants to organize it herself and act surprised. Claire sees a lot of letters with final demands. She asks if she needs money. Fleabag says no, but overcharges her on the sandwich.		Jokes about bulimia.	Medium wide shot. Medium shot on Fleabag.

			Claire asks about Harry and when hearing that they're back together she says she can't keep up.			
	28	Fleabag's house	She enters her house and has forgotten to think of a surprise for Harry. She looks at the camera as if she has an idea. She jumps him in the shower with a knife as if she is a burglar, to surprise him. He has a breakdown in the shower. Fleabag apologizes laughingly and offers to get them wine. Fleabag shrugs apologetically at the camera.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts. Fleabag is laughing at Harry's breakdown, not taking him seriously.	Medium shot. Close shot on Fleabag
	29	Street	Fleabag runs out of a store having stolen wine.		Controversial behavior	Wide shot
	30	Fleabag's house	Harry found out Fleabag has been watching porn. Fleabag looks caught. They break up. Harry says a beautiful line, Fleabag tells him he should write it down for his songs. He does. Fleabag looks at the dino figure and tells the camera he'll be back. Harry comes back to take the dino and he leaves. Fleabag looks into the camera with an awkward laugh.	Direct address	Fleabag tries to joke about Harry breaking up with her. Vulnerable moments are reacted to with humor.	Medium shot
	31	End credits				
3	1	Cemetery	Fleabag is on a run and stretches.	Direct address		Wide shot, as she runs towards the camera, turns into medium shot.
	2	Credits				
	3	Cemetery	Fleabag meets up with Claire. They talk about their mom. Fleabag brought a cake for Claire's birthday. Fleabag says she won't eat it. She does. Fleabag looks surprised. Claire discloses information about the surprise she threw for herself. It is a	Direct address	Disclosing information. Expressing emotions. Making a joke about her	Medium shot

		<p>business meeting, and there is a promotion coming up for her. Claire tells Fleabag off for jogging at the cemetery.</p> <p>Fleabag tells the camera about her mom passing away from breast cancer three years ago. Which was unfortunate because she had amazing boobs.</p> <p>They talk about Claire not having sex with Martin. They walk around the cemetery and see a crying man. Fleabag tells her he is at a different grave every day. Claire is sorry for Fleabag that she comes here every day.</p>		mum's passing.	
4	Street	<p>Fleabag calls Harry to ask if he wants to join her for the party. She walks past a dog and thinks he is flirting with her. She looks at the camera and acts caught.</p>	Direct address	Inviting the viewer into narrative.	Medium close shot, camera moves with her.
5	Cafe	<p>Fleabag takes a picture of her vagina. She tells the camera an ex used to ask for these photos of her everyday.</p>	Direct address	Explains backstory.	Medium close shot
6	Office	<p>She gets a text asking for nudes. She takes multiple pictures.</p>	Flashback		Medium shot
7	Café	<p>She sends her nudes. Martin comes in, he does not know what to get Claire for her birthday. He claims not to be drunk. Fleabag tells the camera he always is. He asks her to slap him in the face. A customer walks in but walks out again after seeing the slap. Martin is drunk and wants to eat something. Fleabag explains into the camera that he is someone who is very inappropriate but makes you feel like the problem if you take offense.</p>	Direct address	Explaining backstory of other characters	Medium shot
8	Restaurant	<p>Martin makes an inappropriate comment.</p>	Flashback		Medium wide shot

9	Café	Martin mocks the café. He says her guinea pig looks sad. Fleabag explains she is depressed. Martin says they can die of loneliness. Fleabag looks into the camera looking scared.	Direct address	Expressing emotions.	Medium shot
10	Café	Boo asks Fleabag to hold the guinea pig.	Flashback		Medium close shot
11	Café	Martin shushes Fleabag. She tells the camera he is awful but he makes her sister laugh.	Direct address		Medium shot
12	Restaurant	Martin makes Claire laugh.	Flashback		Wide shot
13	Café	Martin talks about gifts for Claire. He wants Fleabag to come with. Fleabag wants to be paid.			Medium shot
14	Shoestore	They look for a gift for Claire. Fleabag sees a man she appears to know. Fleabag looks upset.			Medium close shot
15	Boo's apartment	Boo tells Fleabag about her new neighbor and that she fancies him. Fleabag pushes her to go and talk to him when he is in the hallway.	Flashback		Close shot
16	Shoestore	Martin is wearing heels. Fleabag leaves. Martin comes after her still wearing the heels. Fleabag wants to get a drink.			Wide shot
17	Bar	Fleabag downs her drink. Martin asks about the guy. She explains that it was Boo's boyfriend who cheated which made her kill herself.			Medium wide shot. When talking about the guy turns into a medium close shot.
18	Bikelane	Boo standing in the bike lane.	Flashback		Medium wide

						shot
19	Bar	Martin says he's sorry. Fleabag changes the subject to the shoes. Fleabag says he needs to have sex with Claire. Martin says she needs to get herself out there. Fleabag gets a text and leaves.	Direct address	Avoiding a vulnerable conversation.		Medium close shot
20	Street	Fleabag is walking with the Bus Rodent on their way to the party. Fleabag tells the camera to shut up. They are getting a present first.	Direct address	Expressing emotions.		Medium shot
21	Sexshop	Fleabag is looking for a gift for Claire. Bus Rodent is looking out of place. The cashier flirts with Fleabag, who looks pleased.	Direct address	Expressing emotions.		Medium shot
22	Claire's house	Bus Rodent is excited. Fleabag looks unsettled. Claire is honking in the car for them to hurry up and get inside. The party surprises Claire who just walked in. Fleabag thinks she's a great actress. Bus Rodent introduces himself to Fleabag's dad. Stepmother walks away and Fleabag follows behind her. They strike up conversation. She asks about her missing sculpture. Bus Rodent comes into the conversation and spins Fleabag around which leads to a lot of glasses breaking as she tips over. Claire rushes over. Martin is drunk and comes over to give her a present. It's the sculpture. Fleabag takes the sculpture away and hides it. She looks at the camera and takes a sip of wine.	Direct address	Expressing emotions.		Wide shot
23	Claire's garden	Fleabag is smoking. Martin comes in and talks to her. He makes inappropriate jokes. Fleabag tells her Claire will leave him. Martin kisses her. He walks off. Fleabag sits still, looking at the camera	Direct address	Expressing emotions.		Medium close shot
24	Street	Fleabag leaves. Claire comes after her, she accidentally took Claire's coat. Fleabag gives her present to Claire. Claire thanks her for it. Claire tells her the business meeting went well. Bus Rodent comes out and leaves with Fleabag. Fleabag looks at the	Direct address	Expressing emotions.		Medium close shot

			camera displeased.			
	25	Café	They have sex. Fleabag doesn't look pleased. He knows she is pretending and is upset. He gets scared by the guinea pig and thinks it's a rat. Fleabag looks at the camera.	Direct address	Telling the viewer inner thoughts.	Medium shot
	26	Café	Boo is petting the guinea pig with her boyfriend.	Flashback		Wide shot
	27	Café	Fleabag picks up the guinea pig and tries to cuddle it.			Medium shot
	28	Café	A series of shots are shown where Boo is trying to get Fleabag to pet the guinea pig.	Flashback		Wide shot
	29	Café	Fleabag cuddles the guinea pig and smiles.			Medium shot
	30	Cemetery	Fleabag is jogging and waves at the crying man at a different grave.			Wide shot, Fleabag runs out of frame, camera stays still.
	31	End credits				
4	1	Car	Claire and Fleabag are in the car, Fleabag claims to know the road without navigation. They have a discussion over this. Fleabag tells the camera she was right. Fleabag makes a joke and Claire starts crying. She doesn't want Fleabag to joke all the time. Fleabag asks if she is okay. Claire claims she is fine. Fleabag tells the camera that she is psycho.	Direct address	Jokingly expressing thoughts	Medium shot

2	Credits				
3	Silent retreat	<p>Claire and Fleabag walk towards the entrance. It was a gift from their dad for mother's day.</p> <p>Claire makes small talk, Fleabag dismisses this which Claire is happy about.</p> <p>As they rung the doorbell and wait for someone to open, they hear a man calling out the word sluts. Fleabag answers.</p> <p>Someone opens the door. The sisters pretend to be happy to be there.</p> <p>A receptionist welcomes them with a calm voice. Claire asks for wifi and a separate room.</p>			Medium shot
4	Retreat room	<p>Fleabag asks where every single item of Claire's skincare is for. Fleabag has one cream she uses.</p> <p>Fleabag finds small batteries in Claire's stuff. She pokes around asking what they're for. Claire goes into the bathroom, a rank smell comes out. Claire goes in and Fleabag looks at the batteries.</p>			Medium wide shot
5	Hotel room	Boo takes out batteries from an alarm clock.	Flashback		Wide shot
6	Silent retreat	<p>Fleabag and Claire are sitting cross legged in a group. They are being welcomed to the retreat.</p> <p>A man stands up who realizes he is in the wrong group. Shame, Fleabag says. Someone shouts sluts outside and he runs towards the sound.</p> <p>When asked why they are here, Fleabag answers very wholesomely, to Claire's surprise. The head of the retreat explains the rules, Fleabag and Claire look disagreeing.</p>	Direct address		Medium shot
7	Garden	<p>The women are gardening meticulously. Fleabag grimaces at the camera. A woman gets stung by a bee, but has to remain silent.</p> <p>Fleabag hears a man shout slag. She goes to explore and hears more shouting of female slurs.</p>	Direct address	She is expressing her opinion on the retreat. Making fun of it essentially.	Wide shot

8	Male retreat	She enters a room where men are shouting female slurs continuously. It is a retreat for men to get better. They are doing an exercise where they learn how to talk correctly to women. Fleabag sees the Bank Manager.			Wide shot Over the shoulder, following Fleabag's perspective.
9	Bank	Bank Manager asks Fleabag to leave.	Flashback		Wide shot
10	Male retreat	A man notices her and calls her a slut. Fleabag gets asked to leave.			Medium shot
11	Silent retreat	Claire and Fleabag are doing a bonding yoga session where they have to hold hands. Fleabag grimaces at the camera. Claire hates the exercise.	Direct address	Expressing emotions. Explaining other character's behavior.	Medium shot.
12	Retreat room	Claire is doing her skincare. Fleabag asks if she's okay. Claire dismisses this and goes to bed. Fleabag turns on the vibrator under her sheets. Claire wants it back. A woman knocks on the door, shushing them. Claire takes the vibrator and puts it on her nightstand. She thanks Fleabag for the gift. She also mentions how happy she is with the sculpture. Fleabag admits that she stole it from their stepmother. Claire gets upset and goes to sleep. The next morning Fleabag is woken by a gong. Claire is already up.			Wide shot
13	Silent retreat	They are doing another yoga mindfulness training. The leader asks them to think of something they can't let go.			Medium shot
14	Fleabag's house	Fleabag is unbuttoning someone's jeans.	Flashback		
15	Silent retreat	Fleabag dismisses the thought. Now she has to think of something peaceful.	Direct address	Explaining her thoughts	Close shot

16	Boo's apartment	She is chatting and laughing with Boo.	Flashback		Close shot
17	Silent retreat	They are having lunch and Fleabag burns her mouth. The women are polishing the floors. Fleabag makes a joke. Claire bursts out laughing. Fleabag looks unsure at the camera. The women are being told off in the leader's office. The leader leaves. Fleabag asks Claire what's wrong. Claire tells her she got the Finland promotion, but that she is turning it down because Martin told her so. Fleabag introduces the camera to Jake.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts	Medium wide shot. When the sisters are alone, it switches to over the shoulder shots. Fleabag looks over her shoulder during the direct address.
18	Claire's house	Jake is trying to get into the bath with Claire.	Flashback		Medium shot
19	Silent retreat	Fleabag says she needs to take the promotion. Claire says she can't. Fleabag says Martin tried to kiss her on Claire's birthday. Claire leaves.			Close shot
20	Retreat room	Fleabag sits on the bed. She hears the men shouting again and looks at them through her window.			Medium shot
21	Garden	Fleabag watches the group of men, having a smoke. The group finishes a session. Bank Manager comes up to her and they smoke together. Fleabag is not speaking. The Bank Manager explains why he is at his retreat. Fleabag offers to touch her breasts, but he declines the offer. He talks about how he wants to move back home and move on. It is a		Vulnerable moment, expressing her thoughts and insecurities.	Wide shot. When just Bank Manager and Fleabag it becomes a

			touching moment. Fleabag admits she just wants to cry all the time.			medium shot.
	22	Retreat room	Fleabag comes into the room, Claire is already in bed. Fleabag also goes to bed. She looks at the camera and gets back up. Fleabag lies down next to her and goes to sleep. Claire holds her hand. Fleabag smiles at the camera. The next morning Fleabag wakes up alone. She looks at the camera wondering.	Direct address	Showing awareness of the viewer.	Medium wide shot
	23	Silent retreat	Fleabag asks if anyone has seen Claire. Claire has left. Fleabag looks at the camera upset. Fleabag calls Boo's machine to listen to her voice. She tells the camera someone should disconnect that.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot. When on the phone it turns into a close shot.
	24	End credits				
5	1	Doctor's office	Fleabag is getting a breast exam. She makes inappropriate comments to the doctor, as if he is flirting with her. He mentions he also saw her sister, Fleabag asks if she's okay. Fleabag explains to the camera that her dad books these appointments for them. The doctor tells her off for her comments. She shamefully looks at the camera.	Direct address	It is a serious topic, breast cancer, but Fleabag solely jokes about it.	Medium close shot.
	2	Credits				
	3	Dad's house	Fleabag runs towards Claire. Fleabag explains they are going to their mom's memorial lunch. Claire says she doesn't appreciate their stepmother being there. Fleabag asks about Martin, Claire dismisses this. The door opens and they are greeted by their stepmother. She takes the	Direct address	Explaining events. Stealing glances at the viewer to show her expressions.	Medium shot When all on the couch it is a medium

		<p>flowers meant for their dad, and puts them on the doorstep. They hear their dad sawing in the backyard, he is taking down a tree because their cat tried to escape.</p> <p>The three women are sitting in silence on the couch. Fleabag says this is her favorite part of the visit. They make awkward conversations. Dad walks in and is being awkward, not making full sentences. He asks about the doctor's appointment. He wants to say something about their mother, stepmother cuts this off.</p> <p>Dad talks fondly of their mother, the sisters laugh. The stepmother starts talking about her ex. They leave to the kitchen.</p> <p>Fleabag asks about Finland. She notices Claire's plaits. She explains to the camera that she always does something different during her period, or something has gone down.</p>			wide shot
4	Dad's house	Claire walks in wearing a turquoise leotard.	Flashback		Wide shot
5	Dad's house	<p>Claire takes out the sculpture from her bag. She wants Fleabag to put it back.</p> <p>They go upstairs.</p> <p>Fleabag puts the sculpture back and asks Claire if everything is okay. Claire doesn't respond and asks who Fleabag has invited.</p> <p>Fleabag jokes around about their dad's relationship, Claire says she needs to stop nosing in other people's marriage.</p> <p>Stepmother walks in asking them what they are doing here. She escorts them downstairs.</p> <p>Fleabag goes into the kitchen with her dad. She tells the camera he hates being alone with her. He stumbles over his words. She talks about the café closing. Her dad says they can't help, Fleabag asks about their house in France that they are buying.</p> <p>Dad drops food on the floor and panics. They clean up and laugh together. Stepmother walks in. The doorbell rings and she goes to open it. Fleabag smiles at the camera.</p>	Direct address	Using humor to say controversial things.	Medium wide shot

6	Dinner table	Fleabag tells the camera she didn't want to show off. She shows Arsehole Guy. He asks how they met. Claire and Fleabag explain. Stepmother compliments him continuously, telling him he is almost too good looking. Fleabag looks at the camera. He goes to the bathroom. They talk about the sex-hibition coming up. Stepmother talks about her sexlife with their dad. Fleabag brings up Claire's promotion. Claire doesn't want to talk about it. Fleabag pokes. Claire shouts that she can't leave Fleabag behind. The table falls quiet.	Direct address	Sarcasm. Expressing emotion	Medium shot
7	Bathroom	Fleabag hides out.			Medium shot
8	Fleabag's house	Fleabag and Boo have a talk about how Fleabag doesn't like herself, Boo pretends to be Fleabag. Fleabag goes off against her.	Flashback	Humor to talk about personal issues	Medium shot
9	Bathroom	The cat is scratching on the door. Fleabag lets him in and opens a window for him to escape.			Medium close shot
10	Dinner table	Arsehole Guy compliments the artwork in the house. Stepmother invites him to her sex-hibition. She also asks Fleabag about the café. She says it's fine. Arsehole Guy doesn't understand. Stepmother belittlingly talks about Boo and tells Fleabag to let the café go.			Medium shot
11	Café	Boo and Fleabag are proud of their café.	Flashback		Medium close shot
12	Dinner table	Claire excuses herself.			Wide shot
13	Bathroom	Fleabag is smoking.			Medium shot

	14	Dad's house	<p>Stepmother asks about the cat and mentions that the sculpture has returned. Fleabag pushes her after a nasty comment. Stepmother slaps her in the face. Dad walks in but doesn't say anything. Claire comes down the stairs and says that they are leaving. They leave. Arsehole Guy also leaves, stepmother compliments him some more. Arsehole Guy loved the visit and asks Fleabag to spend the night. Claire tells Fleabag she is leaving Martin, taking the promotion and will give Fleabag money for the café. She also stole the sculpture back and hands it to Fleabag. They hug. Fleabag jumps on the motorcycle. The cat crosses the street. Fleabag looks at the camera pleased with herself. They ride off.</p>	Direct address	<p>Keeps her eyes closed, keeping the viewer out of this moment during the hug. Showing emotion.</p>	<p>Medium wide shot Direct address is a close shot</p>
	15	End credits				
6	1	Arsehole Guy's house	<p>They have sex. Fleabag tells the camera she needs to stay sexy. He talks about her small breasts. He loses his erection. Fleabag explains to the camera that this means he is falling in love.</p>	Direct address	Expressing thoughts.	Medium close
	2	Credits				
	3	Arsehole Guy's house	Fleabag wakes up			Close shot
	4	Café	Fleabag reads the newspaper.	Flashback		Wide shot
	5	Arsehole Guy's house	Fleabag smiles reminiscing.			Close shot

6	Café	Fleabag tells Boo a horrible story in the paper. Boo responds lovingly.	Flashback		Medium wide shot
7	Arsehole Guy's house	Fleabag explains she was a surprising person.	Direct address	Explaining other characters.	Close shot
8	Café	Boo says people make mistakes.	Flashback		Medium shot
9	Arsehole Guy's house	He says to Fleabag he wants to talk later. He leaves.			Medium close to medium wide shot
10	Sexhibition	Fleabag and Arsehole Guy arrive. Stepmother hands her a tray of drinks. Stepmother does a welcoming speech. "Sex brings life."			Medium to wide shot during the speech.
11	Café	Boo is crying.	Flashback		Close shot
12	Sexhibition	Speech continues. She mentions the stolen sculpture. Fleabag smiles at the camera. Fleabag calls Claire asking where she is. Arsehole Guy is looking at the sexhibition and talking with stepmother about it.	Direct address	Expressing emotion.	Close shot on Fleabag, rest is wide shot.
13	Outside the sexhibition	Fleabag looks at the camera ready for the conversation. Arsehole Guy explains that he fell in love with someone else and doesn't want to continue their sexual relationship. Fleabag pretends she doesn't care. They say goodbye. She looks away from the camera.	Direct address	Inner thoughts Keeping the viewer out by not looking.	Medium close shot

14	Sexhibiton	<p>Fleabag calls Claire again. She bumps into a statue of Harry, her ex. She looks confused. Then she bumps into the real Harry. He introduces her to his new girlfriend. They talk about the statue.</p> <p>Fleabag says he's left some of his stuff at her apartment. He says she can keep it. He doesn't think about her anymore. Fleabag mocks his girlfriend's name at the camera.</p> <p>Claire arrives with Martin. Fleabag looks surprised. They go and greet everyone.</p> <p>Stepmother hands Fleabag the tray again. She looks at the camera angrily.</p>	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot
15	Coatroom	Fleabag downs some glasses of champagne.			Medium close shot
16	Café	Boo and Fleabag drink wine together.	Flashback		Wide shot
17	Coatroom	She pours more glasses.			Medium shot
18	Café	Boo and Fleabag drink wine together.	Flashback		Wide shot
19	Coatroom	She takes the tray and heads back.			Medium shot, camera does not follow her
20	Sexhibiton	<p>Fleabag drinks more glasses. Stepmother snaps her fingers at her. Fleabag drops a glass. The room falls silent. She drops the entire tray. Her dad tells her off and tells her to apologize.</p> <p>Stepmother fake cries.</p> <p>Her dad gets angry and leaves.</p> <p>Stepmother tells Fleabag to clean it up.</p>			Wide shot to medium close shot over the shoulder from Fleabag's perspective

21	Coatroom	Claire asks what she was doing. Fleabag asks what Martin is doing here. Martin enters the room. Claire says Fleabag tried to kiss Martin, not the other way around. Fleabag tries to explain. Claire doesn't want to hear it and doesn't believe her, after what she did to Boo. Fleabag's face drops.			Medium shot over the shoulder shots. Close shot at the end
22	Fleabag's house	Fleabag is unbuttoning someone's jeans.	Flashback		Close shot
23	Coatroom	Fleabag looks into the camera.	Direct address	Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
24	Café	Boo is crying.	Flashback		Close shot
25	Coatroom	Fleabag looks away and tries to walk off.	Direct address	Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
26	Café	Boo says her boyfriend slept with someone else.	Flashback		Close shot
27	Coatroom	Fleabag looks around feeling caught. Claire apologizes but sticks to it.	Direct address	Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
28	Shoestore	Fleabag sees boo's boyfriend.	Flashback		Close shot
29	Coatroom	Fleabag is crying. Martin tells Claire to leave. The camera pushes in on Fleabag which makes her fall into the coat rack.	Direct address	Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
30	Bar	Boo is kissing her boyfriend	Flashback		Medium shot

31	Coatroom	Fleabag tries to push past the camera, not looking at it.		Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
32	Café	Boo and her boyfriend are petting the guinea pig.	Flashback		
33	Coatroom	Fleabag is running away.		Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
34	Boo's apartment	Boo tells Fleabag she loves him.	Flashback		
35	Coatroom	Fleabag is walking away.		Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
36	Fleabag's house	Boo's boyfriend touches Fleabag's shoulder.	Flashback		Close shot
37	Coatroom	Fleabag can't walk further, she is trapped by the camera and a fence.		Expressing the feeling of getting too close.	Close shot
38	Fleabag's house	She unbuttons Boo's boyfriend's jeans and they kiss.	Flashback		Close shot
39	Coatroom	Fleabag is sitting on the floor crying.			Close shot
40	Café	Boo says she is going to hurt herself.	Flashback / direct address	Talking to Fleabag	Close shot
41	Fleabag's house	They kiss more.	Flashback		Close shot
42	Bike lane	Boo is standing in front of the bike lane.	Flashback		Close shot

43	Café	Boo says he'll be sorry.	Flashback	Talking to Fleabag	Close shot
44	Bike lane	Boo is standing in front of the bike lane. She steps forward.	Flashback		Wide shot
45	Outside the sexhibition	Fleabag leaves. She sees her dad crying by his car. She walks up to him and he says he doesn't understand her and that he is hurt by her. She asks if he thinks about her mom. He asks if she thinks about Boo. Fleabag apologizes. Stepmother walks up and her dad dismisses their conversation and tells her to leave.			Wide into medium shot
46	Street	We hear Boo's answering machine. Fleabag is walking around at night, looking dissociated. It is now light and Fleabag is still walking around with a tear stained face. We still hear Boo's answering machine.			Wide shot into close shot of her face
47	Café	Fleabag feeds the guinea pig. She looks around the café and leaves.			Medium shot
48	Bike lane	Fleabag is standing on the sidewalk. The same as Boo has been.			Medium wide shot
49	Bike lane	Boo is standing in front of the bike lane.	Flashback / direct address	Looking at Fleabag	Medium wide shot
50	Bike lane	Fleabag is standing on the sidewalk. She closes her eyes.			Medium wide shot
51	Bike lane	Boo is standing in front of the bike lane. She steps forward.	Flashback / direct address	Looking at Fleabag	Medium wide shot
52	Bike lane	Fleabag is standing on the sidewalk. A car stops in front of her. It is the Bank Manager. He asks if she is okay.			Medium wide shot

	53	Café	The Bank Manager talks about her loan application. He asks if she wants tea. He goes to leave, and mentions that café's are difficult. She says she's fucked up everything. She goes into a monologue about sex and her obsession with it and how she hates that. The Bank Manager wants to leave. He comes back in and redoes the loan application interview with her. They smile together.		Vulnerable moment, not looking at the viewer, keeping it for herself.	Medium shot
	54	End credits				
Season 2						
			Narrative			Visual
Ep.	Sc.	Place	Action	Narrative techniques	Dramedy conventions	Camera framing
1	1	Recap	"Before"			
	2	Timestamp	"371 days, 19 hours & 26 minutes later"			
	3	Restaurant bathroom	Fleabag is washing her hands in the bathroom. We see her in the mirror with a heavy bloodied nose. She is cleaning herself up. someone outside asks if they can help. She looks into the camera saying it is a love story.	Direct address	Controversial	Wide shot from behind, then medium close shot over the shoulder
	4	Credits				

5	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself.	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
6	Park	She is doing a workout with a trainer.	Flashback		Wide shot
7	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself.	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
8	Café	Eating healthy.	Flashback / direct address	Expressing thoughts	Medium shot
9	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself.	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
10	Street	Arsehole Guy offering her sex. Which she declines.	Flashback		Wide shot
11	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself.	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
12	Bar	Laughing with friends.	Flashback		Medium shot
13	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself. She is not even thinking about:	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
14	Café	Boo is smiling.	Flashback		Medium close shot
15	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself. She is not even thinking about:	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
16	Claire's house	Martin kisses Fleabag.	Flashback		Medium shot

17	Restaurant	Fleabag goes over everything she has done to work on herself. Her sister still hates her, but they pretend to be polite. Because her dad is:	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot, over the shoulder
18	Cemetery	Fleabag and Claire are standing at a grave.	Flashback		
19	Restaurant	A joke. Her dad is there, engaged. Martin comes in. Fleabag grimaces. Everyone laughs loudly, choir music swells on. Fleabag looks blandly at the camera as this happens. Her dad tries to make a meaningful speech, but fails to finish any sentences. The priest congratulates their engagement and Fleabag tells the camera she doesn't know him. Claire mentions they are not drinking. Fleabag tells the camera she hasn't seen her since the coatroom.	Direct address	Humor about controversial things (parent passing) Expressing emotion. Giving extra context.	Medium shot of the table. Close shots over the shoulder from Claire to Fleabag
20	Coatroom	Claire walks away (choir music)	Flashback		Close shot
21	Restaurant	Except for:	Direct address	Explanation of events	Close shot
22	Restaurant	Claire compliments Fleabag's jumpsuit. They make awkward conversations. Claire walks away. Fleabag smiles at the camera. (choir music)	Flashback / direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot
23	Restaurant	It becomes obvious that the mystery man is their priest. Fleabag tells the camera. The priest swears. Fleabag calls him cool to the camera. The conversation continues. Fleabag explains reactions of other people to the camera	Direct address	Expressing thoughts Explanation of behavior of other characters	Medium shot, direct address is close shot
24	Outside	Fleabag is smoking and sighs deeply.			Medium wide shot

25	Restaurant	<p>Claire is talking about her Finland job and their sobriety. Martin tells them they are trying to get pregnant. Fleabag explains conversation topics. Godmother takes over the conversation and switches it about herself. Martin tells the table they are trying to have kids. Fleabag looks at the camera.</p> <p>Fleabag tells the camera that no one has asked her anything. The priest asks her what she does. The table falls silent. Fleabag answers. She says it's going well.</p> <p>She also tells the camera it actually is going well.</p>	Direct address	<p>Explanation to the viewer.</p> <p>Expressing emotion</p>	<p>Medium shot, direct address is close shot</p> <p>Fleabag looks over her shoulder to the camera</p>
26	Outside	<p>Fleabag is smoking and has her head against the wall sighing. The priest walks out. He bums a cigarette. As he wants to ask her something, Fleabag walks off. He curses at her but smiles. Fleabag smiles back.</p>			<p>Medium shot</p>
27	Restaurant	<p>They silently wait at the table for the priest to come back. Fleabag awkwardly looks at the camera.</p> <p>When he returns he talks about his priesthood and his family. The priest and Fleabag make eye contact and there seems to be some tension.</p> <p>Godmother and the priest talk about a feast coming up. Godmother mentions they don't want gifts. Fleabag responds kindly. The table again falls silent.</p> <p>Godmother tells everyone she is making a portrait of the two girls. Fleabag says "oh god" to the camera. Claire says "oh god."</p> <p>The conversation continues. Claire talks about how she doesn't see her sister much and the priest mentions his brother. He is a pedophile. Fleabag smiles at the camera.</p>	Direct address	<p>Expressing emotion</p> <p>Using humor to talk about controversial topics.</p>	<p>Medium wide shot of dinner table</p> <p>Shots between Fleabag and Priest are medium close shot</p> <p>Rest is medium shot</p>
28	Outside	<p>Fleabag is smoking. Her dad walks out. He gives her a birthday present envelope.</p> <p>He mentions she is behaving. She says because it doesn't matter. They go silent and the conversation dies down. He goes back inside.</p>		<p>Vulnerable moment, brought with a laugh.</p>	<p>Wide shot</p>

29	Restaurant	<p>Fleabag catches Martin having a drink when she walks back inside. He offends her and Fleabag gives a side eye to the camera.</p> <p>They sit back down at the table.</p> <p>Everyone is saying how happy they are. Claire mentions she works in finance. Everyone at the table is shocked, they thought she was a lawyer. Fleabag tells the camera as well.</p> <p>Claire asks why Fleabag is being quiet. Claire asks about the envelope. Fleabag opens it. It is a voucher for a counseling session.</p> <p>Fleabag makes a comment about her sister not believing her. Choir music swells on. The people at the table look at each other.</p> <p>Claire walks off in a hurry.</p>	Direct address	Expressing emotion	<p>Medium wide shot</p> <p>At the table all medium shots.</p> <p>Shots between Claire and Fleabag are medium close shots.</p>
30	Restaurant Bathroom	<p>Fleabag asks if Claire is okay.</p> <p>Claire needs sanitary towels. She gives her some hand towels and sees a lot of blood. Claire has had a miscarriage.</p> <p>Fleabag urges her to go to a hospital. Claire gets angry and shuts the door. She walks out as if nothing happened. Fleabag tries to talk reason into her, Claire agrees to go to a hospital.</p>			Medium shot
31	Restaurant	<p>Fleabag and Claire arrive back at the table. Claire sits down and has a glass of wine.</p> <p>Claire is suddenly very aggressively happy. Fleabag looks confused. The conversation continues.</p> <p>Fleabag shouts that they need to stop.</p> <p>Claire shakes her head at her.</p> <p>Fleabag says she had a miscarriage. Silence. They say she needs to go to the hospital, Claire says she doesn't want to go. Claire gives her a drink saying she is fine. The priest is worried about Fleabag.</p> <p>Martin goes off at Fleabag and her miscarriage.</p> <p>Fleabag punches him on the nose. In the heat of the moment Fleabag, the priest and the waiter also get hit in the face.</p>			<p>Medium shot</p> <p>Shots between Claire and Fleabag are close shots</p>

	32	Restaurant bathroom	Back at the beginning, Fleabag is cleaning herself up.			Medium close shot over the shoulder
	33	Restaurant	Choir music. The priest got her stuff for Fleabag. He gives her his number, in case she wants to talk. Fleabag walks off, glancing at the camera.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium close shot
	34	Street	Fleabag is walking around with a bloodied nose. Claire shouts at her from a cab to come in. They go to a hospital together. They agree that the priest is hot and they smile. Fleabag smiles into the camera.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot
	35	End credits				
2	1	Church	Fleabag is greeting fellow churchgoers. The priest starts the prayer. Fleabag looks around at religious figures in the church. She looks back at the camera and says amen.	Direct address	Including the viewer	Wide shot
	2	Credits				
	3	Church	They're singing. The priest notices Fleabag and stumbles on his words. Fleabag smugly raises her eyebrows. She looks at him lovingly whilst he talks. Churchgoers are leaving. The priest talks to Fleabag. Fleabag wants to pay the priest back for dinner. Pam takes the money for the collection. He offers Fleabag a cup of tea.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Wide shot Fleabag is medium shot Over the shoulder shots during their talk

4	Priest's room	<p>Fleabag looks around and sniffs at the bible. She looks at the camera and says "Jesus" in a flirtatious manner.</p> <p>The priest drops the tea. He jokingly asks her to volunteer for the feast tomorrow. Fleabag is sad that it is a joke.</p> <p>The priest offers her a gin & tonic. They talk.</p> <p>Fleabag mentions she doesn't believe in god and then a holy painting falls off the wall. Fleabag looks shocked, also at the camera.</p> <p>The priest mentions her miscarriage, which Fleabag forgot about, but thanks him once she realizes.</p> <p>They talk about faith and she says she is an atheist. He makes a lame joke. Fleabag looks upset into the camera and admits she fancies him.</p>	Direct address	<p>Making a joke</p> <p>Expressing emotion</p>	Medium shots during their talk, mostly over the shoulder
5	Fleabag's bedroom	<p>Fleabag is googling about celibacy. Choir music swells. She sighs and looks into the camera shyly.</p>	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium close shot
6	Café	<p>The terrace is full of customers. Claire stops by, who is surprised by the amount of people there.</p> <p>They sit down to talk. Fleabag looks at the camera, suspicious of Claire.</p> <p>A customer comes up to talk to Claire, who is not interested in conversation.</p> <p>Fleabag notices Claire's shoes and looks at the camera.</p>	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Wide shots of terrace. Medium over the shoulder shots during conversation
7	Dad's house	<p>Godmother is hugging Fleabag. She asks many questions, but Fleabag doesn't want to talk about it.</p> <p>The sisters sit down for the painting of the portrait. Fleabag has to face the painting with her back. She looks upset at the camera. Godmother continues to talk about miscarriages. Fleabag reacts to the camera.</p> <p>Claire has to organize an event and Fleabag offers to help.</p> <p>The sisters walk outside and Claire says that Martin is going to press charges but she will provide her legal advice. The lawyer defends rapists, Fleabag makes a joke that he must have a high success rate.</p>	Direct address	<p>Expressing emotion</p> <p>Expressing thoughts</p> <p>Humor to talk about controversial topics.</p>	Medium shot
8	Lawyer's office	<p>The lawyer opens the door and is very flirtatious and sexual.</p> <p>They discuss their options in his office. Fleabag notices Claire and the lawyer flirting , she tells the camera, and she leaves them.</p>	Direct address	Expressing thoughts	Medium shot

9	Outside	Fleabag is staring at birds in a tree, holy music is heard. Fleabag smiles. Claire walks up to her and discusses further actions. Fleabag tells the camera that she thinks he is outrageous. Fleabag mentions she doesn't sleep around anymore. Claire is astounded. Fleabag admits she likes someone. Fleabag wants to give Claire the voucher, but she doesn't want it. She walks off. Fleabag raises her eyebrows at the camera.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts	Medium shot
10	Counselling office	The shrink is moisturizing her arms. They try to set boundaries about making jokes. Fleabag explains everything that could be the reason for her dad gifting her the voucher. She thinks she is good at therapy. The shrink asks if she's close with her family.	Direct address	Opening up about her issues, but doing this in a dry, almost sarcastic manner. Expressing thoughts	Wide shot During session medium close shot
11	Restaurant	Fleabag punches Martin in the face.	Flashback		Medium wide shot
12	Counselling office	"we get on with it." says Fleabag. The shrink asks if she has any friends. Fleabag looks taken aback.			Medium close shot
13	Café	Boo chatting	Flashback		Medium close shot
14	Counselling office	Fleabag says she doesn't have time for friends. Fleabag tries to make jokes, but the shrink doesn't pick up on them. Fleabag says that she is a tough crowd. She also explains why she doesn't have casual sex anymore.	Direct address	Joke	Medium close shot
15	Bike lane	Boo is standing in front of the bike lane, looking at the camera.	Flashback / direct address		Medium shot
16	Counselling office	They talk about the sex impulse still being there.			

17	Church	The priest is laughing	Flashback		
18	Counselling office	They talk about the priest. Fleabag says she does have friends. She winks at the camera. She says her friends are always there and looks at the camera again. She wants her money. but the shrink doesn't give in. Fleabag explains more about the priest. They have a discussion about the fact that she does not know what to do, the shrink tells her she does.	Direct address	Including the viewer	Medium close shot
19	Church grounds	Fleabag is at the feast. She tells the camera to shut up. Harry is there, with a baby. They talk about his kid, he has postnatal depression. The priest comes up, and they explain they are exes. Pam announces the band is starting. The priest is making conversation but Pam interrupts. The priest and Fleabag talk about the painting. He brushes her arm when he walks away. Fleabag sighs into the camera. The band is playing and Martin walks up very closely behind Fleabag. Fleabag grimaces. Martin is trying to get Fleabag to apologize, but she tells the camera she won't. Fleabag goes off into a rant. She tells the camera she is proud. She ends her monologue weakly, and Martin makes fun of her. Fleabag is upset at herself. Jake comes up to them, being creepy. Fleabag explains Jake is creepy. Martin takes his son away. Fleabag sighs, turns around and looks at the priest. Church music swells on. Jake walks back and tells Fleabag Claire needs to leave Martin. Fleabag says into the camera that he will kill someone one day. Fleabag is walking away, the priest comes after her. They brush knuckles. Fleabag tells the camera excitedly. He gives her a bible with some markings for her to read. She hesitantly obliges, but takes it anyway. He invites her to come whenever she wants, to talk. She turns around	Direct address	Expressing thought, including the viewer Expressing emotion	Medium shot

			smiling, when she locks eyes with the camera, she quickly drops her smile. Choir music swells.			
	20	End credits				
3	1	Fleabag's bathroom	Fleabag is reading the bible in the bathtub. She is shocked by what she reads. She looks into the camera.	Direct address	Including viewer	Medium close shot
	2	Credits				
	3	Elevator	Fleabag and Claire are standing in the elevator. Fleabag is holding catering food. Claire is giving her instructions on not to be herself. Fleabag farts. A colleague enters the elevator and says the food smells lovely.			Medium wide shot
	4	Claire's work	Claire is continuously giving Fleabag instructions. Fleabag tells the camera her sister loves this. They enter her huge office, Fleabag curses at its size. Claire is very stressed. Fleabag needs to check the award. Claire thanks her for her help and walks out. Fleabag drops the award. She looks at the camera with guilt.	Direct address	Expressing thought	Medium shot
	5	Outside	Fleabag runs across town and back to the office. She gives a thumbs up to the camera.	Direct address	Expressing thought	Wide shot
	6	Claire's work	Fleabag puts the awardbox on stage. She starts handing out canapés. She makes a joke and Claire tells her off and to be silent. Belinda comes up and asks something about the canapés, Fleabag doesn't dare to talk until Claire tells her to. Claire keeps looking around nervously. Fleabag asks her why. Klare comes up to Claire and they accidentally kiss when greeting each other. They	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot

		<p>explain to Fleabag how they know each other. They are both awkward. Fleabag smiles at the camera. Fleabag laughs at her, Claire asks her to stop and says she's not in love with him. Fleabag wiggles her eyebrows at the camera. Claire goes to announce the award.</p>			
7	Toilet	<p>Fleabag is looking for Sylvia, who is vomiting. Food allergies from Fleabag's catering.</p>	Direct address	Explaining to viewer	Medium shot
8	Claire's work	<p>Claire announces Sylvia, Fleabag mouths "no" at her. Claire understands and announces the rest of the award herself. She repeats Fleabag's joke from earlier. The crowd laughs. Claire hands the award to Belinda, which is the golden statue stolen from godmother.</p>			Medium wide shot over Fleabag's shoulder
9	Hallway	<p>Claire is upset at the statue being the award. Klare comes up and kisses Claire on the cheek. Claire tells Fleabag to leave.</p>			Wide shot
10	Street	<p>Fleabag is chasing Belinda. She asks for the statue back. Belinda wants an explanation.</p>			Wide shot to medium shot
11	Bar	<p>Fleabag has just explained the statue story. Belinda loved it. Belinda talks down on the women's award. They talk about each other's sexuality and being a woman. Fleabag clearly looks up to her. Fleabag kisses Belinda, she pushes her away. She gives her some life advice and leaves. Fleabag looks into the camera.</p>		Belinda being serious about feminist topics. The women's award is "ghettoizing, a subsection of success."	Medium shot
12	Claire's work	<p>Fleabag walks into Claire's office. They talk and Claire acts happy. Fleabag tells the camera she is in fact furious. Claire bursts out that she wanted to come up with her own joke. She goes off at Fleabag and Fleabag defends herself by saying Martin kissed her not the other way around. Claire knows.</p>	Direct address	Expressing thoughts	Medium shot

			She goes off again at how she makes her feel like she has failed. Fleabag wants to mention her office, but Claire tells her not to. Claire tells her they are not friends, only sisters. Fleabag walks off. Choir music swells on.			
	13	Church	Choir music continues. Fleabag rings the priest's doorbell, looking at the camera. The priest opens the door, she woke him up. He lets her in. They discuss the bible Fleabag read. She points out some flaws in the story. The priest explains it's more like poetry. He explains his faith. Fleabag makes a joke about giving him kids, he tells her it's not going to happen. Pam slams the door upstairs, they go outside.	Direct address	Including viewer	Close shot of Fleabag Over the shoulder medium shot of the priest.
	14	Churchyard	The priest jumps up thinking he's seen a fox. They are after him, apparently. Fleabag asks questions about his faith, also about celibacy. The priest jumps up again thinking he saw the fox. He explains that celibacy is quite simple. Fleabag keeps digging, the priest admits he likes her, but tells her they're not going to have sex. He wants to be her friend. Fleabag agrees. She tells the camera it won't last. The priest notices this. He asks her about it and she denies. He continues to notice. Fleabag looks into the camera horrified. They scream at something and both jump up.	Direct address	Expressing thought. Invading fourth wall break.	Medium close shot
	15	End credits				
4	1	Clothing store	The priest is in a dressing room, Fleabag is shopping with him. He comes out hesitantly in a church gown. They give their opinions, he goes back to change. Fleabag looks happy and caught at the camera behind her.	Direct address	Expressing emotion, viewer getting close.	Medium wide shot

2	Credits				
3	Street	The priest talks about his gown and Fleabag repeatedly tells the camera she loves his arms and neck. They talk about weddings and funerals. He asks if she's been to many funerals.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts	Medium wide shot
4	Funeral	Claire and Fleabag are receiving condolences.	Flashback		Wide shot
5	Street	They continue to talk about funerals. She accidentally talks to him instead of the camera. Fleabag talks it off. The priest takes her somewhere inside. Fleabag tells the camera about his neck.	Direct address	Switches inner monologue to outer monologue.	Medium shot
6	Quaker meeting	Fleabag and the priest are in a room with other people at a Quaker meeting. Fleabag explains to the camera what it is. Someone stands up, speaks and sits back down. Fleabag talks to the camera, wondering what the priest is thinking. She feels the need to stand up and says she would probably be less of a feminist if she had larger breasts. The priest laughs.	Direct address	Explanation of events. Expressing thoughts	Wide shot. Fleabag is Medium close shot
7	Street	Fleabag and the priest walk back outside. They discuss the meeting. Fleabag has to leave, the priest wants to come with.			Medium shot
8	Café	The priest is cuddling the guinea pig. Fleabag smiles at the camera. He asks about the café.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium close shot
9	Café	Boo is hanging up a guinea pig picture.	Flashback		Medium shot
10	Café	The priest asks more questions. Fleabag answers and tries to stir the questions his way, but he goes back to questioning her.			Medium close shot

11	Café	Boo is eating a sandwich.	Flashback		Medium shot
12	Café	Fleabag looks into the camera.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot
13	Café	Boo is eating a sandwich and looking into the camera, shaking her head.	Flashback / direct address	Communicating with Fleabag	Close shot
14	Café	The priest keeps digging. Fleabag tells the camera he is annoying. The priest notices again. Fleabag looks into the camera again, the priest then also looks at it. Fleabag tells him to quit. The conversation goes south and Fleabag tells him to go. He leaves.	Direct address	Expressing thought, entering her inner world.	Medium shot
15	Street	Fleabag is smoking, looking at the camera, and then away from it.	Direct address	Not wanting to let the viewer in.	Medium shot
16	Funeral	Fleabag and Boo are smoking together.	Flashback		Medium close shot
17	Street	Fleabag is smoking. She is looking at the camera, trying to get away from it.	Direct address	Not wanting to let the viewer in.	Wide shot
18	Funeral	Godmother is there as well.	Flashback		Medium shot
19	Street	She is looking at the camera, trying to get away from it.	Direct address	Not wanting to let the viewer in.	Medium shot from behind
20	Funeral	Guest tells them their mom was wonderful.	Flashback		Medium wide shot
21	Fleabag's house	She enters her house, giving a side eye to the camera.	Direct address	Not wanting to let the viewer in.	Medium shot

22	Funeral	Dad is sitting in the front row.	Flashback		Wide shot
23	Fleabag's house	She is hanging up her coat.			Medium shot
24	Dad's house	Her dad walks away from Fleabag.	Flashback		Medium shot
25	Fleabag's house	She looks into the mirror.			Close shot
26	Funeral	Boo is telling her it will be okay.	Flashback / direct address	Talking to Fleabag.	Close shot
27	Fleabag's house	She looks into the mirror. She washes her face.			Medium close shot
28	Funeral	Fleabag is trying to mess up her appearance, because she looks too good. Claire enters and is upset because Fleabag looks so good. Godmother enters and compliments Fleabag. The sisters accept condolences, and everyone tells Fleabag how good she looks. The sisters talk about their dad and their godmother. Claire walks off.	Flashback		Medium shot
29	Outside funeral	Boo and Fleabag are smoking together. Harry greets them. He cries. Then he compliments her.	Flashback		Medium shot
30	Funeral	Godmother greets the sisters. She talks to them about being there for them. Claire tells Fleabag off for eating. Fleabag goes up to her dad. They sit down together and talk about her mother. Godmother walks in. She leaves again and dad says she is annoying. They cry together. Dad gives her a pep talk and he goes back to the group. Fleabag remains seated as her dad walks off.	Flashback	Vulnerable moment with her dad.	Medium wide shot, with her dad it is a medium close shot

31	Church	Fleabag is sitting in the church benches.			Wide shot
32	Fleabag's house	She is talking to Boo about missing her mother. Boo tells her to give her the love she has for her mom.	Flashback		Medium close shot, over the shoulder
33	Church	Fleabag is getting on her knees to have a prayer. She gives a side eye to the camera. She hears rap music playing in the background and goes up to check it out.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot
34	Priest's room	She turns the music off and scares the priest with this. There is tension between them. The priest offers her a drink. The priest asks why she's here, she confesses she was about to pray. They toast their drinks. Fleabag apologizes for earlier. The priest shows her his first ever church gown. He asks her what she was praying about. She doesn't answer. Fleabag looks sideways, to the camera. The priest does the same. The priest tells her to come with him.	Direct address	Acknowledging the viewer	Medium wide shot. during conversation over the shoulder medium close shots.
35	Confession stool	The priest convinces her to sit on the stool. Fleabag confesses that she lied about the miscarriage. She confesses to have stolen things, to have had sex outside of marriage, and that she is scared of forgetting people.			Medium wide shot In the stool, medium close shots
36	Park	Boo is laughing at the camera.	Flashback / direct address	Looking at Fleabag	Medium close shot
37	Confession stool	She goes on. She wants someone to tell her how to live her life, because she feels like she's been getting it wrong so far. The priest tells her to kneel. She does. Choir music swells on.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium close shot

			The priest comes up to her and they kiss. It turns passionate, but then a painting falls off the wall. The priest stops immediately. Music stops. He walks off panting and sighing with his hands in his hair. Fleabag looks upset into the camera.			
	38	End credits				
5	1	Bar	Fleabag is on a date with her lawyer. She is laughing at his jokes. She tells the camera how great he is. He tells her he will be good at sex, Fleabag tells the camera he won't be.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts, including the viewer	Medium shot
	2	Fleabag's house	They have sex. She tells the camera he is good.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts, including the viewer	Medium shot
	3	Credits				
	4	Dad's house	Fleabag arrives looking disheveled. She tells the camera she isn't going to be sick, looking sickly. Claire arrives with a huge bouquet. They greet each other. Choir music. Claire rings the doorbell, she is in a hurry. Dad opens the door and lets them in. The priest is there as well, which catches both Fleabag and the priest off guard. Fleabag says she is going to be sick. The priest tells the family that he can't officiate the wedding, due to an unforeseen emergency. Fleabag knows he is lying. She tells the camera that godmother will be furious. However, she reacts understandingly. Fleabag looks surprised. She walks him out. As soon as he leaves she bursts out in anger and tells the girls to leave. Fleabag rushes off.	Direct address	Expressing thoughts and emotion	Medium wide shot Medium close shot of Fleabag
	5	Busstop	Fleabag is sitting with her head in her hands. Choir music swells on. The priest walks up to her and startles her.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot

		He asks her not to come to the church again, with the greatest of compliments. He walks off. Fleabag looks into the camera and drops her head in her hands again.			
6	Café	A customer is talking to Fleabag. She tells the camera she can deal with it. Fleabag asks the customer to stop chatting to her, he is a bit offended and walks off. The bank manager walks in. He has a parting gift for her, a hamster. She gets a call, it's Claire with an emergency. Bank manager offers to watch over the place so she can help her sister. Fleabag quickly leaves.	Direct address	Expressing thought	Medium shot
7	Park	Claire has an awful haircut, Fleabag admits to the camera. She tells Claire it's modern and edgy and French. She looks unsure at the camera. Claire tells Fleabag she went to Anthony, a bad hairdresser. Fleabag tells her off for this.	Direct address	Expressing thought	Medium close shot
8	Hair salon	Anthony is cutting Fleabag's hair, shorter and shorter and shorter.	Flashback		Wide shot
9	Park	Claire tells Fleabag this is not the cut she asked for. Fleabag tells her to come with.			Wide shot
10	Hair salon	Fleabag and Claire barge in. Anthony tells them it is what she asked for. Fleabag goes off into a rant about how hair is everything. Anthony shows the picture of what Claire asked for, it is exactly the cut she got. Fleabag and Claire leave.			Medium wide shot
11	Park	The sisters are sitting on the park bench. Claire thanks Fleabag for having taken her to the hospital. Claire admits she didn't want her husband's baby. Claire wants to change the subject to Fleabag, who tells her she's met someone, the priest. Choir music.	Direct address	Expressing emotion Making a joke	Medium shot

		<p>Fleabag looks into the camera. Claire bursts out laughing. Klare walks up as he spots Claire. He loves her hair. He invited Claire to come out with him and some colleagues. Claire has to bring her stepson his bassoon, but Fleabag jumps in and offers to do this for her so she can go. Fleabag leaves with the bassoon and Claire goes with Klare. Fleabag says goodbye to them, and to the camera. Fleabag watches them laugh together as they leave. She looks at her watch and rushes back to the café.</p>			
12	Café	<p>Fleabag thanks the bank manager for his help. He tells her she has a visitor waiting inside and leaves, with the apron from the café. Fleabag tells the camera he took the apron. Fleabag walks into the café where Martin is petting the guinea pig. Fleabag tells the camera he is going to make a dirty joke. He makes a dirty joke which they have an argument about. He asks where Claire is, Fleabag won't tell. She asks him to put the guinea pig down. Fleabag turns around to the camera and grimaces. He takes out a flask and drinks from it. He blames Fleabag for all his issues. She gets called, Martin wants her phone, she doesn't give it to him. He asks if Claire will leave him, she tells him she hopes so. He grabs her by her collar, and threatens her. She threatens him back. They curse at each other and Martin leaves. Fleabag says she'd better call her lawyer</p>	Direct address	Expressing thoughts and emotion	Medium shot
13	Fleabag's house	<p>Fleabag is standing in front of her door, waiting for her booty call. She tells the camera that she is waiting on her misogynist lawyer to get her to stop thinking about the priest. She is covered in coconut oil and is only wearing lingerie underneath her coat. The doorbell goes and she opens the door to find the priest. He comes in. He tells her he will do the wedding. And asks if she's going to take her coat off. She says she's chilly. He talks about his faith. The doorbell buzzes. Fleabag doesn't want to open</p>	Direct address		Medium wide shot

			<p>the door, but when the lawyer starts shouting, she has to. They talk in the doorway, Fleabag is trying to get him to leave. In order to do so she tells him he was the best sex she's ever had. He happily leaves now.</p> <p>She walks back in. The priest tells her they can't have sex together, because he will fall in love with her.</p> <p>Fleabag tells the camera they're gonna have sex. The priest notices this.</p> <p>The priest asks Fleabag if they're gonna have sex. She nods her head. The priest obliges.</p> <p>He takes off her coat and is surprised she's only wearing underwear underneath. Fleabag looks at the camera. They kiss. Choir music swells on.</p>			
	14	Fleabag's bedroom	They have sex. Fleabag pushes the camera away.	Direct address	Wanting to keep the viewer out.	Close shot
	15	End credits				
6	1	Fleabag's Bedroom	She looks at the priest's back and touches his neck. He wakes up and turns around. She tells him she can't believe he did that. They look at each other			Close shot
	2	Credits	"The wedding"			
	3	Dad's garden	<p>Claire and Fleabag welcome the wedding guests. Fleabag touches Claire's hair.</p> <p>The sisters stand in front of the portrait made by their godmother. Claire and Fleabag welcome Harry and his girlfriend.</p> <p>Dad thanks the girls for coming to get him. He asks if he needs to say anything emotional, the girls decline.</p> <p>Claire is getting tequila.</p> <p>Claire and Fleabag welcome more guests.</p>	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium shot

		<p>Fleabag asks about Klare, Claire says he's crazy about her, but back in Finland.</p> <p>Fleabag and Claire are upset that it is going to be a lovely day. Godmother introduces some of her friends, explaining why they are so very special. Fleabag glances at the camera. When she wants to introduce her husband to be, she can't think of his name. Fleabag glances at the camera.</p> <p>Fleabag asks where she can put her present. Godmother takes her to the kitchen to open it.</p>			
4	Kitchen	<p>Fleabag asks why she had to come. Godmother asks her if she's had anything planned. She tells her she hasn't.</p> <p>Godmother opens the present and finds the golden statue. She thanks her for the gift.</p> <p>Before she leaves the kitchen, she tells her the statue was shaped after Fleabag's mother.</p> <p>Fleabag looks into the camera, unhappy.</p>	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Over the shoulder shots
5	Alley	<p>Choir music swells on. Fleabag walks out of the garden into the alley to have a smoke.</p> <p>The priest is there as well. She scared him, thinking she'd be a fox. He was practicing the homily. He compliments her appearance.</p> <p>He goes to leave but kisses her passionately, leaving them both panting. He is stressed, he doesn't know this feeling. Fleabag asks if it's god or her. He doesn't know.</p> <p>The priest walks off. Fleabag says, fuck you then, as he did the first time.</p>			Medium close shot
6	Garden	<p>Claire brings Fleabag a glass of champagne.</p> <p>The priest comes in wearing his church gown. Fleabag compliments him. Claire looks at them.</p> <p>Godmother goes to introduce the whole family, arriving at Fleabag she mentions the miscarriage.</p> <p>Claire admits it was her miscarriage. Martin gets upset. Claire uses his words against him. Godmother wants them to go to the kitchen.</p> <p>Claire dumps Martin.</p>			Medium shot

		Claire, Fleabag and Martin walk off to the kitchen.			
7	Kitchen	Fleabag takes a drink from the tray. Martin wants her to leave but Claire insists she stays. So she does. Claire asks Martin to leave her. Martin is trying to win her back. Fleabag says he will go on a rant. He goes on a rant. Fleabag is sipping her champagne. He tells Claire he will only leave her if she begs on her knees. Which she then proceeds to do. Martin leaves. Choir music swells on. Claire sighs and Fleabag helps her up.	Direct address	Expressing thought	Wide shot
8	Alley	Fleabag is having a smoke. Choir music.			Close shot
9	Alley	Fleabag and the priest kiss. Choir music.	Flashback		Close shot
10	Alley	Fleabag is having a smoke. Choir music.			Close shot
11	Garden	Choir music. Jake is setting up his bassoon. Godmother asks the girls if they know where their father is. She asks them to go find him. Fleabag smiles at the camera.	Direct address	Expressing emotion	Medium close shot
12	Dad's house	Fleabag is looking all over the place searching for her dad. She climbs the ladder, looking at the camera pulling her skirt down. She finds him in the attic. He tells her is stuck, Fleabag tells him he can call the wedding off. But he meant that he had his foot stuck in the flooring. She helps get unstuck. Fleabag asks if he's sure about the wedding. He is. He tells her he loves her, but he doesn't like her all the time. He tells her she knows how to love better than any of them, that's why she finds it all so painful. Fleabag looks at the camera saying she doesn't find it painful.	Direct address	Including the viewer, not wanting them close Vulnerable moment with her dad. Expressing thought	Medium shot

		They go back down.			
13	Garden	Fleabag walks her dad down the aisle, he is hesitant to let her go. Fleabag sits down next to Claire. The priest starts the ceremony. Jake plays a piece on his bassoon. Claire doesn't want to go through with her speech at the wedding. Fleabag tells her to go after Klare at the airport. Claire says the only person she will run through an airport for is Fleabag. The priest starts the hominy and gets a bit emotional. He looks at Fleabag as he goes on. Fleabag also gets emotional, quickly glances at the camera. Choir music. After the hominy, Fleabag tells Claire to go, she does.	Direct address	Vulnerable moment with Claire. Expressing emotion.	Medium wide shot Two sisters are medium close shot
14	Front porch	Fleabag goes out the door. She lights up a cigarette. Her dad joins her. He thanks her and tells her the priest is looking for her.			Medium shot
15	Garden	The priest asks if she's leaving. She tells him she's taking the bus. Fleabag says goodbye to her dad and godmother and leaves.			Medium shot over the shoulder
16	Busstop	Fleabag is waiting for the bus. The priest joins her. The bus isn't due for another 46 minutes. They talk about the wedding for small talk, then fall silent and look at each other. "It's God isn't it?" the priest replies, "yes." Fleabag tells him she loves him. He wants to reply but she doesn't want that. He takes her hand and says, "It'll pass." The priest stands up to leave and makes a joke about her not being allowed at his church ever again. Then he tells her he loves her too. He walks away. Fleabag cries silently. She sees that her bus is canceled. A fox walks by and Fleabag points in the priest's direction.	Direct address	Expressing emotion Leaving the viewer behind.	Medium shot turned into close shot

			She takes out the golden statue from her bag and hugs it. She looks at the camera and softly smiles. She stands up and starts walking, looking back at the camera and shaking her head, leaving the camera behind.			
17	End credits					

Plagiarism Rules Awareness Statement



Faculty of Humanities
Version September 2014

PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

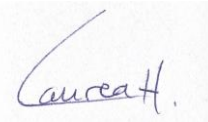
The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



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entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.	
Name:	Laurea Hidma
Student number:	6204139
Date and signature:	6-12-2024 

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.