

THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF MATURE WOMEN ON THE POSTERS OF THE NETFLIX SERIES "GRACE AND FRANKIE"

A REPRESENTAÇÃO VISUAL DE MULHERES MADURAS NOS PÔSTERES DA SÉRIE DA NETFLIX "GRACE AND FRANKIE"

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ABSTRACT

This article aims at presenting a multimodal analysis of movie posters concerning the two female leading characters of the Netflix series *Grace and Frankie* published in their official Facebook page. Specifically, we analyze five posters showing both characters, one from each broadcasted season until 2019 in terms of their visual content based on the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, 2006), with support from studies concerning women in the media as the theoretical framework. Results indicate that the visual meanings in each poster represent the two characters adequately regarding the key developments of each season, showing their change of conduct and attitude, particularly Grace, over the series. The findings of the analysis here undertaken can hopefully contribute to a critical investigation of social identities in different media and to on-going discussions concerning social semiotics and multimodality in relation to contemporary social practices. **Keywords:** Multimodality; Grace and Frankie; The Grammar of Visual Design.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar uma análise multimodal de como as duas personagens femininas principais da série da Netflix *Grace and Frankie* são representadas nos pôsteres de divulgação publicados em sua página oficial do *Facebook*. Analisamos cinco pôsteres contendo ambas as personagens, sendo um de cada temporada exibida até 2019, com base na Gramática do Design Visual (GDV) (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, 2006), e em

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estudos sobre a mulher na mídia. Os resultados indicam uma representação adequada das duas personagens em cada um dos pôsteres em relação aos principais acontecimentos de cada temporada, mostrando suas mudanças de conduta e atitude, principalmente em Grace, ao longo da série. Espera-se que o estudo possa contribuir para uma investigação crítica de representação visual de pessoas em diferentes mídias e discussões atuais sobre semiótica social e multimodalidade em relação a práticas sociais contemporâneas.

Palavras-chave: Multimodalidade; Grace and Frankie; Gramática do Design Visual.

INTRODUCTION

The representation of women in media has been investigated in different kinds of texts with an increasing interest in the analysis of their multimodal nature through functional descriptions of ‘visual grammar’ (UNSWORTH, 2001). Multimodal studies concerned with popular media texts include the analysis of newspapers (FERREIRA, 2003), magazines (HEBERLE, 1997, 2004; GRIMM, 1999; BERNARDON, 2005; LORENSET, 2010; BALEN, 2016), comic books (VELOSO, 2002; ABREU, 2012), advertisements (ALMEIDA, 2006; BÖHLKE, 2008), video games (SOUZA, 2010, 2016), TV series (BEZERRA, 2008), movies (MACEDO, 2014), and publicity posters (LORENSET & TERRES, 2019), among others.

Gauntlett in 2008 already emphasized the great exposure to these types of media and the considerable amount of time people used to watch TV or go to the movies. Currently, given the technological innovations, people are still exposed to ads and pop culture. However, nowadays, there has been a shift to electronic forms of media, with the use of smartphones and laptop computers, and the preference for movies, series and soap operas over books and newspapers (POTTER, 2012). TV series, especially, have been widely broadcasted with the expansion of streaming services in our current society, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and HBO Go, to name a few.

Moreover, it seems that when people decide to follow a series or program, they do so because they empathize with and recognize the emotional ‘journey’ of self-realization, even though they may not share the same personal goals. As a cultural product, series can be significantly influential in spreading ideals, beliefs and behavior, and in conveying new forms of life to the public (SOUZA & CÂMARA, 2014). This way, the investigation of how modern popular media material influences people’s ways of living may be of great value for researchers of contemporary culture (GAUNTLETT, 2008).

One of the recurrent elements used in the analysis of media texts is the one related to the representation of women. According to Gauntlett (2008), the representation of female characters has become more diverse and less stereotyped when compared to the past and female characters now seem more self-sufficient and independent, whereas men are depicted more emotionally, troubled and less straightforwardly (EDWARDS, 2014). However, the underrepresentation of women in media still remains (BIELBY, 2014; LEMISH, 2014). This fact confers to this vehicle of mass distribution the ability to propagate ideas and beliefs that support the value of diversity and the respect of differences, which may contribute to social change (GAUNTLETT, 2008).

Nonetheless, mature women are still the most underrepresented group in the media. Barbosa (2017) and Dolan (2014) state that they are not a very recurrent theme in Hollywood serial production or in media in general, and when they are represented, they are normally portrayed negatively (CALDAS-COULTHARD, 2010). However, their appearance in television is not a novelty – *The Golden Girls* (1985-1992), and, more recently, *Last Tango in Halifax* (2012-2020) are examples of TV series that portray elderly women as main characters. As for movies, elderly women have gradually moved from roles such as widows, grandmothers, mad and lonely women to leading roles as women. To illustrate, elderly women in leading roles can be observed in movies such as *Something's gotta give* (2003), *It's complicated* (2009), *Divine secrets of the Ya-ya sisterhood* (2002), and *The Good Liar* (2019). One of the most contemporary examples is the Netflix series *Grace and Frankie* (2015-), our object of study. The plot revolves around two mature women, Grace and Frankie, who, in their seventies, find out their husbands were homosexual and have been carrying on an affair for more than 20 years. After their husbands asked for the divorce, they are forced to live in the same house, first as rivals, and eventually, as roommates, best friends, and business partners.

Based on this famous series, the focus of this study is to present a multimodal analysis of the two female characters represented throughout the publicity posters of the five broadcasted seasons until the end of 2019, based on the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, 2006) as the theoretical framework. In order to accomplish this objective, this article is organized into four more sections besides this introduction. The second section presents an overview of the series *Grace and Frankie* and the studies related to it. The third explains the theoretical framework used to conduct this study and the fourth discusses the findings of the visual analysis. Then, the final remarks are addressed.

1. THE NETFLIX SERIES *GRACE AND FRANKIE*

The American comedy series *Grace and Frankie* was created by Marta Kauffman and Howard J. Moris, produced by Skydance Media and Skydance Television, and broadcasted on Netflix. Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin play the title roles of Grace and Frankie, while Sam Waterston, Martin Sheen, Brooklyn Decker, Ethan Embry, June Diane Raphael, and Baron Vaughn act in supporting roles as Sol, Robert, Mallory, Coyote, Brianna, and Nwabudike, respectively, family members of the two female characters. Its premiere was on May 8th, 2015, with 13 episodes in the first season, all of them released simultaneously. The other five seasons also have the same number of episodes with approximately 30 minutes each. There is one more season to come (the seventh season), making *Grace and Frankie* the longest-running Netflix original series with 94 episodes¹. So far, it has received a total of 49 nominations, and one award. The TV series has two official sites – Netflix, and the official Facebook page².

Concerning the story, as briefly mentioned in the introduction, Grace, a retired cosmetics mogul, and Frankie, a hippie art teacher, are married to Robert and Sol, respectively, who are two successful divorce lawyers. Their lives change completely with their husbands' announcement that they are getting divorced because they are in love with each other and plan to get married. Consequently, the two women end up living together in a beach house previously bought by both couples. At first, living together is very difficult for both women as they have different styles and ways of thinking; Grace is more resistant to accept Frankie while the latter is more friendly than the former. However, over the seasons, they learn to accept their differences and become friends. Furthermore, along the episodes, Grace and Frankie show that they are strong women and try to cope with the modern world, as they set up a vibrator business together, use online dating websites, and have followers in social networks.

Research related to *Grace and Frankie* has mainly focused on aging, body, and sexuality. These themes are investigated by Guércio (2017), Barbosa (2017), Lusvarghi and Dantas (2018), and Freitas and Calazans (2017). Guércio (2017) analyzes the eighth episode of the first season, which emphasizes the theme of sexuality, focusing on the feelings of insecurity versus self-confidence. According to Guércio (2017), in this particular episode, both characters start to break an old

1. Information retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_and_Frankie, accessed on November 26, 2019.

2. Information retrieved from: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3609352/>, accessed on November 26, 2019.

paradigm that elderly women are not allowed to have intimate and sexual relations. Consequently, from insecurity regarding their bodies, Grace and Frankie end up feeling more confident about themselves as women. In the same way, in relation to how sexuality is present in the series, Barbosa (2017) also concludes that in *Grace and Frankie* the bodies are not portrayed to look younger in order to increase their seductiveness; instead they attempt to captivate the audience as they are. Lusvarghi and Dantas (2018) also share this view that the series brings sexuality into a new perspective, in which mature women are rediscovering themselves as women who can have desires and appreciate their own bodies. Finally, Freitas and Calazans (2017), who investigate three episodes of the second season, notice that despite the series' attempts to resignify sexuality in later life by relating it to youth, there are still negative meanings associated with aged women's bodies and sexuality.

These studies have not approached the series in the light of multimodality, since they analyze the representation of the characters under different theoretical frameworks and using other methodological tools. This way, the present study aims to bring a contribution to the area of multimodality, presenting a different way to investigate the visual representation of elderly women in this series.

2. THE GRAMMAR OF VISUAL DESIGN

Kress and van Leeuwen's GVD has its basis on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The authors' purpose was to help researchers to systematically investigate the multimodal nature of texts through functional descriptions of 'visual grammar' (UNSWORTH, 2001). *Visual grammar* is intended to show how represented elements may be associated with visual 'statements' by choice to express particular meanings in the same way as the grammar of verbal language does. These decisions can be disclosed through the use of a variety of colors, compositional structures and several other ways of representing a particular image, which may result in a difference of meaning conveyed (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). Equivalent to what is seen in SFL related to written and spoken discourses, the visual dimensions of a text present three types of meanings which are considered metafunctions: representational, interactional and compositional meanings (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 2006; UNSWORTH, 2001).

Representational meanings, related to ideational meanings in SFL, construct the kind of events, the objects and participants involved, as well as the attendant circumstances. Representational meanings in GVD are described in terms of narrative and conceptual images. Whereas the former is typically composed of

participants and the actions involved in the image, indicated by vectors, the latter normally represents participants according to their class, structure or meaning (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). Interactional meanings, on the other hand, which are equivalent to interpersonal meanings from SFL, refer to the nature of relationships between viewers and the represented participants. Some of the important elements to be considered in the analysis of this metafunction are mood, modality, contact, social distance, perspective, and attitude, to name just a few (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). Finally, compositional meanings, related to the textual metafunction in SFL, are concerned with the distribution of the information in the images and the emphasis among the text elements (verbal and visual). To conduct a structural analysis of the image, the compositional meaning is divided into framing, salience and information value (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 2006).

Considering the key concepts briefly described, this study uses the GVD framework in order to investigate the visual representation of the publicity posters of each season of the series *Grace and Frankie*.

3. ANALYSIS

In order to analyze how the characters *Grace* and *Frankie* are represented by Netflix in the publicity posters, five posters in total were selected, one from each of the five seasons broadcasted until the end of 2019. The sixth season was removed from this study as it represents a new phase in the life and friendship of the two main characters: *Grace* gets married to *Nick* and they are not living under the same roof anymore. All the five posters investigated here were retrieved online from the official Facebook page of the series *Grace and Frankie*³.

The selection of the posters followed two criteria: 1) all posters had to present the official logo of the streaming service that broadcast the series *Grace and Frankie*; and 2) each poster had to present the characters of *Grace* and *Frankie*, in partial or full body to allow the viewer to identify how these characters are visually portrayed. Based on this, the corpus consisted of five posters and, as previously mentioned, the analysis is based on Kress & van Leeuwen's GVD (1996; 2006) framework. The visual analysis of each poster is reported below, according to the three metafunctions (representational, interactional and compositional meanings) and their main aspects.

3. https://www.facebook.com/GraceandFrankie/?tn-str=k*F, accessed on November 26, 2019.

3.1 Analysis of Poster 1, from Season 1



Image 1. Grace and Frankie – season 1

Source: retrieved from the official Grace and Frankie Facebook page, available at <<https://www.facebook.com/GraceandFrankie/photos/a.382479758603137/420599094791203/?type=3&theater>>, accessed on November 26, 2019.

Regarding the representational meaning, the poster of the first season (Image 1) presents two transactional reactions, one created by the direction of the eyeline vector that connects Frankie (the Reactor) to Grace (the Phenomenon), and the second created by the eyeline vector emanated from Grace (the Reactor) pointing at the audience (the Phenomenon). Regarding clothing, Grace is wearing dark clothes, a fancy necklace and matching earrings, with a medium wavy hairstyle, suggesting a very sober and elegant character, which is consistent with the portrayal of someone wealthy with a high social status. Frankie, on the other hand, is wearing two different types of fabrics, similar to linen and cotton, and different colors (black and yellow), which can be seen as a casual style. She is also wearing large blue earrings, a combination that helps to reveal her lively personality. This already shows that the characters may be considered very different in terms of beliefs and behavior: while Grace is considered a socialite, Frankie is a free spirit, similar to a hippie.

Still referring to the representational meanings, concerning body positioning, Frankie has her arms around Grace, similar to an embrace, while Grace is in a defense position, as her right hand is raised towards Frankie as if trying to stop her or contain her proximity. Concerning facial expressions, while Frankie appears to be smiling at Grace, with her cheeks raised and her lip corners up, Grace holds a very different facial expression. Her eyebrows are slightly lifted in disdain, frowned, her eyes are tense, and her lips are closed and slightly curved down while she avoids eye contact

with Frankie, which might suggest, according to Medlej (2014), indifference or disdain, feelings that are aligned with the initial events of the series.

Concerning the interactional meanings, the participants are very close to each other, which may indicate a high level of intimacy. While Frankie holds Grace on an embrace, Grace seems reluctant to remain so close. This might show that, although one of them is pleased to show affection to the other, the second participant is resistant to accept and retribute the sign of fondness. Both participants are positioned at a close personal distance from the audience as we can see them from the chest up, which suggests the audience is meant to be involved with them. The characters are also represented at the same level of the viewer, showing power equality in terms of the angle of the image. While Grace's gaze is directed to the audience, representing a demand, Frankie's gaze is directed to Grace and not to the viewer, suggesting that this is her focus and she is willing to interact with Grace.

Analyzing the compositional metafunction, the participants are placed on the right side of the picture, indicating they are the new information of the image. This is accurate regarding the context, since this is an official image announcing the first season of the series. Also aligned with characteristics of compositional meanings (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, 2006), the two characters are the most salient elements of the image, as they draw more attention to themselves due to their size, their place in the foreground, their tonal values, sharpness and clear definition. The background of the poster presents darker shades of gray, which become lighter on the center and around the characters, highlighting their level of importance in the image. There is no specific setting, with some level of abstraction through the shades of gray in the background, which indicates lower modality and suggests the two women could be anywhere.

This representation may be connected to the way the characters are portrayed in the series during the first season. As previously reported, right at the beginning, viewers are presented to two mature women in their seventies, Grace and Frankie, who have had their lives turned upside down, being forced to live together in the same house as they discovered their husbands wanted the divorce, because they were having an intimate relationship with each other. When the two ladies start living together, they can barely stay in the same room of the house without having an argument, especially because of their different lifestyles. In this part of the first season, Frankie is still emotionally attached to Sol, her ex-husband, while Grace cannot stand the fact that Robert is not married to her anymore and that she is not living in her own house alone. This way, in this first season, there is a mixture of feelings – on the one hand, anger, denial, conflict of ideas and interests,

and a feeling of wandering aimlessly, and on the other hand, a better understanding of oneself, feeling new emotions, and learning to accept the new reality. It is more difficult for Grace to adapt to Frankie, and to her new reality, not wanting to face the truth. As for Frankie, she seems to handle this situation more peacefully, and wants to be friends with Grace while she is also dealing with her own emotions. Thus, the poster represents this new situation: Grace trying as hard as she can to avoid living together with Frankie, establishing a physical distance between the two of them, and Frankie seeking to have a relationship as harmonious as possible with Grace in a way that both of them can help each other to face the new reality.

3.2 Analysis of Poster 2, from Season 2



Image 2. Grace and Frankie – season 2

Source: retrieved from the official Grace and Frankie Facebook page, available at <<https://www.facebook.com/GraceandFrankie/photos/a.382479758603137/543328555851589/?type=3&theater>>, accessed on November 26, 2019.

The image representing Season 2 (Image 2) shows the two women in a much lighter atmosphere, together and in good terms, compared to the image in Season 1. This poster shows two transactional reactions created by the direction of the gaze vectors of both participants (Reacters) looking at the audience (Phenomenon). Regarding clothing, Frankie's clothes are not visible, while it is possible to see that, differently from the previous image, Grace is wearing a type of sweater in a more casual way and also in a lighter color, almost matching her complex. Her facial expression is also different from before. Both characters are smiling with their lip corners pulled, eyes narrowed and cheeks raised. Likewise, Grace is hugging Frankie, and this may suggest a change in Grace's feelings towards Frankie.

In terms of the interactional metafunction, the participants' gazes are both directed at the viewer, representing a demand, which may require a sense of

connection between the participants and the audience (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996; 2006). Moreover, the participants are at a very close distance, indicating a high level of intimacy and affection, since both women are hugging each other. This closeness is consistent with the context of the second season of the series: the two are attempting to disconnect from their old lives, somehow adjusting to the fact that they really have to live under the same roof. In fact, this second season represents the beginning of a real friendship, with each one helping the other in many aspects of their lives. For instance, Frankie helps Grace to reconnect with an old passion and Grace offers some advice to Frankie in relation to commercializing her natural lube. Based on this, their hug reproduced on the poster is connected to this new phase of their lives.

The audience is at a close personal distance from the represented participants, in which the head and shoulders can be seen. This distance may indicate that the viewer has established a close relationship with the participants, which is coherent, since this is the second season in which these characters appear. The participants are presented at eye level, which suggests a sense of equality between the participants and the audience.

Considering the compositional meaning in Image 2, the participants occupy the right side of the image, indicating they are the new or unfamiliar information. While in Season 1 Grace is positioned on the left, in Season 2 she is on the right side of the image. The verbal text containing the technical information about the TV series (*NETFLIX - A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES / Grace and Frankie / NEW EPISODES May 6*) is positioned on the left, representing the known/given information. Similar to the previous image, there is no specific setting, presenting lower modality through a light blue background, resembling the sky, again suggesting they could be anywhere. The represented participants are also the most salient elements in the image, according to their large size, color and their location in the foreground. Thus, the analysis of the representational, interactive and compositional meanings corroborates to foreground the important roles played by the two represented participants in Season 2.

3.3 Analysis of Poster 3, from Season 3



Image 3. Grace and Frankie – season 3

Source: retrieved from the official Grace and Frankie Facebook page, available at <<https://www.facebook.com/GraceandFrankie/photos/a.382479758603137/691020334415743/?type=3&theater>>, accessed on November 26, 2019.

Considering the representational metafunction, the advertisement of the third season (Image 3) presents two transactional reactions, which are created by the bidirectional vectors formed by the eyeline of both participants (Reacters) looking at each other (Phenomenon). Besides, their gentle facial expression and smiles convey a sense of calmness and might indicate a solid friendship. Both participants are holding a vibrator. Regarding clothing, Grace is wearing a light pink sweater, while Frankie is wearing a striped coat and a white T-shirt underneath with a stamp of the American singer Willie Nelson.

In terms of the interactional meaning, differently from the two previous advertisements, the represented participants are looking at each other, not to the audience, indicating offer, giving viewers an opportunity to contemplate the image freely. The two women are also positioned at a personal distance, still showing a certain level of intimacy, with the viewer positioned close to the participants (medium shot), again suggesting a close relation to them.

Finally, in relation to the compositional meaning, the participants are placed on the center to the right of the image, while the beach where the two live is on the left. On the left, there is also a verbal text (*Good vibes.*), followed by technical information of the series (*Grace and Frankie: a Netflix original series / NETFLIX / March 24*). The other verbal text at the top of the page – the nominal group *Good vibes* – suggests a significant level of importance, due to its position on the image and its double meanings: one denoting sexuality, since each woman is holding a vibrator, and the other, a positive feeling which can be connected to the key events of Season

3. Along the episodes of the third season, Grace and Frankie show how aging can be experienced in a confident, optimistic, and genuine perspective, as presented in the slogan of the season. Moreover, this is associated to the objects they are holding on the cover of the poster. It is in the third season that the women become owners of a vibrator business, setting sail in foreign waters in order to make their product known. For example, they go to start-ups to advertise their product with the objective of receiving some funding, create a webpage, set up group meetings to sell their product, and have to compete with other companies. In addition, according to Barbosa (2017), the show reinforces that aside from being mothers, grandmothers and aged, Grace and Frankie are still women, friends, and proud of themselves, they fall in love, have sex and careers, they lie and cry.

The participants are again foregrounded, while there is a white window frame and a beach in the background. According to their position and size, the two women can be seen as the most salient elements of the picture. The colors of the background setting are lighter and softer (white and tones of blue), revealing a light atmosphere around the characters, which is consistent with the key developments in this particular season. As aforementioned, it is in this season that Grace and Frankie become owners of a company of vibrators, called Vybrant, designed for elderly women. This gives them a new objective in life, contributing to their well-being and to the positive and light atmosphere depicted on the poster.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF POSTER 4, FROM SEASON 4



Image 4. Grace and Frankie – season 4

Source: retrieved from the official Grace and Frankie Facebook page, available at <<https://www.facebook.com/GraceandFrankie/photos/a.382479758603137/823076177876824/?type=3&theater>>, accessed on November 26, 2019.

The poster of the fourth Season (Image 4) presents two transactional action processes regarding the representational meaning, created by the vectors of the participants walking (Actors) toward the horizon (Goal). The represented participants seem to be looking at the horizon, which might be interpreted as new opportunities they are probably facing ahead and are embracing this new future together. And the viewers seem to be following their moves, accompanying them from their back. In this poster, Grace is wearing a yellow and white stamped shirt and jeans, and Frankie, a blue hippie tunic. Frankie is also carrying two objects, one seems to be a bong, used to smoke marijuana, and the other is similar to a fondue pot. Grace, on the other hand, is holding a toaster. These elements reveal that, despite having very different personalities and ways of living, the represented participants share a solid friendship, with an authentic connection of partnership and trust.

As for the interactional meaning, the participants remain at a close personal distance, since they are placed at a far personal distance from the viewer, and can be seen from their hip up, indicating a close relation with the viewer. On the right side of the image it is possible to see two beach chairs at a long distance. The two women are positioned at the same eye level of the audience, showing equal level of power. Both participants are not facing the audience, similar to the poster from Season 3, which indicates an offer. Furthermore, when viewers can see participants from the back, as in this poster, they are allowed to see what the participants are observing, thus sharing the same view.

In the compositional metafunction, both women are on the center of the image, and they vertically occupy the entire length of the image, being the nucleus of the composition. There is a verbal text written in big capital letters in yellow in front of the participants (*co-independent*) that, according to its contrasting color and prominent position, indicates a high level of importance, linked to the plot of this season. In this season, Grace and Frankie face some health problems due to their aging, and more and more they have to count on each other. Nevertheless, they continue living their lives as if they were in their youth, having some difficulties to accept their real age, especially Grace. In some episodes from this season, Grace is suffering from an articulatory problem in her knee, which is stopping her from doing some daily activities such as climbing the stairs. However, she tries very hard to hide this problem from her daughters and her new boyfriend, so she does not show any signs of weakness to them. Likewise, she tries to continue doing all her activities as usual. As for Frankie, she seems to be having some memory problems at the point that she is driving with her granddaughter and she ends up

in Mexico. Bearing all these problems in mind, their children decide to put them in a nursing home, from which they run away to return to the one place that they can be themselves and have their independence, the beach house. This is the moment that is represented on the poster: Grace and Frankie as friends who can be there for each other when needed.

The other elements (beach chairs and the ocean) are backgrounded, indicating the two represented characters and the verbal text as the most salient elements of the image. The background presents different tones of blue, matching the color of the sky, the ocean, and the beach, where most of the key developments of the series take place.

3.5 Analysis of Poster 5, from Season 5



Image 5. Grace and Frankie – season 5

Source: retrieved from the official Facebook page of Grace and Frankie, available at <<https://www.facebook.com/GraceandFrankie/photos/a.382479758603137/1055345427983230/?type=3&theater>>, accessed on November 26, 2019.

The poster of the fifth Season (Image 5), in the representational meaning, presents a transactional reaction, created by the vector formed by Frankie's gaze (Reacter) to Grace (Phenomenon), and a non-transactional reaction, created by the direction of Grace's gaze at something the audience cannot see, to her left side. Regarding clothing, Frankie is wearing a blue tunic, very similar to the one she wore in the previous picture, and two large necklaces, whereas Grace is wearing a pink turtleneck sweater, a pink blazer and she is holding a light pink purse, revealing once more that each represented participant presents her own style and personality. In this poster, it is possible to observe a change in the colors of Grace's clothes if we compare

all the posters. From dark and solemn colors on the first poster to lighter and more vivid colors, such as light pink and yellow, throughout the seasons reveal a change of conduct and attitude. As for Frankie, the same does not happen, she looks very similar in terms of clothes, color, and facial expression in all the posters. However, her representation in each image suggests her character is equally important in the series as Grace, despite not showing any visibly noticeable difference.

Concerning the interactional metafunction, Frankie is looking and smiling at Grace, with her cheeks raised and her mouth corners pulled showing her teeth. Grace, however, holds a different kind of expression as her head is tilted back, her chin is held high, her eyes are relaxed, her eyebrows are slightly lifted in disdain and her mouth is just curved down, an expression that can be seen as haughty. One way of interpreting Grace's expression suggests she is dealing with something or someone with cold disdain, as if it were just too irrelevant to cause her emotional reaction (MEDLEJ, 2014), which is related to the developments of this particular season. Moreover, the change in Grace's facial expression suggests she is becoming more confident and self-assured throughout the seasons.

This fifth season is all about accepting who you are, regardless of what others think of you, and also about doing whatever you want with your life. Right at the beginning of the season, immediately when they are back in the beach house after running away from the nursing home, they find out their house is sold. However, this does not stop them from trespassing the property and sleeping on a mattress on the floor as they owned the place. Despite this circumstance, when they meet the new owner of the house, the two women not only convince her to give them back the house but also to live in a different city. Similarly to the spirit of this scene, other events also happen throughout the season following the same attitude presented in this episode.

On the poster, both women are shown at a close personal distance with each other, confirming that their high level of intimacy is well established. The viewer sees the participants from the hips up (far personal distance), indicating the existence of a social relationship between the viewers and the represented participants. Both participants' gazes are not direct to the audience, following the pattern of the posters from Seasons 3 and 4, which identifies the image as an offer. This change in the representation of the characters can also be observed by their gaze on the posters over the seasons: Grace's gaze is directed to the audience on the poster from Season 1, and in Season 2 Grace and Frankie's gaze is directed to the viewers, demanding their attention and awareness. However, on the posters from Seasons 3, 4 and 5 the characters' look is directed to the horizon or to something or someone

out of the frame to where the viewers cannot see, inviting the audience to admire and contemplate the images. These changes suggest that the goal of the posters from Seasons 1 and 2 is to gain a captive audience to the show through a demanding image, requesting "that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with the" participants (KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 2006, p.118). In the posters from Season 3 on, however, this audience is well settled, so the represented participants are portrayed more as an offer to the audience's observation and appreciation. In addition, in the fifth poster, the viewer and the represented participants are at the same level, indicating equality in terms of power relations.

Finally, considering the compositional meaning, the characters are positioned on the center to the right of the image, representing the new information, while on the left side there is a verbal text presented in big white letters (*Too old for this shit.*), which illustrates familiar information. Grace's right hand is raised to her right towards the verbal text, as a sign of dismissing or ignoring something or someone, while her other hand is holding a purse. Grace is slightly foregrounding Frankie and her body is facing the viewer while her head is turned to the right. Frankie, on the other hand, is a little backgrounded in relation to Grace, and her body is turned to the right, in an oblique angle, whereas her head is turned to Grace's direction, which might indicate a certain detachment from the viewer. The setting of the image is once more absent, and viewers can only see the color pink, which matches the color of Grace's clothes. In the foreground, the represented participants are again the most salient elements in the image.

The elements presented on the poster are in accordance to the key events of this season since both Grace and Frankie are determined to live independently, doing what they want, and having the best time of their lives, as aforementioned. In fact, in this season Grace finally embraces her real age, 80, and not around 75 as she makes everybody believes she is. Also, in this particular season, she ends up helping Frankie in a mission of adding some extra seconds to the crossing light. Frankie asks for Grace's help and says: *We need you to cross. But please, Grace, act your age.* Grace understands, prepares herself, and slowly crosses the street, stopping to wave to the drivers and to get a tissue from her purse. After this, they both successfully guarantee some extra seconds to the light. That is, they act following their own wishes and rules.

FINAL REMARKS

This study had the goal to describe the visual meanings used in the representation of the characters Grace and Frankie in the official advertisements of

the Netflix series *Grace and Frankie* along the five seasons broadcasted by the streaming service until 2019. The analysis was based on Kress and van Leeuwen's GVD, specifically considering the three metafunctions: representational, interactional and compositional meanings.

It was possible to observe that each poster represented the characters accurately in relation to the main developments of each season. At the beginning of the series, the relationship between the two characters was tense and unfriendly, which can be visually portrayed on the poster of the first season, showing Grace in an attempt to avoid or restrain Frankie's proximity. However, this attitude changes throughout the seasons and it is adequately portrayed along the five posters analyzed. Concerning clothing, in general, Grace's clothes from dark and sober on the first poster become lighter and more colorful throughout the seasons, indicating a change of behavior. In addition, her facial expression and body position also suggest she is becoming more confident and empowered over the seasons and her relationship with Frankie is getting closer, showing once again consistency on the way both characters are depicted on the posters to what happens in the series.

Furthermore, the change in the representation of the characters is also observed in their gaze. On the posters from Seasons 1 and 2 (Images 1 and 2), Grace's and Frankie's looks are directed to the viewers, demanding their attention, whereas, on the following posters, the gaze of the characters is directed to the horizon, to something or someone the audience cannot see or to each other, seeking mainly for the audience's contemplation and appreciation. This fact may reveal that in the first two seasons the represented participants aimed at calling the attention of the viewers in order to gain a captive audience and establish a relationship with them. From Season 3 on, their audience is well established, therefore their representation is depicted as an offer to the audience to observe and appreciate what is happening to them (Images 3, 4 and 5).

The visual analysis of the posters undertaken was instrumental in showing the change of conduct and attitude of the characters, especially Grace, over the five series analyzed in this study. Despite this positive transformation, the series has its limits regarding the representation of female old age. The show portrays two white heterosexual and financially successful women, from a high social status, whose ex-husbands are wealthy lawyers who pay their pensions in order to maintain their life status. This depiction excludes the major segment of elderly women in the world considering class, race, social orientation, and family structure (BARBOSA, 2017, p. 1446). Nevertheless, the series brings novelty by depicting two aged women as

the leading characters of the show, which is not a common theme in Hollywood productions.

Therefore, the findings of the analysis here undertaken can hopefully contribute to a critical investigation of social identities in different media and to on-going discussions concerning social semiotics and multimodality in relation to contemporary social practices.

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