

2012

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Is *Grey's Anatomy* on the Wave?
A Feminist Textual Analysis of Meredith Grey and Cristina Yang

Introduction

The traditional portrayal of women in the media concerns feminist scholars and has been the subject of much study because of the repeated sexualization, subordination, and underrepresentation of females in mass media (Collins, 2011). This academic paper uses textual analysis to determine whether one of the most popular primetime television dramas in recent history, *Grey's Anatomy*, portrays female characters with more complex and realistic gender roles than those typically portrayed in mass media. The television drama, now in its ninth season, prominently features strong female characters with demanding individual and professional aspirations, which is a progressive portrayal of female characters.

This project explores the relationship between two of the main characters, Meredith Grey and Cristina Yang, in order to understand how *Grey's Anatomy* constructs female characters in the context of high-pressure, competitive settings in the show's narrative, and how this construction fits in the overarching context of the primetime television drama genre. Through a close analysis of the show as a text, a critical assessment of whether *Grey's Anatomy* promotes progressive women's roles can be accomplished. If the show is promoting positive images of women working in highly competitive professional environments, then it challenges preexisting media stereotypes of women and promotes feminist goals, specifically the equal treatment of women as complex individuals with interests as diverse and legitimate as their male counterparts.

Literature Review

Socialization through Media

In the field of media studies, specifically through social role theory, it is widely acknowledged that people often learn about aspects of social interaction and life from the mass

media, and that as a society humans need “continuity and transmission of dominant values... [especially] in times of rapid social change,” not unlike the present (Tuchman, 2012). In 2010, women comprised 47 percent of the workforce in the United States, with 73 percent of those women holding full-time professions and 27 percent holding part-time jobs (United States Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau). The proportion of women to men in the workforce in 1920, not quite a century ago, was significantly less: only 24 percent of women worked for pay outside of the home. The United States is still in the process of significant change. Since 1970, the year that 46 women filed a lawsuit against employers at *Newsweek* for gender discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the amount of professional segregation by gender has significantly decreased; however, the number of women in authoritative or autonomous positions is still lower than the number of men in similar positions.

In past years, much has been researched and discussed in the scholarly realm of gender representation in media, and findings indicate that “knowledge of basic [social] roles provides the content for gender stereotypes” (Lauzen, Dozier, & Heran, 2008, p. 201). This is reinforced by the idea that television specifically has been identified as an “increasingly important medium for exploring and interpreting social change and beliefs” (Rowe, 2011, p. 3). Since basic social roles as portrayed in media and television influence greater interpretation of how people are supposed to interact with one another, a trend toward the reinforcement of hegemonic patriarchal structures is indicated, particularly because stereotypes often function as a method of “maintaining and reinforcing the power of the in-group while subordinating members of out-groups” (Lauzen, Dozier, & Heran, 2008, p. 201). Furthermore, the traditional gender stereotypes in television “posit men as the ideal or norm against which women are judged” (Lauzen, Dozier, & Heran, 2008, p. 201). In their study on gender stereotypes constructed

through primetime television conducted in 2008, Lauzen, Dozier, and Heran applied the concepts related to social role theory to an analysis of primetime television with special attention to gender roles, the authors assert that basic social roles carried out by characters “contribute to viewer expectations and beliefs about gender (p. 202).

Media's Established Portrayal of Female Roles

In “Content Analysis of Gender Roles in Media: Where Are We Now and Where Should We Go?”, Collins (2011) numerically analyzed the portrayal of women in recent media. The findings of the study concluded that women are continuously underrepresented, sexualized, subordinated, placed in traditional roles, and portrayed as especially concerned with body image and physical appearance in mass media. That this is the current climate of female role portrayal by the media—from video games to film to advertisements to television—indicates that although today it is popularly accepted that women have many of the same rights and are basically equal to their male counterparts, critical evaluation of the situation indicates otherwise. Although it is widely believed that society has progressed significantly since the time [which continued through the 1970s] when women were stereotyped as “men’s silent or unopinionated consorts” (Tuchman, 2012, p. 45) that women continue to be depicted as sexualized, subordinated, traditional, superficially concerned, and not as prevalent and visible outside of the home as men is problematic because of the role that media play in the socialization process.

Over time, studies in this field have indicated a tendency toward the depiction of female characters who are more concerned with marriage, romance and family, while male characters are typically more concerned with occupation. Beyond these findings, as cited in Lauzen, Dozier, & Heran (2008), Vande Berg and Streckfuss completed an analysis of behaviors of male and female characters on television specifically in the workplace in 1992. Vande Berg and

Streckfuss's (1992) findings indicated a tendency toward "more interpersonal/relational actions (motivating, socializing, counseling, and other actions that develop workplace relationships) and fewer decisional, political, and operational actions than do male characters." More recent studies in this area have found trends consistent with this information.

Challenges to Media's Established Femininity

The 1980s primetime television show *Cagney and Lacey*, which featured for the first time in television history two women as the protagonists, demonstrates an early attempt at breaking with some of the traditional depictions of women outlined previously. The show developed because of a mounting concern about how to connect with the growing number of women in the workforce during the time period. Producers and writers worked together on this show to create and modify over time two acceptable female characters who did not threaten conceptions of traditional femininity.

Cagney and Lacey, which ran from 1982 to 1988, dealt with a relationship between two heterosexual women that was professionally based and not especially concerned with romantic relationships. The show faced adversity in pursuing this aim, and when the show first aired on television in Spring of 1982, Meg Foster played the role of Cagney; however, when the show was picked up for continuation in subsequent regular season, Sharon Gless replaced Meg Foster because of her less sexualized look and more aggressive demeanor (concerns arose from CBS executives that Foster would be perceived as a lesbian by viewers). In "Defining Women: The Case of *Cagney and Lacey*," D'Acci (2012) conducted a textual analysis with special attention to society-related network pressures of the television show, finding that when depictions of working women in the late 1970s and 1980s "deviated too much from the acceptable conventions of the industry, they were quickly brought back in line" (p. 81). In the 1990s, shows like *Buffy*

the Vampire Slayer and *Charmed* were recognized as being feminist, or at least conscious of the feminist movement, because they empowered women, and although they did exist primarily in the fantasy realm, the fact that these shows were accepted popularly and related to the greater feminist movement (Rowe, 2011).

Television shows with female protagonists are ideal for feminist textual analysis because of the influential role television has on social and gender role establishment; therefore, the way women are portrayed interacts with the larger feminist movement. Generally, feminist textual analyses focus on the influence of a particular wave of feminism (second, third, or post-feminism) in a particular text (Rowe, 2011, p. 3); in contemporary media, there are elements of each wave in the way gender roles are established and portrayed as contemporary creative professionals lived through each of these waves.

With the 21st century, a blend of elements from the preceding decades' interests became the norm. A new audience with diverse interests and backgrounds developed, and with that audience, new tactics took form in the media to reach this audience. *Grey's Anatomy*, which premiered as a mid-season replacement on ABC in 2005, demonstrates some of these new approaches to television shows through its novel approach to racial diversity, with its color-blind casting approach, and its desire to depict "smart women who compete against one another" (Rhodes, 2005). This series also approached medical television in a manner different from its predecessors—there was an emphasis on character building, to encourage audience members to get to know the surgical interns at Seattle Grace Hospital, the fictional hub of action in *Grey's Anatomy*.

Many of the central characters in *Grey's Anatomy*, a primetime television drama about the process of becoming a doctor, are female. The present study analyzes these characters and

their representation to determine whether they, too, are representative of an attempt to honestly portray female characters outside of stereotypical roles. An interest in honest and complex portrayal of female characters indicates acknowledgement of the presence of feminism, which at its core seeks gender equality, since the standard representation of female characters, according to Collins' 2011 content analysis of different popular media, remains marked primarily by underrepresentation, sexualization, subordination, placement in traditional roles and portrayal as especially concerned with body image.

Waves of Feminism

This study identifies characteristics associated with second wave feminism, third wave feminism, and post-feminism, specifically in relation to interaction between women. This assessment draws on Rowe's 2011 assessment of the different waves. The second wave of feminism, occurring from about 1963, when *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan was published, to the early 1980s, built on the first wave of feminism, which was identified as the time period during which women fought for suffrage (approximately 1848 to 1920); however, the second wave had more of an emphasis on issues, including "abortion, rape, and sexuality," than the first wave (Bailey, 1997, p. 20). While second wave feminists were criticized for being "humorless, too angry, unconcerned about their appearance, and fanatically concerned with 'political correctness'" (Bailey, 1997, p. 22), there was also an increase in the "sense of [women's] collective power" for women, which made the impact of the second wave "broader and deeper" (Epstein, 2002, pp. 118-119). Central to the beliefs of the second wave feminists was the concept that from unity and sisterhood between women, power and impact could increase.

Another central concept of second wave feminism was consciousness-raising. According to Buechler (as cited in Rowe, 2011), consciousness-raising groups “engage in a ‘political role...by taking a woman’s individual experience and revealing the patterns of institutional and interpersonal sexism woven into that experience’” (p. 4).

Overall, the second wave of the feminist movement promoted the idea that “personal is political—you are not alone” (Heywood & Drake, 1997, p. 57). Some foundational words of the movement were “we, feminist, and victim” (Epstein, 2002, p. 57). In conjunction with these facts, as noted by Rowe (2011), feminists of the second wave try to allow individual women “by means of instantaneous and unqualified identification, [to] collapse into a collective, rescuing, rebellious ‘we’” (Heywood & Drake, 1997, p. 57).

Third wave feminism (early 1990s to today) formed as a reaction to second wave feminism and its views on sexuality and power. There was an increased emphasis on the presence of racial and cultural diversity in relation to the feminist movement. There was also a shift from an emphasis on collective power of women to an emphasis on the individual, and the discourse generally suggested that “empowerment and feminism are practices enacted in daily life, not a great wisdom to be achieved” (Meyer, 2003, p. 8). Knopf (2007) identified “consciousness raising, empowerment, self-affirmation, and individual agency” as practices associated with third wave feminism (p. 1). A concern with consciousness-raising continued so that the emphasis on the individual did not completely isolate or disassociate women from one another, which would have weakened the movement. A general consensus that second wave views on marriage and having children were extreme occurrences in third wave feminism, and men were recognized as not being the enemy. Although an increase of attention to individual empowerment was important to third wave feminism, sharing this empowerment with other

women was meant to “lead to social change as other individuals influence other individuals until a critical mass of small changes yields more sweeping social changes” (Knopf, 2007, p. 7).

Post-feminism formed almost contemporaneously with third wave feminism; however, the movement was marked by its general apathy toward actual activism and social engagement, especially when compared with other waves. Post-feminism (1980s-today) was a reaction to the second and third waves, in that it expressed frustration at the other feminist movements and blamed previous feminist movements for general female unhappiness (Busch, 2009, p. 88). Today’s post-feminists believe that the pursuit of gender equality requires the “exchanging traditional female roles of wife and mother for a career” which results in the sacrifice of personal happiness (Busch, 2009, p. 89). As a result of this increased apathy, the sense of unity and collective power previously associated with feminist groups is decreasingly present in post-feminism. Busch’s (2009) post-feminist textual analysis of the television show *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002) identified the female protagonists as “neurotic, promiscuous and shrewish women who have successful careers but are failures at life” (p. 89). The show, which critics define as post-feminist, portrays the lifestyles of the protagonists, attorneys working in a Boston law firm, as insufficient and unfulfilling. Post-feminism posits professionalism as “asexual intellect,” and femininity at times as “unbridled sexuality” (Busch, 2009, p. 90). In one episode of *Ally McBeal*, the title character decides she wants to wear a micro-mini skirt because she does not want to have to choose between being “*loved* (as a feminine, sexy woman), or...*respected* (as an asexual colleague)” (Busch, 2009 p. 90). Busch (2009) asserts that Ally’s preoccupation with appearance and men “levels...a serious indictment...against feminism” (p. 90). *Grey’s Anatomy* is aware of the dichotomy between professionalism and femininity as defined by post-feminist critic Busch; however, it emphasizes that the doctors prioritize both sexuality and professionalism.

Post-feminism in today's media is also marked by an increase in the employment of irony as a way to express "unpalatable sentiments, ...while claiming this was not actually 'meant'" (Gill, 2012, p. 144). Irony employed in this manner can lead to extreme misogyny and objectification because it is used in such extremes that "there is no sexism" (Gill, 2012, p.144).

Critics of post-feminism challenge the wave, and say that it allows women to feel like they are doing something for feminism, because they are asserting their already equal rights, while they actually remain complacent. Shonda Rhimes, creator of *Grey's Anatomy*, has been quoted as saying that the world of the show exists in a post-feminist, post-civil rights reality, not unlike her reality, which accounts for her mostly color-blind approach to casting and her portrayal of women as equal to men in a highly competitive work setting.

Research Question

This study seeks to identify whether *Grey's Anatomy*, through the relationship between main characters Meredith Grey and Cristina Yang, presents concepts and images that are more progressive than traditional media portrayals of women and that align with feminist goals and concerns. If they are in keeping with feminist concerns, are they most like second wave feminism, third wave feminism, or post-feminism?

Methodology

In order to address these questions, this study utilizes textual analysis of four selected narrative arcs from the first eight seasons (2005-2012) of *Grey's Anatomy*. The textual analysis is influenced by previous feminist analyses and critiques of television productions (Busch; D'Acci, Lauzen, Dozier, and Heran; Rowe). Through a close textual analysis of four selected story arcs, the current study hones in on Cristina and Meredith's relationship, specifically in

regard to professional concerns, relationship concerns, and reproductive issues. Since *Grey's Anatomy* through season eight consists of 172 forty-minute episodes, textual analysis of specific story arcs as opposed to analysis of randomly selected episodes should better demonstrate the intentions of the show's creator and producers in relation to the portrayal of the relationship between Meredith and Cristina. Also, by selecting specific story arcs, close analysis (with special attention to issues of feminist interest) of how the characters' relationship progresses over each of the arcs is richer and deeper.

The four selected narrative arcs are from four different phases of Cristina and Meredith's lives on the show. They are at different points in their professional, romantic, and personal lives in each arc. The first is from season two in 2005, in which both characters are first-year interns at Seattle Grace Hospital; the second is from season three in 2006, in which they are in their second year and are first-year residents; the third arc from 2010 bridges seasons six and seven where they are in the middle of their time as residents, and the last one in 2011 bridges seasons seven and eight, which shows the characters approaching their final year of residency. Although the characters might not have as much decisional, political, and operational power as would be ideal, as interns, Meredith and Cristina are required to defer to their superiors in the hospital who are sometimes males and are sometimes their romantic partners. Meredith and Cristina still demonstrate decisional, political, and operational control of situations at points over the course of the series despite their lower station in the hospital.

The decision to analyze Cristina and Meredith's relationship as opposed to specifically including their romantic relationships, their careers, and concerns about physical appearance was made because elements of their relationship touch on romance or sexuality and career because each is at some point a major preoccupation of each of the characters. Concerns about physical

appearance, though identified by Collins' (2011) content analysis of media's portrayal of women as a prevalent theme of feminine portrayal, is hardly ever depicted in *Grey's Anatomy* as something characters care about, which is interesting in itself but rendered analysis of insecurity about appearance negligible.

In this paper, the four selected *Grey's Anatomy* narrative arcs are analyzed with each of the three waves in mind in order to determine in which feminist movement the characters, specifically main characters Meredith Grey and Cristina Yang, exist.

Findings (See Appendix for detailed table)

First Narrative Arc

In the first story arc, which includes season two's episodes sixteen through eighteen ("It's The End of the World," "As We Know It," and "Yesterday"), Meredith and Cristina are first year residents who are each romantically involved with attending surgeons Derek Shepherd and Preston Burke respectively. Shepherd is the head of the neurosurgery department and Burke heads the cardiothoracic surgery department, and Meredith and Cristina are each interested in their specialties. In this arc, Meredith recently discovered that Derek is still married to his wife in New York, and his wife has since moved to Seattle and now practices medicine at Seattle Grace Hospital as well. For these reasons, in addition to the fact that Derek feels that he owes his wife a second chance, Meredith stops seeing Derek but is still interested in neurosurgery as a potential specialty. Meredith seems to develop an interest in neurosurgery as a result of the fact that Derek repeatedly requests her for his service early in the show, which creates tension between Cristina and Meredith early on because Cristina thinks Meredith is using sex to get ahead in her career (using sex as an advantage would be somewhat post-feminist, and Cristina shows signs of

rejecting this). Meanwhile, Cristina has always had an interest in cardiothoracic surgery and seems to fall for Burke because of her respect for his skill.

This story arc begins with a bomb threat at Seattle Grace Hospital that involves Meredith and Cristina. Meredith is Burke's intern on the case of a patient who is revealed to have unexploded live ammunition in his body cavity. Cristina is the intern on Shepherd's case in which he performs a craniotomy on Dr. Bailey's husband. The craniotomy is being performed on the operation room floor where the bomb threat is localized. Over the course of the first episode, a paramedic has her hand inside the body cavity, touching the ammunition. At the end of the episode, Meredith ends up with her hand inside of the patient. The second episode of the arc follows the bomb squad's efforts to remove the bomb threat from Seattle Grace Hospital and Meredith, Burke, Shepherd, and Cristina's efforts in the operating rooms. The third episode of the arc deals with the aftermath of the bomb threat, and addresses concerns about Meredith and Cristina's romantic lives.

The first episode of the story arc, "It's the End of the World," begins with a flash-forward to the end of the episode, where some vague and intense scene is depicted. As the episode unfolds, Meredith has "this feeling" that she is going to die, and her roommates and co-interns, Izzie and George, cannot get her out of bed to go to work. They are forced to call Cristina, who at this point in the series is already depicted as Meredith's best friend. Cristina is the only person able to get Meredith out of bed, although she achieves this goal only after failing by first telling Meredith that they are all going to die anyways, then by saying in a semi-pejorative manner, "Okay, this is me being supportive," and then asking what is the matter. Meredith is upset about her mother's increasingly worse Alzheimer's, her recent break-up with Derek, and generally feels that she needs some hope, although the primary reasons she gives derive from the fact that

Derek is back with his wife. Cristina is very straightforward with Meredith and retorts by saying that everyone has problems, and finally emphasizes work as a reason to get up. Cristina is the only person who is able to convince Meredith to be motivated and she utilizes work as a tool to get Meredith to focus on something other than romantic problems. This moment seems in line with third wave feminist thought about relationships between women, in that Cristina emphasizes Meredith's career, or her individualistic success, as a method of motivation and support.

The episode's central action comes from the arrival of the unexploded ammunition in the body cavity of a patient at Seattle Grace. Meredith becomes central to the case because she eventually ends up with her hand inside the patient. Cristina serves as the intern on Dr. Bailey's husband's case after being brushed aside by Burke, who is mad at her because she disappeared in the morning without explanation. She chooses not to explain that she was helping Meredith get out of bed, instead protecting her friend and giving preference to her relationship with Meredith. Meredith and Cristina are reunited during the central action of the episode, when the operating rooms surrounding the bomb threat are being evacuated, and they catch up and discuss the goings-on of their workdays. Elements of sisterhood between the two women here seem a bit superficial, as they spend their time workplace-gossiping about Dr. Bailey, the doctor whose husband is in surgery, and Bailey's husband's case. Their bond is portrayed as more substantive later in the episode, when each of them tries to encourage the other to evacuate the floor where the bomb threat is localized.

The second episode of the arc, "As We Know It," begins where the first ended, with Meredith's hand inside the body cavity. Cristina is visibly upset and as Meredith continuously repeats, "What did I do, what did I do?", Cristina asserts that what Meredith did was "incredibly

stupid.” Cristina stays with Meredith from that point on to support her, even though Burke tries to get her to leave because he thinks the reason she is staying there is because she wants to be part of the pending surgery. Cristina gets frustrated and insists that it is not about the surgery—Cristina does not want to leave Meredith and Burke in the compromised OR.

The interactions between Burke and Cristina and Cristina and Meredith seem indicative of third wave ideals, in that although the women pursue their own careers and support each other through difficult situations, they do not hold second wave viewpoints about the complete renouncement of men. During a memorable conversation between the women in the middle of the episode, when Meredith and the patient with the bomb in his body cavity are being moved, Cristina defies the bomb squad leader and stays to talk to Meredith to distract her from the life-threatening situation. Cristina tells Meredith that Burke told Cristina, while he thought she was sleeping, that he loves her and Cristina and Meredith discuss the implications. Without explaining exactly why this is a problem, Meredith is able to understand why Cristina is bothered by his pronouncement. This scene shows Meredith and Cristina having a good understanding of one another, but does not seem to merit second or post-feminist classification. It seems more third wave in its approach to this difficult situation: Meredith understands that Cristina does not want to complicate her situation further by being in a more committed relationship with an attending physician, or by being in a more committed relationship in general.

The final scene of the episode harks back to a dream sequence that George had in the first episode of the arc, because it also features Cristina, Meredith and Izzie showering together, but the sentiment is entirely different. Cristina and Izzie, fully clothed, are washing the residue from the bomb’s explosion off of a fully clothed and shell-shocked Meredith. The women are no longer portrayed as the objects of George’s sexual desire as they were in the dream sequence;

instead, they are supporting each other in the face of the trying events of the day. This scene actually empowers the women, as they do not need the help of men to take care of one another—because it is actual empowerment, and is not just the idea of it, the conclusion of the episode is not post-feminist. Instead, second wave feminists might approve, because they do not seek male help in helping the individual and George leaves the room because he sees that he is rendered unnecessary.

The third episode of the story arc, “Yesterday,” begins with Cristina and Burke together. Burke finally finds out that Cristina never gave up her apartment although she said that she did, and this betrayal of trust challenges their relationship again. Meredith, over the course of this storyline, has encouraged Cristina to either actually give up the apartment or to tell Burke the truth; however, Cristina refuses and Burke finds out from another source. Meredith learns that her mother, who she visits regularly at the home where she is receiving Alzheimer’s care, was having an affair during her time as a resident at Seattle Grace Hospital. When Cristina first gets to work, she tells Meredith about her fight with Burke, but Meredith does not sympathize and Cristina asks her what is wrong, to which Meredith replies “My mother’s a dirty whore.” This assessment seems problematic from the perspective of feminist thought in general, although it is consistent with beliefs of post-feminists who consider traditional gender roles and lifestyles, with marriage as a typical demarcation of those traditional roles, to be ideal. It also provides an example of Meredith using irony to express an unpalatable viewpoint to make it more acceptable.

Later in the episode, the women get together and sexually objectify a new male arrival to the hospital, which is very post-feminist, in that the post-feminist approach to romance emphasizes recreational sex as a justified and legitimate way of furthering the movement, as stated in Busch’s (2009) article analyzing post-feminist discourse in *Ally McBeal*, *Sex and the*

City, and *Desperate Housewives* (p. 88). The general treatment of sex in the episode by Meredith and Cristina, as well as by the other central characters, seems post-feminist. During a surgery, Burke has a conversation with Meredith about Cristina and her apartment and asks if she knew that Cristina kept it—Meredith affirms that she knew without apology. This conversation indicates a belief that men are not the enemy, which already aligns with third wave beliefs, but it also shows solidarity between Cristina and Meredith, because Meredith chooses not to make any excuses or apologies even though Burke is the male and the authoritative figure.

In this arc of *Grey's Anatomy*, Meredith and Cristina support each other in critical situations and in personal matters, but still develop relationships with men; men are not the enemy. This arc is not quite post-feminist, because neither ever indicates that she feels she is sacrificing what she wants for her career—their interests in self-actualization through pursuit of individualistic goals are always at the forefront of their desires and actions in this arc from season two.

Second Narrative Arc

The second story arc, which consists of episodes 15 through 17 of season three (“Walk on Water,” “Drowning on Dry Land,” and “Some Kind of Miracle”), follows Meredith through her downward spiral following her mother’s temporary lucid period where she expressed disappointment in Meredith. For Cristina, the arc emphasizes Burke’s marriage proposal and her desire to tell Meredith about it before everyone else. The central action of the arc comes from a ferryboat accident that challenges Seattle Grace and its doctors.

In the first episode of the arc, “Walk on Water,” Meredith feels displaced and unhappy; Shepherd tries to help her, but Meredith rejects his attempts. Cristina tells Burke not to tell anyone about the engagement until after Meredith knows, but then cannot tell Meredith because

telling her makes it real. The episode ends with Meredith falling into freezing water at the scene of the ferryboat accident. The second episode, “Drowning on Dry Land,” focuses on the other doctors, specifically Cristina, who searches for Meredith during the episode to share her news. Toward the end of the episode, Cristina finds out that Meredith is hypothermic and in urgent need of emergent care. The third episode, “Some Kind of Miracle,” begins with Meredith in a supposedly in-between sort of world, where she talks with patients and characters she knows who have died and she has to make the decision to live. It focuses on the other doctors trying to heal Meredith, and also the effects of her state on those around her. During this time, Cristina is inconsolable because she relies heavily on Meredith and leaves the hospital to do mundane activities.

Specific instances relevant to Meredith and Cristina’s relationship in this story arc are plentiful. That Cristina will not tell anyone about her engagement until she talks to Meredith about it first shows her preference for her relationship with Meredith—she wants support and approval from her friend about this decision because they are both focused more on their careers than romance and once she discusses it with Meredith, it will be real. Cristina resists marriage and acceptance of traditional female roles, which indicates that her character would choose her career over fulfillment of traditional feminine roles. The individualistic pursuit of happiness that Cristina engages in, in which she gets the most happiness and satisfaction from progressing in her surgical career and sharing those successes with Meredith, if anyone, is consistent with third wave feminism.

Meredith resents Shepherd’s attempts to save her and be her “knight in shining whatever” because she feels that she does not need saving. She does not turn to Cristina with the problem, which indicates a very self-involved version of dealing with her romantic problems—the

juxtaposition between Meredith's desire to keep everything to herself and Cristina's desire to share with Meredith shows that the characters are distinctive even though they are very close.

The second episode of the arc depicts Cristina continuing her search for Meredith and shows that Cristina considers it most important that Meredith find out about the engagement before others. Izzie even brags to Cristina about how she opened someone's skull in the field, and ordinarily Cristina would express sincere jealousy and frustration that she was not the one to have such an opportunity; however, Cristina ~~just~~ asks in response to Izzie's story, "So you haven't seen Meredith?" In this case, her solidarity with Meredith is beginning to manifest itself as concern and it seems higher on her priority list than her career, which is almost always her priority. Cristina becomes irritated with Burke for revealing the secret of their engagement to other men in the hospital. She tries to explain that telling Meredith makes the engagement real, which frustrates Burke. The episode ends with Cristina and the other interns finding out that Meredith is close to death. Overall, Cristina's single-minded pursuit of Meredith because she is having difficulty accepting the fact that she has accepted Burke's proposal aligns with third wave feminism the closest, because of her clear hesitation and reluctance about the engagement and her need to talk with her closest friend, another woman, about it in order to accept it.

The third episode in the arc, "Some Kind of Miracle," is highly emotional because Cristina and the other doctors of Seattle Grace, including Shepherd, are all afraid for Meredith's life. Cristina panics and says, "No. Uh-uh. I'm not doing this," when she realizes how serious Meredith's condition is. She walks out of the hospital and chooses to go to the grocery store in order to try to attain some normalcy. She ends up going to Joe's, the bar across the street from the hospital, because she cannot face the thought of losing "her person." Burke is actually responsible for bringing Cristina back to the hospital—he convinces Cristina that she will never

be able to forgive herself if she is not there to say goodbye to Meredith. Cristina returns to the hospital and walks into the room where the other doctors are working furiously to save Meredith's life, and shouts for them to try to revive her again.

Meredith, in the alternate reality limbo world she exists in, decides to live again after thinking about how it would break her friends and Derek to lose her, and finally truly decides she wants to live when her mother passes through the same reality and tells Meredith that she is "anything but ordinary." Cristina is waiting for Meredith to wake up when a heartbeat and her breathing start up again, and as Meredith regains consciousness, Cristina orders her to say something. Meredith says, "Ouch," and in response, Cristina finally, tearfully, tells Meredith about her engagement.

Cristina and Burke's relationship ends up failing when he leaves her at the altar in the finale episode of season three, yet although she is traumatized, the first words she offers about how she is feeling, "I feel...free," indicate that she felt trapped by traditional feminine roles. Cristina's character is most comfortable when she focuses on her goals, which generally center on her surgical career.

Third Narrative Arc

The third narrative arc, which is comprised of the last two episodes of season six and the first episode of season seven ("Sanctuary," "Death and All his Friends," and "With You I'm Born Again"), brings a shooter to Seattle Grace Mercy West Hospital (the hospital was merged with previously competing hospital Mercy West). The subplots of this narrative arc focus on Meredith and Derek's relationship while also following Cristina's complex situation with Owen Hunt, her consistent romantic interest by season six. These plotlines are tied together by the overarching shooting spree that occurs. "Sanctuary" and "Death and All his Friends" take place

during the actual shootings, and “With You I’m Born Again,” the season seven opener, deals with the ramifications of the traumatic event.

In the season six two-part finale, a deeply upset husband of a deceased patient from earlier in the season enters Seattle Grace Mercy West and seeks out Shepherd, Lexi Grey, and the former Chief of Surgery, Richard Webber, for ill-conceived revenge. He ends up committing mass murder in the hospital in pursuit of these three characters. Near the start of the episode, Meredith tells Cristina about her pregnancy. Cristina’s response is: “Are we happy about this or are we exercising our legal right to choose?” When Meredith is quiet and keeps smiling in response, Cristina congratulates and hugs her, then asks if Shepherd knows yet. Meredith’s decision to tell Cristina first is very characteristic of their relationship: they trust each other with big news before they entrust anyone else with it. Beyond that, Cristina’s openness about the options before Meredith is certainly feminist, specifically in line with the third wave because of the forwarding of the rights of the individual for the greater good. In order to support Meredith during this conversation, Cristina pretends to be okay with her romantic situation.

Once the lockdown begins, Cristina and Meredith misunderstand its meaning, thinking that it means that they need to stay in the hospital generally, not stay where they are, and they wander around the hospital looking for Shepherd to tell him about the pregnancy. Cristina tags along after telling Meredith that she had to break up with Owen. Meredith tells Cristina that she will be the godmother for the baby, and they talk jokingly about both Meredith and Derek dying so that Cristina can raise the child with “the right priorities.” They both decide that the baby should be a surgeon before running into Shepherd who ushers them into a closet and hides them from the shooter. They are supportive of one another in terms of their romantic lives and their

professional lives, and Cristina helps and steadies Meredith through the moments leading up to and succeeding Derek getting shot. This leads into the second episode of the arc.

Cristina ends up operating on Derek because Teddy Altman, the attending cardiothoracic surgeon, is unreachable because of the lockdown status of the hospital. At the start of the episode, Cristina does not let Meredith leave the closet where they are hiding after Derek's shooting, out of concern, until Meredith knocks Cristina out of the way to go check on Derek. Cristina springs into action post-shooting, which suggests that she does not need anyone's help and she is very self-sufficient in a crisis. In fact, she ends up being the only person available who can save Shepherd's life. Her ability to control the situation with a relatively level head despite the fact that she has to operate on her best friend's husband distinguishes her as one of the strongest characters on the show.

The shooter eventually ends up in the OR where Cristina is operating on Derek and orders Cristina and Avery, another resident, to stop "saving his life," during which time Owen enters the OR and tries to help diffuse the situation. Meredith ends up entering the OR as well and tells the shooter to kill her instead of Derek or anyone else in the OR. Eventually, the doctors convince the shooter that they let Derek die, but not before he manages to shoot Owen in the arm. Cristina and Avery start operating again once the shooter leaves, and Cristina shouts at Meredith that she's "trying to save [Meredith's] guy, now go and save mine!" Meredith takes Owen into another OR and extracts the bullet, but because of the stress, ends up having a miscarriage.

The final episode of the arc, "With You I'm Born Again," shows the post-traumatic stress impact on the main characters. Cristina decides to marry Owen, because she experiences post-traumatic stress disorder and never wants to be alone again after having to perform surgery on Derek at gunpoint. Each of the surgeons of Seattle Grace Mercy West has to be cleared by a

trauma counselor for work, and Meredith and Cristina are still not cleared at the start of this episode. The trauma counselor is convinced that Meredith is hiding something, at which point there is a flashback to Meredith telling Cristina not to tell anyone about the miscarriage. This is another instance of only trusting Cristina with important personal information she feels Derek might not be able to handle.

Meredith and Cristina have a fight during this episode, because Meredith believes that Cristina is only getting married because she is traumatized and therefore Cristina should postpone the wedding, and Cristina thinks Meredith should tell Derek about the miscarriage. Each woman is stubborn, but they care about each other and want each other to understand that they have not fully recovered from the effects of the shooting.

The episode ends with Cristina and Owen's wedding. Meredith arrives and gives Cristina her blessing, choosing to support her friend by saying that "Owen's perfect." Meredith's decision to support Cristina in a relationship she doubts seems dubious, and not very feminist because while her friend believes that she needs this marriage, it has come from an unhealthy reliance resulting from PTSD and Meredith seems aware of this.

Fourth Narrative Arc

The fourth selected narrative arc, which starts with season seven's finale and continues through the first two episodes of season eight ("Unaccompanied Minor," "Free Falling," and "She's Gone"), centers on Meredith's tampering with an Alzheimer's clinical trial that she is working on under Derek's supervision while the couple is also trying to work out their recent adoption. Derek is furious with Meredith for tampering with the trial and stops sleeping at their home. Meredith loses her job and the adoption is jeopardized. Cristina's primary storyline during this story arc focuses on her discovery of an unintended pregnancy and her desire to have an

abortion, which creates a serious conflict between her and her husband, Owen, who wants children badly.

In the first episode of the story arc, “Unaccompanied Minor,” Meredith and Cristina’s paths do not cross directly very often. The chief calls Derek and Meredith into his office because the allegations of her tampering with the Alzheimer’s trial have been brought to Chief Webber’s attention, and he informs her and Derek that the trial is over and that she has likely lost her job. Alex, one of the other interns in their class of interns, is responsible for revealing her tampering to higher-ups in the hospital, and Meredith feels betrayed by him. Cristina goes to Alex when she finds out that he was the person who told an attending about the tampering and verbally attacks him, asserting that “[Meredith] was the only one who ever cared about you (Alex),” and informing him that he might have caused her to lose her job. Cristina’s support of Meredith in the workplace, despite the fact that she broke the rules of the clinical trial, suggests support of Meredith even though Meredith’s decision is something that Cristina would never do because career is her number one priority.

During this episode, Cristina discovers that she is pregnant and panics. She tells Owen, who at this point is not estranged from her, and as he begins to be excited, she declares that she will not have a baby. Owen retorts by saying, “Well, you have one,” and then presses the issue further. This marks the start of their battle over whether or not Cristina should get an abortion. By the end of the episode, Owen throws Cristina out of their home because she declares that she has made her decision—she wants an abortion—and Owen asserts that she has denied him an equal partnership. The difficulty these two characters have communicating with and supporting one another juxtaposes very distinctly with Meredith and Cristina’s ability to support each other through difficult situations.

Meredith, who has wanted a baby with Derek for about two seasons at this point, finally hears back from the adoption agency and finds out that Zola is theirs. Derek refuses to interact with Meredith, so she is on her own with Zola at the end of the episode. Cristina goes to stay with Meredith because ultimately, they support each other when their romantic partners are unable or unwilling. They are generally self-sufficient women who, when they need to rely on someone outside of themselves, turn to each other.

The second episode of the arc, "Free Falling," begins with Cristina and Meredith living together with Zola, and while they miss their husbands, they are happy in each other's company. Meredith makes an effort to reconnect with Derek, while Cristina does not know how to approach Owen, nor does she show particular interest in reaching out to him, which shows Meredith aligning more with post-feminist viewpoints while Cristina's focus on her individual right to choose is more in keeping with third wave viewpoints.

Meredith finds out during this episode that the board of directors of Seattle Grace Mercy West has decided that she is a disgrace to the hospital, and that she must be fired. When Meredith tells Cristina, she hits Alex and is very angry with him. Meredith has difficulty leaving the hospital, until eventually she tries to convince herself that this is a "blessing in disguise," because she can now focus on being a mother. She suggests to Cristina that the reason Cristina has not had the abortion yet is because she wants to be a mother too, on some level. This conversation is post-feminist, because Meredith tries to assert, albeit unconvincingly, that Cristina wants to step into traditional feminine gender roles. Cristina assures her friend that although she wishes that the situation was that way, she does not want to be a mother. Meredith understands her friend's decision after this conversation, and later in the episode, she goes to talk to Owen and tells him that Cristina is hesitant to get the abortion because she loves Owen, but

not because she wants to be a mother. Meredith asserts that it should be Cristina's decision, because Cristina would almost certainly resent being a mother because it would limit her career, which is a somewhat second wave thought, in that second wave feminists believed that women had to choose either career or traditional feminine roles. It is also third wave, because Meredith is asserting Cristina's individual right to choose and supporting her against Owen, a man who, in a way, tries to dictate Cristina's actions.

In the third episode of this arc, "She's Gone," Derek receives repeated pages from the social worker on their adoption case, and realizes that Meredith is missing and she has taken Zola. Derek asks Cristina if she knows where Meredith is, because he understands that their bond sometimes supersedes his with Meredith, a fact he references many times throughout the series. Cristina does not know. Later in the episode, Cristina receives a page to a supply closet in the hospital, where Meredith waits with Zola. Meredith confides in Cristina that she thinks she "stole a baby." Cristina begins to make excuses for Meredith's actions, trying to voice aloud rationalizations for why Meredith could have been missing for four hours. Cristina tries to help Meredith figure out how to improve the situation, and while she is hurrying around the hospital in search of solutions, she runs into Owen who asks if Cristina wants to talk. This is the first time he has significantly reached out to her since he threw her out of their apartment in the first episode of the arc, but Cristina chooses supporting Meredith over potential reconciliation with her husband, cryptically saying that she wants to talk, but has to do something.

Meredith and Cristina, with a remorseful Alex's help, find a way to improve upon the situation. Toward the end of the episode, Owen and Cristina finally get their chance to talk, but only after Cristina has made sure that Meredith is okay for the time being. Owen tells Cristina that he knows she has not had the abortion yet, and realizes that Cristina would do almost

anything for him because she loves him, at which point he asks when her appointment is. She says, "Now," in response, and he says, "Okay, let's go," at which point Cristina breaks down in tears. The episode ends with a conflicted Owen supporting Cristina at her abortion appointment after his conversations with Meredith and Cristina.

Discussion

Grey's Anatomy tends to hybridize elements of each of the waves, but it primarily has elements of third wave feminism and of post-feminism. In many ways, Cristina and Meredith are depicted filling the roles that traditional romantic relationships provide and *Grey's Anatomy* emphasizes this every time Cristina or Meredith prefers each other's advice or support to that of their romantic male partner. Cristina, in particular, seems to fit in the context of a third wave feminist discussion, not only because she is consistently most concerned with her career and her achievements, but also because she is Korean-American, and third wave feminist thought includes race in its central discussion. She also chooses to have an abortion, even though her husband wants her to have a baby, because she realizes that she does not want to force herself into the particular traditional feminine role of mother.

Meredith, especially earlier in the show, seems to be a character who more easily fits into post-feminist classifications because she is often primarily preoccupied with her romance with Derek Shepherd. In reality though, even though Meredith chooses to get married and have a baby with Derek because she really desires those roles, she also maintains her career and ends up a fellow at Seattle Grace Mercy West by season nine. She believes that she does not have to choose between her career and having a personal life in which she gets to be mother and wife, and this belief aligns with third wave thinking. Post-feminist thought would suggest that her

attempt to balance career and family life is the source of her intermittent unhappiness during the show; however, Meredith's character loves her career and realizes she wants to be a mother only after developing a successful romantic relationship with Derek.

External crises seem to result in a desire to find comfort in traditional feminine roles by the characters (more so in Meredith's case, but in the third narrative arc, Cristina exhibits this tendency as well). This tendency is post-feminist, because post-feminism asserts that happiness and fulfillment are attained through achievement of traditional feminine roles of mother and wife.

Assumptions

Initially, it seemed that *Grey's Anatomy* would fit primarily within the constructs of feminist thought, and after analysis, it appears that it does. I thought there would be a stronger identification with post-feminist thought than other waves of feminism, partially because Shonda Rhimes has identified the show as such, and also because it seems that media generally lean toward post-feminism right now (Busch, 2009, p. 89). In actuality, the show has more in common with viewpoints of third wave feminism because of its focus on the pursuit of individual agency, which is not reliant on interaction with other people, or more specifically, on romantic successes.

I assumed that Meredith and Cristina's actions would fall into the classifications of second wave, third wave, and post-feminism fairly easily; however, because the characters are fairly apolitical, identification was harder than anticipated. The fact that the women are fairly apolitical and do not verbalize that they feel like they are fighting harder than the men in the hospital for equal treatment seems somewhat post-feminist, but the actions and interactions of the characters make the classifying process more complex.

Since Collins' study of media's portrayal of women is so recent (2011), I anticipated that there would be more overlap with the five primary findings of her research—that Meredith and Cristina would be portrayed as subjugated, sexualized, underrepresented, placed in traditional roles, and concerned with physical appearance more often. However, this was not the case. Although sex is prominently featured on this primetime television drama, Meredith and Cristina are not sexualized more than Derek or other males on the show are. Cristina and Meredith are sometimes shown deferring to superiors in the hospital, but these superiors can be male or female as it depends on the hospital's hierarchy of doctors based on experience more than any other factors. Thus, they are not subjugated any more than male interns on the show. The characters are not underrepresented, although this was expected because they are main characters. Meredith is married and has a child and in that way she is placed in a traditional role, but little time is spent depicting her wedding because the marriage is about her relationship with Derek and little else. She does want to be a mother, but she carefully considers it and *Grey's Anatomy* is careful to emphasize that she really wants a child with Derek specifically, as opposed to simply wanting to be a mother. Cristina is shown almost getting married in season four, then actually getting married after the shooting at the start of season seven, but only because she does not want to be alone. Her marriage is untraditional and she does not often prioritize this relationship over work. She also avoids traditional roles by strongly resisting the idea of motherhood—she knows that she does not, nor has she ever wanted to be, a mother and she adamantly resists this placement, even when she finds out she is pregnant with her husband's child. Finally, neither of them is particularly concerned with physical appearance and hardly any time is spent depicting the main characters as being concerned about what they look like.

Implications

That Meredith actually ends up married with a child indicates that her character could be acceptable to even those post-feminists who blame the ideals of previous feminist movements for their unhappiness in present society. It is also important to note that the characters go in and out of serious romantic relationships while remaining truest to one another. Season nine of *Grey's Anatomy*, which is still in progress at the conclusion of this study, focuses very closely on the relationship between Meredith and Cristina. By the end of season eight, Meredith tries to convince Cristina that they need to end up in the same city because they are each other's "person," which is the title Cristina gave to Meredith in season two after she put Meredith down as her emergency contact for an abortion she scheduled. Meredith almost entirely ignores Shepherd's requests for her to consider his desires in her decision about where to go for her fellowship because she is more concerned with where Cristina will be.

During these final episodes of season eight, Cristina gets frustrated with Meredith constantly trying to convince her to stay in the same place as Meredith, and tells her that Owen, her estranged husband, is her person now. The result of this conversation is that Meredith and Cristina decide separately from one another where they are going to go for their fellowship years. This particular event is definitely post-feminist, in that Cristina chooses her romantic relationship with a man over her relationship with Meredith; however, by the start of season nine Cristina has selected Mayo Clinic as where she wants to go based solely on the fact that the hospital has one of the leading cardiothoracic surgery departments in the country which indicates a return to her individualistic pursuit of success for happiness. Cristina and Meredith also maintain a long-distance relationship during this period of time in which they still talk to each other every day about the progression of their respective careers, about Zola, Meredith's daughter, and about the goings-on that result from the plane crash that happened during the finale.

Conclusion

Future Research

With more time and resources, I would expand this project to include an analysis of the 2012-2013 season nine of *Grey's Anatomy*, because many of the episodes explicitly highlight Cristina and Meredith's relationship. Rhimes, the show's creator, has been quoted saying that during this season she is more concerned with Meredith and Cristina's relationship than Cristina's relationship with her estranged husband, Owen. I would also expand the research to include a wider breadth of characters from the show, including Miranda Bailey, who is consistently portrayed as a powerful and competitive surgeon who sacrifices her marriage for her career but is ultimately accepting of the trade-off. She is African-American, and it would be interesting to integrate racial concerns in the discussion of the world constructed in *Grey's Anatomy* and to see how racial and gendered concerns intersect over the course of the series.

I would further expand my research to include an analysis of characters who were not on the show the entire time, such as Callie Torres, a bisexual Hispanic woman who ends up in two monogamous relationships with women. Callie is a strong character who is an attending physician for the majority of her time on the show, which could be significant in terms of progressive feminine leadership portrayal. The issue of race could be analyzed with Callie's character as part of the data as well.

I would also analyze Arizona Robbins, who Callie starts seeing during season six and whom she eventually marries. Arizona knows she is attracted to women from the start of her time on the show, which could also provide fruitful information about the racially and sexually diverse case of characters and their relationship to feminist issues.

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Appendix

First Narrative Arc: Season 2, episodes 16-18	Episode 1: "It's the End of the World"	Episode 2: "As We Know It"	Episode 3: "Yesterday"
Second Wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina chooses sisterhood with Meredith over relationship with Burke by disappearing without 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina does not want to leave Meredith in OR with unexploded ammunition (non- 	

	<p>explanation in the morning to help Meredith</p>	<p>individualistic concern) and looks to Meredith for approval before Burke</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sisterhood and collective power of women alluded to when Izzie and Cristina help Meredith wash off residue from bomb explosion in the shower—reclaiming the dream sequence from the beginning of ep. 1 of arc and moving George (and his sexual objectification) out of it 	
<p>Third Wave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina is the only person who can get Meredith out of bed; does so by reminding her of the importance of work over romance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally supportive of each other's relationships and do not condemn one another for being romantically concerned, although they are both wary of potential work complications that could result from romantic entanglement • Burke confronts Meredith about Cristina keeping her apartment and Meredith shows solidarity with Cristina even though 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina as non-committal in relationship (her decision not to give up the apartment) indicates desire to keep the relationship as uncomplicated as possible

		Burke is her superior (her conversing with him about it indicates subconscious belief that he as the male is not the enemy)	
Post-Feminist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gossiping and having less-substantive conversation during the middle of the episode when they run into each other on OR floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not want to leave Burke behind in the OR either—says it is not about surgery (it's about relationships) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meredith's identification of her mother as a "dirty whore" for having an extramarital affair (prioritization of traditional gender roles as ideal) Meredith, Cristina, and Izzie sexually objectify a male new arrival to the hospital—the emphasis of recreational sex as justified manner of furthering movement

Second Narrative Arc: Season 3, episodes 15-17	Episode 1: "Walk On Water"	Episode 2: "Drowning On Dry Land"	Episode 3: "Some Kind of Miracle"
Second Wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meredith rejects Derek's attempts to save her emotionally (men as enemy) Cristina wants to tell Meredith before she tells anyone else about her engagement—especially resentful when 		

	Burke tells other men (she is hesitant about idea of marriage—avoidance of traditional roles)		
Third Wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina shows signs of wanting to choose career over traditional feminine roles—individualistic pursuit of happiness and desire to share successes with Meredith if anyone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reason Cristina desperately wants to talk about the engagement with Meredith—she wants to make sure that her friend who prioritizes surgery nearly as highly as she does approves of her decision to accept Burke’s proposal. She does not want to consider Burke the enemy, but needs to hear that she is not jeopardizing her career and individualistic successes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Burke is the character who brings Cristina back to Meredith’s bedside suggests that while her relationship with Burke is important, he understands how important her relationship with Meredith is—he is not the enemy because he does not take her down • The fact that Meredith’s resolution with her mother (and not her relationship with Derek) is the element that drives her decision to live again emphasizes the importance of self-actualization
Post-Feminist		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to find Meredith to talk about engagement—prioritizes above interest in work 	

Third Narrative Arc: Season 6, episodes 23-	Episode 1: “Sanctuary”	Episode 2: “Death and All His Friends”	Episode 3: “With You I’m Born Again”
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<p>24, season 7, episode 1</p>			
<p>Second Wave</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina emphasizes female solidarity by preventing Meredith from going to check on Derek • Cristina operates on Derek despite the fact that he is her best friend's husband and there is immense pressure to perform—very self-sufficient in the crisis situation 	
<p>Third Wave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith entrusts Cristina with news of her pregnancy • Cristina responds supportively by asking “are we happy about this or are we exercising our legal right to choose?” • Desire to raise child with aspirations of being a surgeon despite gender or any other considerations • Cristina focuses on Meredith and her news throughout the episode over her difficulties with Owen—even though she does not want 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks Teddy to help because she is the attending cardiothoracic surgeon, not because of gender or any other hegemonic structures /political concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith tells Cristina to postpone the wedding, not cancel it—she thinks Cristina should still get married if she wants to, but not because of post-traumatic stress • Cristina tells Meredith to tell Derek about the miscarriage, because it is clearly negatively affecting Meredith and keeping her from surgery (male does not equal enemy)

	children, she supports her friend's individual right to choose to want a baby		
Post-Feminist			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina's decision to look to marriage with Owen (traditional feminine role) to feel whole and secure again after the shooting • Meredith allows Cristina to go through with the wedding even though she has her doubts because she places faith in traditional feminine role of wife for Cristina

Fourth Narrative Arc: Season 7, episode 22, season 8, episodes 1-2	Episode 1: "Unaccompanied Minor"	Episode 2: "Free Falling"	Episode 3: "She's Gone"
Second Wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith and Cristina support each other when their romantic relationships are not working out—Cristina goes to stay with Meredith after Owen kicks her out; Meredith takes Cristina in and is glad to have someone to support her 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derek's acknowledgment that Meredith and Cristina's relationship supersedes his relationship with Meredith sometimes • Meredith asks Cristina for help with the Zola situation—circumnavigates Derek entirely • Cristina chooses to support Meredith before

			attempting to reconcile with Owen, her husband
Third Wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina's solidarity with Meredith despite the fact that she would never risk her career for emotional connection in the same way Meredith did shows support for Meredith's individual success and progress • Cristina confides in Owen about her pregnancy and how she does not want to have the baby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina holds fast to her desire not to have a baby, even if her relationship is jeopardized • Cristina refuses Meredith's notion that the reason she has not yet had the abortion is because she wants to be a mother—self-aware and self-actualized • Meredith talks to Owen after her conversation with Cristina to reason with him and to help him understand that being a mother "would kill her" 	
Post-Feminist		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredith tries to believe that her being fired is a "blessing in disguise" because it gives her the opportunity to be a full-time mother (searching for fulfillment through traditional feminine roles) • Meredith tries to suggest that the reason Cristina has not yet had the 	

		abortion is because she wants to be a mother too	
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