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1. Introduction:

Evoking images of the past has long been considered popular with film makers and show runners. While almost every historical time frame since the earliest moments of mankind (e. g. *His Prehistoric Past*, 1914) up to the more recent decades (e. g. *War Dogs*, 2016) have been adapted for the screen, a peculiar trend seems to have surfaced within the last twenty years.

The 1960s appear to be of special interest to both media producers and the audience as numerous movies and TV shows were shot within that decade. As we are living in an age often referred to as the “new golden age of TV”¹, the interest of this thesis is focused upon TV shows rather than movies. While the relationship between history and film has been a popular research area among scholars for many years, television has far less often been the centre of attention. While taking a closer look at serial formats for television, a global trend can be spotted. There are Australian (*Ms. Fisher’s Modern Murder Mysteries*, 2019-), Mexican (*An Unknown Enemy*, 2018-), Russian (*Fartsa*, 2015), Taiwanese (*A Touch of Green*, 2015-2016), Spanish (*Cuéntame cómo paró*, 2001-) and Dutch (*Ramses*, 2014) shows, just to name a few, set partially or entirely during the 1960s. However, the two countries drawing most from this decade are the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Numerous shows (*11/22/63*, 2016; *Masters of Sex*, 2013-2016; *The Playboy Club*, 2011; and *Call the Midwife*, 2012-; *The Crown*, 2016-; *Breathless*, 2013; respectively) have aired during the last few years.²

Although the 1960s are a completely different era, depending on the country the show is set in, American productions such as *Mad Men* have gained a worldwide fan base that

1 Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: *Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 58

2 Dashes following the productions years of the TV shows indicate that the show is still on air (May 2019)

transcends the U. S. borders. One aspect that the majority of shows mentioned have in common, is the inclusion of famous historical persons or events. In particular, the American productions rely heavily on the Kennedy administration in order to paint a picture of the 1960s. The recurring themes on that front are the assassinations of John F. Kennedy (November 22, 1963) and his brother Robert Kennedy (June 6, 1968). Based on this notion, a total of nine episodes from six different shows were chosen to gain a deeper understanding of how historical events and persons are included in the narrative context. All shows chosen (Mad Men, Aquarius, American Dreams, The Kennedys, Pan Am and Astronaut Wives Club) are set during the 60s and the episodes subject to analysis depict one of the two assassinations mentioned above.

In this thesis, I will discuss several important aspects before presenting an analysis of the above-mentioned episodes.

As nostalgia is one of the key terms while trying to understand the sheer number of shows set in this particular decade that have been produced, I will highlight the origin of the term, as well as the functions TV shows have in relation to nostalgia. Furthermore, I will address the relationship between movies/television shows and history. The connection between fact and fiction is a topic debated heatedly among scholars. Following this presentation of approaches, I will explain the outline of the analysis with some details on the serialized format, information on the sample, as well as some historical context for the time the shows are set in (1960s), and the time the shows were produced (2000s).

Finally, the results of the analysis are presented for both the singled-out episodes as well as the overarching picture that forms. Before ending this thesis with a discussion, a short excursion on the Kennedys as a phenomenon, and the presentation of John F. Kennedy and his brother on the screen will be introduced.

2. Nostalgia:

2.1. Definitions:

According to Pickering and Kightley³, “the term nostalgia derives etymologically from the Greek nostos, meaning to return home, and algia, meaning a painful condition.”

During the 17th century, the Swiss physician Johannes Hofner developed a diagnostic label for nostalgia, associating it with symptoms like melancholia, weeping, anorexia or even suicide. In today’s linguistic usage it mostly refers to some sort of escapism, a yearning for a feature which is presently not attainable. However, scientists argue that nostalgia appears to be a phenomenon more complex and nuanced than it is usually given credit for. Focusing on the negatively coined associations can mean forsaking the chance to analyse the connection nostalgia spans between the past, present and future.⁴ As Boym stated it:

“The past is not made in the image of the present or seen as foreboding of some present disaster; rather the past opens a multitude of potentialities, nonteleological possibilities of historical development”⁵

Nostalgia can be melancholic and utopian at the same time. While it can stand for an idealized past, the point is not to return there, but to use it as “the basis for renewal and satisfaction in the future”.⁶

3 Keightley, Emily; Pickering Michael: The Modalities of Nostalgia. Current Sociology, 2006, Vol. 54(6), p. 921

4 Bevan, Alex: Nostalgia for Pre-Digital Media in Mad Men. Television & New Media, 2013, Vol. 14(6), p. 546;

Keightley, Emily; Pickering Michael: The Modalities of Nostalgia. Current Sociology, 2006, Vol. 54(6), p. 920

5 Boym, Svetlana: Future of Nostalgia. New York: Basic Books 2001, p. 54

6 Keightley, Emily; Pickering Michael: The Modalities of Nostalgia. Current Sociology, 2006, Vol. 54(6), p. 921

2.2. Nostalgia as Emotion:

While the original definition of nostalgia was linked to some sort of sickness, the meaning has evolved over time, as shown in the previous paragraph. One of the more modern approaches highlights a different angle of nostalgia:

Armbruster argues nostalgia is in line with the criteria that define emotions, both in general terms, as well as for personal experiences. Nostalgia is – similar to other emotive reactions – triggered. Television series can, for example, act as such triggers. The feeling of nostalgia is directed at a situation or object and is of a limited nature, and in doing so is elicited by something specific.⁷ Holak and Havlena agree, and state that “nostalgia may be experienced as an intense emotion, it is also likely to take the form of a weaker mood that colors the individual’s experience”.⁸ While history and nostalgia are inexorably linked, approaching nostalgia as an emotion manifests an important difference. “History is factual, nostalgia is emotional. And that emotion also makes it easy to share.”⁹

2.3. Nostalgia, Technology and Television:

7 Armbruster, Stefanie: *Watching Nostalgia: An Analysis of Nostalgic Television Fiction and Its Reception*. Bielefeld: Transcript 2016, p. 59

8 Holak, Susan; Havlena, William: *Feelings, Fantasies and Memories: An Examination of the Emotional Components of Nostalgia*. *Journal of Business Research*, 1998, Vol. 42(3), p. 218

9 Hagedoorn, Berber: *Collective Cultural Memory as a TV Guide: ‘Living’ History and Nostalgia on the Digital Television Platform*. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies*, 2017, Vol. 14(1) 2017, p. 83

Old technologies and the cultural histories attached to them can be understood as a meta-commentary on nostalgia. At the same time, the meta-commentary also deals with media history and “highlights the historical and social constructedness of [...] historical narratives and popular historical memory.” When considering *Mad Men*, one of the shows subject to analysis in this thesis, the use of pre-digital media illustrates historical changes the characters are faced with, as Bevan argues.¹⁰ This is evident not only in the following analysis of *Mad Men*, but is present in several of the other shows as well. One of the formats most often linked with nostalgia in the academic discourse is the period drama, a categorization which can refer to both movie or serial productions. It is sometimes referred to as the “nostalgia genre”, and assumed to be specifically chosen by audiences in a form of “nostalgia mood management” as it creates expectation states associated with nostalgia.¹¹

2.4. 1960s Nostalgia and Politics:

An important factor attached to nostalgia is the political climate during which the desired period is situated. In the case of the 1960s the “Camelot era¹²” is one of the most

10 Bevan, Alex: Nostalgia for Pre-Digital Media in *Mad Men*. *Television & New Media*, 2013, Vol. 14(6), p. 547

11 Armbruster, Stefanie: *Watching Nostalgia: An Analysis of Nostalgic Television Fiction and Its Reception*. Bielefeld: Transcript 2016, p. 365

Cardwell, Sarah: *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 2002, p. 150ff

12 The term “Camelot era” was coined by Jacquelin Kennedy after her husband’s death. In an Interview with *LIFE* magazine she stated that the two of them often listened to music before going to bed, specifically Camelot. John F. Kennedy’s favourite lines were “Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot”. She furthermore said that “There'll be great presidents again [...] but there will never be another Camelot.” (White, Theodore H.: *An Epilogue*. *LIFE*, 1963)

distinguishing factors. The boomer generation¹³ of America, depicted in the nostalgic television shows, represent Camelot before the Vietnam War, and before assassinations destroyed the boomer's dreams. It's a "bittersweet image of pre-decline America."¹⁴ Furthermore, via this struggle, a connection can be made to the present day. "The "Camelot" of 1960 melts into the "Camelot" of 2008."¹⁵ (see also sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more information)

3. History, Television and Movies:

3.1. Involvement of Politics:

One aspect of history to have been incorporated in historical movies from the very beginning is politics. From *Birth of a Nation* to *JFK*, politics are inevitably entwined with historical productions. History is, in itself, represented to a great extent through visuals linked with politics. When considering the United States of America, the Statue of Liberty, or the star-spangled flag are among the most prominent. Therefore, simply using these types of images in film already evokes a feeling of democracy, identification and history with the audience, even if the story being told is fictional. The productions can range from screwball comedy (*The American President*) to animation (*The Simpsons*), or to more serious productions (*Mr. Smith goes to Washington*).¹⁶ In the 1990s, another

13 According to the U. S. Census Bureau the baby boomer generation, often referred to as "boomers" in short, is the cohort born between 1946 and 1964 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2015).

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>, last accessed 08.04.2020)

14 Bevan, Alex: Nostalgia for Pre-Digital Media in *Mad Men*. *Television & New Media*, 2013, Vol. 14(6), p. 547

15 Stoddard, Scott Frederick: *Analyzing Mad Men: Critical Essays on the Television Series*. Jefferson: McFarland 2011, p. 208

16 Scott, Ian: *American Politics in Hollywood Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000, p. 40 ff

trend in historical productions returned to popularity: conspiracy theory films. The interspersing of accepted areas of history with dubious theories would occasionally spark heated discussion, particularly when looking at Oliver Stone's JFK (for more information see section 4.3).¹⁷

3.2. The Past and the Present:

Television plays an important role in the daily routines of Americans. When considering the United States, Mirzoeff claims that life is, to a large extent, mediated through television. This notion stems from the fact that an 18-year-old watches four hours of television on average per day. This number demonstrates the vital role television plays today.¹⁸ In the following paragraphs, I will provide detailed insights upon why this development can also be related to depictions of the past shown on Television. In their 2001 book "Television histories: shaping collective memory in the media age", Edgerton and Rollins state several basic assumptions about the relation of history and television which are important for this thesis.¹⁹ They claim that television is responsible for the majority of knowledge people have learned regarding history and historical events today. According to them, TV is one of the most important means for learning about history. Therefore, television should be considered as the primary source from where both child and adult audiences receive their understanding of the past.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 102 ff

¹⁸ Mirzoeff, Nicholas: An Introduction to Visual Culture. London: Routledge 2009, p. 1

¹⁹ Edgerton, Gary R.; Rollins, Peter C.: Television histories: shaping collective memory in the media age. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky 2001, p. 1 ff

3.2.1. Television and Memory:

In the present day, past television plays a vital role as a resource of cultural and historical material across generations. It can instantly refer to a certain time period and can, therefore, be referred to and utilized as a “cultural touchstone”.²⁰ As several recent studies have demonstrated, media plays a crucial role that is twofold. Media in general, and television in particular, are a part of shaping cultural memory, and at the same time offer a framework necessary for remembering.²¹ In particular when looking at the United States of America, it can be noted that several of the more famous collective memories of the past 50 years have focussed on television.²² A clear example of this phenomenon is the contribution television makes in order to unite the nation in times of mourning, such as the assassination and funeral of John F. Kennedy. The television coverage on that front was excessive, and spanned over all networks for multiple days.²³ Not only are collective memories largely mediated through television, people also fare better with recalling media contents (e. g. TV programmes) than with personal experiences.²⁴ These results certainly add weight to the important role television plays in remembering. One of the pioneers in the field of Visual History, Gerhard Paul, seemingly agrees with this when – drawing from Harald Welzer – he states that memory needs images to attach history to.

20 Kompare, Derek: *Rerun Nation: How Repeats invented American Television*. New York: Routledge 2005, p. 103

21 Hagedoorn, Berber: *Collective Cultural Memory as a TV Guide: ‘Living’ History and Nostalgia on the Digital Television Platform*. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies*, 2017, Vol. 14(1) 2017, p. 74

22 Kompare, Derek: *Rerun Nation: How Repeats invented American Television*. New York: Routledge 2005, p. 106

23 Edgerton, Gary R.; Rollins, Peter C.: *Television histories: shaping collective memory in the media age*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky 2001, p. 21

24 Hackl, Christina: *Fernsehen im Lebenslauf: Eine Medienbiographische Studie*. Konstanz: UKV 2001, p. 88; - as cited in Armbruster, Stefanie: *Watching Nostalgia: An Analysis of Nostalgic Television Fiction and Its Reception*. Bielefeld: Transcript 2016, p. 49

There are images without history but no history without images.²⁵

3.2.2. “Useable Past”:

Edgerton and Rollins elaborate that “The improbable rise and immense popularity of history on TV is also the result of its affinity and ability to embody current concerns and priorities within the stories it telecasts about the past.”²⁶ This point also enforces the connection between past and present already introduced by Stoddard (see section 2.4. 1960s Nostalgia and Politics). In a similar vein, the authors conclude that audiences, as well as TV producers, strive to create a “useable past”. Meaning, they use historical figures and events embedded into stories to “clarify the present and discover the future”.²⁷ This is comparable to Hagedoorn’s concept of doing history, which she describes as the creation or construction of memory as an active process.²⁸ Additionally, an important function of media technologies in this process is to “mediate between personal and collective cultural memory”.²⁹

3.3. Problems and Chances:

25 Paul, Gerhard: Visual History: Ein Studienbuch. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2006, p. 13
Welzer, Harald: Das Gedächtnis der Bilder: Ästhetik und Nationalsozialismus. Tübingen: Ed. Diskord 1995, p. 8

26 Edgerton, Gary R.; Rollins, Peter C.: Television histories: shaping collective memory in the media age. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky 2001, p. 3

27 Ibid., p. 4ff

28 Hagedoorn, Berber: Collective Cultural Memory as a TV Guide: ‘Living’ History and Nostalgia on the Digital Television Platform. Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies, 2017, Vol. 14(1) 2017, p. 74

29 Dijck, José van: Mediated Memories in the Digital Age. Stanford: Stanford University Press 2007, p. 19

The relationship between history, memory and television has always been strained, and can be coined as paradoxical. What media delivers in terms of history is neither here nor there. Past events are “both un-dead and not alive” meaning that images are never fully remembered, but not quite forgotten at the same time, resulting in a grasp on history that is somewhat weak and blurred.³⁰ De Groot advocates that the image of history presented via television is tied to an illusion, and thus, often lacks “concrete roots in memory or reality”.³¹ He warns against the images created in people’s memory by television, and points out they often overshadow what Edgerton and Rollins refer to as professional history.

3.4. Fact and Fiction:

Edgerton and Rollins argue that scholars should accept that professional history has to share space with popular history concerning collective memory. This notion is based on the aforementioned assumption that people receive their main share of information on historic events or persons from popular culture. Hagedoorn agrees, and states herself that the understanding people share about the past is largely negotiated via television programs.³² This raises the important question of what we classify as “professional history” and therefore “true”. Although words like “truth” and “fact” are liberally used in connection with history, one needs to bear in mind that the assignment of those terms

30 Hagedoorn, Berber: Collective Cultural Memory as a TV Guide: ‘Living’ History and Nostalgia on the Digital Television Platform. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies*, 2017, Vol. 14(1) 2017, p. 75 ff

31 De Groot, Jerome: *Perpetually Dividing and Suturing the Past and Present. Rethinking History*, 2011, Vol. 15(2), p. 269 ff

32 Hagedoorn, Berber: Collective Cultural Memory as a TV Guide: ‘Living’ History and Nostalgia on the Digital Television Platform. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies*, 2017, Vol. 14(1) 2017, p. 71

might change over time. So, how can the relationship between a movie or television program and history be fruitful? Cameron claims that the correspondence of fact and film is necessary as “the fact is skeleton, (...) history is body”.³³ Allen, with reference to Carr, differentiates between a fact of the past and a historical fact. The distinction lies in the notion that facts of the past exist even without any historian shedding light on them. A historical fact is created once a historian chooses a certain aspect of history to form their argument.³⁴ When considering history, its representation on screen, and the question of fact vs. fiction, Toplin introduces a new term to find a form of equilibrium between the two. This term he labels “faction”, referring to a story that “references history but does not represent it specifically”, and in doing so is a way of referring to films or TV shows that tell fictional tales that are loosely based on reality. Those productions include actual people or events from the past, but mix those elements with invented stories.³⁵

3.4.1. Objective History?

While written history is usually considered “objective” or “true” by scholars, it is nevertheless shaped into narrative forms that don’t naturally occur. As Rosenstone states, “neither people nor nations live historical stories.”³⁶ Written history is strongly guided by conventions dictated by genre and language, a trait it has in common with forms of fiction. Ultimately, the historians choose what to highlight in their stories, and create

33 Cameron, Kenneth: *America on Film: Hollywood and American History*. New York: Continuum Publishing 1997, p. 7 f

34 Allen, Robert C.: *Film History: Theory and Practice*. Boston: McGraw-Hill 1993, p. 7f
Carr, Edward H.: *What is History?* Basingstoke: Palgrave 2001, p. 7ff

35 Toplin, Robert B.: *Reel History: In Defence of Hollywood*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2002, p. 92

36 Rosenstone, Robert A.: *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995, p. 35

narratives that are verbal fictions.³⁷ Allen claims historians have no chance of knowing what really happened, and they can only spin a tale based on the partial information available to them.³⁸ This is in line with Rosenstone's thoughts on the matter, as he states that both history and fiction tell stories, but the former claims to be a true one. However, an exact truth about what occurred in the past can never exist, not in film and not printed in a history book.³⁹ Toplin seemingly reciprocates this sentiment, agreeing that a "completely truthful presentation of the past is impossible". No historian can make an interpretation that is the only correct one, or claim to have found the single truth about what occurred. Every approach that attempts to explain history is structured in some form.⁴⁰ History, as we know it, is not simply a thing that exists on its own, rather it is created. Creation always involves underlying values such as "notions of individual rights, and the nation state". No form of history, not even "scientific history" is free from those influences.⁴¹ As mentioned previously, language in particular is a crucial factor to be taken into account, as it does not allow us to mirror the past the way it supposedly really happened. As Rosenstone argues, "language creates and structures history and imbues it with meaning."⁴²

3.4.2. Narratives:

37 Rosenstone, Robert A.: Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995., p. 35

38 Allen, Robert C.: Film History: Theory and Practice. Boston: McGraw-Hill 1993, p. 8

39 Rosenstone, Robert A.: Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995, p. 69

40 Toplin, Robert B.: Reel History: In Defence of Hollywood. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2002, p. 161

41 Rosenstone, Robert A.: Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995, p. 43

42 Ibid., p. 35

Shaping historical arguments into narratives⁴³ appears to be a commonly used strategy applied by historians and filmmakers alike. Although narrative structure is a common feature within both history and fiction, history relies on evidence instead of invention to create those narratives. Nevertheless, narratives in history retrospectively imbue the past with meaning, or a certain moral order, that is attached to events, therefore creating “meaning, order, causality and structure”. While historical narratives don’t differ much from fiction when related to the creation of “a superior viewpoint”, the former are even more explicit in terms of exploring causality. However, ultimately the similarities outweigh the differences for narratives in history and fiction. Walker and Mee draw the parallels between a crime story which culminates in the detective’s final account, and a historian delivering a final explanation on an event. Similarities can be found in “the balance of forces, the attribution of responsibilities, the reflection on the role of the actions of individuals, the examination of underlying causes”.⁴⁴

3.5. Translation of History to Screen:

While film may not be what rationally comes to mind when contemplating history, it is a form of history nonetheless, and presents reality in a different and novel way. Most importantly, it shows realities that are long gone, a past that had vanished from sight.⁴⁵ As stated previously, both history and film usually work with narratives. While, however, history is usually rather closely bound to linear narratives, filmmakers have more freedom

43 A narrative is defined as a chronological arrangement of events in a cause-effect relationship by Allen, Robert C.: *Film History: Theory and Practice*. Boston: McGraw-Hill 1993, p. 44

44 Walker, Johnny; Mee, Laura: *Cinema, Television and History: New Approaches*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2014, p. 13

45 Rosenstone, Robert A.: *History on Film, Film on History*. Harlow: Pearson/Longman 2006, p. 158

in creating their own version of the past. Their take on history can be “serious, complex, challenging, and ‘true’ in its ability to render meanings rather than the literal reality of past events” all at once.⁴⁶ Film depicts history as a process, and has the power to “emotionalize, personalize and dramatize history”. However, an aspect not to be neglected is the amount of dramatic license and action that imbues the historical narratives with life. Furthermore, they highlight that the film’s aesthetics play a key role in reaching an uneasy equilibrium between realistic representation of history and artificiality.⁴⁷

3.5.1. Set Design and Costumes:

While it certainly delivers the visual aesthetic of the past not only through the inclusion of specific iconic buildings or clothing, film instils the audience with a sense of how things appeared and how they were used in the past, therefore allowing the past to come alive.⁴⁸ This argument is supported by Walker and Mee, as they agree that set design, clothes as well as hair and makeup are important factors in invoking period authenticity and historical verisimilitude. Costumes represent an entirely different language system for films. As complex and profound as other language systems filmmakers use, costumes are an important symbolic form of communication, they are not merely decorative but function as aspects of both the theme and character.⁴⁹ In particular for the 1960s, the

46 Rosenstone, Robert A.: *Revisioning History: Film and the Construction of a New Past*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1995, p. 202

47 Walker, Johnny; Mee, Laura: *Cinema, Television and History: New Approaches*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2014, p. 262ff

48 Rosenstone, Robert A.: *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995, p. 59f

49 Gianetti, Louis: *Understanding Movies*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall 2001, p. 327ff

period in question for this thesis, fashion is often revolutionary, and it developed into a cultural industry, forming a time when fashion was practical, ideological and functional.⁵⁰

3.5.2. Re-enactment:

One of the ways in which filmmakers and showrunners translate history to the screen is through re-enactment. According to Collingwood, re-enactment allows to bridge the gap between past and present by reconsidering ideas long gone. This challenges the concept of history as “an imaginary picture of the past”⁵¹, and brings together different forms of historical representation. The audience has a chance to witness again what has transpired in the past in the shape of an imaginative re-creation.⁵²

4. The Kennedys:

4.1. A Phenomenon:

Considering the 1960s, John F. Kennedy is one of the most iconic figures representing the decade, even more so than the Beatles or Malcolm X.⁵³ Backed by a strong family clan, the young senator rose to the ranks of president and subsequently charmed the majority of Americans, a spell that has transcended the decades and is still present today. According

50 Morin, Alice: *The Fashion of the 1960s. A New Power Shaping the American Image*. USAbroad – Journal of American History and Politics, 2018, Vol. 1(1), p. 5

51 Collingwood, Robin G.: *The Idea of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1983, p. 246ff

52 Burgoyne, Robert: *The Hollywood Historical Film*. Malden: Blackwell 2008, p. 5

53 Hodgson, Godfrey: *Our Back Pages: Conversations with the Sixties: JFK and the 1960s*. *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 2015, Vol. 8(2), p. 212

to opinion polls, he is seen as the greatest president since Abraham Lincoln.⁵⁴ While President John F. Kennedy certainly was the most well-known member of the family, he is not the only famous Kennedy. His brother Robert, who led the campaign that got John elected President, and later became is Attorney General, was moving closer to winning the presidency for himself when he was assassinated. John's wife Jackie was seen as a fashion icon and took on the historic restoration of the White House.⁵⁵

The Kennedys solely changed forever what would come to be expected from future Presidents. They added an element of glamour to politics and “a bit of Hollywood in the White House”. Not only was John a President to be remembered for decades to come, Jackie is among the most famous and popular first ladies herself. The Kennedys were the first presidential family to welcome media into their lives, another point which subsequently aided their popularity. They influenced not only the politicians in America who were to follow in their footsteps, but had a profound impact on most Western Democracies.⁵⁶ Some voices claim that the hopes people invested in Kennedy would never have been fulfilled, and that the myth surrounding is death is what created his popularity. Whether that is true or not, the entire Kennedy clan continues to inspire and influence politics, fashion and popular culture more than 50 years after John F. Kennedy's short presidency.

54 Kazin, Michael: An Idol and once a President: John F. Kennedy at 100. *The Journal of American History*, 2017, Vol. 104(3), p. 707

55 Dunak, Karen: Jackie Reconsidered, again: Jacqueline Kennedy and 1960s-era American womanhood. *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 2018, Vol 11(1), p. 46

56 Saxena, Suyash: Kennedys' Camelot: The age and time of the Kennedys has been a Camelot in the short history of modern politics. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2017, Vol. 52(4), p. 78

4.2. Camelot Today:

Many parallels can be drawn between the 1960s and 2000s. From heatedly debated wars (Vietnam and Iraq/Afghanistan respectively) to conspiracy theories that spike people's interest (Kennedy Assassinations and 9/11), the periods have more in common than might be apparent at first sight. With the Bush administration, sentiments were created that are comparable to those that resulted in Kennedy's election. The American people were pining for change, hope for a better, different future. While those hopes had once been shattered in 1963 with John F. Kennedy's assassination, and been crushed again with his brother's death, those feelings were ignited once more when Barack Obama entered the political ring. He too had to deal with a war inherited from his predecessor, but carried the spirit of a youthful idol. Many people, especially Al Gore, a former presidential candidate himself, drew extensive comparisons between the two presidents.⁵⁷ The fact that the pre-Obama period, during which so many productions about the 1960s were started, closely resembles the spirit that led to the election of John F. Kennedy might be one explanation for the rise in TV shows on the topic. The audience longed to return to a time where change was afoot, and troublesome times were about to be overcome. Nevertheless, the 1960s didn't end the way they were promised to. With Kennedy dead, the audience reverted back to the sentiments that were already present in the 2000s, that being a sense of hopelessness and fear, now also fuelled by terrorist attacks (9/11).

57 Stoddard, Scott Frederick: *Analyzing Mad Men: Critical Essays on the Television Series*. Jefferson: McFarland 2011, p. 229

Bothmer, Bernhard: *Framing the Sixties: The Use and Abuse of a Decade from Ronald Regan to George W. Bush*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press 2010, p. 230

4.3. Popular Culture:

Several members of the Kennedy clan have been the subject of film or television productions throughout recent years. From the documentary *Ethel* (2012), about Robert Kennedy's wife, or *Jackie* (2016), a biographical drama about Jackie Kennedy, to movies (*Bobby*, 2006) and documentations (*Bobby Kennedy for President*, 2018) about Robert Kennedy, every aspect of their lives has received attention. However, not one of them has been the topic of shows or films as often as President John F. Kennedy, with the topic of his assassination and the mysteries surrounding the event having now been adapted countless times. Conspiracy theories surrounding his death were newly ignited when Oliver Stone's political thriller '*JFK*' was released in 1991. In Stone's opinion "history needs to be rewritten", and considers himself to be a "cinematic historian" delivering a "history lesson".⁵⁸ However, as soon as the film hit cinemas, an outcry came from politicians as well as from historians, who claimed '*JFK*' is full of inaccuracies, historical errors and distortions. This might not be uncommon for fictional productions about historic events and people, but in this case the "controversy is particularly heated because of both the topic and its treatment."⁵⁹ The problem is that Oliver Stone claims to be recounting an accurate version of history, and uncovering some sort of conspiracy. In the course of the film, he implicates just about everybody to have been involved in said intrigue, and in doing so, the film becomes a fictionalized political thriller that wants to be a documentary. This is what led to a wave of outrage as audiences were to some degree wilfully deceived. By utilizing techniques commonly used within documentaries,

58 Kurtz, Michael L.: *Oliver Stone, JFK, and History*. *Oliver Stone's USA: Film, History, and Controversy*, Toplin, Robert Brent (Editor), Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2000, p. 167ff

59 Rosenstone, Robert A.: *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1995, p. 121

Stone tried to give his production an air of credibility that might then lead viewers to take his claims as fact. However, his arguments were not supported by facts or evidence. JFK nevertheless turned out to be a box office success, and even received critical acclaim.⁶⁰ The extent to which the debate surrounding the film became heated, even approaching 30 years after Kennedy's death, clearly shows the impact the late President had and still has upon the United States. Furthermore, it is also a testament to the need for discussion on fact vs. fiction in historical adaptations (see section 3). This never-ending fascination with the life and death of Kennedy warrants further research. As many scholars already wrote in depth about Stone's film and other movie productions, this thesis chooses a different focus. Instead of looking at films, TV shows are to be the main object of interest, with both John F. and Robert Kennedy making regular appearances on 1960s themed shows. This analysis will provide a deeper insight into how this is achieved, and to what effect.

5. Methodology:

The analysis conducted on six television shows is based on Korte's systematic film analysis. He describes four major dimensions (film reality, production reality, referenced reality, impact reality) relevant for the process.⁶¹ The film reality is included in the description of the material (shows and episodes, section 6). This section will also include information on the impact reality (audience, reception, etc.) The production reality, dealing with the context of the time during which the show was produced will be detailed under section 5.3 Historical Framework – The 2000s. In contrast, the referenced reality

60 Pereboom, Maarten L.: History and Film: Moving Pictures and the Study of the Past. Boston: Prentice Hall 2010, p. 113f

61 The terms for the four dimensions were translated into English trying to best capture the original German meaning. Korte named the four dimensions Filmrealität, Bedingungsrealität, Bezugsrealität and Wirkungsrealität. Korte, Helmut: Einführung in die Systematische Filmanalyse: Ein Arbeitsbuch. Berlin: Schmidt 2010, p. 23f

which relates to the time the production is set in (in this case the 1960s) will be outlined under section 5.2 Historical Framework – The 1960s. However, as this analysis draws from TV shows instead of movies, some adjustments and remarks regarding the serialized format will be made (see section 5.1). After laying out all relevant information, the nine episodes in question will be analysed in terms of historic events and persons included in the story. The insights gained from said analysis will be discussed under section 6. Systematic Analysis and summarized under section 6.7 Meta Analysis.

5.1. The Serialized Format:

5.1.1. Structure:

No matter which medium (comic, book, film, radio, etc.) is used to tell a serialized story, the structure always follows the same principle. There are at least two parts of a narration which follow one another in relation to content. Characters, themes, etc. are shared, thus resulting in a progressive continuation of the narration. This also means that the audience needs to be aware of the seriality. The parts can be consumed on their own, but a full understanding of the story and potential can only result from taking the entire series into account.⁶² An important difference of serialized narration from linear narration is the temporal aspect. While a movie usually has a runtime of 90 to 150 minutes, a series spans over many episodes and several seasons, leading to numerous hours of storytelling, thus allowing for a different way of presenting a story: characters can be imbued with more psychological depth, subplots can be added and developed. The central organising

⁶² Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 13ff

scheme of a series is in form of seasons and episodes, which means that the plot is cut into pieces, split up and organized as well as interrupted by the serialized frame. The plot is “broken on purpose”⁶³, including techniques like shows opening with a “Previously on...” or ending with a cliff-hanger. Organizing a show in this form is a basic necessity to allow a serialized consumption, with the episode being the micro-level of a series, while the season is the macro-level. Depending on the genre, the length of both episodes and seasons varies.⁶⁴

5.1.2. Forms:

There are different forms of serial narration. Sitcoms and animations are often status-quo shows, meaning that at the end of every episode everything resets back to the initial situation. During the episodes a multitude of things can happen but ultimately it does not affect the rest of the show. In contrast to status-quo shows, progressive production feature story arcs that span over the course of an entire/several season/s. The shows included in this analysis are all progressive.⁶⁵

5.1.3. Elements of an Episode:

The following elements can be included in episodes, but by no means all of them have to appear. Many shows include episode titles instead of simply numbering them, which can often allude to the events occurring on the show or follow a certain theme. Another

63 O’Sullivan, Sean: Broken on Purpose: Poetry, Serial Television, and the Season. *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, 2010, Vol. 2(1), p. 59

64 Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: *Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 113ff

65 Ibid., p. 120ff

element often featured is the intro, usually consisting of a title card, a theme (song or melody) and short sequences from the show. The pendant to the intro is the outro, which mostly only features the credits. Similar to the intro and outro, “previously on...” and “next week on...” elements can be included at the beginning or the end of the episodes respectively. These elements provide a brief summary of the events that have transpired in the episode before, or try to interest the audience in the following one.⁶⁶

5.1.4. Reception:

The reception of a TV series is inherently different than when watching a movie. Due to the schedule a TV channel has, a weekly (or daily) rhythm is created for watching the show.⁶⁷ Therefore, the reception is linear, just like the series itself. A new and different form of consuming a series was introduced by streaming services such as Netflix. By uploading an entire season at once, instead of providing the episodes in a weekly rhythm, the audience is invited to watch for as long as they please at a time. Nevertheless, the shows are still split into episodes and seasons.⁶⁸

5.1.5. TV Shows vs. Film:

While most studies on John F. Kennedy have so far focused on movies instead of serial productions, this study draws from TV shows.

It is apparent that there are some important differences to consider for the two formats.

66 Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 181ff

67 Bignell, Jonathan; Orlebar, Jeremy: The Television Handbook. London: Routledge 2005. – as cited in Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 113ff

68 Ibid., p. 116f, 202ff

Time is naturally one of the biggest factors discerning the two. While a movie has to introduce, tell, and conclude a story in more or less two hours, TV shows usually have at least one season, if not multiple ones to do the same. Numerous hours of episodes allow for more elaborate side-plots, that simply could not fit within a film, and they are also given more time to explore characters, and imbue them with psychological depth. While movies have to choose carefully which characters to focus on, the longer format allows a TV series to develop and explore a more expansive range of characters.

While cinematic film productions have commonly been associated with Hollywood and big budgets, the television industry has experienced a shift concerning this area. When considering shows such as *Game of Thrones* or *Marco Polo*, the budget is easily comparable to that of a large-scale movie endeavour. Furthermore, TV shows have begun adapting cinematic aesthetics and seem to be taking on a “Hollywood-style”.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, both forms still deliver fiction, even when a historical background is present. It is therefore important to remember that, although neither films nor serialized formats are documents about the historical events they depict, they give a sense of significance to those events for the culture the production is made in.⁷⁰

5.2. Historical Framework – the 1960s:

All the shows discussed are set in the 1960s. In order to understand how history is implemented in the context of the shows’ narratives, it is important to gain an understanding of the period the shows take place in. The cornerstones of the 1960s

69 Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: *Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 95ff

70 Reynaud, Daniel: *Dealing with Historical Movies in the History and English Classroom*. *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, 2008, Vol. 2 (2), p. 52

atmosphere will be covered in the next paragraph with those points being vital for all shows under analysis. Certain aspects that will only be important for particular shows are to be covered during the analysis of respective episodes.

5.2.1. The Politics:

Presidency:

The political landscape of the 1960s was characterized by hope and disenchantment, and when Senator John F. Kennedy was elected president in 1961, many believed in a better future to come. With a strong family clan behind him, his brother Robert Kennedy even working as his Attorney General after he had taken care of the successful election campaign, Kennedy was destined for greatness, or so the American people expected. However, his presidency was cut short when Lee Harvey Oswald shot Kennedy in 1963 (an event still enshrouded in conspiracy theories). Former Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson subsequently took the oath of office, and remained there until 1969 following his election victory in 1964. By 1968, Robert Kennedy had decided to follow in his brother's footsteps and also run as a candidate for the presidency. However, similarly to John F. Kennedy before him, "Bobby" was assassinated, shot in 1968 during an event for the primary elections. Eventually, Richard Nixon won the election the following year.⁷¹

⁷¹ O'Donnell, Helen: *The Irish Brotherhood: John F. Kennedy, his inner circle, and the improbable rise to the presidency*. Berkeley: Counter Point 2015
Hersh, Burton: *Edward Kennedy: an intimate biography*. Berkeley: Counterpoint 2010

Space Race, War and Riots:

The 1960s were certainly a turbulent decade, with the American people still caught in the middle of the Vietnam war (1955-1975), and while soldiers were fighting abroad, Americans were also fighting at home for their rights and equality.

The strained relationship with the Soviet Union and the Cold War (1947-1991) also shaped the decade substantially. The United States had entered a “space race” in 1955 with the Soviets, as both nations tried to exhibit dominance with their spaceflight programmes. After Mercury (1958-1963), Gemini (1961-1966) and Apollo (1961-1972) Programs, the “race” culminated in 1969 when the Americans landed a man on the moon. In the meantime, Americans also lived in fear of threatening situations such as the Cuban Missile Crisis (see section 5.2.3 for more information).⁷²

Gender:

The 1960s and early 70s were important decades for gender debates. “Second Wave” feminists raised discussions that also drew lesbians and women of colour into the movement. The liberal feminism of 60s argued for a unified women’s movement demanding equal rights. By then, women were already an important factor in the work force, but were still far away from being treated equally. However, while women were indeed making progress, the political sphere still remained very much a male domain.⁷³

Although some of the shows subject to this analysis take tentative steps towards including

72 Archer, Jules: *The Incredible ‘60s: The Stormy Years that changed America*. New York: Sky Pony Press 2015

Mieczkowski, Yanek: *Eisenhower’s Sputnik Moment: The Race for Space and World Prestige*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2013

73 Farber, David; Bailey, Beth: *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*. New York: Columbia University Press 2001, p. 127ff

moments of women surpassing boundaries, the focus is still heavily on the straight white men in charge.

5.2.2. Television:

By 1960, almost every home in the United States was equipped with a television set (with only 13% of the population without one).⁷⁴ Furthermore, the daily amount of consumed television had risen to five hours per household, resulting in an overall decline of radio usage. One of the biggest innovations related to television the 1960s was the introduction of colour, with CBS, ABC and NBS having all changed their airing schedules to full-colour by 1965. Subsequently, several popular shows (e. g. The Dick Van Dyke Show) were cancelled instead of changing the production to colour due to economic reasons. Some other shows (e. g. The Beverly Hillbillies) changed to colour production mid-series in order to remain on air.⁷⁵

While during the 1950s, primetime dramaturgy was focused on “imitations of life lived”, during the 1960s and 1970s daily news shows had claimed that spot. The anchors Walter Cronkite (CBS), John Chancellor (NBC) and Howard K. Smith (ABC) presented audiences with increasingly violent and threatening imagery of the world, thus resulting in a sharp contrast with the formerly peaceful programme.⁷⁶ The period between 1949 to around 1960 are often referred to as the “golden age of US television” due to the first

⁷⁴ Marc, David; Thompson, Robert: Television in the Antenna Age: A Concise History. Malden: Blackwell 2005, p. 54

Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 33.

⁷⁵ Marc, David; Thompson, Robert: Television in the Antenna Age: A Concise History. Malden: Blackwell 2005, p. 66ff

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 92

hugely commercially successful drama shows having been produced.⁷⁷ The television landscape of the 1950s and 1960s consisted largely of serialized formats in the genres of western and crime (The Untouchables, 1959-1963 on ABC) and family (Father Knows Best, 1954-1960 on CBS/NBC; Bonanza, 1959-1973 on NBC), with these types of shows airing on all networks. In particular, the trend for family shows would continue on into the 1970s (The Waltons, 1972-1981 on CBS; Little House on the Prairie, 1974-1983 on NBC)⁷⁸

5.2.3. The Relationship of Television and Politics:

During the 1960s, politicians began to grasp the power of television for the first time, and attempted to work with the medium. The first major political event that deserves to be mentioned in those terms is the debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, who were both running for president at that time. On September 26, 1960, the debate was broadcast nationwide on all three existing national networks (CBS, NBC and ABC) without any commercial breaks. The debate aired on both the networks' television, as well as on their radio channels, with nothing comparable having ever been achieved throughout the radio period. This extensive coverage resulted in an estimated audience of 75 million viewers. In total, four debates were held and broadcasted during the 1960 campaign.⁷⁹

77 Eboch, M. M.; Petruska, Karen: A History of Television. Minneapolis: Abdo Publishing 2015, p. 52

78 Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 42

79 Marc, David; Thompson, Robert: Television in the Antenna Age: A Concise History. Malden: Blackwell 2005, p. 77

Eboch, M. M.; Petruska, Karen: A History of Television. Minneapolis: Abdo Publishing 2015, p. 53

Following his election, President Kennedy embraced the media during his short term in office. He went as far as to have television cameras at his first press conference, and his wife Jacqueline Kennedy invited the Americans for a tour of the White House on television⁸⁰. When it became evident in 1962 that Cuba was aiding the Soviet Union by hosting bases for nuclear missiles within firing range of the United States, President Kennedy requested airtime from all broadcast networks – something that was unprecedented. He went on air to request the Soviets withdraw from Cuba, remove all missiles, and threatened military action from the United States should the terms not be met. While he could have done the same by going through private diplomatic channels, he instead made his demands in front of the entire nation. This meant that he was also bound to what he had said, making it virtually impossible to back down.

The so-called Cuban Missile Crisis lasted 13 days before the Soviets agreed to withdraw. This was again met by a public declaration from President Kennedy, assuring that the United States would not invade Cuba.⁸¹ Only a year later, President Kennedy would dominate the television screens once more. When wire services received news of his assassination on November 22, 1963, all television channels scrambled to deliver coverage of the story. The soap opera *As the World Turns* was interrupted by a voice-over announcement. Soon after, Walter Cronkite, a news anchor on CBS, appeared on screen, visibly distraught, to inform the American people of John F. Kennedy's death. His passing would affect the entire TV programming for the next four days, as no entertainment programming was broadcasted.

80 "A Tour of the white House with Mrs. John F Kennedy" was televised on CBS and NBC on Valentine's Day 1962. More than 45 million people watched in America alone. Lubin, David M.: *Shooting Kennedy: JFK and the Culture of Images*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2003, p. 12

81 Eboch, M. M.; Petruska, Karen: *A History of Television*. Minneapolis: Abdo Publishing 2015, p. 54ff

The actual footage of President Kennedy being shot was not aired at that time, and would not be shown on TV until 1975. However, the material was available and bought by LIFE magazine, where it was printed later on. In contrast, the footage of Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin who shot President Kennedy, being shot by Jack Ruby (November 24, 1963) was broadcast live by NBC. A slow-motion (a technique that had only been developed two years prior) replay of the incident was provided by CBS shortly afterwards.⁸²

5.3. Historical Framework – the 2000s:

5.3.1. Politics:

The 2000s bear an uncanny resemblance to the 1960s when considering the political field. George W. Bush was President from 2001 to 2009 while America dealt with threats of terrorism, particularly after the events of 9/11, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, while in the 1960s it was the Cold War and Vietnam that preoccupied people's minds. Bush was succeeded by Barack Obama, who remained in office from 2009 to 2017, and in doing so caused some of the hopes for change that had been buried with John F. Kennedy to eventually resurface.⁸³

82 Eboch, M. M.; Petruska, Karen: A History of Television. Minneapolis: Abdo Publishing 2015, p. 54ff
Marc, David; Thompson, Robert: Television in the Antenna Age: A Concise History. Malden: Blackwell 2005, p. 93

83 Obama, Barack: The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream. New York: Canongate, 2007
Cimbala, Stephen J.: The George W. Bush Defense Program: Policy, Strategy and War. Washington, D. C.: Potomac Books 2010

5.3.2. Television:

Structure:

While throughout the 1960s only a handful of television channels were available, the present TV landscape looks rather different. While the three big networks, NBC, AMC and NBC are still on air, numerous basic cable programmes including FOX or CNN share a space with Pay TV/premium cable channels such as HBO and AMC. Furthermore, a public non-commercial channel, PBS, also broadcasts. Apart from PBS, the American TV landscape can be split into two groups: commercial networks and premium subscription pay TV channels. This distinction is important when considering the kinds of programmes (see section 5.3.2 Quality Television) that can air. While the basic cable channels are governed by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) and thus limited in what they are allowed to air, the pay TV channels do not have to follow any censorship regulations.⁸⁴

Quality Television:

The 1950s are often described as the “golden age of television”. However, it is not the only golden age the American TV landscape has gone through. When shows like *Twin Peaks*, *St. Else* or *Emergency Room* aired during the 1980s and 1990s the term “Quality Television” was coined, and many were quick to name it a “second golden age”.

With the new millennium, a “third golden age” seems to have emerged, with the introduction of hugely popular productions such as *Mad Men*, *Game of Thrones* or

⁸⁴ Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: *Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 58

Breaking Bad. The standard of what is considered “Quality Television” has evolved.⁸⁵

Other big players to have entered the field only recently include online streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. Since 2012, Netflix has offered original productions, in addition to shows they pay the aforementioned networks millions of dollars, in order to stream them on their platform. This on-demand service of shows is affecting the traditional form of television, as more of the consumption moves online.⁸⁶ (see section 5.1.4 for more information)

6. Systematic Analysis:

6.1. The Kennedys:

6.1.1. About the Show

“The Kennedys” was a Canadian-American co-production by Muse Entertainment Enterprises Inc. in association with Asylum Entertainment, directed by Jon Cassar. It is a mini-series that consists of one season, with a total of eight episodes, and premiered in 2011. The production company describes “The Kennedys” as follows:

“They've been called America's royal family. But that does them - and the country - little justice. Royals are born to their status. The Kennedys attained their status in an utterly American way, through driving ambition, hard work and, when necessary, a willingness to toss the rule book aside. “The Kennedys” portrays these most public of figures in their most private moments of happiness, despair, intimacy and estrangement.”⁸⁷

85 Schleich, Markus; Nesselhauf, Jonas: Fernsehserien: Geschichte, Theorien, Narration. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag 2016, p. 43ff

86 Eboch, M. M.; Petruska, Karen: A History of Television. Minneapolis: Abdo Publishing 2015, p. 91ff

87 Muse Entertainment: Information on Cast, Crew etc. for The Kennedys. <http://www.muse.ca/en/the-kennedys.aspx> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

The cast features, most notably, Greg Kinnear in the role of John F. Kennedy, and Katie Holmes as Jacqueline Kennedy in each of its 40 minute episodes. Although the show begins with the final moments leading up to 8th November, the day that John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States, the story that is told begins much earlier. In fact, director Jon Cassar chronicles how John F. Kennedy was groomed to be president, was elected, and navigated through his presidency. In the final episodes, seven and eight, the assassination of John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Robert Kennedy respectively were re-enacted.

Although critics expressed mixed opinions about the show, almost two million viewers watched the opening episode.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the show was nominated for, and won, numerous accolades, including the Emmy and Gemini Award⁸⁹.

6.1.2. Episode Structure:

Each episode opens with a “Previously on...” segment, which is followed by the opening sequence, consisting of an U. S. flag falling in slow motion with the cast’s faces and names fading in and out, followed by images from the show, as well as original material. Before the actual episode begins, a bible quote⁹⁰ is shown on screen.

88 Sun, Rebecca: ‘Kennedys’ Sets Rating Record for ReelzChannel. The Hollywood Reporter 2011. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/kennedys-sets-rating-record-reelzchannel-174384> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

89 IMDb: The Kennedys. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1567215/>. (last accessed 08.04.2020)

90 Episode 7, Lancer and Lace: “We spend our years as a tale that is told.” -Psalms
Episode 8, My Brother’s Keeper: “The voice of my brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.” - Genesis

6.1.3. Season 1, Episode 7: Lancer and Lace:

Plot:

The episode begins with news anchor Walter Cronkite informing the audience about John F. Kennedy's assassination. Going back and forth between what occurred on November 22, 1963 and events leading up to that day, this episode includes four story lines: John F. Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy in Texas, Lee Harvey Oswald preparing for the assassination, Robert Kennedy contemplating his future, and the Kennedy parents dealing with father Joseph's health issues.

John F. Kennedy in this Episode:

Although this episode follows a non-linear structure, everything that transpires can be directly related to the assassination. Scenes depicting either events leading up to the shooting, or later reactions, are interspersed with the actual tragedy in Dallas.

What becomes clear from the first minute on is the show's emphasis on television. The episode begins with original material of Walter Cronkite on full screen, giving information about John F. Kennedy being shot. Original news broadcasts are used several times throughout the episode, highlighting that the whole nation – including Kennedy's family – is watching on television, and learns about his death this way.

"The Kennedys" makes extensive use of original footage and couples it with re-enacted scenes. To achieve a seamless transition, even the newly recorded material was partly manipulated to appear old. Whenever original material (or re-enacted material made to look old) was used, the format was naturally different than for newly recorded material. Thus, a black frame, resembling a TV, was inserted, before the format transitioned back to 16:9. The audience gets the impression of also learning about the events the same way

the original viewers did back in 1963, once more underlining the importance of television at that time. In order to incorporate as much of the original footage as possible, fast cuts were applied, showing different angles and scenes, especially for the Kennedys' arrival at the airport (minute 28). Meticulous effort was put into the details, as the newly created footage is barely distinguishable from the original material.

Although the assassination itself was not televised at the time, news reports and witness interviews are included in this episode. While many flashback scenes are included, the story always transitions back to the assassination, which is still to a large extent mediated through television. The actual events were re-enacted, and thus also included in the episode.

It is, furthermore, evident that not only the events in Dallas, but Kennedy's entire presidency have had profound effects on a majority of Americans. Several times throughout the episode, the hope instilled in Kennedy is mentioned, as well as what it will mean for the future of the country, and in particular for the individuals featured in the episode.

6.1.4. Season 1, Episode 8: My Brother's Keeper:

Plot:

This episode deals with the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's assassination, including Robert Kennedy organizing Lyndon B. Johnson's inauguration, John's funeral, and Jackie moving out of the White House. After coming to terms with his brother's death, Robert decides to follow in his footsteps, and the remainder of the episode depicts his efforts to become president of the United States. Events of his political rallying are interspersed with flashbacks of the campaigns he organized for his late brother's presidential

candidacy, while Jackie settles into her new life, eventually entering into a relationship with Aristotle Onassis. Bobby is well on his way to presidency after winning the California primary, when he is mortally wounded by Sirhan Sirhan at an event for his campaign supporters. The episode, and consequently, the show conclude with a scene of John F. Kennedy and his family shortly before he becomes president.

Robert Kennedy in this Episode:

This episode once more underlines the impact of John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Although the entirety of the episode prior was devoted to the events in Dallas, the topic is continued within this one, depicting both the funeral, as well as Lee Harvey Oswald's death. Once again, the profound effects on each characters' lives are emphasised, with almost half of the episode centring around the immediate aftermath.

Although the show's title is "The Kennedys" and not "John F. Kennedy", he remains the focus, even after his death. The audience follows Robert Kennedy's decision to follow in his brother's footsteps, but after only a few scenes of his own candidacy, flashbacks are included that show him leading his brother's campaign. Although Robert Kennedy played an important role as Attorney General during John F. Kennedy's presidency, the show mostly stresses his function as "fixer" of his brother's problems.

Robert Kennedy only receives very limited screen-time when his actions are not directly related to his brother, thus cutting his election campaign, as well as his own assassination rather short, in particularly in comparison with the amount of time devoted to John F. Kennedy's assassination. Robert Kennedy's death occurs only within the final 5 minutes of the episode, and instead of depicting the impact his passing has, the show closes with

another flashback to shortly before John F. Kennedy became president. Thus, the contrast in levels of importance and overall impact of the two brothers is evident.

As was the case with the previous episode, “My Brother’s” Keeper also includes a vast amount of both original, as well as re-enacted material. The episode begins with news footage from the funeral, once again mediated through television, and narrated by original voiceover from the broadcast. The original scenes fade into re-enacted material in black and white, therefore maintaining the illusion of the original broadcast, and in doing so, the audience experiences the events closer to the way people had in 1963. This was the first of several moments in this episode that stress the importance of television. Many important events, including the assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald (minute 4), or speeches by Robert Kennedy (minute 24) are shown through the TV screen. The episode includes several original news reports, as well as re-enacted scenes. Not only the audience, but also the characters in the series, witness those events on television. The camera often zooms in and out, showing either the television broadcast on full screen, different members of the Kennedy family (e. g. Joseph, Jackie or Robert) or other important characters (e. g. Lyndon B. Johnson) watching.

6.2. The Astronaut Wives Club:

6.2.1. About the Show:

The show “The Astronaut Wives Club” was based on the 2013 book of the same name by Lily Koppel, which became a New York Times Bestselling novel.⁹¹ The channel ABC

⁹¹ Cowles, Gregory: Inside the List. The New York Times 2013.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/07/books/review/inside-the-list.html> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

picked up the story and commissioned a ten-part show, with the production premiering on 18th June 2015.⁹² ABC describes the show as follows:

“As America's astronauts were launched on death-defying missions, the lives of their young wives were transformed from military spouses to American royalty. As their celebrity rose, and tragedy began to touch their lives, they rallied together.”⁹³

The show focuses on the lives of seven astronauts and their wives, with the most prominent cast members being JoAnna Garcia Swisher, Yvonne Strahovski and Desmond Harrington. The first of the 45-minute-long episodes shows how seven men are elected to fly into space for NASA, and in doing so, practically overnight their lives become public. As their wives attempt to excel in their new roles, they form a bond. In the course of the season, the Mercury and Gemini Missions are depicted, as well as the subsequent Apollo missions, with the final episode showing the moon landing of Apollo 11.⁹⁴

6.2.2. Episode Structure:

Each episode begins with a montage of previous events introduced by a voice over, followed immediately by the first scenes of the episode. “The Astronaut Wives Club” does not feature an opening sequence, instead, a title card with the show’s name in white letters on black background is shown approximately 4 minutes into each episode.

92 IMDb: The Astronaut Wives Club. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3530726/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

93 ABC: The Astronaut Wives Club Episode Guide, 2015. <https://abc.go.com/shows/the-astronaut-wives-club/episode-guide> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

94 IMDb: The Astronaut Wives Club. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3530726/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

6.2.3. Season 1, Episode 5: Flashpoint:

Plot:

Gordo prepares to leave for a 34-hour space orbit mission, while his wife Trudy tries to convince the board that women should be allowed to become astronauts, but ultimately fails in her attempts. She is, however, elated when news breaks that the Russians have sent the first woman into space. Most of the couples illustrated in the series struggle with their relationships, but they all set their differences aside when news breaks that President Kennedy has been shot. The “astro-wives”, together with their families, gather at a park to collectively mourn the events that have transpired.

John F. Kennedy in this Episode:

While other historic moments, such as a successful Mercury Mission landing (minute 32), or Russia sending a woman into space, are incorporated in this episode, it isn't until minute 37 that news of John F. Kennedy's assassination is broken.

However, the profound impact is immediately evident. Rene Carpenter is at bar for a meeting with a newspaper mogul, when a man bursts into the establishment, informing the gathered people that President Kennedy has been shot. Everybody in the room is affected, all conversation dies, and people stop dead in their tracks. With the characters left in confusion, original black and white footage is introduced, showing people on the street, crying and mourning, thus continuing the sentiment already built up in the scene prior. The original scenes also feature voiceover comments from a news anchor, continuing on to original footage of people gathering and staring at the nearest television set they can find, in desperate need for more information and answers.

A sharp cut back to the show's newly shot material shows empty streets, as the American people remain at home, glued to their television screens. All of the main characters are depicted in that exact situation: discussing the current events, as their TVs run in the background, showing original news footage. Again, the importance of television in these hours of confusion is highlighted, that it remains the main source of information and updates that everybody is desperately in need of.

Finally, the "astro-wives" attempt to reach each other via phone, and decide to gather in the park.

The situation is portrayed to be a time of collective mourning, as nobody can stand to be at home any longer, bearing the gravity of the unfolding events alone. As music plays in the background, the "astro-wives" discuss the high hopes they had shared, and how their expectations have been shattered. It is evident that none of them knows what the future might hold, or how to even deal with the aftermath of the assassination. All characters appear to be shook and profoundly impacted, particularly Rene, who apparently had the highest hopes among all of them for President Kennedy to bring about change.

Although the assassination is only mentioned in the final minutes of the episode, the weight of the event is immediately made clear. It brings all characters together, no matter their individual story lines, as they all try and come to terms with what has happened. The loss of hope placed on the young President is explicitly mentioned, while the characters try to chase away the dark, oppressive feelings in the sunlight. The song that plays in the background during this final scene is "Three White Horses" by Andrew Bird, which contains lyrics that deal with loss, death and desperation, thus picking up on the characters' feelings.

6.2.4. Season 1, Episode 9: The Dark Side:

Plot:

Robert Kennedy gives a speech on how America is changing. Rene is working on the campaign team and is, therefore, present when Kennedy is shot in Los Angeles. While she tries to settle back into her old life, the Apollo 7 mission is in preparation, and about to be launched. While the space program evolves, the relationships in the show are also subject to change. Several of the couples struggle, divorces are afoot. The episode concludes with the successful Apollo 8 mission, which Rene covers on television.

Robert F. Kennedy:

In contrast to the episode featuring the assassination of John F. Kennedy, where the incident was only introduced in the final minutes, The Dark Side begins with the events revolving around Robert Kennedy.

The episode opens with original footage from riots, protests, and the Vietnam war (both in black/white and in colour). In a voiceover, Kennedy is giving a speech on how America is changing. There is a cut to Jo, who watches the Kennedy speech on television. In this case, the footage is not original, but was re-enacted. When the camera filming the speech moves, Rene is shown to be at the event. While everybody was intently focused on the TV in episode 5, here it provides more of a background noise. The characters still gather around their TV sets, but are engulfed in their own discussions, paying lesser attention to the broadcasts.

In the next scene (minute 3) Rene is shown at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, where Kennedy addressed his supporters. These scenes are re-enacted to include the

character from the show. Her involvement in Kennedy's campaign is highlighted several times, especially when she talks with him just before Kennedy goes on stage. Moments later, he is shot. During these re-enacted events, a filter appears to be applied for a few seconds to give the scene an authentic and original look. As Kennedy is shot, the camera focuses on Rene and her reaction. In contrast to John F. Kennedy who immediately took centre stage, Robert Kennedy seems to be but a means to highlight Rene's ambitions and her commitment. She was an important part of the campaign and is longing for change. While she had already been the one most profoundly affected by John F. Kennedy's death, she was shown as a silent mourner whereas now the focus is on her instead of on Robert Kennedy.

After this scene, the opening theme is shown.

Rene is visibly shaken after the event and has trouble going back to living her normal life. It was already mentioned in episode 5 that she had placed the highest hopes of all the characters in John F. Kennedy, and it appears to be the same with Robert Kennedy. After feeling like she could help shape the world, could help change things (minute 9), all hopes are now shattered with the death of another Kennedy.

However, there is less of a collective outcry, the other characters seem barely moved by the incident. Furthermore, the events don't seem to influence the rest of the episode, except for Rene struggling to find purpose. For her, the loss is maybe even worse than when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, as this time Rene was involved in the campaign. It is, nevertheless, made clear that the same hopes were placed on Robert Kennedy that had already been associated with John F. Kennedy: a better America, change.

6.3. Pan Am:

6.3.1. About the Show:

Created by writer Jack Orman⁹⁵, the show “Pan Am” was named after the famous Pan American World Airways Inc., founded in 1927, and operated as an airline up until 1991.⁹⁶ Similarly to “The Astronaut Wives Club”, it premiered on ABC, and was cancelled after one season, with initial negotiations regarding the show moving to Amazon Prime being dropped after no agreement could be reached.⁹⁷ The show is described as follows:

“The Jet Age just hit full swing, and leading the way are Pan Am’s elite stewardesses, who can navigate any culture and overcome any challenge. From New York City to the edge of the world, they will discover romance, natural dangers and exotic intrigue in a lush recreation of 1963 that will take your breath away.”⁹⁸

The existing 14 episodes aired on television in 2011 and 2012, and are about 43 minutes long. The show focuses on the private and professional lives of the female cabin crew, with the most prominent cast members to star as stewardesses including Christina Ricci and Margot Robbie. The stories featured include the CIA’s influence on the women, sudden fame, and also political events not only in the United States, but throughout several destinations Pan Am flies to, including West Germany, Paris, Rangoon and Monte Carlo.

95 IMDb: Pan Am. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1826805/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

96 Encyclopedia Britannica: Pan American World Airways, Inc. | American Airline Company. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-American-World-Airways-Inc.> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

97 IMDb: Pan Am. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1826805/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

98 Amazon: Pan Am: The Complete Series. <https://www.amazon.com/Pan-Am-Complete-Christina-Ricci/dp/B00A4Y624U/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

Despite being rather short-lived, “Pan Am” was nominated for an American Society of Cinematographers Award, a Dorian Award and a Rose D’Or Award⁹⁹.

6.3.2. Episode Structure:

“Pan Am” episodes open very similarly to The Astronaut Wives Club. A voiceover introduces a “Previously on Pan Am” segment, and is followed by the first scenes of the episode, until around 8 minutes, when the Pan Am logo is shown as the camera zooms in, functioning as the title card.

6.3.3. Season 1, Episode 12: New Frontiers:

Plot:

Colette reveals she’s hoping for a transfer to Hong Kong when Dean makes a move on her. She befriends a mysterious man named Omar on a flight to Rome, and promises to show him the city. In the meantime, Dean is dealing with local authorities who are on the hunt for a smuggler. Maggie informs Ted about her second thoughts on Amanda. Kate learns how to pickpocket, and Laura is flabbergasted that photos taken of her were sold to a gallery where they are now on display. All story lines are interrupted when news of the Kennedy assassination breaks.

⁹⁹ IMDb: Pan Am. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1826805/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

John F. Kennedy in this Episode:

It isn't until late in the episode that news about the Kennedy assassination breaks. At minute 40, Amanda is at the park having a discussion with her husband, when a nearby outcry demands their attention. Together, with sobbing bystanders, they gather around the radio to hear Walter Cronkite give a detailed report on Kennedy's situation. Laura is still at the gallery when a worker rushes in, in tears, and the news report can be heard in the background. At the same time, business is interrupted at the office as the phones won't stop ringing. The TV is turned on, and again, the entire staff crowds around the television screen. The gravity of the news is apparent as everybody stops dead in their tracks. No matter what the characters were doing, they all gather around the closest news source, waiting for any scrap of new information.

The camera cuts back and forth between all the characters, showing the scenes outlined above. Everywhere people are confused, in shock, and in tears, instilling a sense of hopelessness over every storyline, as they express hope that the news report is wrong, despite it being clear to the audience that nobody believes that.

Original footage of Walter Cronkite is shown, first mediated by the TV in full screen, and, after a cut, the news report fills the entire frame, without the TV as a bridge.

Despite the event only occurring within the last few minutes of the episode, it clearly shows how the lives of all characters are interrupted. No matter what they were preoccupied with, the assassination has brought them all together in that moment, with all problems and discussions forgotten, as the world appears to stand still. Once again, media (television and radio) are depicted as an important anchor the people cling to for information. In all three scenes shown in the episode, characters gather around TV sets or the radio, transfixed by the news.

6.4. Mad Men:

6.4.1. About the Show:

Among the shows considered in this analysis, “Mad Men” was the longest running, with a total of 92 episodes airing from 2007 to 2015 across seven seasons,. The show focuses on an advertising agency in New York, and follows the personal lives of the employees, as well as the professional endeavours.¹⁰⁰ AMC describes the show as follows:

“The series revolves around the conflicted world of Don Draper (Hamm), the biggest ad man (and ladies’ man) in the business, and his colleagues at the Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce Advertising Agency. As Don makes the plays in the boardroom and the bedroom, he struggles to stay a step ahead of the rapidly changing times and the young executives nipping at his heels. The series also depicts authentically the roles of men and women in this era while exploring the true human nature beneath the guise of 1960s traditional family values.”¹⁰¹

“Mad Men” featured many famous actors and actresses, with Jon Hamm, January Jones, Elisabeth Moss and Christina Hendricks being among them.

During its runtime, “Mad Men” was nominated for and received numerous awards, including 13 Golden Globe Award nominations, five wins, as well as 116 Emmy Award nominations and 16 wins¹⁰².

100 IMDb: Mad Men. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0804503/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

101 AMC: Mad Men AMC. <https://www.amc.com/shows/mad-men/exclusives/about> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

102 IMDb: Mad Men. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0804503/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

6.4.2. Episode Structure:

Again, a voiceover led segment replays the events of previous episodes before the opening sequence is shown. In contrast to some of the previously discussed shows, this is more done more elaborately: the graphic animation of a businessman falling from a height while surrounded by skyscrapers was inspired by the movie poster for Vertigo by Alfred Hitchcock.

6.4.3. Season 3, Episode 12: The Grown-Ups:

Plot:

On November 22, 1963, Pete Campbell receives bad news at work and begins contemplating his future. Margaret Sterling's wedding is two days away and she's still not sure about her life. All events are interrupted when John F. Kennedy is assassinated. Everybody is riled by the events, and only few people even attend the wedding. Most of the characters remain glued to their TV sets, and the days are spent in disbelief and mourning. The episode concludes with the funeral of President Kennedy about to be televised.

John F. Kennedy in this Episode:

The Grown-Ups depicts the assassination of President Kennedy as an impactful event, with the storyline spanning across the entire episode and all story lines. It chronicles the day President Kennedy was shot as well as the subsequent days leading up to his funeral, at which point the episode concludes.

Daily business is sharply interrupted when news breaks of the President being shot. The soap opera running on a TV set in the background is interrupted by a voiceover announcement (minute 13). Soon, everybody working at the office gathers in Harry Crane's office, as it is the only one with a TV. All conversations are interrupted, as people stare at the news broadcast in disbelief. The camera cuts back and forth between the news report on the TV, and the faces of people present, showing their shocked expressions. A collective wave of outrage and confusion appears to sweep over them.

Similar developments unfold for all other characters, with Peggy, Duck as well as Betty Draper all glued to their television sets. To underline the gravity of the situation, the TV set is shown in full screen, providing the audience with a direct view on what it is the characters are seeing. By this time, the death of the President has been confirmed. While Betty is crying and unable to continue her day, Duck tries to phone his children.

In all storylines, the characters are grieving and in shock, confused, and trying to get a grip on what has happened. It soon becomes apparent that none of them knows how to cope or how to go on. This sentiment is echoed once more when neither Betty nor Don have an idea what to tell their children, as they are just as confused as the kids, until a visibly shaken Don is shown telling them that everything will be fine. This line is repeated several times throughout the episode, although it appears none of the characters seem to believe it.

The importance of television is once more highlighted as the TV is constantly running in all storylines. While sometimes functioning as background noise, the camera also often zooms in and gives the audience a direct view on the original news footage airing. This goes on for the next days, right up until Kennedy's funeral. Even at the wedding taking place the following day, many of the guests gather in the kitchen in front of a TV, as Lee

Harvey Oswald is about to be interviewed. Again, the camera cuts to the TV in full screen broadcasting the original news footage. At minute 34, Betty Draper is back at home, seated in front of the television when Lee Harvey Oswald is shot live on screen. Again, the beliefs and hopes not only in the President, but in America as an institution (“How can such a thing happen? This is America!”), are shattered. The TV keeps running in the background, as Pete Campbell watches with his wife, and reacts in outrage as the slow-motion replay of the footage is shown (minute 39). This technique had only recently been introduced, and this was one of the first occasions of slow motion being used. Thus, the show opts for an extremely realistic and detailed recreation concerning the media coverage.

Before the credits roll, Peggy and Don once again gather in front of a TV at the office to watch Kennedy’s funeral. The song chosen for the credits is “The End of the World” by Skeeter Davis.

As different as the characters and their stories may be, the assassination is an event with consequences so grave, it brings them all together. The phones keep ringing, everybody tries to talk to their friends or family as nobody knows what to do or how to react. The television is shown as a central piece in everybody’s life. A constant influx of information is incorporated in the episode, and the camera continually cuts to a full picture of the TV where the original news footage is played. It is important to note that during all these scenes, no additional background music was played, instead, the TV could be heard even when the characters were conversing, signifying the importance of the event that has transpired. The title of the episode “The Grown-Ups” ties in with the shattering of innocence that all characters feel, with them all being clearly portrayed as helpless, and not knowing what to believe anymore. That the episode concludes with a song named “The End of the World” shows, again, the gravity of what has occurred. The loss of hope,

and the grim outlook on the future, is highlighted when characters state that Kennedy meant change, whereas Lyndon B. Johnson is just more of the same.

6.4.4. Season 6, Episode 7: Man with a Plan:

Plot:

The merger between SCDP and CGC is in full swing as the CGC staff moves into the building. Pete Campbell, unhappy with the events, has to deal with his mother suffering from dementia. Everybody tries to adjust to the new situation at work, and competitive behaviour already starts to show. In the meantime, Don continues his affair with Sylvia. The episode ends with the news regarding Robert Kennedy's assassination.

Robert Kennedy in this Episode:

The assassination of Robert Kennedy is clearly not portrayed as such a historic and world-altering event as the assassination of his brother. Where the death of John F. Kennedy occupies the span of one entire episode, and had been the main focus of attention for all storylines, the assassination of Bobby is more of a side note.

It isn't until minute 26 that anything related to politics is even mentioned. In that scene, people gathered at the office discuss who they would vote for, McCarthy or Kennedy. It is briefly highlighted that the characters associate Robert Kennedy with hope, placing similar expectations upon him as they had placed in his brother, although nobody appears to feel strongly about the topic.

Almost at the end of the episode, Don Draper enters the bedroom to find his new wife Megan crying over the news report on TV, that Bobby Kennedy has been shot. The

camera shows the TV screen via an over-the-shoulder shot, again, with original footage being broadcast. Music starts playing as the credits begin to roll. In this case, the audio of the TV news footage can still be heard, while “Reach out of the Darkness” by Friend & Lover is played.

As was the case with the previously discussed *Mad Men* episode in this thesis, the historic events are mediated via television using original footage. However, while the passing of John F. Kennedy resulted in a death of innocence and a collective loss of sense and hope, his brother’s assassination doesn’t have the same effect. By now, the people almost seem to be used to this, and somewhat numb. Furthermore, there is no subsequent effect upon all storylines. Whereas John F. Kennedy’s death put a halt to all events happening in the episode, Robert Kennedy’s death is left merely as a side note that could have easily been replaced with something else. It only appears to matter to Draper’s wife, but no real impact of the event is shown, neither is the topic picked up again. Although the news broadcast is watched by Megan for more than a minute, the camera never zooms in to provide the audience with a closer look at what has transpired, once more showing that the event itself is not of such consequence. Neither the song played at the end, nor any of the other events in the episode seem to have any close connection to Robert Kennedy, which poses a stark contrast to the episode dealing with his brother’s assassination.

6.5. Aquarius:

6.5.1. About the Show:

“Aquarius” refers to the television show created by John McNarama for NBC, not to be confused with the British show of the same name that aired in the 70s.

The U.S. American “Aquarius” was produced by Tomorrow Studios, and cancelled after two seasons. NBC gives the following overview about the show’s content:

“America in the 1960s was a land of tumult and transformation. [...] No city felt this pain more than Los Angeles. [...] Two men are on a crash course that will ultimately lead to the gruesome, bloody end of the hippie era and leave America shaken, and once again, changed. Ringing with the unparalleled music of the era, "Aquarius" is a sprawling work of historical fiction with nuanced characters whose actions in a time of national transformation enlighten how we became who we are today.”¹⁰³

Both seasons consist of thirteen 40 to 45 minute length episodes, with season one having been aired in 2015, and season two in the subsequent year. The show begins in 1967, when two police officers are investigating the case of a missing teenager, who soon transpires to have joined Charles Manson’s “family”. The first season focuses mainly on the rise and expansion of the Manson family, while the second season is centred around the Tate/LaBianca murders. The cast features television veteran David Duchovny, who is known for his roles in The X Files and Californication, and joined by additional cast members including Grey Damon and Gethin Anthony.

The show was honoured at the Critics' Choice Television Awards as one of the most exciting new shows in 2015¹⁰⁴.

103 NBC: Aquarius. <https://www.nbc.com/aquarius> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

104 IMDb: Aquarius. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3768572/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

6.5.2. Episode Structure:

Among all the productions considered under this analysis, “Aquarius” is the only one to begin with the information that its content is partially inspired by “historical events”, however the characters, places and circumstances are fictitious. This disclaimer is shown on screen prior to a “Previously on” segment, which is introduced via voiceover. The episode’s first scenes are shown before fading to black four minutes in, as “David Duchovny in Aquarius” appears on the screen as title card.

6.5.3. Season 2, Episode 6: Revolution 9:

Plot:

Sam Hodiak is contacted by Sean, an old war buddy. Sean works for Robert Kennedy and wants Sam to be part of the security team for his appearances in Los Angeles.

Additionally, he has a personal blackmail related problem he needs Hodiak to take care of. Although already preoccupied with a missing persons investigation, Sam reluctantly agrees to help out. The episode concludes with Robert Kennedy being shot at the Ambassador Hotel.

Robert Kennedy in this Episode:

The main character, Hodiak, is contacted to work as security for Kennedy while he is in Los Angeles. While he talks this over with one of the campaign managers, he actually meets Bobby Kennedy at the campaign office (minute 26). However, the actor portraying Kennedy is never clearly shown, as sunlight streams in right from behind him, leaving Kennedy only a dark shape without any discernible features. While he talks with Hodiak,

the scene is mostly filmed from behind Kennedy, only showing his back. Although Kennedy is highlighted as “the good guy” who has a way with people, and wants to change the world for the better, his politics are quickly put aside, and the characters move on to other matters. Once more, Robert Kennedy appears to be more of a device to further a character’s story instead of being the focus of the episode.

The next time Hodiak sees Kennedy is at the Ambassador Hotel. While he discusses several issues with the campaign manager, Kennedy makes his speech and supporters cheer. All this time, the actual focus is on Hodiak, and Kennedy remains but a background figure. The manager is concerned about Kennedy leaving the building through the front door, due to the large crowd that has gathered, leading to Hodiak taking him out through the kitchen. Again, Kennedy’s face is barely visible, with the shots being either filmed from behind him, or cheering people and blinding flashlights are used to obscure his face. The scene ends when Sirhan Sirhan draws his gun, which is shown in slow motion, as the camera zooms in on the pistol. Even in the moments leading up to Kennedy’s death, the camera constantly switches between him and Hodiak. Even when the gun is drawn and shots ring out, it’s only Hodiak’s reaction the audience is permitted to see. Again, it’s clear that Kennedy is not the centre of attention here, even though he is the one being assassinated.

Many of the characters express faith in Robert Kennedy, and already refer to him as the next president, with the way Kennedy is shown when he first meets Hodiak being almost Saint-like. He is encircled by golden light as he asks Hodiak what can be done to improve the living conditions for black people, thus stylizing him as a president who would bring change, and stand for a better America. Those sentiments were usually associated with his brother, and in this case seem only to have one function: underline why it is important that Hodiak, the best man for the job, helps out to protect Kennedy. His politics are never

actually important for the episode or the further cause of the show, and his death does not seem to personally affect any of the characters.

6.6. American Dreams:

6.6.1. About the Show:

Similarly to “Aquarius”, “American Dreams” aired on NBC, consisting of three seasons and a total of 61 hour-long episodes (25, 19 and 17 episodes for season one to three respectively), aired from 2002 to 2005. The series is centred mainly around the Pryor family, and the lives of each family member, including the endeavours of J. J, who is a U. S. Marine, or the growing up of seventeen-year-old Meg, of whom many of the episodes are focused. A time frame from 1963 to 1966 is covered by the show. The cast list for “American Dreams” includes Brittany Snow, Daphne Zuniga, Adina Porter and Milo Ventimiglia, however, numerous actors, actresses and musicians guest starred. One of the big trademarks of “American Dreams” was re-creating the show American Bandstand¹⁰⁵, with present day singers portraying famous musicians of the 1960s.

Furthermore, “American Dreams” has received several awards and award nominations, including four nominations and two wins of Emmy Awards.¹⁰⁶

105 The original American Bandstand was a nationwide show (from 1957 on) where popular musicians would perform, and teenage studio guests contributed their opinions. Furthermore, the show featured teenaged regulars who danced. Eboch, M. M.; Petruska, Karen: A History of Television. Minneapolis: Abdo Publishing 2015, p. 52

106 IMDb: American Dreams. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319930/> (last accessed 08.04.2020)

6.6.2. Episode Structure:

“American Dreams” starts in medias res (cold open) without any “Previously on...” montage or voiceover. It’s only after those initial scenes that the opening sequence is incorporated, consisting of images from the show, as well as original material from the news or Bandstand, with footage of President Kennedy even being included.

6.6.3. Season 1, Episode 2: The End of the Innocence:

Plot:

The Pryor family, similarly to all their friends, try to return to a normal life after the assassination of President Kennedy. In addition to the national tragedy that has occurred, all of them have to deal with personal struggles. Meg Pryor is chosen to be a regular on American Bandstand while her friend is not, causing a rift between the two. JJ Pryor is uncertain about his future, as he doesn’t want to play football anymore, despite a football scholarship being his only chance of attending college.

John F. Kennedy in this Episode:

This episode opens not only with tackling the Kennedy assassination as a topic, but shows original footage of the funeral on full screen. After a few moments, the camera zooms out to reveal the broadcast being on television. The focus is on the TV with the broadcast rolling for a few seconds, before the Pryor family is shown sitting on their couch, watching, crying and praying. The camera regularly cuts back and forth between the family and the television, their faces fading into one another, each one of them reflecting the sentiments of utter disbelief and shock. They still don’t know how to react to the

situation, and have trouble adjusting to a post-Kennedy life. Several times throughout the episode, the characters return to discussing what this will mean for the future, and what they are supposed to feel and do. All family members are visibly shaken, and an eerie silence hangs over their family dinners.

While the entire family seemed transfixed by the television screen at the beginning of the episode, they often seem to return to the news broadcasts while they go about their days. Helen Pryor, in particular, is regularly drawn back to the screen, with the news report being heard in the background even when she isn't watching. Finally, the background noise transitions to the song "A Change is Gonna Come" by Otis Redding, which can be heard while the camera alternates between all family members, who look increasingly lost. The lyrics reflect the topics so far raised in the episode: death, how to carry on and inevitable change.

The episode resumes with Lyndon B. Johnson on the TV (minute 5) addressing the American people. Although all characters were preparing to leave the house, they gravitate back to the television, once again highlighting the importance of this medium, as they look to their TVs in search for guidance and answers.

Throughout the following days, all characters are shown to struggle as they try to settle back into their normal life. Meg Pryor mentions that nothing really has changed, although, at the same time, everything has changed, a sentiment that continues to be raised throughout the episode. Furthermore, the youngest member of the Pryor family, Will, keeps asking why Kennedy was shot, but nobody can give him an answer, causing him to eventually arrive at his own conclusion: it was because of politics.

The title of the episode is already the first hint at the sentiment conveyed here, as The End of the Innocence is what all the characters seem to be feeling. Although life needs to

go on, they always return to the tragic events surrounding John F. Kennedy. All characters had hopes and expectations for the future, that are now shattered with the President's death. This was already accentuated within the first minutes of the episode, when the footage of the funeral was paired with the Otis Redding song "A Change is Gonna Come". Once again, the event affects everybody and brings people together, as the topic is raised in almost every conversation. Another important point is the television as a constant. Even after the assassination and the funeral, people still cling to the screen for every new bit of information, for any clue of how to go on.

6.7. Meta-Analysis:

Several characteristics have emerged after closely analysing each of the episodes:

6.7.1. Jack vs. Bobby:

As can be seen from all the episodes in question, the assassination of John F. Kennedy was an event that deeply shook all of America. While the death of Robert Kennedy had already lost some of its shock value, due to the large number of assassinations in the 1960s, it is still shown to be a moment of importance for the American people, although it is clearly more of a side-note to the stories told. While John F. Kennedy's death was impactful on every character and every storyline, his brother's death only mattered to selected characters. The events surrounding Robert Kennedy's assassination are usually closely related to a particular character's story in the respective episodes (Rene working on the campaign in *The Astronaut Wives Club*, or Sam being hired as his bodyguard in *Aquarius*). John F. Kennedy is, on the other hand, introduced as a meta-narrative that affects all characters, instead of explicitly connected to a singled-out person. His death is shown to influence several days and weeks, and to have changed everything, whereas

Robert Kennedy's death is more of a moment in time that passes without many consequences for the lives of the characters.

6.7.2. The TV:

In all shows, television is singled out as the most important piece of media that connects all of America. While, on a few occasions, radio announcements can also be heard, newspapers and radio don't seem to play as crucial a role in relation to the events that transpired with the Kennedys.

In most of the shows, we do not only see the characters glued to the screen, but as viewers we are explicitly presented with the news footage framed by a television, instead of showing the images all in full screen. Thus, the audience is presented the news in the same way the characters on the shows learn of it. Furthermore, the TV is what all characters keep returning to. Even when they try to go on with their respective lives, they are always shown to gravitate back to the TV. Moreover, this is often a collective action, as rarely does a character sit in front of the television alone. Instead, the entire family, or all co-workers gather round the TV set, mourning together and leaning upon one another.

Considering how the assassination affected all television broadcasts for days, this appears to be an accurate depiction of behaviour. From the moment the news broke that the President had been shot, John F. Kennedy dominated all TV channels right up until the point his funeral was televised. This includes eye-witness reports, news anchors providing the audience with the latest developments, the arrest and assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald, etc.

Furthermore, what is mediated through television is mostly original material. Instead of

re-enacting news reports, the majority included, for example, footage of Walter Cronkite addressing the American people.

The TV is not only shown to be a source of information, but also functions as a lifeline the characters hold on to as the world veers out of control. They don't know what to do, how to react, or how to continue with their day. So, they remain in front of the television in hope of some sort of guidance. They look for more news, for answers they can't seem to find.

6.7.3. Original Material vs. Re-Enactment:

Almost all the episodes include original footage in some form, in particular, the news reels of Walter Cronkite made many appearances, informing the audience of Kennedy being shot. As both assassinations were largely mediated via television, in order to re-create a somewhat authentic account of how people acted and felt during those days, the original behaviour of TV channels was mimicked. As a result, a great amount of old footage (news reels, speeches, etc.) was included, and whenever original footage was not available, re-enactments were created.

This was more often the case with Robert Kennedy. As mentioned previously, with him, an attempt was made to integrate the shows' characters into the events. For example, this was done by recreating the events at the Ambassador Hotel to include Sam (Aquarius), who guides Kennedy out of the hotel, or Rene (The Astronaut Wives Club) who sews a button back on for him.

With John F. Kennedy, the amount of original material by far outweighs those which were re-enacted. As his assassination was not linked to any particular characters, but instead meant to act as a meta-narrative for all storylines, the shows focussed on using

original footage by also presenting it in its original form (within television screens for the characters to watch).

An exception from this is the show *The Kennedys*, where an attempt was made to blend new footage (both for John F. and Robert Kennedy) with original material. Many of the new scenes filmed were adapted to resemble the old footage by forsaking the 16:9 format, or making the images black and white. Those scenes were added between original and new material, therefore allowing for a smoother transition.

6.7.4. The Loss of Hope, The End of Innocence:

The overall sentiments conveyed by all shows are that of the loss of hope, increased confusion, shock and anger. Particularly with the death of John F. Kennedy, beliefs of a better future and change to come were shattered. The characters in all shows are portrayed as visibly shaken, and don't seem to know how to react or go on with their days. A wave of collective mourning sweeps over the country, as the characters stare at the TV screens in disbelief, while tears stream down their faces.

John F. Kennedy's death affects the characters for days, and influences all aspects of their lives (e. g. the wedding in "*Mad Men* Season" 3, Episode 12), and the day of the funeral is explicitly mentioned to be a day of national mourning. The characters are shown to immediately call their friends and family, as they don't know how to come to terms with what has transpired on their own. They are in need of guidance, and either seek it from peers or from television. When it becomes apparent that neither friends nor family know what to do, the news reports are what all characters appear to turn to.

The assassination of Robert Kennedy results in similar sentiments, however, they appear only to be pronounced for those characters previously shown to have some sort of

affiliation with him. Rene in “The Astronaut Wives Club”, who worked on Kennedy’s campaign, mentioned that she felt like he would change the world, and she could be a part of that. Therefore, she felt a loss of meaning in her life when she had to return to her former ways. When Sam meets Kennedy in “Aquarius”, he is presented as almost Saint-like, illuminated by light, the crowd cheering for him. Many of the characters expressed hope in him, similar to the expectations placed in his late brother.

While the death of John F. Kennedy affected everybody, Robert Kennedy’s death is seen as tragic, but the characters continue with their lives as usual, and his assassination appears to be more of a device to further a particular character’s story. Whereas the passing of the President shook the entire nation, Robert Kennedy mildly rattles the lives of those who knew him personally. Even in “The Kennedys”, a show explicitly focused on all Kennedys and not just John, his ambitions and death are barely given any screen-time, and are not shown to have any profound effect.

This difference can stem from several reasons. First of all, John F. Kennedy had already been president when he was shot, meaning that he was a symbol as much as he was an ordinary man. The myth around him and his family, coupled with his positive attitude towards television, had placed him in the spotlight and made him larger than life. John F. Kennedy stood for a new America, change and a better future.

Furthermore, his assassination was the first in a series of tragic events similar to it. By the time Robert Kennedy was shot, people may have already been numb, and somewhat used to tragedy. Furthermore, he was on his way to presidency, but of course his role hadn’t yet reached a level of importance comparable with his brother’s. Although many people placed similar hopes in him, those feelings never seem to be as intense or pronounced as they were for John.

6.7.5. The Collective Moment:

Another important feature included in most of the episodes is people banding together in their grief. While few scenes show the characters watching the TV in solitude, more depict the characters clinging to one another, trying to find somebody, something to hold on to. In “The Astronaut Wives Club” the women talk about not being able to be alone any longer, sharing their grief. Sometimes they get together (see the picnic at the end of “The Astronaut Wives Club Season” 1, Episode 5), gather around the TV as a crowd (“Pan Am” Season 1, Episode 12, “American Dreams” Season 1, Episode 2) or simply pick up the phone right away to call friends and family (“Mad Man”, Season 3 Episode 12, “The Kennedys” Season 1, Episode 7). Once more, this is far more pronounced for the episode about John F. Kennedy. It’s in these episodes that the characters seem lost, long for guidance, and lean onto each other or the media. With the episodes on Robert Kennedy, this is not the case, with the characters seeming to quickly accept what has happened, and go on about their day.

6.7.6. Sunny Side Up:

It is, furthermore, striking that both Kennedy brothers are presented in an unrealistically positive light. Almost all of the characters appear to be supporters, and unanimously agree that both of them were excellent politicians. Even those who lean more towards a different candidate hardly articulate any criticism of the Kennedy brothers, with John F. Kennedy seeming to receive a huge amount of support. No word is ever mentioned of any scandals in his life, or discussion raised about his political decisions. With Robert Kennedy, a more diverse view is presented, although the overarching opinion is still overwhelmingly positive.

Although people were surely riled about both assassinations, it is hardly credible that no negative voices were raised in the aftermath. The extensive list of television productions set in the 1960s can be seen as a materialized desire to go back to simpler, more glamorous, better times. Naturally, those times are then presented in a very favourable light, sustaining nostalgic and benevolent sentiments towards the past. Even though the shows do raise critical topics, the President of the United States is as much – if not even more so – a symbol than he is a person. He stands for all of America, and is therefore to be seen in the most positive light possible. This could be an explanation as to why John F. Kennedy is – in contrast to his brother – entirely free of criticism. While he was President, his brother was still campaigning and therefore not yet as untouchable.

6.7.7. Camera Work:

All episodes about John F. Kennedy's assassination feature a very similar form of camera work. What stands out are the numerous close-ups of faces, particularly of the eyes. The camera attempts to capture people's emotions: their shock, horror and grief. This is achieved by zooming in on various people, with fast cuts from one face to another. With Robert Kennedy, the focus was different. In these episodes, the camera usually highlights a specific character (Sam Hodiak in "Aquarius", or Rene Carpenter in "Astronaut Wives Club", for example) showing them reacting to the events from the waist up, allowing for more movement in the scenes. Neither is there a focus on faces, nor are other characters drawn into the picture.

However, a constant for all episodes is the framing of television sets. The camera plays with different angles, either capturing what is being broadcast on the TV in full screen while still retaining the TV as frame, or choosing a wider frame to include characters.

This is usually achieved by over the shoulder shots of the characters watching TV, or by filming from behind the TV set, so the character is in the focus while still keeping the TV set in the picture. This nods once more to the important role of television, something all shows highlight throughout the episodes.

6.7.8. Music:

Finally, it is worth noting that throughout most of the episodes, an eerie silence prevails as the tragic events unfold. No music is played in the background as the characters watch in disbelief.

However, the few times music is included, the songs are chosen in order to reflect the sentiments presented in the show. The lyrics tie in with the overall message of the episodes (Otis Redding's "A Change is Gonna Come" in "American Dreams" Season 1, Episode 2 or Skeeter Davis' "The End of the World" in "Mad Men" Season 3, Episode 12). The songs deal with loss, death, and an impending feeling of doom due to the changes that will inevitably come.

7. Conclusions:

The Kennedys have been a phenomenon from the very outset of their careers. However, their rise to power was closely linked with numerous personal tragedies. When John F. Kennedy was shot, those tragedies were no longer personal, but tipped the entire nation of the United States into mourning. His death had a profound effect on the American people, and would come to be a recurring symbol for the 1960s. When his brother tried to follow

in his footsteps and was assassinated as well, the American people were shocked once more, but at the same time already numb. They had been tentative to raise their hopes once again, after dreams of a better America had been shattered with John F. Kennedy's death. As those two men and their deaths had an effect on the United States that would last for decades to come, it is only logical that TV shows trying to re-create the 1960s would draw from those two personalities.

The analysis clearly shows that the death of John F. Kennedy, in particular, shook the American people. It is presented as a meta-narrative, affecting all characters no matter how their storylines are progressing. This is largely achieved through original footage (particularly news reels) that are presented via television. Kennedy is presented as a flawless politician and statesman, and characters in all shows appear to be vivid supporters of his, and there is very little room for criticism. This leads to the belief that, although it is credible that the Americans were deeply shook by the assassination of their President, reactions are depicted much more favourably in hindsight. The collective moment of bringing the American people together in their grief, that all shows depict, may have not have been all that unanimous in reality.

As the rising number of TV shows could be referred to a strong feeling of nostalgia for simpler and more hopeful times, it is logical that to satisfy this sentiment, the past is portrayed in a rather favourable way. Similarities can be drawn between the Bush administration, and the subsequent expectations in the succeeding President Obama, and Kennedy's time in office. The same hopefulness and longing for a better future are evident, and another credible explanation as to why audiences readily turned to TV shows set in that precise period. Therefore, Kennedy is not necessarily only a symbol for the 1960s, but also a metaphor for the present day. Furthermore, this larger than life function leads to the notion that not only people's attitudes towards Kennedy, but also the

importance of his role, has been exaggerated in hindsight. Of course, the President of the United States is a pivotal figure, but the utter breakdown of everybody's lives in every one of the shows could be an overblown depiction.

While the camera frequently tries to capture the grief and horror shown upon the characters' faces throughout the episodes depicting John F. Kennedy's assassination, the result is strikingly different for his brother. While Robert Kennedy also appears to be a popular subject for TV shows, his function within the episodes is quite contrasting. The tragedy of his assassination is linked with certain characters, and storylines are created to depict a connection. To achieve this effect, re-enactment was used instead of original footage. His death does cause an outrage among the characters involved, but only those previously linked with him seem deeply affected. This is a stark contrast to the episodes including John F. Kennedy's death, as his passing was shown to have unhinged all of the characters. For Robert Kennedy's death, neither shock nor grief seems to run deeply, as most of the characters quickly continue with their lives. He appears to be used as a plot device to further certain characters' story lines, whereas John F. Kennedy's death interrupted all storylines, and brought other events to a standstill.

Many of the shows briefly introduce other persons of political importance, and include stories or original material related to gender and race (see section 5.2.1), both key issues of the 1960s. Nevertheless, the focus remains on the straight white men in charge. Not only are those the characters that are shown to have the biggest impact on, and relevance for the American people, they are also the figures that appear most often in fictional TV shows. While narrowing down the material for this thesis, it soon became apparent that the overwhelming majority of historic events or people are not only the Kennedys, but the white man ruling the country, oftentimes ignoring other impactful characters of the time that don't fit into that category.

Although neither movies nor television shows can provide an entirely accurate portrayal of what has occurred in the past, including events such as the assassinations of both Kennedy brothers allows filmmakers and show runners to convey to the audience who and what had a significant impact on people's lives and beliefs in the 1960s. Throughout the episodes analysed for this thesis, both Kennedys are presented in a more positive light than is likely to be realistic, however, they reflect the characters' expectations and ambitions for the future, thus giving the audience an immediate sense of how the 1960s felt.

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8.2. Filmography:

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Cassar, John: Lancer and Lace (The Kennedys Season 1, Episode 7), Amazon Prime, USA/Canada 2011, 43 Minutes

Cassar, John: My Brother's Keeper (The Kennedys Season 1, Episode 8), Amazon Prime, USA/Canada 2011, 43 Minutes

Fortenberry, John: New Frontiers (Pan Am Season 1, Episode 12), DVD, USA 2012, 41 Minutes

Keene, Elodie: Flashpoint (The Astronaut Wives Club Season 1, Episode 5), DVD, USA 2015, 41 Minutes

Pate, Jonas: Revolution 9 (Aquarius Season 2, Episode 6), Netflix, USA 2016, 42 Minutes

Schroeder, Barbet: The Grown-Ups (Mad Men Season 3, Episode 12), Netflix, USA 2009, 47 Minutes

Semel, David: The End of the Innocence (American Dreams Season 1, Episode 2), DVD, USA 2002, 44 Minutes

Slattery, John: Man with a Plan (Mad Men Season 6, Episode 7), Netflix, USA 2013, 39 Minutes

9. Abstract:

9.1. English:

In recent years television series set in the 1960s have boomed. Numerous shows around the globe are set in this period, although no country produced more than the U. S. What many of those shows have in common is the incorporation of historic events and persons. Among the most popular of those appear to be John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy with their respective assassinations.

After giving an outline on the relationship between history and movies/TV shows, as well as the functions those can have for the audience, the analysis focusses on how and why the Kennedys were added to the story. To do so, a total sample of nine episodes from six shows was gathered that allows to gain a deeper insight on the matter.

Results show that the function John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy fulfil in the shows' contexts are rather different. Whereas the President's death showcases an important series of sentiments present in the 1960s: hope for a better future and change as well as the end of innocence and the crushing of those expectations, his brother's passing is added as a device to further certain character's stories without any overarching implications.

9.2. German:

In den letzten Jahren gab es einen regelrechten Boom an Serien, welche in den 1960er Jahren spielen. Obwohl dieses Phänomen rund um die Welt Verbreitung fand, wurden in keinem Land mehr solche Serien produziert als in den USA. Was die meisten dieser Sendung gemeinsam haben, ist das Einbauen von historischen Ereignissen und Personen in den Erzählkontext. Unter den beliebtesten scheinen dabei John F. Kennedy und sein Bruder Robert Kennedy zu sein.

Nach einer kurzen Einführung zur Beziehung von Geschichte und Film/Fernsehen, sowie den Funktionen für das Publikum, fokussiert die Analyse darauf wie und warum die Kennedys in die verschiedenen Serien eingebunden wurden. Dazu wurde ein Sample von neun Episoden aus sechs verschiedenen Produktionen zusammengestellt, das es erlaubt die Attentate auf beide Kennedys im Serienkontext zu vergleichen.

Die Resultate zeigen, das John F. Kennedy und Robert Kennedy dabei zwei sehr unterschiedliche Funktionen erfüllen. Während der Tod des Präsidenten die Entwicklung von Gefühlen und Stimmungen der 60er widerspiegelt (von Hoffnung auf einer bessere Zukunft und Veränderungen hin zum Ende der Unschuld und der Erwartungen), wird das Dahinscheiden seines Bruders hauptsächlich genutzt, um die Geschichten einiger weniger spezifischer Charaktere voranzutreiben, ohne dabei größere Auswirkungen zu haben.