

nomad²⁰⁰⁸

THE TV EDITION

The Comparative Literature Program's
Journal of Undergraduate Writing
University of Oregon

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

In a 1981 interview, Michel Foucault suggested that the practice of criticism should “make the facile gesture difficult.” As some of the essays in this TV edition of *NOMAD* will argue — Sarah McNaughton’s analysis of network newscasts, Scott Dinsfriend’s theological critique of the Trinity Broadcasting Network — television itself is guilty of the facile gesture: slites of one hand that lure the eye away from machinations of the other. However, if television is to blame, then so are its detractors, who all too quickly implicate it in a conspiracy to dumb down the masses. As Amanda Golbek’s wonderful discussion of *Grey’s Anatomy* points out, television often reflects rather than elides the personal, social, and aesthetic complications of a globalized world. Indeed, Jacob Bentley and Alex Frane argue that some television programs — from Saturday morning cartoons to campy teen dramas — resist rather than facilitate mindless complacency. And while many of us are inclined to look merely at screens, Maggie Minnich’s discussion of iPod advertising’s influence on urban culture, and Benjamin Taylor’s essay on global television set production practices, remind us to look around and realize that television affects more than our retinas.

This TV edition of *NOMAD* is the first in what is sure to become an ongoing collaboration with the Comparative Literature Program’s Annual Speakers Series. Our year long endeavor brought more than twenty faculty, graduates, and undergraduates together. It is our hope that this collaborative process will continue to spark critical thoughts, excite young writers, and enthuse the more grizzled of us. Many thanks to everyone involved.

MAX RAYNEARD

PROF. LISA FREINKEL

Lisa Myōbun Freinkel has been the Director of the Comparative Literature Program since 2004. An associate professor of English, she is the author of *Reading Shakespeare's Will: The Theology of Figure from Augustine to the Sonnets* (Columbia UP, 2002) and of essays on topics in early modern literature as well as in the history of theology and philosophy.

IN PRAISE OF ILL-BREEDING

A GUEST COMMENTARY

Television is an ugly word. Or so at least Thomas Stearns Eliot tells us, at the very threshold of TV broadcast history. In his 1942 essay on “The Music of Poetry,” Eliot writes that “ugly words are the words not fitted for the company in which they find themselves....”

[T]here are words which are ugly because of rawness or antiquation; there are words which are ugly because of foreignness or ill-breeding (e.g. *televison*): but I do not believe

that any word well-established in its own language is either beautiful or ugly. (Eliot 113)

Ugliness, for Eliot, is a matter of standing out: of being disconnected from one's company, lacking the background or pedigree—the “breeding”—that would fit one for the immediate surroundings. “Television” for Eliot is the paradigmatic misfit: ugly, foreign and ill-bred.

In 2008, however, Eliot’s assessment seems wildly off-base—as “antiquated” as an ugly word. There is certainly nothing “foreign” about television, either regarding the word, or the phenomenon itself. Television is ubiquitous. The word itself has been transliterated into a majority of the world’s languages: *televisión*, *télévision*, *televisie*, *televisão*, *terebi*.... Indeed, as a number of the essays in this journal demonstrate, contemporary television has all but obliterated the very notion of foreignness. Both in the geographical reach of its broadcasting, and in the proliferation of its programming into new technologies (e.g. webcasting or YouTube), today’s TV is as global a cultural form as can be imagined. Moreover, given the wit and sophistication of the broadcasting analyzed in this volume, one hesitates to call contemporary television “ill-bred.”

Nonetheless, Eliot’s high modernist aesthetic—or at least my reaction *against* it—reminds me of the counter-cultural impulse I’ve always associated with the discipline of comparative literature. Unlike Eliot, I don’t want to study a culture that is “well-established” and well-bred. Indeed, back in the olden days, I chose comparative literature as my college and graduate major precisely because it seemed the opposite: it was fresh, edgy and

raw. I didn’t want language and literature that was (again to borrow Eliot’s prissified terms) “fit for company.” I wanted instead to dive into the misfits of western culture, to peel apart our culture’s assumptions and venerable conventions, and to glory in the ugly, the foreign, and even the antiquated obsolete. To be sure, comparative literature is, was, and will always remain the place to work across languages and national traditions. Nonetheless, for me such polyglot border-crossing has always, first and foremost, made comparative literature the place to remain eternally *out-of-place*. Comparative literature is where the misfits of culture *fit right in*.

Hence, the title of this journal: *NOMAD*. The journal names the itinerant impulse behind the discipline of comparative literature. To move across our globe’s cultural, linguistic and national borders is to resist taking refuge in a permanent home or established point of view. As one of my colleagues is fond of saying: comparative literature is the home for homeless causes. Given the history of the discipline, this nomadic character makes perfect sense. While the first American comp. lit. degrees were granted by Harvard and Columbia Universities around the turn of the last century, the inception of what is now recognized as the discipline emerged only in the context of World War II, during the massive wartime diaspora. In an important sense, the discipline emerged in the context of exile and through the efforts of displaced persons. Many key figures in the rise of the new discipline were refugees from Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. Scholars like Leo Spitzer, Eric Auerbach, Henry Remak and René

Wellek relocated to America, bringing a new internationalism, and a new study of literature, with them. In a very literal way, then, the discipline established itself as the place for the displaced. A home for homeless causes, indeed.

As for the journal *NOMAD* itself, since 2000 it has been the home for a collaboration that is unlike any other at the University of Oregon. The brainchild of Bonnie Roos, a doctoral candidate in “COLT” (as we affectionately call the Program), *NOMAD* was designed from its inception to bring together COLT grads and undergrads in a celebration of undergraduate research. Over the past three years, the journal’s charge has expanded into a full-blown mentorship program, aligned each year with a nine-month viewing/lecture series. Along with *NOMAD*’s graduate editor, several COLT grads are hired to serve as Mentorship Coordinators. These Coordinators research and select a theme to serve as the basis for the year’s viewing/lecture series. Their goal is to choose a theme that is both global in scope and provocatively irreverent. As T.S. Eliot might say, their goal is to find a suitably unsuitable theme: something simultaneously “ugly” and “ill-bred.” Hence our recent topics: *The Keanu Reeves Film Series* (2006-07), *COL[TV]* (2007-08) and this year’s selection, *THE UNDEAD* (2008-09). Speakers for each year’s series are drawn from faculty and graduate programs all across the UO campus. Their presentations are characteristically incisive and snappy: fresh, raw, edgy. Everything we love comparative literature to be.

At the same time, the Mentorship Coordinators also recruit a dozen or so graduate student mentors, along with the

undergraduates who will be their “mentees.” Over the course of the viewing/lecture series, mentors and mentees work together to develop and research a project inspired by the year’s theme. Finally, at the end of the year the undergraduates present their research as the final installment of the viewing/lecture series. As long as they meet editorial muster, these papers are published in the special issue of *NOMAD* launched the following Fall.

And thus you have the text you currently hold in your hands. *NOMAD: The TV Edition* is the product of a full-year’s collaboration between our grads and our undergrads. Novice students who are delving into advanced research for the first time in their lives, working with advanced students who have decided to make literary research their lives’ vocation.... In some disciplines, all research is — of necessity — collaborative. One couldn’t imagine, for instance, the natural sciences without envisioning the laboratory with its corps of technicians, post-docs and students. In many of the social sciences as well, field work may also involve numerous people. But in the Humanities we typically think of ourselves in isolation: a single, solitary writing, thinking subject.... Just me, my books, my computer, and my ivory tower.

However, the nomadic, interdisciplinary character of comparative literature insures that, sooner or later, we all will require the assistance of somebody else. To work across borders is to risk, at every turn, the possibility of being out-of-place. It is to risk the possibility — the likelihood, even — of ignorance and “ill-breeding.” And yet, such ignorance can provide the

opportunity to reach beyond the very borders of the self. Simply put, such opportunities can transform your life. There simply is no going it alone: when you have no home, the whole world is simultaneously your colleague and your teacher.

I write these words with great admiration for the participants in COL[TV]. May we all continue to teach each other.

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AMANDA GOLBEK

Amanda Golbek is a sophomore majoring in Comparative Literature. She is currently studying Russian and hopes to soon add German. She is interested in post-colonialism and social semiotics.

Mentors: Kom Kunyosying and Jeong Chang

"NOT EVEN THE LENGTH OF A DECENT KISS"

ROMANTIC LOVE AND THE LATE CAPITALIST MORAL OCCULT IN *GREY'S ANATOMY*

Premiering in 2005, Grey's Anatomy is a hospital drama that follows the lives of five young interns — Meredith Grey, Izzie Stevens, Christina Yang, Alex Karev, and George O'Malley — as they begin their surgical residencies at Seattle Grace hospital. The hospital serves as the backdrop for the drama of the characters' personal lives, with the boss-employee and doctor-patient boundaries blurring as the interns

participate in intimate relationships with the surgical doctors as well as the patients. The emotionally intense environment of the hospital, coupled with that of the personal drama of the patients, interns, and doctors, makes for an emotionally — and dramatically — charged show.

These features mark the presence of the “melodramatic mode” in the show. The “melodramatic mode” is that which makes a direct appeal to the emotions of the viewer, moving him or her to pathos for the characters, who stand in opposition to forces beyond themselves and, by virtue of this position as subordinate to uncontrollable forces, who are construed as victims. The melodramatic mode draws the viewer in, catching him or her in the emotion of the moment — be it sadness, anger, happiness, or any of the emotional spectrum’s vast array. What is at stake in melodramatic scenes is life and death, and the tension illustrated through the emotions of the characters is what draws in the audience, investing them in the scene, making them choose a character with whom to ally. The viewer’s reaction depends on this investment in the scene. At times, when one is not entirely invested in such a scene, these moments may be interpreted as excessive: the emotion being expressed appears laughable, and we judge it to be overdone. Linda Williams says that for the audience, it is “as if there is a “bad” melodrama of manipulated, naively felt, feminine emotions and a “good” melodrama of ironical hysterical excess thought to be immune to more pathetic emotions” (44). Although the achievement of moving the viewer to pathos is dependent on the emotional investment of the viewer

in the characters, Williams says, “It is never a matter of simply mimicking the emotion of the protagonist, but, rather, a complex negotiation between emotion and thought” (49). In the moments where the viewer finds him or herself moved to a pathos different than that being expressed by the characters, it is not that the scene has failed in its purpose, but rather that the pathos into which the audience has entered is one in which they have negotiated between emotion and thought, with thought having led the audience to side against the pathos of the character, or “victim.”

In the moments of intense emotion in which the viewer is moved to pathos for a character, the motivation beneath such a reaction, which the melodramatic mode, through its intense, potentially excessive emotionality, points to, is moral. The melodramatic mode serves to gesture to this underlying morality, or, as Peter Brooks describes it, the “moral occult.” The “moral occult” is the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality” and the domain of morals and values that rest underneath actions (Brooks 5). Brooks, in a discussion of the melodramatic mode in Henry James’s work, explains that there is “a total articulation of the grandiose moral terms of the drama, an assertion that what is being played out on the plane of manners is charged from the realm of the moral occult, that gestures within the world constantly refer us to another, hyperbolic set of gestures where life and death are at stake” (8). In the context of *Grey’s Anatomy*, the gestures of the show — be it the aesthetic design of the show with its fast cuts, multiple plot threads, opening and closing

voiceover narration and musical montages, or the actions and decisions made by the characters in both their professional and personal lives — are, in the most emotional moments, “charged from the realm of the moral occult.” Moreover, the melodramatic mode in Grey’s Anatomy not only functions to locate a moral occult, but locates one that operates under late capitalist ideology, which as a recurring plot dynamic serves to internalize in its audience the instability of capitalism in the globalized world.

While each episode of Grey’s Anatomy exhibits features of the melodramatic mode, the moral occult, and the late capitalist ideology that functions beneath it, it is in the three-part finale of season two that such features are most visible. The specific features of late capitalism that are most apparent are those of time-space compression and consumerism. Time compression refers to the reduction of time it takes for processes in society to occur. It is as if our society has gradually been speeding up; the amount of time it once took to complete only one task is now enough to complete multiple tasks. Financial transactions, for instance, are completed in a matter of seconds instead of a matter of hours or days. As a result, time has become “compressed”: we try to reduce it to the smallest quantity possible while completing larger and larger quantities of actions in that new compressed time. This creates a notion of time as being the enemy as well as a scarce resource.

Just as time is the enemy in this late capitalist world, so is space, as space (in terms of distance) contributes to the time it takes for actions to be carried out: the compression of space and time is interdependent: when one can be compressed so can the

other, resulting in the economic world to the making of more money, or (in the show) to the saving of a life. Space, through the advent of faster forms of transportation and electronic devices for transferring information, while not quite eliminated, has become smaller. Bauman observes, “With the time of communication imploding and shrinking to the no-size of the instant, space and spatial markers cease to matter . . .” (Bauman 13). Space (in its traditional, conceptual sense) ceases to exist, as circumstances exist in which miles have become the equivalent of inches.

A subsequent feature of late capitalism present in the show, which is connected to time-space compression, is consumerism. Consumerism in the late capitalist world goes hand-in-hand with time compression because the compression of time and space contribute to economic profitability: the faster transactions occur, the more things can be bought and sold, and the faster products can cross space. Through the advent of the Internet and Internet shopping, in some cases, this has approached instantaneity. We can purchase music and movies through iTunes and Netflix, love and relationships through sites like eHarmony and match.com, and even pornography, where within seconds of completing our purchase, the product is in our hands. Consumerism has become disembodied from objects, and experiences have become commodities. While the traditional “products” of consumerism are still essential to the cycle, they are secondary to the experience. They are merely tools to support the attainment of the desired experience.

Both time-space compression and the consumerist ideologies of late capitalism, as they operate in the realm of the “moral occult” and are gestured to through the melodramatic mode, can be found in various facets of the show. The structural aesthetics of the episodes, with rapid cuts between plot threads (which occur within the average tempo of the show between every minute and a half to two minutes and every 10-30 seconds during melodramatic periods), along with rapid camera angle movements of every five to ten seconds within shots, serve to set the show in a time-space that conveys a feeling of speed, as though there is a need to constantly keep moving and not linger too long with the risk of missing something, something which, in the context of the hospital, could be life or death. The speed that is embedded in the structure of the show through the use of such rapid camera movements functions as a method to instill in the audience the pathos of the melodramatic scene, a pathos that unites the audience with the characters of the scene and, in turn, with the moral occult that is being gestured to — one operating under the ideology of time-space compression.

For example, in episode one of the three-part finale of season two, the main situation through which the melodramatic mode is expressed is one regarding the ability to obtain a heart for the patient Denny Duket. The rapid shifts between scenes at the hospital that doctors from Seattle Grace have gone to in order to obtain a donor heart, and scenes of the intern Izzie back at Seattle Grace hospital, emphasize the tension of the scene. The viewer is forced to be pulled back and forth by the emotional

pendulum of the rapid succession of cuts. And, not only are they forced to be pulled back and forth between the two emotional scenes, but additionally, through such rapid camera shifts, the audience finds itself caught up in the significance that time and space have in the scenes. As the tension grows over whether Denny will get the heart, the camera movements within the scenes (as well as between the scenes) become faster, and the audience internalizes the frantic nature of the scene. Audience perception speeds up to keep time with the increasing rapidity of these camera movements, and just as the tension reaches its climax, the shifting camera movements cease. The camera suspends its movements, with the camera briefly, but slowly, focusing on the disembodied voice of a speakerphone, and time — the very thing that, until that point in the show, the camera (and consequently the audience) had tried to overcome — emphatically reasserts itself. The reason for Denny losing the heart is revealed to be that he was logged into the transplant system seventeen seconds too late. The feeling left in the viewer is one of disappointment and agitation.

The loss of the heart is in itself devastating, but what makes it worse is that the loss is the result of only seventeen seconds — not two weeks or three days, but seventeen seconds. Two weeks constitutes an eternity in this world of time compression, where society is trying to reduce every action to instantaneity. If Denny had been two weeks behind the other patient in being logged into the system, it would feel reasonable for him to lose the heart, because our feelings would rest with the other individual. In a time-compressed world, the time and distance that is represented

by two weeks can resemble an eon, and therefore, if two weeks had been the gap, we would conceive the first patient as being logged in a “fair” amount of time before Denny, making the loss of the heart by Denny (while sad) something that does not elicit any significant pathos. This is not the case when we confront Denny’s loss of the heart as being the result of only seventeen seconds — as Izzie says to Denny, “not even the length of a decent kiss.” This loss of the heart reveals how, in the world of the hospital (just as in late capitalism), taking too long, and expending too much time, equals the difference between a loss and a gain, life or death.

Just as the scene of the revelation that Denny will not get the heart points to time compression, there is also an articulation of space compression. In the show, this is shown through the use of a modern tool, a helicopter, to zip back and forth between hospitals. Space compression is additionally significant in its ability to evoke pathos for Denny. This is conveyed through how Denny comes to be logged into the transplant system “too late” or behind the other patient. Denny was not logged in behind the other patient because of slow paperwork, or because someone stalled on making a phone call (still a relatively fast form of communication). What made the difference for when Denny was put into the system was the time someone hit the enter button on a keyboard. Denny is competing for a heart not only against those geographically near him, but in this late capitalist time and space compressed world, he is ultimately in competition with the entire

globe, and he lost that fight by a small, yet significant, amount of time.

Similarly, late capitalist consumerist ideology is gestured to by the melodramatic mode in Izzie’s decision to make Denny more ill in order for him to move up on the transplant list, despite Denny’s original plead against it saying, “I am not going to steal a heart from another man’s chest” (Denny ultimately gives in). Izzie, despite not only the ethical ramifications of what she is doing as well as the fact that she is ruining her future as a doctor, makes the choice to cut Denny’s L-VAD wire in order to cheat the system. As pathos is elicited in the audience through the melodrama of the scene, the viewer either thinks that what Izzie is doing is right and hopes Denny gets the heart, or he or she condemns her for her actions and hopes that Denny doesn’t get the heart. In siding with Izzie, the viewer is uniting him or herself with Izzie and her underlying motivations for saving Denny. Izzie is able to justify her actions because she loves Denny, and he loves her; that “love,” which exists between them in terms of “experience” (the “experience” of getting to share that with each other), is held in the show as justification for the disregard of ethics. For Izzie, that Denny, the man she loves, won’t get a heart because he was 17 seconds too late, and that this is “not even the length of a decent kiss,” justifies her choice to fight for the heart and against the reasserted force of time.

In the final two episodes of the finale there is a culminating articulation through the melodramatic mode of both late capitalist time-space compression and consumerist ideologies. In the second

episode, which subsequently follows Izzie's cutting of Denny's L-VAD wire, the audience is again pulled back and forth, between the two hospitals and whether or not Denny will receive the heart. It is in the last 12 minutes of the episode that the silent breath the audience has been holding up to this point can be released as Denny is awarded the heart. With this announcement there is a reiteration of time-space compression as the high-tech tool of the helicopter again serves to quickly zip a surgeon who is to put the heart in, to Seattle Grace hospital, while also bringing with it this time the heart.

With Denny finally being awarded the heart, there is a suggestion that despite the disregard by Izzie of traditional moral and ethical standards, what she did when viewed in terms of late capitalist ideology is justified. Izzie asserts her free will to obtain the thing she desires the most, the opportunity to have the experience of a relationship with Denny. This free will that she asserts which is not only a response to the reassertion of time, her futile attempt to beat the clock, which is the villain that she lays victim to, but is also the result of the internalized effects of consumerism, as Bauman explains, "To act like this is for fully fledged, mature consumers a compulsion, a must; yet the 'must' that internalized pressure, that impossibility of living one's life in any other way, reveals itself to them in the disguise of a free exercise of will" (84). The act that Bauman is speaking of is the act of consumption. Izzie desperately wants the heart so as to be able to have her experience of a relationship, that she asserts her will, choosing to do whatever is needed to get Denny the heart.

This "free" will though is really the effect of the internalization of late capitalist consumerist ideology. This same "free" will is ironically mimicked by the audience as the pathos of the melodramatic mode that is elicited in the viewer causes the viewer to either side with Izzie and hope Denny gets the heart or side against Izzie and hope Denny doesn't get the heart. Regardless of whether the viewer sides with Izzie or against her, the viewer is making a choice, exhibiting his or her "free" will. This "free" will though is dictated by late capitalist ideology, as Bauman explains, "They are the judges, the critics and the choosers. They can refuse their allegiance to any one of the infinite choices on display" (84). The audience may choose to side against Izzie, but all they are denying is "their allegiance" to the desire for the experience that she desires; they are still choosing, and in so as much as they make a choice, they are influenced by late capitalist consumerist ideology.

The dramatic tension of whether Denny will get the heart is resolved in his finally going into surgery at the end of the second episode and waking up post-operation to Izzie in the third and final episode of the season two finale, with it appearing that Izzie and Denny will get a happy ending. With Denny alive and well with a new heart, the audience sees Izzie onto the next issue at hand, acting frantic over whether he remembers asking her to marry him. The happily ever after that the viewer thinks Izzie is going to get doesn't last long when in the final episode of the finale bringing the dramatic arc to a close, Denny flat-lines and dies, unable to successfully use his new heart.

With Denny dying, it suddenly appears that everything Izzie fought for was futile. For those who were hoping for Denny to get the heart and Izzie to get to have her “experience” or love match with him, it appears that time once again reasserted itself, as Izzie walks into the room seconds too late to try and save him. For those that didn’t want Denny to get the heart, it appears that Denny’s dying was Izzie’s payback for disobeying the rules of morality and ethical behavior. When looked at in terms of late capitalist consumerism, though, Denny had to die not as punishment for Izzie’s actions but because the objects of desire, which Denny and his heart were for Izzie, cannot last too long. As Bauman says, “nothing should be embraced by a consumer firmly, nothing should command a commitment till death do us part, no needs should be seen as fully satisfied, no desires considered ultimate”(81). Izzie was able to have the brief fulfillment of her desire between the time after Denny received the heart and when he died.

There cannot be a “happily ever after” in the traditional sense for Izzie in this late capitalist world, because as “experiences” have become commodities, holding onto an experience forever, as would be the case if Denny lived, stops that cycle of consumption. Izzie attains a new, late capitalist “happily ever after,” one where happiness is not supplied through the finding and uniting with one person for the rest of one’s life, but instead where “ever after” is redefined as the continuous renewal of the first moment of desire, and where the “after,” is not an end, but a repeated beginning.

Similarly, in the context of the structure of the show, Denny had to die because that is what keeps the show going. The viewer may have liked Izzie, and thought that Denny was the one she was meant to be with, but what is made clear through Denny’s death is that the viewer, like Izzie, is more interested in the next desire than the one that requires a “until death do us part” commitment. Both Izzie and the audience will overcome their grief and be searching anew to have their desire fulfilled once again in the next season.

While the three episodes of the finale of season two demonstrate the melodramatic mode, the moral occult, and the late capitalist ideology that functions beneath it, it is not here where these features begin nor end in the show. Denny is neither the first nor the last man with whom Izzie has a relationship, and the relationships of most of Izzie’s peers and superiors on the show mimic Izzie’s patterns. Like Izzie’s relationship with Denny, these relationships are about the experience and the fulfillment of desire, but not lingering with that desire for too long, which is apparent in the characters sleeping with numerous people, as well as in the lack of married couples on the show. All of the main characters that were married in the premier of the show are divorced by the end of season four, and any of the characters that attempt to get married or do get married, such as Christina and Burke, and George and Callie, either do not actually get married or end up getting a divorce.

Further, while the hospital for her actions does punish Izzie, it is trivialized in her receiving an inheritance from Denny

that allows her to open up a clinic in his honor. This clinic is meant to help the poor and underinsured, those who in this time-space compressed world do not find themselves freed by the erosion of the significance of space, and are the ones grounded by it. So, just as Denny competed for the heart against those geographically near and far from him, in the late capitalist time-space compressed world so too do people compete with those around the globe for jobs. These are the people who are unable to traverse space as easily as the doctors are able to do for Denny to get his heart, those who are weighed down, finding themselves unable to compete in the global market. Through Izzie's philanthropic behavior, the moral occult's ideological function is to reify the idea that the philanthropy of the economically empowered is enough to resolve the tensions of the globalized economy. Izzie fights for these economically marginalized patients, just as Izzie fought for Denny, in the show. And through the melodramatic mode, the audience continues to internalize the tensions of the late capitalist ideology that rests beneath it.

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SARAH McNAUGHTON

Originally from Denver, CO, Sarah moved to Oregon to pursue her love of news/editorial journalism and creative writing. She is currently a sophomore. She is excited to be a part of the creative writing department's Kidd Tutorial this year. She comes by her excessive cynicism honestly and therefore dedicates this essay to her brilliant late father.

Mentor: Virginia Piper

THE PLEASURE OF FEAR

NETWORK NEWSCASTS AND THE 2002 BELTWAY SNIPER ATTACKS

Seeking information that will quell their uncertainties, anxious audiences have relied upon television for decades. When a crisis occurs, Nielsen ratings for news broadcasts spike as viewers rush to their television sets for the latest information. As frightening stories such as the Columbine shootings or the attacks of 9/11 have received more media attention in recent years, a culture of fear has grown and along with it,

the public's need for information. According to sociologist David Altheide, "popular culture includes a relatively large amount of information and images pertaining to fear, including crime and violence, and audience members perceive social life as very dangerous" (Altheide 648). In a time when each newscast introduces the viewer to new and imposing dangers — be they drugs in drinking water or bomb threats at middle schools — the American public's sense of security is under constant attack.

The Beltway Sniper story of 2002, in the wake of 9/11, attracted intense national attention. Over the first three weeks of October, two men shot thirteen people near Washington DC, killing ten. The story gained immense popularity and the media created household names for the killers, including "The DC Sniper," "The Serial Sniper," and "The Tarot Card Killer." Throughout October of 2002, viewers nationwide turned on the news to learn of the latest killing or the newest lead. Particularly in Washington DC, viewers relied heavily on their television sets for crucial information. "In the Washington area, the number of homes using television rose about 20% on average during the crisis...with cable's local Newschannel 8 getting some of the highest ratings in its 10-year history" (Washington TV 7). As *New York Times* columnist Ann Patchett wrote during the weeks of the attacks, "we are always looking to make some sort of sense out of murder in order to keep it safely at bay" (Patchett 21). Viewers watched on, and the news did not simply try to make sense out of the sniping; the information was presented in a systematic way so as

to provide superficial comfort while simultaneously acting to heighten viewers' fears.

Viewers relied on newscasts to provide information that would "make order of the chaos at hand" during the sniper attacks of October 2002 (Patchett 22). Previous experiences with the media teach viewers to depend upon television news for valuable information. Over time, the media become a reliable resource. Altheide argues, "The mass media play a large role in shaping public agendas by influencing what people think about" (Altheide 648). As viewers watch the news, the news teaches viewers what is important and what is dangerous, thus manipulating the viewers' own sense of reality and driving them to tune in for more information later. Viewers seek consolation and comfort through knowledge, and thus rely heavily on the acknowledged authority on crises: the media.

Consequently, in the first few days of the Beltway Sniper attacks, viewers' fears of being the next random victim drove them to search for any information that would ease their anxieties. Viewers received the information they were searching for in the newscasts, such as the locations of the latest shootings; however, the format in which each newscast provided this information was organized in a manner that also heightened viewers' fears. Altheide explains that this presentation technique is called a "problem frame," in which news stories are based upon a broader outline so as to spark specific reactions within viewers. Accordingly, "The problem frame promotes a discourse of fear

that may be defined as the pervasive communication, symbolic awareness and expectation that danger and risk are a central feature of the effective environment" (Altheide 648). During the sniper attacks, network newscasts invaded viewers' living rooms nightly, broadcasting images and phrases of peril and becoming an intimate yet overwhelming source of fear. The problem frame, then, compels viewers to continue to be frightened yet interested as well, as it relies heavily upon entertainment. The more thrilling a news story is, the more important it is considered by the public.

Altheide elaborates:

The entertainment format of news is key to the rise of the 'problem' frame... First, there is an absence of the ordinary; second is the openness of an adventure, outside the boundaries of routine behavior; third, the audience member is willing to suspend disbelief... Packaging such emphases within formats that are visual, brief, action-oriented, and dramatic produces an exciting and familiar tempo to news audiences. (652)

Additionally, Altheide states that the problem frame often uses characteristics similar to a narrative structure to peak viewers' interest. Based on Altheide's guidelines of the problem frame as well as characteristics of the narrative, one notices the clear parallels between coverage of the sniper story on the night of October 4, 2002 and the narrative impulse of the problem frame.

Stories based on the problem frame contain a beginning-middle-end structure with particular attention paid to the suspenseful middle. Within this middle, the stories must include the "absence of the ordinary" as well as "the openness of an adventure, outside the boundaries of routine behavior," both of which easily enhance the sense of suspense within a story.

Suspense and the thrilling fear of the unknown drive the story forward, as in a traditional narrative. Each of the newscasts equally stress the absence of the ordinary in strikingly similar ways.

CNN's coverage, sensationally titled "Killing Ground," immediately addressed the irregularities inherent in the story: "all [shootings] happened — all but one — in broad daylight, all in public places, all with sniper-style precision, from a distance, and all as people were going about their very mundane activities: mowing their lawns, sitting on a park bench." With its emphasis on something extremely unusual interrupting the usual, the story becomes a frightening adventure that starkly contrasts with "mundane activities" or "routine behavior." ABC's "Sniper Search" emphasized the randomness of the attacks where "a woman simply out shopping" and "a 72 year old man, just walking down a street," were shot. The addition of "simply" and "just" — while seemingly minute details in a larger sentence — epitomize the problem frame's ultimate goal: to create an overpowering awareness of potential crisis. For instance, NBC's "Shooting Spree" transformed a simple sentence into a dramatic and frightening scene, stating, "the serial killer is a skilled marksman, hunting down random citizens with a powerful rifle." While other newscasts chose titles such as "shooter" or "gunman," NBC's simple diction choice in using "serial killer" adds a certain entrancing power to the story. Although the term "serial killer" is not incorrect, it is far from the most accurate or informative, and therefore is used primarily for its rarity and entertainment value. Combining strong phrases that highlight Altheide's "action-

oriented and dramatic" such as "serial killer," "skilled marksman," "hunting down" and "powerful rifle" into one sentence is guaranteed to entertain as much as it informs.

In order to capture the sense of adventure that goes outside routine behavior, CNN, NBC and CBS spent the majority of their newscasts discussing the chase for the suspect and the weaponry used. A true indicator of the problem frame's emphasis on adventure and suspense, three of the four newscasts addressed the story with the specific word "manhunt": "Tonight the manhunt still underway" (NBC), "while the manhunt goes on" (ABC), and CBS's entire segment titled "Manhunt." Being the literal hunt for a dangerous man, this one word epitomizes the newscasts' need to highlight the most thrilling, adventurous and suspenseful parts of a story. The problem frame thus turns a news report into a small tale replete with emotive diction, poignant irregularities, and a gripping quest. Additionally, one immediately notices the ceaseless repetition of the phrase "high-powered" in each of the newscasts, in addition to the insistence that the sniper is a frighteningly good shot. For instance, CBS reported that "Investigators today brought out an array of high-powered weapons... Any of these rifles or dozens more like them could have fired the 223 caliber rounds... Police are fairly certain that the shooter is a well-trained marksman who gunned down his victims from a distance." CNN reported that "[Investigators] believe it was a 223 round, a high-powered round, that was fired from a high-powered rifle... you can hit a target with precision with one shot from distances up to 500 yards, that's the length of

5 football fields." Finally, NBC: "Ballistics reports from the 5 deadly slayings show the gunman used a high-powered assault or hunting rifle... Police showed 223 caliber Remington bullets... A very light, very fast round with deadly accuracy and devastating consequences." Clearly the newscasts parrot each other, revealing how systematic the problem frame tends to be. As "high-powered" rifles obviously rest "outside routine behavior," the newscasts capitalize on the weaponry of the story. They each add sensational wording to an otherwise basic report on guns, pointing to a dangerous man trained to "gun down his victims from a distance," as far as "5 football fields." This framing of the report leaves little room for feeling safe or comforted as viewers are fed one disconcerting phrase and image after another. Minor differences in the reports aside, the message throughout each newscast is remarkably similar: 'isn't this horrible, yet isn't this thrilling?' As Patchett notes, "the same television set that gives us random violence on CNN gives us "Law and Order" on NBC, where violence comes with some kind of closure" (Patchett 21). Lines like "A very light, very fast round with deadly accuracy and devastating consequences," could easily be pulled directly from a primetime drama series. By covering the hunt and the weapons so closely and presenting information in a manner almost reminiscent of a primetime crime show, networks placed the viewer in an all too-real adventure that provoked fear just as it provided information.

News media, as Anthony Kubiak asserts, is "no mere re-creation of reality, but the creation of the Real" (Kubiak 15).

Networks no longer simply produce an informative news story; they create a new and fear-provoking reality for fascinated audiences. Networks create a reality for viewers in which everything is inherently dangerous. Altheide argues that “[u]nlike morality plays in which the audience is reminded of eternal threats and truths, the problem frame features everyday life filled with problem generating fear” (Altheide 655). The newscast emphasizes the point that although the story is an individual one, it is not isolated; it is part of a larger societal problem and cannot be ignored. For instance, CNN’s coverage connected the Beltway sniper shootings to the overriding issue of terrorism in the United States, a topic that, occurring barely a year after 9/11, was guaranteed to spark interest and fear in the majority of the public:

We begin with a story of terror, terror is a word we’ve used a lot over the last twelve months. But this is a reminder that terror isn’t always spelled with a capital ‘T,’ it isn’t always about groups in foreign lands with political grievances. Sometimes terror is as simple as a guy with a gun. And that terror is what we begin with tonight or at least so it appears.

Here, the word “terror” was repeated five times in sixteen seconds. Not only does the allusion to earlier attacks shock and scare viewers, the repetition of negative words adds to the sense of fear throughout the report. Similar to CNN’s introduction, ABC opened with “the seemingly random shootings that have terrorized residents in the Washington D.C. area for the last two days.” Altheide notes that between 1985 and 1994, “ABC’s regular evening news program [had] an increase of 173 percent [in the use of the word ‘fear’]” (Altheide 660). The repetition of startling

images such as the planes flying into the World Trade Center or of upsetting words such as “terror,” “fear,” and “murder” reinforce the dangerous and scary reality created by the media. The media bombards the public with familiar words and images in order to make terrible things seem real. As Altheide, citing Heath and Gilbert¹, suggests, “Because the media often distort crime by over representing more severe, intentional, and gruesome incidents, the public overestimates its frequency and often misperceives reality” (Altheide 649). The media ultimately and unfortunately creates a new sense of dramatic reality for viewers through the overwhelming and repetitious sense of impending danger.

To further convince viewers of a frightening outside world, the media must suspend viewers’ disbelief. In this, each network provides the ultimate reason to believe the reality of the tragedy of the Beltway sniper: would you not trust the words of frightened suburban mothers and children? CNN reported, “if you think we are overstating, here are the words of a mother today in suburban Washington... ‘My kids are scared. They’re more scared now than on September 11th.’” NBC cut in a scene of a student saying “I’m scared, so I didn’t want to go to school today.” Meanwhile, ABC showed one mom in front of a grocery store holding her infant close, saying, “Right now I’m scared to come here, you know?” and another in her spotless kitchen: “It’s frightening, I am going to drive [my kids] and that makes me feel safer just making sure they get in that door.”

¹ Linda Heath and Kevin Gilbert, “Mass Media and Fear of Crime,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 1996: 379-386.

Creating an empathetic space where viewers can relate with people on the screen makes the situation much more real than any other device. Kubiak notes the many interviews with witnesses of 9/11: "These testimonials were certainly heartrending and appalling, but they were also carefully selected and rehearsed, and followed a very fine line between sheer ghastliness and empathy" (Kubiak 18). The problem frame inserts such "heartrending testimonials" into nearly every critical story, where an innocent civilian professes their concerns and fears to the rest of the nation. Seeing seemingly trustworthy individuals who are sharing the audience's anxieties enforces the viewers' sense of fear, for, as Altheide explains: "Fear of crime in many ways is about fear for one's safety, fear of becoming a victim, or fear of kids being victims" (Altheide 663). Newscasts based on the problem frame create touching characters that are likable so as to spark an intense emotional reaction within viewers: 'it could have been me!' This potential reality frightens viewers into an obsessive need for information on every avoidable crisis. "Television becomes, oddly, a kind of reality principle" (Kubiak 7). Newscasts reveal a terrifying and dissatisfactory reality that viewers, in trying to avoid, accept as truth. The dangerous reality created by the media takes on a powerful role in altering how the public reacts to everyday issues; it creates a self-generating culture of fear.

Just as the news media is well versed in manipulating viewers' feelings of fright, the news media is also skilled in transforming feelings of fright into pleasure. In "Enjoyment of Mediated Fright and Violence," Cynthia Hoffner and Kenneth

Levine note the various ways in which individuals enjoy feelings of fear, particularly through outlets like horror books and movies. Hoffner and Levine find that suspense and resolution are key to enjoyment, and that many people engage in an increased level of "sensation seeking" in which they enjoy intense emotions, particularly fear. Therefore, audiences retain pleasure from their fright based on the careful presentation of each newscast.

Initially, Hoffner and Levine note that suspense always plays a key role in the pleasure gained from fear: "physiological arousal, facial expressions of both fearfulness and positive affect, and liking for the program increased as the degree of suspense increased, especially when the threat was successfully overcome" (Hoffner and Levine 210). Newscasts are able to utilize this fact in appealing to the suspense and drama of an ongoing murder case, particularly highlighting the expected resolution. A segment based on the problem frame will not only present a highly suspenseful story, it will make the most of the ensuing chase. For example, NBC's coverage in "Shooting Spree" concluded the night's story with loose and fearsome ends: "Tonight the manhunt still underway, yet police admit they still don't know what kind of person they are looking for, there are so few clues the FBI has yet to complete a profile." As the problem frame's basic presentation style plays on and worsens viewers' fears through suspense, it is the impending resolution that recuperates feelings of pleasure. Comparable to a nighttime drama series' daunting "to be continued" at the end of an episode, CNN's "Killing Ground," anchor added dramatic flair to an otherwise mundane

sign-off to a correspondent's report: "Kathleen, thank you. Kathleen Koch on the story tonight....We'll see where this one goes." With one simple line, the audience is encouraged to continue watching to find out what will happen next as the anchor successfully engages the audience using a device resembling that of a detective drama series. While the sniper story was framed to be particularly frightening as a serial killer hunts down random citizens, newscasts in turn frame this fear to be enjoyable, with all the key elements of a fictional story. CBS's "Manhunt" also contained suspenseful commentary that included viewers in the thrill of a mystery, stating,

So far the big break hasn't come. Investigators have called in a psychological profile expert to help understand the killers' motive and a geographical profiler to spot anything in the location of the shootings scattered over a 4 mile radius that may yield some clue.

A clip showing an investigator asked, "Is there a pattern, is there something trying to be accomplished from the way it looks on the map, are they familiar with the area, are they simply just doing this in a random fashion?" The addition of investigators' questions ultimately pull the viewer deeper into the suspense of the story, as a very real incident is turned into a dramatic chase full of unsolved clues.

Hoffner and Levine, drawing on the work of Zillman², note that "suspense [is] defined as audience members' 'acute, fearful

apprehension about deplorable events that threaten liked protagonists'" (Hoffner and Levine 208). Closely related to the way a reader may identify with the hero in a traditional narrative, in a problem-framed newscast viewers see themselves as sympathetic protagonists. As viewers sit in their living rooms afraid that they may be the next victims, newscasts draw them in and transform their fears into an emotional anticipation for a happy ending. Guaranteeing "breaking news" and a positive conclusion, network news reports allow viewers' fears to become a part of the suspense and subsequent resolution, creating a thrilling and pleasurable experience. Newscasts ensure an enrapt and attentive audience for several updates to follow by continuously promising to provide closure to a story as soon as it is discovered.

Often, however, newscasts hardly have to make an effort to make horrible stories enjoyable, for the majority of viewers derive pleasure from frightening experiences. Hoffner and Levine, drawing on Zuckerman³, address "sensation seeking...a trait characterized by 'the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences'" (Hoffner and Levine 211). The majority of Americans are sensation seekers, as evidenced by the success of thriller, horror and drama film ticket sales. Statistics provided by the Motion Picture Association of America reveal that of the 20 top-grossing films in 2007, nine fell in the genre of thriller, horror, or drama. "High sensation seekers enjoy

² D. Zillmann, "The Psychology of Suspense in Dramatic Exposition," *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations*, 1996: 199-231.

³ M. Zuckerman, *Behavioral Expressions and Biosocial Bases of Sensation Seeking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 27.

stimuli that elicit negative emotions, such as fear, because the intensity of these emotions helps them reach their optimal level of arousal" (Hoffner and Levine 212). As fear is an extremely powerful emotion it is often preferred, and thus explains the evergrowing market of horror products and Halloween hysteria.

Newscast are able to manipulate viewers' initial concerns into larger fears that actually give sensation-seeking viewers a sense of pleasure while seemingly providing comforting information. As long as the newscasts report the story in a way that maintains a careful balance between a definite danger and a potential danger, the result of fright is enjoyment. If the viewer perceives a dangerous situation as potentially threatening but not unquestionably so, the actual feelings of fright are, in turn, pleasurable. Hoffner and Levine add that "this may enable them to enjoy temporary states of fear without expecting long-term negative consequences" (227). To endure this enjoyment, the network must maintain a balance between the audience perceiving something as a general threat and believing something to be a personal threat. Newscasts must weave each separate part of the problem frame into a narrative-like report.

Altheide, quoting Gunther⁴, best condenses the impact of the problem frame upon viewers' senses of fear and pleasure:

Probably nearest the truth...may be a notion of circularity in the relationship. Greater fear of potential danger in the social environment may encourage people to stay indoors, where they watch more television, and are

exposed to programmes which tell them things which in turn reinforce their anxieties. (Altheide 650)

At its core, the systematic presentation of the problem-frame newscast is a cyclical experience. The viewer comes to the television with his anxieties, hoping for comfort, and is simultaneously comforted, frightened and pleased; each of these emotions draw him back to the television in a separate but related way. While watching, his initial need of comfort is met through the basic information provided; his fears are manipulated and heightened as he is convinced of a perpetually dangerous outside reality, thus driving him to return to the television more often and more anxious; finally, he enjoys the sense of danger and fear the newscast so dramatically provides, and therefore wishes to be frightened again. This cyclical relationship is important to the success of television news and is how networks ensure a dedicated audience each night. Without the narrative character of the problem frame, viewers would not tune in and therefore would not live in a twisted and fearful reality in which they derive comfort and pleasure from sensational newscasts. The Beltway Sniper story of 2002 not only revealed the lengths to which network newscasts will go to maintain a frightened audience, it also revealed the manifold reasons why viewers continue to watch ever-frightening coverage and support a culture of fear: the culture itself creates feelings of pleasure. During the Beltway Sniper story of 2002 and throughout many other crises since, the American public has enjoyed being scared senseless.

⁴ Barry Gunter, *Television and the Fear of Crime* (London: John Libbey, 1987) 270.

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Born in 1989 in Denver, CO, and raised in Las Vegas, NV, Ben Taylor is currently working on a Bachelor of Arts in English, which he hopes to finish within the next year. He is not entirely sure what he wants to do with himself when he graduates; although he proclaims to have a "vague goal" of living somewhere in the northwest and teaching middle or high school English.

Mentor: Prof. Leah Middlebrook

THE PRODUCTION BEHIND PRODUCTION

DEVELOPING TRENDS IN THE GLOBAL TELEVISION SET MARKET

It is safe to say that television remains one of, if not the, primary medium of cultural transmission in the modern world. As such, the global nature of its physical production, which has been developing in a certain direction for the past twenty to thirty years, is pertinent to understanding television programming as a global cultural medium. Undoubtedly, programming content is an important area of study in

regards to globalization. However, it can easily distract us from television's role as an economic product, a commercial entity, a "box."

The developments in television set production of the last two or three decades appear to revolve around the economic theory of convergence and its implicit tenet of economically absorbing "developing" nations into the "developed" world. Convergence theory or the "catch-up effect," contains two central parts. First, it presupposes that the economies of countries that start off poor generally grow faster than the economies of countries that start off rich. Second, it concludes from this premise that the national income of poor countries usually catches up with the national income of rich countries ("Catch-up Effect," par. 1). Implicit, and at the same time fairly obvious, in convergence theory is the idea that developing nations should, can, and will merge, or be absorbed into the global economy of the developed world. Since television manufacturing is a highly divisible process — certain stages of the process being better suited to the environment of developing nations — it is easy to decipher how convergence theory is central to the globalization of the television manufacturing industry and why this absorption is beneficial to large television manufacturing corporations. However, despite its positive outlook, the reality of convergence theory ever successfully bringing developing nations up to the economic standards of developed nations is questionable and ultimately contradictory.

The research presented in this paper is concerned with giving the reader a sense of how television manufacturing corporations use the resources of developing nations — primarily cheaper but less-skilled labor — to remain financially viable in a highly competitive industry. The research is also meant to demonstrate the supplier-consumer relationship between developing nations and developed nations. Both of these aims will support the claim that the television manufacturing industry's development towards an underlying trend of economic absorption is not possible through a mere reliance on the catch-up effect.

The Countries, the Companies, and the Technology

Only a few nations in what is currently considered the developing world have been major participants in the economic practice of absorption within the modern global television set industry. Mexico and certain Eastern European nations are the most prominent and most relevant in relation to how television acts as a link between developed and developing nations. These developing nations are in close proximity to the most developed parts of the modern world — the United States and Western Europe, respectively. On its own, this fact means nothing; however, paired with the observation that, Western Europe, North America, and Japan together still absorb over 80 percent of total production of consumer electronics (United Nations 40), the geographical

relationships between newly emerging television production centers and their main consumers comes into focus.

As important as the nations involved in this new development in the television set industry are the companies executing the practices that constitute economic absorption. According to iSuppli Corporation¹, a company that furnishes various market intelligence, in the fourth quarter of 2007 market shares in the television industry stood as follows: for liquid crystal display (LCD) televisions, Samsung held the largest market share at 14.2%, followed by Sony (12.5%), Vizio (12.4%), Polaroid (9.4%), Sharp (8.3%), LG Electronics (7.8%), Philips (6.7%), and all others (28.8%). For Plasma-televisions, Panasonic (also known as Matsushita) lead with a 37.1% market share, followed by Samsung (19.7%), LG Electronics (12.7%), Hitachi (6.5%), Vizio (5.5%), Philips (5.2%), Pioneer (4.6%), and all others (8.7%) (Cassell, Table 1). These numbers help to determine which companies are most influential, allowing one to gauge the future trends of the television set industry.

Though traditional cathode ray tube (CRT) televisions have constituted the greater part of the product of television manufacturing in the past, they are currently in the process of being surpassed by the production of flat screen, mainly LCD, televisions. Riddhi Patel of iSuppli Corporation predicts that by the year 2009, shipments of LCD televisions will exceed those of

¹ From iSuppli Corporation's website (<http://www.isuppli.com>), "iSuppli Corporation helps clients improve performance in the electronics value chain by providing them with the facts, analysis and advice they require to know precisely how to succeed."

CRT televisions by approximately 20,000 units. This shift obviously has an effect on competition within the television market and will most likely further complicate an already complex industry. Companies will either have to gradually produce more and more LCD televisions to maintain a sufficient market share or find a way to sustain a profit from the sale of outdated CRT televisions. Patel predicts the former, suggesting that with the rise of LCD television manufacture, there will also be a drop in CRT television manufacture (1).

Though this change in technology may not seem to have a connection to the global economy, it actually plays a significant role: changing technology appears to be prompting some of the top manufacturers of LCD televisions to rely on the labor markets of certain developing nations in order to produce this relatively new technology at an affordable price.

Mexico

As previously stated, Mexico is a major developing nation that television production firms are using as a center of LCD television production. Mexico has played an integral part in the television set industry, especially as it supplies the North American market. The United Nations states that "[b]etween 1982 and 1997, more than \$80 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) entered Mexico," and that this, along with certain changes in Mexico's trade and investment policy, prompted color television production to expand from 1.7 million units in 1987 to over 18 million units in 1996. These developments resulted in the

establishment of a major center for color television export in Tijuana, which has been successfully supplying the U.S. with a large number of color televisions (United Nations 50, 52)

A related and more recent news article concerning Mexico in the LCD television industry also falls into this historic context. Published in February of this year, it states that in Playas de Rosarito, the Japanese electronics-maker Sharp, invested \$300 million in a brand-new plant and adjoining complex, which churns out LCD television sets for the North and South American markets (Kessler, par. 3). As holder of the fifth largest market share in the industry, Sharp is adopting what tech analyst for DisplaySearch² Eddie Taylor calls “a risky strategy” and what he considers to be “a huge investment” (Kessler, par. 10).

The strategy’s riskiness says much about the highly competitive nature of the LCD television manufacturing industry. Aside from there being very little difference in market share numbers among the leaders of the industry (no company controls more than 15% of the total market value), researcher Rosemary Abowd of Pacific Media Associates³ states that the success of television manufacturers can fluctuate greatly from day to day, earning around 10% profit on each set sold one day and losing money the next (Kessler, par. 7). Thus, it is not hard to see why Sharp is inclined to gradually move its LCD television production

² DisplaySearch is a leading provider of information, consulting and conferences on the display chain and display-related industries.

³ Pacific Media Associates is a high-tech market research publishing firm that specializes in providing information on large-screen display products, markets, and manufacturers.

to Mexico, where Mexican workers make about \$4.50 a day at minimum wage, as opposed to the average \$46.80 workers in the U.S. make per day at minimum wage. In addition, situating the plant in Mexico reduces shipping costs to North and South American markets for Sharp (Kessler, par. 21). Sharp can easily justify this recent business venture, as there is a definite possibility that it will increase its market share in the LCD television industry in the long run.

Sharp’s new investment has even greater implications for the television set industry’s inner workings when one examines another major decision the company has made in the past six months. In late 2007, Sharp and Toshiba announced an alliance to be enacted for the 2008 fiscal year. The alliance dictates that Sharp will obtain “system LSIs [large scale integration circuits] for LCDs from Toshiba” in exchange for providing Toshiba with “LCD modules for TVs of 32 inches and larger” (Deffree, par. 2-3; “LSI Definition”). At its new plant, Sharp’s workers complete only the last stages of assembly involved in television set production, creating a need for Sharp to obtain the more technologically intricate parts necessary to television set production elsewhere: in this case, through their alliance with Toshiba.

Eastern Europe

The role of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to Western Europe is comparable to that of Mexico to the United States; Drew Wilson asserts this relationship in an article titled “Manufacturing boom shows New Europe’s strength” (par. 6).

LCD television market developments in the area support this claim. In the last quarter of 2006, several major LCD television manufacturers announced future investments in Eastern Europe (Bjorsell, par. 3). The reasons for these new investments were not unlike those for the investments made by LCD manufacturers in Mexico: "Many of these companies put their manufacturing facilities in Eastern Europe for the nearness to the exploding market for flat TVs in Europe," writes Henrik Bjorsell of Evertiq News Media AB. He continues:

Eastern Europe is today by many considered as the most cost effective alternative, not only because of the lower wage but also since there are many industry parks where the government has implemented tax reliefs for companies establishing their operations there. (par. 1)

Mexico and Eastern Europe share an identity as regions in geographical proximity to the markets of developed nations and abundant in cheap, unskilled labor. Bjorsell's statement also introduces another similarity between the two areas that will be discussed later: the influence of government policy in promoting foreign investment in developing nations.

According to senior analyst Jeffrey Wu (of iSuppli Corporation), LG Electronics, Samsung, and Sony are three of the biggest companies setting up LCD-TV production facilities in Eastern Europe. LG has established its facilities in Mlawa, Poland; Wroclaw, Poland; and Ruza, Russia. Samsung has done so in Galanta, Slovakia and Kaluga, Russia. Finally, since the final quarter of the year 2007, Sony has condensed its production operations in Eastern Europe to a single plant in Nitra, Slovakia (Table 1). Of this new plant in Nitra, Sony states:

With the aim of creating a stronger supply structure in Europe, where rapid growth in the market for LCD televisions is expected, we are building a new BRAVIA LCD TV plant...which is scheduled to come online in the summer of 2007 and will give us an annual production capacity of 3 million units in Europe.

(Sony 28)

There is an apparent correlation between the nearly simultaneous decisions of Sony in Eastern Europe and Sharp in Mexico. The risks involved point both to the volatility of the extremely competitive LCD television market and the economic advantages of outsourcing the final assembly stage of LCD televisions to developing nations.

Added, in Chech Republic, some of the LCD television industry's largest competitors, who currently employ 5,700 workers, are planning an expansions to the sector that will employ up to 14,500 more in the future (Kozáková). These competitors include Panasonic and Hitachi, who, together with Canon, recently formed an alliance akin to, and seemingly in response to that of Sharp and Toshiba: the alliance came within a week of Sharp and Toshiba's. Furthermore, publicity materials for these companies emphasize that "[u]nder the alliance, the three companies will merge their strengths to step up development of the display technologies and expand their scopes of application" (Deffree, pars. 1-3).

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The Reality of Convergence Theory

Both Sharp's investment in a new Mexican assembly center and Sony's investment in a new Eastern European assembly center demonstrate the greater economic theory of convergence at work. Economists today are undoubtedly questioning the validity of this theory; however, it seems that the business practices of LCD television manufacturers implicitly facilitate its concept of absorption. By investing in poorer, developing nations, the majority of big LCD television companies are realizing the first highly exploitative stages of the absorption of the developing world into the global market that currently benefits the developed world.

Realistically, these companies are not actively seeking to increase the wealth and development of those developing nations that are proceeding towards attaining the economic standards of the developed; however, their investments indirectly aid in the process. The United Nations labels this process as the "internalization of TV production in the developing world" and outlines its progression in five distinct stages (United Nations 47). The early stages involve a highly exploitative relationship between the transnational corporation and the developing nation in which it establishes its production operations. The second stage, for instance, involves the establishment of television manufacturing plants in developing nations, the products of which are intended for export to developed nations. The third stage reads nearly the same, save for the creation of stable regional assembly centers. The late phases of the process, in contrast, appear to be

stages that neither Mexico nor Eastern Europe have reached. The fourth requires skilled, rather than unskilled, low-cost labor, reliable local suppliers, and efficient modern infrastructure that allow for the introduction of regional manufacturing centers. Lastly, the ultimate goal of the internalization of TV production is the creation of global manufacturing centers, that require 80% or more production of local content. The UN concludes its outline of this process by stating, "The first signs of a move towards the development of global manufacturing centres in a few developing economies are becoming apparent, but there is still some way to go" (47-49).

"Some way to go" sounds euphemistic, and the UN recognizes this. The report mentions that there are tensions at every stage of development (49), and that transnational corporations are inevitably self-interested. Most are looking for a few things:

low-cost labour or trade preferences available to them [TNCs] in major destination markets...[and the ability to]...source from internal sources, import from home-country companies or induce establishment of local affiliates of home-country suppliers, rather than establish links with local companies that require coaching to bring them up to required standards.

The UN states its solution to this corporate self-interest as such:

Much depends on the ability of national policy makers to formulate coherent policies to induce the TNCs to take the desired decisions, make the necessary investments, transfer the requisite technology and skills, and graduate affiliates in developing countries to regional assembly or regional manufacturing centres.

In the developments of both Mexico and Eastern Europe, these types of national policy decisions have certainly been a factor.

Before 1989, trade policy in Mexico discouraged foreign investment and encouraged Mexican investment, actually “prohibiting FDI in several sectors and limiting it in others.” This greatly changed in the 1990s with a new interpretation of Mexican law, that set the foundation for the new FDI friendly rules introduced by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 (51).

As a result of increased foreign investment, Mexico currently presents itself as economically stable, compared to other developing areas around the world. The Mexican government is using this claim to convince companies like Sharp to further invest in Mexico through the development of more high-tech manufacturing plants — plants that would, in theory, help Mexico reach a higher stage in the internalization of TV production. Mexico’s assistant secretary of industry and commerce, Rocio Ruiz, assesses Mexico’s economic stability in terms of its inflation rate (3.8%), stating that the rate is “very manageable and very adequate for the macroeconomic conditions of our country” (Cearley, pars. 18-19).

Government policies also played an important part in the increased investment from television set manufacturers in Eastern Europe. Firms shipping televisions to Western Europe from assembly centers in Eastern Europe receive tariff exemption (Wu, pars. 2-3). Governments in Eastern Europe have also implemented tax grants and benefits for companies with research and development or manufacturing operations situated in their nations. In addition, it is worth noting that these areas of potential

investment and development were inaccessible to corporations before the fall of the Soviet Union less than twenty years ago (“Why Eastern Europe Has Emerged,” pars. 1, 7).

Like Rocio Ruiz in Mexico, Slovak Premier Robert Fico is glad to see increased investment in Slovakia as a center for television manufacturing: “[He] stressed the Japanese giant [Sony] had chosen an advantageous location ‘in the heart of Europe’” (“Sony ‘to Double’ LCD TV Production in Slovakia,” par. 4). He too seems to have high hopes for the further economic development of Slovakia, mentioning its plans to join the Eurozone in 2009 and stating, “The time has come that companies like Sony come to Slovakia not because of the cheap workforce but also for the knowledge, experience and discipline of our people” (par. 5).

The television manufacturing industry — the LCD television industry especially — is clearly demonstrating a trend of economically absorbing developing nations into the developed world. The trend is undeniably presented in the history of the television industry within the past twenty years in regards to corporate foreign investment. However, the trend is even more apparent in fairly recent progressions in the developing nation of Mexico and various developing nations of Eastern Europe. From Sharp’s investment of \$300 million for an LCD television manufacturing plant in Playas de Rosarita, Mexico, to Sony’s consolidation of its LCD television assembly operations in Eastern Europe to a single plant in Nitra, Slovakia, LCD television manufacturers are attempting to increase their market shares in

an endlessly competitive industry. Attracted by the prospect of a large, cheap labor force and favorable government policies towards foreign investors, companies like Sharp, Sony, Panasonic, and LG Electronics are perpetuating convergence theory.

However, many economists argue that this theory does not stand as a reality. Economic growth undeniably occurs within these developing nations; yet, is this type of growth, which exploits laborers, benefits the transnational corporations of already developed nations, and churns out an exponentially increasing number of televisions for export to the U.S. and Western Europe, really beneficial to nations like Mexico, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia? In reality, this predominant cultural medium is the product of an equally incomprehensible global television market that essentially allows for the dissemination of culture to the economically dominant powers in society at the expense of those on whom the television industry relies for production resources. Convergence fails in the global economy because in order for a global economy to subsist, transnational corporations inevitably need sources of cheap labor, and the ideal result of convergence — that is, the development of developing nations to the point of being able to economically compete with the currently developed world — would destroy these sources of labor.

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SCOTT DINSFRIEND

Scott Dinsfriend was born in Anaheim, CA, and was raised in Temecula. He enjoyed companionship of two brothers, and wonderful parents. He is adept at piano, violin, and drums, and is majoring in Music Composition. Once he has graduated, he plans to attend seminary to further his study of the Bible.

Mentor: Amanda Cornwall

THE SCREEN IS WIDE AND MANY SHALL ENTER THROUGH IT

THE TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK'S GLOBAL
QUEST TO SELL THE "FREE" GOSPEL

The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) stands securely at the forefront of all American religious networks. According to James Whittaker, "TBN reaches 91 percent of TV households [and] receives 300 million hits a year" on its website (Whittaker 58). Although TBN "does not buy a national rating from Nielsen, its analysis indicates that [it] averages a .35 to .4 rating in primetime" (58). Whitaker indicates that

"these ratings are small compared to secular stations, but are huge for Christian networks" (58). TBN itself is not averse to proclaiming its own success. According to its website, it "is featured on over 5,000 television stations, 33 international satellites, the Internet and thousands of cable systems around the world!" On top of these impressive statistics, TBN underscores its efforts in reaching the entire globe by highlighting the fact that "programs are translated into numerous foreign languages" (*The Trinity Broadcasting Network*).

With this loud and clear proclamation on the official TBN website, Paul and Jan Crouch — the founders and Presidents of the Network — delineate their "dream" and "vision" to "build a Christian television network that spans the whole world." A famous passage from the Gospel might explain what drives them. After he rose from the grave, Christ commanded, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28.19-20). "The Great Commission," as it is known, clarifies TBN's biblically-inspired motivation to raise enough money to broadcast its message to every living human — that is, every human who owns a television, for, as Kathleen Mahoney Hladky suggests in her thesis "Modern Day Heroes of Faith," "the importance of evangelism has...translated into the use of available technologies that might aid in spreading the gospel" (Hladky 4). Following this evangelistic trend, the Crouches take full advantage of television as a global communication tool, knowing that they must first intertwine attractive forms of entertainment to draw in

Americans and obtain the financial contributions needed to send TBN theology — not necessarily an orthodox theology — across the seas.

Part of TBN's success in the United States must be attributed to its particular brand of theology. Siding with the ubiquitous American imperative to pursue one's personal desires and dreams, TBN tends to omit the biblical message of self-sacrifice. Rather, TBN stresses scriptural evidence that God's people should live healthily and prosperously. It frequently fails to broadcast the abundant portions of the scripture pertaining to the worldly suffering of believers. With this inclusion of biblical promises and the exclusion of biblical warnings and qualifications for the recipients of these promises, TBN paves a wide pathway for "Christians," thereby increasing its demographic appeal and success.

TBN thus extracts from the Christian message the specific content that would alienate the majority of modern American viewers and thus seeks to "reach [...] audiences both religiously observant and those exploring religious faith" (Whittaker 128). If the network were to preach, for example, that "men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth...suppose that godliness is means of gain," (1 Tim. 6.5) or that "those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare," (1 Tim. 6.9) then it would potentially alienate a large portion of its audience with a biblical teaching at odds with the overwhelming force of capitalism and its glorification of material prosperity. In an effort to attract a contemporary audience, the Trinity Broadcasting Network molds

the message of Christianity so that it appeals directly to the values and desires of *capitalist* America.

The manner of this theology's broadcast will be examined in more detail later. TBN does not merely increase its popular appeal by staying in step with the current ideology in which Americans believe they are entitled to long lives and material comfort on Earth while avoiding suffering *at all costs*. Bountifully drenched in America's most popular medical breakthroughs, celebrities, musical genres, reality series, clothing, and even hairstyles, TBN liberally adapts present day forms of secular television to present religious teachings.

This is no simple adaptation, for secular and religious programming may be seen to operate under a different set of assumptions on the part of both its producers and its audiences. That the name and power of Christ can deliver faithful followers from all diseases is one of the most attractive ideas that TBN preaches. This represents a very different approach from that taken by most secular and mainstream television networks, where the metaphysical world is usually portrayed as a distant place or a land of fiction. Some popular examples of this are "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Heroes," two television programs that assume their viewers accept that the supernatural powers displayed are fictional and irrelevant for use in the "real world." Contrarily, the Trinity Broadcasting Network stresses the importance of accepting God's supernatural healing and other divine blessings. In other words, viewers are required to have faith in an unseen realm, a realm which directly intervenes in

their earthly lives. TBN must accommodate this contradiction between secular form and religious content. To do so, it situates the television screen as more than a site of mere entertainment. Rather, it is perceived to be a conduit of God's healing and blessing. Thus, TBN appropriates secular genres for their entertainment value, while altering them in accordance with their evangelical drive.

A recent showing of *Praise the Lord*, the Trinity Broadcasting Network's flagship program, demonstrates the way in which this "conduit" is perceived to work, albeit within the context of more "traditional" praise and worship programming. As the host, Phil Munsey, commands the television audience to "put that remote down" and to "put your hands up," the viewers experience the worship music of Grammy-winning artist Israel Houghton. This direct reference to the home audience gives evidence that "people worshipping in the studio during a *Praise the Lord* taping and people worshipping at home can be understood to worship together" (Hladky 24). Utilizing hosts and preachers who speak directly to the camera and ignore the barrier formed by the television screen, TBN offers a sense of personal connection and inclusion to the live audience as well as the audience sitting comfortably at home. Jenny Slatman describes this phenomenon in *Religion and Media* as a process in which "transmission from the eye of the camera to the eye of the spectator crosses the chasm of the visible and the invisible" (Slatman 226).

Later on in *Praise the Lord*, Joel Osteen, a popular preacher, affirms his congregation members' purpose in life, declaring, "you

have an assignment [and] you have gifts and talents." Immediately, Osteen points into the camera and personalizes the message for a worldwide audience with three words: "You as well." Osteen thus bridges what Jenny Slatman calls the "insurmountable distance" (Slatman 226) between the studio / congregation, and the viewer at home through the strategic technique of speaking directly into the camera. To help close this distance, TBN makes sure that *Praise the Lord* is recorded in front of a live studio audience, showing its home audience that they are experiencing the message of each preacher at the same exact time as the worshippers on the other side of the television. TBN not only builds a bridge between the television and its audience, but further causes the viewers to forget they are on their couch, pulls them into the live performance through attractive forms of music, and personally appeals to each viewer by ignoring the gulf of separation between the television, the camera, and the home.¹

¹ As anecdotal evidence, my mother's response to a TBN broadcast is instructive: Lying in misery with a case of strep throat, my mother barely managed to build enough energy to press the worn power button on the remote. Fortunately for my mother, she need not lift another finger, for her television knows no other channel. In this household, the mere thought of changing channels would be bordering on the line of blasphemy. Transforming the dark, germ-infested room into a heavenly atmosphere, the Trinity Broadcasting Network illuminates the once-bland bedroom walls with gilded, luminescent images. As the soaring strains of the orchestra fade away, evangelist Katherine Kuhlman shines into the bedroom with majestic glory, clothed in a purely white, angelic dress. Interacting with a woman who had passed away thirty years ago, my sick mother prays to Jesus Christ under Kuhlman's guidance, believing and receiving a supernatural healing. According to her experience, she escapes her sickness and enters into a state of renewed health, running and shouting throughout the house, praising the Lord for this miracle. The inanimate, seventeen inch television sent the inti-

If in *Praise The Lord* we see the hand of secularism, it is in its use of music. Phil Munsey invites the home audience to join the band as it leads the congregation in singing "goodness and mercy will follow me, surrounding me everywhere that I go." In order to hook a wider audience, instead of hearing a simple organ accompaniment, the viewers hear the musicians fuse in rock and roll guitar riffs. Since TBN knows how music draws in diverse audiences, it includes the most popular genres such as rap, hardcore rock, and country. As the minds behind TBN see the growing support and love for rap, especially amongst the younger generation, they skillfully replicate almost every aspect of this musical style. James Whitaker argues that "contemporary Christian music is the fastest growing form of popular music in the United States today" because "[their] new sound contains secular styles, including hip hop, country, hard rock and pop to reach a more mainstream audience" (59). TBN uses rap music and its tendency to focus on financial wealth in order to draw TBN viewers and increase viewer donations. Although women wear more clothing and are not portrayed as sex objects, the rap videos that appear on TBN are still attractive to viewers as they display the importance of living with financial abundance. The videos and artists on TBN differ from the mainstream because they do not glorify self-enrichment through violence and deceit

mate prayer of a deceased evangelist into the future, directly touching my mother's physical body. My mother considered her experience to be one of a miraculous physical transformation, and for decades she faithfully supported the Trinity Broadcasting Network with both her time and money.

— as some mainstream artists do — but by following what Stuart Brooks Keith III calls “prosperity theology.” In *Religion as Entertainment*, he writes that “prosperity theology” is founded on the belief “that one may increase personal wealth if one is willing to increase financial giving to a church or religious organization” (Keith 131). As TBN facilitates this theological content, the rap lyrics glorify self-ambition, and remain consistent with a prevalent trend in its secular manifestation. The message that TBN inserts is convenient and friendly to a society that uplifts a capitalistic economy and that is based on an individual’s constitutional right to the pursuit of happiness — especially attracting those individuals who fulfill this happiness by becoming rich and living healthily.

Another potent mixture of this prosperity theology, popular mainstream generic appropriation and personal address is the chameleonic *Xtremelife*. It is broadcast every Saturday night at ten, just in time to catch both the teenagers and pre-teens and is a program that displays extreme sports to reach out to its intended audience: the youth. In fact, the slogan for this program is “Sports with a Message,” indicating to its viewers that not only will they enjoy exciting sports videos with professional skateboarders, surfers, motocross bikers, and snowboarders, but they will also receive salvation and a new sense of purpose. After a famous professional skateboarder speaks for a few minutes from his heart in front of the inquiring audience, testifying how Jesus transformed his life, leading him away from addiction and giving him a reason to live, he performs for more than ten minutes,

wooing the audience with his impressive skateboarding talent. This segment is then followed by a sequence of blooper videos, a popular feature that both MTV and Spike TV use to draw massive audiences. However, while MTV and Spike TV never offer “free gifts,” *Xtremelife* offers redemption at the end of every show. As the viewers’ eyes are glued to the screen, mesmerized by the sight of reckless daredevils flying in midair on pieces of plywood, the host Ivan Van Vurren looks into the camera and asks, “Do you want eternal life, the free gift of eternal life?” The camera then turns around to reveal nearly every hand in the audience reaching toward heaven, indicating their willingness to receive this gift.

With this crafty choice of the word “free,” this program reiterates the Biblical doctrine of free salvation through Christ’s sacrifice. Writing to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul explains that “the *gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6.23). Ephesians highlights the principle that “by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the *gift* of God” (Eph. 2.8). TBN inserts this message into a form of television (extreme sports) that typically excludes the promotion of any religious content. As TBN offers the incentive of eternal life at no cost whatsoever, it appeals to a consumerist country where most citizens expect businesses to advertise their product at a lower price than their competitor. TBN’s competitors are the other networks on television, which do not quite offer a relationship with God. TBN thus aims to lure each viewer with the chance to receive the gift of salvation, knowing that their

American audience is automatically magnetized to anything that is free.

TBN is advertising as much as evangelizing. Prosperity theology, or Word of Faith theology (as Hladky calls it), offers the teaching “that material and physical prosperity is the divine right of Christians” (Hladky 42). This is the “but wait, there’s more!” that is meant to clinch the deal in viewers’ minds. According to Hladky there is “an overwhelming bias for Word of Faith” on TBN programs, suggesting “that 95% of the guest pastors...were from Word of Faith churches” (48). Stuart Brooks Keith III provides another interpretation of prosperity theology, suggesting that it is premised on the idea that “the more one gives to a certain figure or organization, the more divine blessing one may expect to receive” (Brooks Keith III 131). Word of Faith or prosperity theology can thus be seen to promise spiritual and financial enrichment to its followers, while guaranteeing the financial viability of the televangelists who espouse it. However, this financial viability is dependent on a broad viewership and the viewers’ generous support.

Whitaker suggests that “Christian television executives are reinventing the genre for their audiences” (59). It is also true to suggest that TBN is reinventing the audience typical for evangelical programming. Bobby Alexander writes, “legitimation in the eyes of viewers of conservative Christian community as a community of the saved, puts in place ‘we-versus-they’ distinctions that close off viewers from the social mainstream rather than encourage more open encounters” (Alexander 206).

If this is true, then TBN is unique because its faithful audience is no longer a completely “conservative Christian community.” Rather, TBN caters to a broad interdenominational audience and, beyond that, a wide range of religious and moral sensibilities.

The language of Joel Osteen’s message on *Praise the Lord*, for example, has more in common with motivational speaking than with a traditional evangelical sermon. The broad appeal of Osteen’s theme, “all things are possible if [one] believes,” draws in Americans of all sorts, Christian or not. In fact, Osteen does not name “Christ” once in his message, rather deferring to the more generic “God,” thereby appealing to a broader community of believers than TBN’s traditional conservative Christian audience. Seemingly with the awareness, however, that TBN cannot alienate this traditional audience, Phil Munsey introduces the program with the assertion that “this is a place where over forty thousand people gather every week to lift up the name of Jesus Christ.” TBN must remember that it still needs to keep the faithful support of its Christian viewers. Munsey’s dedication of the program to Christ comforts Christians that they will receive sound doctrine. Non-Christians, on the other hand, enjoy Osteen’s positive message without feeling uncomfortable or indoctrinated. TBN’s *Praise the Lord* “[c]ertainly...appeals to a great number of persons never included in traditional forms of mainline denominational church[es]” (Keith 128).

Since TBN aims to win as diverse an audience as possible, it uses Word of Faith teachings that focus on self-centeredness and material prosperity on Earth, rather than the biblical teachings

that revolve around glorifying the Trinity. An analogy: Christians often say grace over fast food, asking God to bless unhealthy food to their bodies in Jesus' name. In the same way, Munsey's dedication of the program to Christ allows Osteen to render a sermon that, while palatable to the masses, is not necessarily nourishing of Christ's body, His followers. Seemingly with intention, then, TBN generally does not emphasize biblical references regarding suffering as part of the Christian life, such as this commandment in the New Testament: "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin" (1 Pet. 4.1). Rather, TBN primarily airs Word of Faith in pursuit of its underlying goal: to obtain the money of American viewers, to make the necessary investments that keeps TBN financially viable. However, as Stuart Brooks Keith III suggests, "sacrificial giving is viewed in Christian scripture as honoring a God who gave his only begotten Son sacrificially for each of us," and not as a way by which to obtain wealth (131).

Whether or not one agrees with TBN's method of incentive-based ministry, the immense national and global following of the prosperity gospel exists in large part because of the network's use of broadcasting technologies. As its website suggests proudly, the network "touch[es] billions now," reaching the ends of the earth, "from California to New York, London to Cape Town, Moscow to Baghdad, Calcutta to Shanghai, and Sydney to Buenos Aires."

As the internationalization of TBN continues, the appeal of Word of Faith prosperity theology — a theology tailored to an

American audience that believes in its own entitlement — will be tested by nationally diverse, culturally different, and economically disparate audiences. Some, perhaps the truly impoverished, will find hope in its promise of earthly and heavenly comfort. Others may take theological issue, or reject it as yet another example of American cultural imperialism. In these responses, we find the paradox at the heart of TBN's practice. Regardless of our confidence in the network's and its founders' sincere commitment to Christ's Great Commission, the way in which they evangelize cannot *but* be questioned. Even if we believe that TBN accomplishes good deeds, is it in the business of spreading The Gospel, or is it simply in the business of business? Is it *touching* millions, or just *making* millions? And what did Jesus say about camels and the eyes of needles?

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JACOB BENTLEY

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Mentor: Jamie Richards

"PROTECTING THE CASTLE"

APPROPRIATION AND DOUBLE DISCOURSE IN *GARGOYLES*

For an animated series in the U.S., *Gargoyles* is unlikely in almost every respect. It is marginal even for a cartoon, a medium generally banished to the "TV ghettos of Saturday morning and weekday afternoons" (Butler 253), because it aims for a more general audience than seven-year-old boys. The series unfolds with all the complexity of an old-fashioned saga, tapping sources from film noir to Shakespeare, to

Egyptian, Native American, and Nigerian mythology. Yet *Gargoyles* infuses everything with a comic book sensibility that won't bore younger audiences. So although the show relies more on melodrama and complex story arcs than the standard beat-em-up gimmicks of most cartoons, it has plenty of action and is absolutely bursting with sci-fi gadgetry, from hovercrafts to cyborgs to nanotechnology. Of course, it is not enough to have cool gadgets, so the show also delivers big on the sword-and-sorcery front, including magic books, talismans, and time travel.

Gargoyles thus commits itself to a double discourse that negotiates between the contemporary and the historical, the profane and the sacred. Because of this commitment to both innovation and tradition, *Gargoyles* occupies a marginal role in which characters (and the show itself) must navigate the demands of the present by interpreting the past.

The series revolves around six gargoyles who, stone by day and flesh by night, are beholden to the maxim that "A gargoyle can no more stop protecting the castle than breathing the air" (1.13). Thus guarding Wyvern Castle in 994 CE Scotland, and having witnessed the massacre of their clan after a betrayal by human allies, the gargoyles are enchanted to sleep in stone "until the castle rises above the clouds" (1.2). However, the unlikely condition of the spell is met and the gargoyles are awakened a thousand years later when billionaire David Xanatos buys every brick of their castle and rebuilds it on top of a Manhattan skyscraper. The series, indeed the very presence of the gargoyles in contemporary New York City, is thus premised on a fantastical

combination of the magical and commercial: enchanted and honor-bound "monsters" of yore must adapt to the cynical rationalism of the contemporary metropolis. And as we shall see, five of the gargoyles do just that by adapting their maxim, expanding the definition of "castle" to include all of New York City, which they must protect from Xanatos, a rival gargoyle named Demona, and itself.

It is a wonder that the show was made at all, and still more incredible that it lasted 78 episodes — not because it was not good, but simply because it went against the grain of so many shows of its kind. This is especially evident in the series' pursuit of an audience that extends beyond the usual target demographic of action cartoons, grade school-aged boys. As Jeremy Butler suggests, animation depends "on technology to achieve aesthetic goals that are always restricted by cost," because it appeals mainly to children, "an audience without direct buying power" (Butler 253). Hence, many cartoons rely on a simpler, more abstract aesthetic to streamline the animation and cut down on production costs, which makes the series easier to sustain financially and therefore more likely to stay on the air. However, *Gargoyles* seems neither to have been greatly restricted by cost, nor to have been aimed primarily at an audience of children. The series' aesthetic goals alone are ambitious for a Saturday morning cartoon. It sports a Disney-naturalism, complete with deep shadows and realistic perspectives, and despite the bulk of the action taking place in a metropolis at night, color is not sacrificed for a gloomy black palette: rich purples and deep blues enliven the cityscape.

Complicating these aesthetic standards is the fact that *Gargoyles* is a long, complex story where continuity from episode to episode is of the utmost importance, making consistency an everlasting concern, both in terms of plot and appearance — if a character does not behave or appear the way he or she has for dozens of episodes, viewers will notice. The appearance of the characters provides another hurdle, for few if any other cartoons exist in which the villains look so heroic and the heroes so villainous. Indeed, many of the characters would be frightening to small children, making action figures based on the series less likely to be popular at toy stores.

Gargoyles, in this analysis, represents nothing so much as a financial risk. The question then becomes, why cater to an unlikely adult audience? Why inject mythology or Shakespeare into a Saturday morning cartoon? And why gargoyle, of all things? Why insist on making heroes out of stone statues? It is my contention that the risks taken by the series' creators speak to philosophical commitments that are unusual in the competitive and cynical world of television entertainment. Some consideration of real gargoyle, the architectural features as opposed to the cartoon characters, will shed light on these commitments.

Gargoyles as architectural features first arose from a practical need to divert rainwater away from the foundations of medieval churches (Bridaham xiii). Over time these wooden rainspouts became more ornamental and were eventually replaced by stone. By this time, the purely decorative function of gargoyle was appreciated, and their construction increased until many

stone figures were sculpted for aesthetic value alone and did not carry any water at all (xiii). The term “gargoyles” popularly refers to stone carvings of mythic beasts and monsters. However, their actual forms vary to a breathtaking degree: some are entirely human, others part human, part beast, others something else altogether. There is controversy as to the symbolism of medieval gargoyle “since grotesque carving is by no means essential to and is in fact almost antipathetic to the aesthetics of Romanesque or Gothic architecture...there must have been ... powerful reasons for its inclusion.” (Sheridan & Ross 7). One account claims these sculptures stem “directly from earlier pagan beliefs” and represent “pagan deities dear to the people” that the Church was unable to eradicate (8):

The Church in medieval times had come to be the storehouse of the sub-conscious of the people—the lumber room, as it were, in which were bygone, ancient, half-forgotten, half-formulated beliefs and superstitions, customs and folklore. The authorities ... seem to have been remarkably tolerant of these. (19)

Gargoyles as sculpture, then, can be considered a bridge between the present that people found themselves in and an older, almost forgotten past; ancient cultural material has been put to work for the present, and so has been made new. Thus, in addition to “guarding” the physical church itself, gargoyle protect a people’s heritage from being obliterated by the dominant power structure. The very presence of these pagan-influenced sculptures is out of place in a Catholic church, just as the characters in *Gargoyles* are total strangers to their environment: they are taken from tenth century Scotland and “frozen in stone by a magic spell for a

thousand years,” as the intro tells us, only to awaken in contemporary New York City (1.2). So the characters in *Gargoyles* provide the same link to a forgotten past as their actual stone counterparts. The show as a whole is doing the same thing: it draws on near-forgotten stories and traditions and re-imagines them in such a way as to make them accessible to a young audience watching Saturday morning cartoons, just as medieval sculptors brought their pagan heritage to illiterate churchgoers.

Nowhere is this analogue more evident than in the series’ appropriation from Shakespeare’s works and in their methodological kinship with the bard. In the process, *Gargoyles* makes several of Shakespeare’s works available to those who would otherwise not encounter them, and in ways that can be appreciated by those who already have. An important four-episode arc in the second season, “City of Stone,” features a retelling of *Macbeth*. The play had already been referenced in the first season, with the eponymous character showing up in person with all the flair of a comic book hero, wielding laser pistols and outfitted with skin-tight body armor in the episode “Enter Macbeth”. He continues to play a crucial role throughout the series. The three witches from the opening act of *Macbeth* are given a makeover and elevated to the level of the immortal Weird Sisters in the episode “Avalon, Part Two,” in which they are revealed to have manipulated many of the crucial events of the second season. There are other allusions to Shakespeare’s works throughout the series, from *Hamlet* (2.43) to *Romeo & Juliet* (3.1).

However, perhaps the most instructive Shakespearian allusions in *Gargoyles* are those pertaining to *A Midsummer*

Night’s Dream: a play in which Shakespeare readily reveals his appropriationist hand. Throughout the series Puck, Oberon and Titania make notable appearances. Puck undertakes a “merry romp” in an episode called “The Mirror” (2.5), and works in more subtle ways for much of the series’ run. In “Ill Met By Moonlight” (2.42), Oberon is set up as a pagan king who reigns over the creatures of myth that populate the series. He is depicted as arbitrary and quick to anger, easily manipulated by the more levelheaded Titania (2.45), whose grudge against her husband is no doubt a residue from the play’s incident involving the ass-headed weaver Nick Bottom.

In Bottom’s metamorphosis in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* we see a clear precedent for *Gargoyles*’ own discursive machinations. In Shakespeare’s play, Bottom’s transformation is an appropriation of Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses* lurk behind much of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Paster & Howard 275). The weaver’s sudden change into a half-man, half-donkey is reminiscent of *Metamorphoses*’ many physical transformations, such as that of King Midas, who is given an ass’s ears in Book XI for his failure to keep secrets. However, Shakespeare was not writing for an audience comprised merely of classically trained gentry. For those members of the play’s audience with no access to classical texts, the trope of human-to-animal transformation would, at least, have evoked the May Day celebrations of the time, which were “communal feasts where celebrants, some of them wearing animal masks or garbed as hobby-horses, entertained their fellow townsfolk” (276).

In Bottom's transformation, then, we find an example of Shakespeare's own double discourse. He united so called "high" and "low" sources, and created "an eclectic mix of classical and local mythologies" (275). That Shakespeare did so with a self-conscious awareness of the potential trappings of such double-discursive practices is evident in the mechanicals' version of Ovid's "Pyramus and Thisbe" in the final act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This serves as a comic example of unsuccessful appropriation with a disastrous fusing of high and low, in relation to which Shakespeare demonstrates his own mastery.

Gargoyles, it may be contended, takes its cue from Shakespeare, not only referencing him throughout the series, but using his eclectic style of appropriation and his effortless mastery of double discourse. *Gargoyles* does so with sources as diverse as classical myths and comic books, and in the process blurs received distinctions between the categories of high and low art. As Shakespeare treats Ovid in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, so *Gargoyles* treats Shakespeare in "City of Stone" (2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12) and "The Mirror" (2.5). And yet, when he is mentioned directly by characters he is dismissively referred to as "that guy Shakespeare" (2.5), as though to ward off bardolatry and preserve the series' commitment to blurring typical low-high distinctions.

In blurring such lines and fusing cultural materials from wildly different places and times, *Gargoyles* seems as unlikely a creature as Frankenstein's famous monster. In fact, we find a direct echo of this particular monster in Coldstone, the character most emblematic of the series' eclectic appropriations. He is a cyborg

gargoyle who is brought to life from the pieces of three long-dead gargoyles; his awakening is punctuated by lightning and even sarcastic cries of, "It's alive!" Coldstone makes his first appearance in "Reawakening" (1.13) and he is a symbol of the gargoyles' cultural-temporal schizophrenia. In confronting Coldstone, the five gargoyles must wrestle with and define their own place in a wholly different world.

"Reawakening" marks a turning point in the series. Prior, Goliath and his clan of survivors are struggling merely to stay alive in an unfamiliar world; they have been forced from their ancestral home and only remaining link to medieval Scotland, Castle Wyvern (1.9)), which now stands atop the world's tallest skyscraper and belongs to David Xanatos, the billionaire who wants to control the gargoyles for his own purposes (1.5). After "Reawakening," however, the gargoyles emerge nightly from their clocktower to patrol all of New York City, protecting "human and gargoyle alike," as Goliath puts it at the end of the episode.

"Reawakening" is the culmination of a lot of self-doubt for Goliath as leader. He is still haunted by the massacre of his clan in 994 CE, during which Wyvern Castle was raided by vikings and the gargoyles there smashed to pieces, being stone by day. After a flashback, we see Goliath in present-day New York, silhouetted against the reverse side of an enormous clock face as though he is looking back through time. Meanwhile Lexington, Broadway, and Brooklyn, three young gargoyles who survived the massacre, laugh at the oldest member of the clan, Hudson, for staying home to guard "the castle," which is actually a clocktower

above a police station. Lexington responds, “We don’t even live in a castle, anymore.” Goliath frowns at this exchange, and then the three young gargoyles leave for a movie while Hudson watches television.

We find here a clear division of generations within the clan. For one thing, the young gargoyles see no value in Hudson’s words, rolling their eyes and brushing it off on their way out the door. Hudson himself does not appear too impressive, looking distinctly senile as he carefully aims the remote at the television. Goliath, their leader, stands above them all, too remote and lost in thought to intervene. The divide is further suggested by the language-use of the different generations. Hudson, as the oldest and most established in medieval Scotland, speaks with a Scottish accent, and the three young gargoyles, who have enjoyed far greater freedom in New York than in Scotland, sound like modern American teenagers. They quickly pick up on words like “cool,” for example (1.4). Goliath, however, speaks neither with a Scottish accent nor with modern slang, remaining neutral between the two. However, he is the most linguistically innovative of the gargoyles, even inventing his own exclamation, “jalapeña!” in the episode “Protection” (2.19).

Meanwhile Xanatos and Demona, who is Goliath’s lover turned enemy, are combining science and sorcery in a kind of Frankenstein’s lab to create Coldstone, the half-gargoyle, half-robot creature who is constructed from the stone fragments of gargoyles from the Wyvern massacre. Coldstone is an especially poignant symbol of the gargoyles’ cultural and generational schizophrenia:

he is assembled from three different bodies, transplanted from medieval Scotland and reawakened in modern New York, and to top it all off, he is both organic and cybernetic. He is the creation of both science and sorcery, the two primary means of power in the modern and medieval eras of the series. He is also a manifestation of the show’s interest in both mythical and comic book elements, being part “beast” and part cyborg. Coldstone is therefore marginal even for a gargoyle. When Goliath first sees him, he does not recognize him as his “rookery brother,” but calls him, “an abomination.” Goliath sees in Coldstone the division of generations within the clan, suggested by Coldstone’s dual nature of old flesh and new machine, as well as their shared confusion about how to live in this new world. In fighting Coldstone, Goliath suggests his own internal conflict and the difficulties of coming to terms with his own and his band’s seemingly irresolvable circumstance.

The turning point comes on the George Washington Bridge, when Coldstone saves Goliath, despite having been lied to by Demona about Goliath’s involvement in the Wyvern massacre. “You said that destroying my brother is the only way to survive,” Coldstone says to Demona. “Is that all there is for us? Mere survival?” Demona’s response cements her total separation from the rest of the clan: “Isn’t that enough?” Mere survival means self-preservation, which is all that Demona lives for. But for the other five gargoyles, and the show as a whole, meaning and purpose are ultimately communal projects. To merely survive is to divorce oneself from the clan and thus from a life of purpose.

So Goliath responds, “Gargoyles protect. It is our nature, our purpose. To lose that is to be corrupt, empty — lifeless.” And indeed, we have seen the younger and older generations of the clan spring back to life in order to protect each other during the course of the episode. The young trio emerges from a movie theater to protect Goliath, and Hudson finally mobilizes after seeing a news report with grainy images of the clan in Times Square. The impulse to protect has broken through the technological dope that has been arresting the development of the clan.

Back on the bridge, Coldstone asks Goliath the all-important question: “And what do you protect?” Before Goliath can respond, Demona fires her laser rifle, intent on killing him, but Coldstone jumps in front of him and is blasted into the water, from which he does not emerge. Goliath is then able to determine Coldstone’s significance: “he was family, and now he’s gone,” he says. While the tensions inherent to the gargoyles’ spatial and temporal at-oddness with their new circumstances are not necessarily resolved (indeed, Coldstone returns in a later episode, “Legion” (2.3) with an even more dramatic case of schizophrenia), the gargoyles *have* begun to chart a course by way of their traditional purpose. In so doing, Goliath emphasizes a kind of organizing principle. The younger gargoyles ask Goliath what they protect. Hudson suggests the clocktower they call home. “That is merely where we sleep,” Goliath intervenes. “This island, Manhattan—this is our castle. From this day forward, we protect all who live here—human and gargoyle alike.” So Goliath, a character between generations, epochs, and continents functions

as an interpreter. By so broadly defining the word “castle,” Goliath has remained loyal to tradition, but he has also made it relevant to a new generation and made it speak to an entirely new situation.

The ethics of the gargoyles speaks to the philosophical commitment of the series’ creators. Goliath’s double discourse — speaking to both tradition and the contemporary — serves as an instructive model for *Gargoyles*’ contemporary appropriation of diverse historical and cultural materials from pagan ritual to Shakespeare to Mary Shelley. The series infuses TV’s ghetto with depth. It is a children’s show that respects its older viewers by engaging tradition, and that respects young viewers enough to make that tradition accessible to them. It is also a highly moral series, not throwing in unconnected “lessons” at the end of an episode as in other kids’ shows like *He-Man* (Butler 277), but instead anchors its action in the ethical considerations of individuals that either bring together or drive apart the community. Indeed, the show is engaged in a community-building task that respects individuals and different traditions and fosters understanding amongst them: all of the characters in *Gargoyles* are isolated in powerful ways, but the “good guys” are simply those who choose love and cooperation over anger and retaliation. So, many of the villains (most notably Xanatos) finally choose love, becoming a part of the community of protagonists. As unlikely as pagan sculptures in a Catholic church, *Gargoyles* roosts on the parapets of corporate-controlled television in order to protect, not the establishment, but the people outside its walls.

"Gargoyles protect," is the maxim at the heart of the series, and while its characters protect all sorts of people and things, the show itself can be taken above all as a protector of its audience's heritage.

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Gargoyles Episode Guide

Episode	Title	Writers
1.2	"Awakening, Part Two"	Michael Reaves, Eric Luke
1.4	"Awakening, Part Four"	Michael Reaves, Eric Luke
1.5	"Awakening, Part Five"	Eric Luke, Michael Reaves
1.7	"Temptation"	Bryne Chandler Reaves
1.9	"Enter MacBeth"	Steve Perry
1.13	"Reawakening"	Bryne Chandler Reaves
2.3	"Legion"	Robert N. Skir, Marty Isenberg
2.5	"The Mirror"	Lydia Marano
2.9	"City of Stone, Part One"	Michael Reaves, Bryne Chandler Reaves, Lydia Marano

2.10	"City of Stone, Part Two"	Michael Reaves, Bryne Chandler Reaves, Lydia Marano
2.11	"City of Stone, Part Three"	Michael Reaves, Bryne Chandler Reaves, Lydia Marano
2.12	"City of Stone, Part Four"	Michael Reaves, Bryne Chandler Reaves, Lydia Marano
2.19	"Protection"	Gary Sperling
2.22	"Avalon, Part Two"	Lydia Marano
2.42	"Ill Met By Moonlight"	Michael Reaves, Diane Duane, Peter Morwood
2.43	"Future Tense"	Marty Isenberg, Robert N. Skir
2.45	"The Gathering, Part Two"	Lydia Marano, Gary Sperling
3.1	"The Journey"	Greg Weisman

THE iPod SILHOUETTE CAMPAIGN

VISUALS FOR AN AURAL CULTURE

As you walk through the heart of campus you will observe many college students listening to music on headphones. Iconic white wires climbing out of sweatshirt pockets or inching out of backpacks identify the majority of their portable music devices as iPods. Just as skin-tone adhesive bandages are almost ubiquitously associated with the brand name “Band-Aid,” and tissues are called “Kleenex,” “iPod” has

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become synonymous with digital music players. How did Apple manage to gain a virtual monopoly in the mp3 industry? This essay argues that this monopoly is more than an inevitable outcome of the technological advancements offered by the iPod to what Michael Bull refers to as the “culture of mobile listening”. Rather, I argue that Apple’s television advertising for the product, especially what will be referred to as the “silhouette campaign,” reified this culture by providing it with a unique iconography.

In “No Dead Air! The iPod and the Culture of Mobile Listening,” Michael Bull discusses the increasing prominence of “the culture of mobile listening” (Bull 343) arising out of the increased availability of portable music players: tape players such as the Sony Walkman, then CD players such as the Sony Discman (Bull 344). Bull argues that Headphones, which accompanied these devices, were a crucial element in the development of the culture of mobile listening because they enabled music to become a private, individual experience. Personalizing the music experience gave individuals the ability to alter their overall experience with each song selection, to create personal soundtracks. As Bull argues — with reference to the prevalence of portable music devices on urban commutes — the “culture of mobile listening” refers to the role of music in the consumer’s “personal narrative.” The portability of music is a key aspect of this phenomenon (346).

However, while individuals were able to gain some control over their personal experience with early portable music players, listeners were still limited by the capacity of tapes and CDs (344).

When Apple introduced the iPod, the first generation player was capable of storing up to 1,000 songs. Today, iPods are available with 160GB hard-drive and have a storage capacity of approximately 40,000 songs. Mobile listeners, formerly restricted in their music selection, suddenly gained immediate and portable access to entire music libraries. The iPod facilitated a rapid evolution for the culture of mobile listening through exponentially greater music accessibility: “iPod users often refer to the magical nature of carrying their entire music collection with them wherever they go, thus giving them an unprecedented amount of choice of music to listen to” (344).

While Bull argues that the iPod solidified the phenomenon of a culture of mobile listening, I argue that the advertisements themselves completed the iconography of the iPod and consequently delivered the culture to the masses, making it an integral part of pop culture. The iPod as a product facilitated this evolution by providing consumers with the most advanced form of mobile listening. Early iPod advertising highlighted these advances. In October of 2001, Apple launched the first wave of iPod commercials. The commercials illustrated the ease of use and overall capability of the iPod. They stressed the number of songs the iPod could hold with the slogan “1,000 songs in your pocket.” In the following years, Apple released several updated versions of the iPod, with each new product featuring increased hard-drive space. The storage capacity of the iPod far surpassed every other portable music device on the market, boasted the simplicity of the product and its ease of use, all while giving listeners unparalleled access to their music libraries on the go.

The iPod thus granted individuals a new sense of control over their own, personal experience and in doing so, alleviated some of the monotony of day-to-day existence, specifically the routine nature of the urban commute (346). Bull stresses the significance of restoring control to the individual within the urban environment through music: “In this de-routinisation of time lies both the unalloyed pleasure of listening but also the management or control of the user’s thoughts, feelings, and observations as they manage both space and time” (344).

The increased ability of individuals to control “thoughts, feelings and observations” through music as provided by the iPod had a significant impact on the urban listener (348). The creation of the iPod was particularly momentous for members of urban communities because it allowed them to recapture a sense of personal structure and order within a hectic and chaotic, urban environment, over which they may have felt they had no control. Urban listeners used the iPod to create a sense of emotional connection within the detached, impersonal nature of the urban environment:

The desire for company or ‘occupancy’ whilst moving through the city is thus contextualized through the daily or habitual use of a variety of media. The array of mobile sound media increasingly enables users to successfully maintain a sense of intimacy whilst moving through the city. (345)

Although Bull’s argument focuses on the iPod’s influence on the culture of mobile listening, it does little to explain Apple’s control of the market. How are we to explain the ubiquity of iPods? How did the product become entrenched in consumers’ minds as *the* mobile listening device? It is possible to argue that this

entrenchment is the effect of Apple's broader incursion into the music market, including its interests in the online sales of music via iTunes. However, it may also be contended that its later advertising campaign — specifically the silhouette campaign it launched in 2003 — reified the culture of mobile listening by providing it with its own iconography. The commercials ingeniously provided iconic images for an aural culture. In so doing, the campaign delivered the phenomenon of a culture of mobile listening to a mass audience.

During the first few years of the silhouette campaign the commercials shared the same basic structure: black silhouettes danced against brightly colored backgrounds, listening to white iPods with white headphones. The silhouette advertisements are visually simple. The early television ads never showed more than three colors at any given time: the iPod (white), silhouette (black) and background (colored). In the early years of the campaign, the backgrounds consisted of solid, vibrant colors. Over the years the background of the advertisements evolved into a more complex backdrops with added shapes and the use of multiple colors. Despite slight alterations, the commercials maintained the basic visual characteristics and the emphasis on simplicity.

In all the commercials the iPods and headphones remain white. This choice by Apple has become a part of the iPod's iconic status. When Apple set out to create a digital music player, they entered a market that already existed. However, none of the other MP3 players on the market even came close to the storage capacity or *ease of use* offered by the iPod. Apple's decision to create a

campaign that focused on its product's simplicity was crucial. White became a very important visual component of that image of simplicity. In The New York Times, Jonathon Ive, the vice president of industrial design for Apple Inc., remarked, "I remember there was a discussion: 'Headphones can't be white; headphones are black, or dark gray" (Walker). He attributes the decision for white headphones to a desire for the continuation of the uniformity of the iPod product as a whole. Ive further suggests that he views the iPod as "overt simplicity." The emphasis on the simplicity of the iPod is visually represented by the product's absence of color in the commercials, and is stressed in contrast to the vibrant backgrounds and solid dancing silhouettes. The silhouette advertising campaign thus visually conveys simplicity as the antithesis to the chaotic urban environment that members of the culture of mobile listening seek to escape and to gain individual control over via music.

Initially, the silhouetted dancers in the commercials were presented as solid black shadows dancing to music, heard by the viewer, but ostensibly pumped through white headphones connected to a white iPod, which they carried in their hands. The silhouettes have since evolved to include color variation, but the basic idea remains. The silhouetted bodies are the fundamental element of the advertisements because they visually represent the culture of mobile listening. The generic bodies function as ciphers into which viewers potentially insert themselves, suggesting that whoever or wherever they may be, with an iPod, they can dance to their own beats.

The generic nature of these shapes is highlighted, for example, by the manner in which they eliminate skin color as the primary race indicator. Although, occasionally, some race indicators do reveal themselves — variations in physiognomy and body type — they are celebrated within the positive context of the commercial. A global sense of diversity and culture undoubtedly exists within the advertisements and is generated in part by the silhouettes themselves through hairstyles, clothing, and dance. However, the second important element contributing to this diversity is the music itself, which is drawn from a variety of genres from rock and roll to “world music.” Through varied music selection, Apple effectively advertised to multiple demographics. The iPod thus situates itself as a broad cultural phenomenon.

However, the essentially *personal* nature of the mobile listening experience is the crucial hook by which the commercials pull in potential consumers. The silhouettes dance and sing to music heard by viewers, but ostensibly transmitted via iPods. Even when multiple silhouettes dance in one scene, they are depicted listening to their music on headphones suggesting the culture of mobile listening to be at once personal and communal. The premier example is the May 2007 commercial featuring the song “Mi Swing Es Tropical” by Quantic and Nickodemus, a Latin American pairing. The commercial includes several shots of silhouetted couples dancing. Visually speaking, nothing seems abnormal about the scenes; the images are aesthetically appealing and the picture and music correspond perfectly. But the image

depicted is unusual because couples would not normally dance together while listening to music on headphones. It is not a practical undertaking because the two dancers would have to be listening to the exact same song at the exact same time in order to dance in sync. Thus, the “Mi Swing Es Tropical” commercial perfectly illustrates the manner in which silhouette campaign negotiates the desire for personal control as part of a communal if not global phenomenon. The silhouettes are at once alone in their listening and dancing together. They are both individual and part of a broader global community.

Although a culture of mobile listening existed prior to the creation of the iPod, the culture rapidly evolved after the iPod’s debut because it provided the listener with the most advanced form of mobile listening. The iPod’s corresponding silhouette advertising campaign embodied the culture of mobile listening both visually and aurally. Together the iPod, the product, and its advertising campaign reified an aural cultural phenomenon by providing it iconic visual images.

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"It's All VERY VIOLENT"

VIOLENCE AND THE CLASH OF VALUES IN *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*

The series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon follows the story of a young teenage girl blessed with mystical powers named Buffy, the most recent in a long line of girls known as Vampire Slayers. Together with her friends Xander, a nerdy high-school boy; Willow, an introverted but brilliant young girl; and Giles, a member of the Watcher's Council, an organization which watches over the line of

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slayers, Buffy fights the forces of darkness: vampires, werewolves, demons, and other monstrosities.

The series is undeniably violent. Not a single episode passes without at least one fight scene. In 2002, the Parent's Television Council ranked the series number one in their list of worst shows on TV due to its violent and sexual nature (Stevenson 12). Other critics have also complained that the program promotes violence; after all, the majority of problems presented on the series are solved by its episodes' signature climactic fight-scenes. However, I would argue that these critiques misrepresent and overly simplify a far more complicated and layered text. Violence in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* is the allegorical pivot in the series' negotiation of the complex moral issues inherent to the opposition between organic, friendship-based communities, and patriarchal and hierachal militarized organizations. This discussion will engage the series' fourth season, and specifically its finale. It is an often-overlooked season: other seasons have multiple essays written on them while the fourth is relatively un-critiqued.

In *Televised Morality: The Case of Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Gregory Stevenson argues that the moral outrage often expressed by critics of televised violence is not representative of anything inherent to violence. Rather, violence becomes subject to "the value[s] and perspective[s] that the media ascribes to it; in other words, the overall context of violent representations" (Stevenson 203). He draws on Biblical morality by way of explanation: the Bible is undoubtedly a violent text. However,

that violence represents an ideological clash: the violence that sin and virtue exact upon each other.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer uses violence in the same way: violence in the series is the site of a melodramatic struggle between good and evil. Buffy and the “Scoobies,” as her friends are called, represent the side of good, while the vampires and demons that populate the series represent evil. The particular qualities granted to each side of the dichotomy are where we can read the series’ value system. While each episode in season four represents its own clash of ideologies, its broader moral concerns are most apparently dramatized in the season finale. The season culminates in a battle between the Scoobies and the “Big Bad” (as the series refers to the ultimate villain of each of its seasons).

Buffy’s first three seasons tackle the idea that high-school is “Hell” – literally: it is set in the fictional Californian city of Sunnydale, which sits upon The Hellmouth, a supernatural gateway to the netherworlds. Season four extrapolates the high school-is-hell conceit to include young adult lives more broadly. The Scoobies leave high-school. Some start college. Others do not. Buffy begins a new relationship with a man named Riley and Willow explores her blossoming homosexuality with a woman named Tara. Xander, who fails to gain acceptance to a college, suffers through multiple failed jobs. Giles is unemployed and undergoes a pre-midlife “midlife crisis.” With its members lost in their own dramas, the group begins to drift apart.

The foil to the disparate Scoobies is a tight-knit organization: a clandestine branch of the U.S. military known as

The Initiative, which attempts to hunt down and study demons and vampires. Riley, Buffy’s partner is a member of the organization. Seemingly, thus, on the side of good — peace, fraternity and the American way — The Initiative is lead by Buffy’s villainous psychology professor, Maggie Walsh. When Buffy, sponsored by her boyfriend, becomes an honorary member of The Initiative, Walsh, fearing that the young slayer will find out about her evil machinations, attempts to kill Buffy. However, directly after her failed attempt on the series’ heroine’s life, she is killed by the product of her sinister experimentation: season four’s “Big Bad,” Adam (4.13). Adam is a monstrosity created by Walsh as a military weapon. He is made up of human, demon, and electronic parts. He has a large, phallic stabbing weapon extending from his left arm. His first actions, upon waking, are to stab his “mother” with it, and then leave the place of his birth, The Initiative Headquarters.

The name Adam, in the Judeo-Christian mythos the name of the first human being, is no accident. The biblical Adam’s body is the source of the first female and he was the first patriarch, with God-ordained dominance over Eve after they ate from the tree of knowledge. Of course, the biblical Adam did not have a mother. From this it is possible to infer the reason that the series chose to have its Adam kill his. It is fitting, as Simone de Beauvoir might have argued, that a prelapsarian ideal of masculinity would not be born of a woman

...because [the maternal’s] presence calls him back to those realms of immanence whence he would fly, exposes roots from which he would tear himself lose...To have been conceived and then born an infant is the curse

that hangs over his destiny, the impurity that contaminates his being. And, too, it is the announcement of his death.

(de Beauvoir,155)

Alternatively, in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, unlike in much of traditional mythology, it is the masculine that is often the monstrous, whereas pagan, lesbian and witch figures such as Willow and her lover Tara, are represented as heroic.

While monstrous Adam may be read as a Judeo-Christian allusion and Buffy's heroic matriarchal line and witch allies seen to represent a pagan perspective, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* does not condemn Christianity or advocate paganism. Indeed, the series frequently seems to commend Christ-like sacrifice – martyrdom in the service of humanity. In season five, for example, Buffy, diving into an apocalyptically dangerous portal, briefly adopts a pose like that of the crucified Christ, dies, and in so doing saves the world (5.22). She is resurrected in the following season.

Pagan powers, the series suggests, are also prone to corruption, such as in season six, when Willow abuses her abilities (flaying a man and trying to destroy the world). Indeed, it is interesting to note that only Xander (employed as and referring to himself as “the carpenter”), through an offer of unconditional love, brings her back to the Scooby fold. (6.22). The series thus seems to espouse an ethos at odds with facile allegiances to overly simple categorical binaries such as male/female, Christian/Pagan, Good/Evil. As series creator Joss Whedon says of his creative influences, “[t]he fact is, the Christian Mythos has a powerful fascination to me, and it bleeds into my storytelling. Redemption, hope, purpose, Santa, these are all important to me, whether I

believe in an afterlife or some universal structure or not”(Stevenson 21).

The organizational principles espoused by The Initiative may be seen as anathema to the syncretism that Whedon brings to the series' creation. Indeed, the singular mindset of the organization is nowhere more evident than in its basic categorical tenet that “demons are bad and humans are good.” Hence, Riley (a member of The Initiative) is horrified to find out that Willow (before her homosexual awakening) used to date a werewolf named Oz:

Buffy: You [sound] like Mr. Initiative. Demons bad, people good.

Riley: There a problem with that theorem? (4.19)

There is a problem with that theorem, as Riley himself discovers. Despite his membership to The Initiative, Riley is kept sympathetic to the viewer, not merely because of his relationship with Buffy, but also in part because he does not completely give into the institution's militarized categorical logic. Thus, while initially circumspect — segregationist even — about the mingling of werewolf and human represented by Oz and Willow, he later redeems himself. When Oz is captured and experimented upon by The Initiative, it is Riley's empathy for the werewolf teen that drives him to commit what members of the military organization brand as “treason” (4.20). He helps free Oz, and for that is jettisoned from The Initiative.

His “treason” is not merely that of an underling going against orders. What is more dangerous and hostile to The Initiative is the fact of Riley's empathetic response to Oz's plight.

Indeed, it is telling that, rather than merely expel him for his betrayal, The Initiative attempts to undermine his love-relationship with Buffy: an emotional connection at odds with its schema. As one member of the initiative says to Buffy, “You think you’re the first girlfriend Riley ever had?.... No. You’re just the first one to get him to commit treason” (4.20). With Buffy being the sole (honorary) female member of the Initiative’s fighting force, her expulsion, as well as that of Riley, represents a cleansing of sorts: a dogged assertion of the mechanical masculinity of the militarized Initiative.

The lead up to season four’s climactic battle, as well as the battle itself, clearly illustrates the opposition between unity forged of human relationships and that which arises from militarized indoctrination. If syncretism, as it has been used thus far in this discussion, denotes a fusion of seemingly disparate myths, beliefs and positions, then the communal ethic that binds the Scoobies, a group not without its different and contradictory personality types, may be seen to speak to the broader ethical concerns of the series. Indeed, in the fourth season, the group’s unity is under some duress, owing to its members’ respective isolation. Adam is representative of a monstrous syncretism — a unity forged out of militant necessity rather than social bonds (as Adam himself says, “I know why I’m here. I was created to kill. To extinguish life wherever I find it.” (4.16)). He thus presents a unique challenge to the heroes, as their miscommunication and divisiveness means the Scoobies are unable to unify against him.

Adam, opposed to The Initiative and the scoobies, and with the help of Spike (a seemingly harmless vampire who has infiltrated the group), exploits the sensitive situation, preying on the foursome’s insecurities, and turning them against one another. In this way the Big Bad hopes to throw the Scoobies off his trail as he plans to unleash all the demons that the military have locked up in The Initiative Headquarters (4.20). Luckily, the bond of friendship proves too strong. The Scoobies recognize unity as the best way to combat Adam. Their unity is, however, distinct from the syncretism Adam embodies. While made up of multiple aspects (demon, human, and technology), his unity is exclusive: the “inferior” parts of each aspect are tossed away with a view to creating the “perfect” killing machine. He is incapable of understanding friendship and love as it is represented by the Scoobies’ all-inclusive unity. Indeed, in the course of the series, the Scoobies’ ranks included a werewolf, two different vampires, a robot, a 1100 year old ex-demon, two witches, and a young girl who was once a glowing ball of green light.

Predisposed, then, to inclusivity, the Scoobies inevitably realize the strength inherent to their social bonds. In the penultimate episode of season four, the Scoobies cast an “enjoining” spell. Willow, Xander, and Giles transfer their spirits and minds into Buffy’s body. This is not an enjoining that jettisons weakness. While Xander and Giles, are feckless and/or unemployed, both are integral to the enjoining spell. Despite their “weaknesses,” they are embraced and enjoined and not rejected. Instead of just Buffy and Willow, who are perceived as the stronger

two of the four, all four are needed to complete the spell, Xander as the heart, Giles as the Brain, Willow as the Spirit, and Buffy as the Hand (4.21). So, as the Scoobies — singularly embodied by Buffy — fight Adam, the mechanical monster becomes frightened. “How can you?” he stammers. The coalesced friends respond, “You can never hope to grasp the source of our power!” (4.21). With that, the “scoobified” Buffy pulls out Adams heart.

This is an undeniably gruesome act, one that the Parent’s Television Council probably deems unsuitable for young viewers, condemning it as abhorrently violent. But this would be an oversimplification of the scene, an entirely facile reading. What matters is what the fight represents. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* does not pretend to represent reality. The series is impossibly campy, appropriating a wide array of mythical and supernatural elements into plot lines that beggar the belief of even the most susceptible of viewers. The series’ singular achievement is that it manages to synergize these incredible elements into pertinent relations. This, if nothing else, is the definition of allegory.

The fantastical nature of the battle, a magically coalesced foursome versus a powerful demonic/human cyborg, creates an impossibility in regards to violence. This disconnect from reality allows the show to portray great amounts of violence without actually encouraging violence. The violence is allegorical: community, acceptance, and heterogeneity versus bigotry, patriarchy, and uniformity. So when Buffy, with the power of her friends, rips out Adam’s life force, the series is not suggesting that its viewers should pull out the hearts of those with whom

they disagree, but that is it possible to resist patriarchy and conformity.

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Buffy the Vampire Slayer Episode Guide:

Episode	Title	Author
4.13	“The I in Team”	David Fury
4.16	“Who are You?”	Joss Whedon
4.19	“New Moon Rising”	Marti Noxon
4.20	“The Yoko Factor”	Douglas Petrie
4.21	“Primeval”	David Fury
6.22	“Grave”	David Fury

