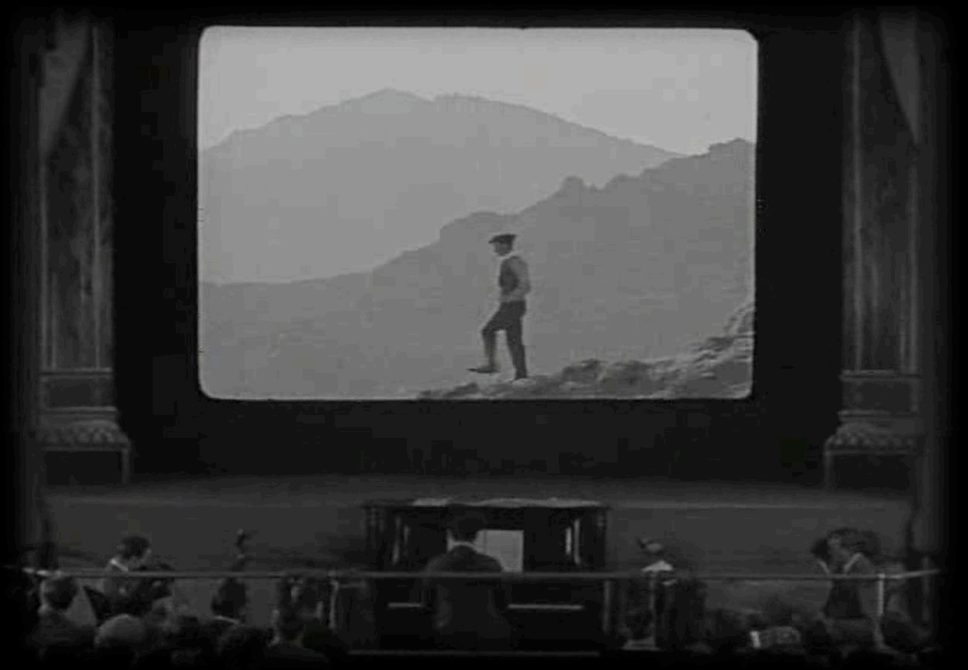
Department of Film and Media Studies
2433 Social Sciences and Media Studies Building
UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-4010

Focus Media Journal Volume XXXI

University of California Santa Barbara

Focus

Media Journal 2010-2011



in media res

UCSB Film and Media Studies
Undergraduate Journal

VOL.
XXXI

Focus

Media Journal

Volume XXXI

2010-2011

The Focus Staff

Editor-in-Chief
George Davidovich IV

Copy Editors
Derek Boeckelmann, Kelsey Brannan,
Jedediah Demke, Riley Jauchen

Staff Advisor
Joe Palladino

Graduate Student Advisor
Maria Corrigan

About The Staff

George DavidovichIV: Editor-In-Chief

George Davidovich is a third year Film and Media major. Since coming to UCSB, he has been involved in many undergraduate film productions. He enjoys trashy television (the trashiest), one man bands, public access television, and loves *Xavier: Renegade Angel*. He hopes to one day produce the most ridiculous Super Bowl commercial ever made, or pursue a career in entertainment law and sell the timeslot rights for each commercial.

Kelsey Brannan: Copy Editor

Kelsey Brannan is a graduating senior in the Film and Media studies department at UCSB. She has played an integral role in the production of numerous digital media projects within the GreenScreen program, FLMST 106 class, and reel-loud festival. In the fall she will begin the Communication, Culture & Technology Master of Arts program (CCT) at Georgetown University where she will explore the relationship between changing technology and changing cultures, including research, government and media. She received a fellowship at the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) at Georgetown, where she will provide technical support for academic and professional media projects. Kelsey plans to move into media curation following graduate school. Website: www.kelseybrannan.com.

Derek Boeckelmann: Copy Editor

Derek Boeckelmann is a third-year Film and Media Studies major at UCSB. Despite being born stateside, Derek grew up in the small coastal town of Caloundra in Queensland, Australia. During his time at UCSB, he has been involved in several undergraduate film productions and frequently contributes to the Artsweek section of the Daily Nexus campus newspaper. An aspiring screenwriter, Derek plans to continue his studies towards obtaining a Master of Fine Arts degree and hopes to one day write for television.

Jedediah Demke: Copy Editor

Jedediah Demke is a 3rd year Film and Business/Accounting double major with a minor in Philosophy. His emphasis in film is screenwriting and he hopes one day to write and direct his own feature. Until then, he settles for writing in his spare time while taking a variety of University offered courses in his various major studies.

Riley Jauchen: Copy Editor

Riley Jauchen is a third-year Film and Media studies major. He enjoys reading comic books of all shapes and sizes and hopes to one day work in the comics publishing industry. After graduating from UCSB, Riley may pursue an MA but is still weighing his options.

A Letter From The Editor

On behalf of this year's *Focus Media Journal*, we would like to thank those who contributed their time and effort in making this journal possible. It has been quite the journey, and we are beyond grateful to those who guided us along the way. We are so proud of this year's journal, and we wish to extend our thanks to those who helped us most.

Focus Media Journal XXXI contains some of the most creative undergraduate scholarship concerned with contemporary media studies. The constantly changing landscape of the media industry, due especially to evolving digital technology, is even more reason for acadamic inquiry into the media studies field. As with every year's issue, we hope to encourage and foster thoughtful debate, and give undergraduates an opportunity to experience publication.

This year's focus is "*In Media Res*", which literally means "in the middle of things" or "mid-point". We feel that the contemporary media industry is in a middle-state of transition and great change, which has caused vast uncertainty within academia and the media industry. We have organized this year's issue in three sections, as we try to make sense of what it means to be *in media res*. The cover image of Buster Keaton from *Sherlock Jr.* was chosen as he walks into a movie screen within the film, representing how Keaton is in the middle of two different worlds. In fact, all of the articles published in this journal are *in media res*, in that they all represent a "lens" at one moment within the grand scheme of time. In other words, these articles are all published *in media res*, as their content will be seen differently in the future, since ideas and opinions are always in flux.

We would also like to thank the Film and Media Studies Faculty and Staff for all their support, especially Dana Welch, for some much needed layout advice. A special thanks to Maria Corrigan for her commitment to this journal, without her expertise, this journal could not have been possible. Being this year's editor has been a wonderful and challenging experience, and it is with great enthusiasm that I am able introduce the 31st issue of *Focus Media Journal*. We are really proud of it and we hope you enjoy it! On behalf of myself and the *Focus* staff, I would like to personally thank Joe Palladino for his gentle support and every one who contributed their time and effort into making this journal.

Yours Truly,
George Davidovich IV
Editor-in-Chief
2010-2011

Contents

Cultural Transitions: Media and Identity Politics

Mobile Media in media res

National Conflict and Digital Nostalgia

Cultural Transitions: Media and Identity Politics

When Kids Began To Matter:
Nickelodeon and Children's Programming in the 1990s

by Dara Edwards

Before the advent of cable television in the United States, broadcast channels ABC, CBS and NBC allotted kids just a few hours per day of children's programming in the mornings and afternoons. However, in the 1980s, as cable began to broaden its reach and companies began to strike up deals with various municipalities, the concept of children's television began to change considerably. With the rapid spread of cable across the nation came an increase in the number of television channels and the ability to reach increasingly specific audiences, thereby addressing more directly viewers' personal interests. Kids suddenly had hours upon hours of programming to choose from and entire channels completely dedicated to their interests alone. Although children's television shows have been around since the introduction of television in the 1950s, no channel had ever addressed the child viewer in quite the same way as Nickelodeon. During the 1990s in America, Nickelodeon reigned supreme in terms of children's programming, drawing kids away from broadcast channels. Most importantly, Nickelodeon began to conceive of the child viewer as a complex, opinionated and profitable television consumer. By implementing programming blocks that targeted specific child demographics, as well as airing a variety of original programming which spoke to children of various ages and sociological backgrounds, Nickelodeon began to reevaluate the child's role within larger society and, as a result, wholly redefined the child's social and economic identity in America.

"Nickelodeon began to conceive of the child viewer as a complex, opinionated, and profitable television consumer."

It is important to note that this niche marketing technique employed by Nickelodeon during the '90s was by no means a new programming strategy. Niche marketing was a programming tool pioneered in the 1970s with the aim of bringing young, educated and affluent audiences—also known as the "quality" audience—to advertisers. Networks such as CBS and NBC discovered that by airing programs that attracted a particular type of viewer, advertisers would be willing to pay premiums for ad spots, especially during prime time. In her article "MTM Enterprises: An Overview," Jane Feuer points out that "In 1970 CBS was threatened for the first time by NBC. In pioneering the sophisticated 'adult' sitcom CBS was attempting to be in the vanguard in the quest for the new demographic audience of young, urban adults," showing that beginning in the 1970s, the previous network strategy of airing the least objectionable programming was slowly

being undermined.[1] The outmoded least objectionable programming theory developed by Paul Klein strove to air shows that would appeal to the broadest audience possible in order to avoid offending anyone into changing the channel. But as Feuer argues and as such ground-breaking programming as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS '70-'77) and *All in the Family* (CBS '71-'79) reveal, this least objectionable programming theory was unable to hold up in a rapidly changing and ever expanding industry. With this in mind it is important to consider that nearly two decades later, Nickelodeon further developed this niche marketing approach to programming and took it to a new level. By appealing to a previously untapped niche market, Nickelodeon was subsequently able to successfully rival the previously dominant broadcast networks in attracting child viewers.

The next question one may ask is, 'why kids?' If networks' primary concern is appealing to an audience that advertisers want to sell to, then how did Nickelodeon expect to make a profit from an audience that did not directly generate any disposable income? In a *New York Times* article from 1992, Bill Carter reports that "The reason children are more and more favored consumers among many cable executives is that they are increasingly perceived as having access to deep pockets."[2] Furthermore, senior vice president of Grey Advertising, Jon Mandel is quoted in the same article as saying that "the children's advertising market has grown 25% this year," highlighting the fact that children were becoming an increasingly profitable and highly advantageous market for networks and advertisers to reach during the 1990s.[3] With this it is clear that Nickelodeon devoted practically its entire programming schedule to kids, because kids who had access to cable also had access to some of the "deepest pockets" in the nation. If advertisers could effectively send their message to kids, then kids would relay that message to their parents, who would in turn buy the given product that was originally promoted by the advertiser. In addition to this, the 1990s in America is widely considered a decade of prosperity. With the dot-com boom and the overall economic affluence, consumers had ample disposable income, thus giving networks further incentive to appeal to many American households that had the money to spend on consumer products. Unlike broadcast channels, which were free to the public, cable was primarily available to those who could afford it. Therefore, Nickelodeon could assure advertisers that the viewers of Nickelodeon shows most certainly had money to spend. With this said, it was not unreasonable that Nickelodeon's principle effort was in appealing to the child viewer. By examining their programming strategies, Nickelodeon recognized the unique opportunity in appealing exclusively to kids and, as a result, was able to attract advertisers who otherwise may have had a difficult time reaching such an age-specific audience.

In addition to appealing specifically to kids, Nickelodeon implemented various programming blocks throughout the day and was able to appeal to specific age groups ranging from toddler to teenager. Nickelodeon's morning block of programming, launched in 1994 and titled Nick Jr., targeted toddlers and preschoolers and aired at a time when older children would be in school. With this programming block all to themselves, the tiniest viewers could enjoy shows such as *Little Bear* ('95-'01) and *Gullah Gullah Island* ('94-'95), which

With an airtime when older children would be at school, Nick Jr. targeted toddlers and preschoolers.

addressed social issues and moved at a slower pace than most shows on TV. In his article "Reading Nickelodeon: Slimed by the Contradictions and Potentials of Television," John Weaver argues that:

> When Nickelodeon initially developed its programming for preschoolers, the shows were geared toward social consciousness. Many of the shows introduced preschoolers to a community of public ethos which demonstrated that the world was much bigger than they were and that people were dependent on one another to create a sustainable environment.[4]

Weaver thus emphasizes that with Nick Jr., Nickelodeon's primary focus was on education. Much like prevtious children's programming such as *Sesame Street* (PBS '69-) or *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* (PBS '68-'01), shows on Nick Jr. taught young children useful life lessons and, in turn, gave parents peace of mind that their child's television viewing was wholesome and beneficial. Nickelodeon's programming strategy for Nick Jr. suggests that the appeal of various shows was just as much centered on the child's approval as it was on the parent's (who were the ones paying the cable bill, after all). If the parent disapproved of programming on Nick Jr. they would ultimately be the one in control of changing the channel or turning off the television. Programming on Nick Jr. also featured very few advertisements following a similar programming style as PBS, thus marking Nickelodeon as a viable competitor for the public broadcast channel. Although not completely innovative in its approach to preschool programming, Nick Jr. addressed preschool-aged children and their parents at a time when they would most likely be home, indicating that Nickelodeon understood the principles of tactful programming strategies and strove to establish a loyal following early on in a child's life.

Starting around 1pm, after the older kids came home from school, Nickelodeon shifted its programming to more appropriate shows for the elementary and middle school-aged viewer. Programming blocks such as Nick in the Afternoon ('95-'98) ran through the middle of the afternoon and featured game shows such as *Double Dare* ('86-'93), cartoons such as the immensely popular *Rugrats* ('91-'04), and sitcoms like *Clarissa Explains It All* ('91-'94), appealing to the more diverse interests of older children. In his article, John Weaver states that "in the sophisticated programming for this [elementary to middle school] age group, the child as innocent disappears almost completely and the young person as sophisticated individual and the child as consumer appear more prominently," highlighting this shift in programming between the earlier shows aired on Nick Jr.[5] This afternoon programming block also re-

veals how Nickelodeon conceived of the older child viewer as a more complex and opinionated consumer. While Nick Jr. was primarily composed of narrative formats, Nick in the Afternoon featured a variety of shows, including game shows, sitcoms and cartoons in an attempt to appeal to kids' diverse and variable interests. If one child disliked game shows, he or she could watch a cartoon. If another didn't identify with the strong female lead in *Clarissa Explains It All*, he or she might like the messy chaos of *Double Dare*. With such diversity Nickelodeon made it almost certain that at some point in the afternoon a show of interest would air and a child would tune in. Unlike Nick Jr., commercials and advertisements were much more prevalent during afternoon programming on Nickelodeon, mostly consisting of toy and food ads, demonstrating advertiser's desire to appeal to and profit from this older and more viable consumer demographic. The contrast between programs aired in the morning and those aired later in the afternoon highlights the breakdown of demographic audiences, which Nickelodeon employed in the 1990s in order to appeal to the interests of various age groups, as well as to appeal to an array advertisers.

In the early evening Nickelodeon shifted the tone of its programming yet again with the programming block entitled Snick, which began in 1992. Appealing to an even older age group (middle school to teenaged kids), Nickelodeon aired multiple programs, from variety shows (i.e. *All That*, '94-05), to sitcoms (i.e. *Kenan and Kel* '96-'00), to the horror series *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* ('91-'96). In his article "In Its Prime, Cable TV Gets Younger," Bill Carter argues that "The idea behind moving children's shows into Saturday night, where Nickelodeon had previously run repeats of old network situation comedies, is to fill the void left by the broadcast networks, which have not tried in recent years to attract children on Saturday nights," drawing attention to Nickelodeon's strategy of reaching a previously unaddressed television audience.[6] In the evenings, most stations aired adult-oriented sitcoms and dramas, but tweens were very limited in their television programming choices. However, with the great success of MTV (which happened to own Nickelodeon), the value of the teenage consumer began to be recognized, and, as a result, evening programming started to cater to this previously unaddressed market. The shows featured during Snick were slightly different from those featured on Nick Jr. and Nick in the Afternoon. These programs tended to embody a slightly more wry sense of humor and engaged more edgy issues such as identity and relationships. *All That* featured a cast of kids of various ethnic backgrounds, and *Kenan and Kel* starred two African-American actors. In each show, however, race was rarely addressed as a critical social issue, ensuring that the overall tone of each program was light and still remained appropriate for younger viewers. Nevertheless, Snick undoubtedly offered something different from Nickelodeon's previous programming blocks, indicating that the cable channel recognized the different interests and tastes of teenage viewers and strove to provide a space on cable television for such interests to be addressed.

Finally, in the last programming block of the day (or rather night), Nickelodeon aired Nick @ Nite starting in 1985. This programming block would later become its own cable station, TV Land, in 1996. Nick @ Nite aired retro

television shows including *I Love Lucy* (CBS '51-'57), *The Andy Griffith Show* (CBS '60-'68), and *Happy Days* (ABC '74-'84). The sitcoms that were aired were never controversial or overly dramatic. For example, shows such as *Roots* (1977) and *Amos 'n Andy* (CBS '51-'53) were never a part of Nick @ Nite's regular programming schedule. Nick @ Nite manager Rich Cronan is quoted in a 1993 *L.A. Times* article saying that "back when censors were so much tougher, shows were more wholesome so kids could watch, which also appealed to adults because they'd grown up with the shows and had strong emotional bonds to them" revealing that in airing retro programming during Nick @ Nite, Nickelodeon was able to appeal to adults, who would most likely be the ones awake in the household, while at the same time continuing to air child-friendly content.[7] Nick @ Nite ran throughout the night on Nickelodeon until the early morning, when Nick Jr. would start again. With Nick @ Night, children could watch shows along with their parents or parents could relish in a little childhood nostalgia once their own kids were sound asleep. By appealing to the parent's inner child during this programming block, Nickelodeon managed to draw an adult audience and simultaneously capitalized on the broadcasters' previous least objectionable programming strategy. In doing so, Nickelodeon was able to ensure that nothing objectionable would infiltrate a channel devoted predominantly to children, and although Nick @ Nite mainly appealed to an adult audience, it was still suitable for child viewers. Although Nick @ Nite was a markedly different block of programming on Nickelodeon than programming aired earlier in the day, it still managed to appeal to the adult viewer who was most likely to be watching at night, highlighting the cable channel's principle programming strategy of appealing to the age group that would most likely be watching the channel at any given time of day.

"With Nick @ Night, children could watch shows along with their parents or parents could relish in a little childhood nostalgia once their own kids were sound asleep."

After going to such lengths to appeal to various children's age groups and interests, the question remains whether Nickelodeon's age-specific programming strategy was successful in attracting children viewers. Considering that Nickelodeon is still on today amongst a vast sea of cable channels devoted exclusively to children, it is probably safe to say that Nickelodeon was on to something in the 1990s. During the 1990s, broadcast stations were required by the FCC to air three hours of children's educational programming per week; however, Nickelodeon presented stiff competition, and ABC, NBC and CBS had a difficult time luring the youth demographic. In an *L.A. Times* article from 1996 Jane Hall states that "Nickelodeon seems to be where many

of the networks' lost children are turning up. The cable network for children is up 12% overall this season among the 2 to 11 crowd and 30% on Saturday mornings where it is beating ABC, CBS, NBC and WB."[8] In essence, Nickelodeon's programming strategy worked extremely well during the 1990s when children's choice of television programming was fairly limited. Now that kids had options of what to watch and when to watch, they became more empowered consumers and overtly voiced their opinions by tuning into Nickelodeon over other, more limited, broadcast channels. While broadcasters only aired a minimal amount of children's programming, Nickelodeon proved a more reliable entertainment outlet. Children would have to intentionally tune in to broadcast channels at allotted times during the week if they were to watch programming to which they could relate; however, Nickelodeon took a new approach and became the loyal and ever-present friend. No matter what time of day or which day of the week, Nickelodeon always had something to offer kids. By honing in on one particular demographic and breaking that demographic down into different categories based on age and interests, Nickelodeon was able to corner one area of the television market, leaving broadcasters largely without children viewers.

Nickelodeon's programming strategy during the 1990s reveals that along with new technological developments and new media formats, comes a new way of addressing the consumer. Without the emergence of cable, it is unlikely that children would have found a channel devoted exclusively to their interests, and, in many ways, Nickelodeon helped shape the identities of America's youth. By exposing kids to characters of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, such as with *Gullah Gullah Island* and *All That*, as well as presenting strong female leads like in *Clarissa Explains It All*, Nickelodeon helped kids envision a more diverse world and encouraged them to consider previously unrepresented points of view on television. However, there is also the issue that Nickelodeon was not a viable option for children of families in lower socio-economic classes who could not afford cable. With its age-specific programming blocks, Nickelodeon, as a cable channel, was inherently addressing a child of a particularly affluent economic standing, raising the question of whether children without cable should have access to the same consistent flow of child-oriented programming as children of more affluent families. In addition to viewing children as a viable consumer market, Nickelodeon also catered to children's developmental needs by exposing kids to a variety of points of view and relatable issues in a way that broadcasters had never done. As a result of Nickelodeon's immense popularity during the '90s, it is important to consider how cable is able to serve the public interest in ways that the handful of broadcast channels are unable to achieve.

Works Cited

1. Jane Feuer, "MTM Enterprises: An Overview," in *MTM: "Quality Television,"* ed. Jane Feuer et al. (Ann Arbor: BFI Pub, 1984), 25.

2. Bill Carter. "In Its Prime, Cable TV Gets Younger: A strong bid to lure children, and dollars, away from the networks." *New York Times,* July 13, 1992, 13.

3. Ibid.

4. John Weaver. "Reading Nickelodeon: Slimed by the Contradictions and Potentials of Television," in *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*, eds. Joe Kincheloe, and Shirley Steinberg, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 78.

5. Ibid, 81.

6. Carter, "In it's Prime, cable TV Gets Younger," 13.

7. N.F., Mendoza, "Nick's Nites to Remember: [Home Edition]" *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 1995.

8. Jane Hall, "Networks See Drop in Kids' Audiences; Television: Four of five broadcast networks experience a Saturday morning slump as Nickelodeon's ratings climb: [Home Edition]," *Los Angeles Times*, October 15, 1996.

Mass Communication and the Proliferation of Mass Culture

by Tony Ung

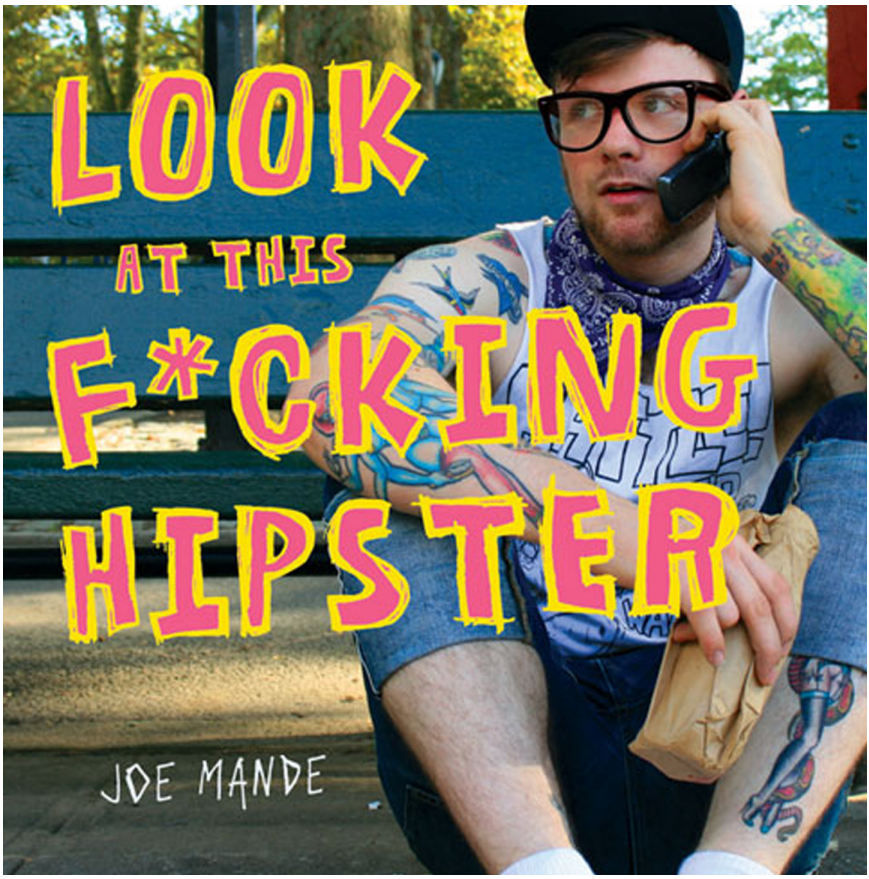
> "When youth culture becomes monopolized by big business what are the youth to do? Do you have any idea? I think we should destroy the bogus capitalist process that is destroying youth culture!"
>
> -Thurston Moore from Sonic Youth.

Bhaskar Sarkar, a Film and Media Studies professor at UC Santa Barbara, once asked his class, "Who here is a Hipster?" To his expectations, no one raised his or her hand. A majority of the students in the class, dressed in Urban Outfitter attire, such as large-framed glasses and flannel shirts, did not identify as Hipsters. What is the explanation for this phenomenon? Why has a majority of the American youth formed an identity built on rejecting the mainstream, yet denies its membership to a unified counterculture? This essay defines Hipster culture as a teleological paradox that simultaneously upholds anti-mainstream cultural values, while maintaining the corporate consumer practices it rejects. By utilizing cultural theory I argue that the Internet and other forms of mass communication are the main reasons why Hipster culture has become a fruitful paradox in modern America.

The broad definition of a 'Hipster' as encompassing a majority of contemporary youth culture is under much scrutiny. Although Hipsters are a demographic of youth culture who may listen to the same music, shop at the same stores, and even ride the same bikes, they are seeking to be individuals – albeit not adhering to a label such as being called a Hipster. In other words, the commonalities that unify them are too general to classify them within a unified 'Hipster' subculture. The stereotyped definition of a Hipster is a young adult that listens to obscure independent music and has an affinity for vintage style clothing. This definition, however, is too general and fails to reflect address intersections of race, gender, and class. That said, someone who is straight edge, apolitical, buys clothes from Urban Outfitters and American Apparel, rides a fixed gear bike, listens only to indie rock bands, and lives in the suburbs may be considered a Hipster, while at the same time someone who is an urban dwelling, vegan democrat, who likes electro music and techno, and only buys clothes from thrift stores is also considered a Hipster. It is clear that these two individuals hold distinguishable characteristics, yet the mainstream would classify them as 'Hipsters.' The question is: how are these seemingly different individuals related? The search for an identity *outside* of or counter to the mainstream 'Corporate' American culture, however, is what links these two individuals under the umbrella term of Hipster.

Famous individuals that adhere to mainstream American culture can usually be classified as being generally successful and well known among the general public. For example, Taylor Swift, a famous teenage country singer, who sells out international venues and is a household name, would be considered a mainstream individual. Mainstream culture and trends are easily accessible to consumers. For instance, a film like *Avatar* was able to gain maximum exposure by its dominant screening time in most commercially owned theaters across America. The mainstream is commercially successful and easily accessible to the masses.

Hipster culture is built on an aesthetic disposition. According to Pierre Bourdieu, an aesthetizising disposition is defined by finding value in something



Hipster culture is at the same time mocked and promoted by corporate interests.

that is obscure and non-mainstream, yet respected among an elite circle of individuals, Hipsters. The esoteric value and knowledge applied to an object in this circle gives the object cultural capital. The cultural capital that Hipsters assign to obscure art art, music, and style contain what Walter Benjamin would consider "aura." This "aura" which can be seen as an object's value, is formed by an acceptance of an esoteric community. However, once this object is mass-produced and distributed to the masses, it loses its value and becomes "aura-less" object of the mainstream. Therefore, an object, whether it be a band or fashion style, gains cultural capital when its accessibility is limited and a small elite assigns value to it, and loses its 'Hipster' aura when it is mass produced. This leads to a major point of criticism of Hipster culture. Hipster culture is built upon being an individual that collects and wears objects distinct from the mainstream, yet when their 'unique' vanity falls into mass appeal they no longer regard it as containing as much merit as before, regardless of whether or not the content of the object has changed.

Hipster Culture is thus built upon a perpetual paradox of consumption – the mainstream social phenomenon it hopes to reject. According to Andy Bennett, "Much

of counter-culture's oppositional stance hinged on forms of expression articulated through commercially available products, such as music and style."[1] This speaks true for Hipster culture, which distinguishes itself from mainstream culture through its fashion sensibility and music taste powered by expenditures. Whether shopping at a local thrift store or paying to see a band, the Hipster remains stuck in an endless circle of consumption in order to distinguish her/himself from others through their individual purchases.

In this process of shaping one's identity through consumption, Marx's theory of reification come to life. According to Marx, the reification of an object in a capitalist society produces a distortion of consciousness, which attaches intangible meaning to objects that remove it from its original context. Hipsters' purchase of an album or a shirt is not just to listen to music or shelter the skin, but to exemplify a state of mind and persona. Hence, the act of wearing a jacket from the 80's is more than a means of keeping warm, but now stands as homage to the past and a reinterpretation of style that is an indicator of the Hipster's personality. According to Theodore Adorno, the accelerated production of capital becomes the main goal behind cultural production. This is clearly demonstrated by companies that cater to Hipsters such as Urban Outfitters. Urban Outfitters is not only catering to Hipsters, but also shaping the culture with its specialized selection of clothing sensible to vintage fashion. Yet, there is something ironic about a store that mass-produces products to consumers who build their identity on being individuals and one-of-a-kind. Urban Outfitters' production of hipster culture represents a paradox. Their product line follows Adorno's expectations of cultural production and profit. Urban has become a crucial driving force behind Hipsters culture, taking note on what is in at the moment, Urban, paradoxically, has gained mainstream acceptance.

The 'fixed-gear' bike is an example of one the ways in which Urban Outfitters takes 'Hipster' products and turns them into mainstream products. Praised for its "clean" look, the fixed gear bike are road bikes with one gear. What started as a style of bike that came from the Velodrome and track racing has now been adopted by bike messengers in cities, such as New York City and San Francisco, and was eventually consumed by Hipsters in stores like Urban Outfitters. Urban Outfitters also privileges those with higher-economic standing. Hipsters need to have the money to be able to purchase a track frame or have the ability to convert a standard multi-gear vintage bike into a single speed. In addition, Hipsters need to know how to ride a fixed gear bike properly. Fixed gear bikes have no brakes and require the rider to continuously pedal due to the rear wheel's locked cog. Hipsters pride themselves on the cultural capital needed to create and ride a fixed gear bike. As more individuals purchased and created fixed gear bikes, however, the demand rose and Urban Oufitters began to mass produce them for mainstream consumers. Urban Outfitters also gives the consumer the option to customize their bike, tapping into the 'unique' fixed gear bike appeal. Rather than using a used bike frame from dumpster diving, consumers now have the option to choose from three frames, made in China, at Urban Outfitters. Urban Outfitters is an example of a corporation profiting off the exploitation of Hipster culture by taking away the cultural value from objects, such as the fixed gear bike, by making them available for the mainstream public. As a result, shops such as Urban ride on the coattails of a group that places itself against the mainstream. Although not all Hipsters shop at Urban Outfitters, they cannot avoid being under watch of such corporations looking for the next new style to exploit.

Hipsters pride themselves on the cultural capital that is needed to build and ride a fixed gear bike.

The Internet is one way in which Hipsters are targeted by style vultures. The Internet is a platform that has enabled and fueled instant exchange of ideas of Hipster culture. Before the Internet, Hipster culture was smaller and required a greater degree of labor. Whether it was finding the next cool band or discovering a fashion that separated them from the 'crowd,' a person would have to be more active, such as going to concerts in small venues or scouring thrift stores, to portray the 'Hipster' aura. Just as Marshall McLuhan said the mobility, speed, and accessibility of communication has made people more connected to one another, he notes that the population is moving back to a "primordial tribe," and as a result, people are losing their individuality – a crucial element that defines Hipster culture.[2]

The assimilation of Hipster styles into mainstream culture, however, is not simply a result of corporations viciously monopolizing youth culture in a top-down fashion, but is also partially created by Hipsters themselves. Henry Jenkins describes their own self-demise as, "convergence culture," a cultural space where old and new media collide.[3] Hipster blogs and websites online have made Hipster knowledge and styles more readily available to the public. Hipster Internet-users are thus becoming active participants in the exploitation of their anti-mainstream culture and, ironically, making their knowledge available to mainstream consciousness. Jenkins states that since "there is more information on any given topic…there is an added incentive for us to talk among ourselves about the media we consume."[4] Hipsters expose their individuality to the masses through personal blogs, public forums, and even video sharing websites (e.g. www.mrhipster.com, www.diehipster.wordpress.com) allowing for the formation of a collective aesthetic. The various discourses on Hipster media and fashion "creates buzz that is increasingly valued by the media industry." Henceforth, a corporation such as Urban Outfitters does not need to find their way into the niche

community of bike messengers to find out what kind of bikes they are riding, the clothes they are wearing, or the music they are listening to, they have access to this information with the click of a mouse, ciphering through user generated content for 'Hipster' inspired styles.

The powers that shape mainstream culture in America are not exerting control over Hipster culture, but rather participating in the same convergence culture that Hipsters are using to create their non-mainstream lifestyle. In the "Southern Question," Antonio Gramsci notes that the lower class, or subordinated class, is dominated through a process of negotiation and articulation. In this case, 'Hipster' culture is monopolized and dominated by corporations such as Urban Outfitters. According to Tony Bennett, "the Gramscian concept of hegemony refers to the process through which the ruling class seeks to negotiate opposing class cultures onto a cultural and ideological terrain which wins for it a position of leadership."[6] Mainstream culture can be defined as the ruling class asserting their power over the lower class (Hipsters) by adopting the unconventional styles of Hipsters and making them commercially successful against the will of Hipsters. The commercialization of Hipsters' individualism, however, is not a one-way process that empowers the ruling class. It is also enabled by the Hipsters themselves, who freely exhibit their lifestyle online and on various public forums, allowing for a negotiation between the mainstream and the underground.

The paradoxical nature of Hipster culture becomes apparent when the forces that allow for its cultural capital to be created, become the same forces that ultimately destroy it. In order for a media or fashion to be regarded as hip and gain cultural capital, it must create acceptance and buzz among an esoteric community – something achieved through an object's opposition to the mainstream. As Hipsters exhibit and display why a particular object (e.g. fixed gear bike) as having higher value than the mainstream, they consequently create its mainstream appeal.

Thus, Hipster culture, which is based on an opposition to the mainstream, is creating the mainstream. This takes us back to the recount at the beginning of this essay in which no one in the film and medias studies class would admit to being classified as a Hipster. What the Hipster represents is a culture that is self-destructive, bringing media and fashion to the forefront of cultural appeal and dropping it the moment it enters the mainstream arena, all the while facilitating its rise to popular status.

The mass communication facilitated by the Internet has allowed for a culture that builds its identity on unconventional, esoteric aesthetics, as niche communities online provide insight into their esteemed lifestyles. Although Hipsters do not always adopt the lifestyles that influence their taste in music or style, they are able to construct a pastiche individual identity comprised of several influences made possible through their active consumerism. It is capitalist society that allows for the reification of products, which is the foundation for Hipsters to proliferate, finding identity through the products they consume. Ironically, the Hipster's constant search for non-mainstream products renders their culture teleological - that is, the belief in progress and that media and styles of all shapes and forms are on a perpetual incline of becoming popular.

In closing, aside from mass communication and the rapid transfer of ideas making it possible for Hipster culture to flourish in the modern age, I feel that Hipster culture is ultimately built upon the desire of American youth to find an identity of individualism, while at same time gaining the approval of their peers.

Works Cited

1. Andy Bennett, "Subcultures of Neo-tribes? Rethinking the Relationship between Youth, Style, and Music Taste," *Sociology* 33(1999): 599-617.

2. Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fior, and Jerome Agel. *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. (San Francisco: HardWired, 1996).

3. Henry Jenkins. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. (NYU Press, 2006).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Tony Bennett, "Introduction: Popular Culture and the Turn to Gramsci," *Popular Culture and Social Relations*. (Open University Press, 1986).

Gender, Sex, and G.I. Joe

by Sean Olenick

The rhetoric of the current "War on Terrorism" plays on many well-rehearsed wartime themes including good vs. evil, sacrifice and honor. However, the current "enemy" has dictated a certain re-evaluation of these timeless themes. The figure of the terrorist, specifically, has necessitated this adjustment because he/she is hard to pin down. The terrorist is far more fluid than traditional "bad guys," and his/her lack of national citizenship makes vilification a complicated process. As Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai have written, the construction of the figure of the terrorist cannot be separated from sex. In fact, the idea of terrorism is built on sexual depravity.[1] This is just one example of how the discourse of the "War on Terrorism" relies heavily on sex and gender. The toy line, GI Joe, is a fascinating site for this discussion, as it is explicitly tied to gender: GI Joes are dolls for boys. Thus, *GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra* (dir. Stephen Sommers, 2009) is also transfixed on sex and sets up a discourse where the handsome, white, all-American male must protect his country from the depraved wishes of a sexually frustrated villain. The "Cobra Team," the film's antagonists, is not the only side implicated in these covertly sexual references, however, as the "Joes" are also framed in a certain sexualized manner. In this paper, I will discuss the construction of the terrorist as sexual monster and argue that *GI Joe*, in both of its incarnations as a film and toy, plays on gender and sex in its creation of power structures.

War is a gendered construction. Traditionally, it is framed in a way where the men go off to fight in order to protect their women and children. The rhetoric of the "War on Terror" plays on these sentiments but also frames the figure of the terrorist in a very sexualized manner. Specifically, the field of "terrorism studies" postulates the terrorist as a sexual deviant and, even worse, a queer sexual deviant. Specifically, Puar and Rai point to two models of terrorism construction: the personality defect model, in which the terrorist holds unconscious hatred towards the parents, and a sexual depravity model, which focuses on the sexual motives of violence (the promise of 72 virgins for suicide bombers, for example).[2] Both models of terrorist studies reduce a complex and historically rooted figure to a simple, historical monster, acting out some depraved sexual fantasy. The backlash after September 11th illustrates this perfectly; for example, one poster depicted the Empire State Building sodomizing Osama Bin Laden. Puar and Rai state, "American retaliation promises to emasculate bin Laden and turn him into a fag. This promise... suggests that if you're not for the war, you're a fag."[3] As we will see, all of these themes are well represented in *GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra*.

Opposite the terrorist is the male patriot, wielding "an aggressive heterosexual patriotism."[4] Psychoanalytically speaking, the source of male power is the phallus and, thus, military strength is derived from the penis. Women are characterized as lacking the phallus, so they are also implicated in this rhetoric. According to Jessica Glaser, "military identity is centered on the notion of the warrior: a term of identity that excludes women."[5] The military plays on

stereotypically male attributes like aggression and strength, and these qualities are only enhanced through training and combat. In fact, "in basic training, recruits are taught rather violently who they are and who they are not. There are three main 'others' that the military rejects in its identity: civilian culture, the enemy, and women and femininity."[6] Interestingly, as discussed above, the terrorist is framed as a feminine homosexual or, rather, a failed heterosexual, and these notions obviously contrast with the ultra-manly image of the soldier. Thus, gender and sexuality play huge roles in the rhetoric of war making: "The notion of the soldier is very much caught up in being male and not female."[7]

This type of rhetoric creates a national story through which citizens understand both themselves and the war machine. But this discourse is not innate, and the media often functions as a way to disseminate this gendered ideology. Thus, we can view *GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra* as this specific type of ideological mechanism, helping to propagate the ideas of heterosexual patriotism and homosexual terrorism. The GI Joe franchise, however, began as a toy line in the 1960s, and a discussion of this history is necessary to understand the broader implications of the GI Joe film.

The GI Joe toy line is an interesting site of negotiation between gender roles. The toys became very popular immediately upon their release by Hasbro in 1964 as the United States was still several years away from Vietnam, and the glorification of the "Greatest Generation" still lingered. The first line of Joes were available in the four major branches of the military (the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy) and, at 12 inches, measured much larger than a normal action figure. Thus, the GI Joes becomes known more as dolls than action figures. The ideological implications of the dolls were quite obvious. According to Karen Hall, "GI Joe led boys to fashion themselves after the same mold that Joe was cast in: militarized, masculinized citizenship, not of woman born but government issued… [they] put a trustworthy, amiable, childlike face on the image of the US military".[8] However, the Joe doll represents an interesting dichotomy; though in one sense the toy is male, representing the military and masculinity, in another it is female, as girls generally enjoy playing with dolls. Thus, in some sense, GI Joe is transgender.

Joe's production history signals this gender bending as well, and Hasbro went to great length to make Joe as masculine as possible. For example, the development team purposefully left Joe's face blank in an attempt to negate any femininity, but, in the process, made the face look very robotic. According to Hall, a whole generation of boys grew up associating masculinity with a certain "exaggerated numbness and stunted humanity."[9] Adding to the confusion of Joe's gender is the fact that the doll has no penis. Apparently, with production deadlines rapidly approaching, Hasbro decided to forego the crotch. Ironically, as a military toy, Joe was stripped of the symbolic power that the military wields: the phallus [you could easily argue that he still has the phallus (since it is symbolic), though he lacks the physical penis]. Thus, the GI Joe doll has a very complicated history, stemming not only from its distinction as a doll but also its very body. As discussed above, military discourse cannot function without sex and gender, and the same must be said about GI Joe.

Cast from left to right: Duke, General Hawk, Breaker, Scarlett, Ripcord.

GI Joe: Rise of Cobra is truly a product of "War on Terrorism" rhetoric, and many of its characters represent the archetypes discussed above. The film had a successful box office run in 2009, grossing $150 million in the United States and $151 million in 14 international markets, illustrating the film's huge global reach. Thus, millions of viewers worldwide were introduced to the gendered ideology discussed above. *Rise of Cobra* exists in a semi-fictional world where a top-secret military organization, the Joes, defends freedom from a nation-less organization, Cobra, who would like nothing more than to take over the world. The parallels to the "War on Terror" are obvious, and the film banks on a type of "ripped from the headlines" appeal.

Channing Tatum stars as Duke, the soon-to-be leader of the Joes. (The film is an origin story.) Tatum is the personification of American astmasculinity: tall, physically imposing, white, and exceedingly handsome, and thus the ideal choice to play Duke, the physical embodiment of American military perfection. Beyond his appearance, Duke psychologically represents the romanticized soldier, appealing to both male and female audiences; though manly and able to kick major ass, Duke is also vulnerable and scarred from a failed past relationship—wild yet tamable. Even his name serves a purpose, linking the character to the American hero who tamed the Wild West: the Duke, John Wayne. In some sense, George W. Bush played this role during his two terms as the "terror president," often dressing in a cowboy hat or, famously, in an Air Force flight suit just prior to his announcement of "Mission Accomplished" in 2003, to link himself with the iconic imagery of past American heroes.

Duke's main adversary is James McCullen, played by Christopher Eccleston. McCullen fits Puar and Rai's

description of the terrorist who exists outside of history since he isn't fighting for a country and seems to have no reason for what he is doing. The narrative not only neglects to convey McCullen's origin but also makes every attempt to hinder the audience's ability to determine it. For example, he speaks with a very ambiguous accent (possibly Scottish) but also seems to know French. He also states that he sells arms to "both sides," but never specifies the sides themselves. It is not only McCullen's origin that is confusing but moreover his sexuality, as he displays signs of both deep sexual frustration and gender bending. Specifically, he is in love with one of his henchmen, or more accurately a henchwoman, named the Barroness (Sienna Miller). Not only does she recoil at McCullen's touch, she yearns for the more rugged and sexually appealing Duke, in one scene even staring at Duke while McCullen kisses her. The audience is thus cued to understand that Duke would fulfill the Barroness's sexual needs more readily than McCullen, and this is one reason why we root for him. McCullen's penchant for jewelry visually links him to femininity and further cements that he is a sexual deviant who should be feared.

Besides existing outside of history, the McCullen character fits into another categorization of the terrorist: seemingly mindless, he has no reason for what he is doing, neither wanting nor demanding anything. According to Puar and Rai, terrorist studies attempts to "reduce complex social, historical, and political dynamics" to various personality glitches, and this is exactly what happens in *Rise of Cobra*.[10] In the film, McCullen plans on shooting a nanite-filled warhead at major cities, an act that, we are told, would not only kill millions but also cripple the infrastructure of various Western powers. Throughout the film, he is repeatedly asked why he would do such a thing, and he never gives anything but generic answers beyond his wish "to strike fear into the hearts of every man, woman, and child." Since the character has been completely stripped of history or cause, we begin to attribute all of his acts to a mere hatred of freedom. The media and Bush Administration used this rhetoric often in describing everyone from Al-Qaeda's members to Saddam Hussein to opponents of the Patriot Act.

The film continues to play on the theme of mindless evil throughout. This is a rehearsed "War on Terror" line, and *Rise Of Cobra* invokes it often. Specifically, McCullen's scientist ally, Rex (Joseph Gordon-Lewitt), uses nanotechnology to create an army that "feels no pain, has no morality, and is completely obedient." Not surprisingly, the soldiers Rex describes all look ambiguously non-white.

Perhaps the most fascinating character in the film is Zartan, played by Hollywood's go-to terrorist actor, Arnold Vosloo. Zartan is a member of the Cobra team, but since he is Arab, he must be even more ruthless than the other villains and seems to have no conscious at all. For example, he breaks a well known rule of war by stealing and wearing an enemy combatant's uniform, and later impales a female Joe with a sword, whistling while he kills. After murdering the woman in cold blood, another Cobra member gives him a dirty look, to which he replies, "Oh that's right, you don't kill women." With these two acts, the film has set up a power structure where, even amongst other villains and murderers, the Arab member is the worst, and the other bad guys look down on him as despicable. Halfway through the movie, Zartan

undergoes a procedure that makes him look like the US President, and, by the end of the film, he kills the real president and takes over power. Since he looks like the man, no one notices, but, in the film's last shot, he begins to whistle, and the audience realizes that America's worst fear has come true: an Arab is now the President. Obviously, the Joes will have to deal with this in the sequel.

To complete our understanding of the film's power structure, we must also discuss Joes who are black males. Marlan Wayans plays Ripcord, Duke's African-American sidekick and the film's comic relief. He displays the same physical ability and heroism as Duke but, because he is black, he is relegated to second-in-command. An actor named Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje plays the Joe's other black member, Heavy Duty, and this is the character who is tasked with training Duke and Ripcord early in the film, as he is already an accomplished member of the team. Despite his seniority, however, Duke eventually supercedes him as the leader of the team; Duke looks American while Heavy Duty is black and speaks with an ambiguous African accent. Obviously, Duke will become more important based on this fact alone.

The team also features a woman, Scarlett (Rachel Nicols), but she is, quite clearly, at the bottom of the power hierarchy. Though we are told that she graduated college at 12 years old and is the smartest member of the Joes, she nevertheless needs constant saving by the men in the film. Even worse, she serves as a sex object by the end of the film, giving in to Ripcord's constant flirting and essentially promising him sex if he returns from his last mission alive. Also, her outfits often reveals enough of her body and breasts to tease both the male characters in the film and the audience, made up primarily of teenage boys. The point seems to be that if a woman wants to be in the military she must dumb herself down, and she better remember that she is in a man's world. Thus, despite her apparent smarts, she is relegated, like the wives of US soldiers in Iraq, to hoping that her man will come home alive. Ironically, Nicols, the actress who plays Scarlett, seemed to realize the utter weakness of her character. In a telling promotional interview, Nicols acknowledged that *Rise of Cobra* is a "male dominated film," though not without a dose of "girl power."[11] Unlike the dolls of the 1960s, there is no questioning the misogynistic nature of this new-school interpretation of GI Joe. The character hierarchy further illustrates this: Duke stands at the top as the embodiment of the American military spirit, while the male black members, Ripcord and Heavy Duty are his subordinates, and Scarlett, as the woman member, is relegated to the bottom.

Besides determining the character hierarchy in the film, the phallus appears often in the composition. Phallic imagery plays an important symbolic role in the film's main fight scene, for example. McCullen decides to fire a warhead on Paris, and the Joes race against the clock to stop him. The setting of this sequence is odd, however, as Paris seems to have nothing to do with the rest of the film, and France has nothing to do with the Joes at all. Eventually, the villains are able to launch the missile, which hits and knocks down the Eiffel Tower. Immediately following this Paris sequence, the narrative jumps to Washington D.C., and the camera tilts down the Washington monument, yet another phallic world monument, signaling the change in lo-

Paris has been castrated, as it's phallus, the Eiffel Tower, has been destroyed, while the United State's phallus stands erect and powerful.

cation. These consecutive shots serve a definite purpose in the narrative, but the symbolism also works for a certain purpose. France is targeted first because its symbolic castration is not as colossal as America's since France is often framed as feminine and weak; while Paris' Eiffel Tower, has been destroyed, the United State's phallus stands erect, powerful, and impervious to foreign attack.

Upon its release in August 2009, most film critics and reviewers wrote off *GI Joe: Rise of Cobra* as a mindless Hollywood action flick. This reading of the film, however, downplays its more insidious accomplishments, and the ideological implications serve a greater purpose when put into the context of soft power. According to Joseph Nye, power works in two forms: hard and soft. Hard power involves using military power or economic coercion to forcibly influence the behaviors of other nations. Soft power, conversely, is more menacing and involves using co-operation to make others want what you have.[12] Soft power works through the mechanism of cultural imperialism, whereby the media of a powerful nation creates a discourse to promote Western ideals and broadcasts it to less powerful nations.[13] In theory, the less powerful nation should begin to buy into the ideals of the more powerful one, rendering hard power unnecessary. *GI Joe* represents soft power. It is a type of media, seen throughout the world, which creates a particular vision of democracy and terrorism. In this light, *GI Joe: Rise of Cobra* is nothing more than propaganda, helping to create a particularly gendered (and all-powerful) vision of the US military and foreign policy.

Works Cited

1. Jasbir Puar and Amit S. Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text* 20(2002): 117.

2. Ibid, 124.

3. Ibid, 126.

4. Ibid, 118.

5. Jessica Glaser, "Insurgencies: Gender Roles, Performances, Bodies, and the Construction of Identity in the United States Military during the War on Terror." *Conference Papers-International Studies Association* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA's 49th Annual Convention, Bridging Multiple Divides, Hilton San Francisco, CA, USA, Mar 26, 2008;6.

6. Ibid, 7.

7. Ibid, 1.

8. Karen J. Hall, "A Soldier's Body: GI Joe, Hasbro's Great American Hero, and the Symptoms of Empire," *Journal of Popular Culture* 38(2004): 35.

9. Ibid,, 43.

10. Puar & Rai, 124

11. Tony Toscano. Interview. *Talking Pictures TV*. August 3, 2009.

12. Richard De Zoysa and Otto Newman, "Globalization, Soft Power and the Challenge of Hollywood." *Contemporary Politics*, 8(2002);187.

13. Ibid, 189.

Doctor/Doctor:
Exploring Slash Fandom Interpretations within House M.D.

by Paula Ersly

From *Star Trek* to *Buffy*, *Starsky and Hutch* to *Firefly*, the "cult" of fandom has been a recurring phenomenon. Wherever there is good television or good literature (or even bad television and bad literature) there are dedicated fans responding to and challenging the presented texts. Fans take what they see on screen and they use it as a launching point for their own speculation about the characters or direction of the show. This can manifest itself through community discussion of episodes, character studies, artwork and computer graphics centered around the show, or fan fiction, which is defined as written works by fans using the characters and universe of the show. These activities are undertaken as a hobby, and not for profit.[1] Fan fiction is a way of reading between the lines of what is on screen and playing with the possibilities left there. Within this definition of fandom, there is a large number of so-called "slashers", or fans who support, read, write or otherwise create works centered around homosexual, often subtextual pairings within the text. I plan to use *House M.D.* (2004-present) to explore the motives of these slash readers and writers. Fans, and especially slash fans, use the text to interpret their own ideas of ideal gender relations onto the shows they watch. The medical drama provides a unique arena for the construction of queer subtextual readings. In this essay, I demonstrate how queer readings exist within the *House* episode, "You Must Remember This,"(season 7, episode 12).

Fandom has been most associated with the sci-fi genre in the past—with texts like *Star Trek* or *The X Files*, and more presently with shows like *Firefly* or *Supernatural*. But sci-fi is not the only genre with a devoted base of followers. Ranging from *Glee* to T*he Big Bang Theory*, all varieties of modern TV have found their own fandom niche on the internet, on sites like fanfiction.net, livejournal, or even facebook and twitter. While sci-fi and fantasy still dominate the most popular ranks of fandom, a prominent genre has begun to pull its weight among these superstars—the medical drama. On the list of top 20 most popular fandoms on fanfiction.net, *House M.D.* ranks 8th with over 19,000 "fanfics" associated with it, and Grey's Anatomy ranks 19th with 10,000. Further down the list appear *General Hospital* (#33), *ER* (#37), and even *Scrubs* (#81).

Many theories have been proposed to explain why science fiction has generated such a strong base of slash fandom and fanfiction that can also be applied to the medical drama and to *House* in particular. Constance Penley argues that science fiction is ripe for slash because it is a genre that deals with issues of sexual difference and relations by "fusing political concerns with the playful creativity of the imagination."[2] Science fiction is a world that largely marginalizes the role of women, but it is also often categorized as depicting utopian societies where anything can happen. This mixture allows for all kinds of creative opportunities. Penley states, "writing a story about two men avoids the built-in inequality of the romance formula, in which dominance and submission are invariably the respective roles of men and women."[3] Science fiction is a world dominated by

"House himself is highly masculinized; he is characterized as abrasive, never clean-shaven, and sexually vulgar."

men and often marketed to men, and when female fans rearrange this patriarchal structure, they subvert the male dominance of the sci-fi realm and the relationships portrayed therein. But how does any of this apply to the medical drama?

The world of medicine, like the world of science fiction, is geared around science and technology, two fields of interest that are often understood as the specialties of men, not women. Because medicine is such a gendered world—populated largely by male doctors and female nurses—it offers the same possibilities as sci-fi for exploration and deconstruction by women in the form of slash fiction. Renee Kyle writes in *Introducing Philosophy Through Pop Culture* that, "traditionally, the doctor-patient relationship grants authority based on scientific (medical) knowledge, and rejects subjective, experimental knowledge. In *House*, the majority of physicians are male, and the majority of patients are female, this gendered male (doctor) to female (patient) relationship privileges 'masculine' knowledge over 'feminine' knowledge."[4] Slashers of *Star Trek* fiction solve this problem of differing intellects and intuition by pairing Kirk and Spock, the two more powerful and balanced characters together. Similarly, slashers in the *House* world pair together the two heads of medicine—Diagnostics head Gregory House, and Oncology head James Wilson—as a way to balance out this gendered world, where all the female characters are subordinates of House.

Lisa Cuddy is the only exception to this—she is in fact both House and Wilson's superior as the Dean of Medi-

cine, but unlike House and Wilson, she has a familial and gendered tie to her young daughter. She is not presented as just another medical equal, but very much as a woman. By assuming the role of House's girlfriend, moreover, she threatens the stability of the romantic pairing of House and Wilson. House constantly questions her judgment in relation to her emotions, especially when it comes to patients that are young children, and reminds her that because she is the administrative dean, she's not a "real" doctor, thus setting her apart—and somehow below—the two men.

In the episode "You Must Remember This", Cuddy appears a powerless figure, despite her authority. In two of the scenes, she argues with House and tells him to stop meddling in Wilson's affairs. In one scene, she is asleep and spooning with House, and in another she is doing paperwork and, again, bickering light-heartedly with House, who ignores her. In one of four such scenes, she has just gotten out of the shower and is half-naked. She does not practice medicine in any of these scenes, nor does she do anything of particular import, apart from being House's girlfriend. This is not exactly an honest or satisfying portrayal of a female character.

Most fandom scholars like to point out that fandom–and slash fandom in particular—is composed of primarily heterosexual women. The House fandom is no different from most other fandoms in terms of gender composition and sexual orientation. I conducted a survey on two *House* fan communities on livejournal: "house_cuddy", a community dedicated to House's relationship with the female administrator Cuddy, and "house_wilson", a community dedicated to the slash relationship of House and Wilson. My poll appeared on a general House fandom newsletter the next day (house_md_news), and the results reflect the wide range of House fans that participated. Of the 305 people who participated, 278 (91%) were female, and 201 (66%) were heterosexual. The results were split almost exactly in half over who preferred House/Wilson versus House/Cuddy, despite the fact that House/Wilson has never been overtly cast as a sexual relationship on the show. Also, 25% of the people who responded to the poll over at the "house_wilson" slash community were bisexual (a larger number than at the "house_cuddy" community) and the only people who declined to state their gender were users from the slash community. These results suggest that to slash fans, things like gender and heteronormativity may be outdated concepts. Thus, slash fiction reveals the variety of sexual relationships that mainstream TV fails to address.

House himself is highly masculinized; he is characterized as abrasive, never clean-shaven, and sexually vulgar. He also prides himself in avoiding patient care and social interaction, the type of work nurses (ergo women) should be doing. In "You Must Remember This," House takes Wilson out to a bar for a "guys night out." The scene opens with House's very male gaze at the center of attention; as the camera pans around the bar, pausing to hover on various women along the way, House's voiceover narrates his subjective judgment of these women: "too fat, too thin, too desperate, not desperate enough…" When Wilson fails to chime in, House quips, "if you objectify them now you'll feel more comfortable when you tie them to a table in your basement later… or whatever." This dialogue is inherently misogynistic and while it is

approached in a humorous manner throughout the show (Wilson's reticent objectification includes the complaint "too... armpit fat-y") there is no denying that, well, House is a pig. He is the exact man a woman generally wants to avoid, and yet he is the protagonist of this show and the character the audience is meant to support and identify with. So how can female fans deal with this dichotomy?

One method has been to reinterpret the world of *House* as a world in which House and Wilson are gay and attracted to one another. If that is the case, then House's objectification of women seems less callous and offensive, and more like a deeper defense mechanism. It gives House a layer of insecurity and character ambiguity that he otherwise lacks. Constance Penley makes the case that many *Star Trek* Kirk/Spock fans use fanfiction and the characters of Kirk and Spock as a method of "retooling" masculinity.[5] The same can be said of House/Wilson fans, who seek to undermine House's sexist streak by placing him in a relationship with another man, his equal--someone he cannot objectify through reckless comments about female anatomy. The work of slash writers, according to Penley, "embodies the same impulse as the female nineteenth century popular novelists: to transform the public sphere by imaginatively demonstrating how it could be improved through making it more answerable to women's interests."[6] This is precisely what these slash fans try to do.

"One method has been to reinterpret the world of House as a world in which House and Wilson are gay and attracted to one another."

Slash fans structure their fiction through the gaze of the characters. The fans rely on "looks" and body language to structure their case. The slash fan's goals is to find the queer elements in a heterocentrist text. Alexander Doty notes, "basically heterocentrist texts can contain queer elements, and basically heterosexual, straight-identifying

people can experience queer moments... and these people should be encouraged to examine and express these moments as queer..."[7] Slash fandom is therefore a niche in which this kind of interpretation is cultivated and encouraged on the daily. A closer look at *House*'s "You Must Remember This" episode reveals that slash thinking is rooted in the cinematographic elements of the show.

At the opening of the episode, Wilson has just recently broken up with his ex-wife Sam. A large portion of this episode focuses on House trying to get Wilson back into the dating world. The ending sequence of shots sparked huge debate among slash House/Wilson fans, including comments such as the following from livejournal user "foxke_lafra": "woah, just me, or is the slash back? ...That last interaction between House and Wilson, and the looks they were sharing... I firmly believe that they were lying awake thinking about each other at the very end" (anonymous).[8] The sequence in question is a pairing of these two shots back to back at the close of the episode, one of Wilson awake and petting his cat, and one of House awake and cuddling his girlfriend.

Given the context of the episode, the "concerned" looks of Wilson and House could mean two different things. Wilson admitted to House that he wasn't ready to go back into dating and that he was still hung up on Sam, and so he is lying awake thinking of her. Cuddy earlier pointed out to House that he's trying to get Wilson back into dating because House feels guilty that he—the unstable jackass—is in a happy relationship for once, whereas Wilson—the kind bleeding-heart—is not. Ergo House is awake meditating on his own happiness and wondering if he really does deserve this relationship. However as Doty points out, "the queer often operates within the nonqueer, as the nonqueer does within the queer."[9] A queer reading of this scene provides a completely alternate explanation for the respective looks Wilson and House project off-screen. The song playing as the shot of Wilson fades into the shot of House is called "How to Fight Loneliness" by Wilco. The two shots mirror each other so closely that they create very strong parallels between the two characters. The camera pans up Wilson from left to right, and when the shot fades into Cuddy and House, the camera pans once again from left to right to House's face. While Wilson pets Sarah, the cat, House is notably caressing Cuddy's elbow in a similar manner. Throughout the entire episode, House teases Wilson that a cat is a sign of spinsterhood and loneliness—obviously Wilson is not in love with the cat. Based on the similarities already mentioned, as well as the overlying song about "fighting loneliness", it is possible that Cuddy is House's version of the cat—a mere stand-in to temporarily stave off his loneliness and that he is not in love with her either. The linking of these two shots in cinematographic style, with the sound bridging them together, could lead the viewer to extrapolate that House and Wilson are, in fact, lying in bed thinking of one another. Their gazes off-camera could be interpreted as longing and, while they can't see one another, the last shot of Wilson's face shows his eyes veering off into the top right corner of the screen, and the final shot of House's face shows his eyes veering into the bottom left direction of the screen, as if at each other. Conversely House/Cuddy fans did not focus so much on these parallels, but chose to emphasize instead

the fact that House—a notoriously bad sleeper—closes his eyes and appears to relax at the end of the shot. Look at how comfortable they [House and Cuddy] are together, these fans said, look how happy! And this wouldn't be a wrong assumption either; the scene works both ways—in queer and non-queer contexts. Slash fans are aware of sexual differences in the real world and see the nuances of this world built into an otherwise often over-simplified and heteronormative TV drama world.

The scene where House and Wilson are at the bar also has slash connotations. The scene opens on House being a chauvinist with the camera aiding in his wandering gaze, but by the end of the scene something flips. Wilson spots a woman he knows at the bar, and House encourages him to approach her. When Wilson crosses to the bar, House remains.

The scene cuts back and forth between a close shot of House's face as he watches Wilson speak to the woman at the bar and a medium range shot of Wilson at the bar from House's point of view; Wilson and the girl are slightly off-center, nothing they are saying can be heard, and the heads of strangers cross in and out of the frame much like in the initial shots of House scoping out the bar. This time, however, Wilson is the focus of House's almost affectionate gaze. When Wilson leaves with the girl, he pauses to whisper to House, and then House's gaze (and the camera) stays on Wilson until he exits the bar. While the narrative purpose of this scene is to get Wilson to go home with a girl, the scene itself showcases House and Wilson's close relationship. Wilson is the object of House's more meaningful gaze—a focused gaze—whereas the women from the opening shot of this scene flit in and out merely as periphery objects of House's vision. It is also notable that once Wilson leaves the bar, there are no more House POV shots, even if he lingers in the bar to order a round of champagne for everyone before he himself exits. The camera does not center on House, but leaves a space to House's left—where Wilson was standing before—which accentuates Wilson's absence. A reading of the scene in this manner sets up a reading of the episode's final scene in which House and Wilson are thinking of (and subconsciously looking for) each other. At the end of the episode, Wilson also admits he did not sleep with the woman from the bar—that he couldn't. He does not give an overt explanation why (the assumption is that he is not over his ex-girlfriend yet) but it is possible that House, or a love for House, is the true reason.

Fandom, fanfiction, and slash are all a means of exploring the multitude of possibilities a show can develop off-screen. By looking at the phenomenon of slash fandom through the academic lens of a queer reading it becomes apparent that, "queer readings aren't 'alternative' readings, wishful or willful misreadings, or 'reading too much into things' readings. They result from the recognition and articulation of the complex range of queerness that has been in popular culture texts and their audiences all along."[10] This kind of speculation restructures and recasts the world in which the characters live in order to create new forms of gendered power relationships. Like science fiction, the medical drama is a conflicting arena of structure *and* chaos. Medicine involves rules, theories, strict doctor/patient protocol—and yet a hospital with its E.R. is an inherently tumultuous place. This polarity provides the perfect framework for the challenging of un-

derlying societal—and sexual—rules, a task slash fans are eager to take on.

Works Cited

1. Susan Clerc, "Estrogen Brigades and 'Big Tits' Threads: Media Fandom Online and Off." *WiredWomen*, (1996) 78.

2. Constance Penley. *Nasa/Trek Popular Science and Sex in America*. (New York: New Left Books: 1997), 103.

3. Ibid, 125.

4. Renee Kyle, "Cameron's Ethics of Care." *Introducing Philosophy Through Pop Culture*. (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Inc: 2010), 222.

5. Ibid, 127.

6. Ibid, 134.

7. Alexander Doty, "There's Something Queer in Here," in *Out of Culture*, eds. Corey Creekmur and Alexander Doty. (Durham: Duke University Press: 1995), 72.

8. Lafra Foxke, "Episode Post-Mortem: 7x12 You Must Remember This". Feb 14, 2011. http://house-wilson.livejournal.com/4383581.html?thread=54697821#t54697821

9. Ibid, 73.

10. Ibid, 84.

Conference Report:
Free Press and the Debates on Net Neutrality

by Kristen Aguanno

The National Conference for Media Reform (NCMR) presented by *FreePress*, took place in Boston, Massachusetts from April 8 – 11, 2011. Media producers, academics, lawmakers, and activists attended the conference to discuss the current state of American media, including the potential loss of a free and open Internet and the dominant control of news, entertainment, and communication platforms by media conglomerates.

At NCMR, one of the major topics of discussion was net neutrality, which is the principle that establishes the right for open access and online creativity (e.g. personal blogs) without corporate and government discrimination and intervention. Ironically, on the first day of the NCMR the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill stating that they do not that did not support the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) regulation to protect net neutrality. The approval of this bill made it clear to the conference participants that the loss of free Internet is not only possible, but also an imminent threat to Internet users unless the public speaks out.

The discussion about the loss of Net neutrality also addressed the concern about the lack of diverse perspectives in mainstream news media. Independent journalists from *Democracy Now!* and *Free Speech TV* are encouraging independent journalists to present alternative perspectives and stories onscreen because they do not have to be concerned about following corporate policies or government approval.

For the activists at NCMR, media and communication consolidation is a major concern. Mobile phone companies are beginning to implement policies that limit the first amendment. For example, Verizon™ has the power to block text messages, which impedes our first amendment right to speech and to organize a peaceful political demonstration if they disagree with the cause. Some presenters at the conference argued that people who dislike Verizon's policy should choose an alternative phone service. However, as we see with AT&T™ merging with T Mobile™, the trend is moving towards conglomeration. Unless we tell our government to step in and protect the free market, there will no longer be a choice.

In most college level Film and Media Studies programs, undergraduate students learn about how the history of American media industries has been one of consolidation and closure, with the government standing in the way of creative and independent control. With this in mind, it is surprising that the student attendance at the conference was small. If we want to keep net neutrality, foster more competition, and maintain creative and diverse perspectives, we need to continue knowledge production in order to make our government act. This does not mean scholars and students in the fields of media need to drop their books to become activists, but it means that the most powerful thing they have to fight with against the mountains of industry dollars is the number of those in support of media reform. For more information about net neutrality and other media issues visit: FreePress.net.

Mobile Media
in media res

iRetail:
The Taste of Apple

by Kelsey Brannan

Apple retail began on May 19, 2001. On this day, two Apple Stores opened - one in Tyson's Corner, Virginia, and the other in Glendale Galleria, California. Since then, over 323 Apple Stores have opened around the globe. The stores offer customers a local and personal meeting point to not only purchase computers, but also receive Apple service care. The popular geographic locations and the high-tech architecture of Apple stores produce a taste of luxury that appeal to a middle and upper class lifestyles. For example, the Apple Store in Paris, France is located in the glass corridors of the Carrousel du Louvre.[1] The luxurious space and "cool" aesthetic design of the Apple store becomes a place where customers and Apple fans can exercise popular production and consumption practices. For example, a 'Youtube auteur,' iJustine, has accumulated millions of fans by visiting Apple Stores to record fan videos with Apple's 'Built-in-iSight' cameras.[2] The combination of luxurious architecture and popular consumption engenders a paradox. The Apple Store becomes a luxurious space requiring a taste of popular *necessity*.[3]

The habitus of Apple retail employees must also match Apple's taste of luxury. Williams and Connell note, "Retailers with "cool" brands are successful at attracting workers because they appeal to their consumer interests."[4] In other words, the ideal employee for Apple is a youthful Apple consumer that identifies with the potential of Apple products. An Apple employee notes, "You'd be surprised how similar we all are."[5] In the following analysis I move beyond the luxurious 'face' of Apple to investigate the organizational strategies and professional codes which make Apple retail an attractive place to work. My methodology involves three modes of analysis: (1) ethnographic field operations on the Apple store sales floor and Back of House (BoH), (2) interviews with Apple store employees, and (3) textual analysis. From these methods I look at two aspects of Apple's production culture that structure the flow of Apple employee communication: (I) Apple's interactive training programs and communication strategies (i.e Market Core Training, Retailme, Apple Credo, Retail News Network) implemented by Apple Corporate to fetishize the retail space as a "fun" workplace, and (II) the ubiquitous computing and m-commerce strategies designed to increase customer satisfaction. By deconstructing Apple's taste of luxury and performance culture, I expose the negative implications of m-commerce on retail space and employee communication.

I. Apple's Professional Training and Corporate Strategies

"Innovation is a part of our DNA"[6]

At the point of sale (POS), Apple employees simultaneously perform mobile communication and advertise their products as an attractive and necessary mode of communication. Bourdieu referred to this performance as conjuring up a taste of "amor fati."[7] He says, "Taste is amor fati, the choice of destiny, but a forced choice, produced by conditions of existence which rule out

An Apple Store in Paris, France, located in the glass corridors of the Carrousel du Louvre.

all alternatives as mere daydreams and leave no choice but the taste for the necessity."[8] Wearing seasonal American Apparel Apple shirts and carrying *Easypay* mobile cash register devices, Apple employee's produce a taste of luxury that appeals to its customers and employees. A college student, age 21, decided to work at Apple because she thought the vibe at Apple was "cool":

> **BRANNAN:** What is your background in retail? How did you choose to be a part of Apple?
>
> **APPLE SPECIALIST:** I always liked the vibe at Apple and that people were friendly and actually seemed to care and after my mum started working there I saw how much she enjoyed it and wanted to do the same.[9]

This college student was influenced by her mother's initial attraction to Apple, which was based on the way in which Apple constructs their products as being helpful and beneficial to the 'middle-class' quotidian family lifestyle. This employee's response embodies the taste of Apple, a taste that manufactures retail fetishism, attracts youthful enterprise, and family oriented lifestyles. This 'taste,' however, is not just a natural part of Apple, but assembled, reinforced, and maintained through the implementation of interactive organizational strategies by various actors in Apple Corporate. I have identified five essential strategies: (a) Market Core training, (b) Retailme, (c) RNN and the 'Daily Download' language, (d) Apple Credo and (e) store quarterly meetings.[10]

A. Market Core Training

The following Apple training program analysis is based on field notes taken during Southern California's Apple Market Core training. There were a total of six employees in the training class between the ages of 19 and 22. Five of the employees in the training program were hired as part-time Apple Specialists, one was hired as a part-time Genius, and the other was hired as full-time Specialist. The mentors who facilitated the Apple Market Core training program claim that the knowledge and skills acquired during Core training is not only useful for Apple retail practices, but useful for quotidian practices as well.[11] The first page of the "Market Core Training Participant Guide" reads:

> There's work and there's your life's work. The kind of work that has your fingerprints all over it. The kind of work that you'd never compromise on. That you'd sacrifice a weekend for. You can do that kind of work at Apple. People don't come here to play it safe. They come here to swim in the deep end. They want their work to add up to something. Something big. Something that couldn't happen anywhere else.[12]

The training guides' opening statement shows how Apple structures retail work as valuable life-work. Although Apple advertises the retail store as a space where creative innovation can be practiced, the mediated organizational strategies detract from individual agency.

Similarly to the organizational strategies practiced in Taylorism, Apple's Market Core training methodologies use technology to scientifically manage employee practices.[13] During the classroom stage of training, the new hires engage in mediated activities that code and define each role, action, and task in the Apple Store. On the first day of Market Core training new employees learn about the history of Apple (i.e. 1976 Apple release first computer) by watching and interpreting Apple television commercials. In between these lessons, the mentors introduce various team building activities. In one activity - the "Apple description activity" - the trainees define and describe Apple with words. The trainees described Apple with words such as, innovation, immediacy, creativity, revolutionary, new age, and design.[14] This catalogue of words exemplifies the way in which organizational strategies code and mediate Apple with language and symbolism that appeals to youth and creative lifestyles.

On the second day of training, trainees are given large sheets of paper to draw an "Apple Ecosystem." The ecosystem is intended to map Apple's spatial (i.e. red zone, family room, genius bar) and hierarchal distinctions (i.e. Managers, Geni, Creatives, and Specialists) (see Figures 1 and 2). Trainees are encouraged to be creative in this training activity. One group of trainees produced a human body diagram as a metaphor for the Apple ecosystem, in which the brain represented a Genius, the heart represented Apple product, and the blood represented the Specialists.[15] This activity, among others, raises creative employee commitment to Apple, but also creates the illusion that Apple's work flow is flexible and fun.[16] Williams and Connell note, "some upscale retail stores require applicants to perform creative tasks during the job interview...once hired, however, many retail workers find they are given no opportunity to use their creative talents."[17] Training activities like the "Apple Eco-

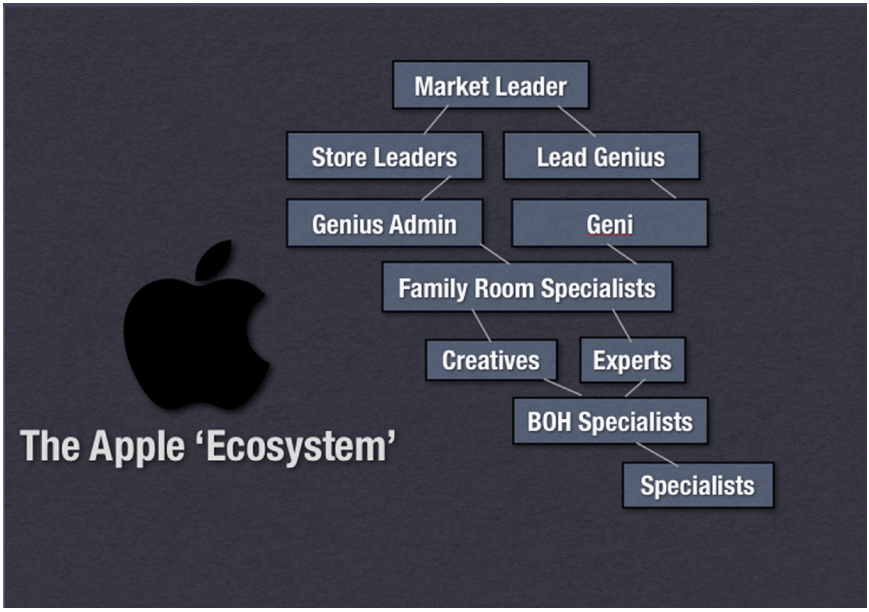


Figure 1. The Apple Ecosysytem.

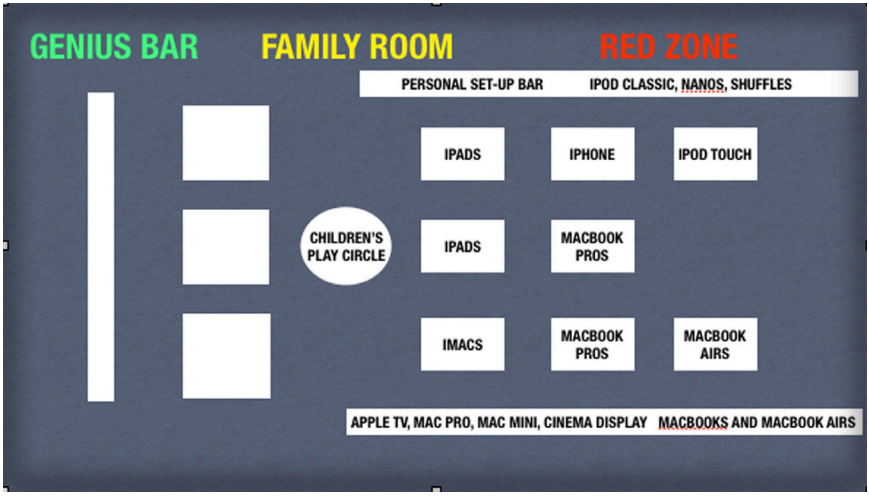


Figure 2. The spatial design of an Apple Store.

system" give employees the false impression that Apple will continue to let them be creative on the sales floor.[18] For example, the visuals team, responsible for updating the visual design of the store, may feel as if they are creatively contributing to the spatial design, but they are actually restricted to following Apple corporate's visual script. As Bauldy and Hallier note, the shifting products and interior spatial arrangement of the Apple store "has paralleled the overt dissemination of a workplace 'fun' culture."[19]

The third day of Core training is based on mastering Apple's steps of service (A, Approach, P, Position, P, Probe, L, Listen, E, End with a Fond farewell) and learning how to provide customers with the "complete" Apple solution. The complete solution is a sales package consisting of an Apple Product accompanied with Apple Care Protection Plan, a MobileMe account, and a One to One Membership. The trainers tell the employees that the complete solution was designed to ensure that Apple's customers have protection, proper training, and back-up systems for their products. These solutions, however, are designed to promote a taste of luxury as necessary. It is also a fetishized way to control the store's daily attachment goals (60% Apple Care sales, 20% One to One sales, and 15% MobileMe). Apple's steps of service shapes the customer's lifestyle to fit Apple's luxurious taste of necessity.

The focus on 'life-work,' creative activities, and customer service during Market Core deprive employees of the essential software and hardware knowledge needed to correctly inform customers about their products. Thus, a majority of Apple employees end up learning about hardware and software outside of store with the illusion that it is not labor. In other words, the infectious taste of Apple becomes a natural work ethic that invades the lifestyles of employees.

B. Retailme

Apple retail training does not end in the classroom. Apple designed an interactive media program called Retailme to keep employees informed about new product releases and software updates on a daily basis. Retailme is an online portal where Apple employees can learn more about Apple's systems, processes, and products. The retail back of house is set up with multiple iMac computers that provide access to Retailme courses.

The interactive interface of Retailme is designed to make training appear as a familiar and popular activity. For example, the aesthetic design of the Retailme homepage closely resembles the iTunes layout. Rather than hosting playlists, music, and movies, however, Retailme provides its users with a library of training courses. The courses on Retailme are divided into the following categories: accessories (e.g. Headphone training guides), business, hardware, operations, people (e.g. grow your own genius), services (e.g. Apple Care Protection Plan training, Apple Store Application), software (e.g. Adobe CS5 training), and systems. To encourage employees to take the courses, quarterly quizzes are installed into Retailme. Receiving high scores on these quizzes result in prizes ranging from Apple software to third party products. Retailme training software also functions as a social networking site; employees can upload a profile photo to Retailme or enter his/her interests and favorite Apple products. The aesthetic and interactive design of Retailme as well as its content and social network features frame retail work as fun, interactive, and desirable.

C. RNN and The Daily Download

RNN, the Apple Retail News network, is an online digital interface to keep employees up to date with new products, software, and policies. During the Daily Download, a fifteen minute informational meeting that occurs at the stores opening, a manager or expert will brief the Apple team about store updates and the daily store goals. In order to maintain confidentiality, Apple management informs the employees that if they are faced with customers inquiring about new releases or Apple rumors, they should say, 'If it is not on Apple.com, then it is probably not true.'[20] This statement is reiterated during most meetings.

The Daily Download is also a time where Apple employees practice abbreviated language or 'Appletalk' to communicate with one another. Appletalk, created for easy input into mobile devices and computer databases, is a useful and easy way to facilitate fast communication on the sales floor and to organize the daily schedule. The daily schedule assigns and codes the spaces of the store with Appletalk (i.e. red zone, family room, easy-pay, ipod wall). An employee noted that Appletalk is easy to use, but ambiguous:

> **BRANNAN:** In what ways does the Apple language structure employee to employee communication?
>
> **APPLE SPECIALIST:** Well, it makes it very "Top-Secret" oriented, Making you feel like part of the little club. But at the same time. It made it easier to say quickly then the entire word. But I still have no idea what RNN and NFR stand for...[21]

Appletalk is naturalized as a necessary component of the Apple employee lifestyle. New hires are not given the definitions of Appletalk, but are expected to learn them as they gain more experience. Credo awards are given to employees that exemplify outstanding application of Appletalk and Apple service on the sales floor.

D. Apple Credo

Performing Appletalk and practicing Retailme courses are not requirements for Apple employees, but are encouraged through the Apple Credo value system and the stores daily attachment goals. The credo system recognizes people who live up to the Apple steps of service at a 'star' level and turn prospective Apple owners into Apple promoters. Every month employees vote on who they believe deserves the "Living the Credo" award. Store leaders also consider positive customer feedback when choosing the Credo award winner. This feedback and reward system is one of the many organizational strategies used to manufacture retail fetishism.

E. Quarterly meetings

"Apple's most important resource, our soul, is our people"[22]

According to Chris Baldry and Jerry Hallier, any company whose "ideology" enforces that the people are the "strongest asset must appear to back this claim by provision of quality working surroundings..."[23] Apple creates a fun and quality working environment through store quarterly meetings. The meetings begin with a store dinner in the Back of House (BoH), and then the Apple team moves to the sales floor for a meeting consisting of store updates, recognition awards, keynote presentations, and games. At the beginning of the store meeting store leaders cheer,

clap and encourage the Apple team to perform the ritual store chant - the Apple store's name/location. An employee noted that the store chant and performance of the quarterly meeting often made her feel uncomfortable:

> **BRANNAN:** How would you describe the 'Habitat' of Apple?
>
> **APPLE SPECIALIST:** A cult. I don't know if any other Apple stores around the world are like [this] one, but it is a very interesting vibe. I feel like some of the employees are actually brainwashed. I did, however, find some fellow co-workers that felt the same way I did, but they were too afraid to do anything about it. They are really nice people (most of them), but I did find that some of them think they are way better/smarter than others. I feel it wasn't what Apple stood for, especially the few that would get fed up from another employee asking for help.[24]

There is a significant lack of fidelity between Apple's attractive performance culture and employee habitus. The lifestyle, once perceived as attractive, becomes one that not only alienates the employees from one another, but from the customer. This alienation is reinforced through the Easypay mobile device communication on the salesfloor, a point I will get to later in this paper.

The store meeting is also a time where the store leaders remind the employees that they are unique and creative people. At the 2010 winter quarter meeting, a store leader said that the uniformity of the Apple shirts is not meant to make everyone look the same, but designed to "frame" and enhance the creativity of the employees' face.[25] In a conversation with one of the new employees, she mentioned that the Apple store reproduces privileged hierarchies and manufactures a superficial sense of community:

> **BRANNAN:** In what ways are the Apple employees like a family?
>
> **APPLE SPECIALIST:** I found my few good co-workers at Apple, and yes, they were like family. Besides that, it felt like high school all over again. You had the 'nerds'/'bottom level' = specialists. You had the 'cheerleaders' = experts. The popular kids that everyone liked = creative team. And then the jocks who (most of) were complete jerks. (Okay, I really only had a few coworkers be really rude to me and belittle me, so I guess that is an unfair assessment of all of them, but they still were jocks.)[26]

The Market Core training program, Retailme, RNN and abbreviate language, Apple Credo system, and quarterly meetings are all strategies used by Apple to create the illusion that working for Apple is fun. The focus of all these strategies, however, is not to ensure quality working conditions for the worker, but to please the customer and create more revenue. The training program is designed to facilitate and organize the busy working environment.

In order to manage the high amount of customers that come into the store, Apple designed mobile machines, Easypay devices, to perform expedited m-commerce. The interactive computing systems installed on Easypay devices produce the technologically deterministic notion that technology can manage and solve customer problems. But when Apple employees attempt to apply the 'life-work' lessons from Mar-

ket Core and Retailme courses to the mobile devices, a disruption between personal and technological communication surfaces. The reliance on ubiquitous computing makes the sales experience impersonal and virtual. This mobile system, originally designed to speed up sales, results in network malfunction and store operation delay. Apple employees are cast into a virtual and digital enclosure where their sense of scale and locality is redefined in virtual terms.[27] In the following analysis I introduce the complications and employee fragmentation produced from Apple's digital enclosure.

II. M-Commerce and Ubiquitous Computing

The Apple Store provides a variety of support services for customers: Apple store personal set-ups, one to one trainings, genius bar appointments, and personal shopping appointments. These appointments can be made online outside the store or in-store using what Mark Andrejevic calls "U-Life" or Ubiquitous Computing.[28] The Apple Store relies on m-commerce to organize the flow of "U-Life" in the store. The digital devices that execute m-commerce produce a digital enclosure. Andrejevic describes the digital enclosure as a "process...whereby place and activities become encompassed by the monitoring embrace of an interactive (virtual) space."[29] Apple organizes the store around this digital enclosure in order to monitor what people are doing and their location in the store.[30] These devices not only perform the basic function of communication, but also carry out surveillance operations. This digital surveillance is comprised of three modes of digital computing: (a) Easypay devices, (b) Concierge, and (c) Runner and Radio system management. I will first describe the functionality of these modes and then describe the negative implications they have on the communication flow of Apple retail.

A. Easypay

The mobile wireless check-out devices that Apple Specialists are required to wear are called Easypays. The Easypay is an iPod touch equipped with a rechargeable battery-pack inside a hard plastic gray shell with grip texture. A magtripe card swiper is on the back side of the device and a barcode scanner is installed on the top of the device. The scanner can read price tags and make returns by scanning the receipt bar code. The Easypay can look up customer information with either the customer's email or by swiping their credit-card. To complete transactions, the customer will sign the EasyPay screen with their finger-tip and have the option to have the sales receipt emailed to them (see Figure 3). The Apple Store also registers Easypay devices to 'mobile' cash drawers on display tables over a wireless IP network. If a customer is paying by cash an employee can walk the customer over to the display table, with the built-in-register, to complete the sale. These are all strategies used by Apple corporate to produce what Apple calls "Wow" moments, moments that advertise technological liberation. Anna McCarthy wrote, "Point-of-purchase video serves these final brand identification goals, creating miniature, branded environments on the sales floor."[31] The convergence of Apple products, point of sale purchases, and marketing into one device has revolutionized the speed and scale of retail consumption. Apple has also added another application to the Easypay, Concierge.

B. Concierge

The Concierge App manages customer appointments wirelessly. The application features an employee communication positioning system (similar to GPS) where employees can make themselves "available" in particular spaces of the store (i.e. red zone, genius bar). This positioning system manages and tracks employee availability and location within the Concierge App.

When a customer comes into the store, the greeter - holding an iPad at the front of the store - approaches the customer and asks how they can assist him/her. If the customer has an appointment, the greeter checks the customer as 'here' and inputs a generic physical description of the customer into Concierge. This will then alert the genius bar that the customer is 'here' for their appointment. If a customer walks into the store to purchase a product, the greeter uses Concierge's "iQueue" feature to put the customer on the waiting list - the queue.' The greeter inputs the customer's first and last name, the product they are looking for, and the customer's physical description. Meanwhile, the next available Specialist on the floor will log into Concierge as "available" and locate the customer based off the greeter's description.

Concierge is also designed to work with the Apple Store App developed by Apple for consumers. Downloadable for iPads and iPhones, this 'free' Apple Store App allows customers to conduct m-commerce without the help of an employee. Upon entering an Apple store, a customer with the Apple Store App on their iPhone will be be alerted by their mobile device to make an appointment. Once the customer creates an appointment, a push notification with a photo of the next available employee appears on his or her mobile screen requesting that the customer and employee 'meet up.'

This system of m-commerce eliminates face to face communication. Andrejevic forecasted this virtual form of customer-employee relation; he wrote:

> "We won't have to remember details of conversations, directions, or scheduling, or even out own consumer preferences, because various smart devices will keep track of them for us…over the next 20 years computers will inhabit the most trivial things: clothes labels (to tack washing), coffee cups…light switches…and pencils"[32]

This mobile process of the "iQueue" is difficult to manage when the store is busy. The customer descriptions entered into Concierge are often generic and imprecise, and sometimes politically incorrect. Customer's reactions to 'ubiquitous computing' can be negative as well. People do not like to provide personal information for a simple appointment. For example, in order to make a genius bar appointment, the Apple employee must get the customer's full name, phone number, email, and address if possible. Thus, Concierge acts as a form of narrowcasting and surveillance which track the desires and needs of Apple customers.

C. Radio and Runner

The radio system enables Apple employees to communicate via in-ear walkie-talkies. Employees are required to wear these radio devices in order to communicate with management and back of house operations. Many employees believe that radio communication is disruptive when talking with

To complete transactions on the Easypay, the customer signs the screen with their fingertip.

customers.[33] An employee notes that instead of hearing what the customer had to say, she would overhear a Genius inquiring about a poor description in the Concierge queue. The combination of signal traffic over the radio and the inaccurate Concierge descriptions leave many employees fragmented.

Another element of Apple's ubiquitous computing is the "Runner System." This is a product request system used when a customer is ready to make a purchase. An Apple Specialist logs into runner and which requests the products from BOH (Back of House). During busy periods, however, customer dissatisfaction arises when BOH specialists cannot keep up with the amount of runner requests from the floor.

Implications of Technological Surveillance

Apple's personal shopping appointments allow customers to reserve hour long appointments with Specialists to talk about or purchase a product. With the advent of Concierge, however, Apple stopped booking personal shopping appointments with the notion that Concierge would be able to mobilize "Personal Shopping Experiences" with every customer. Ironically, Apple's reliance on technological computing makes the customer experience at the Apple Store less personable. An employee notes, "Our process of communication is no longer personal...we no longer have face to face interaction, it's like screen to screen action."[34]

The Easypay device, Concierge, and radio/runner are not only fragmenting customer to employee communication, but also employee identity. In *The Organizational Culture Handbook*, Eisenberg and Riley note that technology is having a major impact on the future of organizational culture. They claim:

> "The future of many organizations... will thus be largely characterized by flexible learning through instantaneous communication...We ought to investigate the cultural practices that will be critical not just for or-

ganizational effectiveness but also the individual management of identity..."[35]

The organizational strategies deployed in the Apple store are modeled on digital interfaces rather than on the natural and human relationships in the store.[36] Employee identity is determined by how well they are able to use Easypay devices and follow the digital guidelines. Based on an employee's position and how long he/she has worked there, the employee will have a greater knowledge on how to work the virtual system. With wires around their ears and their EasyPays at their belts, Apple Store employees often refer to themselves as machines operating as part of a broader digital communication system. Rather than reporting to work in person, employees are reduced to a statistic within a virtual GPS 'concierge' system; they are marked as 'here.' Apple communication devices are material forms of what Andrejevic calls 'smart clothes,' the wired uniform that employees wear (e.g. radio and Easypay devices) to facilitate digital communication.[37] Andrejevic describes the implications of smart clothes, he says, "once the external world becomes wired - overlaid with an interactive interface - individuals moving through it will need to be equipped with devices that can interact with the smart world, even if they remain oblivious to the electronic conversations taking place around about them."[38] Most Apple employees, however, are conscious of the electronic conversations around them. One employee expressed her dislike of the communication devices:

BRANNAN: Do you find it hard when the structures of communication are always changing?

APPLE SPECIALIST: Yes. I wouldn't find it a problem if they worked, but there many hiccups and unsolved problems that it is a headache....The new Easypays limited the amount of communication between employees too. I don't know how many times I was yelled at through the walky-talkies for talking to an employee about a new costumer, instead reading it on the easy pay. I feel like costumers like to see us talking with each-other, and figuring out who is next. They put their name in the queue, so they want to see that we are going up to the person that put them in, and then finding them. Just looking at device and running over to a person isn't going to show a person who to go to to seek help. - its a very confusing system.[39]

Apple's ubiquitous computing is transforming the way retail space operates. M-commerce systems are making communication exchanges completely electronic. The Apple Store App and m-commerce system are based on a taste of luxury - a taste that segregates customers who do not fit the Apple Store 'habitus.' Thus, Apple privileges customers that can afford the luxury of Apple's mobile devices.

The Apple Store is advertised as a local space to help customers find their technological needs. But as m-commerce strategies dominate the sales floor, the experience of being local is compromised. These modes of ubiquitous computing are creating "new patterns of work [produce] implications for our theorizing about what it means to be "local."[40] The virtual scale of locality in the Apple Store underscores Deleuze's theory of the "dividual."[41] Apple employees are divided into two people - their physical self and their

digital other within the store's positioning system. Easypay devices produce what Andrejevic calls, "the emergence of the informational doppleganger of the consumer-worker.....a subject split between its physical manifestation and the digital profile that emerges from its interaction with data-gathering devices."[42] Similarly to the invention of the airport's self check-in kiosks, with the advent of m-commerce, retail workers may soon be replaced by automated self-check in devices.

Apple's strategic use of interactive training, quarterly meetings, and m-commerce strategies produce a retail culture based on technological modes of surveillance, which in turn compromise employee communication and creative labor. The fun aesthetic and "wow" moments, however, encourage an enthusiastic employee mindset despite the context of an alienated job.

Apple corporate maintains a taste of luxurious necessity by implementing the same professional codes and strategies across all Apple Stores. In television and new media studies, it is important to examine how mobile commerce strategies are fragmenting employee identity and transforming the dimensions of locality in retail space. Apple's Concierge App is moving the digital enclosure beyond the walls of the Apple Store into personal mobile devices in order to monitor the desires and necessities of the customer base. Concierge is also compromising the experience of personal connections by relying on retail computing devices to solve and manage customer needs and desire. Mark Andrejevic notes that today's challenge for new media scholars is "to counter the assumption that concepts like interactivity, freedom, and democracy do not overflow the experiences to which they refer with an insistence on making reality live up to the promise of democracy mobilized by the promoters of interactivity..."[43] I encourage Apple to reconsider how their methods are negatively impacting employee communication and unfairly privileging people with a taste of luxury.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Lisa Parks and Ryan Fuller for their support and insight for the project. I am also grateful to all the feedback received from the members of UC Santa Barbara's graduate Television and New Media Seminar, Fall 2010.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The interviews and information gathered for the article is completely anonymous and was used for research purposes only. This paper is intended to (de)construct the ways in which Apple's technology is interfering with sales floor communication and customer service.

Interview Strategies

The *Handbook of Feminist Research* inspired my ethnographic interview process. The interviews were set up as an encounter between Apple employees with common interests, who could share similar knowledge. For example, I (a former employee) would confide in them my own personal information, in hopes my interviewees would respond with their own authentic personal reflections. My method of interviewing was similar to Dorothy Smith's notion of discovering "lines of fault." Marjorie L. DeVault and Glenda Gross wrote, "Her method of inquiry-"institutional

ethnography" was built on the notion that women could report on their everyday work, and the researcher could examine their reports and map the lines of fault they reveal." Similarly, Apple employees reported their everyday work, and I would examine their "report" and find how their lines of fault line up with new media theory. The interviews was just one part of my sustained immersion; most of my information was gathered through participant observation.

Works Cited

1. Perceval McElhearn,"Apple opens first retail store in France," Accessed Oct. 25, 2010. http://www.macworld.com/article/143720/2009/11/applestoreparis.html.

2. "Apple Store Dance," iJustine's Website, accessed December 2, 2010, http://ijustine.com/apple-store-dance/.

3. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 178.

4. Christine Williams and Catherine Connell, "Looking Good and Sounding Right: Aesthetic Labor and Social Inequality in the Retail Industry." *Work and Occupations*. 37 (2010), p. 371.

5. Apple Employee Anonymous Interview, skype interview with author, November 4, 2010.

6. "Apple Retail Store Leader Program Recruitment Video," accessed December 2, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMi-rGmU9qw.

7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 178.

8. Ibid.

9. Anonymous Apple Employee interview, emailed to author, December 4, 2010.

10. Eric M. Eisenberg and Patricia Riley, "Organizational Culture," in *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods*, eds. Fredric M. Jablin and Linda Putnam (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 317.

11. Field notes, noted by author, September 13, 2010.

12. Apple HR, "Market Core Training: Participant Guide v.3.4," Apple Corporate, September 15, 2010.

13. Ulrich Jurgens, Thomas Malsch, and Knuth Dohse, *Breaking from Taylorism: Changing forms of work in the automobile industry*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 20.

14. Fieldnotes, noted by author, September 14, 2010.

15. Ibid.

16. Williams and Connell, "Looking Good," p. 373.

17. Ibid, 371.

18.Ibid, 373.

19. Chris Baldry and Jerry Hallier, "Welcome to the House of Fun: Work Space and Social Identity," *Economic*

and Industrial Democracy 31 (2009): p. 151.

20. Fieldnotes, noted by author, September 14, 2010.

21. Apple Employee Anonymous Interview, e-mail message to author, November 20, 2010.

22. Apple Credo Card, collected during field notes, September 15, 2010.

23. Baldry and Hallier, "Welcome to the House of Fun," p. 153.

24. Apple Employee Anonymous Interview, e-mail message to author, November 20, 2010.

25. Field notes during quarterly meeting, gathered by author, November 15, 2010.

26. Apple Employee Anonymous Interview, e-mail message to author, November 20, 2010.

27. Mark Andrejevic, *iSpy: Surviellance and Power in the Interactive Era* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2007), p. 2.

28. Ibid, 95

29. Ibid, 2.

30. Ibid, 105.

31. Anna McCarthy, *Ambient Television*, (London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 165.

32. Andrejevic, "iSpy," p. 111.

33. Field notes, gather by author, November 10, 2010.

34. Anonymous Apple Employee Skype Interview with author, October 15, 2010.

35. Eric M. Eisenberg and Patricia Riley, "Organizational Culture," in *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods*, eds. Fredric M. Jablin and Linda Putnam (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 315.

36. Donna Haraway, *A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s*. (San Francisco: Center for Social Research and Education, 1985), p. 22.

37. Andrejevic, "iSpy," p. 122.

38. Ibid, 112.

39. Anonymous Apple Employee Interview, emailed to author, November 1, 2010.

40. Eisenberg and Riley, p. 316.

41. Andrejevic, "iSpy," p. 108.

42. Ibid.

43. Andrejevic, "iSpy," p. 268.

44. Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publiciations, 2007), p. 178.

Growin Pains:
Business Models, Twitter, and the Real-Time Web

by Roslyn M. Hernandez

In today's world, where nearly every screen carries Web content and nearly every website carries advertisements, how does a primarily Web based social networking company stand out from the rest of the Web in order to secure advertisers? This is the big question Twitter has faced in the past years. With the two major established companies - Google and Facebook - already in the lead in the advertising front, how does Twitter differentiate itself in terms of platform and business model in order to compete in the Web advertising market and become profitable?

What are the existing advertisement models and how do they work? Google implements a Web search model , which presents advertisements to users based on the keywords they type on the Google search engine. These advertisements are usually in the form of text. They are either prioritized by being highlighted and placed as the top results to a search or featured by being placed to the right of the results list. Google also employs this model to YouTube by placing pop-up advertisements on videos, playing commercials prior to videos often related to the content of the videos, and placing ads on its homepage and at the top right hand corner of other pages. The relationship between the ad and the video is determined through the title of the video as well as by the key words used to describe the video, called "tags". While advertisements on Google search tend to be relevant and relatively inconspicuous, advertisements on YouTube are overlaid on the content or take large portions of the site's realistate, making them very noticeable. Facebook, on the other hand, channels consumers to advertisers through the use of demographic information, interests, and "likes". The more a user interacts with the Facebook platform, other users, and pages by commenting and "liking," the more Facebook knows about their interests. Through these interactions, this model can be analyzed as using both the search and tag elements. It keeps track of what users look for, want and need through the search element. Liking can be seen as a repurpose of the tag. As users like specific pages or products the user account, not the content, is tagged with those keywords, products and interests, efficiently grouping users for target advertising and gathering information about that demographic. In this way, users are more likely to see advertising that pertains to them. Through the use of such platform capabilities, each of these companies has found a successful business model. The well-established and expanding Google makes and average profit of $5 billion per year[2], while the younger Facebook had an advertisement revenue of $1,860 million in the year 2010.[3]

How will Twitter compete with these advertising giants? How will it use its very specific platform capabilities to monetize? These and many other questions have been daunting Twitter Inc. executives and employees over the past years, however, in the process of growth and evolution, Twitter Inc. has created and maintained certain principles and priorities essential to the success of the company and the network. In the efforts towards becoming a viable company, Twitter Inc. has redefined Web

Twitter has come a long way from a city-wide status update that the creator had in mind.

advertising and has provided a direct channel for consumer-provider relations. Through its experimental and platform specific business model it has refined target advertising, benefiting advertisers and companies while also managing to create and sustain platform value for its users.

Twitter Inc.

What is Twitter? The ubiquitous micro-blogging social media platform known as Twitter that we know today has come a long way from the city-wide status update that Jack Dorsey, Co-founder of Twitter Inc., had in mind back in 2001, and even 2006.[4] Twitter was primarily conceived as an SMS and Web based system in which individuals would be able to "report" where they were and what they were doing via text message or Web, and would be able to receive real-time reports from other individuals. Since its birth five years ago on March 13, 2006[5], Twitter has grown in number of users and evolved as a platform and ecosystem. It has grown from 21,000 users on January 2007[6], nine months after its birth, to an approximate 175 million users as of January 2011[7], with an average of 460,000 new accounts per day.[8] As an ecosystem, Twitter has evolved from an SMS, or text messaging and Web system, to a multi-device and open-source multi-developer system.[9]

However, this successfully exponential growth of registered accounts and interactivity has come with the constant pressure to create profit from the platform.[10] With advertising giants Facebook and Google already in the Web advertising lead, Twitter Inc. has taken the task of creating a new type of business model and experience with its dynamic platform and real-time aspect in mind. But what is Twitter, exactly? What are the specifics of Twitter's platform and technology? In the broadest of terms, Twitter is a micro-blogging social networking tool. What this means is that it connects individuals to other individuals, organizations, companies, products, services and information[11] while limiting the communication to 140 characters[12] - thus the micro-blogging aspect. Another important feature of Twitter is the real-time aspect. On Twitter, information is generated, published, and consumed - and thus becomes part of the social conversation - almost instantaneously[13]. Twitter's ability to provide users with this type of format and technology connects consumers with the right content at the right time. Based on these two general characteristics alone, Twitter has the potential to generate numerous business models to choose from.

Possible monetizing models include charging users per registered

accounts, charging users for extra features[14], charging advertisers for market research, and charging companies and advertisers for advertising. While there has been much speculation about Twitter's take on the advertising business, they disclosed in early 2010 that their advertisement model would be similar to Google's search model.[15] It was not until April 13, 2010 that Twitter announced the incorporation of their first attempt to monetize the platform: Promoted Tweets. Biz Stone, one of the three co-founders of Twitter Inc. wrote, "Over the years, we've resisted introducing a traditional Web advertising model because we wanted to optimize for value before profit."[16]

The Search for a Business Model

Twitter's hesitation in monetizing the platform comes from the complex dynamics of the network. One issue it faced was the task of finding the right way to make the most of Twitter's unique real-time Web technology. How did Twitter executives arrive at the business model they are implementing today, and what types of questions did they ask in the process? In 2009, a number of internal Twitter documents were leaked. These documents were brainstorming notes on how to monetize the platform. Of the many concepts outlined in the documents, one note exemplifies a very important characteristic of the business model: "What does a completely relevant product look like for a billion people?"[17] The main attribute of Twitter is relevance; it is connecting people to the right information at the right time. The main issue was how to structure an advertising system that delivers advertisements at the right time while staying within the parameters of the platform. The company's awareness of the value of information is exemplified by Evan Williams' comment on *The Charlie Rose Show*, "there is an informational component to Twitter that makes it less of a social communications tool, and information seeking activities are easier to monetize."[18]

Biz Stone commented, "What we've done is follow this model that we like to call value before profit and that is building a system, a network that is of value to people around the world and then applying a business model to that." Whether this was the exact thinking process or not is not definitive, but Stone's comment brings up several possible questions: How do people use the platform already? How do they find value in the platform? How can we make the least amount of changes and use the least amount of capital to monetize what we already have? How have the users created value in the platform, and how can we monetize from their already exiting habits? What is the least intrusive way to sell their attention to advertisers so that the user will not stop using the platform? What will be the format of advertisements? Fortunately for Twitter, the company's second moneymaking advertising idea has proven more successful than its first venture, @ earlybirds, which was an "e-commerce account that offered daily deals."[19]

Monetizing the Twitter Ecosystem: Twitter's Business Model

Dick Costolo, the current CEO of Twitter Inc., has said the following about the success Twitter is having with Promoted Products: "We feel like we've cracked the code on a new kind of advertising –advertising that starts out as organic content."[20] Jack Dorsey responded and added to Costolo's comment in an interview with Charlie Rose, "Cracking the code not just on advertising but also the human behavior, a way

to communicate, a way to spark interaction."[21] Organic content and human behavior are the two most important elements that are taken into account in Twitter's Promoted Products Suite. These two elements seem to be Twitter's keys to success, and they answer the questions posed throughout the process of finding the right business model. When all the questions are united into one, the ultimate issue is how to include ads in the platform in a way that encourages users to interact with them.

Twitter's advertising program, called Promoted Products Suite, is comprised of three components—the Promoted Tweet, the Promoted Trend, and the Promoted Account—and has been introduced in three phases. Promoted Tweets, the first phase of the program, was introduced April 2010. Promoted Tweets start at the bottom and most basic level of Twitter, the tweet. They are tweets generated by advertisers and companies in the same format as every other tweet: 140 characters or less, with ability to add a link to an image, a video, or a Web page. This is what Costolo refers to when he states that ads are part of the content, not separate from it. Promoted Tweets are displayed alongside the many tweets generated by normal users. In the experimental stage, Promoted Tweets were only shown as the top tweet in results to a search only through Twitter.com.[22] Due to the campaign's popularity, Promoted Tweets have also been released as top results on searches conducted via mobile devices and have been featured on the user Timeline (the main tweet feed and home page of every user).[23] Twitter advertisers pay fees that vary depending on how many users interact with their advertisements. There are three ways to interact with a Promoted Tweet: by clicking on a link that is part of the Tweet, by retweeting the Promoted Tweet (republishing the Promoted Tweet using one's own account), and by responding to the tweet.[24] If a Tweet is not successful, it is removed. Biz Stone reported on NPR, "What we have also created is what we call the resonance algorithm and that measures whether or not the tweets are resonant with users, whether or not they are interesting to users, whether or not people are engaging with these tweets. If they are not we remove them because the advertiser doesn't want the tweet in the system and people don't want to look at them. We are constantly measuring the level at which tweets are resonating with users."[25]

The second phase of the Promoted Products is the Promoted Trend. "Regular Twitter trends are generated by an algorithm that identifies topics that are talked about more at the moment than they were previously. Topics break into the Trends list when the volume of tweets about a specific topic at a given moment dramatically increases."[26] Promoted Trends are an extension of the Promoted Tweet and the regular trend. A Promoted Trend is a topic that may already be trending but has not caused enough Tweeting to be featured in the Trending list. An advertiser would pay to have the topic featured in the Trending list and would also pay for the Promoted Tweet, which would be the first tweet in the search result carried out by clicking on the Promoted Trend. By buying a Promoted Trend advertisers can make sure that their Promoted Tweet is more visible. Instead of having the tweet be visible only for direct searches, their Promoted Tweet will be visible every time a user clicks on the Promoted Trend. Promoted Trends are like insurance for priority placement and maximum exposure for their ad. They sell "for as much as $100,000 for

a single 24-hour campaign."[27]

On October 04, 2010, Twitter launched the third and final phase of the Promoted Products, Promoted Accounts.[28] This is the most direct, and least exposed, level of the Promoted Products on Twitter, but perhaps the most valuable. When an advertiser decides to promote an account, the account is featured in "Suggestions for You." Accounts are suggested in two major ways. The first suggestion occurs as a user sets up an account on Twitter. Twitter introduces the user to various accounts by prompting him or her to choose from a list of topics in which he or she is interested. These topics may include, for example, gardening, films, comic books, celebrities, news, etc. Next the user is given a list of accounts (some of which are Promoted) that are related to the topics that he or she selected. Promoted Accounts are also present on the home page of every user, opposite the Timeline in the "Who To Follow" section.[29] Promoted accounts will be at the top of the list clearly labeled "Promoted." Advertisers pay anywhere from $1 to $3 for every user that follows their Promoted account.[30]

Although Twitter's Promoted Products are successful as a whole and when coupled with each other, Promoted Tweets have not been as effective as was initially expected.[31] So far, Promoted Tweets are greatly reliant on Promoted Trends and Promoted Accounts, because those are the most effective ways of finding them. The original plan for Promoted Tweets is, much like Google's word search ads, tied to keywords typed into the search bar. There is a setback, however; Twitter's search archive is not nearly as sophisticated as Google's. This situation may change as soon as Promoted Tweets are launched in user Timelines. Currently, however, advertisers who want their Promoted Tweets to be widely visible must purchase a keyword/topic for Promoted Trends or buy a Promoted Account to build a follower base.

Advertisers and Companies

As expressed by Evan Williams on *The Charlie Rose Show*, "Some companies are waking up to the idea that they may have a built in constituency to test things."[32] Companies and advertisers that have not previously used the Web for advertising are responding to the rise of social media. Big companies which use television as their major form of advertising (such as Colgate-Palmolive, Unilever, and Coca-Cola) are taking company trips to Silicon Valley to visit Web companies including Google, Facebook, Apple and Twitter, among others. The Web companies are given information about the issues advertisers are facing, "with hopes that the Web companies will present them with viable technological solutions to their advertising problems."[33] Other smaller companies are responding in a more integrated approach. "Across the country companies such as Petco and FedEx are going through a two-step process. First, they scramble to hire social media officers. Second, they figure out what it is, exactly, that social media officers do."[34] These companies are starting to recognize the power customers have through the Web. Specifically, they are realizing that they need "social media strategies"[35] in order to collect data about the way in which their products are received by the customers, foster brand loyalty, humanize the company, and ultimately influence consumer decisions. These companies are learning from the negative experiences of companies such as United Airlines, which did not having a social media strategy geared toward understanding public opinion,

promoting their brand, and "appeasing" tech-savvy consumers.

Virgin America Airlines, Audi, and Best Buy exemplify companies that have successfully engaged with the Twitter Platform. Virgin America Airlines is one of the most successful entities to have engaged directly with the Twitter platform. Virgin uses Twitter as a one-on-one communication tool to provide specific customer service. "The airline responds to in-flight tweets, re-books customers who tweet about missing flights and provides updates on flight schedules via text, e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter."[36] The company does not have to go out of its way to assist customers on an individual, nearly first name, basis, but by providing this type of service the customer feels more cared for and is more likely to remain loyal to that brand. Virgin has also been successful using Twitter's Promoted Products. Virgin used promoted tweets to advertise a sale called Fly Forward, Give Back. The result was the company's fifth most profitable ticket sales day ever.[37]

In February, '06, Audi aired a commercial during the Super Bowl which contained a hash tag so people could comment and follow the conversation about the ad on Twitter.[38] "Audi bought the keyword #progressis as a promoted trend and bough the top promoted tweet. As a result a Super Bowl ad, which is usually difficult to measure in terms of input, because you have to wait until the Nielsens to come out etc. they were able to turn an ad into a conversation that to this day is still going."[39] Through this Promoted Trend and Promoted Tweet, Audi was able to raise awareness about its product as well as track the user response to the advertisement, user opinion on the model of the car, and user opinion about Audi. Additionally, the company was able to do all of this in real-time; it did not have to wait for statistics that only tell them how many people were watching the commercial.

Best Buy uses Twitter and other social media platforms in order to learn about the public opinion of its products and brand. "CEO Brian Dunn, talks openly about the monitor in his office showing the social activity of the brand, its clear to Best Buy that social is more than conversation –it's a critical pace in how the executive team runs the business and that's reflected in the health of the brand."[40]

Media companies are also using Twitter in interesting ways to engage users. NBC will soon be integrating Twitter into its programming by inviting a number of Twitter users to comment on news topics on a segment called "The 20".[41] NBC hopes that the followers of these Twitter users will tune-in to watch the person they follow on Twitter give their opinion on live-television. In this way, the network will be using the already established following of those invited to the segment. The network plans to feature live events which allow Twitter users to watch broadcasts while providing feedback via Twitted responses. NBC thus hopes to gain viewership by featuring already popular Twitter users. Additionally, NBC will build the users' authority and reputation by showcasing them on television and affiliating them with the network. "The 20" can thus be seen as a more interactive and conversational mode of newscasting.

Conclusion

Twitter has refined Web advertising through the concepts of relevance, resonance, and real-time. Twitter technology is able to target its users by tracking their personal interests as well as

the accounts that they follow. Twitter is also able to calculate the relevance of topics around the world in real-time. Thus, Twitter is aware of its users' general interests and how those interests develop over time. Resultantly, Twitter is an excellent tool for gauging consumer interest, and it is therefore a prime resource for companies hoping to develop strategies for advertising aimed at certain demographics. (For example, research could potentially be based on user conversations about products.) In terms of reach, "Twitter ads deliver value for any business, large or small, by giving them new ways to amplify their existing Twitter presence and accelerate awareness and conversations about their products."[42]

While Twitter is able to generate an immense amount of information for companies and expose those companies to all of its users, it also gives a lot of power to the user. The public and real-time aspects of Twitter gives users a level playing field with big companies who might not otherwise feel threatened by or listen to individual, angry consumers. Through responding to company tweets, users can make sure that the company is getting their message; there is no need for the commonly used line "can I talk to your boss?" Through Twitter, the users are heard, but they do not have to watch advertisements in which they are not interested. Promoted Tweets and Promoted Trends, as advertisements, are nearly invisible in the sense that they do not look like advertisements and are not intrusive. Users have the ability to either engage with or ignore any particular Promoted Trend, Tweet, or Account. Twitter Inc.'s business model, based largely on real-time reporting and tracking user activity, has proven to be successful on many levels. This innovative and platform-oriented advertising model has provided the company with the ability to create a win-win-win situation. Twitter is becoming profitable as the advertisement program progresses, advertisers are provided with more value than just "eyeballs," and users are able to get the information they want, when they want it, and are able to interact with the platform in the same way that they did before there were advertisements.

Further Research

Although Twitter Inc. is still relatively young, further research concerning the company may lead to interesting and insightful conclusions. It is a leading figure in the redefinition of media and technology, and further study of its many dynamic and innovating aspects may provide media scholars with an understanding about the future of media, politics, and society. A few of the many interesting topics that raise questions about Twitter's involvement in various aspects of human life are: Twitter as a possible model of the commons, Twitter as a political tool, and the implications of Twitter and social media ubiquity.

The commons, a topic explored in media studies, is often applied to more than one type of medium, yet it always seems to be little more than a theory, myth, or unreachable utopian hope. Twitter's interesting open-source stance and practices, however, once again call attention to this concept of the commons. Among the many potential research questions involving Twitter and the commons are: What is the exact stance of Twitter Inc. on its currently open-source platform? How is Twitter Inc. strengthening or threatening its commons-ness? Why has Twitter Inc. chosen to be an open-source company? How is the company

currently benefiting from being open-source, and how does it expect its open-source platform to help it in the future? What is the company's relationship with third-party software developers? Why has Twitter taken reprehensive action in regards to some third party developer companies?[43] For how long will Twitter Inc. continue to be an open-source company?[44] Twitter's use of crowd sourcing is another potential research topic that I have encountered in my study.[45] Twitter Inc. has openly asked its users to help the translation of its website into other languages.[46] It could be very interesting to follow Twitter's stance on open-source as it grows into a more profitable company.

All around the world Twitter has been used to organize uprisings[47], a research topic which could potentially provide insight into the way in which users appropriate media to use as a political tool. How is Twitter used to organize protests? How is it being used by the public for citizen journalism? How is amateur use of this medium affecting professional journalism? What does the active and self-motivated use of this platform for journalistic purposes suggest about our society? Lastly, I propose a topic that questions the ubiquity of Twitter and other forms of social media in a more critical manner. What is the role of mobile media devices and social media in social construction and interaction? How are different generations reacting and using Twitter[48], mobile media devices, and other social media platforms? How is a Twitter Inc. targeting mobile devices such as the iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry, and Windows Phone? How are users responding to the software interfaces for those devices?[49] What are the positive and negative repercussions of the rise of social media? These are only some of the topics and questions related to the future of media and Twitter as a media company and as a platform. It would also be interesting to compare Twitter's economic development to other popular social networking Web companies such as Facebook, Blogger, or LiveJournal.[50]

Works Cited

1. Auletta, Ken. Interview with Louise Kelly. *All Things Considered*. NPR. 12 Oct. 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130518412>

2. Ibid.

3. Learmonth, Michael. "Study: Twitter Ad Revenue Grow to $150M in 2011" *Advertising Age*, January 24, 2011, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://adage.com/article/digitalnext/twitter-ad-revenue-grow-150m-2011-emarketer/148425/>.

4. Dorsey, Jack. interview with Charlie Rose. *The Charlie Rose Show*. PBS. 10 Jan. 2011. <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/11404>.

5. Dorsey, Jack. "Five Years Ago Today...," (March 13, 2011). http://twitter.com/#!/jack.

6. Talbot, David. "Can Twitter Make Money?" Technology Review 113, no. 2: 52-57. *Military & Government Collection*, p. 56. EBSCOhost (accessed March 04, 2011).

7. Learmonth.

8. Penner, Carolyn. "#numbers," Twitter Blog, March 14, 2011(11:38 a.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/2011/03/numbers.html>.

9. Talbot, p. 56.

10. Ibid., p. 54.

11. Costolo, Dick. "The twitter Platform" *Twitter Blog*, May 24, 2010 (8:05 a.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/2010/05/twitter-platform.html>.

12. Boehret, Katherine. "Birds of a Feather twitter Together," *All things Digital*, December 02, 2008,accessed Marc 04, 2011, <http://solution.allthingsd.com/20081202/birds-of-a-feather-twitter-together/>.

13. Talbot, p. 54.

14. Williams, Evan. interview with Charlie Rose. *The Charlie Rose Show*. PBS. 14 Aug. 2006. <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/10118>.

15. Kafka, Peter. "Twitter's Ad Plan: Copy Google" *All Things Digital*, February 26, 2010, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com/20100226/twitters-ad-plan-copy-google/>.

16. Stone, Biz. "Hello World," *Twitter Blog*. April 13, 2010 (12:01 a.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/2010/04/hello-world.html>.

17. Talbot.

18. Williams.

19. Miller, Claire, "Twitter Introduces New Types of Ads" *The New York Times Bits Blog*, August 28, 2010, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/28/twitter-introduces-new-types-of-ads/>.

20. Ibid.

21. Dorsey.

22. Miller, Claire. "Twitter's Advertising Plan Could Be Paying Off," *The New York Times Bits Blog*, January 24, 2011, Accessed March 06, 2011, <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/24/twitters-advertising-plan-could-be-paying-off/>.

23. Graves, Matt. "Promoted Tweets: Testing in the Timeline." *Twitter Blog*, November 01, 2010 (12:00 p.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/promoted-tweets-testing-in-timeline.html>.

24. Efrati, Amir. "Twitter's Ads: Here's What Works," *The Wall Street Journal Digits Blog*, March 01, 2011. <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/03/01/twitters-ads-heres-what-works/?mod=WSJBlog&mod=>.

25. Stone, Biz. Interview with Terry Gross. *Fresh Air*. NPR. 16 Feb. 2011.

26. Penner, Carolyn. "To Trend or Not to Trend" *Twitter Blog*, December 08, 2010 (3:57p.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/2010/12/to-trend-or-not-to-trend.html>.

27. Guynn, Jessica. "Twitter Tries to Turn 140 Characters Into Money." *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 2011, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/Jan/30/business/la-fi-twitter-20110130>.

28. Penner, Carolyn. "Promoted Promotions" *Twitter Blog*, October 04, 2010 (10:48 a.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/2010/10/ promoted-promotions.html>.

29. Miller, Claire, "Twitter Introduces New Types of Ads."

30. Kafka, Peter. "Twitter Tells Advertisers to Dig Deeper: "Promoted Trends" Get a Price Hike." *All Things Digital*, February 1, 2011, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com/20110211/twitter-tells-advertisers-to-dig-deeper-promoted-trends-are-going-to-get-more-expensive/>.

31. Kafka, Peter. "Inside Twitter's Sales Machine: A Secret Guide for Advertisers (Video)" *All Things Digital*, February 16, 2011, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com/20110216/inside-twitters-sales-machine-a-secret-guide-for-advertisers-video/>.

32. Williams.

33. McMains, Andrew. "Clients Go Direct to Tech" *AdWeek*, February 13, 2011, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://www.adweek.com/aw/content_display/news/agency/e3i2141371c62084aea4f51a9d60f1c1e0a>.

34. Gillette, Felix. "Twitter, Twitter, Little Stars." *Bloomberg Businessweek* no. 4188 (July 19, 2010): 64-67. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed March 4, 2011).

35. Ibid.

36. Bush, Michael. "Virgin America On Why Twitter, Facebook Are More Important than TV." *Advertising Age*, February 09, 2011, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://adage.com/article/digital/virgin-america-values-twitter-facebook-tv/148795/>.

37. Ibid.

38. Stelter, Brian. "TV Industry taps Social Media to Keep Viewers' Attention." *The New York Times*, February 02,2011, accessed March 06, 2011, <www.nytimes.com/2011/02/21/.../media/21watercooler.html>.

39. Stone Biz, interviewed by Terry Gross.

40. Engler, Glenn. "Look at Your Social Media. You're Seeing the Future of Your

Brand." *Advertising Age*, March 3I, 2011, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://adage.com/ article/digitalnext/social-media-future-brand/149185/>.

41. Kafka, Peter. "Local TV News+ Twitter's Talking Heads= NBC's 'the 20,'"*All Things Digital*, February 09, 2011, accessed march 04, 2011, <http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com/20110209/local-tv-news-talking-heads-via-twitter-nbcs-the-20/>.

42. Efrati, Amir. "Twitter Big on Smaller Advertisers." *The Wall Street Journal*, March 02, 2011, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703409904576174711238036694.html>.

43. Durye, Tricia. "Twitter Suspends UberTwitter and Twidroyd Apps for Violating Policies." *All Things Media*, February 18, 2011, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://emoney.allthingsd.com/20110218/twitter-suspends-ubertwitter-and-twidroyd-apps-for-violating-policies/?mod=ATD_search>.

44. Segall, Laurie. "UberMedia Wants to be the Epicenter of the Twitterverse economy." *CNNMoney*, February 17, 2011, accessed March 04, 2011, <http://money.cnn.com /2011/02/17/technology/ubermedia-tweetdeck/?id=EAL>.

45. Wortham, Jenna. "Twitter Wants to go Multilingual Faster." *The New York Times Bits Blog*, February 15, 2011, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/15/twitter-wants-to-go-multilingual-faster/>.

46. Kamdar, Jinen. "Translating twitter into more languages" *Twitter Blog*, February 14, 2010 (9:15 a.m.). <http://blog.twitter.com/2010/11. Translating-twitter-into-more-languages.html>.

47. Stone Biz, interviewed by Terry Gross.

48. Miller, Claire. "Who's Driving Twitter's Popularity? Not Teens." *The New York Times*, August 26, 2009, accessed March 06, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/26/technology/internet/26twitter.html>.

49. Kafka, Peter. "Twitter's 'Quickbar Uprising' is Nothing: Wait Till the Ads Really Show Up," accessed March 06, 2011, <http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com/20110305/twitters-quickbar-uprising-is-nothing-wait-till-the-ads-really-show-up/>.

50. Kopytoff, Verne G., "Blogs Wane As the Young Drift to Sites Like Twitter." *The New York Times*, February 21, 2011, B1.

Netflix:
The Free Trial That Changed Media Distribution

by Kristen Aguanno

In 1997, the business model for Netflix was designed to distribute DVD rentals to people's homes. Today, it has grown to be one of the largest digital subscription companies in American media distribution. This newly developed digital distribution business model, derived from the success of its film and television "long tail" collection, requires both the acquisition of content from studios and networks and the distribution of that content through an advertisement-free flat rate subscription service that offers unlimited streaming of all its available content. Looking to the future, Netflix faces many challenges, from distribution licensing negotiations to competition from formidable businesses, but its ability to use new media and innovative business practices to break into the entertainment distribution industry has all but established a place for itself in the future of media distribution.

Acquisition of Content: The Medium is the Mess

Netflix has a problem. As the internet makes it possible for companies like airlines to sell their tickets directly to customers instead of going through a travel agent, the need for the middleman is nearing an end.[1] Unfortunately for Netflix, their business model of taking content from studios and distributing it to its over 20 million customers makes them a middleman. This was not a problem when their distribution was solely DVDs, since none of the copyright holders had the infrastructure necessary to compete. However, with the distribution industry transitioning into the digital age (which requires much less infrastructure and investment), the studios now have the opportunity to bypass Netflix altogether.

Before Netflix started its digital distribution service, their acquisition of content was as easy as going to the nearest retailer and buying DVDs. In American copyright law, there is a limitation on ownership referred to as the First Sales Doctrine which allows legally obtained content to be lent, rented, or sold regardless of the original owner consent. When a person buys a DVD, they are buying the license to do what they want with it; this is why there is a market for pre-owned DVDs. Digital distribution, on the other hand, has a different legal process that requires the content to be licensed by the copyright owner for legal distribution. Herein lies the problem for Netflix: to get digital distribution licenses, they need to negotiate with the copyright holders who are trying to compete for an audience with their own digital distribution services.[2] This problem, however, is probably not one that will last into the future.

From Netflix's digital acquisition perspective, it has two separate products: films and television (referred to here and further as the episodic entertainment, not the physical box distribution). Despite mostly being owned by the same six conglomerates, both industries have their own traditions and stakeholders that influence Netflix's ability to acquire digital content differently.

The main concern with licensing films is windowing, or the act of giving a

Netflix has shifted from a home distribution company to one of the largest digital subscription companies in American media distribution.

property enough time to make as much money as it can before being sold and distributed by a different means. Netflix has had a difficult fight getting the rights for popular titles because studios are afraid that they will lose DVD revenue if people can rent their films instead of buying them; for example, Warner Bros. would only sell DVDs to Netflix at a low price if they bought them after a window of 28 days from the DVD release.[3] It is true they might lose some revenue this way, but the other concern is that if they do not make their content available for streaming, customers will choose alternative and illegal means to get it.[4] They are also not licensing their content for free; Netflix is willing to pay enormous amounts of money for content rights, so it is likely that any revenue lost from DVD sales could easily be made up for in licensing fees.

Since studios accepted home videos as a means of profit, they have had an agreement with theaters that they will not sell films for domestic viewing before a 120 day window.[5] Since the rise of digital distribution, however, this practice is no longer the standard. When Netflix was solely a DVD distributor, it had to wait to rent films until they were released for home viewing. But with digital distribution, it now has the opportunity to negotiate for rights to distribute at any time. Although Netflix has had little success with this so far, Disney and Warner Bros. have already begun negotiations with Video On Demand cable providers for early distribution, so there is the possibility Netflix will eventually be able to take advantage of this.[6]

Television uses a different form of windowing. Where a film property is distributed as a single product all at once, a television property is distributed over time (both in a single season and over the life of a series). The goal is not to have the customer buy the property once like a DVD, but to consume every episode and every season, which requires a more constructive use of windowing. One major concern with digital distribution is that it will take audiences away from cable distribution; but in some cases, as with NBC's decision to sell *The Office* on iTunes, making previous seasons available for viewing online has encouraged live viewing because it offers potential audiences the ability to

catch up on missed episodes and advertizes the show's return.[7]

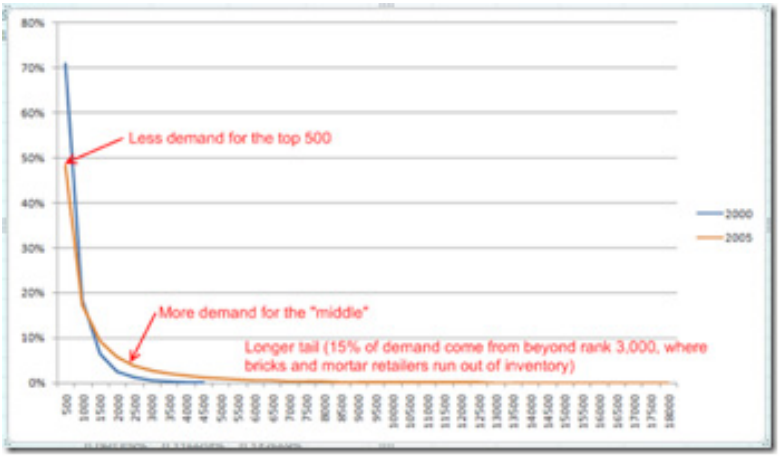
CBS, however, has a different windowing strategy: they license their library of retired shows to Netflix to stream, but withhold all shows that are still producing new content. This decision will not only fail to draw more viewers to their current shows, but also will not encourage viewers to move away from watching first run broadcasts.[8] Although this is a great new revenue source for the content owners of old shows, Netflix's move to stream syndicated content has cable networks squirming. Turner Broadcasting CEO Phil Kent, whose holdings include cable channels that rely on syndication, said that he is concerned about Netflix's impact on cable syndication and is willing to lower his company's bids, or even withhold buying rights altogether, unless there is a stipulation that the content will not be licensed to Netflix.[9] Furthermore, since these cable companies are owned by the rights holders of the content being discussed, it seems as though it could also be in their best interest to syndicate only to the cable channels and not encourage competition by licensing to Netflix.

Netflix is also plagued by the fact that television properties are often controlled by multiple stakeholders and interests that have "complicated profit sharing arrangements and intellectual rights issues."[10] This became particularly apparent in 2007 when the WGA went on strike over residuals for online distribution. When Netflix buys distribution rights, much like the syndication rights on which the guilds rely for residuals, a question remains as to how they are shared between the studios and the producers. Furthermore, when Netflix was licensed the rights to STARZ's content, they also had to negotiate for sub-licensed Disney content previously licensed to STARZ.[11] Even though this is a large hassle for Netflix, the company's army of lawyers and negotiators try to make the process move as fast and smoothly as possible.

Despite all these barriers to get content licensed, Netflix is in a good place heading into the future. Netflix is undoubtedly a competitor to the studios for many consumers, but it also offers an opportunity to the studios to reach new consumers, particularly with its "you may also like..." feature. Even though the content owners are trying to figure out how to thwart Netflix's distribution of their own content, as will be outlined below, Netflix's business model is proving to be a force to be reckoned with, and content owners are slowly buying in.

Content: Netflix's 'Long Tail' Wags Happily

The success of Netflix's business model is not based on its distribution of the occasional blockbuster, but on the distribution of "the long tail." This term, coined by *Wired* Editor-in-Chief Chris Anderson, refers to a distribution model that takes advantage of wide and varied demand for less popular niche products.[12] A company's ability to exploit the long tail has become feasible only recently because of the Internet's ability to provide an unlimited amount of content at little cost. For Netflix, the offering of film and television titles such as *Modern Times* (dir. Charlie Chaplin,1936), *Joyeux Noel* (dir. Christian Carion, 2005), and *The X-Files* (1993-2001) to very different niche audiences gives them the ability to capitalize on blockbuster hits. In his blog, *The Long Tail*, Anderson discusses a study done on Netflix's use of this model where



Anderson's study on Netflix's "Long Tail".

he concluded that their success can be correlated to its shift in distribution towards the tail of the graph. Comparing data from 2000 and 2005, Netflix's rental demand of the most popular 500 titles went from being over 70% of its rentals to less than 50%. Congruently, there was a large increase in demand for the variety of titles that were 3,000th in popularity and below (titles that could not be carried in rental stores because of physical limitations), which made 15% of its total demand.[13]

With all these titles to offer, Netflix had to figure out a way to get their subscribers to notice these "tail" films and television. Their answer was to offer a smart algorithm that suggests titles to subscribers based on their interests. When someone starts a Netflix account, the website asks them to rank what films they like and do not like, and the algorithm then predicts titles from its library the user would like.

Distribution of Content (DVDs): Leaving No Survivors

When Netflix began mailing DVDs to households, it was a vanguard project whose only real competition was video rental stores like Blockbuster and Hollywood Video. History has proven that CEO Reed Hasting's idea was a good one, since both competitors have filed for bankruptcy despite their attempts to come up with a competitive service. Despite the company's movement towards digital distribution, Hastings believes that Netflix will continue to mail DVDs into 2030 because there will still be a demand for them.[14] There are a few reasons why he might be right, the first being that Netflix will only stop shipping DVDs when every title they want to carry will be available for instant streaming. The second reason is that, as he believes, it will take that long for DVDs to become obsolete; he assumes that the future of DVDs will follow the CD decline.[15] The problem with this logic is that when CDs were being replaced by MP3 players, the concept of digital distribution was in its infancy; consumers are now more comfortable with it and this increasing ease might accelerate the transition.

Distribution of Content (Digital): Let the Best Model Win

Even though Netflix was not the first company to stream content online, they are leading the new online digital distribution market with their advertisement-free, unlimited streaming subscription business model. The first major online content distributor was iTunes, which used a pay-per-show model because it "was easiest to implement amidst a complicated array of rights and royalty agreements...[and] the industry was unlikely to try an advertising model because the networks needed to first illustrate value for advertisers."[16] Once this value was established, the networks (first FOX and NBC, then ABC) launched their own online distribution business called Hulu, which provided ad-sponsored, free streaming of current television shows. In 2010 Hulu launched its subscription service called Hulu Plus which offers access to more content in addition to what is available for free and can be used on multiple devices such as the iPhone. The competitor that comes closest to Netflix's business model is the newest entry into the online streaming market, Amazon, which also has a subscription service for unlimited streaming. In addition, it offers two-day digital rentals on films ordered by non-subscribers so they can watch their film instantly instead of waiting for it to come in the mail (a very good move from a company fighting an increasingly impatient client base). The question is: Which of these digital distribution models will be the most successful?

iTunes will continue to have a customer base of people who would rather pay $3.99 for one rental a month than a subscription fee from which they might not get their money's worth. According to Warner Bros. President of Digital Distribution Thomas Gewecke, the flaw in this model is that consumers do not differentiate between streaming content online and buying it digitally. Therefore, consumers are more likely to simply watch something online either through an unlimited subscription where the payment is directly withdrawn, or for free on Hulu.[17]

Hulu has been doing well financially since it implemented Hulu Plus. Its problem is that it still runs advertisements even with its subscription service. It has tried to make the experience less of an inconvenience by offering an ad tailor so it can target ads to the viewer, but the experience is certainly lessened by this emphasis on advertising. It is hard to believe that when future consumers are comparing the Hulu Plus subscription with Netflix, this would not be a major deterrence. However, it has the great advantage over Netflix and all the other competitors because it is able to stream content the day after it airs on television for free. As long as it maintains this power, it will have an audience well into the future.

Amazon streaming is still in its infancy but there is much speculation as to how it will compete with the rest. Its streaming subscription service is tied in with its Amazon Prime service, which offers free two day shipping for $79/year (about $17/year less than Netflix). Right now it cannot compete with the others because it has poorer video quality, a smaller content library, and is not on other platforms yet, but all of these can easily change in the near future.[18] Although Amazon has not released actual numbers, *Business Insider* reported that it is estimated to have 10 million subscribers--already half of Netflix--and will most likely increase.[19] Amazon also has the advantage of having an established income outside of its subscribers so it can spend more on

licensing. All of this makes Amazon a formidable competitor to Netflix.

At present, Netflix is the company to beat because it has by far the most reach of any online distribution company. Last year, Netflix surpassed 20 million subscribers, which means it has the second largest subscriber base for media distribution in the United States, trailing Comcast by less than 3 million.[20] It also has the widest distribution over platforms (like the iPhone, Xbox, Wii, etc.). As for its subscription service, having unlimited streaming for $7.99 a month (which goes largely unnoticed because of automatic withdrawal) and access to the largest content library for niche entertainment makes it the leader of online distribution. Netflix also has the advantage of market inertia; because so many subscribers have already bought into Netflix, those subscribers will more likely than not stick with what they have, unless its quality of service is well surpassed.[21] Finally, because of its current dominance, Netflix just announced a partnership with Facebook to make the content viewing experience social; this alone seems like a free pass into the future.[22]

The End is Far

Netflix has many hurdles to overcome going into the future, but so far it has done well surmounting the ones it has already confronted. In a market that has long been controlled by an oligopoly of studios and networks, the company's great ingenuity and initiative made it rise to a position not only to negotiate with the oligopoly, but to challenge its control over distribution. As the internet matures and companies like Google and Facebook settle into dominance, Netflix will more than likely be right there with them, fully integrated into their systems.

Works Cited

1. Kaihan Krippendroff. "Will Netflix Break My Heart?" *Fast Company,* January 13, 2011, accessed March 12, 2011, http://www.fastcompany.com/1716839/will-netflix-break-my-heart.

2. Daniel Roth. "Netflix Everywhere: Sorry Cable, Your History." *Wired* Issue 17 (2009): 13.

3. Daniel Frommer. "Netflix Bends to Warner Bros., Wont Rent DVDs for 28 Days After They Go On Sale," *Business Insider: Silicon Ally Insider*, January 6th, 2010, accessed March 10, 2011, http://www.businessinsider.com/netflix-bends-to-warner-bros-wont-rent-dvds-for-28-days-after-they-go-on-sale-2010-1.

4. Serra Tinic,"Compensation and Creative Labor." *Net Worth: Media Distribution in the Digital Era*. Presentation at Conference. UCSB. February 18th, 2011.

5. Thomas Schatz, "Digital Strategies of Media Conglomerates." *Net Worth: Media Distribution in the Digital Era*. Presentation at Conference. UCSB, February 18, 2011.

6. Ibid.

7. Amanda Lotz. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*. (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 137.

8. Brian Stelter, "In Deal with Netflix, New Revenue for CBS." *The New York Times*. Accessed February 23, 2011, http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/23/in-deal-with-netflix-new-revenue-for-cbs/.

9. Andrew Wallenstein, "Turner Chief Explains How Industry Will Neutralize Netflix." *Paid Content*, January 5, 2011, accessed March 10, 2011, http://paidcontent.org/article/419-turner-chief-explains-how-tv-industry-will-neutralize-netflix/.

10. Lotz. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, 141.

11. Peter Kafka, "Its Official, Epix, Netflix Announces Multi-year Deal for Streaming Movies." *All Things Digital*, accessed August 10, 2010, accessed March 10, 2011, http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com/20100810/its-official-epix-netflix-announce-multi-year-deal-for-streaming-movies/?mod=ATD_search.

12. Chris Anderson, September 24, 2009 (5:01 p.m.), comment on longtail, "Netflix Data Shows Shifting Demand Down the Long Tail," *The Long Tail: Chris Anderson's Blog*, September 24, 2009, http://www.longtail.com/the_long_tail/2009/09/netflix-data-shows-shifting-demand-down-the-long-tail.html.

13. Ibid.

14. John Paczkowski and Drake Martinet. "Netflix CEO Reed Hastings: We'll Be Shipping DVDs Until 2030." *All Things Digital*. January 8th 2010.

15. Ibid.

16. Lotz, 139.

17. Thomas Gewecke, "Digital Strategies of Media Conglomerates." *Net Worth: Media Distribution in the Digital Era*. Presentation at Conference. UCSB. February 18, 2011.

18. Dan Rayburn, "Amazon's Prime Streaming will DEFINITELY Disrupt Netflix: Heres How." *Business Insider: Silicon Ally Insider*, February 23, 2011, accessed March 8, 2011, http://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-prime-streaming-disrupt-netflix-2011-2.

19. Ibid.

20. Megan, O'Neill, "How Netflix Bancrupted and Destroyed Blockbuster," March 1, 2011.

21. Kevin Berk, "Seven Reason Why Netflix Will Soundly Beat Amazon in Online Video." *Seeking Alpha*, February 25, 2011, accessed March 8, 2011, http://seekingalpha.com/article/255042-7-reasons-why-netflix-will-soundly-beat-amazon-in-online-video.

22. Liz Gannes, "Netflix Gets Social: 'Extensive' Facebook Integration Is Coming." *All Things Digital*. Jan 27, 2011, accessed on March 8, 2011, http://networkeffect.allthingsd.com/20110127/netflix-gets-social-extensive-facebook-integration-is-coming/.workeffect.allthingsd.com/20110127/netflix-gets-social-extensive-facebook-integration-is-coming/.

Conference Report:

Lost and Found: Nostalgia and Media

by Tony Blahd

The title for this year's NYU Cinema Studies Student Conference was "Lost and Found: Nostalgia and Media". Though the call for papers was offered to undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni, I found that the majority of the conference attendees were either MA or PHD candidates predominately from NYU's Cinema Studies department. There were a few participants from San Francisco State University and the University of Southern California, although the only other undergraduate in attendance, beside myself, was a graduating senior from Brown University.

Despite the lack of scholarly diversity, nearly every presentation was unique and distinctive. The conference consisted of 18 papers, by 17 different presenters, grouped in four panels of three by theme: (i) Nostalgia of Genre, (ii) Nostalgia and Cinematic exhibition, (iii) Queering/Querying: Nostalgia Revisited, and (iv) Politics of Nostalgia: Cinematic Challenges to Conservatism. The opening panel, Nostalgia of Genre, was one of the best groupings of the weekend; my favorite of the panel was Russell Sheaffer's (MA, NYU) "Sex in Text: The Inter-Titles of Silent-Era Stag Films." Sheaffer cites Linda Williams and our department's own Constance Penley as the preeminent scholars on pornography studies, yet he chose to concentrate on a close textual analysis of stag film inter-titles, which is, according to Sheaffer, an element of pornography studies that has yet to come into academic discussion. In his research, Sheaffer traveled to the Kinsey Institute in Bloomington, Indiana where he was able to comb an immense archive of silent pornography and collect a multitude of screenshots from the films to include in his presentation. Sheaffer presented examples of films that have almost no inter-titles, as well as a film entitled "The Janitor," in which the inter-titles comprise more of the film's running time than the pornographic images themselves. The role of the inter-title in silent pornography varied deeply, but was mostly predicated upon genre. Inter-titles were comprised of "how-to's," poems, dialogue, and dirty jokes. It is common for inter-titles from one film to be spliced into another by the exhibitor as a means of boosting the production value of a film. Sheaffer's presentation is the beginning of an exciting research project to be added to the discourses within pornography studies.

Following Sheaffer on the panel was Kartik Nair's (PhD Candidate, NYU) "Nostalgia as Nightmare: The Case of the Ramsay Brothers." This paper delved into the low budget horror niche in Bombay cinema in the late 70s and 80s. The Ramsay Brothers were prolific filmmakers, yet were forced into cult obscurity by the high production values of the Bollywood film industry. These films can be considered the "other" Asian horror film; they offer the thrills of horror film, yet still rely on the conventions of the Indian cinematic tradition, such as the inclusion of song and dance. Nair claims that this hybridity has a deconstructive effect on the horror genre. These films have resurfaced as part of the Mondo Macabro horror film compilations, which has spread the cult popularity of the Ramsays' films throughout Europe and the United States. Nair closed his presentation with a clip from one of the Ramsay's films, which I found extremely entertaining; it was, as Nair posits, a

precise mixture of global camp and local kitsch.

The Nostalgia of Genre panel was received with much discussion from audience and panel members, but this was a unique experience for the weekend. A majority of the panels generated little or no discussion from audience members. The lack of participation and debate can be attributed to the overabundance of analysis confined to overly specific and often overly obscure texts. The Queering/Querying: Nostalgia Revisited panel featured close readings of *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005), *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Pierce, 1999), *Sink or Swim* (Su Friedrich, 1990), and *Hide and Seek* (Friedrich, 1996). The Politics of Nostalgia: Cinematic Challenges to Conservatism panel featured close readings of *The Dreamers* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 2003), *Together* (Lukas Moodysson, 2000), *Amadeus* (Milos Forman, 1984), and *Broadway Danny Rose* (Woody Allen, 1984). Though many of these papers offered unique readings of the text(s) in question, they limited discussion and audience participation. The specificity of the presentations was generally detrimental to a participatory conference environment. The second panel, which I was on, Nostalgia and Cinematic Exhibition was followed by sufficient discussion following the presentations. The panel opened with Caitlin Hammer and Erik Piil's (MA Candidates, NYU) "Digital Facsimile and the Knowledge of Film Experience," which examined the nostalgic novelty of "the vintage look." The paper brought into question the value of the "film look" in modern digital media and its significance. This was followed by a presentation by Matt Barry (M.A., NYU), which meshed very well thematically. Barry's paper, "Nostalgia as Historiography: Robert Youngson and the Compilation Film," looked at Youngson's compilations as a cultural practice of writing history. His focus on the compilation of media brought in a relevant contemporary context, in much of the same way that Hammer and Piil's presentation did.

Though this was the first and only conference I have attended, I am fairly certain it was a success. The conference was well organized and intellectually stimulating. I enjoyed the panel discussions and came away with new trajectories for further research, and on top of it all, spent a great weekend in New York City.

National Conflict and Digital Nostalgia

The Road To Cultural Identity in *Wolf Creek*

by Derek Boeckelmann

Since the beginning of the genre, horror films have always utilized the road within their narratives, typically as either a plot device (i.e. how the protagonists ended up in a dangerous locale) or a setting apparatus (where the horror is taking place). As the genre progressed over the years, the road became an increasingly important and prevalent aspect of the horror film. It is therefore hardly surprising, that as the road became a vital and popular subject in horror films, the distinguishable lines between the horror genre and the road movie genre, in some instances, became blurred – resulting in the creation of, what Ballard labels, the "road horror" sub-genre.[1] In the road horror movie, the road tends to act as a space between civilized and uncivilized worlds. It is because of this space that it occupies that the road is primarily used as a setting in such films where contemporary anxieties about civilization and society can be simultaneously embodied and addressed. Unlike the road movie, which is a typically American genre, the road horror is a common international subgenre with entries appearing in the national cinemas of France, Belgium, and New Zealand (to list a few). The road horror has garnered this attention from international cinemas largely because the anxieties about civilization that these films tend to address are universal, rather than nationally specific; and therefore, they can easily be translated across national boarders. One of the more significant international entries into the road horror genre is that of , an independent Australian film released in 2005, directed by first-time filmmaker Greg McLean. Particularly noteworthy is how *Wolf Creek* combines both the American models of the road movie and the horror film to address issues culturally specific to Australia. In this essay I will briefly outline the history of the road horror sub-genre, before shifting my focus onto the road horror film in Australian cinema. I intend to discuss *Wolf Creek*'s classification as a road-horror film and the film's uses of the road to address issues of foreign presence in Australia and the crisis of Australian masculinity.

One of the many reasons for the horror genre's continuous popularity with audiences around the world is the genre's ability to "tap into the cultural moment by encoding the anxieties of the moment into their depictions of monstrosity."[2] Horror films are constantly evolving to address the fears of contemporary society. In their ever-evolving state, horror films also have a tendency to "mate in inimitable ways with other" popular movie genres, such as the western or "the detective noir."[3] It is largely because of these aforementioned reasons that the road-horror sub-genre was created. The *road-horror* was initially created to address the age-old fear of "unknown space" that came with America's fascination with discovery and exploration.[4] Following decades of cultural products that declared the "wilderness . . . a source of fascination" and automobile travel "a transcendental voyage of discovery and of escape from the urban", a low-budget film by Tope Hooper in 1974, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, effectively distorted these ideals and gave the road a more fearsome quality.[5] The success of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* spurred

many other films with similar narratives in the years that followed, from Wes Craven's *The Hills Have Eyes* in 1977 to *The Children of the Corn* (Kiersch) in 1984. The popularity of the road horror film began to decrease in the 1990s but later saw a resurgence in 2001 with the success of *Jeepers Creepers* (Salva) which led to both new road horror franchises like *Wrong Turn* (Schmidt 2003) and *House of 1,000 Corpses* (Zombie 2003), as well as remakes of original road horror films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Nispel 2003), *The Hitcher* (Meyers 2007), and *The Hills Have Eyes* (Aja 2006). It is during this "post-millennial revival" that *Wolf Creek* was developed.[6]

Released in 2005, to both critical and financial success, *Wolf Creek* – unlike many of the other films already cited – is not an American film, but rather an Australian production partially funded by the Australian government. Initially, this might be surprising as the road movie is typically an American cultural product; however, further investigation uncovers the cultural overlap between the two nations. Following the conclusion of World War II, "power [had] shifted away from Europe" and as a result, "Australians began to turn their cultural interests away from Britain and increasingly towards America."[7] In adopting many facets from popular American culture, American and Australian cultures became increasingly entwined. One of the many cultural imports was that of the drive-in movie theatre which found enormous success in Australia. It was through this cultural device that Australians were introduced to "the American horror film" which quickly became "the most popular import on Australian drive-in screens."[8] At the same time, the government began to place a focus on developing Australian film content by funding dozens of local productions, and particularly sought out Australian versions of foreign film genres with pre-established financial success. The result of this funding initiative, which still exists today, were films like *Mad Max* (Miller 1979) (an Australian version of the post-apocalyptic war film), *Razorback* (Mulcahy 1984) (an Australian version of the animal-horror film), and *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (Elliot 1994) (an Australian version of the road movie), which found their way onto Australian screens. It is these developments that ultimately paved the way for the national and international success of *Wolf Creek*.

Wolf Creek is clearly heavily influenced by the American road-horror films of the 1970s, seen through both the film's narrative and the old 1970s Ford vehicle that the characters drive (a 1970s American cultural product, like the road horror films themselves). Furthering *Wolf Creek*'s construction as a hybrid American/Australian film (an Australian version of the iconic American road movie), the protagonists come across the Australian equivalents of many classic American road movie characters. The gang of 'bikie' figures that Ben and the girls cross paths with, is the Australian equivalent of the American motorcycle gang (a recurring character group in the American road film) and Mick is the Australian equivalent of the American killer-redneck figure (prominently featured in both classic road films like *Deliverance* and road horror films like *Wrong Turn* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*). Essentially, *Wolf Creek* is an American road movie placed in an Australian context.

The entire first half of the film acts as road movie, void horror's primary elements; however, many of the narrative and visual elements borrowed from the road movie are laced with

The wide shots of the film create a sense of hopelessness after highlighting the characters' freedom from civilization.

double-meanings that foreshadow the film's ultimate shift from a road movie to a horror film. The film begins with the purchase of a used car. The opening sequence that follows effectively foreshadows the invasion of the manufactured and unnatural into the natural, with shots of the sun rising on the beach shore (symbols of the natural) juxtaposed with shots of the car being serviced by a mechanic (symbolic of the manufactured and the unnatural). Just as the car being fixed does not belong beside images of the ocean, the tourists and the car they occupy do not belong in the outback.

The film frequently uses long wide shots that in the beginning of the film, highlighting the freedom each of the characters are experiencing away from the constraints of society and civilization. However, when the film later moves into the territory of the horror genre, these long, wide shots emphasize the isolation and dislocation of the protagonists, creating a sense of hopelessness rather than freedom within both the characters and the audience.

Furthering *Wolf Creek*'s fabrication as a road movie is the fact that auto-

mobiles or signs of auto-mobility are prevalent in almost every scene of the film – even scenes not set on the road or inside a car. At a party scene before the characters head on their road trip, there is a cake with a toy car located on top with the phrase, 'Happy Travels', iced above it. A scene where the characters decide to camp outside on the first night of their road trip is saturated with allusions to the road and the automobile. There are caravans displayed prominently behind the characters as they sit around the campfire and even the campfire story being told - where a lone motorist encounters a UFO - is heavily focused on the road and its potential dangers.

In the film's first act, the road signs the protagonists pass foreshadow the events that will occur later in the narrative. In one instance, the camera watches the characters driving down the road through a bullet hole in the kangaroo's eye of a 'Kangaroo Crossing' sign – eerily alluding to the fact that an iconic Australian cultural entity (an Australian 'okka' figure rather than a kangaroo) is watching them from afar. The last road sign the characters pass before they are abducted – a sign with the word 'Goodbye' printed on it – is substantially less subtle in its foreshadowing of later events.

However, the film does not just play on and subvert the stylistic and narrative conventions of the road movie, but the ideological customs as well. Almost every American road movie places emphasis on the concept of 'freedom': from *Easy Rider* to *Thelma and Louise*. In these films, freedom is something that is sought out for with positive association. In *Wolf Creek*, freedom is represented a little differently. Ben, the male protagonist, openly envies Mick's lifestyle because of the amount of freedom it grants him. Ironically, having this freedom allows Mick to kill Ben's friends and dozens of other tourists. In *Wolf Creek*, freedom is constructed as a dangerous thing to possess, as the laws of our society are sometimes the very things restraining us from acting on primitive impulses – murderous or otherwise. Here, an individual with too much freedom is the most dangerous villain of all.

As a road movie, the automobile plays many crucial parts in *Wolf Creek*'s narrative. In the first act of the film, the car is a site of comfort and joy as the characters are seen sleeping, relaxing and singing whilst driving across the country. During these early scenes, the car acts as a site of familiarity, while the characters are displaced from their usual cultural and geographical surroundings. This is evident in the car providing the characters with food, music, and cigarettes during their journey. Once the car breaks down, it becomes a site of protection, as the characters await help. It shelters them from heat, rain, and eventually a storm. When the characters see something approaching in the darkness, Ben assumes that danger is imminent and encourages everyone to remain in the car – reinforcing the its distinction of being a safe place. However, the car can only protect the characters from natural threats, not other humans.

After providing the characters with familiarity and safety in the film's first two acts, the car in the third act only brings about the demises of the protagonists. Between the second and third acts, the automobile becomes aligned with Mick instead of the protagonists. This is recognized when Liz and Kristy make attempts to use a car to escape from their violent pursuer, both of which attempts end horribly:

Liz is stabbed in a car that she has just managed to start while, in a separate car, Kristy is rammed off the side of the road and shot. Mick uses their reliance on the automobile to kill both of them. Ben, the only one of the protagonists not to rely on a car for his escape, ends the film as the only survivor of Mick's attacks.

Like any horror film, *Wolf Creek* – at its core – is interested in addressing and embodying contemporary cultural anxieties within its narrative world. The main anxiety that the film addresses is the issue of foreign presence within Australia. It is a long-standing issue for the nation and one that is currently the cause of much controversy in the country.

In his characterization, Mick acts as the voice of many Australians unhappy with the heavy foreign presence within the nation. Before Mick reveals his murderous intentions to the protagonists, he admits to killing hundreds of kangaroos. He speaks to the fact that kangaroos are everywhere in the Australia, and if someone doesn't cull them they could overrun the outback and destroy the natural balance of things. However, there are implications during the conversation that Mick might not be talking about kangaroos in actuality, but tourists. Tourists are constantly visiting the area and threaten the very lifestyle that Mick cherishes, so – similar to his reason for killing kangaroos - he must keep their numbers controlled. In an ironic twist, the very things that allow tourists to regularly access and invade Mick's territory (the road and the automobile) are the very things that Mick uses to ensnare his victims. The introduction of the road and the automobile provided these tourists with easy access to the outback, which was largely inaccessible before their institution. Mick traps tourists by sabotaging their only modes of transport and then taking them away from the road. In a later scene, Mick reveals his disdain for foreigners when he calls Liz and Kristy, (both of whom are British females), "foreign cunts" who are "weak as piss." Mick also makes it a point to dispatch the two foreigners before going after Ben.

Mick is not the only narrative element lending itself to this discussion of foreign presence within Australia. This anti-foreign stance is also embodied in the vehicle that the protagonists drive. The car that ultimately fails the characters is a Ford, with its 'Ford' branding prominently displayed in several scenes. The Ford Motor Company is an American car company that is not highly regarded in Australian culture, because supporting the company sends money and jobs overseas. Australian car companies like Holden however, are significantly more popular and respected within Australian culture because of their ability to offer employment opportunities to thousands of Australians. In his decision to support an American company rather than an Australian company in the purchase of the car, Ben becomes a representation of the passive Australian (a citizen who shows no interest in preventing this increasing foreign presence), as opposed to Mick – a representation of the proactive Australian (who actively takes part in foreign prevention).

Of the film's three protagonists, the two foreigners die while Ben, the sole Australian protagonist, survives the ordeal. Oddly enough however, it is a group of foreigners that find an unconscious Ben on the side of the road and save his life. It seems that in the end, McLean might be alluding to the fact that the very thing that locals don't

want – more foreigners intruding in their living spaces – is the very thing keeping the nation's economy alive, as the tourism industry is one of the most financially successful industries in the country: collecting thirty-two billion dollars in revenue in 2004 alone.[9]

Wolf Creek also uses its characters and road setting to discuss the evolution of the Australian male and address anxieties around Australian masculinity. The character of Mick acts as an embodiment of the traditional Australian male, while Ben represents his contemporary counterpart. In choosing to walk away from a fight in the beginning of the film, Ben shows that he is non-confrontational and apprehensive – the complete opposite of Mick, an uncivilized and violent figure capable of horrific acts of brutality. Mick is a metaphorical embodiment of the anxieties surrounding traditional Australian masculinity, which allows the film to reflect on some anxieties about the kindness of strangers. An earlier victim of Mick's assures his sceptical wife and two young daughters that Mick must have good intentions, when offered his help, because "country people are nice." The man's stereotypical assumption that Mick must be the conventional docile and friendly okka, is ultimately what brings his family to their doom.

The film is deeply interested in the evolutionary concerns of Australian masculinity: that the traditional Australian male is threatened by the new metropolitan, techno-savvy (but not automotive-savvy) counterpart. If horror films are meant to "reflect" and "address", as Cherry suggests, social "anxieties that are of great concern to contemporary society", then the road in *Wolf Creek* acts as a space where this struggle of masculine identity can be successfully mediated.[10] The road is a space that both the past and the present representations of masculinity can temporarily occupy, but not coexist upon (i.e. Ben and Mick can both live at the end of the film, but to do this they must exist in separate spaces – the city and the outback). Interestingly, both incarnations of the Australian male survive the film, but the contemporary Australian can only survive with the help of foresaid foreigners. Ben suffers from dependency and is not a survivalist in the same way that Mick is.

It is the film's heavy focus on automobility, territorial invasion, and the road itself that allows *Wolf Creek* to be classified as a road movie, while its ability to use the road to "reflect" and "address" contemporary social anxieties allows the film to be classified as horror. Combining the two film genres, *Wolf Creek* uses the automobile and the road - the fixtures of any road movie - to address and engage in the discussion of contemporary anxieties about Australian civilization and society. It is through this combination that *Wolf Creek* is able to successfully establish itself as a respectable international film of the road horror sub-genre.

Works Cited

1. Finn Ballard, "No Trespassing: The Post-Millennial Road-Horror Movie." *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*. 2008, accessed 28 February 2010, pg 1. <http://irishgothichorror-journal.homestead.com/roadhorror.html>.

2. Brigid Cherry, *Routledge Film Guidebooks: Horror*. (London: Routledge Publishing Group, 2009), pg 11.

3. Magistrale, Tony. *Abject Terrors: Surveying the Modern and the Postmodern Horror Film*. (Washington D.C.: Peter Lang Publishing Group, 2005), pg 13.

4. Ballard, "No Trespassing: The Post-Millennial Road-Horror Movie." , pg 1.

5. Ibid, pg 1.

6. Ibid, pg 2.

7. Graeme Harper, "Drive-In Horror Across the Outback: Surf, Sand, and Sisters in 1970s Australia," in *Horror At the Drive-In: Essays in Popular Americana*, ed. Gary Rhodes. (London: McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers, 2003), pg 25.

8. Ibid, pg25.

9. Australian Bureau of Statistics, "A Statistical Overview of Tourism," *Australian Economic Indicators*, January 2006, accessed 2 March 2010, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTA TS/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbyCatalogue/56DEEBA1C966180ECA257122001AC52D?OpenDocument.

10. Cherry, pg 11.

Stereoscopic Films Forgotten Past:
Novelty in Three Dimensions

by Anthony Blahd

The 3-D, or stereoscopic process has been popular since the mid 19th century, decades prior to the advent of cinema; a synthesis between stereoscopic imagery and cinema was inevitable. Many regard the 1950s as being both the starting point and peak of the 3-D movie. However, 3-D film underwent a small, yet notable stretch of popularity in the 1920s. I would like to answer a series of questions regarding this short-lived 3-D fad of the 1920s. What was the technology involved in stereoscopic production and exhibition and how did it evolve or change? What kind of stereoscopic movies were being made, and who was making them? Where were these movies being shown, and how were they received? What were industry conceptions and predictions regarding stereoscopic filmmaking? How did stereoscopic film making gain popularity, and why did that popularity wane at the end of the decade? These are all questions that have fueled my research.

Since the 1950s are widely considered to be the birth of the 3-D film, there is very little written regarding the 1920s stereoscopic movement. R.M. Hayes' book *3-D Movies: A History and Filmography of Stereoscopic Cinema* is in-depth in its history and chronology of 3-D from the 1950s onward, yet only devotes around ten pages to the topic of 3-D in the 1920s. Nevertheless, the ten pages actually devoted to the '20s are highly informative and provide a great starting point for my research. The only other secondary source regarding the stereoscopic film movement of the 1920s is Ray Zone's *Stereoscopic Cinema and the Origins of 3-D Film*. This book is truly a seminal and decisive project on the history of 3-D film. This expansive text traces the stereoscopic process from its pre-history in the mid 19th century to its boom in the '50s. Moreover, the book provides an abundance of information regarding the 3-D phase of the 1920s. After reading these sources and combing through newspapers, magazines, trade journals and archives, I have arrived at the conclusion that the stereoscopic film movement's demise can be attributed to its inherent inability to exit the realm of novelty. Stereoscopic films were never able to become truly popular due to problems with the invention itself, the content and exhibition practices ill-suited for its audience, and an inability to successfully monetize the trend via distribution strategies.

High Hopes

The first big wave of stereoscopic motion pictures came to the United States in the early 1920s. Several members of the film industry were outspoken about their high hopes for the new technology. Fox studios had a mounting interest in stereoscopy throughout the decade. In a late 1926 press release, Fox treasurer J.C. Eisle forecasted 1927 as the year in which Fox would focus more attention and funds on the stereoscopic process.[1] Passages of Eisle's press release were quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Outstanding developments to be expected include...the introduction of the stereoscopic process, to give pictures depth as well as breadth and height."[2] Eisle's forecast is of interest in that it demonstrates how studios conceived stereoscopic cinema as a fis-

A *Plastigrams* advertisement addressing the spectator.

cal opportunity. However opportunistic Fox may have been, there is no evidence I have found suggesting that the studio followed through with their forecast; Fox didn't develop a stereoscopic apparatus in 1927, nor did they produce any stereoscopic films. Fox's interest in stereoscopic cinema was too little, too late; three years after the press release, the advent of the Great Depression stymied stereoscopic development for decades.

Interest in stereoscopic filmmaking was not just arising from the studios, but from filmmakers as well. Slapstick comedian Harold Lloyd was quoted in a 1923 Los Angeles Times interview as follows:

> I think the screen's greatest step forward will come through the stereopticon picture. I do not believe the synchronizing of voice and picture, on which a number of scientists are now working, will help the motion picture at all... I do believe that the man who invents a means of producing a perfect stereopticon motion picture will have accomplished the greatest achievement since the first of the motion picture.[3]

Lloyd's high hopes present an interesting dichotomy; while the 1920s were a time of technical development for cinema, he believed there was only room for one true major development. His hyperbolically enthusiastic interview contrasts sound with the stereoscopic process and, thus, juxtaposes the potential of each. Stereoscopic cinema all but died out by the end of the '20s, yet this sense of optimism during the early part of the decade was a sentiment shared by other important members of the film industry as well.

D.W. Griffith, the highly influential and popular film director seemed to share Lloyd's position. Griffith's attitude was made clear in a November 1922 interview with *The New York Times*: "... motion pictures will never realize their ideal effectiveness until they are stereoscopic."[4] However, with Griffith's prophecy came a few obstacles. The interview continued with this amendment by Griffith: "We are, of course, in what will be called the early experimental stage of such development. Where the effect depends upon individual mechanism for each spectator, it is of course a complicated arrangement, and difficult to reduce from a novelty to popularity."[5] Griffith's interview indicates that he was hopeful for the future of stereoscopic filmmaking, yet aware of the tribulations it faced. The "complicated arrangement" of the mechanism refers to the exhibition apparatus necessary for stereoscopic projection. Much like the 3-D glasses of today, the apparatus referred to by Griffith is a small personal viewer

required for the audience to experience the 3-D effect. The novelty mentioned by Griffith refers to the pre-history of stereoscopic film, in which the stereoscopic process was more commonly associated with optical toys. Contrary to Griffith's hopes, the stereoscopic process never was able to forego the cumbersome yet necessary viewing apparatus. Also in adherence to Griffith's prophecy, stereoscopic cinema, regardless of efforts from within the industry, was never able to lose its twinge of novelty. These obstacles prophesized by Griffith were in fact hurdles that the medium was never able to surpass, and major contributors to its demise.

A Period of Invention

The development of the motion picture was a raucous affair, with multiple systems, formats, inventions, and inventors in various countries around the globe. Nevertheless, by the 1920s, the cinematic apparatus was essentially standardized. It was at this point in which the stereoscopic apparatus emerged. The arrival of stereoscopic filmmaking mimicked that of cinema. Inventors and inventions surfaced frequently, but it wasn't until the 1920's that the major players would emerge.

Though often rumored otherwise, no devices emerged which did not require a specialized viewing apparatus.[6] However, this is not to suggest a lack of inventions. On the contrary, inventions came from France, Britain, Spain, Germany, and the United States (New York and Texas in particular).[7] To add to the confusion, the inventions were incredibly complex. Wilhelm Salow, of Germany incorporated two rectangular, equilateral prisms in his design to produce consecutive images.[8] North H. Losey of Indiana submitted a nearly indecipherable patent consisting of four pages of hand written drawings for a design featuring close to 200 individual moving parts.[9] Thomas Edison worked on a stereoscopic apparatus for nearly twelve years before giving up.[10] For the sake of analysis and an attempt at brevity, I will only focus this paper on a select few American inventors, on whom I was able to find the most information.

Laurens Hammond of New York, credited with the invention of the Hammond Organ, was also a stereoscopic pioneer. His first patent, in 1921, was the design for his shadowgraph system. This was a vaudeville-style live act, which featured dancers behind a translucent screen. The images of the dancers were illuminated from the rear with red and green light.[11] In conjunction with the shadowgraph act, Hammond also developed the Teleview. The "Teleview used a twin strip 3-D camera with two lenses 2 and 5/8ths inches apart, dual projectors, and a revolving electrical shutter affixed to the armrest of each spectator's seat."[12] The design of Teleview was solid and effective, but "No doubt plagued with technical difficulties."[13] Hammond combined the Teleview technology with the shadowgraph act in order to create the Teleview program, an early instance of publically displayed stereoscopic projection that I will elaborate upon later in this essay.

The Plastigram was the second stereoscopic invention. Jacob Leventhal and Frederic Ives, along with their cinematographer William T. Crespinel, placed two cameras side by side, which provided optical centers for lenses of roughly three inches in length, each lens with a prism in front of it. The two cameras were hinged together with a common drive shaft to work as a unit. They then created anaglyphic motion pictures prints by using red/blue dyes

with double coated, yet single strip motion picture film.[14] The Plastigram process allowed for an exaggerated 3-D effect in which the image seemingly jumped out at the audience. Leventhal and Ives utilized the exaggerated stereoscopic effect to their advantage by marketing their films for novelty value; this too will be discussed in depth later in the paper.

Content and Exhibition

Developed in the 1910s, Classical Hollywood Cinema (CHC) polished the continuity editing style by the 1920s. The dominant trend of this highly popularized film style became an emphasis on narrative and the diegetic absorption of the spectator. The emergence of this new trend is easily juxtaposed against what Tom Gunning refers to as the "cinema of attractions," a term which Gunning uses to describe early cinema, roughly before 1906.[15] He identifies the contrast between these two styles: "... early cinema was not dominated by the narrative impulse that later asserted its sway over the medium."[16] Narrative cinema is distinguished from cinema of attractions via its spectorial relationship. The "cinema of attraction" is defined by the way it "directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through and exciting spectacle–A unique event."[17] The dichotomy between cinema of attraction and Classical Hollywood Cinema is simplified to that of, "exhibitionist confrontation rather than cinematic absorption."[18] With the rise of Classical Hollywood Cinema came the rise of the feature film; this was the ideal vehicle for diegetic absorption. However, Gunning is careful to make clear that the birth of Classical Hollywood Cinema did not signify the death of cinema of attraction. Elements of the cinema of attraction constantly reappear throughout film history. The 3-D trend of the 1920s exemplifies a reemergence of Gunning's cinema of attractions.

Stereoscopic cinema was unable to adhere to the popular trends of the Hollywood system. The more successful stereoscopic films were not features, or even multi-reeled for that matter. The industry seemed to incorporate older strategies, in order to integrate the new stereoscopic technology. Laurens Hammond's Teleview process had a short run of projection at the Selwyn Theater in New York City. A 1923 review from Variety describes the program,

> The Program opened with an ordinary picture followed by 'Teleview' studies. The studies consisted of "A Bottle of Rye," "A Hole in Space," "Circles" and "A Dragon." The subjects were increased and diminished in size at the will of the projector, giving an effect of distance and proximity, unusual in a normal picture house. Scenic studies next in natural colored "stills" with views of Hopi and Navajo Indian life in motion pictures followed by an ordinary picture, viewed without the instrument. A shadowgraph dance by Jeanette Bobo, Helen Cronovo, and Elly Roder was staged behind a white drop in "one." The effect obtained was novel. The silhouette seemingly came right out over the audience when viewed through the "Telescope." "M.A.R.S.," a "Teleview play" taken with the special camera and featuring Grant Mitchell and Mitchell and Margret Irving in their picture debut proved a fanciful comedy, draggy in spots.[19]

The review is presented almost entirely

in full, because I feel it will be helpful to analyze the entirety of a typical night of a stereoscopic program. Let us begin with the Teleview studies: these were single shot films of a particular item, for instance a bottle of rye. The effect was astounding for first time viewers who had never experienced such depth of image. Another reviewer remarked, "A jug marked 'Rye' was extended out into the audience, and the temptation was to reach out and seize it."[20] These individual stereoscopic shots were interesting for their novelty value and are comparable to early 2-D short subject films. Lumiere's *The Arrival of the Train* (1896) or *Workers Leaving a Factory* (1895) received similar reactions by surprised patrons, however these primitive shorts were examples of display rather than story and unable to command a long-term audience once the novelty wore off. Stereoscopic display pictures, were, in subject matter, no different than earlier non-stereoscopic shorts, and therefore easily categorized as cinema of attractions.

The second part of the film program, featured scenic films. Before the emphasis on narrative took rise in the transitional period of cinema, the scenic was a popular genre during Gunning's cinema of attraction period and even has roots in the magic lantern tradition. Bordwell and Thompson note, "In days before airplane travel few could hope to see firsthand the exotic lands they glimpsed in static view in books of travel photographs… travelogues would bring the sights of far flung places, with movement, directly to the spectators' hometowns."[21] Scenics and travelogues offer little if any narrative, but rather adhere to the spectacle and novelty values commonly attributed to the cinema of attractions.

The third part of the program, the shadow-grams, are yet another example akin to Gunning's cinema of attractions model of understanding early film history. A shadow-gram performance, as previously discussed, was a dance performed live and behind a screen. The dancers were silhouetted by colored lights, which allowed the audience to perceive the 3-D effect of the dancers' shadows when looking through the viewing apparatus.[22] This notion of multimedia programming mixing both film and live performance is a reminder of a vaudeville or early nickelodeon style of exhibition. Gunning notes that cinema of attractions commonly consisted as a series of "unrelated acts in a non-narrative and even early illogical succession of performances. Even when presented in the nickelodeons that were emerging at the end of this period, these short films always appeared in a variety format."[23] During reel changes or between shorts in Nickelodeon theaters, programmers would fill the gap with live music, dance, or theater. This mixed style of entertainment detracts from the possibility of diegetic absorption. Once features rose in popularity, and multi projector systems became the norm, live interludes fell out of favor. The shadow-gram dances are a reminder of the nickelodeon era and therefore a relic of cinematic novelty.

The final portion of the program is perhaps its only section that would have been more appropriately linked to contemporary cinema than to the cinematic past. Labeled by the Variety reviewer as "draggy," *M.A.R.S.* was obviously a longer film, but not necessarily a feature. According to Hayes, the night's presentation in total ran no more than eighty-five minutes.[24] Allowing time for other parts of the show, it is doubtful *M.A.R.S.* ran longer than one hour. Similar to the *Variety* review, *The New York Times* reviewer described the film to be "drawn out to a tedious length."[25]

Plastigrams advertised with D.W. Griffith film, *Way Down East*.

M.A.R.S. seems an attempt to escape the realm of novelty and conform to the guidelines of the classical Hollywood cinema; this attempt however, was problematic. Shorter than a traditional feature, yet decidedly too long for most audiences, *M.A.R.S.* is emblematic of the way in which stereoscopic film struggled with length. *M.A.R.S.*, and the Televiews program as a whole emphasize the stereoscopic film as a purveyor of solely novelty content, and an inability to escape the realm of attraction based cinema.

The Stereoscopic Feature?

What about the stereoscopic process was so unforthcoming to the production of feature films? The answer is not simple, but it was mostly a problem of exhibition and audience reception. William T. Crespinel, cinematographer behind the short stereoscopic novelty film series *Plastigrams*, discusses length in relation to the stereoscopic film:

> [T]he audience became affected with eyestrain, dizziness, headache and nausea, the reason being that the eyes are subjected to an unnatural vision of (1) looking through complementary coloured glasses and (2) having the eyes focus on a distant object which is suddenly brought to a few inches of the eyes in a matter of a second or so. The screening time of our films was no more that five minutes. Thinking in terms of a film with a projection period of almost an hour just won't work.[26]

Crespinel's critique of the feature length stereoscopic mimics one of Griffith's aforementioned obstacles facing the stereoscopic process. The stereoscopic viewing device was essential to the process, yet at the same time detrimental in that it forced the stereoscopic process to remain within the realm of novelty.

Some stereoscopic filmmakers toyed with the notion of the stereoscopic feature in a more hybridized way. Hayes discusses an attempt by French filmmaker Abel Gance to create a partially stereoscopic epic about Napoleon Bonaparte. "[*Napoleon* (1926)] was to be a showcase of all available film technologies, and Gance felt it obligatory to include 3-D."[27] Though the 3-D aspects of the film were lost, the anecdote of its production and exhibition still remains. Gance shot only one major scene of the film with a stereoscopic camera rig, with the rest being shot on standard 35 mm. Hayes writes,

> Gance screened his movie in rough cut form, apparently only in a private situation, and immediately decided to discard the dimensional material…much to the filmmakers displeasure, he discovered his test audience were so overwhelmed by the 3-D footage, they found watching the flat segments… anticlimactic after the excitement of stereo-vision. This, of course, was unacceptable and the only course was removal of the 'offending' material. Napoleon was never publically exhibited with the 3-D scenes (or scene).[28]

Gance's displeasure with his hybridized approach to the stereoscopic feature is indicative of the stereoscopic process' incongruence with the institutionalized style of feature filmmaking. Neither autonomous nor part of a larger non-stereoscopic work, the 3-D feature seemed unfeasible in the 1920s.

Spectacle!

With the possibility of the feature annihilated, the industry began embracing the novelty value of the stereoscopic film. Jacob F. Leventhal and Fredrick Eugene Ives eagerly implemented this strategy with their aforementioned novelty series, Plastigrams. Leventhal described their strategy in writing,

> It was obvious at the beginning that if the exhibitors were to accept this kind of [stereoscopic] picture, it would be necessary to emphasize the spectacular side and make scenes that would startle the audience, rather than views of streets and scenery…Because a viewing apparatus was necessary, stereoscopic film can never occupy more than a few minutes on a program.[29]

Leventhal and Ives were aware of the limitations associated with the stereoscopic process, yet were extremely wise in the way they approached and negotiated those limitations. Due to their short length, the *Plastigrams* needed to be coupled with other films in order to fill a program. To solve this issue, they didn't create a program of their own like Hammond with his Televiews program; instead, *Platigrams* were presented as part of a double feature. For example, the *Plastigrams* were marketed with D.W. Griffith's *Way Down East*, yet the *Plastigrams* though shorter in length are the foreground attraction. Also notice the text occupying the box in the bottom left of the image, "YOU WILL THRILL! – SCREAM AT THIS WONDER NOVELTY. SPECIAL GLASSES ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL."[30] The advertisement is highlighting the spectacle and novelty of the film viewing experience, not the film itself. They embrace the special glasses as a welcome addition to a sensational experience, not as an element detracting from the film's narrative; the technology is just another aspect of the *Plastigrams*' novelty value. Rather then attempting to adhere to the guidelines of the classical Hollywood cinema, Leventhal and Ives favored strategies that embraced the model of content and exhibition likened to Gunning's cinema of attractions model.

Inherent in spectacle is the direct address of the viewer. In place of the more voyeuristic spectatorial relationship of classical Hollywood cinema, the cinema of attraction displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator."[31] *Plastigrams* were undoubtedly and directly addressing the audience. Zone summarizes this point, when describing the *Plastigrams*

as, "vignettes that broke the fourth wall of the motion picture screen, foregrounding spectatorship and display, acknowledging the viewer with a visual shock... These were stereoscopic novelties that violated the audience space."[32] Zone goes on to discuss that even if this spectatorial relationship is not directly referenced in the marketing of a film, the stereoscopic process itself cannot absorb its spectator into the diegesis. Zone quotes Lauren Kroiz, "By wearing the glasses the viewer, rather than entering into the world of depth that 3-D seems to offer, is instead bodily positioned in filmic space as a spectator, the viewer is unable to enter the film as a character, unable to identify with the characters in the narrative."[33] This distinction is crucial in that is identifies one of stereoscopic film's fatal flaws: without the possibility of diegetic absorption, stereoscopic film was never able transcend the confines of the cinema of attraction, thus the possibility of stereoscopic cinema, as a more permanent popularity, was impossible.

Distribution: Monetizing 3-D

Like the filmmakers, distributors embraced the spectacular and sensational when dealing with stereoscopic films. Hammond's aforementioned Teleview process was distributed to only one theater for a limited run. Hammond installed his $35,000 viewing system at the Selwyn Theater on Broadway in New York City. A 1922 advertisement in *The New York Times* embraced the theatricality of the event: "This will be the world premiere of binocularly stereoscopic cinematography, presenting for the first time in history . . . Every seat at the Selwyn equipped with electrical instrument . . . nothing like it ever has been seen before and cannot be seen except at the Selwyn."[34] This film's distribution, however, was advertised more like the run of a Broadway show than an actual film. Its run in New York lasted a few weeks at most. Mr. John Borden, the investor backing the Teleview Process, had planned a major city tour, outfitting one theater at a time, and presenting the show for a few weeks.[35] The success of this strategy is unknown but doubtful. Neither I, nor Zone or Hayes has found any reference to the Teleview process after its initial run in early 1923. Cinema emerged as the first true medium for the masses; this is emblematic of the Nickelodeon tradition's embrace of the working class and immigrant communities. The Teleview distribution strategy was anachronistic to this idea of equal access. The film was marketed as an event and not as a film, and was therefore reflected in its sales. What kept the Teleview from traditional, more lucrative distribution plan was cost. The $35,000 outfitting required for the theater was unthinkable on a national level. High overhead was not unique to the Teleview apparatus alone; in fact, the general stereoscopic process as a whole was notoriously expensive. Adolf Zukor was at one point involved in a stereoscopic endeavor and remarked in his memoirs about the experience, "The 3-d effect was very realistic and quite exciting, but costly and for that reason never utilized again."[36]

Ives and Leventhal used a different, more effective distribution strategy with *Plastigrams*. *Plastigrams* played in exclusive engagements in New York at Reisenfeild's Rialto and Rivoli before general release.[37] Unlike the installed apparatus of the Teleview Process, *Plastigrams* used an anaglyphic process and therefore an audience member needed only a pair of 3-D glasses to en-

joy the experience. With less overhead involved, the films could be nationally distributed via the Educational Film Exchanges who promoted the novelty of the *Plastigrams* in magazine advertisements:

> If you want to give you patrons a treat, and incidentally show a novelty that will create a lot of talk, get hold of the short reel of "Third-Dimensional" pictures called Plastigram***Shown at the Rivoli last week***some amazing effects were obtained***Shouts of amazement and surprised laughter from the unsuspecting audience***Plastigrams are a great novelty.[38]

This sensationalized strategy paid off: the films were widely booked. The majority of Paramount theaters (comprising 130 houses) contracted for the film, and many of Paramount's representative theaters featured them as well.[39]

Although Ives and Leventhal enjoyed the successes of the *Plastigrams* and other short stereoscopic novelty series such as *Stereoscopiks*, their isolated success did little for the stereoscopic movement as a whole. Their stereoscopic films lost novelty value and fell out of popularity by the end of the decade. When the stock market crashed in 1929, and the Great Depression ensued, studios began steering clear of stereoscopic development in favor of the more tried and true classical Hollywood cinema. 3-D returned in the 1950s to greater popularity, and this resurgence is often mistaken for the birth of 3-D. This history now seems closer to myth. Moreover, much like what we have seen in the 1920s, 3-D in the '50s had its rise, and with that came its fall.[40] Since then 3-D has drifted in and out of favor as a fleeting fad, never an established movement.[41]

It's Back, But Is It Here To Stay?

The current topic of conversation in media industries is the contemporary wave of 3-D. Higher budgeted 3-D films are being shown in the biggest theater chains around the country. 3-D televisions are being marketed to the general public, and networks are creating programming solely for this technology. But is this wave of 3-D frenzy a true movement; that is to say, is it the future of the motion picture industry, or is it merely a fad? With a Janus-headed approach, I turned to the past for my answer. Is this current wave of 3-D any different than that of the 1920s? The "individual mechanism" prophesized by Griffith still remains in the form of modern 3-D glasses. Producers stayed away from stereoscopic features in the 1920s because they "may have been very eye straining for most patrons."[42] Yet has this discomfort gone away? At least for me, a feature length 3-D film will almost certainly lead to a headache.

Ray Zone delineated stereoscopic filmmaking's early obstacles as follows: "The utopian dream of stereoscopic images in cinema, then was a double-edged sword. The heightened realism it presented was alluring, but it had to be justified in the context of a narrative."[43] Is the current wave of cinema justified in the context of a narrative, or is it yet another remnant of the cinema of attractions?

Works Cited

1. Anon, "To Give Depth to Films." *New York Times* 1 January 1, 1927, 1.

2. Anon, "Eisele Discusses Outlook for Films," *Wall Street Journal*, December 31, 1926), 4.

3. Anon.,"Pictures in Relief are Next," *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1923, 22.

4. Anon, "Stereoscopic Films." *New York Times*, November 5, 1922, 98.

5. Ibid.

6. Ray Zone, Zone, Ray. *Stereoscopic Cinema and the Origins of 3-D Film*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 135.

7. Ibid, 100.

8. Ibid, 87.

9. Ibid, 94-96.

10. Anon. "Stereoscopic Film is Shown." *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1925), Sec. A, 1.

11. Zone, 105.

12. Ibid, 107.

13. R.M. Hayes, *3-D Movies A History and Filmography of Stereoscopic Cinema*, (Jefferson: McFarland &Company, Inc., 1989) ,5.

14. Ibid, 121.

15. Gunning, "Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde," in *Early Cinema*, ed. T. Elsaesser, London: BFI, 1990, 59.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid, 59.

18. Ibid.

19. Anon, "The Televiewy," *Variety*, January 5 1923, 15.

20. Anon, "The Screen: Vivid Pictures Startle," *New York Times*, December 28, 1922, 20.

21. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film History an Introduction*, (New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 2010), 6.

22. Hayes, 5.

23. Gunning, 60.

24. Ibid.

25. Anon, "The Screen: Vivid Pictures Startle," *New York Times*, December 28, 1922, 20.

26. Zone, 113.

27. Hayes, 9.

28. Ibid.

29. J.F. Leventhal, "The First Use of Stereoscopic Pictures in Motion Picture Theatres," *Society of Motion Picture Engineers Journal* November (1926), 39.

30. Hayes, 8.

31. Gunning, 56.

32. Zone, 120.

33. Ibid, 84

34. Anon, "Display Ad 151 -- A New Form of Entertainment," *New York Times*, December 18, 1922), 25.

35. Anon, "Watching New Film Through Stereoscope," *Variety*, December 20, 1922, 15.

36. Hayes, 4.

37. Zone, 120.

38. Ibid, 122.

39. Ibid, 120.

40. Hayes, 20.

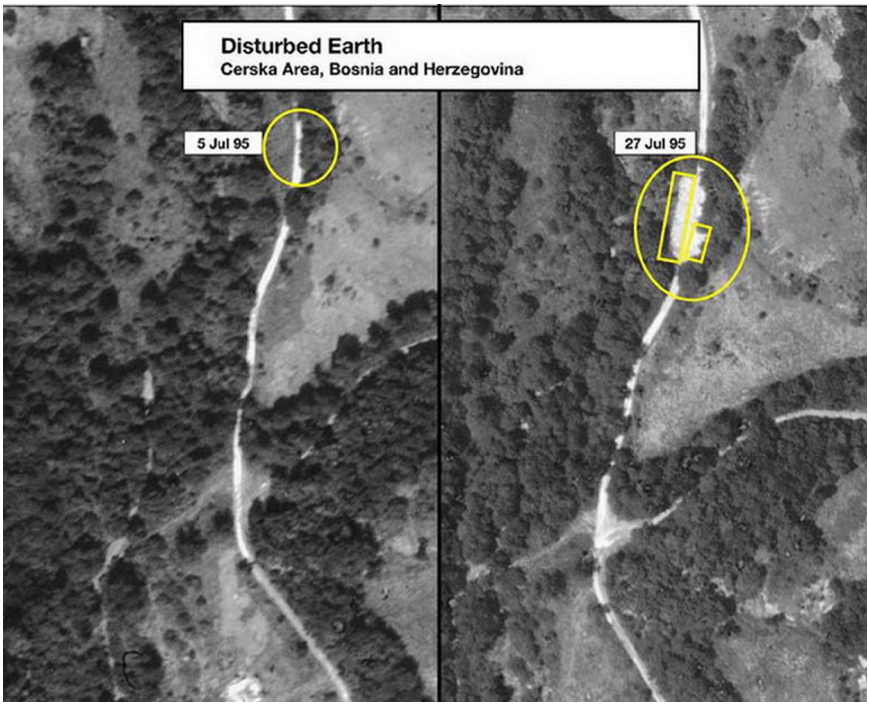
41. Ibid, 67.

42. Ibid, 4.

43. Zone, 143.

The Satellite Gaze During Global Crisis:
From The War In Bosnia to Hurrican Katrina

by Nadia Ismail



Satellite images of the mass graves in Bosnia.

Since its introduction as a new age Cold War intelligence instrument in the late 1950s, satellites have come to dominate political, cultural and social realms in unprecedented ways. The government's traditional use of satellites as a communication, intelligence and scientific device has been recently reconceived as a public tool to gain perspective on locales ravaged by political strife, natural disasters and warfare. In this modern age of satellite technology, satellite images of high profile areas have been used in new ways to access critical information, to push political agendas and to encourage discourse on critical subjects.[1] However, the satellite's transition from a militaristic tool to a humanitarian application is not perfect; it can be colored by the same biases, subterfuges and racial tendencies as prior adaptations of satellite technologies, including the militaristic voyeurism of the Cold War era.[2]

Satellites have captured and exposed a myriad of divergent global conflicts, including the exposure of mass graves in Bosnia, the displacement and murder of over 400,000 individuals in Darfur and the destruction in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. While the move of satellite technolo-

gies towards humanitarian relief efforts should be applauded, the satellite cannot be conceived of as a self-contained *deus ex machina*, as there still exists the potential for misrepresentation, racism and governmental corruption that can be found within more traditional militaristic usages of the technology. In this emergent humanitarian context for satellite usage, the origins, uses, benefits and shortcomings of this evolution must be understood in a critical light in order to better grasp the repercussions of the satellite's emergence into the humanitarian arena.

In his article, "The Militarization of Space and International Law," Allan Rosas notes that satellite systems are mainly anchored in four domains: (i) surveillance of neighboring countries, (ii) forewarning of perceived threats, (iii) communication portals, (iv) and means of navigational aid.[3] Although contemporary privatized satellites may have become estranged from their official association with a specified governmental agency, the psychological gap between a satellite image that is rendered for military purposes and a representation afforded for humanitarian intervention should be reexamined, as the two purposes likely share similar satellites which execute, or are at least capable of performing, nearly identical functions.

Beginning in the 1980s, influential news networks such as CNN altered the visual landscape of public information through invoking satellite imagery in the production and dissemination of high profile events.[4] Television sets around the world displayed politically-charged satellite images, such as the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster or evidence of suspected mass graves in Bosnia, only compounding the "CNN effect" in which large news networks greatly influence and manipulate public opinion and foreign policy.[5] The United States and French governments mainly produced the high resolution and bird's eye perspective of these remote sensing images, as the United States launched Landsat-4 and Landsat-5 in 1982 and 1984 respectively, and France launched SPOT-1 in 1986.[6]

In 1994, President Bill Clinton issued Presidential Directive 23, a policy that instigated the commercialization and privatization of satellite technologies. This policy enabled the "U.S. private sector to develop and operate high-resolution imaging satellites as well as sell the acquired data."[7] As a result, shared capital investment of remote sensing technologies between the government and private companies increased, drastically changing the economic potential of satellite imagery.

Despite its advantages, the privatization of satellite images also introduced the possibility of security threats and enemy infiltration. To protect crucial information leaks, the U.S. government implemented conditions to regulate the distribution and operations of private satellite systems. According to Vitin Gupta, "U.S. companies are required to account for all images that were acquired over the previous year and allow the U.S. government access to the list of acquired images; select a download link format that can be accessed and used by the U.S. government; and notify the U.S. government of the intent to enter 'significant or substantial' accords with new foreign customers."[8] Furthermore, when the "operation of a private remote sensing system is deemed to jeopardize national security, international obligations, or foreign policies, the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense, has the authority to limit data collection and distribution for as long as necessary."[9] The U.S. private satellite sensing

companies' initial and non-reactionary regulation is also put into play, as "U.S. companies are required to account for all images that were acquired over the previous year and allow U.S. government access to the list of acquired images; use only data encryption devices approved [and accessible] by the U.S. government; and notify the U.S. government of the intent to enter 'significant or substantial' accords with new foreign customers."[10] These regulatory procedures are undoubtedly an extension of the government's hand in the seemingly privatized and nongovernmental sectors of commercial satellite imagery. The invisible influence of the U.S. government in the dissemination of media and commercial imagery is significant, as it illustrates an almost innate and indissoluble connection between the seemingly "governmental" and "nongovernmental" agencies of information. These regulations, however, were poorly implemented, and the privatization of satellite imaging systems led to the eventual widespread use of satellite representations available today, from images resonating in the public forum via media and governmental dissemination to the advent of satellite image hegemonies, such as Google Earth.

The privatization of the satellite system and the proliferation of high-resolution satellite images influenced the growth of UN peacekeeping operations: "the mission objectives have widened to include crisis prevention (Macedonia); the protection of humanitarian programs (Bosnia, Somalia); the implementation of internal peace agreements (Cambodia, El Salvador); and the enforcement of UN Security Council ultimatums (Bosnia, Iraq-Kuwait, Somalia)."[11] Gupta conjectures the numerous ways in which satellites can influence UN operations: "commercial satellites can be used to assess threats against UN forces . . . the imagery could be used to filter fact from fiction in some types of eyewitness and government reports. With an independent source of information, UN missions could exercise a greater degree of informational autonomy from the host population and governing authority."[12] In this sense, satellite imagery is imagined not just as a helpful tool for peacekeeping operatives, but an essential one, as it facilitates a greater understanding of the geographic composites of each locale and political implications surrounding each global crisis. Satellite imagery, however, can also obscure the images by including labels that define unidentifiable objects from a distant point of view. Thus, the understanding of events that are either denied or veiled by local (or sometimes intervening) governments can either elucidate or obscure information.

In August 1995, the U.S. government's release of various satellite images that depict mass graves in Srebrenica shocked the global conscience and demanded further inquiry into the atrocities taking place in the Southeast European country.[13] Rather than providing a lucid snapshot of the current political climate in Bosnia, the satellite images were obscured through legends and shadowed effects created by US news broadcasters using Photoshop. These added "effects" were problematic, through melding fact and fiction, the organic image with the altered image.

Lisa Parks notes that these images "initiated a United Nations investigation into what is now known as the Srebrenica massacre," illustrating an extension of the CNN effect for a new age.[14] Jon Wester, a media scholar, describes the CNN effect in relation to the United States' involvement in Somalia. He notes, "perhaps the most common

explanation for the U.S. intervention in Somalia is that the vivid images of starving children on daily news broadcasts outraged the American public. In turn, this moral outrage led to political pressure on the Bush administration to respond aggressively to end the massive starvation."[15] Similarly, the obscured satellite images of the mass graves in Bosnia resulted in public intervention. Who created these graves? Furthermore, how many people were killed?

The extension of this "CNN effect" into the Satellite era also encouraged individuals to act benevolently, with Bosnia as a case in point. Satellite images of the Srebrenica massacre invited people across the globe to unite in action against perceived "evildoers," though the public outcry was part of a political strategy. In 1992, the Bush administration misled the American public by stating that the conflict in Bosnia was the "inevitable consequence of intractable and primordial hatreds unleashed with the collapse of the communist government's tight control."[16] This public announcement situated the conflict in Bosnia as a blood-based and arbitrary hatred between ethnic groups.

The first four months of the conflict saw relatively little opposition from the American public. When journalists independently traveled to the region, however, information counter to the government's media release triggered new insights. Rather than suggesting that the conflict was the spontaneous result of neighbor killing neighbor, as the satellite images portrayed, the journalists "reported activities of small bands of radical Serb nationalists and paramilitaries accused of committing atrocities in a series of highly organized campaigns."[17] Despite these elucidations, the Bush administration ignored the newly found information and continued to view the Bosnian atrocities through a "satellite gaze," structuring the situation as little more than historic bickering and denouncing its formal involvement in the war. Thus, the satellite images of the Bosnian atrocities became tangled in a net of obscured mediations. As Lisa Parks perceptively writes, "In an information society it is almost impossible to differentiate one's knowledge of an event from the media's coverage of it."[18]

It is also important to note that the aesthetic of conflicts in foreign countries displayed in the satellite images lacks significant historical context.[19] Satellite images perpetuate the polarization of the "savage East" and "civilized West".[20] As Aida Hozic holds, quoted in Parks' work, "The 'myth of ethnic violence' in Bosnia or Rwanda has helped construe them as unconquerable, ungovernable, even repulsive . . . The portrayal of these troubled spots as potential quagmires has justified the need for their containment."[21] This condescending "satellite gaze" can have serious consequences for both the first world audience and the observed third world population, as it can serve to highlight and widen gaps between divergent societies rather than unite individuals in a common struggle.

At the same time, this polarizing gaze can also serve as a pedagogical device to raise local knowledge about specific disasters. For example, in 2007, Google and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum released an interactive, user-friendly global outreach program via Google Earth.[22] The program, dubbed "Crisis in Darfur," sought to bring global aid and attention to the thousands murdered and displaced in Darfur through fusing "audiovisual and written materials from a variety of sources, geo-referencing them and integrating them within the Google Earth System."[23] Personal anecdotes

Google's Crisis in Darfur Project.

of refugees were fused with the global positioning capabilities of Google Earth to create a uniquely accessible and educational portal for visitors to the site. In other words, the satellite-mapped regions of Darfur and New Orleans has enabled users to outreach and create solutions by the digitally annotating satellite imagery.

Following the destructive landfall of Hurricane Katrina in the fall of 2005, map overlays via Google Earth and Google Maps' application programming interface enabled cyberspace visitors to catalogue the storm's devastation in various regions of New Orleans. *Scipo-nous.com*, the website that sponsored the Google services and invited user interaction to generate more data on post-Katrina destruction, was particularly helpful because it "allowed people to view specific locations within the gulf region, e.g. their home, and see what kind of conditions had been reported nearby."[24] Although these user-friendly interfaces should be commended for their desire to assist individuals plighted by political or meteorological destruction, their shortcomings should also be critically analyzed and understood.

For example, the Google Earth applications for Darfur and New Orleans focused largely on the corporative and humanitarian accomplishments of Google rather than the actual calamity at hand. Consistent with Hozic's fear of the 'myth of ethnic violence,' these applications exoticize and exploit the struggles of the individuals at the heart of strife in Darfur and New Orleans, further polarizing the divides between "white" and "black," or "us" and "them." As Parks observed in the wake of a Google Earth representative's elation over the widespread media coverage of the project, "what is striking here is that success is measured by an increase in world media attention to the Crisis in Darfur project itself and traffic to the USHMM website as opposed to an impact upon international policy or a change in conditions in Darfur."[25] The eclipsing of the actual calamities in both Darfur and New Orleans illustrates the shift of focus from aiding a

disadvantaged population to sensationalizing corporative achievement.

Furthermore, Internet applications are inherently exclusive. Not everyone has access to Google Earth's "Crisis in Darfur" or *Sciponous.com*, and thus many individuals — including those involved in the crisis — are necessarily unrepresented. For example, Sudanese individuals are prohibited from downloading any U.S. software, including Google Earth, while the poorest and most ethnically concentrated regions of Louisiana had significantly less statistics and placemarks than the richer and whiter parts of town.[26] These observations of user-friendly Google Earth interfaces demonstrate that satellite imagery is not without the societal and political baggage of subjugation, racism and under representation. Furthermore, satellite usage alone cannot save the world; individuals still must be compelled to act, rather than just gaze at crises spanning the globe. This call to action cannot be induced by an emotionally stirring image alone; it must be combined with accurate historical context, actualized means to provide monetary donations, and a wider representation of victims in conflict zones, all of which Google Earth did not successfully provide to users.

From the Corona project to Google Earth, satellite usages in the United States and around the world have evolved to encompass and influence societal, political and cultural domains. Despite the satellite's recent emergence into the humanitarian arena, its usages and repercussions are still under scrutiny. At times influenced by governmental agendas, corporative gain or instilled biases, the induction of the satellite image into the humanitarian frontier can carry the burdens and imperfections of the individuals who employ them. From the mass graves in Bosnia to the hurricane-ravaged streets of Louisiana, satellites have begun to enter the domain of altruism and humanitarism, albeit the concrete positive effects of this transition have yet to be actualized.

Work Cited

1. Vipin Gupta, "New Satellite Images for Sale." *International Security* 20 (1995): 94-125.

2. Lisa Parks, "Planet Patrol: Satellite Imaging, Acts of Knowledge, and Global Security," in *Rethinking Global Security: Media, Popular culture, and the "War on terror,"* ed. Andrew Martin et al. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006): 133.

3. Rosas, Allan. "The Militarization of Space and International Law." *Journal of Peace Research* 20 (1983): 357.

4. Parks, "Planet Patrol," 135.

5. Ibid.

6. Gupta, "New Satellite Images for Sale," 94.

7. Ibid, 99.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid, 114.

12. Ibid, 115.

13. Lisa Parks, "Satellite Witnessing: Views and Coverage of the War in Bosnia." In *Cultures In Orbit: Satellites and the Televisual* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 81.

14. Ibid.

15. Jon Western, "Sources of Humanitarian Intervention: Beliefs, Information and Advocacy in the US. Decisions on Somalia and Bosnia." *International Security* 26 (2002): 114.

16. Ibid, 120.

17. Ibid, 126.

18. Parks, "Satellite Witnessing," 88.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid, 90.

21. Ibid.

22. Lisa Parks, "Digging into Google Earth: An Analysis of 'Crisis in Darfur,'" *Geoforum* 40 (2009): 171.

23. Ibid.

24. Michael Crutcher and Matthew Zook, "Placemarks and Waterlines: Racialized cyberscapes in post-Katrina Google Earth." *Geoforum* 40 (2009): 34.

25. Parks, "Digging into Google Earth," 179.

26. Crutcher and Zook, 34.

About The Authors

Kristen Aguanno is a fourth year Film and Media Studies/Environmental Studies double major. She is very involved in politics and hopes to pursue a career in media and telecommunications policy. She has been a Netflix subscriber for 3 years.

Paula Ersly is a second year Film & Media Studies and Literature double major at UCSB. When she's not squandering her time watching reruns of "Friends" and eating peanut butter straight from the jar she writes short stories, scripts, and other miscellany. This spring she was awarded the Keith E. Vineyard Short Story Scholarship and next year she will be frolicking with the leprechauns around Trinity College, Dublin, pursuing her majors in a year-long study abroad program. Ideally she would like to make a future out of writing, reading, and watching things, but at the very least she hopes to avoid moving back into her parents' basement.

Roslyn M. Hernandez is a fourth year Film and Media Studies/Spanish double major, with a minor in Art History with an Architecture emphasis. As a California native she has enjoyed her time at UCSB. Her hobbies include reading, writing, photography, comics and art. She will miss the sleepless nights dedicated to the academic study and writing of film theory and those spent with her fellow independent-filmmakers. She will be taking a break from filmmaking while teaching abroad in South Korea, but hopes to one day be a costume designer for films, a film critic, and/or a media scholar.

Nadia Ismail is a fourth-year English and film & media studies double major from Alta Loma, California. When not writing in third person, she enjoys many things, including reading, writing (of course) and watching films. She hopes to attend graduate school for film theory and contribute something of value to the academic world. She also wishes to thank her friends and family for their consistent support and encouragement.

Sean Olenick is a graduating senior double majoring in film and media studies and psychology. He's a so-cal kid from Tarzana, California who enjoys playing sports, surfing, and having political debates with his friends. He is most interested in screenwriting and hopes to one day write for The Daily Show. Sean would like to thank his parents, Mike and Liz, for their love, support, and more love.

Tony Ung is a fourth year Film and Media Studies major at UCSB. Originally born and raised in Long Beach, CA, Tony fell in love with filmmaking at a young age when he began using his parents' video camera to make movies and has been making movies ever since. Influenced by the works of Wes Anderson, Michel Gondry, and Spike Jonze, Tony aspires to become a music video director and eventually a writer and director of feature films. Outside of filmmaking, Tony enjoys surfing and going to music shows.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special Thanks to the following for contributing their time, effort, financial support, and/or for inspiring the publication of this journal:

Joe Palladino, Maria Corrigan, Dana Welch,
Lisa Parks, Dick Hebdige, Flora Furlong,
Constance Penley, Anna Brusutti,
everyone who submitted a paper for
consideration in this year's journal,
and all the faculty and staff who helped inspire this writing.

A Very Special Thanks to:

The Office of Student Life (OSL), Associated Students (AS),
The Alternative Copy Shop, Hollywood Book and Poster,
Larry Edmunds Bookshop, The Film and Media Studies Department,
Kerr Hall Digitial Editing Lab, and Amoeba Music.

The Staff also wishes to thank all of their beloved family and friends for all their support.