

In recent years, thinking about television has been dominated by a focus on the problem of series. This perspective, albeit relevant, sometimes fails to register that television (especially broadcast television) structures the everyday lives of a huge part of the population not so much by providing experiences of binge-viewing so-called ‘quality television’ (a highly problematic concept). Instead, television offers opportunities for regular daytime activities and provides an aesthetic experience that is based on the mundane, the ordinary and the rhythms of everyday life.

These kind of experiences often remain under the radar of intellectual, academic viewers and scholars, yet they largely contribute to the cultural and social significance of television as a whole.

I am interested in television magazines and chat show programmes – programmes like, in the UK, *the One Show* (BBC One,), but less from a journalistic point of view than from an aesthetic one. In my talk, I refer to a particular German programme, the *NDR Nordmagazin*. Highly successful in terms of ratings, this weekday topical magazine targets a regional audience in the north-east of Germany, offering colourful and light-hearted stories, regional news, advice, lifestyle segments and in-studio presenting. The idea that I would like to present and to discuss in my conference paper is that this and similar programmes do not gain their appeal primarily from the novelty value of what is being presented, but are rather effective in establishing an aesthetic experience that gives structure to the ordinary and familiar of everyday life. In this respect, I am following up on reflections that can be found, for example, in the work of Stanley Cavell. However, as I intend to show, the experience that daytime programmes establish is a deeply class-based one. Therefore, the fact that these programmes usually tend to be overlooked by television studies in recent years turns out to be hardly a coincidence, but an expression of deeper power relations and value judgements in academia.

I am an Assistant Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the Department of Theatre, Film and Media Studies at the University of Vienna. My main research interests are aesthetics, theory and politics of media as well as capitalism and class.

Roundtable 3 Television and Sustainability

With Steve Smith, Picture Zero Productions, Marta Lobera-Mármol and Manel Jiménez-Morales, chair: Perelandra Beedles

Climate change is becoming an ever-increasingly important topic that needs urgent attention by the earth's population. This roundtable reflects on and discusses what role television plays in creating sustainable futures – both in terms of changes to production practices but also as a crucial communicator of the need to act.

Monday, 11 July,

Panel 14: Adaptation, continuities and changes to TV

The Future of Dickens Adaptations? Marginalised Voices and Generic Innovation

Will Stanford Abbiss, Victoria University of Wellington

Within the explosion of scripted content being produced in the 'peak TV' era, literary adaptations have expanded their formal and conceptual ambitions. In 2022, the debuts of *House of the Dragon* (HBO) – a prequel to *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-19) – and *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* (Amazon) demonstrate the economic value of dramas that adopt the further exploration of a literary world as their central premise. These auxiliary adaptations allow the brands owned by HBO and Amazon to compete with the equivalent extension of the *Star Wars* and Marvel properties since the launch of Disney+ in 2019 (Hogg, 2021: 3). They also present an artistic opportunity; as Shannon Wells-Lassagne (2017: 32-4) establishes, long-form adaptations are required to invent beyond their source material to provide sustainable concepts. The increase of equivalent projects in high-end literary adaptation, as opposed to the sitcoms Wells-Lassagne focuses on, represents a significant development, through which marginalised identities and cultures can be given voice. Perhaps the best demonstration of this to date is *Watchmen* (HBO, 2019), a sequel to the comic book series of the same name, which pursues a revisionist reading against the cultural history of US race relations from the 1921 Tulsa massacre onwards (Johnson, 2020; Kennedy-Karpat, 2020; McLean, 2022).

This paper asks if such a revisionist trend can be beneficial in a more traditional arena: that of the BBC Dickens adaptation. It examines the identities explored by the three major adaptations of the last decade, a period where straightforward screen versions have not been extant: *Dickensian* (BBC, 2015-16), *A Christmas Carol* (BBC/FX, 2019), and *Dodger* (BBC, 2022). *Dickensian* and *Dodger* pursue prequel narratives, of multiple Dickens novels in the former case, and of *Oliver Twist* in the latter. While *A Christmas Carol* does directly adapt the Dickens novella of the same name, it also takes a revisionist look at the novel's characters through extended flashback sequences. The paper will investigate the marginalised voices promoted

through these revisionist adaptations, including the incorporation of female subjectivity and ethnic diversity in the series' casting.

Genre will also be considered through the paper's analysis. While *Dickensian* consciously adopts a soap opera format, with the intention of achieving a long-term presence in the BBC One schedule, *Dodger* is made primarily for the young audience of the CBBC channel and skews towards comedy. These generic considerations will be shown to present both opportunities and hindrances to their projects of adaptation, and as television dramas in general. As the first of multiple projected Dickens adaptations to be written by Steven Knight, *A Christmas Carol*'s social realist approach establishes conventions that may be furthered in future works, potentially of Dickens novels that are themselves more expansive and less well known. The multiple source novels of *Dickensian* also means it adapts the same characters as both *A Christmas Carol* and *Dodger*, allowing a direct comparison of their generic approaches to be conducted.

Will Stanford Abbiss recently graduated with a PhD from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. His research focuses on representations of nationhood in long-form television drama, including the status of public service television in the twenty-first century. His doctoral study established a post-heritage critical framework, through which British period drama productions from the 2010s were analysed. A monograph arising from this research, published as part of Routledge's 'Advances in Television Studies' series, is forthcoming. His future research will further consider international and contemporary-set productions, applying his findings on the depictions of cultural identity to a broader spectrum of television drama.

Adaptation, television, and aesthetics

Christina Wilkins, University of Birmingham

Television adaptations are not new; notably, in the era of streaming, there have been even more adaptations, remakes, reboots, and reimaginings of texts both televisual and not. Historically, television adaptations have focused on the literary adaptation, producing period pieces which may be seen to lend an air of cultural value. However, within the field of television studies more generally, and specifically, television aesthetics, there is an understanding that specific frameworks are needed to understand programming. We must be aware that 'television' is a broad term: and arguably, this is a problem for the field of adaptations. Often the discussion of television adaptations revolves around medium specificity, which, whilst it engages with

elements of televisuality that are sometimes neglected in the study of television texts, fails to approach the broader questions of hierarchy and intertextuality that enable a deeper reading of an adaptation. We might consider Jaramillo's discussion of television and the cinematic, wherein she argues that 'Television is implicated in bombarding the viewer with hyperstylisation or no style at all while, in special spaces, it imitates another medium of higher esteem' (71). I want to use this position of imitation and esteem to think about the recent Netflix series *Archive 81*. As an adaptation of a podcast, the series offers something different to the usual adaptation approach. Variousy categorised as 'melodrama' and 'horror' by critics, the series uses elements of form and style from cinema, television, and the podcast it is adapted from. This results in a mix of categories that ask the viewer to think outside the medium, and as this paper argues, is the central attraction of the series. It deliberately presents itself as intertextual, borrowing from a range of references, mediums (including found footage), and time periods (jumping between the 90s and the present) to create a layered story. This, I believe, is becoming more commonplace as streaming services look to garner more niche audiences through reference to particular cultural moments. By taking the format of television, yet interweaving these other elements, *Archive 81* asks us to read simultaneously on several levels whilst being aware of the 'excess' of televisuality. It self-consciously uses these elements of the televisual and rather than imitating, borrows from other mediums and styles not for 'esteem' but to engage the viewer in a reflexive thinking about medium. In doing so, it asks broader questions about how we engage with texts in culture and the values we ascribe to them. This, arguably, has important implications for the field of both adaptations and television aesthetics.

Christina Wilkins is an early career researcher in the areas of film, television, and literature. Her particular focus is adaptation studies, and she has predominantly written about contemporary television adaptations. Her research interests lie in memory, identity, and the value of cultural narratives.

Netflix, Dark Fantastic Genres and Intergenerational Viewing

Dr Diana Sandars, University of Melbourne Australia,

Dr Jessica Balanzategui, Swinburne University of Technology Australia

and Dr Djoyimi Baker, RMIT University Australia

While the streaming service landscape is becoming increasingly crowded and competitive, Netflix persists as the dominant and most culturally influential subscription video on demand

(SVOD) service. Netflix's influence includes popularising the SVOD "binge-watch" (Jenner, 2020), the prioritisation of "Original" and exclusive rather than licensed content (Lobato 2018), and algorithmically "personalised" viewing recommendations (Van Esler, 2020), all domains that have received careful scholarly attention. One key element of Netflix's strategy and influence that has not yet been adequately addressed, however, is its new approach to "family television". Attempting to expand its core territory, in 2016, Netflix announced a new, concerted effort to attract families through their Original content (Sarandos cited in Flint, 2016). Despite the success of this strategy, the way SVODs like Netflix address the family audience - via content acquisition, distribution, and paratextual means - is a relatively under-theorised area of television studies. Our research project addresses this area of neglect, examining the shifting notion of 'family viewing' in the streaming era, in particular dark family fantasy content on Netflix, which troubles cultural expectations around child-appropriate "family" content that have been shaped by the legacy media forms of broadcast television and film.

The streaming era constitutes a significant shift in the discursive practices around both genre and audience, through interface algorithms and genre catalogue categories. Within this media ecology, Netflix has developed a range of darker science-fiction, horror and fantasy television programs for families. Although presented under their "Family Watch Together TV" label in the catalogue, which sounds like a recommendation around audience suitability and age, Netflix's cycle of family telefantasy actually appears in the Netflix catalogue under "genres." Netflix often omits or downplays the more traditional telefantasy genre labels of horror, fantasy and science fiction for these programs, preferring to highlight the type of audience they hope to attract. This attempt to avoid the moral panic historically associated with "family" and intergenerational programming within these television genres has instead fuelled controversies around Netflix's family content and ratings, leading Mike Hastings, director of enhanced content, to acknowledge: "We understand that every family is different and that parents have differing perspectives on what they feel is appropriate to watch at different ages."

This paper explores how Netflix is reconstituting the notion of family and family viewing in its programming, distribution, and marketing choices around the often-contested genre terrain of telefantasy. Through social media and empirical research, we compare Netflix's model of the family with the way Netflix audiences think about family viewing in the contemporary streaming era. As we highlight, Netflix's construction of family viewing both builds on and challenges previous television and film models, illuminating in new ways some crucial key continuities and distinctions between these legacy media forms and SVOD platforms.

Diana Sandars is a scholar in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Diana has a research focus on the child in, and subject of, screen media. Jessica Balanzategui is a Senior Lecturer in Cinema and Screen Studies at Swinburne University of Technology. Her research includes screen genres across film; television and digital media for and about children; and horror and Gothic media. Djoymi Baker is Lecturer in Cinema Studies at RMIT University, and formerly worked in the Australian television industry. She has published work on television genres, television stardom, and children's television history.

Panel 15: TV and Seriality

Binging the Analysis or Analysing the Binge: Serial Televisual Narrative Analysis Model as A Method for Analysing Narrative Structure in Television Shows

Orcun Can, Coventry University

Television Studies have been using different textual analysis methods for decades. Whether these methods look at the visual language or the storytelling elements, analytical methods adopted from Narratology and Film Studies are usually applied to single units: single frames, scenes or episodes. There may be comparative analysis of different episodes but it is hard to find a systematic textual analysis of a full season or all episodes of a television show.

The Serial Televisual Narrative Analysis (STNA) Model breaks down episodes of a TV show in terms of its narrative components and displays them in a linear timeline whenever they appear in the show. The model uses Seymour Chatman's elements of narrative theory, more specifically elements that make up the form of content in a narrative (1980, pp. 19-26). These elements: characters, settings, actions and happenings, are listed down vertically on a datasheet. The timeline of consecutive episodes is listed horizontally. The timeline is divided into story beats and a new story beat is added whenever something happens in the narrative that changes the story's course (Newman, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2010). Any narrative component that appears in any given beat is marked on the datasheet. This results in the narrative form of the TV show being translated into a dataset that can pinpoint where any of the elements that comprise the form of content appear.

Using examples of the STNA Model in use, this paper aims to introduce the method's versatility in analysing large datasets of narrative in serial television.

Orcun Can is a writer and a lecturer at Coventry University, currently writing up his PhD at King's College London, Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries. His research focuses on Netflix Originals' narrative forms. Utilising a formal analytical tool, the STNA Model, Can's research maps out different narrative possibilities SVOD platforms facilitate.

To Be Continued...on the Football Pitch: Lionel Messi, Seriality, and Sentimental Viewer Engagement with Non-Fictional Television Characters

Oliver Kroener, Independent Media Scholar

The relationship between television viewers and characters from serialised 'quality' TV dramas has attracted substantial academic attention in recent years. In contrast, not much research has been undertaken on the ways in which viewers relate to characters from television sports programmes on an emotional level—despite the fact that sports are among the most watched types of television. This paper argues that contemporary television sports frequently adopt elements of serial narration to intensify the audience's emotional engagement with the characters that are featured on them. Throughout this paper, I will use football star Lionel Messi—one of the most popular professional footballers in the history of the sport—as my main case study to trace how seriality and sentimentality increasingly shape viewer engagement with non-fictional television characters. Referring to prior studies on television sports and affect (e.g., Boyle and O'Connor 1993; Whannel 1992), I am going to begin this paper with an examination of the types of emotional responses that sports programmes typically evoke in the audience. I will then investigate Messi's recent transfer from FC Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain—which was widely reported in the media as playing out like a soap opera—in relation to sentimentality and seriality. My analysis in this article fills a gap in the current academic discourse on seriality, which is still dominated by fictional genres, while also offering a new approach to study the impact of sentimentality on contemporary popular culture.

Oliver Kroener is an independent media scholar from Berlin, Germany. His main research interests are television characters, seriality, and viewer engagement. Most recently, his work on long-term viewer engagement with animated television characters has been featured in *Cognition, Emotion, and Aesthetics in Contemporary Serial Television* (Routledge, 2021).

Celebrating diversity or a token gesture? Soap operas and identity-focused 'special episodes'.

Despite being one of the most enduring television formats, soaps have received little academic attention when compared to other television genres and could be considered a form of ‘invisible’ television (Geraghty, 2010). This ‘invisibility’ often extends to the wider media landscape, with their routine scheduling rarely marking them out for the attention in entertainment media, a far cry from the 80s and 90s where soap stars regularly appeared on magazine front pages and they were frequently topped TV ratings. They don’t have a presence on large streaming platforms like Netflix or Amazon Prime (save a handful of episodes on BritBox). And whilst they still attract a loyal audience, viewing figures are a fraction of what they were, with several under threat of cancellation. Soaps therefore have to find ways of attracting attention. One strategy they routinely employ is the ‘special episode’. These episodes break from the usual format or structure in different ways - adopting a unique filming style, using flashbacks or ‘flash-forwards’, hosting large celebrations, staging huge stunts, or focusing solely on one, two or three characters. Special episodes introduce new characters, mark the exits of others, or the beginning/end of key storylines. However, they are most often utilised for celebrations such as milestone anniversaries, or key calendar events such as Christmas, New Year and Halloween. (Bell and Deller, 2016; Hills, 2017). In recent years, several soaps have extended the reach of the ‘special episode’ format to mark particular occasions in the calendar such as International Women’s and Men’s Days, World Mental Health Day and Pride, as part of initiatives such as Channel 4’s ‘Black to Front’ day which saw the network replace its regular staff roster with black talent, to celebrate a non-Christian/secular festival (e.g. Lunar New Year, Diwali), or to raise awareness of a particular issue such as domestic violence or suicide.

These special episodes tie into soaps’ long tradition of highlighting social issues and representing diversity. Soaps have delivered television milestones including the first same sex kisses on UK television and the first same sex wedding on Australian TV. The large size of the casts and their settings in local communities lend themselves to utilising a diverse range of actors – although there have also been frequent criticisms of under-representation of different groups across their history as well as cast members speaking of on-set experiences of discrimination.

In this paper, I discuss the phenomenon of the identity-focused special episode by analysing examples of the phenomenon from across the genre. Whilst these special episodes have garnered much-needed publicity, and often praise, they are often only one-offs rather than

annual fixtures in the calendar like Christmas and Halloween. To what extent, then, do these episodes signify an ongoing commitment on behalf of soaps to take representation seriously, and to what extent are they a token gesture to garner some positive publicity?

Ruth Deller is a Reader in Media & Communication at Sheffield Hallam University, UK, where she is also Ethics Chair for the Culture & Creativity Research Institute. She has published widely on topics including social media, celebrity, soap opera, reality television, gender, religion, fan and audience studies and ethics in research and practice. She is on the editorial board of *Celebrity Studies* journal and has also co-guest edited special issues of *Sexualities* and the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Panel 16: TV - What TV?

What are we teaching when we're teaching Television Studies?

Katie Moylan, University of Leicester

The persistent importance of television's reach was movingly described by Lynne Joyrich during 2020's first lockdown, when she described how 'TV and screen media both contain and connect, dividing us demographically, defining us by what we watch, keeping us in media bubbles, yet also helping us to feel a part of a community even when — or exactly as — we are physically separated' (Joyrich 2020).

This deep (if shifting) social and cultural reliance on what Joyrich terms an 'expanded televisuality' (2020) during the pandemic has necessarily been reinforced for many students, and shapes current television studies pedagogy in turn. COVID and political and cultural responses to it have sharpened focus on societal priorities which inform television content from news to government briefings to programmes binge-watched for comfort. This sharpened awareness is surely shared by our students. This paper consequently argues for the pedagogical necessity of *meeting students where they live* for teaching Television Studies. In particular, to incorporate recognition of their diverse experiences and subjectivities, and the ways these shape how they each negotiate the cultural form that is television, even as television itself mediates these crisis times in culturally and regionally specific ways.

This paper draws on my pedagogical practice in teaching Television Studies at the University of Leicester, particularly on ways I have altered and amended my approaches to better meet students where they live, from my own transcultural standpoint and set of viewing practices and preferences. I have found—through seminar discussion and through a Reflective Portfolio

assessment—that each year’s cohort are watching a wide and deep variety of shows and series on different platforms for diverse reasons. This recognition of diverse and diffuse viewing practices emerging from an ‘expanded televisuality’ in which YouTube channel content sits alongside subscription streaming sites and PSB programming, informs and shapes how we discuss each week’s topic and illustrative content from a variety of standpoints. Sara Ahmed reminds us that ‘those of us who arrive in an academy that was not shaped for or by us bring knowledges, as well as worlds, that would not otherwise be here’ (Ahmed 2017: 10). These diverse perspectives illuminate and expand our collective understanding in class of what exactly is happening on screen and to us, in each week’s screening and discussion. In turn, this reflexivity allows us to engage more thoroughly in what Paolo Freire calls ‘problem-posing education’ foregrounding active engagement with ‘the problems of human beings in their relations with the world’ (Freire 1993: 52). I suggest in this paper that Television Studies enables space for us to critically consider how television variously mediates these societal problems, via reflexive consideration of television content deploying concepts such as access, agency, cultural capital, media accountability and subjectivity.

Katie Moylan is a settler scholar and Associate Professor in Media at the University of Leicester. Her research encompasses community radio and Indigenous radio practices, critical pedagogy and television's aesthetic capacities for critique.

The Pervasiveness of Outliers: Towards a long History of CCTV

Anne-Katrin Weber, University of Basel

Today, closed-circuit images are everywhere: we use them for our conference calls and Zoom teachings, for telemedicine consultations and video surveillance of properties and babies. Less visible but no less impactful are close-circuits for facial recognition, policing and drone warfare: the real-time view of distant things and people through closed-circuits is part of our digital societies. However, despite their pervasive nature, the multiform closed-circuits have received little scholarly attention, and their history is virtually forgotten today.

Distributed under Industrial Television and CCTV (for closed-circuit television), the closed-circuit systems were developed from the 1940s on in Europe and the USA mainly by enterprises active in televisual R&D (i.e., RCA, Grundig, and many more). In their most basic organization, they connected a camera with a monitor by cable; more sophisticated designs allowed for the video recording of content or bi-directional conversation. While CCTV today

stands as a synonym of the surveillance camera, its historical applications were at least as heterogeneous as digital closed-circuits, and used on factory floors and in nuclear plants, in hospitals and schools. As a tool for control, surveillance, command, and remote observation, the closed-circuit system would fit in almost every non-domestic space.

Exploring the early years of CCTV from a transnational perspective and drawing upon archival research in several countries, I argue that this other form of televisuality should be understood as a useful medium, which develops in parallel to, and concomitant with broadcasting TV. For almost three decades, film historians have engaged in a lively discussion on the role, functions, and publics of useful, non-theatrical or orphan film, broadly defined as “a body of films and technologies that perform tasks and serve as instruments” (Acland and Wasson 2011, 3). Shifting attention away from the feature film and the cinema as entertainment or art, this scholarship investigates industrial, military, educational, and medical images and suggests new analytical frameworks to apprehend a quantitatively highly significant but longtime neglected strand of cinematographic production. As I show in my paper, useful film as an analytical and historiographical category is inspiring for exploring those televisual “outliers”, which have, like CCTV, not received enough scholarly attention.

Anne-Katrin Weber is a television historian with a special interest in non-institutional televisual uses and technologies. She holds a PhD from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, and is currently a NOMIS Fellow at eikones. Centre for the Theory and History of the Image (University of Basel). Her current project analyses CCTV within military and industrial contexts, and explores the transnational history of television’s role in processes of surveillance, automation, and control from the 1940s to the 1990s. Her first monograph *Television before TV. New Media and Exhibition Culture in Europe and the USA, 1928-1939* is forthcoming from Amsterdam University Press.

Wednesday, 13 July

Panel 17: Gender and Migration in Television

Representation of Gender and Migration in Danish Television Drama: Asymmetrical Agency in *When the Dust Settles*

Susanne Eichner, Filmuniversitaet Konrad Wolff, Potsdam

With the international success and critical acclaim of *Forbrydelsen* (DR 2007–2012), *Borgen* (DR 2010–2022) and *Bron/Broen* (SVT/DR 2010–2018), Danish television drama series have

become a worldwide success, selling in numerous locations across the globe, winning the hearts of audiences with their depiction of “exotic” Scandinavian darkness and Nordic Noir (Chow et al., 2020; Eichner, 2020; Eichner & Mikos, 2016; Jacobsen & Jensen, 2020; Hansen & Waade, 2017). One of the reasons for this success are the lead characters: all three examples include strong female protagonists, to which audiences across the world could relate despite their lack of cultural proximity to the distinct Scandinavian setting and storyworlds (Eichner, 2020). Yet, although the series are applauded for their gender representations and strong female leads, which appeal to foreign audiences close by and far away, Stougaard-Nielsen (2016) points out that the reason for the success of Danish television drama series is also based on the fact that they are “accessibly different” to white audiences outside Denmark, with little room for ethnic diversity and a “celebration of subdued whiteness” (p. 9). In a nutshell, they show a homogeneous, white society, yet they offer exotic “Scandinavianess”. This stages the point of departure for a case study, analysing the Danish drama series *When the Dust Settles* (Når støvet har lagt sig, DR, 2020) to scrutinise diversity and inclusion in this Danish drama series, as they play out asymmetrically at the intersection of gender and migration and to contextualise it in the public service mandate and responsibility as formal expressions of the societal discourse. Drawing on seminal and contemporary approaches and studies within the field of gender studies, migration studies and intersectionality, the analysis employs an analytical model that considers representation not only on the screen, but also behind the screen: Representation is understood as both depicting and representing, and allowing access, agency and voice. Therefore, I will also consider how representation plays out behind the screen – at the levels of production, decision-making and regulation – and analyse the actual media text and its on-screen representations, business reports, insights from trade press and general media coverage, and the official documents and contracts that regulate the media in Denmark.

The study thus contributes to a relatively understudied field and investigates questions and various layers of representation: visibility, accessibility, voice and agency, and the underlying conditions that may be traced to behind the scenes and to the regulative level.

Susanne Eichner is an Associate Professor in Media Studies, co-director of the Centre for Transnational Media Research, co-director of the research program Cultural Transformations and coordinator of the BA Media Studies. She employs a cross-media approach focusing on reception aesthetics and audience research, media sociology, production ecology and popular (serial) culture. Since 2016 she has been in the management teams of the Television Studies section of ECREA and of the section Mediated Communication, Public Opinion and Society

of the IAMCR. Her publications include the books: *Agency and Media Reception* (monography, Springer, 2014), *Transnationale Serienkultur* (co-editor, Springer, 2013) and *Fernsehen: Europäische Perspektiven* (co-editor, UVK, 2014).

Migration and Conflict: The Liminal Space of Espionage Drama in a European Context

David Levente Palatinus, University of Ruzomberok / Technical University of Liberec

This paper attempts to reposition the political thriller within a European context, with regard to migrating patterns of Anthropocene television that range from climate awareness to migration to digital identities and hybrid warfare. Framed within the more conventional generic patterns of espionage drama, *Occupied* (TV2, 2015-2020), *Thin Ice* (C More/TV4/Yellow Bird, 2020), and *Berlin Station* (Epix, 2016-2019) embody narratives of the territorialization of identities and offer cultural commentary on ‘violent borders’.

My argument is based on the understanding that the attacks of September 11, 2001, and especially the most recent invasion of Ukraine, changed the ways we think about war, security, violence, territory. As a consequence, the increasing challenge to the concepts of the nation-state (and by extension, of self and identity, territory, the inside and the outside), Derrida argues (*Rogues*, 2005), are paralleled by a new form of violence perpetuating itself - one that discloses specific autoimmune practices of political power reminiscent of the era of the Cold War. Espionage, migration and the criminalization of non-domestic identities have become key players in contemporary political discourse (Nail, 2006). At the same time, the correlation between environmentalism, migration, and the emergence of populist agendas in a number of European countries also necessitates a radical rethinking of issues ranging from politics of inclusion to social mobility to violent borders (cf. Sheller 2018, Mann and Wainwright 2017, Jones 2017). The spy, situated by default in the fold of the inside and the outside, has become the expression of ‘the deep sense of disorientation and alienation’ that characterizes 21st century (migrant) identities (Edgerton, 2021).

Occupied, *Thin Ice*, and *Berlin Station* provide a somewhat underexplored example of practice for the interrelation of the migrant narrative patterns of (US-style) espionage drama, conceptualizations of sovereignty, and the situatedness of migrant (understood as mobile) identities in a European context. In *Berlin Station* CIA operatives are pictured outside of their usual context, literally as a foreign body, as an uncanny reversal of the terrorist cell, operating in Berlin. In *Occupied* and *Thin Ice*, progressive environmental concerns are inexorably

linked to a subversion of long-established economic interests and territorial claims. This paper will argue that these drama series situate clandestine operations in the liminal space of the threshold, both in an inside and an outside, yet again mobilizing the extimacy (Miller, 2008) of the foreign within the (intimacy of the) domestic, constantly probing boundaries of sovereignty (cf. Derrida in *Beast and the Sovereign*, 2009; Nail in *Theory of the Border*, 2016). The narrative context of each series offers material for considerations of migrant identities - primarily in terms of the mobility of operatives across borders, across identities, but also in regards to the mobility of the border itself (cf. Nail, 2006). I will also examine how formulaic patterns of genre fiction highlight the ways popular media is haunted by the spectre of political conflicts (like the events in Crimea in 2014).

David Levente Palatinus is Senior Lecturer in Digital Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Ruzomberok (Slovakia), and the Technical University of Liberec (Czech Republic). His research moves between and across visual studies, digital media, and cultural theory. He has worked and written on violence in serial culture, autoimmunity and war, and digital subjectivity in the Anthropocene. He is co-editor of the ECREA section of *Critical Studies in Television*. He is co-editor of the volumes *Crime and Detection in the Age of Electronic Reproduction* (2018, Americana Ebooks), and (with Maurizio Ascari and Serena Baesi) of *Gothic Metamorphoses across the Centuries: Contexts, Legacies, Media*. Peter Lang, 2020. He is founder of the Anthropocene Media Lab at the University of Ruzomberok.

‘The Righteous, They Get Rewarded – The Wicked, They Get Punished’: Masculinity, Manipulation and Misogyny in Hulu’s *Pam & Tommy* (2022).

Daisy Richards, Nottingham Trent University

This paper will explore Hulu’s 2022 mini-series *Pam & Tommy* in order to argue that women are still subject to a specific mode of mediated erasure even in the contemporary era of so-called ‘feminist “quality” television’ (see Imre, 2009; Havas, 2022). “Quality” television itself is a cultural concept with a complex and controversial history that this paper argues is inherently gendered. In a rapidly changing socio-political climate, with sexism currently occupying an important space within the public agenda worldwide, the role that television plays

in perpetuating and subverting misogynistic attitudes must be ascertained, precisely because of the powerful nature of the medium of television itself. *Pam & Tommy* has been promoted as offering a ‘feminist statement’ (Mitchell, 2022) aimed at centring the experiences of Pamela Anderson and then-husband Tommy Lee in relation to the non-consensual publication of their sex tape in 1995. As Davies argues, the series is part of a recent media effort to ‘...reclaim a rarefied group of famous women — nearly all of them white, many of them beautiful and blonde — that the mass media made mincemeat of in the ‘80s and ‘90s...paint[ing] their subjects as misunderstood feminist icons, offering a theoretically more progressive vision of history, one that illuminates and vindicates mistreated women whose names and stories are already familiar to viewers’ (2022). Despite these efforts, *Pam & Tommy* positions itself as a narrative focused on men. Barely featured in the first episode, the series presents the privacy of Pamela Anderson (played by Lily James) as merely collateral damage in a war of masculinities, with the focus of the programme centred on Tommy Lee (played by Sebastian Stan) and Rand Gauthier (the revenge-motivated carpenter turned tape thief, played by Seth Rogen). As Berman states, the programme is ‘at its worst when paying lip service to feminism’ (2022). This paper will employ close textual analysis to explore these ideas in more detail, arguing that *Pam & Tommy* knowingly brandishes postfeminist discourses of empowerment in order to further exploit and marginalise the central women involved in the tape’s creation, despite her repeated statements regarding the harm it caused to her, and her silence in relation to the programme’s release (Dhir and McGlynn, 2022).

Daisy Richards is a Lecturer in Media and Communications at Nottingham Trent University and is currently undertaking her PhD after having received both her MA and BA from the University of Warwick in 2018 and 2016, respectively. Her research focuses on the representation of female bodies on television, and specifically engages with the relationship between "quality" programming and depictions of sexual violence against women on-screen. She is the author of several articles relating to the coverage of violence against women as presented by news media platforms, and her recent publications include “Normalising Sexualised Violence in Rock Music”. Her forthcoming work includes an article on fat female bodies on television, and a piece on representations of women’s bodies in Hulu’s *Shrill* (2019 – 2021). Outside of academia, Daisy enjoys breakfast food, and her kitten called Meatball.

Transformation of the codes of in/authenticity and claims to the real throughout the seasons of *Survivor Turkey*

Gökçe Baydar Çavdar, Hacettepe University, Faculty of Communication

Transformation of the codes of in/authenticity and claims to the real throughout the seasons of *Survivor Turkey* *Survivor* and reality-game docs have been studied across many countries in many contexts regarding surveillance, emotional labor, and the relationship between reality and performance. However, the academic study on the distinct position of Acun Ilıcalı as the presenter-producer-broadcaster of *Survivor* and the Turkish example remained understudied and overlooked both at the national and international level. As the longest-running reality-game doc program in the Turkish TV landscape, *Survivor* also marked the turning point in Ilıcalı's career to become an exceptional entertainment media mogul. Being one of the *Survivor* presenters and later the producer since the mid-2010s, and the broadcaster (of the TV8 channel) since 2014, he is actively involved in the localizing of *Survivor*: preferred narrative strategies, paratextual elements, casting, and voting system. Since he still continues to present the games and tribal councils, his involvement makes it crucial to consider his symbolic power in terms of the ongoing discourse within the program.

The channel TV8 started airing derivative programs of *Survivor* like *Survivor Panorama* or *Survivor Ekstra*, where mostly reality moments of *Survivor* were discussed, and backstage information was given. As of now, *Survivor* and its derivative programs cover about 10 hours of TV8's daily broadcast stream. This symbolic interaction between *Survivor* and its derivative programs established continuity between *Survivor* and the channel and also between the production company (AcunMedya) and Acun Ilıcalı. Considering that the contestants, Ilıcalı, commentators, and the audience produce the discourse together, I have tried to illustrate certain transformations in terms of the narrative and discourse of *Survivor Turkey* since its beginning. I argue that the first dimension of this transformation is the emergence of "codes of in/authenticity," recognized and expressed especially among the contestants: due to the fact that a pattern emerged considering the finalists or winners throughout the seasons, the performances of the self resembling the finalists' of former seasons (macho and/or the outlier) were quickly named as fake in the last four seasons. These accusations indirectly reaffirm the claims to authentic (selves and feelings), which is the core ideal of reality TV. Secondly, I claim that a particular shift in the reality-entertainment discourse took place, primarily through

Ilıcılı's constant emphasizing the importance of the daily lives of the contestants and privileging the 'outside-reality' over the '*Survivor*-reality' in the last four seasons.

Gökçe Baydar Çavdar is a research assistant in the Faculty of Communication at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey. She received her Ph.D. degree in 2019 from Ankara University, with a thesis focusing on popular religious and spiritual self-help books. Her research interests include everyday life, middle-class, and contemporary popular culture.

Production dynamics in South Indian Soap operas : The case of Tamil Television Industry

Dr. D. Punitha, Department of Communication, Women's Christian College, Chennai, India

Soap operas have been the mainstay of the General Entertainment channels for long. Most of the studies dealing with Television engage in representation and its impact on audiences. Not many studies focus on the Production dynamics. Though a borrowed genre, soaps in India have imbibed the native elements. Even while sticking to a formula they have to differentiate with each new soap. The paper proposes to look into the process of production in the south Indian language - Tamil Television Industry. Pandemic and the lockdown and brought out the surprising behaviour in the audience. *Ramayana* and *Mahabaratham* are two epics in India which are quite popular with the audience. When It was first released in the 80s it had a huge popularity as Doordarshan was the only official broadcaster. The re-run during the pandemic had a surprisingly high viewership. In the age of superheroes and outstanding special effects and animation, how mythological serials command such a viewership is a point of discussion. Media managers believe this could be because of the inability to generate fresh content.

The paper proposes to bring out the dynamics of the production, degradation of the creative labour, industry politics interaction and creative personnel's response to viewership ratings. The focus will also be on the post pandemic world. Prime time soaps will be discussed for the content and in depth interviews will be conducted with producers, directors and the media planners and marketers to find out the changing preferences of the audiences, industry level analysis will be done for the proposed paper.

Dr.Punitha D is the Head and Associate Professor of the Post Graduate Department of Communication at the Women's Christian College in Chennai. She has twenty-three years of teaching experience as well as three years of industry experience. Her doctoral thesis is on the

Political economy of Entertainment Television. She has been part of the curriculum revision committee for Journalism and Communication. Nominated by the University of Madras, she is a member of the Board of Studies in various colleges in the city. She has published chapters in books and presented papers in many national and international seminars and conferences. Email id: punithawcc@gmail.com or punitha@wcc.edu.in

“Say Goodbye to Hollywood”: The Historical and Industrial Precedents of the 2021 Oscars Telecast

Laura C. Brown & Elizabeth Walters, The University of Texas at Austin & Boston University

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and ABC to radically rethink their annual Oscar telecast. With travel rendered impossible, the show had to transcend its usual Hollywood confines, adding (mostly) live segments of nominees, award introductions, and acceptance speeches from London, Sydney, Paris, Seoul, and beyond. The show’s producers situated the ceremony as both a COVID-necessitated outlier and an opportunity for innovation; however, despite the producers’ claims that this Oscar telecast would be uncharacteristically “cinematic”—“like you’re watching a movie”—the event’s format was made possible by the simultaneity of live television. Further, what seemed like an anomaly was in fact a return to the telecast’s roots.

Held in 1953, the first Oscar telecast switched between simultaneous ceremonies in Hollywood and New York City, a format that both allowed Broadway-based nominees to participate in the ceremony traditionally based in Los Angeles, and underscored the power of television to collapse geographical boundaries through a live telecast. The bicoastal telecast continued until 1958, when the Academy consolidated it back into one ceremony, as it was presented during its original radio broadcasts. This singular ceremony format would become the blueprint for Oscar telecasts for the next six decades, with the show beamed worldwide live from a single, star-filled theater in Hollywood, a self-constructed cultural landmark around which a global audience annually converged.

In this paper, we historicize the seemingly anomalous 2021 Oscar telecast by putting it into conversation with the bicoastal Oscar telecasts of the 1950s. By emphasizing the Oscar telecasts as our site of study through an analysis of historical and contemporary trade publications and ceremony footage, we interrogate the supposed novelty of the 2021 ceremony’s format and complicate producers’ claims that the ceremony was “not going to be like anything that’s been done before.” Through this case study, we make a larger argument

that artifacts situated as outliers—whether by necessity, promotion, or both—repeatedly have historical precedents that often go overlooked.

Additionally, our research foregrounds an outlier within scholarship of the Oscars itself: that of the Oscars as television. Scholars have considered the establishment and labor of early Oscar telecasts and the ceremony’s positioning as an international event (Pavlounis, 2018; Real 1985). Our analysis expands upon these concepts to interrogate the ways in which the 2021 Oscars were constructed around an idea of global simultaneity—of one world of filmmakers and cinephiles, separated by necessity but united through a celebration of film. Yet the “COVID Oscars” needed television to fully express this vision through the medium’s liveness and simultaneity, a feature that the Oscar ceremony has leveraged since its inception.

Laura C. Brown is a media studies PhD student in the University of Texas at Austin’s Department of Radio-Television Film. Laura earned an MFA in Film & Television Studies and a BA in History, both from Boston University. Her research interests include American broadcast media history, critical industry studies, music on television, and media failures. Laura is currently the co-managing editor of *Flow*, serves on the editorial board of *The Velvet Light Trap*, and holds a position on the graduate student council of the Library of Congress’ Radio Preservation Task Force.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Walters is a PhD student in the American & New England Studies Program at Boston University, where she also earned her MFA in Film & Television Studies. Her research considers how the film and television industry constructs and perpetuates ideas of prestige and artistry through spaces like awards and film festivals. Before graduate school, she worked in the film festival industry and she currently sits on the board of the Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards.

Panel 19: Experiments in 21st Period Drama

Experiments in Form and Content in 21st Century Period Drama Television

Panelists: James Ward, Katherine Byrne, and Julie Anne Taddeo

Reworking the television murder mystery: from Christie to *High Seas*

Katherine Byrne, Ulster University

The popularity of the classic whodunnit never seems to wane, and Agatha Christie's novels in particular have provided endless inspiration for period drama on both the big and small screen. Sarah Phelps's recent BBC adaptations, however, have subverted this long-established genre, through edgy camera styles, politically charged subplots, and controversial plot changes from the source texts. These have often had mixed responses from devoted fans, but they display the potential of even the most supposedly conservative examples of Christie's work to reflect our present day anxieties about sexual violence, xenophobia, and toxic masculinity. In a much lighter vein is Netflix's *High Seas* (Alta Mar, 2019-), a glamorously campy, tongue-in-cheek Spanish mystery series that combines *Murder on the Orient Express* with echoes of *Downton Abbey* (a winning formula which viewers have unsurprisingly embraced as a guilty pleasure). This paper will consider these recent evolutions in the once "cosy" and predictable murder mystery, which has now become increasingly self-conscious and innovative, while still offering glamour and escapism for viewers. By playing around with form, these shows defy their low-to-middlebrow associations, revisiting mid-century issues and problems which, sadly, are still as topical as ever.

Katherine Byrne is a lecturer in English at the Ulster University. She is the co-author (with Julie Anne Taddeo) of *Rape in Period Drama Television: Consent, Myth, and Fantasy* (Lexington Books 2022) and author of *Tuberculosis and the Victorian Literary Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2011) and *Edwardians on Screen: From Downton Abbey to Parade's End* (Palgrave, 2015). She is one of the editors of *Conflicting Masculinities: Men in Television Period Drama* (IB Tauris, 2018).

Remaking Black Enlightenment Lives

James Ward, Ulster University

Over the last decade, historic Black lives have burst onto our TV screens. Reimagined lives of eighteenth-century Black Britons in particular have proliferated in a TV culture from which they had been largely absent. *Harlots* (2017-19) and *Bridgerton* (2020-) have remade as

objects of pop-cultural fascination the Black lives and communities first documented by Peter Fryer's *Staying Power* (1984) and Gretchen Gerzina's *Black London* (1995). Screen media heighten the sense of touching across time described by David Olusoga, who wrote that 'To stare into the eyes of a black Georgian' was 'to feel the embrace of the past and of a deeper belonging'. But such connections can be invented as well as uncovered. Yinka Shonibare, describing his reimagining of Frances Nelson (1758-1831) as a woman of colour, rejects claims to authenticity and embraces a strikingly pop-cultural ethos. 'I'm remaking the past for the future,' he says, 'It is never an historical document, it is always a kind of fabrication'. Looking at TV documentary as well as drama, this paper argues that both strategies – conscious fabrication and profound connection – are central to the way television culture encounters and remakes Black enlightenment lives.

James Ward is a lecturer in eighteenth-century literature at Ulster University, Northern Ireland. His research focuses on the literature and culture of the long eighteenth century and its afterlives in modern writing, art and screen media. Relevant publications include *Memory and Enlightenment: Cultural Afterlives of the Long Eighteenth Century* and 'The Masculine Economies of *Banished*' (both 2018). Currently he is PI on the BA/Leverhulme funded project ISLE: Ireland in Search of the Legacies of Enlightenment.

“Blokes? Talking? Well, Stranger Things Have Happened”: Masculinity and Trauma in the Australian Period Drama, *A Place to Call Home*

Julie Anne Taddeo, University of Maryland

The TV period drama *A Place to Call Home* (APTCH 2013-2018) follows the interclass relationships between the wealthy Bligh family and the “locals” in the fictional country town of Inverness, New South Wales. Hailed as “the Australian Downton Abbey,” APTCH, like most period dramas, targeted a largely female audience with its storylines about domestic abuse, rape, and women struggling to achieve personal and professional happiness in the post-war era. However, multiple subplots showcase the plight of men, both upper and lower class, and how they cope with a startling array of traumas (from the lasting effects of childhood emotional abuse to the brutality of gay conversion therapy, and even literal physical

emasculatation). This paper will look at how *APTCH* interrogates post-war masculinity-- an era in which men were expected to conform to rigid expectations of stoicism and heteronormativity; it will address how the series uses storylines of male trauma to engage with 21st century concerns and controversies: it aired during key years in Australian history that commemorated the centenary of WWI and the legacy of the ANZAC experience as well as during the battle to legalize gay marriage and decriminalize gay conversion therapy. In the final season of the series, the local doctor, Jack Duncan (a recovered alcoholic and former POW) forms a men's group to "get blokes talking" – not just to help men like himself heal, but to put a stop to the toxic masculinity to which several of the female characters have been subjected; thus, the series suggests the power of period drama TV to be a space in which masculinity can be explored, critiqued, and even transformed, not just for its characters but for its viewing audience.

Julie Anne Taddeo is research professor of History at University of Maryland, USA. She is the co-author (with Katherine Byrne) of *Rape in Period Drama Television: Consent Myth and Fantasy* (2022), and the co-editor of multiple volumes on period drama television, including *Diagnosing History: Medicine in Period Drama Television* (2022) and *Conflicting Masculinities: Men in Television Period Drama* (2018).

Thursday, 14 July

Panel 20: History and TV

Constructing a history of television from precarious archives with the Edinburgh International TV Festival.

Matthew Floyd, University of Glasgow

In this paper I will address using primary sources to understand the 'big stories' of television histories, in relation to my doctoral research on the history of the Edinburgh International TV Festival (EITVF) as it approaches its 50th Anniversary in 2026. This paper considers the value and challenges of using a specific, unstudied archive of festival materials that the organisation has made available to use in order to construct both a history of the festival and to position the

EITVF within a broader history of television. At the core of this archive are the annual James MacTaggart Memorial Lectures, a keynote address by a leading industry figure that forms the centrepiece of the Festival each year (1976-present). Named after the Glasgow born TV producer, the MacTaggart offers a platform for important policy announcements and agenda-setting speeches, with notable past speakers including Jeremy Isaacs, The Murdochs, and David Olusoga. However, the process of building the archive has been challenged by the precarious nature of festival management and the vast changes in technology that the festival's history has overseen. This paper will demonstrate how these issues are exacerbated when the researcher looks to analyse less central primary sources to construct a more comprehensive television and festival history, such as the wider programmes, records of participation and marketing materials. Nonetheless, the EITVF archive is a revealing and significant resource towards exploring the festival's history and roles in shaping discourses surrounding television as a medium, technology and industry. This paper reflects on the project's archival research to address the broader questions of what sources allow us to understand television histories and what sources are missing. Additionally, considering whose voices have been persevered and whose have been silenced in constructing the history of a leading media event in the broader history of television.

Matthew Floyd is in his second year of doctoral research at the University of Glasgow, constructing a history of the Edinburgh International Television Festival and the MacTaggart Lecture. Additionally, Matthew is a GTA seminar tutor on a film and television history course for second-year undergraduates. Previously, Matthew completed a Film Curation MSc also at Glasgow University, has worked for multiple arts and culture festivals and worked in academic publishing for several years.

Revaluing and Reclaiming 'The Sentimental' in *Play for Today*

Katie Crosson, Royal Holloway and the British Film Institute

Focusing on a dimension of *Play for Today* (BBC1, 1970-1984, UK) which is at times overlooked and in other instances undervalued, this paper advocates for a reappraisal of a widely derided aesthetic mode: the sentimental.

The term 'sentimentality' is typically invoked pejoratively due, I suggest, to a cultural aversion steeped in misogyny and conservatism. Determining how and why this has been the case,

through an investigation into critical responses to *Play for Today*, will, I hope, begin a process of uncovering sentimentality's possibilities.

In order to illustrate a failure on behalf of *Play for Today*'s critics to grasp the complexity of the sentimental, four key plays in the strand — from outliers and underdogs to the celebrated and canonised but crucially misunderstood — will be visited. These sentimental plays demonstrate a variety of critical receptions, from being chastised as such to having their sentimentality altogether ignored. Such contrasts allow for an insight into how the term operates, and to what ends. Firstly, a text deemed 'sentimental' in a pejorative sense, Barrie Keeffe's "Waterloo Sunset", will be highlighted as a play that utilises a sentimental aesthetic mode to compel viewers towards solidarity with its marginalised characters. Then Jack Rosenthal's "Bar Mitzvah Boy" will be juxtaposed to this: a text that has evaded coming under fire from critics for sentimentality due to its foregrounding of a child protagonist — i.e. a protagonist that it is socially acceptable to feel sympathetic towards. After this, "Edna the Inebriate Woman" by Jeremy Sandford will demonstrate how texts can benefit from sentimentality, while evading description as such because their protagonists are seen as so unworthy of empathy and pathos to the extent that the text's sentimentality becomes, through a normative lens, invisible. Here, a three-tiered system which I will argue has been implicitly operating in critical responses to television and other types of art for some time will be made explicit: those we should not empathise with (for that would be 'sentimental'), those who can be empathised with (not seen as sentimental) and those seen as impossible to empathise with (not seen as having the capacity for sentimentality).

By contrasting the way these plays and their receptions relate to the sentimental, the social coordinates of empathy can be revealed. Alternate readings of the way that sentimentality operates in the plays will I hope reveal that the sentimental, when used effectively, can foster solidarity.

The perhaps surprising case study of *Play for Today* offers a way of instantiating a break from contemporary, narrow ideas of what the term 'sentimental' means. It is my hope that this paper will begin a redefinition of the sentimental that contributes not only to the wider television studies landscape but also aesthetics at large.

I am currently a third year CDA (PhD) student based at Royal Holloway and the BFI exploring *Play for Today* and its 50th anniversary in 2020. My thesis will scrutinise the possibility of 're-canonising' in order to reclaim and explore 'lost' or forgotten aesthetic tendencies. To do this, my research is centred on the concepts of 'sentimentality' and 'joy', the

theme of sexual violence, and the form of the television strand. I have written DVD essays and articles, co-programmed a BFI Southbank season, curated a BFI-BBC collaboration exhibition, spoken at and chaired conferences on the subject.

It's Alright: *Saved By the Bell*, American teen sitcom and British broadcasting

Jen Mclevey, University of Exeter

At the end of the 1990s, American sitcom was placed in schedules in a few specific ways. While high profile sitcoms continued to hold their position in prime time schedules, there was a proliferation of other sitcoms being scheduled on smaller channels. Between 1996 and 2001 there was one part of the broadcast schedule that was inordinately heavy on American content, especially American sitcoms – the children's channels. Here, teen sitcoms flourished, reaching a largely unaddressed audience on their own terms.

The teen sitcom itself has multiple meanings, from domestic sitcoms centred on teen characters to a sitcom written for and about teens, where adolescents and young adults are both central to the cast and the audience. This paper focuses on the ways in which channel identities and teen sitcoms created a demographic that was reflective of its time. With a primary focus on the latter type of teen sitcom – the daytime teen sitcoms – this paper also seeks to address an oversight in much of the existing literature.

While scholarly attention has been given to teen television as a whole, there is relatively little that engages with teen sitcoms themselves. Teen dramas have been addressed more widely, with particular attention given to particular programmes inasmuch as they stand out as exemplary in spite of their target audience. Similarly, networks have been profiled for the way they are directed at teens. Where teen sitcoms have been addressed, it is cursory and used as a passing example in a larger focus on other topics, such as the portrayal of teachers, friendships, same-sex desire or race. By and large, they are considered significant only in the way that they relate to something else that's more worthy of scholarly attention.

However, these programmes were a key element of scheduling at the turn of the century, informing a changing approach to scheduling, serving a growing audience that expected to be addressed directly, and produced with marketability in mind. Both primetime and daytime teen sitcoms were produced to draw in younger audiences who, unlike previous generations, had alternative entertainment options available. The availability of video game consoles and the internet began to fracture family viewing, as did ever lower costs for additional television sets. The teen audience had money to spend (and were on the cusp of being adults with disposable

income who fit into advertisers' key demographic), and networks ran the risk of having their most profitable demographics leaving television viewing. Teen sitcoms were a way of retaining viewers and the mix of styles within this subgenre allowed for a wide audience to be reached and retained.

This paper, part of a larger thesis on use of American sitcom in British broadcasting, uses key programmes such as *Saved By the Bell* as a central focus, viewing teen sitcom as an influential and lasting form of the genre at a time when broadcasting was changing. The use of teen sitcoms was strategic and effective.

Jen Mclevey is a postgraduate researcher at the University of Exeter, working on a thesis about the use of American sitcom in British broadcasting. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Networking Knowledge*, the journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network, and works in the television industry. For purely professional reasons, she knows everything that's on Netflix.

Panel 21: Representations of Marginalised Others

“If she’s singing it, she’s feeling it”: Portraying Mental Health and Illness Through Song in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* (2015-2019) and *Zoey’s Extraordinary Playlist* (2020-2021)

Caitlan Truelove, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music

Depictions of mental health in television series have slowly evolved from a topic never discussed to a central facet of a show's premise. Although in reference to physical disabilities, the phrase “superpowered supercrip narrative,” as coined by Sami Schalk, broadly describes the “representation of a character who has abilities or ‘powers’ that operate in direct relationship with or contrast to their disability.” (81, 2016) Referring specifically to representations in television, Davi A Johnson notes that “madness has become...a means of managing individuals and directing them into productive circuits...difference is not excluded but cultivated as a useful social and economic resource.” (29, 2008) More recently, in a study of a sample of television dramas from 2010-2018, Rebecca C Beirne notes that characters are viewed as “responsible” if they choose not to take their medications, and if they do “it dampens their abilities to perform valuable work in the community, thus removing their use value within the world of the series.” (235, 2018)

Television musical series have the heightened ability to portray aspects of mental illness, such as depression and anxiety, through the additional medium of song, as explored by Raymond Knapp and Zelda Knapp (2019, 2020). In this paper I pay particular attention to the series *Crazy*

Ex-Girlfriend and *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*, which use original and pre-composed songs (respectively) to tackle subjects such as diagnoses, postpartum depression, antidepressants, and emotional trauma. While Rebecca Bunch in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* copes with stress by mentally playing out musical numbers, Zoey Clarke in *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist* develops the ability to hear other people's mental states in her head through "heart songs." I argue that audiences connect to these still frowned-upon issues on a safer and personal level than they might otherwise for several reasons: firstly, because the nature of the medium of television is a private (vs. public) activity; secondly because the medium of song allows characters to express their fears and emotions on a more honest level than dialogue; and thirdly because agency is given to the creators behind these series (Rachel Bloom and Austin Winsberg), who have cited their own lived experiences as inspiration for and the reason behind their shows.

Caitlan Truelove is a PhD Candidate in Musicology at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she is dissertating on the twenty-first-century television musical series and their portrayals of mental health, emotional crises, and identity via song. She has presented her work on film and television music at the American Musicological Society, the Society for American Music, and Music and the Moving Image, among others. Her co-authored chapter with James Deaville, "In Your Home for the Holidays: Christmas Musical Specials as Nostalgic Catharsis," will be published in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of the Television Musical* (2022).

Rethinking Catastrophe: Diffuse Disaster in Local News

Sasha Crawford-Holland, University of Chicago

During the July 1995 heat wave that killed an estimated 739 Chicago residents, news coverage mediated the heat as a unique—even fun—meteorological event. Local news conventions delivered lighthearted coverage that obscured the environmental danger facing audiences. When the massive death toll became apparent, the object of reportage transformed from meteorological curiosity to catastrophic spectacle. Cameras and reporters converged on the county morgue's parking lot, where refrigerated trucks stored a mounting overflow of bodies. In this belated shift to the televisual idiom of catastrophe, coverage adopted medical and climatological modes of explanation that ignored the social conditions underpinning the crisis.

Most victims were socially isolated senior residents of impoverished neighbourhoods. Yet conventions of disaster coverage apprehended the city's organized abandonment of its most vulnerable populations as if it were a natural phenomenon, as inevitable as the weather.

This event requires a fundamentally different understanding of catastrophe from those which have informed canonical discourses in television studies. A heat wave lacks the interruptive temporality of an earthquake or an explosion. It lacks the precise spatial coordinates of a tornado or a collapsed building. It lacks the spontaneity of an accident or an assassination. And it lacks the clearly discernible visuality of a car crash or a forest fire. For these reasons, heat waves elude the conventions of disaster coverage through which traumatic events are collectively witnessed and processed via television. Yet arguably, for these same reasons, a heat wave is not an outlier. Arguably, the paradigmatic catastrophes of our times—characterized by financialization, digitization, global heating, and the COVID-19 pandemic—are temporally indeterminate, spatially distributed, foreseen, and avial.

Therefore, this presentation examines TV news during Chicago's 1995 heat wave in order to reassess how news coverage of catastrophic events and television studies' theoretical paradigm of catastrophe have both circumscribed their objects of analysis. It proposes a reconceptualization of catastrophe by interrogating why the institutional processes of broadcast journalism could not register the socio-environmental specificity of this deadly heat wave. Focusing on local television, (which is largely omitted from American histories of broadcast news despite attracting far more viewers than national broadcasts,) I approach catastrophe not as a pronounced rupture witnessed from afar, but rather an indeterminate event inside of which viewers, anchors, reporters, producers, and infrastructures are differentially situated. I draw on critiques of local television news that emphasize how deregulation and consolidation have oriented news production away from the public interest, but I also contend that local news—embedded in specific communities and habitual rhythms—might constitute an ideal media infrastructure through which to apprehend contemporary catastrophe. This event thus holds important lessons for a world in which heat waves are no longer outliers.

Sasha Crawford-Holland is a PhD candidate and SSHRC Doctoral Fellow in Cinema & Media Studies at the University of Chicago, researching how people use nonfiction media to reorganize power relations. Sasha's dissertation examines how media rescale social experience by extending and modulating thermal perception. Sasha's writing about media politics is published in *Film History*, *Television & New Media*, *Synoptique*, and *American Quarterly*.

Turkey Dinosaurs and Double Dinners: *This Country's* Everyday Lives in Rural Gloucestershire

Mary Irwin, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

This Country (BBC 2016-2020) written and performed by Cirencester-born sister and brother Daisy May Cooper and Charlie Cooper, is set in an unnamed village in rural Gloucestershire. The comedy chronicles, in mock documentary style, the aimless, daily lives of disaffected, unemployed twentysomething cousins Lee 'Kurtan' Mucklowe (Charlie) and Kerry Mucklowe (Daisy May). What makes *This Country* markedly original, is the situation of its narratives of working-class life in the rural south west of England, with the Coopers offering a distinctive insiders' view and understanding of their home territory. This is a rarely seen or acknowledged geographical perspective in a UK consistently presented as split by simple unnuanced binaries which contrast southern wealth and prosperity, with northern poverty and deprivation. Fictional screen recreations of the south west of England, have been persistently dominated by picturesque romantic fantasy and historical escapism. These include Cornwall's wild dramatic seascapes found both in adaptations of Winston Graham's historical *Poldark* novels (BBC 1975-1977, 2015-2019) and Daphne du Maurier's darkly, mysterious Gothic tales.

There is the tragic beauty of Thomas Hardy's Wessex, and the lush, sun dappled evocations of the verities of the lives of rural working-class communities, linked eternally to the land, as depicted in a variety of versions of Laurie Lee's 1959 novel *Cider with Rosie*, and in the BBC's much-loved adaptation of Flora Thomson's semi-autobiographical tales of Oxfordshire village life *Lark Rise to Candleford* (2008-2011).

This paper explores *This Country's* rejoinder to such images with its very funny and very poignant articulation of the reality of being young, jobless and hard-up, living in a poorly resourced, isolated Gloucestershire village. Certainly, this is no fantasy 'escape to the country'. As the paper will demonstrate, *This Country* through its seemingly light and artless comic depiction of the Mucklowes' bickering, bumbling daily existence, highlights weighty and significant social and political themes. The series explores poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunity, isolation, mental health, and above all the impact of the then government's austerity driven policies of the 2010s on the type of village in which the Coopers grew up. Such narrative themes are augmented by the intermittent use of on screen captions which evidence through statistical facts, figures and economic reports, the specific impact of such governmental strategies on the lives of the struggling and 'just managing' inhabitants of rural communities.

The paper will highlight the way in which, as writers and performers, the Coopers deploy the situation comedy form to offer a gloriously funny and splendidly observed portrait of the lives of two clueless, self-absorbed young people, at the same time grounding them firmly in the challenges and struggles they and their community face, in a part of the UK where little attention is drawn to, or media spotlight shone on, the plight of the rural poor. *This Country* lands its polemic punches with the lightest of touches, as it does so gently compelling audiences to rethink their preconceptions of West Country life.

Dr Mary Irwin is a researcher within the Division of Media, Communication and Performing Arts at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. She is currently working on the monograph *Love Wars: Television Romantic Comedy*, Bloomsbury (2022) and with Dr Jill Marshall (Queen Margaret University) on the edited collection *UK and Irish Television Comedy: Representations of Region, Nation, and Identity*, Palgrave Macmillan (2022)

Friday, 15 July

Panel 22: Gender and Television

Character Construction of ‘Mother’ in Indian Television Serial: A Critical Analysis on Select Television Series

Noveena Chakravorty, Sharmila Kayal , Swati Aagarwal

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Television has been the most popular and viable medium of Mass in Indian Media. Television since its inception (from the year 1984) has been moulding people’s opinion, reconstructing perception, rebuilding opinions and images (wide acceptance for the character of ‘Sita’ and ‘Rama’ in the epic serial of *Ramayan* for instance). Television serials on the other hand dominates and disseminates cultural, social values of society depicting ethos of Indian family structure and relationships. It is always fascinating to study how gender especially women

represented in Indian popular entertainment channels where mostly been construed as ideal, quiet, gentle and submissive. The very ideation behind is to prove the level of oppressiveness and the state of vulnerability. Here comes the character construction 'Mother's' in the Indian television serial where it much weaved the socio-cultural behaviour of complex hegemonic society. This present study based on qualitative (case study and discourse analysis) which focus on evolutional journey along with the character depiction in TV serials. The study primarily accounts the popular entertainment serials and traverses the stereotypical role in defining their diverse or monolithic identities and power structure, decision taker or influencer etc. This is an attempt to find out the construction in representing that how television can overpower the social and mass culture with ethnocentrism or for just hedonism perspective per se?

Noveena Chakravorty has an experience of more than 15 years in the media and education industries. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Commerce (Finance Specialisation) and Master's in Journalism and Mass Communication with specialization in Radio, Television, and Films from Banaras Hindu University. She completed a Film Appreciation Course from the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India in Pune and a Film Making course from the Indian Film Institute in Delhi. She is pursuing her Ph.D. in Film Studies at the School of Media and Communication at Adamas University. She worked with Star News as a trainee journalist and later as a Communicator in the Public Relations Society of India. She worked for more than a decade as an Associate Professor at Jagran Institute of Management and Mass Communication in Noida for more than 10 years. She has been a columnist on a few Social Journalism Platforms like Differenttruths.com and E-CineIndia. She has mentored and created documentaries, infomercials, and short films. She has also received professional training in dance from Shiamak Davar Institute of Performing Arts and has choreographed and coordinated many events, along with the privilege of anchoring for Film Festivals. In the year 2020, she joined Adamas University as an Assistant Professor at the School of Media and Communication

Blurring the lines: Female Leadership in *Money Heist*

Anja Louis, Sheffield Hallam University

La casa de papel/Money Heist (Antena 3/Netflix, 2017-2021, 5 seasons) has been one of the most watched (and binged) non-English Netflix series. It is the only non-English series to be awarded an Emmy. It sparked off copycat crimes and its iconography (red jumpsuits and Dalí

aimed at a mass audience, a large part of the population has ignored its potential and has labeled it as "trash TV" that trivializes a social problem.

Asier Gil Vázquez and Ana María Mejón Miranda are researchers and lecturers in Media Studies at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. They are members of TECMERIN research group.

Closing Open Roundtable