

Critical Studies in Television
Conference

2022



The Outliers of
Television

Edge Hill University

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Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

We welcome you again to our second Online Slow Conference which we are hoping to run every second year from now on. The Critical Studies in Television Conference aims to bring together researchers from across the globe to discuss television in the hope to generate debate and spotlight key developments in television studies in order to enable and encourage new ways of thinking about television. This year, our focus is on the outliers of Television (Studies).

The conference operates in close collaboration with the *Critical Studies in Television* editorial team, the Institute of Social Responsibility at Edge Hill University, and the Television Studies Research Group.

We are proud to be able to give a platform to such a diverse group of researchers this year which come from all continents and from a range of disciplines. We had more submissions than ever before, and therefore had to reduce the numbers of speakers quite significantly. But this has nevertheless meant that we are this year able to look at many different aspects of television – from community and closed circuit to transnational television, from working practices to representational issues and from aspects of teaching via word choices in our research to our experience of viewing.

As in 2021, the conference will take place on Teams, the links to the individual sessions will be posted closer to the date to conference attendees. All sessions will be recorded, unless a speaker explicitly requests not to be recorded. Registration is free and can be completed [here](#).

Please check the conference website for updates, but in the meantime, welcome and we are looking forward to seeing your faces in the near future.

The Critical Studies in Television Conference Team.

Programme overview

(all times British Summer Time)

Week 1

Time/Day	Monday, 27 June	Wednesday, 29 June	Thursday, 30 June	Friday, 1 July
Morning		9-10.30am Panel 2: Traditional TV and Online Television Swati Bute, Cathrin Bengesser and Vilde Schanke Sundet	9-10.30am Panel 4: The Contemporary Importance of Past Television Joseph Oldham, Karim Townsend and Alexander Beare	
Lunchtime	1-2.30pm Keynote: Rowan Aust	2-3pm Panel 3: Streaming and the TV Text Max Dosser and Kim Carina Hebben	12-1.30pm Panel 5 and Screening: BBC Asian Programming (1965-2009) Hazel Collie, Vanessa Jackson and Dharmesh Rajput	1pm-2.30pm Panel 7: Fan Behaviour Online Cody T. Havard, Timothy D. Ryan and Michael Hutchinson, Kateryna Sivak and Xiao Yao
Afternoon	3-4.45pm: Panel 1: The Outliers in Lifestyle and Reality TV Abigail Jenkins, Alkim Kutlu, Zoe Shacklock and Sofia Bull	3.15-4.45pm Roundtable 1: The TV Dictionary Libertad Gills, Catherine Grant, Evelyn Kreutzer, Johannes Binotto, Ariel Avissar and Jason Mittell	4-5.15pm Panel 6: Queer(ing) TV Julia Himberg and Philippa Orme	3-4.30pm Panel 8: Fan Curation and Online TV Lucas Martins Néia, Sidney Garner and Spiros Chairetis

Week 2

Time/Day	Monday, 4 July	Wednesday, 6 July	Thursday, 7 July	Friday, 8 July
Morning	9-10.30am Panel 9: Community, Space and Television Jana Jedlicková, Elke Weissmann and Matthew Cipa		10-11am Roundtable 2: Television and the British Asian Experience Dipali Das and Mita Lad	9-10.30am Panel 13: Power and Television Laeed Zaghlami, Gulnara Zakharova, Thomas Waitz
Lunchtime	12.30-2.30pm Panel 10: Value and TV Gabriel Ferreirinho, Brett Mills, Catherine Johnson and Michael Clark			1pm-2.30pm Roundtable 3: Television and Sustainability Steve Smith, Marta Lopera-Mármol and Manel Jiménez-Morales
Afternoon	3-4.30pm Panel 11: Practices of Media Work Cat Champney, Maria Fernanda Novoa and Gavin Maclean	3-4.30pm Panel 12: Patterns and Peculiarities in Public Service Media JP Kelly, Julie Münter Lassen and Jannick Kirk Sorensen		

Week 3

Time/Day	Monday, 11 July	Wednesday, 13 July	Thursday, 14 July	Friday, 15 July
Morning	9-10.30am Panel 14: Adaptation, Continuities and Changes to TV Will Stanford Abbiss, Christina Wilkins and Diana Sandars, Jessica Balanzategui and Djoyimi Baker	9-10.30am Panel 17: Gender and Migration in Television Susanne Eichner, David Levente Palatinus and Daisy Richards	10-11.30am Panel 20: History and TV Matthew Floyd, Katie Crosson and Jen Mclevey	9-10.30am Panel 22: Gender and Television Noveena Chakravorty, Sharmila Kayal, Swati Aaggarwal, Anja Louis and Asier Gil Vazquez, Ana María Mejon Miranda
Lunchtime	12- 1.30pm Panel 15: TV and Seriality Orcun Can, Oliver Kroener and Ruth A. Deller	2-3.30pm Panel 18: Changes in Production Gökçe Baydar Çavdar, D. Punitha and Laura C. Brown and Elizabeth Walters		1pm-2.30pm Concluding Open Roundtable: TV Studies – Where Now?
Afternoon	2-3pm Panel 16: TV - What TV? Katie Moylan and Anne-Katrin Weber	4-5.30pm Panel 19: Experiments in 21st Century Period Drama James Ward, Katherine Byrne and Julie Anne Taddeo	2-3.30pm Panel 21: Representations of Marginalised Others Caitlan Trulove, Sasha Crawford Holland and Mary Irwin	

Programme: Panels and Papers

Monday, 27 June

Panel 1 The Outliers in Lifestyle and Reality TV

The Cruelty of Wellness: Interrogating fat bodies in lifestyle reboots

Abigail Jenkins, University of Glasgow

A decade ago, queer scholar Lauren Berlant (2011) boldly demonstrated the dissonance between Capitalist language of upward mobility and social realities as a kind of "cruel optimism." The years following Berlant's incisive affective analysis have only confirmed and strengthened their position. As paid employment is cordoned off into the realms of vulnerable freelance and individual gig-work and healthcare provisions continue to trend toward privatisation, contemporary television has proven an effective vehicle of cruel optimism. This is particularly clear in the sweeping shifts in contemporary wellness reality TV, where a positive attitude toward non-normative bodies has replaced the former "tough love" agendas of lifestyle shows such as *The Biggest Loser* (2004-2016; 2020 -), *Queer Eye* (2003 - 2007; 2018 -) and *What Not to Wear* (2003 - 2013; 2020 -). These shows, all recently rebooted and rebranded to reflect a supposed ethos of self-love and care, are now congratulated for their willingness to assign a degree of humanity to participants. The shifts in tone from obliquely cruel to gently optimistic are marked as important, as changes with a great deal of meaning for oppressed groups (who, these programmes posit, simply have not had the drive to progress without coaching or insistence). This tone is even further heightened and complicated when applied to fat bodies, whose larger forms push the boundaries between optimism and cruelty into stark relief.

Reality television has long been scrutinised in media studies for its connection to the neoliberal idea of self-help and as a poor replacement for government programmes and welfare provisions. And yet, there is something darker embedded in these more recent iterations that has yet to be fully unpacked. For, although the optimistic tone of these reboots is blatantly different than that of their turn-of-the-century predecessors, a palpable improvement in effect toward participants' wellbeing is less clear. These programmes are still populated by "experts"

at wellness, whose lives are optimised and who have supposedly earned the right to counsel “failed” subjects toward “better” ways of living.

This paper addresses the tone and poetics of wellness in contemporary TV by unpicking the dynamics of the aforementioned wellness reboots. Considering in particular the role of the fat body in these texts, I question the optimism of wellness TV and begin to define the cruelty embedded in - and masked by - these shows’ bubbly, joyful, thin, wealthy, healthy, and (very often) white presenters. This line of enquiry represents an intervention into media studies - which has a tendency to take for granted the “problems” caused by “obesity” - by way of fat studies, a discipline that recognises the fat body not as a symbol of moral failure but as a lived reality varyingly constructed on the popular stage. My analysis here explicitly pushes for a deeper, more intricate study of the language of contemporary television via a deconstruction of cultural constructs that remain obscured in the labyrinthine mechanisms of cruel optimism.

Abigail Jenkins is a doctoral candidate at the University of Glasgow. Their research dissects representations of fat bodies in contemporary British and American television.

A seat at the table: Food television and the changing definition of food literacy and culinary capital

Alkim Kutlu, Institute for Media and Cultural Studies, Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf

Food has been a part of television since its first inception in the 1940s, as one of the oldest forms of programming. Since then, it has evolved into a genre in its own right, with entire network channels dedicated to food and global franchises exploring the broader world of/around food and foodways. Food itself, as Arjun Appadurai notes, is “a highly condensed social fact... and a plastic kind of collective representation” with a capacity to “bear social messages” (1981: 494). Combined with the representational power of television, which is “the production and transformation of ideologies,” (Hall 2005: 89) food television as a genre thus becomes a mediated representation of food and identity formation. This mediation emulates a particular way of engaging with food, one which is steeped in ideologies of gender, race, and class, which cater particularly to white and affluent demographic. With the rise of the streaming platforms and on demand content, choice and intentionality in television viewership, the messaging of these shows has become even more poignant.

In this paper, I will draw attention to recent developments in contemporary food television in US television, namely how it has started to address overlooked topics, peoples, and food

systems. Drawing from Peter Naccarato and Kathleen Lebesco’s concept of “culinary capital,” I will look at the changing paradigms of representation, in shows like *KCET* and *Tastemade’s Broken Bread* (2019-), Hulu’s *Taste the Nation with Padma Lakshmi* (2020-), and Netflix’s *High on the Hog* (2021-), analyzing the critical narrative discourse throughout the series to show how the political messaging around social topics such as incarceration, marginalized neighborhoods, obscured (culinary) histories, and social injustice become part of food literacy through the shows. By shifting the discourse on the “right” foods to consume to elevate status, i.e. culinary capital, these shows both redefine the literacies that construct and transform audiences while simultaneously destabilizing the hierarchical structures of race and class which laid the ideological groundwork on defining culinary capital in previous shows. I will conclude that although existing channels such as Food Network and FOX, series such as *Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives*, and celebrity chefs such as Guy Fieri and Gordon Ramsay emulate the existing definitions and assumptions of culinary capital, the growing number of shows throughout different platforms featuring people of color work to call out the lack of representation that food television has been complicit of, while redefining culinary capital.

Through my paper, I hope to emphasize the shifts as well as the importance of food television in reflecting the social, cultural, and environmental discourses in the US, and to highlight the changing discourse on these shows towards celebrating diversity and inclusivity in an industry—both food and television—with a long history of exclusion.

Alkım Kutlu is a lecturer and doctoral candidate at the Institute for Media and Cultural Studies at Heinrich Heine University in Düsseldorf. Her dissertation focuses on the history, aesthetics, and cultural politics of food and travel series produced in the US. She holds an MA in the fields of English and Transcultural Studies from Ruprecht Karls University in Heidelberg and a BA in English from Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. She was previously a lecturer at Albert Ludwigs University in Freiburg before starting her position at HHU. Her research interests include food media, gender & queer theory, affect & phenomenology, popular culture, and advertising.

“Where Broken Treasures are Brought Back to Life”: *The Repair Shop* and Television’s Ideology of Ability

Zoe Shacklock, University of St Andrews

The Repair Shop (BBC One/Two, 2017-present) has been something of a surprise success for the BBC, regularly drawing six million viewers after moving from the afternoons to Wednesday evenings. The programme's popularity can be attributed to how it reiterates traditional televisual qualities, such as intimacy, the ordinary, comfort and care. Yet its success also tells us something about the normative dynamics that underlie these qualities – in particular, in relation to able-bodiedness. This paper explores how *The Repair Shop*'s focus on repair and restoration reiterates what Tobin Siebers (2008) calls the 'ideology of ability'. Each episode of the programme focuses on restoring the broken, on bringing objects 'back to life', on replacing parts and re-animating objects. In doing so it suggests that smooth, controlled movements and whole, working parts are valued over the broken, or the frozen, or the stuttered. Consequently, the state of 'disrepair' is presented as an abnormal, temporary state from which we desire to return. Such a foregrounding of able-bodiedness is furthered through the programme's interest in skilled labour. Extending Alexia Smit's work on 'tele-affectivity' (2013), I argue that the programme relies on what I call the kinaesthetics of craft - small, precise, and repetitive actions often framed in extreme close-up – for much of its affective, intimate address. This focus on skilled labour sets up a hierarchy between who can 'fix' and who (and what) must be 'fixed', one reiterated further in the fact that many of the participants suffer from terminal illnesses. Yet if *The Repair Shop*'s success lies in how it embodies traditional ideas of the 'televisual', then it might also tell us something about how such televisual qualities are structured by the ideology of ability. How might the reliability of repetition, or the smooth movement of flow, for example, reiterate the norms of able-bodiedness? My paper thus aims to extend work on disability and television studies beyond representation, to consider how properties of the medium itself might be entangled with the ideology of ability.

Zoë Shacklock is a Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of St Andrews. Her research focuses on the body in contemporary television, with particular interests in movement, queerness and empathy. Her monograph *Television and the Moving Body* is under contract with Edinburgh University Press.

Viral (tele) Visions

Sofia Bull, Southampton University

This paper presents some preliminary work on a new project about television's role in the public understanding of the biological processes of viral contagion and infection, mapping recurrent viral imagery across a wide range of UK television programming aired during the Covid-19 pandemic. Rather than simply focusing on programmes directly narrating the coronavirus or the pandemic, the project will consider how a wider range of television content (both factual and dramas) have contributed to shaping ideas about viral processes. The paper presents the hypothesis that television has encouraged affective responses to the pandemic that places emphasis on individual illness and risk, but that television also plays a significant role in a wider cultural reconfiguration of the popular understanding of viral disease that increasingly challenges us to understand viruses in terms of multiple complexly interlinked processes beyond the scale of the individual human body (from the global flows of contagion to the viral life cycles that can cause genetic mutations). The current digital television landscape will be considered in relation to television's history as a medium of both intimacy and distance, that simultaneously address both the individual and the community (on the levels of the local, the national and the global), and as such – I will argue - television has a unique potential for conceptual negotiations of the viral at different levels of scale.

Sofia Bull is lecturer in film and television at the University of Southampton. Her research and teaching covers both film and television, but she has a particular expertise in medico-scientific discourses on television. Her PhD thesis examined science, biomedicine and genetics in forensic crime dramas, particularly *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and she's the author of *Television and the Genetic Imaginary* (Palgrave, 2018).

Wednesday, 29 June

Panel 2: Traditional TV And Online Television

Stagnation in storytelling and creativity in General Entertainment Channels of Indian Television

Dr. Swati Bute, Jagran Lakecity University, India

In India television is still a very popular medium for News and General Entertainment. In last few years we have seen tremendous growth in the Indian television sector specifically in the category of General Entertainment Channels. In the category of General Entertainment

channels the programs formats are mostly daily soaps, reality shows, dance competition shows, Music program and Indian Mythology based content.

This format is followed by all general entertainment channels in Hindi Program formats and storytelling forms are similar in the regional language General Entertainment Channels. Television in India has the potential to reach the audiences in more creative ways as it is highly accepted and adopted medium in Indian households. People watch television for news and current affairs based programs but at the same time it is also in high demand because of its power of storytelling or narrating people's story. Indian television channels are not only watched in India but they have high demand in foreign countries. The Indian diaspora in foreign countries like to watch general entertainment programs in Hindi in other regional languages. Before privatisation Doordarshan (public broadcasting service of India) was the only channels for news and general entertainment program

After privatisation of the television sector, a lot more channels came on air, but we see kind of stagnation in storytelling and creativity in making programs of general entertainment. This study will explore the potential of Indian television channel as a competitor for OTT platforms if utilised properly. This will be a comparative study of storytelling and creativity in Indian television program and storytelling and creativity in web series of OTT platforms. This study will be an explorative study to understand the reasons of stagnation in storytelling and creativity in general entertainment channels of the Indian television sector.

Dr. Swati Bute works as an Associate Professor of Journalism & Communication in India. She has 13 years work experience in higher education and 8 years industry experience. Before entering into the academy, she worked as a radio broadcaster. She teaches subjects related to radio journalism & production and media research. Her research interests areas are social media, radio broadcasting, international affairs and media, health communication and print journalism. She has published two edited books which are indexed in Scopus.

What's happening in the local niches of streaming? A tour through the home-grown services of Denmark and Germany

Cathrin Bengesser, Aarhus University

Netflix and Amazon account for two thirds of video-on-demand subscribers in the European Union, but there are in fact over 700 other video-on-demand services in the EU alone. Over the past 15 years, TV studies has been tracing the transformation of Europe's legacy broadcasters

into streaming services, with a particular focus on the public service outlets, such as the BBC iPlayer. Since their global expansion between 2012 and 2016, Netflix and Amazon have monopolized TV studies' attention on the aesthetics, practices and industry logics of the new streaming age and therefore they also shape our theories and understanding of the VoD market, be it interfaces, binge-watching or the global orientation of content. While this focus on the big US-born streaming services is justified by their market shares, growth rates and power in the markets, it leaves underexplored the diversity of alternative and different streaming platforms out there.

This paper takes you on a tour through the home-grown streaming services of Denmark and Germany, to point out some of the domestic alternatives beyond the global players and the legacy broadcasters' services have existed way before Netflix and to discuss those that challenge the practices and business logics we associate with the streaming age. Cases include: Filmstriben DK – the streaming service run by the public libraries in Denmark, Oiii a Nordic children's streaming service run by Nordisk Film in collaboration with local broadcasters, such as TV2Play, Netzkino, a films streaming service growing out of YouTube and Pantaflix, a service that amongst other things offers self-publishing to filmmakers and streaming of film festivals. Methodologically, the overview on local streaming services builds on analysis of the European Audiovisual Observatory's Mavise Database, a review of local industry press and interviews with informants at the services under investigation.

While rooted in their national/regional media-systems, these cases illustrate broader contemporary streaming trends: brand collaborations; public service outside the public service broadcasting system; the rise of advertising-funded streaming and dependencies of local players on global platforms. Thereby, they allow us to discuss the potentials and hindrances of new or alternative streaming models that challenge – not necessarily the market dominance, but – the logics of the US-based globally operating services.

Cathrin Bengesser is Assistant Professor for Digital Media Industries at the Department of Media and Journalism Studies at Aarhus University. Her research interests include national and EU media policy regarding the regulation of the VoD market and public service media as well as transnational audience studies. She is PI on an AUFF-funded (2021-23) project that studies the impact of media systemic differences on the transformation from broadcast to VoD markets in Europe.

Serving youths on YouTube: Public service television on global media platforms

Digital, social and global media platforms largely dominate the media lives of teenagers. Unlike older generations, today's teenagers hardly adapt to global services but have always assumed the place of global platforms and on-demand services in their everyday media life. For national media industries, youth's (global) media habits represent a potential challenge. It is often coined the 'youth challenge', the 'missing audience' problem or the 'lost generation' issue, signalling how legacy media perceive reengagement with youth audience as core to their future legitimacy and even possible existence. Public service institutions have a particular position in this respect: They are bound to have an overall offering of relevance to all age groups and social segments, including youth, and serve them not merely as consumers but also as citizens. A growing corpus of literature addresses public service television made for youths, teens, and tweens. However, studies addressing public service teen content made for distribution on global platforms are still limited. Key questions, therefore, remain if public service institutions should serve youth on global platforms, and if so, how to serve youth in the best way and give them public service content they not only want but also presumable need on these platforms.

This paper analyses public service youth content on global media platforms, taking the Norwegian public service broadcaster NRK and its youth flagship program—*NRK 4ETG* (NRK, 2018)—as the basis for discussion. *4ETG* is produced in-house as a YouTube humour show, following a social media logic and aesthetic, but made available on NRK's TV Player to allow for more traditional viewing modes. Two research questions guide the paper: First, what strategic function and rationale underline the show, and how does this show fit with NRK's overall ambition of serving youth with public service content? Second, which industry logic guides the show's production, and how are these logics similar and different from traditional youth television produced by NRK?

Theoretically, the paper combines perspectives on public service youth content with perspectives on social media logic. As such, the paper discusses how legacy media translate and incorporate social media logic when making youth content for global platforms. Methodologically, the paper builds on a case study of *NRK 4ETG*. It draws on interviews with key informants working in the production and analysis of the show's many texts and artefacts. These texts and artefacts include institutional documents (addressing missions and strategies), promotional materials, news articles, and audience and fan response on YouTube and elsewhere.

Vilde Schanke Sundet (PhD) is a researcher at the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo. She is part of the ‘Global Natives?’ research project, exploring the position of global media platforms among Norwegian teenagers. Sundet has published extensively on topics concerning media industries, television production, media policy and audiences/fans, and she is the author of *Television Drama in the Age of Streaming* (2021).

Panel 3: Streaming and the TV Text

Streaming’s Skip Intro Function as a Contradictory Refuge for Television Title Sequences

Max Dosser, University of Pittsburgh

Since the early 2000s, theme music and title sequences have become less common on network television as the proliferation of viewing options and platforms has led to a dwindling of viewership. The skip intro function that originated on Netflix in 2017—and has since been adopted by many other portals—appeared to be another blow to theme songs’ existence. With this paper, however, I challenge the idea that the skip intro function and streaming services are the end of title sequences. I argue that through portals giving audiences greater control of their televisual flow, they create a space for title sequences and, ultimately, preserve the cultural technology of title sequences. This is particularly true as binge-watching becomes an increasingly common practice for audiences and portals model much of their aesthetics on the “prestigious” cable networks. It is through the creation of this space that we see how portals are embracing a hybrid model of linear and non-linear television in order to create a feeling of agency that is increasingly key in practices of post-network television. Title sequences and their theme music in particular are often overlooked paratexts in television studies, while the visuals in film title sequences and their accompanying musical themes have received more attention. This lack of attention is surprising as theme music can express a series’ affective mode and identify its genre. The work that has been done on television title sequences is often from a musicological perspective, but television studies scholars should examine title sequences and theme music as well. Their changing form and function has mirrored industry changes and gives a broader sense of how television producers adapt to changing economic and technological developments.

To make this argument, I first illustrate how the concept of binge-watching and televisual flow interact and how binge-watching as well as a desire to emulate prestige cable television directly influenced Netflix's development and adoption of the skip intro function. Second, I demonstrate how the skip intro function preserves a space for title sequences by providing choice for audiences. It is through the creation of this space that we can see how streaming services are embracing a hybrid model of linear and non-linear television in order to create a feeling of agency that is increasingly key in practices of post-network television. Finally, I situate the skip intro function within the history of television title sequences to illuminate how title sequences were already being phased out of network television years before the skip intro function was introduced. By doing so, I show how the skip intro function fits into this historical progression while simultaneously counteracting it by maintaining a place for the cultural technology of theme music and title sequences.

Max Dosser is a PhD candidate in the Communication Department at the University of Pittsburgh. His research interests largely fall within the fields of media studies and cultural studies, with particular focus on genre (speculative fiction in particular), fandoms, and music communication. Max is the co-founder and editor of the speculative fiction literary magazine Flash Point SF.

Are You Still Watching TV? Virtual Reality as Temporary Manifestation of (Post) Television

Kim Carina Hebben, Ruhr University of Bochum

The Network Era, Television 2.0, Post TV – one tv set in the living room, streaming television on portable devices, immersive gear. These (paradigmatically selected) milestones show that television was always known to reinvent itself regularly. It has included the newest technologies and devices ever since its beginnings. Television's current media landscape is ambivalent, convergent, and immersive. It is experimental. And at first view, some phenomena are not even considered to pass as television.

In this talk, I would like to highlight virtual reality experiences as recent outliers of (post) television (studies). VR equipment such as glasses or gloves is not considered conventional gear watching television. Yet it is of importance to analyze how VR and television interrelate. This correlation between TV and VR is not only an example of media convergence (see Jenkins 2006) or remediation (see Bolter/ Grusin 1999), but it reveals television's true nature,

namely its ongoing transformation (see Keilbach/ Stauff 2013). Some VR practices, such as 360-videos or AR (augmented reality) visual effects are easily accessible as smartphone or browser applications with no additional technology needed. One way to experience VR is with the help of a simple card box construction and YouTube. These extensions hardly bear any obstacles in terms of technical knowledge, they are highly engaging, and they do not require high production costs. Therefore, it is perspicuous that VR has become a prevalent add-on to television that entails new possibilities of audience behavior. The audience is not watching exclusively in the living room anymore. It has left the family circle. It is browsing through streaming platforms, archives, and social media in search of flow-like entertainment that I analyze through the lens of television studies.

VR is always referred to as experience because it is highly participative and immersive. Concurrently, there is a transition from watching television to experiencing it – or even playing it. Besides its frequent occurrence as an addition to television, VR is also a stand-alone video game genre. Hence, it is necessary to study how television and gaming affect each other. I am going to explore virtual reality experiences as temporary manifestations of (post) television. To discuss VR as a part of television I would like to start with a 15–20-minute presentation and integrate an interactive VR screening (about 10 minutes + 15 minutes discussion) that does not require any special gear. The presentation provides an overview of the different variations of virtual reality formats that appear on (and around) television (for example on streaming platforms, social media, or websites of tv networks like NBC, HBO, or ARTE).

The online format of the conference promotes this proposal and enables one to experience the transforming brinks of television. It is not productive to discuss whether VR is a part of television but to reassess the findings of our perception of television as a medium regarding its outliers.

Kim Carina Hebben is a doctoral researcher in media studies at Ruhr University of Bochum. In her research, she analyses the convergence of television studies and game studies as an approach to re-evaluate (digital) media practices such as transmedia storytelling. She graduated from Ruhr University of Bochum with a master's degree in media studies and German studies in 2014. Furthermore, she is a research assistant and student council at the department of diversity studies at TU Dortmund University since 2017. Her fields of research include participation, artificial intelligence, and the remediation of bodies and gender.

Roundtable 1: The TV Dictionary

The TV Dictionary – Videographic Ruminations on Television

Chair: Ariel Avissar, Tel Aviv University

This roundtable will showcase and discuss representative entries from the “TV Dictionary”, a collaborative videographic project devoted to television – a medium that remains relatively underexplored within academic videographic criticism. The project is premised on a simple prompt: each video attempts to capture the essence of a particular television series using a single word, by juxtaposing the dictionary definition(s) of that word with a clip or several clips from the series. It is currently comprised of 42 videos by 22 makers, and has been warmly embraced by the videographic community; the collection as a whole or individual entries received numerous mentions on Sight & Sound’s poll for the best video essays of 2021, and many others have expressed an interest in making their own entries, or in applying the prompt as part of their teaching.

While the prompt itself is quite simple, the various videos in the collection have responded to it in very different ways, applying a diverse range of formal and stylistic choices, at times sombre, at times playful; at times adopting the tone and language of the chosen series, at times deconstructing or subverting them. Some of the contributors are well-established videographic practitioners, who welcomed the opportunity to apply this new perspective on their own objects of research and fandom, in some cases incorporating their entries as part of their broader videographic and theoretical projects; for others, this was a first dabble in videographic criticism, one that will hopefully lead to further experimentation with the form. As such, the project holds interest for scholars of television, videographic and otherwise, as an example of “videographic telephilia” that offers a productive range of engagement with television texts. Each participant in the roundtable has contributed to the project; each will present and briefly discuss one of their videos (with the average length at just under 3 minutes), touching on its realization, its contribution to their broader scholarly projects, etc. These presentations will be followed by notes from a respondent, and an open discussion.

These are the participants, and the videos they will be presenting:

1. Libertad Gills (Universidad de las Artes [Ecuador] and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid): “Derry Girls” (<https://vimeo.com/584324964>)
2. Catherine Grant (Birkbeck, University of London and the University of Reading): “Edge of Darkness” (<https://vimeo.com/585878623>)

3. Evelyn Kreutzer (Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf): “Fleabag” (<https://vimeo.com/584240162>)
4. Johannes Binotto (Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and the University of Zurich): “Miami Vice” (<https://vimeo.com/582524624>)
5. Ariel Avissar (Tel Aviv University): “Seinfeld” (<https://vimeo.com/594155302>); will serve as chair
6. Respondent: Jason Mittell (Middlebury College)

The above entries serve as a representative sample of the project as a whole, and of the various generative possibilities that it can offer for creative videographic engagement and experimentation with television.

Ariel Avissar is a lecturer and PhD student at the Steve Tisch School of Film and Television, Tel Aviv University. His main areas of scholarly interest are television studies and videographic criticism. He is one of the founders and organizers of the Annual Television Studies Conference in Tel Aviv University. He has co-edited Sight & Sound’s “Best Video Essays” poll since 2019, and (along with Evelyn Kreutzer) the “Once Upon a Screen” audio-visual essay collection (“The Cine-Files” issue 15, fall 2020). Since 2021 he has served as Associate Editor at [in]Transition, the Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies.

Thursday, 30 June

Panel 4: The Contemporary Importance of Past Television

‘The description “missing person” does not compute’: Surveillance, Anonymity and ‘Agency Panic’ in ‘Bird of Prey’ (BBC1, 1982)

Joseph Oldham, British University in Egypt

Ron Hutchinson’s *Bird of Prey* (BBC 1, 1982) is a pioneering British television conspiracy thriller serial, anticipating later, better-known dramas such as *Edge of Darkness* (BBC 2, 1985), *State of Play* (BBC 1, 2003), *Utopia* (Channel 4, 2013-14) and *Bodyguard* (BBC 1, 2018) in offering a paranoid portrait of the ‘state of the nation’. Highly prophetic in its exploration of anxieties over human agency at the dawn of globalisation and the onset of the digital age, the serial concerns Henry Jay (Richard Griffiths), an unassuming, fastidious civil servant with an expertise in computing and new possibilities for electronic fraud. When discovers that one of his prized reports has been tampered in order to cover up a major fraud, he finds himself marked for death by a sinister pan-European conspiratorial force known as ‘le Pouvoir’.

This paper explores two ways that *Bird of Prey* engages with questions of anonymity at a moment of transformation in British culture. On one level, this theme manifests in the faceless, decentralised conspiracy of le Pouvoir. Here the conspiracy narrative's longstanding drive 'to reflect upon and confront the contradictions and conflicts of the contemporary democratic state and capitalism' (Fenster, 2008) is imbued with a new sense of alienation arising from integration into European Common Market and the influx of international finance into the City of London. Jay's efforts to evade detection by agents of le Pouvoir are further compromised by the rise of electronic surveillance technology, reconfiguring the conspiracy narrative's theme of 'agency panic' into anxiety concerning the right to anonymity in the digital age (Melley, 2000). Yet it is his expertise in computing technology that affords the unlikely Jay the opportunity to fight back. Defiantly adopting the moniker of 'the little man on the 8:15' to emphasise an anonymity through his very unassuming typicality, Jay seeks to assert a new form of agency on the electronic frontier.

Joseph Oldham is a Lecturer in Mass Media and Communication at the British University in Egypt. He is the author of *Paranoid Visions: Spies, Conspiracies and the Secret State in British Television Drama* (Manchester University Press, 2017), and has published articles in journals including *Cold War History*, the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, *Adaptation*, the *Journal of Popular Television* and the *Journal of Intelligence History*.

Revisiting the prescient politics of HBO's *Enlightened*

Karim Townsend, University of Cambridge

This paper considers the critically acclaimed, yet low-viewed and prematurely cancelled HBO series *Enlightened*, created by writer-director Mike White and lead actress Laura Dern. Following a woman's journey as a whistleblower exposing her corrupt corporation, the series has been considered "ahead of its time" by critics. Moreover, its socio-political prescience has been remarked upon by various writers (Reid 2017; Syme 2017; and Ryan 2019) in light of the 2016 US election, the #MeToo movement, and the various forms of political action that have manifested in response. Indeed, Dern herself has remarked upon the renewed political relevance of the series in numerous interviews and has drawn attention to the shift in viewer reactions to her protagonist, Amy Jellicoe, from the time of the series' initial airing to our current political era. In this paper, I think through this sense of renewed political relevance and consider how the series' depiction of Amy's political resistance prefigures renewed attention

to modes of collective action in the age of social media. Or as Maureen Ryan (2019) puts it, “Amy’s obsession with finding ways to #resist corporate greed and the cynical manipulations of the powerful, and her quest to ignite change on social media and in real life, made *Enlightened* a precursor to the last few years of marches, protests, whistleblowers, and anti-billionaire critiques.”

In this paper, I consider *Enlightened* in relation to the theory of Félix Guattari, whose writing in *The Three Ecologies* has similarly been characterized as prescient in its thinking on questions of activism, and the connections between the social, psychic, and environmental dimensions of our society. If *Enlightened* has been regarded as prescient in its emphasis on a more affective, collective, and intersectional ecological resistance against the exploitative logic of neoliberal capitalism, then I suggest that Guattari’s writing, similar in its prescience with regard to the role of mediated technology in shaping socio-political discourse, provides a useful framework for examining the series and its depiction of Amy’s investment in social media as a means for social change. Yet the series’ humorous and ironic framing of social media platforms casts ambivalence on their efficacy. As such, this paper considers this ambivalent engagement with activist discourses in the virtual, viral, and rhizomatic spaces of the internet, and explores questions of community, power, equality, and the internet’s economy of visibility, in relation to the series’ portrayal of political resistance. If, as Guattari notes, the transition from the mass media to the “post-media” age, in which the media will be “re-appropriated by a multitude of subject-groups”, is essential, then *Enlightened*’s fraught depiction of social media, as this paper suggests, provides a useful tool for examining the numerous issues at stake regarding mediated technology and its ability to shape socio-political and ecological discourse. Ultimately, I examine the ways in which *Enlightened* speaks to us today, while also considering the possible tensions of this resonance within contemporary pop culture and the current US television landscape.

Karim is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Film and Screen. His doctoral research focuses primarily on questions of ecological relationality and the politics of community in the Anthropocene, as mediated in contemporary American and European film and television. He is particularly interested in drawing connections between film, neoliberal capitalism, ecologies, environmental crisis, and critical theory.

Resurgent Television: Watching *The Sopranos* During Lockdown

Alexander Beare, The University of Adelaide

In 2020, thirteen years after its final episode aired, HBO's classic series *The Sopranos* saw a sudden surge in popularity. The US and UK respectively saw viewership increases of up to 200%. Of course, it is no coincidence that this happened during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been widely reported that SVOD (Streaming Video on Demand) providers shattered their annual subscription and revenue records in 2020. However, such an increase in viewership for *The Sopranos* cannot be attributed to this 'bump' alone. According to an article in *The Guardian*, Google searches for *The Sopranos* "dwarfed those for other classic series such as *The Wire*." There is a perception that "young people" are driving the show's resurgence and adapting it to new platforms like YouTube and Twitter.

Critics and journalists have speculated as to why this is the case. A *GQ* article suggested that the show's themes of isolation family and betrayal "may fit a little too well given the state of the world." New viewers are watching *The Sopranos* in a different media scape to when it originally aired. It's surrounded by new paratexts like memes, Tweets and YouTube videos as well as proclamations by online journalists that it's one of the "greatest shows of all time". Viewers are also able to "binge" the show on streaming services that previously didn't exist. Despite this, there has been a limited amount of scholarship concerned with how audiences may experience a resurgent text differently. This paper reports on the findings of research interviews conducted with participants who recently watched *The Sopranos* for the first time. It shows how the dark themes of the show took on new functions as tools for catharsis and relatability during lockdown. It also finds that the participant's reading of the show was often at odds with scholarly understandings of the show's most prominent themes like nostalgia and masculinity. The participants used *The Sopranos* as a conduit for current culture and politics in ways that were often oppositional to its own televisual logic.

This paper concludes that this has ramifications for how we approach resurgent television texts like *The Sopranos*. It reveals the ways in which we must consider analysing these programs specifically as 'new' texts and dissect how new cultural contexts may transform their meanings. It shows the considerable effect that new paratexts, discourses and cultural contexts can have on how audiences make meaning from a text. Television is a public site where ideas are negotiated, recuperated, and reimagined. As such, we must recognise the ways in which resurgent texts can be reinterpreted by new, active audiences.

Alexander Beare is a final year PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. His thesis is entitled “Retrospectively Reading *The Sopranos*.” It explores how ‘old’ television texts are being adapted to new cultural and televisual environments by active audiences. His research interests are television studies, audience studies, complex TV, media memory and masculinity studies.

Panel 5 and Screening

“It was the only place you’d see brown people on telly” – BBC Asian Programming (1965-2009)

Dr Hazel Collie, Dr Vanessa Jackson, Dharmesh Rajput, Birmingham City University

This one-hour screening event will include an introduction by at least one of the programme makers and a contribution from presenter, Mina Anwar (*The Thin Blue Line*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures*), a screening of documentary, *Love @ First Click* and some provocations to inform a dynamic discussion between panel and audience. While Britain is often described as a multicultural nation, the diverse historical experiences which contribute to this story are less well known. In 1965, in response to a request from Wilson’s government, the BBC established specialist programming for ethnically diverse audiences, founding the ‘Immigrants’ Programme Unit’ (IPU) at its Birmingham headquarters. In the 1980s the IPU became the ‘Multicultural Programmes Unit’ (MPU) and then the ‘Asian Programmes Unit’ (APU). The Unit was closed in 2009, as the BBC considered there was no longer a need for specialist programming. Histories of the BBC are over-researched in some areas, notably developmental histories and drama creation, but minority programming and its audience is overlooked. This panel seeks to redress this neglect, exploring the programming of the BBC Asian Programmes Unit and its reception. This is particularly timely given the centenary of the BBC, and the 75th anniversary of Partition this year. The panel seeks to remind the academic audience of the existence of such programming and to reflect upon its significance in wider histories of the BBC and British broadcasting.

Panel 6: Queer(ing) TV

Revy: Making the Case for LGBTQ Channels

Julia Himberg, Arizona State University

“Inclusive.” “Unapologetically queer.” “Queer TV 24/7.” These are the tag lines of Revry, an OTT (over-the-top) channel launched in 2016 that promotes itself as the go-to site for LGBTQ media content and creators. Its attempt to provide audiences with “over 4,000 hours of TV, films, podcasts, and music” has led some to hail it as “The queer streaming site you always needed in your life” and as a platform “serving up all the queer content you need during pride month and beyond.” Yet, when the press talks about changes in LGBTQ television representation, it primarily addresses representation on linear TV – U.S. broadcast and cable networks – and on major streaming platforms – Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime. While U.S. LGBTQ-dedicated cable channels Logo and Here TV receive occasional attention and accolades (Logo is most famous for launching *RuPaul’s Drag Race*), smaller and newer internet-distributed LGBTQ television platforms such as Revry and others including Dekkoo, Happi TV, and WOW Presents Plus are largely absent from these discussions. Revry, however, offers a useful case study about television channel logics and LGBTQ representation in a time defined by “unfathomable changes in U.S. television” and discourses of post-gay LGBTQ mainstreaming. Founded by a small team of friends, Revry bills itself as “the first queer global streaming network” (Cosgrove). Indeed, Revry makes the case for a “queer network” through its global reach, what I describe as its social justice mission. In sum, the platform’s vision aims to expand the range of LGBTQ representation on TV, to make those representations more widely available, and to give voice to LGBTQ content creators. Embracing the language of “queer culture,” Revry pushes back against post-gay discourse, a tactic reflected in the platform’s programming; through programs both acquired and original, Revry features a wide array of LGBTQ people and issues. In a 2020 interview, co-founder Damian Pelliccione said, “We consider ourselves an impact start-up.” Pelliccione’s description of Revry encapsulates the components of the platform that separate it from the other LGBTQ-dedicated channels that populate the market; Revry builds itself around disruption – of LGBTQ mainstreaming, of systems for generating revenue, and of TV’s traditional development and distribution pipelines. These means of disruption have been constitutive of Revry from its founding and arguably support the relevance of the LGBTQ channel, especially its ties to identity politics in a time when their very necessity is being challenged (LGBTQ-dedicated channels and identity politics). Revry thus offers a distinctive example of how channels can disrupt traditional systems to continue to serve a broader range of social minorities in economically viable ways.

Julia Himberg is director and associate professor of Film & Media Studies at Arizona State University. She is the author of *The New Gay for Pay: The Sexual Politics of American*

Television Production. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Communication, Culture, & Critique, Television & New Media*, and *JCMS*. She is currently the Special Features Editor for *JCMS*.

True Love or True Lies (2018-): Queer performativity on Reality TV

Philippa Orme, University of St Andrews

Television and queer theory may appear a frictional partnership. ‘Queer theory’ seeks to dismantle hegemonic structures of sexual oppression and normalisation by revealing “the [artificial] theoretical presumptions by which they establish, justify, and reinforce their power” (Hanson, 1999). While television has been characterised as the most mainstream of media forms, rooted in capitalist and heteronormative forms of power which queerness - being distinctly disruptive and oppositional - defines itself against (Joyrich, 2014). But if television is the outlier in queer theory, reality TV is the outcast. Reality TV is dismissed as fundamentally normative: it is overly commercial, depressingly derivative, or immorally deceptive, possessing neither the innovation or earnestness needed to challenge social and cultural norms (Corner, 2002; Bignell, 2005; Kilborn, 2000, 2013). And where work has considered queer identity, analyses of reality TV are often limited to the ‘accuracy’ of its LGBTQIA+ representations (Schroeder, 2006; Clarkson, 2005; Edgar, 2011; Gamson, 2014). Michael Lovelock’s interrogation of how reality TV’s privileging of authenticity and core-truths have shaped normative perceptions of queer identity is a refreshing exception (Lovelock, 2019). Nonetheless, we still understand reality TV predominantly through its ability to represent queer identity, rather than seek the queerness within its mode of representation.

My paper on MTV UK’s *True Love or True Lies* (2018-) will challenge this so-called incompatibility between reality TV and queerness. The programme invites heterosexual and queer couples to a holiday villa. The catch: some pairs are ‘real lovers’ whilst others are ‘liars’, faking their relationship and/or sexual orientation. The couples must eliminate the ‘liars’ amongst the group to increase their prize money, while viewers at home are encouraged to ‘figure out’ the legitimate pairs.

While *TLOTL* demands these couples prove their connection and identities are genuine, distinctions between what is true or false become illuminatingly ambiguous. Challenges are specially constructed to test couples’ innate compatibility. And the contestants’ ‘true selves’ are revealed in a paradoxically sensationalised ‘love ceremony’. Meanwhile, participant’s ritualistic heartfelt confessional sequences, heated arguments and emotional reconciliations -

and the believability of these declarations - are continuously called into question by fellow contestants, and interrogated by the show's voice-over, undertaken by the people's favourite "geezer", Danny Dyer.

What gets exposed is an inherent performativity to reality TV which, once given proper consideration, can possess great value for queer theorists. Tensions between *TLOTL*'s pursuit of authenticity and the impossibility of this aim run rampant. The show continuously challenges its own capacity to reveal any essential 'truth' about its contestants' relationships and sexual orientations - a paradox fundamental to reality TV which offers a rather productive platform for queerness. I will explore how *TLOTL* disrupts our often naturalised assumptions about truthful/authentic versus constructed/fabricated reality which, through a queer lens, reveals reality TV's potential to profoundly challenge essentialised and normative notions of gender and sexual identity onscreen.

Philippa Orme is a PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews. Their thesis interrogates the queer potential of reality TV, which explores the medium's disruptive ambiguities between observation/obtrusion, performance/authenticity, and sobriety/sensationalism. Philippa is also the co-editor-and-chief at Frames Cinema Journal and is working on an upcoming issue on queer phenomenology and 'lowbrow' media.

Friday, 1 July

Panel 7: Fan Behaviour Online

Prime Video vs. Netflix vs. Disney+: Investigating Fandom and Rivalry among Direct-to-Consumer Streaming Services

Cody T. Havard, Ph.D., Timothy D Ryan and Michael Hutchinson, The University of Memphis

The entertainment industry was forever impacted with the introduction of the Netflix online streaming service in 2007 (Littleton & Roettgers, 2018). Over the last five years, people have increasingly found more options to consume entertainment separate from the traditional means of terrestrial television and movie theaters. In 2019, the Walt Disney Company launched the direct-to-consumer streaming service Disney+ and several other large studios followed suit (e.g., Paramount rebranding of CBS+, Comcast/Universal) along with major tech companies (Apple TV+), joining already successful services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic seemingly sped up the need and desire of consumers to spend

their discretionary income on streaming services rather than other entertainment options. With this large and fast growth, consumers are faced with many different options competing for their money, attention, and loyalty. To this end, the companies behind the streaming services engage in strategic moves consistent with rival brands (Havard, 2021). In an attempt to further understand consumer preferences and behavior regarding favorite and competing brands, the current study investigated the ways people perceived brands they identified as favorite and rival. Because the sport setting offers an ideal setting to investigate rivalry and group behavior, the two settings were compared. Specifically, it was hypothesized that fans of sport and streaming would differ in their perceptions of relevant rival brands (H1), being a fan of both sport and streaming would influence perceptions toward the relevant rival in both settings (H2, H3), and whether significant fan perceptions were present between fans of different streaming service brands (RQ1).

Using a sample of participants from Amazon MTurk, a total of 117 participants provided responses regarding their brand identity (James, Delia, & Wann, 2019), attitudes toward favorite and rival brands (Spears & Singh, 2004), and perceptions and likely behaviors toward the identified rival brands (Havard, Gray, Gould, Sharp, & Schaffer, 2013; Havard & Hutchinson, 2017).

Of the participants, 38.5% reported being a fan of a sport team, 31.6% a fan of a streaming service, and 29.9% a fan of both a sport team and streaming service. More demographic information will be provided in the presentation. A series of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) revealed that fans of sport were more identified with their favorite teams and experienced greater satisfaction from favorable comparison to the rival than did fans of streaming services (H1). Further, identifying as a fan of both a sport team and streaming service influenced greater negativity toward both the rival sport team (H2) and rival streaming service (H3). Finally, significant differences in favorite and rival brand preferences were not present between fans of separate streaming service brands (RQ1).

Results support previous research that sport fans report more negativity toward rival brands than in other consumer settings (Havard, Grieve, & Lomenick, 2020; Havard, Wann, Grieve, & Collins, 2022), and that identifying with multiple groups influences the perceptions people report toward both favorite and rival brands. Further, the findings carry implications for researchers and practitioners working in the sport and straight-to-consumer entertainment space, which will be discussed in more detail during the presentation.

Cody T. Havard, Ph.D. is a professor of Sport Commerce, Director of Research, and Director of the Bureau of Sport and Leisure Commerce in the Kemmons Wilson School at The University of Memphis. His research focuses on the rivalry phenomenon to better understand group member behavior and its impact on society.

Informal AVT Practices in Ukraine: Questioning the Notion of Global Access to Mainstream Television

Kateryna Sivak, Birmingham Institute of Media and English

As Werner Herzog once said, “piracy is the most successful form of distribution” (Blaney, 2019). ‘Pirate’ – or, less colloquially, informal – media have been long found to be capable of achieving what the formal media industry fails to deliver (Lobato, 2012; Mattelart, 2012; Goldgel-Carballo and Poblete, 2020). Today, in the age of seemingly ubiquitous global streaming services, some of which even take into account a varying willingness and ability to pay for content in different countries (Ramachandran, 2021; Shkil, 2021), it might seem that such questionably legal media practices have little reason to exist. However, how global are these services truly? When Netflix claims that it is available in over 190 countries, what does it mean by “available”? When we consider *Game of Thrones* or *Stranger Things* as television series with a worldwide audience, do those audiences in different parts of the world spend the same amount of effort to access the episodes?

To address these questions, I focus on the case of Ukrainian informal voice-over groups and individual subtitlers, whose practices serve as the only source of Ukrainian translation for a significant amount of globally available television. These practitioners, whose informal status often leaves them at the underexplored margins of the mainstream, Western media studies, are more than common in Ukraine. Whereas some of the major streaming services became formally available in Ukraine over five years ago, it is largely amateur subtitlers and voice-over actors who continue to be responsible for making the content of their libraries accessible to the Ukrainian audience.

Such a central role of these mostly not-for-profit, crowdfunded localisation practices not only challenges the notion of global in the context of such streaming services as Netflix, but it also begs the question of what having “access” to television content means in practice. I argue that the availability of audiovisual translation (AVT) – not only into the necessary language, but in a preferred to the specific audience format – is a crucial, yet sometimes overlooked aspect within media studies. In this paper, I draw primarily from in-depth interviews with these AVT

amateurs and informal professionals, conducted as part of the virtual ethnography of the Ukrainian informal screen media economy. I discuss the nuances of their practices as well as broader cultural, political, and economic aspects of the Ukrainian context where they exist.

Kateryna is a full-time doctoral researcher in Media and Cultural Studies at Birmingham City Institute of Media and English. Her PhD project explores varying practices within the Ukrainian informal screen media economy that in one way or another make films and TV series accessible to the Ukrainian audience. She is a co-editor of *Makings*, an open-access journal on the cultural and creative industries.

The Translational Fandom of Marvel Cinematic Universe in the Outlier of Chinese Television Culture

XIAO Yao, The University of Hong Kong

The escalating tech-innovation in new media culture is liberating audiences from passive consumption to more productive and critical engagement with the legacy and streaming television media. In particular, transcultural fans constantly overstep moral and legal boundaries, circumvent the dominant media apparatus and re-establish new routes and conventions of engagement (Hill, 2021; Jenkins, 2013; Lee, 2014). Although fan-generated contents are recognised as formidable political economies in the development of the Chinese online cultural industry (Li, 2017), how fan translation is furthering the reception and interpretation of global screen stories remains in the outlier of television studies. This paper will showcase the recent fan-based cross-cultural engagement with the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) in China. This to highlight: 1) the ways marginal audiences (Chinese MCU fans) seek to sync with the recent telecinematic expansion of MCU while its host platform, Disney+, has no official access to the Chinese media context; 2) the forensic and interpretative works done by Chinese MCU fans who persistently seek to amplify the pleasure of MCU content in their media contexts; 3) the crucial but largely unacknowledged cultural value generated by Chinese MCU fandom in the outlier of contemporary Chinese TV culture. Taken together, this study aims to further explore the notion of “translational fandom” (Guo and Evans 2020) and integrate its theorisation to the present research in television culture.

Xiao Yao holds a BA in Tourism Management and English: BISU, a Minor Degree in French and an MA in Translation & Bilingual Communication: HKBU MPhil, PhD: HKU

The Outliers of Brazilian TV History

Lucas Martins Néia, University of São Paulo

This paper discusses the challenges involving the maintenance of Brazil's television history in contemporary times. The following axes are considered: (1) the centrality of Rede Globo in the country's audio-visual scene; (2) the archive-ability and preservation of TV content over time; and (3) the various agents of Brazilian television memory present in the digital environment. Inaugurated in 1965, Globo has the largest viewership in Brazil since the 1970s. It is the TV network that has best systematised its history in print and online projects and publications. Historians and communicologists, however, must make efforts to go beyond the official narratives promoted by the channel and ensure that its protagonism doesn't jeopardise the understanding of the importance and contributions of other TV stations to the history of the vehicle.

One must also consider the scarcity of materials relating to the early years of television in Brazil, when networks based all their programming on ephemeral broadcasts. Even the advent of videotape didn't immediately become a guarantee that Brazilian TV channels would preserve their archives: for economic reasons, many tapes were reused, while others were lost in floods or fires. The lack or difficulty in accessing primary sources will require television historians to reformulate their notions of textual analysis and engage with the past in an analytical and imaginative way (Freire Filho, 2004).

That's why it is necessary to highlight the role of public institutions and the so-called TV "curator fans" (Lopes et al., 2015) in video streaming platforms, environments which stand out as "lieux de mémoire" (Nora, 1989) of the Brazil's audio-visual production. The Brazilian Cinematheque, for example, maintains the Bank of Cultural Content (BCC), a website where it's possible to watch several news reels and full telenovela episodes by defunct Rede Tupi, a pioneering network in Latin America which shut down in 1980.

Meanwhile, many TV fans take to YouTube to share morsels of their cult content, which they have often stored since childhood — such as recordings on VHS tapes, for instance. The activity of these fans fosters the general public's curiosity in the history of Brazil's TV networks that are no longer active, such as Rede Tupi itself and Rede Manchete. Often, though, these fans' practices collide with the interests of present-day networks — Globo constantly uses copyright claims to shut down YouTube channels sharing some of its old programmes.

By scrutinising interactions, conflicts, and disputes amongst government agencies, public institutions, media companies, and “curator fans”, it aims to verify how these actors are involved in the narration of Brazil’s TV memory and, therefore, of the country’s history itself. The cultural, political, and economic ways that have characterised this becoming will also illuminate the outliers and “steep corners” of the historical trajectory of Brazilian television, providing clues about which histories of the vehicle have not yet been told.

Lucas Martins Néia is a screenwriter, playwright, and theatre director. He holds a PhD in Communications from the University of São Paulo (USP, Brazil) and a BA in Performing Arts from the State University of Londrina (UEL, Brazil). He is also a workshop instructor and speaker with the Pontos MIS Program, from the São Paulo Museum of Image and Sound (MIS-SP, Brazil), as well as a member of the Screenwriting Research Network (SRN) and the International Network of Communication Historiographers (RIHC).

“Falling in love with a fifteen year old cartoon”: Streaming, Fandom Renaissance, and "Avatar: the Last Airbender"

Sidney Garner, University of Texas at Austin

In May 2020, fifteen years after its Nickelodeon debut, Netflix added *Avatar: the Last Airbender* (“Avatar”), an Asian-inspired fantasy animation, to its United States platform, in anticipation for its forthcoming live action adaptation. The “Avatar” fandom, though already prosperous, experienced what fans dubbed a ‘renaissance’ which brought an influx of new fans, content, and discourse. As such, this presentation will use *Avatar* as a case study to explore the relation between streaming and cycles of television fandom. Along with Covid-19 and social unrest-induced anxieties making *Avatar* a means of escapism and a lens for understanding our world, binge-watching and Netflix’s affordances, as noted by Mareike Jenner, contributed to this renewed popularity and explosion of fan-produced content.

Using discourse analysis of fan reactions on Tumblr, this research demonstrates how fandom renaissance can manifest from SVOD’s streaming of shows with previously prominent fan engagement. Examining the *Avatar* renaissance, as well as shifts in related fan practices, reveal a dichotomy of established fans versus new fans. This dichotomy, as noted by established fans, is expressed through the perceived generational differences in which new fans bring more enlightened concepts of sexuality into the fandom. Thus, streaming shows in a new context removed from the social milieu of their original airing has impacts on the discourse in which

new fans engage. The purpose of this research is to illuminate the value of understanding fan-favorite texts in a streaming context. Doing so sheds light on how certain viewers watch shows and how the future of shows like *Avatar* with established fandoms can experience revival when introduced to viewers through SVODs.

As animation and children's programming, *Avatar* is often overlooked, both by viewers and scholars, for shows with more prestige catered to adult audiences as conceptualized by Michael Newman and Elana Levine. However, *Avatar* holds a unique position as a show relevant to our current streaming and participatory cultures. This research may speak to the future of streaming and its relation to existing fandoms. As streaming services acquaint themselves with shows and franchises with prominent fandoms, those adaptations and their fans can be a rich site for understanding how fans interact with streaming services.

Sidney Garner is a master's student in Media Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She graduated from the University of Louisville in 2021 with BAs in Pan-African Studies and Women's Gender, & Sexuality Studies. She is also a 2020 scholar of the Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her interests include fan and audience studies especially in regards to identity and representations of race, gender, and sexuality. Prior research includes police propaganda in Fox/NBC's "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" and the relationship between comedy and race in recent buddy cop films.

When Greek television studies (never) met the audiences: How fans respond to popular old television comedies on YouTube

Spiros Chairetis, University of Oxford

This article draws on research in television studies to explore how online fan communities interact with Greece's popular old television comedies on YouTube. Although television fiction studies in Greece constitutes a rapidly developing sub-field, the overriding body of academic work available tends to concentrate on genre/gender aspects of television shows or to prioritise researchers' analysis of the texts over real audiences and research subjects. Against this backdrop, this article seeks to explore the extent to which fans' readings of the popular old texts differ from the readings that academic researchers have mobilised. To this end, the article provides a qualitative analysis of discourses that have been posted on YouTube, under the videos of the comedy shows *The Unbearables* (MEGA, 1991-1993) and *Wonderful Creatures* (ALPHA, 2007-2008). This research reveals that online conversations around *The Unbearables*

and *Wonderful Creatures* diverge significantly -in terms of content- from the ones discussed among television academics, ranging from a tendency of fans to share consumption patterns of television fiction before and after the pandemic, and promote nostalgic/affective readings of the shows, to blur the boundaries between actors/characters and relate them with contemporary LGBTQI debates and the #MeToo movement. Through a detailed analysis of posts and comments on YouTube, this paper argues that online fans' interactions and decodings of the shows contribute to the development of an ever-expanding archive, which expands the old television comedies' horizon of expectations. Finally, such an analysis suggests the need for a systematic incorporation of the audience's voices, with the ultimate aim to diversify the available understandings that can emerge from television texts.

Spyridos Chairetis holds a DPhil in Media and Cultural Studies from the University of Oxford. He has published on Greek (LGBTQI+) cinema and television, genre studies and auto-ethnography. He is the author of *Greek Television Comedy: Popular Texts, Queer Readings* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022). His research interests revolve around media and sexuality studies, television fiction, gender anthropology and the relationship between media, culture and society. He is currently teaching television and media studies at Fårö Creative Learning in Athens, Greece.

Monday, 4 July

Panel 9: Community, Space and Television

How I decided to research a regional television in Czechia

Jana Jedličková, Palacký University Olomouc, Czechia

I have never been specifically interested in researching the topic of regional television. Like most of other TV studies scholars who came in with the background of film and media studies I was more curious about international and global TV forms and ways contemporary TV industries are shaped nowadays. However, almost two years ago I was asked by a young local politician about everyday regional TV practices, from whom they get their financing and how are they attached to local communities. It seemed like a simple task but as it turned out, with the exception of few outdated students' theses, there were really no valid sources focusing on the state and forms of Czech regional televisions. It is hardly any surprise considering TV studies is a fairly new area of academic interest in our country. Nonetheless, what surprised me even more is the lack of international interest in regional TV broadcasting. Though we could

find some very interesting studies about local media, they are very scarce and they are usually written in local languages as well. Not to mention, they usually cover only the topics connected to journalism and news coverage. Thus if you want to research the connection between let's say regional TV programming and local communities or the role of regional TV companies in upkeeping the culture heritage you not only lack the source materials but the efficient methodology as well. Therefore, my presentation is focused on the importance of researching local and regional forms of TV broadcasting and streaming, as well as the difficulties one can face when they decide to do a research of regional television. I do not offer satisfying answers. Instead of, I hope to open the discussion about the role of television in small local communities and how we can actually measure and research such topics if we decide that it actually is a topic worthy of our academic attention.

Jana has studied media, communication studies, journalism, and theatre and film studies. Following up on my media theory and film studies background she researched trends in representation of LGBTQA+ teen characters in contemporary American and British TV fiction. She received her Ph.D. from Palacký University in 2016. She co-authored a book on the portrayal of criminalologists in contemporary *Czech television, The Work of the Female Heroine and Their Depiction in Czech Television Crime Series* (2019). So far, she has been focused on topics of online TV curation strategies and mobile app design in the context of content curation.

Climate Action, Local Communities and Local Television

Elke Weissmann, Edge Hill University and Belinda Tyrrell and James Hickson, Liverpool University

There is no doubt that television is increasingly operating at a transnational level with particularly 'peak TV' drama often being coproduced and exploited internationally. Nevertheless, there is evidence that television is also becoming more and more focused on the local. This includes the dramas produced for international distribution, which are often grounded in very specific, micro-local spaces, but it also includes the institutions of television, as television continues to operate nationally, regionally and locally. In many ways, then, television plays out on a representational and institutional level that globalisation includes a localising element (Robertson, 1995). While local television has existed in different forms in different countries, including as community television in Germany, Canada and the USA (see Higgins, 1999; King and Mele, 1999), in the UK it was only formally established in the 2010s

under commercial licences. Since then, local television has conglomerated into two central franchises, That's TV And Now TV. As a result, the local content of local television has been reduced to a few hours a day while the rest of the time is filled with reruns of US shows. This, unfortunately, means that an opportunity is missed in terms of engaging with local communities which are becoming increasingly important in offering alternative ways of political engagement in a post-national world (Sassen, 2003). As Sassen (2006) emphasises, it is these local communities that ground the political experience in local action, but connect them with community groups elsewhere. Thus, in a world where political engagement with the nation is on the wane, local community groups offer direct action. This is true particularly for climate action, which is often organised at local level and responds to specific local needs.

In this paper, we report back on a project which followed a local community group, Love Wavertree CIC, which aimed to find specific local responses to climate change through climate assemblies. These were filmed and the resulting two programmes, a documentary series and a life-style series, disseminated through different means locally. In this paper, we examine what role local television could play if it was re-imagined as a community-led public service. Set up to educate, inform and entertain about local events, and organised to give voice to local communities, could television help engage the public beyond those immediately involved?

Elke Weissmann is Reader in Film and Television. Belinda Tyrrell is a researcher into community and policy at the Heseltine Institute at Liverpool University. Together they have gained funding for the project 'Community-led Television, Local Voice and Climate Action' from the British Academy.

More than Time: Television Space and a Sense of Community

Matthew Cipa, University of Queensland

The field of television studies has made much of the medium's extended and interrupted storytelling time relative to the shorter, continuous temporal qualities of cinema, emphasising how this shapes and underscores TV's storytelling possibilities. Television's temporally extended capacity for storytelling underpins the complex and uniquely pleasurable challenges of paying close attention to television shows (notably serials) as well as the possibility for rich engagement with multi-faceted characters – both heroes and anti-heroes. However, comparatively little attention has been paid to what I term storytelling or narrative space. With the extension of storytelling time across episodes and seasons comes an expansion of space,

which is critical to appreciating how television series and serials manage not just a depth of character depiction and engagement, but a breadth and quantity of characters depicted at comparatively equal depth.

To shed light on the overlooked medium-specific characteristic of storytelling space, I focus on the idea of community. Following philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, I understand communities as having a temporal dimension across which shared values and goods are worked out and worked toward with varying degrees of success: that communities are not just formed but sustained to the extent that members of the community invest themselves and adhere to this shared understanding of goods and values. However, a community also has a spatial dimension – namely the extent to which the community is defined and redefined, reinforced or threatened in terms of the individual members who comprise it and factors outside of the community. The wellspring of a community is a shared foundation of values, interests, practices, and agreed upon internal goods: Biological families, symbolic families (crime families, friendship groups), workplaces, towns; cultural, political, and religious groups are all examples of communities. The community of a television program is replicated formally in the community of its narrative organisation – the variable ways in which episodes come together as seasons, and seasons come together as a whole work. The types of communities developed will depend, then, on the narrative form and structure of the work – whether a series (*Seinfeld*, 1989–1998; *The X-Files*, 1993–2002 & 2016–2018) or serial (*The Wire*, 2002–2008; *Rectify*, 2013–2016; *Peaky Blinders*, 2013—; *Atlanta*, 2016—) including self-contained 8- (*True Detective*, 2014; 2015; 2019) or 10- (*Fargo*, 2014; 2015; 2017; 2020) episode programs, or standalone mini-series (*Mildred Pierce*, 2011). By highlighting a range of television programs, I illustrate how different sorts of communities and the ways in which these are explored demonstrate the importance of narrative space to television as a medium.

Matthew Cipa teaches film and television studies at the University Queensland, Australia. His first monograph – *Is Lola Free? and Other Essays on the Metaphysical Screen* – is currently under contract with SUNY Press. He has forthcoming contributions to edited collections focusing on performances of autism in film and television, the work of director Mervyn LeRoy, and the philosophy of Friedrich Schiller.

How to make or define "quality" and "prestigious" TV? Disputes of meanings within the television field

Gabriel Ferreirinho, Universidade Federal Fluminense

The symbolic relations behind the notions of "quality" and "prestige" in television present complexities particular to the medium itself. The discursive disputes within the television field for the definition of these categories are part of the struggle for symbolic power, to determine what should be understood as legitimate. After all, television has historically been associated with mass consumption and had its "commercial" aspect emphasized in such a way that its productions, seen as focused "only" on entertainment and to supply the demand of a "popular" audience, had their artistic potential underestimated. On the other hand, despite the supposedly consensual perspective among art critics, academics and journalists that television would be an "inferior" or "less valid" medium, other discourses emerged throughout television history trying to frame it as capable of producing works that could dispute the notions of prestige and quality, comparing it at least to two already recognized fields of the arts: cinema and literature. When Feuer, Kerr and Vahimagi (1984) wrote about the television quality of MTM, they discursively tied the creative freedom and sophistication of the productions to those found in productions of other media. And from the 1980s to the 2010s, the trend in trying to legitimize television from other art fields remained, even if taking different forms and using different elements as categories to define "qualities" and possibilities of prestige at different times (Ferreirinho 2020). The analysis intended here also could not turn only to articles published on sites that represent media institutions already well positioned in the field, because the forms of power that are present from the discourses are plural and inhabit different places, not only those understood as hegemonic or legitimate, they are also ordered from social relations and opinions, both in public and private spheres. Therefore, in this paper, 15 journalistic articles or opinion pieces that intend to define what is and how to make a "quality" or "prestigious" TV will be analyzed, thus, we seek to understand what are the discursive elements evoked for such categorizations in television series. It is possible to notice seven recurring categories in texts that propose to define "quality" and "prestige" television: a) channel/platform: in which a relationship between prestige and premium channels and streaming platforms is based; b) audience: in a way in which the "type" of audience of the series also influences the prestigious aspect; c) economic value of the production: connecting more expensive productions with the notion of "quality"; d) authority of the crew: in which the professionals in front and behind the

camera are elements to elevate the discourses about the production; e) narrative: a more complex category in which issues of complex narrative (as opposed to procedural series) and "controversial" or "serious" themes are triggered as well as issues of representation, gender identity, and sometimes race; f) innovation: which includes discourses on televisuality, technique, and "creative freedom"; g) awards, in which relevant awards in television culture are discursively triggered to elaborate the prestige of certain productions.

Gabriel Ferreirinho is a PhD candidate at the Postgraduate Program in Communication at the Universidade Federal Fluminense with an M.A in Communication and a bachelor's in Media Studies from the same institution. Currently, he is developing academic research related to television serialized fiction; "quality TV"; television field; institutions of cultural consecration; representations and gender. He is also a member of the TeleVisões research group (UFF) and an associate researcher of Série Clube (UFF).

Cheap TV

Brett Mills, Edge Hill University

What does it mean to describe television programming as 'cheap'? Much TV Studies work has extensively explored television categorized variously as 'quality', or 'complex', and these terms often circulate within (typically unacknowledged) contexts of aesthetics of expense. In doing so, television that can be understood as 'cheap' becomes marginalised, an outlier of the analytical and evaluative rubrics that reify particular kinds of programming. But 'cheap' may be a useful category for understanding television. 'Cheap' here is understood not entirely as indicating actual production costs, but instead as an aesthetic and generic set of signifiers that can be inflected in particular ways across a variety of genres, such as quiz shows, chat shows, (some) dramas and (some) sitcoms. I intend here to examine the fruitfulness of unpicking these 'cheap' aesthetics, and exploring how they function productively in opposition to that defined as 'quality' or 'high-end'. The aim here is also to reclaim the term 'cheap', disassociating it from evaluatively negative connotations arising from simplistic correlations of cost and quality. Indeed, the aesthetics of 'cheap TV' may offer representational possibilities productively congruent with the medium's progressive societal functions.

Brett Mills is a Visiting Professor of Media at Edge Hill University, UK, and an Honorary Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of East Anglia, UK. His books

include *'Television Sitcom'*, *'The Sitcom'*, *'Creativity in the British Television Sitcom Industry'* (with Erica Horton), and *'Animals on Television: The Cultural Making of the Non-Human'*.

Audiences, Everyday Life and the Values of TV During Covid-19

Catherine Johnson, University of Huddersfield

Viewing and subscription figures tell us that Covid-19 had a significant impact on people's television viewing habits, with linear and SVOD viewing increasing (Ofcom, 2020). But this data does little to tell us why television viewing increased or the role that television was playing in people's everyday lives during a time of extraordinary crisis. This paper addresses this gap, drawing on two sets of qualitative data gathered before and during the Covid-19 pandemic that explored the changing television viewing habits of the same 29 participants. In drawing on qualitative audience research, the paper responds to calls to apply the focus of earlier models of audience research on people's lived experiences, to the work on media platforms, streaming and (S)VOD (see, for example, Livingstone, 2019; Gray, 2021; Turner, 2019). In doing so, the paper argues for the importance of understanding television as being deeply embedded into the patterns, habits, stresses and pleasures of people's everyday lives and confronts how and why television continues to matter to people.

Moving beyond studies that focus on 'savvy' or engaged audiences (Martinez & Kaun, 2019; Valiati, 2019), our research was designed to include non-self-selecting viewers, including those who were light TV viewers or placed little value on television. Here we argue for the need for TV Studies to broaden the kinds of audience that it researches if we are to understand the role that television plays in people's daily lives. In addition, our research demonstrated the need to understand 'television' from an audience's perspective as encompassing a wide range of different forms, from broadcast and VOD to video accessed through social media and online video services. In doing so, the paper argues for research that explores the intersections and relationships between older forms of linear and broadcast television, and new forms of streaming, from SVOD to Twitch and YouTube.

In drawing on this audience research to examine the changing role of television within people's everyday lives, this paper addresses the CST Slow Conference theme of 'The Outliers of Television (Studies)' in three ways. First, it moves beyond the tendency in recent studies to focus on the impact of new (streaming and digital) technologies, to demonstrate the importance of the socio-cultural in understanding contemporary changes to television viewing behaviour. Second, it widens the kind of audience being studied, arguing for the value of exploring the

behaviour of light and non-tech-savvy audiences that have tended to be overlooked in recent years. Third, it demonstrates the importance of examining different forms of television (from linear broadcast to VOD and online video) together, if we are to understand the processes of continuity and change that shape contemporary television.

Professor Catherine Johnson's most recent book, *Online TV*, examines the rise of internet-distributed television and its impact on the TV industry and regulation. She frequently works with industry and is on the DCMS College of Experts. She leads the Routes to Content project at the University of Huddersfield, which examine people's changing viewing habits. She is also researching the impact of platformisation on public service media, and (with Dr Ben Spatz) leads the Yorkshire Film and Television Studies Innovation Lab, which is developing experimental methods to address systemic inequalities in the film and TV industries.

It's Not TV, it's... Happening Again. It is Happening Again: On the Characterisation of *Twin Peaks: The Return* as an Outlier of Television

Michael Clark, University of Kent

This paper critiques two versions of a flawed but popular claim that *Twin Peaks: The Return* (Showtime 2017) cannot be categorised as an instance of television because it is an outlier within the medium. The first version was advanced by those involved in production, not least co-creator David Lynch, who characterised *The Return* as “a feature film in eighteen parts” on the basis that its screenplay, shooting schedule, and editing process more closely resembled those of a feature film. I call this the strong version of the outlier claim, which I elucidate by attending to interviews with creative personnel that were conducted during *The Return*'s pre-release promotional campaign, parsing assumptions made about the categories of ‘feature film’ and ‘television’ in their testimony. When doing so, I posit the strong version as emblematic of a broader trend of contemporary prestige television producers asserting that their work is an ‘x-hour-long movie’, which, alongside archaic hierarchies of cultural forms, I find to be premised on anachronistic understandings of television production and a misguided conflation of ‘feature film’ and ‘a discrete narrative’.

The second version appeared in critical discourse and characterised *The Return* as an instance of cinema. I call this the weak version, and elaborate it by focusing on arguments advanced by *Cahiers du cinema* when championing *The Return* as the 2010s' outstanding cinematic achievement. I explain the complexities and idiosyncrasies of *Cahiers*' provocative appreciation of *The Return*, which has the appearance of evoking Noël Carroll's pluralistic

account of cinema as a medium of moving images that encompasses film and television. Then, I clarify that *Cahiers* also employs a different logic to traditional discourses of 'cinematic television'; it does not gesture in a vaguely positive manner to a visual style that is redolent of films, nor to lavish production values, but instead identifies in *The Return* an overall attitude that is risky, unpredictable, and personal, which is ostensibly sufficient to categorise it as cinema. When making this distinction, however, I find that *Cahiers*' argument is premised on a circular and analytically unhelpful honorific understanding of art—one that posits 'cinema' as an evaluative category, as opposed to Carroll's descriptive category, and in turn encourages a familiar, regrettable contrast between 'good' cinema objects and 'bad' television objects.

Thus, I reject both versions, which are ahistorical and dependent on a narrow understanding of 'television' that omits *The Return*'s considerable formal, generic, and thematic continuities with television's rich history. Nevertheless, throughout this paper, I position these outlier claims as intriguingly confused and illustrative of continued problems facing television studies regarding the correct categorisation of some works amid continued technological and aesthetic convergence. I conclude by considering television studies' complicity in this, asking whether the field's longstanding scepticism of questions of an aesthetic nature, and its attendant lack of precision regarding its object of inquiry, have permitted some confusion over the medium to which works like *The Return* belong and opened a space for practitioners and critics to discuss these works in counter-intuitive ways.

Michael Clark is a PhD student at the University of Kent, where he researches the problems that long-running television fictions pose to traditional notions of aesthetic appreciation.

Panel 11: Practices of Media Work

Pandemic Personalities: The Adapted, Digital Body of MTV's *Catfish*

Catherine (Cat) Champney, University of Delaware

Though not an overlooked program in television studies per se, MTV's *Catfish* today supersedes most of its existing scholarship. Critics who express interest in the show, even recently, rarely explore beyond seasons one or two (episode 56 of season eight airs on February 16th, for context) - and have not, to date, analyzed *Catfish* beyond the transition of co-hosts or the start of the pandemic - both of which drastically changed the players in a semi-consistent

formula. In 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, Kamie Crawford replaced Max Joseph as permanent co-host to Nev Schulman on the series. The show - for those unfamiliar - presents a pseudo-true crime investigation (per episode) which uncovers the identity of a potential online “catfish.” Schulman and Joseph are both cis, straight white men - so, Crawford, a cis Black woman, provides needed perspective to the series: though this shift does not necessarily offset previous criticism of the show - from both Fans and scholars - it presents an opportunity for closer examination of the *Catfish* adaptation formula and its exploration - or exploitation, to some - of authenticity, bodies, and reality, as it continuously adapts to seemingly critical changes.

Now a colloquial term even outside of the show’s audience, a “catfish,” according to Urban Dictionary (whose definition is based on the series), is “a fake or stolen online identity created or used for the purposes of beginning a deceptive relationship” (2017). Both the term and the series are adapted from a documentary based on Schulman’s experience as a “Hopeful” - the person - or victim, to some - who dates the online persona. The television series “helps” a different Hopeful in each episode - Crawford and Schulman meet and interview the Hopeful, investigate the online persona, and set up a physical confrontation between the two, for better or worse. Prior to the pandemic, MTV’s *Catfish* associated reality with physical location - the Hopeful’s relationship is only “real” so far as it is “authentic,” which requires the canonic in-person confrontation - an authentic identity needed a real, physical body. So, the danger - to MTV’s *Catfish* - was as much the lack of an authentic body as it was the online setting, home to only digital bodies (avatars, profile pictures, etc.). However, because the pandemic eliminated travel, the digital playground formerly occupied only by *Catfish* and their Hopefuls expanded to include the television series itself, as Crawford and Schulman transitioned the show to the Zoom platform.

This project aims to investigate MTV’s *Catfish*’s identity as an adaptation through its ability to adapt its own form, both physical and digital, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. The series’ adapted pandemic identity, I argue, offers the show a digital “body” not unlike the *Catfish* and Hopefuls themselves, that challenges the series’ original dedication to physical authenticity. Afterall, how can a television series that prioritizes “authentic” connection exist only as the type of body it seeks to challenge? Furthermore, how does the series’ digital identity challenge existing television studies’ criticisms of the show - particularly concerning marginalized, non-normative bodies and empathy?

Catherine (Cat) Champney is a PhD student at the University of Delaware. Her areas of research include: adaptation, early/19c literature, and American popular culture. Currently, she is interested in “contagious” narratives, especially if they adapt or manipulate early American gothic narratives. Other recent interests and publications include the film adaptation of *Gone with the Wind*, Black speculative fiction, and authorial concerns in Fan theory. Outside of academia, she enjoys bingeing YA fiction, walking the riverfront in Wilmington DE, and visiting family (and her beloved dog) in Vermont. She received her MA in Literature (19c) from Brooklyn College in 2020.

A study of the journalistic routine through four levels of audience involvement. The case of *The Newsroom* (HBO) in Spain

Maria Fernanda Novoa, University of Navarra

The manifestations of journalism in popular culture make it possible to project models capable of arousing the admiration or rejection of public opinion (Ehrlich & Saltzman, 2015). The honorable vision of the profession is reflected in Aaron Sorkin's series, *The Newsroom* (HBO, 2012-2014).

The simulation of real events recreated in fiction reveals the educational potential of *The Newsroom* (López-Gutiérrez & Nicolás Gavilán, 2016). Peters (2015) noted the ability of this television drama to spark discussions about the mission of journalism. Ferrucci & Painter (2014) studied how the series constructs reality through pseudo-events, and Koliska & Eckert (2015) studied the perception of journalists through articles published in the US media. This paper presents the results of an investigation carried out on the followers of the television series *The Newsroom* (HBO) in Spain. Two focus groups (N = 17) were carried out. They included journalists (with different roles in local and national media) and journalism students from various Spanish universities. The participants were questioned about their experiences, knowledge, and perceptions of the plot and the characters of the audiovisual fiction. The interpretation of the data was made from four levels, which evaluated the emotional involvement from lower to higher degree: (1) transportation, (2) identification, (3) parasocial interaction, and (4) worship. The central hypothesis raised the relationship between the ethical values of *The Newsroom* and the high emotional involvement of the fans.

The results obtained will help to understand the high degree of identification of the spectators with the media content. The internalization of ethical values, the adoption of the character's point of view, and the reflection on their informative mission, based on the fiction proposal,

are significant aspects. Participants demonstrated an aspirational tendency through empathy and the desire to imitate the main characters. The reasoning of the fans revealed parasocial interactions, and their experiences of transportation (immersion in the story) demonstrated critical skills expressed through counterarguments. Studying how television series are related to professional expectations is extremely important and shows different modes of perception and emotional manifestation.

María Fernanda Novoa Jaso is professor at the Faculty of Communication of the University of Navarra. She has devoted her attention to reception studies in audiovisual fiction. She has collaborated in empirical studies of public opinion in which she has used quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Her doctoral thesis dealt with the influence of workplace TV drama series on social and professional expectations about journalistic work.

Production of Bureaucracy/Bureaucracies of Production: Understanding formal organisation on and off screen

Gavin Maclean, Edinburgh Napier University

The post-2016 conjuncture can be viewed in terms of an anti-bureaucratic romanticism in parts of the Global North (Lopdrup-Hjorth and Du Gay, 2020). The votes for Brexit in the UK and the rise of right-wing populists, such as Donald Trump, can be closely associated with rhetoric that attempts to break with bureaucratic organisation. The rise of these populist leaders is intricately connected to the medium of television through the creation and legitimation of these individuals as public figures. Post/anti bureaucratic romanticism is represented on screen with popular programmes such as *Line of Duty* and *The Good Fight* offering depictions of bureaucracy, legitimacy and due process that feed into or represent anti-bureaucratic sentiment. Within the cultural industries, post-bureaucratic principles have provided the basis for the organisation of television productions with the rise of ‘flexible’ project-based work in the 1990s with the industries having apparently moved on from bureaucratic forms of organisation. This has led to a situation where informal organisation dominates the industries where social capital is increasingly important in getting jobs (Blair, 2001; Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012). These changes have acted to concentrate jobs in the hands of white, male, middle class workers. The abuses reported through the #MeToo movement reflect a ‘sugar daddy capitalism’ (Fleming, 2019) where the increasing unaccountable personal power of gatekeepers in informal organisations act to perpetuate abuse. Despite seeming to disappear

from view with this increased informal organisation, bureaucracy does continue to be a central feature of production within the cultural industries. Logics of bureaucratic cultural production – such as genres, formatting decisions and hierarchies of creative management – continue to imbue productions with bureaucratic decision making (Hesmondhalgh, 2019; Ryan, 1992). Using the lens of bureaucracy to frame the current conjuncture and drawing on organisational sociology and cultural theory, this paper seeks to connect bureaucracies of production with their representation on screen. Bureaucracy is a continuing feature of cultural production and a key feature of productions in this age. Illustrated through the examples of bureaucratic production, productions such as *Line of Duty* and sports broadcasting on TV, this paper argues that how bureaucracy is represented and how bureaucracy produces these representations give important insight into our current conjuncture.

Gavin Maclean is a sociologist concerned with the links between work, organisation and culture.

Wednesday, 6 July

Panel 12: Patterns and Peculiarities in Public Service Media

Patterns and Peculiarities in Public Service Media: A Policy and Data Driven Approach to Television Studies

JP Kelly, Julie Münter Lassen and Jannick Kirk Sørensen

Television has always been a highly ephemeral and complex object of study. But this ephemerality and complexity has been exacerbated over the past decade or so as video-on-demand [VOD] has grown exponentially and as the medium has become much more data-driven. While broadcasting and scheduling remain vital features of the medium, television is increasingly shaped by a web of complex new technologies and infrastructures, by propriety datasets and algorithms, and by new and more personalised models of delivery and consumption – many of which we know very little about. Thus, television as an object of study is more ephemeral and more complex than ever before.

This process of datafication and the growth of consumption via VOD presents several significant and specific challenges to our understanding of television and calls into question the suitability of existing research methods. How, for example, are we to understand or examine television when so much of its underlying data is inaccessible to TV scholars? How are we to understand the consequences of these new technologies and/or algorithmic designs when such phenomena require a highly specialised knowledge? How can we make these largely invisible

aspects of television more visible? What might a more data-driven approach to television studies tell us about our increasingly data-driven object of study? What are the main patterns and peculiarities in the data?

In response to these significant conceptual and methodological challenges, this panel proposes a more holistic, collaborative, and innovative model of research and dissemination. We take as the starting point for this collaboration our mutual interest in the agenda, policy, and regulation of traditional public service media. More specifically, we are concerned with how traditional broadcasters such as the BBC and DR are adapting to a more data-driven industry, and attempting to redefine what television is, could, or should be in a highly competitive online market.

As such, we begin with a set of agenda- and policy-driven research questions. For example: to what extent do platforms such as BBC iPlayer and DRTV continue to embody and deliver public service values? To what extent are they able to apply the temporal practices of broadcasting to the spatial realm of the VOD platform? How can we measure and demonstrate these public service practices and values? These central research questions will be used to guide our analysis of these platforms, determining what data and what methods are required to adequately answer them. The final stage of this research is the development of a more innovative and interactive model of dissemination in which our findings are not only presented to the reader but also invite further interpretation and exploration.

This panel will therefore adopt an innovative format in the guise of a series of interactive visualisations (to be shared in advance) based on original datasets and followed by a roundtable discussion. These visualisations will present an overview of our research questions and methodologies, our main findings, as well as key patterns and outliers. They will also provide the opportunity for others to ask questions of the data via a range of filters and parameters. In this way we present a living and interactive model of research that is no longer subject to “interpretive monopolies” (Baack, 2015) in which findings are a result of the specific interests or agendas of the researcher / institution. In the roundtable discussion we will briefly summarise our methods and key findings, before inviting and encouraging participants to share their own insights from these visualisations.

JP Kelly / Julie Münter Lassen / Jannick Kirk Sørensen

Royal Holloway, University of London / Aarhus University / Aalborg University

JP Kelly is a lecturer in television and digital media at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of *Time, Technology and Narrative Form in Contemporary US Television Drama* (Palgrave, 2017). His currently research explores a number of interrelated issues including narrative form in television, digital memory and digital preservation, and the datafication of TV. He has published essays on these topics in various books and journals including *Ephemeral Media* (BFI, 2011), *Time in Television Narrative* (Mississippi University Press, 2012), *Convergence, Television & New Media, Critical Studies in Television*, and *MedieKultur*.

Julie Münter Lassen is a post.doc at Media Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark. In her PhD dissertation she studied the development of the television channel portfolio of DR in a period characterized by channel proliferation (see also Lassen 2020). Her ongoing research interests are public service media and the transition from traditional broadcast media to on demand platforms. She currently works on the project Re-Scheduling Public Service Television in the Digital Era, which focuses on how two traditional Danish public service media organizations adapt to the challenges and conditions of the digital media landscape.

Jannick Kirk Sørensen is an Associate Professor in Digital Media at Dept. of Electronic Systems, Aalborg University, Denmark. Since 2007 he has researched the implications of and potentials in personalisation of public service media. Mixing data-informed research with qualitative methods he examines the challenges for the concept and praxis of public service media posed by platformization and datafication.

Thursday, 7 July

Roundtable 2: Television and the British Asian Experience

Reflections of watching British Terrestrial TV as a second generation South Asian.

Mita Lad, Middlesex University

This paper aims to examine two outliers, first programmes that are often overlooked, specifically those that targeted minority audiences on British terrestrial channels; and second marginalised voices. For the latter I take inspiration from Alexander Dhoest's (2015) call for more media scholars to self-reflect on their own media experiences and practices. Dhoest argues that 'reflection on one's own media use, as a researcher, may be useful as such, as a method to better understand the complexity and contextual nature of media uses and to indicate

possible avenues for future research' (2015:29). With this call in mind, I want to reflect on my memories of watching television as a second generation British Indian woman, a voice that is largely missing from British television audience research. The paper will critically explore growing up in the 1980s, where there was not a lot of people who looked like me on television, at least not on British terrestrial television, and the subsequent importance of programmes like *Network East* or *Eastern Eye*. These programmes were much anticipated, alongside Channel 4's annual Hindi language Indian film season. Many of the films broadcast on Channel Four were recorded on VHS and continually re-watched. The paper attempts to critically interrogate these reflections and more through the lens of identity formation to bring to the fore experiences that have been largely overlooked.

Mita is an Associate Lecturer at Middlesex University and is the Chair of the MeCCSA Race, Ethnicity and Postcolonial Network. Her research centres on ways of looking at and engaging with television, specifically the looks and engagement of Indian Hindu diasporic women. Forthcoming publications from her PhD will examine the construction of darshan in prime-time Hindi language soap operas; as well as the semiotics of the Hindutva political agenda on popular Indian Hindi language television. Mita received her PhD from Edge Hill University in 2020, having gained her BA at Staffordshire University and MA at the Universiteit van Amsterdam.

Friday, 8 July

Panel 13: Power and Television

Television Power or Narcissistic Desire

Dr Laeed Zaghلامي, Algiers University

The small screen has polarised the attention of researchers from different backgrounds. Alain le Diderder predicts the end of the magic of the television set and the magic of television. For him, it is the end of the sacredness of the screen and its banalization. Nevertheless, television will remain omnipresent in the lives of citizens in the West but no longer as a sacred object. In third world countries, on the other hand, it still has a bright future ahead of it since politicians adore and venerate it. It is the symbol of power and of power itself. Everything passes through it; without it, authority fails. It is not by chance that during putsches and coups, television is seized and becomes an absolute tool of political legitimisation. Thus, the perception of the image and especially its veneration are linked to the political, social and cultural evolution of

a country. In his studies on the events in Romania in 1989, Dahrendorf calls 1989 the year of television. He notes that "... anyone who witnessed the growing disarray of the deposed president during the demonstrations organised by his own agents, which were to turn against him, will never forget the image of a fallen and weakened president coming to sign his end".

The mysteries of receptivity

However, let's be pragmatic, television is an essentially symbolic power, each one looks at it with his own glasses or from his "cultural and informational fence". Daniel Dayan in "Les mystères de la réception" notes that television represents the eruption of a disturbing culture into one's own space of intimacy and that the television set constitutes a space of cohabitation which also remains symbolic. That said, the television-audience relationship has not revealed all its secrets. Thus, to study reception is to enter the intimacy of others and to consider that their universes of meaning, which are elaborated there, can be characterised differently, in terms of alienation or deficit. It is in this light that Benedict Anderson notes "that television contributes to the imaginary construction of the national community". For him, "the fact that it is imagined and begins to be anticipation or a fiction, does not prevent it from becoming reality and, above all, from enjoying a deep emotional legitimacy". Secondly, the audience that watches it has a fictional status that does not prevent it from being a reality either. And it is indeed a fictional world that becomes a real world where battles are fought and stories are made and unmade in the television studios and before us on the screens. In practice, I will examine how Television is used as tools to exert power and authority but incidently it is a source of narcissism notably from public figures with examples from Algeria.

Laeed holds a PhD from Algiers University³, an Mphil from University of Surrey, Guildford, UK and Diploma from International Academy of Broadcasting Montreux, Switzerland and a 1st Degree Algiers University. He is professor of Information and Communication, at Algiers University³ and Associate Professor Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations (Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). He has published on "Social Media in Algeria : New Tools for Democracy and Press Freedom" in *Changing Media-Changing Democracy*, Eds Tobias E Berwein & Corinna Wenzel, in *Communication & Research in Comparative Perspective, Russian Journal of Media Studies* and *Social Media and Elections in Africa*.

**RT France as an "alternative" media outlet for the extreme right communities in France.
An audience study of YouTube comments**

RT France is the French branch of Russia Today, a Russian state-funded international television network. Launched in 2017, it has since been accused of acting as a Russian propaganda tool and has been subjected to criticism regarding its endorsing of extreme views. The channel defines itself as an “alternative source of information” as opposed to the “mainstream” media. Despite ongoing criticism, RT France’s audiences have been growing steadily, focusing on social media, especially YouTube, where the channel has its largest following of 1.07 million subscribers (as of February 6, 2022). This paper, as part of a larger ongoing doctoral research, aims at filling the gaps in the channel’s audience research in France by focusing on the Far-Right active viewers of the channel based on YouTube comments of its content. It shows how RT France’s YouTube channel provides anti-democratic counterpublics with a platform to consolidate and further spread their views. By studying comments on the fifteen most popular RT France’s YouTube videos (representing a variety of topics, formats and lengths) using qualitative content analysis, we demonstrate that Far-Right ideas are mentioned, endorsed and discussed often, though they do not always relate directly to the content provided by RT. We argue that Far-Right counterpublics get drawn to the channel due to its “alternative” positioning and history that amplify these counterpublics’ feeling of marginalization (Holm, 2019). They then claim the channel’s comments area as their own space of “withdrawal and regroupment” (Fraser, 1990), namely through localizing the channel’s international content to the national news agenda, while social media affordances of association and metavoicing (Holm, 2019) allow them to reaffirm these views and share them with wider publics. Made more visible by the architecture of YouTube, these views end up dominating the comments space, while opposing voices, through present, are barely noticeable.

Gulnara Zakharova studied political science in Moscow before continuing her education in France in communication studies. She is now a PhD student researching RT France's audiences within the field of transnational media studies.

Overlooked Television, Class and Television Studies

Thomas Waitz, University Vienna, Austria

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

Ilıcalı'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.

“Blokcs? 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 evolutionary 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

masks) has since been used in anti-capitalist demonstrations. Similarly, the emblematic use of the 1940s anti-fascist song *Bella Ciao* as an anthem of rebellion has reverberated throughout the world.

This paper explores the pivotal role of two female police negotiators in the traditionally male-centred genre of heist dramas. As a clear danger to patriarchy, they redefine the genre. Both inspectoras are trained crisis negotiators, trained to defuse dangerous situations and ideally bring about non-violent endings. The viewers' pleasure partly derives from witnessing feminine ability, grit, power, and control. I examine the negotiators' professional ethics, their accountability to the state and their different leadership styles. As confident heroines, these women differ widely in their methods: from empathy, care and sensitivity to aggression, risk-taking and violence.

Murillo's and Sierra's differing approaches mirror the increasing violence throughout the series. Where Murillo banks on reasoned and firm negotiation, Sierra has no qualms to use torture and other illegal methods to bring about a win. Where Murillo has a steady hand and stays calm under pressure, Sierra is on the verge of sending in the military. Murillo never crosses the line of basic human rights, while for Sierra the end justifies the means. Both women ultimately fail in their endeavour to stop the gang from stealing money or gold. Both women's private lives have an impact on their professional performance, both women deal with life-changing and heart-breaking situations, but the effect on their performance differs considerably. The series subverts genre traditions by blurring the lines between the im/morality of both police officers and criminals, thus playing with viewer expectations.

Anja Louis is Reader Cultural Studies at Sheffield Hallam University. She has published widely in the fields of gender studies and popular culture. Her monograph *Women and the Law* is a seminal study on the Spanish feminist Carmen de Burgos. She has also co-edited a collection of essays bringing together leading international specialists of Burgos's work (*Multiple Modernities: Carmen de Burgos, Author and Activist*, Routledge, 2017). Recent projects examine the representation of female lawyers and law enforcement officers in Spanish film and television. She is currently working on a monograph on *Gender and Television in Spain* and is co-editing a book on *Transnational Gender and TV*.

Gender violence and celebrity gossip shows: analysing *Rocío, contar la verdad para seguir viva*

Asier Gil Vazquez / Ana María Mejon Miranda, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

On December 4, 1997, Ana Orantes, a housewife from Granada, appeared on the talk show *De tarde en tarde* (Canal Sur, 1996-1999) to narrate her experiences as a victim of gender violence. Thirteen days later, it was announced that Ana Orantes' husband had murdered her. This sparked a new debate on gender violence and new laws were passed. Although it is difficult to establish a direct relationship between this case and the legislative changes, the social relevance of this televisual moment in the debate on gender violence in Spain seems obvious. The memory of Ana Orantes reached an enormous symbolic value, however, from the academy it has been studied more from journalism than from television studies.

Over the years, the concern for gender violence began to be integrated into the common sense of Spanish society. However, in recent years, a fourth feminist wave of both global and local dimensions, has opened new perspectives on gender and violence, especially as a result of media cases, both foreign (as the “#MeToo” movement) or local (as controversies and protests after the rape case of “la manada” in 2016). In the face of these feminist advances and in a climate of culture wars, conservative sectors and extreme right-wing political parties that question the existence of discrimination and gender inequality are gaining visibility.

In this context of political and social tension, the documentary series *Rocío, contar la verdad para seguir viva* (Telecinco, 2021) was released. Rocío Carrasco, daughter of one of the country's most famous singers, returns to television after years out of the spotlight to tell her story as a victim of gender violence. She does so on the same television channel where her ex-husband worked and where, for years, she had been publicly attacked and tagged as a bad mother. Each episode of the documentary is accompanied by a debate with the participation of the network's tabloid journalists and specialists in gender violence.

The programme had huge audiences, increased the calls to the hotline for the victims of gender violence, and generated media attention that even led different politicians to make statements on the subject. Through this show, debates on feminism gained more strength and reached new sectors of the population and television audiences, such as middle-aged working-class women. This research follows two objectives. First, to study Rocío Carrasco's documentary as a cultural forum where different positions on contemporary feminist debates come into play. To this end, it is important to analyze the reception and the paratexts that accompany the programme, as well as its industrial factors. Secondly, the research will study how this phenomenon has been burdened by opposing forces related to the de-legitimization of television or, at least, of certain television products. As it is broadcast by a generalist channel dedicated to gossip contents and

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