Faculty Research & Creative Activity   English

January 2012

Time in Television Narrative: Exploring Temporality in 21st Century Programming

Melissa A. Ames
Eastern Illinois University, mames@eiu.edu

TIME

IN TELEVISION NARRATIVE

Exploring Temporality in Twenty-First-Century Programming

Edited by Melissa Ames

For all who feel that "time" is never wasted on a good television show

INTRODUCTION
Television Studies in the Twenty-First Century

The trends of contemporary popular television programming have received a great deal of attention both within and outside scholarly circles throughout the past few decades, even more so as the medium continues to evolve into the twenty-first century. The increasing complexity and experimental nature of television narratives have been well studied by both academics[1] and laypersons through various fan forums.[2] This collection adds to this discussion by limiting its analysis of such televisual texts to those solely in the first decade of the new millennium. This collection offers an analysis of twenty-first-century televisual texts exclusively—something that has not existed heretofore—thus expanding on this discussion and bringing into sharper focus the added complexity of this medium at present.[3]

THE POST-NETWORK ERA

Much of the recent scholarship on this influential medium has tracked the changes currently affecting the television industry. These studies include Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson's *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, Amanda Lotz's *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, and Janet McCabe and Kim Akass's *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*. In the latter text, the periodization of television history provided by Jimmie Reeves, Mark Rodgers, and Michael Epstein maps out the shifts leading up to the current post-network or digital era of television: TV I (1948–1975), associated with the network era or broadcast era, TV II (1975–1995), the cable era, and TV III (1991–Present), the digital era. Lotz, studying the latter era, describes three characteristics of this post-network era—convenience, mobility, and theatricality—claiming that these traits have "redefined the medium from its

network-era form" (50). Similarly, Jason Mittell has demonstrated the ways in which the emergence of new media, along with changes in the industry, has resulted in the production of increasingly complex television narratives and alternative viewing practices.[4] Although these studies have been groundbreaking in reconceptualizing the current televisual landscape, continued attention is needed to explore the narrative content and stylistics of the programs resulting from recent production trends.

POST-9/11 TELEVISION

The scholarship of the past decade that has focused primarily on narrative content has often studied programming through a post-9/11 lens.[5] Although much was going on in the fictional television programs during this time period, for the most part media scholarship focused on representations of 9/11 and the early stages of the "war on terror" by studying print and television news coverage (Spigel 238). Lynn Spigel points out that the majority of the work from the academy during this time attended to "the narrative and mythic 'framing' of the events[,] the nationalistic jingoism," and the "competing global news outlets," such as Al Jazeera (238). But, as Spigel states, despite these important achievements of the academy, "the scholarly focus on news underestimates (indeed, it barely considers) the way the 'reality' of 9/11 was communicated across the flow of television's genres, including its so-called entertainment genres" (238).[6] The goal of this collection, in part, is to address this void by focusing exclusively on fictional texts and considering how these narratives work through the reality of this historic decade.

TELEVISION AND GENRE STUDY

Other recent studies have focused largely on specific televisual trends in terms of bourgeoning genres, such as those of reality television and infotainment, which many read as a response to 9/11.[7] The attention to the former is not surprising, given that by January 2003, one-seventh of all programming on major networks was reality based, a trend that continues today (Douglas 632). The rapid growth in this genre has contributed increased scholarship theorizing its popularity from both an audience and production standpoint.[8] While the numbers of reality programming caught scholars' attention during this time, the visibility and impact of the other growing genre, infotainment, has also begun to spark academic discussion.[9] An online poll conducted by *TIME*

magazine in June 2009 reported that Jon Stewart, the host of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* (1996–Present), was named the most trusted televised newscaster since Walter Cronkite.[10] The following year, *People* reported that he had been voted the "most influential man of 2010" (Silverman).[11] This suggests that such programming, originally designed for comedic/entertainment purposes, is beginning to supplant traditional news media in interesting ways. Although both of these television genres were very influential during the first decade of the twenty-first century, and while their editing practices might be important to study in terms of temporal play, these genres have been omitted from this collection as they do not fall into the neglected category of fictional programming.

THE STUDY OF (NARRATIVE) TIME ACROSS MEDIA

While all of the studies listed above have been quite instrumental in understanding the evolving state of television, few of these studies have focused on narrative content across genre or on the televisual aesthetics that have resulted from these network and genre shifts. This leaves room in television scholarship for studies that narrow their focus to specific televisual characteristics of this new era of programming, such as this anthology's focus on the phenomenon of experimental time—a subject which has yet to be given attention in terms of twenty-first-century programming.

ACADEMIA AND TIME

In its focus, this collection deals with a particular concept that has fascinated scholars for centuries: time. These essays will, in a sense, continue the work of philosophers (from Aristotle and Augustine to Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger to Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson)[12] and scientists (such as Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and Stephen Hawking),[13] applying their theories of time to the contemporary new media moment in novel ways. Many of the recent studies concerning time have moved away from looking at time as a philosophical concern and scientific inquiry and have instead studied its impact on societal development. For example, the standardization of time (from the invention of clocks and calendars to the impact of railroad schedules and daylight savings) has brought about interesting inquiries into humans' need to regulate time.[14] This impact on society is often seen in the various ways that time is depicted in cultural narratives.

NARRATIVE THEORY AND TIME

Most relevant to this project is the scholarly work of the late twentieth century in regard to the link between narrative structure and time. As Ursula Heise notes, "theorists of narrative generally agree that time is one of the most fundamental parameters through which narrative as a genre is organized and understood" (47). Therefore, it is not surprising that scholarly work abounds in this area dating back to foundational texts such as Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending* (1966) and Walter Benjamin's "Storyteller" (1968) to more recent studies like Heise's own *Chronoschisms* (1997), which analyzes the experimental narratives found in postmodern literature.[15] Scholars have also attempted to theorize how time plays a role in the actual experience of reading literature. One such example is Paul Ricouer's theory concerning "the fictive experience of time," which he explains as "the temporal aspect of (the) virtual experience of being-in-the-world proposed by the text" (100). The essays in this collection draw upon many of these narrative theories, reworking and applying them to televisual narratives in new ways.

POSTMODERN LITERATURE AND TIME

Because this "age is one of unprecedented flourishing for alternative ways of understanding and inhabiting time," it is not surprising that the cultural narratives of the last half century have been obsessed with time itself (Wood ix). Nonlinearity, or temporal distortion, is one of the most common features of modern and postmodern fiction. Postmodern novels, in particular, are centrally concerned with the possibility of experiencing time in an age when temporal horizons have been drastically foreshortened. The coexistence of these competing experiences of time allows new conceptions of history and posthistory to emerge, and opens up comparisons with recent scientific approaches to temporality. Heise reads "the temporal structure of the postmodern novel" as "a way of dealing aesthetically with an altered culture of time in which access to the past and especially to the future appears more limited than before in cultural self-awareness" (67).[16]

Although a complete list of postmodern literary works that rely on experimental temporality would be too lengthy to include here, it does seem useful to include a few key examples that might have served as predecessor texts for the cinematic and televisual time experiments that followed. However, it would be misleading to include only postmodern works that could have served as inspirations for these later media creations since experimental time,

at least in the form of the time-travel motif, has existed in fiction for centuries. Such motifs have surfaced in both canonical and popular texts throughout the years with increasing regularity in the most recent decades. Examples include Samuel Madden's *Memories of the Twentieth Century* (1733), Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843), H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), Alison Uttley's *A Traveller in Time* (1939), Isaac Asimov's *The End of Eternity* (1955), Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), Philip Jose Farmer's *Time's Last Gift* (1972), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1980), Michael Crichton's *Timeline* (1999), Audrey Niffenegger's *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2003), and Jacob LaCivita's *Timely Persuasion* (2008).

FILM AND TIME

Of course, this focus on experimental time quite obviously did not remain entrapped on the printed page. In *Time Lapse: The Politics of Time-Travel Cinema*, Charles Tryon argues that new media technologies often become associated with disruptions in our experience of chronological time. This collection claims they also explore and allegorize such disruptions. Tryon's project analyzes constructions of time, history, and memory as they are articulated cinematically in various time-travel films. While similar projects are beginning to surface in the study of film,[17] the implication of experimental temporality has often been ignored in television scholarship. Despite the uneven academic coverage between these two fields, it is clear that the films of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century helped establish the precedent for what is occurring on the small screen today.

For example, various films focused on the narrative trope of the "do-over" where characters were able to travel back in time to revise their lives. These include action films such as Robert Zemeckis's *Back to the Future* trilogy (1985, 1989, 1990), comedies such as Burr Steer's *17 Again* (2009), dramas like James Orr's *Mr. Destiny* (1990), and adaptations along the lines of Brett Ratner's revision of *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *The Family Man* (2000), or Richard Donner's *Scrooged* (1988) and Penny Marshall's *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past* (2009), both updated versions of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. Other films dealt with filmic time in more experimental ways. For example, Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) influenced a wave of nonlinear films that followed it, including Terry Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), David Lynch's *Mulholland Dr.* (2001), Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2001), Eric Bess's *The Butterfly Effect* (2004), and Tony Scott's *Deja Vu* (2006).

TELEVISION'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TIME

The majority of scholarship concerning television and time is restricted to the analysis of nonfiction, live television,[18] with the occasional study devoted to the way that time plays a part in a specific genre of television, such as the soap opera[19] or the science fiction drama.[20] Varying from these approaches, this text analyzes the role of time across a variety of television genres (including the sitcom, drama, musical, and cartoon).

Although this collection focuses on the novelty of the televisual time experiments played out during the twenty-first century, it would be amiss not to mention that such programming has existed in decades prior (although in much lesser frequency) and that some scholarship has been directed toward it.[21] Some noteworthy programs include *Doctor Who* (BBC, 1963–1989; 2005–Present), *Timeslip* (ITV, 1970–1971), *Voyagers!* (NBC, 1982–1983), *Quantum Leap* (NBC, 1989–1993), *Time Trax* (PTEN, 1993–1994), *Goodnight Sweetheart* (BBC, 1993–1999), *Crime Traveller* (BBC, 1997), and *Seven Days* (UPN, 1998–2001).[22]

THE "TIMELINESS" OF THIS INQUIRY INTO CONTEMPORARY TELEVISION'S EXPLORATION OF TEMPORALITY

Studying more recent series, this project aims to fill a void in the current scholarship concerning the temporal and narrative experimentations taking place in twenty-first-century American programming. As such, this collection analyzes television programs through various theoretical and methodological approaches. Although the television shows of the past decade are as diverse and plentiful as that of any previous time period, there appear some commonalities between the programs currently creating the most engaged fan communities, the ones that have become quick cult draws or instant hits. These types of shows often fit the complexity that Steven Johnson lists in his discussion of television's role in the smartening of culture: multiple plot threads (often stopping and starting up again) spanning large durations of time, a thickening of characterization and a multiplication of cast members, and a heavy reliance on audience intellect (and loyalty) in order to keep up with the narrative leaps and bounds. These are all characteristics that can be attributed, in part, to existing in the current media moment. However, this anthology argues that a new characteristic is sneaking into the mix: the temporal tease.

The most popular television shows of the new millennium have at their center a narrative progression unlike many of those that came before them.

These shows play with time, slowing it down to unfold the narrative at rarely before seen rates (time retardation and compression) and disrupting the chronological flow itself (through the extensive use of flashbacks and the insistence that viewers be able to situate themselves in both the present and past narrative threads simultaneously). Although temporal play has existed on the small screen prior to the twenty-first century—soap operas are well known for their use of time retardation and NBC's Emmy-award-winning sitcom, *Seinfeld* (1989–1998), had various televisual time experiments (including its 1991 episode "The Chinese Restaurant," which occurred in real time, and its 1997 episode "The Betrayal," which presented all scenes in reverse chronological order)—never before has narrative time played such an important role in mainstream television. The frequency of this practice at present seems worthy of epochal note and this collection offers explanations for not only its presence in contemporary programming, but the implications of this presence.

Drawing upon the fields of cultural studies, television scholarship, and literary studies, among others, as well as overarching theories concerning postmodernity and narratology, this collection suggests that the influx of television programs concerned with time may stem from any and all of the following: recent scientific approaches to temporality, new conceptions of (post)history, and trends in late-capitalistic production and consumption. These programs could also be viewed as being products of the new culture of instantaneity (forever focused on the fleeting present, often termed "nanosecond culture" or "throw-away culture")[23] or of the recent trauma culture amplified in the wake of the September 11 attacks. In short, these televisual time experiments may very well be an aesthetic response to the cultural climate from which they derive. However, this explanation oversimplifies the complicated, reciprocal way that societal trends affect textual production, and textual production and consumption affect society. This collection examines both ends of this continuum while also attending to another crucial variable: the television viewer/fan.

ORGANIZING (DISCUSSIONS OF) TIME
Understanding the Structure of This Text

This text is organized into five sections representing different approaches to the study of television and temporality that have yet to be brought into conversation with one another. Section 1 is titled "Promoting the Future of Experimental TV: The Industry Changes and Technological Advancements That Paved the Way to 'New' Television Ventures." In this section authors explore the ways in which production and consumption practices in the post-network

era have encouraged complex television programming that disrupts previous televisual norms (especially in regard to linear storytelling). Section 2, titled "Historicizing the Moment: How the Cultural Climate Impacts Temporal Manipulation on the Small Screen," focuses on how the political and cultural climate during the first decade of the twenty-first century (one fueled by, for example, post-9/11 anxieties) contributes to narratives that depend, in part, on temporal play to achieve their goals. The chapters in Section 3, "The Functions of Time: Analyzing the Effects of Nonnormative Narrative Structure(s)," determine what these temporal practices actually *do* for the television programs they play a part in. Section 4, "Moving beyond the Televisual Restraints of the Past: Reimagining Genres and Formats," continues on this thread and discusses the ways in which these fictional depictions of time actually work to alter existing television genres in the neo-postmodern era. And, lastly, Section 5, "Playing outside of the Box: The Role Time Plays in Fan Fiction, Online Communities, and Audience Studies," shifts its focus from the television programs themselves to the viewers who consume them.

Section I. Promoting the Future of Experimental TV: The Industry Changes and Technological Advancements That Paved the Way to "New" Television Ventures

The work in this section draws upon and extends the work of influential scholars who have traced the ways in which the television industry has been altered due the technological advancements of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The essays in this section argue, in part, that the fragmented plots and experimental narrative structures of the programs analyzed are, to some extent, conditioned by the accelerated temporal rhythms of what Fredric Jameson would consider late-capitalism's technologies of production and consumption.[24] In chapter 1, "Television's Paradigm (Time)shift: Production and Consumption Practices in the Post-Network Era," Todd M. Sodano explores temporal differences between yesterday's linear television viewing and today's post-network consumption practices. As modes of content distribution have evolved, so have serial narratives and viewer discourses. Sodano argues that this paradigmatic shift from the broadcast networks' carefully orchestrated flow to individualized viewer control has complicated how viewers draw meanings and pleasures from programs. Today's viewer can time-shift and/or binge on favorite series through DVD, DVR, on-demand, and online viewing. Consequently, the standard gap (traditionally the week between new episodes) that used to predominate TV discourses now has shrunk, increased, or been eliminated altogether. Meanwhile, paratexts, which include "previously on" segments, previews, commercials, spoilers, and water-cooler discussions

that surround the main text, have become critical pieces in TV conversations, due to the proliferation of online communities and social media. Sodano's end claim is that as digital platforms continue to grow in number, viewing audiences are sure to fragment into smaller pieces, thus further complicating these conversations.

The second chapter, "'A Stretch of Time': Extended Distribution and Narrative Accumulation in *Prison Break*," continues the argument that the new distributive regimes of the contemporary television industry have given rise to new narrative temporalities. In particular, a number of series, such as *24*, bear many hallmarks of what has been called "network time," namely acceleration and real-time. Although scholars maintain that "network time" is the dominant temporality of the twenty-first century, in this chapter J. P. Kelly argues that the flexibility of distribution in contemporary television has resulted in multiple narrative temporalities. To illustrate this point he uses *Prison Break* as a way to complicate and challenge many of the assumptions made by "network time" scholarship. By taking an industrial-textual approach his essay highlights the interdependent relationship between narrative and distribution, while also revealing key differences between the seriality of shows such as *Prison Break* (which uses "serialized seasons") versus series such as *24* (which uses "episodic seasons").

The next essay extends the arguments set in motion by the opening two chapters by considering the ways in which two specific programs'—*Battlestar Galactica* and *Lost*—formal and generic structures both emphasize and undermine the ostensible statements the shows offer about leadership, time, memory, and continuity, while also spotlighting the ways in which the narratives might be read as allegories for their position in the constellation of contemporary serialized TV. In "'It's Not Unknown': The Loose- and Dead-End Afterlives of *Battlestar Galactica* and *Lost*," Jordan Lavender-Smith attends to the way the shows' writers are always in the process of returning to previous material, changing the relative valences of the past because of their present situation, a situation which itself will be rewritten by and according to the future. Additionally, his chapter suggests that the very same advanced technologies that allow contemporary writers and producers the opportunity to create shows with such novelistic ambitions also compromise the narrative coherence of these elaborate, plot-heavy epics.

Chapter 4 considers Jameson's argument that by the mid-twentieth century electronic media would comprise a discretely defined "third phase" of corporate capitalism. "Zero-Degree Seriality: Television Narrative in the Post-Network Era" argues that two recent television shows preoccupied with time (*24* and *Lost*) emblematize a "fourth" moment in corporate capitalism. Norman

M. Gendelman's essay extends Jameson's claim that global capital exists as a confluence between embodied subjectivity and ethereal corporate electromagnetism and argues that as incorporated electronic serials, the shows construct narrative codes that structure a "ground" from which to confront the electronic present while likewise mapping its displacements. By stylistically and structurally foregrounding ("plotting") their own emergent contexts as obsessive speed and digressive multiplicity, these shows are semiotic/experiential modes—electronic "signatures" of our era. This chapter entertains what it means to experience and think through time-based media in the twenty-first century.

The final essay in this section, Michael Fuchs's "'Play It Again, Sam . . . and Dean': Temporality and Meta-Textuality in *Supernatural*," narrows down this discussion of contemporary television to analyze one specific drama. Like so many other contemporary television series, *Supernatural*, basically a series about two brothers hunting supernatural beings, breaks traditional linear narration in numerous episodes. This chapter argues that by departing from a chronological structure and also deconstructing seemingly fixed temporal markers such as death, *Supernatural* self-reflexively draws attention to the constructed nature of (television) narratives while also highlighting the cultural construction that is the concept of linear time. This program is thus indicative of a larger trend in our contemporary society in which the differentiation between objective and subjective time has evolved into conceiving of temporality as discontinuous and fragmented.

As the work in this section indicates, developments in technology, science, and media—along with changes in production and consumption practices—help to explain the formal experiments that contemporary televisual narratives have taken on. However, these television programs also help shape the cultural lenses through which viewers perceive and interpret those technological and social developments.[25] Therefore, the relationship between the cultural-industrial climate and the texts it produces is reciprocal in nature rather than simply being one that could be reduced to a mere cause-effect relationship. The essays in the next two sections further showcase this reciprocity.

Section II. Historicizing the Moment: How the Cultural Climate Impacts Temporal Manipulation on the Small Screen

Moving away from the first section's focus on the scientific and technological advancements of the twenty-first century, the essays in this portion of the text expand their focus to analyze how the historical time period more generally might have influenced the wave of experimental time narratives on the small screen. In chapter 6, "Temporality and Trauma in American Sci-Fi Television," Aris Mousoutzanis approaches the experimentation of temporality in recent American Sci-Fi TV shows, such as *Lost*, *FlashForward*, *Fringe*, and *The Event*, in terms of their preoccupation with the topic of psychological trauma. As a psychopathology that constantly returns patients to the traumatic incident, which they compulsively reexperience in nightmares and hallucinations, trauma is characterized by an experience of temporality that is nonlinear and repetitive; fictions of trauma often attempt to convey that aspect of the disease by employing a nonlinear, repetitive, and cyclical narrative. Mousoutzanis's discussion, however, does not read the widening interest in trauma in popular narratives only as a response to contemporary historical tragedies and crises. Instead, it combines this historicist approach with one that sees these television shows as self-reflective texts on the history and function of the medium of television itself.

While chapter 6 purposely avoids reading the televisual creations of the twenty-first century as post-9/11 products (alone), chapter 7 analyzes three programs with this very argument in mind. In "The Fear of the Future and the Pain of the Past: The Quest to Cheat Time in *Heroes*, *FlashForward*, and *Fringe*," Melissa Ames analyzes three contemporary fictional narratives that remediate the tragedy of 9/11. These programs include experimental temporality and center their plots on anxieties concerning time: the longing to correct mistakes of the past, the panic of living in a hypersensitive present, and the fear of the premediated future.[26] These shows suggest that the fear we feel as a nation post-attack unconsciously resurfaces itself and seeks resolution in narrative spaces through repetition and that the consumption of these narratives is a means by which viewers "work through" the lingering emotional trauma caused by the attacks. This essay suggests that the temporal play present within these programs is crucial to this working through and, in fact, embodies the affect of fear that prompts it.

In chapter 8, "*Lost* in Our Middle Hour: Faith, Fate, and Redemption Post 9/11," Sarah Himsel Burcon argues that both the narrative structure (flashbacks, flashforwards, and flashsideways) as well as the thematic content of *Lost* worked together to immerse viewers in the longstanding philosophical and theological debates surrounding free will/destiny and faith/reason. In her examination she draws a parallel between *Lost* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* to demonstrate that, after 9/11, Americans refocused on religious ideals given their shattered sense of freedom, righteousness, and sense of security. Ultimately, Himsel Burcon draws upon the rhetoric of political speeches contemporary to *Lost* to suggest that the program emphasized how Americans were (and perhaps still are) in their "middle hour" of grief. That is, they wished to "do

over" the past at the same time that they were living in an unstable present and looking to some "Other" to help them move into the future.

Also focusing on this popular motif of the do-over, Kasey Butcher's essay analyzes the ways in which *Pushing Daisies*, the story of a man who can bring the dead back to life with the touch of his fingertip, mirrored the political discourses surrounding the 2008 presidential election and interacted with the 2007–2008 Writers' Guild of America strike. "'New Beginnings Only Lead to Painful Ends': 'Undeading' and Fear of Consequences in *Pushing Daisies*" claims that, on the surface, the show is a candy-colored fairytale romance mixed with a fast-talking crime-drama, but the major tension of the series is a push-pull between the optimism of Charlotte Charles and the pessimism of the Pie Maker, Ned—the program's two main characters. By taking ideologies about transmedia, intertextuality, and genre convention into account, this chapter argues that the larger-than-life world of *Daisies* can be understood as reflecting similar anxieties in the culture of its viewing audience, who were faced with a contentious election and a looming economic crisis.

Section III. The Functions of Time: Analyzing the Effects of Nonnormative Narrative Structure(s)

This section, housing perhaps the most eclectic gathering of essays within this text, studies the various results of such narrative experiments with time. In the wake of debates on flexi-narratives, narrative complexity, and narrative compression, Gry C. Rustad and Timotheus Vermeulen's "'Did You Get Pears?': Temporality and Temps Mortality in *The Wire*, *Mad Men*, and *Arrested Development*" discusses these three programs in terms of narrative disintegration. While scholars such as Robin Nelson and Jason Mittell emphasize the extent to which these programs complicate plot lines, Rustad and Vermeulen draw attention to the moments these lines dissipate into the details of the image and disperse into the arbitrariness of the world. In spite of their significant generic differences, *The Wire*, *Mad Men*, and *Arrested Development* all frequently begin, interrupt, or end scenes with moments in which "nothing happens." Chapter 10 researches the temporal inferences of these particular moments, arguing that these moments hint at a temporality that oscillates between *kainos* and *chromos*; between a structured, linear narrative and a rhizomatic, inexplicable there-ness of the world; and between the promise of closure and a radical, inconclusive openness.

Chapter 11, "Temporalities on Collision Course: Time, Knowledge, and Temporal Critique in *Damages*" proposes an analysis of narrative temporalities

in the legal drama *Damages*. Toni Pape focuses on the show's second season, which constructs two opposing temporal trajectories: while the main narrative starts at the beginning and is told forward, the second narrative trajectory starts in the future and regresses into the past. In this way, the show creates an intricate network of temporal relations. Drawing on philosophical critiques of "modern time consciousness," this essay argues that *Damages's* temporal structures rely on an emphatic conception of modern time. Thus, the show reveals the complicity of these temporalities with a modern knowledge economy and power structures. Secondly, this chapter argues that *Damages* ultimately discards its "modern time consciousness" in favor of a notion of time as "intelligible becoming." This shift in narrative temporalities simultaneously brings about a shift in the knowledge economy and power relations represented in the *Damages*.

Chapter 12 shifts the focus to time's impact on the formation of identity rather than knowledge. "Freaks of Time: Reevaluating Memory and Identity through Daniel Knauf's *Carnivàle*" looks into the complex temporal structures of *Carnivàle* and argues that this television series offers layers of time through which it becomes possible for characters to retrace temporality, relive events, and share pasts and/or futures. Identifying these layers as actual and virtual dimensions of time, Frida Beckman proposes that this portrayal of time and space challenges not only the notion of a continuous, causal temporality, but also the idea of individual continuity since memories and experiences are not tied to one single mind or body. Rather, there is a repetition of events traveling across generations. As such complexities need to be untied by viewers over the integral interruptions of serial television, *Carnivàle* demands active viewing. It also invites philosophical inquiries into the nature of time and selfhood.

In chapter 13, "The Discourse of *Medium*: Time as a Narrative Device," Kristi McDuffie analyzes the character Allison Dubois, a psychic who dreams about past, present, and future crimes and uses those dreams to help the district attorney's office solve crimes. Although *Medium* is primarily an episodic crime drama, its paranormal elements allow it to challenge genre limits. McDuffie evokes Sarah Kozloff's idea of discourse—how a story is told—to discuss the ways episodic crime dramas privilege the process of solving the crime over the crime itself. The paranormal elements in *Medium* allow it to utilize different temporal structures, such as flashbacks, visions of the future, and alternate realities, to further plot and discourse possibilities. This essay demonstrates how *Medium* is unique and innovative in its utilization of these time devices throughout the series.

Section IV. Moving beyond the Televisual Restraints of the Past: Reimagining Genres and Formats

This section resumes the discussion of how nonlinear narratives might reshape existing television genres. Continuing the conversation begun in chapter 13, "Making Sense of the Future: Narrative Destabilization in Joss Whedon's *Dollhouse*" attends to the practice of temporal play in another science fiction program. Casey J. McCormick uses Joss Whedon's *Dollhouse* as a case study for examining recent trends in science fiction televisual narratives, particularly the prevalence of present-tense settings. Through an examination of the narratological implications of the series' "Epitaph" episodes from the perspective of the show's creators, as well as the experience of the viewer, this chapter explores how multiple diegetic layers emerge as a result of *Dollhouse*'s complicated temporal structure. Using theories of narrative derived from Gerard Genette and Mieke Bal, in conjunction with Bruce Clarke's concept of posthuman narratology, McCormick explores how temporal complexities relate to the ontological and epistemological concerns of a hyper-narrativized culture.

Colin Irvine's work further expands this section's hypothesis that experimental temporality plays a large role in the evolution of television genres at present. "Why *30 Rock* Rocks and *The Office* Needs Some Work: The Role of Time/Space in Contemporary TV Sitcoms" draws on a combination of frame theory, embedding Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of chronotopism to assert that paying attention to the uses of humor in sitcoms enables viewers to understand how—with respect to their uses of time/space—these shows function and why, as importantly, some succeed and some fail. Chapter 15 focuses first on *Arrested Development* and the manner with which it presents complex and yet coherent scenes, episodes, and seasons that allow for manipulation of time/space. It then turns to *The Office*, noting the similar reasons and ways the show worked during its first few seasons and discussing why it eventually began to fail. Irvine's essay concludes with an analysis of *30 Rock*, a sitcom that effectively establishes an imagined and yet plausible space that allows for multiple kinds of time as well as various political and social commentary.

Molly Brost's "Change the Structure, Change the Story: *How I Met Your Mother* and the Reformulation of the Television Romance" attends to how romantic storylines are affected by strategic alterations in temporal flow. *How I Met Your Mother* began with a unique premise: in a flashback from the year 2030, a middle-aged man tells his teenage children the story of how he met their mother. From the very beginning of the series, viewers were told who the mother was *not*: Robin Scherbatsky, the journalist who would be protagonist Ted Mosby's love interest for the show's first two seasons, and intermittently

thereafter. Though some critics believed that this allowed the show to sidestep the "will-they-or-won't-they" relationship drama that plagues many sitcoms, others dismissed it as merely a gimmick. Chapter 16 argues that the show's unique narrative structure allows the series to reimagine the traditional romantic comedy formula; within this reimagining, the audience's expectations for both televisual romantic relationships and traditional gender roles are challenged and subverted.

Chapter 17 also analyzes how nontraditional narrative time works to draw attention to gender issues. Janani Subramanian's "Like Sands through the Half-Hourglass: *Nurse Jackie* and Temporal Disruption" once again moves this collection's focus on time from that of traditional network television to that which can be found on the competing cable stations. Showtime has emerged in the last few years as a serious contender in the premium television league. While HBO built its reputation around narrative complexity, Showtime has incorporated the female-centric, single-camera, half-hour "dramedy" genre into its quality brand identity. In this chapter, Subramanian argues, using *Nurse Jackie* as her primary example, that the segmentation of these thirty-minute shows presents a reformulation of television time in a quality television context; along with continuing to develop Showtime's brand identity, the combination of situation comedy and melodrama in that 30-minute time frame also turn conventional rituals of heterosexual coupling and domesticity on their head, creating a space in the television landscape for female characters' renegotiation of the traditional work/home binary.

Chapter 18 closes this section by giving attention to one of the newest television genres of the twenty-first century: the musical. In "The Television Musical: *Glee*'s New Directions," Jack Harrison looks at the temporal narrative experiment taking place in Fox's *Glee*, the first successful contemporary musical television program. His essay addresses the temporalities of *Glee* in three parts. The first section explores how musical conventions are changed by seriality, arguing that the climactic narrative synthesis of the musical film is still relevant to the show, but that the indefinite temporal expansion of television creates opportunities for multiple romantic unions. In the second section, closer attention is paid to the cause of the diegetic ruptures—the musical numbers themselves—reading their lyric time against the history of televisual realism to highlight the break from tradition they represent. Finally, in order to begin to address the question of why *Glee* was the show to bring the musical to television where other series have failed, the third section reads the show's musical numbers through the lens of Amit Rai's interval, showing how their circulation, independent of the greater text, has tapped into novel flows of sensation and revenue, particularly through digital downloads.

Section V. Playing outside of the Box: The Role Time Plays in Fan Fiction, Online Communities, and Audience Studies

The final section in this anthology turns away from the programs themselves and instead studies the various viewing audiences of these programs dedicated to exploring experimental time. Melanie Cattrell's "'Nothing Happens Unless First a Dream': TV Fandom, Narrative Structure, and the Alternate Universes of *Bones*" looks at how contemporary television writers draw upon the work in fan communities to inform and inspire the directions of their shows. This essay examines the way in which *Bones* challenges traditional storytelling patterns in two episodes that play with and disrupt narrative time by breaking from its typical format to place the lead characters in different realities. Within these realities, the lead characters are placed in a romantic relationship. Thus, these episodes allow viewers to see the characters together without disrupting the larger narrative of the program. Cattrell argues that the techniques used in these episodes are similar to techniques used by fan fiction writers, as they frequently place characters in different situations and in new realities.

In chapter 20, "Two Days before the Day after Tomorrow: Time, Temporality, and Fandom in *South Park*," Jason W. Buel examines atypical narrative time and narrative experimentation in the television series *South Park*. Though narrative time is not in the foreground of *South Park* as it is in many of the other programs analyzed in this collection, temporal play is nonetheless an important and common part of the show. This chapter examines such experimentation and attends to how fans have responded to the show's subversion of their expectations. Although the series has received a great deal of attention in popular media for the way its characters subvert the conventions of society, the way its form subverts conventions of narrative time is rarely discussed. *South Park* regularly delays narrative resolutions, continues narrative arcs from episodes long past, misremembers its own history through flashbacks, and refuses to pay off cliffhangers. Through such temporal play, Buel argues the series not only delights its fans but also carries different meanings for dedicated fans compared to casual viewers.

With Lucy Bennett's "Lost in Time?: *Lost* Fan Engagement with Temporal Play," this collection closes with an essay that analyzes the show most credited with jumpstarting the narrative trend of experimental temporality—a show that, because of its importance, has appeared (at least in passing) in almost every section of this anthology. As is well known, the television program *Lost* uses experiments with time as an important part of its structure, employing flashforwards, flashbacks, flashsideways, time travel, and multiple plot threads

to create quite a novel narrative development. This chapter, by focusing on a specific example of the flashforward employed in season three, seeks to examine how online fans of the show engage with, and respond to, the use of these devices surrounding narrative time and the rationale that underlies their participation in the program as a puzzle to be solved. To achieve this, Bennett considers how these fans "read" and try to make sense of the show's use of temporal play in terms of their placement as viewers following characters in past, present, and alternate timelines, often simultaneously. Exploring discussions by members of the largest online community for *Lost* fans, www.lost-forum.com, she illuminates the responses of fans initiated by the startling temporal narrative device and explains how some struggled with its inclusion.

CONCLUSION
Why Time Matters

Humans have been preoccupied by time for centuries so it is not surprising that academic works and popular culture products continue to play to this fascination. In *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution*, Paul Davies explains that "the greatest outstanding riddle" concerning time is linked to "the glaring mismatch between physical time and subjective, or psychological, time," or how the brain struggles to relate the two in a way that connects "to our sense of free will" (283). The sociologist Émile Durkheim first noted that an "individual's temporal experience is conditioned by the collective rhythms of" his or her society (Flaherty 2). That is, time itself "is shaped from the very outset by society because self-consciousness is generated through socialization" (Flaherty 2). As television is perhaps one of the most influential media products helping to shape the "collective rhythms" of the society it stems from, and is one of the most apt means of socialization, it only makes sense that the medium of television, and televisual narratives in particular, would play a role in shaping individuals' understanding of the abstract concept we call time.

Although time moves along steadily whether we fully comprehend it or not, this study suggests that temporal explorations are the result of societal trends (sometimes even to the extent that they become allegories for them), they are a way of working through contemporary cultural concerns, and that they can be influential in transforming the very narratives that we tell (and the way we tell them) generation after generation. Moreover, these programs, in surprising ways, continue the work of scientists, philosophers, and media scholars, offering up fascinating critiques of current "times" while chasing the age-old dream of understanding "time" in general.

NOTES

1. One important study is Steven Johnson's *Everything Bad Is Good for You*, which argues that entertainment media of the last three decades have been increasing in complexity and have resulted in the smartening, rather than the "dumbing down," of American consumers. Two other noteworthy studies, focused more specifically on televisual trends, would include Robert J. Thompson's *Television's Second Golden Age* and M. Keith Booker's *Strange TV.*

2. For academic studies on the role of the active fan as television scholar/critic, see Henry Jenkin's *Textual Poachers*, Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women*, or Nancy K. Baym's *Tune In, Log On.*

3. Although no such book for this decade exists, there is a precedent for the success of academic books focusing on one decade of television alone. See Jane Feuer's *Seeing Through the Eighties: Television and Reaganism* and Aniko Bodroghkozy's *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion* as examples of ancestor texts that study a specific televisual decade.

4. These ideas can be further explored in Mittell's "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," "Serial Boxes," and "Previously On: Prime Time Serials and the Mechanics of Memory."

5. For such examples, see Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan's *Journalism after September 11th*, Daya Kishan Thussu and Des Freedman's *War and the Media*, Stephen Hess and Marvin Kalb's *The Media and the War on Terrorism*, Dennis Broe's "Fox and Its Friends: Global Commodification and the New Cold War," Susan J. Douglas's "The Turn Within: The Irony of Technology in a Globalized World," and Marc Redfield's "Virtual Trauma: The Idiom of 9/11."

6. To be clear, there have been some studies on individual television shows that read their fictional contents through a post-9/11 lens. Examples include Cinnamon Stillwell's "'24': Television for a Post-9/11 World," Lynnette Porter, David Lavery, and Hillary Robson's *Saving the World: A Guide to* Heroes, and J. Wood's *Living Lost: Why We're All Stuck on the Island*. However, most of these studies analyze one single program through a post-9/11 lens rather than studying programming thematics more broadly.

7. See Douglas (2006) and Spigel (2004).

8. A full list of such studies would be impossible to include here, but some select examples include Mark Andrejevic's *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn's *Understanding Reality Television*, Michael Essany's *Reality Check: The Business and Art of Producing Reality TV*, Laurie Ouellette and Susan Murray's *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, Anna David's *Reality Matters: 19 Writers Come Clean About the Shows We Can't Stop Watching*, and Jennifer L. Pozner's *Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth About Guilty Pleasure TV.*

9. Two noteworthy studies are Bonnie Anderson's *Newsflash: Journalism, Infotainment, and the Bottom-Line Business of Broadcast News* and Daya Thussu's *News as Entertainment: The Rise of Global Infotainment.*

10. Stewart beat out other reputable newscasters, such as Katie Couric, Charles Gibson, and Brian Williams. This poll can be viewed at http://www.timepolls.com/hppolls/archive/poll_results_417.html (accessed March 11, 2011).

11. This title was given to him just days before his political event, The Rally to Restore Sanity, which drew over a quarter million people to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on October 30, 2010.

12. See Aristotle in the fourth book of *Physics*, Augustine in book six of *Confessions*, Husserl in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, Heidegger in *Being and Time*, Nietzche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Bergson in *Duration and Simultaneity.*

13. Perhaps the best text that traces the development of scientific debates and theories of time is Hawking's *A Brief History of Time.*

14. Two such studies are David Landes's *Revolution in Time* and Jo Ellen Barnett's *Time's Pendulum.*

15. Other noteworthy studies include Mikhail Bakhtin's "Forms of Time and the Chronotrope in the Novel," E. M. Forester's *Aspects of the Novel*, and Peter Brooks's *Reading for the Plot.*

16. For other studies on postmodernism and time, consult E. D. Ermarth's *Sequel to History*, Brian Richardson's *Beyond Story and Discourse*, and David Dickens and Andrea Fontana's "Time and Postmodernism."

17. See also Doane (2002), Tyree (2009), and Uhlin (2010).

18. See Stephanie Marriott's *Live Television: Time, Space, and the Broadcast Event.*

19. See Tania Modeleski's *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women.*

20. It is not surprising that many of the shows analyzed in this collection could loosely fall into the category of science fiction as the genre as a whole aims to accomplish what each of these time-travel narratives do on a smaller scale: work through cultural anxieties. For two highly informational studies that track this science fiction goal historically, see Nagl and Clayton (1983) and Hollinger (1999).

21. For example, Steve Anderson's "History TV and Popular Memory" studies how television crafts cultural memories and how fictional programming often remediates historical events in interesting ways.

22. It is worth noting that the majority of the television shows devoted to experimental time, or time travel, prior to the twenty-first century were British. As this collection focuses on American television series alone it is interesting to observe how American television post-2000 hijacked this focus that it had previously only occasionally dabbled in.

23. This cultural trend was noted as early as 1970, when Alvin Toffler pointed out the close relation of instant availability and disposability in what he termed the "throw-away society" (47–67).

24. See Jameson's *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.*

25. Heise makes a very similar argument concerning postmodern literature in *Chronoschisms.*

26. For more on the concept of premediation, see Richard Grusin's *Predmediation: Affect and Mediality after 9/11.*

WORKS CITED

Anderson, Bonnie. *Newsflash: Journalism, Infotainment, and the Bottom-Line Business of Broadcast News*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004. Print.

Anderson, Steven. "History TV and Popular Memory." *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*. Ed. Gary R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001. 19–36. Print.

Andrejevic, Mark. *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. Print.

Aristotle. *Physics*. Ed. David Bostock. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.

Augustine. *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. Trans. Edward Pusey. New York: Collier, 1961. Print.

Bacon-Smith, Camille. *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth*. Philadelphia: University Press of Pennsylvania, 1994. Print.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. 84–258. Print.

Barnett, Jo Ellen. *Time's Pendulum: From Sundials to Atomic Clocks, the Fascinating History of Timekeeping and How Our Discoveries Changed the World*. New York: Harvest Books, 1998. Print.

Baym, Nancy K. *Tune In, Log On: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community*. London: Sage, 2000. Print.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller." *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. 83–110. Print.

Bergson, Henri. *Duration and Simultaneity*. 1922. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965. Print.

Bodroghkozy, Aniko. *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. Print.

Booker, M. Keith. *Strange TV: Innovative Television Series from* The Twilight Zone *to* The X-Files. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002. Print.

Broe, Dennis. "Fox and Its Friends: Global Commodification and the New Cold War." *Cinema Journal* 43.4 (Summer 2004): 97–102. Print.

Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. New York: Random House, 1985. Print.

David, Anna, ed. *Reality Matters: 19 Writers Come Clean About the Shows We Can't Stop Watching*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. Print.

Davies, Paul. *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. Print.

Dickens, David R., and Andrea Fontana. "Time and Postmodernism." *Symbolic Interaction* 25.3 (2002): 389–96. Print.

Doane, Mary Ann. *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, The Archive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. Print.

Douglas, Susan J. "The Turn Within: The Irony of Technology in a Globalized World." *American Quarterly* 58.3 (September 2006): 619–38. Print.

Edgerton, Gary R., and Peter C. Rollins, eds. *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001. Print.

Ermarth, Elizabeth Deeds. *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. Print.

Essany, Michael. *Reality Check: The Business and Art of Producing Reality TV*. Boston: Focal Press, 2008. Print.

Feuer, Jane. *Seeing Through the Eighties: Television and Reaganism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.

Flaherty, M. G. *A Watched Pot: How We Experience Time*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Print.

Forester, E. M. *Aspects of the Novel*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985. Print.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Grusin, Richard. *Premediation: Affect and Mediality after 9/11*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Hawking, Stephen. *A Brief History of Time*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988. Print.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. 1927. Trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. London: SCM Press, 1962.

Heise, Ursula K. *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.

Hess, Stephen, and Marvin Kalb, eds. *The Media and the War on Terrorism*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2003. Print.

Hollinger, Veronica. "Contemporary Trends in Science Fiction Criticism, 1980–1999." *Science Fiction Studies* 26.2 (1999): 232–62. Print.

Holmes, Su, and Deborah Jermyn. *Understanding Reality Television*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Husserl, Edmund. *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. 1928. Ed. Martin Heidegger. Trans. J. S. Churchill. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964. Print.

Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991. Print.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.

Johnson, Steven. *Everything Bad Is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter*. New York: Riverhead, 2005. Print.

Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of an Ending*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966. Print.

Landes, David S. *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge: Belknap, 1983. Print.

Lotz, Amanda. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*. New York: New York University Press, 2007. Print.

Marriott, Stephanie. *Live Television: Time, Space, and the Broadcast Event*. London: Sage Publications, 2007. Print.

McCabe, Janet, and Kim Akass, eds. *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2007. Print.

Mittell, Jason. "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television." *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (2006): 29–40. Print.

———. "Previously On: Prime Time Serials and the Mechanics of Memory." *Just TV*. July 3, 2009. Web. November 6, 2010.

———. "Serial Boxes." *MediaCommons*. January 20, 2010. Web. January 22, 2010.

Modleski, Tania. *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982. Print.

Nagl, Manfred, and David Clayton. "The Science-Fiction Film in Historical Perspective." *Science Fiction Studies* 10.3 (1983): 262–77. Print.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. Print.

Ouellette, Laurie, and Susan Murray. *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2009. Print.

Porter, Lynnette, David Lavery, and Hillary Robson. *Saving the World: A Guide to* Heroes. Toronto: ECW Press, 2007. Print.

Pozner, Jennifer L. *Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth About Guilty Pleasure TV*. New York: Seal Press, 2010. Print.

Redfield, Marc. "Virtual Trauma: The Idiom of 9/11." *diacritics* 37.1 (Spring 2007): 55–80. Print.

Reeves, Jimmie L., Mark C. Rogers, and Michael M. Epstein. "Quality Control: *The Daily Show*, the Peabody and Brand Discipline." *Quality Television: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*. Ed. Janet McCabe and Kim Akass. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 79–97. Print.

Richardson, Brian. *Beyond Story and Discourse: Narrative Time in Postmodern and Nonmimetic Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002. Print.

Ricouer, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. Vol. 1–3. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. Print.

Silverman, Stephen M. "Jon Stewart Named Most Influential Man of 2010." *People*. October 27, 2010. Web. January 5, 2011.

Spigel, Lynn. "Entertainment Wars: Television Culture after 9/11." *American Quarterly* 56.2 (June 2004): 235–67. Print.

Spigel, Lynn, and Jan Olsson, eds. *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Stillwell, Cinnamon. "'24': Television for a Post-9/11 World." *SFGate*. Web. January 31, 2007. April 10, 2008.

Thompson, Robert J. *Television's Second Golden Age: From* Hill Street Blues *to* ER. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996. Print.

Thussu, Daya Kishan. *News as Entertainment: The Rise of Global Infotainment*. New York: Sage, 2007. Print.

Thussu, Daya Kishan, and Des Freedman. *War and the Media: Reporting Conflicts 24/7*. London: Sage, 2003. Print.

Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock*. New York: Bantam Books, 1970. Print.

Tyree, J. M. "Against the Clock: *Slumdog Millionaire* and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*." *Film Quarterly* 62.4 (2009): 34–38. Print.

Uhlin, Graig. "TV, Time, and the Films of Andy Warhol." *Cinema Journal* 49.3 (2010): 1–23. Print.

Wood, J. *Living Lost: Why We're All Stuck on the Island*. New Orleans, LA: Garrett County Press, 2007. Print.

Zelizer, Barbie, and Stuart Allan. *Journalism after September 11th (Communication and Society)*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

PART I

PROMOTING THE FUTURE OF EXPERIMENTAL TV

The Industry Changes and Technological Advancements That Paved the Way to "New" Television Ventures

7

THE FEAR OF THE FUTURE AND THE PAIN OF THE PAST
The Quest to Cheat Time in Heroes, FlashForward, *and* Fringe

MELISSA AMES

To be mired in the past is to be unable to think and act the future; conversely, to be unanchored in the past
. . . is also to have no way to see or make a future.
—ELIZABETH GROSZ (*THE NICK OF TIME* 116)

Fictional narratives have traditionally depended on a narrative time that is linear in nature. This temporal structure "carries with it the implication of an arrow of time, pointing from the past to future and indicating the directionality of sequences of events" (Davies 34). Although this has been the narrative norm for a majority of fictional texts across media, a great many tales have arisen that question and/or disrupt this directionality. One thematic motif that participates in such narrative disruption is the "do-over." The last several decades have found this theme increasing in popularity in the American culture realm and it has amplified further since the September 11 attacks. Although this theme has existed across mediated divides, the medium that embraced it most readily (even if not always as overtly) is television. The last televisual decade has seen an acceleration of this theme and the prevalence of it in shows that specifically deal with post-9/11 material makes it worthy of analysis.

In the years following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, cultural products have been sites for interrogating the trauma that 9/11 caused for U.S. citizens. Although these cultural concerns were played out in both nonfictional and fictional spaces across media, this essay argues that televisual narratives in particular provide great insight into societal concerns during the start of this century. They do this in a unique space that repackages these concerns from "reality" and displaces them into the safe comforts of "fiction" where they can be repeatedly addressed with more favorable results. Although this underlying motif of fear is often developed through the subject matter of various television programs (e.g., the wave of rescue/salvation shows), it is also amplified in series that foreground time. I analyze

three contemporary fictional narratives that often remediate the tragedy of 9/11: ABC's *FlashForward* (2009–2010), NBC's *Heroes* (2006–2010), and Fox's *Fringe* (2008–Present). These programs include experimental temporality and center their plots on anxieties concerning time: the longing to correct mistakes of the past, the panic of living in a hypersensitive present, and the fear of the premediated future. These shows suggest that the fear viewers feel as a nation post-attack unconsciously resurfaces and seeks resolution in narrative spaces through repetition and that the consumption of these narratives is a means by which viewers "work through" the lingering emotional trauma caused by the attacks.[1]

While a vast array of American programs from the twenty-first century could be studied due to their thematic obsessions with salvation, this essay actually avoids this broad focus. Instead of focusing on this larger motif, I consider how this salvation theme morphs into personal quests: individual quests of redemption/rescue. Three individual episodes, all aired during 2010, will be analyzed. Within each, main characters from the three programs—*Heroes, Fringe,* and *FlashForward*—wrestle with personal demons, rage against the ticking time clocks that shape their own destinies, and attempt to manipulate time to "save" themselves and loved ones. The analysis of these episodes reveals an interesting commonality: each program includes an allusion to a cultural archetype or myth that carries with it a warning. The message appears to be that although the desire to change the past or control the future is perhaps unavoidable, extreme efforts to do so will only result in harm to any who attempts such feats. It is a message that delivers fear to both characters and viewers alike.[2]

THREE SNAPSHOTS OF TELEVISION POST-9/11

It is not hard to classify *Heroes, Fringe,* and *FlashForward* as post-9/11 television. Besides the fact that each premiered after the attacks, they each contain apocalyptic storylines that quite obviously point back to the national tragedy.

Heroes

Created five years after the attacks, Tim Kring's drama, *Heroes,* revolves around a plot where seemingly ordinary individuals realize they have supernatural powers. Although the post-9/11 relevance remains throughout all four years of the program's run, the first season clearly sets up this focus. During the final episode of the first season, all of the characters' paths cross so that they can

collaboratively prevent a national tragedy from occurring—one foreshadowed throughout the season's run. When studying this fictional tragedy, the allusions to 9/11 cannot be overlooked.

The first mention of this pending disaster comes in the form of a character's painting of a New York cityscape in flames. This disaster finally becomes "reality" toward the end of the season when, "in 'Five years Gone,' *Heroes* presents an alternative future vision not only of the characters' world but also of the series itself . . . The episode reveals a dystopia that is yet to come" (Porter, Lavery, and Robson 149). The echoes of 9/11 are not subtle. In this episode, as the president speaks to a sober crowd in the ruins of the city, beneath a banner reading "America Remembers," the scene is reminiscent of memorials stationed at Ground Zero years after September 11. This episode highlights the cultural fascination with the theme of the "do-over." Arguably, this post-explosion scene is shared with viewers so that they might hope (along with the main characters) that it can still be prevented. The timing of this episode is also important. In it the characters are viewing a time *five years* in the future—one that if they could go back in time *just five years* (and some do have this power), they could change. Also significant is the fact that viewers are watching the episode *five years* after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

As the series progresses the desire to turn back the hands of time gets linked less to longing to undo societal wrongs or national catastrophes but instead becomes more linked to the individual choices (and their consequences) made by the various characters.

Fringe

In 2008 Fox launched yet another narrative to explore the concerns of a nation battling an invisible enemy called "terror." Created by J. J. Abrams, Alex Kurtzman, and Roberto Orc, *Fringe* focuses its plot around the FBI "Fringe Division," agents operating under the supervision of Homeland Security. At the heart of this show lies an eclectic team headed by Olivia Dunham (Anna Torv), an FBI agent with enhanced supernatural skills leftover from being part of a childhood experiment; Dr. Walter Bishop (John Noble), a mad scientist figure and former government researcher who understands of the capabilities existing on the periphery of science; and his son, Peter Bishop (Joshua Jackson), a potential/eventual love interest to Olivia and investigative sidekick.

Originally the program was concerned with investigating "the pattern"—a series of unexplainable, and often catastrophic, events caused by fringe science attacks. The perils from which the characters save society hint at mass concerns about the possible use of biological warfare and new technology.

Like *Heroes,* this program ended its first season with an obvious moment of wish fulfillment when it presented viewers with a parallel universe in which the Twin Towers had not been destroyed on 9/11. In season two this storyline is continued as some of the supernatural feats they uncover (and prevent) include travel that disrupts the normal space-time continuum.

FlashForward

Brannan Braga and David Goya adapted Robert J. Sawyer's 1999 science fiction novel to create a program about a mysterious event that caused a blackout wherein the entire human population lost consciousness for two minutes and seventeen seconds. During this brief time period, all unconscious persons had visions of their lives six months later. A team of Los Angeles FBI agents assembled the Mosaic, a database system that compiled the visions of all who volunteered what they saw through an online Web site. These tentative future visions laid the foundation for their investigation as they attempted to not only discover how this event was possible but how it could be prevented in the future.

Although the larger goal of the investigative team is to protect society at large, many of the agents actually have personal motivation for trying to unravel the future before it occurs. In fact, many want to prevent the future they saw (or did not see) from occurring. The main character, Mark Benford (Joseph Fiennes), hopes to prevent his future in which he is under attack and about to die on the fated day of April 29, while his wife, Dr. Olivia Benford (Sonya Walger), is in bed with another man, Lloyd Simcoe (Jack Davenport), someone partially to blame for the science behind the global event. Mark's partner, Demetri Noh (John Cho), is on a quest to prevent the future from occurring as predicted specifically because he did *not* have a vision during the two-minute blackout—an anomaly that has proven to mean only one thing: he will be dead.

THE STRUCTURE AND IDEOLOGY OF TIME-TRAVEL NARRATIVES

Although each of these programs includes elements of time travel through various motifs or individual episodes, this focus on temporal play would likely not be considered a defining feature of most of the shows. Most would categorize *Heroes* as a televisual version of the comic genre, *Fringe* as a variation of the police procedural, and *FlashForward* as a post-*Lost* type of prime-time drama. However, their overarching thematic concerns with the implications

of time travel, or controlling time more generally, make them interesting bed-fellows in the loose category of "time travel narratives." As such, they follow some of the same structures of similar narratives that came before them: the characters in these programs almost always attempt to either "manipulate fore-gone events" or "thwart such attempts" to do so (Wittenberg 66). Therefore, like most time travel stories, their goal in "temporal revisionism is quite often to leave events and plots just as they were, or else to restore them to what they *should have been*" (Wittenberg 66, emphasis added). In these three episodes, many of the characters aim to do the latter: ensure a desired alternate future, the future that *should be*. The moral implications of this desire will be analyzed further in the following sections of this essay.

The relatively standard plot structure of the time travel narrative is often the result of the common ideological function that such fictions serve. With ties to the science fiction genre, these narratives provide "the necessary dis-tancing effect" needed

> to be able to metaphorically address the most pressing issues and themes that concern people in the present. If the modern world is one where the individuals feel alienated and powerless in the face of bureaucratic struc-tures and corporate monopolies, then time travel suggests that Everyman . . . is important to shaping history, to making a real and quantifiable dif-ference to the way the world turns out. (Redmond 114)

As post-9/11 narratives, these programs metaphorically address the concerns viewers have after the attacks of September 11 by reworking them into small-screen fictional narratives. In their plots that suggest that one person can make a difference (and perhaps undo time), these shows provide viewers with the hope that they, too, have control in a seemingly out-of-control world. How-ever, the suggestion that everyone has the ability to control his destiny is un-dermined by the ways the programs weave cautionary tales into their plots.

AN OVERVIEW OF THREE INDIVIDUAL EPISODES

Each of these programs showcases a desire to change the past or future, which, in and of itself, may not be extraordinary. However, they also include charac-ters with the power to actually accomplish such feats—those who *can* travel through or manipulate time. On a larger scale, as each program revolves its action around a group of officials aiming to protect the people (the FBI in both *Fringe* and *FlashForward* and various governmental special task forces in

Heroes), each quite obviously seems to echo concerns from 9/11. But as each series progresses, the longing to undo the past or future becomes more en-trenched in the individual storylines of characters attempting personal (rather that national) salvation.

"The Garden of Forking Paths"

In *FlashForward*, Demetri's pending death and the predicted collapse of Mark's marriage are the two central storylines that involve the theme of "fearing the future." This discussion will focus solely on the former narrative arc. "The Garden of Forking Paths" is set on March 15, the day of Demetri's anticipated death. This episode follows immediately after one in which he was abducted and focuses on his colleagues' efforts to find him before his future hypotheti-cal plight becomes real. Viewers first see Demetri as a captive in a nondescript warehouse bound to a chair with an elaborate mechanical set-up positioning Mark's gun (the weapon predicted to kill him) at his head. Demetri's captor, Dyson Frost, a villain connected to the blackout, later explains that beyond being rigged to fire if disarmed, the mechanism also contains a backup tim-ing device. Frost also points out an elaborate chalk flowchart positioned on the wall behind Demetri, calling it his "Garden of Forking Paths." This chart documents all the possible futures Frost has seen through years of engineering smaller flashforwards. It focuses on key decision points and days that alter the future path—one being this specific day when both of them are slated to die. Through this scenario, Frost hopes to prevent the future from occurring as it did in his many flashforwards, although he is convinced that by the day's end one, if not both, of them will be dead.

The episode then shifts primarily to Mark's efforts to save Demetri. In the previous episode Frost had delivered clues concerning Demetri's whereabouts to Mark's young daughter, Charlie, cryptically concealed in riddles: he told her that his favorite Dr. Seuss book was *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* (this clue eventually prompts Mark to know the proper way to disarm the col-ored wires attached to the firing mechanism) and he gave her a photograph of a painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres titled *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (this clue allows Mark to find where Demetri is located because the street address matches the painter's name). Before these clues can become evident Mark first engages with Frost, only to watch him die by the hands of another villain. In his last breath Frost admits that he provided Charlie with all of the information needed to save Demetri. Racing against the clock, Mark decodes the riddles and arrives at the warehouse with only minutes to disarm the con-traption. With his hand on the gun viewers are led to believe that the future

cannot be prevented and that Demetri will, in a sense, die (as predicted) by Mark's hand. However, Mark manages to disarm the motion sensors and tilts the gun just as it fires, barely missing Demetri's head. The rescue triggers a sprinkler system aimed directly at Frost's chart and the two agents watch helplessly as the clues melt away. The most ominous piece of information lingers in Mark's memory. It was the event at the end of the probability lines, simply written as "The End" and dated December 12, 2016. For them, the future remains something to be afraid of.

"The White Tulip"

In *Fringe*'s second season viewers learn a secret hinted at throughout much of season one: that a terminal illness ended Peter's life when he was a young boy. Desperately attempting to find a cure, Walter had been spying on his alternate self, a version of him in the other universe who was slightly more skilled at science and was also attempting to accomplish the same task—to save *his own* son. When the other Walter failed to notice that he had, indeed, created a cure for the disease, Walter realized that the second Peter would also die. Walter decided to cross over to the other universe, abduct that Peter, and nurse him back to health. Although he had intended to return him, he was never able to do so and instead Peter lived out the remainder of his life not knowing that any switch had been made.

An episode toward the end of this season, "The White Tulip," is devoted to the guilt Walter feels for these actions. This episode starts with him writing a letter to his son confessing his past mistake. His determination to deliver this letter is interrupted as both he and Peter are called to a crime scene investigation in which a train has arrived at a station with all of its passengers dead. Walter later determines that all of the persons died instantaneously when their body cells were drained of energy. The closest thing they have to a witness is a teenage pickpocket who saw one living man depart the train. The team discovers that he is Alistair Peck, an astrophysics professor at MIT. Walter determines that Peck has found a way to apply the Theory of Relativity—a feat that would require massive amounts of energy. When they attempt to apprehend him at his apartment for the murders, Peck remarks that they are not permanently dead and then disappears. Viewers see him again aboard the commuter train as they did at the start of the episode where he disembarks and walks past the pickpocket. The only difference is this time he tells the boy: "sorry you have to go through this all again" ("The White"). After Peck is out of sight, again, the teenager discovers all the corpses on the train. The episode starts over with slight variations in the investigation.

In this second version they meet a colleague of Peck's at MIT who informs them that he was obsessed with creating wormholes that would allow time travel. Through her they discover that Peck's fiancée, Arlette, was killed in a car crash ten months earlier. After realizing that the unfinished chapter in Peck's book, titled "The Arlette Principle," refers to time travel, Walter realizes that Peck is attempting to time-travel back ten months—an act that would kill thousands of people. When they next discover Peck he is in his lab. Going in before the SWAT team, Walter warns Peck of the team's presence and then tells him that they know of his plans. Walter explains that the time-jump he is attempting will kill thousands of people. Peck, rather than address this immediate concern, explains his desire to attempt this in the first place. On the day his fiancée died they had had a fight. It was also on this day that he realized how to apply his theories of time travel while he sat in an empty field. Peck then tells Walter that he plans to jump directly to that field to avoid killing anyone. Walter, who realizes Peck cannot jump further than twelve hours, points out the error in his calculations. As the FBI team rushes in Walter warns Peck that he will not be able to live with the consequences of bringing back a loved one who was intended to die. He explains what he did with Peter and the burden he has felt, commenting that he keeps looking for a sign of forgiveness: a white tulip. Immediately after this conversation, Peck escapes.

The episode then begins a third time. Peck has time traveled back to his apartment, killing all of his neighbors in the process. The investigative team, possessing no knowledge of the previous two attempts to solve this crime, again closes in on Peck at his office at MIT as he writes a letter addressed to his colleague, Carol. Just as the FBI break in, Peck teleports back into the past to the empty field on the day of his fiancée's death, thanks to Walter's calculations. Viewers see him running to her car and getting in, sobbing. As he tells her that he loves her, a car hits and kills them both. Months later, Carol finds Peck's letter in his files. In it is an envelope addressed to Walter Bishop with instructions that it be sent to him on a specific date in the future. She follows through with his wishes and the letter arrives unmarked to a Walter who would have no recollection of ever engaging with Peck (since their encounter has no longer happened). He opens up this letter right after having burnt the one he had written to confess to his son. Inside this envelope is s single drawing: a white tulip. His eyes fill up with tears and the episode comes to a close.

"Brave New World"

This *Heroes* episode revolves around the romantic story arc of Hiro Nakamura (Masi Oka) and Charlie Andrews (Jayma Mays). Seen initially in the first

season, Charlie is a waitress in Midland, Texas. Like many of the characters on the show she has a gift: enhanced memory skills. However, unlike most of the characters, her gift comes at a cost. When Hiro meets her she is currently dying from a blood clot in the brain. Although the two quickly become friends, their bond is short lived as she is soon after murdered by Sylar, the key villain of the series. In an attempt to undo this tragedy, Hiro travels back in time and meets Charlie again a few months earlier. The two fall quickly into a relationship and Hiro is forced to prove his powers to her by stopping time, restarting it after he has made and hung one thousand origami cranes all about her.[3] Hiro urges her to escape with him but she declines his offer, telling him of her disease. Hiro inadvertently travels back into the future before he could complete his time-travel salvation mission leaving her in the past to die once again.

The storyline remains in the backdrop until the fourth season when Hiro attempts to save her once again, traveling back in time with a new villain at his side, Samuel. They arrive just as Sylar is about to kill Charlie. Hiro prevents it, forces Sylar to fix her brain with his new healing powers, and then lets Sylar go free even though he knows the damage he will cause in the future. Instead of being grateful for this rescue, Charlie is angry with Hiro. Having accepted her fate, Charlie scolds him: "Hiro, 300,000 people die every single day—young, old, there are accidents, murders—why am I any different?" She further questions how he could set Sylar free knowing that he would go on to kill so many people. Hiro claims that it was their "happily ever after," proclaims his love, and eventually Charlie forgives him. However their happiness is thwarted as soon she is kidnapped by another time traveler and dropped into a time and place unknown to Hiro whose rescue attempts thereafter would be futile. The loss of Charlie and the ethical questions she pitched haunt Hiro in the coming months. The show dedicates one episode to his guilt in "Pass/Fail," where Hiro experiences a dreamlike state where he stands on trial for his actions.

The episode discussed here brings closure to this storyline. While Hiro is hospitalized a nurse arrives and hands him an origami crane with the message, "Hiro, is it really you? Come and find me" ("Brave"). Hiro enters a hospital room to find an aged Charlie. He learns that when she was kidnapped she was dropped off in 1944 during World War II. Hiro responds, "I'm so sorry, Charlie. This was all my fault. I led the evil butterfly man right to you. It was because I loved you that he sent you away" ("Brave"). Their conversation reveals that Hiro is still not finished trying to undo the past.

> CHARLIE: Don't beat yourself up, Hiro. I would have waited for you but by the time you were born I was middle aged. I'm just so happy I got to see you before . . .

> HIRO: You're not well . . . I can fix this, Charlie . . . It's simple, I'll be waiting for you in 1944. When you pop out onto that snowy street corner I'll take you right back to the (diner) where I left you.
> CHARLIE: I'd be young again.
> HIRO: And we can finally build a life together.
> CHARLIE: That sounds nice. But Hiro, I already had a life—a wonderful life. 65 years is a long time. ("Brave")

Charlie further explains why she cannot accept his offer: "Hiro, after the war I married a wonderful man. I had four children. I now have seven beautiful grandchildren. We had a home, friends, cherished memories, a life. If I was to go back now and live a different life what would happen to all of that?" ("Brave").

Hiro's best friend, Ando, calls him away and he watches through the hospital window as her family happily enters the scene. Hiro smiles and says, "It is over. The damsel has found her happy ending. My hero's journey has come to an end" ("Brave"). He bows, blows a kiss, and walks away.

SYMBOLS, ALLUSIONS, AND THEMES
Beware Those Who Attempt to Master Time

All three of the episodes summarized above contain symbolic allusions that carry the same didactic message: changing the past/future is something to regret. In *Heroes*, Hiro refers to the man who instigated the kidnapping of Charlie, who used time travel to fulfill his own selfish needs, as "the butterfly man." In that same episode, while he is concocting his scheme to travel back to 1944, he has a brief conversation with Ando that again returns to this motif: Ando comments, "There's no such thing as stepping on a small butterfly," and Hiro responds, "All I'm doing is righting a terrible wrong" ("Brave"). The scientific principal they are referring to, the butterfly effect, is a metaphor related to chaos theory, an idea that small factors in the initial condition of a complex system may produce large variations in the long-term behavior of the system. It has been a common trope in the fictional work of time travel, creating "what if" scenarios. The phenomenon specifically refers to the idea that a butterfly's wings might create tiny changes in the atmosphere to the point that it could even alter the path of a tornado. Their allusion to the butterfly effect quite obviously suggests that Hiro's actions might (continue to) disrupt the future rather than heal it.

The allusions in the other two episodes receive less attention. In *FlashForward*, the most important allusion is the painting given to Mark's daughter by Frost: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Oedipus and the Sphinx*. The painting focuses on Oedipus's actions which inadvertently brought about the death of his parents—the very fate he was trying to avoid. Within the episode this allusion causes the agents to wonder if they themselves are following in a similar path, if their rescue efforts may actually be contributing to rather than preventing Demetri's death. Finally, in *Fringe*, the drawing of the white tulip that closes the episode symbolizes forgiveness, suggesting that changing the past requires forgiveness.

All three of these symbolic references point to the negative consequences that accompany attempts to alter time.[4] The programs reinforce this by pairing all such attempts with death. Hiro's choice to save Charlie brought about the deaths of many. Peck's time-travel attempts cause accidental death and even when he finally masters his quest, he is unable to save his fiancée and dies beside her. In the *FlashForward* episode, the mention of Oedipus points to choices that ultimately lead to death. This may seem counterintuitive to the celebratory episode itself, which suggests momentarily that fate can be altered. However, the Oedipus tale is very well aligned with the program as a whole as it proves repeatedly that fate cannot be avoided as all the characters' attempts to avoid death ultimately fail.[5]

CONCLUSION

Each of these episodes showcases characters who are haunted by their past actions and who live in fear of what is to come. Therefore, their present temporal states are preoccupied and determined by that of their past and future ones. The characters are frozen in the present and unable to move forward freely into the future without fear until the guilt they feel is resolved. Friedrich Nietzsche believed that "too strong an immersion in the past is an illness, a debilitation, an inhibition to life, for it prevents our active living in the present" (Grosz 116). Such a fixation on the past results in an inability to digest that past, move on from it, and be rid of it; the past, instead, dominates and haunts the present (Grosz 116). These storylines validate this sentiment, and as figures in post-9/11 texts, the characters within them may represent citizens at large who are also frozen in a temporal pocket, unable to move beyond the past, reliving it over and over through the consumption of remediated versions of the very past that haunts them. In some ways these programs may be conceived as spaces in which viewers unconsciously work through the

emotional trauma remaining after the attacks—especially fears dealing with time: the past, the future, and the present that is dependent on them both (the past and future). These three episodes also indicate that we may be able to learn from our mistakes and craft a better future accordingly—that our past truly can be a "resource for overcoming the present, for bringing about a future" (Grosz 257). They may even go as far as suggesting that each person has the ability to control his or her own destiny, as individual characters in these shows are shown to have the ability to help craft the futures they desire. However, as the cultural allusions in the three analyzed episodes suggest, these shows also simultaneously urge viewers to steer clear of hopes that they might fully control the future or undo the past altogether. In their efforts to show characters who have successfully manipulated time, *FlashForward, Fringe,* and *Heroes* clearly highlight the personal conflicts, rather than successes, that stemmed from these acts.

SUGGESTED EPISODES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

FlashForward

1:1. "No More Good Days." Writ. David S. Goyer and Brannon Graga. Dir. David S. Goyer. September 24, 2009.

1:16. "Let No Man Put Asunder." Writ. Seth Hoffman and Quinton Peeples. Dir. Bobby Roth. April 15, 2010.

1:20. "The Negotiation." Writ. Byron Balasco, Quinton Peeples, and Deborah J. Ezer. Dir. Leslie Libman. May 13, 2010.

1:21. "Countdown." Writ. Lisa Zwerling and Seth Hoffman. Dir. John Polson. May 20, 2010.

1:22. "Future Shock." Writ. Timothy J. Lea and Scott M. Gimple. Dir. John Polson. May 27, 2010.

Fringe

1:1. "Pilot." Writ. J. J. Abrams, Alex Kurtzman, and Roberto Orci. Dir. Alex Graves. September 9, 2008.

1:19. "The Road Not Taken." Writ. Jeff Pinkner, J. R. Orci, and Akiva Goldsman. Dir. Fred Toye. May 5, 2009.

2:13. "What Lies Below." Writ. Jeff Vlaming. Dir. Deran Sarafian. January 21, 2010.

2:15. "Jacksonville." Writ. Ashley Miller and Zack Stentz. Dir. Charles Beeson. February 4, 2010.

2:16. "Peter." Writ. Jeff Pinkner, J. H. Wyman, Josh Singer, and Akiva Goldsman. Dir. David Straiton. April 1, 2010.

2:22. "Over There: Part I." Writ. J. H. Wyman, Jeff Pinkner, and Akiva Goldsman. Dir. Akiva Goldsman. May 13, 2010.

2:23. "Over There: Part II." Writ. J. H. Wyman, Jeff Pinkner, and Akiva Goldsman. Dir. Akiva Goldsman. May 20, 2010.

3:1. "Olivia." Writ. J. H. Wyman and Jeff Pinkner. Dir. Joe Chappelle. September 23, 2010.

3:7. "The Abducted." David Wilcox and Graham Roland. Dir. Chuck Russel. November 18, 2010.

3:10. "The Firefly." Writ. J. H. Wyman and Jeff Pinkner. Dir. Charles Beeson. January 21, 2011.

3:14. "6B." Writ. Glen Whitman and Robert Chiappetta. Dir. Tom Yatsko. February 18, 2011.

3:18. "Bloodline." Writ. Alison Schapker and Monica Breen. Dir. Dennis Smith. March 25, 2010.

3:21. "The Last Sam Weiss." Writ. Monica Breen and Alison Schapker. Dir. Tom Yatsko. April 29, 2011.

3:22. "The Day We Died." Writ. Akiva Goldsman, J. H. Wyman, and Jeff Pinkner. Dir. Joe Chappelle. May 6, 2011.

Heroes

1:1. "Genesis." Writ. Tim Kring. Dir. David Semel. September 25, 2006.

1:9. "Homecoming." Writ. Adam Armus and Nora Kay Foster. Dir. Greg Beeman. November 20, 2006.

1:10. "Six Months Ago." Writ. Aron Eli Coleite. Dir. Allan Arkush. November 27, 2006.

1:23. "How to Stop an Exploding Man." Writ. Tim Kring. Dir. Allan Arkush. May 21, 2007.

2:7. "Out of Time." Writ. Aron Eili Coleite. Dir. Daniel Attias. November 5, 2007.

2:9. "Cautionary Tales." Writ. Joe Pokaski. Dir. Greg Yaitanes. November 20, 2007.

3:1. "The Second Coming." Writ. Tim Kring. Dir. Allan Arkush. September 22, 2008.

3:2. "The Butterfly Effect." Writ. Tim Kring. Dir. Greg Beeman. September 22, 2008.

3:4. "I am Become Death." Writ. Aron Eli Coleite. Dir. David Von Ancken. October 6, 2008.

3:8. "Villains." Writ. Rob Fresco. Dir. Alan Arkush. November 10, 2008.

3:14. "A Clear and Present Danger." Writ. Tim Kring. Dir. Greg Yaitanes. February 2, 2009.

3:23. "1961." Writ. Aron Eli Coleite. Dir. Adam Kane. April 13, 2009.

4:8. "Once Upon a Time in Texas." Writ. Aron Eli Coleite and Aury Wallington. Dir. Nathaniel Goodman. November 2, 2009.

NOTES

1. Each of the programs analyzed is loosely related to the genres of science fiction and fantasy. While both genres have historically been understood as escapist modes or fictions of wish fulfillment, research has indicated that their subject matter may often play an important role in how victims of trauma construct their narratives.

2. Television has long been associated with the catastrophic and the affect of fear. See Mellencamp and Doane on how televised news coverage works to both instill and relieve anxiety in viewers. This article, inspired by their works and the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins (see Sedgwick and Frank), suggests that fictional programming works in a similar way.

3. In Japanese custom it is thought that the person who could fold 1,000 cranes would have his greatest wish fulfilled. As most of these time-traveling attempts are in fact attempts at wish fulfillment, this symbol seems quite relevant.

4. These shows are not the first to explore the moral issues of temporal manipulation. NBC's *Quantum Leap* (1989–1993) dealt heavily with this theme.

5. This is best shown in two linked episodes, "The Gift" and "Course Correction," in which, despite the often heroic or altruistic efforts of various characters to prevent deaths predicted by the flashforward, those predicted to die do so (even if delayed for a short while). The program hints that Demetri is an exception rather than the rule and suggests that he still may not be safe.

WORKS CITED

"Brave New World." *Heroes.* NBC. February 18, 2010. Television.

"Course Correction." *FlashForward.* ABC. May 6, 2010. Television.

Davies, Paul. *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. Print.

Doane, Mary Ann. "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe." *Logics of Television.* Ed. Patricia Mellencamp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990. 222–39. Print.

"Five Years Gone." *Heroes.* NBC. April 30, 2007. Television.

"The Garden of Forking Paths." *FlashForward.* ABC. April 22, 2010. Television.

"The Gift." *FlashForward.* ABC. November 5, 2009. Television.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Mellencamp, Patricia. "TV Time and Catastrophe, or *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* of Television." *Logics of Television.* Ed. Patricia Mellencamp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990. 240–66. Print.

"Pass/Fail." *Heroes.* NBC. January 18, 2010. Television.

Porter, Lynnette, David Lavery, and Hillary Robson. *Saving the World: A Guide to Heroes.* Toronto: ECW Press, 2007. Print.

Redmond, Sean, ed. *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader.* London: Wallflower Press, 2004. Print.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, and Adam Frank, ed. *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.

"The White Tulip." *Fringe.* Fox. 15 April 15, 2010. Television.

Wittenberg, David. "Oedipus Multiplex, or The Subject as a Time Travel Film: Two Readings of *Back to the Future.*" *Discourse* 28.2&3 (2006): 51–77. Print.