**Lost Communication: A Generative Criticism of How Parental Communication Towards**

**Children Affects How Children Communicate with Peers**

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M.A. Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Strategic

Communication in the School of Communication and the Arts

at Liberty University Lynchburg, Virginia

**Author Note**

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I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

**Approvals**

This Master's Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from

the School of Communication and The Arts at Liberty University.

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# Abstract

This study aimed to determine the effect parental communication towards three characters on the TV show *Lost* had on how these characters interacted with their peers. The researcher details the history of *Lost* and other scholarly information that led to this analysis. To determine the effect of parental communication on peer communication, the researcher coded all six seasons of *Lost* using a generative criticism method. This study showed that the characters Jack, Kate, and John used communication mechanisms displayed by their parents to judge their value and place in peer communications and interactions.

*Keywords:* Lost, Generative Criticism, parental communication, peer communication

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## Chapter I: Introduction

### Overview

This research study examines the science fiction television show *Lost* and how the parent-to-child communication in the show affects the characters' communication with their peers. The show ran for six seasons with 121 episodes over six years. Entertainment Reporter for quartz.com, Adam Epstein, wrote that since *Lost* aired during the birth of social media, DVR, and internet streaming, it became the "quintessential 21st-century viewing experience" (Epstein, 2014, para. 2). While the show's main storyline was about the passengers of a plane that crash-landed on a deserted island, frequent flashbacks show the main characters interacting with their parents. These interactions impact how the characters communicate with others on the island. This research examines how *Lost* characters Jack, Kate, and John communicate with their parents, shown in flashbacks. How the communication shown in these flashbacks may affect the ways in which the characters communicate with their peers on the island is then explored. All six seasons were viewed to code the flashbacks that involve Jack, Kate, and John interacting with their parents or parental figures. Those flashbacks were coded and categorized, and a schema was developed using S. K. Foss's (2018) generative criticism. All seasons were viewed to code peer-to-peer interaction and communication on the island involving Jack, Kate, John, and their peers. All parental interactions involving Jack, Kate, and John were coded. These instances were coded and categorized to determine if there is an effectual pattern or correlation between the type of parent-to-child communication the characters experience and the type of peer-to-peer communication the characters use in the future. This chapter includes the Background, Problem Statement, Purpose Statement, Significance of the Study, and Research Questions, and it concludes with a Summary.

**Background of the Study**

One of the main background factors of this study is how relevant *Lost* was in culture and entertainment. *Lost* was an incredibly successful television show in the United States and a "gargantuan worldwide success" (Epstein, 2014, para. 2). Viewers could watch live, record, or stream the show days later. This access to a current and popular television show prompted internet discussion and theorizing on new social media and chatrooms. The main characters of *Lost* are highly diverse; Australia, Korea, Iraq, the United Kingdom, the United States, Brazil, and many more countries are represented in solid characters. A global fan base of people finding a way to relate to the show helped make *Lost* the world's second most popular weekly program in 2006 (Epstein, 2014). As internet accessibility rose in the 90s, viewers were ready to discuss a show in-depth online. Whether a 14-year-old, prep school-attending female living in Florida or a middle-aged, single, working-class man in England, there was a storyline for the viewer to relate to in *Lost*. Due to the many mysteries and character storylines, *Lost* prompted fans to dissect, contemplate, and discuss the show. The need for dissection was a pioneer for official television (TV) show podcasts. Michelle Jaworski, a TV critic for the Daily Dot, wrote that "people constantly had to explain what podcasts were" when ABC launched the official *Lost* podcast (Jaworski, 2021, para. 3). The early adoption of recap and breakdown internet content put *Lost* on the main stage of entertainment and popular culture. The internet roundtable of opinions and theories formed in the early 2000s, and *Lost* was in the middle of it all.

*Lost* featured interwoven storylines and a plethora of character arcs over the six seasons. Fans and critics alike felt that the writers and producers of *Lost* had set out to achieve too much and ultimately fell short when attempting to bring the show and the many storylines to a close. Linda Holmes, Pop Culture Correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR), wrote that while

she thinks *Lost* was the most important show of the decade, it was only possible for the show to be partially successful. Holmes wrote:

> As I've gone back and given *Lost* a full viewing after dipping in and out over the first three seasons or so, one thing has impressed me more than any other, which is that, as comes up in the linked discussion, there is absolutely no way for *Lost* to be entirely successful. This goes beyond the nitpickiness of viewers, I think; it goes beyond the fact that some people are never satisfied; it goes beyond the dissecting culture of Internet television fanaticism. It's not that it can't be *perceived* as entirely successful -- though that's certainly true. It's that it can't be *actually* entirely successful in wrapping up the sprawling, complicated, decades-spanning mystery it's created. (Holmes, 2009, para. 2)

Empathy also plays a role in viewers' connection with *Lost* characters. *Lost* combines character backstories interwoven with the main story of plane crash survivors on an island. Viewers are shown an empathy-inducing backstory seconds before seeing that same character engaged in a communication conflict with another beloved islander. In a video titled "Here's why you get so emotionally attached to TV and movie characters", Vox Media stated that when we watch movies or TV, we "experience psychological effects such as identification, self-other taking, and the proximity effect… all these effects work together to make us empathize with and feel emotionally attached to these characters to the point where, sometimes, they can even seem real" (Vox, 2018, para. 2). *Lost* had the ability to appeal to viewers through the human-interest stories as well as the main storyline of the plane crash and mysterious island. *Lost* presents viewers with opportunities to insert themselves into the character's shoes and live through their emotions and experiences while watching from the comfort of their living room. *Lost* provided a wealth of interpersonal communication examples by showing a character's backstory while then

showing that the character engaged in different communication behaviors and instances while

stranded on the island.

Diverse characters and backstories enabled viewers to relate to the dialogue and choices

made by the characters. Michael Suarez, writer for *TVObsessive.com,* noted that the writers for

*Lost* "established the use of flashbacks as a tool for exposition" starting in episode one (Suarez,

2021, para. 3). Suarez wrote that the first central theme of *Lost*, letting go, was shown in the

flashbacks during the first few episodes (2021). Using flashbacks, the audience can distinguish a

theme and learn how each character's life uniquely connects to each theme. The flashbacks create

a character-driven exposition style and show how their past has defined each character. The

plane crash and subsequent interactions with peers on the island allow the characters to reinvent

themselves or continue to let their history explain their actions. Moving on and letting go of

one's past seems to be the show's central theme. Not only can the audience identify with the

characters' lives, but the audience can become more understanding of the characters' difficult

choices on the island. The audience can see and experience backstories instead of just hearing a

character explain them. Suarez calls this structure of storytelling a form of visual rhetoric. The

audience sees both sides of the character's dilemma, confronting who they were pre-crash and

their choices after the plane crash.

A third background factor for this study is how prevalent father wounds or "daddy issues"

are in *Lost.* The producers did not hide their belief in "daddy issues" being relatable to viewers.

When asked about the prevalence of fatherly storylines in *Lost*, Carlton Cuse, producer of *Lost*,

said this in an interview with Entertainment Weekly; "I don't think there is anything more

powerful in film than father-son relationships, maybe even in literature, too" (Jensen, 2007, para.

8). The producers believed in leveraging the power of familial relationships to write captivating

characters. In the same interview, producer Damon Lindelof (2007) said:

> Ironically, I had a fairly awesome (if not slightly complicated) relationship with my
>
> father. I suppose the fact that he died shortly before we began writing *Lost* had a great
>
> impact on where my head was at [at] the time, but he was an amazing guy who is pretty
>
> much responsible for my love of all things storytelling-related. He never even TRIED to
>
> steal my kidney. That being said, I think, mythically speaking, all great heroes have
>
> massive daddy issues. Hercules. Oedipus. Luke Skywalker. Indiana Jones. Spider-Man. It
>
> all comes with the territory. We dig flawed characters on *Lost*, and a large part of being
>
> flawed is the emotional damage inflicted on you by your folks. (para. 8)

Lindelof made the point that one does not have to have a bad relationship with one's father to be

emotionally invested in or at least entertained by fictional characters with flawed familial ties.

Viewers find interest in flawed characters and characters with a personal challenge to overcome;

the producers believed the most relatable flaw was emotional hurt from one's father. Seeing

flashbacks of characters on *Lost* being yelled at or double-crossed by their dad gave viewers

instant buy-in to that character on the island. In the 2000s to 2010s, when TV and other forms of

entertainment were made increasingly more accessible to children, a primetime TV show

showing the effects of bad parenting roped in viewers of all ages and all backgrounds.

### Statement of Problem and Purpose

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of understanding regarding a possible

connection between familial and peer-to-peer communication in the television show *Lost*. This

study examined the communication between parents and offspring and peer-to-peer

communication in the television show *Lost*. The study also examined whether there is a

relationship between parent-offspring and peer-to-peer communication. The characters analyzed were Jack Shephard, Kate Austen, and John Locke. The negative parenting dynamics shown in *Lost* are listed on the Lostpedia (2022) website. The character Jack Shephard thought of his father as an alcoholic. Growing up, his father gave him minimal validation, and his father recently died after a drinking binge that may have been Jack's fault. Kate Austen killed a man who she thought was her stepfather because of how he treated her mother. She found out later that the man was her biological father. John Locke didn't meet his biological father until his mid-life. Locke was put up for adoption by his birth parents. After Locke and his biological father meet, his father convinces Locke to be his kidney donor and then abandons him after the operation. Years later, he convinces Locke to be a partner in a con, resulting in Locke's girlfriend leaving him. After seeking an explanation, Locke is pushed out of an eight-story building by his father, leaving Locke paralyzed from the waist down (2022). These familial relationships could have impacted how the characters interacted with others on the island. The researcher examined the dialogue, communication tactics, and unique character aspects of relationships. The findings of the parent-to-child analysis were compared to the peer-to-peer communication of the three characters analyzed. The findings were then dissected and categorized to develop a schema and search for a possible effectual pattern.

  The first research question "In what ways does the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affect the characters' communication with their peers?" requires an analysis of the parent-to-offspring communication shown and the subsequent communication behaviors between peers. The researcher observed how the peer communication of Jack, Kate, and John is portrayed and compared this to communication shown with the parents. The researcher did not add unfounded interpretations or personal opinions to the content of *Lost*; but coded and compared what the

producers put in the show and then evaluated using generative criticism. The second research

question "What lessons regarding familial communication can viewers learn from the television

show *Lost*?" will be answered in chapter five and involves a detailed analysis of the findings and

conclusions made in chapter four. The purpose of this study is to understand the ways in which

parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affects the characters' communication with their peers.

The secondary purpose is to discern what lessons *Lost* shows viewers regarding familial

communication and its lasting affects.

As stated before, *Lost* was a popular television show; it is helpful to determine the

correlation in communication dynamics in a piece of media viewed by many. *Lost* has many

ways for viewers to identify with the diverse characters. Christine Hsu, a writer for

MedicalDaily.com, wrote that "Experts have dubbed this subconscious phenomenon 'experience-

taking,' where people actually change their own behaviors and thoughts to match those of a

fictional character that they can identify with" (Hsu, 2012, para. 2). The potential for viewers to

identify with fictional characters is present. This possibility is why it is vital to research a

potential correlation between the two communication settings.

A study from Deloitte found that 70% of United States consumers binge-watch TV

(2015). Binge-watching involves watching multiple episodes of a TV show in one sitting. *Lost*

was popular during its original run and gained a second streaming life in recent years. First-time

viewers of *Lost* can now binge the series and take everything in without opinions and theories

from other viewers. These factors seem to contribute to how much a viewer could self-identify

with a character, which is why this study seeks to determine how the show's flawed heroes

portray communication. A. Al-Heeti, a writer for CNET, said this in an article they wrote about

watching *Lost* for the first time during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown; "Watching a hit series

completely cut off from people's theories is a privilege and a rarity in this day and age" (Al-Heeti, 2020, para. 12). Isolation viewing allowed Al-Heeti to be wholly invested in the story, an experience currently shared by many viewers. Al-Heeti was able to form their own opinions of *Lost* and make a relevant connection with the story; "*Lost* may have first aired 16 years ago, but its lessons on love, hope, and destiny resonate strongly today" (Al-Heeti, 2020, para. 13). *Lost* continues to make a meaningful impact on viewers, even more so when binge-watched. These factors contribute to the importance of the purpose of the study.

## Significance of the Study

The study adds to the knowledge base of how generative criticism can be applied to an artifact. The research used a schema based on the data gathered to determine if an effectual pattern exists among the variables. This study sought a relationship between parental communication with offspring and offspring's communication with peers in the television show *Lost*. The study sought to extend existing knowledge of how generative criticism can be applied to artifacts.

The study also adds to the knowledge base of how Transportation Theory connects to artifacts like *Lost.* According to M. C. Green in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* "Transportation into a narrative world refers to the feeling of being lost in the world of a narrative, of being completely immersed in a story and leaving the real world behind." (2008, para. 1). Green states that the experience of transportation is the vital factor when considering the influence that stories are narratives have on one's attitudes and beliefs. Transportation being associated with media enjoyment relies on a mental process that constitutes the integrative melding of attention, imagery, and emotions (2008). Green writes that consumers of text audio or video narrative accounts can be transported into factual and fictional narratives.

In fact, fiction can be a vehicle to engage consumers into a more immersive and less critical

processing experience. Green writes that Transportation Theory "does not depend on whether a

narrative reflects real world truth." (2008, para. 4). In the context of Transportation Theory,

narratives are "a sequence of connected events and characters, typically in a causal chain that

moves from beginning to end." (2008, para. 5). In *Lost,* the narrative involves various diverse

characters engaged in a narrative, while showing flashbacks involving narrative with the main

characters. Discussing the role that Transportation Theory has in viewer attachment to

characters, Green (2008) says that it is possible for viewers to develop a para-social relationship

with the characters in a narrative. Characters can seem like friends when a viewer develops a

para-social relationship. Green (2008) points out another dimension of connectedness to

characters will occur if individuals personally identify with the character. The identification

involved in this process is when a consumer has a lower level of self-awareness and temporarily

replaces it with more emotional and cognitive energy directed toward the characters narrative. A

further dimension of attaching oneself to characters can involve a viewer making the character a

model for desired behavior. When viewers see characters as models for desired behaviors, the

characters become personally relevant to the viewer and the narrative becomes powerful in

changing the real world beliefs of the viewer (2008).

### Research Questions

Research Question 1: In what ways does the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affect

the characters' communication with their peers?

The first research question was chosen because it represents the Generative Criticism

process used to analyze the chosen artifact, *Lost.* S. K. Foss (2018) states that when a researcher

encounters a curious artifact with a particular aspect of the rhetorical process that prompts a

specific question, Generative Criticism can be used. When a rhetorical artifact is appealing in some way, generates intrigue or amazement, or prompts one to think about specific ideas, the process of criticism begins (2018).

Research Question 2: What lessons regarding familial communication can viewers learn from the television show *Lost*?

The second research question was chosen because it helps explain the findings from the Generative Criticism and connects the findings to real world implications. Foss (2018) states that after going through the coding process and developing an explanatory schema for the findings, the researcher can then formulate a research question to apply the schema directly to the findings. The second research question used for this study will use the findings from the explanatory schema to connect principles from *Lost* to the viewer experience caused by Transportation Theory.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

## Overview

The purpose of this rhetorical criticism is to observe communication behaviors in two settings shown in the television show *Lost* and compare these findings to discern any possible connection. The purpose of this Literature Review is to present a thorough review of the literature related to this topic. This chapter opens with this Overview, which is followed by the Related Literature. Following the Related Literature section is the Theoretical Framework, which introduces Transportation Theory and explains the use of Generative Criticism. The chapter closes with a Summary.

## Related Literature

### The Foundations

For *Lost* to have the success that it achieved, it needed a foundation of television drama and multi-season shows to pave the way. Noël de Souza of the Golden Globes wrote about the first "drama" program to air in the United States, *The Queen's Messenger*. A silent melodrama written by Irish playwright J. Hartley told the story of a male British diplomat's love affair with a woman Russian spy; they were the only two actors in the play (Souza, 2020, para. 2). TVs were only 3 inches in diameter in 1928, so only one face or one prop could be shown at a time (Souza, 2020, para. 4). Despite the broadcast being bare bones, this was the first step in entertainment that was needed for show like *Lost* to exist.

Newsweek.com wrote about one of the most popular weekly shows that was equally entertaining and thought-provoking, *M*A*S*H*. The show about the Korean War ran for eight years longer than the actual war. Based on the large following, the show's finale became a cultural event (Newsweek, 2018, para. 1). This kind of response to a show and anticipation for a

finale was a trailblazer for *Lost*. CBS sold 30-second commercial spots during the *M\*A\*S\*H*

finale for $450,000. The Super Bowl of 2010 would be the next television event to break the

record the *M\*A\*S\*H* finale set at 105.97 million viewers (Newsweek, 2018, para. 2). Writer for

The New Yorker, Howard Fisherman, wrote about what a show set in a wartime field hospital

taught the viewers, "Salvation is found in small, personal connections, in wry humor, and in the

forlorn hope that intelligence and decency will ultimately prevail" (Fisherman, 2018, para. 1).

This kind of commentary showed that TV could be more than just a mindless escape, it could be

a weekly journey into a world where the characters were honest and vulnerable about life. Part of

*M\*A\*S\*H's* appeal was that the characters displayed authenticity with each other. Authenticity is

what drew viewers in for years at a time. Finding that appeal was like striking gold on television.

Real-life and relatable drama was something *Lost* would seek to emulate. Todd VanDerWerff

(2014), writer for Vox, talked about the appeal viewers had to *Lost* in an article involving

interviews with the producers:

> Yet *Lost* was about more than just the theorizing, flipping over to the internet after an
>
> episode ended, knee-jittering with the possibility of it all, and leaping into comments
>
> sections to swap ideas about what was happening (though I also miss that aspect). No, it
>
> was about a bunch of people who had, in one way or another, failed at being complete
>
> human beings, and a weird place that gave them a chance to complete themselves. If the
>
> mythology didn't always add up, the characters always did. They were all searching for
>
> pieces of themselves they had misplaced along the way, and on the Island, they were able
>
> to find them. (para. 10)

*Lost* was the unicorn of 2000 – 2010's TV shows. It had the sci-fi and mystery elements to

connect to internet chat room theorists while also connecting to the middle-aged single mother

who watched after her kids went to bed. The human part carried the show as far as it could run. While viewers want to be entertained, they also crave a relatable and satisfying coming-of-age story. *Lost* delivered in-depth development in nearly every main character. The mythology kept the world talking, and the characters kept the world watching. These two elements are what made the show relevant and loveable.

***Lost*: The Unicorn of Cult TV**

The term "cult following" is often used when describing popular forms of entertainment like movies, TV shows, or music. Collins Dictionary defines a cult following as "the admiration that is felt by a particular group for a film, book, band, etc". According to Collins, the term's usage peaked in 2004 (Collins English Dictionary, date?). A show does not need to be niche to have a cult following; it must be admired. In the book "The Essential Cult TV Reader," Marc Dolan wrote about how ABC entertainment chairman Lloyd Braun chose writers with fantasy and romance backgrounds. From Dolan:

> In other words, from its inception, *Lost* – much like the American sci-fi series that would be launched in the wake of its spectacular initial success (especially *Surface* and *Invasion*) – was designed to be a peculiar hybrid: a mainstream cult show. (Dolan, 2010, para. 2)

*Lost* proved that the key to finding an audience that admires a show is connecting to a viewer wholistically. Instead of letting viewers reach their conclusions about the emotional state or relationship status of their favorite sci-fi heroes, *Lost* did it for them. The method of showing these emotional backstories was in the form of frequent flashbacks that, according to Dolan, "took both the audience and the actors by surprise from the beginning." By employing the use of character-individual flashbacks throughout the show, viewers saw that the characters would

provide "incomplete versions of their pasts to the others on the island" (Dolan, 2010, para. 7). This storytelling technique allowed viewers to feel like they were inside the characters heads while they did constant reputation management on the island. Just when a character was getting bland, a flashback would insert just the right amount of intrigue or drama into the dynamic on the island. Flashbacks were the ultimate mystery box, and it is one of the ways the show stayed relevant.

Characters hook a viewer; *Lost* not only had plenty but constantly added more. The creator's goal was to make *Lost* feel like a videogame. New characters, backstories, and physical spaces are introduced every season (Dolan, 2010). The island and its surrounding spaces would mean nothing to viewers unless the characters are a part of them. The means behind creating this sort of meaning would be in the ever-changing storytelling used by *Lost.* Watching the show season after season made the viewers feel like a student. The paradigm shifted so frequently that a viewer must be entirely caught up to understand what was happening. Dolan says this was done by using new "diegetic" levels every season or new levels of storytelling that consequently built on each other. Season one would bounce between two streams of time: the present-day plane crash and the individual character backstories. Season two reveals some missing pieces from the post-plane crash on island stories, and the last episode shows an on-island pre-plane crash narrative (Dolan, 2010). Even if these narratives did not consistently fully deliver, it was enough to keep audiences engaged through the different types of character-building. Audience engagement would keep the show relevant during its run and for years after. The production company that made *Lost*, Bad Robot, set up a discussion site for actors, writers, and viewers to discuss the latest happenings and theories (Dolan, 2010). Even though *Lost* has some similarities to works like *The Stand* and *Lost Horizon*, it was one of the greatest combinations of writer

creativity, fan engagement, and media attention to date (Dolan, 2010, para. 15). It would take a

Frankenstein of modern TV, a compilation of all the most significant trends, to captivate the

number of people that *Lost* did. VanDerWerff pointed out the appeal's rareness by saying, "A

complicated, character-driven sci-fi/fantasy hybrid with heavy elements of horror? And we all

watched it? And it was on *broadcast network television*?" (VanDerWerff, 2014, para. 2). The

mass appeal was an anomaly because the show took significant risks. Understandably, so many

sitcoms become household names as humor is quickly endearing. Adam Chitwood, who writes

for *Collider*, said it was a minor miracle for a show with supernatural undertones to survive on

network television (Chitwood, 2020, para. 1). *Lost* made bizarre and fantastical elements

palatable to American viewers. The commercial success it achieved was groundbreaking for a

sci-fi show.

**How Lost Was Developed**

  *Lost* began with a simple four-word pitch: "Plane Crashes on Island" (Dolan, 2010, para.

1). A plane crash can only take a show so far, something writer J. J. Abrams realized early on.

The extenuating circumstances of a crash on an island must be carried by something else to keep

people watching. The island could not be the world of the show; it would have to be the stepping

stone to unlocking the rest of the *Lost* universe. Abrams described this as the tent poles that

would keep the overarching narrative alive (Dolan, 2010, para. 3). For the writers to decide what

kind of characters would be needed to hold the proverbial tent up, writers Abram and Damon

Lindelof found common ground on an affinity for Stephen King novels. The Stephen King work

*The Stand* influenced many of the show's core characters (Dolan, 2010, para. 5).

  For *Lost* to get on the air, Abrams and Lindelof had to say whatever they could to get the

first season on TV. Joe Allen of Looper reported that the ABC executives wanted the show to be

"self-contained" and "episodic"; the reality of the show was different (Allen, 2021, para. 5). The

writers also told ABC that everything on the show would have a natural and scientific

explanation, including the infamous smoke monster, this promise also could not have been

farther from the truth (Allen, 2021, para. 7). While the writers did not mind changing their plans

when it came to the plot of the show, they were firm on when the show would end. Chitwood

reported that around season three, the writers negotiated an end date for the show (Chitwood,

2020, para. 2). The writers wanted to end the show after a few seasons; they wanted a show that

made sense and was able to answer all the questions it asked. *Lost* got so popular that ABC did

not want it to end. After conversation and negotiation, ABC said the show could end after 10

seasons. The extension was offered halfway through season three. Lindelof did not see a reality

where they could stretch the storyline to seven more seasons (Chitwood, 2020, para. 13). The

writers and ABC executives agreed on six seasons. For a show that some people believe to be

written on the fly, it is quite a feat for writers to make a meaningful and emotional story stretch

three additional unplanned seasons (Chitwood, 2020, para. 16).

      There was expertise and nuance that went into the world and character building seen on

*Lost*. IGN writer Michael Martin wrote about how some of these twists and turns were worked in

the critically acclaimed first season of the show:

      One notable example of this is the Hatch, which Abrams came up with the idea for and

      wanted to put into the series immediately. Instead, they waited until halfway through the

      first season because Lindelof (who was initially the sole showrunner, before Carlton Cuse

      then partnered with him) wanted to wait until they had some angles on what exactly was

      inside that hatch. (Martin, 2015, para. 7)

Lindelof was a proponent of only introducing a new question if the audience had at least a small idea of what the answer was going to be. This storytelling strategy would prove to be a recipe for success. As a viewer watching *Lost*, every feeling of satisfaction is followed by the presentation of a new question. Combining flashbacks and flashforwards with stringing the viewers along just enough to get to the next mystery was all part of how the writers told the story out of order. Tim Molloy, writer for Reuters, reported that the idea for the non-chronological storytelling in *Lost* came from Pulp Fiction (Molloy, 2011, para. 15). All these techniques were used to make the show exciting and engaging, that was the point of *Lost*—seemingly random twists and turns packaged in deep backstories to keep viewers coming back for more. The writing process would not have been the same if J.J. Abrams had not stepped down shortly into season one. Since he was not committed to the long haul, he was willing to brainstorm unconventional and innovative ideas. Abrams felt that viewers would be bored watching characters on the same island week after week; this is where the flashbacks idea came from. He said, "My solution was, hey, let's get off the island every week" (Molloy, 2011, para. 13). Physically, the characters could stay on the island while the viewers were transported into their backstory:

> We'll do one character at a time and there's going to be like 70 characters on the show, so we'll go really, really slow, and each one will basically say, here's who they were before the crash and it'll dramatize something that's happening on the island and it will also make the show very character-centric. (Molloy, 2011, para. 13).

Along with this core idea of the show, Abrams also birthed the idea of the hatch, the others, and many of the jungle mysteries shown (Molloy, 2011, para. 14). These ideas were unorthodox for a show that was supposed to be explained by natural science. Abrams was not at all worried about the response to the first season; he quit halfway through so that if anyone asked him about the

show, he could say, "I'm working on 'Mission Impossible,' go to Damon" (Molloy, 2011, para.

22). Having Abrams in the writing room early on was the push that was needed to make *Lost* a

TV anomaly.

**The Finale and Shortcomings**

Even though *Lost* was extremely popular, it still had flaws including its finale and some

of the "filler" episodes. VanDerWerff wrote, "No one is going to claim that *Lost* was perfect.

Even I, someone who largely defends the much-derided finale, will admit that the series lost its

way several times throughout its run" (VanDerWerff, n.d., para. 7). Six seasons is an impressive

run in any era, some episodes are bound to be flops. You had to be a consistent viewer who was

not turned off by some of the off-putting elements on the show to make it to the finale

(VanDerWerff, n.d., para. 8). For a show that prompted the viewers to think about some of the

ideas presented week after week; the finale would follow suit. It was not an episode that laid out

clear answers. There was so much drama and story leading up to the ending that it would have

been nearly impossible to create a satisfying sense of closure for every viewer. Paul Shirey,

writer for Screenrant.com, wrote about the reception to the finale:

> *Lost* was also a show that reminded viewers that no character was ever safe. Many fan
>
> favorites were killed off from season to season, creating a tension that wasn't really seen
>
> again until HBO's *Game of Thrones*. By the time the show reached its finale, viewers
>
> were so invested that it seemed near impossible to conclude in a way that would please
>
> everyone. Lindelof vowed not to comment on the *Lost* finale for a long time after it aired,
>
> in order to let viewers absorb and reflect on their own, rather than have someone tell
>
> them what it was all about. (Shirey, 2021, para. 5)

The constant longing to see a character through to the end or to see a villain killed off is what made *Lost* so watchable. The character backstories became so personal and relatable that giving the fan service everyone wanted for their favorite islander was impossible. *Lost* is a show to think about; that was the essence of the finale and where the writers chose to leave the fans.

**Streaming and Binging**

Abrar Al-Heeti, a writer for CNET, wrote about how *Lost* the perfect binge-watch in the year 2020. She talked about the initial hook of island survival that leads into a complex storyline involving loss, forgiveness, and the human condition (Al-Heeti, 2020, para. 8). She goes on to say that even though it had its peak when there was constant internet chatter involving the show, she enjoyed being able to form her own opinions while not having to wait a week for each new episode (Al-Heeti, 2020, para. 9). *Lost* had the components necessary to achieve a second life in the internet streaming and binge-watching world.

Mareike Jenner wrote in the *International Journal of Culture Studies* that Video-On-Demand (VOD) has blurred the lines between fans and non-fans. One can now access a show anytime and anywhere; viewers can rewind and rewatch as many times as they would like. Before VOD, a viewer relied on a network to know when to watch a show; this could imply passive viewing. Now, the viewer decides when and for how long to watch a show; this could indicate active viewing. VOD opens up a new world of analysis (Jenner, 2017). Viewers are not as invested as they want to be. Fandom can reach a new level with on-demand access to every season of a show.

**Elements shown in *Lost***

*Lost* employs the use of real-world human elements to give depth and relatability to their characters. One of these elements is alcoholism and the effect that a parent alcoholic has on children.

### Methods used to identify children of alcoholics

In 1981, J.E. Biek published a screening test designed to quickly and broadly determine if a child is negatively affected by a parental drinking problem (PDP) (Biek, 1981). The test employs a two-phase method. The first part was a question asked during a routine medical screening: "Has the drinking of either parent created any problem for you?" (1981, p. 108). The second phase was a semi-structured interview containing eight questions. The first two questions were ordered to focus the child's attention on their parent's drinking behavior and not make the child feel judged by the clinician; these two questions would not be scored—questions three, four, and five, incorporated modified previous screening tests to identify parental drinking patterns. Question six was a retest of the initial screening question. Question seven used the term "difficulty" instead of "problem" when referring to parental drinking behaviors (1981, p. 108). Biek conducted this study over six weeks in a Wisconsin hospital, surveying 37 participants with a mean age of 15.8 years. Biek found that 21 participants reported adverse effects of a parental drinking problem (PDP). The semi-structured interview supported these findings, yielding scores from the 21 individuals who indicated a PDP according to the testing parameters. Since it was found that 57% of the participants identified as experiencing adverse effects from a PDP, Biek recommends that all children in primary care settings be screened with this test or one similar.

In 1984, L. DiCicco, R. Davis, and A. Orenstein conducted and published a study that supported Biek's method for identifying children of alcoholics (DiCicco et al., 1984). DiCicco writes that since alcoholism is identified by various behaviors that a child may not know about, it

is ineffective to ask children about the alcohol-drinking patterns of their parents. DiCicco states

an alternative strategy is "to ask children how they have been affected by or react to parental

drinking" (1984, p. 2). DiCicco used a simple survey to evaluate the CASPAR Education

Program, an alcoholism treatment system used in prevention activities in schools and after-

school programs. The CASPAR used the simple survey item for eight years. The survey item

used to identify children from an alcoholic family was: "Have you ever wished that either one or

both of your parents would drink less?" (1984, p. 3). DiCicco argued that if a child wishes that a

parent drank less, the child has likely been exposed to more extreme drinking behaviors than

social drinking. DiCicco found stability over time in answers to the new survey item when used

with youth undergoing alcohol education. DiCicco also found that a new survey item can predict

"the clinical judgments of treatment personnel in an alcohol education program" (1984, p. 13).

Both Biek and DiCicco's work showed researchers at the time that a simple survey item could

identify children of alcoholics, and future research should be conducted on a broader scale

concerning children with alcoholic parents.

     D. Dinning and L. Berk of Acadia University surveyed 494 high school-aged adolescents

with the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST), the Conflict, Cohesion, and Expression

subscales of the Family Environment Scale (FES), and the Maladjustment Scale (Dinning &

Berk, 1989). The CAST has been used to assess children, adolescents, and adults to discern

between children of alcoholics and children with non-alcoholic parents. This study examined the

CAST's relationship with family environment and social adjustment. The Conflict, Cohesion,

and Expression subscales of the FES developed by Moos and Moos and the Maladjustment Scale

developed by Wiggins were used by Dinning & Berk to seek a possible correlation between the

CAST score and family and social development. Dinning & Berk found the CAST to have high

internal consistency reliability. The correlation between the CAST and the other tests shows that children who report parental alcoholism report "greater family conflict, less family cohesion, and less overall family support" than their peers (1989, p. 338). There was no correlation found between children of alcoholics and socially introverted tendencies.

Dr. M. J. Sheridan of Virginia Commonwealth University did another study that sought to test the reliability of the CAST. Sheridan's study investigated the psychometric properties of the CAST (Sheridan, 1995). The study consisted of 214 participants who were mailed a self-report survey. The survey included the CAST, five standardized tests that measure family and personal functioning, and questions regarding sociodemographic information. Sheridan's results suggested that the "CAST is unidimensional, possesses excellent reliability, and has a low standard error of measurement" (1995, p. 159). The results were consistent with previous research involving the validity and reliability of the CAST. The results supported the prior beliefs that the CAST is reliable and a test that could be used in research and clinical practice. The CAST is easy to interpret and short, making it valuable for clinical uses.

D. Hodgins & L. Shimp compared the reliability of the CAST-6, a shortened version of the CAST, with various single questions and other more complex methods (Hodgins & Shimp, 1995). The authors state there are two ways to obtain information about alcoholism in familial history. The first method, family study, often cannot be accomplished due to "time and financial constraints and often impossible due to death, refusal to participate and geographic accessibility of the relatives" (1995, p. 256). Family history is the most reliable and achievable method of obtaining information regarding familial alcohol use. Hodgins and Shimp compared the test-retest reliability of the CAST-6 with the test-retest reliability of four single questions. Fifty-five alcoholic volunteers, recruited from a substance abuse treatment facility, were surveyed. The

researchers chose to survey alcoholics because the study's goal was not to test for validity but for test-retest reliability. The four single questions used in the study included Biek's question from the 1981 study asking if parental drinking has created a problem for the participant. Hodgins and Shimp found the CAST-6 reliable but found single questions equally successful in identifying children of alcoholics (COAs).

To determine the reliability of the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST) developed by Jones in 1983, researchers H. Harland and G. Côté of the University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières conducted a study evaluating 376 college students using the CAST (Harland & Côté, 1998). The students would be initially given the test, given the test again one month later to gather reliability data, and then interviewed to determine the validity of the results. Harland and Côté noted that the CAST was developed to aid in the complex research on alcoholism in family units. To develop the CAST, Jones used personal clinical experience mixed with published literature about children of alcoholics.

The CAST has been used to assess children, adolescents, and adults to discern between children of alcoholics and children with non-alcoholic parents. Researchers in the field continue to conduct validity studies to further refine and understand the accuracy of the questionnaire. The main purpose of Harland and Côté's study was to assess the reliability and validity of CAST with college students (Harland & Côté, 1998). The students were French, and a French version of the CAST was used. Harland and Côté were also concerned with measuring the stability of the CAST over time and "the concordance of CAST results with established criteria for alcohol abuse and dependence" (1998, p. 996). The established criteria that Harland and Côté used were from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd Edition Revised* or the DSM-III-R. Harland and Côté used the SCID to diagnose according to the DSM-III-R to test for

validity. The 376 participants were administered the CAST during class time, they were not

informed that the same test would be given one month later; the participants were volunteers and

completely anonymous. Based on how the participants scored on the CAST and the CAST retest,

the validity of their diagnosis would be investigated using the SCID. Harland and Côté found a

high level of reliability when comparing the initial test and the retest scores, they consider it to

be a "valid instrument in identifying ACOAs (adult children of alcoholics)" (Harland & Côté,

1998, p. 1001). Harland and Côté found the validity to be accurate when using the CAST to

diagnose with certainty, but not as accurate when seeking to diagnose the possibility that an

individual was raised in an alcoholic home. Harland and Côté corroborate with Jones that a score

of six or more on the CAST can be considered a definite diagnosis that an individual is an

ACOA. Harland and Côté concluded the study by stating that the CAST is a "highly reliable and

valid instrument" that can be used to identify adult children of alcoholics (1998, p. 1002).

**Group Therapy with Adult Children of Alcoholics**

In 1982, Dr. Cermak and Dr. Brown published clinical impressions of their group therapy

with adult children of alcoholics at Stanford Alcohol Clinic (Cermak & Brown, 1982). The

researchers felt the need for family members of alcoholics to receive treatment was not fully

emphasized in the field at the time. According to Cermak and Brown, Stanford psychiatrists

noted that many patients who seek general psychiatric treatment have an alcoholic parent in their

background. Cermak and Brown conducted a nine-month long weekly group therapy session

with nine women and five men, all of whom are adult children of alcoholics. The researchers

noted that the members had various reasons for joining the therapy group including, a way to

"face realities ignored by their families," "breaking their identification with the alcoholic parent,"

and "as a means of prevention" (1982, p. 377). Another notable reason members joined the study

was to "break a strong emotional tie to their families of origin"; members noted a strong feeling of responsibility for the family well into adulthood (1982, p. 377). Members who feel this responsibility towards family experience problems with intimate relationships and difficulty forming primary attachments to their family.

Cermak and Brown summarized the dynamics shown at group meetings into the word "control" (1982, p. 377). Conflicts of control brought up issues involving trust, personal needs, and responsibility. It was noted that control conflicts were the main source of anxiety for the group members. The dynamic of group psychotherapy provided a safe arena for intense interpersonal conflict to surface. Members of the group feared being overly controlling of the group or feared that others had control. Even silence was used as a vehicle for control. One member noted that their silence keeps them from being responsible for what happens in the group and that no one is responsible for them by not sharing feelings. After each meeting, the therapists would write a weekly summary and share it with the group. Members often attacked the summary because of its position in having the last word and making "definite statements about group members" (1982, p. 378). Cermak and Brown noted that "conflict is created when a part of one's self attempts to control the whole" (1982, p. 379). Members did not want to show feelings because those feelings would influence them and/or their situation. For the members, "affect is experienced as a lack of control"; feelings are avoided since feelings lead to affect (1982, p. 379). Denial and suppression are used to control outward expression and awareness of emotion. Members spoke about the desire and ability to keep control of their projected image by showing a façade. It does not matter if the inner psyche is in turmoil and chaos; all group members agree that things have not gotten too bad if the "façade of control can be maintained" (1978, p. 379). One of the main concerns of the group members is uncertainty in the belief that

they can be different from their alcoholic parents. They avoid accepting advice from other group

members and being indecisive because they see it as a lack of control. Members showing

emotions like intense joy, panic, or vulnerability frighten the inner self because it brings a sense

of lack of control.

Cermak and Brown wrote that group members possess little self-trust (1982). Members

question the validity of their feelings and do not trust the outcome of expressing personal

emotions. Members believe that "feelings are revealed for the specific effect they will have on

others" (1982, p. 380). Trusting someone is seen as giving control to another person. Members

do not trust their personal perception of people. Cermak and Brown wrote:

> Children who confront parents about their alcoholism are often told that it isn't true, that
>
> they see incorrectly, or are bad for noticing at all. In the end, the adult children of
>
> alcoholics continue to ignore direct experience in favor of the facade for the sake of
>
> maintaining an extremely tenuous status quo. (1982, p. 380)

Due to this distrust in self-perception, members do not trust that another person is open and

interested in listening to them. One group member stated that by addressing another person, "she

must automatically distrust the sincerity of their response, since her request omnipotently

obligates them to listen" (1982, p. 380). Feeling and trust are seen as transactional in nature;

these group members have extreme experiences where their trust and emotions are discarded.

The group members experience the expected level of vulnerability that comes with expressing

emotions. This vulnerability comes from fear of expressing emotion to garner sympathy and

worry that other group members interpret real emotion as phony.

Cermak and Brown wrote that members have an unhealthy outlook on personal needs

(1982). There is a belief among the group that survival during childhood relied on being

dependent only when it was demanded or when others were free to help them. Personal needs were a source of guilt for the group members because it implied their parents were insufficient. As children, group members felt the need to make their parents feel important but "must not demand or take anything from them" (1982, p. 381). The group members live in a no-win emotional situation surrounded by guilt, prompting them to avoid requesting or accepting help from others.

A common theme that Cermak and Brown noted was the reality that members "overassume responsibility for the feelings and actions of others" (1982, p. 381). The two likely causes of this over-assumption are the modeled behavior by an alcoholic parent of disowning responsibility and parent/child boundaries being blurred, which causes a role reversal. All members commonly shared the feeling that unpleasant circumstances that would produce anger, sadness, or criticism drove the alcoholic parent to drink. As children, the main goal of the group members was to avoid being the cause of their parent's alcoholism. The parent/child relationship dynamic was defined by the parent's inevitable return to alcoholism and the child seeking control "by rescuing the alcoholic or by trying to remove the necessity for drinking" (1982, p. 382). The child would seek to accomplish this goal by overachieving, seeking personal perfection, or meeting every need of the alcoholic parent. By assuming responsibility for the parent's alcoholic behavior, "the child also assumed responsibility for the parent's daily abandonment of him or her" (1982, p. 382). The dynamic created by these behaviors leaves the adult child of an alcoholic with an unspeakable urge to avoid expressing anger or strong emotion in themselves or others. When the group specifically discussed feelings and emotions, members found it important to see themselves as a child while participating in therapy (Cermak & Brown, 1982). The members did not experience childhood in a way that valued structure and typical displays of

emotion. Members recalled their survival during childhood depending on being less of a child and seeking a controlled and vigilant existence. The members would seek to control their feelings to protect others from "overwhelming out-of-control and long-suppressed fury" (1982, p. 383).

Cermak and Brown noted that no definitive statements about the study's outcome could be made since it was a pilot study (1982). The therapists pointed out the lack of research at the time regarding adult children of alcoholics. Two reasons were explained as potential factors contributing to the lack of research. The first reason is that an alcoholic parent is typically a closely guarded personal secret, often not spoken about to non-family and may not be spoken about amongst family members. Another potential reason for the lack of research is that drinking alcohol was generally accepted as a social activity. One would have to be blatantly intoxicated and potentially harmful to themselves or others not to be seen as amusing. When the pilot study was conducted, Cermak and Brown noted a need for further research to make their impressions less tentative. However, the impressions that were found suggested that children of alcoholics carry a recognizable pattern of conflict into their adult lives. The ACOAs seem to have an intense view of issues of control. The pressure to keep the obvious was paramount in the family system. The nonalcoholic parent tends to encourage the child's feelings of responsibility for the alcoholic while avoiding confrontation with the alcoholic behavior. Cermak and Brown wrote about the shared experiences of ACOAs:

> Adult children of alcoholics have in common the experience that one day, a serious piece of misbehavior was laughed at by a drunken parent, and the next day, a normal bit of youthful exuberance was severely chastised by a projecting, guilt- ridden, and perhaps hungover parent. (p. 386)

The child learns the best way to manage the reactions and behavior of others is to control one own displays of emotions and attempt to fit oneself into the intoxicated parent's mood. The child of an alcoholic finds their self-worth and pride in having control. When the child has controlled their emotions and consistently fits into the alcoholic parent's system, the child finds their family value in being an individual who does not cause the alcoholic to spiral downwards. The group members displayed intense anxiety when asked to relinquish control because their childhood paired their self-worth with their ability to control. The conclusion of the pilot study led Cermak and Brown to state that issues of control, trust, personal needs, responsibility, and feelings were all observed in the group therapy sessions with adult children of alcoholics.

**Personality Characteristics of Male Adult Children of Alcoholics**

In 1988, A. Berkowitz and H. Perkins sought to compare personality characteristics between COAs and their peers and examine if the gender of the alcoholic parent plays a role in the personality difference (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1988). The data used for the study was taken from a 1984 survey of 840 first and second-year students of a liberal arts institute. The questionnaires asked about impulsiveness, self-depreciation, lack of tension, independence/autonomy, need for social support, directiveness, sociability, and other-directedness. The survey also has a section regarding attitudes, consequences, and familial experiences with alcohol usage. To identify COAs, the survey included 12 items from the CAST. The only personality characteristics that COAs differed from their peers were self-depreciation and independence/autonomy. Male COAs scored significantly higher than their peers in the area of independence/autonomy. The study shows that some aspects of personality, like independence/autonomy, are affected by alcoholic parents. Based on this study, it seems that most aspects of personality are not significantly affected by alcoholic parents. Berkowitz and

Perkins state that the study "points to the resiliency of COAs as it is evidenced by unimpaired or potentially adaptive functioning on a variety of personality measures" (1988, p. 209).

**Coping Behaviors in Adult Children of Alcoholics**

Klostermann et al. published a study examining the coping behaviors in adult children of alcoholics in *Substance Use and Misuse*. The researchers surveyed 619 undergraduate college students, 134 were ACOAs, 431 were non-ACOAs, and 54 participant classifications were indeterminate. To determine which participants were ACOAs, the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST) was used. Participants were also surveyed using tools to evaluate depressive mood symptoms and coping behavior. The results show that ACOAs possessed greater depressive mood symptoms than non-ACOAS. ACOAS also reported less effective coping strategies compared to non-ACOAS. Some of the avoidant coping behaviors reported were smoking and drinking, supporting the notion that ACOAs have difficulty reacting positively to life events.

**Theorizing a Model of Resilience in Adult Children of Alcoholics**

Doctors Park and Schepp (2018) conducted a study by interviewing ACOAs to suggest a "theoretical model of resilience capacity by validating and extending one of the existing nursing theories of resilience—the society-to-cell model developed by Szanton and Gill" (2018, para. 2). The CAST was used to determine which potential participants met the criteria for the study. The qualifying participants were surveyed to establish coping and adaptive behaviors used by ACOAs, the identified behaviors would be used to suggest a theoretical model of resilience capacity. When discussing adaption to parental alcoholism, the results showed several participants experiencing direct or indirect influence from social attitudes towards alcoholism. Most of the participants resided in South Korea, where families may be ill-informed about ways

to treat alcoholism. When searching for treatment centers for alcoholic parents, many

participants reported being "scorned by relatives and neighbors" (Park & Schepp, 2018, para.

21). Family members of ACOAs who sought treatment for alcoholic parents were seen as failing

to adequately take care of their parents. Participants reported the reliance on non-alcoholic

family members as a positive factor in healthy adaptation. Another important factor in ACOAs

resilience capacity for their adaption was their relationship with their parents. Some ACOAs

were reported to have ambivalent feelings toward their alcoholic parents. Some participants

understood that their alcoholic parent suffered from alcoholism and believed they still loved

them despite coming up short as parents. Many ACOAs noted the importance of having an

optimistic and future-oriented disposition. The three reported characteristics of this disposition

were seen in having a purpose in life, self-esteem, and self-initiated efforts. ACOAs noted that

having these characteristics helped them actively work to live their own lives and not surrender

themselves to fate. ACAOs reported having been able to assume better control over their

environment. This supports the findings from Cermak and Brown (1982), suggesting that

ACOAs crave control and gear their actions towards being the controller of a situation. Park and

Schepp (2018) noted that the ACOAs were influenced by several vulnerability factors when

growing up. The researchers added vulnerability to the theoretical model and defined it using

Schröder-Butterfill and Marianti's (2006) definition "vulnerability is the outcome of complex

interactions of discrete risks, namely of being exposed to a threat, of a threat materialising, and

of lacking the defences or resources to deal with a threat" (Schröder-Butterfill & Marianti, 2006,

p. 9). Park and Schepp (2018) suggest in their model that resilience and vulnerability cannot be

separated and that they exist on a continuum. According to one's resilience capacity, an

individual is somewhere on a continuum between absolutely vulnerable and absolutely resilient

at a certain point in time. Park and Schepp posit that "resilience capacity is determined by the nature of various factors (either protective or risk), as well as the quantity and strength of each type of factor" (2018, para. 65).

The background provided regarding parental alcoholism ties into certain characters in *Lost.* In the findings chapter, these studies regarding alcoholism will be referred to when discussing character's parental behaviors. It is important to have a base of real-world knowledge and research when discussing real-world dynamics that are portrayed in fiction mediums. Using these studies as a base, the researcher was able to more reliably determine possible effects that could be seen in offspring from parents.

## Theoretical Overview

### Transportation Theory

According to Green (2008) Transportation Theory can be used for explaining the experience of A viewer being lost in the world of a narrative consumed in a form of media. As previously stated in the significance of study section, Transportation Theory explains a key mechanism and experience that explains the influence that stories and narratives have on viewers attitudes and beliefs. According to Green and Brock (2000), it is possible to measure transportation with a 15-item self-report scale. The scale discussed by Green and Brock (2000) showed good internal consistency and convergent validity. A key factor stated by Green (2004) involving transportation was that "Pre-existing familiarity with an aspect of the narrative world can increase transportation." (2008, para. 8). As transportation relates to *Lost,* it is conceivable that viewers had many opportunities to have pre-existing familiarity with aspects of the narrative due to the diversity of characters. Green and Brock (2000) found that viewers who are transported into a narrative are likely to change their beliefs in response to what was

communicated in the story. Green (2004) wrote about the three ways that transportation aids in belief change. The first factor is that transportation does not allow for counter arguing about issues that may have been raised in the narrative. Transportation also may make narrative events seem more like a personal experience, thus affecting beliefs on a different dimension. Narratives that are particularly immersive may cause the viewer to feel that the lessons seem more powerful. The last factor that aids in belief change is the attachment to characters. Viewers who feel particularly attached to a character, may feel the actions or beliefs of the character carry unique significance.

Transportation Theory is sufficient to aid in the understanding of how *Lost* may affect the viewers because of the narrative storylines that *Lost* contains. However, due to the nature of the parental communication present in *Lost*, Transportation Theory is not sufficient in explaining how the communication between parent and child is portrayed in the show. Due to the deficiency in Transportation Theory to explain the communication in *Lost*, Generative Criticism will be utilized to develop an explanatory schema to analyze the parent to child communication in *Lost*.

**Generative Criticism**

Foss writes that many approaches to criticism start with a particular method (2018). However, Foss points out that many rhetorical critics use generative criticism. Generative criticism allows an artifact's most interesting and significant aspects to be analyzed and explained. Foss states that in generative criticism, "you generate units of analysis or an explanation from the artifact and your analysis rather than from previously developed, formal methods of criticism" (2018, p. 411). It is noted that many rhetorical critics do not begin with a research question, but they start with an artifact that raises a question for them. Viewing media like television and movies or listening to music will raise concepts one may find curious and

worthy of analysis. Foss continues by saying that perhaps an artifact that piques one's interest is

one that had a different impact than expected. One may be unable to explain the appeal for an

artifact, but the appeal is still present. Engaging in generative criticism is warranted when

encountering an artifact with a more complex or profound meaning than initially shown to

audiences. This is significant for the current research as ….

Foss outlines the nine-step process of generative criticism, starting with a broad-brush

coating after the initial encounter with an artifact. The nine steps will be explained further in the

methodology section. It is important to note that Foss says to be careful about coding artifacts to

what one wants to find or is certain one will find. If one already has an explanation, there is no

reason to search for an explanation for an artifact. Foss also states that the critic will have to

explain how they came to the interpretation of the features of the artifact. Using these

interpretations, the critic will then develop an explanatory schema.

A schema will enable the critic to tell the story of the artifact originally and insightfully.

In generating an explanatory schema, the critic should find a better explanation for the artifact

than what an existing theory or concept could offer. Foss defines an explanatory schema as a

"framework for organizing your insights about the artifact in a coherent and insightful way"

(2018, p. 422). In this way, the explanation is derived from the analysis of the significant

dimensions of the artifact and should ideally connect most of the observed categories. In another

way, Foss states that an explanatory schema could be considered a theory: "the components of

the schema are concepts in the theory, and the patterns among the concepts in the schema are the

statements of relationship in the theory" (2018, p. 422). The schema should explain how the

constructs or concepts of the artifact relate. It is important to note that before developing an

original schema, Foss states that the critic should search for an existing way to explain the

artifact. This search can be done by evaluating research that has been done on the artifact previously or similar artifacts. Foss points out that when using an existing theory or concept to analyze an artifact, there is a possibility that the critic could engage in what is called *cookie-cutter criticism*. Foss explains *cookie-cutter criticism* as what happens when "all artifacts studied through the lens of the same method or theory come out looking exactly the same" (2018, p. 420). By avoiding using an existing theory or concept, the critic can note all significant and interesting things in the artifact without leaving out any that do not directly support an existing theory. The possible downfall of using an existing theory and allowing oneself to fall into a *cookie-cutter criticism* is the possibility that one may mold the artifact such that the significance must fit into the components of the theory. Foss also states that when data is made to fit a theory, the essay and discussion of criticism may illustrate the theory more than it explains the artifact. Unless the theory fits with the artifact very well, avoiding an existing theory allows the critic to consider the whole scope of the observations and interpretations. Foss notes that using an existing theory to explain an artifact simply illustrates the theory without adding anything to it and, in turn, restricts the insights about the artifact; it would serve the critic and readers better to create an original explanatory schema.

If the critic finds a theory that explains one aspect of the artifact but not all of the significant dimensions, then the critic should produce a sophisticated explanatory schema. Foss notes a few factors to consider when assessing the explanatory schema. One thing to consider is that it should encompass all the major categories of interpretations derived from the data. Another criterion is that there should be a precise fit between your schema and the coded data. The following criterion is that the explanatory schema should be insightful. It should produce new insights into the artifact and not be an overly obvious take on the artifact. After an

explanatory schema has been devised, Foss suggests that the critic revisit all the codes in greater

categories to apply this schema to them. The critic should be looking for concepts and

interpretations that could further develop the schema and help make the answer to the research

question more straightforward. This step in generative criticism aims to refine the schema further

by using the significant dimensions found in the data. At this point, the critic may change some

of the wording on the labels defining large data sections. Foss recommends that the critic think

of labels that may be more original and unconventional than concepts from existing literature.

The reasoning is that Foss believes that if the critic has discovered new insights or observations,

these new insights deserve new labels. Renaming or reorganizing the labels will make writing

the results section easier for the critic and the reader to understand. Foss points out that critics

should work to keep the labels together that describe more abstract dimensions and keep the

more concrete dimensions together. Foss states that the critic should aim for consistency when

developing this schema in parallelism when organizing how the labels and data will be

presented. It is important to note that at this stage, Foss implores critics to search the literature

for existing concepts that may aid in explaining the original schema. Foss states that it is

acceptable to use the ideas from literature in writing the results section of a generative criticism.

**Summary**

In summary, this Literature Review explored the literature foundational to the

purposes and practices of generative criticism and other elements that impact this study.

Background knowledge was presented, and the common understanding needed to analyze the

television show Lost within the context of this research was described. This literature review

includes the theoretical framework and the related literature needed to understand the ways in

which parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affects the characters' communication with their

peers.

**Chapter III: Methodology**

**Overview**

The researcher viewed all six seasons of *Lost* and systematically coded the parental and peer communication between characters Jack Shephard, Kate Austen, and John Locke. The coding style and subsequent steps in gathering and analyzing data followed S. K. Foss's generative criticism (2018). The researcher categorized the recorded data and developed a schema to determine the presence of an effectual pattern. The analysis and results section used the schema developed from the initial coding to explain the variables' relationships and cause/effect. The following chapter explains the method used in completing the current study and analyzing the data surrounding the research question, "In what ways does the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affect the characters' communication with their peers?"

The purpose of this rhetorical criticism is to understand the ways in which parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affects the characters' communication with their peers. This chapter includes the method used to conduct this research. Topics presented in this chapter include the Research Design, Research Questions, Ethical Considerations, and Procedures, and the chapter concludes with a Summary.

**Research Design**

**Background of Rhetorical Criticism**

In the book *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism*, Brock et al. wrote that all human beings have a critical impulse that manifests itself in the desire for more information and deeper understanding (Brock et al., 1972). The researchers stated that knowing about something and criticizing it go hand in hand. Knowing about a thing and recognizing that it plays a role in the purpose of creating a human product leads to criticism. The authors state that while scientific

impulses lead to the observation of natural phenomena, critical impulses lead to the

understanding of the creation of human beings. They continue to explain the existence and

importance of criticism:

> Human beings do not simply live in an environment; they create instruments and
>
> institutions for living, which they use, discard, and recreate. They see and assess what
>
> they do. In fact, human beings seem scarcely able to keep themselves from responding
>
> critically to the products of the human imagination. (p. 11)

A television program is understood from a different perspective if it is supposed to be a comedy

as opposed to reflect tragedy. Brock et al. state that the human act is likely viewed by the critic

as a product of drives, desires, or motivations. The authors point out that since critics do not have

direct access to the internal motivation of others, intentional fallacies may arise when criticizing

one's work. The authors define an intentional fallacy as an issue arising "whenever one claims to

identify and understand all that motivates others" (1972, p. 12). Brock et al. claim intentional

fallacy can be largely avoided when the intentions of others are based on what they say, the

assessment of explicit behaviors, the employed means, circumstances surrounding an action, and

social outcomes. However, even using the measures mentioned will, at most, produce the

persona of a human at a given moment in time. The well-intentioned critic should be aware that

when "a psychological profile is created to account for the actions of others" there are inherent

limitations (1972, p. 12). It is important to note that Brock et al. believe that critical impulse

should not degrade a person's self-worth and limit individual choices within the individual being

criticized. Criticism and critical judgment should be seen as a reason-giving activity. Brock et al.

distinguish between statements of taste and preference compared to criticism. Statements of taste

and preference that only gauge the worth of human action without giving reasons for judgment

are not criticism. They explain what distinguishes the practice of criticism from statements of taste and preference:

> Criticism is a reason-giving activity; it not only posits a judgment, the judgment is explained, reasons are given for the judgement, and known information is marshaled to support the reasons for the judgment. (p. 13)

Criticism is a reason and knowledge-based activity that seeks to assign meaning and motivation to each human act. Types of critics seek different kinds of human change; in this way, criticism is action-oriented. Brock et al. write that the rhetorical critic clarifies values from a certain piece of rhetoric to then relate those to human tendencies. The entertainment critic may aim to direct viewers to certain plays or movies, and the political critic exists to use criticism to affect the voter. Critics engage in ethical activities when criticizing and reason-giving since future human actions may be altered.

Brock et al. define rhetoric as "the human effort to induce cooperation through the use of symbols" (1972, p. 14). The authors acknowledge that the given definition leaves room for debate. The boundaries of rhetoric are not easily drawn when it comes to simple and conventional requests compared to thoughtful speeches. The authors say that the need for criticism arises when posing, "Has one really cooperated if one accedes to conventional requests, social conditioning, or threats?" (1972, p. 14). The need for rhetorical criticism becomes greater to further establish what constitutes cooperation due to rhetoric. The authors say that historically, rhetoric has referred to the process that brings about cooperation and the outcome of that process. Rhetorical Criticism is a tool that can be used to further dissect instances of rhetoric into social norms, new propositions, and even coercion. Rhetorical criticism operates in the supposed words of town hall speech, how the speaker interacts with the environment, and how the verbal and

non-verbal choices may engage certain social conventions. Though broad, the rhetorical critic's endeavor is driven by the human effort to use symbols to produce cooperation.

Brock et al. set the primary dimensions of rhetorical criticism as description, interpretation, and evaluation (1972). These dimensions may blend with each other, and each should build and support the next. The descriptive dimension requires the critic to point out and draw attention to the critic's perception of an artifact or symbol. The interpretive dimension requires the critic to give meaning to the symbolic inducement of the artifact or case. Since the critic has several possibilities for description, it can be noted that criticism has a selective nature. The selective nature of rhetorical criticism requires interpretation involving a stated knowledge base by the critic. The evaluation dimension requires the critic to use certain methods or grounds to lead towards evaluation. The authors point out that a critic must define the terms of evaluation. If a critic were to evaluate rhetoric solely based on its effect, than the winning candidate of an election would have had good rhetoric regardless of the opponents' ineptness (1972). The evaluation criteria will be discussed further in the section regarding updated methods by S.K. Foss.

**Criticism According to Edwin Black**

The book *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* by Edwin Black was first printed in 1965 by the Macmillan Company (Black, 1978). After being reviewed with varied opinions and establishing controversy among readers, the book was not re-printed until the University of Wisconsin Press executed the undertaking in 1978. In the introduction of the re-print, Black states that the book now represents "an episode in the modern history of its own subject" (Black, 1978, p. 10). Since the original printing in 1965, Black believes that the technique of rhetorical criticism has become less uniform, there is less agreement on the proper role, and there is more

confusion about the method. The idea behind the book was that Rhetorical Criticism "is too personally expressive to be systematized" (1978, p. 10). Black believes the distinction and area of concern about Rhetorical Criticism is not the precision or comprehensiveness, but the amount of personal choices that Rhetorical Criticism requires. Black wrote that Rhetorical Criticism is not in the same classification as methods like determining circumference and executing a surgery. There is no personal or creative choice that would add to or subtract from the result of using the method of finding circumference from a diameter. A surgical procedure may produce contingencies that require spontaneous creativity, but the practitioners still aspire to objectivity. Black states that criticism is near the "indeterminate, contingent, personal end of the methodological scale" (1978, p. 11). Black states that it is impossible for criticism to be fixed into a system or for critics to become interchangeable for replication purposes. It is also not desirable for rhetorical criticism to become the "handmaiden of quasi-scientific theory" (1978, p. 11). Black argues that Rhetorical Criticism should not be seen as a method void of personal choices by the critic, but that should not be seen as a negative. Black notes that criticism is not uniform and that some critics may strive for and achieve an illusion of objectivity, while others seek to use a personal voice. The two main characteristics that Black attributes to the association of criticism with an interpretive and morally colored perspective are: the critic is the sole instrument of observation, and the style of critical writing is intrinsic to criticism (1978). Black points out that other more objective methods augment, confirm, or may replace purely human perception. In criticism, the engagement between the critic and the subject is direct and there is no instrument to mediate the engagement. Black writes that since the critic is the instrument used for criticism, the value of the criticism could be affected by the critic's unique influences. Black adds to this point by saying that any critic who has not internalized a methodological concept is

sure to yield work that is sterile. Black notes that criticism that is unoriginal or understands an object the same way many people would understand it is not valued. Black says, "We value criticism that gives us *singular* access to its subject (1978, p.12). Black believed that criticism should be a method to give a unique insight into an artifact.

When explaining his meaning of criticism, Black states that criticism is concerned with humanity and is a humanistic activity (1978). While a scientist studies events in nature, the critic studies the products of man. Black explains that the dual task of criticism is receiving from one source and conveying it to another. The critic must translate the artifact to his audience and educate his audience on the terms of the artifact. Black says an essay about an artifact that affects nobody's response or appreciation for the artifact is a failed criticism. The author states, "criticism, like other humanistic studies, seeks to understand men by studying men's acts and creations" (1978, p. 9). Black is explaining the idea that engaging in criticism is not for the end goal of better controlling man, but for understanding motives and enhancing human life.

**Synthesis of Rhetorical Criticism**

In an article by J. deWinter titled *A Bibliographic Synthesis of Rhetorical Criticism,* the scope and history of Rhetorical Criticism is explained (2006). The author explains that they are uncomfortable with the popular claim that rhetorical criticism is fully under the umbrella of speech communication. J. deWinter believes this widespread belief exists because rhetorical criticism has been historically defined and theorized as a legitimate disciplinary concern by speech communication scholars. The synthesis written by deWinter is aimed at rhetoric and composition scholars to provide a broad understanding of rhetorical criticism to incite theorization and enrichment of more scholarship. J. deWinter writes that E. Black's book *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*, was probably the most important book about

contemporary rhetorical theory. Black opened the field of rhetorical criticism by exposing the

limitations of neo-Aristotelian criticism (Black, 1978). In doing so, the Wingspread Conference

of 1970 gave a platform to twelve scholars to present papers on rhetorical theories that involve

communicative technologies (deWinter, 2006).

　　　Black writes that rhetoric is an art form that exists everywhere; it is the structure of all

principles and is always present in human activity (1978). This assertion widens the field of

rhetorical criticism even more and supports the ideas of Brock et al. (1970). Brock et al. believed

rhetoric was not only the speech being given but also the thought behind the use of symbols in

the speech and the rhetorical situation in which the audience and symbol-giver existed. In the

book *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*, Brummett argues that "rhetoric needs to be

conceptualized as *the social function that influences and manages meaning*" (1991, p. 12).

Brummett poses that rhetoric is not only speeches and essays but also a dimension of popular

culture. The author notes that a finely crafted political argument delivered by a candidate may

not sway public opinion as much as the cut of the speaker's suit or a celebrity endorsement. In

this way, television shows have the potential to show multiple aspects of rhetoric at one time.

The script, delivery, clothing choices, music, and audience could be considered part of a

rhetorical situation. Brummett pushes for theoretical flexibility by enabling scholars to consider

certain aspects of experiences as rhetorical that would not have been considered otherwise.

Broadening the field of rhetoric changes the way scholars search for artifacts to criticize.

Brummett's primary theoretical purpose in the book is to reconceptualize rhetoric as a social

function. He hopes the reconceptualization will help increase awareness that the intaking of

popular culture is participating in a rhetorical battle over the order of society and help empower

people who are disadvantaged by rhetorical influences they may have been unaware were influencing them.

**S. K. Foss's Definition of Rhetoric**

In the book *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice,* S. K. Foss defines rhetorical criticism and explains how to execute 10 methods of criticism. Foss states that rhetorical criticism can be used daily to understand one's response to symbols and prompt reactions from others by generating one's symbols (2018). This view shows that the ideology of Black (1978), Brock (1972), and Brummett (1991) successfully recategorized rhetorical criticism from text to a social function. Foss notes that humans live enveloped by symbols like movies, television, YouTube videos, speeches, ads, art, and conversation (2018). One chooses to communicate based on the symbols one has discovered and the depth of understanding held about symbols. Foss defines rhetoric as "the human use of symbols to communicate" (2018, p. 3). The three noted dimensions of this definition are humans as the creators of rhetoric, symbols as the medium, and communication as the purpose.

Foss states that humans are the only animals who use symbols to create most of their reality and that every symbolic choice causes one to see the world in a certain way. Foss states that a symbol is "something that stands for or represents something else by virtue of relationship, association, or convention" (2018, p. 4). A symbol does not directly connect to the object represented; signs have direct connections. The example Foss uses is that smoke is a sign of fire because it has a direct link. However, the word *cup* is a symbol invented by humans to refer to an open container usually used for beverages. An essential point in understanding the use of symbols is a thought posed by Foss about intended communication: The receiver of a message can choose to give symbolic value to an action or object regardless of whether the sender

intended for the action or object to send symbolic value. Foss gives an example of a United States reconnaissance plane accidentally flying over North Korea. Regardless of the true intention or lack thereof, North Korea may act based on their interpretation of the symbol. Foss states, "Any action, whether intended to communicate or not, can be interpreted rhetorically by those who experience or encounter it" (2018, p. 5). One could say that a sender can send a message with a specific intent but cannot control how the receiver interprets the intended and unintended symbols in the delivery.

To further explain the dimension of communication being the purpose of rhetoric, Foss states that most people see the terms *rhetoric* and *communication* as synonymous. The choice of which term to use is often decided by the area of study in which the scholar is based. Foss states that rhetoric functions to allow humans to communicate. Rhetoric can be used to persuade others, invite others to understand, seek self-discovery, and construct reality. One's reality changes based on the symbols one uses to talk about it. Foss points out that rhetoric constructing one's reality does not mean that a physical book is real for some and not others. It does mean that the symbols one uses to filter reality affect how each person views and acts toward reality.

**Foss's View of Rhetorical Criticism**

Foss (2018) defines rhetorical criticism as a "qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes" (2018, p. 6). Foss states that humans continually respond to symbols. One may say they like a particular movie or do not like a specific song; this is part of the natural process of encountering symbols. Foss states, "rhetorical criticism involves engaging in this natural process in a more conscious, systematic, and focused way" (2018, p. 6). Through this process, statements can be made about messages instead of making statements about

feelings. Rhetorical criticism enables a more sophisticated and discriminatory way of explaining and understanding symbols and their responses (Foss, 2018). Foss uses the term *artifact* throughout her explanation of rhetorical criticism. Foss states that since an act takes place in front of the intended audience and tends to be fleeting, scholars prefer to study the artifact of an act. The artifact of the act can be the text, trace, transcription, print-out, video, or any tangible evidence of the act. Further explaining their rhetoric definition, Foss states, "Rhetorical critics are interested in discovering what an artifact teaches about the nature of rhetoric" (2018, p. 7).

By engaging in rhetorical criticism, critics contribute to rhetorical theory. Foss states that theory could be considered a "tentative answer to a question we pose as we seek to understand the world" (2018, p. 7). Theory is used to help answer the questions we ask by providing a set of clues, generalizations, or principles. Foss explains that everyone is a theorist in their everyday life. One may develop a theory as to why a friend has not returned a call, e-mail, or text. Asking oneself a question about the state of a friendship based on the evidence one possesses and then tentatively settling on a conclusion constitutes theorizing about the world. In rhetorical criticism, critics ask questions about the rhetorical process and provide tentative answers. Fosse states that the answer to two questions posed by theorists may not be fancy or complicated. The tentative answer simply identifies basic concepts involved in a rhetorical phenomenon or process and should give insight into how they work to communicate or incite cooperation. It is important to note that Foss states that the theory that results from rhetorical criticism is based on limited evidence, typically one artifact. Foss points out that the end goal of rhetorical criticism is not to contribute to the theory but rather to enable individuals to develop research to improve communication practice. Foss states, "The final outcome of our rhetorical criticism is an

improvement of our abilities as communicators" (2018, p. 8). The rhetorical critic should be able to suggest how more effective use of symbols can accomplish clear communication.

By studying artifacts this way, one should be more skilled, discriminating, and sophisticated when communicating with others. Participating in rhetorical criticism to this extent can also enable one to become a more discerning audience member. One can become more engaged in shaping the nature of the world when one finds a deeper understanding of the tactics available to senders in constructing messages (2018). By understanding the history of rhetorical criticism, one may deduce that rhetorical criticism is the scholarly action of translating all discernable symbols from all discernable viewpoints of an artifact.

The researcher chose to use rhetorical criticism because of the variety of symbols used in *Lost*. Since the researcher observed three characters over the span of six seasons, rhetorical criticism allowed for dynamic analysis while being flexible to suit the different stories and narratives of each character.

**Perspective**

To capture what is most interesting and significant about the parent-to-child and peer communication in *Lost,* the researcher employed a specific type of rhetorical criticism called generative criticism. According to Foss, this kind of criticism generates "units of analysis or an explanation from your artifact and your analysis rather than from previously developed, formal methods of criticism" (2018, p. 411). Generative criticism allows critics to analyze artifacts without using a formal method of criticism. The research perspective is qualitative because it examines how individuals experience the world. The research examined behaviors and dialogue in *Lost,* and the explanation for the behaviors is based on the rhetoric observed and the research groundwork in the literature review. *Lost* was chosen because of the diverse character beahviors

and back stories. Analyzing three characters with their parental interactions allowed for ample data opportunity to craft an explanatory schema. The real-life factors that contribute to the writing of the fictional characters in *Lost* were covered in the literature review; these concepts assist in analyzing the results from the *Lost* criticism. The study took place approximately 13 years after the final airing of *Lost* (Abrams et al., 2006-10). As discussed in the delineations and limitations section, the researcher determined that the three characters to be analyzed would be Jack, Kate, and John. The reasons for choosing these three characters were the amount of screen time they held on lost and the nature of the character's relationship with their parental figures. Jack, Kate, and John were the series' top three screen-time characters (IMDB, 2020). These three characters also had a relationship with their parental figures that, after an initial viewing, prompted the researcher to analyze how this parental relationship may have affected how these characters communicated with their peers on the island setting of *Lost* (Lostpedia, 2010). It is important to note that, as previously stated in the delineations and limitations section, the analysis of peer communication was conducted solely on the interactions these characters had with their peers while on the island. The island provided a neutral arena for all characters to communicate with their peers.

### Research Questions

Research Question 1: In what ways does the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affect the characters' communication with their peers?

As previously stated in the research questions section, the first research question represents the Generative Criticism process discussed by S.K. Foss (2018). The nature of *Lost* showing parent to child communication raised the specific question about how the communication is being portrayed and what effect the parents have on the children's

communication in *Lost.* Due to the structure of *Lost* showing frequent flashbacks, intrigue was generated to develop a research question that would seek to determine how the parents' communication to children affected the children's communication with their peers.

Research Question 2: What lessons regarding familial communication can viewers learn from the television show *Lost*?

As previously stated in the research questions section, the second research question aids in connecting the findings from the Generative Criticism to possible real-world implications. While the Generative Criticism analyzed the communication shown in *Lost* and how communication affects its recipients, Transportation Theory will aid in answering the second research question. The second research question will connect to the fictional communication that was analyzed to the lessons about communication perceived by the viewers.

## Ethical Considerations

The study examined communication in *Lost* without commenting on the morality of the characters' decisions. Characters were not be described as having made a "right or wrong decision." Connections were made to and from the parental and peer communication viewed for the three characters under review. Personal opinions were not involved in the analysis of the data.

The researcher has chose to analyze Jack Shephard, Kate Austen, and John Locke. The researcher determined the character selection by analyzing each character's screen time and the nature of each character's parent issues. According to IMDB (2020), Jack Shephard has 900 minutes of screen time, John Locke has 693 minutes, and Kate Austen has 671:15 minutes. These are the top three characters in terms of screen time. According to the synopsis written by

*Lostpedia*, Jack, Kate, and John all have parent issues related to interactions they had with their parents before the plane crash (2010). The nature of these issues was centered on communication between the parent and child. The researcher limited observation and coding to Jack, Kate, and John to focus on the characters with the most screen time and parent communication-related backstories. The researcher did not code parental interactions after the plane crash or peer interactions after the plane crash and off the island. To fit with the research question, "How does the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affect the characters' communication with their peers?" the researcher focused on only the parental interactions before the peer interactions on the island. The researcher only coded and observed peer interactions on the island because the island could be seen as an equalizer to the group. For Jack, Kate, and John, the plane crash brought them to a new environment with no initial social hierarchy. The island provided an arena for the characters to communicate with peers, sharing the same domain. Still, the differing variable was the previous parental communication experienced by each character. Peer interactions shown after the island were not coded due to more variables and established social hierarchy carrying over from the island.

It is important to note that in season six of *Lost,* a storytelling device is employed that has been referred to as a "flash sideways" (Lostpedia, 2010). These flashes sideways are seen as an alternate reality that the characters could have lived out if things had happened differently. Many

As the episodes of *Lost* progress, an increasingly mystical and spiritual element is present in the show (Abrams et al., 2006-10). This element will be relevant for certain characters and dimensions of the communication but not for all characters in all instances of communication. In the cases reviewed, some characters accepted a spiritual reality on the island, and others actively pushed against it.

of these flash sideways involve the characters and their parents. These interactions with the parents and peer interactions were not coded or involved in the data for this criticism. These interactions were seen as irrelevant to how the characters acted on the island.

There are instances where characters leave the island after the plane crashes and choose to return to the island. These instances of characters interacting with each other after returning to the island were not coded. The initial island interactions show how the characters act in a new environment while choosing to accept or deny the communication mechanisms demonstrated to them by their parents.

## Procedures

### Instruments and Procedures Used in Data Collection

All six seasons of *Lost* were viewed in their entirety on Hulu. The book *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* by S. K. Foss was used to analyze the artifact.

Foss created a nine-step process for generative criticism (2018, p. 411):

(1) encountering a curious artifact;

(2) coding the artifact in general;

(3) searching for an explanation;

(4) creating an explanatory schema;

(5) assessing the explanatory schema;

(6) formulating a research question;

(7) coding the artifact in detail;

(8) searching the literature;

(9) and writing the essay

After viewing all six seasons of *Lost*, the researcher conducted an initial "broad-brush coding" to discover several central features (2018, p. 413). Foss describes this kind of coding as systematic and carefully reviewing the artifact to separate significant scenes. The significant scenes or rhetoric of note included major dimensions and components that fit into the schema to be developed after coding. The researcher coded every interaction that Jack, Kate, and John had with their parental figures in these scenes that were flashbacks before the island. The researcher also coded every peer interaction that Jack, Kate, and John had with their peers while on the island.

Foss (2018) states that the second part of this coding involves classifying each notable scene with a word or phrase that names the feature one sees in this part of the artifact. This coding is a step to further analyzing the notable dimensions of the artifact. These initial words and phrases are not the final category used for the schema but to classify what one sees in the artifact without becoming abstract. Foss points out that paying attention to the intensity and frequency of certain aspects of an artifact when coding is essential. When coding the peer communication of the three chosen characters, the researcher took extra note of behaviors that seemed to be reoccurring in certain characters. The researcher used three documents: one for each character's parental communication and three for each character's peer communication. The document headings specified the season and episode of each observation.

Foss (2018) states that after the broad-brush coating of the artifact, the next step is to interpret the data. The first part identified presented and suggested elements, accomplished with broad brush coating, and categorizing. The next part is categorizing the presented elements into suggested elements. Analyze what these elements may suggest regarding concepts, ideas, or illusions they may evoke. The researcher took the initial coding and wrote an interpretation for

each instance. For example, in an instance where Jack's dad, Christian, tells young Jack that he does not have what it takes to withstand the pressure that comes with being a hero, the interpretive label is *belittling* (Abrams et al., 2006-10). In the results section, the critic explained the interpretation assigned to the artifact's significant dimensions. This interpretation came from the artifact and the literature review. In the literature review, the researcher covered real-life data and studies regarding some major dimensions found in *Lost*'s characters and parental figures.

To continue categorizing the features and their interpretations. Foss (2018) writes that the researchers should print and cut out each feature. Doing this enables the researcher to efficiently categorize these slips of paper into different piles. These different piles are separated into the major themes and elements of the artifact. An example of one of the major themes that emerged was a pile of instances where Jack had emotions discouraged by his father and instances where Jack was averse to showing emotions with his peers on the island. The central theme and label of this pile was *no emotions.* It is important to note that this categorizing process was done separately from the parental and peer interactions. All three characters' parental interactions were categorized separately from their peer interactions. The reason for this separation was so that the research question could be more adequately explained. The results section will further show which major themes presented themselves in the parental interactions and which major themes presented themselves in the peer interactions of the characters. At the end of this process, the researcher had a pile for each character of presented and suggested themes regarding parental interactions and communication. The researcher also had a pile for each character presented and suggested themes regarding peer interactions and communication. Each of these piles had a label on them of the interpretation that could be deduced from the features and instances in the pile.

**Data Analysis**

Foss states that the piles with labels and interpretations categorizing them are the beginning of the explanatory schema of the findings (2018). An explanatory schema conceptualizes and organizes the data to enable the critic to tell the artifact's story originally and insightfully. Following along with Foss, the researcher then took the labels given to each pile and created copies of the labels so that these elements would all be together in one place to seek an explanation. This step was done separately for each character and each character's parental codes and peer codes. As covered in the literature review, an explanatory schema can be used when an existing concept or theory does not fully explain or show the relation of an artifact's significant dimensions. To develop an explanatory schema, the labels were arranged in different ways that may explain the artifact. Foss states that when doing this step, the critic can assemble topics that seem alike, look for connections among the groups, and start looking for possible cause-and-effect relationships among the labels. For this study, the critic focused on the parental labels of one character and the peer communication labels of the same character. These groups of labels were kept separate but were analyzed in a way to find a possible explanation that may reveal an effect that the parent communication had on the peer communication.

**Summary**

This chapter discussed how *Lost* was analyzed specifically for parent-to-child communication. The analysis was done to understand the impact that parental communication had on the character's peer communication. Generative criticism was explained and applied to the study. Generative criticism was chosen because it analyzes artifacts in a way that prompts the creation of a framework or explanatory schema. Jack, Kate, and John were the chosen characters for the study because they had the most screen time among all the characters. The parental interactions and peer interactions on the island were coded and classified in accordance with

generative criticism. The interpretation and schema building followed the coding and

categorization. Chapter Three: Method introduced the reader to the qualitative, rhetorical

criticism utilized for this research study. Included in this chapter was the Research Design

Description, Research Questions, and the Procedures for data collection and analysis were

described.

## Chapter IV: Findings

## Overview

The observation and coding process was explained in the previous section. The purpose

of Chapter Four is to present the findings from this qualitative generative criticism research

regarding the communication of specific characters in the television show *Lost*. Using the

generative criticism method outlined by Foss (2018), all six seasons of *Lost* have been viewed,

coded, and categorized to find significant features from the three chosen characters. This chapter

presents a Description of each Character's Parental and Peer Communication, Codes and Themes

Development, Findings, and a Summary. The subsections are divided by character, and a

heading is assigned above the results pertaining to each character's parental and peer

communication. The codes and themes are included in the section for each character.

## Description of Character's Parental and Peer Communication

### Jack's Parental Communication

The character, Jack Shephard, is the son of Christian Shephard, a surgeon (Abrams et al.,

2006-10). Jack would also grow up to be a surgeon. One of the earliest interactions we see with

Jack and Christian is a very young grade school-aged Jack entering Christian's study or office.

We see that Christian is drinking an alcoholic beverage during this whole interaction. More will

be discussed about this interaction in this section that discusses Christian's rhetoric with Jack

involving the ability to handle pressure. The storyline involves Jack as an adult working in

Christian's hospital. The storyline shows that Christian started to perform surgery while he was

under the influence of alcohol. We hear that the nurses called Jack into surgery because Christian

was performing poorly. The patient cannot be saved when Jack is called to the surgery room. The

fallout of this interaction involves Christian imploring Jack to lie to the hospital higher-ups about

what happened. In this section of dialogue, Christian mentions the pressure he put on Jack as a

child when trying to convince Jack to sign off on the story that the patient's death was not

malpractice:

> I know I have been hard on you. But, that is how you make a soft metal into steel. That is
>
> why you are the most gifted young surgeon in this city. I mean this, this is a career that is
>
> all about the greater good. I've had to sacrifice certain aspects of my relationship with
>
> you so that hundreds of thousands of patients will live because of your extraordinary
>
> skills. I know it's a long, long time coming. What happened yesterday, I promise you,
>
> will never happen again. After what I've given, this is not just about my career, Jack. It's
>
> my life. (Abrams et al., 2006, 20:01)

During the meeting in which Christian asks Jack to lie for him, Jack states that in his professional

opinion, Christian operating under the influence and severing the patient's hepatic artery caused

the complication that led to the patient's death. After this interaction, Christian can no longer

practice as a doctor. The time frame is unclear, but after this happens, it is revealed that Christian

has been found dead, after allegedly heavy drinking.

A theme throughout Christian and Jack's interactions shows Christian telling Jack that

Jack cannot handle pressure. In the scene where young Jack is in Christian's office, Jack tells

Christian about a fight he was in during school that day (2006-10). This dialogue prompts

Christian to recall a story about when he was in a high-pressure situation. Christian recalls when

he was in the hospital performing surgery, and everyone was looking at him to make decisions

and that he made those decisions because he had what it takes. Christian then tells young Jack

that he should not take up the mantle of trying to save everybody as Christian does. He tells Jack

he does not want to try to be the hero because when he fails, it just shows he does not have what

it takes. This dialogue shows that from a young age, Christian instilled in Jack that he did not have what it takes to be like his father and save the lives of people around him daily. Years later, we see Jack's mom telling Jack that Christian has gone missing after his license was revoked due to the alcohol incident. Jack's mom implores him to search for Christian at his last known location, Australia. When Jack initially refuses, his mom says that Christian was right about Jack when he said he did not understand the pressure. Jack's mom says that he cannot deny searching for his father after he was the one who revealed to the hospital that Christian operated under the influence.

Another theme that could be discerned from the coding of the parental communication between Jack and Christian is the theme of Jack attempting to save the people around him. In a specific instance, Jack fails to save a patient in surgery, and Christian tells Jack to end the surgery (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack says that he will not end it. Jack did not want to accept the fact that he could not save this patient, especially when the reality of the situation was coming from Christian. In another scene, Jack agrees to undergo surgery with a minimal chance of success. Christian lectures Jack and says that there is a line that Jack should not cross. In this case, the line is agreeing to operate on somebody when there is a minimal chance of the operation being successful. Not only is Jack on a quest to save people, but he is on a quest to avoid his father being the final judge. We see in another instance that Jack was upset after failing another surgery. Christian tells Jack that it is not his fault and that he has already notified the family. Jack is upset by this fact, and Christian reminds him that Christian is the Chief of Surgery in the hospital. Jack's hunger to save the people around him seems to come not only from these interactions with Christian but also from situations surrounding the saving of Christian. As previously discussed, when Christian was operating on a patient under the

influence, Jack was called in to save the operation, but he could not. Also, as discussed

previously, Jack's mother sent him to Australia in hopes of saving Christian. We find out later

that this endeavor would end as Jack's quest to save his dad's corpse.

Along with these themes, Jack's behavior with his father noted the trait of being

emotionally distant or seeking to hinder emotions from showing (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There

is a scene where Christian and Jack are in a consultation with a patient. Christian pulls Jack aside

and tells Jack that he should start giving some hope to the patients. Jack is reluctant to give

patients false hope in this scenario. It is a different tone from Christian compared to the tone he

used to parent Jack in the earlier scenes. From Jack's perspective, he may be reluctant to take

emotional advice from his father, who would tell him as a young child that Jack did not have

what it takes to withstand the pressures of being a *hero surgeon.* This dynamic is further

explained in a scene where we witness Christian in an Australian bar starting to partake in what

would likely be his last drinking spree. Christian starts speaking with a stranger sitting next to

him at the bar. When speaking with the stranger, he tells him about what happened at the hospital

and losing his license. When explaining Jack to this stranger, he says that Jack is a good and

maybe a great man. Christian says that Jack feels betrayed right now and thinks Christian hates

him. Christian admits to the stranger in the bar that he feels gratitude and pride because what

Jack did took more courage than Christian has. He says he could call Jack and tell him these

things, which would probably fix everything, but he does not do it because he is weak. In the

scenes explained thus far, we have seen that Christian was slow to praise Jack and may not have

encouraged him much. The most encouragement we viewed from Christian to Jack was when

Christian tried to convince Jack to lie for him. Not only was Christian an alcoholic and a man

who died from alcohol abuse, but it seems he was also a man and a parent who could not show positive, consistent emotions towards his son.

Another constant theme that can be discerned in the relationship between Christian and Jack is the need or desire to control people and situations (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Christian was seeking control when he attempted to create a false report about the patient's death and sought control over Jack when he attempted to convince Jack to lie for him. Another scene involves Christian supposedly being in contact with Jack's ex-wife. Jack suspects that Christian has been calling his ex-wife. Through a turn of events, Jack briefly possesses his ex-wife's phone and calls the most recent number that was dialed. Christian walks in, and we hear Christian's phone ringing. At that point, the viewer does not understand why Christian is in contact with Jack's ex-wife. What can be seen is Christian withholding information from Jack to stay in control, and Jack seeking information because he feels out of control.

Another instance is shown involving Christian's alcoholism when Jack walks in on an alcoholic support group that Christian is attending. In a boisterous and loud manner, Jack confronts Christian in front of the group and accuses him of sleeping with his ex-wife. Jack gets into a physical altercation with Christian after Christian tells Jack to let the situation go. Christian was withholding information from Jack, and Jack felt out of control in the situation because of his lack of information.

With the observable data regarding Christian and Jack's relationship, we can discern that some of these significant dimensions were notable aspects of Jack's life before arriving on the island. The following section will cover Jack's peer communication on the island.

**Jack's Peer Communication**

*Decision Making*

One of the earliest discernible actions that Jack engages in during his peer communication on the island is Jack doctoring the other group members (Abrams et al., 2006-10). As soon as the plane crash happens, Jack immediately starts directing people and aiding those around him. Jack is quick to make decisions, and if someone hesitates to complete a given task, he is quick to do it himself. Whenever an issue occurs, Jack's first instinct and direct mode of operation is his doctor mode. He is the first to seek to fix the physical issues with the people in the group and directs others as he would staff during an operation.

There are moments throughout the series where Jack insists that somebody does something. For example, Jack often insists that Kate return from an excursion to avoid danger. There was no explicit appointment of Jack as a leader, but he did begin to give out orders very quickly and never ceased to do so. There is no sense that Jack relishes the role of leadership. Instead, he is driven by making logical decisions.

He is often willing to lead and decide if a course of action logically makes sense. When the group of survivors debated where to set camp, Jack decided to move into the jungle to live by the water in some caves (Abrams et al., 2006-10). He did this even though some of the group members disagreed with him and chose to stay back on the beach. Jack explained his rational reasoning for why he felt the caves were better, and he decided. However, other decisions are not as straightforward. At times, Jack shied away from making the executive decision. Initially, Jack does not want to decide anything when the group runs low on water. This is because whatever Jack decided, some people would not agree with him. If Jack is confident about the decision that needs to be made, he will take charge and make the decision. However, as confident as Jack makes decisions, he is not much of a galvanizer.

Jack is often the voice of reason and the calmest in the scenario, but he rarely motivates people to make changes and follow him. He will seek to convince people he is correct or needs their help but will not rally support simply to have more people agree with him (Abrams et al., 2006-10). He will lead with the facts, which comforts some, but will not pander to the emotions of the people who feel distressed about the decision. An example is when Jack explains why the group should move to the caves. He does not give a sense of false hope that rescue is coming but simply states they have a better chance of surviving if they stay in the caves instead of the beach.

Jack does not wait around to make decisions and is happy to receive help from people who wish to follow him (Abrams et al., 2006-10). In a specific instance, Kate asks Jack why he switched the dynamite packs so that he carried the dynamite back to camp. When Kate expresses her disapproval of the decision, Jack says, "everybody wants me to be a leader until I make a decision they don't like" (Abrams et al., 2006, 29:35). This takes place in the last episode of season one and shows that at this point Jack was willing to make a decision that was logical even if the people around him disagreed.

Jack has a conversation with Kate regarding John. John and Jack have disagreed on multiple decisions that were made. Jack tells Kate "If we survive this, if we survive tonight, we're going to have a Locke problem. And I have to know that you got my back" (2006, 29:50). This shows that Jack is taking the extra step in recruiting help to aid him in his leadership endeavors. It also shows that Jack still relies on logic to convey his decision-making. He points out that they will have a problem with John in the future.

Jack can lose patience when interacting with characters or group members who are more open to making decisions based on a spiritual feeling. Sometimes, Jack almost sees conjecturing the right decision as a waste of time. There are multiple instances where John wants to review

the data they have and consider what it might mean for their future before making a decision.

Typically, Jack leaves no room for that in his decision-making and is very fact-based and action-oriented. It could be said that Jack does not like going out on a limb. In making decisions, he does not like to give out false hope or act on false hope.

A common tactic Jack uses in peer communication is putting the responsibility of evidence on others around him (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack is usually confident in the reasoning behind his actions. If someone like Kate or John suggests he does something differently or that a situation may not be what it seems, Jack often points out that they do not bring up a better option.

Jack will not make the next move until he knows what he should do next (Abrams et al., 2006-10). At one point, the group has a hostage from the other group on the island. When Jack is asked what the plan is, he says he will keep doing what he is doing until a better idea surfaces. When Jack has decided what his next course of action will be, very few things will hold him back from achieving his goal. Jack decides to try to trade a prisoner for the return of the child the other group took from them. He does this by marching into their territory and yelling until the other group responds to him and is willing to bargain. Jack engages in very little back and forth in situations like this and is usually dead set on his desired outcome. It appears Jack values his control over his own life and his actions. Jack is unwavering and usually unwilling to change his mind when he has logic to back it up and can control his actions.

***Control seeking***

Jack usually seeks control and interactions with peers on the island (Abrams et al., 2006-10). He does this by keeping information from people even if these people are very close to him. There are several instances where Jack keeps information from Kate. Jack will often keep the

people directly around him on a need-to-know basis when it comes to facts that may distress

them. Early on, when Jack and a few others went to find the plane's fuselage, they encountered a

security system on the island that killed the pilot. Many of these details were not given to the

other people or group members.

Jack is held hostage in one of the show's later seasons (Abrams et al., 2006-10). To

maintain control of this situation, Jack only gives out valuable info when it serves him to his

captors. The group that captured Jack did it to get him to perform surgery on someone with a

tumor on their back. Jack figured this information out before they wanted him to, and he used it

to bargain for the safety of other members they had captured. Jack only performs and finishes the

surgery when he is confident that Kate and Sawyer, the other two who were captured, have made

it to safety. Even though Jack was in a situation where he seemed to have very little autonomy,

he was still able to leverage what he had to grasp control over elements of this situation that

served him the most.

While Jack does not often recruit others to help, he does not hesitate to tell people what

they do not need to do if they are in his vicinity (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Regarding Kate and

another group member, Charlie, Jack often directed them. When a new variable is added to the

group dynamic, like Kate uncovering a case of guns, Jack takes it upon himself to lock up the

guns. Whether it is information or physical things, Jack seeks to be the one in control of them.

Later on, a character named Sawyer steals the guns and hides them. Instead of physically

confronting him immediately or leveraging the resources he had to get the guns back, Jack tells

Sawyer that when he needs the guns, he will get the guns. This shows that Jack had built up

extreme confidence over the control he exerted or was able to exert for the other group members.

Sometimes, it seems that Jack will demand control over group dynamics (Abrams et al., 2006-10). At times this behavior is warranted because an individual is hurting the group. At one point, Charlie decides to baptize a baby in the middle of the night. Charlie does this without permission from the mother and then in a dangerous way. After addressing Charlie's wounds from being physically assaulted by another group member, Jack told Charlie he needed to know that Charlie would never do this again. It is important to note that in that situation, Jack's priority was to heal Charlie's wounds and then to ascertain control.

There are instances where Jack has a control struggle with John (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack sometimes takes physical measures if John stands in the way. Jack will also tell John to shut up when he is not listening or simply not allowing Jack complete control over his situation. There are also times when Jack expects other people to support him in his quest for control. Kate presented Jack with new information that she found out about the other group on the island, and Jack asked her why she did not tell him this information immediately after she found out. Kate said she did not feel part of the group enough to tell him this information. This dynamic will be further discussed in the emotional section of Jack's peer communication.

Jack also asserts control by helping people (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack is the gatekeeper of the medicine on the island, and he often insists on offering medical support to other group members. In interactions where one group member is doing something that will then prompt an action to take place, and Jack enters the situation, he is often the one to question what the group member is doing and what motives the group member has. There are a few times when Jack plays a support role in a group dynamic, and he is usually the first to question the method or goal of an activity. When Jack, Kate, and John are transporting dynamite back to the camp, Jack insists on not allowing Kate to carry any dynamite because of the risk involved. After the three

draw straws to determine who will carry the dynamite, Kate is designated as one to carry the dynamite back to camp. When the dynamite is being distributed, Jack secretly switches his bag with Kate so that he is the one with the dynamite. The dynamite situation shows that Jack seeks to have control over new variables.

Controlling new variables can also be seen when Jack takes control of the bunker situation (Abrams et al., 2006-10). John was the one who found the bunker initially and also the one who devised the plan on how to open up the Hatch so that they could enter. As soon as Jack found out about this bunker, he took control of the situation, and John took a supportive role in opening the Hatch. As tensions arise, Jack will often use any means necessary to gain information that will help him control. There were instances where Jack would hold people at gunpoint if he did not believe what they were saying and often would not want to hear what someone had to say unless it was the information that Jack needed to resume control.

The yearning for control is reflected in Jack's parental interactions with his father, Christian (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There were many instances noted in the parental communication section where Christian would seek control over Jack. The dynamic switched when Jack had control over Christian when Christian needed Jack to lie for him so that Christian could keep his medical license. As referenced in the literature review, Cermak and Brown (1982) found that adult children of alcoholics tend to have an intense view of control.

### Justice

Another common trait and driving force behind Jack's peer communication on the island was the desire to seek justice for the people around him (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack was often the one to break up physical altercations between two parties on the island. In his dynamic with Kate on the island, he would often defend her when many others suspected her of being a

criminal after connecting her and some of her belongings with one of the police officers who was on the plane. Jack did not want to know Kate's story for much of the show. He simply wanted to defend her and did not want her to owe anything to anyone.

We also see this drive for justice when Jack feels he has been slighted personally (Abrams et al., 2006-10). When John is alone in the forest with a character named Boone, an accident seriously injures Boone. John did not tell Jack the whole story. After Jack does what he can to save Boone, we see Jack distance himself from John and start treating him differently. When Jack confronts John about the situation, he physically pushes John and says that John left him to die after lying to Jack. Jack is quick to act when he feels that he or somebody around him has been slighted.

There is a situation where John, Jack, and Kate are all on a mission to bring dynamite safely back to the camp (Abrams et al., 2006-10). On the way back to the camp, John goes rogue and does something that could have cost all three of them their lives. When asking John why he chose to make that decision, John states that he believed he was meant to be a sacrifice for the island. After hearing this, Jack tells John he does not believe in destiny. This dynamic between Jack and John shows that Jack is a rational thinker and is confident in his decision-making regarding logic and human conflict. Jack does not leave much room for abstract thought or faith to play a role in his decision-making, especially when he feels that a spiritual-based decision has hurt him or the group.

Although other people in the group share the desire for justice, Jack seems to be frantic about it at times (Abrams et al., 2006-10). After the other island dwellers start attacking or kidnapping people from the plane crash group, Jack starts seeking justice quicker and less calculated than before. When someone in the group gets attacked by an unknown person, Jack

draws no boundaries as to whom he will question about the incident. The fact that someone in the group has been injured is his driving force. Jack seems determined not to be slighted by anybody, yet also determined to heal people around him even if they hurt him. When the group has a hostage from the other island dwellers, Jack is determined to treat his wound rather than allow him to be questioned and interrogated. Though it seems that this hostage is part of the group that has harmed Jack and his group, Jack will not punish him until the truth has been proven. Jack does not seek justice until this hostage starts making sarcastic remarks about the dysfunctionality of Jack's group. Jack does not want to be seen as weak or tolerate people making unfounded statements. At one point, one of Jack's group members secretly works with the other island dwellers. Jack calls out this group member in front of the others and verbally attacks him for double-crossing the group.

Later in the show, Jack becomes a hostage to the other island dwellers (Abrams et al., 2006-10). To gain freedom for the other group members who have been taken hostage, Jack makes a deal with his captors. This deal involves Jack undertaking back surgery on a captor with a tumor. Jack could have gotten what he wanted and then refused to do the surgery. However, Jack performed the surgery because he said he would do it. Jack keeps his word and expects it from others.

### Saving People

One of Jack's main goals and peer interactions is to save or heal the people around him (Abrams et al., 2006-10). He will often bring in other people to help him, even if those other people are not qualified for the task. One of the main dimensions of Jack is that he will offer help and aid to people before he figures out why they are hurt or who hurt them. This does not mean that Jack does not care what happened; in the section before, it was noted that Jack was angry

about John lying to him when Boone was injured. However, it does seem to convey that Jack

prioritizes saving people over getting revenge. This is seen when many group members wonder

who an injured police officer was escorting on the plane. The police officer has not spoken well

since the plane crash, so Jack has been doctoring him. Jack does not let anybody question the

police officer, and he does not question the police officer until the situation is unavoidable. There

is a group member named Sawyer who often odds with Jack. Sometimes, Sawyer gets injured or

is sick, and Jack is always there to aid him. Sawyer may not want the help, but Jack cannot help

himself.

　　　　Jack will try to save someone even if it costs the group precious resources (Abrams et al.,

2006-10). When asked how much medicine he would use on somebody who would likely die,

Jack said he would use as much as it took. When Kate is found supposedly trying to hurt the

police officer more, Jack stops her and asks her what she did. He was not asking her what she did

before the plane crash that got her into this interaction with the police officer; he was asking her

what she did to the police officer that made him start bleeding again. While much of the group

was worried about what Kate did before the plane crash that seemed to have her handcuffed on

the plane, Jack was wondering what Kate did to set back the healing of the police officer that

Jack was trying to save.

　　　　Jack also denies the possibility of losing patients he tries to save on the island (Abrams et

al., 2006-10). When a group member asks Jack what he is doing using all the medical resources

on the dying police officer, Jack does not acknowledge this group member. Jack is also willing to

amputate Boone's leg based on the slim chance that it could save him, but before it happens,

Boone tells Jack that he is letting him off the hook and can let him go.

Jack is usually averse to conflict, but he will seek conflict if it helps him save someone (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There is an instance where a group member is hoarding medical supplies. Jack approaches his group member and will fight him to obtain medical supplies. When a physical altercation ensues to gain the supplies, Jack says he will stop if the group member just tells him where the supplies are. There is a situation where one of the group members gets taken by a separate group that dwells on the island. Jack, usually level-headed in a crisis, frantically searches for this group member in the jungle and does not take advice to slow down and regroup. This could be seen as an effort to prove his dad wrong continuously. In the parental communication section, Christian instilled in Jack at a young age that Jack did not have what it took to withstand the pressure of being the hero. We now see in this peer communication section that nothing would stop Jack from saving someone. Whether it was fighting another group member, using all available resources, or doing surgery that probably would not work, Jack's main goal was to be the hero. In a few instances, we see Jack willing to fight Sawyer to obtain medical supplies that Sawyer has been hoarding.

We see that Jack is willing to engage emotionally when it seems that that is what the person needs to be healed (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There is a group member who is forlorn and does not eat for days after her husband has not yet shown up after the plane crashed. Jack brings her a blanket and food and engages in a somewhat emotional conversation with her because it seems that is what she needs to be healed in that moment. Jack is willing to go to great lengths to heal and save people. Many peer interactions involve Jack seeking the next step toward saving his next patient. Jack will somewhat use a bedside manner if it is what the situation calls for. One example is when Jack is quick to reassure another character that their baby does not have a fatal illness and will be OK. Jack sits with Michael when Walt gets taken and tells him he has not

forgotten about him and wants to return him. When the group has taken one of their adversaries

prisoner, Jack comforts the prisoner since he is injured and brings him food and a book.

### *Emotions*

Another defining factor of Jack's peer communication on the island is his avoidance of

showing emotions (Abrams et al., 2006-10). It seems that Jack is often willing to help people

with their physical needs much more than he is willing to hear their emotional side of them or

show his emotional side to someone. There are few instances where Jack goes beyond bedside

manner and into sharing his personal life. In one instance, Jack helps Kate find the keys to a

lockbox she is dead set on opening, but initially, she is not honest with Jack about what is in the

lockbox. Jack does not want to hear the explanation. He just wants to know that she got into the

lockbox.

When it comes to moments of crisis on the island, like when somebody is in a severe

injury or in one instance when a character is giving birth, Jack tells Kate that she is going to have

to deliver the baby because Jack cannot be there (Abrams et al., 2006-10). This kind of exchange

is seen multiple times with Jack and others on the island. Jack gives an order for them to do

something that may be outside of their comfort zone, but he does not leave room for emotional

negotiation.

There are also instances where it seems that the people around him are expecting more of

an emotional response than what Jack is willing to give (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack is never

the one to play into group fear on the island. He is skeptical about the warnings that the group

receives from an outsider on the island that there is another group living on the island that means

to do them harm. There is also an instance where a group member gives a stack of journals to

Jack. These journals are from passengers who did not survive the crash. Jack says he is unsure

what to do with these and puts them aside. Jack does not leave much room for conjecture or

theorizing when a task is to be done, especially when it involves saving or healing somebody. He

will use somewhat of a bedside manner at times, but he is unwilling to stay in this mode of

operation for long as he will seek the wellness of the group member above understanding their

complex emotions.

In a notable instance, Jack appeared to show some emotion, but it was revealed that

Jack's motivation was to avoid emotion in his life (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack had a wound

from the plane crash in one of his first interactions with Kate and needed someone to stitch him

up. Initially, Kate was nervous and did not feel equipped for the task. At this point, in one of the

first peer interactions on the island, Jack tells Kate a story about when he was in medical school.

He told her that when he faced something challenging and felt fear enter his mind, Jack would

count to five, let fear in for five seconds, and then finish the job or task. This shows that Jack

acknowledges emotions but gives minimal space for these emotions to control his actions or his

thoughts.

There is an instance where a group member named Hurley has a theory that he shows to

Jack about why they crashed on the island and how they might be able to get out (Abrams et al.,

2006-10). The theory has a long back story tied to Hurley's life story. Hurley shares his

information with Jack, and Jack brushes it off and does not support this theory. Curley tells Jack

that Jack needs to get a better bedside manner. There is another instance where John is having

what seems to be a crisis. John has discovered what could have been a haven on the island as an

underground bunker, but this bunker is not cooperating with John how he would like it to. John

is distressed, and they are saying this was not supposed to happen, referring to the bunker not

working out like he had hoped. Instead of comforting John and seeing what he could do to help

fix this situation, Jack tells him that he is alone, and Jack leaves. This is also supported by Jack's mode of leadership, which is very logical and fact-based. When he sees no point in engaging in something that will probably yield no return, he does not put any emotional or physical effort into that thing.

### *Father Callbacks*

There are instances throughout Jack's peer communication that are callbacks to things his father said to him as a child (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There is a particular instance and series of events in episode five of season one where Jack's driving force of saving people seems to get in his way. A group member named Boone is seen frantically swimming out in the ocean to save another group member who appears to be drowning. It does not seem that Boone will make it to this person in time, thus motivating Jack to dive in and pull Boone back to shore. This shows Jack's quick thinking when in doctor mode and willingness to save people. The aftermath of this incident shows that Boone was upset with Jack because Jack decided to save him instead of letting Boone try to save the drowning person. This creates an instance where Jack feels the pressure of the people who decide to make them the facto leader. Following is a dialogue between Jack and John. This dialogue occurs after Jack leaves the group after having an emotional moment, processing that he could not save everybody. John's section of the results will explain how he plays somewhat of a counselor role to the people around him on the island. *Lost* season one episode five, 27:16 (Abrams et al., 2006):

Jack: how are they, the others?

John: thirsty, hungry, waiting to be rescued and they need someone to tell them what to do

Jack: me? I can't

John: why can't you?

Jack: because I'm not a leader

John: and yet they all treat you like one

Jack: I don't know how to help them. I'll fail. I don't have what it takes

In this dialogue, we see that after Christian instilled in Jack that Jack did not have what it takes and Jack believes it.

Some moments have been mentioned where Jack saved many people on the island (Abrams et al., 2006-10). This particular moment when Jack cannot save everybody brings up this core belief that Jack had about himself that seemed to stem from his interactions with his father. It seems that many of Jack's actions are done as a way to counter the belief he has about himself that he does not have what it takes. As previously stated in this section, Jack will go to great lengths, like inciting conflict, to do what it takes to save someone and improve that he has what it takes. Following the dialogue noted above is the conversation that John has with Jack about the reason why Jack has momentarily left the group. The nature of this conversation surrounding one's destiny and other spiritual aspects will be discussed further in John's peer communication section. In response to John asking why he is out there, Jack says he is chasing someone who is not there. A few scenes earlier, we saw that Jack had a vision of his father on the island; at this point, it is unclear whether that was a vision, hallucination, or something else. The nature of this father figure on the island is not crucial when seeking to understand Jack's motivation behind his peer communication. It seems notable that Jack had the vision of some sort of his father on the island directly after Jack had a peer interaction where he cracked under pressure and could not save everybody. This dynamic between Jack's pure communication and inner dialogue will be examined further in the explanatory schema.

Another instance where we see Jack's peer communication directly affected by his father is when a group member tells Jack about an interaction with Jack's father (Abrams et al., 2006-10). This group member, Sawyer, told Jack that before the plane crashed, he was in Australia and was conversing with a stranger at a bar. The audience knows that when Christian talked to the man in the bar about his son, he was talking to Sawyer. Sawyer tells Jack that this man was a surgeon and that he had just gotten his medical license removed from him because his son told the truth. Sawyer recalls to Jack that this man told him he wished he could call his son and tell him he was proud of him but did not have the courage to do it. Jack did not give much verbal reaction to hearing this from Sawyer, but he did begin to tear up. If anything, this shows that Jack's actions on the island are not entirely separated from the words his father told him as a child. This dynamic will be further examined in the explanatory schema.

**Kate's Parent Communication**

The first interaction we see with Kate and her father involves Kate's father being drunk (Abrams et al., 2006-10). We see him stumble out of his truck, fall into Kate, and her help him into bed. Throughout this interaction, he calls Kate beautiful multiple times. After Kate gets her father into bed, we see her drive away; in the background, we see the house blow up. Kate then goes and visits her mom at work at a diner. Kate immediately notices that her mother has a bandage around her wrist. Kate comments on the injury being from her father, but her mother defends it.

Kate's mother says she chose to be with her father (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Kate then hands her mom the house insurance policy and tells her she took care of her and will not see her for a while. Kate was later arrested, and the police say that her mother turned her in. This interaction shows that Kate felt she was doing an admirable thing and defending her mother but

was not appreciated or valued. Through a discussion with the police, it is revealed that Kate did

not realize the man she killed was her father. Kate believed the man she killed was her

stepfather. Kate escapes from police custody and goes to speak to another older man. We

discover that this is the man Kate believed to be her birth father. This man tells Kate that he was

not honest with her about who her birth father was because he knew she would kill him if she

knew the truth. This man, who is believed to be her father, but it is her stepfather, told Kate that

her mother loved her father. Kate asks why he did not kill the step father himself, and the man

says he does not have a murderous heart. Kate's stepfather gives her one hour to run away from

the police before he calls and turns her in. In this interaction, we see Kate realizes that the two

prominent men in her life have been lying to her for years. We also find out that her mother has

lied to her for years.

Kate does not experience much support or encouragement after she decides to kill her

father (Abrams et al., 2006-10). She is told that she has murder in her heart and that she has an

hour to run away before she will be turned in. The following interaction is an unspecified amount

of time later, involving Kate and her mom. Kate asks her mother why she turned her in. Kate's

mother was hoping she was there to apologize, but that was not the case. Kate says she would not

apologize because the man she killed treated her mother poorly and even treated her like a dog.

Kate's mother says that she loved him with the good and the bad, and it hurts her that Kate

murdered him. Kate's mother then says if I see you again, I will yell for help. Through this

interaction, we learn that Kate's mother still does not support Kates decision to murder her

abusive father. Future scenes show Kate on the run, relying on strangers to cover for her and

protect her. She has one primary policeman chasing her throughout these scenes, and it is the

same policeman who was in the plane crash and ended up injured on the island.

We see an instance where Kate stayed with a farmer for at least a few months (Abrams et al., 2006-10). This farmer did not know what Kate had done and was paying her to work for him. At the end of her stay, we see that this farmer turned her in because she was worth $30,000 to the police. The viewer has witnessed throughout this that there has not been a parent or parental figure in Kate's life who has not double-crossed her or told her that they do not support her life decisions. Kate did what she believed was right in this scenario with her father. When she got out of it, she was being banished by her mother and by her stepfather. Kate is on the run and, leading up to the island, finds herself getting captured by the police that were chasing her with no family to turn to.

**Kate's Peer communication**

*Seeks Good for Others*

One of the main dimensions of Kate's peer communication are the interactions which seem to show that she wants people around her to be comfortable and feel well (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There are a few instances where Kate will code-switch to make her peers feel more comfortable. Kate is very straight to the point when talking with men like Sawyer or Jack. When talking with women, she uses more comforting language and may have moments of giving out false hope. This appears to be a tactic for Kate to find the humanity and the people around her. There is a moment in her relationship with Sawyer where she tells him that she knows there is a human inside of him somewhere, and he is currently playing games. Kate is often the first to engage in fun activities around the island, and will also use humor to make a situation more lighthearted. The code-switching and comforting can also be seen as a way for Kate to remain in good standing with everybody on the island. Kate has no enemies and, in one case, is the mediator between two strong personalities. Sawyer and Jack both seem to like Kate. Kate has

moments of opening up emotionally to both of them. She does not like when they are at odds and will vouch for both of their characters to the other. Kate's peer interaction seem to genuinely seek good for the people around her. parallel could be drawn between how she acted before the island and her behavior on the island. Kate wanted good things for her mother and, by doing so, required her to kill her father.

Along with seeking good for people around her, Kate also desires peace (Abrams et al., 2006-10). She is not only the middleman between Sawyer and Jack, but she is often the person between two groups of people. She would travel between the caves group and the shore group and built relationships with both groups of people. Most members of the island had an interpersonal relationship with Kate. Whether through humor, fun activities, reminiscing on life before the island, or a physical attraction, Kate was in good standing with those around her.

### Calculated

A dimension of Kate's peer communication that could further explain how well she treats everybody is her calculated way of seeking information and influencing the group (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Kate will rarely make a strong statement or stance on group matters. She will seek information about what others are thinking and what others are plotting and may even physically go with them but will rarely give verbal affirmation. She is often a supporter of both Jack and Sawyer but is careful not to be dependent on either of them.

### Seeks Information

Early in the series, Kate often shows persistence to be included (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Whether she ventures into the jungle or builds a new structure, she finds a way to be a part of the team without being the leader. Kate was not fully standoffish, and she would still be in the mix of things regularly. At one point early on, Sawyer revealed that he had a gun. Before tensions

could rise, Kate disarmed him in a way that looked like she was experienced in disarming

people. She then asked for help unloading the gun, acting like she did not know how to unload

the gun. Later, Sawyer privately calls her out by telling her that he could tell she knew how to

handle a gun. This is an example of Kate asserting control in a situation without being a clear

leader to everybody around. Kate also seemed aware of her effect on men on the island. She

would verbally ask Jack or Sawyer if they were checking her out. This shows that she was not

oblivious to her social effect and wanted the men to know that she knew what may have been

happening in their heads. There are some male characters, like Charlie, that she would subtly

lead. She was not an overbearing leader in these situations, but they would do what she wanted.

When Kate desperately needed a situation to go her way, she was not shy about it. She asked

Jack to kill the policeman on his deathbed and would get verbally short with Sawyer when she

needed something from him. She would not practice this behavior around the women or the

lower-ranking men of the social ladder. She chose to be close with the dominant males and the

emotional females. She was close to a pregnant woman and with a woman whose husband had

been missing for some time. This could show that Kate was methodically carving out her role in

the social ladder and knew precisely how much control she needed to stay safe. As mentioned in

Jack's peer communications section, Kate withheld information from Jack at one point. When

asked why she withheld it, she told him she was waiting until she was a part of the inner circle

again. Again, this shows how socially aware Kate is and how methodically she picks her spots

regarding information seeking and information getting.

### *Eventual Reliance on Jack and Sawyer*

It is important to note how much Kate relies on Jack and Sawyer (Abrams et al., 2006-

10). She is not simply a neutral bystander who follows them around, but she will sometimes

impose her will into the situation. If Jack needs something from Sawyer, Kate will go and be the

one to make the exchange and vice versa. She is emotionally open with Jack. She tells Jack about

the hallucinations she is having on the island. Kate also seeks personal information from Jack.

She asked him about his tattoos, and will make a remark when he smiles, saying she almost does

not recognize him. The apex of their emotional and physical connection happened through tears

and ended in a kiss. Kate tells Jack she is sorry she is not perfect or as good as him. She starts

crying, and then they end up kissing. However, she also shared some deep emotional connection

with Sawyer. There is an instance where they are camping out alone in the jungle, and through a

drinking game, it emerges that both Sawyer and Kate have committed murder.

You need a paragraph here where you connect the dots to your RQ like you had for Jack.

You also need to incorporate the lit review into your findings.

**John's Parent Communication**

In the first interaction with John and one of his parents, we learn that John was adopted

and not in contact with his birth parents for most of his life (Abrams et al., 2006-10). John is

middle-aged and working at a toy store. We see a woman approach him and tell him he is unique

and part of a design. Through a turn of events, John finds this woman and finds out she is his

birth mother. John asks about his father, and she says he did not have a father and was

immaculately conceived. John hires a private investigator to find out more information and finds

out that his mother has been institutionalized. John is then able to find his birth father's address.

John arrives at his birth father's house and immediately speaks to the guard watching the gate.

The guard says that the house's owner does not have a son. After talking for a few minutes to the

guard, John's father walks out of the house. John's father claims that he did not know he had a

son for a year after John was born. John's father also says he does not have a family, even though

he tried a couple of times. John's father begins developing a relationship with John, and they do

activities together, like hunting. One day, John walks in on his father getting dialysis. Anthony

tells John he does not want him to see that, but he also tells him that he needs a kidney

transplant. In subsequent interactions, Anthony tells John he is thankful to God that they have

been brought together.

John ends up volunteering to donate a kidney to Anthony (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Right

before the surgery, Anthony says that he is thankful for John and that this was meant to be. After

the surgery, John wakes up and sees Anthony is gone. John's mother is there and explains the con

that she and Anthony pulled on John. She says she needed money and Anthony needed a kidney,

and they worked together to con John. John is in disbelief that this is happening and that

Anthony would do this to him. John drives back to Anthony's house, but the gateman will not

open the gate for him. John screams at the gate, conveying to Anthony that he cannot do this and

that it is unfair. John drives away, punching the ceiling of his car.

Later, we see John at a support group (Abrams et al., 2006-10). He says he never knew

his parents; his birth mother tracked him down and told him he was special, his birth father

pretended to love him but stole his kidney, and then his father abandoned him like he did when

he was a baby. These instances are told through an angry and frustrated John as a part of this

support group. We see that John continually drives by his father's house and sometimes parks in

front of it. In one of these instances, Anthony gets in John's car, and he says John stalking him is

annoying. John simply asks Anthony why he did what he did. Anthony said there is not

necessarily a reason, and that John is not the first person to get conned. He said he got what he

needed, and John got a dad for a little while, and now John should get over it. Anthony tells him

not to return and that he does not want him. John starts going out with Helen, who leads the

support group. Helen eventually tells John that he can either be with her or he can continue to

chase his dad. Locke says he does not know how to move forward and cannot move on from his

father. Helen encouraged him that it can be done.

In another instance having to do with John and Anthony, we see John find out that

Anthony has passed away (Abrams et al., 2006-10). We then see John and Helen at Anthony's

burial, and John says he forgives him. It is then shown that Anthony is alive, and we see

Anthony and John meet at a bar. Anthony tells John he knows what he did was wrong and then

asks John to pick up some money for him. He offers John $200,000 if he will complete the task.

John eventually agrees to help Anthony out in this way. John drops the money off and then

denies the reward from Anthony. John tells Anthony that he did not do it for the money but does

not tell him why he did it. Anthony says he needs to catch a plane and leaves. When he leaves

the room where they are meeting to drop the money off, we see Helen outside. She slaps John in

the face and storms off. This scene conveyed that she was upset that John was tied back into

Anthony (Abrams et al., 2006-10). We find out later that John was about to propose to her. He

tells her he wants her love more than Anthony's love and asks her to marry him. She denies it,

gets in her car, and drives away. What is understood from these interactions is that John felt very

little closure regarding these interactions with his father.

The next instance we are shown involving John and Anthony is years in the future

(Abrams et al., 2006-10). Somehow, John discovers that Anthony is involved in another con

involving stealing money from an older woman. John confronts Anthony about this in person

after tracking him down. When Anthony denies the allegation that he is involved in a con, John

walks towards the phone to verify what he says. When John does this, Anthony pushes him out

of an eight-story window. John's back is broken and he is permanently paralyzed from the fall,

leaving him in a wheelchair. He is still in a wheelchair when the plane crashes. Somehow, John's

body is healed when he wakes up after the plane crash on the island. He no longer needs a

wheelchair and uses all his limbs fully. This plays into the spiritual aspect of John's peer

communication on the island.

In the instance that happens on the island, a character named Ben tries to explain John's

actions by citing what happened with John and his father (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Ben knows

what Anthony did to John and tells John that everything he does on the island is so that Anthony

will never get to him again. Ben says that John is scared of Anthony and tries to explain his

decision-making by citing the interactions John had with Anthony before the island.

**John's Peer Communication**

*Relational*

One of the main dimensions of John's peer communication is how he fosters relationships

by being a counselor, encourager, and empowering person (Abrams et al., 2006-10). John does

not come off as a dominant personality. The first scene we witness of John after the plane crash

is him smiling with an orange peel in his teeth. This is directed at Kate, and it seems John is

doing it to lighten the mood. This also shows John's calmness as he does this with the plane still

on fire behind him. John becomes someone people turn to as a steady presence as he looks

prepared with all the outdoor gear he recovered from the plane crash. He is often the calming

presence in group interactions with people like Jack and Kate. He will not add drama to the

situation whether they agree with him or not. Early on, he had many emotional conversations

with the group members. However, like Jack and Kate, he is calculated regarding how much

personal information he gives in these emotional interactions. In one of the early interactions we

see John empowering Jack to lead the group. Though Jack did not feel like a leader or that he was equipped to be a leader, John told him that they all treated him like a leader.

A group member named Claire is pregnant and ends up having her baby on the island. John becomes somewhat of a father figure to Claire as he helps her care for the baby, seemingly getting nothing in return. John will ask poignant questions that some of the characters do not answer. John asks Sawyer why he does not go by his real name. We later discover that it is because Sawyer changed his name due to a traumatic childhood experience. Another aspect of John's relational countenance is a tendency to believe the best about others. He is very trusting early on in relationships, and it will give group members a chance to prove themselves without micromanaging them. John often asks questions when something has gone wrong or someone seems to have made a mistake. He rarely uses an accusatory tone and will often find himself in a better relationship with the person. Much of John's interactions seem to stem from a genuine place of curiosity. Many people will open up to him emotionally and continue returning to him as a safe and calm presence. Later in the series, when Jack becomes a hostage to the other group on the island, John becomes the de facto leader of the plane crash group. He begins incorporating more people into the grand plans of the group, and some members comment on how Jack is not very inclusive. Another factor that makes John someone that people want to trust is that John is very confident in himself when he goes on the island and seems confident in the things he says to people. When he does not have the answer to something, he is calm about it and honest.

This relational and counselor role played out in John's relationship with a group member named Charlie (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Early on, we learned that before the plane crash Charlie had a heroin addiction. After the plane crash, he searched for his stash in the plane's remains. John connected to Charlie by asking Charlie about the band that he was in back home. Once this

relationship was established, Charlie gravitated towards John in the group dynamics. When John observed some behaviors of Charlie's that were confusing, John simply asked Charlie if there was something that he wanted to tell him. Charlie does not freely admit that he has a heroin addiction, but after a few interactions, John finds out. Charlie is honest in saying he wants to give up this addiction. John takes Charlie's heroin stash from him and tells him he will return it if Charlie asks three times. This establishes somewhat of a fatherly relationship between John and Charlie. Charlie seems to be over his addiction until the two of them stumble across a large heroin stash on the island. At first, John does not realize that Charlie takes some of the heroine for himself. However, after finding out some information, Locke approaches Charlie and asks him if he is back on heroin. After finding it with Charlie, John tells him that he is disappointed in him.

        We see Charlie have an inner struggle and want to give up the addiction, seemingly because he has support from John in giving it up (Abrams et al., 2006-10). John eventually sets more boundaries with Charlie and the pregnant woman, Claire. Charlie and Claire have a close relationship on the island, and Charlie has taken it upon himself to care for her. When John starts becoming a caretaker for Claire, this angers Charlie. John and Charlie were conversing over a game of dominoes. John confronts Charlie again, calling him a heroin addict, but Charlie says he is a recovering heroin addict. Through this back and forth and John continually working with Charlie, there is a scene where Charlie throws all his heroin stash into the ocean. John is watching from a distance, and this relationship has a sense of closure. It seems that John completed the purpose he had in helping Charlie, and eventually, Charlie accepted that help and found freedom from an addiction when he willingly chose to throw away his whole stash.

John had another relational and counseling type of relationship on the island with Michael and his son, Walt (Abrams et al., 2006-10). We find that Michael has been divorced from Walter's mom and has not played a significant role in Walt's life. Walt seems to be looking for a steady father figure. This can be discerned because Walt feels comfortable to go and sit down next to John without introducing himself or even knowing who he is. Through this action, John and Walt start playing a board game, and John starts telling Walt things he wishes he would have known at his age. This begins these fatherly type interactions between John and Walt. John teaches Walt how to throw a knife, which prompts a strong rreaction out of Michael. Michael discovers that John and Walt have been going into the jungle alone for hours and tells Walt that he is no longer allowed to spend time with John. After this, Walt's dog wanders off. It is none other than John who ends up finding Walt's dog. He brings the dog to Michael because he wants Walt's father to bring his dog back to him. Walt disappears, and Michael assumes that it is Locke's fault. John does not get offended by this but instead offers to help Michael find his son. During the search for Walt, John tells Michael that Walt likes being with John because John treats him like an adult. We see that John can give fatherly advice to Michael, advice that Michael may have never heard before. This creates a positive relationship between Michael, Walt, and John. Later, Michael attempts to build a raft to get help and get off the island. Somebody burns down the raft, and the group thinks they are being sabotaged. John approaches Walt privately and asks him why he burned down the raft. He says he will not tell anybody why, but he has a good reason. We see that John seems to have insight into how Walt acts, and Walt is comfortable divulging information to John. Later on, Walt gets kidnapped by the other group on the island, and John is the one who teaches Michael how to shoot a gun so that Michael can go on a mission to get Walt back.

Another group member with whom John has a mentor-type relationship is a character named Boone (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Boone was on the plane with his step-sister, Shannon. Boone wants to contribute to the group and asks to go boar hunting with John. John readily accepts Boone's help and educates him about boar hunting. They try and fail, and John stays calm, teaching Boone what went wrong until they get a boar. When the other island group attacks the plane crash group, John and Jack set up shifts to ensure a man is always awake to watch the camp. John empowers Boone to take one of these shifts. He also empowers Boone to join the search party for one of the missing members. He does this by suggesting that Boone can do these tasks, Boone accepts and excels in them. There is an instance when it seems that John has taken it upon himself to teach Boone lessons about life that John wishes he knew sooner. We see John knockout Boone after Boone says he wants to tell Shannon about the Hatch that Boone and John have found. He ties Boone to a tree, and when Boone regains consciousness, John tells him that he will thank him later for this and that there are some things that he needs to let go of. He says he will be able to untie himself when he finds the correct motivation. This will be discussed further in the section discussing John's core beliefs, faith, and destiny.

Through a series of hallucinations while tied up, Boone says he saw his step-sister Shannon dying, but this death caused him to feel relief (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Boone talks through this experience with John, and he tells John that he has had romantic feelings for his step-sister Shannon for years. All this information is exchanged between Boone and John because Shannon is in a relationship with another person on the island. When John finds out that Boone has liked Shannon for quite some time, John approaches Shannon about the situation. He tells her she is just giving Boone attention and giving him more motivation to get her approval. John tells Boone that he needs to put aside his differences with the man who likes Shannon and

accept that he may never have the relationship with Shannon that he craves. This happens before

Boone is involved in a fatal incident on the island. Boone dies when he climbs a cliff to get to a

small, crashed airplane that John wanted to investigate. This prompts John to initially lie about

how Boone died and causes division between him and Jack. Eventually, John apologizes to

Shannon about letting Boone do so many dangerous things, asks her to forgive him, and says he

knows what it is like to lose family. He tells her he knows many things about pain and wants to

be there for her in any way he can. He ends up telling a story at Boone's funeral about how

Boone was a hero and was willing to do anything for Shannon and the other people on the island.

John's relationship with Jack has different elements and is not explained in just one

dimension (Abrams et al., 2006-10). It begins with John empowering Jack to be the leader of the

group. He tells Jack to be the doctor and to let him be the hunter. He encourages people to play

the roles that they are qualified for and seeks the best in other people. The tension does not start

until John starts holding back information from Jack, like the fact that he and Boone had found

an underground bunker. This shows that Jack craves control immensely, and John also craves

autonomy. John will ask Jack questions that may make Jack uncomfortable because of the

emotion required to answer them. There is an instance when John and Jack enter the

underground bunker for the first time, and they meet a character named Desmond. This character

seems to recognize Jack, and Jack gets increasingly upset about the whole situation because

Desmond will not cooperate with John or Jack. John asks Jack if he is upset because Desmond

recognized him. John exposes Jack's need for control in ways that make Jack avoid John and not

want to cooperate with things that John wants to do (Abrams et al., 2006-10). With all this being

said, closer to the end of the series, John still seeks to identify good intentions in Jack. There is a

time when John, Kate, and Sawyer seek to rescue Jack from the other group on the island. When

they arrive, they see that Jack seems to be enjoying his time with the other group. Kate and

Sawyer assumed the worst about Jack, but John believes that Jack must have good reasons to be

friendly with these other people. In an instance discussed in Jack's peer communication section,

John almost cost Jack, John, and Kate their lives. This happened when John felt he was supposed

to sacrifice himself to the island in a way that would involve him leading John and Kate, along

with half of the dynamite they had collected for the camp. In this interaction, it is clearly stated

between John and Jack that John believes that he is chasing a greater purpose or destiny on the

island, and Jack is always looking for the next logical move toward survival.

### *Calculated*

John seems very calculated in his peer interactions (Abrams et al., 2006-10). He is

usually the first to want to gather more information before making a significant decision with the

group. This could be because of his past parental interactions where he was conned multiple

times. Even though revenge is often on the table in group dynamics, especially when other island

groups kidnap a character, Locke wants to gather more info before seeking blind revenge. While

characters like Jack are the action takers, Locke could be seen as the inquisitor. He wants to

discover the motives behind what is going on and what they may not see in a situation. John also

trusts the expertise of the people around him if he does not have the correct logic to judge the

situation. John will often defer to a character named Saeed, who was an interrogator in the army

before the plane crash. John rarely forces his control on anyone and often lets characters do what

they feel needs to be done. John is much more of a reactor in his peer interactions and will adjust

accordingly based on what characters feel is in their best interests.

### *Emotionally Closed*

Another dimension of John's peer communication is that he is closed off when asked to give personal facts about his life before the plane crash (Abrams et al., 2006-10). When a character named Hurley is creating a census to keep track of details about the survivors, John gives little to no detail. At one point, Walt asks John if he has a good father or if he is fun to be around, and John says that he is not and leaves it at that. When Boone asks John to tell him his life story, John says that it would be tedious to him. The hostage from the other group, Ben, at one point, tells John that he knows him. John tells him he does not know him at all.

### Faith and Destiny

An element that influenced how John communicated with his peers was the element of faith and destiny (Abrams et al., 2006-10). A line can be drawn from when John's birth mother approached him before the crash and told him he was unique, to John rationalizing events in his life by relying on a greater purpose. In an instance discussed already, John explains to Jack that he does not simply write off hallucinations as meaningless visions. He believes the island is unique and feels a particular spiritual or magic quality about the island. John also challenges Jack by asking him to consider the possibility that everything on the island is happening for a reason. This could also explain why John is so laid back in such a dire situation when others are panicking or resorting to extreme measures to get what they want.

Belief in inevitable destiny not only influenced what John verbally said to his peers but also what he physically did around them (Abrams et al., 2006-10). There was an instance previously discussed when John allowed himself to be taken by the island's security system. This almost cost the lives of Jack and Kate, and he reasoned that he was supposed to be a sacrifice for the island. John also believes that everybody has their core beliefs in destiny. After Jack told him that he did not believe in destiny, John told him that he did not know he believed in it yet. When

working on opening the Hatch that would grant access to the underground bunker, John waits for

a sign from the island on how to open it. There are also scenes where he kneels, begging the

island to allow him access to the Hatch. He was so set on getting into this bunker because he

believed that all the roads of all the people on the island led to opening this hatch, and he

believed there was hope inside of the Hatch. While Jack often questions if something is the best

way, John takes action because he believes it is the only way. This could also show why John

reacts so calmly to disruptions in the group or setbacks. To cope with the behavior shown to him

by his father and being paralyzed before the crash, John may have justified that everything

happens for a reason in his life. When things go wrong with John inside the bunker, he retorts

that these happenings were not what was supposed to happen to him. This shows that while he

has faith in something to the extent of a higher calling, he also feels that some things do not

happen according to plan.

## Findings

The data obtained and analyzed seemed to show that specific communication

mechanisms used buy parental figures showed or assigned children their value. While the

characters did not always use these mechanisms to assign value to their peers, it seemed that

these mechanisms were how the characters judged their personal value in life or peer

interactions. If the characters did not feel they excelled in these communication mechanisms,

then there was a sense of the characters being lost and searching for how to achieve worthiness

through themselves or the people around them. To explain how peer communication was

affected by parent communication, the parent communication can be seen as the mechanisms by

which the characters filter their experiences through as adults. Each character has a different

mental filter, depending on their parent interactions. When a life experience or peer interaction

passes through the mental filter, the parent interactions that make up the filter judge and assign value to the experiences or peer interactions.

**Jack**

The communication mechanisms used by Christian when interacting with Jack were used to make Jack feel out of control and unworthy of his father's encouragement (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Jack could never fully control Christian due to his alcohol problem. Not controlling Christian, Jack could never get the response he may have craved from Christian. The only time Jack received encouragement from Christian was when Christian was convincing Jack to lie on his behalf. Since Christian told Jack as a young child that he would not be able to withstand the pressure of being the hero for everybody, Jack's life goal became to be the hero for everybody. It can be seen then, in his peer communication on the island, that Jack seeks to find his value in whether he can control situations and withstand the pressure of saving everybody. In some ways, Jack also holds back encouragement like Christian did with him. Jack is task-oriented on the islands and emotionally closed off. Whether or not somebody shows emotion or vulnerability with Jack, he is still set on saving the people around him from physical harm. This shows that the idea that his worth is found in withstanding pressure still drives Jack in his peer communication. The core communication mechanisms that raised Jack are the mechanisms he uses to determine how he communicates with his peers and finds purpose on the island. The parental communication mechanisms that raised Jack created the core motivators that Jack uses as an adult to accomplish tasks and judge his worth.

**Kate**

The communication mechanisms used in parenting Kate involved her actions not being validated (Abrams et al., 2006-10). Kate felt that she was doing a good thing by killing the man

she thought was her stepfather because he was abusing her mother. Kate voiced these feelings to her mom after the murder was done but was met with rejection. Kate's mom was set on being committed to her father and rationalized his unhealthy behavior even after Kate showed her loyalty to her mother. Kate emotionally and physically took significant risks to defend her mother and was repaid by her mother turning her in to the police. Kate also finds out that she has been lied to for years by her father, mother, and stepfather. Kate's whole reality was based on who she thought her birth parents were, and she was not given the truth until after she had killed her birth father. In her peer communications on the island, Kate was very calculated with whom she would emotionally be attached. This shows that the communication mechanism used by her mother in showing loyalty to one man caused Kate to be cautious about pledging loyalty to a man. Eventually, Kate did come to rely on Jack and Sawyer. Once she showed reliance on these two men, there was nothing that could get in between or end her loyalty to them. Though Kate disagreed with her mother's decision to stay loyal to her father, the lesson that Kate learned from that situation was to be more cautious before giving loyalty to a man. The mechanism of verbal and physical loyalty seen in her mother did not prompt Kate never to give loyalty to a man but rather to be more careful when choosing whom to give loyalty to.

Kate also wanted those around her to have good experiences and be comfortable while on the island. The root of this can be found in Kate wanted her mother to be safe and comfortable. Kate sought to achieve safety for her mother by killing her abusive husband. Kate also often sought information from her peers while on the island. The root of this behavior can be found in the experience Kate had when she found out her who she thought was her stepfather was her birth father. The root can also be found in Kate being lied to by the man who was hiding her from the police. Kate's pre-island decision making process involved wanted good for people

around her. Kate's pre-island parental figure interactions showed her how vital it is to seek out

all possible information and to be slow to trust men. While Jack's mental filter was more often

receiving interaction and experiences, Kate's mental filter seemed to send signals and influence

her on-island actions. Kate learned pre-island to be a rabid info-seeker and a woman who is slow

to trust. Kate never abandoned her desire for people around her to be safe and comfortable.

**John**

The communication mechanisms that John's parents used involved appealing to destiny

and spirituality (Abrams et al., 2006-10). In John's first interaction with his birth mother, she told

him he was special. John was mentored by his father for a short period before he conned him into

giving him a kidney. To convince John to donate the kidney, Anthony would repeatedly say that

their relationship being rekindled later in life was meant to be. When John still desired a

relationship with Anthony or sought closure, the result was John being pushed out of an eight-

story building and being paralyzed. In his peer communication on the island, John still appealed

to destiny and spirituality. John became a methodical decision-maker and was slow to

emotionally open to people around him. He still was influenced by the idea of having a destiny

or one sole purpose for his life. John also became a mentor for many of the people on the island,

like his father was for him at one time. Though John experienced great hurt by being conned by

his father, John still used the exact mechanism of mentoring later in life to connect with his

peers. Appealing to spirituality and destiny was also something that John was hurt by before the

crash, but he still used it in his peer interactions after the crash. It seemed that John found value

in finding and accessing the destiny he believed was his. It also seemed that John found value in

mentoring people on the island.

The communication mechanisms the parental figures used to convey value to Jack, Kate, and John were used by those characters in peer interactions. These mechanisms experienced earlier in life were the basis for obtaining value and direction for these characters within peer communication. Jack, Kate, and John used the communication behaviors directed to them and from their parents to find value in life and a place in an ecosystem of peers.

**Results Summary**

This chapter gave an overview of the data obtained regarding Jack, Kate, and John. The parental communication observations for each character were summarized. The main aspects of Jack's peer communication that was summarized were decision making, control seeking, justice, saving people, emotions, and father callbacks. The main aspects of Kate's peer communication that was summarized were seeking good for others, calculation, seeking information, and reliance on Jack and Sawyer. The main aspects of John's peer communication that was summarized were relationships, calculation, closed emotions, and faith/destiny.

The explanation used to interpret Jack's communication involved his reliance on using his father's principles when judging himself. The filter that Jack processed his experiences in was built using his childhood parental communication mechanisms. Jack's mental filter was goal oriented and set on being a hero for his peers. If a peer interaction involved Jack failing to help a peer, the mental filter would deem it negative and cause Jack to seek for validation in a different interaction or experience.

Kate's mental filter not only judged incoming experiences, but also filtered her own desires based on how her actions were rewarded in pre-island interactions. Kate was still a kind person on the island an sought comfort and safety for her peers, but she also was slow to trust

men and would seek to be aware of any information possible. These aspects of her mental filter were learned from pre-island parental figure interactions.

John's mental filter was heavily shaped by his belief in destiny and specific spiritual significance in his life. Though John was conned by his parents by way of spiritual and faith vernacular, John still sought this aspect of life on the island. John's mental filter seemed to yearn for meaning and purpose. John also was influenced by the hurt he received from his father as a mentor. It seemed that John wanted to be the father figure he never had to the younger people on the island. John's mental filter is a mechanism that filters incoming interactions by assigning value as well as filtering outgoing actions by giving them purpose.

## Summary

In this chapter, the findings of this research study are explained in detail. The chapter opened with the Character's Parental and Peer Communication which included the Codes and Themes. Following, the Findings of the research were presented and related to the research questions.

## Chapter V: Discussion

### Overview

The purpose of this qualitative rhetorical criticism was to analyze the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* and to determine if there was an effect on the peer-to-peer communication of the chosen characters. The top three characters based on screen time were chosen: Jack, Kate, and Locke. All six seasons of *Lost* were reviewed, and generative criticism was utilized to code, categorize, group, interpret, and analyze the findings. All parental interactions involving Jack, Kate, and Locke were used for data. All the on-island peer-to-peer interactions involving the chosen characters were used for data and to compare to the parental interactions. The process for this research involved a comprehensive literature review discussing the history of Lost and many television and internet cultural factors that influenced the creation and consumption of *Lost*. The literature review also covered research and studies regarding adult children of alcoholics, a prevalent factor among the chosen characters. Rhetorical criticism and generative criticism were explained and researched in the literature review. The methodology laid out the process by which the researcher employed the use of generative criticism to analyze the chosen artifact. The presentation of findings was presented and summarized by explaining the data obtained and the explanatory filter used to find meaning. This final chapter of the study includes a Discussion of the findings, Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research.

### Discussion

Research Question 1: In what ways does the parent-to-child communication in *Lost* affect the characters' communication with their peers?

Based on the data and findings from Chapter IV, the answer to this research question can be seen in how the characters judge their own interactions and experiences. It seems that there is a relationship between parental and peer communication among the characters observed. Each chosen character chooses actions and words in peer communication that seem to be rooted in experiences from previous parental communication. It could be believed that these actions seek to attribute worthiness or value to the characters, as these actions or outlooks were how they received value from their parents.

Research Question 2: What lessons regarding familial communication can viewers learn from the television show *Lost*?

Based on the findings from the first research question, *Lost* showed viewers that communication received from parents will shape and affect how one communicates with their peers. Of the three characters analyzed, all three all three showed communication tendencies that were directly influenced by the communication they received from their parents. Some characters embraced the communication styles of their parents, and some avoided using the same communication styles and techniques as their parents. None of the three characters showed complete separation from how they communicate with their peers compared to how their parents communicated to them. The lessons about familial communication that can be perceived from the viewers are shown in each character. The lesson about familial communication that is taught in Jack's character is that one will continue to use the measure of success in life that was used by their parents to measure their success growing up. The lesson about familial communication that can be perceived from Kate is that based on the communication shown to someone from their parents and the outcome of that communication, the same outcomes can be expected if that communication is received from peers. The lesson about familiar communication that is taught in

John's character is that a positive communication behavior like mentoring can yield positive

results even when received from someone with an overall negative impact on one's life. John

showed multiple communication techniques to his peers that were used with him from his

parents. All the parental communication shown to Jack, Kate, and John formed a filter that would

dictate how they communicated with their peers. *Lost* showed that there is a filter being built by

parental communication in every child and the filter will dictate how that child communicates

with their peers and how the child values various peer interactions. The parental communication

strategies do not directly dictate behavior, they directly dictate what the individual feels will

happen due to engaging in certain communication behaviors and they dictate the worth that one

puts in certain communication experiences.

## Implications

This section details the various implications that were found from the analysis and

findings of this study.

### Theoretical Implications

The communication strategy that informed this research was rhetorical criticism and,

more specifically, generative criticism. Generative criticism allows for the most interesting or

most significant parts of an artifact to be explained. This outlook on generative criticism, and the

outlooks used by the researcher, is from S.K. Foss (2018). Generative criticism is focused on

building units of analysis. These units were built by choosing characters, choosing an aspect of

communication, and coding episode by episode. The units were further segmented by theme and

setting. To be fully utilized, Generative Criticism does not require a theory. However, when

connecting the results of a Generative Criticism to real-world implications the researcher used

Transportation Theory. The researcher was able to further broaden the scope of Generative

Criticism by using it on a multi-season television show. The researcher also used Generative

Criticism to analyze two aspects of an artifact, the parental communication and the peer

communication.

**Practical Implications**

As previously stated in the literature review, Transportation Theory is the experience of a

consumer of media becoming lost in a narrative world (Green, 2008). The experience of

transportation by consuming media can also lead to belief or attitude change through the

character attachment (2008). By showcasing a diverse cast of characters and three main

characters with in-depth back story on their parental relationships, *Lost* created a pathway for

viewers to be transported into a relatable narrative. The island setting in *Lost* created a place

where all the characters were on an equal level at the beginning of the show. The audience was

able to watch the characters navigate a new social situation as well as develop their own opinions

as to how they would react in the given narrative. Not only did the island and plane crash

narrative lend itself to the audience's experience taking, but it also provided an avenue for *Lost*

to show the characters backstories. While the experience of being crashed on an island is not

relatable to every viewer, the experience of having a negative or positive relationship with one's

parental figure is relatable to every viewer. *Lost* not only showed that everyone has to navigate

parental communication but *Lost* also showed the way one's parents communicate with them will

affect how they will communicate with their peers in the future. *Lost* viewers saw six seasons of

characters being influenced and making life decisions based on prior parental communication.

For a view of *Lost* who related to a character, *Lost* showed them that their real-life decisions

have been shaped by their parental communication. For viewers who related to characters of the

show, any feeling that their parent's communication has impacted them was confirmed. *Lost*

showed viewers that parental communication will affect peer communication in negative or

positive ways through elements like self-worth, faith, and trust.

## Limitations

The limitations of this study involved the size and scope of the artifact. With hundreds of

hours of material, there was difficulty gaining a comprehensive view over all aspects of a

character. The researcher also limited the study to three characters. There are several other

characters that warrant research. The aspects reviewed and researched in the literature review

were broad and wide. Since the research question asked for a broad answer, the research required

a large scope.

## Recommendations for Future Research

*Lost* has many options for future research including more studies like the study just

completed. There are numerous characters, backstories, and aspects of the show that warrant

rhetorical criticism. All of the aspects analyzed in the current study could also be extended into a

qualitative study involving a survey given to human participants. Generative criticism seems to

lend itself to being the basis for future research regarding the same or similar artifact using the

same explanatory schema.

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