"Get a pic, Do a *Vlog*":
Vlogging Aesthetics within *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*

Madeleine Tudor
Emerson College

[1] In 2007, Joss Whedon started to work on his next series in the wake of the Writer's Guild Strike and sought to encapsulate and solve some of the problems writers were facing. This series would exist in a new medium that he had not worked in before: the Internet. With the Writer's Strike raging he sought to create a model to make the Internet a lucrative place for both the above-the-line talent and for everyone working on it, thus addressing a problem that was a key issue during the strike. By teaming up with his brothers, Zack and Jed Whedon, and his sister-in-law, Maurissa Tancharoen, *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* was born as a hybrid superhero musical that would be released over three days in July 2008 and would rise to great success with and love from fans. The release of the series capitalized on a moment of convergence between many different types of media. At the time, the trend of vlogging was only just starting with the success of Ze Frank's *the show* and the Vlogbrothers in the couple years before *Horrible*. On the most commonly used video site, YouTube, vlogging or video blogging has become popular to the extent that it has launched vloggers into the stratosphere of celebrities with varied products and revenue streams beyond YouTube such as books, television shows, movies, and merchandise. Vlogging requires direct address and a strong fan response which is commonly founded on parasocial relationships, relationships that exist between viewers and the persona a creator has on screen, a theory that used to most frequently apply to fictional media. Now, looking back at *Dr. Horrible,* one recognizes common characteristics between the two: the fan response both within and outside the text, the direct address, and the use of "mail time." Whedon built these practices into the format of the series: Billy's alter-ego Dr. Horrible runs a blog which he posts videos to, receives emails from, and uses to put out information about his latest evil exploits. Horrible's actions attach the show inherently to the medium for which Whedon created it, thus specifically positioning the work to succeed as a web series. Whedon's use of vlogging aesthetics in *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* shows the adoption of new media techniques in what Whedon ultimately saw as a piece of traditional media, which largely helped to contribute to the success of the series.

[2] *Dr. Horrible's* use of both traditional and web narrative techniques create convergence between vlogging and other formats Whedon was used to working in, "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins 2). *Horrible's* particular moment of

convergence centered on the connection between vlogging and Whedon's previous work. Vlogging often establishes the strongest viewer-creator connection that exists within the YouTube community. This connection largely develops because most vloggers only seek to show their everyday life, "Vlogs are video collections that serve both as an audiovisual life documentary and as a vehicle for communication and interaction on the Internet" (Biel, Gatica-Perez 211). Thus, viewers can more easily relate to them. Vlogs are filmed using basic video equipment and are founded on the idea that the vloggers are just sharing their everyday activities with the viewer. No matter the activity it may be a worthy addition to a vlog: "Like reality TV, these vlogs are numbingly entertaining. Watching another person's boring life might be the pick-me-up needed after a hard day. The viewer can unplug from their life and veg" (Soler, Piedrahita). The performance of everyday activities closely connects the viewer to what the vlogger is doing, as they both experience similar daily routines.

[3] The viewer connection is strengthened by the change in communities that occurs when one is online versus in person and is a part of the move to creating communities around person-to-person interaction over that of large group connections. As Michael Wesch notes, as we have become more individually focused, we still value community connection, but it has moved online. He states that these creators seem like a safer form of interaction in that they may be addressing the whole world but in this moment are only addressing a single camera. The "safety" allows the vlogger to speak more freely, and because there is no immediate audience reaction, the vlogger is more them self than if they were in front of an audience. Wesch asserts that this allows viewers and vloggers to form deeper connections based on the more candid nature of the videos, thus creating a stronger community. Instead of the screen and medium distancing the two bodies, it actually brings them closer and makes a more meaningful connection (Wesch).

[4] This connection is founded upon direct address, the most common use of address found within vlogs and one of the foundational ideas of vlogging and a community forming activity. As Soler and Piedrahita discuss, the vlogger's placement of the camera directly across from them (where a friend might be standing) and ability to address the audience makes them seem like the viewer's friend. Thus, the videos are more open and engaging, making it easier for the viewer to connect with them (Piedrahita, Soler). Direct address creates a feeling that the viewer is a part of the vlogger's daily routine or is their friend. Through the use of direct address the bond the audience has with them is strengthened. When one feels like they are a part of another person's life they feel as though they are important to them- thus allowing the viewer to feel as though they are a key part of the vlogger's life.

[5] This connection strengthens the fan culture that forms around different vloggers. YouTube fan cultures are similar to most fan cultures associated with any other media. The only exception is that typically vloggers are much more accessible to their fans through social media

than other celebrities. As mentioned before, fandom culture is a big part of vlogging. Some of this significance stems from the use of direct address and the inherent ideas of letting viewers into vloggers' regular lives. Much of this can be most easily understood through the idea of parasocial relationships which are defined by Ballantine as the seeming "face-to-face interaction" between characters in different types of media and their audiences. These media characters can be presenters, actors, or celebrities (198). The theory around parasocial relationships is true of almost all fandoms that are found online but particularly those of vloggers, because the use of direct address allows them to make a "personal" connection with each person viewing the video. The basic format of vlogs have strong potential for parasociability: "this potential is influenced by the ability for a medium to approximate reality and content characteristics, such as the dominance of lead figures, as well as personae who regularly appear in the program (or in other media contexts)" (Ballantine 199). The vloggers, their friends, and family are the recurring characters within the show that is their lives in which they portray activities that are both their reality and their audience's reality: from doctor visits to nighttime routines.

[6] Parasociability makes the vloggers become both real people and fictitious characters at the same time. As Zoella, a popular lifestyle vlogger whose subscribers count is close to 14 million across her two channels as of June 2016, once told her audience in a teary video that she does not always feel like the Zoe one sees in videos is the real one. On video she expresses the fact that she is confident, calm, and bubbly, but in real life she is an anxious introvert. Now she seeks to educate students and adult viewers about anxiety and mental health and serves as an ambassador for multiple mental health organizations in the United Kingdom. Feelings of falsehood are common among YouTubers in varying forms- all of them acknowledge that they do not always present their true selves online but strive to be as close to their true selves as possible. They often note that they will always keep some parts of their lives private, but also want to be as transparent as possible. This dichotomy is still a struggle for Zoe: when there were accusations of ghost writing in her young adult novel, *Girl Online,* she left the Internet completely for over a month. As John Green noted at Vidcon in 2012, "There is human within the jump cuts." The humanity Green speaks of is often shielded from viewers online and can also be seen at the end of *Dr.*
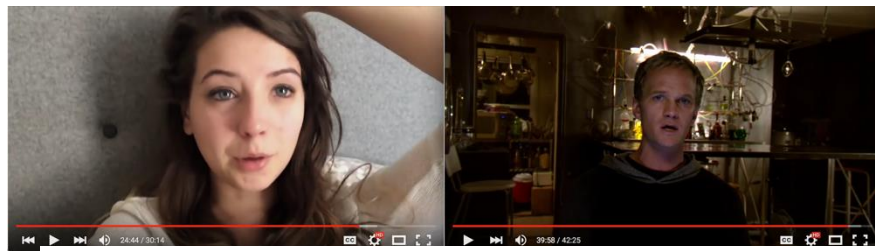

Fig. 1. Zoella and Billy show their true selves (*The Creators; Dr. Horrible*).

Horrible in which the last shot is of Billy sitting in front of his camera essentially admitting that he got what he wanted but now he, "…won't feel/ a thing" (*Dr. Horrible*). He breaks down in a moment of weakness and his Dr. Horrible persona drops in front of his viewers just as Zoe's did when she posted a video about her anxiety (see Figure 1). Fans feel as though they have a connection with the person and the persona when the walls are dropped.

[7] These deep connections build upon the parasociability of the medium and create an active fan community. Often, "viewers may try to affirm their loyalty through sending mail, collecting memorabilia of the performer, and purchasing products recommended by the performer" (Ballantine 198). This action is common in both vlogging communities and among Whedon fans. It is typified by the customary action of vloggers who have "Mail Time," something that also manifests in *Dr. Horrible*. These communities often send in fan art, different trinkets, and personal artifacts to their vloggers. And yet, sending in fan mail is not the only action these communities perform, as Jenkins notes, communities are forming in different ways that are more tactical and are affirmed through "common intellectual enterprises" and are kept together through group production and exchanges of knowledge (27). Thus these communities are also known to work towards different goals: some charitable, such as the Vlogbrother's Project for Awesome which gives away millions of dollars every year to charity and some to support their favorite creator including many YouTubers who sell merchandise such as shirts and hats. An exchange of knowledge is a shared trait between the fan communities built up around vloggers and those built up around Whedon, whether it be distributing information about new works and debating their meaning (c.f. the *Whedonesque* blog; Williams; Frohard-Dourlent), fan scholarship activities (such as buffistas.org, which became TV Tropes), fan activism (c.f. Abbott; "Past the Brink of Tacit Support"; Cochran 2008; Tabron), community building (as documented in *IRL* and *Done the Impossible*), and fan creative enterprises (c.f. Busse; Cantwell; Rebaza; Hill; Fuller; Heinecken; among others).

[8] While on-camera personas and representations are not always connected to the reality of the person, they build a connection between the viewers allowing them to create a brand around themselves. The brand can create a dual identity between the celebrity persona and the actual personality of the person, giving some safety that celebrities who are known for acting innately have:

> As theorized by Richard Dyer, Joshua Gamson, Graeme Turner, and others, a star image is the public construction of a performer, made up of the diverse representations of that individual. This star text, of course, is never equal to the "real" person behind the image, but is, rather, an intentionally crafted narrative blend of consumerism, success, and ordinariness. (Ellcessor 48)

Thus, whether a vlogger or a traditional celebrity they both have the effect of creating a social community around the persona. As was discussed earlier in regards to Zoella, sometimes these dual identities have negative effects on the vloggers, and sometimes not. This dual identity is also seen in *Dr. Horrible* in which Dr. Horrible is addressing the blog, but viewers also experience Billy's perspective throughout the series.

[9] Joss Whedon connected *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* to vlogging and internet culture from its inception. When Whedon first had the idea to create *Dr. Horrible* for the Internet, he sought to create something that writers, particularly those currently striking, had been discussing for years: "As Whedon (2008) has noted, the striking writers talked often about the prospect of distributing series directly to audiences without going through traditional channels" (Jenkins, "Joss Whedon"). Whedon was also filling a gap he had in his creative time since as the Writer's Strike occurred production on his latest series, *Dollhouse,* was put on hold. Born of his frustrations with, in his opinion, the unfair pay distribution in Hollywood, Whedon sought to create a work that was fair to all. He saw the Internet as the place to do this even though, admittedly he noted in an interview with Knowledge@Wharton that he knew little about monetization on the Internet at the time and that most of his ideas were inspired by ones already taking place. He just sought to take advantage of the already established monetization ideas and take advantage of what was at the time seen as a wild west that major companies had not yet colonized (Knowledge@Wharton). He wanted to create a system on the Internet in which everyone involved in the production got a fair shake. Thus *Dr. Horrible's* three main actors, Neil Patrick Harris, Felicia Day, and Nathan Fillion worked for free with money offered on the back end of distribution to them instead. This approach allowed some of the higher above-the-line costs to be cut down thus distributing those funds back into the production and to immediately pay the below-the-line crew, such as camera people and other tradesmen who were the people most affected by the strike. His release schedule was based upon his pursuit of fair pay, "Over three days in July 2008, one act at a time, *Dr. Horrible* was unleashed on the public, its viral publicity backed by high-quality performance and production made it a prime viewing attraction and one of the first streaming stories to gain so much attention" (Porter 373). The release was so huge that the website hosting the video crashed within minutes of the first episode's posting and in the end Whedon has commented that they grossed around three million dollars from the project (Knowledge@Wharton). Porter noted, the web-only viewing widened the audience for webisodes and created a "web classic" (371). Thus, while Whedon may not have known much about capitalizing on the Internet, he created something that was essential to it.

[10] After the web-only release on the *Dr. Horrible* website, the show moved to DVD, iTunes, and Hulu and this release strategy created one of the most lucrative and successful online releases of any web series. As Whedon recalled in an interview with Knowledge@Wharton, the release "steamrolled" expectations of industry insiders and changed the way television professionals operated. Whedon knew the production had to take advantage of the momentum they had and worked to speed through contract negotiations and other processes that usually take months at the beginning of the production to save time and money which could be funneled into the marketing and release (Knowledge@Wharton). By fundamentally changing the way production worked, it created a group that recouped their funds on this project and allowed the fans to feel a part of the process and the project's success.

[11] Some of this success is owed to the format of the piece which made the show particularly special to the audience. *Dr.Horrible* was also distinctly web-based, whether Whedon intended it or not. The link is established from the first moment of the musical. Wilcox notes that the show opens with a setup that seems like a typical video blog entry in which Billy sits alone addressing his webcam while dressed up as Dr.Horrible. In its opening moments, *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* is not a musical in itself but seems to be an actual blog. From there on, Wilcox points out, a more traditional musical structure follows until at the beginning of Act II, the audience once again finds itself in front of the webcam with Billy. The framing of the webcam entries firmly grounds the show on the Internet: it is both a reflection of Dr. Horrible's blog and the life behind the blog. The audience creates a connection to Billy and Dr. Horrible, the former through the more traditional narrative, the latter through the vlog, creating the same dual identity effect as was discussed earlier about Zoella. It also demonstrates Boyd's phenomenon of context collapse- when multiple audiences (in this case internet and traditional media) flatten into one, causing a struggle to separate the different ways that identity is expressed online and in person. Instead, the two identities come together using the framing of *Dr. Horrible* by collapsing the internet aesthetic (Billy's vlogs- one identity) into a traditional aesthetic (the story and musical sequences- a second identity). The framing of the weblog also serves to place Billy and Dr. Horrible within internet culture through dialogue and behaviors, such as use of "internet jargon" and reading out his mail and responding to it that Ramos notes reflects blog culture and language. Ramos argues, "He neglects the possibility that his viewers may include his nemesis and the police, as well as anonymous readers; bloggers will often forget how public their writing is and reveal something that gets them into trouble in the offline world" (Ramos). Thus, Horrible and the show are placed within internet culture and are practicing internet traditions and starting a genre that is now an industry. This practice works to draw audiences into the world that is created through framing the piece in a way that provides the audience information through direct address in the video blog and placing the viewer among Dr. Horrible's viewers (Cowlishaw). Cowlishaw notes that the viewer becomes a part of an audience that includes other real viewers, but also fictional viewers such as the LAPD and Captain Hammer, blurring the lines between reality and fiction. The inclusion of the viewer in the text catalyzes the parasocial relationships and will be furthered by the use of direct address within the text. It also shows behaviors that Whedon fans and vlogging fans perform: sending in comments or fan mail thus nestling *Dr. Horrible* firmly within both worlds through the use of format and framing.

[12] Whedon knew that his first foray into the Internet would be different, but did not seek to treat it any differently than he had any of his other series. Whedon stated that he still held to his story standards of whether or not, in the end, the viewer cared about the characters or were having a good time (Knowledge@Wharton). He acknowledged that this guiding spirit allowed him to avoid worrying about the fact that he was working on a piece that would be positioned and responded to differently in the internet landscape as it did not follow any norms of common internet video such as length or tone (Knowledge@Wharton). Whedon's fundamental beliefs

allowed the series to live on its own as strong work and this belief sets it apart from many other pieces on the Internet as *Dr. Horrible* was not treated differently because of its medium.

[13] Crowdsourcing was a new concept for Whedon as he typically worked within a studio system, but it was starting to become common and was inspired by his friend and coworker, actress Felicia Day who appeared in *Buffy* and in *Dr. Horrible.* She found success in digital distribution with the series, *The Guild,* a direct-to-digital sitcom about online gamers launched in 2007 (Jenkins, "Joss Whedon…"). Day had already broken ground in web series production and distribution and had laid the foundation for the future success of *Dr. Horrible.* Both were funded independently and both rely on traditional and web aesthetics to create their world. While *The Guild's* distribution was much more targeted, it still set an example of what is possible for Whedon. As Ellcessor notes, *The Guild* was initially supported by fan donations and, like *Dr. Horrible,* it was distributed on YouTube. Unlike Whedon's distribution plan, though, it eventually gained sponsorships from Microsoft and Sprint and was distributed on the Xbox 360 and MSN.com and later streamed on Netflix, Hulu and became available on DVD (47). Whedon would eventually take the same path with his series on the distribution end, starting it for free and then putting it on paid services. In addition, the combined formats of the vlog, or as Whedon saw it, video-blog and traditional media was seen first in *The Guild.* As Ellcessor notes, Day's series draws on "…codes of serial television, the aesthetics of webcams and the content of gaming" and used social media to connect with her audience to promote the series, thus combining old and new media outside of corporate control (47). While Whedon might not have intended to be influenced by the Internet or make something that was specifically for it, he was influenced by *The Guild* which sought to be a part of internet culture. All of this incorporates basic ideas of vlogging, largely the format that is used in both shows and the distribution strategies.

[14] The major connection between *Dr. Horrible* and vlogging can be seen in the use of direct address by Dr. Horrible on his video blog. It creates the same effects of parasociablility and fandom both within and outside the text that vlogging does. The placement of Horrible's blog at the beginning of the first two episodes allows the viewer to be reminded of where they are, "The sequences of Dr. Horrible (Neil Patrick Harris) delivering his blog to a web cam in first person direct to camera address are completely in keeping with the internet aesthetic" (Abbott). The direct address immediately brings the audience closer to Billy and Dr. Horrible: "Through Horrible's blog, Billy engages with his audience, and with us, extending his mind and emotions through the blog itself" (Willis 248). This starts to enact the same ideas of parasociability that were discussed earlier: "Television programs, along with other media content (e.g., advertisements), are able to create the illusion of interpersonal contact when media figures speak directly out of the television and address the audience personally" (Ballantine 198). Thus, the audience feels connected to Billy/Horrible in the same way they might to a vlogger- the personal and direct address makes them feel closer to the character because they are being directly spoken

to. This direct address truly emphasizes the connection to vlogging through parasociability. In Ballantine's understanding of parasociability, when the fourth wall is broken the parasociability of the character increases. The character that breaks the wall becomes more "dominant" because they are aware of the other characters and the audience, it acknowledges that the program is fiction, and by directly addressing the audience the character becomes more intimate with the audience making the whole piece more interactive (198). Dr. Horrible emphasizes all of these reasons and makes his connection stronger with the audience. As was articulated by Ballantine's reasons for parasociability, Billy acknowledges the audience and the other characters within the world noting that while this is fiction there is still a real and intimate connection between him and the audience. Whedon accomplishes this by using the direct address not only to talk about Horrible's successes, but also his failures such as the fact that the gold bars he mentions he tried to steal are "still in liquid form" (*Dr.Horrible*). We see a vulnerable side to Horrible and Billy, not just a scary exterior. Billy's failures and successes shown on camera create a consciousness within the audience that they know in some ways the inner workings of our main character as they might with a vlogger, "As we watch the web film on a computer screen, we begin to engage in the video blog, interacting with our screens, and our protagonist, more closely than we do when we watch a television screen" (Willis 249). Billy's honesty forms a close connection and allows the show to form a greater emotional connection with its audience than if it had aired on television or used a more traditional expositional format. Thus, "…in *Dr. Horrible*, we become more conscious of our roles as watchers—and perhaps as creators of the screen image, the video blog" (Wilcox). This consciousness mimics the connection viewers have to vloggers and "we are asked to participate as blog viewers and media consumers, both with actors and with the media format. With the greater physical proximity of the computer, the blog directly addresses us as viewers: instead of being asked to watch a narrative unfold, we are asked to listen to Horrible's journal, his Web log" (Willis 249). Whedon used this strong fan connection to great effect to bolster *Horrible* in a narrative and marketing sense.

[15] The intense fan relationship is seen both within the piece itself in Horrible's use of the fan mail concept and in the fan response to the show. In the use of the mail time segment, the story is furthered and it mimics one of the most typical manifestations of fandom online. Many vloggers keep PO Boxes and so between the physical mail and mail that is similar to mean and angry YouTube comments there is a connection between both concepts. When Horrible reads his emails on the blog, he experiences the same kind of bullying that any vlogger might experience as epitomized in the email he reads that is written by "2Sly4U": "Hey Genius, Where are the gold bars you pulled out the bank vault with a trans-matter ray. Obviously it failed or it would be in the papers" (*Dr. Horrible*). There he faces doubt typical of vlogger's comment sections. In addition, he faces the same invasive question many vloggers do as epitomized in "Deadnotsleeping's" email in which he asks, "You always say in your blog you will show her the way. Show her you are a true villain. Who is her?" (*Dr. Horrible*). The comments show an audience within the text but also are typical of the kinds of comments one might find on any

vlog: "We already know that Hammer pays attention to Horrible's activities, as is made clear when Horrible admits he must be more careful about how much information he releases on his blog, since, 'apparently, the LAPD *and* Captain Hammer are among our viewers'" (Buckman). Thus, the show acknowledges its own place within the Internet as something where if it were a real vlog or blog viewers would write in, so Horrible also has that experience. He is also positioned as a typical user of the Internet- someone who might be a part of fandoms had he not started his own vlog. As Hollis notes, Billy and Dr. Horrible do not belong in the "common" world, which is something many fans identify with, and is computer-savvy enough to keep a blog to detail his time as Dr. Horrible. He also has his own fans who send him e-mails that he then answers on his blog. He encourages a community around him of others who have similar aspirations to be part of something bigger, even if it is to join the Evil League of Evil. Overall, he asks people to join his community by telling them to "get a pic, do a blog" indicating that the participation is the best way to create change (Hollis 302; *Dr.Horrible*). He is experiencing internet culture the way many other Whedon fans do, but instead of joining something like the blog Whedonesque, he wants to join the Evil League of Evil. Billy exhibits the same behavior that many viewers do and encourages them to join him.

[16] This shared behavior and participation strengthened the fan reception to *Dr. Horrible.* The series was particularly suited to reach out to fans who used the Internet, making them feel like they were important to the piece by scaling the production to be what Whedon saw as the "right size" for the medium- putting it somewhere in between a major Hollywood production and amateur content. By doing this Whedon also built a more intimate relationship with his audience (Jenkins, "Joss Whedon…"). The intimate relationship between Whedon and his fans was also bolstered by the fact that Whedon already had a strong cult following which Abbott observed was as much attributable to the crashing of servers on release day as Whedon himself. Fans of his previous work such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Angel,* and *Firefly* all came to support Whedon's new venture (Abbott). Thus, his fans were ready and willing to help the creator they loved so much. This fan support is similar to the fan support of vloggers who announce another project. In both situations, Whedon and vloggers use these fans as marketing machines in their own right. Thus, "By putting faith in a largely word-of-mouth campaign to publicize *Dr. Horrible*'s release, Whedon and his team were not only making a sound financial decision, they also allowed the fans to build their own set of expectations for the video" (Ramos). Whedon relationship with fans is almost exactly the same as the creator-fan relationship found in most YouTube vlogging fandoms. As Ramos notes, this inclusiveness allowed viewers to find a community in supporting the new web series, "With the release of *Dr. Horrible*, internet users pooled their resources not only to form a collective intelligence, but also to create a collective event" (Ramos). By not limiting his fandom, Whedon fans were able to take the series in as both theirs and Whedon's, adopting *Dr. Horrible* as a new piece of media to gather around, and, as Porter notes, fans started to create fan works around it such as stage productions and comics (Porter 371). The strong response also caught the attention of more

"formal" and "legitimate" sources. Whedon's effort to treat *Dr. Horrible* as just as strong as his other pieces in regards to production value rather than lessening it because it was a web series paid off. Not only did he recoup all of his money and earn a significant payout for not only himself and his cast, but the series also earned critical acclaim and award recognition by traditional sources, such as the Hugo Awards for Science Fiction and the Creative Arts Emmy Awards, and newly formed organizations such as the Streamy Awards (Porter 373). The series' success gave it a cachet that allowed it to step out from being seen as just a web series while still creating the same fandom and affects as any other series that was native digital content.

[17] With *Dr. Horrible*, Joss Whedon created a show that fit perfectly within the world of internet culture and works as a piece of "traditional" media. Through the use of the vlog format, direct address, and integration of fannish activities and behavior, Whedon positioned the show for great success and used what is now seen as activities and behaviors typically associated with vlogging. This practice positioned the show to create parasocial relationships with the audience just as vlogs would thereby bolstering the fan response to be even stronger than initially expected. Whedon's adoption of new media techniques such as constructed autobiography effect, low budget aesthetics, publicly-affirming fandom, and blurring the lines between fiction and nonfiction signaled the start of the recognition of these aesthetics by those in the more "traditional" media industries such as when E! Network gave Grace Helbig, a popular vlogger, her own late night talk show in 2015. Now vloggers are sought after to star in movies (Grace Helbig is currently in post on her second) headline tours (the Girls Night in Tour and Tyler Oakley's Sleepover Tour were both sold out worldwide) and write books (Zoella's *Girl Online* books are breaking sales records). And in 2012, *Dr. Horrible* bridged the old and new media gap and was aired on The CW to a strong fan response. As Whedon said, "The integration of the things can be exciting, if it's approached the way everything needs to be approached — which is artistically" (Knowledge@Wharton). Thus, in the broader view, *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* was at the forefront of transmedia production. It was one of the first of now many to bridge the gap between new and old media. This gap gets smaller and smaller each day. Digital media is becoming more popular than some TV shows and frequently YouTubers get more views than shows on major TV networks. Traditional media and new media ought to look to *Dr. Horrible* when establishing themselves in the ever changing media landscape. If one follows Whedon's advice and approaches each format artistically, eventually there may not be a gap between them.

Works Cited

Abbott, Stacey. "Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog – A Cult TV Event without the TV." *CST Online*. Critical Studies in Television, 22 Nov. 2012. Web.

_____. "'We'll Follow Angel to Hell... or Another Network: The Fan Response to the End of *Angel*." *Reading* Angel: the TV Spin-off with a Soul. Ed. Stacey Abbott. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005. 230-233. Print.

Ballantine, Paul W., and Martin A. S. Brell. "Forming Parasocial Relationships in Online Communities." *Advances in Consumer Research* 32.1 (2005): 197-201. *www.acr.org*. Advances in Consumer Research, 2005. Web.

Biel, Joan-Isaac, and Daniel Gatica-Perez. "Voices of Vlogging." *Fourth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*. Geaorge Washington University, Washington, DC. Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, 26 May 2010. Web.

Boyd, Danah, and Alice E. Marwick. "I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience." *New Media & Society* 20.10 (2010): 1-20. 7 July 2010. Web.

Buckman, Alyson. ""Go Ahead! Run Away! Say It Was Horrible!" *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* as Resistant Text." *Slayage*. Whedon Studies Association, n.d. Web.

Busse, Kristina. "Crossing the Final Taboo: Family, Sexuality, and Incest in *Buffy*verse Fan Fiction." *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Eds. Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 207-217. Print.

Cantwell, Marianne. "Collapsing the Extra/Textual: Passions and Intensities of Knowledge in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Online Fan Communities." *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media* 5 (2004). Print.

Cochran, Tanya, "'Past the Brink of Tacit Support': Fan Activism and the Whedonverses," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 10, 2012. http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/331/295

Cover, Rob. "'More Than a Watcher': *Buffy* Fans, Amateur Music Videos, Romantic Slash and Intermedia." *Music, Sound, and Silence in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Eds. Paul Attinello, Janet K. Halfyard, and Vanessa Knights. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2010. 131-148. Print.

Cowlishaw, Bridget. ""Is That a Footnote, or Are You Just Happy to See Me?"" *Southwest Journal of Cultures*. Blogger, 04 June 2010. Web. <http://samiranadkarni.blogspot.com/2010/06/is-that-footnote-or-are-you-just-happy.html>.

The Creators Official Documentary Film. Dir. Nannette Burstein. Perf. Zoe Sugg, Thomas Ridgewell, Niki Albon, and Sammy Albon. YouTube. YouTube, 10 Mar. 2015. Web.

Done the Impossible (Tony Hadlock, Jason Heppler, Jeremy Neish, Jared Nelson, Brian Wiser, 2006).

Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog. Dir. Joss Whedon. By Jed Whedon, Zack Whedon, and Maurissa Tancharoen. Perf. Neil Patrick Harris, Felicia Day, and Nathan Fillion. Mutant Enemy Productions, 2008. Internet.

Ellcessor, Elizabeth. "Tweeting @feliciaday: Online Social Media, Convergence, and Subcultural Stardom." *Cinema Journal* 51.2 (2012): 46-66. Web.

Frohard-Dourlent, Hélène."When the heterosexual script goes flexible: Public reactions to female heteroflexibility in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* comic books." *Sexualities* 15.5-6 (September 2012): 718-738. Print.

Fuller [de la Rosa], Nicole (Nikki) Faith. "The Art of *Buffy* Crafts." *Fan Phenomena:* Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Ed. Jennifer Kate Stuller. Chicago: Intellect, 2013. 112-119. Print.

Heinecken, Dawn. 'I Wasn't Planning on Hurting You – Much': Sadomasochism, Melodrama and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Fan Fiction." *Spectator*25.1 (Spring 2005): 48-60. Print.

Hill, Kathryn, "'Easy to Associate Angsty Lyrics with *Buffy*': An Introduction to a Participatory Fan Culture: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," <u>Buffy</u> and <u>Angel</u> <u>Conquer the Internet</u>. p. 172-196. Print.

Hollis, Erin. ""It's the Perfect Story, So They Say" Viewer Participation and the Works of Joss Whedon." *Previously On: Interdisciplinary Studies on TV Series in the Third Golden Age* (2011): 291-305. Print.

IRL: The Bronze Documentary Project (Stephanie Tuszynski, 2007).

Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New
      York UP, 2006. Print.

_____. "Joss Whedon, The Browncoats, and Dr. Horrible." *Spreadable Media*. NYU Press, n.d.
      Web.

"Joss Whedon's Plan to Monetize Internet Content (Watch Out, Hollywood)."
      Knowledge@Wharton. Wharton at University of Pennsylvania, 04 Feb. 2009. Web.

Porter, Lynnette. "Joss Whedon 101: Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog." *Joss Whedon: The
      Complete Companion: The TV Series, The Movies, The Comic Books and More*. London:
      Titan, 2012. 371-74. Print.

Ramos, Katie L. "Heroes Are Over With: Possibilities for Folk Hybridity in "Dr. Horrible's Sing-
      Along Blog"" *Folklore Forum*. Indiana University, 03 May 2010. Web.

Rebaza, Claudia, "The Problematic Definition of 'Fan': A Survey of Fannish Involvement in the
      *Buffy*verse," *Buffy and Angel Conquer the Internet* (2008): 147-171.

Soler, Jesica, and Stephanie Piedrahita. "Vloggers: The Celebrities of the Internet." *Florida
      International University Student Media*. Florida International University, 24 Mar. 2015.
      Web. 12 Apr. 2015. <http://fiusm.com/2015/03/24/vloggers-the-celebrities-of-the-
      internet/>.

Tabron, Judith. "Girl on Girl Politics: Willow/Tara and New Approaches to Media
      Fandom." *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies* 4.1-2 (13-14),
      October 2004. Web.

Wesch, Michael. "An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube." Library of Congress,
      Washington, D.C. 26 July 2008. *YouTube*. Web.

Wilcox, Rhonda V. "Breaking the Ninth Wall with Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog: Internet
      Creation." *CST Online*. Critical Studies in Television, 22 Nov. 2012. Web. 16

Williams, Rebecca Sian. "'It's About Power!': Executive Fans, Spoiler Whores and Capital in
      the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* On-Line Fan Community." *Slayage: The Online
      International Journal of Buffy Studies* 3.3-4 (11-12), April 2004. Web.

Willis, Victoria. "Joining the Evil League of Evil: The Rhetoric of Posthuman Negotiation in Dr.
      Horrible's Sing-Along Blog." *Reading Joss Whedon*. Ed. Rhonda Wilcox, Tanya R.

Cochran, Cynthea Masson, and David Lavery. 1st ed. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2014. 237-49. Print.

Zoella. Dir. Zoe Sugg. Perf. Zoe Sugg. *YouTube*. N.p., n.d. Web. 7 June 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/user/zoella280390>.