@US - *AM TO DM* AND THE REIMAGINING OF MORNING TELEVISION

by

Tanya Melendez

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
Communication Studies

Charlotte

2019

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Jon Crane

_____
Dr. Cliff Scott

_____
Dr. Richard Leeman

ABSTRACT

TANYA MELENDEZ. @US – AM to DM and the reimagining of morning television.
(Under the direction of DR. JON CRANE)

In September of 2017, BuzzFeed News launched a morning television show that airs live on Twitter five days a week. *AM to DM* represents one of the first disruptions of a 60-year-old genre with an emphasis on audience participation, an editorialized point of view, and social media. This study applies critical discourse analysis to learn how *AM to DM* has updated the morning show genre for a millennial audience by letting social media lead content creation, recreating an ideal millennial workplace, and emphasizing virality through technology. Implications for the future of television, including shifts in how content is made, how we speak about television culturally, and how media is consumed are also discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude goes to my committee. I could not have succeeded without the guidance of my advisor Dr. Jon Crane, who demonstrated equal amounts of wisdom and patience. His suggestions, advice, and critical eye were exactly what I needed in this process. Dr. Leeman gave thoughtful answers to my random, out of the blue questions and led me to better research. In addition to being an incredible sounding board and dear friend, Dr. Scott is the person who inspired me to apply for this program. I'll always be grateful. Additional thanks to Dr. Nance Riffe - a friend, boss, and speech partner who helped make this year wonderful. Finally, thanks to all my friends and family who encouraged me to go back to school to do what I love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the 1950s, the cartoon *Winky Dink and You* (Barry & Allen, 1953) asked children to purchase a mail-order special cloth and plastic sheet set. The cloth could be rubbed on a television set to create enough friction for the transparent plastic sheet to stick to the screen. Then, when prompted by the show, a child could draw in crayon on the sheet and believe they had inspired the object that appeared on the screen in response. It was short lived experiment, in part because of complaints where a child did not purchase anything and simply drew on their television (Carey, 1996).

Winky Dink and You is a reminder that television was never intended to be interactive. While Jenson (2008) explains that in the earliest iterations of television development two-way audio was briefly considered, the idea was rejected and television was deliberately engineered as a one-way medium. Yet from the 1950s to the 1990s, interactive television was periodically experimented with and largely considered a failure. Those early forays, however, laid the groundwork for what was to follow in the next millennium- a digital and streaming television revolution that has changed the way we consume media and in turn, how media is created for our consumption.

The first live streamed event was a September 1995 MLB Yankees-Mariners game on the ESPN SportsZone webpage. Live audio only, it required a subscription to ESPN, a 56k modem internet connection, and a software download - and was only able to stream to "several hundred people at a time" due to technical limitations (Farrey, 1995). The first television show that streamed over the internet quickly followed on November 23, 1995 when ABC aired *World News Now* (Dorff, 1995) for those who could watch through online video conferencing software. Anchor Kevin Newman interviewed

computer scientist Yvonne Andres about the future of computer-based communication. Because the broadcast used video conferencing, Newman could see a few audience members looking directly at him during the show. Dorf (2016) writes "The experience changed [Newman's] view of broadcasting, he says, because he realized the internet held the potential for a new level of interactivity that could change the broadcaster's relationship to the audience" (para. 15), a prescient observation.

As technology became more advanced, cheaper, and widespread in the mid 2000s, streaming content online became commonplace, with Netflix launching streaming in 2007 and Hulu premiering in 2008. At the same time, audience participation with television shows surged due to two entry points for the interaction: the rising popularity of social media and widespread access to a 'second screen' like a laptop or smartphone (Okoye, 2017). Social media allows viewers to connect with others, respond to television content in real time, and give immediate feedback to content creators. Content creators also use social media to guide audience members to associated content like commerce driven websites or show associated web content. In 2004, ABC's *Lost* (Lindelof, 2004) became one of the first television shows to embrace a digital strategy with online alternate-reality games, multiple websites with clues and puzzles about ongoing show plotlines, and the open encouragement of fan chat rooms - "forward thinking digital marketing" that "changed television viewing forever" (Pruner, 2018).

More than simply adding new ways to watch television, digital streaming and social media have altered the ways our culture thinks about television as a medium. Market research firm GFK (2019) found 72% of those under 34 years old prefer streaming over any other form of television viewing. 48% percent of all adults co-view

television with others, with the primary driver for shared viewing being to discuss the content with someone. Further, 60% of adults under 34 years old are co-viewing more today than three years ago. Content is available at all times, meaning co-viewing has become an intentional act, changing the nature of the term 'appointment television.'

Streaming has also let to a radical increase in the amount of content. The number of scripted television shows more than doubled since 2010, from 216 to 495 (Malone, 2018). Even that number is dwarfed, however, by the number of unscripted shows that aired in 2018, including news shows, reality television, docuseries, instructional television [e.g. cooking or home improvement], talk shows, sports, game shows, and more - a total of 750 shows across all platforms (Lynch, 2018). Social media and co-viewing allow audiences to find others who share their viewing experiences, despite audience fragmentation.

This 'new normal' invites cultural critics to more closely examine what Henry Jenkins (2004) calls the "tension and transition shaping the media environment" (p. 34). Jenkins argues critics have held static assumptions about television audiences and media consumption, assumptions that depended on the passivity of consumers and are now upended:

> If old consumers were predictable and stationary, then new consumers are migratory, showing a declining loyalty to networks or even media. If old consumers were isolated individuals, then new consumers are more socially connected. If old consumers were seen as compliant, the new consumers are resistant, taking media into their own hands. If the work of media consumers was once silent and invisible, they are now noisy and public (p. 38).

If Jenkins is correct and the static, old assumptions of past research are no longer useful to understand a modern environment, then critics should begin by finding how television content creators and distributors are attempting to attract and retain audience members now. One way to do so is to focus on how genres evolve.

Television genres are often examined within genre studies (Kelley-Romano, 2008; Rose, 1985). Audiences have been trained to understand and respond to recognizable genre traits - even a casual television viewer stumbling onto a rerun of *Law & Order* (Wolf, 1990) can predict the beats of an episode; the red herring suspect, the predictable interrogation roles, the criminal being caught at the end of the first half by 'law' so that 'order' can then prosecute (Frederick, 2019; Dyess-Nugent, et. al., 2012). Viewers of one broadcast network sitcom will recognize the interchangeable aspects of all broadcast network sitcoms, like the insignificant conflict introduced in the first act which gets resolved in the last act.

Because of this deep familiarity, which often begins in childhood, those same viewers will recognize when a television show challenges its genre in some way. For example, when it premiered in 1992, HBO's *The Larry Sanders Show* (Shandling et.al, 1992) was a recognizable workplace sitcom about a late-night talk show host. While it took advantage of its place on premium cable to use profanity, the thirty-minute run time, familiar comedic actors, and a three-act structure all helped audiences locate it within the sitcom genre. At the same time, there was a significant difference as *The Larry Sanders Show* was the only sitcom on television without a laugh track. The success of the show demonstrated that the genre didn't need a laugh track to cue audiences and legitimized the same choice for content creators going forward (Cheadle, 2011). By 2000, the laugh

track had become a symbol of dated or staid sitcoms, shows that hadn't kept up with the evolution of the genre (Lepore, 2015). Interestingly, one of the last sitcoms on the air in 2019 with a laugh track is also the most popular - CBS's *The Big Bang Theory* (Lorre, Molario, Prady, & Kaplan, 2007), which culture writer Adam Raymond (2014) believes is successful because it uses old fashioned sitcom techniques that feel nostalgic to audiences.

Regardless of the type of text, generic criticism should seek to do more than identify what text fits in what genre. Rather, critics should discover the theoretical significance and cultural situatedness of a text while informing understanding of the genre as a whole (Campbell, 1995; Kelley-Romano, 2008). Kelley-Romano (2008) further suggests that the most familiar genres are also ripest for larger cultural application, as they can be used to identify the social functions being served by the text. Further, placing the artifact in the appropriate production and consumption contexts allows a scholar to make claims regarding the success of generic components like structures (Buozis & Creech, 2017). Cawelti (1985) proposes that studying popular genres also allows a better understanding of how "particular cultural groups interpret texts" and who integrates those texts into their daily routines (p. 60).

Researchers Michael Buozis and Brian Creech (2018) argue that while genre has been used to analyze television for decades, the method has not been applied frequently to news. Rather, scholarly work regarding news typically focuses on either the purpose, intent, or effect of specific news stories or cycles. Yet the generic characteristics of news are crafted to convey social meaning as well as information, designed before a news story is written (Schudson, 2011; Buozis & Creech, 2018).

The word ‘news’ encompasses a large swath of television including fourteen cable news channels. Within broadcast networks, a news division will produce a wide variety of programming focused on different types of news production. For example, NBC News currently produces 8 shows (“Current NBC Shows,” 2019): *Meet the Press with Chuck Todd* (1947–present) for weekly coverage of political fare, *Today* (1952–present) is the flagship morning show, *NBC Nightly News* (1970–present) covers the top national news of the day, *Dateline NBC* (1992–present) is a newsmagazine, *Weekend Today* (1987–present) is one of four expansions of *Today* alongside *Early Today* (1999–present), *Today with Kathie Lee and Hoda* (2008–present), and *Sunday Today with Willie Geist* (2016–present). The longevity of these shows helps demonstrate the fortitude and flexibility of genre to adapt to changing culture, technology, and audience needs.

In particular, morning shows have stood the test of time. NBC’s *Today* (Leist & Mazzarelli, 1952) is the original morning show, but ABC’s *Good Morning America* (Corn, 1975) was founded in 1975 and is the current ratings winner. *CBS This Morning* (Miller, 2012) is the most recent entry at 2012, but the network has always had a morning program of some form since the late 1950s. Cultural critic Lee Sigel (2007) explored the broad and steady appeal of morning news shows across sixty years of broadcast television, ultimately arguing they operate “as close as most popular culture does to replacing the spiritual devotions of yore” (p. 219) by creating a morning ritual with the audience, with anchors often being one of the first voices a viewer will hear in their day. The anchors themselves are a carefully cast family; idealized, but simultaneously given an exaggerated flaw to make individual performers relatable and endearing to the audience, with an “orchestrated humility and rigged self-effacement” (p. 224). While

morning shows on cable do not typically cover the lifestyle and entertainment components of 'the big three,' they nevertheless stick to the basic formula, with shows like CNN's *New Day* (Morgado, 2013), Fox News's *Fox & Friends* (Hadden, 1998), and MSNBC's *Morning Joe* (Korson, 2007) strikingly familiar to their broadcast counterparts in casting, banter, and pace.

The morning television show has remained remarkably unchanged in the its 66-year history. While there have been some nods to modern times, like the inclusion of live audiences and more hard-hitting news pieces, this genre of television news all follows a highly predictable script. Stelter (2014) explains this is intentional, arguing morning television shows "have always seen themselves as being in the familiarity industry, and thus have historically been about as open to change as your average seventy-six-year-old Roman Catholic cardinal" (p. 13). What has changed, however, is the ability for those outside traditional broadcast media to experiment with formats, content, and delivery systems. Television and the experiences of those watching television, has radically changed in the last decade. Research needs to consider audiences, content providers, and delivery systems equally in order to best evaluate the impact of media today on culture and future content creation.

In September of 2017, BuzzFeed News launched their iteration of a morning show in collaboration with the social media platform Twitter, calling it *AM to DM* (Edelsburg, 2018). Sharing similarities with broadcast counterparts like *Today* or *Good Morning America*, *AM to DM* features affable hosts, news of the day, and celebrity interviews live five days a week. However, it sharply divides from the morning show format in distribution, content, casting, audience participation, a highly editorialized point

of view, and extensive use of social media (Ha, 2017). *AM to DM* represents one of the first disruptions of a sixty-year old format: a live, morning news television show produced by the news division of a website and aired exclusively on a separate social media platform.

The show is an example of how television media is evolving to center audience shaped content as the primary driver of the medium. This project examines the ways *AM to DM* breaks boundaries as a morning show while maintaining enough traditional elements to ensure audience recognition of its place within the genre. Examining these points of creativity and constraint will uncover dominant formats, casting, styles, themes, and tonality that morning shows use to fulfill what they perceive are audience needs while also encouraging favorable comparison against their competition. In evaluating how *AM to DM* challenges the limits of its format, this project seeks to find a new understanding of how modern television genres are disrupted and reimagined.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

The marriage of technology, media, and audience was long predicted by researchers of media convergence, who anticipated media consumption would be altered in fundamental and lasting ways including production, distribution, organizations, and practices (Erdal, 2007; Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins, 2006). While convergence culture is the overarching term for a complex range of processes (Erdal, 2007), recent research has begun building upon what is largely now considered the status quo. Polymediation "starts where convergence stops" (Herbig, Herrmann, & Tyma, 2014, p. xx). If convergence allowed us to understand how technology enabled the ability to send and receive multiple messages across multiple platforms (Jenkins, 2006), polymediation seeks to further our understanding of how audiences and producers of such messages are shaped by "their converged mediated moments" (Herbig et al., 2014, p. xx). The success of such convergence can be examined through the ways audiences are empowered to create discursive communities. These audiences are drawn to specific mediated formats in part by genre and can inform critics about larger truths in the culture they represent (Neale, 1990; Buozis & Creech, 2018). Buizis & Creech (2018) argue that in order to better understand the specifics of how "extant concerns can be traced through a changing journalistic product" (p. 1439), investigating genre becomes more vital as audiences fragment. This analysis will review the literature surrounding convergence culture, polymediation, and genre. Finally, it will then anticipate how these theoretical frameworks can best be utilized to analyze a how *AM to DM* creates a recognizable morning show experience while breaking from generic constraint.

1.1 Convergence Culture

Jenkins (2004) proposed convergence culture as a theory within the larger umbrella of media convergence to address a rapidly changing relationship between the many actors in a mediated environment. Jenkins argued media convergence goes far beyond an array of accessible technology products being available to a public, and instead is now changing cultural practices and the way markets, technology, audiences, and genres interact (Deuze, Bruns, & Neuberger, 2007; Erdal, 2007; Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). Cultural convergence not only examines the individual tools of convergence, but the use of such tools by content producers to create cultural texts that would not have been possible earlier. Further, this convergence has blurred the delineation between audience and content producer, giving agency to audiences to create while simultaneously allowing media entities to use amateur content and often commodify work from end users in a cycle of creation-commodification-creation (Deuze et al., 2007; Jenkins, 2004). As Jenkins (2004) reminds "convergence refers to a process, but not an endpoint" (p. 34). Yet while convergence culture is a necessary narrowing of media convergence, it fails to consider or seek the consequences of such a process on modern communication, whether interpersonal or cultural (Madianou & Miller, 2012).

Additionally, convergence culture seems to focus primarily on questions and conclusions about the media consumers, ignoring media institutions and the placement of such culture within a historical, capitalist framework (Hay & Couldry, 2011). An example is found in the work of Bratich (2011) who demonstrates how polemological popular culture expands convergence beyond "producer/consumer or fans/corporation" (p. 622). Polemological culture places popular culture within a "tradition of warfare" and

as a relationship between actors that is described as a "cat and mouse game with power that also produces innovation, creativity and invention" (p. 622). Jenkins (2006) demonstrates how the tradition of warfare becomes converged in an examination of the television show *Survivor* (Parsons, Burnett, & Probst, 2000). Producers of *Survivor* would routinely describe the online community of fans who collect and post spoilers from the show as spies, informants, and poachers who are undermining the very premise of *Survivor* – that fans will only know the winners/losers at specific times. As the show tightened efforts to hide eliminations from media outlets in an effort to stop spoilers, the fans who sought them had to become more creative in their search for results, becoming more spy-like and turning those who did leak spoilers into informants. The use of polemological rhetoric resulted in fostering a war-like culture.

Additionally, Ouellette and Wilson (2011) shine a light on how convergence culture can place undue burden on those who were expected to reap the largest benefit from modernized culture. They examined artifacts outside of the traditional fandoms that many convergence studies focused on, and instead looked at the "gendered templates for active citizenship" flourishing in this cultural landscape, like their case study of Dr. Phil's self-help franchise (p. 549). They conclude that these examples of cultural convergence do not enhance leisure time for women, but instead create more unpaid labor for a marginalized group already suffering under the expectations of the 'second shift' phenomenon:

> In other words, while the multi-platform Dr. Phil television program, website and publishing empire certainly encourages sustained, rigorous and devoted participation in convergence culture, its insertion into the 'fabric of our everyday

> lives' looks less like a 'richer media experience' than the 'women's work' upon which political regimes of privatization and personal responsibility depend. (p. 549)

Convergence culture does not happen because of technology; it happens through technology, a process enabled by the intersection of multiple technologies with multiple audiences as boundaries between media platforms become easier to cross (Erdal, 2007; Hutchinson, 2016; Jenkins, 2006). Understanding the consequences of this process is the necessary next step in understanding convergence.

1.2 Polymediation

While performing a comparative ethnography on Filipino and Caribbean transnational families, Madianou and Miller (2012) coined the term polymediation to describe how a vast amount of communication choices have transformed interpersonal communication (Renninger, 2014). Converged communication technologies have shifted the way we think of individual communication devices, from considering the constraints of one over another to instead weighing the social and moral consequences between those different media options. (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Further, the near ubiquitous adoption of smartphones in the last decade has forced users who might not have willingly adopted new mediated experiences to increase their media literacy and skillset (Livingstone, 2004; Madianou & Miller, 2012). The widespread use of smartphones lowered the barrier of cost and access for mediated experiences, allowing converged communication to flourish rather than be limited to a technologically privileged few.

Polymediation, then, is the modern, converged communication environment where every medium is defined by the way it relates or compares within the context of all

media and a piece of the integrated structure described by convergence (Levenshus, 2016; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Renninger, 2014). Users switch between different forms of media or combine various forms to achieve their purposes. Madianou & Miller (2012) tie polymedia to Strauss structuralism, explaining "Email is not simply email, it is defined relationally as also *not* a letter, *no*t a text message and *not* a conversation via webcam; which, in turn, is *not* a phone call" (p. 175). The technology selected has implications for how the communication is intended by the sender and interpreted by the receiver. In their 2014 study on cell phone etiquette Forgays, Hyman, and Schrieber found while almost all respondents accepted the use of text messaging as a standard way to maintain relationships, there was also an understanding that voice phone calls were reserved for communication considered most important to the sender or receiver. A phone call is therefore given value not only by the communication experience a voice call provides, but is also seen as a conscious rejection other communication options.

Herbig et al. (2014) have expanded the work of Madianou and Miller (2012) to adapt polymediation beyond interpersonal communication. The integrated structures present in our mediated communication experiences have eliminated barriers between media, allowing audiences to multi-task. An example of this is social viewing, where a television viewer can watch the program, tweet cast members of the show, communicate with other fans of the show via a closed Facebook group, and buy show merchandise from a third-party seller on Amazon, all at the same time (Choi, 2017; Lin, Sung, & Chen, 2016; Rubenking, 2016).

Michelle Calka (2012) describes the characteristics of polymedia in order to explore the relationship between "media, performer, and identity" in a media rich

environment. She describes four: Ubiquity, shape-shifting authorship, simultaneous fragmentation and merging of identity, and division/communality (p. 15).

Ubiquity is the pervasive nature of media and how we live in a world where media is nearly always accessible or present. This is furthered by multi-tasking multiple media sources simultaneously. This ubiquity is often noticed, but polymedia invites us to reflect on how it has changed our identities. Calka uses the example of smartphones, explaining that acknowledging the high rate of ownership is not as important as understanding the ways those smartphones have changed from a piece of technology into a part of a user's identity. Smartphones have "faded into the background and are "embedded into the environment" (p. 17), giving us instant access to almost any piece of information and also making us instantly accessible to others. The ubiquitous nature of technology has altered our perception of who we are and how we relate to the rest of world.

Shape-shifting authorship speaks to how the use/producer roles have morphed and confused in a polymediated environment. Calka offers the examples of memes, where the original producer of content could be anyone, but the act of turning a photo into a meme creates a new author. The sharing of the meme also becomes a production act, and so on. Calka argues "we create a co-authored digital reality online in much the same way that our identities are co-authored through communication with others" (p. 19). Consumers and creators have a relationship that often evolves past passive consumption as fandom is performed, content is shared, meanings are debated, social media is used, etc - all of which can be authored by either the original author or someone new, rejecting old ideas about authorship.

Polymediation also creates a paradox where identity performance is simultaneously fragmented and unified. A legacy of social interactionism, this paradox explains how our identities are constructed through polymediation. Calke explains that we have different, fragmented performances for different forms of media, but all of those performances are linked by being an interconnected part of a unified whole identity. Further, our online personas can allow us to explore new aspects of ourselves, because as Calke describes, "we perform facework in mediated contexts" (p. 26). She uses the example of identity play, where users purposely present themselves as different ages, genders, or ethnicities. Social media allows us to perform facework by amplifying our desired traits and downplaying others, creating ourselves for a specific audience. Users may maintain multiple faceworks at once depending on the type of social media or online space, but "the polymediated self exists and shifts through media" (p. 25). Polymediation argues we construct fragments of identity in mediated ways, but they are always part of unified whole.

Finally, this division/unification of self has implications for culture, leading to the last aspect of polymediation as described by Calke. Division and Communality describes the two differing results of polymediation. First, we can be divided by the sheer number of potential communities in which to join or explore in mediated contexts. The rise of filter bubbles, confirmation bias, and online echo chambers create spaces where individuals are no longer exposed to contradictory thought and demonstrates how online communities can seek to keep us further apart and isolate individuals. Simultaneously, however, a polymediated world leads to connection and community, such as the rise of hashtag culture, Facebook groups, support groups, online fandoms, etc. to find and form

webs of personal relationships not previously possible. Communities can be constituted in new ways within polymedia, sometimes unifying and sometimes isolating, continuously.

The modern communication environment is simultaneously global and fragmented, textual and visual, specialized and mass-produced (Herbig, et al., 2014). Polymediation reflects those contradictions by describing process and product of media producers, who in this converged environment, can be anyone. Because this describes phenomenon that can be both a discursive entry point and a discursive structure, it is an adaptable method to examine complex and shifting modern media and modern audiences. This is especially necessary considering a piece of media, whether a single news story, video game, podcast, television show, or blog post, can be commented on, replied to, shared, re-posted, and so on for as long as there is an internet (Hermann & Herbig, 2018).

The 'poly' in the polymediation should not only indicate the multitude of types of media now accessible to a majority of Americans, but the variety of interactions possible because of them and the variety of connections made through them (Herrmann & Herbig, 2018; Herbig, et al., 2014). Most importantly, polymedia is concerned with the meaning and consequences of these types of communication and is not merely descriptive of processes. If it is describing any one piece of communication, it is the creation of possibilities for connections beyond any that technology could previously offer.

1.3 Genre

Genre is often linked to a group of things. Harrell and Linkugel (1978) describes that genre "stems from organizing principles found in recurring situations that generate discourse characterized by a family of common factors" (p. 263-264). John Murphy

(2003) writes that genre "means type or sort" (p. 608) before arguing the more common a genre is, the more it must be meeting a societal need. He notes critics are drawn to examine community needs and the rhetorical means used to "achieve those needs, the way form follows function" (p. 607). Regularly used genres can be seen as a "task that regularly needs doing" (p. 607) such as religious sermons. However, this taxonomic view of genre limits the role of genre studies to mere comparison (Kornfield, 2012). It can often be tempting for critics to fall back on this definition for forms like television, which seem to naturally appeal to the modes of criticism that compare and contrast (Kornfield, 2012).

Helping to steer rhetoric away from those definitions, Campbell and Jamieson's seminal work *Form and Genre, Shaping Rhetorical Action* (1978) traces the shifting definitions of genre from the classical understandings to modern generic criticism. They tie genre to form, noting that it is the recurrence of forms that make a genre, which they define as "groups of discourses which share substantive, stylistic, and situational characteristics" (p. 16). Further, these characteristics must be recognizable in form - working together in what the authors describe as a constellation. Otherwise, they argue, disparate texts could be misidentified as part of the same genre. They use the example of dogmatic rhetoric, which can only be structured in a deductive manner. If dogmatic rhetoric is structured inductively, it could have the same components but lose the stylistic characteristics that make it dogmatic, taking it out of the genre.

Carolyn Miller (1985) calls for genre to be understood as a cultural artifact, contributing to how a culture is constituted. Borrowing from Raymond Williams's second definition of culture as a particular way of life whether people, period, or group (Storey,

2015), Miller proposes that like an archeologist, a critic should examine a genre as only being able to exist in a specific culture. She observes that the discourse from courtrooms in ancient Greece and the modern United States is radically different not just because of what the discourse contains, but because of the cultures containing the discourse, writing "these cultures are related, and although they comprise many similar social functions, they are far from the same, at both micro and the macro-levels" (p. 69). Miller's work is a reminder that a genre cannot be removed from the culture that produced the text.

Recognizing the debate surrounding the usefulness of genre studies among rhetorical scholars, Joshua Gunn and Thomas Frenz (2008) argue that the dislike of generic criticism typically falls into two camps, those who believe the critiques are formulaic and those who believe they are obvious to the point of uselessness. In the first camp, Mark Jancovich (2010) rejects the turn towards a culturally constructed understanding of genre in film studies, arguing this reliance on what can be a debatable topic between various audiences that moves the field too far away from "the idealized essence" (p. 25) of a specific film genre. The second camp contains primarily traditional rhetoricians, like John Patton (1976), who argue that the purpose of rhetorical criticism is "to create as complete an understanding as possible about the intentional use of language to influence audiences" (p. 5) and rejects generic criticism as simply creating "classification with no clarification" (p. 4). These contentions seem to point to a problem in how generic criticism is conducted rather than its potential. Criticism's depth and ability to provide an understanding of a text is an issue of execution, not methodology. All criticism must classify and consider the cultural situation of an artifact, but it is not an endpoint. Generic criticism that stops at these points is incomplete.

Gunn and Frentz (2008) assert generic criticism must begin by recognizing that genre is defined not by the intentions of a single text, but instead by the "recognition of patterns that inhere… in the minds of a given public or audience" (p. 216). Audiences have been trained by past texts to recognize patterns, making genre the physical process of mental recognition in response to a text. Generic criticism must acknowledge these physical characteristics while simultaneously seeking the methods used by the creator of a text to call upon those patterns in audience minds.

Gunn and Frentz have further that since culture industries produce mostly formulaic generic texts, the more commercial a genre is, the more recognizable it becomes for audiences being cued. Therefore, they assert disruptions to rigid genres are a rich and compelling place for genre critics:

> Generic criticism is the most interesting and insightful, then, when a fairly rigid and ossified (if not commercialized) genre is expanded, extended, hybridized, or modified in some way - when precisely those formulas and taxonomies decried by the critics of generic criticisms are exploded. We submit that generic innovations in popular culture are indices of emerging forms and transformations in the popular imagination that merit closer scrutiny. (p. 216)

When being developed in the 1960s and 1970s, television studies also relied on a taxonomic view genre to classify television programming into understandable and strict categories like westerns, game shows, detective stories, soap operas, etc (Edgerton and Rose, 2008). Television critic Horace Newcomb wrote several books identifying genre and the recurring patterns contained in them, the first being *TV: The Most Popular Art* (1974) where he categorized shows under 7 labels: Situation and Domestic Comedies,

Westerns, Mysteries, Doctors and Lawyers, Adventure Shows, Soap Operas, and News/Sports/Documentaries.

By the 1980s however, critical-cultural theory had forced scholars to look beyond classification and begin to consider context surrounding an individual television show. Edgerton and Rose (2008) note "television scholars began asking what the proper unit of analysis was for analyzing a television content. Was it genre? Or was it an episode, several programs, a series, a full network schedule?" (p. 4) Critical-cultural views eventually led scholarship away from thinking of genre as a fixed entity and towards understanding genre as a process by creator and audience (Kornfeld, 2012). Helping to encourage this line of study, television began experimenting with borrowing components of several genres to enhance the primary genre of a show. Todd Gitlin (1983) labeled it recombinant television, using the example of the 1980s hit *Hill Street Blues* (Bochco, 1981), which was a cop show that used documentary style camerawork, had soap opera style relationship plotting, and used occasional sitcom humor. Gitlin anticipated, rightly, recombinant television would only grow.

The digital age brings a new set of questions to the forefront of television studies, beginning with whether genre still matters when examining a television landscape where shows seem to intentionally resist simple categorization. Jason Mittell (2004) argues genres do still matter as "cultural categories, discursive practices of definition, interpretation, and evaluation of constituting generic clusters," industrial strategies, sites of audience practices, text creation, and more (p. 188). Whereas in the 1980s cable television expansion had seemed to do the genre work for an audience (the selections on Comedy Central, SoapNet, and SciFi Network, among others, were not difficult to parse),

digital forms of television abandon typical audience cues of genre like episode run time or a slot in the 'family hour.' Genre studies are now called upon to analyze multiple layers of context. Only then can generic criticism hope to understand the role of genre, genre clusters, emerging genre, and genre disruption contribute to the ways we create, consume, and are culturally impacted by television.

The three theoretical frameworks of convergence culture, polymediation, and genre all speak to how technology has impacted cultural communication. *AM to DM* could not exist without convergence, is constructed to encourage a polymediated experience for its viewers, and intentionally disrupts an established popular genre. These theories lay a foundation for a closer examination of the text.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Critical Rhetoric

After establishing a theoretical framework that informs the analysis of modern media texts, it is necessary to define how the proposed study will be conducted. This study of a new media text calls for the engagement of the larger theoretical body of knowledge related to critical rhetoric.

A primary role of rhetorical criticism is to expose and decipher constructions of power. Critical rhetoric is polysemic, or conducted under the assumptions that there are multiple ways to read a text (McKerrow, 2009). Critics can, and should, use various readings to best understand how different audiences interpret texts differently. Further, critics should study the rhetoric in use to understand or anticipate various interpretations. Vande Berg (1999) emphasizes "not all audiences receive the same message" (p. 75) and Sloop (2004) argues critical rhetoric "as concerned with public understanding about these objects" (p. 18).

Vande Berg (1999) reminds critics working with media texts are obligated to track the "circulation, legitimation, and naturalization of" the resulting discourse and how such discourse either upholds or exposes ideology (p. 74). McGee (1990) notes that the tracking of media texts can be best illuminated through analyzing what he calls 'fragments':

> Rhetors make discourses from scraps and pieces of evidence. Critical rhetoric does not begin with a finished text in need of interpretation; rather, texts are understood to be larger than the apparently finished discourse that presents itself as transparent. The apparently finished discourse is in fact a dense reconstruction

> of all the other bits of discourses from which it was made. It is fashioned from what we call fragments (p. 279).

When examining a text like *AM to DM*, which is available at any time, to any one, and encourages the sharing of clips through social media as well as continually maintaining contact with audience members through social media, the analysis of fragments as part of a whole text is necessary. McGee (1990) offers that the text is best understood through fragments when the critic looks for three structural relationships during readings: between discourse and its sources, between discourse and culture, and between discourse and its influence (p. 280).

The structural relationship between discourse and its sources is best examined by revealing how the inevitably truncated or condensed discourse was arrived at by the text or its authors. With mediated texts, this requires an understanding of form, content creation, and the methods content creators use to produce their work.

The structural relationship between discourse and culture is best analyzed as the intersection between doxa, or conventional wisdom, and empowerment. How discourse is used to constrain, demystify, or affirm conventional wisdom allows for the text to be interpreted through the lens of impact on an audience. For a mediated text, this asks for an understanding of how a text reinforces cultural norms, challenges or affirms the status quo, and its overall impact on the culture at large.

The structural relationship between discourse and its influence is what McGee (1990) argues "calls attention to the fundamental interconnectedness of all discourse" (p. 281). Feedback between audience and the text is necessary to analyze and the critic must prioritize the understanding of how a text can influence belief, attitude, and substance. To

avoid dismissing relevant fragments, context must be considered. If context is not explored, the critic is not analyzing the text as it appears in the world and cannot understand the discourse surrounding the text (McGee, 1990).

Jasinski (2001) offers a method of analysis for cultural critics who are not anticipating developing new concepts or theory, but rather are interested in ways texts and artifacts impact specific discourse, genre, or cultural markers. This type of analysis allows a critic to "speak to issues in contemporary social thought" (p. 256). Rather than rely solely on deductive processes, the focus of most methodologically driven criticism, Jasinski advocates for abduction, or a "back and forth tacking movement between text and the concept or concepts that are being investigated simultaneously" (p. 256). A critic will first, start with an interest in a genre or type of discourse. This interest will lead into encountering texts, deciding what text or texts to use as a representative of the genre or discourse. The critic can then use theory to organize the analysis of the texts and apply critical discourse analysis to the relationships found in and around the texts. The critic is free to move between stages - finding theory, organizing analysis, and applying critical discourse - until research is complete. Because the critic's understanding of the object of study grows as research is conducted, various reading strategies should not be "organized in any priori fashion, nor is their validation an important issue for any critic" (p. 256). The ability to refine and move between text and theory as research is conducted is a modern critical approach for textual analysis. This conceptually oriented criticism encourages the use of critical practices that are ideal for a scholar's purpose.

To demonstrate, Jasinksi compares two scholars' analyses, Burgchardt's examination of La Follette and Robert Hariman's analysis of Kapuscinski's book *The*

Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat. While both researchers present a similar organizing set of concepts, they split in the application of those concepts. Burgchardt deploys a traditional perspective, hoping to find a new concept that can then be applied by other rhetorical critics. Hariman ignores the discovery of new methods and his essay does not contain specific critical procedures. Rather, he focuses on the phenomenon he was interested in (in this case, power) before "unpack[ing] central terms within the rhetorical tradition in a way that allows them to speak to issues in contemporary social thought" (p. 255-256). The critic uses abduction to go back and forth between the concepts being focused upon and the object, with understanding increasing over time.

Writing about cultural approaches to studying television genre, Mittle (2001) argues television has a unique set of industry practices, audiences, and genres that cannot be adequately understood through the lens of film or literature genre theory. For example, Mittle analyzes early Michael Jackson videos, finding them at the intersection of multiple discourses and cultural practices including the music industry, race hierarchies in music, Jackson as a celebrity, MTV's policies, and technology. He argues that discovering these multiple elements to the music video genre could only be done by studying case studies of a music video and then working outward. He proposes five principles of cultural genre analysis that each urge research to work with "detailed specificity, not overarching generalities, in exploring media genres" (p. 16). Included in these suggestions is an approach that narrows deeply into a single textual instance to analyze "how genre process operate within this specific instance" (p. 17). This type of analysis can allow a textual instance to better illuminate a genre at work.

2.2 Text for Analysis

By 2011, BuzzFeed was a five-year-old commercially successful creator of viral content known for its listicles, quizzes, and prodigious use of emojis. While the website carried some current news, those stories were largely aggregated from other sources and not original reporting (Tsotsis, 2012). This changed when BuzzFeed hired Ben Smith as editor-in-chief in December of 2011 (Garber, 2011; Lefance, 2012). The former Politico and Daily News reporter is a well-respected political journalist and the news of his decision to join BuzzFeed surprised the media establishment (Stelter, 2011). Smith's hiring sent a clear signal that BuzzFeed was serious about becoming a professional news organization (Garber, 2011; Tandoc, 2017). In the years since, BuzzFeed News has hired over 400 editorial staff and reporters worldwide and established multiple news beats including breaking news, culture, LGBTQ, narrative journalism, a Washington D.C. bureau, business, technology, and overseas bureaus for international news (Reider, 2015; Tandoc, 2017). This investment has led to over 200 million unique visitors to BuzzFeed News per month (Molla, 2017; Tandoc, 2017). Of the top five visited news websites in the United States, BuzzFeed News is the sole digital-only organization, behind only CNN, The New York Times, Fox News, and the Washington Post (Molla, 2017).

Shani Hilton, BuzzFeed News vice president of news and programming, helped develop *AM to DM*. In partnership with Twitter, her team reversed engineered the development process - instead of asking how to put a morning show on Twitter, they sought to understand how the audience already used Twitter and created a morning show designed for the potential viewers. (McAteer, 2018). What they discovered was that the millennials they were aiming for already knew the major morning headlines because they

were logging into social media to start their day. So instead, the show aims for depth and conversation about those stories. Hilton explains "We created AM to DM as a more immediate alternative to the traditional morning show. We're not just wallpaper in the background or talking heads repetitively delivering headlines of the day. Our goal is to take note of what people are talking about, including while the show is on, and address them directly in a smart way" (McAteer, 2018).

Practically, this means the show content is developed to reflect 'the timeline.' When a user logs into Twitter, the default timeline is the stream of tweets they see. This includes everyone the user follows, sponsored/promoted tweets, 'Top Tweets' based on who a user engages with most, and a summary of tweets that Twitter gathers based on user interests labeled 'in case you missed it.' There is also a spot to see what is 'trending' (i.e. most discussed) in the user's country of origin. The timeline is, essentially, a snapshot of the millions of conversations happening simultaneously throughout Twitter. By looking at which tweets are getting retweeted the most, the trending topics, the most popular hashtags, etc, BuzzFeed News is able to tell which topics are most salient to Twitter users that day. Show content can then be shaped around those topics.

AM to DM is led by hosts Saeed Jones and Isaac Fitzgerald. Both are men and both are writers, a combination that is far from typical for on-air hosting (Porch, 2019). Jones, 33, is a gay black poet whose debut collection was a Pushcart Prize winner. He joined BuzzFeed News in 2012 as a culture writer and became their first editor for the LGBTQ desk before establishing the Emerging Writers Program at BuzzFeed. Fitzgerald,

36, is a fiction and essay writer. He worked at literary sites Rumpus and McSweeney's before becoming the founding editor of BuzzFeed Books.

Their backgrounds are of note for several reasons. First, they match the demographic *AM to DM* is aiming for - technically engaged, diverse, millennial professionals. Second, neither had any previous on-air experience, an intentional casting choice by BuzzFeed News, who wanted to put their diverse writers at the forefront of the show. For example, an September 6, 2018 discussion about the financial struggles of millennial women was led by writer Stephanie McNeal (*AM to DM*, McNeal, 2018) and the topic of a growing movement of black survivalists on September 10, 2018 was led by black culture editor Bim Adewunmi (*AM to DM,* Adewunmi, 2018). A Ramadan segment on May 16, 2018 featured BuzzFeed investigative journalist and practicing Muslim Ahmed Ali Akbar (*AM to DM*, Akbar, 2018). The polished, professional nature of traditional morning show hosts is abandoned in favor of on-air talent who are demographically tied to the story and, unlike their broadcast counterparts rising up to their positions through news division ranks, never intended to be in front of a television camera.

Rather than an over-the-shoulder chyron and reporting by a host, segments on topics of the day are typically explored with a live interview of a writer who has written a story about that topic. For example, a story on the ongoing Robert Mueller investigation will begin with Jones or Fitzgerald reading a tweet to establish the current trending conversation on Twitter, then they will introduce a BuzzFeed political writer who appears via a large screen. Jones and Fitzgerald ask questions of the writer as an expert on the topic. Both of the hosts have their phones with them through the entire broadcast and

check them frequently, meaning that if an audience member asks a question they believe is pertinent, the hosts will use it in the interview immediately. Finally, when the segment is done, Jones and Fitzgerald will ask audience members to engage about the topic and continue the conversation in the timeline - using the *AM to DM* hashtag.

Some of the regular segments include Live From the District with the BuzzFeed News White House correspondent, The Sit-Down interview with a celebrity guest, a reading of four or five tweets by non-celebrities that have captured the timeline's attention called Fire Tweets, an advice segment by Jones called Dear Ferocity, and more. Some segments are done daily, but others disappear and reappear as needed. Each show ends with a segment called @us, where the hosts read interesting tweets that have appeared from audience members during the show.

When renewing *AM to DM* for 2019, BuzzFeed and Twitter revealed that the show averages around 400,000 live views daily. For the year 2018, *AM to DM* reported 101 million Twitter impressions with an average of three million tweet impressions each week. Further, the show has sold large ad packages to companies like Bank of America and Wendy's, making it profitable (Spangler, 2019a). Part of this success has been credited to the format. Jones explains in an interview "Oftentimes, [*AM to DM*] is going to be that show [i.e. morning television] with the sets and the guests. But what else can happen in that space? It's having that agility. News is wild. As we continue to grow and as we become more agile as a crew, that's going to be interesting to see where that flexibility goes" (Katzowitz, 2018).

The first episode of *Today* on NBC aired on January 14, 1952 live from their news studio in Rockefeller Center. The host, Dave Garroway, began by rising from his

anchor desk to explain "I really believe [*Today*] begins a new kind of television... We will try to put you more closely in touch with the world we live in via this magnificent, unparalleled means of communication…" (*Today*, 2014). Just 2 miles away and sixty-five years later, *AM to DM* offered the same promise to their viewers. Technology, audience, social media, and BuzzFeed News have all come together to attempt to put us more closely in touch with the world we live in now, by taking the familiar and making it new.

CHAPTER 3: MORNING TELEVISION

Before 1952, the American morning belonged to radio and newspapers. Newspaper circulation grew steadily alongside the post-World War II population with 1952 penetration statistics at 123%, meaning the average American household at the time purchased 1.23 daily newspapers as compared to just 37.3% in 2010 (Thorton, 2016). Radio held a similar strong grip on the average home. The Golden Age of Radio, typically considered a span of about 30 years beginning in the 1920s, included a template of scripted programming that formed the basis of television formats like soap operas, dramas, children's shows, and news. Radio networks had morning shows designed to be consumed by families getting ready for the day, collectively and appropriately known as Breakfast Shows. Programs like *The Breakfast Club* (McNeill, 1933), *Breakfast in Hollywood* (also called *Breakfast at Sardi's*) (Breneman, 1941), *Breakfast with Binnie and Mike* (Frankovitch, 1946), *Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick* (Kilgallen & Kollmar, 1945) *The Tex and Jinx Show* (Falkenburg, J. & McCrary, T.), and *Wake-up Ranch* (Stone, 1949) featured variety-style formats that included issues of the day, entertainment, music, and personality along with bulletin style news or debate about current events ("Good Morning!," 2019).

While half of American homes had a television set by 1950 (Bray, 2012), networks did not yet imagine a 24-hour schedule or, for that matter, an eight hour schedule. With extremely limited programming, huge chunks of the day were left to either empty air or for local stations to program independently. ABC began their schedule at 5:00 p.m., CBS at 1:30 p.m., NBC at 3:00 p.m., and DMN beginning at 10:30 a.m. (Walker & Ferguson, 1998) DMN, or the DuMont Television Network, was an early

competitor in television. Owned by television manufacturer DuMont Laboratories, the network was shuttered by 1956 as it fell victim to FCC regulations that hindered growth in comparison to rivals who began as radio broadcasters.

Like most television executives of the time, Sylvester "Pat" Weaver began in radio and advertising before being hired by NBC in 1949. Almost immediately, Weaver began formulating a morning show he was then calling *The Rise and Shine Morning Revue* (Television Academy Foundation, n.d.). Based on his experience with radio and despite the conventional wisdom of the time, Weaver believed there was a massive audience listening to Breakfast Shows that could, with the right program, be lured to turn on the television (Londino, 2017). Realizing that the evening news bulletin of the time was only 15 minutes long, Weaver's concept was to include entertainment alongside news in a tightly designed and repeating collection of segments that could be played over two hours. Since local stations would have to spend considerable amounts of money in overhead to air the then unheard of ten hours a week, Weaver also reached into his advertising background to satisfy station owners. Rather than try to get a single sponsor for a broadcast, he created a model where the show would sell many advertisements, local for the specific station and national for NBC. This advertising framework, created solely to convince stations to air *Today*, eventually became the industry standard (Londino, 2017).

For the first 25 years on air, *Today* faced only sporadic and easily defeated competition for viewers. As such, the show was able to cement attributes of the morning show genre that still exist today (pun intended, regretfully). First among these generic traits is casting. Morning shows traditionally cast 'families.' This includes a father/host

who is wise, attractive, and in charge; a mother/host who is attractive, comforting, and charming; what Weaver referred to as a 'second banana' to the hosts, typically the newsreader on the show; and a wacky Uncle/weather or entertainment reporter who is personality driven and allowed to be non-traditional looking or older (Sigel, 2007; Stelter, 2013; Londino, 2017). Once assembled, the cast must endear themselves to the audience as what Sigel argues is "an extended family for the millions of people who watch them every morning; nothing less" (p. 220). To do so, these highly trained and typically very wealthy professionals often lean heavily into an 'every person' persona, performing humility and geniality (Stelter, 2013). This relationship with the audience is vital, because as television critic Margaret Lyons (Lyons & Poniewozik, 2017) points out "morning TV lives and dies by its perceived intimacy" (para. 6).

This intimacy with the audience is often tested when hosts depart morning shows or new hosts are brought in. Typically, regardless of reasons behind the scenes, shows offer the host the opportunity to exit gracefully (Stelter, 2013). The format gives a built-in excuse for such departures, as the schedule is generally acknowledged to be physically and mentally brutal on cast members. Hosts over the years from Dave Garroway in 1961 to Joan Lunden in 1997 claimed they were leaving to better parent their children, a reasoning that fits neatly into the idea of being a good family member. *Today* has notoriously bungled two separate departures, Jane Pauley in 1989 and Ann Curry in 2012. Both instances were covered extensively in media where sympathies were aimed at the hosts. Pauley believed she was being nudged aside in favor of up-and-coming Deborah Norville, bringing to mind a first wife being replaced by a younger model (Carter, 1989). Curry, in the job only for a year at the time of her ouster, had been blamed

for falling ratings and a lack of chemistry with host Matt Lauer. Infamously, executive producer Jim Bell launched what he called "Operation Bambi" to force Curry to agree to a demotion (Stelter, 2012), leading to a tearful on-air goodbye that generated extensive goodwill towards the departing host. Stelter (2013) explains "things often turn out poorly when male television executives play chess with female personalities… on the set of a show that three million female viewers think of as theirs" (p. 7).

In a period of two weeks in 2017, two morning shows lost their 'father figure' as CBS's Charlie Rose and NBC's Matt Lauer were both fired due to sexual misconduct. Even within the larger Me Too movement these firings were shocking because of the role each man played in their public life. Poniewozik (Lyons & Poniewozik, 2017) describes how this has altered the relationship audiences have with their television 'family':

> By design, [morning TV hosting] involves a kind of connection with the home viewer, even if an artificial one. You bring people into your home for years, you feel as if you know them, though of course you don't. Here, millions of people were suddenly told — twice — that this electronic, faux relationship was over. (para 5)

Poniewozik goes on to argue the firings proved the traditional host split of a "mom and dad" should be challenged as morning shows reconfigure themselves for a newly aware audience.

Today's format also became a defining trait of the morning television genre. Wieten and Pantti (2005) explain morning shows were the first television format invented to be audience tailored, because they were attempting to fold into an average American

morning. Metz (1977) explains Weaver's primary vision in 1952 was "radio with pictures" which he outlined in a memorandum to the production staff:

> We cannot and should not try to build a show that will make people sit down in front of their sets and divert their attention to the screen. We want Americans to shave, to eat to dress, to get to work on time. But we also want Americans to be well informed, to be amused, to be lightened in spirit and in heart, and to be reinforced in inner resolution through knowledge. (p. 25)

Morning shows are constructed modularly. While they have often grown in length over the years, the typical broadcast is made of blocks of a half hour of programming within a larger hour block, within a larger two-hour show. Over time, *Today* established four half hours, with the first and third half hours allowing 5:45 minutes to the local affiliate. Considering each half hour gave news, weather, and sports, this schedule meant the first and third half hour allowed for about 10 minutes of segments and the second and fourth half hour gave nearly fifteen minutes for segments.

These modules make creating a sense of flow during the duration of a daily program a difficult task. The schedule is fast-paced and hosts must weave from segment to commercial and back again with practiced ease. Like radio, the program also has to be energetic enough to maintain audience attention and occasionally pull their focus back to the television. In studying episodes of *Good Morning, America*, researcher Jan Feuer (1980) focuses on how flow is created by a host within an extremely fragmented design:

> But it is not so much the variety of content that distinguishes the Good Morning, America format; it is rather the extreme spatial fragmentation which characterizes the form of the show, regardless of the content on any given day. Analysis of the

> flow of the program I studied reveals constant alternation of media (live, film, video) and of locale. Yet all this is unified by the presence of David Hartman… The show is obsessed with its own liveness, as symbolized by the logo with the time and upcoming segment in a box. David acts as custodian of flow and regularity, the personification of a force which creates unity out of fragmentation. (p.17)

The phrase "unity out of fragmentation" highlights how the modern iteration of morning shows remains true to Weaver's original intention. The genre established an easy-to-follow pattern that could, and did, become ritualistic for the viewer even if they were only listening to the program while getting ready for work or school. As Douglas Kellner (1982) argued, when a genre becomes more familiar to an audience, the act of watching television shows repetitively evolves into an "industrial religion" where morning show viewing creates participation in "a shared activity which affirms the value of TV as a window to the world" (p. 143). Like Catholics instinctively knowing when to sit, stand, or kneel during mass, the morning show viewer knows when to make sure they can hear the television in time for the weather report, even if they are only half listening. The show has trained the viewer in their participation.

Raymond Williams (1974) reminds the ability for a television program to plan flow is "perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form" (p. 86). The individual frames, the cuts made between different cameras, the move from set to set, and so on are all forms of technology working in seamless coordination, literally flowing from one moment to the next. Further, Williams argues the formerly isolated event, like a play or sports game, becomes

part of the flow when packaged for broadcast. While "a broadcasting programme… is still formally a series of timed units" including commercials, previews for later shows, and station identification, television is a "sequence transformed by the inclusion of another kind of sequence, so that these sequences together compose the real flow, the real 'broadcasting'" (p. 90-91). The morning show is the morning show because all of the individual segments work in concert, a planned flow.

The model also makes viewers dependent on the show to be a guide for what to feel about the coming day. Rather than discovering what the day is like on their own, viewers can have familiar hosts tell them what is coming and how they should be expected to exist within the world. If Charlie Gibson was joking and jovial with Joan Lunden on the set of *Good Morning, America*, the viewer would know the news of the day, while possibly serious, was not tragic. The reverse is also true. The attacks on September 11, 2001 began during the morning shows fourth half hour in EST, meaning that the initial coverage on the three major broadcast networks was done by their morning show hosts. At the time the first hijacked plane struck the north tower of the World Trade Center, news organizations did not know if it was an airline accident or something else. In the course of less than an hour, audiences were emotionally cued as hosts went from their normal human-interest segments of the 8:45 a.m. block (Matt Lauer was interviewing the author of a new biography of Howard Hughes) to calmly explaining the breaking news report of the plane crash to more urgently revealing a terrorist attack had been carried out on U.S. soil (JFK1963NEWSVIDEOS, 2016).

The flexibility inherent in this format gave the freedom for morning television to experiment and adapt, traits that allowed the form to stay relevant over decades and into a

new millennium. The blocks allotted for segments covering human interest, features, analysis, lifestyle, and culture were easily shifted, eliminated, or replaced with other content. In the first ten years of *Today*, hundreds of segments were attempted. As Sigel (2007) notes "morning shows exist on several levels: they are news; they are information; they are (even when they are news and information) entertainment" (p. 219). Which means they can try, and have tried, almost anything. Londino (2017) details how the first decade of *Today* was an ongoing experiment by exploring some of the more unusual segments during the 1955-56 season: Most Wanted Criminals hosted by FBI officials, a monthly series on housing problems focusing on slums, JOBS 1956 highlighted job opportunities for high school graduates, and Finders Keepers, where a glove stuffed with a hundred dollar bill would be dropped on a street in NYC and observed to see who would pick it up. While none of these segments survived more than a few weeks, they demonstrate how easily morning shows can adapt to perceived audience needs. The module format is endlessly re-configurable.

In fact, the only permanent aspect of a morning show is the news coverage. It may not be wise for broadcast networks to get rid of sports and weather, but it is still possible. Morning shows are, however, operated by the news divisions of the networks. This was not always the case; despite prioritizing current events and breaking news, *Today* began as its own entity and was hosted by entertainer Dave Garroway. This independence at the network also explains early choices like J. Fred Muggs, a baby chimpanzee dressed as a child who was the show mascot for several years. Muggs was wildly popular, much to the dismay of Garroway who suffered multiple bites from the animal, and actual news reporters like Jim Fleming who quit upon being asked to share the stage with the primate

(Lodino, 2107). Muggs's stardom eventually led the network to add the occasional drop-in from his "girlfriend" Phoebe B. Beebe, a female chimpanzee. After leaving the show in 1957, Muggs and Beebe performed together in various acts until their retirement. As of 2018, they still live together with the son of their original trainer (Rennie, 2018).

When Garroway resigned in 1961, the show was folded into the news division and hosts were selected from journalist pools. However, even with the primary objective being a news show, the time of day these programs are aired defines how the news must be covered. Steve Friedman, a veteran executive producer of *Today, Good Morning, America,* and *The Early Show* argues the format must accomplish three objectives simultaneously: telling the audience what news has happened since they went to sleep, giving insight into things people need to know for daily life (i.e. lifestyle, culture, health, economic segments), and providing viewers with something to talk about or smile about during their day (Wieten & Pantti, 2005).

Another factor that adds to the longevity of the morning show genre is that it is both live and linear. At the start *Today* was live out of necessity; almost all television was live in the beginning of the medium. However, *Today* did experiment with taping shows in the early years, to lower ratings and sometimes cringeworthy snafus. For nearly two years, from September 1959 to July 1961, the show was taped in the afternoons for the next morning's broadcast. Frank Blair, the newsreader of the time, was recorded separately in the morning so the news would be up to the minute. The flaw in this plan was exposed when Dave Garroway gave an on-air impassioned defense of Charles Van Doren, an occasional guest of *Today* who had been accused of helping to rig quiz shows. Embarrassingly, Garroway's defense aired the morning after Van Doren had publicly

confessed to the crime (Londino, 2017). The incident reinforced that airing live was not only an important characteristic of the show, but that live programming was a vital component to ensure the morning show had timeliness and credibility.

In today's media landscape, live broadcasts still hold audience appeal and have been credited with helping to keep morning shows popular. Michael Corn, executive producer of *Good Morning, America* argued "the format can still draw sizable audiences in a crowded media landscape" because live broadcasts are inherently advantaged over taped performances and streaming devices can now handle live shows with little interruption (Battaglio, 2018). Simply, they feel more important because they are chronologically first (Wieten & Pantti, 2005). The feeling of a live show creates a sense of urgency in audiences that does not exist for taped broadcasts and feels fresh in an age of overproduced television (de Moraes, 2014). While morning shows emphasized their live status by developing more outdoor sets and segments beginning in the 1990s, shows are now emphasizing interactivity with social media to connect with audiences (de Moraes, 2014).

The linear nature of morning television is also an important part of its continued success. Linear television, or television that is watched as scheduled as opposed to on-demand, is still the dominant form of TV watching even as streaming and on-demand services grow in popularity (Lafayette, 2018). Additionally, most television viewers are older, ranging from 36 years old to 65 years old and use television in a habitual and ritualistic manner (Maheshwari & Koblin, 2018). Morning shows face some of the least direct competition from streaming services, who's daily shows are designed to be consumed on demand, like DC Universe's *DC Daily* (Lorigo, 2018) or the twice-daily

Cheddar Politics show on Hulu (Lenzo, 2018). The content, while about current events, is not inherently tied an ideal time slot. Morning shows, on the other hand, align linear and live television to be consumed while it's aired.

Morning shows remain extremely popular and profitable for the broadcast networks. For 2018, the overall average ratings were *Good Morning, America* at 4.15 million viewers, *Today* at 4.07 million viewers, and *CBS This Morning* at 3.31 million viewers - considered impressive for broadcast shows in this era of massive television choice (Battaglio, 2018). Part of the reason for this success has been tested genre traits that stood the test of time, but also of the genre's ability to discard what doesn't work and try something new. The 1950s *Today* attributes that would seem completely odd to a modern audience, like J. Fred Muggs, Dave Garroway making a phone call to a reporter in Germany to see if there was any international news of note, or "the *Today* girl" of the week coming on to speak about a new trend in glove fashion - those segments were slowly replaced. The monkey bit evolved into a goofy entertainment reporter with a giant mustache named Gene Shalit, who always made the hosts laugh. The international call to reporters gave way to live reporting from anywhere in the world, allowing *Today* to cover everything from the fall of President Nixon to the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Wall Street crash of 2008. The parade of *Today* girls ended with the hiring of a young journalist named Barbara Walters, who eventually became an official co-host and paved the way for Savannah Guthrie and Hoda Kotb, the women who now lead the show as co-anchors.

Morning television can be many things at once, in fact, it must be. It is news, entertainment, a simultaneous reflection and influencer of our culture. As Pat Weaver

imagined, it is, for millions of Americans who grew up starting their day by turning on the television, a of the family.

CHAPTER 4: *AM TO DM*

On March 21, 2019 former *Today* host Katie Couric was perched comfortably on a morning show couch, this time as a guest (*AM to DM*, Mack, 2019). Couric appeared on *AM to DM* to promote her involvement with the 3M State of the Science Index, an annual report on how Americans feel about science. She was interviewed by contributor David Mack, who eventually steered the conversation to current events:

> Mack: You are a media expert.
>
> Couric: I don't know, I'm a - I don't think anybody at this point is an expert because it's changing so dramatically and the landscape is so different than when I got into the business. Good luck to you. (28:48-29:02)

Part of the new media landscape Couric was referencing is the environment that BuzzFeed News and Editor-in-chief Ben Smith helped create beginning in 2011, a landscape that is invested in immediacy and virality (Rutenberg, 2019). When designing *AM to DM*, those two factors were combined with the classic formatting of a traditional morning show. Co-host Saeed Jones admits "We can't pretend that Robin Roberts [host of *Good Morning, America*] doesn't have a hand in inspiring this work, but what's cool is that we've been given an opportunity to apply all that we've learned from all these different people and their properties that we've admired" (Katzowitz, 2018). The result is a morning show that is recognizable as part of the genre, yet obviously different and younger than its broadcast counterparts. This analysis will examine *AM to DM* by first examining the show through the lens of specific traits of morning television to discover how the program maintains or modernizes the genre before second, analyzing a specific episode of the program in detail.

4.1 The 'Network'

After 12 years of being popular yet losing millions of dollars, Twitter had its first profitable year in 2018, largely due to video advertising and content (Farey-Jones, 2019). To maintain this revenue and keep viewers, video playback and streaming technology on Twitter is user friendly and high quality, pairing nicely with the 1.8 billion people worldwide who "watch digital video via a mobile device at least once per month" (Adler, 2018).

That viewership is the target audience for *AM to DM*. Visually, the show is optimized for Twitter, designed to be consumed on a laptop or smartphone (Patel, 2017). Viewing on a computer allows for a user to have *AM to DM* in a separate window, letting them continue with work or recreation during the show (McAteer, 2018). On the Twitter app for smartphones, the show can be watched while the stream of tweets is visible. If a user scrolls down the list of tweets, the video moves to a small box that goes with the user as they swipe. This also allows for users to tweet at the show without losing the video feed.

Airing *AM to DM* on Twitter finds people under 35 years old where they are, rather than trying to lure them to a television set, an act they are increasingly reluctant to do as more millennials get their news primarily from social media (Yao, 2017). BuzzFeed News executive producer Patrick McMenamin argues that *AM to DM* is the logical answer to young people being ignored by traditional broadcast news, saying "Fact of the matter is mobile devices are the future and we need to find a way to tap into the conversations people are already having on those devices" (Adler, 2018).

Overall, a 2018 Pew Research Center report finds for those who prefer to read their news, 76% of 18 to 49-year-old's rely on internet sources. For those who prefer to watch their news, 34% of that age group still prefers the digital sphere - a full three times more than their older counterparts (Mitchell, 2018). Twitter is also international and the show can find English speakers across the globe. Nearly one-third of *AM to DM* viewers are from outside the United States, from countries including the UK, Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, and Mexico (Edelsburg, 2018).

The instant audience feedback that *AM to DM* relies upon is also only accessible via social media. Producer Shani Hilton explains "[Twitter] is the platform for how people consume news today. People want news in an accessible and engaging way, but we've also seen that they want to be able to quickly pivot between topics that have piqued their interest. That is the power of Twitter that we've been able to harness for the show" (McAteer, 2018). Simultaneously, Twitter's limit of 280 characters per tweet means that audience response is, by nature, succinct, letting hosts digest the feedback efficiently even while on the air.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Pat Weaver designed morning television to be entertaining even if it was only heard by a viewer who was getting ready for the day and could not pay attention to the visuals. Likewise, *AM to DM* understands that its ability to be streamed on a variety of platforms, including a phone, means they must adapt their show to be entertaining even if the viewer is driving, working, in recreation time, in a classroom, etc. The network and technology that *AM to DM* uses means they cannot assume a physical location for their audience, eschewing one of the oldest generic traits of morning television for mobile consumption.

4.2 The Set

The physical set is small, with only two areas. The first is a large standing desk where hosts can stand and where the majority of the show takes place. In between the standing hosts is a large 4k screen used to display tweets, images, and to air interviews for guests connected via live video conferencing. The wall behind the desk is painted bright orange with small shelves holding tchotchkes. These items are simultaneously random and thematic, including a vase, a mannequin hand with the palmistry lines marked, a miniature motorcycle, and an old-fashioned camera with an oversized bulb flash. Taken as a whole, the collection appears as if it were selected more for overall aesthetics than individual meaning. The second area is the interview couch, a bright orange L-shaped sofa decorated with show logo pillows. The shape allows the guest and hosts to be able to see each other while talking. Behind one side of the couch is a bookshelf with objects d'art and books. On the other wall is a long table with more decorative pieces and wall-mounted succulents. On the wall between the guest and hosts is a large show logo.

Traditional morning show sets are designed to replicate the experience of an audience going through their morning (Wieten & Panetti, 2005), typically having a kitchen, living room, windows, fireplaces, coffee tables, and furnishings that all visually place the televised family in a stylish ideal home. *AM to DM* is no different in the idea of replicating audience environments, but in their case the space reads as an office. Technology is dominant, with the large screen becoming a default third host for most of the show. Unlike a cast of morning shows at a kitchen table or comfortably seated on a couch together, Jones and Fitzgerald only sit when they are interviewing a guest who is

also seated at the couch, otherwise, they stand. The items that line the shelves seem random and unconnected to the hosts - neither Jones or Fitzgerald's own books are obviously placed on the bookshelf, for example. The modern office motif makes sense in the context of cultivating a millennial audience. First, many *AM to DM* viewers are watching from work when the show is aired. Second, the space is a checklist of ideal millennial workspace features. Modern office design for people under 40 years old blurs the lines between home and office, featuring bright colors, quirky design, aspects of nature being bought indoors, standing or moving desks, and integrated technology (Thacker, 2018).

4.3 The Cast

One of the most significant differences between traditional morning shows and *AM to DM* is found in the casting. Morning television hosts are on-air journalists by trade, having risen up the ranks of a news organization over decades, with the median age being 50 years old. Current *Today* hosts Savannah Guthrie and Hoda Kotb both began their careers on local television affiliates immediately after college in the mid 1990s (Abramovitch, 2012; Friedman, 2018). On *Good Morning, America,* Robin Roberts spent fifteen years as a sports broadcaster on ESPN before moving to ABC ("Robin Robert's Biography," 2017). Post-retirement from full time politics, her co-host George Stephanopoulos joined ABC News in 2002 and hosted their Sunday talk show for 8 years ("George Stephanopoulos' Biography," 2017) and Michael Strahan spent most of his career as a professional athlete before becoming a co-host of *Live* in 2010 (Rothman, 2016). *CBS This Morning* has four hosts. John Dickerson guest hosted *Face the Nation* in 2009 until he became the News Director for CBS in 2011 (Eggert, 2015) and Norah

O'Donnell has been an on-air journalist since 1999, rising up the ranks at NBC until leaving for CBS in 2011 ("Norah O'Donnell," 2018). The final host, Gayle King, has been an on-air journalist since 1976 ("Gayle King," 2019). The least experienced co-anchor of a broadcast network morning show had nine years of work in front of a camera.

AM to DM, on the other hand, cast a group of writers with exactly zero on camera experience. While Saeed Jones, 34 years old, and Isaac Fitzgerald, 35 years old, are the only two full time hosts, the cast also includes three fellow millennials. Part time host Stephanie McNeal is a Deputy News Director. Many of her stories on *AM to DM* deal with issues directly affecting professional young women, like a February 11, 2019 interview with a black woman reporter who had been fired for wearing her natural hair on-air (*AM to DM*, McNeal, 2019) or a frequent segment she hosts called *Ladies Who Lead*, when she interviews women in leadership roles. Contributor David Mack is a Deputy Director of Breaking News, an Australian, out gay man who often covers popular culture stories ranging from the Oscars to the real-world effects of the documentary *Surviving R. Kelly*, as well as political stories involving people like Kim Jung Un and Michael Flynn. Another frequent contributor is Sylvia Obell, an entertainment reporter. Obell is a black woman and often focuses on issues in black entertainment, such as highlighting artists she believes have not received enough attention, such as Kim Porter, or focusing on black entertainment stories that would not normally be seen in mainstream morning television, such as the social media fight between hip-hop artists Pusha-T and Drake (*AM to DM*, Obell, 2018a; *AM to DM*, Obell, 2018b). During Black History Month, Obell often pairs with Jones to have episodes focusing on black stories, including tongue-in-cheek segments like February 1, 2019's "From Beychella to Michelle Obama's

autobiography, @TheEssenceOf_ and @SylviaObell present: Things Black Women Still Managed To Accomplish Since the Last Black History Month Despite Y'all Being Racist As Hell" (*AM to DM*, Obell, 2019).

As noted previously, Lee Siegel (2007) described broadcast morning show casts as soothing and robotic, with every member demonstrating "orchestrated humility and rigged self-effacement" (p. 224). In contrast, *AM to DM* does not prioritize polish, rather, by using writers as on-air talent, it seeks to demonstrate authenticity. Often this is done by matching the host demographically to the segment. For example, on November 15, 2017, David Mack reported on his native Australia passing marriage equality laws by talking about the texts he received from his father and how issues of equality affect individual lives (*AM to DM*, Mack, 2017). During an advice segment he hosts every few weeks called *Dear Ferocity*, Jones uses his personal experiences as a Southern gay black man to frame his advice. Stephanie McNeal will address her struggles to adapt finances to marriage when reporting on relationship issues. The diversity of the hosts is not only obvious, but used as a mechanism to relate to a diverse audience.

Jones (Brathwaite, 2018) argues placing identity in the forefront of reporting matters to viewers and also opens doors in the industry for minority representation:

> When you talk about queer people in media and representation and everything, a lot of it is about people being risk averse. It's editors and gatekeepers being scared to trust that people who don't look like them, live like them, love like them can run shit. When you feel that work or media is being made for you or with you in mind, you want to engage it. (para 5)

If morning shows are notorious for casting ‘families’ with parents and wacky uncles (Stelter, 2013), then *AM to DM* has cast a tight knit group of workaholic friends in the style of an Aaron Sorkin show. At the center is Jones and Fitzgerald, best friends on-air and off. They speak often of their relationship and were asked to do the show together partly because of their tight bond (Ford, 2017):

> If you met Saeed [Jones] and Isaac [Fitzgerald] separately, you might not even be able to picture them ending up in the same room. But if you meet them together, even if you’re barely paying attention, you’ll most likely find it hard to think of them ever being apart. And that’s a big part of what BuzzFeed and Twitter are counting on. (para 3)

By focusing on adult friendships as the core of their cast, *AM to DM* again attempts to align themselves with their ideal audience. Young, professional millennials seek connection in the workplace, with Forbes noting 70% of millennials want their coworkers to function as “a second family” (Landrum, 2018). Every morning, *AM to DM* shows an idealized millennial work environment.

4.4 Format

On October 5, 2017, *AM to DM* attempted to discuss baseball. BuzzFeed News political reporter and baseball fan Katherine Miller appeared with Fitzgerald to talk about the MLB playoffs. What followed was a five-minute primer for a sports-adverse Fitzgerald, who had to ask Miller basic questions about teams and the playoff structure (*AM to DM*, Fitzgerald, 2017). It was also the last time a segment about baseball was run.

Traditional morning shows value breadth over depth, leading to bulletin style news reading for major headlines of the day, including important sport scores. Their link

to local affiliates also prioritizes commuter basics like traffic and weather. As a single, global broadcast with no link to an individual city or time zone, *AM to DM* skips the topics altogether. No sports, weather, or traffic. Instead, their segments resemble the interview and reporting aspects of broadcast morning shows. Examining 30 episodes taking place from February 15 - March 27, 2019, the show averaged eight segments per program (Periscope, *BuzzFeed News,* 2019). Segments vary in length but are typically more than four minutes and less than ten minutes. Format priorities for *AM to DM* can be seen by more closely examining four aspects: repeatability and virality, time, language, and audience participation.

4.4.1 Repeatability & Virality. As discussed in Chapter 3, morning television is built on repetition. Blocks of programming for each half hour allow for news, weather, traffic, and sports to be on a predictable loop, with other segments filling airtime as needed. *AM to DM* also promotes repeatability, but not of traditional information. Rather, the show mines its segments for repeatable content.

Every segment on the show is isolated and released onto Twitter immediately after airing. Further, individual clips from segments are also packaged and released onto Twitter as well. For example, on May 13, 2018 actor Terry Crews appeared on *AM to DM* (*AM to DM,* Fitzgerald, 2018). He covered a variety of topics and filmed a separate video for the show. The result was 5 different tweets:

- The 13 minute and 29 second interview titled:

  "Full interview: @terrycrews joins #AM2DM to talk #Brooklyn99, #Deadpool2, and the #MeToo movement"

- A 40 second clip titled:

"You had me at hello." @terrycrews describes what it's like being part of #Deadpool2

- A 55 second clip of Crews superimposed into famous Tom Cruise movies, titled: IT'S BEEN A LONG WEEK, SO HERE ARE A BUNCH OF TOM CRUISE MOVIES BUT WITH TERRY CREWS INSTEAD. ENJOY.
- A one minute and fifteen second clip about Crew's involvement in the #metoo movement, titled:

  "What we need to do, as men, is to check other men." @terrycrews speaks out on the #MeToo movement and how men can support women.
- A one minute and three second clip about NBC buying Crew's sitcom Brooklyn Nine-Nine after cancellation titled:

  @terrycrews says he and the rest of the #Brooklyn99 cast had no idea Fox wasn't going to renew the show for a sixth season 😱

A single interview can be clipped, repackaged with focus on specific subtopics, and released on Twitter for viewing, sharing, and commenting on in perpetuity. Each clip is also hashtagged so that people who are invested in a topic can find the videos even if they are not invested in the people speaking. A #Brooklyn99 fan is more likely to have seen the Terry Crews interview because of the actor, but a person searching the #metoo hashtag may not even know *AM to DM* exists. For 35-year-olds and younger, the show makes content "in all the ways they want it, live and on demand, both unedited and chopped into clips" (Porch, 2018).

Rather than having to repeat content themselves, *AM to DM* takes the original module design of traditional morning shows and packages their segments into content bites that their viewers repeat for them.

4.4.2 Time. Airing on Twitter provides *AM to DM* with even more opportunity for flexibility than its forefathers. One of the most flexible aspects is time. While *AM to DM* airs at 10 a.m. EST, the hour-long broadcast is a goal, not a rule. Unlike a network, there is no show coming up after *AM to DM* that would be impacted by it going over its allotted hour and there is no negative impact to advertisers expecting a specific time for an ad to air. For example, the November 21, 2018 episode ran 1 hour and 17 minutes long, an overage that would only be acceptable on network television if there was a breaking national news event. For *AM to DM*, the reasons were simpler. They had more segments than usual that day, the banter between the hosts at the top and bottom of the show was longer than average, and an interview with singer Patti LaBelle ran almost 11 minutes. Examining 30 episodes taking place from February 15, 2019 - March 27, 2019, program length ranged from the shortest at 59:18 to longest being 1:13:4. Only seven episodes were at one hour or less (Periscope, *BuzzFeed News,* 2019). In traditional morning shows, these types of indulgences are not possible. For *AM to DM*, they are standard.

4.4.3 Language. The Federal Communications Commission has executive oversight for television and radio networks, and is responsible for licensing. Part of their duties includes the monitoring of language choices. Violation of speech limitations can lead to penalties against a show, their producers, and/or the network. As a result, live events held on broadcast television are carefully planned and include a slight delay to

ensure that no potential FCC violations can make it to air. *AM to DM* does not have these limitations and took advantage of their uniqueness to advertise the show. On September 22, 2017, Jones sent three tweets out regarding language from his personal account. The first was “Do you think it's okay for people to curse on morning shows? Asking for a friend.” That tweet also included a video with Jones and producer Shani Hilton debating the issue, where Hilton notes “It’s live T.V. But it’s also Twitter” (Jones, 2017a). The second was a poll asking “Help us decide: should the word "fuck" be allowed on @AM2DM ? 👀” (Jones, 2017b) and the poll options were “Fuck yes” or “H*ck No” (Jones, 2018c). The last tweet was “Do you think it's a good idea for @IsaacFitzgerald and me to use the word "goddamn" on @AM2DM? And the poll options were “Hell Yeah” or “H*ck No.” The over 3,100 hundred voters on both polls overwhelmingly voted for cursing.

The freedom to curse is often a welcome surprise to guests. Actor Sendhil Ramamurthy appeared on the show on March 29, 2019 (*AM to DM*, Jones, 2019a) leading to this conversation:

> Jones: What’s interesting is that you’re shooting *New Amsterdam* during the day and then at night you’re on Off Broadway on stage doing *Hate Fuck.*
>
> Ramamurthy: Yeah, so we’re allowed to say it?
>
> Jones: Yeah.
>
> Ramamurthy: Oh, cool. Very good. This is the first show I’ve done - *Hate Fuck*! Great! (:15 - :33).

As one would expect, *AM to DM* tweeted that exchange as an individual clip, titled “@Sendhil_Rama is delighted to finally be able to say the name of his off-

Broadway play "Hate Fuck" out loud on air 😅" (*AM to DM*, Jones, 2019b). Other instances of cursing occurring organically from the material include coverage of the new media company Fuck Jerry and when rapper Fat Joe was interviewed about his song "Fuck Trump" (*AM to DM,* Fitzgerald, 2019; *AM to DM*, Obell, 2018c).

Cursing is also used by the hosts to demonstrate extreme disgust with either a public figure or news story. For example, a segment on the federal government shutdown on January 24, 2019 (*AM to DM,* Jones, 2019c) included statements Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had made to CNBC expressing confusion that furloughed workers didn't take out loans while waiting to go back to work. Jones reacted to the information by saying "You fucking idiot. If you are the Commerce Secretary of the United States of America and you don't understand the implications of federal shutdown that your President and your administration has enacted, but further don't understand how loans impact people, and why it's so difficult for many people, particularly the working poor, to get them - what the fuck are you doing in your job?" (:25 - :52).

Embracing this use of language, on January 31, 2019 the show edited and released a montage of guests cursing titled "Can I Curse on AM2DM" (*AM to DM*, BuzzFeed News, 2019). The show uses its linguistic freedom to separate itself from the rest of the morning shows available.

4.4.4 Audience Participation. *AM to DM* was created to reflect the ways people use social media, so audience participation is paramount to the show's DNA (Porch, 2018). Throughout the program, the hosts have their phones and tablets on hand, allowing them to check Twitter constantly. They interact with audience members, 'like' tweets, respond to them, and often retweet their favorites. The hosts will also use tweets to ask

questions of guests or inform a guest how the audience is responding to their appearance. The show is aware that "social conversations are playing out in real time" and believe that "what gives them the edge over competition is the show's real-time feedback loop with its audience" (McAteer, 2018).

In traditional morning shows, audience participation is limited. Over the years, outdoor and window sets have allowed audiences to have signs or wave during broadcasts, limited participation that is highly popular with viewers. All three network shows use social media extensively to promote segments, air extended segments, seek feedback, and air 'extras' featuring cast members (Winchel, 2019). However, this type of social media work is marketing and public relations focused, seeking to lure viewers and separate from the show content. For *AM to DM*, social media is the backbone of the show itself.

4.5 Editorializing

One of the most significant differences between *AM to DM* and traditional morning shows is an embrace of editorialized reporting. As seen in earlier examples above, *AM to DM* rejects objectivity in favor of the hosts being able to express their personal viewpoint about an issue. A typical example happens often during the daily segment *Live From the District* with a BuzzFeed political correspondent, when Jones and Fitzgerald often interject with subjective opinion while getting objective reporting. For example, on March 29, 2019, correspondent Nidhi Prakash reported on a Department of Housing and Urban Development lawsuit against Facebook for discriminatory advertising tools. Prakash listed some of the demographics Facebook was accused of allowing landlords to block and the hosts responded with shock:

Prakash: It includes 'women in the workforce' 'Puerto Rico islanders,' people interested in 'accessibility' 'animals' 'hijab fashion' or 'Hispanic culture.' And that's just some of them.

Jones: Oh! And that's just some of them.

Fitzgerald: Wow. Wild.

Jones: You know, it's like, we're gonna have to go down the rabbit hole of racism and fucked up-ness for a second. (:17 - :37)

The hosts ask questions to allow reporters to tell the story from an objective journalistic standpoint, while responding in a conversational, opinionated voice.

Editorializing took on a personal and more negative slant after BuzzFeed CEO Jonah Peretti announced the company would be cutting 15 percent of its workforce across both BuzzFeed and BuzzFeed News. The announcement was made via email on the evening of January 23, 2019 (Spangler, 2019b). After the email went out, Jones tweeted from his personal account "Gonna do @AM2DM tomorrow exactly how we always do: Talking about the news that matters to us, the timeline, or both. So yeah, should be honest and interesting. Ain't no way forward but through" (Jones, 2019).

The next morning, Jones and Fitzgerald opened the show with the newsroom layoffs, including coverage of other media layoffs announced in the same week by Huffington Post and Gannett News (*AM to DM*, Jones & Fitzgerald, 2019a). Fitzgerald noted the personal emotional toll for him and his colleagues. Jones recounted how when he joined BuzzFeed News in 2013 there were less than 150 staffers globally, but the division had grown so rapidly that the 2019 cuts would be more than that number. Both hosts contextualized the national news story from the perspective of a journalist. Jones

also stated that layoffs disproportionately affect women and people of color who are usually the last hired in media companies, and Fitzgerald retweeted a Harvard Business Review study confirming that disparity.

The next day, on Friday, January 25, 2019, the show continued to cover the story in the opening segment. Both hosts committed to transparency in their coverage, spoke about how difficult the layoffs were personally, and Fitzgerald took time to urge media companies to hire laid off BuzzFeed reporters (*AM to DM*, Jones & Fitzgerald, 2019b).

The tone took a turn from somber to angry on Monday, January 28, 2019 (*AM to DM*, Jones & Fitzgerald, 2019c). After Fitzgerald opened the show with the customary good morning, Jones introduced the first segment by saying "Eat the rich" and revealing BuzzFeed management were refusing to pay 'earned paid time off' to employees outside of California (where the law mandates a payout). An employee had organized a formal letter to management demanding pay, and Fitzgerald stated:

> Now Saeed and I have both signed the letter along with 463 of our coworkers and I believe that number is rising… I just wanted to say that I think it is embarrassing and absurd to work for a company that puts such an emphasis on this idea of 'all of us in this together,' 'all of us as a family' and then refusing to pay out PTO, paid time off, except where it's law. (:11 - 1:37)

Jones went on to call out Jonah Peretti by name, saying that the CEO had benefited from employees working to earn the PTO and his actions were "shameful, embarrassing, and simply evaporates any trust" with employees. The segment went on for five minutes, and ended with Fitzgerald saying "Jonah, do the right thing" and Jones saying "You're welcome to tweet us, use the hashtag #AM2DM, Jonah" (4:47 - 4:53).

The admonishment did not go unnoticed. *New York Magazine* credited the segment and subsequent tweets with forcing management to reconsider the decision, saying "BuzzFeed's livestreamed morning show, AM2DM [sic], used the top of this morning's show to blast management for its treatment of employees, and by Monday evening, BuzzFeed relented and agreed to the payouts" (Feldman, 2019).

Another aspect of this editorialized point of view is that hosts can and have disagreed with one another on air. On July 11, 2018 David Mack was guest hosting and led a segment alongside visiting editor-in-chief Ben Smith (*AM to DM*, Mack, 2018). During Judge Brett Kavanaugh's Senate confirmation hearings, *The Washington Post* had published an editorial by Julie O'Brien entitled "I don't know Kavanaugh the judge. But Kavanaugh the carpool dad is one great guy" (O'Brien, 2018). After discussing the piece, Smith and Mack had a spirited on-air debate about whether *The Washington Post* should have published it at all, with Smith on the side of the paper and Mack expressing outrage the material would be considered relevant.

Traditional morning shows are conflict averse. They strive to convey an air of positive, happy, familial energy that can inform their audience, not persuade, and any visible conflict is a sign of turmoil behind the scenes (Stelter, 2013). In contrast, *AM to DM* embraces a highly editorialized viewpoint that is inherently persuasive, embracing and sometimes contributing to conflict when deemed appropriate by the production team or the hosts. Business Development Director for BuzzFeed News Ari Shahdadi notes that from the beginning, they "realized [*AM to DM*] wasn't that different from the traditional morning shows that have been a staple since the 1950s" (Poggi, 2017) but over time,

decided Jones and Fitzgerald's creativity, tone, and relationship to the audience is what would set them apart (Spangler, 2019a).

4.6 *AM to DM* March 27, 2019

As Mittle (2001) proposes, a specific textual instance can give insight into how genre processes operate. Further, the examination of a genre-disrupting text necessitates comparison to already established work. In order to highlight the similarities and differences in generic traits between traditional morning shows and *AM to DM*, the following section offers analysis of a single episode. Each segment is described before analysis is given. Segments that are repeated have names, which are indicated. Those without names are labeled by their segment order in the broadcast, and the length of the segment in indicated in parenthesis.

Opening Theme (0 - :10). The theme music and images for the show are short and bright. An alarm clock, coffee mug, and sun are featured before the camera shows the two hosts behind their desk.

The opening is relatively generic and extremely short. Traditional broadcast morning show openings are longer, often include the name of the hosts, and have a voice-over announcing the date and the name of the show. The most similar is *CBS This Morning*, which has the fastest paced opening on broadcast. The *AM to DM* opening makes sense in the context of Twitter, where the show must be able to capture users who are scrolling the timeline quickly. The morning show genre is affirmed by familiar images of 'waking up' to start a day, even though the for many of the viewers watching, the show airs much later in the day.

Opening (:11 - 2:57). Jones and Fitzgerald open by showing the newly released posters for the upcoming film *Avengers: Endgame*. They discuss which characters were revealed to have died off-screen in the last *Avengers* film and jokingly create the hashtag #JusticeForShuri, which becomes the title of the episode on the Periscope listings for BuzzFeed News. They encourage viewers to tweet what they would want out of a solo Shuri film.

This is a typical opening for the show when there is not a serious or somber breaking news story. The *Avengers: Endgame* posters had dominated pop culture Twitter since their release, becoming the basis for comedic memes and tweets. The show again pulls content from conversations already happening on Twitter. While the conversation and audience participation component are unique to this morning show, the genre is obvious in content. Broadcast morning shows all feature entertainment segments, particularly about highly anticipated events. The frothy, light nature of the subject matter is also emblematic of the traditional genre.

Segment 1 (2:58 to 8:01). Introducing it as a "a can you believe this is happening in 2019 story," Fitzgerald reveals a tweet from BuzzFeed News about a New York county which has banned unvaccinated children from being in public spaces due to a massive measles outbreak. Jones audibly sighs before pointing at the camera and saying "I have had it with these nasty ass parents refusing to vaccinate their nasty ass kids. I've had it." He then introduces BuzzFeed science reporter Dan Vergano for a live interview, who appears to be video conferencing from home. Jones and Fitzgerald ask Vergano about the outbreak origin, ban enforcement, community reaction to the ban, and how public health officials are handling the outbreak. They also bring up the religious

complications of a large Orthodox Jewish community being asked to prove vaccination of their children and, at the encouragement of Jones, Vergano speaks to the ways a non-vaccinated community disproportionately impacts the poor and sick.

This segment is an excellent example of how *AM to DM* takes a staple of morning show genres - the health and science segment - and updates it for a younger, Twitter audience. *Today* also covered the story that morning (*Today,* 2019) but gave it significantly less time and provided more straightforward fact based reporting without editorial comment. In contrast, *AM to DM* lets the BuzzFeed reporter provide the fact-based analysis, while also allowing Jones and Fitzgerald to editorialize and tie the story to larger social issues.

Segment 3 (8:02 - 16:02). Following the previous days reporting about charges being dropped against *Empire* actor Jussie Smollett (who had been arrested in February for allegedly filing false police reports claiming he was the victim of a hate crime) Fitzgerald introduces a tweet from ABC News' Terry Moran revealing that no written motions were filed in the dismissal and the case has been wiped from the Cook County database. Jones and Fitzgerald express how unusual the case has been to that point, including the press conference by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel where the Mayor referred to the charges being dropped as a 'whitewash of justice.' Fitzgerald visibly reacts to the language, saying "Ah, a word! A choice." Jones then introduces a tweet from policy analyst Samuel Sinyangwe that lists aspects of the latest Chicago police contract dealing with police brutality, including that officers who are accused or convicted of misconduct can have their records erased. Fitzgerald says "Erase… a word that comes to mind is whitewash." They then interview Dr. Nicole Gonzales Van Cleve, a professor of

criminal justice who has written two books about Chicago's criminal courts. Van Cleve, who calls in from the Philadelphia airport, speaks about the Smollett case, the press conference by the Mayor, how these types of cases are typically prosecuted, the influence of the media, police brutality cases in the city, and the context of all of these issues within the larger criminal justice system. At the conclusion of the interview, Jones teases the rest of the show lineup before going to commercial.

Again, a highly editorialized viewpoint lets the show cover a national story in a different way from their peers. It is a staple of the morning show genre to cover any high-profile celebrity arrest and the subsequent story. Jones and Fitzgerald, however, use the Smollett case as a springboard to report on larger issues in the justice system, contextualizing and historicizing the event. Rather than speak to a reporter who is working on the Smollett case, they instead speak to an academic expert on criminal justice.

Segment 4 - *Fire Tweets* (18:04 - 26:30). Jones is joined in studio by actor Chris Geere from the FX show *You're The Worst* to read tweets that are considered especially smart, funny, and 'on fire.' These tweets are all from non-celebrity Twitter users and are usually cultural observations, like the tweet that reads "The fastest land mammal is a toddler who's been asked what's in their mouth." Once they finish the tweets, Jones conducts an interview with Geere about his show and upcoming projects before going to a second commercial break.

Fire Tweets, a daily segment, is the type of content one would most likely expect from BuzzFeed. It emphasizes virality, succinct comedy, and being highly re-tweetable.

The segment typically is done by the hosts, but is sometimes a way for the show to include another celebrity guest on a busy day.

Segment 5 - *Live From the District* (27:37 - 31:49). Jones and Fitzgerald introduce political reporter Nidhi Prakash, who joins them from the *AM to DM* set in the BuzzFeed News Washington, DC offices. Their first topic is Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and federal cuts to Special Olympic funding. To contradict a viral tweet claiming cuts have already happened, Jones shows a tweet from a news source explaining the cuts are proposed but not finalized. They also speak about President Trump's most recent statements regarding Puerto Rico disaster aid funding and a bill currently in Congress to fund food stamps on the island. The segment leads the third commercial break.

This daily segment covers a few major news stories in brief. It can be extremely similar to traditional broadcasting newsreaders giving bulletin-style reports, but also can veer into a longer and more editorial segment depending on the host's reaction to the news. As discussed in Chapter 3, morning shows have an obligation to fill audiences in on stories that happened while they slept, making this segment one of the ones more in-line with typical generic expectations.

Segment 6 - *What's Poppin'* (34:12 - 39:17). Stephanie McNeal is in studio to lead a segment on an upcoming Netflix show based on the young adult book series *The Babysitter's Club.* McNeal reads a tweet from a fan of the book series and interviews her guests, the hosts of the podcast T*he Babysitters Club Club*, who join from their homes. The fourth commercial break follows.

What's Poppin' is a pop culture segment that focuses on what excites Twitter users and what they are tweeting about that day. Millennial audiences grew up with these books, making the segment a natural fit for the show. This type of cultural segment is a staple of morning shows, but on broadcast TV would probably take the form of a celebrity interview with a star of the show. In contrast, *AM to DM* often promotes pop culture events like a new television show based on audience anticipation, which they judge through the Twitter timeline.

Segment 7 - *The Sit Down* (40:42 - 50:40). Fitzgerald interviews actor Paul Scheer, who is in the studio to promote his new show *Black Monday* on Showtime. Fitzgerald speaks to him about a variety of topics including the Mueller report, his podcast, and social media. They play a game called One's Gotta Go, where the host will give three options and the guest has to reject one of them. In reference to the time setting of *Black Monday*, the game is 80s themed. The fifth commercial break follows.

BuzzFeed built its original brand on listicles and quizzes, and *AM to DM* often nods at that history by including games during celebrity interviews. Otherwise, this type of segment is nearly indistinguishable from similar ones on broadcast counterparts. While language freedom and the age of the hosts often give an overall more relaxed feel to the interviews, celebrity appearances, a staple of the genre going back to the 1950s, remains a familiar element.

Segment 8 (51:52 - 1:05:44). BuzzFeed News editor-in-chief Ben Smith joins Jones to interview South Bend Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who has surged into national prominence in recent weeks as a potential candidate for the 2020 presidential race. Buttigieg is interviewed via phone. Using tweets as a springboard for questions, the

interview covers a variety of topics, from American institutions like the military (Buttigieg is a veteran), other Democrats running, LGBTQ rights, Vice President Mike Pence (Buttigieg is an out and married gay man), white nationalism, and the effectiveness of economic boycotts. Lighter moments included Smith asking about a rumor that President James Buchanan was gay. Buttigieg answered "My gaydar is not great to begin with and it definitely doesn't work over long stretches of time, so I think we'll just have to let the historians figure that one out" and Jones added "I agree with you, my gaydar does not always pierce the time/space continuum." The last question was a discussion of the strangest pronunciations he's heard of his name, which turned out to be someone who called him "Pete Build-A-Bear." The last commercial break follows.

Ben Smith has appeared on *AM to DM* in two roles, sometimes as a guest discussing political news, and other times as an interviewer with high-profile political guests. His appearances signal a certain level of importance to a segment and import a gravitas to the interview. Unsurprisingly considering his background in political reporting, Smith's questions to Buttigieg focused on political process and the presidential race. In contrast, Jones's questions focused on broader social issues like the rise of white nationalism. One of the ways *AM to DM* is affirmed as a member of the morning show genre is in its political interviews, especially of potential presidential nominees. Candidates are expected to make press appearances on a variety of television shows and the inclusion of *AM to DM* on that list validates their membership as a morning show.

Segment 9: *@us* (1:08:23 - 1:12:16). Jones and Fitzgerald speak briefly about the interview with Buttigieg and read tweets that have been submitted from viewers during the show, including submitted ideas for a Marvel Shuri movie.

The last segment for every show is *@us,* bringing the viewers back into the spotlight for the day. The hosts pick tweets that emphasize the tone they want to convey - if it's a day full of serious news, they will focus on thoughtful or pointedly sharp tweets. If it's a more relaxed or energetic day, they will highlight comedic or silly tweets. Regardless, every show ends with where production for that day began - in the Twitter timeline.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to understand how *AM to DM* has disrupted a traditional genre of television for the modern era. The analysis demonstrates that the show has been able to retain the formatting, style, and purpose of the morning show but has funneled those traits through a millennial lens that includes modeling after the workplace rather than the home, a highly editorialized voice, and performing a convincingly millennial version of chat show authenticity. That, combined with the freedoms afforded to the show by airing on Twitter, allow *AM to DM* to be a recognizable member of a genre while still modernizing the morning show for the digital age. These understandings prompt further implications about the future of television.

Initially, the success of *AM to DM* demonstrates our cultural vocabulary surrounding television is no longer sufficient to describe the television landscape. In attempting to describe post-Network television, cultural critic Amanda Lotz (2014) identifies three large categories of television: prized content, live sports and contests, and linear content. Prized content is "programming that people seek out and specifically desire" (p. 12) regardless of quality. *The West Wing* (Sorkin, et al., 1999) and the *Real Housewives* franchise (Ragusa, 2018) have little in common artistically speaking, but are both shows that are experienced with a particular passion by their fans. Live sports and contests such as NFL football or contest-based shows like *The Masked Singer* (Plestis, 2019) have an inherent time sensitivity that urges viewers to watch. Finally, linear content is the rest of programming available, what most people would consider "watching what is on" (p. 14), including morning television, syndicated fare, talk shows, and most of the prime-time lineup. Under these guidelines, *AM to DM* fits all three categories. It is

a linear morning show, airs live and is time sensitive to real world events as well as the conversations happening on Twitter, and because of the interaction component is experienced with a deep connection to viewers. While Lotz herself notes that it's impossible to create foolproof categories of modern content, the analysis around *AM to DM* suggests that the failure to compartmentalize television in a post-network era is by design. In a fragmented, larger-than-ever field of competition, modern television shows have deliberately adapted to capture as many viewers as possible, attempting to make their content appealing without regard for tidy labels and genre.

While *AM to DM* has reformatted and hybridized the morning show label to embrace the breadth of coverage that is on Twitter every day. For other forms of television, genre is more limiting than expansive. Television producer Stephen Falk (2016) asserts "when discussing [television] categories are reductive and intrinsically problematic" (para 1), explaining:

> When looking at the Emmy race and extrapolating from there the direction television comedy is going, binary questions like single-cam versus multi-cam now seem kind of quaint. Web shows are becoming TV shows. TV shows are moving to the web. Adult Swim makes some 12-minute-long shows better than most half-hour shows, which are actually 21 minutes — except on pay cable, where they're 25. Streaming comedies are now routinely 30 minutes. (para 8)

Additionally, the rise of on-demand television has contributed to these 'intrinsically problematic' ways of categorizing television. For example, the 2018 show *You* (Siega, et al., 2018) originally aired on Lifetime as a weekly, one-hour drama. The ratings were low and rather than running a second season, Lifetime sold *You* to Netflix.

There, Netflix rebranded the show a bingeable thriller. *You* became a success for Netflix and they boasted about the show receiving 40 million-member hits (Romano, 2019). The difference between Lifetime and Netflix, argues television critic Alexis Nedd (2019), is that "there's a tangible difference between shows that are written to be binged and those that are meant to be watched week to week" (para 4). *You* proved to be the former. This level of nuance when labeling, discussing, broadcasting, and marketing a single television show demonstrates the difficulty of speaking about 21st century media production with 20th century jargon.

Further, the analysis of *AM to DM* suggests that technology is now driving content creation, especially for social media networks. While broadcast, cable, and streaming networks all take their branding and audience into account when launching television shows, they tend to first be creator focused. The showrunner, writers, directors, and producers are given money and freedom to create content that is then packaged for audiences to either watch or not watch. Those with proven track records, like Shonda Rhimes and Ryan Murphy, receive multi-million dollar bids from networks in exchange for exclusive rights to future, unproduced work (Shaw, 2018). The increase in networks has only increased the amount of money these artists get paid; in an effort to stave off competitors, Warner Bros offered producer Greg Berlanti a record-breaking $400 million dollars to remain exclusive for 6 years (Koblin, 2018). For these networks, it is a *Field of Dreams* theory of content creation - build it independent of the audience and then hope the audience will come.

Social media platforms have also been on a development spree. Twitter, who announced 30 new original shows for 2019 (Patel, 2019), is not alone in becoming a

network; after a slow start developing original programming in 2017, Facebook Watch doubled the amount of content available in 2018 is now a serious player in the streaming market (Kim, 2018). Snapchat has announced 12 originals (Constine, 2018) and Instagram has developed Instagram Television, or IGTV, for content creators to use as a distribution platform (Lee, 2019). In each case, the technology comes first. Twitter's shows are all live, inspired by the way their users scroll the timeline in search of instant content that can be readily commented on and reweeted. This form of intense audience commitment increases the appeal to advertisers, who value what they see as a more engaged audience (Patel, 2018). Snapchat also meets viewers in how they use their service including push notifications, reaction lenses so audiences can post about a specific moment in a show, and an augmented reality feature "in their Snaps that they can walk through to explore a scene from the show and then tap to watch that show, allowing them to spread virally" (Constine, 2018). Here, content is secondary to the technology.

Next, *AM to DM* demonstrates a shift in media consumption from attention to intention. From its earliest days and up until digital streaming, a television program's job was to grab our attention and keep us in front of the physical television set to boost advertising revenue. The assumption was that most people would turn on the television to begin their day, when they arrived home from work or school, and that it was the primary entertainment technology in the home. Content needed to seize our attention to ensure that we would not change channels. Now, however, the era of the home entertainment center and domestic, morning to night ritual viewing is over. While 119 million homes still have a television, the number of U.S. households without a television is trending up while the number of homes with three or more televisions is going down (Nededog,

2017). Simultaneously, the number of 'cord cutters,' or those who have ended their cable and satellite TV subscriptions, rose 38.2% in 2018 (Perez, 2018), meaning 33 million television owners cannot just turn on the TV and have a show already in progress. They, alongside those who use their phones, laptops, and tablets, must *intend* to watch television. Programs are selected and consumed.

The exceptions to this shift tends to be live sports and massively popular television shows like *Game of Thrones* that become cultural phenomenon. However, television critic and historian Matt Zoller Seitz (2019) argues communal television will end with *Game of Thrones* for one reason:

> Television, as it existed from the 1950s until recently, was the ultimate incarnation of the [installment] form. You can draw a direct line from Dickens to the comic strips… to the half-hour adventure serials that used to play in movie theaters to Janice plugging Richie in season two of *The Sopranos*…
>
> And then Netflix came along. (para. 12 - 13)

As streaming continues to pull audiences in different directions, networks must create content that makes audiences intentionally tune in. Culture writer Daniel Pink (2018) argues that networks can "create a new, extended, and meaningful space to experience the show - rather than use the show to occupy existing, shorter, and less meaningful spaces" (para 10). He points to the success of NBC's live musicals, which were marketed around selling the experience of watching a live event together. These events, however, like major sporting events, are only occasional habits. The challenge will be for television shows to be able to capture that kind of attention over the course of a season or multiple seasons.

Finally, this analysis demonstrates how and why polymediation will continue to influence the television industry. As noted from the beginning of this work, television has experimented with interactivity since long before the technology existed to make such relationships seamless. *Winky Dink and You* was not concerned with convergence, the show was trying to lure children to become regular viewers. That motivation hasn't changed - the creators of *AM to DM* did not set out to create a polymediated television experience, they set out to create a successful television show. All of the aspects of polymediation that the show has embraced are a consequence of this effort. For example, *AM to DM* consciously creating a set, format, style, and content that is ideal for computer and smartphone use was done for two main reasons. First, to ensure their audience could find and watch the show regardless of where they were or what they were doing. Second, because the show recognized their targeted audience has embedded their technology into their lives and would be more likely to watch a daily show if they could access it on a smartphone instead of a television. Those reasons are success driven and logical for a new television show. They are simultaneously, however, also examples of how the polymediated characteristic of ubiquity effects the relationship between "media, performer, and identity" as described by Michelle Calka (2012). The considerations that content creators must make in a polymediated environment are vastly different that those made in a traditional broadcast, pre-digital television industry. As television shows are now being created with the understanding that they may be repackaged for different formats, types of consumption like binging, a variety of screens and types of technology, like smart devices, and new viewers who do not stop what they're doing to physically

turn on a television set, the changes in culture reflected in polymediation will come to the forefront of content development.

AM to DM's reliance on Twitter and audience content also demonstrates the link between the modern communication environment and shape-shifting authorship. We consume media in a world that is full of contradictions, global and fragmented, textual and visual, specialized and mass-produced (Herbig, et al., 2014). At the same time, polymediation also highlights the ways content is now continuously produced, reproduced, and authored throughout time and technology. When *AM to DM* sought to create a show that could reach such a multi-faceted audience, they did so by using the audience to both mine the timeline for content and then allow the audience to help mold the material over the course of show. Engaged viewers use the technology of Twitter to clip and disseminate show fragments by commenting, forwarding, etc. Viewers are now, to an unprecedented degree, in charge of anarchic patterns of distribution. AM to DM weaponizes the dizzying scope of a polymediated world by letting their content be continuously inspired by and altered by the audience.

Herrmann and Herbig (2018) stress that polymediation demands content producers must be concerned with the variety of connections and interactions possible through media. *AM to DM* demonstrates many types of these experiences, but even more, foreshadows a future where these types of connections are common across a rhizomatic empire of screens. Even television programs which are long past are not immune; *I Love Lucy* (Oppenheimer & Arnaz, 1951) is experienced in 2019 not only in reruns but in the thousands of online gifs commonly used in online communication. How we experience television continues to evolve; *AM to DM* lives in a world where the lines between

authors, distributors, audiences, and technology are sometimes blurred, shifted, and merged.

The future of television is one where thousands of television programs simultaneously compete for an audience that watches programming in a multitude of ways on a multitude of platforms. To do so, they'll have to give the audience a reason to click and inspire intentional viewing. This is why BuzzFeed News gambled on creating television programming to begin with - getting people to click was how their brand was built. To create *AM to DM*, BuzzFeed News looked back to a time when most Americans rolled out of bed and turned on the TV to let morning shows prepare them for whatever the day would bring. While *AM to DM* is aired on Twitter, has a millennial perspective, embraces diversity in their cast, and goes out of their way to create endlessly re-tweetable content… the mission is still the same, to forge a ritual compact with their audience and prepare them for the day to come.

REFERNCES

Abramovitch, S. (2012, June 26). Savannah Guthrie: 10 things to know about Ann Curry's replacement. *The Hollywood Reporter.* Retrieved from: https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/savannah-guthrie-today-ann-curry-10-things-know-341825

Adler, H. (2018, March 6). With AM2DM, BuzzFeed reinvents the broadcast journalism wheel. *DMN News.* Retrieved from: https://www.dmnews.com/channel-marketing/social/article /13034660/with-am2dm-buzzfeed-reinvents-the-broadcast-journalism-wheel

AM2DM. [BuzzFeed News]. (2019, January 31). A lot of our guests wonder if you can you curse on #AM2DM. The answer? Fuck yeah 😊 [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/am2dm/status/1090969854734188544

AM2DM. [Adewunmi, B.]. (2018, September 10). Survivalists aren't just "white dudes with guns," says @bimadew - there's a whole subculture of black survivalists who don't trust the government to take care of them [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: t witter.com/am2dm/status/1039171819981291520?lang=en

AM2DM. [Akbar, A.A.]. (2018, May 16). Is binge watching your favorite shows during #ramadan okay? @nabihasyed and @radbrowndads say yes (especially if one of those shows is #Westworld 😂) [Tweet]. Retrieved from: twitter.com/AM2DM/status/996844359298367488

AM2DM. [Fitzgerald, I.]. (2017, October 5). If you've ignored baseball since, uh, April, that's OK! @BuzzFeedNews' Katherine Miller is on #AM2DM to catch us up for the playoffs ⚾ [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/915962717583794177

AM2DM. [Fitzgerald, I.]. (2018, May 13). Full interview: @terrycrews joins #AM2DM to talk #Brooklyn99, #Deadpool2, and the #MeToo movement [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/996856061444476929

AM2DM. [Fitzgerald, I.]. (2019, February 6). Comedy Central teaming up with Fuck Jerry for advertisements "twisted the knife a little too much" for @megh_wright, who started the #FuckFuckJerry movement [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1093177519765737478

AM2DM [Jones, S.]. (2019a, March 29). @Sendhil_Rama joins #AM2DM to talk #NewAmsterdam, starring in "Hate Fuck" off-broadway, and more [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1112516929439227904

AM2DM [Jones, S.]. (2019b, March 29). @Sendhil_Rama is delighted to finally be able to say the name of his off-Broadway play "Hate Fuck" out loud on air 😅 [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1112494028522610688

AM2DM [Jones, S.]. (2019c, January 24). Wilbur Ross: *asks why federal workers don't take out loans during the shutdown* @theferocity: What the fuck are you doing in your job?? [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1088503308803665920

AM2DM [Jones, S. & Fitzgerald, I.] (2019a, January 24). Addressing news of BuzzFeed layoffs this morning on #AM2DM [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1088456958703587328

AM2DM [Jones, S. & Fitzgerald, I.] (2019b, January 25). Opening [Twitter broadcast]. Retrieved from: https://www.pscp.tv/BuzzFeedNews/1BdGYOWbZMlxX

AM2DM [Jones, S. & Fitzgerald, I.]. (2019c, January 28). Opening [Twitter broadcast]. Retrieved from: https://www.pscp.tv/BuzzFeedNews/1lPKqdwbjLbxb

AM2DM. [Mack, D.]. (2017, November 15). “It just feels like this was a big win” @davidmackau says what his dad's reaction to Australia's marriage equality vote meant to him #AM2DM [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/930823097753550848

AM2DM [Mack, D.]. (2018, July 11). @BuzzFeedBen and @davidmackau go head to head over the Washington Post op-ed about SCOTUS nominee Brett Kavanaugh being a great carpool dad 👀 [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1017053912329621504

AM2DM. [Mack, D.]. (2019, March 21). Full interview: @katiecouric sits down with #AM2DM to discuss the State of Science Index, climate change, the 2020 election, and more. [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1108898084203814912

AM2DM. [McNeal, S.]. (2018, September 6). What @lestanberry wants people to take away from her @Refinery29 "Money Diaries" book: "I would love for women to start talking more about their finances." [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: twitter.com/am2dm/status/1037642312497524736?lang=en

AM2DM. [McNeal, S]. (2019, February 11). TV anchor @noblejonesontv shares why she decided to start wearing her natural hair at work - and what happened when she did [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1094984905333735424

AM2DM. [Obell, S.]. (2018a, November 16). @SylviaObell on cultural icon Kim Porter's legacy [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1063449793874329600

AM2DM. [Obell, S.]. (2018b, May 31). People have mixed feelings about Drake's statement regarding the blackface photo Pusha T posted of him, says @SylviaObell [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1002202957100666881

AM2DM. [Obell, S.]. (2018c, January 23). Fat Joe says he started his new song with "Fuck Trump" because the president left people in Puerto Rico without power and disrespected Haiti [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/955897556726239232

AM2DM. [Obell, S.]. (2019, February 1). From beychella to Michelle Obama's autobiography, @TheEssenceOf_ and @SylviaObell present: Things black women still managed to accomplish since the last black history month despite y'all being racist as hell [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1091476878760660992

AM2DM. [Prakash, N.]. (2019, March 29). HUD is charging Facebook with violating fair housing laws by allowing advertisers to avoid showing housing ads to people because of their race, religion, gender, and other traits, reports @nidhiprakash [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/AM2DM/status/1111635222372798464

Barry, J. & Allen, D. (Executive Producers). (1953). *Winky-Dink and you.* [Television series]. New York, NY: Universal Television.

Battaglio, S. (2018, September 25). ABC wins the morning and evening ratings races, but network news is still losing viewers overall. *The Los Angeles Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.latimes.com

Bochco, S. (Executive Producer). (1981). *Hill street blues.* [Television series]. Los Angeles, CA: MTM Enterprises.

Brathwaite, L.F. (2018, April 20). Waking up & getting woke with BuzzFeed's Saeed Jones. *Chill Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.chill.us/commentary/2018/ 4/20/ waking-getting-woke-buzzfeeds-saeed-jones

Bratich, J. (2011). User-generated discontent. *Cultural Studies, 25,* 621-640. doi:10.1080/09502386.2011.600552

Bray, H. (2012, September 29). Tuning in to the end of radio's golden age, 50 years ago. *The Boston Globe.* Retrieved from: https://www.bostonglobe.com

Breneman, T. (Executive Producer). (1941). Breakfast in Hollywood. [Radio program]. Hollywood, CA: Warner Bros.

Buozis, M. & Creech, B. (2018). Reading news as narrative. *Journalism Studies, 19,* 1430-1446. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2017.1279030

Calka, M. (2014). Polymediation: the relationship between self and media. In A. Herbig, A. Herrmann, & A. Tyma (Eds.), *Beyond new media: Discourse and critique in a polymediated age* (pp. 15-30). London, UK: Lexington Books.

Campbell, K.K. (1995). Gender and genre: Loci of invention and contradiction in the earliest speeches by U.S. women. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 81*, 479-495. doi:10.1080/00335639509384130

Campbell, K.K. & Jamieson, K.H. (1978). Form and genre in rhetorical criticism: An introduction. In K.K. Campbell & K.H. Jamieson (Eds.) *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 9-32). Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association.

Carey, J. (1996). *Winky Dink to Stargazer: Five decades of interactive television.* UnivEd Interactive TV Conference, University of Edinburgh.

Carter, B. (1989, October 14). Jane Pauley is expected to leave 'today' show. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com

Cawelti, J. G. (1985) The question of popular genres. *Journal of Popular Film and Television, 13*, 55-61. doi:10.1080/01956051.1985.10661993

Cheadle, H. (2011, March 1). Your favorite comedy exists because of The Larry Sanders Show. *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from: vulture.com/2011/03/your-favorite-comedy-exists- because-of-the-larry-sanders-show.html

Choi, Y.J. (2017). Emergence of the viewing public: Does social television viewing transform individual viewers into a viewing public? *Telematics and Informatics, 34,* 1059-1070. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2017.04.014

Constine, J. (2018, October 10). *Snapchat becomes the mobile HBO with 12 daily scripted original shows.* Techcruch. Retrieved from: https://techcrunch.com/2018/10/10/snapchat-originals/

Corn, M. & Sherwood, R. (Executive Producers). (1975). *Good morning America.* [Television series]. New York, NY: ABC News Productions.

Current NBC shows. (2019). Retrieved from: nbc.com/shows/current

De Moraes, L. (2014, March 12). Live and well: Morning shows gain ratings ground thanks to stiff competition & focus on interactive programming. *Deadline.* Retrieved from: https://deadline.com/2014/03/morning-show-ratings-gains-today-good-morning-america-rivals-697931/

Deuze, M., Bruns, A., & Neuberger, C. (2007). Preparing for an age of participatory news. *Journalism Practice, 1,* 332-338. doi:10.1080/17512780701504864

Dorff, V. (2015, November 20). Internet television - an anniversary. *Huffington Post.* Retrieved from: huffingtonpost.com/victor-dorff/internet-and-television-o_b_8602316.html

Dorff, V. (Producer). (1995, November 23). *World news now.* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: American Broadcasting Network.

Dyess-Nugent, P., Bowman, D., VanDerWerff, T., McGee, R., & Koski, G. (2012, September 13). Law & Order: Slave to formula, or crackling entertainment? *TV/AV Club.* Retrieved from: tv.avclub.com/law-order-slave-to-formula-or-crackling-entertainme- 1798233362

Edelsburg, N. (2018, January 28). AM2DM on BuzzFeed news paves the way for the future of morning shows. *Found Remote.* Retrieved from http://foundremote.com

Edgerton, G. R., & Rose, B. G. (Eds). (2008). *Thinking outside the box: A contemporary television genre reader.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.

Eggert, J. (2015, November 14). Who is John Dickerson? A guide to the CBS democratic debate moderator. *Mic.* Retrieved from: https://mic.com/articles/128507/who-is-john-dickerson -a-guide-to-cbs-democratic-debate-moderator#.z2O673J47

Erdal, I. J. (2007). Researching media convergence and cross media news production. *Nordicom Review, 28,* 51-61. doi:10.1515/nor-2017-0209

Falk, S. (2016). Why it's time we stop categorizing TV comedies. *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.vulture.com/2016/06/why-its-time-to-stop-categorizing-tv-comedies.html

Falkenburg, J. & McCrary, T. (Executive Producers). (1946). *The Tex and Jinx show*. [Radio program]. New York, NY: NBC Radio Productions.

Farey-Jones, D. (2019, February 7). Twitter reports 23% rise in Q4 ad revenue and first full-year profit. *PR Week.* Retrieved from: https://www.prweek.com/article/1525206/twitter-reports-23-rise-q4-ad-revenue-first-full-year-profit

Farrey, T. (1995, August 31). Internet broadcast is wave of the future. *The Seattle Times*. Retrieved from: community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=19950831&slug=2139154

Feldman, B. (2019, January 29). BuzzFeed's experimental era is over. *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from: http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/01/buzzfeeds-expansion- contraction-and-layoffs.html

Feuer, J. (1980). The concept of live television: Ontology as ideology. In A. Kaplan (Ed.), *Regarding television: Critical approaches* (12-22). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Ford, A. (2017, December 18). The epic romance of Saeed Jones and Isaac Fitzgerald. *Into Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.intomore.com/culture/The-Epic-Romance- of-Saeed-Jones-and-Isaac-Fitzgerald

Forgays, D. K., Hyman, I., & Schrieber, J. (2014). Texting everywhere for everything: Gender and age differences in cell phone etiquette and use. *Computers in Human Behavior, 31,* 314-321. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.10.053

Frankovitch, M. (Executive Producer). (1946). *Breakfast with Binnie and Mike.* [Radio program]. Los Angeles, CA: KFVD A.M.

Frederick, B. (2019, January 11). Not everything needs to be prestige: The value of formulaic TV. *Fansided.* Retrieved from: fansided.com/2019/01/07/not-everything-needs-to-be-prestige-tv/

Friedman, M. (2018, January 2). Who is Hoda Kotb? 5 facts you need to know about the Today show co-anchor. *Good Housekeeping.* Retrieved from: https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/entertainment/news/a47517/hoda-kotb-facts/

Garber, M. (2011, June 18). New York Times + BuzzFeed = OMG. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/06/new-york-times-buzzfeed-omg/258658/

Gayle King. (2019, January 15). Retrieved from: https://www.cbsnews.com/team/gayle-king/

George Stephanopoulos' biography. (2017, June 5). Retrieved from: https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/george-stephanopoulos-good-morning-america-anchor-biography/story?id=133369

GfK. (2019, January 14). The social side of TV viewing. [Infographic]. Retrieved from: https://www.gfk.com/en-us/insights/infographic/the-social-side-of-tvideo-viewing/

Gitlin, T. (1983). *Inside prime time.* New York, NY: Pantheon Publishing.

Good Morning! Breakfast Old Time Radio Shows! (2019, April 1). Retrieved from: https://www.oldradioshows.org/2016/04/good-morning-breakfast-old-time-radio-shows/

Gunn, J. & Frentz, T. (2008). The Da Vinci code as alchemical rhetoric. *Western Journal of Communication, 72*, 213-238. doi:10.1080/10570310802210114

Ha, A. (2017, October 4). BuzzFeed says its morning show AM2DM is reaching 1M daily viewers. *Techcrunch.* Retrieved from: https://techcrunch.com/2017/10/04/am-to-dm/

Hadden, G. (Executive Producer). (1998). *Fox & friends.* [Television Series]. New York, NY: Fox News Productions.

Hay, J., & Couldry, N. (2011) Rethinking convergence/culture. *Cultural Studies, 25*, 473-486. doi:10.1080/09502386.2011.600527

Herbig. A., Herrmann, A., & Tyma, A. (2014). We need a word. In A. Herbig, A. Herrmann, & A. Tyma (Eds.), *Beyond new media: Discourse and critique in a polymediated age* (pp. ix-xxiii). London, UK: Lexington Books.

Harrell, J. & Linkugel, W.A. (1978). On rhetorical genre: An organizing perspective. *Philosophy & Rhetoric, 11,* 262-281. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40237086

Herrmann, A., & Herbig, A. (2018). Returning to Kolchak: Polymediated narrative, discourse, and supernatural drama. *International Journal of Communication, 12,* 222-240. Retrieved from: http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/7827/2224

Hutchinson, J. (2016). Moving convergence culture towards cultural intermediation: Social media and cultural inclusion. *Journal of Media and Cultural Studies, 30*, 158-170. doi:10.1080/10304312.2016.1143161

Jancovich, M. (2000). "A Real Shocker": Authenticity, genre, and the struggle for distinction. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies, 14*, 23-34. doi:10.1080/713657675

Jasinski, J. (2001). The status of theory and method in rhetorical criticism. *Western Journal of Communication, 65,* 249-270. doi.org/10.1080/10570310109374705.

Jenkins, H. (2004). The cultural logic of media convergence. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 7,* 33-43. doi:10.1177/1367877904040603

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Jensen, J.F. (2008) Interactive television - a brief media history. In: Tscheligi M., Obrist M., Lugmayr A. (eds), *Changing Television Environments*. EuroITV 2008. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 5066. Berlin, GER: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-540-69478-6_1

JFK1963NEWSVIDEOS. (2016, July 10). *NBC news 9-11-2001 live coverage (complete Today show)* [video file]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89G749GrtBQ

Jones, S. (2017a, September 22). Do you think it's okay for people to curse on morning shows? Asking for a friend [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/theferocity/status/911252920431185920

Jones, S. (2017b, September 22). Help us decide: should the word "fuck" be allowed on @AM2DM ? 👀 [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/theferocity/status/911253711908896768

Jones, S. (2017c, September 22). Do you think it's a good idea for @IsaacFitzgerald and me to use the word "goddamn" on @AM2DM? [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/theferocity/status/911254235454504961

Jones, S. (2019, January 24). Gonna do @AM2DM tomorrow exactly how we always do: Talking about the news that matters to us, the timeline, or both. So yeah, should be honest and interesting. Ain't no way forward but through [Twitter post]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/theferocity/status/1088231857865527296

Katzowitz, J. (2018, February 19). How 'AM to DM' became Twitter's best, and only, morning talk show. *The Daily Dot.* Retrieved from: dailydot.com/upstream/buzzfeed-am-to-dm/

Kelley-Romano, S. (2008). Trust no one: The conspiracy genre on American television. *Southern Communication Journal, 73*, 105-121. doi:10.1080/10417940802009509

Kellner, D. (1982). Television, mythology, and ritual. *Praxis, 6,* 1330155. Retrieved from: https://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/kellner8.pdf

Kiligallen, D. & Kollmar, R. (Executive Producers). (1945). *Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick.* [Radio program]. New York, NY: WOR Radio Productions.

Kim, D. (2018, September 7). Is Facebook Watch a serious streaming platform? These 6 shows say yes. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com

Koblin, J. (2018, June 7). Prolific TV producer Greg Berlanti extends deal with Warner Bros. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com

Kornfield, S. (2012). *Postfeminist detectives: Television genres, genders, and crimes.* Retrieved from Pennsylvania State Electronic Theses and Dissertations Database (7443).

Korson, A. (Executive Producer). (2007). *Morning joe.* New York, NY: MSNBC Productions.

Lafayette, J. (2018, July 31). Linear TV dominates time spent watching video: Nielsen. *Broadcasting & Cable.* Retrieved from: https://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/linear -tv-dominates-time-spent-watching-video-nielsen

Landrum, S. (2018). Millennials are happiest when they feel connected to their co-workers. *Forbes Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.forbes.com/sites/sarahlandrum/2018/01 /19/millennials-are-happiest-when-they-feel-connected-to-their-co-workers/#d8fa7873a2fd

Lefrance, A. (2012, August 21). BuzzFeed with a press pass: What happens when the GIF kings try to take Washington? *Nieman.* Retrieved from: http://www.niemanlab.org

Leist, L., & Mazzarelli, T. (Executive Producers). (1952). *Today.* [Television series]. New York, NY: NBC News.

Lenzo, K. (Executive Producer). (2018). *Cheddar politics.* [Television series]. New York, NY: Cheddar.

Lepore, S. (2015, November 23). In a fall TV season bereft of comedy, the laugh track continues to fade. *New York Daily News.* Retrieved from: http://www.nydailynews.com/

Levenshus, A. (2016). Building context-based knowledge of government social media communication through an ethnographic study of the US Coast Guard. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 44*, 174-193. doi:10.1080/00909882.2016.1155727

Lin, J., Sung, Y., & Chen, K. (2016). Social television: Examining the antecedents and consequences of connected TV viewing. *Computers in Human Behavior, 58,* 171-178. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.12.025

Lindelof, D. (Executive Producer). (2004). *Lost* [Television broadcast]. Los Angeles, CA: Bad Robot.

Livingstone, S. (2004). Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies. *Communication Review, 7*, 3–14. doi:10.1080/10714420490280152

Londino, C.M. (2017). The Today show: Transforming morning television. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lorigo, P. (Executive Producer). (2018). *DC daily*. [Television series]. Burbank, CA: DC Entertainment.

Lorre, C., Molario, S., Prady, B., & Kaplan, E. (Executive Producers). (2007). *The big bang theory.* [Television series]. Burbank, CA: Warner Bros Television & Chuck Lorre Productions.

Lotz, A. (2014). *The television will be revolutionized.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Lyons, M. & Poniewozik, J. (2017, November 29). Matt Lauer, Charlie Rose and the sexism of morning tv. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com

Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2012). Polymedia: Towards a new theory of digital media in interpersonal communication. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 16,* 169-187. doi:10.1177/1367877912452486

Malone, M. (2018, December 13). Just shy of 500 scripted originals: FX survey. *Broadcasting and Cable.* Retrieved from: broadcastingcable.com/news/just-shy-of- 500-scripted-originals-says-fx-survey

Maheshwari, S. & Koblin, J. Why traditional TV is in trouble. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com

McAteer, O. (2018). Behind BuzzFeed's bold move to launch 'AM to DM' show on Twitter. *Campaign US.* Retrieved from: campaignlive.com/article/behind-b uzzfeeds- bold-move-launch-am-dm-show-twitter/1457977

McGee, M. (1990). Text, context, and the fragmentation of contemporary culture. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 54,* 274-289. doi.org/10.1080/10570319009374343

McKerrow, R. (2009). Critical rhetoric: Theory and praxis. *Communication Monographs, 56,* 91-111. doi.org/10.1080/03637758909390253

McNeill, D. (Executive Producer). (1933). *The breakfast club.* [Radio program]. Chicago, IL: NBC Blue Network.

Metz, R. (1977). *The Today show: An inside look at 25 tumultuous years ... and the colorful and controversial people behind the scenes.* Chicago, IL: Playboy Press.

Miller, C. (1985). Rhetorical community: The cultural basis of genre. In A. Freedman & P. Medway, (Eds.), *Genre and the New Rhetoric* (pp. 67-78). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Miller, D. (Executive Producer). (1975). *CBS this morning.* [Television Series]. New York, NY: CBS News Productions.

Mitchell, A. (2018, December 3). Americans still prefer watching to reading the news – and mostly still through television. *Pew Research Center.* Retrieved from: https://www.journalism.org/2018/12/03/americans-still-prefer-watching-to-reading-the-news-and-mostly-still-through-television/

Mittell, J. (2004). *Genre and television: From cop shows to cartoons in American culture.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Molla, R. (2017, November 30). BuzzFeed is losing website traffic as readers head for more traditional news sites. *Recode.* Retrieved from https://www.recode.net

Morgado, J. (Executive Producer). (2013). *New day.* [Television Series]. New York, NY: CNN Productions.

Murphy, J.M. (2003). "Our mission and our moment": George W. Bush and September 11th. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs, 6,* 607-632. doi:10.1353/rap.2004.0013

Neale, S. (1990). Question of genre. *Screen, 31*, 45-66. doi:10.1093/screen/31.1.45

Nedd, A. (2019, January 25). How to tell is a show was born to be binged-watched. *Mashable.* Retrieved from: https://mashable.com/article/tv-shows-made-for-binging/#T IvYuFC1Miq7

Nededog, J. (2017, March 1). The number of US homes without a TV has doubled in just 6 years. *Business Insider.* Retrieved from: https://www.businessinsider.com /how-many-tvs-in-american-homes-number-us-department-energy-2017-3

Newcomb, H. (1974). *TV: The most popular art.* New York, NY: Anchor Press / Doubleday.

Norah O'Donnell. (2018, October 3). Retrieved from: https://www.cbsnews.com/team/norah-odonnell/

O'Brien, J. (2018). I don't know Kavanaugh the judge. But Kavanaugh the carpool dad is one great guy. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com

Okoye, J. (2017, June 23). 7 ways technology has changed television. *Technopedia.* Retrieved from: techopedia.com/2/29509/technology-trends/7-ways-technology-has-changed-television

Oppenheimer, J. & Arnaz, D. (Executive Producers). (1951). *I love Lucy.* Los Angeles, CA: Desilu Studios.

Ouellette, L. & Wilson, J. (2011). Women's work. *Cultural Studies, 25*, 548-565. doi:10.1080/09502386.2011.600546

Parsons, C., Burnett, M., & Probst, J. (Executive Producers). (2000). *Survivor.* [Television Series]. Santa Monica, CA: One Three Media.

Patel, N. (2017, December). Live journalism comes of age. *Neiman Labs.* Retrieved from: http://www.niemanlab.org/2017/12/live-journalism-comes-of-age/

Patel, S. (2019, January 7). Twitter and BuzzFeed extend AM to DM for another year. *Digiday.* Retrieved from: https://digiday.com/media/twitter-buzzfeed-extend-dm-another-year/

Patton, J. H. (1976). Generic criticism: Typology at an inflated price. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 6,* 4-8. doi:10.1080/02773947609390426

Perez, S. (2018, July 25). US cord cutters to reach 33 million this year, faster than expected. *Techcruch*. Retrieved from: https://techcrunch.com/2018/07/25/u-s-cord-cutters-to-reach-33-million-this-year-faster-than-expected/

Periscope. (2019). AM to DM Full Episodes, BuzzFeed News. Retrieved from: https://www.pscp.tv/BuzzFeedNews/1yoKMjPlXEzGQ

Pink, D. (2018, June 11). The world needs Netflix minis. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/06/the-future-of-television-is-being-able-to-pick-shows-by-length/562547/

Plestis, C. (Executive Producer). (2019). *The masked singer.* Studio City, CA: Smart Dog Media.

Poggi, J. (2017, September 21). BuzzFeed's new Twitter morning show remains true to TV. *AdAge.* Retrieved from: https://adage.com/article/media/buzzfeed- remains-true-tv-twitter-morning-show/310548/

Porch, S. (2018, May 30). Buzzfeed's 'AM to DM' launches Twitter into the morning show wars. *Decider.* Retrieved from: decider.com/2018/05/30/am2dm-buzzfeed-morning- shows-on-twitter/

Pruner, A. (2018, January 12). 8 ways Lost changed TV forever. *Gamespot.* Retrieved from: gamespot.com/gallery/8-ways-lost-changed-tv-forever/2900-1749/

Ragusa, G. (2018, November 20). Why are viewers obsessed with 'the real housewives'? *Cheat Sheet.* Retrieved from: https://www.cheatsheet.com/entertainment/why-are-viewers-obsessed-with-the-real-housewives.html/

Raymond, A. (2014, September 22). Why are 23.4 million people watching The Big Bang Theory? *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.vulture.com/2014/05/big-bang-theory-ratings.html

Reider, R. (2015, June 15). BuzzFeed a burgeoning journalistic force. *USA Today.* Retrieved from: usatoday.com

Rennie, D. (2018, March 13). *J. Fred Muggs - the chimpanzee that saved NBC's 'Today' show.* Retrieved from: https://allthatsinteresting.com/j-fred-muggs

Renninger, B. (2014). Where I can be myself … where I can speak my mind: Networked counterpublics in a polymedia environment. *New Media & Society, 17,* 1513-1529. doi:10.1177/1461444814530095

Romano, N. (2019, January 17). Netflix puts *You* on track for over 40 million member views in first four weeks. *Entertainment Weekly.* Retrieved from: https://ew.com/tv/2019/01/17/netflix-you-ratings/

Rose, B. (1985). *TV genres: A handbook and reference guide.* Westport: Greenwood Press.

Rothman, M. (2016, April 19). Michael Strahan joins 'Good Morning America' full-time, leaving 'Live'. Retrieved from: https://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/michael-strahan- joins-good-morning-america-full-time/story?id=38509323

Rutenberg, J. (2019, January 20). BuzzFeed news in limbo land. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com

Saltzis, K., & Dickinson, R. (2008). Inside the changing newsroom: Journalists' responses to media convergence. *Aslib Proceedings, 60,* 216-228. doi:10.1108/00012530810879097

Shandling, G., Grey, B., Simms, P., Tolan, P., & Barron, F. (Executive Producers). (1992). *The Larry Sanders show.* [Television series]. Hollywood, CA: HBO Entertainment.

Robin Roberts' biography. (2017, June 5). Retrieved from: https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/robin-roberts-biography/story?id=128237

Rubenking, B. (2016). Multitasking with TV: Media technology, genre, and audience influences. *Communication Research Reports, 33,* 324-331. doi:10.1080/08824096.2016.1224167

Schudson, M. (1978). *Discovering the news: A social history of american newspapers.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Shandling, G., Grey, B., Simms, P., Tolan, P., & Barron, F. (Executive Producers). (1992). *The Larry Sanders show.* New York, NY: Brillstein-Gray Entertainment, HBO Entertainment, & Columbia Pictures Television.

Shaw, L. (2018, October 4). The Hollywood empire strikes back against Netflix. *Bloomberg Businessweek.* Retrieved from: https://www.bloomberg.com /news/articles/2018- 10-04/netflix-is-forcing-hollywood-into-a-talent-war

Siega, M., Girolamo, G., Morgenstein, L., Schechter, S., Gamble, S., Berlanti, G., & Krieger, L. T. (Executive Producers). (2018). *You.* Burbank, CA: Berlanti Productions.

Sigel, Lee. (2007). *Not remotely controlled: Notes on television.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Sorkin, A., Wells, J., Schlamme, T., Misiano, C., Graves, A., O'Donnell, L., & Noah, P. (Executive Producers). (1999). *The west wing.* Hollywood, CA: Warner Bros Television.

Spangler, T. (2019a, January 7). Twitter renews BuzzFeed News 'AM to DM' morning talk-and-tweet show. *Variety.* Retrieved from: variety.com/2019/digital/news/ twitter-buzzfeed-am-to-dm-morning-renewed-2019-1203099344/

Spanger, T. (2019b, January 23). BuzzFeed set to lay off 15% of its employees. *Variety.* https://variety.com/2019/digital/news/buzzfeed-layoff-15-percent-employees-1203116266/

Stelter, B. (2011, December 12). BuzzFeed adds Politico writer. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com

Stelter, B. (2012, June 20). NBC prepares to replace Ann Curry on 'today.' *The New York Times.* Retrieved from: https://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com

Stelter, B. (2013). *Top of the morning: Inside the cutthroat world of morning television*. New York, NY: Grand Central Publishing.

Stone, C. (Executive Producer). (1949). *Wake-up ranch.* [Radio program]. Los Angeles, CA: KFVD Radio.

Storey, J. (2015). *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Tandoc, E. (2017). Five ways BuzzFeed is preserving (or transforming) the journalistic field. *Journalism, 19,* 200-216. doi:10.1177/1464884917691785

Television Academy Foundation (n.d.) *Today*. Retrieved from: https://interviews.televisionacademy.com/shows/today

Thacker, I. (2018, May 11). Rethinking workplace design for millennials and gen z. *Entrepreneur.* Retrieved from: https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/313295

Thorton, L.J. (2016). The road to "reader-friendly": US newspapers and readership in the late twentieth century. *Cogent Social Sciences, 2,* 1-13. doi:10.1080/23311886.2016.1189055

Today. (2014, June 2). *Today's first broadcast: Jan. 14, 1952* [video file]. Retrieved from: youtube.com/watch?v=vY4_iv3UbGg

Today. (2019, March 27). *Unvaccinated kids in Rockland banned from public spaces amid measles outbreak* [video file]. Retrieved from: https://www.today.com/video/ unvaccinated-kids-in-rockland-banned-from-public-spaces-amid-measles-outbreak-1465587267756

Tsotsis, A. (2012, January 9). Viral aggregator BuzzFeed raises $15.5 million to transform the way people get their news. *Techcrunch.* Retrieved from: techcrunch.com/2012/01/09 /viral-aggregator-buzzfeed-raises-15-5m-to-transform-the-way-people-get-their-news/

Vande Berg, L. (1999). The critical sense: Three decades of critical media studies in the wake of Samuel L. Becker's "rhetorical studies for the contemporary world." *Communication Studies, 50,* 72-81. doi:10.1080/10510979909388473

Walker, J. R., & Ferguson, D. A. (1998). *The broadcast television industry.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Wieten, J. & Pantti, M. (2005). Obsessed with the audience: Breakfast television revisited. *Media, Culture & Society, 27,* (21-39). doi: 10.1177/0163443705049056

William, R. (1974). *Television: Technology and cultural form.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Winchel, B. (2019). 4 ways 'Good Morning America' nails social media storytelling. *PR Daily.* Retrieved from: https://www.prdaily.com/4-ways-good-morning-america-nails- social-media-storytelling-efforts/

Wolf, D. (Executive Producer). (1990). *Law & order.* [Television Series]. Universal City, CA: Wolf Films, Universal Television.

Yao, R. (2017, September 26). A quick note on AM2DM, Buzzfeed's live morning show on Twitter. *Medium.* Retrieved from: https://medium.com/ipg-media-lab/a-quick-note-on- am2dm-buzzfeeds-live-morning-show-on-twitter-78d35ead3e3f

Zoller Seitz, M. (2019, April 4). Is Game of Thrones the last show we'll watch together? *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from: https://www.vulture.com/2019/04/game-of-thrones-the-last-show-we-watch-together.html