

HELL HATH NO FURY LIKE A SCORNED SOAP FAN:
A CASE STUDY OF SOAP OPERA FAN ACTIVISM

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Sarah Jane Adams

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Sarah Jane Adams

The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Ross F. Collins

Chair

Chair (signature)

Dr. Carrie Anne Platt

Dr. Mark Meister

Dr. Christina Weber

Approved by Department Chair:

June 20, 2012

Date

(Dr. Mark Meister / Department Chair)

Signature

ABSTRACT

Soaps operas, or daytime serials, have long been a staple of American culture. In April 2011, ABC-Disney announced the cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*. Cancellations propelled the fans of these programs to launch efforts to save not only the shows, but the genre. Through the use of social media, websites, and traditional off-line activities that included calling and letter-writing, fans strived to make their voices heard. The study examines the creation of an online community and discourse through a textual-analysis case study of blogs on two fan activist websites. Dahlberg's criteria for presence in an online public space and Habermas' public sphere allows for the presentation of ideas within a group to encourage a sense of democracy in a grassroots effort to be heard against corporate interests. The case study will examine a fan website, *Sudz.Tv*, as a group organized in a virtual public space.

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"There is a destiny that makes us brothers. None goes his way alone. All that we send into the lives of others, Comes back into our own."

~~Edwin Markham (1950, p. 18; Schermering, 1986, p. 10)

The journey we take to learn and discover new things is not without its trials. The trials are what make us stronger. The individuals we meet on that journey provide the guiding light to the goals we desire. The journey to complete my degree has allowed me to expand my interests and appreciation regarding research and scholarship. The journey has allowed me to expand my horizons and thinking on a wide variety of topics. In addition to broadening my horizons, it allowed me to develop tools for researching and interpreting what I have observed in the media and the world around me. As we traverse the hills and dales of the journey, we meet those individuals who give us an encouraging smile, insight, counsel, and guidance.

As we only have one life to live, the importance of making every moment count is the essence of learning. The people I have met on this journey, including friends, family, soap fans, researchers, and scholars, have provided rewards that cannot be measured but only embraced as gifts.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those individuals who believe there is a dream and that, at the base of the rainbow, there is a tomorrow. This research is dedicated to all soap fans and the shows we love.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives” (Russell, 1995, p. 11).

These words were delivered daily by MacDonald Carey, a principal actor on the show *Days of Our Lives*, since its premiere in November 1965; even though he is no longer on the show, his voiceover is still used at the beginning of every episode. The show was co-created by Ted and Betty Corday, Allan Chase, as well as Irna Phillips. Daytime serials, or soap operas, have been a part of the American broadcasting landscape for 80 years, but changes in society have challenged the hold they once had. A soap opera is defined as “a continuing dramatic fictional television program, presented in multiple serial installments each week, through a narrative composed of interlocking story lines that focus on a relationship of specific characters within a community” (Mumford, 1995, p. 18).

The opening credits for *Days of Our Lives* demonstrate the relevancy of these shows in the daily lives of the viewers and fans. The hourglass represents the passage of time and the challenges we face in our daily lives, in addition to the world around us. The hourglass signals the passage of the of soap opera in a traditional sense from our collective culture. The apparent decline of the genre signifies the loss of a cultural legacy that dates back to the beginning of broadcast serials on the radio in the 1920s and is part of American popular culture. The cultural legacy of the soap operas is that they have influenced scripted, narrative television in the United States and abroad. The influence is seen in soap operas and narrative serials in the United Kingdom, continental Europe, the Middle East, Australia, Africa, and the telenovelas of Latin America. These shows enjoy a world-wide audience transcending language and culture. The genre allows for education as well as multi-generational interaction and discourse on relationships, families, romance, and social issues (Spence, 2005). This legacy seems endangered

in the United States as network executives seek to cancel the soaps and replace them with apparently cheaper programs that some observers state do not garner the same viewership loyalty as the soaps (Levin, 2011). As the sands run through the hourglass, viewers and fans see that their favorite shows are endangered, a destruction of American popular culture icons.

The Literature Review briefly addresses the history of soap operas and their relevance culturally. The Literature Review further addresses the fans and their relationship with the show related to the idea of cultural relevance and activism. The goal of this study is to examine the interaction of fans in civic engagement and activism. The study also observes how participation influences the group structure of online communities through organization and communication to achieve cultural legitimacy. This study examines the motivation of the fan as they try to organize activities in the act of saving their shows through online participation and communication of the group's movement to save serial dramas, in particular, soap operas. The drive is inspired by the leader who is seen as a person who organizes and rallies the troops for the struggle with the reasoning of cultural and economic preservation and legitimacy. Within this act of online civic engagement, there is a struggle of differing ideas and outside pressure by competing interests and enemies of the movement. The act of engagement allows for the voices of a marginalized group to be heard in the greater public. This study provides research about soap-opera fan culture in its present state, and it allows for future studies of fan groups, grassroots activism, and culture.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of the Literature Review is to examine research that is relevant to the study of fan culture and grassroots activism. The importance of studying reactions to the cancellation of the soaps provides a voice for those individuals who are trying to preserve the shows, a cultural legacy that is part of America. The fans believe that soaps are an art form, and through activism, the fans believe in preserving an art form as Scardaville (2009) contends “that soap operas may have attained a limited type of aesthetic legitimacy within certain localized circles but not across the general public” (p. 367). Through the process of fandom, there is a creation of culture and a sense of import. In the context of this study, Williams (2001) defined culture as the process of human perfection, documentation, and social definition. With the concept of selective tradition (Williams, 2001), the fans dictate what is key to the story. The networking of people allows the creation of a public presence involved in preserving the art of the genre as opposed to a single show.

In the eyes of the fans, or consumers, the goal is to preserve and legitimize the shows as an art form through the work of the actors, writers, and creative energies in a public setting. By legitimizing the movement, as an aspect of economic, creative, and cultural legitimacy, it provides an identity to the group. The preservation of cultural legacies is important to the fans. The fans reasonably believe that saving the scripted dramas is necessary, whether the shows are soap operas or other forms of serial dramas. The soap operas or daytime serials provide an avenue of escapism and a sense of familial bonding through multi-generational participation.

The primary goal of the study is to examine the relationship between the use of social media and the fans in activism. The use of social media allows for immediate communication in community building. The idea of community allows the union of mutual attitudes concerning

soap opera fandom by creating a singular unit. The variety of soap fan communities allows participation of many individuals and gives insights into a fan movement. Granted, soap operas are part of popular culture, but Williams (2001) asserts a strong argument; once it [a soap opera] is gone, you cannot reconstruct it and gather the true emotional impact of the phenomena relating to the fan activities, emotions, and culture. If a fan culture is reconstructed, it will only be understood in abstract ideas, not by the original emotions and values connected to the original participants.

Simply stated, researchers and future historians cannot re-create the fan culture for the cancelled soap operas. From surviving serials, they can surmise what the culture was like, but future research cannot truly recapture the lost fan culture. However, each show is unique, and the ability to understand that difference is lost. These unique differences are the texts that are lost and cannot be reclaimed. These programs have had a historical presence in our culture for 80 years. Textual documents allow communication and English studies to examine the rhetoric of the fans in relation to greater society. These programs affect people by creating discourse and educational opportunities to explore controversial issues through the serial narratives. The soap operas provide an opportunity for interaction between the viewer and character in an environment where the fan felt safe and in this environment, the fans and viewers are able to express their fears, concerns, heartaches, and joys. Soap operas allow for multi-generational storytelling that involves integrating several generations of viewers into the text. Soap operas are a legitimate art form that involves the spoken word and dramatic interpretation.

The following research supports the study of fans, fan culture, and activism. The thesis provides evidence for fan and cultural legitimacy in the public sphere by having the fans' voices heard by the larger public whether on the Internet or through off-line approaches. The thesis

demonstrates the relationship between existing research and issues surrounding fan reactions to the programs' cancellation. The synthesis of previous research provides insight about what motivates the fans to become activists in regard to their shows and identity.

Background of the Case

The definition of the soap opera genre usually includes the need to use music for background in a scene (Mumford, 1995) or the need to highlight certain characters. Feuer (1994) develops a further definition by clarifying the distinction between daytime and primetime serials. Primetime serials, according to Feuer, tend to have a less conservative sense of morality, emphasize power and big business, and contain more action-filled scenes. In contrast, daytime serials deal more with women's issues, social issues, and cultural issues relating to social mores or fashion. Edmondson and Rounds (1973) assert that the soap operas are stories about stereotypical American life. The soap operas center around personal happiness and the family, typically featuring middle-class "average" people (Edmondson & Rounds, 1973). Efforts to attain happiness are reflected in the everyday struggles and misfortune (Edmondson & Rounds, 1973). In many respects, the daytime and primetime serials represent the fabric of American life. It should be further stated that not all serials are soap operas despite being narratives. The key difference is story length, a finite number of characters, and story arcs. Comedies and dramas are considered serials because of the scripted narratives, regardless of length and complexity, that actors present on screen. Comedies and dramas typically focus on a case or issue in a stand-alone episode, whereas a soap opera or daytime serial is an ongoing work of fiction in a serial form on radio or television.

LaGuardia (1974) ascertained that narrative serials date back to 1928, with *Amos and Andy* and a number of serials were created for evening broadcasts on early radio. Writers

developed programs for daytime broadcasts by taking cues from the success of *Amos and Andy*, *The Goldbergs*, and other evening radio serials. The earliest daytime radio serial premiered on October 20, 1930, on WGN, a Chicago radio station, with an unsponsored broadcast of *Painted Dreams*, created by Irna Phillips (Allen, 1985; Edmondson & Rounds, 1973; LaGuardia, 1974). During the 1930s, the tagging of daytime serials as soap operas arose because early sponsors marketed soap-related products to women. The sponsors also had a hand in producing these shows (Meyers, 1997; Russell, 1995). The participation of advertising agencies and corporate sponsors was evident with the soap operas created by Irna Phillips because Procter and Gamble was an early sponsor (Allen, 1985; LaGuardia, 1974). Meyers (1997) ascertained that radio engaged in changes for business, social habits and forms of entertainment; television merely continued and furthered the ideas.

The work of Phillips, Elaine Sterne Carrington, and Anne and Frank Hummert greatly influenced future writers and producers in the genre who later created shows for television. Carrington created radio serials, and she is best known for *Pepper Young's Family* and the television serial *Follow Your Heart* (LaGuardia, 1974). The Hummerts produced roughly 15 serials for radio, and their most recognized shows were *Ma Perkins*, *The Romance of Helen Trent*, and *Valiant Lady* (Meyers, 1997). *Valiant Lady* migrated to television for a short run in the 1950s (Schermering, 1987).

Serials created by Phillips focused on the sanctity of the family, character development, pacing, and propelling stories from strong characters (LaGuardia, 1974). Philips, Carrington, and the Hummerts were inspired to create their stories from the people they saw in everyday life and from other serials of the day (LaGuardia, 1974). The idea of the storytelling was presented through different perspectives, especially personal and social experiences. Phillips focused on

strong character development surrounding a family (Allen, 1985; Russell, 1995) as opposed to plotlines. Phillips created stories so that her listeners (Russell, 1995), and later viewers, could identify themselves with the characters. Carrington specialized in storytelling from a literary perspective that focused on character and place (LaGuardia, 1974).

The Hummerts, on the other hand, used an assembly-line approach in creating their shows. The Hummerts hired directors, writers, and script writers using a structured formula with story guidelines created by the Hummerts, who retained control of their shows (LaGuardia, 1974; Meyers, 1997). The Hummerts created stories that appealed to their sponsors, and the formula was always the same with common needs, problems, and values (Russell, 1995). The Hummert approach was often criticized for lacking creativity. The Hummerts were influenced by the way newspaper comic serials and other radio serials were designed. The idea of selling products in a story format was useful because advertising agencies were also large production companies (Meyers, 1997).

Radio serials were generally 15 minutes long and were broadcast 5 days a week. These serials were usually targeted towards women. The sponsors saw women as potential consumers of their products (Lavin, 1995). The shows' fictional locations were based in Chicago and the Midwest because the areas represented ideal American values (Russell, 1995). The legacy of radio broadcasts and the creative spirit of early TV pioneers allowed for dedicated loyalty from the listener and viewer. The stories created a connection that led the listener to pay attention to the storytelling.

The daily broadcast of these programs turned women into an audience and provided "role models" for real family life (Lavin, 1995, p. 76). Irna Phillips created the serial formats that appealed to American housewives who typically purchased most household products. The serials

adjusted story lines to meet the needs of her sponsors, used characters as effective product spokespersons and designed promotions to stimulate sales (Lavin, 1995). These programs allowed for marketing products made by Proctor and Gamble, Lever, Colgate-Palmolive, and Kellogg (Allen, 1985) to women who were the target market. The shows provided an avenue for advertising agencies to merchandise products from a variety of companies (Allen, 1985; Meyers, 1997; Russell, 1995), yet the serials provided an avenue for women to enjoy a good story and escape the pessimism of the Depression. Topics were often related to family and personal happiness (Edmondson & Rounds, 1973; LaGuardia, 1974).

Soap operas, or daytime radio serials, migrated from radio to the new medium of television in the 1950s as another avenue of reaching their target audience. A number of radio-based soaps crossed into television with several programs doing simulcasts of their television broadcasts on radio. Phillips was the most successful of the three key players to transition shows to television (Allen, 1985; LaGuardia, 1974) in addition to creating new shows. However, Phillips, the Hummerts, and Carrington provided opportunities for Agnes Nixon; William J. Bell, Jr.; Ray Winsor; and the Cordays to perfect their craft on radio and television before they created their own shows on daytime television (LaGuardia, 1974; Russell, 1995; Schermering, 1986).

The influence of Phillips and Carrington was particularly evident in the work of Agnes Nixon; William J. Bell, Jr.; and the Cordays. By 1965, *The Guiding Light*¹ was the only serial that had originated on radio and was still on the air (Edmondson & Rounds, 1973). *The Guiding Light* premiered on radio in 1937 and on television in 1952. The broadcast of the daytime serials, on both radio and television, was presented live, and in the case of *The Guiding Light*, the

¹ The serial *Guiding Light* dropped the word “The” from its title in 1977. Dropping “The” was an effort to make the show’s title more contemporary (Schermering, 1986, 1987). The text reflects the radio and early television roots of the show with *The Guiding Light* and the title of the show at the time of cancellation on television, *Guiding Light*.

broadcasts were simulcast on both radio and television until 1956 (Schermering, 1986). The new television soaps originally started as 15-minute serials before expanding to 30 minutes in the 1960s. Several serials expanded to an hour in the mid-1970s, crowding out the 30-minute shows.

The popularity of soap operas encouraged viewers to form fan clubs in order to support their favorite actors or characters. Fan interest in the genre was further fueled by the publication of specialty magazines such as *Soap Opera Digest*, *Soap Opera Update*, and *Soap Opera Weekly*, starting in the mid 1970s (Spence, 2005). These publications featured information and news about the shows, fan events, and actor interviews (Mumford, 1995). Fan events and personal appearances by the actors allowed for interaction with fans in a casual setting. The events and magazines contributed to the enthusiasm and loyalty that the fans would have towards their favorite shows and characters. The fans' loyalty was strengthened because of the shows' longevity and the viewers' immersion in a never-ending story (Ford, De Kosnik, & Harrington, 2011). In the late 1970s and 1980s, daytime serials began to influence programming on the primetime schedule with shows like *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, and *Falcon Crest*. The use of video cassette recorders (VCRs) in the 1980s and later digital video recorders (DVRs) allowed viewers to record programs for later viewing. Technological advances allowed programs to be delivered on the Internet (Ford et al., 2011). Online viewing offered fans the convenience of watching a program at their leisure, anytime of day or night. The fan can watch established broadcast programs or new web-based soaps such as *Eastenders: E20*, *DeVanity*, *The Bay*, and *Venice: The Series*.

In the last two decades, television viewing evolved because of changing lifestyles, fragmentation of American viewing habits due to cable, and increased mobility for women that has driven alterations in network television program development and broadcast schedules.

These changes reflected what people choose to view during their leisure time (Levine, 2009). Daytime programming demonstrates these realities. Changes in American culture and the long-term effects from television coverage of the first Iraq war and the O. J. Simpson trial in the early 1990s influenced how people watched television (Levine, 2009) by seeking other programs to view because of the trial and additional pre-emptions. By airing the Simpson trial on the networks, it pre-empted the soap operas, forcing the fans to go elsewhere to find something to watch on cable or satellite TV (Levine, 2009). In comparison, the Watergate hearings did pre-empt the soaps in the 1970s, but not at the same level; hearing broadcasts were scheduled on a rotating basis among the networks, thus allowing writers and networks to plan accordingly (Garay, 2004).

In addition, increased advertising placements during show segments allowed for reduced programming and content, thus leading to distractions. The increased amount of time for the placement of commercials allowed viewers to click the remote as they waited for the run of commercials to end. The increase in the time for advertising placements caused viewers to roam, and this structure reduced the number of people invested in the programs. The writers' strike in 1988 contributed to some dismantling of the genre because the strike forced changes in the formula of the dramas. The decline in the genre was often attributed to the struggle of economics versus aesthetics in relation to fans and the network (Scardaville, 2011).

More recent events, such as extended coverage of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the invasion of Iraq, contributed to the decline in soap opera audiences. Writers and producers showed hesitation in choosing socially relevant stories. The hesitance of writing on charged social issues marked a significant shift because, prior to 9/11, social issues had become a staple of the genre. Since 2007, however, the soap writers and producers returned to addressing

social issues. Nevertheless, the results of these changes contributed to decreased viewership according on the Nielsen ratings (Lewis, 2011). Soap fans complained that the Nielsen rating system is archaic and that the samples are too small for an accurate measurement. Despite these declines, viewer loyalty and the changed viewing habits still catered to an audience despite the method of viewing. The Nielsen numbers were questioned in regards to the proper measurement of Internet viewings and DVR recordings which result in delayed viewing of the programs.

On April 14, 2011, a decision based on declining viewer numbers and increasing production costs led Roger Iger, President of Disney, the parent company of ABC-Television, and Brian Frons, Daytime Vice President of ABC-Television Programming, to announce the cancellation of the 41-year old daytime serial *All My Children*, to take effect in September 2011, and the 43-year old daytime serial *One Life to Live*, to take effect in January 2012 (Carter, 2011). The announcement came less than a year after Procter and Gamble along with Leslie Moonves, CBS Programming Vice President, announced that *As the World Turns* would end its run of 54 years in September 2010 (Carter & Stelter, 2009).

The announcement concerning *As The World Turns* came shortly after the cancellation of the 72-year-old radio and television soap opera *Guiding Light* (Carter, 2009). It was also during this time that ABC-TV and Disney announced the discontinuation of SOAPnet, a cable channel dedicated to rebroadcasting ABC-TV's soaps as well as other daytime and primetime soaps (Stewart, 2005), in favor of adding Disney children's programming in 2012 (Barnes, 2010). The ABC soaps were replaced with talk shows, and the fate of *General Hospital* would be decided at a later date (Andreeva, 2011a). Anne Sweeney, President of ABC-Disney Entertainment, announced the following about the future fate of *General Hospital*: "it really is about eyeballs, and we will go with the shows that have the most viewership" (Andreeva, 2011a). The statement

left the show in limbo as fans reeled from news about the cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*.

Cancellation of the ABC serial dramas marked the end of four decades of story lines focusing on social issues, such as abortion prior to *Roe v. Wade* (Warner, 1994); domestic abuse; cochlear implants in children (Associated Press, 2007); anti-Vietnam War sentiment (Warner, 1994); and Iraqi war veterans disfigured in battle, in which *All My Children* cast an injured Iraqi war veteran (Eldredge, 2008). Additional stories of social relevance were also presented: mental illness, drug abuse, homosexuality (Newcomb, 2011; Warner, 1998), HIV/AIDS (Warner, 1994, 1995, 1998), and alcoholism. These stories were developed under the guidance of Agnes Nixon and provided a platform for controversial stories in a narrative format (Schermering, 1987; Warner, 1994, 1998). Nixon was the creator of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*, was a protégé of Irna Phillips, and became an influential force in daytime television. Nixon used the stories to create empathy for the characters yet to allow exploration of an issue. The serial narrative provided a catalyst for viewers to talk about sensitive issues, and it provided a platform for discussing these topics on the afternoon chat shows of the 1980s and 1990s. Researchers argued that soap operas are an important part of popular culture. Soap operas served as a vehicle for social realism regarding class, gender, race, and morality that is taken seriously by the viewers (Livingstone, 1988). The ability to interact with the characters in the story allowed viewers to explore issues on their own or to share information with others.

The historical relevance of the soap operas is significant, especially in the case of the earlier cancellation of *Guiding Light*. It was created by Irna Phillips 73 years ago for WTTW in Chicago beginning in 1937 and aired on the NBC radio network (Schermering, 1987). *Guiding Light* was the last connection to the days when soap operas were broadcast on radio. The

announcement to cancel the 54-year old soap opera *As the World Turns* came shortly after the last episode of *Guiding Light* aired. The cultural significance of these shows can be traced in the link they fostered among family members, especially females, regarding issues of domestic life (Spence, 2005). The viewers are inspired by watching the story and are encouraged to engage in dialogue on social issues -“in an immersive story world” (Ford et al., 2011, p. 12). The relationship between the viewers and the show relates to the importance of the programs as an educational and entertainment venue.

The initial reaction of fans to the cancellation of *Guiding Light* on the message boards and social media was one of surprise. Fans thought the cancellation announcement was initially an April Fool’s joke (“Guiding Light Cancellation Reaction,” 2009). The hope that the announcement was a joke soon turned to disappointment as the news proved to be true (Carter, 2009). Fans echoed their dismay because of the emotional investment in the stories and characters, communal ties with family members, and online contacts through social media concerning the CBS cancellations. The scene was repeated when ABC-Disney announced the cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* in April 2011. Fans again demonstrated their dismay and anger about the cancellation on social media. A corporate advertiser, Hoover Corporation, also supported the fans regarding the loss of their shows on ABC by pulling its advertising from the network (James, 2011). The news that Hoover was pulling its advertising from ABC-Disney was revealed on Hoover’s Facebook page (James, 2011). The announcement allowed the news to be shared with fans of the shows via social media.

Social media allowed fans to communicate and express their feelings. The genre and its fans saw the development of an Internet presence or online community which discusses and shares the shows’ stories (Baym, 2002; Spence, 2005) through online message boards and virtual

communities. Social media created an avenue that allows fans to network for a cause through the use of electronic bulletin boards, Facebook, and Twitter, helping to give the issue a sense of legitimacy. These virtual locations provided a place for the fans to vent their disappointment and dismay. It is the online soap-opera fan community that forms the focus of this study.

Aside from communicating with one another on fan message boards (Baym, 2002; Spence, 2005), the Internet, especially social media, gives fans a venue to create sites and group pages on the web and Facebook, along with individual interaction on Twitter. These sites offer fans a way to advocate their causes and voice criticism about the cancellations. Scholars have observed that social media allows activist users to participate in civic engagement and activism (Valenzuela, Park, & Ke, 2009) and to maintain a sense of social capital and legitimacy. The fans' irritation at the majority power reflects their experience regarding their response to program cancellations.

In regard to the cancellations, the fans are directing their anger at the network, ABC-Disney, and key executives. The lack of interest by network executives to invest, both economically and aesthetically, in the shows fuels additional dissent among the fans. The use of podcasts on Internet citizen radio, namely *BlogTalkRadio* (<http://www.blogtalkradio.com>), gives fans the opportunity to place their dissent in an additional realm. This site allows individuals and groups to present opinions through the Internet in real time, interacting with callers who share similar ideas and presenting group goals. Some shows allow fan interaction with actors, producers, writers, and field experts. These shows are initially aired live, but fans can download podcasts of the original broadcast.

The Internet and, in particular, social media sites give individuals and small groups a stronger voice to advocate for a cause (Valenzuela et al., 2009). For soap opera fans, social

media allows the creation of group pages for actors, shows, and characters on Facebook. Social media allows soap opera fans to organize efforts to fight for their shows as a community while providing a location for information about the campaign. Twitter is one social media outlet available on the Internet, or through texting on a phone, that allows for interaction (Jungherr, 2009). Fans may tweet about the shows they are watching as well express their feelings or question the actions of networks such as ABC-Disney. Twitter allows fans to interact with the actors and writers who are involved in the actual dramatic serials being viewed. This interaction allows for micro-blogging (Jungherr, 2009) that can be used to enhance ideas, present announcements about various campaigns, and promote upcoming events.

Through websites, Facebook, and Twitter, social media has allowed soap opera fans to participate in civic engagement and activism by creating a presence through web and Facebook sites that include *Sudz.Tv*; *Save the Soap Genre*; *Faces of the Soap Revolution*; and *Fans United Against ABC (FUABC)*; and *SoapSaver, Inc.* as examples of different groups on the web. Aside from groups, individual bloggers also echo the dissent of soap fans regarding the cancellations. The blogs created by fans on *Huffington Post*, *Yahoo*, *Examiner.com*, and *CNN I-Reports*, allow the fans' voices to be heard and allow for presenting their argument of the shows' legitimacy. This involvement allows fans to express opinions and insights through blogging as they contribute to a sense of group identity (Lomicky & Hogg, 2010). The online group of soap fans includes individuals whose experiences date back to the movement to save the NBC daytime serial *Another World* from cancellation in 1999 (Scardaville, 2005). The use of online technologies allows the fans to communicate and place information in an accessible spot for the fans to engage in activism.

The following sections elaborate on the fans, online communities, and activism as well as how these aspects are relevant to the case. The research presented in the following sections elaborates, in greater detail, how these components are connected to the case. The creation of a community is further examined in the creation of a public sphere and how these parts fit into the group's mission. The definitions allow us to view the process of community building through the interactions and discourse the fans present with one another and non-fans.

Fans

A fan can be defined as a participant following a sport, a television program, or a celebrity. People support their favorite actors based on the idea of a perpetuated fantasy through economic manipulation as fans create a sense of something special around them (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972). The creation of the soap fan identity is the consumption of the programs and support of the actors. Raymond Williams (2001) maintains a far simpler argument concerning fans, stating that we all participate in activities with the events of life around us. Harrington and Bielby (1995a) take Jenkins' interpretation of fans one step further as their work examines the culture of soap-opera fans.

Harrington and Bielby (1995a) contend that fans participate in activities that can be construed as public or private. Jenkins contends that "one becomes a fan not by being a regular viewer of a particular program but by translating that viewing into some kind of cultural activity, by sharing feelings and thoughts about program content with friends," (1988, p. 88). Therefore, we are all fans of something. Fandom is often defined as a consumer's attachments to various texts (Hills, 2005; Jenkins, 1992). The fans have an attachment to the soap operas through time and emotional investment. Watching the shows and interacting with others creates a connection among the viewer, the story, and other fans. Andrejevic (2008) contends that all audiences are

active, although perhaps not in the progressive sense the term has come to imply; they are active in relating to what interests them. Through Harrington and Bielby's (1995a) examination of fan gatherings, they cite that soap-opera fan gatherings are more a family reunion than an individual experience. The experience of the fan is more of a communal idea where like-minded people share ideas and express their appreciation.

The idea of fandom has perceived stereotypes that are designated to the group by those who are outsiders. Harrington and Bielby (1995a) surmise that the stereotypes surrounding fandom makes it difficult for viewers to identify themselves as a fan. Fans argue that negative stereotypes exist because non-watchers do not understand the genre and view the serials as a joke (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a). This marginalization is particularly true for fans of soap operas. Soap opera fans are not truly marginalized, but a separate sub-culture (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a). Harrington and Bielby (1995a) define this fellowship, or "fanship," among soap opera fans as being well organized, with public expressions of fandom. Harrington and Bielby (1995a) further state that the textual narrative of the show tends to make a community that is loosely organized. Some fans tend to keep a low profile due to the perceived stigma, based on ignorance, in the main-stream media outlets (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a) connected to the soap opera genre and the goal of fans to pursue meaning in their lives (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a; Spence, 2005). The relationship of the fan and the character is key to understanding the meaning of the literary text and the importance to the viewer.

The fans view the show as a literary text in a plane to create a parasocial relationship that allows the viewer to participate in the story. Burnett and Beto (2000) surmise that reading romance novels is an example of parasocial relationships because of the interaction between the reader and the characters in the text. This connection allows for examination of the interaction

between the reader and the character, thus similar to the relationship that fans have with soap opera characters. Viewers can relate to the character through the literary text they like and view it as a reflection of real life (Burnett & Beto, 2000). Davisson and Booth (2007) maintain that viewers form bonds with the personas they witness onscreen, and these bonds have a place in their life that resembles the bonds between real-world people. This bond creates the interaction between the character and the fan (Davisson & Booth, 2007). Through this interaction, the fans recognize the shows for the art and the absurdity that are presented in a never-ending novel.

These relationships are often multi-generational in nature as the younger generation is drawn into the stories by the older generations. The parasocial dynamic allows the fan to accept the characters and the actors of the programs as friends and family members due to the viewers' investment in the stories. This dynamic, in turn, relates to how the viewers are brought into the storytelling and character relationships. The investment in the product is what drives the relationship, and its relation to fan activism is the preservation of that product.

Simply stated, soap fans are aware of what the stories present and how the characters should behave, yet fans will express dismay if the character changes are outside the set parameters of the story. Jenkins (1988) and Scardaville (2005) assert that fans are not passive viewers but are empowered. Therefore, the act of being a fan and its related actions consist of being a member of marginalized sub-cultural groups. These sub-cultural groups compete for space to express cultural concern to the dominant representatives of the culture (Jenkins, 1988). The assertions of Scardaville (2005) and Jenkins (1992) give legitimacy to the argument that fans gain empowerment through voicing their beliefs to establish cultural and communal legitimacy. This sense of legitimacy is also expressed in how the fans interact with one another via social

media regarding story lines of the different shows and ongoing manipulations of the powers that be to have the fans interpret the story from the producer's standpoint and not the fans' viewpoint.

Some fans, in turn, use the Internet to develop sites to support the shows or personalities with which they are interested and to share ideas with like-minded individuals. However, the challenge in developing these sites is the issue of trust. The idea of trust is key because creating these communities focuses on the idea of honesty and does not limit the members' contributions (Blanchard, Welbourne, & Boughton, 2011). Female fans often feel isolated, showing their pleasure or displeasure surrounding a show due to how the popular media and attitudes portray soap fans as simple-minded (Spence, 2005). However, fans of the genre are clued into the nuances of the stories they watch and the open-ended narratives. The readings or viewings of these open texts encourage interpretation through communication with each other (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a). Spence (2005) presents another perspective to the viewing of soap operas as closer to myths and fairy tales than a modern novel offering. Characters are more typical than unique with a predictable outcome. Soap fans do not watch for the "coup de théâtre or the ingenious invention of unexpected surprises while seeing the expected event" (Spence, 2005, p.71). The stories allow fans to embrace the absurdity yet appreciate the art, in addition to allowing their imagination to run wild. Baym (2002) was a participant-observer of rec.arts.tv.soaps, a Usenet news group, relating to a study done in the early 1990s that utilized content analysis to observe the interactions of *All My Children* fans regarding the show and friendship. These interpretive activities allow for understanding the depictions of life's struggles (Spence, 2005). The relationship with the characters and interaction with soap fans allows for the flow of ideas based on sharing information in the narratives. The interaction allows the creation of relationships that extend beyond the text and characters.

The creation of virtual communities can be argued as the extension of social groups through the act of communication despite being a looser and less formal form of communication (Memmi, 2006). Memmi (2006) further states that virtual communities tend to be large, looser in scope, and show impersonal relationships. The communities also show that membership is based on a goal (Memmi, 2006). Sites dedicated to the interests of the soap opera fans provide a venue to create a sense of camaraderie and lessen the sense of isolation, both socially and culturally (Baym, 2002; Jenkins, 1992). This interest in a show creates the need to develop communities to support the characters and to communicate with like-minded people. This sense of community allows for membership (Baym, 2002; Jenkins, 1992), yet the feeling of influence on others can reinforce or challenge the community, through the reinforcement of needs, in a shared emotional connection (Chin & Chignell, 2007). The connections help make the collection of like-minded people form a sort of fellowship.

The relationship between viewing and online interaction promotes the act of watching in a communal sense. The act of watching and discussing the soaps can be empowering (Scardaville, 2005; Spence, 2005), and it can provide the catalyst for real and virtual communities (Baym, 2002; Scardaville, 2005). As the fans form groups, “members still form impressions of each other which they use to make decisions about how similar others are to them (or not), which in turn leads to positive (or negative) relationships” (Blanchard et al., 2011, p. 79). The discovery of similar or dissimilar ideas leads to presenting viewpoints and collaborating to distribute a product that shares common ideologies. However, trust can play into the effectiveness of collaboration as fans discuss dissimilar viewpoints.

The fan connections create the legitimacy needed in a group to attain the momentum required to voice opinions. The idea of trust in an online community is key in creating

consumption of a product. Consumption sparks the production of interaction from the story and characters, and this relationship with the story contributes to fan production (Harrington & Bielby, 1995b; Jenkins, 1988). Through creative enterprises, the fan fiction, videos, and art promote the fan's message in preserving the cultural legacies of the genre, whether fighting to save the genre or the stigma of watching soaps through the creation of fan-generated videos, art, and stories relating to the show's textual and visual messages. Soap opera fans engage in maintaining their identity through relationships with one another and by communicating that "fanship." This sense of community allows the coming together of diverse individual ideas for a common cause. The relationship among the fans is key to the study because of the identity and connection to the culture as well as the act of saving the show. Culture is a key aspect of the fans as they strive to achieve legitimacy.

Culture

The idea of culture does not immediately come to mind when thinking of soap opera fans, but they echo the key ideas of culture in a general sense. Through the creation of a fandom, there are elements of a culture as people form groups of like-minded individuals. Fans may not be considered a culture in a literal sense, but they have earmarks that make them a cultural entity within the larger culture complete with art, discourse, and the interconnection for a common cause or idea.

In the context of this study, Williams (2001) defined culture as the process of human perfection, documentation, and social definition. The fans define and edit the text of what they present to the world in regards to their fandom. Hills (2002) echoes Winnicott (1971) and Harrington and Bielby's (1995a) assessment of soap fans through the idea of "assuming rights of control and possession over the object [soap operas] which is paradoxically created and found"

(Hills, 2002, p.104). This idea is further defined by the fans' use of favored texts and personal significance (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a). The essence of a culture is the personal connection to objects and texts. The following quotation presents an additional perspective of being a fan from the art and culture perspective:

These dimensions of fiction/nonfiction and highbrow/lowbrow intersect in complex ways, making it difficult to reach only one conclusion as to why some forms of play are socially acceptable while others are not. By all accounts, though, soap operas are both lowbrow and fictional. Fans use them as transitional objects, even though it is socially unacceptable to do so. (Harrington & Bielby, 1995a, p. 136)

The fans use the text to select the objects they want to present or cherish not only within their group, but also to outsiders. Despite the views of the non-fans, the soap opera fans view the aesthetic quality of the show and embrace it as a cultural object. The fans respectively filter through information by presenting to outsiders or non-fans of how the fans want to be perceived. The concept of fans' selective tradition dictates what is key to the story of not only the show, but also their culture (Williams, 2001).

Hills (2002) offers a different perspective on fan culture by stating that fan culture is formed around a given text that has functioned as a "proper transitional object" in the biography of individuals or a group through virtue; it [proper transitional object] is an element of their cultural experience (p. 108). The proper transitional object is the item or idea that is the core of their cultural identity; in this case, it is the soap operas which include the actors, stories, characters, and emotional investment. Hills (2002) addresses the idea that fan culture has a secondary transitional object that is marked by the tension that surrounds the idea the "retained" object symbolizing the culture must negotiate the intense subjective significance with the

intersubjective cultural status (p. 108). Hills (2002) describes the process of where the movement of the proper transitional object may not be of pure diffusion but a residual aspect that has a subjective belonging to a person or group.

Simply stated, the cultural integrity of the shows is endangered in the eyes of the fans because of the cancellations. Fans view the cancellation of soaps as destructive to the creative and cultural capital, whether it is the text that is presented on the screen or the text that the fans “poach” for their own interpretations. The fans participate in the preservation of their culture through creative means.

The participation of fans involved in selecting what they, as consumers, want to use or promote is a key aspect of participatory culture (Jenkins, 1988, 1992, 2006a). Participatory culture, as defined by Henry Jenkins (1988, 1992, 2006a), is where the consumer, or fan, participates in a cultural subgroup and where his/her standing in the group is dictated by the level of influence or status. In this case, the soap opera fans involved in the case study select what is told to the public about their culture and the importance of the shows not only to them, but also to serial scripted television. The fans support a product, in this case, the soap operas, because they believe in the product’s quality. The fans advocate for the cultural product, both verbally and creatively, through convergent and traditional forms of media by reiterating the message of why the soaps are important to them. The fans’ ambition allows for their voice and desires to be exhibited in the fight to ensure the survival of the genre (Jenkins, 1992, 2006a).

The participation of the individuals watching the program inspires them to discuss the show with others on a fan message board or by tweeting. Andrejevic (2008) ascertains the activities in which fans partake are ways where creative activity and exploitation coexist with fan productivity as part of a culture in an emerging online economy. In the context of exploiting and

creating a presence, they are re-interpreting the story and creating additional texts through fan videos and fan fiction. Simply stated, fan activity is based on emotional investment. The advent of the Internet has created an additional venue for fans to present their culture. Jenkins (2006a) presents the idea of the marriage between old and new media outputs through the idea of convergence of culture.

Convergence culture is the marriage of the old by using new technologies. Jenkins further cites that “convergence culture is top-down corporate driven process and bottom-up consumer driven process” (2006a, p. 18). The idea of convergence is how fans consume the media, yet it influences the producers. New technologies have allowed fans to move from the margins into mainstream popular culture (Jenkins, 2006a). The intersection of fandom and new technologies is allowing fans to be drawn into the corporate sectors through advertising and programming inducements, yet it allows them to tell stories within their show’s canon to further explain a story. The act of storytelling and sharing dismay or satisfaction with the commercial producers causes a reaction from the fans, whether that action is positive or negative. The use of technology allows fans to express their concerns and demonstrates the use of the creative and curatorial mindset to fight for their shows.

Changes in technology have created opportunities to preserve and create new cultural artifacts through interactive and social media. The use of interactive media, especially websites and message boards, allows for strategies to promote, harness, and exploit fan cultural activity (Andrejevic, 2008). The Internet allows fans to create websites that promote a different perspective in story lines through fan fiction and fan videos, in addition to artwork done to celebrate the show or characters. This strategy is done from the perspective of a celebratory portrayal of the creative and subversive potential of the audience (Andrejevic, 2008). The use of

technology, primarily through photo-editing programs, along with video and audio programs, has created a new avenue for fans to exhibit their prose and artwork surrounding the characters and show (Jenkins, 2006b). Social media allows fans to support their show in addition to expanding their sphere of influence; its use as an advocacy platform encourages letter writing and other forms of contact. The act of “tweeting” allows fans to follow or subscribe to fellow fans who share their ideas on Twitter (Jungherr, 2009).

The creation of communities based on establishing cultural legitimacy encourages soap fans to engage in community building through the presentation of messages to build cohesion. Researchers regard the organizing of fan communities online as a way for the fans to work at establishing cultural legitimacy of the shows by citing aesthetic values. Through data analysis, Scardaville (2009) ranked aesthetics of soap operas based on data collected through surveys that looked at the lack of recognition of the soap opera as an art form in the wider population as opposed to soap fans who support the idea of soap as aesthetic legitimation. Valenzuela et al. (2009), through a web-based study of college students on Facebook discovered that the activity of college students on Facebook still rings true in the definition of a fan community based on the diversity of the audience. van Zoonen’s (2004) cultural analysis compared fan cultures with political groups by examining the similarities among the entertainment genres, fans, and political candidates because the findings demonstrated that fan communities and political constituencies are similar and resemble each other in activity.

The idea of ownership merges with the idea of culture, and it is that ownership the fans have pertaining to their identity as soap fans. The sense of community is additionally supported by the ideas of diversity and participation. The idea of participatory culture is to provide a voice in popular culture by encouraging a more diverse citizenry through mobilization around issues,

ideas, and civic engagement (Jenkins, 2006a). The act of participating allows fans to advocate for what they believe. Jenkins (2006a) further states that a fan group is apt to be far more diverse than one surrounding a political candidate because the group comes together for a common goal.

This intersection of participatory culture, soap opera fan culture, and civic engagement provides an avenue for grassroots activism either through social media or through more traditional means. The idea of fandom and culture is further enhanced to gain a better understanding about the theoretical interpretation and application to the interaction of fans and social media.

Activism

Activism is participating in a cause or belief to bring about change either socially or politically. In the realm of fan culture, the idea of activism can revolve around challenging the producer in how a story is created or presented (Johnson, 2007). The Internet allows people to organize politically around an issue as they offer oppositional positions to social issues (Kahn & Kellner, 2004). In the case of the soap opera fans, the Internet and social media have led to the creation of Facebook fan sites (*Sudz.tv*, *FUABC*, and *I would pay a network/cable/satellite provider to save my soaps!*) dedicated to saving the shows along with allied websites that provide the tools for communicating the message that soap operas are important and that these programs are an important part of our culture.

Activism propels people to create a public place for gathering in a common cause, creating cultural and economic legitimacy through continual perpetuation of messages encouraging others to join. Dahlgren (2009) provides two crucial ideas when referring to popular culture and civic engagement: popular culture offers a sense of access to symbolic communities and a sense of belonging elsewhere as it invites the individuals to engage their hearts and minds.

Scardaville (2005) supports the assertions presented by Harrington and Bielby (1995a, 1995b) that fans act strategically for a common goal. The idea of media fandom is a form of media consumption that contributes to a political economy for fans and collective action on the part of fans (Seibert-Davis, 2004). Hermes (2006) points to activism as a possibility for a more inclusive citizenship through cultural practices in relation to fan activism. Seibert-Davis (2004) states that activism allows fans to collectively contribute to the text by re-defining the text to fit the message they want to present. Seibert-Davis (2004) contends that fan activism can be a collective approach to the limits set forth by the media. In the case of the cancelled shows, the fans are collectively struggling against how the media, namely the established press, ABC-Disney, the Walt Disney Company, and CBS, downplays the reaction of the fans as they struggle to retain part of their collective culture and legitimacy. The fans view the actions of the networks as a threat to their cultural identity.

This battle of legitimacy is echoed in the comments concerning cultural hegemony from Antonio Gramsci, an Italian philosopher, regarding the war of position (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) between the fans and the network. Upon further elaboration, Gramsci viewed the capitalist society as two spheres that overlapped: a “political society” that rules through force and a “civil society” which rules through consent (Heywood, 1994, p. 100). The civil society is construed as the workers and those who do not garner the power. Gramsci saw civil society as the public sphere where political parties or corporations gained concessions from the bourgeois state, and the sphere in which ideas and beliefs were shaped, where bourgeois “hegemony” was reproduced in cultural life through the media, universities, and religious institutions to “manufacture consent” and legitimacy (Heywood, 1994, pp.100-101).

In relation to Gramsci's comments, the network wants the fans to accept the decision of program changes through set premises and the idea that network executives know what is best for the viewing public. Whereas, the fans are rejecting the dominant attitudes and refuse to accept the network's attitude, seeking to expand their margin of maneuver to position the group's dissent while the network continues to preach that it knows what is best for the viewing public. The rejection of the network's position only serves to empower the fans against ABC-Disney and the Walt Disney Company. The ABC-Disney daytime viewers who are part of the movement do not want programs about food and lifestyles, but the shows that have been part of their lives for years, if not decades. This dissension from the fans supports the study in respect to the idea of fighting to preserve an important element of their culture. The fans view the network's decision as a denigration of what they value.

The creation of sites for saving the soap genre gives fans the opportunity to possess political capital in virtual communities. Hermes (2006) states that people strive for cultural citizenship through the process of bonding by building a community. The reflection of bonding, in cultural studies, offers examples about how popular culture constitutes a public presence by offering frames of reference through ground rules of interpretation and evaluation for the spaces to be excited, frightened, enthralled, and committed. Hermes (2006) cites that community building allows people participating in the public presence to become informed citizens. Baym (2002) contends that participants in online communities proved to be a highly competent audience, expressing their own views and interpretations that often surpassed the producer's knowledge.

These struggles sometimes lead to questions of ownership as the fans struggle to come up with different stories from the text they are viewing, leading to tension between the fans and

producers (Baym, 2002; van Zoonen, 2004). van Zoonen (2004) adds that discussions are not necessarily based on gender, but it is this discussion about particular textual features of the soap operas that calls for divergent meanings and interpretations. This assertion seems to be a trait found not only among soap opera fans, but also among fans of other shows such as *Doctor Who*, *Star Trek*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, as well as music artists such as Elvis and Madonna (Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1988, 1992; van Zoonen, 2004). The opportunity to be able to debate and discuss the stories is key to fans' cultural identity. The debate is not limited to cultural legitimacy, but what approach or method the fans use to get their voices heard by non-fans and the general public.

The creation of virtual communities, fan sites, and groups on social networking sites gives the proverbial physical structure from which the fans can build and promote their cause. Hermes (2006) maintains that the use of new technologies may facilitate a new type of citizenship commitment that combines the exchange of information and evaluation in opinion making. This process includes emotion and experience which are not discounted but an accepted part of the process (Hermes, 2006). van Zoonen (2004) argues that the fan practices and political practices suggest an "equality that facilitates an exchange between the domains of entertainment and politics that is commonly thought to be impossible" (p. 46). The relationship between fandom and politics leads to a sense of democracy because people have a voice to offer insight and discussion. van Zoonen (2004) continues deliberating on this issue by adding that fans have an intense individual investment in the text, thus leading to discussion in the community about the qualities of the text in addition to proposing and discussing alternatives.

This act of communication helps create a sense of democracy and an open forum for groups to speak for their causes. "The Internet infrastructure is *essentially* participatory and

democratic, as we recognized major commercial interests at play and that is contested terrain among competing groups” (Kahn & Kellner, 2004, p. 185). The contested terrain allows for fans to create a place to present their arguments. Through fandom, the key feature has been the behavior of the audience even prior to the participation genres and new technologies that only served to intensify these activities (van Zoonen, 2004). Earl and Kimport (2009) cite that consumers have taken an activist turn and the concept of fan activism is growing due to the casual nature of the internet. Participation allows fans to create a platform to deliver and interpret the text they are presenting.

By using these descriptions, it can be argued that recent developments in technology have made it possible to refocus the idea of participatory democratic politics in everyday life. By focusing on fan activities, it can be argued that fans are challenging the politics concerning the ownership of their programs and the denigration of their culture. This definition gives us tools to understand the dedication that fans have in saving their shows through activism and getting their voices heard.

The fans see the events of their everyday life in both reality and in art, giving them a chance to speak on fan sites and in advocacy groups. The commercial interests, in this case CBS, Procter and Gamble, and ABC-Disney, view the fans as encroaching on their terrain and cultural domain. This view is reflected in the fan reactions to ABC-Disney and the remarks from ABC Vice President of Daytime Brian Frons referring to the idea that “women do not need to escape but make informed decisions for their lives” (James, 2011). Frons’ comments are challenged in the same article by a CBS executive who cited the loyalty of long-time viewers and shopping habits. Frons further ascertains that women were looking for shows that help improve their lives, rather than escapism (Levin, 2011). Frons additionally adds that serials were a product targeted

at baby-boomers and that the boomers aged out of the key selling demographic; he cites that younger demos want an upbeat tone, entertaining relevance, talk, and reality as opposed to scripted drama. Johnson (2007) cites that commercial interests and producers marginalize the fans as an effort to push back. The networks believe that the viewer is insignificant in the bigger picture; that viewers can be served cheaper, lower-quality products; and that the viewer will readily accept what is offered. The corporate entities view the programming change as business, and viewers do not concern them.

The fans view Frons' comments as a way to marginalize them as viable consumers by demeaning them. The fans voice their dissent concerning the network executives' attitudes on websites, blogs, and social media. The struggles of democracy, in particular, the fans and commercial interests, illustrate the issue of "we" and "they" (Dahlgren, 2009). Through civil engagement and activism, Scardaville's (2005) study as a participant-observer for a group dedicated to saving the NBC soap opera *Another World* from cancellation is an early demonstration of the issue of ownership from an activist perspective. Scardaville (2005) examines the idea of ownership and anger in the group through comparisons of primetime and daytime activism. The idea of ownership demonstrates the conflict between the fans and corporate entities to have their voices heard. The fans involved in the movement see the economic and cultural value of the prize by saving their shows through the media understanding that they have a voice.

The idea of hope for survival of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* was initially evidenced by the decision to move the shows to an online streaming platform and, eventually, cable through an agreement with Prospect Park in July 2011 (Barnes, 2011). However, in November 2011, it was announced that Prospect Park was renegeing its agreement to place the

shows online (Andreeva, 2011b). The fans again exhibited their dismay at the decision of Prospect Park and Disney in regards to *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* not going online. The bright light for the struggle to save the soaps was in October 2011 when Procter and Gamble licensed its soap opera library for worldwide distribution to Broadway Digital Video (Hughes, 2011). The Procter and Gamble library included the following daytime serials: *Search for Tomorrow*, *Edge of Night*, *Ryan's Hope*, *Texas*, *Guiding Light*, *As the World Turns*, and *Another World*. In the eyes of the fans, the release of the Procter and Gamble soaps was seen as a victory, although small, in regards to the cancellation of their shows. In the realm of the struggle, the DVD release showed demand for these shows and that soap operas still matter.

Theoretical Framework

The ideas and messages in society influence our daily lives while competing messages can lead to spheres of interacting ideas and propaganda. The fans engaged in saving their shows created a place on the Internet, Sudz.tv, as a gathering place to provide direction and information. The website creates a sphere of influence for a group of informed, dissenting voices in the presence of democratic deliberation. The idea of the public sphere evolved from Jürgen Habermas' ideas on deliberative democracy, with influence from Georg Hegel, Karl Marx, and Immanuel Kant regarding the bourgeois, but involved the dialogue of informed people in a forum that allows the interaction of ideas and discourse.

Jürgen Habermas, a twentieth-century German philosopher and sociologist, stated the idea of a public sphere to describe the exchange of ideas and coming together for a particular goal. Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox (1974) described the public sphere as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed and access guaranteed to all citizens” (p. 49). Poor (2005) contended that “public” in the public sphere engages people

who are not only private citizens, but also part of the wider public, in public discussion.

Habermas (1989) implied the public sphere is a philosophy that is a result of competition in a social welfare state and the construction of a bourgeois public sphere.

Communication is a necessary feature of being “public” even if it is directed at an indefinite audience (Bohman, 2004). Through dialogue, people feel they have the potential to affect public opinion. The public sphere is often a specific domain with struggles between the public and private (Habermas, 1989), and in this case, it is the voice of the marginalized in opposition to power holders in the media or society. The public sphere allows the dispossessed to be judged not on their station in life but on the merits of their arguments in a forum, yet allows the participants to be informed about a diverse array of topics. Goodnight and Hingstman (1997) add a further point to Habermas’ assertion; no one could be ruled out from discussion if a better argument could be furnished. The dialogue in a public sphere is often a mixture of formal institutions and organizations (Poor, 2005).

Habermas (1989) presents three points in defining the public sphere: disregard of status which is the preservation of a kind of social intercourse that, far from assuming the equality of status, disregards participants’ status altogether. The domain of common concern references discussion in a public that presumes the problem of different areas until a certain point in time. The idea of common concern is the object of critical public attention that remains a reserve in which church and state authorities had a monopoly of interpretation (Habermas, 1989). The members, for whom the cultural product (soap operas) becomes available as a commodity, determine its meaning on their own through communication with one another (Habermas, 1989). Inclusivity can be understood as being immersed within a public of all private people whether they are participants or listeners.

The democracy includes all people who are involved in the cause. The involvement of an educated public is key to the functioning of public discourse regarding issues. The public sphere allows people who were previously excluded from forming discussions based on the merit of the speaker, not their position in society to voice their concerns. The reflective public spokesperson does not need to seek an identical understanding to inform action but should engage people in seeking a unanimity of opinion. The public spokesperson should engage in “conciliation, consent, accommodation, and the like” in the interests of avoiding violence, coercion, and manipulation in regards of community (Goodnight & Hingstman, 1997, p. 354).

The spokesperson of the sphere should plant the seeds for democratic dialogue but not hinder it. The passage of time allows for reformulations and interpretations of Habermas’ public sphere based on situations where it has been adapted (Calhoun, 1992; Poor, 2005). The use of Habermas’ theory of the public sphere gives us tools for applying to Internet groups based on the three key elements of his definition: the discussion of ideas in a mediated arena, a space for discourse involving those who have been excluded from presenting discussion, and a system for judging the discourse based on the merit of the discussion and not the quality of the speaker (Poor, 2005). In the past, the idea of dialogue and communication concentrated on newspapers, however computer-mediated communication offers ways to create texts that span space and time (Bohman, 2004). Bohman (2004, p. 135) further cites, “it is the public sphere that is not subject to specific cultural, language and spatial limitations.”

The digital age has provided a new sphere for engagement and dialogue. The Internet is used as a tool in some forms of activism. The digital world may be promoted as a vibrant society because it extends the public sphere of civil society but does not transform it (Bohman, 2004). Simply stated, for the ability of the Internet to bring the world riches to the citizen, the public

sphere may extend democracy and civility, but online communication does not necessarily change. The Internet has provided a tool for soap fans to advocate their opinions regarding the decision of ABC-Disney's cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*.

The Internet, since the 1990s, has offered new venues for individuals to express their thoughts and ideas through chat rooms, forums, blogs, podcasts, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, and websites. Poor (2005) contends that the Internet is construed as a public sphere, but it must be grounded by observation. Dahlberg (2001, 2004) cites six criteria that need to exist for an online space to be considered a public sphere: autonomy from state and economic power, exchange and critique of critical moral-practical validity claims, reflexivity, ideal role-taking, sincerity, and discursive inclusion and equality. Poor (2005) maintains that Dahlberg focuses more on an overarching, single public sphere and less on one sphere within a multiple public sphere framework. Bohman (2004) argues that the Internet only becomes a public sphere through those individuals who engage in reflexive and democratic activity. By using the Internet, the ideal goal of public argument is to reach unanimity of opinion in a rationally informed consensus (Goodnight & Hingstman, 1997). The Internet offers a wide array of opportunities to communicate with high accessibility for people with Internet access as well as the low cost of placing comments on forums and blogs. The Internet presents opportunities for the creation of virtual public spheres, but it is not without its challenges.

The virtual nature of the sphere and perceived anonymity of some participants can either strengthen or weaken the sense of democracy. Papacharissi (2002) cites three issues concerning the creation of a virtual public sphere. One is that the Internet allows vast storage of information, allowing unequal access and literacy. Second, people around the world can communicate with one another with greater ease than with previous technologies, however, the amount of

information may lead to audience fragmenting. The third issue is that any online public sphere will face the problems of Habermas' bourgeois public sphere idea and become corrupted by capitalist and commercial interests (Bohman, 2004; Papacharissi, 2002). Despite these challenges, the Internet still provides an avenue for discourse. The anonymity of contributors can also be an issue regarding accountability and credibility based on the quality of the discussion. The sheer volume of information on the Internet can either help the creation or hinder its development. The issue of accessibility is most acute in rural areas and among the poor and elderly.

The Internet still provides a platform for the coming together of people to share ideas and concepts with similarly like-minded people. Computer-mediated communication extends the forum by providing an unbounded space for interaction (Bohman, 2004). This union tests the ideas of participation and democracy in the creation of the public sphere. Dahlberg (2001) finds that the Internet is facilitating discourse that replicates the basic structure of rational-critical debate and that, in various ways, approximates the requirements of the public sphere. The discourse from varied voices allows the creation of different spheres despite limitations in scope and reach. The limitations only serve to strengthen the voice within that group's effort to be heard by corporate interests who refuse to listen to the group and its position as a consumer.

The idea of democracy is descended from dialogue and debate, and it allows for petitioning and protest directed at the entities that control the power in a society. Dahlgren (2009) argues an additional point to Habermas' ideas by stating that deliberative democracy underscores the importance of what the reasons are but in the idea of reciprocity. Simply stated, the decision makers owe explanations and justifications for their decisions. Dahlgren (2001) maintains that arguments about justice involve all people; through the act of communicating,

actors address their reasoning to larger audience. The validity of the message is measured by the knowledge and sincerity of the information presented (Dahlberg, 2004). The position the participants take on an argument is dependent on the reaction they have and the idea of sincerity that involves both impartial and respectful listening. Thoughtful examination of dialogue in the text is needed in order to understand the message than to bypass its meaning or aggravate differences in the group (Dahlgren, 2001). Goodnight and Hingstman (1997) present the argument that a strategically motivated compromise of interests and achieved consensus can argue validity in regards to working together for a common goal. The act of communication is connected to the truthfulness of a statement by Habermas, “[t]hat the manifest intention of the speaker is meant as it is expressed” (1984, p. 99), and this statement alludes to the condition of sincerity as stated by Dahlberg (2001).

The process of communication allows for ideas to be discussed in a sense with formal equality where the statement is judged on its merit (Dahlberg, 2001, 2004). Participatory equality involves participants who are involved in rational discourse but is not necessarily relevant to all positions. These claims are under consideration in order to ensure equal participation (Dahlgren, 2001). Inclusion in a group is formalized, but governed by informal restrictions which may limit the voice of some based on social and cultural inequalities. Discussions and interaction within a sphere are free of corporate interests and focus on influences which are based on the rationality of communication reaching an understanding and agreement in the public sphere (Dahlgren, 2001, 2009). Dahlberg (2004) further asserts that the *possibility* of consensus is assumed in reasoning over matters of truth and justice because the nature of such matters is such that participants have to work towards agreement in order to live together peacefully. The sense of alliance in a public sphere is a choice of communicative action as the lesser evils among ways to

construct public space, deemed as “sites of power, of common action coordinated through speech and persuasion” (Goodnight & Hingstman, 1997, p. 354) Therefore, both Dahlberg (2001, 2004) and Habermas point out that the act of communicative rationality is the form of communication that allows the formation of a public sphere of reasoned deliberation in order for the public members to put forth their assertions and arguments that hold formal decision making accountable (Dahlberg, 2004).

In summary, Habermas believes that a democracy is dependent on a public that is informed, aware, and debates the issues of the day. In regards to mass media, the public has the ability to read a variety of material or news reports and to form an opinion to discuss the issues at hand. The ownership of some forms of mass media limit the diversity of outlets in which the public can form and discuss opinions. In this study, ABC and Disney own the corporate dialogue about the shows, thus preventing further discussion on the issues concerning the cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* directly with the fans. Ownership of ideas brings about an additional thought in understanding how Habermas relates to the creation of a sphere of publicness in relation to the soap opera movement with the intersection of competing spheres.

The competing spheres include not only the commercial interests, but also stakeholders’ indifference about the soap opera movement and cultural influences. The creation of a virtual public sphere allows dialogue that is mediated, accountable through reflexivity and sincerity. Utilizing a website blog allows users to present their concerns and views about the importance of saving their shows, addressing issues and arguments presented by others based on informal rules of decorum in an effort to present concerns without harassment from commercial interests. Freedom from corporate interests allows for discourse that corporate interests cannot own or dictate.

The fans, through participation, engage in activism and civil engagement uniting in a cause that they believe is important, the preservation of these programs. Engagement through discussion and interaction allows fans to create a public presence and engage. Civic engagement allows the fans to present arguments about why the soap operas are important not only to them, but also as an important part of American and fan culture. Building a public presence helps them fight for legitimacy and challenge the position held by ABC-Disney. The creation of a virtual public sphere allows for the union of competing spheres based on shows. The public sphere allows fans to present a united front to the network which allows their voice to be heard by presenting thoughtful arguments and pointing out the reasons they disagree with the corporate rhetoric presented in the mainstream media.

Purpose of Study

The passage of time has seen a significant change in communicative technologies, and communication is now conducted through a variety of media. In the last two decades, we have seen significant growth and development of computer-mediated communication and the relationship between the message and messenger. Use of the Internet allows communication and rhetoric of the fans involved in the save-the-soap movement to be studied and understood. Because identity is an aspect of human nature, it brings into consideration the idea of cultural and economic capital that individuals support a cause or movement as they strive, in a crisis situation, to preserve what is important to them.

The importance of the study examines how marginalized groups connected to a genre of mass consumption garner a voice. The fan activists use their voice to gain respect from outsiders and to challenge presupposed ideas and positions. The merits of this study can be further applied to understand how marginalized groups with disparate identities and ideas unite. The union of

activists and ideas allows them to present their arguments against the controlling corporate and commercial interests. This study examines, on a simplistic level, the idea of grassroots activism for a marginalized group through the use of communicative technologies to create a sphere of influence. The study observes the effect of the activists and how they reflect larger grassroots groups, with marginalized populations, as they respond in the public sphere via social media and blogs instead of more traditional outlets such as newspapers and flyers.

The creation of the public sphere allows fans or participants to voice concerns, through dialogue and debate, about the actions of ABC-Disney, the controversy of cancelling *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*, and the pending cancellation of *General Hospital*. The use of new media allows observation and development of a public sphere from influence through documents and rhetoric within the group based on the ideas of the public sphere presented by Habermas in addition to Lincoln Dahlberg's criteria. The idea of deliberative democracy creating the public sphere allows for examining the activities of soap opera fans. The use of an online platform creates a question about structure in relation to verbal rhetoric concerning the importance of capital as fans seek to save what is important.

Research Questions

The idea of deliberative democracy in relation to soap opera fans, activism, and community presents the following questions for consideration in relation to the fan-created websites:

RQ1: How does deliberative democracy enhance or hinder activism?

RQ2: How do soap opera fans present their message through deliberative democracy?

RQ3: How does community building contribute to discourse?

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study is to examine the influence of culture and activism when building a virtual community and sphere of influence. The importance of community building allows the gathering of fans in a virtual sphere to advocate for a greater mission, in this case, saving a soap opera. The presentation of the message concerning the importance of soaps in the fans' lives is key to legitimizing their actions and downplaying the stigma that non-fans have towards the soap opera and serial narratives in general.

The approach for addressing the research question is to take into consideration the definition of the problem and the environment where the participants exist. The use of a case study allows the use of context analysis and it is supported to a lesser degree with fan ethnography. The online setting lends itself to a case-study perspective as a participant-observer even if the role is conservative. The role of a participant-observer is key to understanding the nuances of the group and to gather information from the virtual "field." Monaco (2010) states that "positioning as a part of a 'knowing' fan-audience membership was therefore not only validated by the fandom but by the media studies' academic canon" (p. 132). The role of being in the fan audience allows the researcher to be validated in the realm of media studies because access allows the researcher to understand the nature of the community.

Fan ethnography is grounded in the fan culture's existence along with a connection to a group that allows audience knowledge and interpretation by reading the text. Because the Internet structure is decentralized, it allows participants to send information in many forms (Lindlof & Shatzer, 1998). The text can be presented through messages in a forum or a blog on a virtual wall. Fan ethnography allows for reading of the text, in this case, the presentation of the group's message in an activist mode regarding the fan activism. The nature of this study allows

for a contextual analysis of the data as the primary source of information, and data collected as a fan ethnographer allows for the collection of supporting data and limited participation to limit bias and perceived influence. Lindlof and Shatzer (1998) maintain that the dynamic interpretation of the stories being told via computer-mediated communication allows for understanding the social relationships and stories for the “native” members of the website.

The idea of fan ethnography has its roots in ethnographic research and emphasizes the possibility for a researcher to assimilate into a group. Studies in the past by Baym (1993, 2002), Harrington and Bielby (1995a, 1995b), and Scardaville (2005) use the open-participation approach to research and gain access to soap-opera fan groups either as unobtrusive observers or through open participation. This presence also creates a relationship between the user and the researcher (Lindlof & Shatzer, 1998). A modified ethnographic approach, even from a contextual analysis perspective, permits the examination of the message being presented to the researcher, the reader, and the participants of the group in order to understand the image being presented (Smith, 2005). The access allows the researcher to enter the group as an observer and to note interactions of the group's online setting by explaining the experience. Murthy (2008) cites that the role of participant-observer can still be considered “passive” in the eyes of bloggers and forum participants if the researcher is not overtly interacting with members. The presence of the discourse on the screen allows meanings that are relevant to the group to be interpreted (Lindlof & Shatzer, 1998).

The use of the case study allows us to approach the research the idea of community building from a theoretical perspective by applying Dahlberg’s criteria and how they can relate to Habermas. Lomicky and Hogg (2010) also illustrate that case studies provide insight into special groups as in their study with the Deaf and Hard of hearing. This approach allows for the

use of a case study because soap opera fans tend to be marginalized by the media and general society. Despite the fact that the marginalization of soap fans is related to a defined stigma, the use of social media and new technologies allows them to reach out and express their positions.

Narrowing the focus of the study allows for a contextual analysis based on examination in a case-study setting. Flyvbjerg (2011) says that a case study allows the examination of single class of phenomena, but it is not exhaustive. The use of a case study from an ethnographic perspective allows the examination of fan culture and activism in a more intimate setting by laying the groundwork for future studies (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

The study entails an examination of the website and virtual community involved in civil engagement. The steps include definition of the research question, identifying the community, community participant observation, and interpretation of the data. Physical artifacts and data that support the emerging themes of inclusivity, engagement, and creation of a community will be collected. The fan ethnographic approach with a content analysis focus allows for an examination focused of communication patterns and messages within the group (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Murthy (2008) ascertains that data collected from blogs and other online forums can keep researchers more accountable as respondents because they have an opportunity to engage publicly with the research process and its outputs.

The research consisted of regularly monitoring activity on two key websites (*Sudz.tv* and *Save the Soap Genre*) and related social media outlets on Facebook and Twitter over a three-month period. The selection of the sites was based on the cancellation announcement by ABC-Disney of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*. The study's time frame included the last broadcast date of *One Life to Live* and will focus on the most recent cancellation. The group observations allowed for studying the movement in a case study format with historical reference

dating back to when the cancellation announcement was made public. Aside from examining the blog entries based on Dahlberg's criteria, the study collected documents and selected tweets that demonstrate the process of community building and that support Dahlberg's criteria and cultural definitions.

The study focuses primarily on blog posts on the *Sudz.tv* site from December 2011 to February 2012 through content analysis with supporting documents from fan activity on the websites and social media. Looking at the data from this time frame allows the researcher to gain insight into the fan activity relating to the movement. Membership on the website is ill-defined, unlike a Facebook group, because people can use their real identities or pseudonyms. In regards to both social media and the blogs, all personal identifiers including location and identity, perceived or real, are removed or obscured based on research protocol and privacy. Blog entries and testimonials that have been coded are identified by the date the blog was posted.

The websites are archived through *Webcite.org*, an academic site dedicated to archiving online data for scholarly enterprise that will allow future research to be developed from the archived material. The sites are rich in information and the data will reflect a representative sample of the vast amount of available data. During the study's time frame, 44 blog entries were created, ranging in length from 25 to 1598 words. The typical entry averaged 750 to 800 words in length. Each blog entry could be awarded one to five stars based on a user rating, if the reader chose to award the entry any stars.

The blogs were read several times to examine evidence of Dahlberg's criteria for the creation of a public space on the Internet. The codes were based on key words from Dahlberg's criteria definitions. *Atlas.ti* software was used for coding to examine emerging categories. The

software allowed for coding to be done electronically, and this approach allowed for observation of emerging patterns from repeat readings.

The coding definitions were based on the key words connected to each criterion. Each blog entry was read for actions, comments or representations relating to the terms. Additional terms were used in connection to stakeholder, resulted in further elaborations on the words detailing Dahlberg's criteria. Additional words were derived from the definitions to allow for coding based on the definitions and ideas presented in the Literature Review that focused on fans, culture, and activism. The use of these additional definitions allowed the application of Dahlberg to fan culture and activism. The application of Dahlberg provided an additional avenue to understand the struggle for ownership in relation to downplaying stereotypes and promoting cultural legitimacy. Each criterion was applied separately to allow for careful reading of the text. Further discussion of the definitions is in Table 2 in Chapter 4. The application of the criterion separately allowed for the entries to be examined on the merits of the definitions.

This approach allows for examination of the communication process in this unusual online setting. *Sudz.tv* (<http://sudz.tv> Appendix B, Figure 6) and its allied site, *Save the Soap Genre* (<http://www.savethesoapgenre.com> Appendix B, Figure 7) are rich sites that allow for many research possibilities, ranging from communication analysis to rhetoric. The communication process includes the creation of the group's presence through posts from like-minded participants and supporting documents, including testimonials, statistics, affiliate information, a collection of articles relating to soap operas, press releases, and data regarding the save-the-soaps campaign and the Standing With Agnes Nixon (SWAN) initiative. The available data for possible studies include participant-produced CNN I-Reports relating to the movement,

and links to blogcasts supporting the group's activity relating to activism or cultural maintenance.

As a fan and observer of the soap opera genre, my role of a conservative observer-participant with limited interaction allowed me to use the insight of being a fan yet to balance emotions and ideas from the perspective of scholarly enterprise. In this capacity, it allowed for interaction with the fan activists on a limited basis. Low-key interaction allowed for the exchange of information, some interaction, and providing an encouraging word to support the groups' mission. Participation also included some mass tweeting, commenting on articles outside of the group, and collecting 15 cable coupons. The act of participating in the groups was limited to allow for observation of the fans' activity in regards to saving their shows and to limit any perceived bias. Considerable care was taken on the researcher's part to limit any influence in fan discussions or strategies as that was the domain for the groups administrators' and the fan activist. The role of the researcher was to keep interaction limited to maintain balance and limit bias. The study proved to be far more rewarding using a low-key approach.

The study examines the existence of the online public space as well as its influence and constructs through public dialogue in a mediated setting (Poor, 2005). The space allows for discussion and the exchange of ideas from individuals excluded by corporate entities. These ideas are judged on their merit and importance to the movement. The textual data from the website blogs are analyzed as recurring themes and ideas. The themes are inspired by the idea of deliberative democracy in a public sphere based on Habermas and Dahlberg's definitions, and they are pertinent to the group's activities, especially in the blogs and forums. The data collection examines themes based on the inclusivity, relevance, and importance that they have in the community, especially in relation to the cable coupons for a soap channel and the SWAN

campaigns. The use of a case study allows us to examine this activity from a real-life context because messages are stated on the website's blogs, in addition to observing daily tasks supporting the ideas presented by Dahlberg in the context of understanding Habermas in a different light.

Delimitations

The study incorporates an ethnographic examination from the perspective of a fan ethnographer as a participant-observer. The ethnographic approach examines interaction, physical artifacts of community building, and activist activities. However, further application of the Habermasian ideas will be used on the blogs located at *Sudz.tv*.

The study covers blog entries on the *Sudz.tv* website between December 1, 2011, and February 29, 2012; it is only a representative sample of the amount of material available on *Sudz.tv* and its allied site, *Save the Soap Genre*. The data on the sister site, *Save the Soap Genre*, take into consideration Dahlberg's criteria. In regards to the blog entries, the selection of the three-month window allows for examination of the group's activities. It should be noted that there is a three-week period during the Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year holidays where there is an absence of blog activity.

The goal of the study is to examine, through textual analysis, a representative sample of blog entries looking for elements of fan culture, community building, and activities relating to activism based on theoretical ideas presented by Habermas and Lincoln Dahlberg. The selection of the data allows for an examination of the emergent themes based on evolving codes.

The sites' allied Facebook groups, *Sudz.tv* and *I would pay a network/cable/satellite provider to save my soaps!*, are offshoots of the two websites, and it should be noted that activity on these social media outlets could provide a launch pad for future research. The depth and

amount of data exceed the scope of this study, and only representative posts relating to the questions are taken. The researcher chose to limit the study to a time frame of a few months and to focus on the websites and related social media activity. The scope of the study is unable to take in the full scope of the affiliated Facebook groups and Twitter due to size, the amount of activity, and the amount of rich data. The representative examples provide insight for the groups' activities. This limitation allows the research community to get a glimpse of what is entailed in building the community as the website's participants engage in civil discourse and activism.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Internet is a venue that gives people the opportunity to create virtual spaces. The virtual spaces allow users to express their opinions on an electronic wall. The electronic walls include forums, websites, blogs, podcasts, and video. The Internet provides a platform for building an online community that supports the activities of soap-opera fan activists. On April 14, 2011, ABC-Disney announced the cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*; the shows would end in September 2011 and January 2012, respectively. The announcement is the catalyst for building an online community. The discussion of results and theoretical implications focuses on site activity between December 1, 2011, and February 29, 2012.

Creation of the websites dedicated to the save-the-soap movement allowed fans to create a venue to voice their opinions and launch campaigns, and to create daily work lists through engagement and communicative practices. It is important to revisit the research question in order to apply the findings: How does deliberative democracy enhance or hinder activism? How do soap opera fans present their message through deliberative democracy? How does community building contribute to discourse?

The analysis of two websites is broken focuses on the application of Dahlberg's criteria for an online presence vetted through Habermas' idea for a public sphere. Chapter 4 focuses on the blog entries on *Sudz.tv* and activity from *Sudz.tv*'s allied site, *Save the Soap Genre*. Theoretical Implications in Chapter 5 examines the larger picture for both sites. The Discussion shows the application of Dahlberg's (2001, 2004) six criteria for an online space: autonomy from state and economic power, exchange and critique of critical moral-practical validity claims, reflexivity, ideal role-taking, sincerity, and discursive inclusion and equality. Dahlberg's criteria are used in consideration of Habermas' tenants of the public sphere.

Overview

Sudz.Tv and its allied site, *Save the Soap Genre* (Appendix B, Figure 7) are fan-created sites geared to fighting to save the soaps. *Sudz.tv* is organized to offer information on affiliates, forums, and blogs as a place for fans to vent their ideas, concerns, and positions. The role of the participant-observer examines the structuring nature of communication in regard to creating a public space. The idea of community building is not typically associated with some aspects of soap opera fandom because online communities originally focused on a character or a show. The stigma of being a soap fan is also connected to the hesitance to create an online presence. The cancellations created a new reality that brought people together for a common goal: to save their shows and create cultural legitimacy.

Save the Soap Genre's direction is dedicated to providing work assignments and an online collection of material for the cable-coupon campaign and other activities the fans see as important in the mission to save the soaps. This venue allows a common spot for people to check information and to gather materials regardless if they use Facebook or not. The site is organized to offer quick access for daily work assignments, supporting fellow soap fans who have online podcasts or radio programs, videos, questionnaires, memory lane, easy tweets, and soap articles. The site's front page registers the number of visitors, and it averages between 25,000 and 50,000 unique visits monthly. These visits can include people who are curious about the sites and soap fans who are involved in work to save their shows.

Both sites, *Sudz.tv* and *Save the Soap Genre*, were created by fans to save the shows, yet they both have slightly different data sets. Both sites were created on quasi-private sites that are reasonably free of corporate intervention, and it gave the users freedom to speak freely and not be hindered by corporate interests. The mission statement for *Sudz.tv* was similar to *Save the*

Soap Genre as both stated they are trying to save the genre. The mission statement encouraged fans to participate and become involved in the movement. A non-monetary membership on *Sudz.tv* was required through creating an account for posting, unlike *Save the Soap Genre* which had no distinct membership requirements. Membership on the websites had no hidden costs; the role of a member was not based on race, color, sexual orientation, or socio-economic standing, thus furthering the idea of equality.

The only perceived costs to being a member of the online group are paying for Internet or cell-phone data access. Aside from paying a commercial entity for Internet access, membership in the groups is free, monetarily speaking. The idea of perceived freedom allows fan activists to create blogs and dialogue concerning the goal of saving the soaps. The space allows for all who are interested to participate in the groups' activities. The ability to post a blog entry and provide commentary gives fans the opportunity to present their positions in a public forum on *Sudz.tv*. The examination of the blogs through coding on *Sudz.tv* is further supported by activity from the *Save the Soap Genre* site.

The blogs on *Sudz.tv* originally covered entries from May 2011 to the April 2012 resulting in over 135 blogs on the site. However, the study only focused on the time period from December 2011 to February 2012 and two significant entries from November 2011. The two entries from November were included in the study because they were continually cited in several blog entries from the duration of the study. During the time of the study, 44 blog entries were posted in the blog forum on *Sudz.tv* ranging in length from 25 to 1598 words. The average length of the blogs was between 750 and 800 words. The blogs were created by 15 fan bloggers for a total of 44 postings. The breakdown of the bloggers revealed that nine users had a single blog entry; two fan bloggers each had two blog entries; two fan bloggers had three posts; and finally,

one blogger had ten entries, and another had fifteen entries. During the three-month study, it should be noted that there was a three-week window where only two blogs were posted due to religious holidays and the New Year holidays. The blog entries in the study was only a small sample from the roughly 135 blog entries dating back to May 2011 when the site was established in reaction to the cancellation announcement from ABC-Disney.

The blog entries posted on the website allowed fans to express their concerns and outrage regarding the actions of ABC-Disney, Disney, and Prospect Park. The website gave the fan bloggers the opportunity to express their opinions in a forum where they felt safe from corporate intrusion. It should be noted that, in the blog entries, the fan bloggers, in addition to some media outlets, used abbreviations to describe eight serials and one company in the data (Table 1).

Table 1. Abbreviations

Proper Title	Abbreviation
<i>All My Children</i>	AMC
<i>As the World Turns</i>	ATWT
<i>Bold and the Beautiful</i>	BB
<i>Days of our Lives</i>	Days
<i>General Hospital</i>	GH
<i>Guiding Light</i>	GL
<i>One Life to Live</i>	OLTL
Prospect Park	PP
<i>Young and the Restless</i>	YR

The blogs yielded 81 pages of data that were coded using Dahlberg’s criteria vetted through the 3 key points presented by Habermas: domain for common concern, disregards of status, and inclusion. The coding revealed 184 unique codes within 13 categories including Dahlberg’s 6 criteria. Within these 184 codes, 4 additional themes also emerged: education, culture and art, historical, and political. The coding revealed four additional categories and three

sub-categories through multiple readings of the text. The four additional categories reflected multiple intersections of Dahlberg’s criteria in the data in addition to fan culture and investment. Coding of the data also revealed three sub-categories in Dahlberg’s six criteria. The sub-categories fit initially with the main set of criteria, but details in the text set them apart, but address issues more from a fan perspective. These sub-categories included commodity, campaign, and civility. Table 2 reflects details about the words used to define the 184 codes and related terms,

Table 2. Words and Phrases Used In Coding

Dahlberg's Criteria and Related Themes	Codes	Code Words
Autonomy from economic & corporate power	36	Corporate power, economic power, state power
Commodity	12	Product, investment, economic
Exchange & critique of critical moral-practical validity claims	22	Moral validity, practical validity, validity of soaps
Moral	5	Moral
Practical	5	Practical
Reflexivity	17	Reflexivity, passion
Ideal role-taking	11	Role-taking, power
Campaign	16	Campaign
Sincerity	5	Sincerity, reflection
Civility & incivility	10	Civility, incivility, moral indignation
Discursive inclusion & equality	9	Encouragement, inclusion, equality
Education	14	Youth, education, arts, language
Culture & art	9	Actor, artist, culture, imagination, creative
Historical	8	History, past
Political	5	Political, legislation, government, corporate

Table 3 gives a brief overview of the breakdown regarding the codes based on Dahlberg’s criteria concerning the two websites with influences from social media. The use of social media is strongly reflected in data from *Save the Soap Genre*.

Table 3. Code Interpretation for Sudz.Tv and Save the Soap Genre in Relation to Social Media

Dahlberg's Criteria and Related Themes	Codes	Sudz. tv	Save the Soap Genre	Social Media	Notes
Autonomy from Economic & corporate power	36	30		Facebook	ABC-Disney v. the fans
Commodity	12	10	Soaps as a product	Facebook	Show demand for the shows; ownership
Exchange & critique of critical moral-practical validity claims	22	20	Provide links	Post links on Facebook,	Invites dialogue on articles via Facebook
Moral	5	2	Create demand		
Practical	5	2	Promote demand	Facebook	Demonstrate the value of soaps
Reflexivity	17	12	Passion, insight	Facebook	Importance, ownership, legitimacy
Ideal Role-Taking	11	8	Challenge, empower	Daily tasks	Empowering
Campaign	16	6	E-coupons, tweets, Phone calls, articles	Facebook, Twitter	Three blog entries dedicated to contacts; coupons;
Sincerity	5	2	testimonials	Facebook	Passion drives the reason ownership
Civility & Incivility	10	8	Reminders for politeness	Blogs, Facebook, Twitter	Remind that unity is important
Discursive Inclusion & Equality	9	6	All are welcomed	Facebook, Blogs	People judged on the merits of arguments
Education	14	4	Memory lane	Facebook, blogs,	Soaps as a tool for education
Culture & Art	9	4	Memory Lane	Facebook	Supporting the craft and imagination
Historical	8	5	Memory Lane	Blogs, Facebook	Embracing the past for the future
Political	5	4		Facebook, Twitter,	Promote empowerment

Table 4 demonstrates the intersection of Dahlberg and Habermas in relation to online community building and activism. The application of Dahlberg’s criteria is done in conjunction with Habermas’ three criteria for a public sphere. Dahlberg’s criteria demonstrates the relevance of an online presence that is needed for building a public sphere. The public sphere allows for a public space for communication and discourse in deliberative democracy.

Table 4. Intersection of Habermas and Dahlberg

Dahlberg’s Criteria and Related Themes	Codes	Domain of Common Concern	Disregard of Status	Equality
Autonomy from economic & corporate power	36	Quasi-free from corporate interests	Yes for members	
Commodity	12	Serials as a product, investment	Yes	Yes
Exchange & critique of critical moral-practical validity claims	22	Yes from fans and non-fans	Debate welcomed	Yes
Moral	5	Passion, conviction, insight	Yes	Yes
Practical	5	Logic, realism, place	Yes	Yes
Reflexivity	17	Insight, passion, legitimacy	Yes	Yes
Ideal role-taking	11	Ownership of saving the shows	Yes	Yes
Campaign	16	Role-taking, active participation	Yes, all	Yes
Sincerity	5	Merit, conviction of argument	Yes	Yes
Civility & incivility	10	Civility, respect, challenge stigma	Sometimes	Yes
Discursive inclusion & equality	9	Equality, umbrella for all voices	Yes	Yes
Education	14	Supports moral, commodity	Sometimes	Yes
Culture & art	9	Supports several criteria	Sometimes	Yes
Historical	8	Respect the past for the future	Yes	Yes
Political	5	Empowerment and knowledge	Yes	Yes

The codes in the blog entries often reflected the appearance of more than one criterion. The blog entries often reflected at least two criteria and in some cases as many as five criteria appearing in several entries.

The discussion of the sites shows how Dahlberg's (2001, 2004) six criteria can be applied to an online space: autonomy from state and economic power, exchange and critique of critical moral-practical validity claims, reflexivity, ideal role-taking, sincerity, and discursive inclusion and equality. *Sudz.tv* and *Save the Soap Genre*, were created by fans to save the shows, yet they both have slightly different data sets. The use of social media allows the fans on the sites to further their message. Both sites were created on quasi-private sites that are reasonably free of corporate intervention, and it gave the users freedom to speak freely and not be hindered by corporate interests. The mission statement for *Sudz.tv* was similar to *Save the Soap Genre* as both stated they were trying to save the genre. The examination of the results presents a direction for observing the websites and presence relating to Dahlberg's criteria. The following sections further explore the relationship between the categories by examining the messages and action.

Autonomy from State and Economic Power

The *Save the Soap Genre* website (<http://savethesoapgenre.com>) was spun off *Sudz.tv* during the study time frame as a way to pull in more people to help save the soaps. *Save the Soap Genre* is an allied site of *Sudz.tv*, and it aims to create an easy-to-use site for daily campaign tasks. *Save the Soap Genre*'s mission statement cites that it is also a sister site to the Facebook group, *I would pay a network/cable/satellite provider to save my soaps!* and that it is "designed with intent to make it easier for all soap fans to know what the latest campaigns are, as well as the priority. The [Facebook] groups become awfully busy and things can be missed" (Save the Soap Genre, 2012). Both sites are dedicated to the saving-the-soap genres, whether from an

electronic approach or a more traditional approach. Although the missions are similar, they complement the viewpoints of the movement and fit Dahlberg's criteria as having autonomy from state and economic entities. The only cost to the fan is paying for Internet access from home or a data plan for a mobile device.

The soap movement was essentially free from most corporate entities with the movement's presence being established on public or quasi-private infrastructure. The fan bloggers participated on *Sudz.tv* blogs and forums without intervention and harassment from ABC-Disney or other corporate entities. The blog entries were coded using the terms of "corporate power," "power," and "economic power." Fan bloggers posted 30 entries that revealed 36 unique codes showing their freedom from corporate control to express their feelings, but the lack of corporate interference also allowed them the freedom to speak freely. One statement was clearly representative of the feelings of many fan activists in their disregard of corporate entities: "I refuse to live in a society where corporations dictate virtually every aspect of my life" (January 21, 2012).

The freedom from corporate control allows the fans to organize and speak out against the tactics of ABC-Disney. The feeling of the fan activists was reflected in the next two statements in regard to Disney's decision to cancel their shows in favor of less appealing fare; "Disney has long held the reputation for reptilian tactics in broadcasting" (January 16, 2012). The fan blogger wanted to clarify his/her sentiment to reflect how he/she perceived Disney's tactics for program scheduling. The following statement expresses concerns about the relationship between ABC-Disney and Prospect Park in regard to the shows going online: "There are numerous legitimate concerns over ABC/Disney's negotiations with Prospect Park" (January 21, 2012). The fan activists also challenged the corporate mindset and the idea that soaps do not matter, with the

following statement: “Like it or not, corporations and advertisers cannot argue soap operas do not matter because the truth stares us in the face daily” (January 4, 2012).

With quasi-freedom from corporate control, despite news releases to dislodge the movement, fans continue to question the corporate and economic power motives from their blogs. The fan bloggers have addressed and challenged the position of ownership for the cancelled shows: “In light of the fact that ABC, under the dominance of Walt Disney Productions, has decided to hold hostage the legacies of the great Agnes Nixon” (January 4, 2012). The reaction to Prospect Park’s decision to shelve the shows is demonstrated in the following blog post and rumored pressure to have the fans lay off contacting them in regards to the shows:

let's take a look at the text of the item they are saying. First and foremost, we are being told to shut up. “ALL emails, calls, and letter to them, networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, etc), investors, etc STOP IMMEDIATELY.” There is no sugarcoating this; we're being told to shut up. (January 21, 2012)

The statement is further supported by the fact that fan activists are clued into the corporate tactics and fan activism: “Clearly, SOMETHING had to be done and we got a new belch from Prospect Park telling us all to just shut up. I'd rather SWIP and SWAN than shut up” (January 31, 2012). This statement is further supported by a blog post a day later: “The ‘Power’ at Prospect Park wants the beloved fans of All My Children and One Life To Live to sit back, be quiet and quit asking for Our soaps back” (February 1, 2012). A fan blogger presents an additional statement concerning Prospect Park: “In my mind what the corporate entities are doing is nothing short of holding hostage her [Agnes Nixon] legacies” (January 8, 2012). These statements echo the struggle about ownership of the shows.

The idea of autonomy offers insight into Habermas but also challenges the public sphere due to the perceived commercialization of the product and control of the bourgeoisie commercial interests. In the eyes of the corporate interests, the fans have no equality to them, but that is tested by the idea commodity as the fans struggle for ownership by demonstrating the intrinsic value of the product. Statements presented here allow us to look at an additional idea as the fans struggle with corporations over ownership. This struggle is evidenced in culture and commodity because the fans have a vested interest in the shows' text. The fans view the show as a viable economic product which contrasts the positions of the corporations. The idea of commodity ties into Dahlberg's idea for autonomy with the fans challenging corporate ownership of the shows.

Commodity

"Economic power" and "corporate power" were used as code words; they revealed an additional code, "commodity." The coded blog entries revealed 12 unique codes detailing soap operas as a commodity. The struggle between the fans and corporate power over ownership was exhibited in a number of blog entries using soap operas as a commodity for economic investment. The fan activists viewed the decline of soap operas as a serious issue and presented the case of why the soaps can be an economic investment.

The fan bloggers clearly start their position by citing the lack of scripted television and the need to go to cable for scripted programs because the networks have created a vacuum: that "basic programming" the vacuum of creative scripted programming is getting dangerously immense. If you want quality scripted programming that inspires the mind and entertains the soul you have to pay extra for a premium channel. That's pretty much like real life in the marketplace. (January 14, 2012)

A fan blogger points out the failure of Prospect Park and ABC-Disney to deliver a product as well as their lack of respect for the shows as a commodity:

The bottom line for me at this stage of the game is that PP should gracefully walk away from these two shows and return them to ABC so that ABC can work with those organizations that are fully prepared to come to the table and get these shows back into production. It would be in Disney's best interest, on behalf of their stock holders, to encourage PP to give up the good fight and let us continue to do what we need to do to get these shows back into production. (February 1, 2012)

This comment is further supported by the following statement:

If these companies clamoring for investment dollars truly believed in the future of the genre they would readily be SWANs. [Emphasis in original] Their abject failure to support it sends a loud message. If they want us to continue buying their product, it's time for them to step up to the plate. (January 21, 2012)

The struggle about the idea of ownership is exhibited by a fan blog post demonstrating the value of soap operas as a commodity through streaming platforms based on a subscription with the idea of "Show demand and supply will come" (December 24, 2011). The fan blogger continues with his examination of soap operas as a commodity with the following words:

There is money to be made on this or the plug would have been yanked on this project a long time ago. There is obviously a market for the prior years of the serial drama or else those would have been yanked off the store. This seems like a viable avenue for getting our shows in rerun form. (December 24, 2011).

The fan blogger continues to elaborate on the discussion with the following scenario regarding iTunes as well as Procter and Gamble:

Now imagine if the campaign hit the goal of 500,000 coupons or \$4,995,000 if we bought the cheapest season of Days. Suddenly, we've got their attention. Suddenly, we've got Proctor's attention with just the first two As the World Turns DVD's. Imagine if 2,000,000 Guiding Light viewers went in and made \$19,900,000 US for P&G because they decided to put a year of Guiding Light on iTunes at \$9.95 US to test the waters? Put the price to \$15 for a year and suddenly, Proctor is rolling in \$30,000,000 US.

(December 24, 2011)

The fan blogger's discussion elaborates, from the fan perspective, that the shows are an economic commodity as a result of demand.

The discussion of soaps as a commodity is a struggle between fans and corporate interests. The fan bloggers have also raised the issue of economic disparity in relation to serial programming and the lack of quality television:

While serial programming is something respected in other Western societies, here in the United States we still suffer from a pervasive misogyny. We discount the role of women in our society. And like it or not despite the advances women have made since the 1960s, the bottom line is women usually earn no more than 75% of that which men earn.

(January 4, 2012)

The idea of ownership allows the fans to present their message about the importance of the shows as a marketable product. In addition to the idea that the shows are a commodity, the fans are asserting that they viable market of consumers. This actions is further supported by fans tweeting advertisers who purchase an ad placement during *General Hospital* (Appendix D, Figure 11). Commodity offers support to this Dahlberg criterion by demonstrating how fans as an entity challenge the corporate position through presenting their arguments that soaps are a

commodity worthy of investment. The position being presented allows fans to commodify a product by presenting its merit through discourse in a setting where their voices are heard.

Exchange and Critique of Critical Moral-Practical Validity Claims

The criterion of exchange and critique examines the positions that provide reasons to allow for criticism based on moral and practical validity claims. Three different codes play into the examination of validity claims: moral, practical and validity of soaps. Coding the blog reveals 32 unique codes. The codes reveal the discussion of fans' dedication to soap operas through testimonials and debate in reaction to outsiders and corporate decisions. The discussion and differences are also evident in the critique and criticism of the moral and practical arguments. The critiques are further broken down along the lines of moral validity and practical validity.

Moral

Moral critiques are based on providing criticism founded on a concept that challenges right and wrong behavior. The fan bloggers present entries that challenge the comments and preconceptions of the non-fans and the criticism they may receive from those who do not understand. The fan bloggers' posts also reflect actions of fellow activists. The positions also extend to those within the movement because fan bloggers stand for what they believe.

In the case of the fans, they are advocating to save their shows, a product in which they believe in, and several entries stood out as supporting the claims of moral validity when contrasted with practical validity. One of the key concerns is the struggle of corporate ownership and the fans requesting the return of the shows that they believe were taken:

We as SWAN Fans are not going anywhere until someone rights the injustice that has been bestowed upon us. We want the rights of these Stories back in it's creator's hands

for her to do with what she feels is best. My Question Is this to much to ask? We think not. (February 1, 2012)

The blog entry echoes another post where a fan is expressing dismay regarding the tactics of corporate media to silence the fans. The fan blogger feels the right to express opposing viewpoints in relation to corporate media attempting to lead the fans astray in regards to Prospect Park:

I give you a fair warning we will be bombarded with misinformation designed to take us off our focus. What “the powers that be” haven’t discovered yet is that this time the predictable pattern of our behavior has been altered by their actions and not by our own. (January 14, 2012)

The previous statement is further supported by the same blogger later in the same entry: “We soap viewers know the truth because we were engaged and immersed in the process. I defy anyone to show me a television viewer base as intelligent, engaged or aware of what it takes to create such artistic magnificence” (January 14, 2012).

The fan activists must also face challenges from those people who question the validity of soaps. Several fan bloggers present the following statements in defense of the argument that they are right in the face of outside criticism:

For those who believe soap don't matter, all I can say to that is THEY DO MATTER. They matter to me. They mattered to my mother. They matter to thousands of other viewers. If you don't believe me, that's just tough cookies. (January 16, 2012)

This statement is further supported by a post from another fan blogger regarding the validity of the soap genre:

Yes, there was a lot of melodrama and silly superfluous stories woven into those shows. But oh how I learned so much about the world in which we live! And soap opera played a great role in shaping that educational process. These last nine months have been a journey between Heaven and Hell - ironically the working title for *One Life to Live*. (January 14, 2012).

The fan bloggers also use moral validity to solidify support for the shows and the actors based on artistic merit:

Those who act in soap operas are looked upon as being substandard within their own industry. Those who write the brilliant dialog day in and day out are looked upon as being members of the lowest rung of the writing profession's ladder. There is but one truth and that is the notion that soap operas do not matter is a bold faced lie! (January 4, 2012)

This statement is echoed in a blog entry to encourage fans to express their support of the shows in their own words: “[I] hope others begin to share theirs so that, collectively, our stories make for ONE HELL OF A SOAP OPERA. We only have ONE LIFE TO LIVE. Let’s make saving the soap genre part of OUR lives’ journey” (January 16, 2012).

The moral argument demonstrates what fans view as correct, and entries reflect the responses from outside sources, including media, corporate interests, and other fan groups. The Facebook groups also echo the validity of soaps because fans posted video clips via YouTube of Viki’s Speech [Erika Slezak] (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcuT2iHGemk>) on the *One Life to Live* episode that aired January 12, 2012, in the Facebook groups and on Twitter (Appendix I, Figures 18 and 19). The video clip features the character, Victoria Lord (Erika Slezak), explaining the essence of a soap opera and pointing out the dedication and investment of

the fans by using the last episode of *Fraternity Row* as a basis to present the definition (Appendix I, Figure 19). It is an example of reality imitating art based on a moral position. The video clip presents the moral validation to the fans in addition to validating the importance of soap operas.

Practical

Practical validity claims challenge the moral validity claims of right and wrong by basing arguments on facts instead of conviction and passion. The critique of the ideas can come from outside influence or from within the group. In the eyes of the fans, “The soap genre encompasses past, current, and future soaps operas and is not about one show, network, or platform” (November 26, 2011). The previous statement is further enhanced by another blog entry challenging the perceived stereotypes by stating “We soap viewers know the truth because we were engaged and immersed in the process. I defy anyone to show me a television viewer base as intelligent, engaged or aware of what it takes to create such artistic magnificence” (January 14, 2012).

One blog post makes the practical argument that challenges the idea of right and wrong based on passion by expressing the need to end the infighting among different fan groups and to focus on the real matter at hand:

What is done is done and I think everyone who is a soap fan owes the genre the respect of not being so angry about what they are doing and start focusing on what you can do to help save the genre. This is not about one soap, it's about so much more. We must come together now, like never before. (January 15, 2012)

Another fan blogger presents the importance of the genre because of the respect fans have for the actors:

Since the onset of television, soap operas have served as a proven training ground and incubator for up-and-coming actors, technicians and crews. They have offered a unique training experience alongside seasoned and respected veterans as well as other new talent, often in a family-like atmosphere. (December 11, 2011)

Practical validity also extends to the blog entries concerning the campaigns and their goals. Criticism about the campaign has come from different angles, and fans posted their comments about the issues regarding the cable coupon-campaign and what was needed to save the shows. The first post details what needed to be done to attract new viewers:

Soaps in 2012 need to do two things in order to attract new viewers. The first is to advertise and this is a no brainer. Primetime is advertised in daytime and the only thing in daytime that gets advertised anymore are the replacement programs. (January 1, 2012)

This blog entry is supported by clarifying the goals of the cable coupon campaign and citing its success in two statements, “The main goal of this campaign is to keep this genre alive” (November 23, 2011). This entry is furthered by presenting a brief explanation about the coupons: “We discussed where these coupons are coming from and the list of geographic locations was extensive. Heavy coupon returns have come in from the major cities across the country one would expect” (November 23, 2012).

In addition to the campaigns, fans are encouraged to comment on articles (Appendix G, Figures 12 and 13) posted on Facebook and *Save the Soap Genre* to make their voices heard relating to the serial dramas. The site provides links for articles published by bloggers and media outlets on a page where soap fans can go and leave comments in an effort to continually voice the message that soaps still matter (Appendix G, Figures 13 and 14). The ability to post a comment engages the fans in criticism by using moral and practical validity claims.

The articles on *Forbes*, *TV Media Insight*, *TV Guide*, and *Wall Street Journal*'s websites provided an additional avenue for fans to place their arguments. It also gave fans the chance to acknowledge those bloggers outside the fan groups, who wrote in support of the genre. The ability to leave comments allowed the fans to support the bloggers who supported them. It also allowed the fans to politely chastise ABC-Disney about the rapid decline in viewers number that the replacement shows, *The Chew* and *The Revolution*, were posting. The fans' dismay further criticized ABC as articles reporting the Neilson numbers showed significant drops in viewer numbers when compared to the same week in the previous year. The drop in viewer numbers was the most significant for *The Revolution*, ABC's replacement program for *One Life to Live*. A *Forbes* article pointed that out for the week of March 14, 2011, *One Life to Live* had 2.43 million viewers, and a year later, *The Revolution* only mustered 1.33 million viewers. *The Revolution* shed 45% of *One Life to Live*'s audience in 2 months (Freidman, 2012). The decline in viewer numbers was further documented in that by April 4, 2012 *The Revolution* shed 51% of *One Life to Live*'s audience (Berman, 2011b). The fans questioned the validity of ABC-Disney's decision to cancel *One Life to Live* for a program no one was interested in watching. The article comments were viewed as important because they demonstrate to non-fans and corporate entities that soaps still matter.

The articles that are linked to *Save the Soap Genre* have sections that allow the reader to present statements supporting the soaps and decrying the activity of some corporate entities. The fan activists are strongly encouraged to post and interact in an effort to make their voices heard. The fans who want to post are encouraged to respond respectfully and to downplay rhetoric from non-fans and those who claim they are fans but only offer negativity about the goals of the group. Placing comments (Appendices G and H, Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17) allows

public discussion among the citizenry by giving legitimacy to those reporters and bloggers who support claims (Hermes, 2006). Hermes position on posting supports the moral and practical validity claims that Dahlberg presents in his definition. Dahlberg's definition gives credence to the importance of equality in the arguments. The fans present their position by demonstrating thoughtful dialogue while supporting those in the media who support the product the fans want to preserve.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the relationship between cause and effect. Dahlberg's criteria are evident in 12 blogs creating 17 unique codes. The following posts demonstrate the relationship between the action of the post and its effect. Reflexivity also has influences in education, culture and art, and civility. The idea of reflexivity also embraces passion and insight regarding the issues surrounding the soap operas and validity of the genre. This concept is most evident in posts for the Facebook groups and on *Sudz.Tv*. Reflexivity allows the fans to express feelings about legitimacy, ownership and importance of the shows. The following blog entries demonstrate reflexivity in these areas. One blogger reflects on soaps and the change in society:

At some quiet turning point, society decided these subjects were nice-to-haves, but not requirements for a successful career and, by extension, life. At that moment, something shifted. While we work like dogs to be "successful," based on how much we make, what we have, and who we know, our humanity and spirits suffer in the process. (December 13, 2011)

The following blog entry further expands the previous idea by examining the harshness of reality in our present society. The change of society's values is reflected in how the message is presented by looking at world through media messages and corporate greed:

Perhaps the statement is “too intellectual” for most in this age of misinformation. Perhaps the simplest of explanations for a catastrophe are the most difficult to recognize because we've become a society with a propensity to gravitate toward the sensational. And in observing the obscene conduct of so many in an effort to gain some kind of control over an industry speaks to an inherent malaise within our society. (January 21, 2012).

The previous blog post reflected how changes in society affect the realities in which we live. One fan blogger posted a blog entry examining the struggle of fighting for scripted drama that was marred in a love-hate relationship regarding soap operas:

We all want the same thing--scripted drama. It's the avenue that is different and the moment you're able to get past that then you'll start to see the drama and wind up loving a form of serial drama that can be magnificent in some series and terrible in others. Kind of like loving and hating soaps. (January 3, 2012)

The previous blog entry demonstrated the love-hate relationship of soaps. Another approach to this blog entry was echoed in the struggle to overcome perceived stereotypes of the soap opera fan: “The whole notion of ‘hysterical soap opera women’ is absolutely misogynistic and just plain wrong. Sure, there might be some that fit the stereotype, but more often than not, we don't fit it” (January 20, 2012).

The last two blog entries examined the reflection of the fan bloggers regarding the campaigns to save the soap and role-taking as a fan activist:

These last nine months have been filled with joys and sorrows; victories and defeats; but the greatest gift out of these months of tumultuous debate has been the assortment of fellow soap fans that came together in seeing the big picture. (January 14, 2012)

The entry was further supported by another fan blogger:

Watch the wings of soap viewers open and soar as they come to understand the message we are trying to send. I know it's all business with the networks but sometimes all it takes is a pivotal moment, a creative movement to massage those who try to massage us.

(January 21, 2012)

The blog entries demonstrate the cause and effect of the fans' actions in regards to behavior and their experiences with outsiders and corporate entities. The critique and criticism of the moral and validity claims establish the presence based on arguments that support the fans' cause. Dialogue is presented in a reflective matter that encompasses a variety of opinions yet encourages discourse. The balance of discourse and action allows the perpetuation of text surrounding the cultural points they value as important as well as the familial connections, whether real or imagined. Both sites have forums that allow fans to discuss the soap operas, both currently airing shows and cancelled ones. The text encourages fans to take the fate of the show and genre into their own hands with the message that they are contributing to the effort even if it is a tweet; mailing or collecting a coupon; or posting a comment on an article about soaps, the television industry, or the failing ratings of the replacement shows.

Ideal Role-Taking

Members, or users, of the sites utilized the materials to organize and present their message. Sudz.Tv (Appendix B, Figure 6) was created first in order to establish a presence on the Internet. The site offered contact information for ABC-Disney television affiliates, blogs, and flyers with English and Spanish cable campaign coupons. The blogs on Sudz.Tv were further supported by the daily activity pages on *Save the Soap Genre*, allied Facebook groups and tweets. Four blog entries in January and February 2012, provide lists for contacting affiliates by mailing flyers, sending tweets and posting on corporate websites. These lists also included

contact information for Disney's board of directors, Anne Sweeney, and Roger Iger to express disappointment concerning Disney's actions.

The information on the site allowed the fan to research information about the network affiliates to call or email them concerning the cancellation of the shows and the status of *General Hospital*. *Save the Soap Genre* furthered this activity by providing lists of affiliates and advertisers (Appendix E and F). The lists also included contact information for advertisers on *General Hospital* and *Days of our Lives* (Appendix E) in addition to website and direct mail information. The fans were encouraged to show support, via Facebook and Twitter, to corporate entities that place commercials on the soaps, and because of that support, the fans would remain loyal consumers.

Ideal role-taking refers to the role or position that participants take in a public sphere. This role-taking benefits the group and is not based on status in the group or society. Nearly half of the blog entries dictated, directly or indirectly, the roles soap fans could play in regards to the soap movements. The coding revealed 11 unique codes in the blog entries. One code stood out by simply stating the importance of participation: "Soapers have a very important role to play" (December 11, 2011). Several blog entries, in particular, solidified the idea of role taking by further expanding this statement:

It is up to them to continue making their presence known; being the voice for those who do not have one; and educating others to the intrinsic value of the soap genre whether one is a fan or not. The wave of support shown the genre over the past eight months will prove to be instrumental in the survival of two cancelled shows and the genre. (December 11, 2011)

The previous statement demonstrates the importance of the fans taking a role in making themselves heard and is further supported by a later entry from a fan blogger:

While the studios and advertisers anticipate the soap genre is in the throes of death I place them on notice - the SWAN movement is charged up! We are filled with electric fire and we shall provide the spark which returns the flame of creativity to this American conversation. (January 14, 2012)

The idea of civility also comes into play as fans are encouraged to be proactive in their behavior and address the actions of others: “If a board is too toxic - LEAVE IT, period! It’s time to start being proactive. Soap fans do not need to shoulder the reputation that we are all some kind of fringe lunatics! It has to stop” (February 1, 2012). This entry was done in effort to get fans to act with a higher code of ethics and to police themselves. One blog entry also encourages fans to take a proactive role in challenging stereotypes: “This is our year! We no longer will be treated like the ugly ducklings of viewers. We are SWANS: we Stand With Agnes Nixon and we will not surrender” (January 8, 2012).

The blog entries also include a call for action encouraging fans to organize and support fan activity and campaigns:

I say we do a mall attack!! And if we could get a newsletter with the certain soap campaigns that if they're not on the Internet or on soap pages they might have missed (Daytime Fans Unite or I Would Pay for My Soaps) and with a description of the coupon campaign so they know what we're trying to accomplish. (December 18, 2011)

The blog entries demonstrate the idea of empowerment as a tool to encourage fans to take an active role as soap fans to save the shows and to challenge stereotypes. The idea of role-taking allows the fan to have a sense of empowerment by creating a strategy to present the message of

the fans to non-fans. In the codes supporting ideal role-taking, a sub-set of codes emerge supporting the role of the activist in a campaign.

The idea of role-taking was evident as the fans take control of the activities needed to participate in the campaign. In addition, the discussion and interaction with outsiders allowed fan activists to present their arguments about the importance of the soaps and to overcome divisions within the group. The Facebook groups had messages from the administrators detailing daily tasks that needed to be addressed by the fan activists. The fan activists were encouraged to watch *General Hospital*, both live and online, to boost its ratings. During the hour prior to *General Hospital*, fans were encouraged to call their affiliates, prepare flyers for mailing to Anne Sweeney, and to tweet their dismay about the cancellation of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* as a united message to ABC-Disney that they did not want to be told what to watch.

Articles and new tweets are posted daily, as an encouragement to soap fans to reach out and to express their opinion. Besides posting on articles, the group members are encouraged to send tweets from a collection of prepared scripts from the website regarding the movement and their goals (Appendix C, Figures 8 and 9). The tweets can be sent anytime during the day or night. When visiting the sites, interaction with the fans involved sending out tweets to followers and re-tweeting messages from soap fans to achieve reach in hopes of getting the message heard. The tweets were used as a tool to educate others about the cancellation of the shows and the campaigns to save scripted serial programming in hopes of getting their message heard. The tweets often included links to the websites that gave the fans the opportunity to network socially with fans and non-fans. Tweets (Appendix C, Figure 8) were sent to actors as a message to offer support and congratulations for accomplishments and recognition. In addition to tweeting information about the campaigns, in the last week of *One Life to Live* broadcasts in January

2012, the fans conducted a mob tweet to hopefully trend the following hashtags in the United States and Worldwide: #AgnesNixon, #OLTL, and #OneLifetoLive. In the final week, the massive tweeting succeeded in all three hashtags trending on Twitter's social stats that change steadily based on activity (Appendix J, Figures 20, 21, 22, and 23).

Through the process of creating these texts for Twitter, several fan activists expressed interest in creating text to reach out to those individuals who were bilingual or native Spanish-speakers. The idea was to connect telenovelas and soap operas together and reach out to that community. The fans expressed the importance of watching telenovelas as a time for families to come together to watch television and reconnect with one another. Several fans gathered in a small group online to create Spanish and bilingual tweets (Appendix K) and translating the coupon flyer and Anne Sweeney flyer from English to Spanish (Appendices L and M). The translations were done to reach those individuals who enjoyed American soap operas but were native Spanish speakers. It should be noted that three current American soap operas: *Days of our Lives*, *Young and the Restless*, and *Bold and the Beautiful* were broadcast in Latin America with Spanish sub-titles or dubbed with Spanish-speaking actors. Tweets were also sent to Spanish language broadcasters: Telemundo, Televisa, Univision, and Azteca America, along with their affiliates in the United States to spread the message.

Tweets and flyers are also directed at Disney executive Anne Sweeney to hold her to words she stated regarding the show with the "most eyeballs will win," in this case the survival of *General Hospital* (Appendices L and M). A soap fan, with a Twitter account can click on the tweet button, and the message is sent directly to Twitter. In addition to tweeting, fans can print flyers (Appendix D) from *Sudz.Tv* to mail to affiliates and Sweeney, advocating the survival of *General Hospital*. Tweets are also directed at ABC-Disney, Disney, and Prospect Park to release

All My Children and *One Life to Live* back to Agnes Nixon in the hopes the shows can find a new home (Appendix C, Figure 9). Prospect Park was awarded the licenses to put the shows online under a one-year agreement from the last airdate on broadcast television. The agreements end in September 2012 and January 2013, respectively (Potts, 2011).

Campaign

The codes relating to the campaigns detailed role-taking in 8 blog entries, revealing 16 unique codes. Three blogs were exclusively reserved for placing campaign information such as contact and affiliate information, and material relating to the cable coupon campaign and the SWAN initiative. These three blogs revealed information about contacting affiliates and the Disney board of directors that included phone numbers, email addresses, websites, Facebook accounts, and Twitter handles. The campaign codes furthered the concept of ideal role-taking by empowering and challenging the notion that soap fans are not aware. The use of social media and traditional methods empowered the soap fans.

The message of the campaign's importance is reiterated in several posts to encourage the soap fan to take the role of activist with "The main goal of this campaign is to keep this genre alive" (November 23, 2011). The idea of role-taking is further augmented by the following statement: "Soapers continue to take to the streets spreading the word of coupons. The goal is to show the actual demand for a cable soap network and home for all things soap opera" (November 23, 2011). This directive is further supported by a blog posted from a soap fan: "For me it has always been about getting a cable soap channel. This commitment remains. Coupons, my friends! Like it or not THEY WILL BE THE DIFFERENCE!" (November 25, 2011).

The soap fans are encouraged to take control of the mission by challenging the argument that there is no demand for soaps:

One argument Soapers have taken issue with is that there is no demand for the genre. This argument is based on the flawed and proprietary Nielsen ratings system. Coupons are the physical evidence of who is watching soap operas. They are not being collected by Nielsen, a network, or cable provider, but by a Soaper. (November 23, 2011)

The cable coupon is being run in conjunction with the Anne Sweeney campaign and the SWAN initiative. The Anne Sweeney campaign is an effort to keep Anne Sweeney true to her words per a statement she gave in a June 6, 2011, interview. In addition to mailing flyers to Anne Sweeney, fans mailed and emailed Disney stockholders the same flyers regarding Anne Sweeney's words prior to the stockholder's meeting in March 2012 (Appendices L and M). The fan activists are clued in to the importance of this campaign and the significance of their role:

It's time to remind Anne Sweeney of her words on June 6, 2011 in regards to General Hospital. It is VERY important for us to put as much pressure on Disney/ABC to try and keep GH broadcasting as long as possible on ABC while we continue to get AMC & OLTL back on air. (February 13, 2012)

The fans were directed to mail flyers, to call Anne Sweeney in regard to her words and the replacement shows, and to watch *General Hospital*. In addition to these campaigns, there were two blog entries regarding the SWAN initiative, in particular, attempting to gain Kennedy Center honors for Agnes Nixon and warning corporate America:

It is time for the Kennedy Center to recognize Ms. Nixon's accomplishments and her contributions to the American conversation. Let the corporations and advertisers be placed on notice right now -- any of you who would dare to try and influence the Kennedy Center in denying Agnes Nixon this honor will deal with more than 50,000 soap opera fans mobilized today in gaining this honor. (January 8, 2012)

By using the code word, campaign, its usage furthered the idea of participation in relation Dahlberg's ideal role-taking, history, and commodity. The idea of role-taking allowed for the participants to take an active role in forwarding the movement's message and giving themselves a sense of empowerment. The sense of empowerment allows the fans to argue their position by citing the cultural and historical significance of the genre.

The campaign for a new soap channel is done through two methods: electronically (Appendix C, Figure 10) and by printing English or Spanish coupons for the cable-channel campaign (Appendixes N, and O). The cable coupons and flyers are printed so that fans can hand them out at fan events, malls, and to soap fans who are not online as they may not be aware of the campaign to save the soaps. Many off-liners were aware that *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* were cancelled because the announcement was featured on a number of mainstream media outlets. However, conversations between online fans and off-line fans helped create discourse over the cancellations that extended beyond the virtual public sphere. Additionally, the coupon campaign was supported by tweets to get people to complete the forms.

The campaign is done to demonstrate that there is still demand for the programs. The coupons address the issue of a new channel for both cancelled and presently airing soap operas. Fans are also encouraged to support online and traditional media outlets that support the coupon campaign and soap genre in magazines and websites such as *Huffington Post*, *Yahoo contributor network*, *CNN I-Reports*, *Examiner*, *CBS Soap in Depth*, and *Globe*. Questionnaires and online forms ask fans to provide information regarding DVR failures; final broadcast airdates for SOAPnet, as ending dates varied in different markets; and daily activities. It should be noted that end dates for SOAPnet have varied across the country and some cable and satellite companies still carry the channel. This example creates documentation supporting the claims that the fans

feel they have been wronged by corporate entities due to widespread failure of the DVR feeds. These actions support ideal role-taking and practical validity claims. The fans are encouraged in engagement with others concerning the campaigns and thoughtful dialogue that is open to all based on the merits of their discussion.

Sincerity

Sincerity is defined as person who speaks his/her own mind based on his/her own thoughts, feelings and ideas. Sincerity was evidenced in two blogs, yielding five unique codes. However, elements of sincerity were also echoed in reflexivity, inclusion, and validation claims. Conviction and passion were additional ideas that emerged concerning the idea of sincerity. The use of the word passion yielded an additional code regarding sincerity. Sincerity is echoed in many of the blogs to demonstrate the passion and emotion the fans have regarding the genre through testimonials and conviction. Passion also drove the issue of ownership. A fan blogger added a facet to the idea of a soap fan, inclusion and equality: “They’re our family, our friends, our educators, our psychologists, our doctors, OURSELVES! They maybe crazy and fantastical at times, but they are a reflection of society. The good, the bad, the ugly and THE BEST OF US” (January 16, 2012). One blogger even expressed the debt of gratitude and sincerity regarding the importance of *Guiding Light* in relevance to the fans:

If you are a SWAN, you owe a debt of gratitude to Guiding Light. If it weren’t for Guiding Light, we might not have Agnes Nixon. If it weren’t for Guiding Light, we might not have All My Children. If it weren’t for Guiding Light, we might not have One Life to Live (January 25, 2012).

Within the idea of sincerity and reflexivity is the need for civility during emotionally charged situations. Sincerity is used in connection with reflexivity and civility because of the effort by

fans to downplay the stigma and stereotypes connected with the shows they love. The participation and discourse allow for equal opportunity to express ideas to help the movement or to develop new campaigns. Both websites in the study allow the soap movement to create and provide a sense of cohesion among like-minded fans.

The websites allow small groups to band together to support a cause and allow for activism. Fans' observations help to address new issues being presented to them as they struggle to save their shows. All soap fans are included if they desire, and opinions are heard and discussed; those discussions are judged on the merits of the discourse. The fans are not judged on their station in life but by what they bring to the proverbial table. The inclusion of members and their roles in the movement allows the perpetuation of the text by citing that they, as fans, have a cultural investment, including emotional and creative capital. In closing, the belief to affect change is through action and discourse. Despite the deliberative and equal opportunities to express their feelings and values, the administrator, at times, needs to dictate rules governing behavior. Civility and incivility emerged as a subset of sincerity.

Civility and Incivility

Eight blogs encouraged fans to act with decorum in regards to downplaying the perceived stereotypes when contacting affiliates and executives. The idea came from the reflection and introspection in the posts of the fan bloggers but was taken one step further with the use of civility, incivility, and moral indignation. One fan blogger viewed civility as an effort to downplay stereotypes concerning soap fans: "As soap fans we have an opportunity here to show that the majority of us can be patient and not subscribe to the ridiculousness being propagated by a few" (November 25, 2011).

Despite the opportunities to unite as one group, human nature challenges that idea. During the time of the study, there were pleas by the administrators for fans to end in-fighting because it hurts the movement. Pleas for civility demonstrates the need to keep their passions in check so the stereotypes are not perpetuated and that there is equal dialogue for all. In a situation where people feel a threat to their culture, the feelings and emotions run high as demonstrated in this blog entry:

This isn't to say that having emotions is a bad thing. It's perfectly fine to have emotions. It's fine to be angry at ABC or CBS. It's fine to still be angry at NBC over Another World! Doing things out of those emotions, though, is a bad idea" (January 20, 2012)

The blog continues with the following statement: "Let the emotions pass before making something that even remotely resembles something official. Not waiting means you have inadvertently placed the entire movement in danger because you reinforced a stereotype" (January 20, 2012).

In addition to ending in-fighting, fans are encouraged to get along for the sake of the movement by the use of this argument: "With the infighting between OLTL and GH fans, the gigantic writing problem in the works, and ABC/Disney's attempt to derail the SWAN movement, we're in for a toxic mess of epic proportions" (January 14, 2012). This statement is further supported by another blogger, "UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL" (January 15, 2012).

One blog entry, dated February 1, 2012, detailed several rules of conduct. The rules governed message boards as well as calling Disney, the affiliates, and Prospect Park. The blogger stated that there were high emotions and a sense of desperation, but there was no need for incivility by posting the following remarks:

If you are going to represent yourself as a member of this soap fan movement you must do it with dignity, respect and a perfect understanding that anyone who makes inflammatory or threatening telephone calls or sends a threatening letter will be asked to leave any organized soap fan group. I appeal to the leaders of the various groups to make it abundantly clear to their followers and members that we have reached a crucial stage in the soap opera movement and we cannot tolerate this kind of behavior. (February 1, 2012)

The blog entry continues to plead for civility and further states the rules of conduct in regards to contacting affiliates and refraining from rude, harassing phone calls. Two blog entries detailed how incivility plays into the stereotypes that non-fans have of soap opera fans. The call for polite behavior also demonstrates the idea of not playing into a stereotype that some people have of fans:

Please do not call your local affiliates to express your concerns over programming more than once per day **Stay on message and DO NOT use threatening language!**

[Emphasis in original] Treat these people as you expect to be treated! In calling, be nice and don't let them think you're a deranged lunatic. (February 1, 2012)

Two bloggers express the idea of sincerity and civility in regards to their shows by looking beyond the struggles of civility regarding to the movement: "So today on the seventy-fifth anniversary of Guiding Light, hold onto love for love is all that we have and we will find a way...if we just hold on" (January 25, 2012). This idea is further supported by three simple words from one blogger, "**Soaps STILL Matter**" [Emphasis in original] (January 16, 2012). The idea of civility plays extensively into discourse yet can hamper equality because some ideas are over ran by the louder voices.

Discursive Inclusion and Equality

Elements of this criterion appeared in six blogs, revealing nine unique codes. Additional words of power and inclusion were also used to explore this criterion. The criterion was also echoed in the expressions of codes relating to education, culture and art, history, and political criteria. The idea of discursive inclusion and equality was to empower those who have a vested interest in a common cause regardless of position in society.

The participants are judged on the quality of their arguments. One fan blogger echoes the sense of equality by stating the following about soap fans and gently challenging perceived stereotypes: “I defy anyone to show me a television viewer base as intelligent, engaged or aware of what it takes to create such artistic magnificence” (January 14, 2012). A fan blogger presents what is believed to be the number of soap fans involved in the movement: “THOUSANDS of soap fans have declared themselves SWANs - Standing With Agnes Nixon” (January 21, 2012). A fan adds further evidence by using the following analogy to present how mainstream society perceives soap fans, but the blogger views it differently:

As I have said several times in the last few days we have been treated like the ugly duckling. Imagine that ugly duckling as a metaphor for the misogyny of our society.

Imagine that ugly duckling as a metaphor for those of us who do not have great wealth or social standing. Visualize that we ugly ducklings received the greatest gift of all. (January 14, 2012)

The use of discursive inclusion and equality allows the fans to have a venue to voice their opinions and concerns, yet to provide support for others in the movement regardless of status in the group. The inclusion of all fans in the group’s activities empowers them to assume a role in the effort to save the shows. The idea of inclusion offers the ability to tender moral and practical

validity of the shows in their lives by expressing the importance of the shows in a public way. The idea of inclusion allows the opportunity to have an equal say in the dialogue that occurs without being judged on their station in life. True equality can be challenged by actions of incivility as they can denigrate other voices in the group and the mission to save the soap genre. The idea of discursive inclusion and equality is echoed in the discourse that occurred in the blogs because it detailed the item of concern to the fans, the cancellation of the soaps.

The last four categories are connected to the initial six criteria and three subgroups. They are distinct subgroups based on how fans view the soaps as a commodity that can be used in education based on historical insight and relevance in society. Historical relevance of the soaps allows the fans to discuss and reflect on the contributions of daytime serials or soap operas in our culture. The idea and construct of the daytime serial as a source of education, culture, and art allow the fans to express the merits, both historically and culturally, of the shows.

The idea of education is two-fold in the eyes of the fans: the education of youth through art and empowerment. Dahlberg's criterion has direct influence on education, culture and art, historical relevance, and political influences based on five of the six criteria. From the aspect of fan culture, the categories of education, history, art, and culture are directly connected to the fan activities that involve fan fiction, art and videos. Including the definition of the soap opera genre, historical relevance, and the fan culture allows for the criteria to be examined from additional perspectives. The application of fan culture allows for an umbrella examination of Dahlberg's criteria based on what is important in the soap opera fan culture. Political ideas are also connected to the movement because it encourages dialogue and role-taking of the fan to preserve what is important to their culture because of actions by corporate and government interests. The criteria that is most evident in the last four categories are: exchange and critique of critical

moral-practical validity claims, reflexivity, ideal role-taking, sincerity, and discursive inclusion and equality. The idea of autonomy from economic and corporate power is most evident in the political codes due to the struggle of ownership between the fans and corporate entities. The idea of equality and disregard of status is a challenged somewhat in education and culture due to the lack of access and availability of creative outlets at some schools and communities in parts of the country. However, in the online community, people have the opportunity to learn and broaden their horizons in addition to creating and appreciating artistic endeavors.

Education

Education, as a code, appeared in four blogs and had fourteen unique codes. Education, as seen through eyes of the fans, involved voicing their position about the importance of the art form and its use in schools as an education tool. The use of Dahlberg's criteria was further supported by the following code words: youth, education, arts, and language. The fan bloggers presented the importance of teaching about the arts and how soap operas can play a role. One fan blogger presented the following argument regarding the importance of art education: "It has been proven in studies in other cultures and societies that with art and music a child excels in mathematics, science and literature" (January 14, 2012). This statement echoed one that was posted earlier regarding arts education and its relation to soap operas: "The arts teach appreciation, expression, perspective, creativity, imagination, productivity, and self-worth" (December 11, 2011). The importance of the arts and education was echoed in a number of posts. One fan blogger lamented in regard to the lack of art education by stating the following issues about the arts and culture in schools in addition to the costs of removing the soaps from the American culture:

Like our education system, our entertainment system, an industry of artistic expression, has experienced similar blows. Thoughtful, imaginative, American classics are now few and far between. Art education: unrealized potential without the necessary tools to reach that potential. The same holds true for the soap genre. We cheat our children by removing this cultural facet from the American fabric. They are cheated of the opportunity to share in generational storytelling and many may be cheated of the opportunity to enter and thrive in the entertainment industry. (December 11, 2011)

Education through soap operas was not limited to arts and culture, but could also be a tool to teach English to non-English speakers. One fan blogger posted the following information to support the use of soap operas as an educational tool:

When my mother came to the United States at the age of 12, she could not speak A WORD OF ENGLISH. Guess who taught her? Yep, you guessed it, SOAPS!!!

And soap opera played a great role in shaping that educational process. (January 16, 2012).

Education is the key to learning about issues and ideas. Education provides the opportunity to see the soap operas as a venue for educating and entertaining. The union of education and art allows the viewer to be involved in the story but provide the tools to explore an issue or concern through a parasocial relationship. Exploration of an idea leads to opportunities that enhance an educational experience giving the viewer the information for further examination in an arena where they feel comfortable. Education connects the idea of soap operas as a commodity and a tool for education, cultural preservation, historical relevance, political criteria in addition to Dahlberg's criteria of reflexivity, sincerity, inclusion and equality, and critique of the moral-practical validity claims.

Culture and Art

A number of blogs focused on the message of soap operas, or serial dramas, as art and an aspect of the fan culture and society in general. This particular idea was revealed in nine unique codes and in four blog entries. In addition to Dahlberg's criteria, the following words were also used in coding: artist, actor, culture, imagination, and creative. The importance of culture in relation to education played out in the following quotations. The coding demonstrated the importance of art and culture to the fans by supporting creativity, moral and practical claims, inclusion and equality. Fans were encouraged to post in order to get others to discuss ideas or to show creativity.

Several blog entries argue the importance of art and culture not only to the fans, but also their importance in our society, especially for children. One soap fan blogger presents the importance of culture, demonstrating respect for the actors on the shows who have spent years perfecting their crafts. It is an idea that soap fans understand and encourages greater understanding from those who do not understand the genre:

I find it morally unacceptable that in this day and age our society looks down upon these marvelous artists. Unless you have stood on a set and observed these artists executing their respective crafts you have no idea of the true meaning of artistic passion. In my mind those who close their eyes to these simple truths deprive themselves of understanding the true value of creative arts in a free society. (January 14, 2012)

The idea of art and culture is also argued because of the spurt of reality television despite the assertion that the lack of culture contributes to decline of the arts by stating: "This erosion translates into significant negative impact on not just the industry at large, but on our culture, and the value of our culture in the world" (December 13, 2011). Pundits contend that art is not

needed despite the comment from a blogger: “that soap opera imitates life in real time” (January 14, 2011). The cultural argument is also furthered in a blog supporting Agnes Nixon:

This is not about profit, greed or the decimation of the soap genre. This is about the fact that Agnes Nixon created 2 shows which have had a significant impact on the society within the borders of the United States and then outside our borders. (January 8, 2012)

The education of the arts is important and contributes to learning and artistic expression.

Two fan bloggers assert the following comments supporting the role of soap operas in educating and teaching artistic expression through the crafts and storytelling. One fan blogger presents the following argument regarding the importance of culture: “We’ve forgotten the beauty of art and in doing so we have forgotten the gift of humanity” (January 14, 2012). The fan blogger cites the failure of organizations in the role and implies that each individual fan needs to step up to the plate as “our children need our help. We are the only ones who can teach them the value of art and artistic expression” (December 13, 2011). The blogger furthers the position on the matter in the following statement regarding how art and storytelling can be used in the classroom:

What an interesting leap it would be to take the soap opera genre into the class room as a tool to learn how storytelling reflects, impacts and influences society. Perhaps this would be a small step toward early appreciation of this piece of American culture. It might also help develop the future stewards of the soap genre. (December 11, 2011)

Through creative enterprises, the idea of art and culture is also perpetuated through several blogs and references. The idea of creativity is evidenced in a blog entry related to the Standing With Agnes Nixon (SWAN) initiative; several fans created fan art to support the creator of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live* on January 9, 2012 (Appendix A, Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The fan art supports the idea of poaching text to create a new interpretation of the it.

The idea of culture also plays into three blog posts showing the artistry and beauty of storytelling in the soap operas through poetry: “IMAGINATION and ART that we love to see beyond this time and we love to see yesteryear that shall always be near and dear to our heart” (December 17, 2011). The same blogger also presented additional poetic insight, furthering the value of the storytelling: “The Storyteller that touches the heart and continues to do so. **STORYTELLER** the **ARTIST** [Emphasis in original] has and will be many people yet still tells the story of *US!* The Swan smiles and watches” (January 13, 2012).

The concept of culture plays a key part in the fan culture as it is reflected in several blog entries. The idea of culture supports the relevance of the soap opera to the fans as a cultural reference and education tool, not only for themselves but for all people. The codes reflect influences from Dahlberg’s criteria of commodity, validity, and role-taking arguments, in addition to historical, cultural, educational, and political ties.

Historical Relevance

Historic relevance brings into consideration the role of education and offering support to the idea of art, culture, and Dahlberg’s criteria of critical moral-practical validity claims and reflexivity. Two additional words that reflected a historical category were also used in the coding: history and past. Two blogs detailed the historical significance of the shows in the lives of fans. Three bloggers detailed how they were brought into watching soaps with their mothers or grandmothers in the forms of sincere historical testimonials. Two blogs furthered historical lessons about the genre and the cycle of cancellation by the three networks: ABC, NBC, and CBS. The fans were encouraged that “We have history, we’re proud of that history, and we want you to share in some of it” (January 1, 2012). This comment was further supported by another statement in the same post: “It’s all right to acknowledge history” (January 1, 2012).

Two blogs detailed the history concerning the definition of serials and the vicious cycle of cancellation citing corporate and network meddling. Additionally, the blogger challenges the long-held stereotypes of the genre by clearly stating what serials and soap operas are in relation to each other based on their definition through denotation and connotations. The blog entry came in direct relation to the historical attitudes that outsiders have had towards the genre by contrasting the ideas in soap operas and serial dramas by demonstrating the difference in attitudes exhibited in a *Wikipedia* article. By using the written definition in *Wikipedia*, the soap fan was able to provide arguments using historical denotation to show the negative perception of the show. The blogger presented the following synthesis from the entry regarding how some people perceive soap operas in relation to serial dramas and challenged fans to change the mindset from the historical connotation and to embrace the less negative connotation:

Soap opera has such a harsh connotation. Serial drama doesn't have that harsh of a connotation. By definition, soap operas are serial dramas. So why should we keep using the term "soap opera," while wearing our Eva Gabor wigs and our muumuus while eating bon bons. So burn your wig, rip apart your muumuu, trade in your bon bons for more healthy Greek yogurt (yummy) and embrace the term "serial drama" like the rest of world calls our shows. (January 16, 2012)

In a blog entry dated January 25, 2012, a fan gives a long, detailed explanation of the historical significance of the serial, *Guiding Light* as well as its relevance to culture and history, in addition to American society. The fan blogger presents the assumption that *Guiding Light* was more than just a show by pointing to the show's many firsts; "Guiding Light became the first US weekday drama (aka, daytime drama, or "soap opera") to be recorded digitally" (January 25, 2012). The fan blogger further elaborates that the show was the first to transition between two

mediums in addition to being an innovator in daytime television in story lines and production models: “The show moved from traditional three sided studios to a more realistic feel, allowing for location shots and more outside scenes that didn’t look like a stage with nearly-fake trees in it” (January 25, 2012) which has now been copied by other shows. The same fan blogger further elaborates on the historical innovation of the show by detailing a story line presented in 1962 regarding cervical cancer in a time when it was deemed unacceptable to talk about such issues:

[Agnes] Nixon wasn’t allowed to use such “terrible items” like cancer, uterus, or Pap test/smear. She had to work at it to make it palatable to those same people who called Inna Phillips’s audience childlike, unrealistic, vulgar, and distasteful. It was a successful storyline and many women did go and get tested as a result. (January 25, 2012)

The historical relevance presented in the blogs demonstrates the importance of the past in regard to innovation, story-telling, and artistry. The argument of accomplishments is also used to promote the history of shows by providing examples for innovation that the shows provided in regards to television production and stories. The blogs with historical codes lend additional support to the critique of practical and moral validity claims, sincerity, reflexivity, inclusion and equality, and ideal role-taking.

Political Claims

Political engagement is related to the idea of protecting the fans’ cultural presence and identity in addition to placing their concerns about corporate activity in the public field for discussion. In addition to the criteria that Dahlberg presents, the following words were also used in the codes: political, legislation, government, and corporate. The emergence of five political themes came from four blog entries questioning the activities of the corporate sectors in business

and government in three blogs. This theme was particularly evident in the rhetoric surrounding government legislation that the blogger felt infringed on one's civil liberties.

Commentary surrounding corporate activities and encroachment on new entertainment platforms presented concerns of ownership and access. A soap fan offered the following comment: "Has anyone asked the FCC how Disney and Comcast can enter into a 'ground breaking' relationship on the new extended platform after the FCC made such a great issue about Comcast's involvement with HULU" (January 21, 2012). The purpose of this statement was to encourage discourse on the matter and to empower the fan to question the policies and actions of corporate entities in lieu of federal regulations.

A fan blogger examined the political rhetoric surrounding congressional legislation from the perspective of civil liberties encroachment. The fan blogger viewed the legislation as an attempt to end the fan cultural productions of fiction, videos, and art as fan creative practices would be viewed as copyright infringement under Stop Online Piracy Act/Protect IP Act (SOPA/PIPA). The post and the call to action relating to SOPA/PIPA were done to educate fellow soap fans about legislation that is viewed as a threat to their culture and identity. In several posts, the blogger provided support to arguments concerning the threat to the soap-opera fan culture and movement. The blogger used the argument of cultural denigration as a tool to create knowledge about the bill and its dangers to the readers:

To be blunt about things, this one bill can and will destroy a lot of things that we love. It will be ILLEGAL to host items like fanfiction or a video clip (a single video clip) and said site will be forced to shut down. It will be illegal to do pretty much anything.

(November 18, 2011)

The blogger further elaborated on the bill with the following statement regarding the evils of corporate entities and alluded to diminishing the fans' civil rights to speak freely on the Internet:

The Soap Movement Killer known as SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) is going to go to a vote on January 24th. Let me remind you of the full ramifications of this law. It will be illegal to do pretty much anything. A copyright holder can with the single stroke of a pen shut anything down on the chance that you will violate copyright. That's all it will take.

(January 5, 2012)

The same blogger further added the following point: "the soap movement will not survive SOPA" (January 5, 2011). The poster cited the convenience of the Internet and that there was no way to go underground to continue their shows. The creators of fan-inspired products relating to the shows would be found and shut down. The poster provided websites and information in addition to using the same strongly worded message in four statements to get fans to speak out against the legislation in reference to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and fanfiction: "Any fanfiction will be closed permanently because of copyright. Don't like it? TOUGH FUCKING LUCK! Say goodbye to any continuation of your favorite soap opera because you were too goddamned lazy to do something" (January 5, 2012). The fan blogger ended the blog with a passionate plea for fans to stand up against the legislation: "For gods sakes, people, DO SOMETHING" (January 5, 2012).

The fans' position on SOPA/PIPA brings into consideration nuances of autonomy from corporate and economic power; ideal role-taking as the fans are encouraged to take action through the inclusion of all fans; and finally, cultural implications. The discursive quality allows fans to interact and take action against corporate activity. It allows fans to challenge the position of government legislation and corporate activities by using an online space to voice their

opposition to the actions of Congress. The fans have equal opportunity to take action in protesting the legislation by contacting their congressional members through calling and emailing. In the eyes of some bloggers, the legislation and corporate action go beyond the mere intent of the legislation and threaten their own civil liberties. The status of the individual is not challenged, and the fans are judged on the merit of their positions. The lack of interest by the individual and access to information is the only hindrances to fighting for the product they value.

In summary, observation of the movement demonstrates the exchange of information for members to get the message out that soaps still matter and to down-play the stigma that soap fans are not informed about the world. Participation in the soap movement demonstrates that the fan is involved, knowledgeable, and clued into the nuances of culture. The fan activists are attuned to actions of the mainstream media and design campaigns that involve the critique of critical moral-practical validity claims. They challenge the claims that they are uninformed by preaching that soaps still matter based on arguments of artistry, education, and how the shows reflect the state of our lives. By using valid approaches rooted in civil discourse, fans are able to present a text to others as they attempt to reduce the sense of marginalization they have in society.

Dahlberg's criteria and additional themes allow for the creation of the public sphere vetted through Habermas' three tenants. The fans were able to establish a presence by creating a space free of corporate interference to state their positions and fight for the commodity, or shows, as a viable economic investment. The shows created the platform of common domain as the fans strove to save a valued commodity and cultural legacy. The fan activists further demonstrated that they had to take responsibility for presenting thoughtful arguments and strategies to save their shows. The investment in the programs allowed for dialogue about education and cultural pursuits. The criteria also allowed the development of sincere discourse

based on moral and practical validity claims. The creation of the discourse allowed fans to present a discussion based on the merits of their positions and not their standing in society.

The soap opera fans were demonstrating cohesion in the acts of advocacy and activism to save their shows through civic engagement. The Internet and websites allowed engagement in a virtual world, where they strengthen their own convictions. Fans are not passive viewers, and they used the Internet as a springboard for support or advocacy. The leaders created an outlet for fans to voice their feelings about a text that has been created and gave a venue for ideas concerning civic engagement and activism.

CHAPTER 5. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Fans participate with a group of like-minded individuals for a common goal. The fans view participation as empowerment and reduced marginalization. The soap opera fans are concerned with knowledge, discourse surrounding their show or genre, imagination of alternatives, and the implementation of these ideas culturally. Fan participation allows testimony relating to the preservation of cultural capital. Testimony is due to long-term investment through interaction with the characters, re-telling the stories, and connection on a personal level. This connection extends to other soap opera viewers.

The virtual world of the Internet allows soap opera fans to unite for a cause in an effort to preserve the cultural product in which they have invested. As consumers of this product, they voice their concerns about the dominant power structure: the networks, production companies, and mainstream media. The public sphere allows fans to interact with one another in a context that allows them to share ideas and concepts with website administrators and other fans.

The Results and Discussion chapter applied Dahlberg's criteria to the blog entries on *Sudz.Tv* regarding the presence of a virtual space on the Internet that was supported with activity from *Sudz.Tv*'s allied site, *Save the Soap Genre*, and two related Facebook groups. Dahlberg can be used to as a way to understand the Habermasian public sphere. This chapter addresses the use of Dahlberg vetted through Habermas' three ideas regarding the public sphere.

Dahlberg's criteria (autonomy, corporate power, state power, economic power, moral critique, practical critique, validity claims, reflection, role-taking, inclusion, sincerity, and equality) were applied to the blogs and activity on the websites. Seven additional criteria were also observed in the data: commodity, civility and incivility, campaign, education, art and culture, historical, and political categories take into consideration the application of more than

one of Dahlberg's criteria. The application of Dahlberg clearly demonstrated that a public space can be constructed for marginalized groups to come together to create a venue to present their positions.

Habermas presented three criteria for a public sphere. The first one is a disregard of status involved in discourse; while not completely equal, the public sphere does disregard the status of the participants in a public setting. The idea of common concern is that the object of critical public attention remains an area in which church and state authorities have a monopoly of interpretation (Habermas, 1989). For the members for whom the cultural product (soap operas) becomes available as a commodity, they determine its meaning on their own via communication with one another through collaborative efforts (Habermas, 1989). Inclusivity can be understood as being immersed within a public of all private people whether they are participants or listeners. In the case of the soap fan, they view the fight to save the soap opera as part of the domain of concern because the product is the focus of their mission.

Participation on a website and its related entities presents an umbrella, or an arena, for the fans to gather in a common cause. An area of common concern allows fans to unite for a common cause. The concern that weighs heavily on the minds of the fans is two-fold: the cancellation of their shows as well as the campaign to save *General Hospital* and the other three remaining three soap operas by advocating the shows' artistic importance and the investment placed in these programs. The fans are advocating for a cable channel dedicated to the soap genre that features presently airing soap operas; telenovelas; and cancelled ABC-Disney, NBC, and Proctor and Gamble soap operas, telenovelas, and international soap operas such as *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders*. The campaign demonstrates an aspect of the domain of common concern as the fans work to preserve the commodity that is the group's focus.

The fans envision additional opportunities on a cable channel featuring soap operas to include documentaries and features dedicated to the genre. The shows are a commodity in the fans' eyes because of the creative inspirations viewers pull from the programs. The shows offer a venue for fans to tell the story from their perspective, thus enhancing the value of the fans' investment. The campaign involves fans from a variety of backgrounds, regardless of age, ethnicity, and socio-economic groups, thus creating a sense of equality. This idea of equality in the soap movement allows soap fans to voice their concerns regardless of their station in life. The fans invest in their shows through parasocial relationships which enhance the activism. The involvement based on a goal allows for sincerity, reflexivity, and validity arguments to emerge through Habermas' idea concerning the disregard of status.

The requirements of having a presence on the Internet are minimal because the costs are minuscule and reasonably free from corporate interests. Reasonably free is in reference to the fact that the sites are on public domains that the designer or creator can construct for free or by incurring a nominal expense. The websites support the assertion presented by Jenkins that the low cost of the Internet has allowed groups and fan sites to organize (2006a, 2006b). The physical presence of the website allows enhancement of the public sphere by ignoring status, letting the fans unite for a common cause and allowing the inclusion of all individuals. This construct further supports a citizen's democracy in the realm of grassroots activism. The public includes fans from all the soaps, including on-the-air soaps, web soaps, and cancelled serials, in addition those individuals who become aware of the site through social media.

Inclusivity is built on the principle that all discussions are measured on the merit and that group membership is not based on the fan's position or station in the group. The group is governed by informal rules, but it is influenced by formalized rules based on sincerity, civility,

and morality. The presentation of the historical construct of soap operas allows fans to construct another argument that soap operas are important based on cultural legitimacy and as a commodity based on aesthetics and relevance in the larger society.

The relationship among the fans allows them to construct a message for the outside audience to understand based on the aesthetic merits of the show. Members within the group understand the importance of the message and strive to present it to outsiders. Freedom to voice their opinions permits them to demonstrate that there is still demand for the shows despite the attitudes and words from corporate entities. The gatekeepers maintain a flow of communication with the members as they recruit new people for the group and encourage members to write letters, call, email, and tweet the key corporate players to achieve the goals of getting their shows back while protecting the ones that are still on the air.

The fans' knowledge of the shows' history and cultural importance allows them to use the information as a basis for moral and practical validations in their campaign and discourse. The websites allow the public sphere to involve participants who are versed in the matter that they are viewing and how it relates to the debate that engages the group. Debates often dictate the direction of the campaign, its angle, and secondary campaigns that further support the primary campaign. The campaigns are viewed as a tool that demonstrates how soaps still matter.

The use of campaigns allowed the fans to present the argument that soaps are a cultural commodity and offer insight about economic and aesthetic viability. The fans are encouraged to participate in the movement in some fashion, ranging from watching the shows to help their ratings, sending tweets, emailing, or making phone calls; and presenting their arguments in a polite manner on articles written on the soaps and the media. Fan empowerment encourages viewers to take the reins in the fight to save their shows. Empowerment gives them ownership of

the shows, or commodity, and it allows marketing the serials' survival. The fans' role in the movement allows them to market, promote, and develop relationships with others by giving them that sense of empowerment.

Through investment in the story, the viewer establishes a relationship with a character and invests in the story he/she is reading. The fans' investment of the on-screen text allows the building of trust that relates to the trust they create as like-minded individuals regarding the matter at hand. It must also be noted that not all viewers are fans, and this fact will reflect how people view feedback from those outside the sphere of influence.

The uniqueness of the fan is the ability to distinguish the difference between fiction and reality, allowing for the ability to debate what is presented based on group discourse or communication through media outlets. There are situations where fans are viewed negatively, due to behavior and perceived stereotypes, by those individuals who do not understand a particular genre. The fan can represent all realms of human nature. The online presence allows group participants to organize and present plans to challenge or support an argument. This approach demonstrates respect of each other, despite personal views or the views of outsiders and corporate interests.

Fan culture allows for interaction among individuals who share similar or dissimilar ideas about their shows through discourse and virtual interaction. The elements of culture include knowledge about the jargon that the group will recognize along with an in-depth knowledge of the show's history in relation to what is happening on screen. This statement supports the assertion that the show's history provides a valid argument based on culture and history. In addition to these arguments, the fans assert the idea that soaps are also an aspect of social culture because the public sphere allows for online interaction with one another.

The adoration of favorite characters is exhibited through discussion, fan videos, art and fiction. The culture includes fans who embrace similar ideas of like-minded, yet diverse, individuals. The culture of soap opera fans allows for building virtual communities using the Internet by marrying participation with the use of traditional and new media. The use of new media allows for building a fan community and a perpetuation of the message that soaps are still important to the fans and the culture as a whole, thus providing legitimacy to the art form of soap operas. Fans view the shows as a very important part of their culture, and the show's text allows for further interpretation.

The cancellations of the soap operas and the rhetoric of restrictive Internet legislation were considered a threat in the eyes of soap fans and the struggle to save their culture. During the time of the study, several bills designed to combat piracy and pornography were protested as a threat. Many fans recognized the issues as important but felt that the powers of the state were overstepping the bounds of law-abiding fans in regards to their civil liberties. During the last months of 2011 and early 2012, several members of the United States Congress introduced bills that fans felt would impinge on their freedom of speech, in particular, two bills that would affect the nature of the fan culture: the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) [U.S. HR 3261] (SOPA Bill, 2011) and the Protect IP Act (PIPA) [U S. SB 986] (PIPA Bill, 2011). Fans feared these bills would impinge on their ability to interpret the text through creative outlets. The blog entries echoed the fans' concern about the control of online content by corporate and government entities. Several entries encouraged fans to sign petitions; contact their Congress members; and protest against SOPA/PIPA, including turning sites black in January.

The ability to express their displeasure about the bills empowered fans to become more aware about activities of corporate and state entities. The empowerment of the fans to protest this

legislation also lent credence that soap fans are clued in to the events of the world around them by asking questions and sorting through the rhetoric of the government and corporate entities. The engaged and knowledgeable soap fan downplayed the perceived stereotype that the soap fan is uninformed. The fans' protest regarding the legislation demonstrated the use of moral and validity arguments in connection to cultural output because fans were encouraged to act against legislation. The growing sense of empowerment took into consideration the threat of corporate infringement on their culture.

Dahlberg's criteria for the an online presence offers another perspective to a virtual sphere when vetted through Habermas' ideas. However, Papacharissi (2002) says that there are three issues concerning the creation of a virtual public sphere. First, the Internet allows for vast storage of information but offers unequal access and literacy; second, people around the world can communicate with greater ease than with previous technologies. However the overload of information may lead to audience fragmenting in the message delivery. The final issue is that any online public sphere will face the problems of Habermas' bourgeois public sphere idea and become corrupted by capitalist and commercial interests (Bohman, 2004; Papacharissi, 2002).

The vastness of the Internet can cause issues with audience fragmenting, and the message needs to be repeated to balance the noise in the hopes that the message is heard by the fan activists. The fan activists have to be vigilant and work at getting their messages heard. The Internet provides a large venue for hosting and storing information, yet the movement's virtual presence allows fans to create a database that presents the message and the tools. The challenge is finding the soap-opera fan activist text among the many texts regarding soap operas on the Internet. The sense of true unity is challenged by the sheer number of voices, thus finding the unity in the chorus of fragmented messages is the true challenge.

Aside from fragmentation of the message, the danger of commercial interests is always in the shadows. The corporate entities see the fragmentation as an opportunity to divide the movement, yet it perseveres. The commercial threat can come from any venue, with the most common one being corporate and state entities. The threat of commercializing the soap movement can also hurt because some individuals see the movement as an attempt to capitalize from the action of fan activists. Papacharissi's final issue regarding Habermas' public sphere is corruption by capitalist and commercial interests. This concern is evident in the fan reaction to the failure of Prospect Park putting the shows online and to congressional legislation. The evidence for this final concern is evident in the media and commercial interests of SOPA/PIPA.

In summary, Dahlberg's criteria vetted through Habermas can be applied to fan activist groups in the creation of online communities. These communities allow for fans to come together for a common cause that allows them to present their positions through respectful dialogue with members of the groups and non-fans. The use of respectful dialogue downplays the idea that soap opera fans are hysterical and the perceived idea that they are less intelligent. The soap fans challenge the perceived stereotypes by organizing and presenting dialogue based on history, culture and strategy. The websites and their allied Facebook groups allow the fans to create a space where dialogue based on reflexivity and sincerity allows the presentation of their positions to group members and non-members.

The fans desire to save their shows through taking on the role of activist as they present the reasons why soaps are a valuable commodity with cultural and historical significance. The created space allows fans to create a sense of legitimacy in a virtual world. The virtual space allows them to deliberate and present arguments based on the merits of the product. By using the soaps as a commodity, the fans can create a discourse surrounding the shows in an electronic

venue that allows discourse and strategy based on the merit of the discussion, not the person's standing in society. The online communities allow fans to have a voice to present arguments and discourse based on the merits and the group members.

Dahlberg's criteria support the group's activities and campaigns that are free from corporate interference. The application of Dahlberg allows fans to create a gathering place based on text in a public setting that focuses on a particular matter that is important to the group. The group's goal is the key to empowering the fans to present their position and take action to advocate for what they believe. The group allows inclusion based on the merit of the presented arguments. The idea of inclusion allows for empowerment which can lead to activism in the fan's life outside the group. The idea of inclusion and equality is evidenced through the merit of the argument presented by the participant and that is a cornerstone of Habermas' public sphere. Through Dahlberg and the use of the criteria related to building public space online, the criteria allows us to have additional insight to understanding the Habermasian public sphere.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

As a person who appreciates the aesthetic qualities of the daytime serials, or soap operas, the storytelling and creative dialogue have been intriguing and entertaining. The announcement of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*'s cancellation in April 2011 saddened and angered the researcher and the fans because it was a blow to a cultural legacy. The importance of studying the fan movement surrounding the cancellation of the soaps provides a voice for those individuals who are trying to preserve a legacy that is part of the American culture. The study of fan culture allows for the examination of a sub-cultural group that can be construed as a representation of American society in a microscopic slice.

This study attempted to address the issue of soap opera fans in relation to fan culture and online activism regarding the cancellation of their shows. The field study observed fans in a “virtual world” as they united in an effort to save their shows on two fan-created websites and allied Facebook groups based on moral and practical arguments, in addition to ideas based on culture, commodity, and social relevance. The virtual world demonstrated that the fans are clued in to the world around them with an understanding of the cultural message they are presenting to the non-fans and corporate entities.

In summary, this study has attempted to address issues regarding fan culture and activism: How does deliberative democracy enhance or hinder activism? How do soap opera fans present their message through deliberative democracy? How does community building contribute to discourse? The challenge to answer these questions has been enriching and difficult as is the nature of deliberation and discourse. Deliberative democracy allows all members of a group to express their positions on an issue of common concern for a common goal. In this case, it is the preservation of soap operas as a valued commodity in an online setting.

In the first question, the study addresses the following: how does deliberative democracy enhance or hinder activism? The challenge of deliberative democracy is enabling the citizenry, in this case, the soap opera fans, to create the space to gather without being challenged by corporate interests and allowing people to present their arguments based on merit. The challenge is vast openness of the Internet, yet the coming together of the goal to save the soap attracted fans who were dedicated to the challenge of fighting for a valued commodity. The creation of the public space allows administrators to create an arena for fans to present their message to like-minded individuals and non-fans. The fans have the opportunity to equally present their positions in a respectful manner.

The idea of creating the space based on deliberative democracy is challenged of the vastness of the Internet. The vastness of the Internet can fragment the group's message, however challenge to bridge the vastness is not insurmountable. The group is dependent on charismatic leadership to unite the members based on inclusion, equality, and the judging of the arguments based on merit. In this case, the sense of community does apply to the soap movement because it allows a marginalized group to gain online public space to present positions to the outside and offer support to one another. The challenges to creating a space for deliberative democracy are negative feedback and pressure from outside sources, corporations, and non-fans. The challenge is overcoming the vastness of the internet by utilizing a number of tools and avenues to get voices to be heard and to encourage the group's citizenry to reach out and continually preach the message.

Activism can be enhanced by cohesion in the group to present a united front for a common goal. In the case of this study, the goal is to save the soaps and to promote a sense of cultural legitimacy. The act of advocating for what one believes in is furthered by the coming

together of other like-minded people regardless of status and position in life. The coming together allows for a collection of people in a sphere of influence to advocate for a particular goal. The challenge to enhancing online activism is overcoming the outside rhetoric and the vastness of the Internet.

In the second question, the study addressed the following: how do soap opera fans present their message through deliberative democracy? The fans created a two websites and allied Facebook groups to present their message by encouraging dialogue with fan citizens. The use of Twitter provided another way to create reach for their message. The act of tweeting and posting comments allowed them to present their message not only to like-minded individuals, but also to non-members. The act of leaving posts on blogs and articles outside the groups and websites allowed fans to present their message based on the encouragement of group administrators. This aspect of democratic discourse allows them to reach outside of their group to engage in respectful dialogue with others.

The websites offered the opportunity for fans to strategize and provide the tools to take their own role in the mission. The idea of cultural legitimacy provided the impetus for coming together to save their shows and find a new home for them. A groups of soap fans came together and united for a common cause; members were able to create dialogue, presence, and strategy by using the tools that they were given. Using the Internet reduced the distance among fellow soap opera fans but created a cohesion that accepted opinions and ideas that are different. The idea of deliberative democracy allowed each person to find a role in the group to create the cohesion needed to accomplish the goal fans set for themselves. Encouragement from group and website administrators led to empowerment. The sense of empowerment was contagious even when times were dark, but small victories help propelled the fan activists in their struggle.

The key was keeping the shows alive in the minds of the soap fans as the struggle continues through the perpetual repeating of the message. The goal of tweeting, preparing flyers, and calling during *One Life to Live*'s replacement show demonstrated that the fans were resisting the actions of ABC-Disney in dictating what they should watch. The decline of viewer numbers for *The Revolution* demonstrated the fans' resistance to being told what they should watch. Although the numbers of viewer numbers is most remarkable for *The Revolution*, the same can be said for *All My Children*'s replacement show, *The Chew*, but on a smaller scale (Berman, 2012 b). The drop in ABC-Disney's daytime ratings can be attributed to soap opera fans refusing to watch programs that had little value to them as viewers yet endeavoring to increase the ratings for *General Hospital*.

Finally, the study also examines one more question: how does community building contribute to discourse? The process of discourse contributed to the perpetuation of the message that allowed cohesion in the group regardless of status. Acceptance, in the act of community building, is based on the merit of the argument that the individual presents in regards to the rest of the community. The acceptance of all fan bases, regardless of character or show affiliation, contributes to the idea of community building because of the dedication to a common goal. The online communities empowers the fans to fight and encourage one another. Granted, the idea of online communities can challenge debate because of the lack of face-to-face communication, but that is balanced by the passion and dedication the fans have for a common goal.

Perhaps the true beauty of online communities is that they allow people who are far from the center of action to contribute in their own way based on merit and effort. Through the act of community building, members provide feedback and insight about how the community should proceed with guidance from the website administrators as ideas are coalesced into plans of

action. The sharing of information contributes to community building because the effort of working together allows more people to become involved and because the reach of the discourse can extend to a new audience. As more people become aware of the movement, the challenge of creating cohesion by adding new voices in order to present the groups' message to a wider audience and downplay the voices that decry the movement. The sense of empowerment received in the community allows the individual to question the actions of the corporate stakeholders yet allows civic engagement that extends beyond the soap movement. The concept of empowerment was demonstrated as many people voiced their opposition to SOPA/PIPA legislation early in 2012, and it empowered fans to voice their dissent against legislation they felt threatened their culture. By using the cancellations of the ABC-Disney soap operas, the fans were able to create a community based on a dissenting argument opposing the primary stakeholder, creating a message of dissent to empower and engage the fan in the effort to save a cultural legacy.

This study illustrates that online community exhibiting Dahlberg's criteria is dynamic and that building the community is based on a common goal. The soap fans are called to action for a common goal to save *General Hospital* and the remaining soaps in reaction to ABC-Disney's cancellation of *One Life to Live* and *All My Children*. Dahlberg demonstrates a practical application for Habermas' idealized public sphere based on reasoning and deliberation. The study applies the construct that the fans taking action based on their dissenting dialogue in regards to the actions of ABC-Disney. As a result of the dissent dialogue, the fans are engaged in activities to challenge the primary stakeholders in order to preserve what they see as a valued commodity.

The dissenting messages are created in the groups and disseminated to outside sources in a respectful manner. The fans provide discourse that challenges dissenting opinions by learning their positions and creating a sense of understanding about the positions that non-supporters of the genre have regarding them. The ability to understand the dissenting arguments allows the fans to create sensitivity in regards to their own dialogue as a reaction to the discourse being offered by outsiders. As the fans present their message that supports the genre, it also offers dissent to the actions of ABC-Disney, because they are creating a virtual venue for dialogue and dissent in the Facebook groups and on websites.

Fans have equal opportunity to question and present arguments in the groups and as a result of the discourse, this opportunity contributes to the idea of a community formation through rational arguments based on interests, needs, and desires. The idea of needs and desires when applied to the activities of the soap fans involved in the save-the-soap movement is based on preserving what shows remain and advocating for a new broadcast home for these programs. As the fans reach out to different venues to spread their message outside their groups, the challenge is getting their message heard. Dahlberg provides an argument supporting the idea of fans reaching out to media outlets and institutions to spread their message: “It is to these institutions that we must look in order to strengthen citizen deliberation and public opinion, evaluating their success via the communicative conditions” (Dahlberg, 2004, p. 13).

Dahlberg does not clearly define media or institutions; therefore, his ideas can apply to citizen journalists and broadcasters as well as non-mainstream and mainstream media. The Internet provides many avenues for the use of media, therefore creating a platform that can allow voices to create groups to present the group’s message and forward their causes through a variety of outlets, both traditional and electronic. The question can be asked if Dahlberg is referring to

established media outlets such as ABC-Disney or the *New York Times*, and does Dahlberg's media outlet position take into consideration media outlets like *Globe*, *Soap Opera Digest*, or an online newspaper like *Huffington Post*? Is Dahlberg referring to corporate media only, or does Dahlberg's media position encompass citizen media and does it reflect contemporary culture? Citizen media can include the creation of blogs, newsletters, podcasts, flyers, citizen news reports, Facebook groups, and message forums to create a venue for discourse. Can it be argued that his definition of media also includes social media? It can also leave a question about if Dahlberg is referring to for-profit media outlets or non-profit, private outlets.

Dahlberg's definition regarding media outlets is vague, leaving the reader to question what form or context media is being presented and consumed in relation to his definition. Dahlberg's definition of media is the opposite of the definitions set forth describing the criteria for creating a virtual public space. It can be argued that, on the vagueness of his media definition, media can encompass many forms, thus allowing fan groups to prepare and disseminate a message based on reflective discourse rooted in sincerity and respect. The vague definition allows for a wide latitude of interpretation and application of his criteria in regards to grassroots groups, including fan groups. The creation of the groups and daily tasks allows fans to vent and express their ideas for presenting their message. These online communities also give the fans the opportunity to have a central location for fulfilling their missions by having the tools in a centralized virtual location that is consistently changing to meet the needs of the movement to achieve the goal.

Therefore, the act of deliberative democracy can be argued to be an element of a fan activist group based on the idea of thoughtful and deliberative discussions based on reflexivity and sincerity. The leader creates a venue that allows discourse and deliberation of ideas and

strategies to engage in dialogue with groups members and non-group members. Inclusion and equality are granted on the basis of their argument and position in the group. Activism is based on an idea or position held in reaction to acts committed by stakeholders that challenge the group's cultural legitimacy. The fans are acting against actions of ABC-Disney to protest the network's decision to cancel their shows.

Through thoughtful discourse, the soap opera fans are presenting their message through discussion; sending emails; tweets; flyers; and contacting affiliates, stockholders, and a variety of media outlets including citizen media. This action downplays the long-held negative stereotype of soap opera fans having low intelligence and being lazy. As fan activists, they have challenged this idea by creating a venue for thoughtful dialogue, both positive and dissenting, in the act of community building. The act of community building is done through the process is discarding long-held attitudes of one show over another and uniting for the sake of saving all the shows. A particular show's fan base identity is not completely eradicated but is held in balance for the sake of the movement. The save-the-soap movement has presented the soap fans as thoughtful, intelligent, and insightful individuals dedicated to a cause and product that they see has merit and value in their lives.

The value of the product, the soap opera, is based on investment, emotional ties and narrative qualities that are created over time. The fans have presented their arguments regarding the educational, historic, and aesthetic values relating to a valued product or commodity. The fans have further demonstrated, through thoughtful discourse, that they are aware and clued into the action of the primary stakeholders, media rhetoric, and political manipulations from corporate and government stakeholders. The fans are aware of societal nuances of the non-fans and can react thoughtfully by using the history and aesthetic arguments to further their cause by

demonstrating the importance of soap operas to their fan culture and the wider culture as a whole.

The drive and dedication of the soap opera fans is key to working towards a goal by putting aside politics and uniting for a common cause. The soap opera fans have demonstrated that they are aware of the manipulations and perceived stereotypes that non-fans have of them. As the fans demonstrate a sense of decorum and diplomacy while presenting their viewpoints, they are challenging the long-held stereotype of “Eva Gabor wigs, muumuu wearing, bonbon eating and sometimes hysterical soap fan” (January 16, 2012). Through the process of community building and coming together for a common cause, the soap fans have demonstrated, through passion and dedication, fighting for a commodity that they view as an important part of their culture. Through dialogue and discourse, the soap opera fans have demonstrated thought, dialogue, and dissent based on their position on an issue and status in the group.

However, the effort to answer these questions has left the door open to examine this issue from a different angle; how do issues in different fan groups resemble each other, or do the groups have needs that are radically different from soap opera fans? The idea of civic engagement and activism allows for the creation of a participation and engagement that influences the group structure of these communities. Within this act of online civic engagement, there is the struggle of competing ideas and outside pressure by competing interests.

Those viewers who watch the daytime serials see themselves as participating in the story and are, therefore, part of the culture involved in presenting the message through activism and aesthetic ventures. Participatory culture allows the fans to unite and become active in a realm where they are comfortable as a consumer of a product that they see as valuable Through fan

participation, they are able to use traditional and new media to present their arguments challenging the non-fans and network executives on the positions they hold in the discourse.

The creation of the public sphere based on Dahlberg's criteria and vetted through Habermas' definition was evident on two soap opera fan activist sites. The sites, *Sudz.Tv* and *Save the Soap Genre*, along with the allied Facebook groups and Twitter, revealed elements supporting Dahlberg as participants echoed the influence of Habermas in activities and discourse relating to the text and promotion of the shows as a commodity by demonstrating demand in the shows. The websites and allied Facebook groups were chosen due to the proximity of the cancellation announcement by ABC-Disney. The discourse also showed the importance of the shows aesthetically and culturally in the eyes of the fans along with why they believe the shows are an important part of American social culture.

The use of social media and online broadcasting by individuals offers additional opportunities in communication and history. Rhetorical analysis of *Blogtalkradio* or other audio podcasts can provide insight, both historically and culturally, about a group or individuals. The broadcasts offer a slice of life and information about activities and communication between citizen broadcasters and public figures, particularly actors and actresses. These podcasts present an opportunity to study fan culture outside the activism or civic engagement. Facebook group news feeds could allow additional study on group activity or rhetoric.

The range of future study is endless and spreads across a wide variety of disciplines, including business; anthropology; history; sociology; and a variety of communication angles, such as intercultural, textual, rhetorical, group, and gender communication. This study provides the platform to study other groups for similar traits or actions. Future examination can also entail the study of dissident bloggers in comparison to the official position of corporate entities or

activism in general. The case study supports the idea of examining how corporate stakeholders view the fans' actions and if these grassroots factions have any influence on decisions.

The study of fan activism can also take into consideration the study of hidden ideologies and structures at play in the decisions about programming and culture in which fans do not have access to gain such information. The comparison of mainstream media and "citizen journalists" can be studied for message reach and accuracy. The idea of power struggles between fans and the corporate stakeholders is an area for further study. Power struggles among fans are another avenue for study from the perspectives of cyber bullying, intimidation, and political power struggles within a movement.

From the perspective of social issues and activism, a future direction could use a feminist approach that examines the socio-cultural cost of subjugating female preferences for those of a different audience. The examination of corporate culture and its relation to the message that they present benefit or hinders marginalized groups. This approach can be used to examine the position of gays, minorities, and disabilities in fan culture as well as their portrayal in popular media.

Future research could examine the relationship of disabled fans and the development of Internet platforms for streaming television programs; how will these platforms affect the Deaf and Hard of hearing communities. Observation of the movement revealed fans who expressed concern about how they were going to "hear" and "read" their programs. Future research can examine how these groups view and interact with this form of program delivery due to issues surround the captioning of programs, in addition to hardware needs and Internet service accessibility. The study of program access for Deaf fans is a true challenge because the trend in

media appears to be moving online and because rules governing access for the Deaf in media were made for television prior to the development of online platforms.

The cultural approach can also be used as future areas of research from the perspective of studying the artifacts of fan culture. Future research projects can focus on rhetorical and literary studies involving fan fiction and fan videos relating to shows and characters. The review of fan culture from a literary and rhetorical perspective can also include the artifacts from fan-activist movements. The examination of fan culture allows for studying fan activity from different cultures and language groups. Do international soap fans differ in their actions and activities when compared to American soap fans? The activity of soap fans trying to save American soap operas has pulled in soap and telenovela fans from around the world. A future study could also examine the fan production from a cross-cultural perspective. Cross-cultural studies can consider the approach of studying fan cultures and the nuances that resemble or diverge from other minority groups.

Epilogue

On April 12, 2012, ABC-Disney announced that *General Hospital* would be renewed (Appendix Q, Figures 26 and 27) but a broadcast timeslot has not been determined. The same announcement mentioned that *One Life to Live*'s replacement show, *The Revolution*, would be cancelled due to low ratings after four months (Berman, 2012a, 2012b). The announcement regarding *General Hospital* seemed to be at least partially attributable to the work the fans did in regard to saving *General Hospital*. The efforts included watching the show, commenting on articles, calling affiliates and Disney, tweeting, sending flyers, and promoting their position about the importance of the show. The improved writing and production values under the

tutelage of Ron Carlivati and Frank Valentini breathed new life into *General Hospital* and pulled viewers back to watch the stories being created.

The fans expressed their appreciation to the blog's author, Marc Berman, for his support. In return the author provided the following feedback when referring to fans' hard work: "You know what? You all really made a difference. Congratulations!" (2012; Appendix Q, Figure 27). This statement demonstrates the activist role of the fans in an online setting. The fans realized that a battle had been won but the war was not over as the struggle continues to save the other shows and fight for a cable channel. The fans stood firm in their position to fight for all the soaps and it is aspect that challenges the stereotype that soap fans are not informed or knowledgeable about what is going on around them.

On May 10, 2012, DirecTV posted a survey on Facebook and Twitter asking people what their favorite soap opera of all-time to watch. This survey proved to be very curious because of the nature of DirecTV's business. The survey featured *General Hospital*, *All My Children*, *Bold and the Beautiful*, *Young and the Restless*, *Days of our Lives*, *As the World Turns*, and *One Life to Live* (Appendix P, Figures 24 and 25). In the eyes of the fans, it seemed ironic that DirecTV would be asking this question when there are only four shows left on the air and due to the passage of time since three of the shows in the survey were cancelled. As of May 2012, SOAPnet did not cease broadcasting in March 2012, as previously announced. The cable channel is still available on some cable systems in some markets nationwide with an uncertain future.

Broadway Digital Video created a site for selling DVD sets and stream classic episodes for the classic Procter and Gamble soap operas, Soap Classics (<http://www.soapclassics.com>). Broadway Digital Video was still releasing DVD sets for different characters and key episodes from *As The World Turns* in October 2011 and began releasing sets from *Guiding Light* in

January 2012 (Appendix R). The release of the DVDs supported the fans' position that soap operas are a commodity and can be used as an investment. The DVDs provide evidence to support the argument of historical, educational and cultural legitimacy. The DVD sets demonstrated key points in a show's history since the late 1970s by featuring key episodes, weddings, vixens, villains, and holidays. Several sets for both shows feature particular families, couples, and individual characters. The DVDs are Region Free, meaning that they can be sold worldwide, and they will work in most players. The videos helped demonstrate that there is still a demand for these programs through the DVD sales. Fans were encouraged to purchase and support the endeavor and to demonstrate demand that the programs still have value.

The victories were small, however, but they demonstrated that a marginalized group can come together to fight for a cause by downplaying the negative stereotypes that non-fans have of soap operas and their fans. The victories illustrated that the fans, through thoughtful discussion, inclusion, and equality based on the merit of the argument can create a community that is focused on a goal. The fans took on the role of activists to fight for what they believe is a viable product based on cultural and historical arguments. The victories also propelled the fans to continue the mission of saving the shows and reaching out to affiliates to promote the value of *General Hospital* (Appendix S). The fans also demonstrated that they are clued in to the activities of the media and government stakeholders in relation to their culture. The fans demonstrated that they will stand up for what they believe; they will not go away and be quiet, but will do research to present their position.

At this time, there is still a considerable story to tell concerning the ongoing text about the soap movement; several questions and concerns are unanswered. These unanswered questions pertain to the uncertain status of *One Life to Live* and *All My Children*, depending on

whether Prospect Park and ABC-Disney relinquish the rights of the shows to Agnes Nixon or another party. How will the changing broadcasting landscape affect the survival of the *Bold and Beautiful*, *Days of our Lives*, and *Young and the Restless*? As the old daytime serial cliché goes, tune in tomorrow!

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APPENDIX A. SWAN GRAPHICS

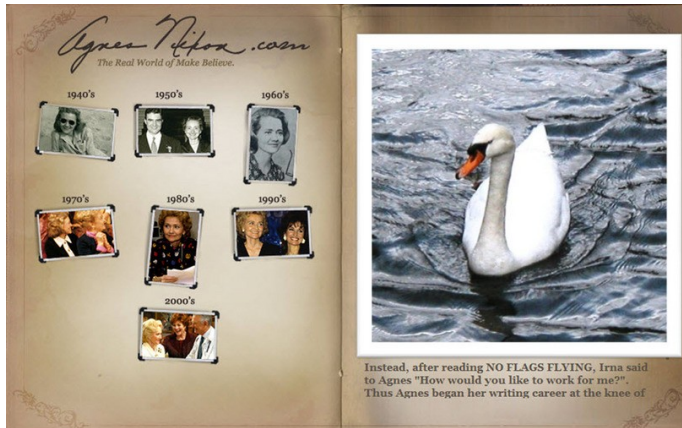


Figure 1. Agnes Nixon.



Figure 2. Standing with Agnes Nixon.



Figure 3. Swans of Glory.



Figure 4. SWAN.



Figure 5. Stand with Agnes Nixon.

APPENDIX B. SUDZ.TV AND SAVE THE SOAP GENRE SCREENSHOTS



Figure 6. Screenshot of Sudz.Tv.

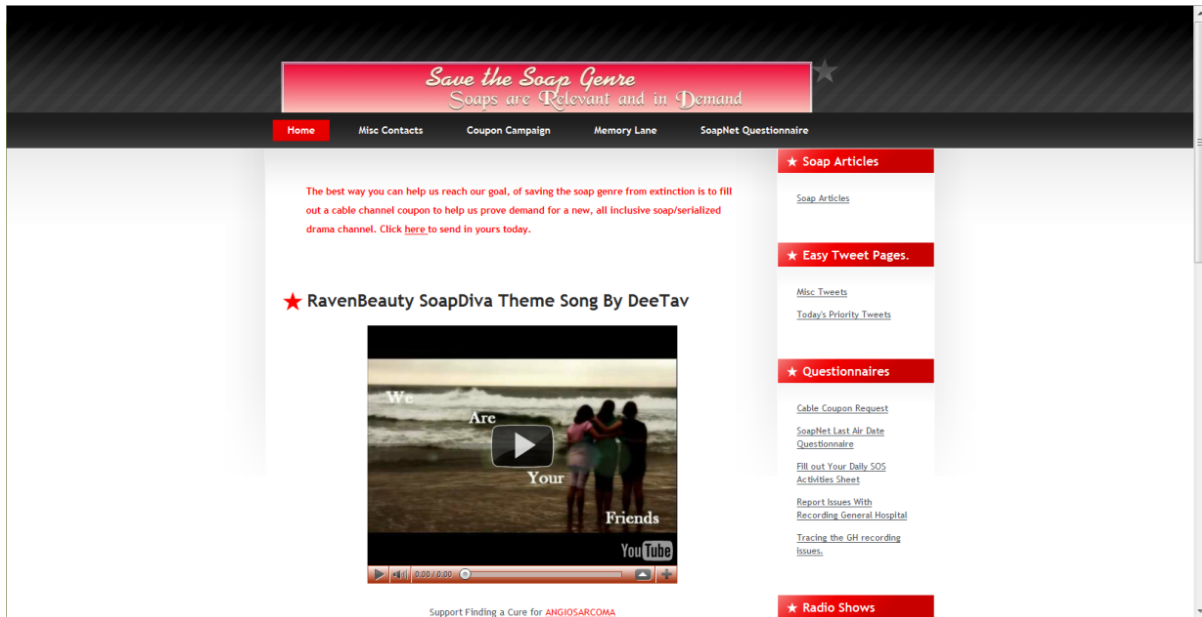


Figure 7. Screenshot of Save the Soap Genre.

APPENDIX C. SAVE THE SOAP GENRE SCREENSHOTS

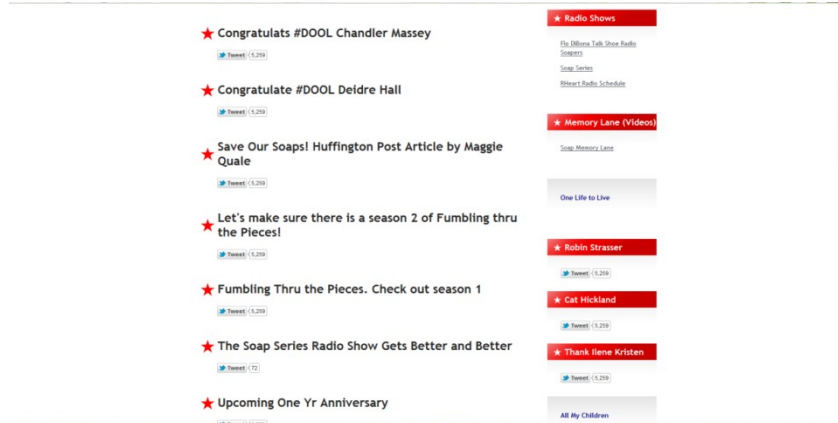


Figure 8. Daily Tweets.

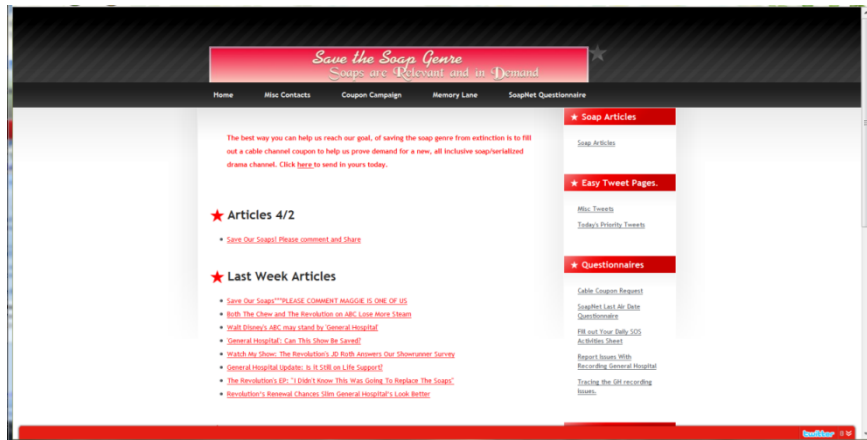


Figure 9. Article Links for Comment.

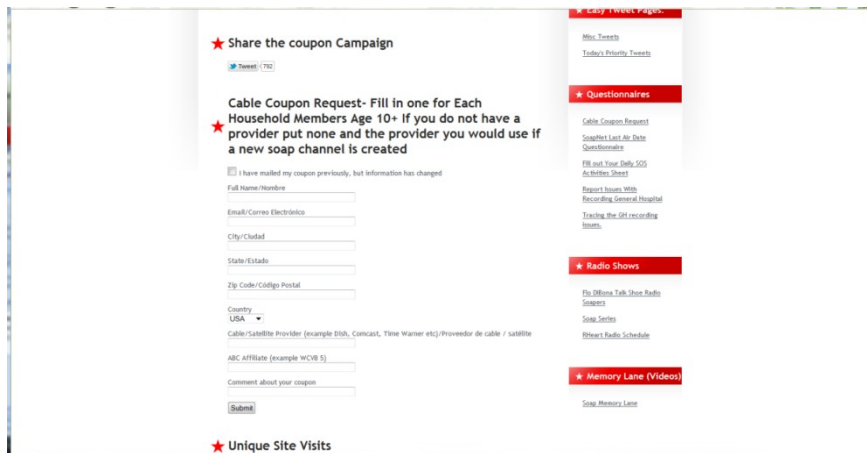


Figure 10. Online Form for Cable Coupon Campaign.

APPENDIX D. EXAMPLES OF TWEETS TO ADVERTISERS

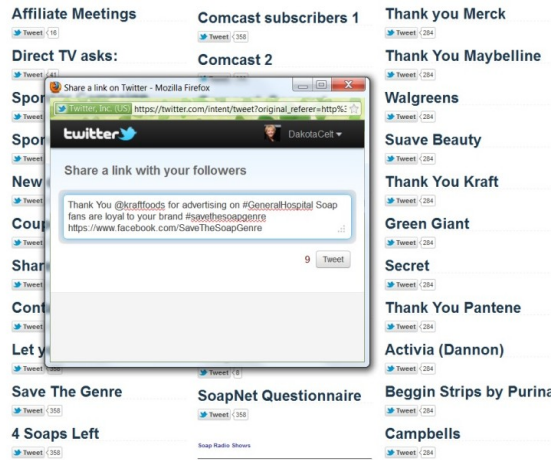


Figure 11. Thank You Tweet to an Advertiser.

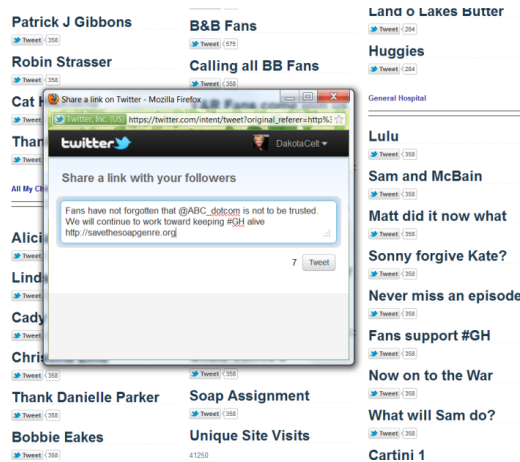


Figure 12. Tweet Informing ABC-Disney, Fans are Still Fighting.

APPENDIX E. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO CONTACT ADVERTISERS

The best way you can help us reach our goal, of saving the soap genre from extinction is to fill out a cable channel coupon to help us prove demand for a new, all inclusive soap/serialized drama channel. Click [HERE](#) to send in yours today.



Save The Soap Genre
Soaps are Relevant and in Demand

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[Soap Articles](#) · [Misc Contacts](#) · [Memory Lane](#) · [SoapNet Questionnaire](#) · [Top 50 Affiliate Twitter Handles and Website Links](#) · [Live Chat](#)

Show the Sponsors of GH that soap fans are loyal.

Let's do more than just tell the sponsors we appreciate them, let's show them! Beginning today we will be tweeting, emailing, posting to facebook walls or small mailing pictures of us, our families, our pets, etc. actually using their products. A message such as "As long as GH is on the air and you advertise I will support you." Or "Because you support GH I support you." With the meeting with advertisers coming up we need as many as possible participating! Let them see the loyalty BEFORE they get to the meeting.

This list will be added to, so please check back often.

Personalize your message to each by mentioning the products of theirs that you purchase.

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Hershey, PA 17033
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HERSHEY KISSES FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/hersheyskisses>
TWIZZLERS FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/Twizzlers>
ALMOND JOY FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Almond.Joy/4293445878>
TWITTER HERSHEY KISSES: <https://twitter.com/HersheysKisses>
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Website: <http://www.yoplait.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Yoplait>
General Mills Brands:
<http://generalmills.com/en/brands.aspx>
General Mills Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Generalmills>

Massage Envy Spa

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MessageEnvy>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MessageEnvy>
Find location: http://www.messageenvy.com/directory_of_clinics.aspx
Email: info@massageenvy.com
<http://www.messageenvy.com>

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ON THE WEB: <http://www.kraftfoodscorp.com/es/come.aspx>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Kraftfoods>
facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Kraftfoods>
FACEBOOK KRAFT MAC & CHEESE: <https://www.facebook.com/kraftmacaronilandcheese>
TWITTER MAC N CHEESE: <https://twitter.com/Kraftmaccheese>

APPENDIX F. AFFILIATE INFORMATION FOR TWEETING AND EMAILING

The best way you can help us reach our goal, of saving the soap genre from extinction is to fill out a cable channel coupon to help us prove demand for a new, all inclusive soap/serialized drama channel. Click [HERE](#) to send in yours today.

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Copy, Paste and Tweet your Affiliate

We want to help the affiliates sell ads on GH. If you are in one of these top 50 markets and are on Twitter, please copy the below messages and tweet to your affiliate.

1. Copy the Message(s) (in blue below)
 2. Click on the twitter account for your local affiliate.
 3. When you get to twitter on the left you will see a box that says tweet to [affiliate name appear]
 4. Paste the message
 5. Click on Tweet
- (To return to this page to tweet the other messages or additional affiliates, hit the back button in your browser)

Copy message(s) You can tweet each one repeating the steps.

If your advertisers want me to see the ad, they need to run during #GH. That's the only show I watch on ABC. http://save肥皂genre.org/stand_behind_the_affiliates

Do advertisers know ads during #GH are reaching the largest audience?
http://save肥皂genre.org/stand_behind_the_affiliates

Does your channel & its advertisers know that they reach largest audience during #GH airtime? http://save肥皂genre.org/stand_behind_the_affiliates

Top 50 Market ABC Affiliate Twitter Handles and Website

Market Rank	State	Station	Twitter	Website
40	AL	WSMA-LD 58	https://twitter.com/Wabc3360	http://www.abc3360.com/
12	AZ	KNOV-TV 15	https://twitter.com/Wabc15	http://www.abc15.com/
2	CA	KABC-TV 7	https://twitter.com/Wabc7	http://abclocal.com/abc/index
6	CA	KGO-TV 7	https://twitter.com/Wabc7newsbayarea	http://abclocal.com/abc/index
20	CA	KOTV 10	https://twitter.com/Wabc10_ca	http://www.news10.net/
28	CA	KQTV 10	https://twitter.com/Wabc10news	http://www.10news.com/index.html
18	CO	KMGH-TV 7	https://twitter.com/Wabc7denverchannel	http://www.thedenverchannel.com
30	CT	WTHH-TV	https://twitter.com/Wabc7	http://www.wthh.com
13	FL	WFTS 28	https://twitter.com/Wabc28news	http://www.abc28news.com/
16	FL	WFLG 10	https://twitter.com/Wabc10local10	http://www.local10.com/
19	FL	WFTV 9	https://twitter.com/Wabc9	http://www.wftv.com
38	FL	WPBF 25	https://twitter.com/Wabc25news	http://www.wpbf.com
47	FL	WXXL 25	https://twitter.com/Wabc25	http://www.firstcoastnews.com
8	GA	WSB-TV 2	https://twitter.com/Wabc10	http://www.wsbtv.com/
3	IL	WLS-TV 7	https://twitter.com/Wabc7chicago	http://abclocal.com/wls/index
25	IN	WRTV 6	https://twitter.com/Wabc6indychannel	http://www.theindychannel.com/
50	KY	WTVQ-TV 36	https://twitter.com/Wabc36kentucky	http://www.wtvq.com
7	MA	WCVB-TV 5	https://twitter.com/Wabc5	http://www.thebostonchannel.com
26	MD	WMAR-TV 2	https://twitter.com/Wabc2news	http://www.abc2news.com
11	MI	WXYZ-TV 7	https://twitter.com/Wabc7detroit	http://www.wxyz.com/
39	MI	WZZM 13	https://twitter.com/Wabc13	http://www.wzzm13.com/
15	MN	KSTP-TV 5	https://twitter.com/Wabc5	http://www.kstp.com
21	MO	KDNL-TV 30	https://twitter.com/Wabc30NBC	http://www.abc30news.com/
31	MO	KMBC-TV 9	https://twitter.com/Wabc9	http://www.kmbc.com
24	NC	WSOC-TV 9	https://twitter.com/Wabc9_TV	http://www.wsoc.com
27	NC	WTVD 11	https://twitter.com/Wabc11_rhdf	http://abclocal.com/wtvd/index
36	NC	WL0S-TV 13	https://twitter.com/Wabc13	http://www.wl0s.com/

APPENDIX G. EXAMPLE OF FANS POSTING ON AN ARTICLE

Forbes Log in | Sign up | Help
Search news, business leaders, and stock quotes

Real Time: The Latest Updates On Forbes | What Romney Is Really Worth | Who's Making Money Right Now | AdVoice: Beware The Cult Of Business | Subscribe >

ACURA Introducing the entirely new RDX. Intelligently built for the size of your life. DISCOVER RDX

Roger Friedman, Contributor
I cover Hollywood and the business of celebrity

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT | 2/23/2012 @ 10:18PM | 11,530 views

Will "General Hospital" Survive ABC's Stupidity After All?

It's almost the end of March and so far, no closing notice for the ABC soap "General Hospital." It was on the docket for cancellation to make way for [Katie Couric's](#) talk show, which debuts September 10th. But lo and behold—ABC's terrible decision to cancel its soaps and replace them with nattering nabobs hasn't worked. It's not just that "The Chew" and "The Revolution"—which replaced fan faves "All My Children" and "One Life to Live"—are unwatchable. They're also not being watched. If ABC plans to cancel "GH," they're going to have to do it soon or will have no proper ending. (Not like "All My Children" did—it was discourteously snuffed out in mid-sentence.) These shows may be cheaper to produce than soap operas, but all they've done is drive away audience and incurred enmity toward new programming. ABC now lacks Regis, Susan Lucci, [Oprah Winfrey](#), and the 43 year loyalty to "One Life."

As their mistakes will be discussed in a special New York and the

Reduce personnel costs with an Avigilon high-definition surveillance system. [Learn more](#)

Most Read on Forbes

Roger Friedman, Contributor
I also publish and write Hollywood news and scoops at [www.Showbiz411.com](#), a site I started in 1995. That site has earned dozens of awards

Waiting for loadus.exelator.com...

Figure 13. Article.

Forbes editors have the ability to call out member comments they find particularly interesting. Called-out comments are highlighted across the Forbes network. You'll be notified if your comment is called out.

Comments

Called-out Expand All Comments

[User] 1 month ago
BIIIIING SMILE!!!! "ABC's troubles worsened in daytime talk with The Revolution sinking to another series low and The Chew off by noticeable percentages from year-ago occupant All My Children." AHHEM!!!! Disney stockholders..... Are you listening to the viewers? We're not happy! What are you gonna do about it????? Oh.... Right! And sponsors????? What are you????? Are you listening to the audience? Oh, I'm sorry. There is no audience. Hnnnnnn. What are you gonna do?????

[User] 1 month ago
All they have to do is get the schedule back as it was & put Katie at 4pm in Opera place & everybody would be happy except maybe Frons, Sweney & Iger. They are replaceable easier than 4,000,000+ fans. They came in & thought the soaps fans were no better than lap dogs to be TRAINED to watch what their masters said. Well, we ain't lap dogs & don't need anyone telling us what we like to watch. We want to be entertained—carried away to a different place & sometimes a different time.Give us back our soaps & the BOYCOTT will end.

[User] 1 month ago
I hope ABC will open its eyes before it's too late for General Hospital. People are getting more and more tired of reality shows, and are longing for good scripted programming. Come on, ABC/Disney, wake up!

[User] 1 month ago
Totally agree ABC, needs to open their eyes!

Figure 14. Response from Fans.

APPENDIX H. FACEBOOK POSTS



Figure 15. Fan's Comment to Iger.



Figure 16. Comments.



Figure 17. Fan's Disappointment.

**APPENDIX I. SCREENSHOT OF A POST REGARDING VIKI'S SPEECH IN A
FACEBOOK GROUP, JANUARY 12, 2012**



Figure 18. Screenshot of Facebook Post.



Figure 19. Screenshot from Viki's [Erika Slezak] Speech.

APPENDIX J. SCREENSHOTS OF TRENDING, JANUARY 9-12, 2012, FOR *ONE LIFE TO LIVE* AND AGNES NIXON

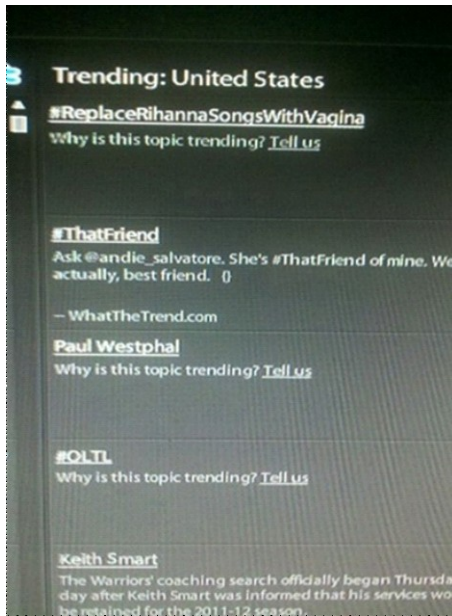


Figure 20. #OLTL Trending, US.

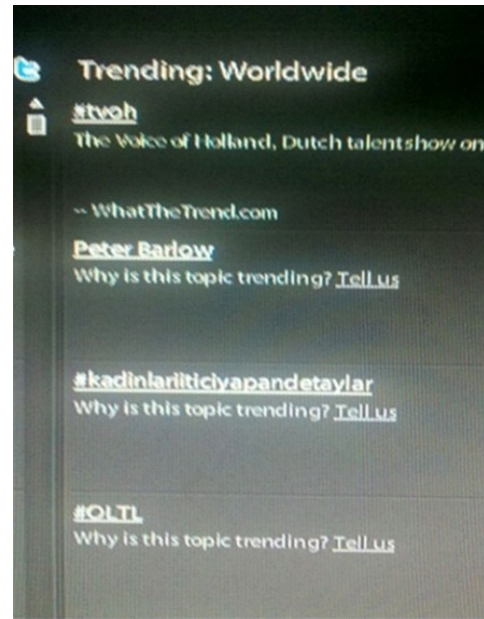


Figure 21. #OLTL Trending, Worldwide.



Figure 22. Facebook Post Showing Twitter Trend.

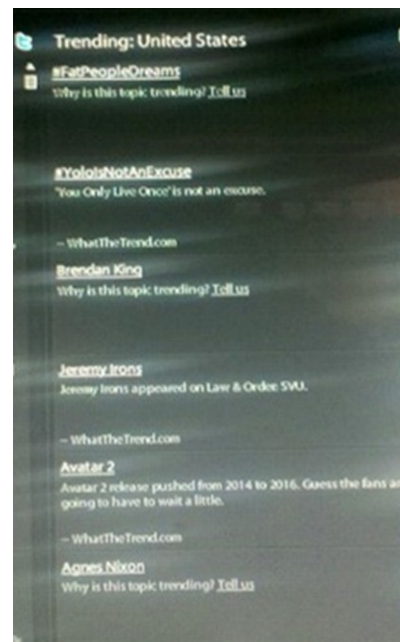


Figure 23. Agnes Nixon Trending, US

APPENDIX K. SPANISH/ENGLISH TWITTER IDEAS

Hash tags:

#telenovelas #soaps #Days #AMC #OLTL #YR #ATWT #BB #GL #GH

The hashtags were added at the end of messages for the English tweets and most of the Spanish tweets.

Example: I'm calling for the Latino community help save our soap operas fill out our coupon campaign #Days #AMC #OLTL #YR #ATWT #BB #GL #GH

English Tweets	Spanish Translation
I'm calling for the Latino community help save our soap operas fill out our coupon campaign	Estoy llamando a el Latino comunidad ayudanos salvar las telenovelas Americanas apuntase con los cupones para salvar un género de la telenovela
Storytelling is key to us all. Help save the US stories.	(Historias)/Cuentos es la llave para todos...Ayuda a salvar las Telenovelas Americanas.
Language is not a barrier to storytelling. Save American soaps keep tradition alive	el lenguaje no es una barrera para la narración de cuentos ayuda salvar los telenovelas americanas para mantener viva la tradición
Spanglish is a bridge that can unite us help save American soaps.	El spanglish es un puente que nos puede unir a ayudar a salvar a la telenovela Americana
Love, drama, intrigue and family have no language barriers help save the American soaps.	el amor, el drama, la intriga, y la familia no tienen barreras lanuaje ayudar a salvar la telenovela Americana
We are encouraging the Latino community to help save American soaps http://sudz.tv/spanish_flyer.pdf	El spanglish es un puente que nos puede unir a ayudar a salvar a la telenovela Americana http://sudz.tv/spanish_flyer.pdf
Love, drama, intrigue and family have no language barriers help save the American soaps. http://sudz.tv/spanish_flyer.pdf	

Port Charles Herald

VOL. LVII No. 19,325

13 DE FEBRERO 2012

ONE DOLLAR

¿Es Disney de confianza? GENERAL HOSPITAL GANA demográfico clave en una victoria abrumadora

Super-rich Russian buyers are looking beyond London

There is a joke in Moscow: Two men are walking down the street. On being paid a compliment on his tie, one of them smiles, boasting it cost him £1,000. "What a rip-off!" his companion scoffs. "Mine cost £3,000." The joke has reached London. Earlier this year, one Russian multi-millionaire was so keen to secure a £20m villa in Kensington that he ended up bidding against himself. He eventually secured the property, but the mix-up - because although he was using a property finder, he also acted alone - meant that he ended up paying £1m more than the asking price. Such monetary one-upmanship among Russia's super-rich has become relatively common in the smarter parts of London. Increasingly, though, the wealthy are taking to their helicopters and venturing to the home counties and beyond in search of trophy properties.

A study by Knight Frank, one of the handful of top-end agencies that has tailored its services to cater for Russian clients, estimates they now own as much as £2.2 billion worth of property in London and the home counties - up from a mere £93m in 2000. Liam Bailey, the agency's head of residential research, estimates Russians have bought more than 240 £1m-plus properties in the capital since January. Indeed, the massive spending power of the novi Russki has been a driving force behind the 25% rise in prices in the few squares miles of what estate agents call "prime central London" since January.

Gary Hershman, managing director of Beauchamp Estates in Mayfair, sold his first property to a Russian buyer nearly 15 years ago. This year, he has sold more than a dozen flats and trophy houses priced from £1m to £20m to Russians - among them, a five-bed penthouse in The Knightsbridge. The buyer paid almost £1m over the asking price of £15m to secure the property.

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Casio lists top calculator words

Japan-based Casio is celebrating the sale of its billionth calculator with a list of the top English words that can be read upside down. Britain's Sun newspaper said old favorites include boobies (5318008), gobbles (5378806) and boogie (316008). New words include Google (376006) and blog (6078). Everyone has fond memories of making rude and funny words on the display when they should really have been concentrating in class, a Casio spokesman said.



¿Es Sweeney una mujer de su palabra?

En una acción digna de la multitudine local de El Padrino, Sonny Corinthos, Anne Sweeney, Presidenta del Grupo Disney/ABC Television hizo a los asociados de ABC "una oferta que no podían rechazar." Sweeney anuncio el pasado mes de Junio que ABC estaría volviendo en un intervalo de tiempo, ocupado por la telenovela General Hospital a los afiliados, que los asociados de la cadena ABC pueden elegir comprar el nuevo programa sindicado de Katie Couric.

Sweeney le dijo a Wall Street Journal, "Vimos una necesidad de evolucionar de la television durante el día. Es el espacio que necesitamos para ser más competitivos, y estamos desde luego poniendo los recursos en contra de eso." La Sra. Sweeney pasó a responder a los aficionados interesado de la Telenovela General Hospital a explicar los criterios para su toma de decisiones: "No estamos anunciando la cancelación de la telenovela, General Hospital" pero la Sra. Sweeney agregó, "Es impor-

tante tener en cuenta que durante el día como lo hacemos en horario estelar—Realmente se trata de telenovelas, y nos vamos a ir con los espectáculos que tienen la mayoría espectadores."

El 6 de Junio, sin embargo, otro portavoz de ABC, dijo al The Hollywood Reporter, "El anuncio no quiere decir la inevitable cancelación de la telenovela General Hospital. Más bien, significa que en Septiembre de 2012, vamos a programar nuestro bloque durante el día con nuestros tres principales espectáculos."

La clave de 18-49 demográfica femenina ha hablado fuerte y claro. De acuerdo con los Ratings de Nielsen, desde su debut a través de 23.01.12, la serie "The Chew" tiene un promedio de 455,000 espectadores en el grupo clave demográfico.

En cuanto al nuevo serie "The Revolution" en sus tres primeras semanas en que los Ratings de Nielsen están disponibles, el promedio fue de aproximadamente 338,000 los es-

pectadores clave de la demostración. En promedio, la telenovela General Hospital está superando los dos series, "The Chew" y "The Revolution" en el grupo demográfico clave en aproximadamente un 26% y 41% respectivamente.

En sus 49 años en la cadena de ABC, la venerada telenovela General Hospital puede ser destituida sin ceremonias de su hora de transmisión por el programa de television de Katie Couric mas sin embargo, los fans insistieron a no añadir más sal a la herida mediante la cancelación de la última telenovela amada de ABC durante el día se trata de los observadores, la telenovela General Hospital ha sufrido tanto en el total telenovelas y lo más importante en el demográfico objetivo de los anunciantes. Si en Disney se puede confiar, y la Sra. Sweeney es fiel a su palabra, en el año 2013 los aficionados a General Hospital celebrarán el aniversario de oro de la telenovela en ABC, no lo haremos ¿Sra. Sweeney?

Los Fans de General Hospital

What's your humor style?

In today's personality stakes, nothing is more highly valued than a sense of humor. We seek it out in others and are proud to claim it in ourselves, perhaps even more than good looks or intelligence. If someone has a great sense of humor, we reason, it means that they are happy, socially confident and have a healthy perspective on life. This attitude would have surprised the ancient Greeks, who believed humor to be essentially aggressive. And in fact, our admiration for the comedically gifted is relatively new, and not very well-founded, says Rod Martin, a psychologist at the University of Western Ontario who studies the way people use humor. Being funny isn't necessarily an indicator of good social skills and well-being, his research has shown—it may just as likely be a sign of personality flaws.

He has found that humor is a double-edged sword. It can forge better relationships and help you cope with life, or it can be corrosive, eating away at self-esteem and antagonizing others. «It's a form of communication, like speech, and we all use it differently,» says Martin. We use bonding humor to enhance our social connections—but we also may wield it as a way of excluding or rejecting an outsider. Likewise, put-down humor can at times be an adaptive, healthy response: Employees suffering under a vindictive boss will often make the office more bearable by secretly ridiculing their tyrant. Though humor is essentially social, how you use it says a lot about your sense of self. Those who use self-defeating humor, making fun of themselves for the enjoyment of others, tend to maintain that hostility toward themselves even when alone.

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Port Charles Herald

VOL. LVII No. 19,325

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2012

ONE DOLLAR

Can Disney Be Trusted? General Hospital WINS Key Demo by a Landslide

Super-rich Russian buyers are looking beyond London

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Is Sweeney a Woman of Her Word?

In a move worthy of local mob Godfather, Sonny Corinthos, Anne Sweeney, President of Disney/ABC Television Group made ABC affiliates "an offer they couldn't refuse." Sweeney announced last June, ABC would be returning the time slot, occupied by General Hospital to affiliates, so affiliates could "choose" to purchase ABC's new syndicated Katie Couric talk show.

Sweeney told the Wall Street Journal, "We saw a need to evolve daytime. It's a space that needs to be more competitive, and we're certainly putting resources against that." Ms. Sweeney went on to address concerned General Hospital fans and explain the criteria for her decision-making: "We are not announcing the cancellation of General Hospital," but Ms. Sweeney also added, "It is important to look at daytime like we do at primetime - it really is about

eyeballs, and we will go with the shows that have the most viewership."

On June 6, yet another ABC spokesperson told The Hollywood Reporter, "The announcement does not mean the inevitable cancellation of General Hospital. Rather, it means that in September 2012, we will program our daytime block with our three strongest shows."

The key 18-49 female demographic has spoken loudly and clearly. According to the Nielsen Ratings, from its debut thru 1/23/12, The Chew has averaged 455,000 viewers in the key demographic. For the same period, General Hospital averaged 617,000 in the key demo. As for The Revolution, in its first three weeks for which Nielsen data is available, it averaged approximately 338,000 viewers in the key demo. On average, General

Hospital is outperforming The Chew and The Revolution in the key demographic by approximately 26% and 41% respectively.

In its 49th year on ABC, venerable General Hospital may be unceremoniously ousted from its time-slot by the upstart Katie Couric talk show; however, fans urge ABC not to add insult to injury by canceling the last beloved soap on ABC's decimated daytime roster. If Ms. Sweeney is telling the truth, and the daytime race is about "eyeballs," then General Hospital wins in both total viewers and most importantly in the advertisers' target demographic. If Disney can be trusted, and Ms. Sweeney is true to her word, in 2013 fans will celebrate General Hospital's Golden Anniversary on ABC, won't we Ms. Sweeney?

Fans of General Hospital

What's your humor style?

In today's personality stakes, nothing is more highly valued than a sense of humor. We seek it out in others and are proud to claim it in ourselves, perhaps even more than good looks or intelligence. If someone has a great sense of humor, we reason, it means that they are happy, socially confident and have a healthy perspective on life.

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APPENDIX N. CABLE COUPON: ENGLISH

Daytime Television is losing its lather!

Recently, ABC cancelled the television soap operas All My Children and One Life to Live. Soap viewers are uniting in an effort to find new homes for these shows, but there's more. The classic American staple known as "soap opera" is in jeopardy! We're trying to do our part to save a genre which has brought entertainment to millions of viewers!

ABC/Disney is taking the cable/satellite channel SoapNet off the air in 2012. We are urging viewers to let their cable/satellite providers know they want a new cable channel dedicated to soap operas and their viewers. We're asking you to help us in the cause to bring new life to an American favorite by filling out the coupon below!



We're Lathered Up!

NOTICE OF SUBSCRIBER FEEDBACK

Dear _____ (cable provider name):

One of the networks you have been providing in your cable/satellite lineup is SoapNet which is being taken off air. I am urging your company to do everything it can to promote the development of or find a replacement for this cable soap network. It is my hope that your company continues providing cable networks which respond to the preferences of paying subscribers such as those in my household. Thank you!

Please mail this coupon to:

New Home For Soaps

Office use only:

Market Rank:	
Provider Code	
Region Code	

Please provide your name, address, city, state & zip code below:

APPENDIX O. CABLE COUPON: SPANISH

ESTA PERDIENDO SU TELEVISION LA ESPUMA!

Recientemente la cadena ABC cancelo las telenovelas All My Children y One Life To Live, los seguidores de las telenovelas así como la Federación America de Television y Artistas de Radio conocida por sus siglas AFTRA, se aun unido con el proposito de encontrar un nuevo hogar de television para las telenovelas americanas. Pero eso no es todo, el genero clásico conocido como "Soap Opera" (Telenovelas) esta en peligro. Estamos tratando de salvar este genero que ha traído entretenimiento a millones de televidentes.

La cadena ABC/Disney esta quitando de la television por cable y satélite el canal conocido como "SOAPNET" fuera del aire en el 2012. Estamos pidiendo la ayuda de todos los televidentes que le dejen saber a su proveedor de cable o satélite que les gustaría tener un canal dedicado a las telenovelas. Te pedimos por favor nos ayudes y te unas a esta causa que traerá de vuelta a la television america las telenovelas.



*Espectadores quieren
calidad scripted
programación
¡por la televisión!*

*Demasiada realidad
y programas de entrevistas
duelen el
¡industria de televisión!*



AVISO DE REACCIÓN DE SUSCRIPTOR

ATENCIÓN _____ (Nombre del proveedor de servicio de cable o satélite):

Uno de los canales que su compañía tenia en el aire ha sido cancelado y fuera del aire. Como usuario de su compañía estoy haciendo todo lo posible por promover el desarrollo o un sustituto de ese canal, que son de la preferencia de los suscriptores que pagan y la mía tambien gracias.

Por favor envíe este cupón a:

New Home For Soaps

Uso de Oficina:

Market Rank:	
Provider Code	
Region Code	

Por favor proporcione su nombre, dirección, ciudad, declare y código postal abajo:

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APPENDIX P. DIRECTV SURVEY: FAN POST AND POLL



Figure 24. Facebook Post Addressing DirecTV Poll.

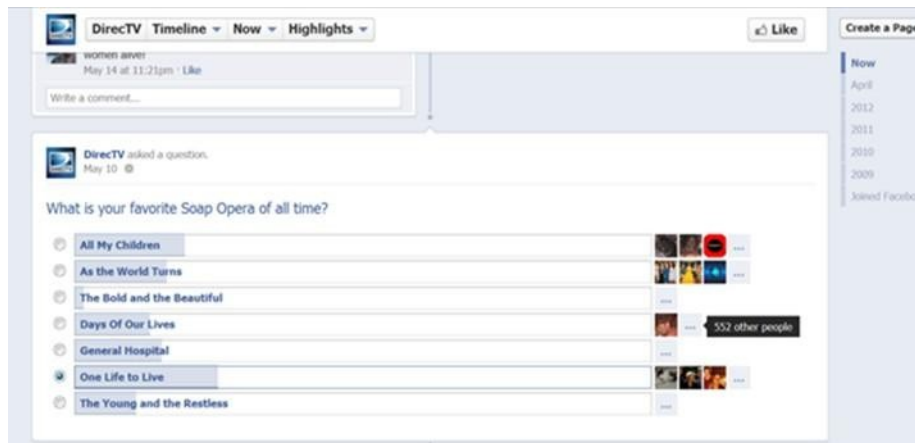


Figure 25. DirecTV Poll.

APPENDIX Q. GENERAL HOSPITAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The screenshot shows a webpage layout for TV Media Insights. On the left, there are subscription forms for an email newsletter and a daily text update, along with social media links for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+. The main content area features the article title 'ABC RENEWS GENERAL HOSPITAL' by Marc Berman, dated April 12, 2012. The article text states that ABC has renewed General Hospital for 2012-13, marking its 50th anniversary. It mentions that the show's struggling talk show entry, The Revolution, has been canceled and will depart in July. An afternoon edition of Good Morning America, tentatively titled GMA in the Afternoon, will step in for The Revolution for nine weeks until General Hospital moves into the weekday 2 p.m. hour in early September. The article also provides recent ratings for The Revolution: 1.32 million viewers and a 0.6 rating/4 share among key women 25-54, according to Nielsen, which is half of the year-ago occupant One Life to Live. Below the text are two images: one for 'The Morning General Hospital' and another for 'The Revolution'. On the right side of the page, there is a vertical sidebar titled 'TVMI CLASSIFIEDS' containing job listings for 'SENIOR ANALYST, STRATEGIC RESEARCH & ANALYTICS, ATLANTA', 'ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE', 'COPYWRITER', and 'SALES MANAGER', each with a 'Full Listing' link.

Figure 26. Article.

This screenshot shows a comment thread on the article. At the top left, there is a 'Click Here' button and an advertisement for IncentivePlus.net. Below the ad are navigation tabs for 'Recent', 'Popular', 'Comments', and 'Tags'. A list of recent posts is visible, including 'Thursday, May 17, 2012', 'Dallas and Beverly Hills, 90210', 'Wednesday, May 16, 2012', 'A Quartet of Series Enders', and 'Tuesday, May 15, 2012'. The main comment section shows several replies. A comment from 'Debbie Joyce' (dated April 12, 2012 at 12:58 PM) thanks Marc for pointing out that fans have spoken and expresses hope that soaps are in demand. A comment from 'camille' (dated April 12, 2012 at 12:09 PM) thanks Marc for giving fans the opportunity to help with the saving of General Hospital and the Full Genre. A comment from 'marcberman' (dated April 12, 2012 at 12:38 PM) is highlighted with a white arrow pointing to it; the text of the comment reads: 'You know what? You all really made a difference. Congratulations!'. A comment from 'SSW71' (dated April 12, 2012 at 12:41 PM) thanks Marc for his support in helping fans make a difference and expresses hope that General Hospital is saved.

Figure 27. Author Congratulating the Fans.

APPENDIX R. SOAP CLASSICS WEBSITE SCREENSHOT

The screenshot shows the Soap Classics website interface. At the top, a navigation menu includes links for HOME, GUIDING LIGHT, AS THE WORLD TURNS, FAREWELL TO SPRINGFIELD, FAREWELL TO OAKDALE, LILY & HOLDEN, BAUER FAMILY, PHILLIP SPAULDING, CARJACK, REVA SHAYNE, STORE, FEEDBACK, and FREE ONLINE EPISODE!. Below the navigation is a dark blue banner with the text "WELCOME TO SOAPCLASSICS". The main promotional area features a large blue banner for "GUIDING LIGHT 20 CLASSIC EPISODES" priced at "\$24.95", accompanied by four circular character portraits. Below this is a "Featured Products" section with the note "All SOAPCLASSICS DVDs are Region Free". Three DVD sets are displayed: "Farewell To Springfield" (blue box), "Farewell To Oakdale" (red box), and "The Bauer Family" (blue box). Each product has a "CLICK FOR DETAILS" and "BUY NOW" button.

**WHEN IT'S TIME FOR GENERAL HOSPITAL
IT'S A GOOD AFTERNOON AMERICA!**

The Port Charles
INQUISITOR

SPECIAL LOCAL AFFILIATE AD SALES EDITION - Summer 2012

**There's one daytime show
making a lot of buzz...**

The Daily Beast:
"No soap opera has achieved the pop
cultural distinction of General Hospital."

GH Hits 18 Week Ratings High!
'General Hospital' Fights Back!

**Viewers are watching
GENERAL HOSPITAL**



We're watching again! Are you?
MAJOR LEAGUE DRAMA



**ENCOURAGE
ADVERTISERS TO
SPONSOR
GENERAL HOSPITAL
STAT!**

Local viewers support
local ABC affiliates!
We're your neighbors
and we are watching!

As General Hospital
continues its 50th year on
ABC Daytime, now's your
chance to promote your
station's daypart to
sponsors!

Solid afternoon pro-
gramming means
increased viewership for
local news and syndicated
programming.

As your neighbors, we are
on YOUR side! Let ABC
know at the Affiliates
Meeting that we're
behind our local affiliates
all the way!

**There's no better
hour as a lead in to
local programming**
**GENERAL
HOSPITAL**