

Found: The Etiology of Character Realization, within Rhetorical Analysis of the Series

LOST, through the Application of Underhill's and Turner's

Classic Concepts of the Mystic Journey

Presented to the Faculty

Liberty University

School of Communication Studies

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts

in

Communication

By

Lacey L. Mitchell

2 December 2010

Liberty University
School of Communication
Master of Arts in Communication Studies

Michael P. Graves Ph.D., Chair

Carey Martin Ph.D., Reader

Todd Smith M.F.A, Reader

Dedication

For James and Mildred Renfroe, and Donald, Kim and Chase Mitchell,
without whom this work would have been remiss.
I am forever grateful for your constant, unwavering support,
exemplary resolve, and undiscouraged love.

Acknowledgements

This work represents the culmination of a remarkable journey in my life. Therefore, it is paramount that I recognize several individuals I found to be indispensable. First, I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Michael Graves, for taking this process and allowing it to be a learning and growing experience in my own journey, providing me with unconventional insight, and patiently answering my never ending list of inquiries. His support through this process pushed me towards a completed work – Thank you. I also owe a great debt to the readers on my committee, Dr. Cary Martin and Todd Smith, who took time to ensure the completion of the final product.

I will always have immense gratitude for my family. Each of them has an incredible work ethic and drive for life that constantly pushes me one step further.

To my grandfather, the patriarch of our family, you have engrained integrity and truth through the entire fabric of our family; your example has provided an established model of which I wish to exemplify.

To my grandmother, you have made every journey to the mailbox a poignant one through your constant thoughtfulness and sacrificial love.

To my father, your hard work, determination and sacrifice are qualities I have strived to emulate in all of my pursuits.

To my mother, my Kimi, thank you for reminding me that even if I did go crazy through this process that this was the south and, like Julia Sugarbaker said, “we are proud of our crazy people.”

To my brother, your humor has continually been a source of perspective and your overt confidence in me has propelled me to believe in myself.

To 1311B, as Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." Without your constant support, listening ear and loving spirit, I would have easily become unraveled.

Finally, the utmost gratitude I can articulate belongs to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My journey has been His from the very start.

Copyright © 2010
Lacey L. Mitchell
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

This study rhetorically and visually analyzed the presence of the spiritual journey represented through the journeys of selected characters traced over several episodes of the television series *LOST*. Popular literature asserts the classic concept of the spiritual journey can be and has been found across the spectrum of various media. Episodes were analyzed to trace the journey of two characters, Jack Shephard and Juliet Burke. Evelyn Underhill's three-fold path and Victor Turner's concepts of liminality and communitas were implemented as a way to organize and analyze the contextual elements displayed in the episodes. The sampling used forty-seven episodes across the series' six seasons. These episodes were chosen for character inclusion and plot development. When the tools for analysis were applied to the individual journeys, deeper understanding of the characters and the series was revealed. Instances of varying levels of liminality and communitas were found to be present as well as different experiences of the three-fold path.

Content

Chapter I: Introduction.....	2
Literature Review.....	7
Methodology.....	19
Chapter II: Context.....	23
Chapter III: Jack Shephard.....	34
Liminality.....	49
Communitas.....	51
Three-fold Path.....	53
Chapter IV: Juliet Burke.....	59
Liminality.....	66
Communitas.....	68
Three-fold Path.....	70
Chapter V: Conclusion.....	74
References.....	85

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Two sides: one is light, one is dark." - John Locke

From the very beginning of the series *LOST*, the audience was introduced to an interrupted journey followed by a gradual unfolding of the characters' spiritual journeys. *LOST* opened its series premier with one of the main characters, Jack, opening his eyes to find himself a survivor of a major plane crash. He then springs into action trying desperately to help his fellow air travelers survive the sudden tragedy. In January 2010, *LOST* began its sixth and final season. During the show's six seasons, the creators of *LOST* have taken their characters through turmoil that only an island full of mystery can provide. Along their individual journeys, each of the characters come face to face with both past "off island" experiences and present "on island" occurrences. They are forced to make decisions each step of the way that propel them on their journey. The journeys are complex and at times surprisingly, but they suggest a rootedness in spirituality, not always Christian. In fact, the character journeys invite analysis using Underhill's framework of the spiritual journey as well as Victor Turner's concepts of liminality and communitas. Underhill's framework of the journey unfolds over the process of three different steps: (1) purgation, (2) illumination, and (3) union. In this thesis, the spiritual journeys of two of *LOST*'s key characters will be analyzed and compared using Underhill's framework and Turner's concepts. *LOST* occupies a significant place of distinction in television programming. This study will seek to further explore the significance of *LOST* and of Underhill's schema as well as Turner's concepts as tools to analyze television popular cultural events.

Studies That Have Addressed The Problem and Deficiencies in the Studies

Many past writers have explored the journey metaphor. In addition, the concept of the spiritual journey has been traced through literary works, film and television. One of the more prominent frameworks of the spiritual or mystic journey is Evelyn Underhill's. In a thesis using Underhill's framework Elizabeth Robinson said that, Underhill "is considered one of the founders of the modern study of mysticism, and while her work is at least fifty years old, it is still the basis from which modern scholars work" (Robinson 21). Robinson's thesis used Underhill's framework to outline the journey found in a selection of poetic works. Along with this framework, Victor Turner presented two concepts found within the realm of the spiritual journey, *communitas* and *liminality*. This framework, combined with the two concepts, provides the tools in which to explore the journey.

In another study using the framework to trace the journey, Anne Mallon states: "The journey is an 'ascent' because it involves the struggle of the soul to emerge from beneath the many layers of false self that obscure his identity, and to reach up to the 'summit'..." (Mallon 21). While these two studies focused on literary works, a third delved into the arena of film. Jonah Goldberg wrote a popular article on the film *Groundhog Day* and analyzed the process that the main character goes through to accomplish his journey. These studies provide a foundation for the uncovering of the spiritual journey with the use of Underhill's framework and Turner's concepts, but are limited to the specific realms they chose to explore. This study will apply the journey framework as presented by Underhill and Turner to the realm of television, specifically to characters from a popular network drama series.

The significance of the study

Since its beginning, *LOST* has provided viewers with thought provoking storylines filled with opportunities for rhetorical criticism. In her dissertation, *“Lost”: A Rhetorical Analysis of Post-9/11 America*, Megan McFarlane observed: “As one of the major forms of entertainment and information, television possesses enormous rhetorical power in American society” (14). In his article “Rhetorical Homology and the Caveman Mythos: An(Other) Way to Ridicule the Aggrieved,” Luke Winslow summarized, a popular approach to television’s rhetorical power, Barry Brummett’s:

In an analysis of the 1984 film *Gremlins*, Brummett argues that, although on the surface the movie is about fictional fuzzy critters, on a formal level, the film is really about technology that has gotten out of hand. The story in the film follows a pattern of ignorance and disrespect for technology, with sinister consequences—so often the same pattern we follow in our everyday lives. *Gremlins* connects with us not because we have actual gremlins in our attics but through sharing a form with how we behave when we encounter technology. A second example from Brummett involves vampire films and the pattern of conformity and loss of identity that all of us experience from time to time. A vampire movie may be “about” vampires, but at the formal level it is also about some of the patterns we confront in life, such as going along to get along, losing our identity at work, and so on. (Winslow 261).

In his book, *Uncovering Hidden Rhetorics: Social Issues In Disguise*, Barry Brummett says of this concept: “Clearly, form is an important way that texts address social issues, but in

disguise. Once a text has connected to a social issue at the level of form, the content of that text – what happens at a literal level – can address those social issues. The form of *Gremlins* advises us not to engage technology until we fully understand and respect its social consequences, because its story says one should not keep gremlins until one has wisdom – the connection is formal, the advice is explicit” (Brummett 9).

This type of criticism is paramount to the further understanding of today’s prevalent media exposure. This study will employ the use of rhetorical criticism to find deeper meaning in the television series furthering the field of communication in regards to rhetoric and the media.

Another reason to take a critical glimpse into the inner workings of the massively popular show is the reoccurring themes that appear in the show. These themes are numerous, but some of the most prevalent are good versus evil, dualities, numerology, salvation and redemption. Long before crashing on the island and becoming habitants thereof, the characters found themselves in the throes of daily life. However, once on the island, the survivors are forced to come to grips with their various pasts and the journeys that brought them to where they are today. There are many references by the various characters to the relationship found between their past and present state. Many have sordid pasts that they are forced to deal with once on the island. In many instances, it is their actions in the past that ultimately resulted in them boarding the plane that eventually crashed on the island. In the article “Lost and Saved on Television,” Ross Douthat observed:

Most of the castaways carry secret sorrows or hidden sins: There are murderers and adulterers, drug addicts and former mental patients, an

African warlord and an ex-torturer from the Iraqi Republican Guard. And the island is attuned to all of them in some mysterious fashion, speaking to the survivors in dreams and visions, pushing them into strange obsessions and dangerous quests, delivering healing to some and sudden death to others. (Douthat 3)

Throughout the series, the characters are constantly finding the experiences of their previous off island lives and their present lives interacting. The writers then interweave these two scenarios together in order to fully develop the different characters.

The purpose statement

This rhetorical study will attempt to extract further meaning from the television series *LOST* by using the framework outlined by Underhill. The intent of this study is to apply Evelyn Underhill's framework of the spiritual journey to the portrayal of two characters in the television series *LOST*. I will view and analyze multiple episodes from each season of *LOST*. These episodes will be chosen for their content and pivotal character development found within the specific episode plotlines. The characters, Jack Shephard and Juliet Burke, storylines will be chronicled according to the three-fold path outlined by Underhill. The two characters will be chosen according to their prominence in the show and their appropriateness for the framework. Their individual characters will be analyzed along the outline of Underhill's framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of *LOST* undertaken in this study must be seen against the background of previous studies. First, the previous works on the series must be reviewed. *LOST* has been a very influential series in the television industry, therefore, its impact on society and academic research warrants scrutiny. Finally, there must be an overall understanding of the background and uses of the Spiritual Journey theory. This theory has provided a basis for much of the research applied to film and television. Over the course of its history, this rhetorical criticism tool has taken on different forms and many approaches and applications to the theory have been developed.

Popular Discourse on LOST

Due to the show's cult like following, there has been and continues to be a large amount of discourse regarding the show. Season after season, the show has reported record ratings. *Variety* magazine reported, "ABC sure could use a breakout drama success, as it hasn't had a real hit since *The Practice*. *Lost* represents the network's best start for a drama with eighteen to forty-nine year olds since *Once and Again* in 1999, and in total viewers since *Murder One* in 1995" (Kissel 21). The pilot episode reported promising ratings for the television network. "'LOST' (6.8/20 in adults 18-49, 18.65 million viewers overall) took the 8 o'clock hour in every ratings category from kids to 50-plus. It showed broad appeal in key young-adult demos and between both genders. Another positive sign was the nice growth on the half-hour, including 16% in 18-49 rating (7.3 vs. 6.3)" (Kissel 21). Throughout the first season, the television show continued with an average of sixteen million viewers. As *LOST* progressed through the seasons, critics started noticing a growing

trend. Viewers were choosing to tune in according to their own agenda. Carlton Cuse, the producer and writer of the show, said,

We heard one report that there were literally three million [Internet] streams of *Lost*; there are countless downloads on iTunes; we have two and a half or three million people who DVR the show every week; and then there's about a million, million and a half people who actually buy the DVDs. When you aggregate all those people together, you realize there is a really sizable audience still watching the show, it's just that they're watching it on their own terms. (McDermott 19)

According to this interview with Carlton Cuse, *LOST* is also one of the top downloaded television shows on iTunes.

On February 2, 2010 the sixth and final season opened to 10,084 viewers and closed to a finale garnering 13.5 million viewers on May 23, 2010 (Devault 1). It was reported by *Advertising Age* "the remaining fans are so intense that marketers are spending big to appear in the program's on-air farewell. The cost of a 30-second ad in the final episode of the series is coming in around a whopping \$900,000, according to media buyers" (Steinberg 1).

This criticism will focus largely on the spiritual journey that two of the characters experience. In a recent article, Chris Carpenter wrote, "While *Lost* is not a Christian show, it addresses many deep spiritual issues that people face today" (Carpenter). While watching the television show, the viewer is usually taken on two adventures. The viewer is typically watching the character that the particular episode revolves around deal with on island

conflict. While the character goes through this conflict, the episode is typically flashing back to a different time. Most flashbacks take place before the plane crashed onto the island. These past and current events that the characters go through are usually marked with inner turmoil and a struggle between good and evil. Carpenter discusses these struggles and the inclusion of scripture in the show

There are lots of them but some of the ones we focus on in the book are what Lost says about God in particular because they do mention Him frequently. What do they say about Him and going through some of those quotations and what they mean. They specifically cite and reference the Bible at least 23 times in the first three seasons. That is about once every three episodes if you average it out. So, we went through each of the references, made the connection, how did they use it, how accurately did they use it. There is a huge focus on prayer by different characters. Early on, there are lots of funeral scenes and people are trying to deal with this idea of what happens after we die? Are people reincarnated? Do they just die and that is it? Or is there a heaven to be prepared for, or a hell to be concerned about?

(Carpenter)

While scripture is mentioned throughout the series, it is not always tied to a certain religion. Many beliefs are brought to the surface in different contexts, but two that are most prominent are Catholicism and Islam (Twair 46). Each character struggles with his or her own beliefs of religion through the context of the show (Wax 10).

Nature of the Program

Lost is not the first television series to employ these types of plotlines. Many have gone before it. For the purpose of this thesis, I have reviewed literature similar to *LOST* featured on other television shows that have contained these themes. Several studies have been done on this type of programming. In a thesis by Rachel Wax, entitled “*Lost* as an Example of the Orphic Mysteries: A Thematic Analysis,” the author discusses some of the common themes in these serial dramas.. Wax writes, “a person lives an ordinary, average, and every day life. But one day, everything changes, forcing the characters to reassess their role in life” (Wax 12). This is a somewhat common occurrence in popular television shows and is completely applicable to the characters in *Lost*. Wax says, “The islanders are believed to be dead, so they see the island as a chance at a new life. However, they are constantly confronted by, and therefore must resolve, their pasts. This gives them a chance to recreate their present and therefore, their future. The islanders, defying death, only yearn to return to ‘life,’ hoping to do things differently and atone for their sins during their second chance” (Wax 12).

In a study by Lisa Elliott, entitled “Transcendental Television? A Discussion of *Joan of Arcadia*,” the author discusses the popular television show *Joan of Arcadia*. Elliott says:

Loosely based on the Joan of Arc legend, the premise of this hour-long serial drama created by Barbara Hall is that Joan Girardi, a teenager in fictional Arcadia, California, is visited by God in the form of different people (including a cute guy, a cafeteria worker, a homeless man, and a little girl, among others). God gives Joan instructions, but God does not explain how they will benefit Joan, only that they will help her to “fulfill her potential” (Elliot 5).

This summary of *Joan of Arcadia* is similar in some ways to *LOST*. Throughout the series, different characters have encountered people or situations that force them to make a decision solely based on the knowledge that it will somehow benefit them. As these choices present themselves, the character's decisions move them along in their journey (Wax 10). Many of the characters are looking for redemption or forgiveness in their individual journeys, but each are given different opportunities to find what they are looking for. Some of the choices may present themselves as an opportunity to forgo a decision that would best help them and instead help a fellow castaway. Wax notes: "If positive decisions are made and their actions are for the good of everyone, an epiphany toward salvation occurs. The more knowledge that is gained leads the characters toward spiritual perfection" (Wax 10).

Jonah Goldberg published another study of the journey faced by film and television characters in an article discussing the film *Groundhog Day*. This film focuses on a character that is forced to relive the same day repeatedly until he reaches a level of realization that allows him to move forward on his journey. In his study, "A Movie for All Time: Tomorrow, Tomorrow and Tomorrow," Goldberg describes the main character's journey by saying that the character "goes to his own version of hell, but since he's not evil, it turns out to be purgatory, from which he is released by shedding his selfishness and committing to acts of love. Connors is saved only after he performs mitzvahs (good deeds) and is returned to earth, not heaven, to perform more" (Goldberg 4). Many of the characters within the plotlines of *LOST* are found on a journey that closely resembles the one found in *Groundhog Day*. The similarities are so close that audiences were theorizing that the characters were in

a form of purgatory (Keveney 1D). On the island, many of the characters are forced to face their past life choices repeatedly and then make “better” choices in their current state of life. These life decisions as a part of a journey are best described by Taylor and Upchurch in their article “Northern Exposure and Mythology of the Global Community” as,

People are good and bad and everything in between...While we might look upon missteps and errors as ‘bad,’ these characters grow beyond their problems and their errors, learning and applying the lessons as they move to the next trial. The focus is on the process. (Taylor and Upchurch 79)

The Spiritual Journey

Two significant writers have discussed the spiritual journey: Evelyn Underhill and Victor Turner. These authors largely focus on the term journey and its application. For the purpose of this thesis, I will specifically discuss the spiritual journey, as it will be applied to film and television.

The framework of the journey is outlined by Evelyn Underhill. Underhill describes those who follow this journey framework, or mystics, in her book, *Man and the Supernatural*, as:

...men and women who insist that they know for certain the presence and activity of that which they call the Love of God. They are conscious of that Fact which is there for all, and which [is the] true subject matter of religion; but of which the average man remains either unconscious or faintly and occasionally aware. They know a spiritual order, penetrating, and everywhere conditioning though transcending the world of sense. They

declare to us a Reality most rich and living, which is not a reality of time and space; which is something other than everything we mean by 'nature; and for which no merely pantheistic explanation will suffice. (Underhill 21)

Her three stages are as follows: (1) purgation or discipline, (2) illumination, and (3) union (Underhill 169-170). Elizabeth Robinson uses Underhill's framework to explore the journey theory in her thesis. She observed that the heroes of these journeys "travel a well-worn, well-known, well-marked and easily identified road" (Robinson 11). Robinson goes on to say, "The mystic life is characterized not only by the traits listed above, but by a common life experience: the spiritual journey along the "mystic way" which mystics go through as they approach "mystic union." Ann Mallon, mentioned above, discussed this process in her dissertation titled, *Mystic Quest in Flannery O'Conner's Fiction*:

Shaken from the complacency of a well-ordered existence or erupting under the pressure of constant denial, his inner self drives him forward into the experience of an encounter that disrupts everything known and valued in his life. Suddenly, in a moment of revelation, his familiar world vanishes, is turned upside down, is transformed or recast by a terrifying presence, and he finds himself on the threshold of an alien territory. Without knowing why, he is drawn into that territory and compelled to move through its darkness and strangeness. In the process, he becomes violently detached from those possessions that shaped his old identity, and wholly open to the suffering and anguish that will necessarily define his new identity. Such possessions maybe the actual physical attachments of a wooden leg or a well tended property,

the personal securities of a “good name” or a prosperous past, or the carefully cultivated images of superior knowledge or a superior intellect. Whatever the particular reality, its value is revealed as insignificant and relative in the face of an Absolute Reality that overwhelms that individual with its power and charges him with a new responsibility. Frequently, the experience is too violent to bear. For those strong enough to endure the journey, however, their way back to wholeness will also be the way back to God. (Mallon 22-23)

Traditionally, scholars (and many mystics) have divided the mystic way into three phases: the Purgative way, the Illuminative way, and the Unitive way” (Robinson 22). However, Underhill’s journey can be broken into five phases with each of the characters moving through the different stages. Dana Greene describes Underhill’s stages in her article, “Adhering to God: The Message of Evelyn Underhill for Our Times:”

First is the *awakening*, the stage in which one begins to have some consciousness of absolute or divine reality. The second stage is one of *purgation*, which is characterized by an awareness of one’s own imperfections and finiteness. The response in this stage is one of self-discipline and mortification. The third stage, *illumination*, is one reached by artists and visionaries as well as being the final stage of some mystics. It is marked by a consciousness of a transcendent order and a vision of a new heaven and a new earth. The great mystics go beyond the stage of illumination to a fourth stage which Underhill, borrowing the language of

John of the Cross, calls the *dark night of the soul*. This stage, experienced by the few, is one of final and complete purification and is marked by confusion, helplessness, stagnation of the will, and a sense of the withdrawal of God's presence. It is the period of final "unselfing" and the surrender to the hidden purposes of the divine will. The final and last stage is one of union with the object of love, the one Reality, God. Here the self has been permanently established on a transcendental level and liberated for a new purpose. Filled up with the Divine Will, it immerses itself in the temporal order, the world of appearances in order to incarnate the eternal in time, to become the mediator between humanity and eternity. (Greene 30)

Ann Mallon describes Underhill's use of five stages in her dissertation titled, *Mystic Quest in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction*: "Thus she abandons the three-fold division of typical scholarship and suggests a frame of five headings which offer the fullest possible diagram for the many unique and varied experiences of mystical history" (Mallon 26). In addition, Robinson, mentioned earlier, describes Underhill's framework further:

Underhill points out that not all mystics go through all five stages of the mystic way, nor do they experience them in the same manner, but she argues – and I agree – that they must experience the first three stages. Some mystics go through all five stages distinctly as described above. Many, however, may experience two of the phases alternately or almost simultaneously. The phases may be of differing durations of time and of differing intensities. What

is important is that for the most part, these phases describe the common experiences shared by most of the great mystics. (Robinson 24)

In an article titled, "The Hero's Journey as a Developmental Metaphor in Counseling," Gerard Lawson outlined the journey. His description is paraphrased as follows: This spiritual journey is presented in sequential steps. It usually begins with an ordinary character that the audience would not deem spiritual. The journey begins by the character encountering some type of "supernatural event" that propels them on an "adventure." Once on the "adventure" the character will be given an opportunity to choose. This is the "call to adventure" which one may accept or refuse. This is a crossroads of sorts for the character. Those that accept the call will continue on their journey by moving to the next step, the "crossing of the threshold." Those that refuse the call are destined to live life with whatever fate sets before them. For those characters that continue on with their journey, they will soon find themselves in a situation that does not come with the opportunity for turning back to their old lives, or "the belly of the whale." Throughout the journey the hero will be presented with "tests" of their physical, emotional or spiritual nature and the reward is known as the "ultimate boon." To help with these "tests" the journeyer is usually provided "supernatural aid" that can be provided from a various characters that choose to present themselves and provide benevolent advice (Lawson 135-137). Finally, once the hero has accepted his adventure and completed his tasks, he has completed his journey. Lawson summarizes by saying,

More important than achieving the ultimate boon is the ability to return to the community from which the journey began and communicate what has

been learned. The hero who achieves the goal of the journey but is unwilling or unable to return and share what has been gained is unable to enjoy the fruits of his or her efforts. But if the hero crosses the threshold returning home, and if he or she is able to understand the meaning of the experience and communicate the benefits of the journey to the community, then the hero's journey is complete. (Lawson 136—137)

In the midst of this journey, there are many other factors that the hero may experience. Victor Turner presents two concepts that can occur during the spiritual journey, liminality and *communitas*. Liminality is that odd stage of no longer being what one was and not yet being what one is to become. Turner explains, "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner 95). It is in this state that the hero is best prepared for the rest of his journey. Another explanation by Turner of liminality is "an interval, however brief, or margin or limin, when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potential when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance" (Turner 44). Turner is also responsible for developing a framework for a certain type of relationships between fellow journeyers. He calls this type of relationship "*spontaneous communitas*" and explains it as a "direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities" (Turner 47). This stage of the journey is explained by Turner to have a special quality that bonds those involved. He goes on to say, "when the mood, style, or fit or *spontaneous communitas* is upon us, we place a high value on personal honesty, openness, and lack of pretensions or

pretentiousness" (Turner 48).

It is evident that there has been extensive research on the topic of the hero's journey. Also, the series, *LOST*, has provided researchers with an artifact worthy of study. Therefore, a concrete foundation of research has been set for a study of this nature. The application of the knowledge of the spiritual journey to the subject of *LOST* provides the essential tools for this study.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher will be viewing and analyzing multiple episodes from each season of *LOST*. These episodes will be chosen for their content and pivotal character development found within the specific episode plotlines and these episodes will range from the first season to the finale season, which is season six. Each episode of *LOST* is based around one of the characters in the television series. These episodes use flashbacks to inform the viewer of character backgrounds while furthering the current plotline. The researcher has chosen two characters found throughout the television series, Jack Shephard and Juliet Burke, and will chronicle their storylines while applying Underhill's spiritual journey framework. It is believed that through the application Underhill's three-fold path to the individual journeys, further meaning will be extracted from the show's content. The two characters were chosen according to their prominence in the show and their appropriateness for the framework. It became apparent in the pilot episode that Shephard, a main character, would be a prominent fixture throughout the series. Burke, a minor character, was introduced later in the series and became an integral part of the plotline. These two characters seemed most promising in which to apply the framework. The episodes that have been chosen for criticism are episodes in which Jack Shephard and Juliet Burke are most prominent and also, ones that provide the most information for the individual narratives.

Materials

ABC Studios released all six seasons of *LOST* in a set of DVDs titled, *LOST: The*

Complete Collection on August 24, 2010. The researcher will review and analyze selected episodes. These episodes are as follows:

- “The Pilot, Part One”
- “All The Best Cowboys Have Daddy Issues”
- “Man of Science, Man of Faith”
- “The Hunting Party”
- “A Tale of Two Cities”
- “White Rabbit”
- “The Incident, Part Two”
- “Walkabout”
- “Exodus, Part One”
- “Exodus, Part Two”
- “Exodus, Part Three”
- “Adrift”
- “Orientation”
- “One of the Them”
- “Live Together, Die Alone, Part Two”
- “The Glass Ballerina”
- “Every Man for Himself”
- “I Do”
- “Through the Looking Glass, Part 1”
- “Through the Looking Glass, Part 2”

- “There is No Place Like Home: Part One”
- “There is No Place Like Home: Part Two”
- “There is No Place Like Home: Part Three”
- “Something Nice Back Home”
- “The Beginning of the End”
- “The Life and Death of Jeremy Bentham”
- “The Lie”
- “The Little Prince”
- “Not in Portland”
- “One of Us”
- “The Other Woman”
- “Jin Yeon”
- “The Cost of Living”
- “The Man From Tallahassee”
- “Stranger in a Strange Land”
- “316”
- “Namaste”
- “La Fleur”
- “He’s Our You”
- “LAX: Part One”
- “The Variable”
- “Across the Sea”

- “Whatever Happened, Happened”
- “The Last Recruit”
- “The Substitute”
- “What They Died For”
- “The End”

Conclusion

Finally, the researcher’s rhetorical criticism of the television show, *LOST*, will ultimately seek to conclude what can be derived from the application of Underhill’s framework of the three-fold path and Turner’s concepts of liminality and communitas. This study is just one attempt to grasp a better understanding of the popular series. As *LOST* has just concluded its final season, this study will be among some of the first in providing critical responses to the now completed, complex narrative.

Chapter II

CONTEXT

"His name is Christian Shephard? Seriously?" – Kate Austen

Intrigue, deception, romance, and mystery are among the elements that have been involved in the success of *LOST* since it first debuted in 2004. Few television series have been able to generate such a devoted audience as the one that followed *LOST*. This success can be measured in the exploration of show content, audience reception, and the use of outside media. This chapter, which discusses these elements, is divided into six sections: (1) introduction (2) various ratings and audience reception, (3) the dedicated fan base, (4) social media, (5) religion, and (6) conclusion. *LOST* has provided an artifact in which to explore how these elements effect television programming.

Introduction

LOST was a new breed of television programming. When many television dramas were wrapped up neatly in a basic hour long format, *LOST* raised a sense of thirst in viewers to tune in weekly in hopes of satisfying their thirsts by uncovering the answers for which they were so desperately looking. Landon Palmer discussed this phenomenon in his article *Cultural Warrior: The 3rd Golden Age of Television*, "Television in its classical sense was constructed to be watched passively, allowing the home viewer to come in and out of focal attention to the screen as they please without becoming confused as to what's going on, enabled by constant repetition in story structures, situations, and dialogue. Traditional comedy and drama shows were designed to be mostly interchangeable; they could be watched in any order without confusion (Palmer 1)." Typical television programming

didn't require the dedicated audience that *LOST* did. Landon goes on to say, "What *LOST* and shows like it represent is a dramatic shift in the reverse." While serial dramas such as *LOST* have existed in the past, *LOST* was the first to employ different means for garnering audience attention.

Ratings and Reception

On September 22, 2004, ABC aired the pilot episode of *LOST*. The series ran six seasons and concluded with its series finale on May 23, 2010. The six seasons produced varying ratings and slowly sloughed off casual fans to reveal a strong, unwavering fan base. According to ABC's website, *ABC Medianet*, the ratings for the six seasons are as follows:

- Season One
 - The premier attracted 18.65 million viewers.
 - The finale attracted 20.17 million viewers.
- Season Two
 - The premier attracted 23.47 million viewers.
 - The finale attracted 17.84 million viewers.
- Season Three
 - The premier attracted 18.82 million viewers.
 - The finale attracted 13.86 million viewers.
- Season Four
 - The premier attracted 16.14 million viewers.
 - The finale attracted 12.30 million viewers.
- Season Five

- The premier attracted 11.35 million viewers.
- The finale attracted 9.43 million viewers.
- Season Six
 - The premier attracted 12.10 million viewers.
 - The finale attracted 15.31 million viewers.

The above numbers numerically pinpoint the series' followers and imply the fluctuation in dedication to the show's content and mystery. While there were viewers that showed unwavering commitment and enthusiasm for the program, there were also those that were becoming frustrated with the never-ending list of unanswered questions posed by the show. Arguably, This discontent led to a drop in ratings and a question regarding the show's viability. Writers and producers responded to their viewers' concerns by establishing an end date for the series. In a *USA Today* article titled "Mystery Solved: LOST to End in 2010," Gary Levin commented on the decision: "ABC's bold step marks a response to the show's producers, who have been eager to set a finish line to better plot out their convoluted mystery of plane-crash survivors and to placate fans who are frustrated that the show seemed to be vamping its way to a conclusion (1)." Levin also includes his interview with co-creator, Damon Lindelof. In this interview, Lindelof described how the fans irritation influenced their decision to set an end date: "Among fans there was an unease that they were making an investment in a show that's complicated without any sense of where that's going to lead them. From the very beginning, fans and even critics have been saying, 'Are you making it up as you go along?'" This judgment allowed for fans

to believe that the writers and producers had a definite plan and ending in mind to wrap up the various storylines and answer questions that had been plaguing viewers.

It should also be noted that the reported ratings did not reflect the show's entire viewership. Viewers with Internet access were able to view the show through Apple's iTunes or different websites that allowed for viewing the entire show. In "ABC Series Score Online Audiences in Variety Magazine," Cynthia Littleton observed: "The caveat with Nielsen's online video numbers is that they do not encompass any viewing done via Hulu, which has quickly emerged in the past year as the dominant online showcase for full-length TV episodes... Through plays on ABC.com, 'Lost' accounted for 36.4 million total video streams -- a tally that includes views of full-length episodes, clips and video podcasts related to the show." Audiences were able to watch the series episodes on their own time. They were able to access them via the Internet, use their DVR to record them or download them for a fee.

The series ended with a finale aptly titled, *The End*. This episode promised to be a culmination of the previous six seasons. Fans tuned in to find answers, say goodbye to their favorite characters and to be a part of a historic television ending. In "LOST Finale Brings ABC All-Night Ratings Success," the *New York Times* reported that, "The almost unwavering rating 'Lost' scored over such long a period of prime time is highly unusual for any television show, but it is reflective of the extraordinary loyalty of the 'Lost' audience — and the show's demands on those fans. This was not a finale casual viewers could easily drop into at the end to see how it all came out." On the finale ratings the article went on to observe, "The 13.5 million viewers represented a bump from the 11.5 million who had

been watching regularly this season, though the figure was still a far cry from the 18.5 million who watched the series premiere in 2004.” However, the ratings were projected to be noteworthy and advertisers were willing to pay to be apart of the event. Brian Steinburg commented in “The Cost of LOST? Abc Asks \$900,00 for Finale” that: “At \$900,000, a spot on the last episode of *LOST* would cost more than any of the 10 most-expensive programs on TV for advertisers, according to *Ad Age*’s survey of prices paid in last year’s upfront. The costliest program for the 2009-2010 TV season was NBC’s ‘Sunday Night Football,’ where a 30-second spot cost an average of \$339,700 (1).” This large increase of advertising cost demonstrated the advertisers’ desire to target a niche market in a dedicated fan base. The ratings and audience reception that *LOST* acquired during its television run were illustrative of its success levels from a marketing perspective.

The Dedicated Fan Base

LOST was nothing less than a complicated television series. Several plotlines, characters and adventures were introduced throughout the course of the show’s existence. These aspects of the show required viewers to be more than casual observers when following *LOST*, which developed a sort of cult fan base through its audience involvement. Intentional clues were placed in episodes for viewers to find, writers and producers referenced message boards on occasion, and the audience even helped shaped the outcome of certain stories. In the article, “LOST, Harnessing the Digitized Water Cooler, Captivated Ann Arbor Fans,” Nathan Bomey observed: “The way in which this kind of storytelling tapped into fan culture (showed) that the deeply motivated viewer is an important part of the television environment and is something that can be catered to... *LOST* illuminated a

new reality: The water cooler has gone digital (1).”

Intentional clues such as a book on a coffee table or a song played during a scene are referred to as “Easter eggs” by avid followers. These “Easter eggs” had the potential to point to a reference point that would then allow for a greater understanding of what was occurring or would happen in the program’s future. Dedicated fans took the time to watch and then re-watch episodes to find these hidden gems among the regular happenings of the show. John Kubicek of *Buddy TV* describes this activity: “All these *LOST* Easter Eggs help to make watching the show a unique experience. Sure, casual viewers can watch and enjoy what happens with the characters. But, for the hardest of hardcore fans, catching all the little clues and following the online adventures make *LOST* so much more than just another TV show (1).” Some of the more popular “Easter eggs” were found in forms of anagrams, books, music, reversed audio, pop-culture references, and reoccurring elements. Some were easier to spot, while others required in-depth research. Viewers used these “Easter eggs” to formulate theories and to predict the overall direction of the series.

Another factor worthy of attention was the audience’s ability to manipulate various outcomes of the series. Through message boards and online involvement, viewers were able to present their opinions on topics such as the show’s direction and character interaction. One of the most notable instances of this occurrence was when the writers decided to introduce two brand new, irrelevant characters in the episode *Expose* in the third season, Nikki and Paulo. Their arrival was met with viewer backlash from all available media outlets. The criticism was severe enough to garner attention from the writers and

producers. Consequently, the writers quickly killed off the two characters erasing them from the show.

Also, dedicated fans began to write and explore portions of the show through “fan fiction.” These writings usually delved deeper into characters, storylines, themes and places that were not given much attention during the duration of the series. These writings were shared with fellow observers through various media outlets and provided the chance for viewers to interact on a deeper level.

Social Media

One of the noteworthy aspects of *LOST* is that it found success in uncharted waters. It had the loyal followers, a range of ratings, and audience involvement, but *LOST* was one of the first serials to influence social media. *LOST* was also one of the first programs to be influenced by the audience’s use of available social media. Landon Palmer, in an article titled “Cultural Warrior: The Legacy of *LOST*,” observed, “*LOST* has become the go-to example signifying a sea change in how we watch television and how stories are told through the medium (1).” *LOST* featured an engaging plotline that forced the viewer to stay current in order to understand how the plot was unfolding. The character development sometimes took place over many episodes and even seasons. Storylines were told over several episodes many times leaving more questions than they answered. Landon continued: “...television content across the board has become remarkably complex and even cinematic in the last half-decade or so, and the increased complexity of plot has brought with it a more attentive and discerning viewer. Television can no longer be background noise, but a full and enveloping sensorial and narrative experience.”

This type of programming drove audiences to their computers where they logged into message boards to debate show theories, characters, and writer intentions. Pete Cashmore, in his article titled “LOST Finale: What the Web Wasn’t Made for,” stated: “The Internet has provided *LOST* aficionados with a wealth of options for consuming and connecting around each episode. *LOST* was among the very first series available on iTunes, enabling viewers to watch episodes on-demand on their computers, iPods and iPhones without commercial interruption (1).” This type of program availability was key in allowing users to access the series at their convenience, re-watch and discuss with other viewers around the globe. Bomey, mentioned above, noted: “The Internet enabled *LOST* to maintain a complex mythology, because enthusiastic fans had an avenue to explore their questions and share theories (1).”

With the amount of feedback provided through the web, producers began creating different outlets in which viewers could participate. Chris Crum observed in his article, “Online Video Views are Not “Lost” on ABC.com,” “ABC gives viewers more than just the videos though. This season, ABC.com offers interactive, community-driven features including user-created Top 5 lists which allow fans to arrange, rank and share their personalized lists of show-related favorites; and Episode Commentary where fans can access commentaries created by series' insiders, and create and share their own for each episode.” This mode of fan interaction was new territory for a television series. In the article, “LOST: Harnessing the Digitized Water Cooler, Captivated Ann Arbor Fans,” mentioned above, Nathan Bomey interviewed Charlie Wollborg, an avid fan and social media user:

Wollborg, who has more than 7,000 Twitter followers, said the relationship between *LOST* and social media was natural. Wollborg and his social media friends have an agreement during the show: *LOST* tweets are allowed only during the commercials so that no one gets distracted during the actual show. *LOST*, like social media, encourages people to explore connections. 'Twitter users are like Curious George. They click blind links, they talk to people they don't know. *LOST* really feeds the curiosity in a way that social media does.' The web provided audiences with a new type of entertainment spawned from an old medium. Social media played a large part in the sensation of *LOST* while also providing a new means for providing and measuring viewership.

Religion

LOST employed recurring themes, frequently religious in nature, to communicate ideas, further plotlines and provide intrigue. These themes were placed in character conversation, plotlines and visual elements among other things. Some of the more popular themes were sacrifice, science versus faith, free will versus predetermination, color, balance, time, and relationships. These are just a few of the recurring themes that made their way onto the screen. However, one of the more prominent cluster of themes found in *LOST* was that of religion.

An article in *The Huffington Post* described religion and *LOST* in this way: "LOST is many things: a mystery, a sci-fi serial, a thriller, and a show about humanity at its most basic. But it's also full of religion and spirituality. It's no coincidence that the show's multi-

racial, multi-ethnic cast represents many different types of belief systems. Whether the characters are praying for survival or arguing about whether God exists, *LOST* is one of the few programs that doesn't shy away from depicting spirituality (1).” Religion is a large part of the castaway’s lives. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Catholicism and Mythology are all represented in the spiritual lives of the survivors. In addition to this, religion and spirituality are also represented visually. Examples of these occurrences are statues of the Virgin Mary found on the island, a survivor’s past experience as a monk, found Bibles, and rebirth signaled through water. Along with the visual elements, many of the character’s names point to Biblical personages. Christian Shephard, Aaron, Jacob, Isaac and Benjamin are among the names with this common theme.

With the many religious themes present, viewers have speculated as to what their inclusion might signal. Many believed that the storyline represented a specific religion. For example, certain sacrifices point to Christ’s sacrifice, however, other on island occurrences point towards more of a mystical belief system. In an article titled, “Five Questions at the End Of Lost,” David Roark states: “Early on, I thought it would mean more, having so many allusions to religion, especially Christianity and Judaism; however, after the finale, its large-scale message turns out to be fairly generic and exceedingly pluralistic. Treating the metaphysical relatively, specifically the way it's interpreted by viewers, it screams coexist (1).” He goes on to say, “That said, there are numerous moral themes woven through the series, including sacrifice, mercy and forgiveness, which are challenging. I also think *LOST* says a great deal about humanity. Through complex characters, good and bad, it explores

the human struggle between the imago dei and depravity, showing the need for something divine or supernatural to redeem us. It also teaches us that redemption can't come on our own and promotes community." The intentional placement of religious rhetoric throughout the series spurred numerous discussions, theories and insights. The recurring themes, including religion, shaped *LOST* into a more complex and thought provoking artifact that necessitated serious, thoughtful analysis.

Conclusion

LOST is an artifact worthy of study in that it was a one of a kind. It was the first television program to explore areas that others had left untouched both in terms of story and mediated communication. The show's use of the Internet, social media, recurring themes and religious rhetoric make *LOST* a compelling popular cultural artifact. These various tools discussed in this chapter were crafted thoughtfully to energize classic storytelling in a new age of television.

Chapter III

JACK SHEPHARD

"Three days ago we all died. We should all be able to start over" – Jack Shephard.

Jack Shephard was introduced to the *LOST* audience in the very first scene of the pilot. Throughout the series he proved to be a pivotal character. This chapter, which begins the analysis of selected *LOST* characters, is divided into six sections: (1) introduction, (2) chronology of events, (3) consideration of liminality, (4) consideration of communitas, (5) analysis of the three-part spiritual journey, and (6) conclusion. The following chapter will also be organized in the same sequence.

Introduction

The main character of *LOST*, Jack Shephard, provided a traceable story line in which to explore the mystic journey. The mystic journey could be may exhibit elements. These include but are not limited to Turner's concept of liminality and communitas as well as the three-part journey outlined by Underhill. These elements are discovered through the chronicling of Shephard's journey in the next section. Subsequently, the elements of the mystic journey and how they are specifically contained in Shephard's story will be discussed in later sections.

Chronology of Events

The pilot of *LOST* opened to a single man alone in a bamboo field. Dr. Jack Shephard was introduced to the audience in the episode titled "The Pilot, Part One." He survived the crash of Oceanic flight 815 and awoke on a small island in the middle of the ocean. The

plane on which he was a passenger was traveling from Sydney, Australia to Los Angeles, California in September 2004 when it encountered turbulence and consequently broke into three parts over the ocean. Jack found himself in the middle of an island jungle, wounded, and amongst many other survivors in need of assistance. He sprung into action to try desperately to help his fellow air travelers survive the sudden tragedy. His ability to assess the situation and act accordingly, along with his medical knowledge, catapulted him into a leadership position on the island. Shephard, played by Mathew Fox, was situated as a prominent character throughout the series.

In a series of flashbacks, Shephard's past was explained. In the episode "All The Best Cowboys Have Daddy Issues," we learned that prior to the plane crash, Shephard attended medical school at UCLA and worked at Saint Sebastian hospital as a spinal surgeon. This career choice was in direct alignment with his father's. They were both surgeons in the same hospital and often worked together. His story progressed in "Man of Science, Man of Faith." While practicing medicine at Saint Sebastian, Jack met and fell in love with one of his patients, Sarah, who was rushed to the hospital after a head on collision with another vehicle. Her spine was crushed and she was told that she would never walk again. However, Jack promised that he would correct her spine, not knowing whether he would actually be able to or not. Eventually, he was able to help Sarah regain her ability to walk. The two married, but their union was soon brought to a bitter end in the episodes "The Hunting Party" and "A Tale of Two Cities" as Jack was working excessive hours and Sarah was seeing someone else. Jack found his father's, Christian Shephard's, phone number in Sarah's phone and believed him to be the man Sarah was seeing. He followed him to an Alcoholics

Anonymous meeting where he accused him of adultery and attacked him. Jack ended up in prison for the attack and his father returned to drinking.

Christian Shephard was influential in Shephard's medical career, but their relationship as colleagues was trying for Shephard, as his father was an alcoholic. After a nurse observed a mistake Christian made during surgery in the episode "All the Best Cowboys Have Daddy Issues," she called Jack into surgery to try to fix the issue, but Jack was unable to save the patient. He then realized that his father was intoxicated while performing the surgery and decided to make a statement explaining that his father was responsible for the patient's death, a statement that resulted in the loss of Christian's medical license. Consequently, his father never spoke to him again. This decision of Shephard's would prove to be influential in his journey and will be discussed further later in the chapter.

In the episode "White Rabbit," Christian Shephard's wife was unable to locate him. She begged her son, Jack, to go to Sydney, where Christian had been living, to try and find him. While there, Jack discovered that his father had died from a heart attack. He quickly made arrangements to take his father's body back to Los Angeles for the funeral and burial. On September 22, 2004, Jack boarded Oceanic flight 815 with his father's casket in the belly of the plane and began the long flight home.

On Island

Jack woke up on the island, but conscious of his surroundings in "The Pilot, Part One." In the distance, he heard a damaged plane engine, screams, people running about the

shoreline and general chaos from the plane crash. He jumped up and ran to assist others.

His medical knowledge was key in this opening scene as he assisted several wounded survivors. He pulled many of them from the wreckage and gave their injuries attention.

Later, he enlisted the help of a fellow survivor, Kate Austin, to help him stitch his own wounds. This interaction is the beginning of a series long friendship and romantic interest between the two characters. This interaction will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter.

The flashbacks continued as the series progressed and allowed for glimpses into Shephard's past. For instance, in "The Incident, Part Two," while in surgery at St. Sebastian, Jack made an almost fatal mistake in surgery and only corrected the situation with his father's guidance. Several challenges presented themselves to Shephard while on island and he was tasked with solving them as well as helping others survive in his roll as leader. In the first few days on the island, he chose to burn the bodies of the passengers left in the fuselage of the plane. He made the tough decision to save a drowning woman while feeling the guilt of allowing another passenger to drown. He also approved the torture of another survivor for reasons he believed to be justifiable. Life and death decisions were part of daily life on the island and Jack had to deal with the consequences of those decisions whether they were positive or negative.

Within his first few days on the island, Jack began seeing visions of his dead father, Christian Shephard starting with the episode "White Rabbit." While sitting on the shore, he saw his father off in the distance and followed him into the jungle. After chasing him for quite some time, the image of his father led him to stumble upon an area of caves on the

island where Jack found fresh water. He led the rest of the survivors to move to the caves in the episode "Walkabout" and directed them with the phrase that would eventually become a series mantra, "If we can't live together, we're going to die alone."

Forty days into his time on the island, a fellow survivor, John Locke, approached Jack. Through flashbacks in "Walkabout," the audience learned that Locke was once paralyzed from the waist down. He had survived a fall from a building several stories high and was left a paraplegic. Mysteriously, after he crash-landed on the island, Locke suddenly regained strength in his legs and his ability to walk returned. This resulted in his unshakeable faith that the island had an extraordinary effect on individuals. He believed that the survivors were there for a reason and that they must fight to stay on the island. This belief stood in direct contrast with Shephard's. The series dubs Jack Shephard as "A Man of Science" and John Locke as "A Man of Faith." These two characters were constantly at odds and challenged each other to examine their own core beliefs about life and fate. This dynamic became apparent in the episode "Man of Faith, Man of Science." The following conversation unfolded in "Exodus: Part Two:"

Locke: [explaining why he wanted to let the island monster drag him off] I believe that I was being tested.

Jack: Tested?

Locke: Yeah, tested. I think... that's why you and I don't see eye-to-eye sometimes, Jack, because you're a man of science.

Jack: Yeah, and what does that make you?

Locke: Me, well, I'm a man of faith. Do you really think all this... is an accident? That we, a group of strangers survived, many of us with just superficial injuries? Do you think we crashed on this place by coincidence, especially this place? We were brought here for a purpose, for a reason, all of us. Each one of us was brought here for a reason.

Jack: Brought here? And who brought us here, John?

Locke: The island. The island brought us here. This is no ordinary place, you've seen that, I know you have. But the island chose you, too, Jack. It's destiny.

Jack: Did you talk with Boone about destiny, John?

Locke: Boone was a sacrifice that the island demanded. What happened to him at that plane was a part of a chain of events that led us here, that led us down a path, that led you and me to this day, to right now.

Jack: And where does that path end, John?

Locke: The path ends at the hatch. The hatch, Jack, all of it. All of it happened so that we could open the hatch.

Jack: No, no, we're opening the hatch so that we can survive.

Locke: Survival is all relative, Jack.

Jack: I don't believe in destiny.

Locke: [pause] Yes, you do. You just don't know it yet.

The three episodes, "Exodus, Part One;" "Exodus, Part Two" and "Exodus, Part Three," unfolded the mystery of the island's hatch. John approached Shephard about a hatch that he had found on the island, but was unable to open. The two located dynamite on a slave ship that had wrecked onto the island, and were able to blow the hatch door open. The opening of the hatch was the end of the first season. The second season opened with the two characters exploring their finding.

After blowing open the hatch, Shephard, John Locke and Kate Austin uncovered its secrets and discovered a man that had been living there for years, Desmond Hume. The series of events that occurred in the hatch are explained in three different episodes: "Man of Science;" "Man of Faith;" "Adrift;" and "Orientation." Desmond quickly fled the hatch and Locke and Shephard were left with the task of entering numbers into a computer every 108 minutes for an unknown purpose. Shephard and Locke argued over whether or not entering the numbers was of any significance. Locke believed that it was and continued to

enter them.

It was in the hatch, during the episode “One of the Them,” that the survivors first encountered the leader of the people that they called “the others”, Ben Linus. Linus first presented himself as another survivor that crash landed on the island with his wife via hot air balloon. Through various means, the survivors found out that he was lying and that he actually was the enemy. Shephard and Austen decided to use this information to their advantage and negotiate a trade with the enemy camp in “Live Together, Die Alone, Part Two.” After the trade backfired, Shephard was taken hostage by the enemy camp along with Austin and another survivor, Sawyer.

During his captivity in the episode titled “The Glass Ballerina,” Shephard was introduced to another side of the island and learned a bit more about its mysterious history. Through Ben Linus, he was introduced to Juliet Burke, who was responsible for monitoring him while he was in captivity and was also conducting medical research on the island. In an interesting twist, Juliet exposed secrets of the island to Jack while delivering his lunch one day in “A Tale of Two Cities.” He learned that the enemy camp, or the “others,” had extensive files on all of the passengers of Oceanic flight 815, including Shephard and his comrades. Juliet eventually revealed that she was also a captive of sorts of Ben Linus and longed to escape from the island.

In the episode “Every Man for Himself,” Jack, while in captivity, stumbled upon an x-ray of Ben’s spine and realized that he was in need of a spinal surgeon to remove a large tumor. Shephard conned Linus into allowing him to operate and while he had Linus open on the table in the episode “I Do,” he used the situation as leverage to allow the escape of

Austen and Sawyer. After the two successfully fled, Shephard and Juliet also fled and returned to the beach to the survivor's original camp.

Upon arrival, Austen informed Shephard that a woman named Naomi parachuted into the camp from an off shore freighter in "Through the Looking Glass, Part 1." Naomi informed the survivors that the freighter was there to rescue the survivors of the oceanic crash. Ben Linus told Shephard not to trust Naomi's boat and that the freighter's actual purpose was to kill everyone on the island. Shephard ignored Linus in his blind determination to get off the island and continued trying to make contact with the freighter via Naomi's satellite phone. In his attempt to thwart rescue, John Locke arrived on the scene, stabbed Naomi and raised a gun to Shephard. Shephard ignored Locke's efforts and made the connecting call to the freighter, which allowed them to establish the whereabouts of the survivors. The freighter answered and told Shephard that rescue was on the way. Shephard and the other members of the camp were vastly relieved and began celebrating the arrival of the freighter as season three ended with the episode "Through the Looking Glass, Part 2."

As other members of the freighter arrived on the island, it became apparent that their motives were not necessarily good. It did not seem that they were on the island solely to rescue the remaining survivors, but were there for other purposes. Fights ensued and the safety of the island and its inhabitants was threatened. The survivors continued to fight to leave the island. This exodus was chronicled in three episodes: "There is No Place Like Home: Part One;" "There is No Place Like Home: Part Two;" and "There is No Place Like Home: Part Three." The freighter's helicopter and pilot, Frank Lapidus, were located and

Jack instructed the group he was with that if they did not board the helicopter soon and leave the island, they might never leave. Frank Lapidus, Jack Shephard, Kate Austin, Sun Kwon, Aaron Little, Sayid Jarrah and Hugo Reyes boarded the helicopter in hopes of leaving the island for good. They safely made it to the freighter despite low fuel complications only to realize that the freighter had been sabotaged and was about to explode. The helicopter pilot informed them that if they wanted to get back to land safely they had to take off immediately, leaving behind Sun Kim's husband, Jin, to die. Jack made the final call, sacrificing Jin's life for the other's safety. The helicopter continued to lose fuel rapidly and eventually power. It consequently crashed into the ocean taking its passengers with it. All of the passengers survived the crash and reassembled on an inflatable raft. A passing yacht rescued them and it was there that Jack formulated a plan. He and Austen decided that the remaining survivors must lie once they returned home to Los Angeles. They believed that for the safety of those left behind they could not tell the truth about what happened on the island or where the island was located.

The Return Home

"There is No Place Like Home: Part One," "There is No Place Like Home: Part Two," and "There is No Place Like Home: Part Three" also detailed the return of those rescued to their homes. After receiving rescue, the surviving members were brought to Hawaii and were named the "Oceanic 6" by the media covering their return. Jack continued with the lie that he instructed the others to tell. They told their families and the media that they were the only surviving passengers of Oceanic flight 815. Their arrival home was marked by celebration, but the survivors were haunted by their history on the island. John Locke told

Shephard on the island that they were not supposed to leave. He believed that they had a destiny to fulfill on the island. Shephard was and continued to be staunchly opposed to this view until he returned home and began encountering the consequences of his actions.

He returned to Los Angeles and arranged for a formal funeral service for his father. At the service, Carole Littleton approached Shephard. She asked Jack if he knew her daughter, Claire. She told him that she was involved with Shephard's father and Shephard then realized that Claire, a fellow survivor, was his half sister. Aaron Littleton, Claire's son, was one of the "Oceanic 6" and was brought safely home by Kate Austin, but the choice was made to leave Claire behind.

Shephard and Austen resumed the romantic relationship that they shared on the island and eventually moved in together. Shephard's guilt over leaving Claire and others on the island prompted a personal review of his own insecurities. Shephard began seeing visions of his father again and asked another doctor for a prescription to calm his nerves. He began drinking heavily along with taking the medication in the episode "Something Nice Back Home."

In the episode "The Beginning of the End," Hugo Reyes told Jack that he had been seeing visions of a fellow survivor that died on the island and that the vision had told him that Shephard or Austen were not to raise Aaron and that they had to return to the island. Sun Kwon continued to blame Shephard for her husband's death and his relationship with Austen became strained after a dispute over raising Aaron. Through a series of occurrences, John Locke was able to leave the island and visited Shephard multiple times to tell him that he was not supposed to leave the island and urged him each time to return. He visited him

under the alias of “Jeremy Bentham” to protect his identity.

We learned in “Through the Looking Glass: Part Two” that Shephard eventually gave into substance abuse and depression and was suspended by the hospital. He began taking flights over the Pacific Ocean hoping that the plane would encounter turbulence and crash land over the island to which he desperately wanted to return. After finding out about John Locke’s death, Shephard tried to jump off a bridge only to be stopped by a patient he once saved. Shephard attended Locke’s funeral alone and later broke into the funeral home only to find Ben Linus waiting for his arrival in the episode “The Life and Death of Jeremy Bentham.” Linus informed Shephard that they all needed to return to the island to stop the horrible things that were happening there. He added that everyone, including the body of John Locke, had to return. Shephard started gathering the other members of the “Oceanic 6” for their return to the island with help from Linus in the episodes “The Lie” and “The Little Prince.”

The “Oceanic 6” was ultimately convinced that returning to the island was the only option and they followed Linus to a church where they met Eloise Hawking. There, she showed them the strategies and equations that were first used to find the island. She informed them that if they wished to return, they must board Ajira Airways flight 316. She told Shephard that if this return was to be successful, he must find something that belonged to his father, Christian Shephard. He listened and provided a pair of shoes that Christian once wore. Once on the flight in episode “316,” the returning members were surprised to find that their pilot was once again, Frank Lapidus, the pilot that once flew them off the island. Some time into the flight, Shephard opened a note that Eloise Hawking had given

him. The note, from John Locke read, "Jack, I wish you had believed me. JL." After reading the note, the plane began to have trouble and the scene was bathed in a white light.

The Return to the Island

Ajira Airways flight 316 crash-landed onto the island and the passengers were strewn about. Jack woke up in a bamboo field reminiscent of the one he originally found himself in during the pilot episode. However, something was different. The first person they encountered was Jin Kwon, the assumed dead husband of Sun Kwon. In "Namaste," Jin informed the passengers of 316 that they arrived back on the island, but the current year was 1977. It seems that when the "Oceanic 6" watched the island mysteriously disappear, the island had actually been forced into an unstable period where its inhabitants were constantly experiencing a series of changes in time. These changes had taken a toll on the island dwellers causing memory loss and fatalities.

The episode, "The Variable," provided insight into why Jack was supposed to return. Jack believed that he and his fellow travelers had returned to right a wrong that occurred in 1977. If he was able to successfully do so, then Oceanic flight 815 would have never crashed and the time changes would be stopped. This task would require Jack to detonate a bomb over an electromagnetic field in order to negate the field and course correct previous actions. This act and event would result in the hatch that Shephard and Locke found earlier never being built and the need for the numbers erased. Shephard's decision to detonate the bomb was met with mixed opposition and encouragement. However, after approval from a select few, including Austen, in "The Incident: Part One" and "The Incident: Part Two," he chose to go ahead with his mission. Before Shephard was able to detonate the bomb, the

electromagnetic field began growing and started pulling all magnetic devices towards its center. Juliet Burke was nearby when this began to occur and was soon tangled in a large piece of chain that pulled her towards the epicenter of the electromagnetic field. The surrounding materials were eventually collapsed into the field and Juliet was left alive at the bottom of the pile with the bomb. She chose to detonate it and Shephard's wish became true, but this choice resulted in the death of Juliet.

Shephard woke up to find that the bomb's detonation was a success. The inhabitants of the island found themselves in present time, 2007. Jack was blamed for the death of Juliet and grieved her sacrifice. However, even though the bomb was a success, Shephard knew that his task was not yet complete. In his search for his ultimate destiny, Shephard learned that there were two forces on the island: good and evil. *Across the Sea* introduced Jacob, a man born on the island centuries before Shephard's arrival, a man who represented all that was good. He usually appeared wearing white, neutral clothing and was charged with protecting the island. His brother, known only as "The Man in Black," represented evil and had been trying to find a loophole to kill his brother Jacob for as many centuries as Jacob has been protecting the good of the island. Jacob's existence ensured that "The Man in Black," or evil, would stay contained on the island and would not be able to corrupt what was good in the world. "The Man in Black" told Shephard in "The Last Recruit" that he was the man Jack originally saw in "The Pilot: Part One." He presented himself to Shephard as a vision of his father so that Shephard would follow him to the caves to find water.

"The Man in Black" finally found success and had his brother murdered by Ben

Linus. Subsequently, the spirit of Jacob was responsible for locating a replacement. The episode “The Substitute” explained that Jacob knew this day would eventually come and had been grooming “candidates” for years. Among these candidates were several members of Oceanic 815. Jack was included in this group and was recruited by both Jacob and “The Man in Black.” In “What They Died For,” Jacob explained the need for someone to protect the “source of all good” on the island from “The Man in Black” and Shephard volunteered for the position. Jacob performed a small ceremony and passed his power to Shephard.

Shephard knew of “The Man in Black’s” plan to destroy the island and was tasked with thwarting his attempt. Along with “The Man in Black,” Jack traveled to “the source of good” on the island, a bright light omitting from a stream that Jacob showed Shephard. “The Man in Black” intended to shut out the light that sustained good, but Shephard was determined to stop him. Shephard took advantage of a vulnerable point and attacked his enemy. The two entangled in a fatal fight that ended with Shephard defeating “The Man in Black” and kicking him off the edge of a cliff in “The End.” However, despite his victory, Shephard knew that he was wounded and was at the end of his life. He said goodbye to Austen and stumbled into the nearby bamboo jungle where he once awoke at the start of *LOST*. There, he took his final breaths. He closed his eyes and was gone.

In a series of flash-sideways in “The End,” the audience was allowed to see a glimpse into the lives of the passengers of flight 815 if the plane had never gone down. In that alternate timeline, Shephard was a successful surgeon and had various encounters with the other passengers of the plane. The other passengers experienced brief flashes in this alternate timeline that jogged their memory of the on island events. Shephard was the only

one not to experience these flashes. The other passengers worked together to bring Shephard to the church where they once met Eloise Hawking for instructions on returning to the island. Once there, Austen instructed him to enter the church. When he did, his friends and family were there to greet him. His father, Kate Austin, Juliet Burke, Sawyer, Jin and Sun Kwon, John Lock, Hugo Reyes and Claire Littleton were among the people gathered there. The dialog between Christian and Shephard explained Shephard's final scenes of the series:

Christian explains: I'm real, you're real. Everything that has ever happened to you is real. All the people in the church, they're all real too.

Jack They're all dead?

Christian: Everyone dies sometime. Some of them before you, some of them long after you.

Jack: Why are they here now?

Christian: There is no now, here.

Jack: Where are we now?

Christian: This is a place that you all made together so you could find one another. The most important time of your life was when you were with these people. That's why you are all here. No one does it alone.

Jack. You needed all of them and they needed you.

Jack: For what?

Christian: To remember and to let go.

Jack: Kate, she said we were leaving.

Christian: Not leaving, no, moving on.

Jack: Where are we going.

Christian: Let's go find out.

After Christian explained Shephard's surroundings, Shephard began to embrace all of those waiting for him. All shared hugs, smiles and memories. They all took seats in the pews of

the church and Christian walked toward the back. He opened the double doors of the church and everyone was bathed in a bright, white light. Shephard smiled next to Austen and the series closed.

Liminality

Analysis of Jack Shephard's journey throughout the series proved that Shephard experienced liminality several times, but many times the process began the same way. Shephard's threshold into liminality was visually presented several times through air travel. These different experiences were shown through present day happenings as well as flashbacks that provided insight into his past. Turner observed, "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (Turner, 95).

Shephard first encountered a liminal phase in the episode "White Rabbit," when his mother asked him to travel to Australia to retrieve his father. This journey was a visual picture of Shephard crossing a threshold. He did not know what the process of leaving the United States via aircraft and traveling to another continent would bring. Eventually, Shephard discovered during this trip, that his father had passed away and that he needed to make the proper funeral arrangements. He then boarded Oceanic flight 815, along with his father's body, to return to Los Angeles. This flight demonstrated Shephard entering another deeper phase of liminality. In fact, this phase lasted much longer and carried with it the emotions and experiences of his time in Australia. Throughout his time on the island, the audience saw Jack Shephard in this liminal stage of his journey. He was no longer the person he was before crash landing onto the island, but he was not yet the person that the

island's trials were going to make him. He experienced an interesting stage that most go through along their path. Shephard was in a sort of limbo and the experiences that occurred while there would shape the next stage of his journey. While on the island, Shephard experienced an even deeper stage of liminality while being held in captivity in "the other's" camp. It was during this experience that Shephard learned more of the island's secrets, learned more about his reasons for being on the island and also met Dr. Juliet Burke. Shephard and Burke worked together to escape and crossed another threshold back to the survivor's camp. After leading the other survivors to rescue from the island they had been trapped on for months, Shephard entered his next experience of liminality. With the "Oceanic 6," he walked off the plane in the United States and was greeted by family and friends in "There's No Place Like Home: Part One." He was changed. He carried with him the effects of his time on the island. The on island experiences proved to trouble him so extensively that he began to board random flights in hopes of returning to the island. In the episode "Through the Looking Glass," the audience is able to glimpse into to Shephard's troubles that led him to this series of flights that represented several experiences of liminality:

Jack Shephard: Every Friday night I, I fly from LA to Tokyo or, Singapore, Sydney. And then I, I get off and I, have a drink, and then I fly home.

Kate Austen: Why?

Jack Shephard: Because I wanted to crash, Kate. I don't care about anybody else on board. Every little bump we hit or turbulence, I mean I, I actually close my eyes and I pray that I can get back.

[Kate looks near tears, as does Jack]

Kate Austen: This is not going to change.

Jack Shephard: No, I'm sick of lying. We made a mistake. We were not supposed to leave.

Kate Austen: Yes, we were.

Kate Austen: Goodbye Jack.

Jack Shephard: We have to go back, Kate.

Jack Shephard: We have to go back!

This conversation between Shephard and Austen is demonstrative of the emotional turmoil that forced Shephard into experiencing varying levels of liminality shown through his multiple flights.

He eventually boarded Ajira Airways flight 316 to return to the island in the episode "316." In this episode, Shephard discussed the plans for this flight with Ben Linus and his past hesitancy:

Ben Linus: Thomas the Apostle. When Jesus wanted to return to Judea, knowing that he would probably be murdered there, Thomas said to the others, 'Let us also go there and we might die with him.' But Thomas was not remembered for this bravery. His claim to fame came later when he refuses to acknowledge the resurrection. He just couldn't wrap his mind around it.

The story goes that he needed to touch Jesus wounds to be convinced.

Jack Shephard: So was he?

Ben Linus: Of course he was. We are all convinced sooner or later, Jack.

This exchange demonstrates Shephard's preparation for his final stage of liminality. However, he was finally convinced, like Thomas the Apostle, of his destiny and crossed this final threshold with a purpose and determination for his final time on the island as opposed to the haphazard and undisciplined framework of his previous phases of liminality.

Communitas

Along his journey, Shephard experienced what Turner deems *communitas* several

times. His air travel and subsequent crash-landing with fellow passengers on Oceanic flight 815 provided a sense of community through the need to survive. For instance, Shephard's relationship with Kate Austen was one that allowed for a sharing of open and honest communication. In "The Pilot: Part One," Shephard enlisted Austen to help stitch the wounds he incurred during the crash. His trust in her abilities and the conversation that occurred during the procedure laid the groundwork for the beginning of a relationship. It is through their relationship that the audience is able to see Turner's "spontaneous communitas" – a shared journey between two individuals, both experiencing liminality. Shephard and Austen bonded almost immediately over their shared interest in survival, uncertainty of the unknown and need for community in their new surroundings. They were able to share candidly about their pasts and how their experiences had influenced their life outcomes. Shephard was able to open up to Austen about his relationship with his father and Austen was able to reciprocate with by revealing her own familial struggles. This friendship and eventual romantic interest resulted in the two looking out for one another's needs while on and off the island.

Shephard also experienced Turner's concept of communitas with another, unlikely character. John Locke was the converse of everything Shephard believed. The two built a relationship through the struggle to lead and survive on the island. Shephard firmly believed the survivors were in need of rescue, while Locke held that the survivors were on the island for a purpose and were not to leave. This constant power struggle led a discourse between Locke and Shephard shown in "Exodus, Part Two:"

Locke: [explaining why he wanted to let the island monster drag him off] I

believe that I was being tested.

Jack: Tested?

Locke: Yeah, tested. I think... that's why you and I don't see eye-to-eye sometimes, Jack, because you're a man of science.

Jack: Yeah, and what does that make you?

Locke: Me, well, I'm a man of faith. Do you really think all this... is an accident? That we, a group of strangers survived, many of us with just superficial injuries? Do you think we crashed on this place by coincidence, especially this place? We were brought here for a purpose, for a reason, all of us. Each one of us was brought here for a reason.

Jack: Brought here? And who brought us here, John?

Locke: The island. The island brought us here. This is no ordinary place, you've seen that, I know you have. But the island chose you, too, Jack. It's destiny.

Shephard and Locke shared open and sincere dialogue regarding their beliefs and reason for being on the island. While the two rarely agreed, nor did they ever bond into a friendship, they shared a mutual respect for each other that was built through *communitas*.

Three - Part Journey

As noted in chapter one, the spiritual journey can be outlined in three stages: purgation, illumination and union. I believe that Jack Shephard experienced each of these three stages. Shephard's journey began when he boarded the initial flight to Australia. It continued while on the island, during his departure and return to the island and ended with his final passage inside the church. The threefold path provides insight into Shephard and his journey.

Purgation

Jack Shephard's purgation was presented through present-day encounters and flashbacks much like his phases of liminality. Purgation is experienced through the

realization of imperfections and the restrictions of one's self. Evelyn Underhill described this stage as "the period of self-stripping and purification which no mystic system omits" (131). Shephard's purgation began long before he boarded the plane to Australia in "White Rabbit." Chronologically, his purgation could be traced back as far as a story he recalls in "The Pilot: Part One." Shephard tells Kate Austen of a time when he made a fatal mistake in surgery and was forced to have his father, Christian Shephard step in to help him. This experience added to Shephard's realization of his own limitations. As mentioned earlier, he had a tumultuous relationship with his father and blamed himself for the downward spiral his father experienced after he reported him for being under the influence of alcohol while performing surgery in "All The Best Cowboy's Have Daddy Issues." His mother also reminded him of this decision when asking him to fly to Australia to find his father in "White Rabbit." His purgation continued while on the island when forced to make difficult decisions. For example, Shephard had to make the tough decision of deciding which drowning person to save and which to let go. His limited ability to save only one left him with guilt and the memory of watching the other drowning victim die. When leaving the island in "There's No Place Like Home: Part One," Shephard chose to have the helicopter take off before the freighter exploded. He chose to leave Jin Kwon behind to die in order to save the "Oceanic 6." Sun Kwon, Jin's wife, blamed Shephard for Jin's supposed death for years. Once back in the United States, John Locke began visiting Shephard and told him of horrible things that were occurring on the island because he chose to leave. Jack recalled this in "There's No Place Like Home: Part Two," "He told me... that after I left the island, some very bad things happened. And he told me that it was my fault for leaving. And he

said that I had to come back.” As mentioned earlier, Shephard and Locke were at constant odds over whether or not they belonged on the island. Shephard was finally convinced through Locke’s death and began a downward spiral of substance abuse over the full realization of his wrong actions. This was his most rigorous purgation. He knew that it was wrong of him to ask the “Oceanic 6” to lie to their family and friends upon their return. While trying to convince Kate Austen to return to the island with him in the episode “Through the Looking Glass: Part Two,” the following conversation took place:

Jack Shephard: Every Friday night I, I fly from LA to Tokyo or, Singapore, Sydney. And then I, I get off and I, have a drink, and then I fly home.

Kate Austen: Why?

Jack Shephard: Because I wanted to crash, Kate. I don't care about anybody else on board. Every little bump we hit or turbulence, I mean I, I actually close my eyes and I pray that I can get back.

Kate Austen: This is not gonna change.

Jack Shephard: No, I'm sick of lying. We made a mistake.

Kate Austen: I have to go. He's going to be wondering where I am...

Jack Shephard: We were not supposed to leave.

Kate Austen: Yes, we were.

Kate Austen: Goodbye Jack.

Jack Shephard: We have to go back, Kate.

Jack Shephard: We have to go back!

Shephard convinced Kate and the others to return with him to fulfill their purpose on the island. Shephard’s purgation was quite lengthy. It began long before he crash landed on the island in his difficulty with his father and continued on the island and after rescue. This phase of purgation was a stripping away of Shephard’s will, recognition of abilities and confidence in self. Once back on the island, Jack’s purgation was finalized and he moved to the next stage, illumination.

Illumination

Once back on the island, Shephard emerged from his purgative state with the reassurance that he was on the island for a purpose and that John Locke had been right all along. Shephard switched rolls at this juncture and adopted a “Man of Faith” approach just as John Locke had been. He realized there was destiny to fulfill and volunteered to be the “candidate” for which Jacob was looking. In the episode “What They Died For,” Shephard explained his actions by saying, “I took the job because the Island is all I’ve got left. It’s the only thing in my life I haven’t ruined.” I believe this statement showed that Shephard’s purgation had ended and he was ready to move to the next stage. While the purgation and stripping away was quite unpleasant, it led to an enlightenment of purpose and allowed Shephard to move to the next stage. Jacob led Shephard to a nearby stream that fed into the center of the island. There, Jacob took a cup, filled it with water and gave it to Shephard to drink. After Shephard emptied the cup, Jacob told him, “You are now like me.” This process signified a rebirth of sorts for Shephard. The water, a purifying symbol, signaled Shephard’s transformation and preparation for the final stage. This illumination brought, as Underhill describes, “a certain apprehension of the Absolute, a sense of the Divine Presence: but not true union with it” (169). Shephard was then able to move forward in his journey. He had not yet experienced the final stage of union, but was one step closer to it.

Union

The final stage of Shephard’s journey was that of union. After willingly accepting Jacob’s position, Shephard battled and killed the “Man in Black” in the episode “The End.” He was fatally wounded and finally died in the nearby bamboo field. He died knowing that

he accomplished his purpose. He fulfilled his destiny. He was then able to enter the final stage of the mystic journey, union.

In the series of flash-sideways mentioned earlier, Shephard's experience of the stage of union is represented visually by him entering through the threshold of a church and being welcomed by family and friends, especially his father. Although the church Shephard entered was first represented visually as a Protestant church, many artifacts inside pointed to various religions symbolizing an amalgamation of different people, backgrounds and religions. Christian Shephard explained to Shephard that they were "moving on." Death had brought each individual to this place so that they could all pass on together. Shephard sat in the church pew next to Austen as his father walked to the back of the church and opened the doors. The entire church was covered in a bright, white light, representative of purity and a coming together with the spiritual journey's end. This final scene symbolized the final passage of all of the church's members and Shephard's union with the divine.

Conclusion

I have argued that elements of the spiritual journey can be traced through the experiences of the main character of *LOST*, Jack Shephard. The application of Turner's *communitas* and liminality as well as Underhill's framework of purgation, illumination and union allow for a deeper understanding of Jack Shephard's mystic journey. These tools allow for an in depth exploration and understanding of Shephard's character and development throughout the series. By using the concepts outlined by Turner and the three-fold path, a greater understanding of Shephard's narrative can be understood. Shephard's actions, the resulting consequences, his intentions and motivations were

considered when developing this argument. Jack Shephard's character in *LOST* provides the opportunities to further explore the classic metaphor of the mystical journey.

Chapter IV

JULIET BURKE

"It doesn't matter who we were. It only matters who we are." – Juliet Burke.

Upon arriving on the scene in season three of *LOST*, Juliet Burke provided insight into the secrets of the island and ultimately played a pivotal role in protecting it and its inhabitants. This chapter, which continues the analysis of two selected *LOST* characters, is divided into six sections: (1) introduction, (2) chronology of events, (3) consideration of liminality, (4) consideration of communitas, (5) analysis of the three-part spiritual journey, and (6) conclusion.

Introduction

Much like Jack Shephard, Juliet Burke provided an observable story line to analyze using the apparatus of the spiritual journey. Burke came to the island under false pretences and continually tried to leave, never was able to find rescue, and she eventually died helping the Oceanic 815 survivors she had come to love. Burke's narrative also provides the opportunity to apply Turner's concepts of liminality and communitas as well as the three-part journey outlined by Evelyn Underhill. These elements are revealed through the chronicling of Burke's journey in the next section. Subsequently, the elements of the mystic journey and how they are specifically contained in Burke's story will be discussed in later sections.

Chronology of Events

Juliet Burke was first introduced into the *LOST* series during her interaction with Jack Shephard in the episode titled "A Tale of Two Cities." However, flashbacks outlined her

past in various subsequent episodes. Burke attended medical school and specialized in fertility and obstetrics. The episodes “Not in Portland” and “One of Us” detailed Burke’s past. During her medical career, Burke researched infertility with a concentration in cancer patients. Her sister had become infertile after receiving cancer treatments and believed she would never be able to conceive. Through her research, she eventually found success in helping her sister become pregnant. Shortly after this achievement, two men approached Burke and requested that she join their medical practice. The two men, Richard Alpert and Ethan Rom, showed her an ultrasound of a uterus that appeared to belong to a seventy-year-old woman, but actually belonged to a woman in her twenties. The ultrasound was enough to intrigue Burke and she agreed to join their research team. However, upon joining them, she was told that the job was not actually in Portland and that she would not be able to know where she was going. She was given a tranquilizer and boarded a submarine to reach her new destination.

Burke reached the island and was informed of the infertility issues of its inhabitants in episodes titled “The Other Woman” and “Jin Yeon.” The women that became pregnant while living on the island were not able to carry to term. They would become ill, fall into a coma and eventually die around one hundred days into the pregnancy. Burke tried to apply her past research to these cases, but initially failed. Her distress over the death of these women coincided with the beginning of an affair with Ethan Rom, in whom she found comfort. In an interesting twist, Juliet Burke was assigned to see a physiologist, Rom’s wife, while on the island. During a counseling session, Rom’s wife admitted to knowing about the affair and warned Burke to end the affair before Ben Linus, Burke’s superior, intervened.

Rom's wife explained that Linus was infatuated with Burke to the point of being extremely possessive and if he found out about the affair, it could be detrimental to Rom. As it turned out, Rom's wife's predictions were true and Linus eventually put Rom in harm's way and had him killed. Burke confronted Linus:

Juliet Burke: "You knew this would happen. You sent him out here because you knew this would happen. You wanted this! You wanted him to die! Why?"

Ben Linus: "Why? You're asking me why? After everything I did to get you here, after everything I've done to keep you here, how can you possibly not understand...that you're mine?"

Burke grieved Rom's death and longed to leave the island, but Linus insisted she stay for future research.

After "the others," Burke's camp, kidnapped Jack Shephard in "The Glass Ballerina," Burke was charged with his care. While in captivity, Shephard stumbled across x-rays that showed that Linus needed surgery to remove a spinal tumor. Shephard agreed to perform the surgery. Prior to the surgery in "The Cost of Living," Burke brought Shephard lunch and insisted that he watch the movie that she brought him. The video consisted of Burke in front of a camera holding a series of poster boards on which she had written a message. The video explained that Burke believed Linus to be evil and "the others" wanted him dead, but it needed to look like an accident. She asked Shephard to kill him during the surgery and promised to protect him if he did so. As detailed in the previous chapter, Shephard did not kill Linus in the episode "Every Man for Himself," but instead, used the situation to his advantage to allow for the escape of his comrades. With Linus open on the table, Shephard

revealed Burke's plan. Linus, in an effort to save his own life, told Burke that if she helped them escape, he would allow her to leave the island. She complied and responded by contacting "the others" and ordered them to capture Shephard's friends and kill them if necessary. However, this was all an act for Linus. Burke eventually helped Shephard's friends by killing a fellow "other" when he refused to let Shephard's fellow survivors go free. She was charged with murder and sentenced to death for her actions in *Not in Portland* and "Stranger in a Strange Land." However, with Shephard's help, she was able to negotiate her release and was punished by being "marked," a type of branding. Linus stayed true to his word and allowed for Shephard and Burke to leave the island via submarine. Their attempt, however, was thwarted in "The Man From Tallahassee," when John Locke blew up the submarine so they could not leave the island. Burke was devastated and returned to the survivor's camp with Shephard.

At Shephard's camp, Burke's arrival was met with hostility and distrust in the episode "One of Us." The survivors demanded answers from Shephard regarding Burke, but not many were provided. The following conversation, in "One of Us," details Shephard's reasoning for allowing Burke to stay:

Juliet Burke: "You keep saying 'they.' Don't you want answers?"

Jack Shephard: I was standing right beside you when that sub blew up. I saw your face. I saw that you want, more than anything, to get off this island.

That's what we all want. That makes you one of us."

Burke stayed with the survivors and slowly gained their approval. She helped fight off attacks from the enemy camp, assisted with the health care of survivors and was even

briefly involved romantically with Shephard. When Shephard was informed that a woman had parachuted onto the island with the promise of rescue, Burke began to assist in the rescue of the remaining survivors. She waited on the beach as the first group was taken to the freighter via helicopter. However, while waiting on the beach for the helicopter's return, Burke watched her dreams of her departure literally go up in smoke when the freighter suddenly blew up in "There's No Place Like Home: Part One," "There's No Place Like Home: Part Two," and "There's No Place Like Home: Part Three."

In the episode "Because You Left," Juliet Burke found herself still on the beach, joined by Sawyer, a survivor of Oceanic 815. They were on the same beach, but everything was suddenly different. The freighter that they had watched explode was nowhere to be seen and the camp that the survivors built was completely gone because the island seemed to be moving through time. Bright flashes of light signaled time change and those left on the island found themselves in varying time periods. Burke and Sawyer bonded during this time in an effort to survive and eventually the time travel stopped, leaving the two of them in the 1970s.

The episode "Orientation" explained that during the 1970s, The Dharma Initiative inhabited the island and conducted medial experiments via researchers from around the globe. Part of this research included tapping into an electromagnetic resource that the island held. This operation eventually ended in disaster and the pressure created by the release of the field had to be controlled via the hatch found by Locke and Shephard, as discussed in the previous chapter. Burke and Sawyer joined the Dharma Initiative shown in

“La Fleur” and lived and worked with them for three years before “the Oceanic 6” returned. During this time, Burke and Sawyer fell in love, created a deep relationship and moved in together. It was also during this time that the Dharma Initiative first explored the electromagnetic field by drilling into the core of the island. When Jack Shephard and Kate Austin returned to the island in 316, Burke and Sawyer were surprised to see them, and insisted that they were happy in 1977 and did not want them to be involved or upset the life they had created. Shephard explained his reason for returning and convinced Sawyer and Burke of what had to be done. In “The Incident: Part One” and “The Incident: Part Two,” they both agreed to help in his mission of detonating a bomb over the field where the Dharma Initiative had been drilling in the hopes that this action would eventually set time straight and would prevent Oceanic flight 815 from ever crashing.

While Burke, Shephard, Austen and Sawyer prepared to detonate the bomb over the electromagnetic field in “The Incident: Part One” and “The Incident: Part Two,” the electromagnetic field began to build. The sky turned an odd color, steam began shooting out of the drilled area and all magnetic objects began to be drawn to the center. A large chain wrapped around Burke and dragged her into the hole that had been drilled. Sawyer and Austen tried to pull Burke back to the surface, but were unable to fight successfully against the extreme magnetic pull. Before being thrown to the bottom, Burke proclaimed her love to Sawyer and was then thrown to the bottom of a hole. Burke awoke at the bottom of the vast hole to find that the bomb had not detonated. She grasped a nearby rock and hit the bomb until it exploded. The scene was covered in a bright, white light as season five ended.

Season six opened with Shephard, Austen, Sawyer and Burke waking up to the bomb's success in "LAX: Part One." Shephard, Austen and Sawyer heard Burke in the distance screaming and rushed over to uncover her. Sawyer climbed into the opening and held Burke as she mumbled something about coffee. She followed, "We could go dutch." Sawyer was confused, but listened as Burke continued, "I have something to tell you. It's very important." Burke succumbed to her injuries and died in the arms of the man she loved. Sawyer was devastated by her death and recruited Miles, a man that communicated with the dead, to discover what Burke was going to tell him. Through Miles, Burke said, "It worked," meaning the bomb was a success.

As with Jack Shephard's journey, a series of flash-sideways in "The End" allowed for a glimpse into another life of Juliet Burke. In this life, Burke never went to the island. Instead, she practiced medicine at Saint Sebastian Hospital along side of her ex-husband, Jack Shephard. The two shared custody of their son, David, and remained close friends. While working at the hospital, Burke ran into Sawyer while he was trying to retrieve a candy bar from a vending machine. Burke told him that if he unplugged the machine, it might release it. He unplugged it and the candy bar fell to the bottom. Burke said, "It worked," her original dying words, and handed him the candy bar. When they touched, both were flooded with their memories of the island and embraced. When Shephard entered the church at the end of the series, Burke and Sawyer were there waiting to greet him. They sat together in the pews of the church, along with their friends, and watched as Christian Shephard opened the doors of the church allowing the scene to be immersed in a white light as they completed their passage.

Liminality

Two men claiming to be with a research group interested in her talents first approached Juliet Burke. They insisted that her knowledge of fertility and obstetrics would be valuable to their organization. She eventually agreed to join their team and began her journey. To begin the trip, one of the two men, Richard Alpert, asked her to drink a glass of orange juice filled with tranquilizers to help make the trip bearable. This conversation is detailed in "One of us:"

Richard Alpert: Oh yes, you'll want to be asleep for the trip Dr. Burke.

Ethan Rom: It can be kind of intense.

Juliet Burke: OK, I was fine with signing all over your paperwork. Fine with agreeing to not talk to anyone in my life for six months. Fine with the fact that no one in the medical community has ever heard of Mittelos Bioscience.

Richard Alpert: Why were you fine?

Juliet Burke: What?

Richard Alpert: Why were you fine with those things? It seems like quite a leap for a job opportunity. I mean we're not paying you that much. I think you're fine because deep down a part of you knows that the place we're taking you to is special.

Juliet Burke: Special?

Richard Alpert: Let me ask you, Juliet. You took a woman. Your own sister. Whose reproductive system was ravaged by chemotherapy. Who was sterile. And you made her pregnant. You created life where life wasn't supposed to be. That's a gift, Juliet. You have a gift. And don't you think you're meant to do something significant with it? Where we're going, you can do just that.

Juliet Burke: Where exactly are we...

Richard Alpert: I can't tell you that. But what I can tell you is that, you'll see things there that you never imagined. Now, no one is forcing you to do anything, so if you change your mind we're happy to take you back to...

Burke did not allow Alpert to finish, but quickly gulped down the drink and immediately passed out. The exchange and Burke's subsequent decision mark the beginning of Burke's experience of liminality, but also allow for insight into what she was going to encounter once on the island. Visually, Burke was placed on a submarine and taken to the island to begin her research. This was a picture of Burke crossing a threshold and entering the liminal phase of her journey. Burke willingly took and swallowed a mixture that would strip her of her power. Due to the sedatives in the drink, Burke was asleep during the trip to the island and completely vulnerable to any type of attack or advance. Textually, Rom stated, "It can be kind of intense." This was a verbal foreshadowing of things to come in this phase of her passage. Once on the island, Burke failed time and again to help women carry their pregnancies to term deeming her once again powerless, just as the drink had left her. Like Shephard, she was no longer the person she was when first asked to come to the island, but she was not yet the person her tumultuous experiences were going to shape her into. For instance, Burke was a female working on an island dominated by her male counterparts. She was forced to scheme, lie and form alliances to retain any type of stronghold. These ploys eventually led to her escape from "the other's" camp where she experienced a deeper phase of liminality. She joined the survivor's camp and was considered an untrustworthy outsider. She was able to form relationships within the small

community and entered a series of random, multi-layered, experiences of liminality with these individuals through varying time changes. This sequence of changes was Burke's final phase of liminality and proved to be quite intense. Each of these encounters with liminality provided Burke with a broader understanding of her time and destiny on the island.

Communitas

During Burke's time on the island, she met and developed relationships with several individuals. Her interaction with these people varied according to her levels of honesty with each of them. Prior to the arrival of Oceanic 815, Burke communed solely with her fellow researchers. She presented an outward professional demeanor, but was never completely open and honest with any one else. This included Ethan Rom, with whom she was having an affair. However, an opportunity for open and honest communication was presented through Burke's interaction with her therapist, Rom's wife. Even though Burke was in the midst of an affair with Rom, she was able to speak truthfully with her therapist about the relationship once she was told the two, Burke and Rom, might have been in danger. Rom's wife warned Burke that Rom might be in danger if the two continued the affair due to Ben Linus' jealousy. After this warning, the two were able to share honestly about their fears and concerns about life on the island.

Jack Shephard's arrival on the island provided Burke with the opportunity to experience communitas as outlined by Turner. Burke first encountered Shephard while providing for him during his captivity. She begged him to kill Linus in surgery and eventually escaped with him back to the survivor's camp. Their shared interest in survival and escaping the island was first revealed to Shephard when they both watched the

submarine, their chance of rescue, blow up. Shephard said to Burke, "I was standing right beside you when that sub blew up. I saw your face. I saw that you want, more than anything, to get off this island. That's what we all want. That makes you one of us." This moment of transparent communication allowed for a completely candid exchange between the two characters. Through this interaction, the two forged a bond that would last until Burke's death.

Burke also experienced *communitas* with another Oceanic survivor, Sawyer. The two watched the freighter blow up and burn off the coast of the island. The freighter represented Burke's second failed attempt to leave the island. She was left on the island with the remaining survivors and was thrown into the series of time changes. These time changes proved to be fatal for some survivors, but Burke and Sawyer survived and started a new life in the 1970s with the Dharma initiative. They shared a secret that no one else knew; they were from the future and were blending for the purpose of survival. It was during this time that the two forged a friendship that developed into a deep love affair. They created structure in a world that was not their own and in turn, a meaningful exchange occurred over time. Burke tried to explain away this relationship as a simple survival mechanism in "The Incident: Part Two" when she said, "You would stay with me forever, if I let you, and that is why I will always love you. What we had, it was just for a little while, and just because we love each other doesn't mean that we're meant to be together... maybe we were never supposed to be together. So if Jack can make it that none of you ever come here, then... he should." However, in her death, it was revealed that the two had a far deeper love for each other than either of them realized. The deep connection

was established through their open and honest communication that was experienced along the lines of Turner's *communitas*.

Three - Part Journey

As outlined in the previous chapter, the spiritual journey can fall into three stages: purgation, illumination and union. Juliet Burke experienced each of these three stages. Burke's journey began when she boarded the submarine to join a new research team. It continued while on the island, during her time with "the others," her escape from "the other's" camp, her time in the 1970s and finally, her death. The threefold path provides insight into Burke's character and development as a person.

Purgation

Once on the island, Burke entered into the first stage of the three-step process, purgation. Burke had found success in her medical research back in the United States and hoped to find the same results on the island. However, Burke's attempts to help women on the island carry their pregnancies to full term were never successful as seen in "Jin Yeon." Burke grieved these consequent deaths and allowed the failures to frustrate her. Her restricted abilities caused her to question her skills and her purpose on the island, and she longed to return home.

Initially, Burke was scheduled to be on the island for only six months. Due to the manipulating efforts of Ben Linus, Burke was on the island an additional three years longer. She tried to leave through varying efforts. Burke tried to enlist the help of Shephard in the episode "Not In Portland" by asking him to kill Linus during the operation. Shephard chose to put Linus' life in danger only to use the situation to his advantage. Eventually, Burke

changed her mind and helped stop Shephard and save the life of Linus. When asked by Shephard why she chose to save him, Burke responded by saying, "I've been on this island for 3 years, Jack. 3 years, 2 months, and 28 days. He said that if I...let him live...and I helped you...that he would finally let me go home." Linus stood by his word and allowed Shephard and Burke to depart the island, but their attempt was upset after John Locke caused their submarine to blow up. Burke was charged by "the others" with treason and was forcefully removed from their camp. She joined Shephard and continued to fight to leave the island only to have her second effort meet the same fate as her first. These continued failures illustrated Burke's time in the first stage of purgation. It was a time in her journey where familiar things, surroundings and people were constantly being stripped away. She questioned her own abilities and general purpose. Her inability to help the dying women or leave the island left Burke feeling limited and restricted.

Illumination

Burke's final purgation came when Shephard returned to the island. She had been living happily with Sawyer in the 1970s and had established a home and a career. In "He's Our You," Burke said to Sawyer regarding Shephard's return, "It's over isn't it. This. Us. Playing house. All of it. I never thought they'd actually come back. Shephard's return signaled the end of this identity she had worked to establish. With this end, Burke demanded an explanation from Shepard in "Whatever Happened, Happened:"

Jack Shephard: I came back here because I care, Juliet. I came back here because I was trying to save you.

Juliet Burke: We didn't need saving! We've been fine for three years. You came back here for you... At least do me the courtesy of telling me why.

Jack Shephard: I came back because I was supposed to.

Shephard's return to the island was the final stripping away of Burke's purgation. The Oceanic survivors came back and the life that she had established with Sawyer would never be the same. Shephard explained his reasoning for coming back to the island and was able to convince Burke of his mission. She believed that detonating the bomb would correct the events of the island. Her confidence in Shephard was an indication of her moving into the second phase of the journey: illumination. She came to believe that there was something larger at work in her life's events. In this stage, she willingly assisted Shephard in his mission to negate the magnetic field and help correct the events of the island. Here, Burke finally accepted that she was on the island for a purpose. Burke was pulled into the electromagnetic field and forced to the bottom of the immense hole. It was there that she made the final decision to give her life and detonate the bomb. Instead of yelling for help and waiting for rescue, Burke gripped the bomb and began to hit it against a nearby rock. This act of self-sacrifice discharged the bomb and the scene was immersed in brilliant, white light signifying illumination and consequently ushering Burke into the stage of union.

Union

The final stage of Burke's journey was that of union. After willingly detonating the bomb, she was able to experience this final stage of the mystic journey. In the series of flash-sideways mentioned earlier, Burke's experience of the stage of union is represented visually by her presence in the church in the last scene of the finale episode, "The End." Burke was reunited with Sawyer and found comfort among the friends for which she once gave her life. It was explained that they were "moving on" and that this place had been

created so that each of them could come together in death and pass on together to another life. Burke sat in the church pew next to Sawyer as Christian Shephard walked to the back of the church and opened the doors. The entire church was covered in a brilliant, white light signifying the final passage of all of its members, including Burke's union with the divine.

Conclusion

I have argued that elements of the spiritual journey can be traced through the experiences of Juliet Burke's character in *LOST*. The application of Turner's *communitas* and liminality as well as Underhill's framework of purgation, illumination and union were used to delve further into Burke's character development. As with Shephard, Burke's actions, the resulting consequences, her intentions and motivations were considered when developing this argument. By using the concepts outlined by Turner and the three-fold path, a greater understanding of Burke's narrative can be understood. While often confusing, the narrative of *LOST* displays a surprising detailed spiritual narrative in the life of a secondary character. Juliet Burke provided the chance to further explore the classic metaphor of the mystical journey.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

"There are no shortcuts, no do-overs. What happened, happened. Trust me, I know. All of this matters." – Jack Shephard

On May 23, 2010, the *LOST* finale aired, marking an end to a six season long adventure. The television series was full of bumps, turns and excitement that invited investigation. This chapter, which concludes the research, will be divided into the following six sections: (1) review of the chapters, (2) a summary of liminality, (3) a summary of communitas, (4) a summary of the three-fold path, (5) ideas for future research, and (6) conclusion.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I introduced the artifact of *LOST*, reviewed the literature regarding the mystic journey, and outlined the framework through which I was planning to analyze the television series. The overall purpose of this study was to interpret the series by tracing the terms and key concepts of the classic, spiritual journey through the narratives of two key characters of the popular television series, *LOST*, using Victor Turner's concepts of liminality and communitas, along with Evelyn Underhill's three-fold path of purgation, enlightenment, and union.

Chapter Two presented the context of the artifact. *LOST* was a television series that bypassed television standards. It asked and required more from its viewers than regular television programming. In order to understand the show's complicated dialogue and plot lines, it was essential for fans to tune in for every episode, dissect and understand meaning, and go beyond casual viewership to comprehend the show's design. Viewers were able to

interact with the television series through new means designed by writers and producers through online media. They were also able to communicate with fellow fans across the globe through social media websites such as twitter and various blogs. *LOST* was one of the first television programs to be influenced by the viewership's use of online media. This was especially seen through the deaths of two minor characters, Nikki and Paulo. As discussed earlier, the audience was not pleased with their inclusion in the series and voiced their opinion through media outlets. The writers and producers listened and consequently killed the characters off demonstrating the power of audiences and online media.

Chapter Two also delved into the religious rhetoric found within the series. This rhetoric was discovered to be both visual and textual. Textually, many metaphors and analogies found in character dialogue led back to Biblical accounts. For instance, in "The End," Sawyer asked Shephard: "Well, doc, how about you come down off the mountain top and tell us what the hell the burning bush had to say for itself." This was an overt reference to the Genesis account of Moses' experience with God. Visually, as discussed in previous chapters, the Protestant church featured at the end of the series, was found to be full of representations of a broad range of religions. Among those represented were Christian, Buddhist and Catholic artifacts. Characters on the island embodied a myriad of belief systems beyond Christian, including Islam and mystical viewpoints. This all-inclusive religious message seemed to point to syncretism laced through out the series. At times, the religious rhetoric was used to foreshadow a specific occurrence, helped further the

plotline, or provided insight into a certain character. Arguably, religion played a large part in the narrative of the popular television series.

Chapter Three was the first of the two analytical chapters that focused on character analysis using the lens of the spiritual journey. The chapter centered on the narrative of the main character, Jack Shephard. Upon surviving the crash landing onto an unknown island, Shephard became the de facto leader of the small group of survivors. Through his time on the island, and even after rescue, flashbacks throughout his story line provided insight into his character. Audiences learned that he had a sordid past with his father and that this played a large role in the man he had become. Shephard was a practicing spinal surgeon and was able to use his medical skills to survive the island's difficulties. Through five of the six seasons, Shephard was portrayed as an absolute "Man of Science," intent on leaving the island. It was not until season six that Shephard allowed his circumstances and history to reshape his viewpoint and make him into a "Man of Faith." This resolute transformation is best seen through Shephard's statement in "The End:" "I took the job because the island is all I've got left. It's the only thing in my life I haven't ruined." Shephard consequently embraced his destiny and gave his life protecting the island.

Chapter Four was a continuation of the exploration of character analysis by means of the lens provided by the spiritual journey. However, in this chapter, Dr. Juliet Burke's narrative was outlined and explored. Burke, a fertility specialist, joined the rank of researchers on the island to investigate on island pregnancy complications. Upon reaching the island, Burke became frustrated with her inability to help the pregnant women. Although she had fulfilled her contractual time requirement on the island, Burke was not

allowed to leave and was forced to stay on the island, which she had come to loath.

Through building an alliance with Jack Shephard and befriending the survivors of the plane crash, Burke was able to escape her captors, but was still unable to leave the island. As with Shephard, Burke constantly looked for rescue and longed to leave the island. In the sixth season of the series, through Shephard's persuasion, Burke came to grips with the fact that her journey had led her to the island and that she had a purpose to fulfill there. In turn, Burke sacrificially gave her life while helping Shephard and her other comrades. She died on the island she so adamantly wanted to leave.

In both analytical chapters the terms of the spiritual journey were discussed in sequence: liminality, communitas, and the threefold path. We now turn to a consideration of each of these terms, comparing and contrasting their implications across the two characters.

Liminality

Through the analysis of both Shephard's and Burke's narratives, a common theme appeared, liminality. Turner's concept of liminality, a transitional stage, is shown in both Shephard's and Burke's story lines. Comparatively, both characters seem to enter their phases of liminality through travel. Shephard almost always enters liminality through crossing the threshold of an airplane cabin's door. In contrast, Burke is put onto a submarine after taking a considerable dose of tranquilizers.

Through both characters' stories, varying, deeper levels of liminality can be found. For instance, Shephard boarded his initial flight to retrieve his estranged father. Having discovered and collected his father's remains, Shephard crossed another threshold into a

deeper phase of liminality upon boarding Oceanic flight 815, the flight that would eventually crash onto the island. On the island, Shephard traveled by foot into an even more complex experience of liminality when he was a hostage at “other’s enemy” camp. Here, Shephard met Burke and the two crossed a threshold together upon arriving at the survivor’s camp. This phase is similar for both characters as it is a relief to find safety, but it is different for the two in that this was familiar territory for Shephard, but uncharted waters for Burke.

Shephard was eventually able to cross through the threshold of leaving the island via a helicopter, but eventually returned with renewed purpose and enlightenment. His return marked his final phase of liminality as well as his acceptance of his destiny.

Burke, however, was never able to cross through the threshold of rescue, but was required to stay on the island and experience a period of time changes that would place her into a series of multi-layered phases of liminality. The time changes ceased and Burke was placed in her last phase of liminality, the 1970s. Burke and Shephard both came to terms with their fate on the island during their final phases of liminality. Here, the two brought with them the knowledge and experiences they obtained through their previous encounters with the liminal phase. The two characters were then able to see the broader picture of their purpose and as a result, sacrificed their lives to fulfill destiny.

Communitas

As with liminality, Shephard and Burke also experienced Turner’s idea of *communitas*, a communication experience marked by an open and honest exchange of dialogue. They were able to share candidly regarding their desire to leave the island and

most importantly, Burke was finally able to open up to a male counterpart regarding her desperation to leave the island. In the same manner, both characters were able to experience this exchange with parties of the opposite sex. Shephard first met Kate Austin in the pilot episode and a relationship grew throughout their experiences of liminality, allowing the two to bond through sincere and truthful conversations. Their relationship eventually became a romantic involvement and the two fell in love. The same occurred with Burke and Sawyer. These two characters were also able to connect while they were both in the throes of varying time changes. They both survived the tumultuous experience and lived in the decade in which the time changes ended, the 1970s. During this time, the two formed a relationship contextualized first by the need to survive, but that also grew into a deep love for one another. They were able to express honest communication with each other and grow through the experience of *communitas*.

Turner's concept of *communitas* also provided insight into two very unlikely relationships. With Shephard, John Locke provided the opportunity for forthright and candid dialogue through the constant challenges of Shephard's motives, ideas and methods. John Locke, the "Man of Faith," was in direct contrast with Jack Shephard, the "Man of Science." This honest, challenging dialogue was best seen through Locke's statement: "Me, well, I'm a man of faith. Do you really think all this... is an accident? That we, a group of strangers survived, many of us with just superficial injuries? Do you think we crashed on this place by coincidence, especially this place? We were brought here for a purpose, for a reason, all of us. Each one of us was brought here for a reason." Locke expressed his belief that the group was on the island for a purpose during this encounter, and Shephard directly

questioned this belief in his retort. This frank and open exchange is an example of a constant dialogue that occurred both through actions and words. While the two never created a friendship, they did share a mutual respect created through Turner's idea of *communitas*.

Much like Shephard, Burke also experienced *communitas* with an improbable character. Her relationship with her psychologist was built on a mutual, honest expression of fear. This relationship was unlikely as Burke was having an affair with her psychologist's husband, Rhom. But through the concern for Rhom's life, the two were able to experience honest discourse. These interactions of both Shephard and Burke are demonstrative of the ability to experience *communitas* even in the most unlikely of circumstances found through this study.

Three-Fold Path

The three-fold path, as outlined by Underhill, can be traced through both storylines. As stated earlier, the path is composed of three parts, purgation, illumination, and union. The consideration of these three areas was paramount in dissecting the two journeys. Through the application of the three-fold path, it was learned that the two characters both experienced each stage of the path and their experiences of these stages influenced the next phase of their journeys.

Comparatively, the first stage, purgation, was difficult for both characters, as it usually is meant to be. This stage was a tearing away of familiar people and places. Purgation stripped away both character's confidence levels and left them vulnerable. By contrast, the two experienced these stages differently, due in part to their gender

differences. Shephard's purgation was wrought with debilitating circumstances through his realized inabilities, but he carried with him the title of "leader," a term of power. However, Burke's was much more demeaning. She willingly took a powerful dose of sedatives in preparation for her transportation to the island. This action stripped her completely of her power and any ability to protect herself from enemy advances. She was on a submarine with two men that could have taken advantage of the situation if they wished. Once on the island, many of Burke's fellow researchers were her male counterparts. This included Ben Linus, her male superior, who would not allow her to leave the island. As opposed to Shephard, Burke was deemed completely powerless. However, while on the island, she realized the extent of her own inabilities through purgation, just as Shephard had. This purgative process, although unpleasant, served as a required preparation for the tasks set before the two characters. Through this progression, Shephard and Burke were groomed to fulfill their purpose on the island.

The second stage, illumination, was also found to be similar in each of the characters. Through purgation, they were able to understand that they belonged on the island and that their lives were to serve a greater purpose than they had originally thought. They were prepared for illumination.

Shephard's illumination was shown visually through the "passing of the cup" from Jacob. He drank the water that Jacob collected from the stream, symbolizing a purification process, and was then, as Jacob stated, "like me." This illuminative process brought him one step closer to his final stage of union.

Burke's experience of the illumination stage was a bit different from Shephard's, as

it ushered her directly into the stage of union. After she fell to the bottom of the immense hole, Burke willingly chose to sacrifice her life to save her friends and loved ones. She took hold of the bomb and bashed it into a nearby rock until it exploded. Consequently, the setting was covered in a bright light, a filmic representation of illumination.

The final stage of the three-fold path, union, was experienced jointly by Shephard and Burke. Shephard was guided into the church in the final scene of “The End” where he found family and friends awaiting his arrival. Among those friends was Burke. Here, the two listened as Shephard’s father explained their surroundings: “This is a place that you all made together so you could find one another. The most important time of your life was when you were with these people. That’s why you are all here. No one does it alone Jack. You needed all of them and they needed you.” Everyone present sat as Shephard’s father opened the church doors to reveal a profound light signifying the spiritual journey’s end.

Finally, the application of the spiritual journey provided an apt lens in which to explore the series and its characters a bit further. The framework of the spiritual journey and the tools used to explore it, liminality, communitas and the three-fold path, were used to extract additional meaning and understanding from the series than a surface study would have allowed. It was especially useful as this main character and minor character were both on a spiritual journey throughout their plotlines on the series. The application of the established framework allowed for the tracing of the journey through the character plotlines and allowed for the gleaning of further information from the apparatus.

Ideas for Future Research

LOST is an artifact that suggests many avenues for research unexplored here.

Although two characters, Shephard and Burke, were analyzed in depth, it would be interesting to apply the framework to other characters involved in the series. For instance, Sayid Jarrah, a former Iraqi Republican Guard torturer, was a member of the Oceanic flight 815 survivors and brought with him a sordid background full of regret and loss. He ultimately gave his life to protect his friends and loved ones. His character would be an apt opportunity in which to apply the framework.

Also, it would be interesting to analyze John Locke's character. He was constantly at odds with Jack Shephard and provided insight into the island's abilities and secrets. His purgative stage was especially interesting in that he was empowered during this phase. He was paralyzed before crash landing on to the island, but upon his arrival, he mysteriously regained strength in his legs and was able to walk. His faith in the island's power grew from this occurrence. His traceable storyline would be an interesting one in which to apply the framework.

Another opportunity to use the established framework would be through a current television series. For example, *Mad Men* is an on going serial drama set in the 1960s. The main character, Donald Draper, is shrouded in mystery and intrigue. The difference is that the audience watches Draper's purgative stage in present time instead of through flash backs as Jack Shephard's was. It would be interesting to relate the framework to this type of plotline to see what could be uncovered.

Also, although it was touched on briefly in chapter two, it would be interesting to further delve into the effects of social media in regards to *LOST*. The noteworthy aspects of the online media's relationship to a television series would be worthy of an in depth study

into how this phenomena impacts both the series and the viewer. It would be interesting to follow the rise of social media and the marked influence it has had on popular culture. This could be accomplished through a careful study of the media involved in *LOST*, as well as interviews with individual audience members regarding their television interaction as it pertains to the media.

Conclusion

Since it first premiered in 2004, *LOST* has remained one of the most provocative television series to date. Its complex characters, never ending list of unanswered questions, and dedicated audience made for an atypical hit television show. This study has revealed that the classic metaphor of the spiritual journey wound its way through *LOST*. Through the use of liminality, *communitas* and the three-fold path, it was possible to trace the spiritual journey and analyze the main character, Jack Shephard, and a significant minor character, Juliet Burke. Liminality, *communitas*, and the three-fold path were principal tools in examining the narratives of Shephard and Burke. Arguably, the spiritual journey framework increased understanding of character interaction, plotlines, and meanings. The apparatus served to tease out deeper meanings than a typical narrative approach might have allowed.

REFERENCES

- Ahrens, Frank. "With Lost Experience, ABC Moves Beyond the Island." *The Washington Post* 13 May 2006: D1.
- Bomey, Nathan. "'Lost,' Harnessing the Digitized Water Cooler, Captivated Ann Arbor Fans." *Ann Arbor* 23 May 2010: 1. <<http://www.annarbor.com/entertainment/lost-social-media/>>.
- Brummett, Barry. *Rhetoric in Popular Culture*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2006. Print.
- Brummett, Barry. *Uncovering Hidden Rhetorics: Social Issues in Disguise*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008. Print.
- Carpenter, Chris. "LOST: In Translation." 2009. CBN. 14 September 2009.
- Carter, Bill. *Desperate Networks*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.
- Carter, Bill. "'Lost' Finale Lifts ABC To a Big Night." *New York Times* 25 May 2010: 5.
- Cashmore, Pete. "'Lost' Finale: What the Web Wasn't Made For." *Mashable* May 2010: n. pag. <<http://mashable.com/2010/05/23/lost-finale/>>.
- Catford, Lorna Ruth, and Michael L. Ray. *The Path of the Everyday Hero: Drawing on the Power of Myth for Solving Life's Most Important Challenges*. Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1991.
- Devault, Ryan Christopher. "LOST Series Finale Ratings Impressive." *Associated Content*. 24 May 2010. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 2 Aug 2010.
- Douthat, Ross. "Lost and Saved on Television." *First Things*. (2007): 1-6. Print. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

- Elliott, Lisa M. "Transcendental Television? A Discussion of Joan of Arcadia." *Journal of Media & Religion* 4.1 (2005): 1-12. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web 5 Feb. 2010.
- Greene, Dana. "Adhering to God: The Message of Evelyn Underhill for Our Times." *Spirituality Today* 39. (1987): 22-38.
<<http://www.spiritualitytoday.org/spir2day/873912greene.html>>.
- Jonah, Goldberg. "A Movie For All Time: Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, *Groundhog Day* Scores." *National Review Online* 2 Feb 2006: Web. 10 Mar 2010.
- Halstead, Richard W. "From Tragedy to Triumph: Counselor as Companion on the Hero's Journey." *Counseling & Values* 44.2 (2000). Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 9 Mar. 2010.
- Hasan, Zaki. *From "The Delta Force" to "Lost": A Personal Journey*. Diss. San Jose State University, 2007.
- Hundley, Kerri. *Narrative Complication Through Science Fiction Television: From "Twin Peaks" to "The X-Files" and "Lost"*. Diss. University of Kansas, 2007.
- Jensen, Jeff, and Dan Snierson.. "LOST & Found. (Cover story)." *Entertainment Weekly* (16 Feb. 2007): 30-36.
- Johnson, Derek. "Franchising Media Worlds: Content Networks and the Collaborative Production of Culture. Diss. The University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2009.
- Keveney, Bill. "LOST in Theories." *USA Today*. 20 Sep. 2009. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.
- Kissell, Rick. "ABC, Eye have quite some night". *Variety*. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO.

Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

Lawson, Gerard. "The Hero's Journey as a Developmental Metaphor in Counseling." *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education & Development* 44.2 (2005): 134-144.

Littleton, Cynthia. "ABC Series Score Online." *Variety* 14 June 2009:

<<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118004942?refCatId=14>>.

Lindelof, Damon, Prod. *LOST: The Complete Collection*. Perf. Fox, Matthew, and Elizabeth Mitchell. ABC Studios: 2010. DVD.

"LOST: The Official Website." 3 March 2009. <<http://abc.go.com/shows/lost>>.

Mallon, Anne Marie G. *Mystic Quest in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction*. Diss. Univ. of Notre Dame, 1981.

McDermott, Jim "Fear and Trembling in Oceania." *America* 193.6 (2005): 19-20. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

McFarlane, Meghan. *"Lost": A Rhetorical Analysis of Post-9/11 America*. Diss. California State University, Fullerton, 2009.

Palmer, Landon. "Culture Warrior: The Legacy of 'Lost'." *Film School Rejects* 25 May 2010: n. pag. <<http://www.filmschoolrejects.com/features/culture-warrior-the-legacy-of-lost.php>>.

Porter, Lynnette and David Lavery. *Unlocking the Meaning of Lost: An Unauthorized Guide*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2006.

Roark, David, and Andrew Welch. "5 Questions at the End of Lost." *Relevant Magazine*. 1. <<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/culture/tv/features/21657-5-questions-at-the-end-of-lost>>.

Robinson, Elizabeth Kathleen. *George MacDonald's Fantasy: Visions of a Christian Mystic*.

Diss. A&M University, 1995.

Steinberg, Brian. "The Cost of 'LOST'? ABC Asks 900,000 for Finale." *Advertising Age*. 29

Mar. 2010. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 14 June. 2010.

Taylor, Annette M., and David Upchurch. "Northern Exposure and Mythology of the Global

Community." *Journal of Popular Culture* 30.2 (1996): 75-85. A

"The Prognosticator." *Newsweek* 153.22 (2009): 60. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.

Turner, Victor Witter, and Edith L. B. Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture:*

Anthropological Perspectives. Lectures on the History of Religions, new ser., no. 11.

New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

Turner, Victor Witter, and Edith L. B. Turner. *Blazing the Trail: Way Marks in the*

Exploration of Symbols: The Anthropology of Form and Meaning. Tucson: University

of Arizona Press, 1992.

Twair, Pat McDonnell. "ABC-TV's Hit Series, Lost, Features Sayid, a Sensitive, Appealing

Iraqi." *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 24.3 (Apr. 2005): 44-52.

Underhill, Evelyn. *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual*

Consciousness. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2002.

Underhill, Evelyn. *Man and the Supernatural*. London: Methuen & co. ltd, 1927. Print.

Underhill, Evelyn. *The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons

Ltd, 1920.

Wax, Rachel. *"Lost" As An Example Of The Orphic Mysteries: A Thematic Analysis*. Diss.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2008.

Weaver-Hightower, Rebecca. "Cast Away and Survivor: The Surviving Castaway and the Rebirth of the Empire." *Journal of Popular Culture* 39 (2006): 294-317.

Winslow, Luke. "Rhetorical Homology and the Caveman Mythos: An(Other) Way to Ridicule the Aggrieved." *Communication Studies* 61.3 (2010): 257-271.

Wren, Celia "Fantasy Island." *Commonwealth* 132.4 (2005): 20-21. Web. 2 Dec. 2009.