

## Classics/History

### 1. Beware of Geeks (Mis)quoting Greeks

Episode 7 of the first series of *Torchwood* is entitled 'Greeks Bearing Gifts' and includes references to the story of Philoctetes, a lesser known episode from Greek mythology. In my paper I will discuss the limited reading of the myth in the episode, compared with the classical sources. I will then move on to modern attitudes to the myth and the episode drawn from an internet based questionnaire and two group discussions that took place in February and March 2007. Using the results gained from my research I will argue that even where television writers use myth as the basis for an episode in a fairly superficial way, the ways in which viewers engage with the myth can be complex and insightful.

Amanda Potter  
Open University

### 2. Caecilius est pater, Medicus est Dominus Tempis: *Doctor Who*, Romans, and the Cambridge Latin Course

On screen, the Doctor has made only two genuine trips to the Roman empire, once in 1965, and a second time in 2008 (discounting 'The War Games' on the grounds that it doesn't really happen on Earth). The first story, 'The Romans', was a genuine 'historical', i.e. a story in which the Doctor and his companions are the only science-fictional element. The second, 'The Fires of Pompeii', is a pseudo-historical, an sf story set in the past, and indeed an aetiological one, where the Doctor's involvement is responsible for some major historical event.

Drawing upon comments I've made elsewhere (<http://tonykeen.blogspot.com/2008/04/doctor-who-fires-of-pompeii.html>), this paper seeks to draw a web of links and contrasts between the two stories, showing how, forty-three years apart, the shows requirements from historical backgrounds, and uses of those backgrounds, have changed significantly. It will also draw into the net the audio adventure 'The Fires of Vulcan', the 2008 episode 'The Unicorn and the Wasp', and *Doctor Who*'s history of high-profile overseas shoots.

Tony Keen  
Independent Scholar

### 3. Who's history? *Doctor Who* fan critics, historicals and pseudo-historicals.

A glance at the *Doctor Who* fanzines of the 1970s reveals an array of preoccupations, some familiar to early twenty-first century fans, others not. This paper proposes to take a look at how fandom's attitude to the portrayal of history in *Doctor Who* on television has changed since the emergence of what was called 'organised fandom' in the mid-1970s with the birth of the *Doctor Who* Appreciation Society. It asks the question 'Who has a history?' from the point of view of *Doctor Who* fan writers, as well as '(whether *Doctor*) Who is history?' It will draw on fan essays and letter columns from fanzines in the personal collection of the author (which range from editions of *TARDIS* from 1975, through editions of influential titles such as *Frontier Worlds*, *Queen Bat* and *Skaro* in the 1980s and 1990s) and those held by United Kingdom copyright libraries, to Usenet and Forum postings and weblog entries, as well as from *Doctor Who Magazine*, which (especially between 1989 and 2005) drew so heavily from British fanzine culture that it became its dominant force. Such a sample may be random and dependent upon impressionistic interpretation, but I would argue that it would still be possible to follow trends in writing about the portrayal of history and characters drawn from historical figures in the *Doctor Who* television series during this period.

Matthew Kilburn  
Independent Scholar

## Philosophy

### 1. A Kiss is Just a Kiss (Except When it's Not): Life and Breath in the Whoniverse.

The Stoic concept of *pneuma*, or life essence in the breath, is common both to Western thought and to the 'Whoniverse' in general. But what of the transfer of life energy commonly seen in the series? Through examination of several of the more spiritually-orientated liplocks on *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood* in this light, I will show that sometimes, philosophically speaking, a kiss is more than just a kiss.

Melissa Beattie  
Cardiff University, School of History and Archaeology

### 2. Who's Real: The Doctor's Lacanian Struggle

Since the 2005 relaunch of BBC's *Doctor Who*, executive producer and head writer Russel T. Davies has constructed a narrative arc around a Time Lord without a home, a "lonely god" on a never-ending journey through space and time with only human companions to accompany him in his travels. With the destruction of the Doctor's home planet of Gallifrey in the Time War, the Doctor is the last of his kind, the sole Time Lord in existence; burdened with the guilt of being the only survivor and tormented by the atrocities of battle.

The Doctor's character is forged by loss — not only the loss of his home planet and species, but the loss of his ambient existence in an effort to achieve independent selfhood. The desire to return to the instinctive, pure state into which he was born places the Doctor on a path of symbolic substitution. Using the theories of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, this paper examines the Doctor's ongoing struggle with loneliness not only as a result of the traumas of the Time War, but as natural psychoanalytical development driven by the Doctor's unconscious desire.

Katie Reing  
Rosemont College

### 3. The Ontological Trouble of the Blinovitch Limitation Effect: Time Travel and the Self and the Self

One of the most feared dangers of time travel, seen in *Doctor Who* and throughout sci-fi narratives – is the “paradox” of crossing one’s timeline, of two (or more) otherwise temporally distinct selves meeting themselves, or, in Whoniverse terms, the Blinovitch Limitation Effect. Such a “paradox” raises ontological questions: What does it mean for the self to meet the self? How can one be two? Can one self be considered the ‘real’ one, and if so, how does one judge? Is there any good to come of the self meeting the self, and if not, why do we keep going back (so to speak) to this moment? Why does this paradox ‘matter’ to Western society? This paper will explore the socio-cultural implications of anxieties around this paradox through examining *Doctor Who* as medium for thinking through and playing with sedimented ontological beliefs. Though the simulacra-phobic concept of the self-and-self paradox remains committed to Enlightenment notions of subjectivity as unitary and stable, rejecting the possibility of a proliferation of selves, *Doctor Who* has historically performed a complicated relationship to such notions: taking them up in some instances (i.e., Rose bringing about the Reapers in the 2005 “Father’s Day”), yet reworking or even rejecting them in others (such as in the 1983 “The Five Doctors” or the 2007 “Time Crash”). I will work through Baudrillardian and Deleuzian concepts of the simulacrum, postulating that the former

illustrates the problematic, conservative urge to reject simulacra and ‘doubled’ selves while the latter corresponds with the urge that brings us – and Rose and Rose, and the Doctor and the Doctor and the Doctor – back and back again to this uncanny meeting ‘place’ (or space-time coordinate); the urge that suggests, however quietly and slyly, that there might be something liberating in this moment of meeting, something good.

Allyson Shaffer  
University of Minnesota

#### **4. “I name thee”: Political Implications of Names and Naming in Doctor Who**

Concentrating mainly on the ‘new’ series of *Doctor Who*, this paper will explore the political implications of the authority derived from the ability to name others. Throughout the series, the Doctor’s superior knowledge is demonstrated by the fact that he is able to name the aliens he comes across when his human companion is not. This is demonstrated most forcefully in the episode called “The Shakespeare Code” where the Doctor is able to weaken the Carrionite ‘witch’ by naming her. When Martha attempts to do the same thing later on, it does not work. Martha does not enjoy the same powerful position as the Doctor, and therefore cannot name the alien she sees. Most importantly, however, when Lilith, the Carrionite, attempts to name the Doctor, she cannot because, ‘there is no name’. This is one example of a long-running theme – the absence of the Doctor’s name. If Althusser is right when he argues that subjects are constructed in society through the process of interpellation, i.e., by being hailed into existence, then the Doctor would appear to be ‘always-already interpellated’ outside culture and ideology. The object of this paper, then, is to try to answer whether the Doctor really is a subject outside culture, or if the apparent impossibility of interpellating him implies a more insidious functioning of ideology.

Anindya Raychaudhuri  
Cardiff University, School of English, Communications and Philosophy

### **Masculinity/Sexual Identity**

#### **2. The Regeneration Game: The Changing Faces of the Heroism In Doctor Who**

The paper focuses on the articulation and rearticulation of masculinity and British heroism through the use of ‘regeneration’ in the popular science fiction series *Doctor Who*.

The paper briefly considers the function of the hero in television drama and discusses how the format of *Doctor Who* allows the title character to be ‘reborn’, thereby allowing masculinity to be rejuvenated, if not reinvented.

The paper maps out significant changes in the portrayal of the character, encompassing both ‘classic’ and ‘new’ *Doctor Who*, offering a comparative study to the performance of Britishness and male heroism. The paper examines the way in which the series has sought not only to reshape the character to appeal to a new audience, but how, through the act of regeneration, the ‘new’ Doctors affirm or challenge dominant images of the British male hero.

The paper will argue that the new series of *Doctor Who* has sought to reposition classic notions of heroism, moving away from the Doctor as lone hero, to the empowering of characters on the periphery.

The paper forms part of my research on the changing face of contemporary fictional heroes and national identity which also includes studies of James Bond, Sherlock Holmes and Dracula.

John Paul Green  
University of Sunderland

#### **3. Captain Jack Harkness, "An Impossible Thing": Bisexuality, Difference, and Identity**

The nonchalance with which Captain Jack Harkness is presented as bisexual in Doctor Who and Torchwood provides the opportunity to theorize the cultural role of sexual identity. Exploiting the symbolic association of queer as a shifting yet perpetual category of otherness and employing a Queer theory approach, one that examines normative identities by interrogating the created limits of knowledge, I posit that the availability of aliens to play the role of the symbolic Other within the Whoniverse frees sexuality from its contemporary cultural anxiety. The freeness of Captain Jack within the series inversely reveals contemporary intolerance for queerness (e.g. the real Jack Harkness of the mid 20th century is only permitted to transgress gender patterns before his inevitable death) and highlights symbolic values that are mapped onto sexual identity.

By foregrounding the struggles of sexual identity, I hope to illuminate the role of language and symbolism in the creation of normative knowledge. Examining how broad forces of love and hate create identity via an us/them dichotomy prompts an interpretative approach to analyzing the relation of Captain Jack to the recurring motifs of the show. Quick to action, on the battlefield or the dance floor, Captain Jack's bisexuality is a representation of a broader pattern of epistemic creation. Embodying the junction between violence and community, and normative sexual identities, the fixity associated with Captain Jack is "an impossible thing" that does not exist in the ever-shifting categories of identity in the historical real.

Blake Wilder

North Carolina State University

### **Subversion/fan studies:**

#### **1. 'Revisiting the Depths: Special Effects, 'Mass Camp' Nostalgia and Fan Readings of 'Underworld'.**

The basic aim of the paper is to draw upon certain writings on science-fiction cinema and special effects, nostalgia, and popular memory in television, to seek answers to the age old question of 'why do people still watch old Doctor Who if we know that it's cack'? What are the pleasures of viewing something that we know isn't very good? I'm using 'Underworld' as a specific case study because it's the absolute extreme of this, and has a special place in fan's hearts because of the chromakey stuff.

Ross Garner,

Cardiff University, School of Journalism Media and Cultural Studies

#### **2. Torchwood - Subverting Fandom**

Fandom has often been seen as subverting as well as celebrating the text from which it springs. In this paper I consider the ways in which Torchwood turns this equation around. Recent years have seen a rise in the number of self-identifying 'fanboys' in executive roles. Examples of this can be seen in Kevin Smith and Joss Whedon in the US and Simon Pegg and Russell T. Davies in the UK. Focusing in this case on Torchwood I look at the ways in which fannish terms, tropes and expectations have been repurposed from the use of 'retcon' to male pregnancy and alien sex sprays which work on anyone rather than just members of the opposite sex, staples of fan fiction but not of mainstream television.

We will also consider the ways in which expectations, built up by other comparable shows, affect the audiences reading of the text and the way that many of these expectations were undercut more or less successfully. This includes the presentation of relationships between the team members, the consequences (or not) of character's actions and how much we should read into a shag.

Katharine Faith Lawrence

### 3. Constructing a Space for the Subversive: Critical Cultural Commentary in *Doctor Who*

Comedy is traditionally used as a vehicle for subversion and the humorous elements present within the four most recent seasons of BBC One's *Doctor Who* achieve this project on an indirect level. At first glance, the series seem to construct a paradigm of human innocence. Each episode involves the attempts of an alien race to destroy the earth only to be disrupted by the valorous interference of another alien, the Doctor. This constantly repeated scenario thus removes guilt and action from the human experience. The message seems to be: humans didn't break it and they won't have to fix it. Yet, while the new episodes of *Doctor Who* might at first seem to placate and encourage the prevailing cultural norm of twenty-first century Western culture that denies a sense of personal and social responsibility, this paper will analyse how humour creates a subversive space in which the status quo is confronted and challenged.

The scripts often utilize comedic devices in order to comment on society's approach to issues such as our obsession with the automobile, concepts of beauty and the dangers of television. The subtle messages of *Doctor Who* are explored through humour, which therefore provides a space for critical cultural commentary. I will analyse four episodes, *The End of the World* (Season 1, Episode 2); *The Long Game* (Season 1, Episode 7); *Gridlock* (Season 3, Episode 3), and *Partners in Crime* (Season 4, Episode 1). Each of these episodes present moments of cultural commentary, thus offering the opportunity for reflection and critique.

The repetitive staging of the earth's ultimate safety is no doubt one of the reasons why *Doctor Who* has maintained his 'universal appeal'. This appeal is reinforced, however, because *Doctor Who* attempts to challenge the status quo while simultaneously appealing to a wider audience who can ignore this challenge in favour of a carefree laugh and a happy ending. The cleverness of the Doctor is that in precise, often comedic moments he injects his viewers with a dose of reality.

There is an ongoing debate about whether science fiction reinforces or challenges the status quo. In his book, *Science Fiction Television*, M. Keith Booker discusses the *Doctor Who* of the 1960s, contrasting its humour and fun with the 'serious social commentary'<sup>1</sup> characteristic of concurrently aired series of the era. Yet the *Doctor Who* of the twenty-first century might not be so easily overlooked as a source of social and historical commentary.

Erica Moore

Cardiff University, School of English, Communication and Philosophy

## Sociology

### 1. "Whose Doctor?"

Sydney Cecil Newman, a Canadian-born film and television producer came into the BBC as Head of Drama in December of 1962. He, among many other talents, was one of the founding fathers of the great British SciFi legacy "Doctor Who". Today, a percentage of Canadian taxpayer money funds production of Russell T. Davis' new Doctor Who series. In the 2006 episode 'Army of Ghosts', Yvonne Hartman, head of the Torchwood Institute, explains to Jackie Tyler that Torchwood exists to protect Queen, Country, and the British Empire. "There isn't a British Empire," Jackie protests. To which Hartman replies, "Not yet."

So, then, if a Canadian helped put the dream on the screen, and Canadian money pays for it, and Canada is apparently still a part of the Empire, where is the Canadian talent? None of the current actors, techies, writers, or producers on BBC's most legendary and hottest SciFi series is noticeably Canadian, and the Doctor never graces North America's shores except to tour New (New15) York. This essay investigates the toque-clad history of Who, the notions of colonialism that the new Who propagates, and explores how it would be a benefit for everyone on both sides of

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Booker, *Science Fiction Television* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), p. 30.

the pond if there was a little more maple syrup in the Doctor's tea.

Jessica Frey

Ryerson/York University's Joint Program in Communications and Culture

## **2. Army of Ghosts: Sight, Knowledge and the Invisible Terrorist in *Doctor Who***

Since returning to our screens, the reinvented *Doctor Who* (2005-present) has repeatedly depicted aggressors lurking in human form, be it in the Slitheen's skin suits, the Gelth inhabiting human corpses, men who turn into wolves by moonlight or the aliens who appear human, namely the Plasmavores and The Family. This renders problematic the traditional affinity between sight and knowledge, since looking alone cannot reveal the danger.

These concerns, however, do not exist in a vacuum. In British society at large since 2001 there has been a growing anxiety about how to identify an aggressor that one cannot know by sight, here referring to suicide bombers such as those who attacked London in 2005.

The phenomenon of the aggressor in human form has been seen before in 1950s American science fiction cinema when *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958) and other films projected communist agents within America as monsters in human form. The communists of 1950s America are linked to the terrorists of modern Britain via this representational system.

In this paper I examine the ways *Doctor Who* has negotiated modern British anxieties, accessing fears in the viewer seeded by real world events. Ultimately I conclude that the successful return of the series to television was facilitated by the nature of the Doctor himself insofar as this seemingly omniscient figure is perfectly placed to bridge the gap between knowledge and sight just as the British public requires such a bridge.

Matthew Jones, PhD Student,  
University of Manchester, UK.

## **3. "I don't know if it's Marxism in action or a West-End musical" Class, Citizenship & Culture in 'New' Doctor Who.**

From its London-based opening to the end of the world and back again, via Cardiff, the 2005 series of *Doctor Who* teamed the first Doctor with a recognisably Northern accent (Christopher Eccleston) with shop assistant Rose Tyler (Billie Piper). Over the course of the series they battled aliens in Downing Street, zombies in World War Two and nefarious news editors in the year 200,000. As a relaunch of one of its oldest and most valuable cultural assets, the 2005 series marked a bold move by the BBC to reestablish BBC1 as a ratings leader in Saturday night entertainment. This paper focuses on representations of class, gender and 'Britishness' in the highly successful 2005 series. These representations are discussed in relation to public service broadcasting and television genres through the textual analysis of particular episodes. Excursions into events in British history in the series are also related to debates surrounding 'heritage' cinema and television in Britain.

Lisa Kerrigan,  
BFI

## **4. Lumic's Cyber Revolution: An Allegory of Empire**

Reflecting on Hannah Arendt's notions of the public and private, and the distortion of the private realm through the nature of imperialism, I will discuss Cybus Industries as a corporate empire that effectively recreates these issues. I will also explore allusions to E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* which help to shape the Rise of the Cybermen/Age of Steel allegory. In redefining the nature of the modern separation of public and private, the public incorporates the political and economic needs of

society. Effectively, this new social realm leaves only the intimate to the private realm. Prior to the rise of the Cybermen, John Lumic uses his corporation to leverage political power, a part of the social realm, through economic means. His inventions also restructure the social realm through the control of publicly available information. Finally, the social implications of Lumic's empire over-determine private space by valuing uniformity, reminiscent of past imperial modes, and ultimately in eliminating private space through the removal of emotions. Lumic's desire to begin his cyber project in "The Motherland" reflects a grim mirror to the British Empire and the connection of its economic and social goals. More specifically, the Cybermen serve as an allegorical metaphor for what happens to humanity when the last bastion of the private, the intimate, is destroyed.

Christine Gilroy,  
Independent Scholar

## Technology

### 1. Doctor Who and the Convergence of Media

The British science fiction series *Doctor Who* embraces convergence culture on an unprecedented scale, with the BBC currently using the series to trial a plethora of new technologies, including: mini-episodes on mobile phones, podcast commentaries, interactive red-button adventures, video blogs, companion programming, and 'fake' metatextual websites. In 2006 the BBC launched two spinoff series, *Torchwood* and *The Sarah Jane Smith Adventures*, and what was once regarded as an embarrassment to the Corporation now spans the media landscape as a multi-format colossus. This paper will critically explore many of the transmedia strategies the BBC have employed in re-launching this property. Has it resulted in a richer and more entertaining experience, or is it merely an economic exercise in merchandising and branding? Can these mediums really work together to create a coherent and satisfying whole? And has the franchise's history of converging via books, comics, webcasts and audio adventures during its Interregnum (1989-2005) helped to define the art of storytelling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Neil Perryman  
University of Sunderland, UK

### 2. Dr Who and the Innovation Generation: A one-off Episode

The Dr Who programmes have for many years delighted, frightened, and amused viewers of all ages. Despite many writers contributing over the years, as a body of work, the series follows a long tradition of the greats of Science Fiction, such as Arthur C Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Philip K Dick, and Robert Heinlein in predicting the development of technologies and societal change; to some extent spurring them into existence. In addition the programme played a significant part in determining psychological acceptance of technology through out British society in its time. As in Star Trek (a programme which demonstrated similar effects in America) Art predetermined rather than reflected life. This paper intends to illustrate how science fiction has been instrumental in determining the course of technology, in particular demonstrates the part that Dr Who has played in contributing to many of the technologies we now take for granted, and the mindset of an innovation generation. (Pass me the Sonic Screwdriver, please...)

Peter Talbot-Jones  
Independent Scholar

### 3. The Commercial Electronic: *Doctor Who* and the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop

The BBC has recently released several multi-disc sets of its in-house experiments with electronic music. Heralded as a collection of sonic gems from the Radiophonic Workshop (in operation from 1958-1998), a forgotten arm of the BBC, these reissues are for the most part soundtracks from classic *Doctor Who*. Film and television music holds an intermediate position between pop and

experimental: as a style its relative formlessness (as opposed to a sonata) makes it ambient and impressionistic, as it responds to emotions and events playing out on the screen. This form is also an excellent opportunity to test new ideas, as composers at the early Radiophonic Workshop could experiment with new techniques for an audience who would not have been otherwise exposed to this new electronic music. Godfather of electronic music Karlheinz Stockhausen believed that the proper execution and deployment of electronic compositions was not to be commercial, writing that, “as soon as [music] becomes just a means for ambiance, as we say, environment, or for being used for certain purposes, then music becomes a whore.” Therefore, an interesting tension between the role of the avant-garde in the mainstream culture arises in music that is commercial and yet not pop music, music that is designed to slip unnoticed past an audience's awareness to enhance the words and images on a screen. The *Doctor Who* theme tune is itself a *musique concrète* piece and is an example of tape loops being used in popular culture years before that technique was discovered by pop music. Formalist composers in the early twentieth century looked forward to an electronic composing machine, where the composer's intent could never be misinterpreted in its performance. *Doctor Who* was transmitting electronic scores to audiences across the country before electronic music hit the mainstream, making electronic sounds a part of popular culture thanks to the work of the Radiophonic Workshop.

Charlotte Stevens

York University