

IT'S NOT TELEVISION, IT'S TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING: MARKETING THE 'REAL' WORLD OF *TRUE BLOOD*

U. Melissa Anyiwo

Many writers are only bound by the limits of their imaginations, but television and film writers are bound by the limits of production. Logistics, money, time, and technology all need to be taken into account when breaking story. But the world of *True Blood*, I am happy to say, has a brand-new medium to play in, one that is both exciting and liberating. It is a road that leads to unknown possibilities and endless potential – and I, for one, cannot wait to see where it takes us. (Alan Ball, creator of *True Blood*)

In 2006, Henry Jenkins released *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. His text has come to serve as the template for understanding the place of visual media in a world of increasing technological interface. For Jenkins, convergence culture is about 'the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviors of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want' (2006, 2). Such convergence is not about the migration of viewers from traditional modes of viewing (the television set) to new technologies (the Internet). Instead it focuses on the proliferation of content across multiple platforms originating from a central, binding narrative. This convergence

relies on the active participation of an audience willing to go far beyond the initial source – the television show or film – to find and engage in a wealth of additional and enhanced content. In this ‘new’ participatory culture consumers have a far greater role to play in the content we absorb and thus in the content corporations produce. However it is described, fans in this model are no longer passive consumers; their desires drive the narrative in real ways, from the types of content offered to the literal creation of fan content (as discussed by Erin Hollis in this volume). In this way, each piece of the television universe works together to create a multi-layered narrative far more indicative of our real world experience than just ordinary television.

Not TV

Within this concept of convergence culture lies the notion of transmedia storytelling, the creation of multi-layered worlds that lead to endless story possibilities. These metanarratives are one aspect that, as Jenkins argues, illustrate the successful application of convergence. A television show no longer exists in a boxed-in format that appears in a prescribed place once a week. Nor is a movie merely a story told in a traditional format that begins and ends on the screen. Instead they are just one delivery system for a story told in multiple ways across multiple genres and multiple formats. But not every production utilizes the metanarrative, or indeed uses it as a function of storytelling. Some only manipulate it as one more marketing technique to sell the source content. This chapter examines the attempts of HBO to build the complex world of *Bon Temps* and its surrounding area, both prior to the show’s premier and into season three. Is *True Blood* an example of convergence culture or are elements such as Jessica’s blog and the webisode campaign merely examples of excellent marketing no different from more traditional forms of parallel marketing that we have become used to?

Even Jenkins accepts that convergence culture is not new. He takes us back to the medieval era, when largely illiterate

followers of Christianity, for example, sought the word of God through multiple means and in multiple ways. They listened to sermons (Church-guided interpretations of the Word), and sought inspiration from frescos and religious iconography. Religious leaders dissected and found new connections in the Bible and wrote endless tracts that examined and expanded religious myth, thus creating new dogmas and impacting the political process. Followers created their own 'fan fic' through the creation of miracle plays and other forms of artistic expression. In short, Christians took the source content and created new ways of understanding and knowing. All of these things took place half a millennium before the invention of the Internet, making convergence a new expression of an old idea (Jenkins 2006, 122).

This example highlights one of the central confusions about convergence culture. It is not what Jenkins refers to as the Black Box fallacy, the belief that sooner or later all media content will flow through only one delivery system such as the Tablet or iPad. Such an idea limits media change to technological change, thus missing the point of convergence. So the fact that the average college student may not even own a TV but watches their favourite shows on their laptop is not evidence of convergence; instead it is evidence of technological advancement. Television now refers not only to specific, scheduled encounters between national networks, viewers, and 'the set in the living room, but an increasingly diverse array of activities, texts, and technologies' (Kompere 2010, 97). Indeed, consumers generally interact with their television in the same ways as they did prior to the Internet Revolution. As Barbara Gentikow found in her 2010 study of new media use in Norway, even younger participants had not demonstrably migrated online to watch their favourite shows. Instead many reported that they 'used their PC when they want to be interactive, television when they want to relax' (2010, 145). Furthermore, even when respondents downloaded their favourite shows, 'they were quite in favour of watching series when broadcast. They could look forward to a special day in the week when their favourite series was scheduled' (2010,

148–9). Thus Jenkins and others effectively demonstrate that ‘convergence refers to the process not the end point’ (Jenkins 2006, 6). In short, viewers will still tune in to *True Blood* on Sunday nights at 9 pm, regardless of how they watch it.

According to Jenkins, in the ‘old days’ prior to 1990, the television set served as a passive purveyor of content that we absorbed. The technology of television in the USA requires passive content, though other nations such as Norway and the United Kingdom have explored less passive ways of content delivery.² Consumers, however, have never really been passive consumers. Even before the birth of discussion boards, Twitter and FaceBook and so on, viewers shared ‘watercooler moments’ where they discussed, analysed and dissected moments from their favourite shows with their friends and co-workers. Discussion might have been limited to one’s local circle (geographical and/or emotional), but such conversations illustrate our need to process what we see by sharing it with others.

The element of convergence culture that we are concerned with here is transmedia storytelling, described by Jenkins as a story which ‘unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole’ (2006, 97–8). In order for such a metanarrative to succeed, the author/s must create a multi-layered world that can be peeled away to reveal layer upon layer of depth with each addition of new content. The most successful types of worlds must be sustainable in a myriad of ways even after the source material has reached an end point so that the conversations remain open-ended. Jenkins posits that the first evidence of such storytelling appeared in 1999 with *The Blair Witch Project* (Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, 1999, USA) whose marketing website seemed real in every detail. I would argue that the more successful worlds are those that take on lives of their own beyond the intentions of the producers and that can maintain conversations long after the source has been exhausted, unfolding along with new content delivery systems. An example from film that Jenkins uses is that of *The Matrix* (Andy and Laurence Wachowski, 1999, USA) and its sequels: a world so richly drawn that the ‘deeper you drill

down, the more secrets emerge, all of which can seem at any moment to be *the key* to the film' (2006, 98).

There is a very clear difference, however, between the convergence employed by the Wachowski Brothers and that utilized by the wide range of other films and television series that attempt to cash in via marketing campaigns. Marketing products that merely exploit our interest do not provide evidence of convergence. So those Captain America Happy Meals are not evidence of convergence, instead they are merely evidence of marketing. Clearly convergence culture requires embracing multiple forms of content and multiple forms of delivery. But what is of chief concern in this model, what makes it a metanarrative, are those elements that enhance or expand the source material. *The Matrix* trilogy³ offers a world with enough depth that the story not only does not conclude too quickly but allows for infinite possibilities for fan participation in the narrative world and the addition of new modes of content delivery from comic books to video games. According to Jenkins, therefore, *the Matrix* serves as both a 'cultural attractor', 'drawing together and creating common ground between diverse communities', and a cultural activator setting into motion its decipherment, speculation and elaboration (2006, 97). The Wachowski Brothers were able to achieve this by creating a viral campaign before the first film, creating the *Animatrix* animated series, the *Enter the Matrix* video games and the comic book series. All of these elements enhance the original content by adding depth to the source world, expanding minor characters, explaining elements that are glossed over in the films and otherwise allowing fans to go as far down the rabbit hole as they desire. In contrast, *Underworld* (Len Wiseman, 2003, USA) and its sequels merely offered a number of 'tie-ins' such as a novelization that repeated the source content in a different form. But into which camp does *True Blood* fall? It is easy to confuse marketing with convergence; it is also easy to confuse the desire to make sequels with transmedia storytelling.

HBO's Inventive Marketing

World-building has the ability to draw in multiple types of fans, a key component of effective storytelling, and keep them coming back for more, indicating effective marketing. Producers are ultimately employees of corporations with bottom lines, thus their desire is to create content that will have the greatest financial return. As one unnamed scriptwriter told Jenkins at a 2003 conference:

When I first started, you would pitch a story because without a good story, you didn't really have a film. Later, once sequels started to take off, you pitched a character because a good character could support multiple stories. And now you pitch a world because a world can support multiple characters and multiple stories across multiple media. (2006, 116)

This quote would certainly work with the world-building concept of *True Blood*, a television show (as much soap opera as mystery) seemingly about the waitress Sookie Stackhouse. HBO has something of a tradition of inventive marketing campaigns intended to draw in a privileged fee-paying audience. 'It's not television; it's HBO' is a marketing slogan that recognizes the vast imaginations of the network executives who have managed skilfully to turn a premium subscriber service into the Apple of cable television. According to Time Warner, owners of the Home Box Office Network, HBO has approximately 80 million subscribers worldwide.⁴ Freed from having to seek traditional advertising revenue, the network has functioned on the cutting edge of both world-building and technology. For example, as Marc Leverette et al. write, in '1986, HBO became the first TV station that scrambled its entire output, so it couldn't be pirated' (2008, 25). This tradition of ensuring privileged content by vigilantly policing their material seems to contradict their image as the equalitarian network. However, like Apple, they have managed to present such a wealth of superior content that its exclusive

nature only adds to the sense that it is somehow special. Anyone with a television set or an Internet connection can watch *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000–ongoing, CBS, USA) or *Vampire Diaries* (2009–ongoing, The CW, USA), but unless they are willing to pay extra (or find the content illegally), they are excluded from the world of HBO. Given that consumers have to actively buy entrance into the HBO universe, there is a sense that the consumer is entering into a restricted world, yet one with fewer boundaries. It is not simply that HBO shows have content not deemed appropriate for viewing on other networks. Rather, it is the ability fully to realize worlds in ways more akin to film than terrestrial television freed from the demands of advertisers or the limits of the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board.⁵

Given that Jenkins cites *The Blair Witch Project* as the first production to utilize transmedia storytelling in its marketing campaign, the campaign for *True Blood* provides an excellent contemporary example that demonstrates the advancements in world-building since 1999. It all began in May 2008, when a select few online bloggers and science fiction fans received a mysterious black envelope containing a single sheet of card covered in an indecipherable hieroglyphic message.⁶ There was no advertising slogan or even return address on the envelope or card to ruin the sense of mystery. Simultaneously various members of the media received their own strange package in the mail. According to one reporter, the innocuous-looking, bubble-wrapped envelope contained 'a vile [*sic*] of what looked like Marciano cherry syrup [and] a small card with Japanese writing on it with the url www.trublood.jp' (Dowdell 2008). Enormous billboards advertising the new Tru Blood, a synthetic blood drink, were also erected in cities across the world. None of these contained any reference to Sookie Stackhouse, Bon Temps or even the name of the new series it was marketing. Instead, the campaign focused on the building blocks of a new world layered on top of our own.

Furthermore, when the 'invitations' featuring the hieroglyphic message were sent out and printed in newspapers in 2008, the marketing campaign followed the typical pattern for an alternate reality game (ARG), where players have to find and follow clues.

The intent was to convince the participants to enter the rabbit hole; and it worked. It was not long before the contents and clues were shared and discussed online, precipitating a mad dash to decipher the code. The message, written in the Ugaritic language, read, 'Thank you for answering the call and joining us. But what it means to us is almost beyond words. Tru Blood can sustain us. The bonds of blood will no longer hold us hostage'. From there, players were led to a website, *RevenantOnes.com*, where a mysterious vampire, the Gatekeeper, tried to keep out curious humans. It was a clever tactic but one that only worked with those eager and willing to play and to follow the clues. Dowdell (2008), for example, reports that he was not receptive to the bubble-wrapped package of Tru Blood:

I threw it all away because, although I knew it was the beginning of a viral campaign, it was simply too vague and the site was entirely in Japanese. After all, my mom taught me to not take candy from strangers and I think it's safe to say that includes taking synthetic blood beverages in viles [*sic*] from unmarked packages that arrive in your mail (hooda thunkit?!)

The campaign was thus not for everyone, but for those willing to 'play along' it became an exciting and intriguing journey. For ten days people tried to break the code that would get them past the Gatekeeper and once they did they entered a world peopled by vampires. Of course, the site was one element in an intricate marketing campaign and the Gatekeeper was an actress employed by Campfire, a project-based marketing agency located in New York. But, as with the rest of the campaign, it was played entirely straight, giving no clue that the event was a fiction. Once inside, these pioneers, these Alices, were able to interact in the developing narrative world. As Campfire's Executive Creative Director Greg Hale said on '3 Minute Ad Age', 'Really we're inviting people in to participate in the story'. This was a narrative that took a fictional text and allowed the audience itself to interact with each other and with actors within

it, albeit in a limited way. As Hale also points out, 'We have writers who are dedicated to it the whole time making sure that story tweaks fit with little things that have happened all along the way and we really monitor not only our own forums but other forums for how people are reacting to things'.

This structured form of marketing enabled HBO to capitalize on new media and the evolving technologies of the Internet. In the final week of June, two videos appeared first on the website BloodCopy.com, the vampire's hub, and then on YouTube. The first depicted an interrupted local newscast in Baltimore. It featured a pretty woman with the most obvious visual marker of a vampire, extremely pale skin, reading a carefully prepared statement:

There's no cause for alarm. We've lived among you for thousands of years without your knowledge. And we now come out into the open with the hope to finally become part of society fully, once again. Even now representatives from my kind are meeting with your government to assure them that we reveal ourselves in the spirit of peace and friendship and this is now possible because of the invention of a synthetic called Tru Blood, which allows us to exist without the use of um ... other means. Nothing will change. Nothing has changed. We have lived among you and we hope to live among you still.⁷

The following day, a 'White House Briefing on Vampires' appeared with a spokesperson, Todd Phillips, assuring the public that the Government was fully aware of the breaking situation and that they had everything under control.⁸ The video looked just like every other White House briefing shown on any news network right down to the ticker tape scrolling along the bottom of the screen. There was even an audience of reporters, out of frame, yelling questions to the uncomfortable-looking Phillips. These two videos, if not convincing, at least added to the sense of authenticity of the coming-out narrative that continued to make viewers curious.

The verisimilitude of the campaign materials was helped by its global nature. If vampires were real, they would neither be only American, nor would they speak only English. Accordingly, viral videos in Spanish, Russian and Cantonese were released. Mirroring the way in which anyone with access to the right technology can make videos and upload them to YouTube and other similar sites, video blogs from vampires across the globe and footage of vampires revealing themselves accidentally were uploaded. In one example, a clip – filmed using a cell phone – features a man in swimming trunks at a local swimming pool in Hungary taking a furtive drink from a bottle wrapped in a towel.⁹ As he swallows he notices the women watching him and he spills it. The video cuts back to him smiling with blood running down his chin. In common with all the other examples, there is no exposition and no advertising slogan at the bottom, just the unedited clip.

Viral Videos, Character Blogs and Webisodes

When the series aired in September 2008, *True Blood* drew just 1.44 million viewers, less than 8 per cent of subscribers (Martin 2008). Of course, this figure misses the point of the campaign and HBO's overall intent. Though ratings for the show would increase significantly by season two, breaking 5 million by season's end, they were not just selling a television show. The marketing campaign had brought people into the world of *True Blood* whether they were HBO subscribers or not. With the online viral marketing and other transmedia storytelling material (including the novels that had their own fans), potential viewers could engage with the characters and storylines until the series came out on DVD. If the intent of the pre-series marketing and ARG had just been to attract viewers, it would indeed have been an expensive flop. However, the TV series was only one element of a much larger narrative spanning multiple media platforms that allowed consumers to engage at whatever level they chose. Thus BloodCopy, the HBO sponsored website,¹⁰

originally functioned as the fictional site for 'real' vampires. It is now a live feed for Twitter and other postings related to *True Blood* in general. It is interesting to note that HBO keeps its fan sites and transmedia storytelling content (including websites for the American Vampire League and Fellowship of the Sun) largely separate from the official *True Blood* site (though this does contain links to Jessica's blog and pre-season teasers in the form of webisodes).

There are obvious complexities to the use of such content. The original campaign functioned as the beginnings of a narrative that continued within the television series but that also continues in a number of other ways (in the novels and comic books, as well as the character blogs and webisodes). The *True Blood* homepage on HBO.com not only offers behind-the-scenes clips, interviews with actors and production notes, but also commodifies the series with links to sites for merchandise.¹¹ Traditional merchandising, such as T-shirts, badges and posters, is available for purchase. More significantly, products are available that can be used to replicate a *True Blood* experience or role play. These include bottles of Tru Blood (a blood orange-flavoured drink), a Merlotte's waitress uniform, branded glassware for Merlotte's, Fangtasia and Lou Pines, and Eric's and Lafayette's jewellery. All of these items enable performative consumption (Hills 2004, 123) as well as creating an immersive experience in the *True Blood* universe.

If Jenkins's theory of transmedia requires each element to add depth to the source content, the convergence of these multiple, trans-narrative elements can also be exemplified by Jessica's Blog, an online journal created for one of the show's (now) central characters.¹² One example worth examining is connected to the episode 'Bad Blood' (3.1) when the delightful Baby Jessica is abandoned by her maker Bill Compton after he is abducted by the King of Mississippi. As she only features in three scenes interspersed with unrelated story development, the episode provides little evidence of her reaction to his absence. The viewer can only guess at how she's feeling and perhaps discuss it within their circle of fans. But they have no narrative clues

to support their search for meaning. Once the episode is over, however, Jessica fans can connect to her blog and watch a video 'Where in the World Is Bill F**king Compton' about how she really feels.¹³ 'Truth is,' she says, 'it is scary. And boring as all hell. I'm just stuck in this big old house and the only sounds are the walls creaking and my stomach rumbling.' This allows the viewer to connect more deeply with a minor character at a level impossible within the narrow limits of the televised narrative, and therefore, arguably, with the show.

However, Jessica's Blog does not really add content to the show despite increasing some fan enjoyment. Her blogs offer no more understanding than you might expect from a teenager's musings on their world. She offers no new insights or clues to upcoming events (episodes) or insights into any of the other characters in her world. Take, for example, the entry 'Hoyt's Hot New Date' posted 19 July 2010 after 'Beautifully Broken' (3.2).¹⁴ Jessica is forced to meet her ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend Summer. The entry is short and to the point – an image of the new date heavily graffitied with drawn-on horns, devil tail and goatee with 'slut' written across her head – with only the briefest of commentary:

I found this photo on the Renard Parish Church Retreats and Spiritual Workshop Group photo page. Doodles by yours truly, Jessica Hamby ☺'

In short, it is fun but offers no more depth than consuming a Happy Meal or purchasing a four-pack of Tru Blood from your local Hot Topic. Yet unlike the bottles of blood orange-flavoured beverage, Jessica's Blog is an interactive addition to the narrative and a great marketing tool allowing fans to click on the sidebar links to Jessica's favourite stores which just happen to sell HBO-themed products. Fans can respond to the fictional Jessica either as fans or as 'friends'. Indeed, the majority of followers respond to the blogs as if Jessica were a real person, no doubt responding to the voice of the blog.¹⁵

The wonderful series of graphic novels, which surprised even HBO by becoming the fastest-selling comics of all time, provide an

even clearer example. These are the 'brand-new medium' to which Ball refers in the quote that opens this chapter. The storyline of the first set, *All Together Now* (IDW 2011) jumps off where season two ends, but without repeating a single thing from the series. The viewer already knows these people and knows what to expect of their characters. However, this is an original new story that takes place entirely in Merlotte's. Moreover, it is another kind of storytelling, with the comic books serving as a doorway into the world for new fans, particularly those comics fans who might not have accessed the *True Blood* world previously.

The Great Revelation

The convergence of these various means of storytelling allows the audience access into a universe that becomes real because the makers have made it so. The consumer is welcomed in and allowed to participate in whatever form they are most comfortable with without damaging their enjoyment of the source material. After three seasons, the marketing tactics are no longer new but the anticipation of the new campaign is almost as exciting as waiting for the show itself. At one end of the spectrum are character webisodes, such as those released prior to season three, which were advertised as being 'all new' and written by Alan Ball, with a voice-over that stated, 'You're hungry for more of the story', and stressed that the scenes would not appear in the series.¹⁶ At the other is a weekly newsletter-come-marketing catalogue offering updated T-shirts linked to episodes, video clips and so on. By offering the audience access to a variety of themed content only desired by 'true' fans, the show takes the transmedia storytelling in directions not allowed by the limits of television. As a result, commodification is allowed to develop in ways that connect it to the text rather more than the typical consumer products related to other shows. For example, insiders know that each episode is named after a song, chosen for its dramatic links to the plot. Fans can download these from iTunes or purchase a collection at HBO.com. Viewers who do not, lose nothing.

The *True Blood* narrative appears to be only about the lives of the Bon Temps residents who just happen to live in a world where vampires are real. The narrative actually extends way beyond the small town to encompass the entire world. The story is that of the Great Revelation and all those it impacts, from vampires to humans. Given that, it is no wonder that the viral campaign was approached the way it was. In fact, the viral videos almost all feature 'ordinary' citizens rather than those who could ultimately be revealed as actors in a fictional drama. This wider narrative structure is not bound by one limited, episodic text. In this new world of storytelling there are no boundaries. Perhaps the lesson here is that everything (and everyone) is connected, even if those connections only take you back to Time Warner, who must still be rubbing their hands in glee. Perhaps vampires are real and perhaps as Foy argues, the Great Revelation, or at least its marketing campaign, forced us (in the words of the transmedia storytelling) to 'reexamine every notion we've ever had about life, the natural world, and even our own existence' (2010, 51). Or maybe it just wants us to buy a bottle of Tru Blood.

Notes

- 1 From the introduction to the collected comic books, *True Blood Vol. 1: All Together Now*. 2011. San Diego, CA: IDW Publishing.
- 2 See, for example, the United Kingdom's Red Button Service on the BBC or the less formal red button service on Sky.
- 3 See also *The Matrix Reloaded* (Andy and Laurence Wachowski, 2003, USA) and *The Matrix Revolutions* (Andy and Laurence Wachowski, 2003, USA).
- 4 Time Warner Online subscriber stats December 2010 available online at: <http://www.timewarner.com/our-content/home-box-office/>. (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- 5 In the USA all of HBO's primetime shows are rated for 14 and up (Parents Strongly Cautioned or Mature Audiences Only).
- 6 See the blog posting on ScreenRant, for example, available online at: <http://screenrant.com/is-this-a-new-movie-viral-campaign-solved-vic-1610/>. (Accessed 4 August 2011.)
- 7 'Breaking – Vampires Announce Themselves', viewable online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEiSK-ILwxk>. (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- 8 Viewable online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVCoKJ4mkeQ>. (Accessed 2 August 2011.)

- 9 'Cseh Laci olimpikon véres képsorok', viewable online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKxPkx8ltwI>. (Accessed 20 February 2011.)
- 10 See <http://www.bloodcopy.com/>. (Accessed 25 August 2011.)
- 11 See <http://www.hbo.com/true-blood/index.html>. (Accessed 25 August 2011.)
- 12 See <http://www.babyvamp-jessica.com/>. (Accessed 25 August 2011.)
- 13 Viewable online at: <http://www.babyvamp-jessica.com/babyvamp-jessica/2010/6/28/where-in-the-world-is-bill-fking-compton.html>. (Accessed 25 August 2011.)
- 14 See <http://www.babyvamp-jessica.com/babyvamp-jessica/2010/7/19/hoyts-hot-new-date.html>. (Accessed 25 August 2011.)
- 15 It is worth noting that the title – Baby Vamp – betrays the blog's fictional nature. How many teenagers do you know who would refer to themselves as 'babies'?
- 16 Viewable at: <http://www.trueblood-news.com/hbo-announces-true-blood-webisodes>. (Accessed 25 August 2011.)

Bibliography

- Dowdell, Jason. 2008. 'True Blood HBO's Vampire TV Show Taking Viral Marketing to Extremes.' Marketing Shift Online Marketing Blog, 4 September. Online at: <http://www.marketingshift.com/2008/9/trueblood-hbo-vampire-series-virus.cfm>. (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Foy, Joseph J. 2010. 'Signed in Blood Rights and the Vampire-Human Social Contract.' In *True Blood and Philosophy: We Wanna Think Bad Things with You*, ed. George A. Dunn and Rebecca Housel. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 51–64.
- Gentikow, Barbara. 2010. 'Television Use in New Media Environments.' In *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, ed. Jostein Gripsrud. London: Routledge, 141–52.
- Hale, Greg. 2008. 'Vampire Bloggers Crack Ancient Language Code for HBO Series.' Online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwuooQ1t5Y4>. (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Hills, Matt. 2002. *Fan Cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kompare, Derek. 2010. 'More "Moments of Television": Online Cult Television Authorship.' In *Flow TV: Television in the Age of Media Convergence*, ed. Michael Kackman. New York, NY: Routledge, 95–113.
- Leverette, Marc, Ott, Brian L., and Buckley, Cara L. 2008. *It's not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era*. New York: Routledge.
- Martin, Denise. 2008. 'HBO's True Blood: Audiences Don't Bite.' *Los Angeles Times On-line Edition* (9 September). Online at: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/showtracker/2008/09/hbo-premiere-tr.html>. (Accessed 20 February 2011.)