

## **Evaluating film and television on YouTube**

A comparative thematic analysis of vernacular professional reviewers Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1

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**ABSTRACT**

*Sociologists have long been preoccupied with how the value of artistic objects can be judged. This process called cultural evaluation has evolved within the last few decades. The most common practitioners of cultural evaluation are employed full-time professional critics who specialize in a specific art. Professional or traditional critics influence the consumption of culture in society and contribute to audience tastes. The rise of the Internet and digital media have facilitated the emergence of new types of critics commonly called new critics. They have challenged the influence of their traditional counterparts and have effectively used the affordances of social media to their advantage. The emergence of new critics has also led to renewed interest in the cultural evaluation of film and television. This can be attributed to the rise of popular reviewing websites such Rotten Tomatoes and IMDb which have provided spaces for amateur new critics to share their thoughts. This has also spread to social media websites such as YouTube where self-professed film and television reviewers have gained big platforms. The aim of this research is to analyze and compare the ways in which new critics, particularly vernacular professionals, evaluate film and television in their YouTube reviews. Vernacular professionals are online reviewers who combine their knowledge of reviewing with unique personality characteristics in order to gain an audience on YouTube. Vernacular professional reviewers Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 were selected as appropriate subjects of this comparative study. A total of 29 videos by Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 were thematically analyzed. The analysis resulted in outlining a number of commonalities between the reviewers, a number of contrasting evaluations and some noteworthy differences in their approaches. The main findings of the study showed that vernacular professionals had some general similarities in the way they used evaluation criteria, particularly high art criteria. However, they also had some differences which revealed that Meyers and Nerdwriter1 can focus on very distinct nuances of a specific evaluation such as formal elements of a film. The analysis also showed that the unique language characteristics displayed by Meyers and Nerdwriter1 were related to the online persona which they wish to convey. Meyers' tendency to use humor was related to engaging his audience and Nerdwriter1's use of sophisticated language was related to his desire to break down the filmmaking process. The main conclusion of this study is that new critics evaluate film and television in complex ways and employ a mix of high art criteria, popular aesthetic criteria and their own personality.*

**KEYWORDS:** *cultural evaluation, film, television, critics*

## **Preface**

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## 1. Introduction

The recent success of HBO's *Last of Us* and *Succession* have once again demonstrated that the tastes of audiences and critics are not so different after all. Both shows have united common viewers and professional critics in their views (Hailu, 2023; Koblin, 2023). Such unanimous appreciation of a cultural product invites sociologists of arts to consider the development of cultural evaluation in recent years. While cultural evaluation has historically been theorized for decades (Van Rees, 1983), the question of how cultural products are evaluated nowadays has experienced significant recent development when it comes to digital media (Verboord, 2010). Over the last few decades, reviewing websites such as Rotten Tomatoes and the Internet Movie Data Base (IMDb) have given film and television fans the opportunity to not only read about the critics' consensus about their favorite shows, but also participate in the discourse with their own reviews. This is only one way of the many aspects of the cultural evaluation evolution.

In order to understand the evolution of cultural evaluation, it is first important to turn to the most well-known cultural evaluation practitioners, critics. Traditional critics occupy the unique position of cultural mediators which means that through their work, they influence the cultural consumption habits of the public (Janssen & Verboord, 2015). More importantly, they also contribute to the classification of art when it comes to genres and what is considered aesthetic or high art and what is considered popular art (DiMaggio, 1987). This means that through their evaluations, critics can make the formal distinction between what is considered artistic and what is considered entertainment (Baumann, 2001). Critics' status as authority figures in culture has been noted in previous research (Baumann, 2001; Janssen & Verboord, 2015). However, there is reason to believe that their influence has been declining (Verboord, 2014). This is in part inspired by the rising popularity of an alternative type of cultural practitioners commonly called new or contemporary critics (Janssen & Verboord, 2015). In recent years, the study of new critics has become more prevalent in order to investigate their differences from and similarities to traditional critics (Verboord, 2014). New critics took advantage of the democratization of the Internet in order to bypass the influence of traditional critics and discuss media freely (Janssen & Verboord, 2015; Verboord, 2010).

As two of the most popular media genres, film and television have gained a lot of attention from scholars in terms of their place in cultural evaluation. While film used to be regarded mostly as entertainment in the United States, a number of societal factors and developments in the film industry gradually convinced audiences of film's potential to be considered as art (Baumann, 2001). Film critics also contributed to that through evaluating films in more nuanced ways than previously (Baumann, 2001). In contrast, television has not managed to experience the same shift and has been misjudged by critics due to its format constraints and commercial orientation (Lotz, 2008; Teurlings, 2018). In a way, film and television are considered to belong to the two ends of the high art vs. popular

culture spectrum. High art vs. popular culture is a distinction which has persisted for a long time (DiMaggio, 1987).

### **1.1. Research question**

This research attempts to consider the contemporary state of cultural criticism through the perspective of two new critics with big social media audiences – Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1. Meyers and Nerdwriter1 belong to a new critic group called “vernacular professional reviewers” by Jaakkola (2022). Vernacular professionals combine knowledge of criticism with unique aspects of their online personalities, which are displayed with the help of the affordances of YouTube. Meyers and Nerdwriter1 are YouTube critics who discuss both film and television in their reviews, which gives this research the opportunity to compare their approaches to not only cultural evaluation, but also the two respective formats. Criticism of any kind is performed with the help of aesthetic criteria, which are related to broader cultural implications of aesthetic standards (Bielby et al., 2005). The aesthetic standards applied to film and television have varied significantly because of their unique respective developments, outlined by Baumann (2001) and Lotz (2008). The study will examine selected video reviews by Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 and compare the findings in order to see what similarities and differences are exhibited by them. Despite sharing the same online space, Meyers and Nerdwriter1 vary in their position on the cultural criticism continuum (Kristensen et al., 2021). Meyers’ emphasis on authenticity and audience orientation make him more closely aligned with reviewers, as discussed by Verboord (2014). Nerdwriter1’s attention to form and technique make him more aligned with traditional critic, examined by Baumann (2001). This leads to the formulation of the following research question: *How do vernacular professional reviewers Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 evaluate television shows and films in their YouTube videos?*

### **1.2. Academic relevance**

While previous research has examined broad patterns of online criticism (Verboord, 2014) and peer reviews (Teurlings, 2018), this study contributes to enriching cultural evaluation research in the context of two YouTube creators. A study with similar subjects was conducted by Marshall (2021). Marshall (2021) compared user-generated Rotten Tomatoes reviews and reviews by popular YouTube film critics Chris Stuckmann and Jeremy Jahns. While his findings were related to the online personas reviewers create, this study is a unique opportunity to consider Meyers and Nerdwriter1’s personas as well as the nuances of their evaluative practices. This is noteworthy in the context of wider cultural evaluation research since it examines the unique place vernacular professionals occupy, where YouTube personality and critic intersect (Jaakkola, 2022).

### **1.3. Societal relevance**

Studying the practices of vernacular professional reviewers on YouTube is beneficial to

society in several ways. Firstly, it provides an accessible overview of what it means to do cultural evaluation from the point of view of two people who are not professional reviewers in the traditional sense (Jaakkola, 2022). This can be informative for people with varying levels of knowledge about criticism who are unsure what it actually involves can therefore have an educational purpose. Secondly, learning from Meyers and Nerdwriter1 can also potentially inspire individuals with an interest in film and television criticism to try it out for themselves. Understanding Meyers' and Nerdwriter1's experiences with reviewing on YouTube can also provide more insight into the challenges or issues commonly faced by independent content creators on YouTube who engage in broader cultural commentary. This is important since it provides more information about cultural commentary on social media, which can also contribute to the development of popular culture (Teurlings, 2018).



## 2. Theory

The aim of this chapter is to provide theoretical context that might help answer the research question of this study which aims to compare the reviewing practices of two online reviewers, Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1. Therefore, this framework is divided into several sections. First, in order to establish a starting point for criticism research, the notion of cultural criticism will be explained as well as the role and evaluative practices of traditional critics. This section will also discuss their institutional ties and how they contribute to cultural hierarchies. The second section will explain how the emergence of new critics such as Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 is regarded as a response to the constraints of traditional criticism and what evaluations new critics are likely to employ in their work. Here, the democratization of the Internet will be discussed and how that aided in the rise of new critics' popularity through websites such as YouTube. The final section will elaborate on the unique paths of film and television and how both came to be regarded and evaluated as cultural products and how they have been perceived by traditional and new critics.

### 2.1. Cultural criticism and the notion of traditional critics

In order to understand the activities of new critics, it is first important to contextualize what place their predecessors, old critics occupy in arts and culture. Becker's (1982) notion of an art world helpfully emphasizes that the creation, development and consumption of art relies on a network of individuals with distinct responsibilities. While this may be obvious, it establishes the starting point for discussions of both cultural production (e.g. creating a TV series) and evaluation, the part with which critics are concerned (Janssen & Verboord, 2015). For example, in the film art world, the idea for a film is usually developed by its director and scriptwriter. Their collaboration is an indelible part of the film's journey. After this, many individuals are involved with the film who contribute to its development such as actors and editors. After the completion of the film, a range of distributors and agents is involved. As part of its evaluation, there are critics who discuss their thoughts about the film before the audience. As the activities of critics will be later expanded on, for now it is important to just note that critics are preoccupied with evaluating the merit of a cultural product (Janssen & Verboord, 2015).

The most important nuances of the term 'criticism' can be boiled down to two. Firstly, criticism revolves around "evaluating cultural phenomena and goods" and aims "to consider the cultural and societal value of a certain object" (Kristensen et al., 2021, p. 4). This immediately raises questions about the nature of evaluation and how exactly value is examined. Gilmore (2013) narrows down the particular elements of art criticism performed by critics: "identification of art, its interpretation and its evaluation" (p. 379). This positions evaluation as the final step of a three-step analytical process. A pioneer of studies of art criticism, Van Rees (1983; 1989) discusses the three steps in more detail. In his article about literary critics, he delineates three types based on their

“conception of literature” or “premises and definitions which are believed to specify the nature and function of literature” (Van Rees, 1983, p. 400). In other words, these are normative practices and standards through which literature can be understood. Van Rees’ three types of critics are journalistic, essayistic and academic critics. While the article’s literary focus can be challenging to apply to other arts, the new critics discussed in this research most resemble journalistic critics since those highlight noteworthy cultural products within specific art form and address a broad audience in the face of YouTube viewers (Van Rees, 1983). It is also worth stating that criticism research has evolved since Van Rees’ articles were published and that his research is best used for guidance rather than a source of analogies. All the mentioned types of critics share two common beliefs: criticism is a three-step process as delineated by Gilmore (2013), with the exception of art identification, which Van Rees (1983) calls description. Despite the semantic difference, both terms serve the same purpose: to provide a starting point for distinguishing art objects from all other objects. The second belief is that what critics do directly contributes to the “hierarchical classification of . . . texts according to their . . . quality” (Van Rees, 1983, p. 400). This reasoning can be applied to other types of art critics since it points to fundamental characteristics of criticism: it is a gradual process which relies on prescriptive and descriptive statements about a work of art and it contributes to reaffirming broader and more abstract structures within culture (Van Rees, 1989). Exploration of these issues is later seen in important research by Baumann (2001), Janssen and Verboord (2015) and Verboord (2010; 2014). Janssen and Verboord (2015) provide an overview of how cultural consumption is regulated by different mediators. Baumann (2001) discusses the evolution of film reviews over time and how that contributed to film’s legitimization as an art form. Verboord (2014) compares the practices of online amateur film critics to the often stricter practices of offline, print critics and uses that to discuss the development of cultural evaluation. Similar to his study, this study continues this line of research, but takes the unique angle of examining the practices of two popular YouTube critics.

Traditionally, critics are considered experts in their specialized areas. As mentioned, such expertise is related to understanding the standards within an art form. Critics’ expertise constitutes intensive practice of their knowledge through making repeated observations in their field until they are considered connoisseurs by their colleagues (Janssen & Verboord, 2015). This also provides practice for the future evaluations they have to make for consumers. While such social vetting gives critics room to stand out among their peers, it decreases the possibility of dissenting voices (Janssen & Verboord, 2015; Van Rees, 1989). Thus, the development of a critic’s judgment is dependent on their skills, but also on the acceptance of their community (Van Rees, 1989). This regulation of critics’ practice is one aspect of the institutionalization of criticism. Such regulation is directly related to the authority which critics possess since authority is “proportional to the degree of acceptance of their proposals” (Van Rees, 1983, p. 189). In short, in order for critics to be taken seriously in their field, they must persuade the audience and their colleagues of their evaluations (Janssen & Verboord, 2015).

This is a point of difference between new and old critics which will be discussed in more detail later.

Jaakkola (2022) helpfully summarizes institutionalization as “the increased formalization and structure of the communication activity” (p. 125). Critics can occupy settings with various levels of institutionalization, but when it comes to studying critics’ activities, social scientists have paid the most attention to prestigious legacy media newspapers such as the *New York Times* which have historically employed professional critics (Verboord, 2014). In this sense, institutionalization is related to media organizations having access to important material resources such as money, but also arguably more important immaterial resources such as esteem and respect (Baumann, 2007). Critics employed by such organizations automatically gain respect by sheer association. That also means conducting their work in a way which upholds the values and reputation of their organization. One potential consequence of this is related to the way critics select what to discuss. Here, Van Rees (1983) emphasizes that the selection procedure of films a journalistic critic uses can act as a filter for what films might be interesting for essayistic and academic critics. This then gives journalistic critics a broad range of films to choose from. This is important to mention since Baumann’s (2001) study of the vocabulary critics use to discuss film demonstrates that over time they start using more nuanced and sophisticated arguments in their work, ultimately contributing to the contemporary perception of film as an art form. All of this suggests that the workings of institutionalization permeate the conditions in which critics work. In turn, this affects the way they evaluate films, for instance (Van Rees, 1989). As mentioned, institutionalization also depends on the accumulation of various resources. After all, it is through resources, whether in the form of talent, financing or facilities that institutions in art worlds can gain legitimacy (Baumann, 2007). All of this shows the embeddedness of institutionalization in traditional cultural evaluation. This is also a noteworthy point of difference which differentiates new critics from old critics since new critics are generally considered to have weaker institutional ties (Verboord, 2014).

Additionally, traditional critics have a key role in affirming the age-old distinction between high art and popular culture (Shrum, 1996). Essential to this distinction is who gets to consume certain art genres and why (Alexander, 2020). A prime example of this distinction is opera vs. popular music. Since this study is about criticism of film and television, it is important to say they are a source of contention as an example, which will be discussed in the final section of this chapter (Baumann, 2001). Bourdieu’s (1982) theory of distinction is a fundamental sociological concept narrowly related to art forms. Its most pertinent aspect here relates to the idea that different social groups vary in the amount of their cultural capital which is a “currency based on taste” (Alexander, 2020, p. 201). Taste on the other hand is directly related to socio-economic standing which ultimately affirms social hierarchies (Shrum, 1996). It is then easy to see how this can affirm a cultural hierarchy such as high art vs. popular culture. A common argument for the distinction is that high art has innate sophistication which

popular or low culture does not (Alexander, 2020). While this belief was long-held by scholars, a more nuanced understanding would be that high art is “creator-oriented”, while popular culture is “audience-oriented” (Alexander, 2020, p. 200). For instance, when looking at classical paintings, one might point out the author’s masterful use of color or shadow, but viewers of a television sitcom point out the show’s ability to make them laugh. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the distinction has weakened, but it can be challenging to examine the causes and implications of that (Janssen et al., 2011; Verboord, 2010). Shrum (1996) suggests that the distinction is not due to the innate qualities of the cultural products such as film or television. Rather, it is a difference of the mediation process. His assertion that “taste in high art is mediated, whereas in low art is not” leads back to critics’ status as cultural mediators (Shrum, 1996, p. 23). High art is dominated by institutionalized discourse about aesthetic values and “experienced characterizations by authorities”, which adds many layers of mediation (Shrum, 1996, p. 40). Those layers are not present in popular culture. Online amateur critics of popular culture make use of this in their reviews, as shown by Teurlings (2018) who discusses how audience members analyze the TV show *The Walking Dead*.

Lastly, it is necessary to address the difference between critique, criticism and reviewing. This will be done using the distinctions drawn by Kristensen et al., (2021) that consider all three as part of the continuum of cultural criticism. While some nuances of criticism were already mentioned in the beginning of this section, it is important to consider them in relation to reviewing and critique. As criticism has already been discussed in nuance in the beginning of this section, it suffices to say that it relates to the evaluation of cultural phenomena (Kristensen et al., 2021). Kristensen et al. (2021) characterize critique through its association with academia and tendency to discuss socio-political issues, but they also highlight that it shares something with criticism and reviewing – its emphasis on interpretation. This is important since interpretation is an essential aspect of any type of cultural criticism and it can be expected of the comparative analysis of Meyers and Nerdwriter1 that it will be discussed. The scholars then claim that reviewing is “a more mainstream type of cultural evaluation . . . adopted in everyday language as an umbrella term for many heterogeneous evaluation practices and styles of expression” (Kristensen et al., 2021, p. 5). While this conceptualization is broad, it encompasses the diversity of the term. On the basis of this, the main difference between criticism and reviewing is related to the level of depth and theoretical aspects involved. Investigating this distinction in the context of Meyers and Nerdwriter1 is also a concern of this study.

In summary, this section has discussed the workings of cultural criticism with regard to traditional critics and their activities. It has also explained how institutionalization is embedded in traditional criticism and that affects critics’ practices. Finally, the distinction between high art and popular culture was explained in relation to traditional critics as mediators. Several points of difference between old critics and new critics have been outlined. The next section will focus on the emergence

of new critics, some of their unique characteristics and how they compare to their traditional counterparts.

## **2.2. New critics and digital media**

This section contextualizes existing research about new critics and some unique characteristics they possess in comparison to their traditional counterparts. The emergence of new critics and their rise to popularity is of vital concern for this study as well as studies such as Verboord (2014) and Teurlings (2018). Before delving into them to describe new critics in more detail, the circumstances that led to their emergence and helped them flourish will be explained. The invention of the Internet and the later rise of digital media, are considered two of the biggest forces shaping contemporary cultural discourse (Verboord, 2014). Not only has the Internet granted millions the opportunity to access a wide variety of cultural products such as film but also it has led to what Jenkins (2006) calls participatory culture or the idea that audiences can now create as well as distribute their own content online. The Internet has also given audiences the opportunity to bypass cultural mediators such as critics (Verboord, 2014). This means that audiences can engage in discussions of their beloved television series away from the influence of selective critics. It also gives audiences online spaces where they can discuss films or television shows away from the influence of critics. For instance, the popular reviewing website Rotten Tomatoes has two distinct scores when it comes to reviews – one score is the sum of all critics’ reviews and the other score shows audience reviews. This feature highlights how nowadays the discrepancy between popular opinion and critics’ consensus is more visible than before. Websites such as Rotten Tomatoes give an opportunity space for anyone with access to the Internet to share their opinions and engage with other people who are doing the same. Janssen and Verboord (2015) state that the new wave of criticism takes the form of “alternative, ‘popular’ forms of critical discourse, albeit often in less prestigious settings” (p. 12). This is one of the most important characteristics of new critics. Due to the lack of institutional ties that new critics typically have, they present themselves as an alternative to traditional criticism. However, Verboord (2014) points out that “media critics leave their mark by developing – partly under the influence of academic criticism – a discourse that resonates in the wider cultural field” (p. 923). This serves to establish that new critics might in fact have more in common with traditional criticism previously thought.

Firstly, it is essential to go into more detail about what types of new critics have been researched previously in order to consider where Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 fit in. Firstly, Verboord (2014) analyzed user-generated reviews posted on popular reviewing websites such as IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes. User-generated reviews in general are also discussed by de Jong and Burgers (2013), Jaakkola (2018) and Teurlings (2018). In comparison, research of user-generated reviewers created by social media personalities has not been as prominent (Jaakkola 2022; Marshall 2021). In the

context of this study, Meyers and Nerdwriter1 both create their own original reviews, which makes them peer reviewers, but they also have a social media audience and YouTube personas, which means they also have commonalities with online celebrities (Marshall, 2021). Other research preoccupied with the intersection of both of these aspects is Kristensen and From (2015). They discuss the recent emergence of the “media-made arbiter of taste” who is usually someone who combines their knowledge of a subject with media visibility. What makes media-made arbiters of taste unique in this sense is “a mix of professional skill and personal charisma” (Kristensen & From, 2015, p. 862). So not only do they possess a level of expertise, but they also demonstrate that expertise through calculated media appearances. Kristensen and From (2015) highlight that an important aspect of this type of critic’s development is related to mainstream media coverage. While Meyers and Nerdwriter1 are both known for their reviews in the YouTube sphere, they are not considered media-made arbiters of taste because their online presence is not related to a constant media presence on mainstream media. However, the observations made by Kristensen and From (2015) are relevant since they discuss the presence of media-made arbiters in media in recent years.

Marshall’s (2021) study of online reviewers is essential to this research because it employs a unique approach. He compares user reviewers on Rotten Tomatoes as well as popular YouTube film reviewers Chris Stuckmann and Jeremy Jahns in terms of the online personas all of them create. Marshall (2021) points out that one of the distinct characteristics of YouTube reviewers in general is their intention to authenticity. Authenticity is also highlighted by Jaakkola (2022) as essential on social media because it gives a reviewer an opportunity to stand out in the reviewing sphere while also potentially showcasing personality traits unique to themselves. In this way, Marshall (2021) discusses the importance of humor in the reviews that Stuckmann and Jahns post. Humor, then, is one way in which YouTube reviewers can be unique in their approach to cultural evaluation, without undermining their expertise (Marshall, 2021). His findings show that popular YouTube film reviewers like Stuckmann and Jahns put a lot of calculated effort in order to maintain their persona. Since the subjects of this study Meyers and Nerdwriter1 are also part of the YouTube reviewing sphere, this is relevant to their identity as reviewers because it highlights the presence of the large audience they have. While traditional critics also have audiences since they publish reviews in newspapers or magazines read by thousands, they never had to do that on one of the biggest social media platforms in the world. Therefore, the audience factor that Meyers and Nerdwriter1 face is likely to inform the decisions they make and the way they evaluate film and television.

This is also addressed by Jaakkola (2022) in her work about post-professional reviewers and how they operate online. Firstly, she highlights the importance of agency for any reviewer who occupies an online platform. As a consequence of their agency, they start creating their own original review-based content, which then is shown to the other users on the social media platform (Jaakkola,

2022). This content, then, is accepted or rejected by other users in the form of likes of comments, for instance. This is what becomes the basis of the difference between professional and amateur reviewers, according to Jaakkola (2022). The professionalization of reviewers “implies a constant struggle in which professionals continually negotiate and try to maintain their position with an ultimate aim to uphold the autonomy which is a precondition for functioning independently” (Jaakkola, 2022, p. 122). For digital creators on YouTube like Stuckmann or Meyers or Nerdwriter1, autonomy and independence can be crucial since they can constitute creative freedom, which can also be tied to their income from YouTube monetization policies (Jaakkola, 2022; Marshall, 2021). Jaakkola (2022) then goes on to outline different types of post-professional reviewers, but the most pertinent one here is vernacular professional reviewers. Jaakkola (2022) uses Burgess’ (2006) brief explanation of the vernacular element in the term: “a productive articulation of consumer practices and knowledges—with older popular traditions and communicative practices” (Burgess, 2006, p. 207). This quote is particularly relevant to Meyers and Nerdwriter1 as reviewers since their position as new critics is informed by the activities and characteristics of traditional critics. Jaakkola (2022) goes on to say that, as is the general tendency in new criticism, vernacular professional reviewers do not normally have institutional ties with any organizations, which gives them a unique level of independence. Additionally, she emphasizes an essential aspect of the term vernacular professionals, which also further clarifies the professional element: “serious intention to standardize and structure their product and conduct in order to create. . . integrity in production” (Jaakkola, 2022, p. 136). This involves conscious effort of the reviewer’s part to create their own unique product that not only reflects their knowledge about reviewing, but also their values. Jaakkola (2022) highlights that reviewers like Meyers and Nerdwriter1 go through the process of public legitimization, which involves letting the audience make a decision if they want to see more of a reviewer’s content or not. It is in this way that vernacular professional reviewers gain online legitimization. Once again, the impact of the audience is a unique challenge which vernacular professionals face. In order to maintain their platform, vernacular professionals have to cultivate an audience, which can be done through active communication with it or other ways of engagement that show that a reviewer maintains their audience (Jaakkola, 2022). All of these aspects contribute to the concept of the vernacular professional.

Lastly, this section will discuss some of the reviewing practices most commonly associated with online critics such as vernacular professionals. As already mentioned, the distinction between high art evaluation criteria and popular aesthetic evaluation criteria has been connected to different media consumption habits (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010; Verboord, 2014). Aesthetic evaluations have been discussed in relation to Bourdieu’s (1984) idea of aesthetic and popular disposition. Aesthetic disposition involves appreciating art objects in a manner which provides distance between the consumer and the banality of everyday life (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). This disposition also mainly considers the aesthetic qualities of the object rather than its usefulness (Kersten & Bielby, 2012).

Therefore, it tends to “reject all things too human, common or easy” (Kersten & Bielby, 2012, p. 185). Because of this, aesthetic evaluation criteria tend to consider “form over function”, which means that they relate to the formal elements of an art object, its deeper meaning and ambiguity (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). In comparison, popular disposition refers to art products which are positioned in the everyday and thus have proximity to the audience (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Conversely, this disposition relies on a very shortened distance between the audience and the object itself and the disposition’s primary concern is about usefulness and functionality (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Due to this proximity to the audience, the most common popular aesthetic evaluations are related to the viewer’s experience, familiarity and emotional authenticity (Bielby & Bielby, 2004; Bielby et al., 2005; Kersten & Bielby, 2012). The next section will provide more context into the high art vs. popular culture evaluation in the context of film and television criticism.

### **2.3. Film, television and their criticism**

This section focuses on considering the respective development arcs of film and television in culture and then contextualizing film criticism and television criticism. On the basis of that, conclusions will be drawn about what might be expected from Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 in their reviews.

Firstly, the most significant study into the development of film that is still widely cited is perhaps Baumann (2001). Baumann (2001) aims to explain two issues related to film: why did film gradually shed its status as only a form of entertainment and instead came to be seen as a potential art form? And how is that demonstrated in film reviews over the course of several decades? With the help of Baumann (2007), the process of artistic legitimation, which was what film went through, can be summed up in the following way: “repositioning from merely entertainment, commerce, fad, or cultural experimentation or randomness to culture that is legitimately artistic, whether that be popular or high art” (pp. 48-49). In short, the process involves several aspects such as making use of an opportunity in society, accumulating resources to address that opportunity and providing an appropriate framing for the legitimation (Baumann, 2007). In the context of Baumann (2001) and film, some of the most important aspects are rising educational levels, a restructuring of film production with the emphasis on the director and the influence of critics. It is important to state here that around the 1950s, according to Baumann (2001), film was considered part of popular culture and an unambiguous source of entertainment. The changes in this perspective are traced with the help of film reviews published in print media. Baumann’s (2001) findings suggest that, with the help of the aforementioned socio-economic factors, film critics started intellectualizing film which meant the “application of aesthetic standards” (p. 411). This involved anything from using more sophisticated language in their reviews to using their own interpretations to having nuanced thoughts about a film’s failings (Baumann, 2001). Additionally, the question of whether film has a place in art only and/or



entertainment only, was also discussed by critics (Baumann, 2001). While the subjects which film addressed changed over time partly due to the auteurism influence from Europe (Baumann, 2001), the most important observation here is that critics started considering film in more complex ways than before. Kersten and Bielby (2012) also highlight how this also resulted in more attention to what can be accomplished with film. Nowadays, as Kersten and Bielby (2012) point out, it is only some films that are considered art. This points to a distinction of art vs. entertainment within the film genre itself, which can lead to very different reviewing approaches. One noteworthy observation from Baumann (2001) is that while perspectives of film changed, television implicitly remained regarded as entertainment.

As a cultural product, television has had quite a different development in the last 70 years. Over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, television mainly appealed to mass audiences (Baumann, 2001). Teurlings (2018) points out how television was treated by critics in the same way as other types of cultural products like films or books. However, this failed to account for some unique characteristics television has (Spigel, 2009). Explorations of the development of television criticism in the United States such as Lotz (2008) make it clear that television is a unique medium which demands a different approach to criticism. Throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, characteristics of television such as its relatively ephemeral episodic nature complicated the task of traditional artistic critics who were unable to access a television program after its air day (Lotz, 2008). Additionally, the presence of many television shows every day meant it was difficult to keep track of all shows and episodes (Lotz, 2008). What Lotz (2008) also points out is related to the fact that for a lot of broadcasters, the main motivation to invest in television shows was profit. Therefore, television's commercial orientation made it a tricky medium to criticize. Other constraints which television has include concerns related to distribution. Despite all this, Lotz (2008) insists that television has the capacity to hold artistic merit and be judged within its own constraints. After all, as established, film was gradually legitimized (Baumann, 2001). All of this is relevant when discussing television since, to some extent, Teurlings (2018), points out, television is still limited to an entertainment product.

As previously mentioned, the Internet and later digital media, facilitated the rise of everyday amateur reviewers as well as vernacular professionals such as Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1. While Teurlings (2018) focuses on amateur criticism in the form of recaps rather than reviews, it is still important to consider what he calls "commonification" which can be summarized as the practice of television criticism becoming commonly available to the public, rather than simply an activity which only critics do. This is important to point out in the context of this research since both Meyers and Nerdwriter1 contribute to this commonification with their reviews. Both reviewers offer different approaches to film and/or television criticism which make it more accessible to their audiences.

It is necessary to state that according to Bielby et al. (2005), the area of television criticism does not have expert critics the same way that film criticism has prominent connoisseurs. The main reason why this is the case that Bielby et al. (2005) give is television network's business orientation and emphasis on providing advertiser-friendly programs. This is important in the context of vernacular professionals since they tend to have no ties to broadcasting media (Verboord, 2014). In turn, this gives them creative freedom and room innovate in or experiment with their reviews.

Despite sharing some obvious audio-visual similarities, film and television have been discussed as having two very opposing places in arts and culture. As established, the perception of film underwent a shift towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and while television has been discussed more as a serious medium (Teurlings, 2018), there is still a common perception that television cannot escape the entertainment category.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research design**

In order to answer the research question, this thesis opted for analyzing selected YouTube video reviews by Alex Meyers and Evan Puschak also known as Nerdwriter1. This section is concerned with explaining the reasoning for all decisions related to this.

Firstly, it is important to outline why qualitative content analysis is the most appropriate way to approach this study. Qualitative content analysis is perfect for in-depth discussion and understanding of a phenomenon in a way which promotes iterative cycles of data organization and data interpretation (Boeije, 2010). One of the main principles of qualitative content analysis is constant comparison, which encourages re-analyzing sets of data and considering its similarities and differences in relation to other sets of data (Boeije, 2010). This technique makes this type of analysis perfect for delving into textual data that might have multiple layers of meaning or nuance. Additionally, qualitative content analysis emphasizes breaking big data sets into fragments and examining the meaning of those fragments on their own as well as within the wider theoretical context of a topic (Boeije, 2010). This can be particularly pertinent when conducting a comparative study because it involves considering Meyers' and Puschak's reviewing practices on their own as well as in relation to each other and criticism research in general. All of these characteristics make qualitative content analysis the best way to go about this study.

Thematic analysis was the chosen data analysis method for this study. Thematic analysis hinges on examining data to look for, investigate and discuss patterns within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method allows the researcher to capture nuances and intricacies of a topic and categorize them in various themes, while also considering the theoretical implications of those themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given this, thematic analysis is the perfect way to study how online critics assign aesthetic criteria to film and television, categorize those themes and contextualize the findings with the help of important previous research such as Baumann (2001) and Bielby and Bielby (2012). The interpretative nature of thematic analysis allows the researcher to consider the subjective element that is an inevitable part of all criticism (Van Rees, 1989). Since this study compares several years' worth of videos created by Meyers and by Puschak, thematic analysis also helps identify personal quirks related to criticism that they display over time on their YouTube channels.

YouTube is one of the biggest websites hosting user-generated content in video form (Arthurs et al., 2018). The rise of its popularity in the mid-2000s was associated with how anyone with access to a camera could explore their creativity (Arthurs et al., 2018). Its enormous video catalogue and its status as a social media giant have solidified YouTube's impact on global culture (Arthurs et al.,

2018). As explained in the theoretical framework, the rise of the internet and the capabilities of digital media encouraged people to actively participate in the creation and distribution of content online (Jenkins, 2006). This was also the case for aspiring amateur critics who want to share their reviews online (Jaakkola, 2018). Jaakkola (2018) highlights the importance of studying online reviews to understand if they are a modern continuation of their institutional counterparts or its active challengers. All of these reasons make YouTube the most suitable platform to look for appropriate reviewers to compare.

Existing research into online reviewing practices related to film and television is usually limited to analyzing reviews posted on popular reviewing websites such as Rotten Tomatoes and the IMDb (Verboord, 2014) and regional websites such as Moviekeuze.nl (de Jong & Burgers, 2013). Teurlings (2018) analyzed user comments discussing *The Walking Dead* posted on entertainment websites TVline.com and Entertainment Weekly (EW). Since this study pays attention to YouTube specifically, it was important to carefully consider how to source the reviews. As established in the theoretical framework, Jaakkola's (2022) conceptualization of vernacular professional reviewers is pertinent. YouTube reviewers or critics are considered vernacular professionals which highlights two unique aspects about them: the self-made reviewer aspect which requires public legitimization and the creator aspect which highlights crafting a product using the affordances of the social media platform (Jaakkola, 2022). Often, vernacular professionals are online media personalities (Jaakkola, 2022). In order to consider subjects for this study, the researcher opted for a two-step sampling process. The first step involves using purposive sampling to identify appropriate vernacular professionals to focus on. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique, whose main principle is "deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses" (Etikan et al., 2015, p. 2). Given the exploratory nature of this study, purposive sampling is the most suitable way to conduct it since it involves choosing information rich cases (Patton, 2002).

### **3.2. Sampling**

Criterion sampling, a type of purposive sampling, was used to identify online critics for this study. The goal of criterion sampling is to create a predetermined profile of criteria that must be satisfied (Patton, 2002). In this case, the profile of the online critic was informed by Jaakkola's (2022) vernacular professional reviewers and Kristensen et al.'s (2021) conceptualization of cultural criticism as a continuum. Therefore, the following criteria were formulated in order to select appropriate subjects for the study.

The subject must occupy the sphere of film and television criticism on YouTube. An indication of this is if the YouTube creator has posted regular videos on their channel discussing films and/or television, usually indicated by the title of their videos. The purpose of this criterion is to

increase the validity of this study.

The subject must be a vernacular professional or a “self-made reviewer” as explained by Jaakkola (2022) which consists of regularity of reviewing film and television and entering “the process of public legitimization, which eventually indicates whether they are accepted and acknowledged by their audience or not” (p. 137). This means focusing on people who have multi-year a history of reviewing film and television on YouTube and as a result of that have established a reputation for themselves in the cultural criticism side of YouTube. Considering the pragmatic implications and the limits of the study, this reputation and the public legitimization aspect are indicated by a YouTube subscriber count of over 3 million.

The subject must be a part of the cultural criticism continuum (Kristensen et al., 2021) which means their activity relates to the range from the most intellectualized, critique, to the most versatile one, reviewing, with criticism as a “reflective and evaluative practice” in the middle of this continuum (Kristensen et al., 2021, p. 7). What necessitated this criterion was the researcher’s desire to contribute to existing cultural criticism research through conducting a nuanced study when it comes to different types of critics and reviewers. Previous research such as Jaakkola (2022) and Marshall (2021) highlighted two of the most well-known film reviewers on YouTube, Chris Stuckmann and Jeremy Jahns. Other YouTube creators who occupy different positions on Kristensen et al.’s (2021) continuum have received less attention. Additionally, differing positions on the continuum also facilitate comparison of the use of their aesthetic criteria. The researcher identified YouTube creators Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 as appropriate subjects for this study. This section is concerned with how they match the outlined criterion profile. It also involves brief descriptions of the focus on their respective YouTube channels.

Alex Meyers is an American YouTube content creator who specializes in making reviews of films and television shows that combine animation and humorous commentary (LaJeunesse, 2022). As of writing this, Meyers has 3.39 million subscribers and 333 videos on his channel, the majority of which are dedicated to his reviews (Alex Meyers, n. d.). He discovered a new YouTube niche when he posted a video that involved rudimentary animation in the form of stick figures that accompanied his review of the popular television show *Riverdale* (LaJeunesse, 2022). This allowed him to combine his self-described interest in the genre of teen dramas with his interest in animation (LaJeunesse, 2022). Due to the popularity of this new format with his audience, Meyers decided to continue doing it (LaJeunesse, 2022). Additionally, Meyers orients his content towards suggestions for films or TV shows from his audience (LaJeunesse, 2022). Meyers humorous commentary is the most recognizable aspect of his videos. Meyers’ videos usually incorporate the following format. First, a brief introduction of the show he is going to discuss. Next, he conducts his commentary of the first episode

of the television show or in the case of a film, he aims for more general commentary. This usually involves providing plot summaries and highlighting a number of selected scenes, which are accompanied by humorous animated skits. Lastly, as a conclusion, he provides his final evaluations in a humorous way.

Evan Puschak is an American YouTube content creator who specializes in producing video essays on a wide range of topics including film and television and publishes those videos on his YouTube channel, Nerdwriter1 (Parker, 2017). As of writing this, the Nerdwriter1 channel has 3.14 million YouTube subscribers and 277 uploaded videos (Nerdwriter1, n. d.). Puschak is known for his analytical approach to topics he is discussing (Parker, 2017). He studied filmmaking at Boston University (Evans, 2017). This is worth mentioning since it establishes that Puschak possess academic training related to film and film criticism. His formal education in the area of film makes him possess a level of institutionalization as a reviewer in general and specifically a level of institutionalized film criticism (Baumann, 2001). This in turn makes him more likely to be familiar with the evaluative practices of traditional critics, which might inform his reviewing practices in specific ways. Puschak's videos usually do not follow a specific format that can be outlined, but similarly to Meyers, he also highlights specific scenes of the films he is discussing.

The second step of the sampling process consisted of data collection within Meyers' and Puschak's videos. In order to ensure the feasibility of this study, it was necessary to establish a fixed time period of review publication date on YouTube to ease the process of sampling. In order to make the sample as representative of Meyers' and Puschak's work as possible, the researcher decided to include multiple years' worth of videos. This was also motivated by the fact that Meyers and Puschak have been making YouTube videos since 2011 (Alex Meyers, n. d.) and 2015 (Nerdwrtier1, n. d.) respectively. Initially, the researcher considered setting the time limit from December 2017 to December 2021. Upon examining the amount of videos of Puschak uploaded videos between 2020 and 2021 (15 in total over the course of two years), it was established that most of the film and television related videos were eclectic in nature rather than dedicated to discussing a single media product. Therefore, it was concluded that including the time frame between 2020 and 2021 would not fit the study. After this, the researcher decided to focus on videos posted from January 2017 to December 2019. The biggest factor in this decision was gathering a representative sample that accurately reflects the development of Meyers' and Puschak's reviewing criteria over time. Pragmatism was also a factor in this decision. The span of three years (2017-2019) was deemed an ample time frame since the study aims to provide a quality analysis of select videos rather than an exhaustive exploration of Meyers' and Puschak's respective YouTube channels. Keeping in mind this time frame, the total number of Nerdwriter1 videos posted was 60. For Alex Meyers this number was 144. Two selection criteria were employed in order to further specify a sample:

- 1) videos with total length between 5:00 and 11:00 minutes and
- 2) videos whose titles explicitly name one feature film or a television show.

The first selection criterion was directly inspired by the fact that Alex Meyers' reviews can range from 5 to 30 minutes. In terms of print media reviews, Baumann (2001) finds that longer reviews tend to be more detailed than shorter ones. While the medium of reviews differs a lot, content-wise, this provides a good analogy to suggest that Meyers' videos can vary in depth as well. Considering the comparative nature of this study and the fact that Nerdwriter1's videos generally range from 5 to 10 minutes, it was deemed necessary to introduce a length limit that would accommodate for both reviewers. Therefore, the length limit of 5:00 to 11:00 minutes was set.

The second selection criterion pays attention to the main textual identifier of any video, its title. The decision to only consider the title and disregard the video thumbnail (the snapshot of the video which gives an idea of its content) was motivated by pragmatism and the time constraints of the study. The criterion states that only videos whose titles explicitly name a film or television show will be considered (e.g. *Battle Royale: The Best Teen Movie*). The researcher decided to focus on naming the film or television show itself as an indicator because that serves as a clear confirmation that the video is dedicated to a single media product. Additionally, it is important to note that a number of Nerdwriter1 video titles name an actor or a director, but this was not an adequate selection criterion since such titles indicate a broader discussion of a practitioner rather than a film review.

After eliminating all videos that did not fit the criteria, 19 videos by Nerdwriter1 and 72 videos by Alex Meyers were identified. Upon further examination, two videos by Meyers were excluded since they constituted collaborations with other YouTube creators which makes them irrelevant to the study. In order to increase the feasibility of this study, a total of 15 videos per person were randomly selected. Upon examining the sample once again, one video by Puschak was determined to not fit the study because of its focus on a whole film franchise rather than a single film. Therefore, it was discarded and the final sample consisted of 14 videos by Puschak and 15 by Meyers, totaling 29 videos.

### **3.3. Operationalization**

In order to explore how vernacular professionals such as Meyers and Puschak evaluate film and television, the most important concepts of the research question must be defined. As per Boeijs (2010), this study relies on previous cultural criticism research in order to help operationalize concepts. To summarize the idea of a vernacular professional, it is someone who occupies a non-institutionalized setting such as YouTube and who possesses autonomy in terms of creating their own products, in this case reviews in the form of videos, within the cultural system (Jaakkola, 2022). They

rely on the “logics of self-promotional practices to make a person-centred profile of a film pundit. . . or a cultural online personality” (Jaakkola, 2022, p. 137). In practice, this means putting effort into creating an image on YouTube which reflects their personality when it comes to their niche. For instance, a defining characteristic of Meyers is his humoristic commentary. Puschak stands out with his visually minimalist, but well-thought out analysis of film and TV. The analysis will also attend to how they incorporate the unique characteristics of their YouTube persona into their videos.

As practitioners of cultural criticism, vernacular professionals use aesthetic criteria to evaluate culture. Aesthetic criteria originate in the field of aesthetics which functions through attributing value to cultural products (Bielby et al., 2005). Gans (1974) summarizes the meaning of aesthetics as “standards of beauty and taste but also . . . a variety of other emotional and intellectual values” (Gans, 1974, p. 14). As established in the theoretical framework, cultural hierarchies such as high art vs. popular art operate based on the division between different types of consumers and their motivations for consumption, which is determined by the mediation done by critics (Alexander, 2020). A similar division applies to aesthetics too, resulting in the formulation of high art aesthetic criteria and popular aesthetic criteria (Bielby et al., 2005). Bielby et al. (2005), Kersten & Bielby (2012) and Verboord (2014) will be used to briefly define what the researcher expects when it comes to high art aesthetic criteria and popular aesthetic criteria. Popular aesthetic is characterized by its accessibility to audiences (Bielby et al., 2005). It relates to their everyday experiences and the mundane (Bielby & Bielby, 2004; Bourdieu, 1984). As such, popular aesthetic emotionally appeals to its audience through conventional formulas and familiar tropes based in distinct genres (Bielby et al., 2005). Such criteria are also oriented towards the audience and functionality (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Therefore, some of the aesthetic criteria most commonly associated with the popular aesthetic are related to character development, what feelings a film or show provokes in the viewer, use of genre conventions (Bielby et al., 2005), relevance to the audience’s own experiences, cast performance, credibility and authenticity (Verboord, 2014). On the other hand, high art aesthetic criteria reject closeness to the mundane (Bourdieu, 1984). High art aesthetic criteria emphasize more abstract qualities related to auteurism or the belief that quality cinema is the result of the director’s unique creative vision (Baumann, 2001; Bielby et al., 2005). Therefore, these criteria refer to innovation, novelty, originality (Bielby et al., 2005), complexity and nuanced interpretation (Kersten & Bielby, 2012), formal elements such as camerawork and narrative structure (Verboord, 2014). The analysis will also consider the language and vocabulary Meyers and Puschak since that provides valuable context to their cultural beliefs (Baumann, 2001).

### **3.4. Data analysis**

In order to conduct this thematic analysis, the researcher’s focused on thematic textual analysis of the video transcripts. The meant conducting an inductive thematic analysis in order to



outline patterns in the sample (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done according to the guidelines by Braun and Clarke (2006) that outline multiple steps of generating initial codes, searching for themes and refining those themes. Despite the fact that an essential aspect of YouTube videos is their visuals, the researcher opted not to consider the visual aspect in the analysis. This was done for pragmatic considerations considering the time frame for this study. However, it is also important to say that given the reflexive and evaluative nature of cultural criticism, the main tool of vernacular professionals is their argumentation and reasoning, whose main vehicle is language.

### **3.5. Reliability and validity**

The main reliability and validity concerns of this research are related to its emphasis on a qualitative approach and the choice of thematic analysis as a data analysis method. These were addressed in a number of ways. Firstly, the researcher used the practice of constant comparison throughout the coding process in order to increase transparency (Boeije, 2010). This involved multiple phases of coding one portion of the sample at a time and reviewing the produced codes, which ensures the comprehensive consideration of all data in a systematic way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is also important to mention that since this study is exploratory, it is non-generalizable and only considers evaluative practices within a specific niche.

Throughout the process of coding, the researcher identified a small number of codes whose importance for answering the research question was unclear at the time. They were included in a miscellaneous code group in order to maintain transparency of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The group was re-examined at a later stage when more of the analysis was conducted. Relevant codes were sorted into now appropriate categories and irrelevant ones were discarded.

## **4. Results**

Atlas.ti was used to conduct the analysis. Throughout the coding process, codes were generated, re-examined and refined into sub-themes and themes, as per Braun and Clarke (2006). This resulted in the researcher identifying a number of ways in which vernacular professionals Alex Meyers and Evan Puschak evaluate television and film. There were several types of evaluations/themes, ranging from commonalities to contrasting evaluations to differences. Firstly, there were commonalities they both shared such as interpretation, genre and conventions, creativity and real life relevance. Secondly, there were evaluations/themes that Meyers and Puschak shared overall, but discussed different nuances of. These were called contrasting evaluations. They were namely formal elements, complexity, broader context, audience orientation and comparisons to other art. Thirdly, there were major differences between Meyers and Puschak. Puschak stood out through his use of director and crew, film experience, cast and practitioners. There were also evaluations that Meyers used predominantly, namely characterization. Additionally, the analysis led to discovering unique characteristics of the two reviewers' use of language. Puschak used language that involved intellectualization and use of technical terms, while Meyers' incorporated humor in his reviews and often used positive and/or negative comments. The evaluations/themes in this chapter are largely in line with previous research about cultural evaluation by Baumann (2001), Bielby et al. (2005), Kersten and Bielby (2012) and Verboord (2014), to name a few.

### **4.1. Commonalities between the evaluations of Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1**

#### **4.1.1. Interpretation**

Interpretation refers to Meyers and Puschak actively discovering, interrogating and interpreting one or more aspects of the subject of their review. In the case of Meyers, that meant predominantly interpreting a television show, whereas for Puschak that was films. When it comes to interpretation as an evaluation, it involves not only understanding, but also active intellectual effort which involves creative input on the reviewers' part (Baumann, 2001). This evaluation closely resembles Verboord's (2014) interpretation criterion in his study dedicated to examining the reviewing practices of online and offline film reviews. It is quite pertinent here and can be usefully summed up as going beyond descriptive statements and using analytical thinking in order to connect those statements to more abstract ideas (Verboord, 2014). Both Meyers and Puschak repeatedly interpreted broader aspects such as recurring themes and motifs, but also more specific aspects such as characters' actions or individual developments. Such interpretation on multiple levels is noted in research about reviewing criteria by Kersten and Bielby (2012).

Additionally, the analysis showed that interpretation is present in both film reviews and

television reviews by both reviewers. This is a noteworthy finding since interpretation is generally associated with traditional critics and high art aesthetic criteria (Baumann, 2001; Verboord, 2014). Since Meyers and Puschak are considered vernacular professional reviewers, their use of interpretation suggests that interpretation as an evaluation is not exclusive to the practices of traditional critics. A similar finding related to the use of interpretative work by fans of the television show *The Walking Dead* is highlighted by Teurlings (2018). Within the sample, Puschak used interpretation more often in his reviews than Meyers, but regardless of frequency, both displayed the analytical skills associated with interpretation. Additionally, both reviewers tended to embed their interpretations in their review rather than state their subjectivity directly. The following quote by Meyers about a character in the television show *Breaking Bad* illustrates this: “. . . his involvement with drugs and later his affiliation with Jesse Pinkman, made all that talent, all that potential meaningless. The hours of practice, the thousands of dollars spent. All gone” (Video 26). Here is a similar example where Puschak considers thematic meaning: “. . . it is effective and impactful and it does this by focusing on the very thing that affects and impacts us: language” (Video 9). Additionally, it is also worth noting that both Meyers and Puschak occasionally used phrases such as ‘I think’ or ‘In my opinion’ in order to introduce their interpretations. As a result, the sample contained a mixture of implied interpretations and direct ones, which points to a certain level of language sophistication, which been associated with traditional critics (Baumann, 2001), but also recently with amateur online critics who are becoming more professional in their criticism (Teurlings, 2018).

#### **4.1.2. Genre and conventions**

This evaluation encompasses comments by Meyers and Puschak made about genre characteristics and structure of film and television as well as the use of common conventions in a genre. Evaluating genre is primarily associated with the boundaries and constraints of the television format (Bielby et al., 2005). This is related to the episodic nature of television and broadcasting networks’ desire to reach and appeal to wider audiences (Bielby et al., 2005; Lotz, 2008). However, the sample showed that both reviewers paid attention to genre and its characteristics in film as well as television. Interestingly, both had reviews where they evaluated genre in the context of the superhero film genre and its conventions. For instance, here Meyers named the genre directly and mentioned one type of convention within it: “First of all, in the super hero genre, there are three types of characters. Ones who are born with their powers - now this would of course be people like the X-Men for example” (Video 16). This example also illustrates that in the sample discussions of genre and its conventions were sometimes interwoven. Here is an example from Puschak discussing two film genres: “Westerns are really the perfect genre to measure the superhero movie. The myth of the superhero is, in many ways, a reincarnation of the myth of the gunslinger“ (Video 13). Observations such as this one revealed that while reviewers have interest in genre, they can also be critical of it. This was especially prominent when Meyers in particular criticized the use of commonly used tropes:

“Blood is thicker than water, insert cliché here” (Video 28).

#### **4.1.3. Creativity/Originality**

Both Meyers and Puschak evaluated the creativity, originality or novelty of both film and television. Segments were coded in this group if the reviewers considered that a film or television show stands out or offers a fresh perspective of a storytelling aspect. Language identifiers such as ‘trying something new’ or ‘a different approach’ made identifying a pattern in the sample easier. In film criticism research, creativity is associated with author theory or the idea that a film is a product of a director’s unique creative vision (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Author theory has influenced a lot of the aesthetic criteria in film criticism (Baumann, 2001). It will be discussed in more detail later when discussing Puschak’s use of evaluations related to the director and crew. For now, it is worth saying that the decision to consider creativity in its own right rather than as related to the evaluation director and other crew, was made because the reviewers often pointed out creativity for creativity’s own sake. Here is an example from Puschak that illustrates this: “It’s that pain, that panicked feeling of time running out, that separates this film from others that begin in media res” (Video 6). Creativity was also sometimes discussed in conjunction with other aspects such as positive/negative commentary. This can be seen in this example where Meyers discusses a film: “Because it takes us on this journey and shows us exactly what all the other movies and books and top 40 songs or whatever get wrong. . .” (Video 21). Even though Meyers had more television reviews and Puschak more film reviews, no format was ignored in terms of creativity. Despite his film focus, Puschak discussed what he considered multiple creative aspects of the television show *Sherlock*. Despite Meyers’ television focus, he pointed out refreshing ideas in the films *Justice League* and *500 Days of Summer*. This leads to the conclusion that creativity as an evaluation is not specific to any one format discussed in the sample. It also supports the observation in wider research that evaluation criteria commonly used by traditional critics are also used by new critics, in this case vernacular professionals (Jaakkola, 2022; Teurlings, 2018).

#### **4.1.4. Real life relevance**

The theme/evaluation of real life relevance relates to the way in which vernacular professionals Meyers and Puschak discuss representations of the real world in relation to the films and TV shows in their reviews. A media product’s quality of being close to the audience and their everyday lives is associated with popular culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Additionally, Bielby and Bielby (2004) highlight the importance of authenticity and realism for consumers of popular culture. This evaluation was formulated on the basis of both observations since it encompasses several ways in which real life and film/television intersect.

The first intersection is social commentary, or discussing how film/television might reflect or comment on pertinent social issues such as preserving democracy (Video 12) or mental health (Video

29). Both reviewers occasionally discussed this in reviews of both formats. This suggests that despite their different focuses, they do not disregard either the film format or the television format when considering social commentary. Bielby et al. (2005) liken social commentary to the message a television show has. The presence of a socially relevant message can be clearly demonstrated in the following quote from Puschak, which relates to the dystopian television show *The Handmaid's Tale*: “It brings home a vital message, that our rights are not guaranteed by the world. We fight for them . . . because they can be taken away from us if we don't pay attention” (Video 12). While this instance is clearly related to a television series, there are also broader implications of dealing with social issues on an entertainment industry level. There are several instances, particularly in Meyers' reviews, of mentioning how the entertainment giant Netflix produces content which actively tries to address serious topics of social relevance: “I have to give Netflix a lot of credit for trying. They're trying to start a conversation about heavier topics and I commend that . . .” (Video 29).

Another nuance of real life relevance discussed in the sample relates to the credibility or believability of developments in film/television. Kersten and Bielby (2012) highlight credibility in relation to “the suspension of disbelief” in the story rather than dealing with the question ‘Can this happen in real life?’ (p. 188). In this study, the researcher chose to highlight this as well, but through the presence or lack of realistic representation, since this was a frequent area of interest to the reviewers. For instance, Meyers praises the realistic portrayal of a break-up in one review: “Real life is not this wonderful scripted drama where everything gets wrapped up in the end . . . It's just, you know, things just don't work out sometimes. . .” (Video 21). Alternatively, Meyers also points out the failure of another TV show to portray a family on a tight budget living in New York City: “His dad's working hard, trying to make ends meet . . . and somehow they can afford to live in the apartment on the cover of every interior decorating magazine” (Video 17). On the other hand, Puschak tended to consider believability on a more complex level. Here is an example from Puschak where he discusses the realism of violence in the Japanese action-thriller *Battle Royale*: “What does human connection mean in the context of humanity's capacity of unspeakable violence? And at that time, unspeakable violence was very much alive in the memory of the older generation in Japan” (Video 3). In comparison to Meyers, Puschak employed more subtle language in terms of this evaluation. Meyers' attention to inconsistencies in realism is also in line with Bielby et al.'s (2005) findings that television viewers value the realism of the shows they are watching.

Lastly, there were multiple instances of real life relevance related to the reviewer's own experience with the main subject of a film/television show. These were also mentioned in conjunction with social issues. The most prominent example of this is Meyers discussing his own experience with body image and how that relates to the broader social issue of mental health (Video 29).

## 4.2. Contrasting evaluations between Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1

### 4.2.1. Formal elements

Formal elements refer to the integral elements and technical aspects of a film or TV show such as sound, editing, cinematography, dialogue and narrative/plot (Kersten & Bielby, 2012; Verboord, 2014). Within the sample, Meyers and Puschak focused on very distinct types of formal elements. Puschak exclusively focused on the execution of cinematography, editing and technical storytelling, while Meyers predominantly talked about plot summary, continuity, dialogue and production quality.

Puschak's reviewing approach tended to revolve around breaking down the process of filmmaking, rather than simply providing his judgments. This behavior is a trend in the YouTube film criticism sphere (Marshall, 2021). His reviews displayed a strong interest in the visual aspects of both film and television cinematography: "To capture the dystopian world of Gilead meant choosing the right camera and the right lenses . . ." (Video 12). This included paying attention to camera movements, use of lenses, special effects and visual perspective. Puschak also deconstructed film editing in a similar way, but perhaps the most significant aspect which he paid attention to was called technique of storytelling. While there was a clear division between cinematography and editing, technique of storytelling was named this way because it constituted a more holistic evaluation which emphasized multiple formal elements coming together: "The understated tone of "Spotlight", from the performances to the visuals to the music, serves the story perfectly. It tells us something vital about the nature of good journalism" (Video 8). Additionally, the quote also illustrates Puschak's tendency to use technical language when talking about form. His use of language of language in this way will be explained in a dedicated section. Deciphering the logic of the filmmaking process in this way was also noted by Kersten and Bielby (2012) as a technique which professional print critics pay attention to. They highlight that the most important characteristic of this type of evaluation is the complexity of all of the filmmaking decisions. The aforementioned quote by Puschak also highlights this.

On the other hand, Meyers was more concerned with plot, continuity, dialogue and production quality. These are all evaluations which are commonly used when it comes to television criticism, according to Bielby et al.'s (2005) study of television reviews. This was also the case for Meyers, since the majority of his reviews in the sample were dedicated to television reviews. Bielby et al. (2005) also draw attention to how reviews of television are preoccupied with the writers and producers in a similar way film critics consider the director's importance in auteurism. Here, it is worth pointing out that Meyers refrained from mentioning any writers or showrunners by name, only occasionally using the collective 'they' when referring to them. However, the main elements he did pay attention to, plot, continuity and dialogue, are all products of television writers' efforts. In this way, a parallel can

be drawn between Bielby et al.'s (2005) findings and Meyers' practices. For instance, here Meyers briefly talks about the presence of multiple plot lines in the television series *Breaking Bad*: “. . .you have the main, like, overarching story with Walter White, Jesse and all that, but on the side, with members of the family and, of course, with Skinny Pete and Badger and all that. . .” (Video 26). It is also worth paying special attention to an aspect which the researcher called plot summary. A plot summary referred to any instance where a reviewer re-caps events or developments, usually in order to provide context for an argument or an observation. Plot summary was predominantly used by Meyers. It was used in conjunction with other evaluations such interpretation or genre and conventions, but it was also used on its own in order to establish an important level of information for later evaluations. For instance, here Meyers provides a summary of a plot development in the film *To The Bone*: “Ellen's body issues, we come to learn, can basically be boiled down to the fact that she feels she has no control over her life” (Video 29). Later in the review, Meyers uses this piece of context to support his claim that the film lacks a realistic representation of eating disorders and mental health in general. Additionally, Meyers also used plot summary in his film reviews, but a smaller scale, which suggests that this criterion is not inherently related to either the film or television format. Evaluating plot has been noted in film criticism research by Baumann (2001) and television criticism research by Teurlings (2018). Occasionally, Meyers also pointed out plot inconsistencies, which Teurlings (2018) found to be prominent in fan reviews of television shows as well. For instance, here: “. . . here they are, riding the public city bus, which is something they never do ever again, in the entire show” (Video 17). As exemplified, plot inconsistencies involved highlighting blatant flaws to the audience rather than nuanced discussions. Out of all the formal elements Meyers used, production quality, which involved costumes, sets and special effects, was the least prominent, with only just a few examples. Bielby et al. (2005) also note that is not a main concern of television reviews.

#### **4.2.2. Depth/Complexity**

Evaluating complexity involves the reviewer considering whether a film or television show approach an aspect in a complex or a multidimensional way rather than a simplistic one, which involves considering subtlety and ambiguity (Baumann, 2001; Kersten & Bielby, 2012; Verboord, 2010). Within the sample, Meyers and Puschak paid attention to complexity evaluations in various ways. Firstly, both reviewers discussed the general presence of complexity in their reviews. For instance, here Meyers talks about how a television show handles its unique tone in a nuanced way: “The show is completely self-aware, never takes itself too seriously, but it still has integrity when it matters” (Video 20). Similarly, here Puschak discusses the nuanced approach of the dystopian world in *The Handmaid's Tale*: “This brutal new world, or at least the conditions that made it possible, snuck up on them” (Video 12). Both reviewers discussed general complexity in this way regardless of the television or film format. Therefore, complexity was not found to be inherently related to one or the other. This is important since Baumann's (2001) study of the intellectualization of film discussed

film's gradual transition to an art form, which involved film critics and practitioners paying more attention to film's capacity for complexity. Elevating film's status in this way also involved television solidifying its place as entertainment (Baumann, 2001) and consequently being considered the antithesis of artistic filmmaking (Bielby & Bielby, 2004). Thus, the sample shows that at least within the context of this comparative study, both formats, film and television, are evaluated according to their complexity. When it comes to social media criticism of television specifically, Teurlings (2018) also notes a similar discovery where amateur fan criticism has the capacity to evaluate complexity.

However, there were also noteworthy differences in the more specific ways in which Meyers and Puschak engaged in complexity evaluations. In particular, Meyers predominantly discussed three aspects of complexity which Puschak largely did not focus on. These were namely: merit in failure (Baumann, 2001), lack of complexity and predictability. It also has to be established that while all of these aspects were used in Meyers' film and television reviews, they were slightly more prominent in his film reviews. This is peculiar since it suggests that as a film reviewer, Meyers adheres to practices associated with traditional film critics detailed by Baumann (2001) and Verboord (2014). Additionally, Meyers' use of complexity evaluations when it comes to television supports Teurlings' (2018) findings that online reviewers of television are gradually starting to employ high art evaluation criteria typically used by traditional critics. The nuances of Meyers' complexity use are as follows. Merit in failure is a technique for evaluation developed by Baumann (2001) which involves considering which areas of the film might not be as well-executed as others. This means making multiple evaluations that relate to the way in which a film succeeds and another one, relating to a way in which it does not. An example of this is: "They lean a bit too hard on lifeless CGI, they try to balance serious and comical, which is good, but it really felt unbalanced" (Video 19). Lack of ambiguity is a complexity aspect used by Meyers which refers to how a film or television element is seen as too facile or superficial. For instance, in his review of the film *To the Bone*, Meyers states this about its characters: "None of the other girls' backstories or life's details of any kind are discussed. The entire movie is shown only from Ellen's perspective. . ." (Video 29). Baumann (2001) highlights a similar evaluation technique which relates to how a film is "too easy to enjoy" which shows a lack of effort to go beyond a simplistic understanding (p. 416). The next aspect, predictability, refers to a predictable turn of events, which results in dullness. Meyers used this evaluation almost equally when talking about both film and television. Familiarity and predictability are noted as meaningful to television viewers by Bielby and Bielby (2004) in their study about television aesthetics. Since Meyers was first a television viewer in his own time, and then became a popular reviewer (LaJeunesse, 2022), this aspect addresses this perspective.

#### **4.2.3. Broader context**

This evaluation encompasses references to the position of a film or television show as part of a



bigger entity, whether that be the entertainment industry as a whole, the film world or the respective television world, or a franchise context (Baumann, 2001; Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Both Meyers and Puschak often considered the wider context of the film/television world in their reviews and how their subject fits in that. Kersten and Bielby (2012) also had similar findings in their study of professional film reviews, which they captured with a similarly named reviewing criterion called ‘position in film context/canon.’ Puschak predominantly focused on the film world, and he frequently made references to developments in cinema history and influential film directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Mel Brooks, but also lesser known ones like Kinji Fukusaku. Those references displayed an in-depth knowledge of cinema, which Puschak presumably gained through his film education. This supports the notion that Puschak shares similarities with professional film critics in this respect (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Interestingly, Meyers also considered the film world context frequently in several of his film reviews, particularly those of *Justice League* and *Spider-Man Homecoming*. This could be related to the immense popularity of the superhero film genre at the time (Mendelson, 2019). It is also worth noting that Meyers and Puschak had several instances in their film reviews where they showed an anti-entertainment sentiment (Verboord, 2014). For instance, here is a quote where Puschak briefly mentions the film *Arrival* in the context of other films: “In this way, I think “Arrival” is the perfect response to the bad movies we see so much of. Pretty much everything they do wrong “Arrival” does right. . .” (Video 9). This aspect, however, was more prominent in Meyers’ reviews and it took the form of negative criticism towards the lack of new ideas in the industry: “I mean, Hollywood sure loves to not come up with new ideas, you know what I mean?” (Video 15). This type of sentiment was discussed as an example of a high art evaluation criterion by Baumann (2001) and Verboord (2014) because of its negative stance towards popular culture. The ways in which Meyers and Puschak address the broader context in their reviews suggests that vernacular professional reviewers do not consider their subjects, in this case, more prominently films, in isolation, but often placed in relation to more abstract contexts.

#### **4.2.4. Audience orientation**

Both Meyers and Puschak engaged in evaluations that involved the perspective of the audience. This meant not only the audience of their YouTube reviews, but also the audience which might be interested in the films/television shows they recommend. Because of the way in which Meyers and Puschak construct their respective identities online, with attention to their very different aesthetics, (Jaakkola, 2022; Marshall, 2021), the lines between these two types of audiences have become blurred. As a result, included in this evaluation is any instance in which Meyers and Puschak address their audience or consider the audience’s perspective. Evaluations which consider the audience are usually associated with popular culture criteria (Bielby & Bielby, 2004; Bielby et al. 2005; Verboord, 2014; Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). In the sample, Meyers and Puschak both displayed attention to the audience’s perspective, which was usually indicated by the pronoun ‘we’, ‘us’ or ‘you’

or simply ‘the viewer(s)’: “All this time, you’re experiencing the night from the perspective of Bill, but not from a position of empathy or even sympathy, for that matter” (Video 11). Puschak tended to include the audience’s perspective in conjunction with evaluations of formal elements or general storytelling observations. However, Meyers stood out because of his tendency to acknowledge his audience directly. Interestingly, he usually did this in the context of admitting that he made a review in order to appease his audience: “I’ve seen your tweets, I’ve seen your comments. Here we go. We’re checking out “One Tree Hill”” (Video 23). He also made occasional comments related to the target audience, specifically in television reviews, which has also been observed by Bielby et al. (2005), by Verboord (2014) in online film reviews and by Van Venrooij and Schmutz (2010) in music reviews. Comments like this which involve statements such as “. . .when it comes to shows and movies made for teenage girls, there’s no one more qualified to comment on them than a 30-year-old man” (Video 24), show that Meyers not only addresses practicalities such as who might like a television show (Verboord, 2014), but he also actively incorporates any disconnect between the target audience and the actual audience in his reviews in order to enrich his humorous commentary. This is ultimately part of his highly maintained YouTube aesthetic (Jaakkola, 2022), which will be elaborated on later. Thus, the sample shows that both reviewers pay attention to the audience orientation, but there is an added dimension to that because of YouTube.

#### **4.2.5. Comparison to other arts**

Comparison to other arts refers to instances where a reviewer compares the subject of their review to other films, television series, music and literature, usually in order to illustrate or support a claim. This is a common device used in cultural criticism, especially when it comes to film (Baumann, 2001). The most frequent comparison in the sample was to either film or television. While both reviewers drew comparisons to these two formats, Puschak compared his discussed films to other films more often than Meyers compared television series to other television series. Puschak also provided more explanations for his comparisons, frequently leaving no room for ambiguity as to why: “The closest predecessor to “Spotlight” is of course Alan Peckula’s “All the President’s Men” about Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein peeling back the layers of the Watergate scandal” (Video 8). Such comparisons are associated with a knowledge about cinema which goes beyond the level of a film fan (Baumann, 2001). This is in line with Puschak’s formal film education but also his decision at one point of his career to become a filmmaker himself (Evans, 2017). Additionally, Puschak exclusively used comparisons to other arts such as literature and most prominently music. Here, he discusses the opening of the film *Reservoir Dogs*: “. . . it’s one of the most electrifying openings in film history. Like the first notes in the first Led Zeppelin album. Before you have a chance to blink, you’re involved” (Video 6). Comparisons to other arts in this way can be seen as a legitimation strategy, according to Van Venrooij and Schmutz (2010). This suggests that vernacular professionals like Puschak possess an eclectic knowledge that goes beyond the constraints of film, indicating that vernacular professionals

can have specialist backgrounds like other practitioners on the cultural criticism spectrum such as journalistic professionals (Kristensen & From, 2015), but also have diverse knowledge of other subjects. In fact, this finding is in line with Kristensen and From's (2015) observations that cultural critics with broader knowledge are becoming more common than specialists.

In contrast, Meyers' comparisons were more succinct and simpler and had the purpose of making a parallel for the sake of the audience. In this way, he compares the vampire television series *True Blood* to other dramas in that genre such as the *Vampire Diaries* (Video 15). In this way, Meyers' comparisons require a different type of knowledge than Puschak's. If Puschak's comparisons demonstrated knowledge and understanding of cinema history, then Meyers' comparisons demonstrated a knowledge of television context and genres. These two types of knowledge are crucial for creating their distinct online personalities. Kristensen and From (2015) point out that cultural critics who are media personalities tend to tie their knowledge of a subject to their status. This also applies to Meyers and Puschak in their online niche.

#### **4.3. Differences between the evaluation of Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1**

##### **4.3.1. Director and crew**

In his reviews, Puschak paid special attention to evaluations related to the filmmaking team, the director and crew. Within the sample, this evaluation almost exclusively involved discussing practitioners directly involved in a film production such as director, cinematographer, sound designer. In cultural criticism research, this criterion is closely related to the author theory or the idea of the film director as the main creative force guiding the project (Baumann, 2001). It is a recognizable high art criterion employed by traditional film critics (Kersten & Bielby, 2012; Verboord, 2014). Baumann (2001) analyses the importance of author theory for the legitimation and intellectualization of film in the United States in the 1960s. This meant American film critics started applying aesthetic standards to film that involved more sophisticated language and critical and analytical thinking (Baumann, 2001). As mentioned in a previous section, Puschak's film education likely contributes to his knowledge of filmmaking technique and as a result, he discusses it in his reviews. Here is an example of Puschak displaying this in a review: "Kubrick drags you into the movie, plants you in its center and challenges you to figure out what happened" (Video 11). Puschak's use of this evaluation consisted of naming a director or other filmmaker such as a cinematographer and evaluating their filmmaking skills. Additionally, there were several instances of Puschak discussing a director's general filmography in order to support an argument: "The missing piece to "Reservoir Dogs" is the deeper character studies and exploration of big ideas that you get in "Pulp Fiction", "Jackie Brown", "Inglourious Basterds", and "Django Unchained" (Video 6). The analysis also showed that Puschak talked about films directed by critically acclaimed directors such as Quentin Tarantino or Dennis Villeneuve. In contrast, Meyers

did not discuss any films by acclaimed directors or showrunners. This draws a parallel with Kersten and Bielby's (2012) study of film reviews by professional print media critics. They also find that critically acclaimed films tend to include more discussion of the director's skill. Similarly to the findings of Kersten and Bielby (2012), Puschak also occasionally discussed the career development and recognition of some film directors, which is worth noting since it points to his wider interest in cinema history. Here, it is also necessary to bring attention to the fact that due to Puschak's side of the sample disproportionately featuring films, he discussed the evaluation of director and crew in only one television review, the one dedicated to *The Handmaid's Tale*. What was interesting about that video was that Puschak's evaluations were not modified in any way. He discussed the director's skill in the same way he would for all of his film reviews. This indicates a tendency to treat film and television in the same way when it comes to criticism. Such a tendency has also been noted by Teurlings (2018).

It is worth reiterating Puschak's discussion of the director and crew evaluation revolves around understanding the process of filmmaking rather than criticism for its own sake (Marshall, 2021). Marshall (2021) as well as Kristensen and From (2015) discuss that crafting a persona in the public eye is a unique challenge that reviewers such as Meyers and Puschak who occupy online spaces.

#### **4.3.2. Experience**

This evaluation involves the reviewer discussing different emotional aspects of watching a film or ways in which the film makes the reviewer engaged (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Experience in this context is an evaluation used in television criticism, which makes it a popular aesthetic evaluation (Bielby et al., 2005). Puschak was the predominant user of this evaluation and used it more often in film reviews. Verboord (2014) points out that the film experience can affect the viewer's interpretation of a film or understanding of its narrative. In the sample, Puschak described two types of experiences: those that stand out because of a positive feeling they provoked and those that are simply memorable. For example, Puschak mentioned his love for re-watching a particular film: "25 years on, I'm still watching "Reservoir Dogs", and I'll bet that'll still be true 25 years and more from now" (Video 6). He often used this evaluation in conjunction with other evaluations such as director and crew in order to explain his reasoning: "I can't really tell you how soothing it is for me as a filmgoer to feel that I'm in the hands of someone who knows why the film is constructed the way it is" (Video 9). Puschak's use of the experience evaluation is noteworthy since it demonstrates that he pays attention to aspects commonly associated with popular culture in addition to his focus on the filmmaking logic and auteurism.

#### **4.3.3. Cast**

The evaluation of the cast involves mentioning actors and/or making comments about their

performances (Kersten & Bielby, 2012; Veroord, 2014). Evaluating actors and their performance is a criterion whose use is associated with popular culture since popular audiences tend to pay significant attention to it (Bielby & Bielby, 2004; Verboord, 2014). In Puschak's reviews, the mention of an actor's name was more frequent than the evaluative aspect, which suggests that it is an evaluation whose significance is relative to the subject of the review. He only chose to highlight actor performances which he enjoyed: "When we have an actor as magnetic as Daniel Day-Lewis, the longer the take, the more you hang on his every word and pause" (Video 7). Choosing not to focus on performances he did not enjoy suggests that Puschak is selective about what to discuss in his reviews and pays attention to holistic evaluation. It is also worth mentioning that Meyers only had a single review, that of the film *To the Bone*, where he highlighted an actor's performance he considered bad (Video 29). This suggests that both reviewers have two distinct approaches when it comes to actors' performance, which could be related to their very different online personas.

#### **4.3.4. Practitioners**

In the sample, the evaluation of practitioners refers to individuals mentioned in reviews who were not directly involved with the discussed film or television show. Puschak, in particular, exhibited a pattern where he repeatedly mentioned film directors, film scholars and other practitioners in the field of arts and humanities in order to support an argument or explain a concept relevant to his review. For example, here Puschak talks about influences the film crew of *The Handmaid's Tale* had: "Reed and Watkinson cite Kubrick as an inspiration, and they echo a lot of his one-point perspective framings and definitely capture the creepiness of that" (Video 12). Puschak also mentioned humanities scholars to introduce a relevant concept. For instance, here he talks about literary scholar John Cawelti's thoughts on genre: "If you want to understand how genres change, the writer to look at is definitely John Cawelti, whose famous essay on generic transformation is, I think, a good rubric for what's happening in "Logan" (Video 13). Usually, practitioners were mentioned in conjunction with other evaluations, specifically broader context or comparison to other films/television. This evaluation, as formulated here, is not commonly seen in cultural criticism research. For instance, Kersten and Bielby (2012) only pay specific attention to the film director in their study of film reviews due to the figure's role in author theory. However, Puschak's pattern could not be ignored. It adds yet another nuance to his tendency to his evaluations' similarity to traditional critics. Additionally, his mentions of practitioners were also sometimes coded in conjunction with his unique language characteristics, theorizing film/television and use of technical terms, which will be discussed later.

#### **4.3.5. Characterization**

Characterization encompasses all items related to the discussion of characters in a film or television show, ranging from character development to relationships and the audience's (in)ability to identify with a character. Alex Meyers was the reviewer who predominantly engaged in this in the

sample. Most often, he discussed the actions of a character in an episode or film, in combination with other elements such as dialogue and plot summary. Additionally, he pointed out positive and negative aspects such as character development or lack thereof: “So Jessica's entire character arc is basically almost meaningless. Everything she was fighting for, everything she believed or said she believed turns out to be nothing when she's put in the same situation” (Video 27). Interestingly, Meyers’ review with the most items coded for characterization is of the film *Spider-Man Homecoming*. This adds to the established observation that within the sample, the genre of superhero films is of particular interest to the reviewers. This could be related to the films’ status as blockbusters (Mendelson, 2019) which is seen as nothing more than pure entertainment (Baumann, 2001). Once again, Meyers shows a tendency for anti-entertainment sentiment. In terms of television, Teurlings (2018) discusses how online reviewers have become more concerned with analyzing character development and other aspects of character in their favorite television shows. This suggests a broader tendency that audiences consider characterization and its nuances not just in film, but also television. Characterization relates to the reviewer’s ability to connect with the characters on the basis of authenticity and experiences (Bielby et al., 2005).

#### **4.4. Language use**

Shrum (1996), Kersten and Bielby (2012) and Baumann (2001), to name a few, theorize the importance of language and vocabulary in studying cultural criticism and evaluation criteria. For instance, Baumann’s (2001) study of film gaining legitimacy as art over time is facilitated through focusing on the different linguistic characteristics of film reviews. An essential aspect of film criticism’s development is the understanding that “a classification as art . . . implies that the artistic value of a cultural product can be justified according to a set of conventions” (Baumann, 2001, p. 411). Such conventions are an indelible part of the intellectualization of film criticism, concludes Baumann (2001). Actively applying knowledge about those conventions is easily identified through the use of language. Conversely, the lack of specific language associated with aesthetic conventions can provide a glimpse into what other language characteristics are prominent in reviews and if those characteristics are more likely to be related to popular culture (Verboord, 2014). The choice of Meyers and Puschak as subjects of this study and their different backgrounds necessitated special attention to their respective vocabularies. Additionally, in order to learn more about how they perform their YouTube identities online (Marshall, 2021), their language use and vocabulary had to be interrogated. The result of the thematic analysis identified that the two reviewers had one similarity - in their use of positive/negative comments. Otherwise, they had two differing approaches. ‘Positive/negative comments’ is a technique discussed by Baumann (2001), which involves mixed commentary rather than simple statements, which indicates the presence of more complex thought about a film. In this study, however, positive/negative comments were coded as such only when they explicitly belonged to either category. This resulted in a lack of a mixed commentary code group, which is the opposite of

Baumann (2001). This was done in order to avoid similarity to the evaluation Complexity, which also relied on nuance. In the sample, Meyers used positive or negative comments in almost every review, whereas Puschak only did this occasionally. Examples of phrases that signified this evaluation were ‘my favorite thing’, ‘the problem with’ or adjectives such as ‘fantastic’, ‘substandard’ or ‘annoying’. Meyers’ comments tended to rely on more unambiguous and simple language as shown here: “I actually thought the movie was pretty good. Like, I mean, was it great? No” (Video 19). Verboord (2014) finds that language like this that lacks subtlety is associated with popular culture aesthetic criteria, which is in line with Meyers’ displayed tendencies to discuss aspects such as plot or characterization that are prioritized in popular culture reviews of television (Bielby et al., 2005; Teurlings, 2018). In his occasional comments, Puschak had more subtlety, as exemplified here: “And when you combine these with the limitless world of animation the results can be stunningly tactable” (Video 1).

#### **4.4.1. Nerdwriter1’s language use**

The two unique aspects of Evan Puschak’s language use in his reviews were the following: use of technical terms and theorizing film/television. In his reviews, use of technical terms referred to specialist filmmaking terms such as “split diopter shot”, but also broader storytelling terms like “in media res” or “kinetic energy” (Video 6). Technical terms were used more frequently when Puschak had a review with a focus on a particular film element such as his review of *Toy Story 4*, which focused on its cinematography (Video 1). Thus, while he did use specialist language in his other reviews as well, he did it more sparingly. Baumann (2001) emphasizes that use of critical or technical terms in reviews can require clarification for the audience and Puschak certainly provided that. He also did not prioritize the film or the television format in his use of technical terms. As stated, his primary concern was if the review had a narrow focus or not. Within the sample, Puschak almost always used technical terms in conjunction with other criteria such as director and crew, formal elements or creativity.

Theorizing film/television was assigned to items which contained Puschak’s own ideas about the cinematic logic of a film or television series in addition to technical terms. Those involved Puschak’s signature deconstructive approach: “. . . it’s really, really cool to see an episodic show like “The Handmaid’s Tale” incorporate the effect in a systematic way as a motif of its visual language” (Video 12). It is important to state here that Puschak deconstructed scenes in order to explain how they work. Interestingly, such explanations or Puschak’s use of specialist terms did not make his reviews longer, which was noted by Baumann’s (2001) study.

#### **4.4.2. Alex Meyers’ language use**

Humor was the most distinguishing language characteristic of Meyers’ reviews. Even though

Meyers had a total of four film reviews, he used humor disproportionately in his reviews of television series. In Meyers' videos, humor is highly dependent on tone. In the sample, humor was frequently used in conjunction with other evaluations such as formal elements or characterization. For example, the following quote refers to the context of the TV show *True Blood* in which vampires and humans co-exist in society: “. . .as you could probably imagine, relations are not the best between humans and vampires because, you know, one group is unpredictable and dangerous and likes to prey on the weak and innocent, and the other group has fangs” (Video 15).

It is also worth noting that a number of Meyers' reviews, for instance his *Gossip Girl* review (Video 17) contained more segments coded for humor than anything else with the exception of plot summary. In this sense, humor in Meyers' reviews is commentary rather than evaluation. Meyers' humorous commentary is essential in the context of social media reviewers and YouTube reviewers in particular because of YouTube creators' financial incentive to have an audience on the platform, according to Jaakkola (2022). Due to YouTube's monetization policy, Jaakkola (2022) says, YouTube vernacular professionals, have to keep “making efforts for the sake of audiences—in order to construct and maintain them” (p. 140). As mentioned in the methodology section, Meyers garnered and grew his audience when he started making his animated commentary videos (LaJeunesse, 2022). Consequently, his YouTube channel has revolved around appealing to his audience. Jaakkola (2022) notes that vernacular professionals “develop recognizable aesthetics . . . as well as formats that become their own signature reviewing style” (p. 140). For Meyers, this signature style is his humorous commentary in combination with evaluations. Jaakkola's (2022) observation also shows that vernacular professionals on YouTube face distinctive challenges in comparison to other types of offline cultural critics.



## 5. Conclusion

The research question *How do vernacular professional reviewers Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 evaluate television shows and films in their YouTube videos?* can be answered on the basis of the results and discussion provided. Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 showed similarities in their evaluations which were dedicated to interpretation, genre, complexity and real life relevance, which suggests that both of them consider high art evaluations (interpretation, creativity) and popular aesthetic evaluations (genre and real life relevance). In this respect, one group was not prioritized over the other, which is in line with Kersten and Bielby's (2012) study which showed that use of evaluations can be used to different extents.

The findings related to the contrasting evaluations proved more insightful since they showed that both Meyers and Puschak exhibited a lot of nuance in their evaluations. Interestingly, both of them used evaluations commonly associated with high art, namely formal elements (Verboord, 2014) complexity (Kersten & Bielby, 2012) broader context and comparison to other arts (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010), albeit in some differing ways. This was noteworthy since it showed that vernacular professionals like Meyers and Nerdwriter1 have the capacity to make complex evaluation which involve analytical thoughts and are based on aesthetic standards, but that can vary depending on the subject of the review and the reviewer's own personal biases. Additionally, both reviewers used the anti-entertainment evaluation (Verboord, 2014) sparingly, but when they did, it was highlighted with the help of other evaluation criteria.

In terms of the different evaluations Meyers and Nerdwriter1 used, Nerdwriter1 displayed his more prominently. While his attention to author theory and the director's vision was not surprising considering his use of high art evaluations so far, it was noteworthy that he also emphasized more popular aesthetic evaluations such as audience orientation (Bielby et al., 2005) and cast (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). On the other hand, Meyers emphasized different aspects of characterization as an evaluation. This finding is in line with Bielby et al.'s (2005) observation that characterization matters a lot to fans of popular culture.

Lastly, the examination of Meyers and Nerdwriter1's unique traits through their language use showed that vernacular professionals can vary a lot in their signature practices (Jaakkola, 2022). While Meyers chose to highlight humor in a similar way to other YouTube reviewers examined by Marshall (2021), Nerdwriter1 stood out with his sophisticated language (Baumann, 2001). Both of these aspects show that vernacular professionals engage with their audiences in unique ways which are not commonly seen in new critics (Jaakkola, 2022).

### 5.1. Limitations and further research

This study had some limitations. Firstly, its comparative nature meant that the researcher only

focused on two specifically chosen YouTube critics. While this provides rich findings in terms of comparison, it makes conclusions from this study non-generalizable and only pertinent to the narrow context of vernacular professionals. Additionally, the researcher's original plan for the thematic analysis was to focus primarily on the textual data and use selected pieces of visual data from the videos to supplement the analysis, due to time constraints, only the transcripts were considered. This limitation means that the overall results were less nuanced than they could have been.

Additionally, even though the aim of the sampling process was to be as transparent as possible, there was still a level of bias involved in the selection of Alex Meyers and Nerdwriter1 as subjects of the study. This bias stems from the researcher's previous familiarity with Meyers and Nerdwriter1's work on YouTube as well as the researcher's personal interest in the reviewing sphere on YouTube. These may have contributed to the researcher adopting a narrow focus on the YouTube review sphere rather than a broader one in terms of selection of subjects. Another limitation is related to the fact that the sample predominantly featured film reviews by Nerdwriter1 and television reviews by Alex Meyers. While this is attributed to the random sampling employed, the ratio of both formats is still highly disproportionate and could potentially affect the findings of the research.

In relation to this, further research could involve including a visual aspect to the data analysis in order to enrich the findings. Additionally, a more rigorous and systematic sampling procedure in order to include an equal or similar amount of film and television reviews by Meyers and Nerdwriter1. This could also lead to more solid findings in terms of the use of high art and popular culture evaluations. Additionally, similarly to Jaakkola (2022) and Marshall (2021), this study could take the form of a case study approach instead of thematic analysis. While thematic analysis is a highly flexible and interpretable method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), its flexibility can make it difficult to verify. A case study approach like that shown in Marshall (2021) can lead to more nuanced and holistic findings about the individual reviewers.

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**Appendix A.**  
Operationalization

Concept	Researcher(s)	Definition	Examples
Vernacular professional	Jaakkola (2022)	“self-made reviewers” who occupy non-institutionalized settings such as YouTube and engage in calculated effort in order to create a consistent product (p. 137)	Alex Meyers Nerdwriter1
Signature language characteristics	Jaakkola (2022) Baumann (2001) Marshall (2021)	Vernacular professionals “develop recognizable aesthetics and idiomatic expression, as well as iterative formats that become their own signature reviewing style” (Jaakkola, 2022, p. 140)  “...the comparisons and distinctions that critics use and the thought modes that critics employ when reviewing” (Baumann, 2001, p. 415)	Humor Positive/negative commentary Use of technical terms Theorizing Film/TV
Popular culture aesthetic criteria	Verboord (2014) Kersten & Bielby (2012) Teurlings (2018) Bielby et al. (2005) Bielby & Bielby (2004) Van Venrooij & Schmutz (2010)	“The popular aesthetic is defined in relation to its viewer, wherein the distance between audience and cultural good is minimized “(Kersten & Bielby, 2012, p. 185).	Characterization  Audience Orientation  Genre and conventions  Familiarity  Cast  Experience  Real life relevance
High art aesthetic criteria	Baumann (2001) Bielby et al. (2005)	“...a disposition that translates into a detached manner of observing and evaluating the	Director and crew  Formal elements

	<p>Kersten &amp; Bielby (2012)</p> <p>Verboord (2014)</p>	<p>form, of distancing oneself from the artwork and the mundane of everyday life” (Kersten &amp; Bielby, 2012, p. 185).</p>	<p>(camerawork, sound, plot etc.)</p> <p>Interpretation</p> <p>Creativity</p> <p>Complexity</p> <p>Broader context</p> <p>Comparison to other arts</p>
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## Appendix B.

### Overview of sample

Number of video in sample	Title	Author	Length	Date uploaded
Video 1	The Real Fake Cameras of Toy Story 4 <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=AcZ2OY5-TeM&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=AcZ2OY5-TeM&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	6:42	2.10.19
Video 2	Succession: Say What You Mean <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=REhlyvtihQ&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=REhlyvtihQ&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	8:30	23.10.19
Video 3	Battle Royale: The Best Teen Movie <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=b-8zqZVQ5zY&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=b-8zqZVQ5zY&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	7:46	15.06.18
Video 4	Mandy: The Art of Film Grain <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=4PcpGxihPac&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=4PcpGxihPac&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	8:24	18.10.18
Video 5	Parasite's Perfect Montage <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=malrD2OP85c&amp;t=56s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=malrD2OP85c&amp;t=56s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	8:07	31.12.19
Video 6	Has Reservoir Dogs Aged Well? <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=6HN3G2lOAI0&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=6HN3G2lOAI0&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	9:08	5.05.17

Video 7	One Way To Deconstruct There Will Be Blood – Or Any Movie  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=7KlopLcNC1Y&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=7KlopLcNC1Y&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	7:21	26.07.17
Video 8	How Spotlight Dramatizes Good Journalism  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=UrqejqX44U8&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=UrqejqX44U8&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	8:28	22.11.19
Video 9	Arrival: A Response to Bad Movies  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=z18LY6NME1s&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=z18LY6NME1s&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	7:26	15.02.17
Video 10	Sherlock: How To Film Thought  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=bfFgnJoLiQE&amp;t=369s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=bfFgnJoLiQE&amp;t=369s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	7:16	11.01.17
Video 11	Eyes Wide Shut: The Game  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=t9e82bFWtYU&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=t9e82bFWtYU&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	7:53	7.07.17
Video 12	One Reason The Handmaid’s Tale Won Emmys Best Drama  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=cY4aCnfrqss&amp;t=3s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=cY4aCnfrqss&amp;t=3s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a>	Nerdwriter1	6:44	31.08.17

Video 13	<p>Logan: Superhero Films Get Old</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=pT75YHqID9k&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=pT75YHqID9k&amp;t=1s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a></p>	Nerdwriter1	7:50	25.05.17
Video 14	<p>The Florida Project Should've Been Nominated</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=rXbKeHAoA84&amp;t=7s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=rXbKeHAoA84&amp;t=7s&amp;ab_channel=Nerdwriter1</a></p>	Nerdwriter1	7:10	14.02.18
Video 15	<p>True Blood is kinda dumb...</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=duNWM9_2S0g&amp;t=2s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=duNWM9_2S0g&amp;t=2s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	10:38	18.09.19
Video 16	<p>The Biggest Problem with "Spider-Man Homecoming"</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=_WRnE-4YKWw&amp;t=28s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=_WRnE-4YKWw&amp;t=28s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	6:59	18.11.17
Video 17	<p>Gossip Girl is kinda dumb...</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=LYv1g12y8MY&amp;t=6s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=LYv1g12y8MY&amp;t=6s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	10:47	23.01.18
Video 18	<p>Once Upon A Time is kinda dumb...</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=XMCho5i0Gx8&amp;t=4s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=XMCho5i0Gx8&amp;t=4s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	10:18	15.05.19
Video 19	<p>The Biggest Problem with Justice League</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=8G">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=8G</a></p>	Alex Meyers	9:00	24.11.17

	<a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=Xvhbww7NE&amp;t=59s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">Xvhbww7NE&amp;t=59s&amp;ab_channel=Alex Meyers</a>			
Video 20	Jane the Virgin is pretty great  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=LdPQ8EyKUGQ&amp;t=310s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=LdPQ8EyKUGQ&amp;t=310s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a>	Alex Meyers	10:05	7.08.18
Video 21	500 Days of Summer – the only love story you ever need to see  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=KVbaYT_We2o&amp;t=171s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=KVbaYT_We2o&amp;t=171s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a>	Alex Meyers	6:47	2.10.18
Video 22	The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina is a weird show...  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5aDOP3jOKxw&amp;t=490s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5aDOP3jOKxw&amp;t=490s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a>	Alex Meyers	10:18	6.11.18
Video 23	Why did everyone like One Tree Hill so much  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=MLCZ5DgEAHM&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=MLCZ5DgEAHM&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a>	Alex Meyers	10:21	30.04.19
Video 24	Lucifer is such a weird show...  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=FJv9NEJHSqo&amp;t=190s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=FJv9NEJHSqo&amp;t=190s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a>	Alex Meyers	10:44	9.04.19
Video 25	Switched at Birth is kinda dumb...  <a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=KofNaUkDfc&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=KofNaUkDfc&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a>	Alex Meyers	10:04	13.11.18

Video 26	<p>Breaking Bad - The Tragedy of Jessie Pinkman</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=Jt0-avGfah0&amp;t=337s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=Jt0-avGfah0&amp;t=337s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	7:35	8.12.17
Video 27	<p>The biggest problem with 13 Reasons Why season 3</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=6jiIB2HpLBM&amp;t=47s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=6jiIB2HpLBM&amp;t=47s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	8:22	10.09.19
Video 28	<p>Ozark – the meaning of “Family”</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=LWCGxhL0b4Y&amp;t=176s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=LWCGxhL0b4Y&amp;t=176s&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	5:38	11.08.17
Video 29	<p>The Biggest problem with “To The Bone”</p> <p><a href="https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=TpLkji2mqQM&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers">https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=TpLkji2mqQM&amp;ab_channel=AlexMeyers</a></p>	Alex Meyers	7:19	28.07.17