Ontological Ordering
Achieving Audience in Internet Practice

Emma Dahlin

Abstract

Against the backdrop of changing technological conditions of the contemporary media landscape, new questions arise regarding how *audience* can be can problematized and theorized. This dissertation seeks to shift the focus from conventional assumptions of what audience *is* to an empirical exploration of the specificities of the process through which audience is *achieved* in practice. This involves revisiting and questioning ontological assumptions about the *nature of* audience.

The aim of the study is to develop an alternative approach for theorizing audience. A three year and seven months' exploration of one example of an audience practice, the empirical focus is on the Gallifrey Base, an internet discussion forum for viewers of the TV series *Doctor Who*. To explore the specifics of audience as reality-in-practice, a methodological approach is developed that adjusts ethnographic research methods to align with a concern with ontology in audience practice – an *audienceography*. This dissertation thereby makes questions of ontology an empirical concern, drawing attention to how practices make up realities – that is, to how ontology is achieved. By turning to theoretical and methodological insights from Science and Technology Studies (STS), this study sets out to particularize how audience is achieved on the Gallifrey Base.

Three chapters detail and analyze how practices on the Gallifrey Base achieve audience. Each build on the findings from the previous chapter, attending to *ontological ordering* in different ways, delving deeper into the details of the unfolding audience practice. The findings show how multiple ontologies can co-exist. In contrast to classic communication models, it is argued that the significance of *communication by other means* is about more than sending and receiving messages. An implication for the theorization of audience is that communication can have other purposes, as messages may be sent and received in order to maintain a particular communication practice.

In relation to audience studies, the dissertation makes a theoretical contribution by connecting insights from recent debates on *ontology* and *multiplicity* in STS to empirical explorations of audience, thus widening the scope of the theoretical explanatory basis. The empirical contribution is to demonstrate that rather than *a* natural and stable structure, much work is invested in trying to maintain multiplicity even in the single audience practice of the Gallifrey Base forum. This suggests that ontologically fixed and given theoretical notions of audience are not compatible with contemporary audience practice. Audience practice, it is found, may include a range of multiple modes, which calls for attentiveness to the situated work carried out by various actors in the achievement of audience. In light of these findings, it is argued that approaching audience as ontology-in-practice provides a foundation for further theorizations of contemporary audience.

Connecting the findings from *Ontological Ordering* to wider concerns in the humanities and social sciences – a concern with audience becomes a concern with the processes and implications of how we interact with media material and media devices, which in contemporary media environment is intensely technological.

Keywords: *audience, ontological ordering, empirical philosophy, enactment, ontology, Science and Technology Studies.*

Department of Media Studies

Stockholm University, 115 93 Stockholm

Emma Dahlin

Ontological Ordering

Achieving Audience in Internet Practice

Emma Dahlin

For Andreas

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Gustav, and Eirik for making me leave the computer from time to time and come out and play.

Thank you, mom and dad for making me believe that I could do anything, go anywhere, and be anyone. Thank you for your unfailing support, and for constantly cheering me on, whatever I do. Thank you for being the kindest, wittiest and funniest mom and dad anyone could ever wish for. Don't think that I have not noticed that you have gone above and beyond in your support for me (even though you never got me that pony). Always putting me and my sister first. You always had time and you were always there. I am so immensely glad that the two of you are my parents.

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All screen shots are from the Gallifrey Base forum.

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PART I: AUDIENCE AS PRACTICE

This study is divided into three parts.

Part I: *Audience as Practice* (chapter 1, 2, and 3) presents the study's problematization and aim, which together motivates the study (chapter 1). Part I also, develops the study's theoretical repertoire, provides a critical literature review, and outlines the study's methodological approach.

Part II: *Ontological Ordering in Practice* (chapter 4, 5, and 6) presents the core of the empirical explorations of this study, which focuses the analysis around the mechanisms of ontological achievements in practice.

Part III: *Achieving Audience in Internet Practice* (chapter 7) concludes the study by discussing the study's empirical findings and contributions in close connection to its theoretical and methodological repertoire.

1. Introduction

The BBC's science fiction TV series *Doctor Who* is about the adventures of a Time Lord, the Doctor, an extraterrestrial from the planet Gallifrey who goes time-travelling in a spaceship called the TARDIS. The first episode aired on *BBC One* on November 23, 1963, and the series ran until 1989. It was later relaunched in 2005. Steven Moffat, former executive producer and head writer of *Doctor Who*, said that *Doctor Who* has two things: "scary monsters and a funny doctor. Every week, it's the same: the Tardis lands; the funny doctor pops out; he meets scary monsters; and then he defeats them, because he is very, very clever" (Lepore, 2013). Caitlin Moran (2007) has described *Doctor Who* "as thrilling and as loved as *Jolene*, or bread or cheese, or honeysuckle, or Friday. It's quintessential to being British".

Five years after the first episode of *Doctor Who* had been broadcast, Licklider and Taylor (1968: 21), in their essay *The Computer as Communication Device*, predicted that "in a few years, men will be able to communicate more effectively through a machine than face to face. That is a rather startling thing to say, but it is our conclusion." Licklider and Taylor's conclusion, startling in 1968, would not lift many eyebrows nowadays. Virtual communities, for example, are now common places where people share information, ideas, and common interests (Rheingold, [1993] 2000). In the 1990s, internet newsgroups and bulletin boards discussing TV series started to flourish, and several *Doctor Who* internet forums have been created since. One of the most popular Doctor Who forums on the internet is the Gallifrey Base, presenting itself as "the world's most popular and busiest Doctor Who forum".

Back when *Doctor Who* started to air in November 1963, the term *audience* would typically refer to the people in front of the TV, in their living rooms. Regarding contemporary TV audiences, however, we might think differently about what audience is. So, what is it to be audience in contemporary media landscape? In this study, we turn to the internet discussion forum Gallifrey Base to explore such concerns.

1.1 The Study: An Empirical Philosophy of Audience

As the media landscape has developed with new means of communication, the conditions under which television audience exists are undergoing significant changes. Following the last two decades of technological developments with mobile media and the internet, we now see multiple and overlapping screens, multiple texts, multiple media devices, and multiple simultaneously ongoing practices. Consequently, what and where *audience* is in contemporary media environment can no longer be reduced to single and isolated settings. Due to such changes, we need to rethink how television audience is being conceptualized. Hence, new theoretical appraisals are needed.

The technological development has also played a significant role when it comes to the development of television storytelling, which has become even more complex than ever before. Unlike the story that is told within the finite parameters of a film or play, that of a television series continues week after week – and, in the case of Doctor Who, over the course of months and years. Television's serial narratives have also been affected by technological development, and grown increasingly complex, as exemplified by such series as *Game of Thrones*, *Breaking Bad*, and *Mad Men*. This complexity provides more leeway for discussions by viewers about what is going on or is likely to happen next, leading to an increase in the popularity of internet discussion forums.

One way to understand contemporary television audience, is to closely follow audience practice.[1] There are, of course, various such practices to be found, and in different locations at that. This study turns to one specific location, the Gallifrey Base – an internet discussion forum for viewers of the TV series *Doctor Who*. That said, this study is not trying to explain the TV series *Doctor Who* or its viewer(s). Instead, the TV series *Doctor Who* and the Gallifrey Base forum here function as an example, where the study's main interest is to try to explain how *audience* I achieved *in* and *through* a practice.[2] Taking the Gallifrey Base as an example – this

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[1] The term *practice* is used throughout this study to point to the process of the collective production involved in achieving audience.

[2] Terminology is key here, and the terms *enactment* and *achievement* will be loyal companions throughout this study. *Enactment* points to the doing, the carrying out of a process which

study sets out to examine and detail actions that make up a television audience practice. In short, this study explores the conditions under which television audience is achieved in an internet setting.

By engaging in such an inquiry, this study seeks to shift focus from conventional assumptions of what audience *is* to an empirical exploration of the specificities of the process through which audience is *achieved*. In the setting of a discussion forum, the question of how audience is achieved unfolds *in* and *of* this study, and is to be exemplified through the collage of stories that are about to be told. All the stories that this study tells is about the actions on the Gallifrey Base. When telling these stories, the significance of the work involved in this practice should become clear. Television audience, henceforth *audience*, is the term I will engage with throughout this study when referring to what is being achieved on the forum.

The etymology of the term *audience*, coined in the 14th century, originates from the Latin root *audire*. Tracing the word through earlier editions of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Radway (1988: 359) notes that it was first used in face-to-face communication and "denotes the individual activity of hearing".[1] Radway (1988: 359) explains that "to 'give audience' was to 'give ear' or attention to what had been spoken". More recent editions of *The Oxford English Dictionary,* however, audience is defined as "the assembled spectators or listeners at a public event such as a play, film, concert or meeting" and "the people who watch or listen to a television or radio programme". In these latter definitions of audience, audience is typically defined as a group of people.

A focus on audience practice, on the other hand, draws attention to what happens in the process in which audience is achieved. Here, my approach to *audience* might differ from earlier studies of *audience*. As stated, the last two decades of technological developments – with internet-enabled media, mobile media and with multiple screens, texts, devices and simultaneously ongoing media practices – has made technologies significantly intertwined with television audience. Therefore, this study does not presume people as the sole material of which audience could be composed, and do not limit or reduce the analysis of audience practice to

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results in television audience. *Achievement* then, points to the outcome of such doings. *Achievement* is the result and the effect of *enactment*. I discuss these terms, along with other key terms in this study, briefly in section 1.3 and more thoroughly in section 2.1.2.

the humans involved. As this study situates audience in the changing technological conditions of the contemporary media landscape, new questions arise regarding how audience can be understood.

Taking into account other actors than human actors, *audience* is in this study about the *processes* connected to the viewing of a TV series. A narrower definition of audience would be counterproductive in relation to this study's task – to set out to explore how audience is achieved. Instead, the question of how to define audience is part of what this study sets out to explore, and therefore what audience is remains an open question though this study. Such an *empirical philosophy* encourages a conceptual re-thinking of what audience *is* or could *be*, in contemporary media environment.[3] The question of what audience is, ontologically, therefore needs to be kept open. The study thereby contributes to the theorization of the ontological politics of audience.

In relation to discussions on the term *audience*, Bird (2011: 512) suggests that audience is a helpful term "to discuss engagement with the media". Accordingly, studies of how internet discussion forums engage with media have referred to such engagement as part of audience practice (Baym, 2000; Hine, 2015; Bird, 2011; Ross, 2011; Lotz and Ross, 2004). Whereas such studies have demonstrated that audience happens in such discussions, an *empirical philosophy* of audience sets out to explore *how* such engagement with media is achieved in practice.

That said, the activities on internet discussion forums can also be explained in other ways than audience practice. For example, Baym (2000), in her study, also refers to audience practice on internet discussion forums as fan practice. These phenomena are not different things nor do they stand in contrast to each other. In fact, what we will witness in this study could be interpreted in relation to terms such as *community activities*, *fan activities*, and *audience activities*. However, while the members of the Gallifrey Base do refer to several of these terms (and others) when describing their activities on the forum, their use and interpretations of these terms is not consistent. As follows, phenomena such as *fandom* or *audience* cannot be reduced to separate or pure phenomena. In line with such argumentation, Pool (1994) explains that concepts are not neutral categories, and that what people call things do not reflect a neutral nature. Instead, the boundaries between the worlds of *fandom* and *audience* are

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[3] Here, I borrow the term *empirical philosophy* from Mol (2002: 4).

fluid, which makes these worlds mix (Mol *et al.*, 2015; Port and Mol, 2015). This is also evident in the overlapping research literature on audience, internet communities and fandom (which we will see in chapter 2).

1.2 Research Problem

In relation to the discussion presented in section 1.1, the last two decades' technological developments further advance and actualize the question of ontological assumptions about the *nature of audience*, and pose new challenges for how we can problematize and theorize *audience*. Such technological developments require reconsiderations of what audience is and how it can be theoretically understood.

To bring to the fore *how* and *to what extent* existing ideas of audience are applicable to contemporary audience, we need to question "the ideas behind other ideas" (Slife and Williams, 1995: 71). To do so, this study draws together disparate work with different goals and traditions in the broad interdisciplinary field of audience, in search for commonly held ontological assumptions in audience theorizations. As Alvesson and Sandberg (2011: 253) remind us, "theories are not free-floating statements but are always based on and bounded by researchers' assumptions about the subject matter in question". With this study, I wish to actualize a discussion about audience as an object of study (Livingstone, 1999; 2004; Allor, 1988; Butsch, 2008; Cover, 2006; Bratich, 2005) and challenge "the assumptions underlying existing theories" (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011: 247).

Looking closer into dominant ontological assumptions about the nature of audience in existing explanatory foundations, the debate in audience research has to a significant extent been about audience *activity* or *passivity* (Livingstone, 2015; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). In media studies, there have been debates regarding approaching mass media as a way to allow citizens to take part in what is happening in the world, or approaches to mass media as a threat to the democratic society in different ways. Here, studies have claimed that audiences do not just receive information but actively interact with it, thus theorizing audience as *active* (e.g. Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006). And on the other hand, studies

have claimed that media material has an *effect* on audience, a direct influence on people, thus theorizing audience as *passive* (e.g. Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Signorielli and Morgan, 1990). This, regardless of explaining audience from the theoretical standpoint of mass communication research (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1948; Webster and Phalen, 2013), various Marxist theories (Horkheimer and Adorno, [1947] 2002; Smythe, 1977), or different phases of literary theories (Hall, 1974; Ang, 1985; Morley, 1986).

Acknowledging that technological developments change the conditions under which audience *can* be and *is* being achieved, recent audience research has theorized audience as *fragmented* and *dispersed* (Wiard and Domingo, 2016; Webster and Ksiazek, 2012; Webster, 2011; 2005; Andrejevic, 2011; Bennett and Iyengar, 2008). Such scholars have emphasized that audience, due to a changing media environment, is no longer as easy to identify or research because it may not be located in an isolated setting.

Audience research has also debated audience ontology, theorizing audience as a *construct* (Alasuutari, 1999; Allor, 1988; Hartley, 1987; Bennett, 1996) and claiming that audience is "an abstract totality" (Allor, 1988: 219). Such studies have debated *how* audience exists and whether audience "inhabits a real space" or only exist as a "analytical discourse" (Allor, 1988: 228). Scholars have also argued that it is crucial to keep a distinction between how audience exists, claiming that there is a difference between how audience objectivly exist and how audience can be known and understood (Ang, 1991). Such a critical realism approach argues that things exist objectivly and idependently from how we can know (about) them, which emphazises that the apprehension of objects should not be confused with the object themselves.

Even if audience ontology has not been the primary focus in theorizations of audience as *active*, *passive*, *fragmented,* such theorizations still draw attention to problems for audience ontology in different ways. Assigning audience specific characteristics beforehand oversimplifies audience. Characteristics should not be assumed beforehand, but instead be made part of the investigation because such assumptions assume audience ontology to be stable. For example, taking seriously that audience is *active* could potentially raise interesting questions regarding how activities, at least partly, would define or influence audience

existence. But, instead of inquiring into the significance of audience activity, the tendency has been to ascribe its importance beforehand.

In the light of the contemporary media environment, it becomes even more problematic for theoretical discussions to remain with fixed assumptions about *the nature of audience*. The changing conditions of the existence of contemporary audience, due to the last two decades of technological developments, makes audience ontology a complicated concern since media texts and media screens often are simultaneously ongoing which points to multiplicity in audience practice. Here, emphasizing audience as *fragmented* is not of much help. Even as more recent theorizations of audience acknowledge the changing conditions of audience by, for example, emphasizing *fragmentation* and *dispersion*, such theorizations still implicitly reinforce an assumed ideal of audience as *one distinct group* which implies a singularity. This because the term *fragmentation,* carries connotations of a whole and singular object that is spread out (Strathern, 1992b: 111). Even if audience as *fragmented* signifies a development of audience in the sense that it acknowledges the changing contemporary media environment implications on audience. The same pattern can be found in theorizing audience as *active*, which was a reaction to theorizing audience as *passive*. Even if audience as active is a development of audience in the sense that it acknowledges audience as something interactive, it still implies audience as a singular.

Debates where audience ontology have been the primary focus, such as theorizations of audience as a *construct* and/or as *real* shows an ontological dissonance: a discrepancy between understandings of audience theoretically or audience empirically. Such discussions seek to resolve the issue of audience ontology relaying single-handedly on a theoretical solution. This leaves any empirical investigations of audience ontology out of the discussion. Approaches grounded in such philosophy of science, take the existence of things as independent of what we can know about those things. The implications of such claims suggests that research methods can describe worlds without interacting with them, treating research methods as neutral (Law and Urry, 2004).

For the theoretical understanding of audience in the contemporary, the identified key problems in existing literature is that it (1) implies singularity of audience ontology; and (2) misses to acknowledge that audience ontology may also change and cannot be assumed to be stable. When starting from such positions, there is a risk of homogenising

audience and overlook the significance of complexity and changing conditions of audience by excluding ontology from the analysis. This raises questions about what kind of ontological assumptions can be made to theorize audience in contemporary times.

In relation to the development of new audience practices, it have been suggested that media studies could theorize audience *as practice*, pointing to *practice theory* (Couldry, 2004; Swidler, 2000). Such theorizations have still received little attention in media studies and remains rather unexplored territories both empirically and theoretically. Theorizing audience as practice could direct attention to the details of *what* comes into play and *how* audience is practiced. However, the analytical approach offered by *practice theory* puts too much emphasis on the stability of the context in which audience is embedded (Asdal and Moser, 2012; Law and Moser, 2012). Therefore, instead, this study seeks insights from the field of *Science and Technology Studies* (STS), for theorizations of audience as practice (which is further discussed in section 1.3). STS theorizations of practice do not only resist seeking explanations in the context in which audience is embedded, it also considers the close relations between social practice and technical practice which both seem intensely connected regarding contemporary television audience. Such an approach to practice also sidesteps ontological assumptions being made about audience as an object beforehand, and focus instead on what concretely happens in practice when audience is achieved.

Against this backdrop, I argue that attending to audience ontology, theorizing audience as practice (and when doing so paying specific attention to ontology), is key when exploring contemporary media environment. The main argument here is that even in more recent work, audience singularity is still implied (yet sometimes *fragmented* and *dispersed*). This tends to uphold a fixed and stable view of audience ontology. While this resonates with a determination to remain true to ontological assumptions about audience as a unity, it is problematic to assume that audience ontology does not change, specifically in relation to audience in contemporary media environment. That is, for the theoretical understanding of audience, the changing conditions of the contemporary media landscape may further elevate such problems, and it becomes even more significant to be concerned with audience ontology.

1.3 Research Approach

In this section, the features of this study's research approach will be briefly introduced (in section 2.1 I further develop this discussion). To address the presented problematization, I (1) investigate possible advantages of analyzing audience in terms of ontology and (2) introduce this study's key terms – *ontology*, *enactment*, *achievement*, *multiplicity*, and *ontological ordering* – and their relations.[4]

This study suggests that a reconsideration of audience in terms of ontology, is key to understanding contemporary audience. Such a task urges to look differently at things that are otherwise taken for granted. It will be argued, in what follows, that debates on ontology in the field of *Science and Technology Studies* (STS) may provide a relevant basis for the development of such an agenda. Such an approach acknowledges audience practice as profoundly social and technical and allows for an analyzation of audience in terms of *ontology*. STS has a long history of developing theoretical and methodological tools for the study of practices. Recent debates in STS have also put renewed interest in ontology. Rejecting fixed assumptions about how objects exist, such studies suggest that "the reality we live with is one performed in a variety of practices" (Mol, 1999: 74).[5] This "reality does not precede the mundane practices in which we interact with it, but is rather shaped within these practices" (Mol, 1999: 74).

For the study of audience, such an approach challenges normative ideas of audience because it "requires that we treat entities as themselves a form of ontological achievement" (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013: 51). That is, it draws attention to what is achieved in practice when objects are achieved. Here, importantly, ontology is not a given. Instead, by foregrounding practice, these STS research have turned the question of ontology into an empirical inquiry.

By relocating questions of ontology from a philosophical debate to empirical exploration, these studies have used *enactment* as a key term when studying how objects are achieved in practice. The terms *enactment* and *achievement* are loyal companions throughout this study. If *enactment*

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[4] The key terms in this study are just briefly introduced here, and discussed in more detail in section 2.1.2.

[5] The term *object* could here easily be replaced with *entity*, *technology,* or *person*.

points to the doings, the carrying out of a process which leads to *audience*, then *achievement* points to the outcome of such doings. *Achievement* is the result and the effect of *enactment*. By using these two terms together, this study emphasizes the work involved, by various actors, in the achievement of audience. *Enactment* has become a key term in STS research on ontology in an effort to resist "to draw[ing] on *context* as a descriptive tool" because "objects do not acquire a particular meaning in, or because of, a *given* context" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 323). These scholars have given preference to the term *enactment* over the otherwise routine use of *context* as an explanatory core in social sciences. By doing so, they have acknowledged the ephemeralness of the coming about of realities-in-practice and resisted ideas of objects having stable possessed characteristics. These studies have instead shown that it is in practice that objects are given their characteristics (Mol, 1999; Mol, 2002; Law and Lien, 2013; Lien, 2015; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; 2015). Consequently, *object*s are seen as inseparable from *practice*.

Seeing objects as outcomes of practices, Mol (2002) shows that practices tend to multiply objects. This *multiplicity* shows that objects may be achieved slightly differently in each practice.[6] However, according to Mol (2002), multiple versions of an object somehow still hold together as the same object, even if different practices achieve the object in slightly differently. Here, Mol's work displays interesting ontological tensions between object and practice as an effect of multiplicity. Multiplicity gives rise to an issue of how ontological differences are ordered to hold together.

Against this backdrop, this study foregrounds how such ontological tensions are managed in and through practice. To do this, I develop the notion of *ontological ordering*. *Ontological ordering* guides the analysis of what audience *is* and *how* it is achieved in a single practice on the Gallifrey Base. By attending to *ontological ordering,* the analysis focus on the mechanisms of how ontologies are arranged in practice, bringing the complications of the ontological work to the fore. What happens, in practice, when different ontologies need to be managed? And, what happens when confusions arise, among the involved actors, about how to manage the ontological work? As mentioned above, I do not delimit my analysis to

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[6] Mol (2002) shows this by identifying several different medical practices that achieve the same object – the disease atherosclerosis.

human actors, but account for *who* and *what* is involved in the achievement (which in this study includes forum members, forum staff, technologies, and software). This draws attention to what happens in practice, in human-technology interaction, when audience is achieved. The potential in *ontological ordering* is that such an analytical concept can help to think anew about audience. It steers away from predefined characteristics attributed to audience beforehand.

In sum, the potential of approaching audience in terms of ontology, as an *ongoing* object with uncertain ontology, is, first, that it moves away from audience as a fixed or stable entity and instead engages in theorizations of audience as situated, local practices. Second, by borrowing theoretical and methodological insights from the field of STS, (2) the analytical concept of *ontological ordering* supports the analysis of audience ontology on the Gallifrey Base.

1.4 Research Aim

Analyzing the actions on the Gallifrey Base, this study joins with recent studies in STS that "take seriously the *accomplished* ontology of entities" (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013: 51). This redirects questions of ontology into empirical concerns, drawing attention to how practices make up realities – that is, to how ontology is achieved.

The aim of the study is twofold, comprising both an empirical and a theoretical concern. First, it is empirically concerned with how audience is practiced on an internet forum. Second, based on such an empirical exploration, the study is theoretically concerned with how can we think anew about what audience is.

By turning to theoretical and methodological insights from STS, this study sets out to empirically particularize how audience is achieved on the Gallifrey Base. By exploring implications of analyzing audience in terms of ontology, the aim of this study is *to develop an alternative approach for theorizing audience.*

1.5 Research Questions

In response to the aim of this study, three research questions have been developed to address the study's overall concern – how audience is ontologically achieved in actions on the Gallifrey Base.

All three of the research questions address the overall concern, but they respond to it in different ways. The first research question (RQ 1) addresses an empirical concern with how audience ontology is achieved in practice on the Gallifrey Base. The second research question (RQ 2) addresses a theoretical concern in relation to recent debates on *ontology* and *multiplicity* in STS. The third research question (RQ 3) addresses a theoretical concern with the underlying conditions for audience theorization.

RQ 1. What is audience on the Gallifrey Base?

This question specifies the practical and empirical concern with how audience is achieved at a particular site, the Gallifrey Base. With this question, I start to unfold audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. Here, I identify *routines and relations* found on the Gallifrey Base. When encountering new situations during such a task, I work with guiding questions to address the concern of what audience is on the Gallifrey Base by asking: *Where and what is audience here? Who and what is involved in the actions? What is made a concern in specific situations, and under which circumstances are such concerns attended to?* When analyzing these actions, I also attend to the consequences of making something a concern and how that plays out on the Gallifrey Base. The overall objective here is to situate audience ontology in practice.

RQ 2. How does audience practice on the Gallifrey Base manage audience ontology?

This question is raised as a theoretical concern in connection to recent debates on *ontology* and *multiplicity* in STS. Here, I focus on *ontological ordering* to draw attention to what is enacted on the Gallifrey Base when ontological tensions appear. This means that in the empirical analysis, this question directs attention to how audience is achieved and how tensions in such achievements are dealt with (by various actors in human-

technology interaction) as they appear on the Gallifrey Base. In response to the overall concern with how audience is *achieved*, this question addresses specifically what guides actions when *ontological tensions* appear and what the implications are of such actions.

RQ 3. What does the ontological significance of audience practice mean for the theorization of audience?

This question addresses a theoretical concern with the underlying conditions for audience theorization. It points to problems with earlier understandings of audience that keep audience ontology fixed or given. In relation to the aim of the study, this question relates audience ontology to theorizations of audience and explores how audience can be highlighted by recent debates in STS on ontology and multiplicity. Furthermore, how audience is achieved empirically is linked to how we can think about ontology. In doing so, this question connects RQ 1 and RQ 2 with the aim of this study by theorizing audience ontology drawing on STS ideas.

1.6 Research Methods

This study takes a *qualitative* research approach. Since this is a study of practices that make up realities – focusing on the specific ontological tension in audience – I refer to this study as an *audienceography*.[7] The notion of *audienceography* characterizes an attempt to develop and widen the scope of ethnographic research methods. This study has differences and similarities compared to a traditional ethnography. Differently from many ethnographies, this is not a *study of a culture*, but a *study of a practice*. To follow a practice does not merely entail to follow relations and connections, but also involves attending to the boundaries between different actors and actions within the practice. Like most ethnographic studies, this study takes on an attitude of curiosity to observation of a situated setting over time, and combines that observation with interviews with people who are part of the situated action. And, like and

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[7] I further develop the notion of the *audienceography* in section 3.2.

ethnography, I have combined different narratives in order to tell the story of the object of study.

The empirical site of the study is an internet discussion forum called the Gallifrey Base. The methods applied in this *audienceography* are 1) semi-structured electronic interviews with 70 of the members of the Gallifrey Base (conducted via Skype-chats, private messages sent between me and the members on the forum, and e-mail interviews), 2) observations of the Gallifrey Base over approximately 500 hours, and 3) field notes. The fieldwork took place over a period of three years and seven months, between April 2014 and November 2017.

1.7 Research Contributions

Corresponding to how this study is situated in two fields of research, the contribution is twofold. *One the one hand*, the study contributes theoretically, empirically, and methodologically to audience research, which reflects my empirical interest in audience. *On the other hand*, the study also contributes theoretically, empirically, and methodologically to STS research – the field from which my main argumentative locus draws theoretical and methodological insights.

In relation to audience research, the study contributes *theoretically* by endeavouring to connect recent STS debates about ontology and multiplicity to empirical explorations of audience. By doing so, this study moves beyond debates on audience in terms of political economy, media effects, meaning-making processes, and interpretation. The study responds to problems in theoretical discussions that maintain assumptions about *the nature of audience* that are too exclusive and narrow. In this regard, the study explicates the idea that when achieving audience concerns are articulated regarding the maintenance of audience experience and shows possible challenges of such maintenance. Here, the study points to the possible challenges to this view. This shows how fixed and given notions of audience are not compatible by introducing a different explanatory foundation in audience research. *Empirically*, the study contributes by offering a detailed account of a single audience practice located to the internet. It provides an empirically rich account of the complexity in audience practice, focusing on the process in which

audience is achieved rather than on audience as an end product. *Methodologically,* the study offers an alternative approach to audience as a phenomenon.

In relation to recent debates on *ontology* and *multiplicity* in the field of STS, the study contributes *theoretically* by examining how ontological achievements are managed in practice. In this respect, the study focuses on multiplicity in a single practice, on a single site. *Empirically,* the study broadens the scope of STS research, which typically focus on scientific practices, and it contributes by making an ontological inquiry into the phenomenon of audience. *Methodologically*, the study contributes by developing the notion of *ontological ordering.* This concept makes it possible to analyse the work with ontological achievements and how the ontological significance of enactment is dealt with.

On a broader note, connecting the specific contributions of this study to wider concerns in the humanities and social sciences, we have seen (specifically during the last two decades) that technological artefacts are becoming a growing part of our day-to-day lives when we are communicating and seeking information. A concern with audience is a concern about the processes and consequences of how we interact with media material, which, in the contemporary media environment, is intensely technological. These types of practices have become so significant that it is key for humanities to investigate how the social is assembled through and together with such technologies if we want to advance our understanding of social life in contemporary society.

1.8 The Structure of My Argument

The main argument in this study is that audience needs to be approached as a *set of practices*, and it is *through* and *in* these practices that the object *audience* is achieved. Following such an argumentation, I suggest that the ontological status of audience cannot be assumed to be singular or stable. Each chapter in this study addresses and contributes to the problematization initiated in this introductory chapter in the following way.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the two theoretical fields in which this study is situated. The first part attends to STS, which is the theoretical

and intellectual strand of research from which I have developed the argumentative locus in this study. I begin the theory chapter with this body of work because it makes up the foundation for how audience research is addressed, read, and evaluated in this study. In this section, I develop the theoretical concept of *ontological ordering* to further contribute to debates on ontology and multiplicity in STS. The second part of the theory chapter then deals with audience research, reviewing literature that has taken on audience as an object of study. I approach this literature from the perspective of this study's concern with ontology.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodological decisions I have dealt with during this study. This includes discussions on the motivations and consequences of certain methodological decisions of making practices the object of study. I also specify how the study has been carried out and elaborate on my accountability as researcher. Furthermore, in response to some of the limitations of earlier research methods in audience studies, this chapter also develops a new methodological approach, which I refer to as an *audienceography*.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 turn to the results of this study's empirical explorations of *ontological ordering*. These chapters function as continuations of each other, as audience practice unfolds. That is, I continuously build each chapter based on the previous chapter's findings to delve deeper into the details of the unfolding audience practice. Therefore, the findings of one chapter raise a new concern and motivation for the chapter that follows. In chapter 4, I attend to the unfolding of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. In chapter 5, I proceed to explore the multiplicity that was unravelled in chapter 4. In chapter 6, I turn to how multiplicity is maintained in audience practice. While chapters 4 and 5 seek to unfold audience practice and look at how it is enabled, enacted, and maintained – that is, how the practice *works* – chapter 6 turns to the margins, attending to *tensions* and *interruptions* in audience practice. In this sense, chapter 6 to some extent serves to challenge the results of chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 7 connects and relates the findings from chapters 4, 5 and 6 in a concluding discussion in response to the aim of the study and research questions. This final chapter outlines the key contributions in relation n both to audience studies and to STS.

2. Theories & Ideas

In this chapter, I outline the foundations of the two fields of research, *Science and Technology Studies* (STS) and audience research, that this study intersects. The study brings together a theoretical concern from STS with an empirical concern from audience research. This chapter is divided into two parts, and each discusses one of these two different bodies of literature. The first part presents and elaborates on STS, the intellectual strand of research from which I have developed the argumentative locus in this study. The STS literature is presented first to outline a theoretical grounding for developing the theoretical approach this study takes when discussing audience in terms of ontology. This way the first part of the chapter develops an approach for taking on the question of ontology, and it is against this backdrop that I then, in the second part of the chapter, review and discuss the audience literature.

2.1 Theoretical Repertoire

This section presents and discusses the theoretical repertoire and develops an approach that brings *practice* to the fore and explores the possible advantages of analyzing audience in terms of ontology. As stated in chapter 1, theoretical insights for such an inquiry can be drawn from recent debates in STS. Here, I explore how STS can contribute to a different explanatory agenda for audience research. This study thereby serves as a means for thinking anew about audience. Since STS has a long history of developing theoretical and methodological tools for the study of practices, I suggest that STS might help inform such an inquiry and theoretically challenge the explanatory basis found in audience research.

First, I describe *an STS approach to practice*, discussing important insights and developments in the field of STS, outlining different branches of the field, and describing the basics for understanding STS which are

significant for this study. Second, *analyzing audience in terms of ontology* relates this study to earlier debates on key concepts such as *ontology*, *enactment*, *multiplicity,* and *ontological ordering* and describes how such debates can inform the study. Here, I examine key scholars and key texts that play significant roles in forming a theoretical argument in this study. Third, I demonstrate the theoretical toolbox – the *working theoretical equipment for this study* – that I take with me into the empirical explorations of the study and address how I put key concepts to work.

2.1.1 Theorizing Audience as Practice

In this section, I will first present how STS has developed as a research field. This is necessary to get an understanding of where such ideas have sprung from since they play a significant role in this study. When doing so, this discussion entails the groundwork for theorizing practice with an STS approach. Second, I discuss and identify key insights when turning to STS as an approach to practice. After these insights have been introduced, I will briefly discuss the STS approach to practice and present how these insights help to situate and position this study.

Before STS became a field in its own right, the ideas within it came from minor subfields of other disciplines such as anthropology, history of science, and philosophy of science (Lynch, 2013: 445). The interdisciplinary field of STS consequently holds a wide array of different strands and objectives.[8] However, as Thompson (2005: 31) explains, perhaps "the single thing that most unites those within the field of STS is an interest in the deep interdependence of nature and society". STS is probably best known for its investigations of knowledge production in science (see for example, Latour and Woolgar, 1979). Several STS scholars have shown an interest in explorations of fact production, in what qualifies as knowledge, and in who is authorized to make fact claims. This is evident in the emergence of the *strong programme* in SSK, declaring the importance of social studies of scientific knowledge (Barnes, [1974]

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[8] For introductions to science studies, see Biagioli (1999); Bucchi (2004). For an updated overview of the contrast between different branches of STS and different forms of STS, see Sismondo (2010); Hackett *et al.* (2008); Jasanoff *et al.* ([1995] 2012). For canonical work in STS, see Latour and Woolgar (1979); Mulkay (1979); Pinch and Bijker (1984).

2013; Bloor, [1976] 1991; Bloor, 1973). Interrogating assumptions about science and academic research is a hallmark of STS (Woolgar, 2004).

In the late 1960s, an intellectual movement called *The Radical Science Movement* developed. At this time, a Mertonian functionalist view dominated the sociological debates about science.[9] Merton's text from the 1930s, on the normative structure of science, argued that stable order was crucial in scientific work and that norms and standards are key in such work because they constitute how science can be evaluated and judged (Sismondo, 2010). *The Radical Science Movement*, building on Marxist theories and political economy theories, attended to questions of 'external forces' such as political, economic, and social forces. The movement questioned scientific objectivity and engaged in debates about public issues that related to science. The concerns related to structural and institutional topics. Asdal *et al.* (2007) describe the movement's argument.

> Natural science and technology in capitalist society must by necessity serve the aims of capitalism and reproduce the power structures, institutions and social relations of this social order. The liberating potential of scientific rationality will be repressed and restrained until a new social system, the socialist one, with different values and social relations in both production and reproduction, emerges from the struggle (Asdal *et al.*, 2007: 11).

The attention here was on ideology, and *The Radical Science Movement* looked on its own practices as political. In the 1970s, another movement, *The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge* (SSK), began to develop.[10] What the two movements had in common was their critique of science as neutral. Although the two movements critiqued the ideas of natural knowledge and positivism, they did so on different bases. SKK goals were first and foremost academic, interested in empirical investigations of how science works in practice. SSK was inspired by and built on Thomas Kuhn's discussion on the history of science and its paradigm shifts in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962). Here, the aim was to acknowledge the "production of knowledge as a social and cultural process" (Asdal *et al.*,

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[9] For an early critique on the Mertonian sociology, see Mulkay (1976).
[10] For a further account into SSK, see Barnes and Shapin (1979); Shapin (1984; 1994); Shapin and Shaffer (1985).

2007: 13), approaching and explaining science as a social activity.[11] A group of scholars started to take on the provocative task of exploring under which conditions knowledge came about (Shapin, 1975; Bloor, [1976] 1991; MacKenzie, 1981; Barnes and Bloor, 1982).

SSK criticized the binary opposition *society* and *nature,* and by doing so they pressed the invented notions of both society and nature and the conditions of their supposed relations (Shapin and Shaffer, 1985). STS has a history of criticizing dualistic thinking at large, such as actor *versus* structure, internal *versus* external, and macro *versus* micro. This is connected to STS's discarding of several of the common views and explanatory outlines found in traditional social sciences and humanities, which often draw on the basics of dualistic thinking. The argument here is that binary oppositions are something that should be explained rather than function as a starting point.

SSK critiqued the way that science separated how the world exists (a pure idea of nature) from how that world is described, interpreted, and represented (what can be known about nature). Significant in much STS work is resistance to any clear distinctions between how the world exists (ontology) and how knowledge can be obtained about the world (epistemology) – emphasizing the interdependency of ontology and epistemology. In fact, STS encourages empirical studies of how interpretations, descriptions, and representations of 'a reality out there' are achieved. This is also the reason for the close connection between empirical studies and theoretical development in STS. Based on such insights, theory and method are often kept in close dialogue (close connection) with each other in STS work.

The strong theoretical history together with a rich tradition of empirical studies often portrays STS research as *empirical philosophy*. Resisting normative arguments is another significant characteristic of much STS work. This is not to deny science, but rather to acknowledge that science is not neutral and to acknowledge that knowledge is constructed and produced – a science production in which the researcher herself is part.[12] STS scholars want to highlight questions about knowledge, truth, and objectivity, putting science practices themselves

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[11] Challenging the idea of science came with implications. For an overview of an understanding of science as practice, see Woolgar (1988).

[12] See for example Hacking (1983), who has shown how scientific terms are constructed.

under the microscope, and studying in detail how science is done and knowledge produced. This is also to raise an awareness to the fact that objects could potentially be described differently, researched differently, and explained differently which is reflected in the STS slogan "it could be otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 322).

The development of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in STS sprang from an attempt to introduce a 'sociology of associations' rather than a 'sociology of the social' (Latour, 2005: 9).[13] Latour (2005: 1) tries to "redefine the notion of social by going back to its original meaning and making it able to trace connections again". He argues for a redefining of sociology "not as the 'science of the social', but *tracing of associations*" (Latour, 2005: 5). Here, *the social* refers to ephemeral and temporal associations. ANT has a lot in common with Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology, arguing against the idea of distinctions between micro interactions and macro structures. What differentiates STS from traditional social sciences is that STS scholars treat 'the social' as an achievement of a process and, by doing so, question epistemological preconceptions (Latour, 2005; 2004). ANT bears witness to the STS history of attending to practices in which STSers believe realities are achieved. The commitment to focusing on practices is grounded in the belief that realities are achieved through and in the achievements of those worlds (resisting ideas of *some* worlds, entities, actors part of such achievements pre-exist the conditions under which things come to exist). Thus, following and *tracing associations* is a way to take on such endeavours. The more associations that are made, the stronger the assemblages (Latour, 2005).

Consequently, for studies of *social* phenomena, the social is not something that explains. Instead, the processes that achieve the social needs to be explained (Law and Moser, 2012; Asdal and Moser, 2012). Explanations and theoretical approaches cannot therefore begin with the social (but rather approach 'the social' as an outcome of practices). If we turn to Strum and Latour (1987: 785), "society is constructed through the many efforts to define it; it is something achieved in practice". Latour (2005) compares this approach to the social with a dance. When people

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[13] This branch of STS was brought forward mainly by Bruno Latour (1987; 1996; 1999; 2005; 1993; 1988; 2002; Latour and Woolgar, 1979), Michel Callon (1986b; 1986a), and John Law (1986; 1991; 1994).

stop dancing, there is no longer a dance. The dance cannot continue to exist by its own forces; it can only be maintained if other actors take up the work to keep it going. It needs to be enacted to exist.

Here, Strum and Latour (1987) exemplify the moving of the question of how things exist to practice, which has implications for how we can explain things. If we take the question of power, for example, addressed by such an approach, the focus would instead be put on the actions leading to the outcome of someone being designated a spokesperson. Here, power is approached as an achievement, something that must be enacted in practice rather than something stable or given. This, in turn, demands work. Therefore, power is not something that 'is', but something that has to be done. Following such argumentations, concerns with social concepts (as for example *power* or *audience*) become relocated from what *is* to *how* it is created and maintained.

To study such achievements, ANT suggests that the task of tracing *associations* – that is, tracing connections between things – offers possibilities. Such an approach would focus on the social as an achievement of a process instead of approaching the social as a foundation for explanations. Focusing on tracing associations, or tracing connections, would dissolve the dualistic modes of thought about objects and subjects, culture and nature, and so on that STS has shown concern for. Such dualistic modes of thinking about subjects and objects creates a subjects-human and objects-nature thinking, and the outcome results in assumptions of subjects as "actively knowing" subjects and passive objects-that-are-known" (Mol, 2002: 33). This, once again, shows the superiority that *human* has been given in the humanities and social sciences. In STS, subject and object divides, such as machine *versus* man, and virtual *versus* real, are argued not to be in opposition to each other (see for example, (Cussins, 1996; Stengers, 2000; Latour, 2005; Barad, 2003; 2007; Haraway, 2003). In the study of achievement, the focus is not on specific humans who are assumed to be achievers, but on the work of drawing connections. For this study, this means that the focus is kept on the connections, the links between things, rather than on the *doer*.

ANT studies are known for considering the role played by nonhumans in social interaction. In social sciences, there are few narratives "integrating technology into social theory", which also signifies the difficulty in finding narratives that account for technology (Latour, 1991: 111). Technologies are often *black-boxed* in social theory (Latour, 1987).

The stories of technologies' roles in interaction have been considered less rich than stories about humans (Sismondo, 2010). Because social practices have become intensely technological in the contemporary media environment, finding theories that account for the role played by nonhumans seems crucial when trying to understand contemporary audience. Such theories take the interactional relationship between humans and technologies seriously (e.g. Suchman, 1987; 2006; Strathern, 1991; 1992a; 1992b; 2006; Akrich, 1992; Akrich *et al.*, 2002). Accounting for nonhumans is part of a re-occurring theme in STS research that attempts to do away with ideas of binary oppositions such as object and subject, culture and nature, and machine and man (Strathern, 1991; 1992a; 1992b; Haraway, 1991; Barad, 2003; 2007; Latour, 1999; 2005).

In relation to accounting for technologies and other nonhuman actors, ANT has been criticized by SSKers Collins and Yearly (1992) and Bloor (1999) regarding concerns about symmetry (Lezaun, 2017). Such critiques involved what Collins and Yearly interpreted as an attempt to grant nonhumans as much agency as humans. However, the ANT argument concerning symmetry was that, with regards to humans and nonhumans, it should not be presumed that one has more agency than the other. The point ANT was trying to make was that agency should not be taken for granted as a starting point, but should instead be part of the study – that agency in itself is an achievement worthy of study. ANT was not trying to give either humans or nonhumans agency, but to make them equal in relation to each other. There is a collective that accomplishes realities, consisting of both humans and nonhumans, that together are involved in the accomplishments. Not assuming any pre-existing characteristic (like agency) belongs to either humans nor nonhumans was an important starting point. Another important point to emphasize here is that this is not the same as saying that they are *alike* or equal in *effect*. However, wrongfully, the symmetry that ANT argued for was interpreted as evenness. Evenness would mean assigning equal agency to all actors as a starting point, but the point ANT scholars were trying to make was that one should not *assume* agency but inquire into how any actor (human or nonhuman) might achieve it. Another symmetry-related issue that ANT has with other social science theories is a concern with scale in actors.[14]

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[14] See for example Strathern (1992b).

This, in turn, connects to debates about agency and structure, which bears witness to such distinctions.[15]

Addressing issues regarding structuration instead as activities of *ordering* (as a verb) offers a move away from presupposing that orders are stable or pre-existing and towards approaching structures as practices. This also emphasizes that a structure is not something that is first built up and then sustained. Instead, it focuses on how structures are achieved. Law (1992: 386) argues that "there is no such thing as 'the social order' with a single centre, or a single set of stable relations". Instead, there are multiple orders. This resonates with Haraway's (1991) ideas of multiple and complex related orders and that dominance, or even hegemony, is an outcome of activities of ordering rather than simply something that orders interactions. Scholars have also developed theories trying to understand how communication works in networks (Bowker and Star, 2000; Star, 1999).

Putting the discussion in this section in the context of this study, the task becomes to empirically study how audience is accomplished rather than taking on a priori assumptions of its existence. Grounded in these insights, audience is here analysed as *shaped in practice*. Based on such notions, it is through studies with a focus on audience practices that audience can be understood and theorized, not the other way around. Following the argument that an object cannot exist before the practices that bring that object into existence (Law and Lien, 2013), there cannot be an *audience* behind or before the practices that enact *audience*.

In the same line of reasoning, this study will test Callon's French-English term *interessement* as a way of approaching interest as a consequence of practice. With the term *interessement*, Callon points out that "to be interested is to be in between (inter-esse), to be interposed"

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[15] See for example Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which indicates a build-up, a construction, that actors enter (after it is finished). Although Giddens (1984) admits a correlation between structure and action and accepts the link between them, he argues that people enter a pre-existing structure and adjust accordingly. Giddens (1984) grants humans, to some extent, the possibility to change the pre-existing structure, even though humans are not granted very much ability on this point (technologies or other nonhumans are not considered to have the ability to change and affect the pre-existing structure). Moreover, Giddens (1984) addresses interaction between institutions and the individual as a kind of back-and-forth correlation rather than a constant intertwined interaction. He also argues that *institutional forces* are understood as a valid explanation to structuration issues.

(Callon, 1986b: 8). The 'process of *interessement*' draws attention to how forum members, in practice, keep their interest in *Doctor Who*, looking at what actions are taking place when such interest is maintained. Here, *interessement* is something that is achieved and is regulated "only through action" (Callon, 1986b: 8). Callon argues, in line with the case of Latour's (2005) dance, that an interest needs to be enacted to exist. It is, as Stengers (2000) puts it, a *relational doing*. Practising an interest is here not a stable position, but something that continually needs to be achieved (Callon, 1986b; Akrich *et al.*, 2002). Approaching an interest this way could reveal significant elements of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base.

There are three general insights from STS that are helpful in relation to this study. These insights help to situate and position the study, and are the fundament on which I build and develop arguments (the specificities of this study's arguments will be discussed in section 2.1.2). The first insight is that (1) there is an emphasis on the temporality and the ephemerality of the object of study. An approach that takes this into consideration does not expect stable realities or assume that entities or objects have certain characteristics. The second insight (2) refers to symmetry. The notion of symmetry acknowledges the object of study as 'flat', doing away with dualistic thinking and ideas of entities 'possessing agency', which indicates pre-existing relations between micro *versus* macro, or humans *versus* nonhumans, for example. On the basis of the first two insights, the third insight is (3) that the object of study should be approached attending to practices.

For this study, on the Gallifrey Base*,* this means (1) not assuming the given characteristics of what audience is; (2) not assuming that humans are sole actors in the process of achieving audience; and (3) approaching audience with curiosity in terms of how it is practised.

Moving forward, I will elaborate on specific studies, key concepts, and debates in STS that in different ways matter to, relate to, and have implications for, this study.

2.1.2 Analyzing Audience in Terms of Ontology

What it means to theorize audience as practice, turning to STS, has now been outlined. In this section, I will discuss how key concepts in this study – *ontology*, *enactment,* and *multiplicity* – have been dealt with in STS research.

First, I address the concern of how to study ontology-in-practice and what distinguishes recent STS debates on ontology from traditional inquiries into ontological questions. Second, I discuss the significance of the concepts *enactment* and *multiplicity*. Third, against the backdrop of such discussions, I then develop the analytical concept of *ontological ordering*.

Ontology has long been a central issue for philosophers. However, there are several ongoing discussions about ontology elsewhere. In STS, there is interesting work going on in analyses of ontology-in-practice, where questions of ontology are turned to empirical explorations. Studies engaged in such ontological investigations have attended to questions about the ontological status of objects. In such developments in recent STS debates, important points are being made about ontology (de Laet and Mol, 2000; Law and Lien, 2013; Law and Singleton, 2005; Mol, 1999; Mol, 2002; 2013; Mol, 2016; Mol, 2011; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; 2015; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013; Lien, 2015; Latour, 1999; 2005; Port and Mol, 2015; Thompson, 2005). But what does it mean to attend to questions of ontology in STS?

In June 2013, the journal *Social Studies of Science* (SSS) presented a special issue called "A Turn to Ontology in Science and Technology?"[16] In articles in this special issue, studies with ethnographic studies attended to practices, in ethnographic studies, that bring about the ways of being. Articles in this special issue include ethnographic studies attending to practices that bring about the ways of being. Law and Lien (2013) did an ethnographic study where they followed how salmon is done in different practices. For example, they described how, in a textbook, salmon is described in a way that is quite different from how it is described on a salmon farm. This, they explain, has to do with different concerns about salmon. Different things are made concerns in different situations. Moreover, they argue, the two different ways of describing salmon are two different ways of enacting salmon. The authors contest the notion that there still is a salmon 'out there', a stable object that is not affected by how it is enacted in different situations. Both these practices are achieving salmon differently. The authors demonstrate the work involved in achieving an object and show also when such achievement fails in different ways. This further advances questions of a given and stable

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[16] Contributors to this issue are Brives (2013), Law and Lien (2013), Lynch (2013), Marres (2013), Mol (2013), Van Heur *et al.* (2013), and Woolgar and Lezaun (2013).

ontology of entities. In Mol's (2013) case on dieticians and their dietary techniques, Mol showed how food can be enacted in ontologically different ways, either as *pleasure* or as *fuel*. Woolgar and Lezaun's (2013) example of *the wrong bin bag* highlighted the striving for and value of ontological singularity, pointing to the political incommensurability in the mundane case of a bin bag.

For this study, this means that audience cannot be expected to be enacted in the same way in different situations. Audience, like food, salmon, or bin bags, may ontologically be done differently in different situations. For the study of audience ontology, it then becomes important to pay close attention to the details in different enactments.

What distinguishes the 'ontological turn' in STS from the traditional western philosophical canon study of the nature of reality or being is the focus on studying ontology empirically, not treating ontology (1) as a stable object or (2) as a singular reality, but rather as multiple realities (Sismondo, 2015). Instead, the 'turn to ontology' redirects questions of ontology to empirical practices. Consequently, questions of ontology become a practical concern. The 'turn to ontology' is not an attempt to theoretically define how things exist, but to move the question of ontology towards *how practices enact reality*. Ontology is, in this context, not a property of an object itself or a "reality to be illuminated" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 325), but a consequence of enactment in practice.

This opens possibilities to studying activities involved in enacting ontologies. With the discussed STS studies, I share an interest in exploring how *in practice* ontology is achieved. Mol's (2002) use of 'ontologies' puts emphasis on the importance of thinking in terms of world views (plural) rather than *a* single world view (see also Lynch, 2013). Consequently, due to its unstable and multiple status, *ontology*, is a term that is intentionally kept vague in STS.

> This is not only because it lacks a precise meaning or definitive qualifier but because the term itself is introduced with the intention of destabilizing seemingly robust designations of reality. The point of a turn to ontology in STS is to sharpen a contrast between alternative strategies of description (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2015: 2).

Attending to ontology-in-practice is a way to express an uncertainty regarding assumptions about how things exist and express an awareness

of the unstableness and flexibility of the practices that are part of enacting reality. It is also an attempt to make knowledge production of reality part of the investigation. Reality is, consequently, not approached as given, but as something that is achieved though practices (Mol, 2002).

In relation to the theoretical insights I accounted for in the previous section, this means that the objects of study are not treated as something waiting to be investigated. Instead, how things exist is approached as something that is achieved in practice. For this study, this means that when analyzing audience in terms of ontology, I look for how audience is *achieved* in and through *practice*. Moreover, I do not settle on first impressions as explanations, but continuously recall that "it can be otherwise". Incorporating this notion into the study means that I try to stay curious about what audience is and attend to how it may also be different from situation to situation.

The key contributions made by the STS research on ontology referred to in this section have to do with the complexities and tensions involved in how things come into being. It is no coincidence that the studies discussed in this section have explored mundane objects such as salmon, food, and bin bags. This illustrates that even mundane objects, which might not typically be thought of as particularly complex, reveal multifaceted and complicated ontological problems. In line with such studies, this study also traces a mundane object – audience.

In sum, by drawing insights from STS scholars who stress the potential of empirical investigations when attending to ontology, I will attend to audience in terms of ontology. This makes for an analysis that slows down and gets comfortable with uncertainties. In focusing on achievements, close attention is paid to the complexities of audience practice and the actors involved.

2.1.3   Enactment: Acknowledging   Ontological Uncertainty

Enactment draws attention to how being audience is a consequence of how audience is practised. A scepticism towards essentialism emphasizes the ephemeralness of the practices that enact the object. This exposes the expected instability of objects of study. Based on such reasoning, approaching ontology as an outcome, the focus is turned to the

achievement of realities. To address such concerns, enactment has become a key concept in recent studies of ontology in STS. The concept of *enactment* "adduces a form of scepticism about essentialism" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 324). The verb *enactment* emphasizes that the object never pre-exists the practices that enact it, and stresses the ephemeralness of the coming about of realities-in-practice. Different STS approaches work with different concepts, and an extensive range of concepts is being applied in different traditions. In the 'turn to ontology' in STS, *enactment* has become part of the STS vocabulary, raising an awareness about important questions regarding any assumptions about pre-existing characteristics of any entity.

STS scholars are sometimes accused of rejecting reality, or they are referred to as constructivists.[17] There are indeed elements of constructivism in STS.[18] Here, it should also be noted than some STS scholars would resist being labelled as constructivists, while others might not.[19] Moreover, it should also be noted that the concept is widely used and does not lend itself to the one description.[20] Nonetheless, there are two important discussions worth mentioning in relation to STS scholars resisting being referred to as constructivists.[21] There is a common persistence in STS scholars' arguments that it takes a lot of work to achieve knowledge, and that knowledge is constructed in the sense that it demands tools and instruments that in turn are 'constructed'. 'Constructed' in this sense refers to the fact that the tools and instruments applied in scientific theories and methods are in no way neutral, but manufactured (Hacking, 1983). This does not mean that reality does not exist. Instead, it means that neither reality nor knowledge are independent of the means and practices of achieving knowledge. Second, in more recent debates on ontology in STS, some STS scholars have also resisted being compared to constructivists because that term connotes the idea

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[17] Scholars arguing forcefully against such a comparison are Bruno Latour, Steve Woolgar, Annemarie Mol, Michael Lynch, and John Law.
[18] See Sismondo (2007).
[19] Some scholars in STS label themselves as constructivists, see for example Cetina (1993).
[20] See points made on this topic by Sismondo (2015; 1993).
[21] For a more thorough account of social constructivism in relation to STS, see Hacking (1999); Latour (2003).

that something is 'under construction' which in turn indicates that when it is built, it results in 'durable realities'.[22]

Instead, STS scholars often emphasize the ephemeralness of what is built, focusing on the briefness of the coming about instead of moving to reject the idea of a 'finished product status' as a stable construct. STS scholars emphasize that such taken-for-granted assumptions should be avoided and that whatever is built requires constant ongoing work.[23] Bringing in the concept of *enactment* is a way to resist ideas of ostensive associations and to instead acknowledge and be sensitive about the situatedness and the work involved in accomplishing realties. This is also a reason why *enactment* has such a close connection to *practice*.

Based on this discussion, the advantages of approaching audience in terms of ontology, as an ongoing object with uncertain ontology, are that it moves away from audience as a fixed or stable entity and instead engages in theorizations of audience as situated in practice.

2.1.4 Multiplicity: Acknowledging Co-existence

By attending to ontology, recent STS research has problematized singular or stable assumptions about objects and ontology. One consequence of foregrounding practices in such studies is that objects and ontology, it has been demonstrated, tend to multiply in practice (Mol, 2002). Consequently, studies on ontology in STS have, in the last two decades, started to theorize the world as multiple (Berg and Mol, 1998). Following *enactment*, such studies have shown an ontological multiplicity of objects, and that we can expect objects to be both *multiple* and *fluid* (Mol and Law, 1994; de Laet and Mol, 2000; Mol, 2002; Mol, 2016; Law and Lien, 2013; Law and Singleton, 2005; Law and Mol, 2002; Law, 2002; Moser and Law, 2006). Mol (2002), engaged in the study of things multiplying, emphasizes that reality is not something stable, something singular, because we may enact different versions of it.

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[22] A point made by Woolgar and Lezaun (2015).

[23] Garfinkel has been prominent in STS, with his breaching experiments (Garfinkel, 1967). See also other ethnomethodologists' work that has shown the work involved in upholding structures, rules, and norms, emphasizing their dependence on ongoingness and resisting the idea that structures can be reduced as pre-existing (Wieder, 1974; Bittner, 1965).

Multiple, in this sense, is not the same as having a number of different eyes viewing an object at the centre that remains intact. To refer to reality as multiple is to treat reality as "enacted rather than observed" (Mol, 1999: 77). Mol (1999) explains that the reality of an object takes several forms.

> These are not perspectives seen by different people […] neither are they alternative, bygone constructions of which only one has emerged from the past […] they are different versions, different performances, different realities that co-exist in the present (Mol, 1999: 79).

Mol (1999) stresses that multiple realities do not resemble a Nietzschean *perspectivism* because it is not a question of pluralism, that is, that people look at a single object (that holds a specific centre) but they look at the 'true' object from different perspectives, with different eyes.

Other scholars engaged in the 'new materialism' also claim the need to bring back the discussion about 'the social conditions of how things exist' – but their reality is a stable and singular one (Bennett, 2010; Coole, 2010). Moreover, Abrahamsson et al. (2015) argue that in the 21st century, few scholars in the humanities are acknowledging materiality (Bryant *et al.*, 2011; Alaimo and Hekman, 2007; Henare *et al.*, 2007).[24] According to Abrahamsson *et al.* (2015: 4), these scholars claim that "it is not simply the social conditions for knowing that deserve our attention, but also 'matter itself', the material reality being known". Bennett (2010: 3), one of the scholars urging for scholarly interest in how things exist, argues for the "independence possessed by things", which indicates that the condition of existence is a force within itself. This stands in contrast to what Mol (2013) reminds us, that 'things' always co-exist. The matter 'itself' is never just by itself, but always in relation.

As we have been reminded throughout chapter 2, attending to practices is key in STS to understand how object is linked to practice.

> If we focus on practice then we are led to multiplicity since there are several practices crafting many realities. Truth is no longer the only arbiter and reality is no longer destiny. There are (to put it too simply) choices to be made between the desirability of

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[24] For a more specific and through critique on *new materialism* than the one accounted for here, see Abrahamsson (2015).

> different realities. The world could always be otherwise. If realities are being enacted multiply, then I have argued that it becomes important to think through modes of crafting that let us apprehend that multiplicity. We need ways of knowing about and enacting fractionality or partial connection (Law, 2004a: 152).

As Law (2004a) stresses, engaging in practices leads us to multiplicity because where we can 'find truth' is no longer the question. If practices (plural) are what bring objects into existence, the consequence is that several practices are inevitably involved. More importantly, it means that we need to treat realities as multiple.[25] Studies have engaged in multiplicity in different ways, attending to the multiplicity of worlds, words, and identities (Mol, 2002; Pool, 1994; Law, 1994; Goodman, 1978; Timmermans, 1996).

In relation to the multiplicity of objects, Mol and de Laet (2000) pointed out that a bush pump in Zimbabwe could have a range of different identities because it could be seen as a mechanical object, a hydraulic system, a health promoter, and a nation-building apparatus. These identities come with their own boundaries and differences. Like the bush pump, audience could have several and shifting identities. This means that neither the context nor the object is stable in the way that they might appear. Here we may recall how audience on the internet could also be referred to as fandom and community activity (as discussed in section 1.1).

The fact that objects may be enacted in multiple versions gives rise to possible conflict between the multiple versions. Kaplan (2008) refers to the struggle over such conflicts as *framing contests*. What happens when a *framing contest* arises, according to Kaplan (2008), is that one version of the object wins over the others.

That is, the solution is to gather around one version, which means to agree on one singular ontology. We can find a similar line of argumentation in Mol's (2002) case of the disease atherosclerosis. Mol (2002) showed examples of when the lab outcomes and results of diagnosis differed. But keeping several diagnoses was not an option. One

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[25] See the distinction that Mol (2002) makes between 'multiple' and 'plural', emphasizing that 'plural' indicates many of the same, while multiple indicates many that differ from each other.

had to win and the others had to be disregarded. That is, something that was multiple needed to be made singular. Mol (2002: 64) explained that to achieve such coherence:

> a hierarchy between diverging measurements may be established […] In cases where two facts contradict each other, one may be accorded more weight than the other. Coherence needs to be established. One reality wins – the other is disregarded (Mol, 2002: 64).

This raises questions about *ontological tensions*. As has been shown, objects and their realties are not stable and singular. With the same theoretical approach (that I have been arguing for in this section), questions about ontology will, in this study, also be moved towards processes and practices. By attending to multiplicity, singular definitions and explanations of objects are also resisted, through the acknowledgment and acceptance of realities' complexities. This is also a way to challenge presumptions about how things exist. Paying attention to multiplicity is acknowledging co-existing and intersecting realities that are overlapping and ongoing at the same time. An emphasis on multiplicity also indicates the risks in simplifying and instead attends to the complexity in the conditions under which realities are achieved.

Thompson has, in her work, discussed the ontological work involved in *assisted reproductive technologies* clinics (infertility clinics) (Cussins, 1996; Thompson, 2005). Thompson attended to the coming together of different actors and the coordination of things in the production of babies and parents. The problems that Thompson concentrates on are how technologies, science, kinship, gender, politics, and other involved doers in the work of assisted reproductive technologies are choreographed. Thompson explains this work as *ontological choreography*, which she describes as "the coordinated action of many ontological heterogeneous actors in the service of a long-range self" (Cussins, 1996). In her study, Thompson explains that what we see is not a "hybrid mess" and that the things involved in the work of assisted reproductive technologies need in fact to be carefully choreographed so that different things come together at specific times, like designed sequences (Thompson, 2005: 8).

Mol (2002) explores how the object atherosclerosis is *multiple* and enacted differently with different technologies and tools by different doctors and patients. In each hospital room, the radiologists, the surgeons, the haematologists, and the general practitioners all make atherosclerosis, as an object, differently. The object made in the hospital rooms is atherosclerosis. Mol's (2002) ontological analysis is focused around the object and on the consequences the ontological work done in *different practices* has for the *one object*. Mol (2002) can, by attending to *multiplicity* within the object, show us that an object may be multiple. In doing so, Mol (2002) draws clear boundaries between different practices.

In this study, however, the concern is set within the boundaries of a single practice. Within a single practice, ontology is not a result of an object moving between different practices (cf. Mol, 2002). When ontological concerns are raised in relation to a single practice, as in this study of audience, different ontologies cannot be analytically assigned to specific practices or specific actors, as in Mol's (2002) case. In this sense, the inquiry with this study is not, as in Mol's (2002) case, to look at how *multiple practices* are part of making one object, but to explore ontological achievement in a single practice, on a single site.

Still, what is important in Mol's (2002) study in relation to this study is that she shows that there is a link between practice and object that achieves ontology. But, the main point she wants to make is to show the multiplicity in an object. This raises questions about how the tensions that arise from such multiplicity are managed in practice. Therefore, in this study, I want to start off where Mol (2002) ends, by picking up the idea of multiplicity and attending to how such conditions are ordered. Such *ontological ordering* is at the centre of the analysis in this study.

So far, I have discussed what it means to address audience in terms of ontology in this study, and introduced key concepts such as *ontology*, *enactment,* and *multiplicity*. In the following section I will, against this backdrop, develop what the notion of *ontological ordering* brings to this study.

2.1.5 Ontological Ordering

In line with previous discussions of *ontology*, *enactment,* and *multiplicity* in this text – I will in this section develop the notion of *ontological ordering* and

what such an analytical concept brings a) to this study and b) to recent debates on *ontology* in STS.

First of all, debates on ontology in STS (de Laet and Mol, 2000; Law and Lien, 2013; Law and Singleton, 2005; Mol, 1999; Mol, 2002; 2013; Mol, 2016; Mol, 2011; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; 2015; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013; Lien, 2015; Latour, 1999; 2005; Port and Mol, 2015; Thompson, 2005) have shown that ontology is;

1) a consequence of empirical achievement, and that
2) ontology can therefore be expected to be both fluid and multiple.

As an implication, ontology is a practical concern (something that must be achieved) and, moreover, it is ephemeral.

Against this backdrop, this study develops the notion of *ontological ordering* to draw attention to such implications. What does it mean to order ontology? If ontology is a practical achievement, then how is ontology managed *in* and *through* practice? The notion of *ontological ordering* puts focus on the mechanisms of how ontologies are arranged in practice. By doing so, *ontological ordering* brings the complications of the ontological work to the fore. For example, what happens, in practice, when possible ontological tensions appear? And, what are the consequences for the practice when such tensions appear? What happens, in practice, when different ontologies appear at the same time? And, what happens when confusion emerges, among the involved actors, as to how the ontological work is to be managed?

Here, *ontological ordering* does not put humans at the centre of attention but allows nonhumans (such as tech devices, software functions, and apps) to be approached as doers in the ontological work as well. However, that said, I do not wish to direct specific attention to the *doers* of the ontological work, but rather the elements and details of the interaction in and through which the ontological work takes place.

Moreover, *ontological ordering* is not a concept that explains the ontological work. When approaching ontology as an achievement, the notion of *ontological ordering* helps to focus the analysis on such achievements. As an analytical concept, it thereby provides guidance for the empirical exploration (in chapters 4, 5, and 6). The aim with chapters 4, 5, and 6 is to show how the achievements of audience on the Gallifrey Base has consequences for audience ontology.

For the theoretical analysis of audience, *ontological ordering* then serves as a means for thinking anew about audience. It steers away from predefined characteristics attributed to the object *audience* beforehand, redirecting attention towards how *audience* is achieved in various ways and how such achievements are ordered in and though practice.

In relation to other STS studies, this study focuses on differences and tensions within a single practice (which is different from Mol's (2002) studies of multiple practices, for example). Further, and more specifically, the notion of *ontological ordering* highlights ontological differences and tensions as empirical concerns, attending to how such concerns are treated in practice.

Exploring ontological work, taking on *audience* as an example is interesting because audience is an ordinary and mundane object. Such objects are often taken for granted without much consideration of how they exist or come into being. Mundane objects are often not considered as analytically important as power, politics, or climate change (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). Indeed, most of us do not walk around (I imagine) putting much thought into *audience*. So, is it really vital to engage in a study of audience ontology? What is interesting is that this ordinary object shows to invoke a lot of tension. During this study's empirical explorations, I often heard from people involved on the forum that this is 'merely' discussions of a TV series, or 'just' audience activities. Still, at the same time, the same people would also tell me complex stories about the importance of separating different actions from each other on the forum. Their stories of what happens in this mundane forum practice was everything but uncomplicated. So, as Woolgar and Neyland argues, we should not take even mundane objects for granted. Moreover, (television) *audience* is also an intensely technological practice that can reveal interesting elements and details in the ontological work achieved in human-technology interaction. Examining how humans and technology together achieve and manage ontological work is one of the main interest in this study.

In sum, this study makes use of the notion of *ontological ordering* to continue, and contribute, to recent ontological debates in STS, as well as audience research. Attending to how ontological achievements and ontological tensions are managed in practice, brings the 'ontological politics' of audience to the fore and furthers the analysis of *enactment*, *fluididy*, and *multiplicity*.

2.1.6 Conclusion: Working Theoretical Toolbox for the Study

In this section, I outline the insights I take with me from previous STS work and how key concepts, key arguments, and earlier findings are put to work in relation to this study.

What we know from previous STS work is that – given enactment – practice matters for ontology. Such STS work has consequently done important work in reconceptualizing objects. Studying the day-to-day activities on the Gallifrey Base provides examples of how audience may be done in practice. For the purposes of this study, the terms *enactment* and *multiplicity* are central.

Enactment draws attention to how audience is a consequence of how it is practised. If conditions of existence of objects depend on practices, then *enactment* is key in the link between audience as object and audience as practice. A scepticism towards essentialism emphasizes the ephemeralness of the practices that enact the object. This exposes the expected instability of objects of study. As STS scholars have demonstrated, practices are changeable.

Acknowledging *multiplicity* makes more than one version of audience possible and raises questions about audience ontology. Put together with the proposition that practices are not stable but continuously changing, the implications of multiplicity hold interesting promises also in the case of a single practice.

The STS work demonstrated and discussed in this chapter has pointed to the importance of attending to how audience is *achieved in practice*, and consequently focuses on the details, and what is made a concern, in such achievements. In response, the concept of *ontological ordering* guides the analysis of such endeavours on the Gallifrey Base in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

2.2 Critical Literature Review: *Where* and *What* Is Audience in Media Research?

In audience research, there are several accounts of how audience has developed as an object of study through different trends and phases (Nightingale, 2011; Livingstone, 2004; Butsch, 2008; Moores, 1993; Ruddock, 2000; Webster and Phalen, 2013; Ang, 1991; Boyd-Barrett and Newbold, 1995; Brooker, 2003; Napoli, 2010). In relation to this study's aim – *to develop an alternative approach for theorizing audience* – this critical literature review takes on the task to elaborate on, and evaluate, dominant ontological assumptions underlying previous and existing theories about audience. Sandberg and Alvesson (2011) explain such an endeavour as trying to:

> disrupt the reproduction and continuation of an institutionalized line of reasoning. It means taking something that is commonly seen as good or natural, and turning it into something problematic. Specifically, problematization as we define it here aims to question the assumptions underlying existing theory in some significant ways (Sandberg and Alvesson, 2011: 32).

As introduced in chapter 1, the last two decades' technological developments pose new challenges for how we can problematize and theorize audience, which requires reconsideration of what audience *is* and *how* it can be theoretically understood. Following the argument brought forward by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011: 253) that "theories are not free-floating statements but are always based on and bounded by researchers' assumptions about the subject matter in question", it is important to examine and evaluate previous productions of audience and how they have influenced existing explanatory foundations on audience. Researchers are also part of achieving audience through their scholarly practices, and here in section 2.2, their audience productions will be examined.

The goal of this critical literature review is to challenge what we know to try to think anew about audience. Taking on such a task, I draw inspiration from laboratory studies that were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, exploring knowledge production in laboratories (Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Knorr, 1981; Star, 1983; Lynch, 1985). Although this

study is in many ways different from such studies, not least empirically, it adopts the idea of exploring knowledge production.

In relation to the aim and research questions of this study, the critical literature review concentrates on *media audience research* in general and *television audience research* in particular. Moreover, these studies also have different aims and goals, and drawing such varied work together is not unproblematic. Still, the studies elaborated on in this review highlight significant ontological assumptions in existing research and, based on such assumptions, identify challenges for future research.

First, I trace and discuss *where* and *what* audience is in audience research (sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). Here, the histories of audience research are examined in the search for dominant ontological assumptions of audience, and the implications of the reproduction of such commonly held assumptions in recent and contemporary theorizations of audience. Second, I discuss research on audience as practice and audience on the internet, which more closely addresses the different strands of research close to this study's theoretical and analytical repertoire (sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4). Third, I elaborate on problems in existing theorizations of audience and look to possible paths ahead (sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.6). Taken together, these sections extend the problematization presented in chapter 1.

2.2.1 In Search of Audience Ontology

In what follows, I will search the literature for commonly held ontological assumptions about audience. Here, a) the passive audience; b) the active audience; c) the fragmented audience; and d) the constructed audience as well as the real audience will be revisited.

a) The Passive Audience

As Harbers, Mol, and Stollmeyer (2002) remind us, histories are closely intertwined and linked to each other and the objects they explain. Consequently, older theories that might be seen as rejected decades ago need to be revisited in order to unfold "the ideas behind other ideas" (Slife and Williams, 1995: 71). Following such argumentation, the media effects tradition is worth revisiting since it plays a "hugely influential and dominant role within mainstream communications research" (O'Neill,

2011: 320). Understanding and theorizing audience as *passive* dates back to debates in the 1920s, following World War I, in discussions on government organizations and how propaganda manipulated the masses. Here, audience is treated as a large collection of people divided across time and space acting autonomously and attaining little or no immediate knowledge of one another. Audience is defined as an entity exposed to media. Along the line of this research, scholars have engaged in measuring audience, media consumption, and ratings; mapping audience; and identifying how media audiences receive news radio, advertising, films, and television. Researchers were interested in the effects that media had on people. This body of work includes both academic and market audience research. These studies are foremost positivistic and quantitative studies that assume an objective reality, using surveys, experiments, and content analysis in investigations of audience (Sandvoss, 2011).

Many of the effect studies have been empirical studies focusing on behavioural and psychological attributes of audience. To figure out what the *mass* was doing and thinking, the key task was to quantify individual audience members and combine these results to find out how people's behaviours, attitudes, emotions, and opinions were affected by media exposure (Webster and Phalen, 2013). A key question in effect studies was: What do media *do* to people? Scholars posed questions such as "who says what to whom, through what channel and with what effect?" (Lasswell, 1948: 84).

A common theme in such research is exploring the effect of new media on specific audiences, such as children. Among the first studies to investigate the media–audience relationship was the *Payne Fund Studies* (PFS) in the US in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which let sociologists and psychologists explore films' effects on children. The methods used in these studies were surveys and experiments (Deacon and Keightley, 2011). Scholars measured whether children changed their teeth-cleaning behaviours after being exposed to films with information on dental care. Another effect study is Cantril and Allport's *The Psychology of Radio* from 1935, where the authors argued that people believe what they hear on the radio without questioning it and therefore the radio functioned as a "means of social control" (Cantril and Allport, 1935: vii). Again, such studies grew out of a concern about the public being manipulated by media industries and propagandists.

The theoretical development in effect research has gone through different phases with communication theories such as the *Magic Bullet or Hypodermic Needle* theory of the 1930s and 1940s. The idea was that media texts had a powerful direct influence on people, and could change people's behaviour and attitudes. Such studies gave rise to an idea of audience as defenceless against media texts, hence the passive audience. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948), interested in what they called the social functions of mass media, criticized earlier effect studies for over-emphasizing mass media's effect on its audience. For example, *The Limited Effects Model* in the 1950s, initiated by Paul Lazarsfeld and *The People's Choice,* argued that media texts had less influence on people than previously argued (by the *Magic Bullet or Hypodermic Needle* theory) and that people themselves played an important role in how different media texts influenced them. *The Limited Effects Model* was posed as an alternative to mass society theory, conceptualizing audience as people that are members of social networks. Instead of being vulnerable to direct media manipulation, people actively select and reinterpret the messages they encounter according to these communication theories.

In the 1970s, another media effect theory was developed by Gerbner and Gross (1972). The cultivation theory explored long-term effects of television exposure, arguing that television is different from other mass media and that television cultivates people's perception of reality over time (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Signorielli and Morgan, 1990). The main interest here was in the effects of television violence on viewers.

More recent audience studies attending to developments of such explanations are brought forward by scholars engaged in mediatization theory. Mediatization theorists (e.g. Hjarvard, 2017; Lundby, 2014) criticize effect studies for asking too-narrow questions and have again pointed to the implications drawn from effect studies.

> Much of the research that is usually identified as concerned with the *effects* of media and communication is informed by a metaphor in which media and their texts are understood as a *force* that hits audiences and thereby causes individuals or society to think or act in particular ways. Often this force is measured in terms of *exposure* to particular media texts (advertising, violent media content, political messages, etc.), which is said to bring about a change in behaviour, attitude, knowledge, or emotional state. […] The various effect models do not necessarily imply that

effects are direct, linear, or predictable, although media effects research has often been criticized for just those kinds of implications (Hjarvard, 2017: 1223).

Mediatization theory, according to Hjarvard (2017: 1227), wishes to go beyond effect studies by attending to questions of "whether and how media matter and influence contemporary culture and society". By doing so, mediatization theorists wish to zoom out and take a more general approach to mediated communication, weighing in other domains that might influence the mediated communication as well. Hjarvard (2017: 1225) argues that mediatization theory is a "*macrolevel theory*" taking into account other "institutional forces" such as cultural and social change, which effect studies do not attend to.

Several researchers have suggested that media effects researchers need to refine their methods and develop theory building to adjust to the complexity of the relation between media and its audience, following new conditions of existence of audience (Livingstone, 1996). In a contemporary media environment, it is more difficult to identify, follow, and research audience since audience, according to (Chaffee and Metzger 2001: 371), is not as "well assembled or accessible to researchers as they once were".

Other strands of audience research have also understood audience as passive. Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* from 1947 condemned the cultural industry for creating *passive receivers* of media texts and that media had a direct, automatic effect on audience (Horkheimer and Adorno, [1947] 2002). Drawing on Marxist theories, these kinds of ideas and arguments were driven by concerns for a democratic society. It was a critique of capitalistic systems, with their profit-driven mass media. Adorno and Horkheimer were concerned with media ownership, political economy, and media industries' threat to democracy. Adorno and Horkheimer's study constituted a power position belonging to media ownership that directly influenced, controlled, and manipulated people. As a theoretical basis, a correlation between class and human intellect was assumed.

"Implied audiences", Livingstone (2015: 440) suggests, reside behind homogenizing terms as *crowds*, *citizens*, a *publics*, *consumers* and *masses*.[26] Contemporary audience is conceptualized and organized around a dominant mass- and consumer-oriented research scene. Thus, it is not surprising that the tension between consumer and citizen has had an enormous impact on audience scholars. Concerns with democracy and the role of the citizen and the consumer have once again become pressing concerns in a media landscape with increasing media platforms and texts, not least with the entry of the internet. Consequently, Marxist-inspired theories and other political economy theories have played a significant role within media studies and audience studies. In this strand of research, audience is commonly approached as markets or consumers of media material. Such approaches to audience are common in political economy theories, where scholars have stressed the significance of studying audience as commodities (e.g. Smythe, 1977). Broadly speaking, political economy theories are concerned with the relations between production, economic policies, and political institutions, focusing on the conditions under which production is achieved. The main interest in Marxist theories is in the relations between work, class, and production. Such broad approaches favour different kinds of power relations between audience and media industries. The analyses in such theories are kept on a macro level, drawing connections between *capital*, *society*, and *nations* and other totality systems.

b) The Active Audience
As a critique against the common assumption about audience as *passive*, grew the idea of an *active* audience. Stuart Hall's (2003) influential *Encoding/decoding* (first published in 1973) was grounded in the notion of an *active audience* composed of people who analysed and negotiated media messages. This resulted in a media text that could change depending on where, when, and by whom it was interpreted. Hall's text is a classic reference in audience reception studies, and in approaches to audience as active. In contemporary audience research, Hall's text continues to be

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[26] See for example discussions on audiences as *crowds* (Blumer, 1961; Van Ginneken, 1992; Schnapp and Tiews, 2006); as *masses* (Webster and Phalen, 2013; Williams, 1976; Briggs, 1985); as *publics* (Calhoun, 1992; Warner, 2002); as *consumers* (Lewis et al., 2005; Napoli, 2010; Van Dijck, 2009) and as *citizens* (Butsch, 2008).

influential. By addressing audience as *active* rather than *passive*, Hall proposed a different ontological status of audience. Hall's ideas stand in contrast to those of scholars such as Adorno and Horkheimer ([1947] 2002). The idea of the *Encoding/decoding* theory grew out of a concern about the role of audience members. Hall's text has in many ways played a significant role in the development of contemporary media audience research. Hall's text aimed to extend the understandings of assumptions regarding communication theories. He criticized Adorno and Horkheimer's ideas of *mass* communication, arguing that audience could not be simplified into *passive receivers*. In such critiques, theories drawing on *Encoding/decoding* have in turn themselves been criticized for over-emphasizing the possibilities in the role of the receivers of media texts.

Reception theory has been central in critiquing the idea of the passive audience. Researchers engaged in cultural studies and reception studies argued that there was a need to challenge ideas of audience as passive by investigating the relationship between media text and audience member through in-depth qualitative studies. With such understandings of audience, scholars set out to acknowledge the *active* audience. Morley (1986), for example, argued that media does not have a natural automatic effect, as was argued by the 'effect studies paradigm'. Morley (1986: 15) claimed that television audience is "socially situated individual readers, whose individual readings will be framed by shared cultural formations and practices pre-existent to the individual shared 'orientations' which will in turn be determined by factors derived from the objective position of the individual in the class structure". Arguing that audiences are complex social formations of interacting groups and individuals, scholars were now stressing the need for more complex and nuanced audience theories acknowledging audience as more than passive viewers of a television series (Morley, 1980). Scholars also explored television audiences during the actual viewing activity, using focus groups (Morley, [1992] 2003). Skeggs *et al.* (2008) visited people in their own homes and watched television with them. Such studies showed that other practices surrounding the viewing activity seemed to be significant to television audiences (Silverstone, 1994).

With reception studies grew a number of ethnography-inspired studies, conducted by cultural sociologists, focusing on the social conditions regarding a specific media audience and raising ideological questions about 'meaning' or 'the role of media in everyday life' (Morley,

1980; Ang, 1985; 1991; Bacon-Smith, 1992; Drotner, 1994; Hobson, 1982; Holub, 1984; Lull, 1988; McRobbie, 1991; Radway, 1984; Tulloch and Alvarado, 1983). These scholars were concerned that audience members were assumed to be 'cultural dupes' who were stripped of any possibility to act on media texts. The concern was to try to understand audience from the individual audience member's meaning-making processes and engagement with media texts. Such studies explored the possibilities and restrictions for people to contributing to, and participate in, media productions. What these ethnographically inspired studies had in common were a clear focus on trying to understand *why* people engage with different media texts, the details in people's reading of media texts, and what media texts *mean* to them. They engaged in the relationship between people and television media text(s) in connection to 'wider economic and social structures'.[27] Such researchers have also shown an interest in the different settings of the day-to-day activities of audience. At the centre of attention was the individual audience member's interpretation processes. Many of these studies explored the "struggles over meaning" as an interrelation process that in turn stands in relation to other processes of production, representation, and regulation (Livingstone, 2015: 443).

Showing an interest in the individual audience member's experiences of a specific TV series. In this body of work, we can find studies such as Morley's (1980) *The 'Nationwide' Audience*; Ang's (1985) *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*; Hobson's (1982) *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera*; David Buckingham's (1987) *Public Secrets: EastEnders and Its Audience*; and Tulloch and Moran's (1986) *A Country Practice: Quality Soap*. Such academic work has emphasized how individual audience members use and interpret a text differently, emphasizing that individual audience members' meaning making and interpreting processes were in turn dependent on class and other socio-economic structures. This connected the individual audience member to broader concerns regarding structures. In an interview with Jin (2011), Morley problematized earlier effect studies and argued that it is more complicated than to claim that media has direct effects on its audience:

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[27] Section 2.2.2 will address these 'wider structures' in more detail.

> Technologies do not have effects built into them, because it's always a question of how particular technologies come to be institutionalized in particular ways. There are many social and cultural forces which act to determine that. As my own work has shown, along with that of people such as Roger Silverstone, new technologies don't simply have effects on people, just as media don't have direct effects on their audiences (Jin, 2011: 128).

Such studies look for cultural explanations, often in relation to class and cultural boundaries, claiming that individual audience members live in a society that already has a given structure, which, in turn, influences how they interpret media texts.

Understanding audience this way assumes that audiences are embedded in larger social, economic, and cultural structures that pre-exist audience. Such settings stand the risk of reducing audience to merely being a consequence of culture when it could in fact be that audience might in turn affect culture.

There are also understandings of audience that are commonly accused of over-emphasizing the idea of an *active* audience, celebrating the individual audience member's active participation in creating meaning. Such understandings entered into audience research along with pressing issues following developments in the internet and digital media environment. The body of work that most often highlights audience as resistant to media texts consists of fan studies and participation studies. In turn, audience studies have often turned to fan studies when trying to explain engagement and experiences of television. Jenkins (1992: 23) explains that fans are "active producers and manipulators of meanings". Furthermore, Jenkins (1992: 23) defines fans as "readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves their different interests". Jenkins' work suggests that fans are audience members that care more, and that are more committed, than other audience members. Jenkins' work has been notably influential in audience studies (Rose, 2016). In relation to Hall's model, Jenkins' fans were exemplified as the typical *active* audience that scrutinized media texts and, moreover, actively created their own content in response. In the wake of fan studies' optimism regarding the democratic potentialities following internet-based media, scholars started to engage in participation studies (Carpentier, 2009). With such studies, older concepts, well-recognized in mass communication studies, started to re-appear in audience research,

and ideas of resistance merged with discussions about the masses, citizens, and consumers, but now over internet-based media.

c) The Fragmented Audience

In theorizations of contemporary audience – "smart mobs, electronic democracy, netiquette, new media literacy, virtual communities" (Bratich, 2005: 261) – audience has commonly been described as *fragmented* and *dispersed* (Wiard and Domingo, 2016; Webster and Ksiazek, 2012; Webster, 2011; 2005; Andrejevic, 2011; Bennett and Iyengar, 2008). Such studies emphasize that the nature of the object audience is undergoing changes and acknowledge that contemporary audience is perhaps more difficult to identify and access when researching audience than they may have been before the last two decades' technological developments. These scholars stress that, in the contemporary media environment, audiences are not as isolated to specific settings as they used to be. If audiences used to be more connected to specific settings, such as in front of the television or in a theatre, nowadays they are spread out due to the possibility of viewing and engaging with media material through mobile and multiple channels. This makes audience harder to track and trace.

d) The Constructed Audience and the Real Audience

Within audience research there have been specific debates over audience ontology and disagreements as to whether audience should be analysed as a *construct* or as *real*. Such studies have debated *how* audience exists and whether audience "inhabits a real space" or only exists as an "analytical discourse" (Allor, 1988: 228). Analyzing audience as *constructed* or *real* signals a separation of what audience is *ontologically* and *epistemologically*. It is a separation of *how* things exist (ontology) and *how* we can achieve knowledge about things (epistemology). In approaches to audience as *constructed* or *real*, these two are distinctly separated. Note, though, that these scholars do not use the term *ontology* but instead use a different vocabulary and talk about *audience as construct* and *audience as real*.

Audience scholars have stressed that audience is an analytical conceptualization, a *discursive construct* (Alasuutari, 1999; Allor, 1988; Ang, 1991; Hartley, 1987; Bennett, 1996), narrowing down audience existence to "an abstract totality" (Allor, 1988: 219). Alasuutari (1999: 6) has shown an interest in what he refers to as "the discourses within which we conceive of our roles as the public and the audience" arguing that "there

isn't really such a thing as the 'audience' out there; one must bear in mind that audience is, most of all, a discursive construct produced by a particular analytic gaze". Audiences have also been stressed to be "everywhere and nowhere" (Bird, 2003).

Moreover, the death of audience has been declared (Jermyn and Holmes, 2006). Rosen (2008: 163) in turn has referred to "the people formerly known as the audience". These are ontological claims in that they are claims about what is real or not real. Audience has also been dismissed as nothing but an idealization (Grossberg, 2006). These constructionist scholars have acknowledged audience "not as empirical actors to be examined in their concrete activity, but as discursive constructs, as effects of a variety of programs, institutions, and measuring instruments" (Bratich, 2005: 243).

There are also arguments for an actual audience outside a discursive construct (Lull, 1988). In line with such reasoning is Ang (1991), acknowledging both categories. However, Ang (1991) claims that it is crucial to make a distinction between these two categories, keeping them separated, emphasizing different ways in which audience can exist. Such argumentation is grounded in an idea that there is a difference between how audience objectively exists and how audience can be known and understood (Ang, 1991). Such a critical realism approach argues that things exist objectivly and independently from how we can know (about) them, which emphasizes that the apprehension of objects should not be confused with the objects themselves.

2.2.2 Implied Singularities

I have now gone through the literature to see how audience has been ontologically understood and I have highlighted commonly held ontological assumptions about audience. As a result, implied singularities were found in audience theorizations. These singular ideas of what audience is have also shown to be reproduced in contemporary audience theories. Undoubtedly, audience research has moved on since early effect studies, but it was still worthwhile to revisit these theories since the ontological assumption about audience as passive still comes up in more contemporary theories.

Understandings of the nature of the object audience as either *passive* or *active* assume ontological stability of audience beforehand and assign audience pre-existing characteristics. Such assumptions of audience as a distinct group risk reproducing a taken-for-granted ontology. Although understandings of audience as *active* show a greater curiosity about the nuances and complexities of audience, instead of inquiring into the significance of audience activity, its importance is ascribed beforehand. Whether audience is approached as *active* or *passive*, this simplistic divide leaves out questions of the details in the activities involved in *being audience*. Approaching audience as a distinct group reproduces audience ontology in the same way within different strands of theorizations and research approaches in audience studies. Regardless of whether audience has been researched from theoretical standpoints based on mass communication research (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1948; Webster and Phalen, 2013), various Marxist theories (Horkheimer and Adorno, [1947] 2002; Smythe, 1977), or different phases of literary theories (Hall, 1974; Ang, 1985; Morley, 1986), the ontological significance of audience has been given little attention. When approaching audience as *passive*, studies have commonly highlighted media as a threat to the democratic society in different ways (e.g. Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Signorielli and Morgan, 1990). Studies of audience as *active*, on the other hand, have commonly illuminated how media may enable citizens to take part in what was happening in the world (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006).

Discussing audience this way risks taking audience ontology for granted. One might think that audience research would have moved further away from simplistic conception models (such as active versus passive), yet, as acknowledged by other audience scholars as well, a great deal of the debate has been over understanding audience as *active* or *passive* (De Ridder *et al.*, 2016; Livingstone, 2015; Carpentier, 2011; 2009; Carpentier, 2013). Dominant features from the history of audience research are still occurring in contemporary audience research, which is evident in recent evaluations of audience research, identifying pressing issues (Das, 2017; De Ridder *et al.*, 2016; Mathieu *et al.*, 2016; Livingstone and Das, 2013). Issues regarding power dynamics between audience and media industries are still dominating audience research with questions of organized action and social movements (Murru *et al.*, 2016; Murru, 2016); questions of ethical and political challenges in relation to digital platforms (De Ridder *et al.*, 2016; Mollen *et al.*, 2016); questions about polymedia

practices (Madianou, 2011); and questions regarding how media industries encourage audiences' productive engagement (Mollen *et al.*, 2016; Vesnic-Alujevic, 2016). These contemporary issues risk reproducing older ontological assumptions in the formulation of new problems.

Research approaching audience this way stands the risk of over-simplifying and singularizing audience, which risks overlooking differences and diversity among and within audience. Such theorizations also assume audience ontology as something *stable and given*. Understood in this sense, audience is not something that can develop or vary. Both *passive* and *active* are also vague terms that, perhaps unintentionally, but unavoidably, assume a collective with a given status. Approaches to audience as something passive, as in the era of early media effect studies, have made a notable mark on audience research. This is also evident in the large body of work emerging from the 1990s and therafter, and the determination to stress an active and participatory audience (Jenkins, 2006; 1992; Jenkins and Tulloch, 2005; Bruns, 2007).

Scholars seeking more nuanced approaches to audience have pointed to contemporary audience as *fragmented* and spread out (Wiard and Domingo, 2016; Webster and Ksiazek, 2012; Webster, 2011; 2005; Andrejevic, 2011; Bennett and Iyengar, 2008). As Strathern (1992b) reminds us, the concept of *fragmentation* brings with it connotations of the idea of the object as a whole that is spread out. Such understandings of contemporary audience still stand the risk of assuming a distinct group, although spread out. It is important to acknowledge that even when audience has been acknowledge as *dispersed* and *fragmented*, such studies still risk implicitly reinforcing an assumed ideal of audience as a singular and distinct group, such as when approaching audience as *active* or *passive*.

Audience research literature also debated audience ontology specifically, discussing whether audience exists as a *construct* or as *real*. Studies of *audience as constructed or real* point to an ontological dissonance in audience research and show a discrepancy between understandings of audience as theoretical *or* empirical. The issue of audience ontology, this section has shown, is resolved in discussions. Here, it is problematic to be no more nuanced than to say that *how* we study a phenomenon is what makes it exist. Although speaking of audience as an object of study that is constructed acknowledges that 'science is culture', audience is not simply brought into being by the hands of the researcher and because it

is the focus of research (Asdal and Moser, 2012). Audience *can* potentially be enacted even when researchers are not there to observe it. Audience is somewhere, but how it exists may differ from one setting and situation to another. We witnessed a struggle in the academic research regarding whether to approach *audience as a construct* or *audience as real*. Such discussions point to an ontological dissonance: a discrepancy between understandings of audience as theoretical *or* empirical. Such discussions seek to resolve the issue of audience ontology theoretically and leave empirical explorations of audience ontology untouched. Ontological assumptions of audience as *constructed* or *real* are grounded in a philosophy of science that takes the existence of things as independent of what we can know about those things. The implications of such understandings take for granted that research methods can describe worlds without interacting with them (Law and Urry, 2004). In relation to this study's theoretical repertoire, a sharp conceptual line can be drawn between ontology and epistemology; however, the two are inextricably intertwined and should be recognized as such.

The critical literature review so far points to existing and emerging struggles. Theorizing audience as *active*, *passive*, *fragmented*, *constructed*, or *real* builds understandings of audience based on simplifications rather than specifications. Such understandings also come with problematic assumptions about audience homogeneity and singularity, indicating a sameness. Approaching audience as static gets even more complicated in relation to contemporary dispersed audience, streaming services, mobile media devices, the internet, and multiple screens and communication possibilities. The last two decades' technological developments further advance and actualize the question of ontological assumptions about the *nature of* audience and pose new challenges for how we can problematize and theorize audience. Such technological developments require reconsiderations of not only *how* audience is enacted, but how it can be *understood*. Macrolevel analyses, such as assuming audience as *active*, *passive*, *fragmented*, *constructed*, or *real* have their boundaries, as shown here, and do not escape problems of treating audience as a homogeneous entity. These theories have limitations, as illustrated here, and are consequently not enough to explain audience.

In the next section, the review will move on to theories of audience as practice and audience on the internet, and it will describe in more detail

the different strands of research close to this study's theoretical and analytical repertoire.

2.2.3 Audience as Practice

In the 1990s and early 2000s, scholars started to develop theories emphasizing the active role of audience by using the term *audiencing* as a verb rather than a noun, signalling clearly that audience had to do with actions (see for example Fiske, 1992; Park-Fuller, 2003 and Johns, 2004). Such studies have been devoted to investigating the possibilities and processes for audience members to create meaning. Following this line of reasoning is research on audience as practice (Couldry, 2010). Suggesting that audience should be approached as practice was a move away from focusing on interpretation and meaning-making in the analysis of audience (Couldry, 2010). Approaching audience as practice acknowledges the difficulty in accessing and capturing audience in the contemporary media environment (as brought to the fore by, for example, Chaffee and Metzger (2001) as a critique against media effect studies). A possible solution in relation to identified problems in earlier audience research was a turn to *practice theory* (Couldry, 2010). Turning to practice theory, however, is mostly an idea discussed in theory rather than empirically carried out. With accounts of audience in relation to the growth of internet and digital media, Couldry (2011) stressed the need to approach audience as practice. In relation to this, it is also important to look at activities surrounding the actual act of viewing if we want to understand audience (Silverstone, 1994; Morley, 1986). As media technologies and formats change, Couldry (2011) argues, so do the physical and social locations of audience. The point of the 'turn to practice' in audience research was to challenge inherited descriptions of what people did with media and, at the same time, acknowledge that there are structures in play that also affect this (Couldry, 2010). Drawing on Swidler's (2000) anchoring practices, Couldry (2011) argued that media practice controls other practices. The idea was to return to questions raised by Lazarsfeld and Merton (1969: 495) regarding the media effects "of the existence of media in our society", acknowledging structures in play, but this time by turning to practice (Couldry, 2010).

While Couldry (2012) emphasizes that practice approaches can be useful in media research, he delimits the discussion to the potential contribution of practice theory (e.g. Bräuchler and Postill, 2010; Couldry, 2010; Reckwitz, 2002). This body of work draws on social theories, and in such practice approaches, the practice is given authority and agency, and actors enter a practice according to structures that are already there (see for example Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984). The point of departure here is to separate macro structures from micro structures, and then explain how the two influence each other. In 'practice theory', the practice is given authority and agency (see for example Bourdieu, 1977; Schatzki, 1997). According to 'practice theory', actors enter a practice according to rules, norms, and structures (similar to Giddens' structuration theory) that are already there, embedded in the practice (Schatzki, 1997).

If we instead turn to Garfinkel (1967), Wieder (1974; 1970), and Zimmerman (1970), they emphasize that rules can be implied without being spoken because people fill in the gaps in statements and then connect those statements as being in accordance with 'the rules'. People make these assumptions based on previous experiences. So, to keep the rules ongoing, they need to be (re)produced continuously. In such accounts, consequently, rules are an outcome of interactions rather than simply something that steers and guides interactions. Callon (1986b) makes an important contribution to such debates (by drawing on Touraine's sociology), emphasizing that actors cannot exist outside a structure and then enter. Instead, the actor "fluctuates in parallel" (Callon, 1986b). If an actor is part of a structure, then that actor is part of enacting that structure. Therefore, an actor cannot precede a structure or vice versa; both are part of the enactment. They both *become* what they are in and through that very enactment.

In *practice theory* it is assumed, as a starting point, that the practice at hand possesses pre-existing characteristics, much like Giddens' structuration theory arguing that the structure had a certain set of pre-existing characteristics. Although both theories make a connection between structure and interactions, they both rely to a large extent on *institutional forces* within their *structures* (Giddens, 1984) or *practices* (Bourdieu, 1977). The structures' or the practices' *stretchability* is consequently restricted.

A study following such reasoning was conducted by Baym (2000), who did a television audience study on an internet forum, stressing that:

> Participants appropriate rules and resources from pre-existing sources of influence through social interaction. […] Structuration theory and self-organizing systems theory are used to explain that the group members' interactive appropriation of the pre-existing rules and resources creates structure beyond that which already exists (Baym, 2000: 142).

Closely intertwined with questions of structure are questions about rules and norms. Audience and communication research has approached the analysis of rules as governing behaviour (Markham, 2013), as part of power structures (Baym, 2015), and as a part of being socialized into a socio-technical system (Boyd, 2014). Rules are seen as something that individuals adapt to when entering a social order or structure (Kiesler and Sproull, 1992), and as something that regulates the interaction and structures behaviour (Postmes *et al.*, 1998). Communication is seen as governed by social rules (Rogers and Lea, 2005; Postmes *et al.*, 2000; Postmes *et al.*, 2005), and these internalized rules govern social interactions (Cumiskey and Ling, 2015). Such explanations to audience were sought in a connection between what people did with media and structures that were thought to affect such doings. In such practice approaches, external forces (economic, social, cultural) are continuously used as an explanatory foundation.

2.2.4 Audience on the Internet

By the beginning of the 1990s, television audiences had started to turn to the internet. Internet forums where TV series could be discussed were popping up. Researchers started to explore how groups on the internet were created and upheld through technology (Anderson, 1991; Baym, 2000; Rheingold, [1993] 2000; Turkle, 2005; Feenberg and Bakardjieva, 2004). However, research on the internet is more commonly conducted through quantitative rather than qualitative research (Garcia *et al.*, 2009).

With the internet entering audience studies, concepts such as *produser* were coined as an attempt to press an argument that, with the internet, people more actively *used* media content and media technologies (Bruns,

2007). The term *produser* was an extension of the term *prosumer*, coined by Toffler (1981) to highlight "the interplay of production and consumption" (Nightingale, 2011: 3). Studies of internet discussion forums, on TV series in general (Jenkins, 2006; 1992; Jenkins and Tulloch, 2005; Baym, 2000; Falero, 2016; Gray, 2005; Andrejevic, 2008) and the Gallifrey Base in particular (Hills, 2015; 2010; 2013; Perryman, 2008; Manning, 2015; Richards, 2013; Hadas and Shifman, 2013; O'Day, 2013a; 2013b), showed an interest in the audience members' power and possibilities in relation to interpretation and meaning-making processes as well as creations and relations of communities. Such studies have mainly been carried out by scholars who are themselves engaged as members of the forums they study and are consequently familiar with their objects of study.

Qualitative research, such as ethnographies, focusing on internet audiences has explored various aspects of what people do on the internet (e.g. Baym, 2000; Boyd, 2014; Kendall, 2003; Markham, 1998; Marwick, 2013; Orgad, 2006; Senft, 2008). The internet forum, for example, has been seen as a place for "collective intelligence" (Jenkins, 2006); where expertise is distributed (Banks, 2013); where knowledge can be negotiated (Hills, 2015; Wenger, 1998; Hadas and Shifman, 2013); where people can form relationships (Baym, 2000); where a complexity of relationships between media texts, viewers, and creators can be explored (Ross, 2011); and where people create meaning in their engagement with television (Hine, 2015). Studies on internet forums later suggested that forums offer social benefits and function as sources of information (Pendry and Salvatore, 2015; Ellison *et al.*, 2007; 2011; Shah, Kwak and Holbert, 2001). Larsen found that the members of a site devoted to the TV series *Grey's Anatomy* expressed loyalty to the forum and that "there was a clear sense of community among the participants" (Larsen, 2010: 161).

During the last two decades, technological developments have changed the conditions for contemporary audience and how we can engage with media material. The contemporary media landscape includes simultaneously ongoing media practices, and the internet is becoming closely intertwined with television (Fiske and Hartley, 2004). In fact, internet forums discussing TV series have become of "fundamental importance for our understanding of media and audiences" (Couldry, 2011: 215). Even though the close connection between television and the internet has been stressed, ethnographies on the internet are rare. Not

only that, ethnographies that identify, document, and analyse *movement* on the internet are even less common (Garcia *et al.*, 2009).

Other researchers showing interest in life on the internet, closely related to audience studies, are those in the field of computer-mediated communication taking on studies on communication in the internet age (Jones, 1995). They are asking questions about the consequences of having the internet as part of day-to-day life, and showing how the internet is becoming a larger part of people's day-to-day lives (Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2008; Kiesler, 1997; Preece, 2000). Scholars had already begun to do computer-mediated communication research, pre-internet, in the late 1970s, arguing that computer-mediated communication should be dealt with as a social process.[28] Computer-mediated communication research has explored relationships on the internet in terms of self-representation, identification, trust, and credibility as aspects of internet communication (Smith and Kollock, 1999). This body of work has presented studies investigating the internet as a tool that mediates social interaction. Computer-mediated communication scholars compared face-to-face communication to computer-mediated communication and explored possibilities to participate in the development of relationships (Hiltz *et al.*, 1986; Hiltz *et al.*, 1989; Dubrovsky *et al.*, 1991; Walther and Burgoon, 1992).

While early computer-mediated communication studies argued that text-based interactions pointed to misunderstandings in relation to face-to-face interactions (Short *et al.*, 1976; Sproull and Kielser, 1986, 1991; Leia, 1992), later work has suggested that computer-mediated communication is a way to connect and stay connected in day-to-day life (Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002). Such studies have shown that community dynamics on the internet are not completely different from those in face-to-face situations, which shows the intertwinedness of online and offline relations (Wellman, 2004). However, Baltes (2002) suggested that it was harder to come to a decision in computer-mediated communication than in face-to-face communication.

Scholars have also noted that it is getting harder and harder to point out any clear distinction between what has often been referred to as

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[28] See for example the seminal work conducted by Hiltz and Turoff (1993 [1978]) that helped define electronic communication. For a thorough guide on computer-mediated research, see Jones (1995).

online or offline (Consalvo and Ess, 2011). This is a result of internet practices becoming more and more intertwined with other practices (Livingstone, 2005). This is also evident when reviewing methodological strategies when engaging with internet ethnographies (Beaulieu, 2017; Boellstorff, 2012; Hine, 2015; Hjorth *et al.*, 2017; Markham, 2016; Pink *et al.*, 2016). Another challenge for future internet research, acknowledged by Brügger (2011), is recognizing the ephemeralness and changing nature of the object of study, the internet.

2.2.5 Context as Explanatory Foundation

Qualitative studies approaching audience as practice and researching audience on the internet have commonly turned to theories in cultural studies and social sciences. In such approaches, scholars turn to external forces (economic, social, cultural) in search of an explanatory foundation (Markham, 2013; Baym, 2015; Boyd, 2014; Kiesler and Sproull, 1992; Postmes *et al.*, 1998; 2000; Postmes *et al.*, 2005; Cumiskey and Ling, 2015; Rogers and Lea, 2005). By doing so, there is a risk of reinforcing, rather than challenging, the fragility of structures (economic, social, cultural). Taking surrounding external forces as a foundation for explanation indicates a taken-for-granted stability in structures. Consequently, such studies take the context in which the study object is embedded as stable.

Studies approaching *audience as practice* remain rather unexplored. Although audience practices have often been stressed as key to understanding audience (e.g. Couldry, 2010; Swidler, 2000), little attention has been paid to developments in theorizing audience as practice. Connecting strands of research on audience as practice and audience on the internet, technological developments (pointing to the contemporary media environment's mobile media devices, multiple screens, multiple texts, and simultaneously ongoing practices) are changing the conditions for *where* and *what* audience is. Despite these changing conditions, where theorizing audience as practice seems highly significant, such theorizations of audience remain underdeveloped.

Theorizing audience as practice could direct attention to the details of *what* comes into play and *how* audience is practised. However, by taking power dynamics, structuration theories, and other macro assumptions for granted (for example by turning to *practice theory*), audience research risks

overlooking the significance of the situated work involved in such achievements. Instead, such approaches seek to look beyond the local situated practice, turning to *external forces* to explain how people think and act and thereby how audience practices work. Moreover, suggesting that audience should be theorized as a practice drawing on practice theory (e.g. Couldry, 2010; Swidler, 2000) stands the risk of focusing on the external conditions in which audience is embedded at the expense of the situatedness and ephemeralness of local achievements. The theoretical repertoire that this study draws on emphasizes, contrary to practice theory, that actors cannot exist outside structures.

Again, when studying audience on the internet, context has been turned to as the explanatory foundation, searching for differences between *offline* and *online* practices. In such studies, attention has been drawn to the specificness of internet practices. We saw this, for example, in the coining of terms such as *produser* (Bruns, 2007). Such terms tried to get at how the role of the media user changed with the internet. We also saw it in relation to computer-mediated communication, where scholars compared *offline* practices to *online* practices (Short *et al.*, 1976; Sproull and Kielser, 1986, 1991; Leia, 1992). However, in the contemporary media environment and with mobile media, the differences between *offline* and *online* practices are becoming more and more diffuse to the point that drawing a boundary between the two is no longer helpful. Nowadays, it can also be questioned whether it is even possible to make such distinctions (Consalvo and Ess, 2011).

Reaching for *external forces* of any kind (whether social, cultural, or economic) as explanation means going outside the object in order to explain the object (Asdal and Moser, 2012; Law and Moser, 2012). This leads to audience research that draws on institutional theories to overlook the ephemeralness and situatedness of the local work involved in audience achievements. Using context as an explanatory foundation reinforces rather than challenges the problematic assumptions that support them.

2.2.6 Problems with Audience Theorizations

Setting out to explore *where* and *what* audience is in the audience literature, this review has shown that audience is, broadly speaking, commonly

assumed to be a distinct group that consists solely of people. Be it a mass, a group, or a collective, audience seems to be most commonly understood as a cluster of people.

First, commonly held ontological assumptions about audience were searched for. Evident in all features reviewed was the tendency to understand audience as *one*, as a *singular given entity* (be it *active*, *passive*, *fragmented*, *constructed* or *real*, or *on the internet*). These terms are not only rather vague and general, they also imply audience singularity, that audience can be approached and theorized as a homogeneous group. Such starting positions undermine the theorization of contemporary audience because, by excluding ontology from the analysis, they risk overlooking the significance of complexity and changing conditions of audience.

Second, communication theories have generally approached communication technology as a means by which messages can be sent and received.[29] Here, the discussion about *The Passive Audience* in section 2.2.1 and the computer-mediated communication theories in section 2.2.4 point to how communication theories have focused on how a message is sent, through which channel it is sent, and how it is received by a mass. Such communication theories have employed quantitative methods to address elements in communication more broadly. In comparison, qualitative methods have not been as popular when studying communication. While audience theory is closely related to communication theory, traditional quantitative approaches to communication may need to be revised in accordance with recent developments towards seeing audience as a practice.

Third, theorizing audience as practice is a move away from seeing audience as *one*. However, theorizing audience as practice still remains under-researched, and when such attempts are made, context as an explanatory foundation is heavily relied on.

2.2.7 A Path Ahead

With this study, I try to think anew about how contemporary audience can be theorized. The study involves a shift in focus compared to earlier

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[29] For an introduction to communication theories in mass communication, see McQuail and Windahl (2015).

studies, exploring the possibilities of approaching audience in terms of ontology. Taking on such an inquiry, this study turns the question of audience ontology back to the field and towards empirical investigations. Can we follow both people and technologies on the internet and see how, together, they accomplish audience? There has been a tendency in audience research to underestimate the role of technologies in achieving audience. The theoretical insights developed in section 2.1 outline a possible path ahead, exploring possible advantages of analyzing audience in terms of *ontological ordering*.

Finally, this critical literature review of audience research motivates my research questions: What is audience on the Gallifrey Base? How does audience practice on the Gallifrey Base manage audience ontology? What does the ontological significance of audience practice mean for the theorization of audience?

3. Methods & Materials

In this chapter, I discuss choices related to methods and materials, and elaborate on methodological decisions taken in this study. Consequently, this chapter speak to the specifics of the methodological research approach taken when addressing this study's research questions. Here, I clarify this study's approach to researching realities; I introduce and develop the notion of *audienceography*; I discuss how the fieldwork is situated; I elaborate on the process of analyzing the empirical material; I explain the process of writing; I reflect over, and justify, ethical decisions; I present understandings of generalizations; and I discuss how readers may evaluate this study.

3.1 Realities and How to Study Them

This study takes a qualitative approach to explore one single audience practice. As stated in chapter 1, this study is concerned with questions of *how audience may be achieved* in and through actions in an internet setting. To recall the aim, this study sets out to empirically particularise how audience is achieved on the Gallifrey Base, with the aim *to develop an alternative approach for theorizing audience.* Turning to the Gallifrey Base – this study approaches audience as *a process*, setting out to detail and examine some of the actions that make up audience practice.

In this study, reality is not explored as something 'out there', existing independently, waiting for the researcher to come along and *discover* it. Instead, reality is explored as something that "does not precede practices but is part of them" (Mol, 2002: 6). Haraway's (1988) ideas on 'situated knowledges' resonate with such thinking, emphasizing that there is no reality *behind* things and that we as researchers are part *of* what we study, and through that, part *of* enacting reality. Research thus enacts realities rather than describing them (Law and Urry, 2004; Law, 2004a).

Against this backdrop, the main methodological challenge this study faces are resisting general assumption about audience. If we cannot expect realities to be singular and given, then we must keep the discussions about *the conditions of existence* of object open. This demands that the design of research method: (1) create possibilities to *be surprised* by keeping the question mark on ontology (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013); and (2) create possibilities to not settle on one explanation, and not make hasty decisions about observations, but to carry on with the notion that "it can be otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013). By doing so, a scepticism is maintained regarding claims about the conditions of existence of things. If we were to decide from the beginning what characterises an object, then the process of doing so obstruct possibilities of being able to get surprised about how an object exist. Therefore, it is important to try to keep a distance to the object of study and not get too familiar with it, which is a challenging and demanding task to take on. One way to build this into the methodological research approach is to engage with the empirical material in phases.

Remaining curious during the empirical explorations, resisting approaches to the object of study as obvious or self-explanatory, was key when designing a methodological research approach for this study. This creates a foundation for abilities to "become surprised about elements and relations than were not clear before" (Mouritsen, 2014). This is a way to take seriously what might first seem like uninteresting and otherwise unnoticed observations, but that might lead to surprising and significant findings. Rather than accepting any first impression of the practice, it has in this study been a main task to keep turning over stones in an effort to understand how audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum works.

3.2 Audienceography at Play

In this section, I introduce the notion of an *audienceography*; I motivate the choice of site; I discuss the arrival at the site; and I discuss the work with this study's empirical material consisting of electronic interviews, observations and field notes.

Taking on a qualitative research approach, I have drawn methodological insights from ethnographic research methods. As

clarified in section 1.6, there are both similarities and differences between my study and a traditional ethnography. However, unlike anthropologists that goes off to study tribes, creating "thick descriptions" of their experiences (Geertz, 1973: 6), I engage with ethnographic methods to investigate a practice. This study is not a study of a culture, but one of practice. The *ethno*-part in ethnography is, consequently, downplayed. My main task is, by attending to enactment, to situate audience ontology in practice and document and analyse processes of achieving audience. This is further emphasized by RQ 1 and 2.

RQ 1. What is audience on the Gallifrey Base?

RQ 2. How does audience practice on the Gallifrey Base manage audience ontology?

So, if I borrow ethnographic research methods in this study, I do so to understand a practice rather than a culture. That is, I interview people and observe a forum with the goal to learn about a specific practice. Traditional ethnographic methods were therefore tweaked and adjusted to this study's research design, which situates ontology in practice. STS scholars have suggested that an inclusion of a wider spectrum of ontological approaches serve such purposes (Woolgar, 1998; Lynch, 2013). Lynch (2013) proposes the term *ontography* for ethnographical studies on reality-in-practice:

> Commitment to a general philosophical ontology confuses investigations of specific practical ontologies. To avoid such confusion, I recommend 'ontography': historical and ethnographic investigations of particular world-making and world-sustaining practices that do not begin by assuming a general picture of the world. Such investigations avoid making sharp distinctions between epistemology and ontology and take a symmetrical approach to concerns about identity and difference (Lynch, 2013: 444).

To particularise how such a study could be carried out, Law (2004a) discusses *partial connections*, drawing on the work of Haraway, Strathern, and Mol. To exemplify, Law (2004a) describes Mol's case of haemoglobin levels in blood:

> Mol shows that clinical diagnoses often depend on collective and statistically generated norms. What counts as a 'normal' haemoglobin level in blood is a function of measurements of a whole population. She is saying, then, that individual diagnoses *include* collective norms, though they cannot be reduced to these (Mol and Berg 1994). At the same time, however, the collective norms depend on a sample of clinical measurements which may be influenced by assumptions about the distribution of anaemia – though it is not, of course, reducible to any individual measurement. The lesson is that the individual is included in the collective, and the collective is included in the individual – but neither is reducible to the other (Law, 2004a: 64).

Translating Law's argument to this study, the lesson would be that the object audience (which is the outcome of audience practice) is included in the practice. Law (2004a) stresses that the argument of *partial connections* is applicable as well on studies of reality making. In turn, the practice is included in the object audience – they are *partially connected*. Moreover, Law (2004a: 65) argues that "it appears, then, that in practice there are plenty of partial connections, partial inclusion, partial relations".

In line with these discussions on *ontography* and *partial connections*, I refer to the methodological approach of this study as an *audienceography,* exploring the specifics of audience as reality-in-practice. To follow a practice is in this study not merely the task of identifying relations and connections, but also to attend to boundaries, and how boundaries are achieved, between different actors and actions within the practice.

Connecting this methodological approach to the key arguments of section 2.1 on studying practice, the particularities of an *audienceography* is that the *audienceographer:* (1) accepts its object of study as shifting on fluid grounds; her most important challenge is to (2) stay curious, questioning previous consistencies about what seems obvious and self-explanatory about the object of study. Part of this is to avoid becoming too (3) *at home* with the empirical material and instead (4) get "comfortable with uncertainties" (Law, 2004a), remembering that "it could be otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2015: 4).

An audienceographic approach at play is a curious concern with the *partially connected* makings of objects and realities-in-practice. In this study, I have brought this concern to audience in an internet environment. The methods applied in this *audienceography* is: (1) electronic interviews with 70

forum members of the Gallifrey Base (conducted via Skype-chats, private messages sent between me and the members on the forum, and e-mail interviews); (2) observations of the Gallifrey Base of approximately 500 hours, and (3) field notes. The empirical material therefore consists mainly of written text, in the form of interview transcripts, and field notes.

By including both interviews and observations, as part of an *audienceography,* I was able to engage with audience practice on the Gallifrey Base in different ways and allow for different involvements with it (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 [1983]). Making *observations* was a way to see what was going on at the forum, observing audience practice as it was ongoing. By doing *interviews*, I could ask the members about the activities I observed on the forum. By engaging in both observations and interviews, I was able to move back and forth between the two methods; by taking turns between the two methods, each turn informed the other. The fieldwork took place over a period of 3 years and 7 months. During this time, I have researched in phases. I became a member of the Gallifrey Base in April 2014, and ended the fieldwork in November 2017.

When assembling empirical material, it is always difficult to know exactly when to stop (Latour, 1988). For me, the decision was affected by the time limit of my project, but also by the sense that I had enough material. I continued to assemble material all the way to the end of the study, during the process of writing up. However, the empirical material assembled during the last eight months of my study was primarily member-checking and follow up questions to check whether I had understood members' descriptions of events in accordance with their own understanding of these situations.

The details and the particularities of this *audienceography* have now been laid out. In the next section, I will turn to the specificities of the empirical material beginning with connecting the fieldwork to the internet, choosing a site, the initial fieldwork research process, the interviews, and the observations. Finally, I discuss limitations of this study.

3.2.1 The Location

Situating the fieldwork of this study on the internet is connected to the presented research problem (section 1.2), and the changing conditions of

contemporary audience. Here, it was stated that the changing conditions of the existence of audience urges studies that attends to the ontological significance of such changes. The internet is becoming an undeniable and *embedded* part of our day-to-day lives (Hine, 2015; Coleman, 2010), to an extent that "we don't even think much *about* it at all" (Markham, 2016: 1). Research has shown the increasing development of communication through social networks, emails, text-messages, mobile phones, computers and other tech devices (Büscher *et al.*, 2010; Urry, 2003; 2007; Wellman, 2006). Ethnographic work conducted on the internet has shown the complexities of internet-based actions (Hine, 2017), and on top of this, the production of subcultures on the internet, in relation to TV series, is growing.

Attending to such raised concerns, exploring how audience is achieved on the internet opens up for new and necessary ways of advancing our understanding of what contemporary *audience* is. Other advantages with choosing to locate my fieldwork to the internet: was that it made it (1) possible to get access to a single audience practice relatively easy; it was (2) budget wise a good choice for this project since it did not demand expensive travel costs; it made it possible to (2) follow a single audience practice in detail, as it was ongoing; it is (3) traceable, and it was (4) available at all times and did not demand specific phases when the empirical material could be accessed.

Ethnographic methods that engages with studies *of* and *on* the internet often struggles with the same problems and challenges as traditional ethnographic work (Marshall, 2010; Atkinson, 1994; Boellstorff, 2012; Duggan, 2017). In relation to ethnographic studies, the internet is important to take into consideration mainly "because it makes possible new types of descriptions of social life" (Rogers and Marres, 2002: 342). Exploring actions in an internet environment allows for studying how social life is organized and, enables new ways of analyzing social life (Law, 2011). We can find the social on the internet, but we can also find the internet in the social. There is an embedded duality here that needs to be accounted for. In line with such reasoning, ethnographies engaging with studies *of* and *on* the internet, needs to go beyond *users* and *internet cultures* (Rogers, 2013).

Answering to such calls, this study draws attention to the relations between humans and technology, and the connections between these intertwined beings in social life. This is not a study about the "human

subjects" on the Gallifrey Base forum. However, I do care greatly about their narratives about what happens on the Gallifrey Base. Instead, this is a study about *practice*, which includes relations between humans and technology and the outcomes of their joined achievements. Audience practice on the Gallifrey Base is made possible through technologies, it depends on technologies, it is bothered by technologies, and it is challenged by technologies. Technologies are a significant part of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base and should consequently be accounted for.

3.2.2 The Site

I selected a single internet forum for this study because doing so would make it possible to go deeper into a single case (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 [1983]). It would also make it possible to study audience practice in detail, on a single site. I looked for a forum that (1) was connected to a TV series that was still running, that (2) generated discussions, which could then be followed in time, and that was (3) an English-speaking forum.

A criterion that narrowed down the selection of choosing a site was that I wanted to choose a TV series that I had no previous experience of. Following the idea of staying curious and open to the possibility of getting surprised, I did not want to risk that I would start to make too much sense of things myself when I observed or interviewed, but to stay 'naïve' as long as possible. Knowing too much about the TV series could make the researcher make hasty decision and drawing conclusions about things too fast. In line with such reasoning, I also chose not to view the TV series *Doctor Who* myself during fieldwork.

Doctor Who was one TV series that I had no experience of and new nothing about. I started to look at *Doctor Who* forums since these forums also seemed to generate a lot of discussions, even between periods of broadcast. Originally, I chose a forum that was difficult to navigate, browse, and manage. I contacted a person that I knew had previous experience of that specific forum, in order to get more insight into the how the forum worked. She kindly responded and pointed out that this particular forum was not as active as it had been. Instead, she claimed that the Gallifrey Base forum was a "very active" forum and that it was

here that *Doctor Who* was being discussed nowadays. I took her advice and started to look closely at the Gallifrey Base for a couple of weeks. This resulted in me changing forum since the Gallifrey Base was indeed a more active forum and also much easier to navigate and manage.

The Gallifrey Base forum is run on a voluntary basis and is a moderated forum and a privately owned website.[30] The forum consists of several subforums and numerous discussion threads devoted to different parts of the *Doctor Who* world. The forum is counted as one of the largest *Doctor Who* forums with 85.459 members and 10.430.284 messages.[31] On the forum, the Gallifrey Base is described as "the world's most popular and busiest *Doctor Who* forum – discussing *Doctor Who* in all its forms and spinoffs". The TV series Doctor Who and the Gallifrey Base function, in this study, as a situated example of a contemporary audience practice. The purpose of choosing the Gallifrey Base was to understand it as a site where audience practice could be followed and detailed as a process.

3.2.3 The Arrival

When thinking of anthropological stories, I suppose I am not alone in imagining a researcher arriving as a stranger to a culture far, far away, allowing us, as readers, to take part in their exciting journey. This study, however, has a different point of departure. I did not get to pack my bag and set out on an adventure wearing brand new khaki pants and a neat hat protecting me from a pressing hot sun. Nor did I get into a muddy jeep or take a bumpy ride in a charming single-engine airplane. Nor did I get to take a unforgettable boat ride, with the wind blowing in my hair, to a little abandoned island somewhere – a beautiful but uncompromising place barely on the map. Instead, my voyage starts and ends in a considerably less glamorous manner. It starts and ends in front of a technical device, most often a computer. My journey exploring audience on the internet demands no hats or khaki pants. It demands electricity, an internet connection, and technical devices. Moreover, this voyage calls

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[30] Gallifrey Base is based in Chicago, Illinois, US. Gallifrey Base is co-owned by Steven Hill, Jennifer Kelley, and Robert Warnock.

[31] This is the number of members and messages registered on the Gallifrey Base forum as of 27 August 2017, in Stockholm at 13:22 local time.

attention to artefacts in action, technological constructions, and internet landscapes.

This research is mainly silent. There is, though, the light sound of my fingertips dancing over the keyboard on my laptop from which I do most of my work. There has been a lot of clicking, reading, writing, searching, and sending messages during this study. Also, a lot of waiting. Waiting for the computer to start, and waiting for responses during the interviews and casual talks which were going on electronically during this study. When sending messages to members, and conversing back and forth through these messages, it was often necessary to wait for a response due to the time difference between the member's geographic location and my own geographic location. Moreover, the software also demanded a lot of waiting. The forum does not allow users to send more than four messages every 42 minutes, and when using the search engine on the forum, one must wait 45-seconds between searches.

The beginning of the research process could be characterized as relatively unstructured. I was entering a territory that was new to me. It was many times a slippery, difficult, and challenging road to walk. I started by observing the forum. It was all rather confusing to say the least. Knowing barely anything about the TV series *Doctor Who* made the links on the website confusing. I was starting to question the choice I had made, choosing a TV series that I knew nothing about. However, I tried to remember Hine's (2015: 130) words that "insider knowledge is not necessarily an advantage for an ethnographer", and that "taking the stance of a stranger" provides an opportunity not to take for granted the entities studied.

I did not try to become accepted by the members of the forum; that was never the intention with this study. I do not share their interest in *Doctor Who*. Being an *insider* can make the ethnographer less open to surprises because she has become too familiar with the entities being studied and, will likely perceive what is happening as rather obvious or given. I was open to the members about my inexperience, and as a result they explained things without ever becoming irritated with me (or at least, they never showed such irritation). Furthermore, in line with Lofland (1971), I think that because I was open about my inexperience regarding anything *Doctor Who*-related I was allowed to ask even more questions, including rather naïve and basic questions that people who watch the series would not ask. The forum members were very patient with me.

Exploring the activities on the Gallifrey Base forum has required me to take on a range of different roles. I have had to become an archaeologist, digging for written records, researching history, and identifying changes through time. I also took on the role of anthropologist, interested in studying societies. I noticed early on that the members of the forum were remarkably verbal and interested in analyzing their activities. This was evident in the observations of the forum, in the transcripts I received back from the interviews, and in the many talks that I had with the members. They could talk at length about a discussion thread and recall in detail not only what had been said in the thread, but also when it had been said. Even if the discussion thread was several years old. They could also recall the approximate number of posts in specific threads and which members were active in those threads. The forum members often inserted links to these threads so that I could see for myself what was going on.

During this study, I have also heard stories about how the members started viewing the TV series with their parents, and how they now view it with their own children (but first, they view it alone to minimize the risk of being disturbed, they say). The members told me stories about how they ordered cakes in the shape of the TARDIS when a new season premiered. They also told me stories about how the TV series has shifted in tone, style, and character over the years. During this study, I have been impressed with the detailed information that the members on the Gallifrey Base forum have expressed. Not just when it comes to *Doctor Who*, but also when it comes to the forum itself and its history. I am going to tell you some of these stories in the following chapters, but I want you to remember that the stories I am telling in this text are just a selection among the many stories told during this project.

3.2.4 The Interviews

So, you're going to be a doctor of the Doctor! (Interview 1)

Interviews were chosen as a research method based on the idea that the forum members' stories can uncover significant elements of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. The forum members can be regarded as knowledgeable about audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. For this

study, 70 individual semi-structured, electronic interviews with the forum members of the Gallifrey Base was conducted (45 via e-mail, 23 via the forum, and 2 via Skype-chat). I considered electronic interviews to be suitable for this study since the members are familiar with electronic communication (Gaiser, 2008). Electronic communication is largely embedded in the forum members' day-to-day routines and activities, and the members are effective writers (Karchmer, 2001; Meho, 2006). Electronic interviews also has advantages in relation to issues connected to time and distance (James, 2006). This made it possible to interview members that was hard to reach geographically, without having to take time zones or budget restrictions into consideration (Hooley, 2011; Wilkerson, 2014; Fox *et al.*, 2007). This gave me access to a selection of interviewees that could have been difficult to access otherwise (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Without the possibility of interviewing electronically, I would never have had the chance to select the members that I did for this study (Kivits, 2005). With electronic interviews, the interviewees have time to reflect and formulate their answers (Haverinen, 2014). The interviewer, in turn, has time to formulate follow up questions. In electronic interviews, it is easier to follow up and continue the conversations, even over time, than it might be with face-to-face interviews (if, for example, the researcher wants to re-connect after an interview situation). When interviewing electronically it feels more natural to continue or to pick up where the conversation was last left off. Another advantage of conducting interviews electronically is that you simultaneously get a transcript of each interview, which saves a lot of time.

Electronic interviews also makes it possible to interview over time (James, 2006; O'Connor *et al.*, 2008). In this study, this offered an opportunity to keep an interview going for several days, and sometimes weeks. The interviewees had time to think before responding back, which resulted in deep, detailed and reflexive answers. James and Buscher (2006) acknowledges that electronic interviewing might even offer deeper answers than face-to-face interviews or phone interviews. In relation to face-to-face interviews, the interviewer often has one chance to get answers, which is not the case with electronic interviewing. In this study, every interviewee got follow up questions at least once, but often several times for further discussions on the topics brought up. These were also often quite detailed.

The advantages of doing one-on-one electronic individual interviews was chosen in favour of focus groups. Focus groups demand coordination of participants and the participants are also free to talk to each other (Deggs *et al.*, 2010). Such a setting is suitable if the interest of research is in the collective, in a group of people. However, this study begins with different intentions, that does not take *the group* as the object of study. Moreover, the members of the forum, which is shown in chapter 4, 5, and 6, are not necessarily interacting in the same locations, in the same subforums or discussion threads. Nor do they necessarily see themselves as *a* group. Instead, this study is interested in forum members' reflections on audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. Consequently, two clear advantages of doing one-on-one electronic individual interviews were (1) that it offered members a more comfortable setting than, for example, group interviews, in which they could tell me about their perceptions of the forum in a safe setting, and (2) it allowed the members to be anonymous, since I did not ask about their real names.

When making the initial contact with members of the forum, I contacted them via the *private message* function on the forum. I explained who I was and what my intentions with the project were, and asked if they would be interested in partaking in an interview. I pointed out that they would be anonymous. The members often asked me if I liked *Doctor Who*. I told them the truth, that I do not know the first thing about *Doctor Who*. I sensed that some of the interviewees enjoyed the fact that I was a novice, and that they had the opportunity to tell me all about it. I also think that they probably had a lot more patience with me because of it. The members were generous with their time in answering questions, chatting with me, emailing, sending messages on the forum, and Skyping with me. Some of the members asked specifically to conduct the interview via the forum. I suspect that this was because they wanted to make sure they were anonymous and therefore did not want to give me their email addresses (which could expose information about them). I read this as an act to secure their anonymity.

The interviews was *semi-structured* in the sense that they had been structured to a certain degree, but was also flexible enough to allow for spontaneous accounts (Bernard, 2011; Brinkmann, 2014). I rather quickly abandoned the first interview guide I made. It had too many questions that were far too detailed. I found that by leaving these detailed questions behind and just trusting the process, the discussion often took me closer

to what I wanted to touch upon, rather than direct and specific questions. During this project, the interview guide therefore developed and its structure ended up less and less pre-set (Brinkmann, 2014). Nevertheless, since electronic interviews are textual interaction, some sort of agenda was needed to be set from the beginning. I found that working with open questions was necessary, since I had little knowledge about both *Doctor Who* and internet discussion forums. Open questions were a possibility to find out things that I would not have found out with specific and targeted questions. For example, the members told me that they take breaks from the forum, so that they would not ruin their viewing experience (which is explored in chapter 6.2). This was not something that I could have asked the members about, but something that came up in the descriptions of their activities on the forum and that I then followed up.

I wanted to give the members room to speak, which open questions encourage. I tried to let the members take control of the interaction, rather than just having them answering questions, by clustering the themes I wanted them to touch upon. For example, I asked questions such as "Could you tell me about your activities on the Gallifrey Base?", "What happens after you log in?", and "What do you do next?"[32] I tried to form more general discussion questions, and then take the interview forward based on the member's answer. Therefore, the interviews where customized to each interviewee. I let what came forward guide the research ahead. I continuously tried to let the findings guide the project ahead. Moreover, I was careful not to re-direct the conversation, with the follow up questions I asked. Instead, I wanted to form discussion questions that encouraged the interviewee to continue their narrative (Bernard, 2011). I did this by asking questions that built on the member's previous answers. For example, "You mention that you do this and that on the forum, what happens next?" or "You said that you are engaged in these activities, can you tell me more about them?" This was a way to ask the interviewee to detail the particularities they have previously mentioned. I tried to stay with, and ask more about, the things that might appear self-explanatory to the members, remembering the words of

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[32] See Appendix B for a general interview guide. Note though, that the questions in the interview guide where common questions I asked the interviewees. The follow up questions where individual and specific questions based on the interviewees answers in the initial interview situation.

Heuts and Mol (2013: 128), stating that "the art [of interviewing] is to persistently ask questions about the specificities of activities that members tend to take for granted".

When working with the interview guide, I was also inspired by analytical interviewing (Kreiner and Mouritsen, 2005). What is interesting with this technique is that the interviewee is invited into the analysis. I noticed early on that the members were interested in discussing and analyzing their own answers and activities, so this technique turned out to be successful. Inviting the members into the analysis was important since it put emphasis on the members' own ideas about what was happening on the forum. Moreover, in line with Agar's (1996: 16) view on the ethnographer, I as a researcher tried to work together with the forum members to figure out how the forum works. To do so, I told the members about an observation I had done, asking if they recognized what I was talking about. This functioned as an opportunity to get different reactions to things I had observed, a way to test the observations, putting myself and my assumptions at risk (Haraway, 1997). This is not only a way to risk beliefs and fixed ideas, but also a way to methodologically account for myself and my own engagement and involvement with the empirical material (Haraway, 1997).

The interviews were conducted between October 2014 and August 2017. I selected interviewees based on three criteria. I started by looking at (1) the *Member's list* on the Gallifrey Base, which lists all the forum members. This list could be organized in different ways. I chose to list the members by the number of their published posts. I figured that the members who had posted a lot on the forum would be interesting to interview since they had documented experience with the forum. However, I also wanted to include different members' experiences to ensure richness and nuances in the material. Therefore, I also selected interviewees based on fewer published posts. I also selected interviewees based on (2) recommendations from other members (that I had previously interviewed), a so-called snowball selection (Yin, 2015). Quite often did it happen that members suggested a specific member to interview, without me asking. The suggested members were members that had different experiences of the forum. I also selected interviewees based on (3) observations conducted on the forum. This could be, for example, a member who had contributed to interesting discussion threads on the forum. Discussion threads that I wanted to know more about. My

inclusion of this range of different voices turned out to be both challenging and intriguing when writing. However, I wanted to show the range of differences in the members' accounts in order to show the nuances and the complexities in the empirical material.

There are disadvantages of electronic interviews. For example, in the two real time interviews I conducted (Skype-chats), there were a problem with disruption when taking turns in posting (Fielding, 2010; Mann, 2000; Markham, 2004; Salmons, 2015; Illingsworth, 2006). This is also the reason why I only conducted two Skype-chats. The answers in the two Skype-chats were also significantly shorter than in the other electronic interviews. The possibility to ask questions when the interview took other direction was much more difficult as it put me in a position where I had to come up with something quickly. Chatting seem to depend on the conversation constantly moving forward. In a face-to-face interview, pausing to think for a while does not necessarily make for an awkward situation. In a chat situation, however, a pause can seem to indicate that the conversation is running out of topics to talk about. Therefore, pausing to come up with a possible follow up question, resulted in the members asking me if the interview was over. The Skype-chat seem to rely on quick, short answers. The Skype-chat interviews were therefore not as reflective and rich as the email interviews. Engaging in electronic interviews, one can also miss out on facial expressions when asking certain questions (Bertrand and Bourdeau, 2010). However, such cues where adjusted to the electronic setting by the use of emoticons and acronyms such as LOL (Meho, 2006).

Throughout this project, like many other scholars engaged in ethnographic studies on the internet, I have been met with scepticism when telling people about the electronic interviews. Can these really be called interviews, some wondered, or are they not more like questionnaires? I beg to differ. I should admit that a part of me was intrigued by doing electronic interviews just because it seemed to invoke such provocation. "Who is to say that this preference for one mode of communication – informal written text – is somehow less authentically human than audible speech?" (Rheingold, [1993] 2000: 8). I also thought that electronic interviews would be suitable for this study since the members of the forum are used to written communication. The outcome of the interviews turned out to be detailed and rich. I was surprised to see the length of the texts in the responses that I got back from the

interviewed members. A single question could result in a discussion that lasted several pages. The nuances and rich details of the texts made the interviews quite lively and interesting to read. The members' texts were witty, well-articulated, self-analytical and went deep into details about the members' activities on the forum. Moreover, their analytical stance proved to be a rich source of insights.

In retrospect, electronic interviews turned out to be a suitable method for studying the Gallifrey Base, since the members of the forum were accustomed to writing and to textual interactions. The interviewees also expressed that they like the internet forum, because it gives them time to think, and to prepare their answers before publishing them on the forum. The same goes for the electronic interviews.

A few incidents occurred in relation to the electronic contact I made via the forum. One member thought that I wanted his credit card number. Another member wondered if I were a "bot", due to the small number of posts I had made on the forum (one, to be exact). Making contact electronically via a website can certainly raise questions about the intentions of the sender. However, this was not a significant problem. After these two events, I started to add a link to my research profile on the university website, after which such events never happened again. The link to my research profile functioned as a verification of my 'realness'.

3.2.5 The Observations & Field Notes

Getting access to observe the thing of investigation can be essential in ethnographic studies (Gobo, 2016; Beaulieu, 2017; Hine, 2015). For this study, observations made it possible to observe, up close, audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum. The observations carried out can be compared to non-participant observations, where I myself did not participate in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2007).

On the Gallifrey Base forum, I did not engage in discussing *Doctor Who* (Walstrom, 2004). Starting out not knowing about audience practice on the Gallifrey Base created opportunities to gain insights into areas which the members of the forum take for granted (Czarniawska 2007). Since this study sets out to stay curious, I decided that I would not engage myself in the actions of discussing *Doctor Who* on the Gallifrey Base. For

the same reasons, I also chose a TV series and a forum that I had no previous experience of (as discussed in section 3.2.1).

Engaging in observations of an internet discussion forum means textual observations (Garcia *et al.*, 2009; Schaap, 2002; Svenningson, 2004). Instead of following people, I follow a practice (Marcus, 1995: 106). Setting out to follow a practice in an internet setting, with a firm conviction to stay curious and not take things for granted, I worked with guiding questions. In every new situation, I encountered, I asked "in this situation – what is audience?". This was done as part of the study's intentions of not assuming, or risk taking for granted, what audience is. This was a way to, in practice, keep the question open about what audience is and treat audience as something changeable and fluid. Doing this, I followed and analysed audience practice on the Gallifrey Base as it unfolded. The observations of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base quickly drew focus to the diversity of actions on the forum (Hine, 2011).

The observations allowed me to continue to explore some of the topics that were brought up in the interviews. For example, the members frequently suggested discussion threads on the Gallifrey Base that they thought I should take a closer look at (based upon our discussions around certain topics). I observed these suggested discussion threads, and then turned back to the members, to ask more about what I had seen. Here, I let the members guide me to discussions on the forum that they thought were interesting and important. In that sense, members had influence over the observations. During the fieldwork, I frequently moved between conducting interviews and observing.

I started the observations by trying to identify subforums and discussion threads. This to get a better idea of what happens in different subforums and discussion threads. When observing, if possible, I foremost followed discussion threads devoted to the season of the TV series that aired at the time for the observations. Such discussion mainly take part in the main subforum called *Doctor Who Universes on Television*. In this subforum, I foremost focused on the subsubforums *Doctor Who Series, The Greatest Show – The Doctor Who Universe, The Infinite Quest, The Zero Room, The TARDIS Scanner, and The Long Game – Viewing Marathons*. I also explored threads on older seasons and spoilers and speculations about the TV series production. The reason for following these parts particularly close was because the forum members often brought them up in the interviews. These were the parts that the forum members often

talked about in the interviews. They were also the parts of the forum were members post most frequently. Consequently, certain parts of the forum was therefore explored more closely than others, and some parts were left out of the study (Carter, 2005). Since the Gallifrey Base is far too complex and large to study in its *whole*, specifically if the task is to detail the particularities of the actions found there, it was necessary to choose parts of the forum for closer investigation.

I also briefly spent some time in locations where forum members discussed other issues than the TV series to get a feel for the different locations on the forum. An example of such a place was the *Crater of Needles – Current Events & Life*. This is a location where the forum members can discuss other things than *Doctor Who* (like politics and their personal lives). I briefly explored such parts because I wanted to get a better idea of the variations of the actions on the forum.

Certain technical issues interfered with my observations. The Gallifrey Base restricts the number of messages that can be sent within a certain period of time – in this case, only four messages could be sent within a 42-minute period. This restriction certainly interfered with my study. For example, when contacting a forum member, one can 'click' on the user name and then choose the function to send a private message to that member. During my observations, I made notes about particular members that I wanted to interview. However, due to this technical restriction, I could only contact four members every 42 minutes. Moreover, when using the search function on the forum, one are required to wait 45 seconds between searches. Technical aspects such as these interfered with the research process.

I allocated certain time slots for observations of the forum. I spent around 500 hours on the forum altogether. The more intense periods of observation took place in connection with the interviews. In such periods, I observed the forum every day for several weeks. I also stayed away from the forum and the observations for certain periods. That helped me to keep a distance from the object of study, to avoid me feeling too 'at home' where I might begin to take things for granted. I tried to maintain a *stranger's point of view* to avoid getting too used to the forum (Ager, 1996). This also ties into the audienceographer's task to stay open to surprises and maintain a curiosity.

The field notes from the observations had three different functions. First, I made notes about ideas I got from the observations and, which I

wanted to follow up with interviews, or the other way around. Second, the field notes also functioned as snapshots from the observations – describing particular events. Third, I also took field notes about what kind of questions the observations raised. Things that I wanted to explore closer, and perhaps also follow up in interviews. Since the observations in this study consist of text that has been written (like for example, posts on the Gallifrey Base), field notes could easily be made during the observations without the fear of missing out on what was happening at the time.

3.2.6 Limitations

A limitation that had impact on this study was the decision to leave out certain parts of the forum in the analysis. It would not have been possible to explore the *whole* Gallifrey Base. The forum contains too much material, and all of it could not fit within the limitations of this study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 [1983]). Limiting the project was necessary, due to the enormous amount of information on the Gallifrey Base. Something that had to be left out of the scope was the possibility of researching discussions that was not *Doctor Who* related. Consequently, some parts of the forum have been less researched than others and some parts were left un-explored. In relation to this study's ambition to empirically particularise how audience is achieved on the Gallifrey Base, I chose to leave out the parts of the forum that was identified as the parts that the least related to the significance of the of television audience. Such parts could be referred to as being about something else than audience practice.

   As explained, I foremost explored the parts of the forum that frequently showed activity, and that concerned the TV series. However, one subsubforums that frequently shows activity and that is not about *Doctor Who,* is the *Crater of Needle – Current Events & Life*. It could have been interesting to follow the actions in such parts of the forum as well, and explore how such actions relate and connect to audience practice. However, due to the project's scope, the explorations needed to be delimited.

3.3 Analysis

The empirical material in this study consists of text. On the forum, I observed text, and in the interview settings I dealt with written transcripts. Although it is text that I am analyzing, it is not the text per se that interests me, but what is accomplished through it. The various texts I have dealt with (interview transcripts, field notes, and texts on the forum) describe and show the entanglement of interactions, who's involved in the interactions, and the justifications of those interactions. Consequently, the point of departure is not to analyze text per see – but to analyze text as interactions (Smith, 1978; 1990).

The analysis of ontology is in this study, is directed towards textual practices. The types of texts in this study offer an opportunity to study *practices* and *ontology* in action. Analyzing the ontology of a bin bag by exploring a journalistic article in a British newspaper, Woolgar and Lezaun (2013) argue that "the very character of the object, the ontology of the bin bag, is constituted in and through its articulation, in this case, through the organization of the text". Woolgar and Lezaun (2013) turned to *text* to observe ontological work. "[T]he text tells us who and what is on the scene, who should do what, what might be expected to result, who is liable for what, who did what and whether and how that is legitimate or otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 331).

The analytical work has been guided by the question: *where and what is audience in these situations?* When engaging with the empirical material, I have made good use of a printer. For example, after I got a response back from an interviewee, I directly printed the transcript, read it carefully and made notes. I paid special attention to the members' descriptions of *what* they do on the forum and *how* they do it, rather than what these activities *mean* to them. The analysis was done in connection to reading these narratives, trying to understand audience practice on the Gallifrey Base, how it is enacted, and relating these insights to theoretical ideas (Callon, 1986b; Feyerabend, [1975] 2010). When reading the members descriptions of audience practice on the forum, I identified quotes that I thought were interesting and marked them with a yellow marker. I also made notes directly in the margins of the transcripts. The notes were about possible follow up questions regarding certain descriptions, or comments about other interesting observations in relation to members' descriptions.

Sometimes the theory developed empirical explorations, and sometimes it was the other way around. I knew from the beginning, that I wanted to look for connections and relations and to include nonhumans in these assemblages. I was looking for interrelations, and this affected how I approached the empirical material. Moreover, I wanted to acknowledge valuable initial insights from the fieldwork (Federico, 2016). A field note that I made early on was that "there are a lot of activities and attitudes on the forum", and so *multiplicity* arose as a theme for further investigation. This led me to write chapter 4, which is followed up in chapter 5 by a description of how this multiplicity is managed. As discussed in chapter 2, a multiplicity of objects was to be expected as earlier STS work has shown, so it did not come as a surprise. However, I took this finding as an incitement to continue to explore these multiplicities that arose. Moreover, something that emerged as a theme throughout the empirical material was the broad range of *tensions* involved in audience practice on this site. Although this is probably to some extent visible in all the three chapters in part II, I wanted to pay extra attention to the tension in chapter 6, because of its significance. Tensions of different kinds were brought up in interviews and were evident when I was observing the forum. When presenting this study, I wanted to illustrate both the multiplicity and the tensions and differences in audience practice as it occurred. Therefore, I started to unbox audience practice (in chapter 4) and, as I developed the thesis, I kept returning to the empirical material to further unbox the practice (in chapters 5 and 6) on the basis of the emerging results.

Throughout the research process, I also engaged in what Saldaña refers to as analytical memoing (Saldaña, 2016). Analytical memoing is a way to turn descriptive field notes into initial analysis by writing more extensive observations. These writings were made in a diary that I kept in a regular Word document on my computer. The analytical memos I made can be divided into three different types.

The first type were overall observations about what was happening on the forum, such as the relations of the interactions, which activities the members were engaged in, which enactments were generated and enabled, and links between enactments.

The second type referred to methodological challenges, such as possible rearrangements of the interview guide and possible ways to develop the study methodologically.

The third type were connected to my theoretical repertoire. The memos in this category connected the quotes I had marked in the transcripts to my theoretical repertoire, for example, by changing a note indicating "this is interesting" into questions such as "How can I use this?" and "How is this description interesting in relation to my theoretical repertoire?" The process of working with analytical memoing can be described as connecting quotes to central theoretical concepts such as multiplicity, fluidity, enactment, and object/practice relations, and to considerations of what these quotes had to do with ontology and practice. Working with these three types of analytical memos helped me organize the analytical process.

Going back to Feyerabend's ([1975] 2010) reasoning about theories and methods being inseparable, the process of analyzing the empirical material has been a process of linking the two. Both my theoretical ideas and the empirical work have developed in relation to each other. The empirical material has helped me develop new theoretical ideas (as in the case with 'not letting one ontology win' in Chapter 5, where the empirical material did not fit with, and challenged, earlier theories). In turn, the theoretical repertoire has helped me develop what I saw in the empirical material (as in the case with developing the analytical concept *ontological ordering*). The theoretical repertoire has also continuously helped me develop how I have carried out fieldwork applying the famous STS slogan "it could be otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 322) , and "trudge like an ant, carrying the heavy gear in order to generate even the tiniest connection" (Latour, 2005: 25).

At the beginning of the study, I saved the material in the computer software *NVivo*. I started to code the interviews but quickly learned that doing so was unhelpful since I felt I was forcing the empirical material into different categories while leaving other parts of the interview unmarked. I felt forced to decide too quickly what a certain event *was*. Further, the process of trying to divide the empirical material according to different themes or codes seem to delimit the material too early and shut down curiosity. I was concerned that after these themes or codes had been crafted, they would appear definite and thereby become methodological obstacles by excluding alternatives. I experienced coding as a process of singularizing the empirical material and the multiple realities, which would be counter-effective in relation to the aim of this particular study.

Realities that are to be approached as multiple, fluid, and ephemeral, do not lend themselves very well to being neatly organized into fixed categories. I found that printing the empirical material and then sitting down with the transcripts, working with paper and pen, allowed for more analytical curiosity, creating a situation that allowed me to go in different directions. I wanted to take a more generous and inclusive approach and let the empirical material stay unspecified to keep on engaging with, and questioning, the realities I encountered. Working with building stories around quotes, analytical memos, and the unstructured notes I made allowed for multiple realities. This approach encouraged me to stay curious and to keep the uncertainties in the empirical material when writing up the empirical material and building the stories.

When investigating and analyzing what seems obvious with audience, it is important to maintain a sense of novelty and a desire to keep questioning. Therefore, in this thesis, I reflect on both my own and the members' views on things. I do not want to take for granted what members receive as definite, either. I don't want to look at their experiences as something obvious, keeping in mind that "it could be otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 322).

3.4 Writing

Writing is difficult to separate from the process of analyzing, since it is in the course of writing that many ideas are crafted. Nonetheless, in this section, I want to take the opportunity to clarify how I view my own text and, how I stay reflexive about the experiences with the empirical material. In this section I am first going to elaborate on how I went about writing a multiple story. Second, I am going to discuss two specific actions I took to invite the reader into the text. Third, I will briefly reflect on some concerns that have been expressed, on occasions when I have presented earlier drafts. I will also take the chance to comment on some of the things that have been left out of this text.

First, to write an *audienceography* is to write a story that has many sides to it, a story that is diverse, complex, and at times contradictive and conflicting. It is a form of writing that includes uncertainties. How does one tell such multiple, complex stories? At the beginning, I tried to

summarize the empirical material. Reading Flyvbjerg (2006), however, reminded me that important details might be lost in summaries. Moreover, Latour (1996) explains that writing about one's empirical material entails bringing the experiences to life in a different context than it was experienced in. The stories that I tell in this text are an attempt to narrate my experiences with the empirical material and build stories around quotes (from the interviews and the observations), analytical memos, and field notes. For example, I wanted to capture the humour and wittiness that I experienced and that was significant in the empirical material. I also wanted to capture, in my writings, the multiple, fluid, and ephemeral realities I had encountered. Moreover, the quotes I picked out for this text were chosen because they provide insight into the particularities of audience practice and *ontological ordering*, and they do so through the members' own words. I have also chosen a wide range of quotes from different members to emphasize the variety and nuance in the members' voices and stories, which I hope will make for a richer text (Whittemore *et al.*, 2001). I chose not to embed the quotes in my own writing, to make it possible for the reader to clearly follow who is narrating the text at any time.

Second, I have tried to invite the reader into this text by taking two specific actions. I have been (1) using 'me' and 'I' throughout this text. I prefer this over the use of passive voice because writing is not neutral – writing is always a form of production. It also emphasizes that these are my observations and my experiences. By presenting (2) direct quotes (from the interview transcripts and the screen shots of conversations assembled from the forum), I let the empirical material speak and at the same time I invite the reader into the analysis. Using quotes from the empirical material also lets more narrators into this text. The purpose of letting more voices enter the scene is to create an explorative text that engages in a sort of 'finding out together' task. Here, I found inspiration in Mol and Law's (2004: 59) the assertion that the aim of "a multi-voiced form of investigative story telling need not necessarily be to come to a conclusion. Its strength might very well be in the way it opens questions up". The stories in this study, told by multiple narrators, sometimes agree with each other and sometimes do not. When many voices are put together in the same text, frictions are likely to arise. However, I hope that these frictions give a more nuanced text than would be the case had I used only my own voice to describe events. Finally, the quotes used in

chapter 4, 5, and 6 are all in English with no other manipulation used than the cut and paste procedure.

Third, during this study, when presenting my work-in-progress, I have on several occasions been asked about the forum members' nationalities, age, and gender. This information was suggested to contextualize the members' quotes. However, I do not agree with such arguments, mainly because this is not a study that is interested in drawing conclusions based on such assumed *cultural* explanations. Nor am I drawing any conclusions based on the members' identities or backgrounds. Such questions assume that explanations reside in nationality, gender, age, etc. Deciding beforehand what such *real* explanations are would go against the very purpose of this study. In this study, I focus on writing stories about *how* and *what*, rather than *who,* adding as many details as I can about audience practice on the forum.

Finally, I wrote chapters 4, 5, and 6 (where the empirical material is presented and discussed) not as three free-standing, separate chapters, but as continuations of one another – attending to the particularities of audience practice as it unfolds.

3.5 Ethics

In any study involving human subjects, ethical concerns are involved. Ethical concerns are not just something that can be thought about in the early processes of planning a research project, but must continue to be enacted throughout the study. In this section, I discuss and illustrate some of the ethical decisions I have made in relation to this study, and some of the ethical concerns that have been significant.

For ethical guidance, I have mainly turned to the Associations of Internet Researchers (AoIR).[33] Guidelines for studies of internet

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[33] The Associations of Internet Researchers (AoIR) is an international organization that works with developing ethical guidelines and recommendations for internet research. In Sweden, the *Swedish Research Council* (*Vetenskapsrådet*, VR) has guidelines for research involving human subjects. However, these guidelines do not attend to the specificities of internet research. The *Swedish Research Council* therefore refers to AoIR for guidelines for internet research. The *Swedish Research Council* also refers to the Norwegian *National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities*, which has published research ethics guidelines for internet research. Moreover, the *Swedish Research Council* also

environments are constantly being discussed and developed by different countries' research councils, in relation both to the rapid technological development and to new legislations. The most challenging issue dealt with in relation to this study was that I had chosen an internet forum that required a 'log in'. Elm (2008) discusses the different categories of internet environments and suggests that they could be divided into four categories: (1) public environments, (2) semi-public environments, (3) semi-private environments, and (4) private environments. The second category is defined as an internet environment that is "available to most people. It is in principle open to anyone, but it first requires membership and registration. In this category, we find most web communities or social networks" (Sveningsson Elm, 2008: 75). This is the category to which the Gallifrey Base forum would belong. When creating a 'log in' at the Gallifrey Base, a fictive username and an email address are all that is required. Anyone can create a membership within minutes and then access the forum. The semi-public environments category could be subdivided into (a) those that allow anonymity and (b) those that do not (Sveningsson Elm, 2008). Even though a membership is required to access the forum, anonymity is possible. In other cases that might not be an option.

However, ethical decisions are more complicated than that. Like many works on ethical issues in internet research points out, what it all comes down to is the question: "Could I harm an individual with what I am writing and including in my text?" (Buchanan, 2016). This is a question that the researcher is left alone with when trying to decide how to act. With this in mind, I had to consider if the forum would be acceptable to study (Markham, 2016). And, what are the "expectations of privacy" on the forum (Markham and Buchanan, 2012: 202)? How do I handle the fact that I am studying people that do not know that they are being studied, and their discussions? The content on the forum are foremost discussions about a TV series, which probably would not count as sensitive content to many people. If I would use a screen shot of a

refers to other guidelines for internet research such as "Ethical and legal aspects of human subject research on the internet: a report of a workshop" *(American Association for the Advancement of Science)* and *'*Ethical Guidelines for Research Online" *(Amy Bruckman, Georgia Institute of Technology).* During my research, I turned to these works for guidance regarding ethical matters.

conversation on the forum, is it likely that it would cause anyone any harm? Probably not, but ethical decisions should still be taking into account. There are other discussions on the forum that concern other things than the TV series (for example, discussion about religion, politics and sexuality). However, this study have focused on discussion relating to the TV series in different ways.

An important ethical decision that I had to consider was how I could let the members know that I was a researcher, observing the forum activities. Even if it was not possible to ask for informed consent from such a large population as the members on the forum, it felt like I was looking through a peephole, viewing what others were doing without them knowing I was there. Where is the line between what is considered public and private? This might have been less of an issue had I studied people on a square, or some other situation, which could be easily identified as publically situated. However, on the internet it is trickier to decide, because it depends more on what is experienced as *public* or *private* (which in turn are complicated terms). I wondered whether the members considered it to be a private area. I wondered if they would think that I was intruding, had they known I was there.

This is also a reason for why I have tried to be as open as possible with the members about what I am doing. In the initial contact with the members, through the private message-function on the forum, I therefore linked to my research profile and point out that they can ask anything about the study, before deciding about partaking in the interview, or if they have questions along the way. Furthermore, before I started the research project, I sent an email to the forum directors and presented myself and the research project. Letting them know that I was observing the forum. I decided to take further precaution and post a message on the forum about who I was, what I was doing on the forum. Even if it was not likely that many members would acknowledge the message, I wanted to do what I could to let people know that I was there, who I was and what my intentions was (Garcia *et al.*, 2009). However, to those members that I have not contacted for interviews, and to those who did not read my single post on the forum, I have been an invisible observer (Williams, 2007).

Moreover, I decided to exclude any information about the users in the screen shots that figures in this text. Although, such information cannot be linked back to an individual's identity. In this study, all members are

anonymous. However, some of the members did not want to be anonymous and I got the impression that they wanted to 'be known' for their ideas and thoughts. Nonetheless, all the members are anonymous (both in relation to their real identities as well as in relation to their usernames on the forum). This was done to protect the members' identities. I informed all the members, before interviewing them, that they would all be anonymous and that I would give them fictive names in the manuscript. I did not know some of the members' actual names. Keeping the anonymity of the interviewees was something that I have done intentionally as an ethical consideration (Hine, 2000). I was also something that was unavoidable in the cases where the interviewees did not want to tell me their names.

The screen shots from the forum that figures in this study have all been permitted to be used in this text by forum owner.

3.6 Generalizations

How can this study be transferable to the understanding of other studies? While empirical generalizations might be difficult in qualitative research, theoretical understandings and techniques can travel from one situation to another (Mouritsen, 2014). Being able to generalize the empirical findings is not a primary concern in this study. However, by offering a detailed and rich analysis, particularizing a specific practice in a specific setting, this study could provide a particular way of looking at things and display how such a view can highlight audience in a different way than previous work.[34]

As stated in chapter 1, this study is more concerned with developing theoretical ideas. Since the foundation for the research approach is to stay sensitive to the situated and local conditions of the explored practice, empirical generalizations of this study's findings are not suitable. However, what an ethnographic study can offer other studies (what can be made to travel from one setting to another) are such things as concepts, language, and problem identification (Walters, 2007). An

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[34] What Yin refers to as *analytical generalization*, see Yin (2014).

ethnographic study can raise new questions, challenging existing knowledge and explanatory foundations in specific areas of study.

3.7 Objections

When engaging in scientific text, there is always an issue of trust. STS scholars have stressed a strong constructionist argument regarding knowledge claims, specifically all forms of knowledge production tied to science. Such arguments also have implications for how we may think of the trustworthiness of a research account. For positivist research, which assumes that one single reality exists 'out there' independent of our research methods, trustworthiness may appear to be the question of whether valid methods have been applied in a prescribed manner. From the position that reality can be neutrally mirrored in scientific work, the traditional positivistic researcher may claim the trustworthiness of her study by demonstrating how the study conforms to accepted understandings of 'validity' and 'reliability'.

However, in qualitative studies, the claims of trustworthiness of a study would require different arguments. Clifford and Marcus (1986: 7), for example, stress that "ethnographic truths are thus inherently partial – committed and incomplete". Knowledge is always local and situated, which means that every situation studied is unique, which in turn poses a scepticism against the possibility of being able to repeat results. Once again, we are reminded that "it could be otherwise" (Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013: 322). A studied reality does not exist independent of how we study it (Law and Urry, 2004). Consequently, it is problematic to think of scientific representation. Representation (re-presentation) implies that a reality has been present and can now be re-presented (presented again) in the form of a scientific text. Such a view ignores the involvement of methods in making realities. Method is not a question of representation, but one of enactment. For the study of a *Doctor Who* audience practice, this means that the task for methods is not to re-present a pre-existing *Doctor Who* audience, but engage with a specific practice.

So how can I be accountable for my study? How can I make my involvement in this work visible in this text? Barad (2007: 91) speaks of objectivity as the "possibility of 'objection'" and states that "objectivity is

about being accountable to the specific materializations of which we are part." This also resonates with Latour's (2000) ideas of objectivity as making it possible for the study object to 'object' to the researcher's account of it. In this study, there are two aspects of such objectivity. The first one can be related to the time that the study took place. During this time, the object of study needs to be able to 'object' to the study. Objectivity in this aspect is *in* the study. What has mattered in this study is that the forum members can recognize themselves in my descriptions of their activities. During this study, I have therefore worked with member-checking as a method to address this issue. I have discussed my preliminary drafts with forum members, both during and after the fieldwork. Obtaining feedback from the forum members has been one way to make sure that the members are in agreement with my description of a situation.

The second aspect of objectivity takes place *after* the study is written, communicated, and presented in a text. The readers of the text are then able to 'object'. Objectivity in this respect is *of* the study. To address this aspect of objectivity, I have shown how I have interfered with the empirical material, by trying to make my choices and decisions – as well as their consequences – visible in this text. By doing so, I make myself accountable for the choices and decisions made. Consequently, much of the objectivity is embedded in the text, in the writing. Although I acknowledge my own part in the production of this study, my reflexivity should not be in focus in this text; rather, the focus should be on the liveliness of what I am studying – audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum.

Finally, what it all comes down to is whether or not this study is persuasive to its reader. With this text, I hope I have made it possible for the reader to evaluate my decisions and choices; to judge my decisions as a researcher, and to be able to object.

PART II: ONTOLOGICAL ORDERING IN PRACTICE

In the theory chapter (section 2.1.5), I outlined the notion of the analytical concept of *ontological ordering*, which is employed to direct the empirical explorations. In part II (chapters 4, 5, and 6), the empirical material will be presented in a mix of quotes from the interviews, together with the screen shots and quotes from the observations of the forum.

The following three chapters present and develop the analysis of the empirical material, and attend to the details and particularities of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base, focusing on the *connections, relations and interactions between humans and technology*. The findings of each chapter are then approached as a starting-point in the next chapter. This way, chapters 4, 5, and 6 function as continuations of each other. Consequently, each chapter delves deeper into the conditions under which audience is achieved. That is, chapter 4 starts to unfold audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. Chapter 5 then proceeds to explore the multiplicity, unravelled in chapter 4, looking at how multiplicity in audience practice is managed. Finally, chapter 6 then focuses on how audience practice is maintained by exploring what happens when audience practice is not working, when it is disturbed and interfered with. Focusing on tensions and interruptions in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base*,* thereby, in some sense, provoke and challenge the findings in chapter 4 and 5. The empirical examples in the following three chapters continually show and unfold 'multiplicity within multiplicity' as each chapter delves deeper into different enactments of audience on the Gallifrey Base. Chapter 4, 5, and 6 thereby slowly unfold the workings of *ontological ordering* in practice.

4. What Is Audience in Practice?

In this chapter, I will begin to unfold audience practice on the Gallifrey Base, exploring how audience is achieved on the forum. By doing so, I specifically address RQ 1 in this chapter. Chapter 4 thereby displays the ongoing various enactments engaged in by forum staff and forum members in conjunction with technologies. The initial encounters with the empirical material indicated that it would be a good idea to pay close attention to the diversity of enactments on the Gallifrey Base. What are the day-to-day interactions on the forum?

In the interviews, I asked the forum members to describe in detail what happens after they log in on the Gallifrey Base. The members then pointed me in different directions and it was clear that they distinguished between a range of different enactments on the forum. What they were doing in one part of the forum was in their descriptions something different from what they were doing in another part of the forum. To start to unfold audience practice on the Gallifrey Base, I decided to explore this diversity of enactments.

This chapter further the argument made in chapter 2, that audience is not an unproblematic and self-explanatory matter. While the meaning-making and interpretations processes involved in achieving audience are well known and covered in the research literature, as section 2.2 described, *audience practice* and the interactions between actors involved in achieving audience and their relations to each other, have often been treated in less detail. Here, I focus on such details.

Analytically, I link what happens on the forum to STS questions, highlighting and developing a specific attentiveness to ontology to further elaborate the idea of audience as an outcome of practice. This approach resonates with STS scholars' approach, studying ontology as an outcome of practice (Mol, 1999; Mol, 2002; 2013; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; 2015; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013; Law and Lien, 2013; Lynch, 2013; Lien, 2015) rather than as a stable feature belonging to the object.

Consequently, I argue that *audience* is more complicated than earlier audience literature might have suggested, and here I want to start to unfold audience practice on the Gallifrey Base to show the complexity found even in a single audience practice. In the achievement of audience, pre-existing characteristics cannot be assigned to the object since, as we soon shall see, there are many ways in which audience can be achieved, even in a single practice. The richness of the object audience is understated when such assumptions are made. I will instead approach audience as a set of practices, and attend to *connections, relations, and interactions between humans and technology*. Approaching the Gallifrey Base this way, the following four sections of this chapter explore (4.1) the connections between the TV series and the Gallifrey Base; (4.2) the role played by technologies in such connections; (4.3) the flows and folds of timelines on the forum, and (4.4) the various modes of audience practice found on the Gallifrey Base. When this is accomplished, the complexity in how audience is achieved on the Gallifrey Base has begun to be unfolded. I then close this chapter by connecting the findings in a broader analysis of *multiplicity* in audience practice.

4.1 Associations

In this section, I explore how activities surrounding the viewing activity, such as being on the Gallifrey Base, become audience practice through *associations* (Latour, 2005). What are the associations made between the act of viewing the TV series, and the act of being on the forum? How are these two activities connected in practice? And, how do the forum members connect themselves to what they are audience of?

A closer look at some of the reasons for turning to an internet forum, that forum members brought up in the interviews, demonstrates the interconnections between the two acts.

> The forum gives me a small voice […] I suppose it feels a little like being a member of the audience in a theatre, applauding or even cat calling sometimes. (Interview 48)

> The forum offers a way to be connected to an audience even if the act of viewing is happening 'alone'. (Interview 2)

The forum makes it possible to hear what others think – that are not friends, family or colleagues. (Interview 24)

I went to the theatre showing of the 50th Anniversary special, and when I arrived there were hundreds upon hundreds of people there waiting in line, people in long scarves, and "sticky upy" hairdos, and brainy specs, and every possible costume. And it was probably the largest and most polite collection of nerds I'd ever seen in one place... Everyone there was family. You could talk to anyone, and we were all excited about the same thing, looking forward to the same things, speaking the same language. There was a feeling of community in it, in belonging, in being "part of the magic". It's a bit like Christmas. (Interview 3)

The quotes above serve to illustrate a wish to share, to associate with, and be part of the TV series *Doctor Who*. Sometimes the forum members discuss things other than *Doctor Who*, such as politics and personal things. However, the forum members told me that they all come to the forum with *Doctor Who* as their common reference point. This is what they share an interest in. They tell me that even if they sometimes talk about other things than *Doctor Who*, they do so in an environment where they all have something in common – an interest in *Doctor Who*. Moreover, the forum members also connect, in several ways, their actions on the forum with the act of viewing the TV series.

When I see a new episode, I can never enjoy it on first broadcast. I get tense, thinking, what will the forums say? […] The thing is, the forum is key part of Doctor Who. (Interview 20)

The act of watching Doctor Who and the act of coming online and discussing is intertwined and became inseparable from each other. I'd watch the show with the forum in mind, and I'd log onto the forum with the show in mind. I couldn't imagine letting a story go by without discussing it with them afterwards. (Interview 35)

I sometimes take part in discussions that interest me. Most usually, discussions immediately after and specific to newly aired episodes of the show. (Interview 25)

It's almost an irresistible urge to talk about all aspects of the show and immediately after the latest episode. If I watch the latest story and can't get on to the forum straight away I get withdrawal symptoms. LOL. (Interview 22)

I think about the forum when viewing the television series when I think the series has done something that will make people hit the roof. (Interview 51)

I come here to see if my opinion of an episode follows along where the masses are in their feelings. (Interview 36)

Visiting the forum is part of the audience experience for me, there's a direct correlation. You see an episode, then you see what other people thought and say so yourself. That's the main use of the forum, I guess. There's an immediate thought of "I wonder if anyone else spotted that? (Interview 47)

You know there is a lot of people like you watching the show, analysing it, and ready to jump online and discuss it as soon as the show is over. It makes you feel more connected to the audience, and that the show is an event. And also that watching it has a certain amount of importance; I may watch it on my own, but I'm not really, as it's important to all these other posters too. (Interview 54)

Once you've been on the site long enough, you start to learn what will tick people off or what will make people gush. Those things will cross my mind after I've watched an episode and start reflecting on what it had to say. For better or worse, those things are on my mind when I do make my way over here to engage in episodic discourse. (Interview 50)

These descriptions do not only clarify how members associate being on the forum with the act of viewing the TV series. They also suggest the close interconnection between these two acts, since the members describe how they think about the forum as a reaction to certain events in the TV series during the act of viewing. When viewing the TV series, members think about the forum in relation to what they have previously read there as well as to things that might be discussed after viewing, including, sometimes, things they might write on the forum themselves. Members are even on the forum during the act of viewing to see

immediate reactions to just-aired episodes. Various associations are being made between the act of viewing and the act of being on the forum.

If members re-view an older episode, they also sometimes come to think about discussions on the forum in relation to that episode.

> On later viewings, I sometimes look at it from a more critical perspective, and then I am thinking about comments various people might have made and whether I agree with them or not. (Interview 53)

In the example above, the member describes how, when re-viewing an episode, s/he thought about comments s/he had read earlier about the episode on the forum.

Furthermore, the members are connecting the act of viewing and being on the forum in more than one way. As indicated in the quotes above, members turn to the forum to see how other members have reacted to certain events happening in an episode. And, to see if other members noticed things that they themselves observed.

> During one episode, the Doctor's enemy Missy suggests the Doctor may have once been a little girl [...] As soon as Missy said that, I knew there would be heated debate on the *Gallifrey Base*. I was even thinking about what exactly I was going to write while I was watching the episode. (Interview 54)

Figuring out what to write on the forum sometimes happens during the actual act of viewing, and in some cases, the members are even on the forum during the act of viewing. In these cases, the acts of viewing and being on the forum are enacted at the same time and in relation to each other. Members explained that they plan in advance (sometimes during the act of viewing the TV series) what to write on the forum and then carefully compose their posts in a separate document before posting them on the forum.

These examples have emphasized how members connect themselves to what they are audience of. In the moments when the act of viewing and the act of being on the forum are interconnected, these acts depend on, and feed into, each other. The viewing practice and the forum practice are, in these moments, inseparable. The more *attachments* the members make between the TV series and the forum, the stronger the assemblages

are (Latour, 2005). In the quotes shown, members frequently connected the act of being on the forum with the act of viewing. Moreover, members are simultaneously involved in different audience practices at the same time. My main point here is that, consequently, the object *audience* comes about through various intertwined practices. This points to the importance of why the analysis of audience – which has traditionally centred narrowly around the act of viewing – needs to be stretched and widened to include surrounding activities. Therefore, the question asked should not be what *audience* is, but how it is enacted through various and intertwined practices. Furthermore, this raises questions about how such associations – between the forum and the TV series – are made possible.

4.2 Technologies

In the previous section, members connected the act of viewing to the act of being on the forum, and thereby associate themselves to what they are audience of. However, a lot of things must come together to enable this association – that is, to enable members' interactions on the forum. Getting onto the forum and discuss matters with others demands a lot of things. It depends on relational interaction between human and nonhumans. This interaction is not possible without tech devices such as a computer, a smart phone or a tablet.

   Technical artefacts play a key role in an internet discussion forum (Akrich, 1992). An internet connection, platforms, software, interfaces, apps, chargers, and electricity is also needed. A body which fingers dance over a keyboard, articulating ideas and creating text that then travels and ends up in a discussion thread among other posts, in a subforum, on the Gallifrey Base. The forum is full of wayfarers, drawn together on the forum through technology, connected through a server in Illinois, US. However, nonhuman artefacts and their relations are often overlooked and excluded from social theory, as social theorists are much more accustomed to study humans (Latour, 1991). In the study of the Gallifrey Base, the role played by nonhumans of different kinds are significant and therefore an attempt had to be made. Here, I want to bridge between the story of the humans and the nonhumans by identifying and illustrating

key actions played by nonhumans. In the stories of the Gallifrey Base, technology makes actions possible through a working internet connection, a working tech device, electricity and a body working all devices and technologies. As we soon shall see, technology intervenes in practice by urging, blocking, forbidding, and suggesting certain actions.

Electronic text is part of what make audience practice possible on the Gallifrey Base forum, which makes skills in the English language crucial to be able to participate. Through text, the members interact on the forum. Members emphasized the importance of these interactions taking place on the internet, in writing, by saying that they wanted the interaction to be electronic conversations. According to the members, this was a reason for turning to an internet forum in the first place. On several accounts, members specifically stated that they did not want this interaction to take place in a face-to-face setting, but that this interaction was meant for internet forums.

> I like writing […] and I write articles and reviews and stuff. I like the way a written comment can be thought through as you do it, so you can put a well-thought out version of your opinion online, as opposed to a real life discussion where you can't spend ten minutes working out exactly what you want to say. (Interview 54)

> I enjoy the written discussion and debate on what is my favourite television show […] discussing Doctor Who via the written word is the best place for such a debate. (Interview 43)

> Discussion forums feel like home. Maybe it's familiarity or maybe it's my nature as a writer to be long winded (probably both), but I prefer forums to other social media sites like Twitter, Facebook. (Interview 50)

Electronic text is enabled through technology, and technology also determines the course of action.

> I have a fairly specific method for navigating the forum. Often times when I visit, I know what I'm looking for and I go directly to that place without paying much attention to the rest of the forum. I also have to be careful how many threads I open during any given visit, because my Internet provider is a bit rubbish, and if I open more than three or four tabs at once, the entire forum goes down in a blaze of glory. For a while, I thought there was

something wrong with the forum itself, but then I visited it from a friend's house and realized it's just my connection. So I imagine I browse the forum a bit different from other people. (Interview 27)

Here, technologies play a role in the member's interactions with the forum, mobilized though a sub-par internet provider. In this case, the internet provider determines how it is possible to navigate the forum for the member in question. This shows the interactional relationship between humans and technologies (Suchman, 1987; 2006). The quotes above also illustrates how technology not only enables any forum activities, but also plays a role in how such interactions are made possible. Hence, technologies do not only enable forum interactions, it also matters how technologies operate. Here are two other examples.

I now mostly log on through my Windows mobile phone using the Tapatalk app, which means when I log on I generally go through the Discussions that I have previously contributed to, then I may look at the Unread ones, and occasionally I find something interesting on there. I do not generally browse through the menus in a conventional way, although I am forced to do so when the series is on air and I want to look for new threads in new sections devoted to "live" discussion of current episodes. (Interview 39)

The forum does look different in Tapatalk; the forum (on a computer) normally has its own colour scheme, Doctor Who related banners at different parts of the screen, the various members all have their own titles which appear next to their posts, like 'Time Lord', 'Gallifreyan', etc so it's a lot more Doctor Who-centric and more unique. On Tapatalk it's just a white screen with black writing and people's names in red. I do handle the forum differently on Tapatalk; because it's an app, it gives me push notifications when someone replies to a thread or quotes me, and as well as this I can select favourite sections of the forum to receive updates from - whereas on a computer I would have to log in each time, scroll through the different sections, and look for specific topics. The main difference of course, and the reason I tend to use Tapatalk more than a computer to view the forum, is that it fits in my pocket and I can use it on the bus, sitting in my garden, on a break at work, at a coffee shop or bar, etc - it just fits in with my lifestyle better. I would add that the biggest

> difference between using an app and a computer is with the app
> you can engage with the forum throughout the day, no matter
> where you are, whereas with a computer you have to decide to
> sit down at a keyboard and spend a set amount of time on the
> forum before going off to do other stuff. (Interview 59)

Using an app to interact with the forum can also limit how the interaction
can take place. Moreover, this member explains that "I am forced" to
browse through the menus due to the use of the app (Interview 39). The
second example showed that using the app *Tapatalk* allowed the member
to carry the forum with them throughout the day, getting push
notifications whenever another member replied to a thread, and making
it possible to engage with the forum while getting on with day-to-day
activities.

In these three situations, technologies are shown to play a role and
determine how interactions can take place. Technology here is not
operating in the background; rather, it keeps reminding us of its existence
and becomes visible, as illustrated in the examples above. Furthermore,
these examples resonate with Latour's (2005: 72) point that technologies
do not serve "as a 'backdrop' for human action" but that "things might
authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block,
render possible, forbid and so on".

The nonhuman actors involved in the enactments related to the
Gallifrey Base – such as the technology enabling any forum activity –
should certainly not be left out of the account of what it is to be audience.
However, nonhumans are often assumed not to have as rich "repertoires
of strategies and interests" as humans (Sismondo, 2010: 90). The
conditions for how humans or nonhumans can be studied differs, but it
would be a strange assumption to make that humans play a bigger role
simply because they are more accessible and thus easier to study. Even
though nonhumans may not be able to give interviews and tell us about
themselves and their interactions and relations, this does not mean that
their involvement in the work enacted is less important. Allowing
nonhumans to enter the scene, throughout this study, is part of an
attempt to do away with ideas of binary oppositions such as object and
subject, culture and nature, and machine and man (Strathern, 1991; 1992a;
1992b; Haraway, 1991; Barad, 2003; 2007; Latour, 1999; 2005). Moreover,
technology in particular is often black-boxed (Latour, 1987). Addressing

audience *as a set of relations and interactions between humans and technology* includes nonhumans and treats audience as a practical achievement made possible by both humans and nonhumans.[35]

This section has brought to the fore some occasions that illustrate the importance of nonhumans in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum. When enough humans and nonhumans come together, audience practice on the Gallifrey Base can be enacted. Technologies play a crucial role in the joint practical achievement in what happens on the forum. The empirical examples illustrated how technology enables any interactions with, and on, the forum. And not only that, it also plays an important role in *how* such interactions are made possible. As we could see in the quote from interview 27, the member had a specific way to handle the forum due to limitations posed by an internet provider. This internet provider not only connects members to the forum, it can also determine how that interaction plays out.

The empirical examples discussed so far have shown how being on the forum becomes an audience practice through different associations made possible through technologies. Audience practice is a matter of internet connections, tech devices, screens, apps, lifestyles, travelling, written text, and ideas. In the next section, I stay close to the role of technologies in the enactment of audience and look at how several timelines are folded into the practice, which further complicates audience practice and the involvement of technologies in interactions on the Gallifrey Base forum.

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[35] As Latour (1999) points out, the concept of human-nonhuman "has meaning only in the difference between the pair 'human-nonhuman' and the subject-object dichotomy. Associations of humans and nonhumans refer to a different political regime from the war forced upon us by the distinction between subject and object. A nonhuman is thus the peacetime version of the object: what the object would look like if it were not engaged in the war to shortcut due political process. The pair human-nonhuman is not a way to 'overcome' the subject-object distinction but a way to bypass it entirely" (308). Moreover, focusing on connections between humans and nonhumans takes this notion further and dissolves dualistic modes of thought, which are less necessary if instead we pay attention to the course of interaction. Latour also elaborates on the problematics with dualistic modes of thought in elsewhere (e.g. Latour, 1993).

4.3 Timelines

When logging in to the forum, I was most often in Stockholm. Forum members I was in contact with during this project log into the forum from the US, UK, Finland, Spain, Canada, Russia, New Zealand, Norway, the Netherlands, Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, and Italy, among other countries. My point here is not to draw any conclusions based on the members' whereabouts, but to emphasize the embedded timelines present on the forum. Consequently, the forum is constantly changing.

> There'll be something here 24/7: with so many people on the forum, there'll almost always be someone to talk to about whatever area of Who that appeals to you. (Interview 7)

On the forum, there are several layers of flows and folds of temporalities, and in the day-to-day routines on the Gallifrey Base, different timelines are embedded. Members on the forum operate from different time zones, which means they come into the discussion at different times and view new episodes at different times. Both past and current discussions share space on the Gallifrey Base. On top of that, new posts and discussion threads are constantly created and added. To exemplify, I followed the development of the forum when Season 8 of *Doctor Who* premiered on *BBC One* on 19 September 2015. Within two weeks, 18,402 posts had appeared in 405 different threads in the Gallifrey Base forum. And this was only in a particular part of the forum, where members can discuss and rate episodes after they have aired. A cursory browse through the forum revealed that a wide range of topics were ventilated in different threads. It is not possible to give a precise account of the number of threads and posts on the forum. In the 28 minutes it has taken to write this paragraph, 50 new threads have started and numerous new posts have appeared, so the figures above are already obsolete.

The different timelines challenge the enactment of audience practice on the forum. However, there are ways to handle and manage different temporalities with the help of technologies. For the members to be able to catch up on what has been going on since they were last logged in, there are shortcuts to guide them to topics they might be interested in.

> The 'Today's Posts'-link in the 'Quick Links' drop-down allows me to see an overview of thread titles from across the whole forum, which keeps me from being too insular - without that, I'd probably miss 2/3 of what went on. (Interview 20)

Another way to handle temporalities on the forum is to subscribe to threads that members want to follow and that they have posted in. The members are then alerted if any new posts are added, or if their posts get replies, in the discussion thread.

> If you want to keep track of certain threads you can manually subscribe to them. You can then go to Thread Tools at the top of any thread and click it, producing a drop down menu. In the drop down menu you find Subscribe to this Thread. Follow the directions for subscribing and then you can be notified for new posts in that thread and when you click on your CPanel link at the top of the forum you can monitor and access your subscribed threads and their activity from there as well. (Interview 50)

> I always go to my list of subscribed threads first, because there's a strong likelihood I'll be interested in them. I'll generally follow the links to see what people have said, or to take my turn in one of the gaming threads, or to check out any bargains people have reported. If I have time (usually once a week or so) I then go and check out what new threads have been posted in my most-liked subfora. On rarer occasions I'll browse less-visited parts of the site, just to see what's going on. (Interview 53)

Subscribing to the discussion threads that you are posting in or just want to keep up to date with is also a way to manage the forum's innumerable possibilities. This means that the members do not have to browse the forum in search of specific discussion threads that they are interested in accessing. Technologies make it possible to create shortcuts directly to what the members are interested in. In sum, the forum technologies play a significant role in *how* the members engage and interact with, and on, the forum (which was also evident in section 4.2). On the forum, the flows and folds of different timelines are constantly changing.

This section has shown how multiple timelines are dealt with by the forum members. Moreover, the three sections so far (sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) have together brought to the fore the fluidity and ephemeralness of audience as an object of study. This points to the need to advance our

understanding of audience in at least three ways: by (1) acknowledging activities surrounding the act of viewing, (2) accounting for the involvement of nonhumans in the production of audience, and (3) acknowledging the ephemeralness and continuously changing nature of the object audience. In the following section, to make it even more complicated, I attend to the various activities that are ongoing at the forum.

4.4 Various Modes of Practice

In the interviews, when I asked members what happens on the forum and what they do there their stories were detailed and rich in nuance and pointed to a variety of activities. In the next four subsections, I illustrate significant different activities through what I address and understand as *various modes of audience practice* on the Gallifrey Base forum.

4.4.1 Locations

Before delving into the details of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum, the scene needs to be set.

> Gallifrey Base is a bit like a MegaChurch, where the congregation
> is too big for you to really get a sense of community, because
> most people will never notice you. (Interview 20)

On the Gallifrey Base, there are numerous locations. The Gallifrey Base is one site, but it is consisting of many locations. Figure 4.1 is a screen shot from the home page of the Gallifrey Base forum. It shows a range of different subforums and discussion threads that could be found in one of the forum's main subforums, *Doctor Who Universes on Television*.

Forum	Last Post	Threads	Posts
Doctor Who Universes on Television			
2017 Doctor Who Series (13 Viewing) Discussion of the stories aired in 2017. 1. The Pilot (119/4730) 2. Smile (76/2668) 3. Thin Ice (67/3909) 4. Knock Knock (66/2841) 5. Oxygen (60/2704)	Today 9:28 am	388	16,852
Dr. Who READ SECTION DESCRIPTION BEFORE POSTING IN HERE! Discuss B.B.C. TV's new family programme for autumn 1963! (A special role-playing section)	Yesterday 8:53 pm	586	8,028
The Matrix · Help for New Fans of Doctor Who A place where people can feel free to ask those basic questions about the history of Doctor Who and not be embarrassed – and get straight and friendly answers. NOT FOR FORUM RELATED HELP - use The Rescue section instead for that!	Yesterday 12:16 am	754	12,899
The Greatest Show · The Doctor Who Universe (15 Viewing) General Doctor Who discussion - broad topics that cover the Doctor Who universe in and beyond television. Who's Next? · 13th Doctor Casting Discussion [SP] (86/24224) L.I.'n'D.A. · Clubs 'n' Chat for Characters and Actors (791/871980) The King's Demons · Characters, Actors, and Production Staff (689/17008) T-Mat Control · Transmission & Broadcast (315/26807) The Games of Rassilon · Doctor Who Game Threads (726/166529)	Today 9:36 am	12,738	1,582,197
The Infinite Quest · DW Present & Future [SP] (28 Viewing) Discussion of the present and future of televised Doctor Who (onward from January 2017). SPOILERS PERMITTED.	Today 9:36 am	15,174	1,093,970
The Zero Room · DW Present & Future [NOSP] (1 Viewing) Discussion of the present and future of televised Doctor Who (onward from January 2017). SPOILERS NOT PERMITTED.	Yesterday 8:23 pm	2,313	115,255
The TARDIS Scanner · Past Doctor Who (18 Viewing) Discussion of televised Doctor Who from 1963 through January 2017. Includes missing episodes discussion. 2009/2010 Doctor Who Specials 2010 Doctor Who Series 2011 Doctor Who Series 2012 Doctor Who Series 2013 Doctor Who Series 2014 Doctor Who Series 2015 Doctor Who Series 2016 Doctor Who Series	Today 9:38 am	26,780	1,299,972
Fluid Links · Doctor Who Spinoff Shows (1 Viewing) Spinoff series each have their own sections in here! Class (145/7976) Torchwood Institute Bannerman Road · The Sarah Jane Adventures The House of Gryffen · K9 (The Series) (125/2283)	Yesterday 11:23 pm	3,932	197,250

Figure 4.1 *Doctor Who Universes on Television.*
Screen shot of part of home page of the Gallifrey Base forum (screen shot taken 2017-05-17). The screen shot shows one of the main subforums, *Doctor Who Universes on Television* and, also shows some of this main subforums own subsubforums and discussion threads.

When members log in to the forum, they arrive at the home page of the Gallifrey Base, which displays links to possible locations to visit; there are 144 links to different subforums and discussion threads to choose from.[36] By choosing to click on one of the links, more options unfold. These links

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[36] This observation was made 2017-08-01 on the Gallifrey Base's home page.

are hypertext, technological tools to connect different locations. The links make it possible to travel between different locations on the forum, offering potential paths of action on the forum allowed through hypertext. To exemplify the different topics being discussed on the Gallifrey Base, here is a list of a few topics (these are all examples of discussion threads created by forum members).

'Would you like for Heather to come back?'
'Companions who never were'
'What if Bill moved to another timezone?'
'How far do the Daleks survive?'
'Why was Extremis needed plot-wise?'
'My worry of a female doctor'
'Things I want from the future of Doctor Who'
'The next companion'
'Doctor Who in the era of Netflix'
'Are men capable of writing a female Doctor?'
'New tardis for series 11 confirmed'
'I want more multi Doctor/Master stories'
'Earliest example that the Doctor could be female'
'Should they show the Thirteenth Doctor's post-regeneration trauma?'
'More Women Directors'
'Why doesn't the Doctor get sick?'
'What is the risk with pure historicals?'
'Did Missy save Bill?'
'Jodie Whittaker's costume (Part II)'
'Daleks As Metaphors For Nazis'
'Was the War Chief the 1st time we saw the Master'
'Sonic Screwdriver to be added to the Oxford English Dictionary'
'Why didn't Clara recognise The Curator?'
'Female Doctor: Does it retroactively impact on the series' past?'
'How does the Doctor perceive time?'
'Who is the greater audience?'
'Should the Time Lords put the Doctor on trial again?'
'What were the historical references?'
'How long would the gatekeepers survive from our perspective?'
'Eaters of Light: Please Explain Bits?'

These are the names of different discussion threads on the Gallifrey Base. Each thread includes contributions from members and can unfold over a period of hours, days, week, months or even years. The discussions vary in tone and style: I have encountered brief, witty comments, small talk and, deeper analyses of particular episodes. Members of the forum described it as a place where they can pop in, sometimes several times a day, to see what is going on and what the topics are being discussed at a particular time. Most of the members with whom I have been in contact describe the forum as a way to have constant access to the world of *Doctor Who*.

The topics available for discussion are divided into six main forums. These forums function as different rooms, for different discussions. (1) *Welcome to* Gallifrey Base is a main forum where new members can introduce themselves and where members can get assistance and advice on questions they have regarding how to operate the forum. One of the main threads here are called "Get Your Forum Questions Answered Here". (2) *The* Gallifrey Base *Water Cooler* holds discussions that do not already have a thread. Anything can be discussed and "nothing is off-topic". (3) On the *Doctor Who Universes on Television* the members can discuss anything related to the TV series. (4) In *Inner Worlds* members can discuss scholarly writings about *Doctor Who* and *Doctor Who* matters in other media forms such as books and magazines. (5) *Outer Worlds* holds discussions for topics other than *Doctor Who*, such as hobbies, politics, and religion. (6) *GB Archive – Closed Sections* is where closed discussions end up. In some of these locations members can create their own threads and in some they cannot. Moreover, in some locations spoilers are permitted and in some they are not. Each of these six main subforums, in turn, has its own subforums (which can have their own subforums and so forth) and discussion threads. As Haraway (1997: 37) reminds us, some locations are "*for* some worlds and not others". In this sense, different locations are used as a way to separate different social worlds.

Let's enter *Doctor Who Universes on Television*. Here we can find a subforum called *2015 Doctor Who Series*. This is a location for discussions about each episode from the TV series aired in 2015 (see Figure 4.2). Each episode has its own subforum dedicated to it, and that in turn holds its own discussion threads.

Sub-Forums : 2015 Doctor Who Series			Search this Forum ▼
Forum	**Last Post**	**Threads**	**Posts**
1. The Magician's Apprentice	26 Sep 2016 9:17 pm	210	9,307
2. The Witch's Familiar	27 Jan 2017 2:22 pm	170	7,202
3. Under the Lake	26 Sep 2016 9:20 pm	109	4,409
4. Before the Flood	13 May 2017 2:10 pm	104	4,401
5. The Girl Who Died	26 Sep 2016 9:22 pm	106	4,594
6. The Woman Who Lived	17 Mar 2017 6:13 pm	83	4,169
7. The Zygon Invasion	26 Mar 2017 3:26 am	108	4,942
8. The Zygon Inversion	26 Sep 2016 9:25 pm	97	4,148
9. Sleep No More	13 May 2017 2:17 pm	99	4,935
10. Face the Raven	26 Sep 2016 9:28 pm	114	4,204
11. Heaven Sent	23 Nov 2016 8:50 pm	161	6,266
12. Hell Bent	7 Apr 2017 2:02 pm	215	8,519
13. The Husbands of River Song	Today 5:53 am	85	3,726

Figure 4.2 *2015 Doctor Who Series*
The screen shot shows subsubsubforums within the subsubforum *2015 Doctor Who Series,*
which in turn can be found in the main subforum *Doctor Who Universes on Television* (screen
shot taken 2017-05-17).

Imagine if all the subforums and discussion threads were taken away and
it was just a large number of posts on the forum (as of 2017-08-01 at
13:16 local time in Stockholm, the total number of posts on the forum
was 10,384,534). Without the arrangement of the subforums and
discussion threads, the members would not be able to find the discussions
they are interested in.

> Because the show spans 50+ years over multiple mediums
> (television, audio, prose, comics) and ranges (plus spinoffs in an
> equal number of mediums). It would be a nightmare if it weren't
> divided up a few times over. (Interview 50)

Scrolling up and down Gallifrey Base's arrangement of subforums and
discussion threads was certainly daunting at first for a newcomer like me,

who knew little of the *Doctor Who* worlds. As it turns out, my first impression was not unique.

> I'd describe the subforums as cluttered. This goes back to the fact that the community covers such a variety of topics and interests. You end up with sub-sub-sub-forums […] I tend to go to the same two or three sections of the forum, but even after all these years I still have to hunt. (Interview 27)

The members manage the impressive number of subforums and discussion threads on the forum by having a couple of locations at a time that they visit regularly. The locations that the members visit shift and change from time to time depending on the members' interest.

> For example, right now, there is no new Who on, so I am instead interested in three things: (1) Current events in this election year (as I am in the U.S.), (2) The very recent news that Power of the Daleks has been animated for release / broadcast on BBCA (Woo-hoo!), and (3) Who-related books (specifically the book lines released during the "wilderness years" of the 90s and early 00s). In 2013 and early 2014, there was a lot more discussion about missing episodes (and their being found), so I was engaged in those discussions more then than I am now. If new episodes are being broadcast (or about to be), I naturally gravitate to the areas in which discussion of the new episodes are being held. So I spend most of my time in the appropriate sections. (Interview 37)

Members visit the parts of the forum that interest them at the moment. Certain threads are popular at certain times. The member quoted above further explained that when the discussion about the missing episodes was popular, s/he was in the parts of the forum where those discussions could be found (Interview 37). Where the members go has to do with their own interests at the moment and also with what is happening with *Doctor Who* at the moment. This, in turn, can change from time to time.

Members explained that 'Today's Posts' is included in the day-to-day routine to keep people up to date with what is being discussed on the forum at the time. 'Today's Posts' is also a way to quickly see if there are any promising topics in sections that the members might not usually visit.

> Navigating the forum is fairly easy once you know where everything is. I can imagine the sheer number of subsections would be baffling to a newcomer. Soon enough, though we find the few sections that are of interest to us, and keep to those. (Interview 20)

Getting used to the forum is a first step, this member tells us (Interview 20). After that, members find their places. Browsing through all the parts of the forum every time they visit would be too much work and would take too much time. In fact, it would be impossible to browse through the whole forum. The forum is too extensive for that.

> I can't imagine having the time for all the subforums on GB, even if I were interested in everything. I pick out what appeals to me and those become the places I frequent, whether it's just to read ("lurking") or to actively contribute. In my experience, that's what most others do too. I see a lot of the same users stick to specific sections of the forum. (Interview 50)

Therefore it is necessary to choose some locations. After the members get to know their way around the forum, they mark the locations where they want to go in their browser.

> After logging in (although actually I should state that I tend to leave the website always logged in on my browser, so regularly do I visit), I tend to look first at "The Infinite Quest" section, which is the Spoiler- filled section. It's not necessarily that all the most interesting content can be found in this section, but that this section includes the famous "Spoiler & Speculation Thread", where new updates about the current season of Doctor Who that is being filmed are likely to be posted. It's usually that which I want to see first because it's the most instant and newsworthy, if you see what I mean. Then I tend to check "Latest Posts From Today", which means I keep up to date on what the latest conversations are. Then I usually round off by checking threads I Started - to see if anyone has posted in the ongoing threads I am responsible for (like a thread for my audio drama marathon, for instance). (Interview 49)

This member does not only tell us where s/he goes after logging in. S/he shows us in which order s/he visits different locations, indicating a

routine, a way of doing things when visiting the forum. This again emphasizes that members do more than one thing. There are multiple locations where various enactments are carried out on the Gallifrey Base.

4.4.2 Activities

When I asked the members what they do on the forum, they started to send me links to specific subforums and discussion threads to exemplify their descriptions, pointing me in different directions. They also categorized their activities, separating them out from one another. One popular activity on the forum is to rate and review episodes that have just aired. When I first started to observe the forum, this was also one of the first field notes I made. Every time an episode aired from the new season, the forum staff set up a thread called *Poll: Rate and/or Review*. This is a thread where the members can state their first impressions and opinions of an episode and rate it on a scale from 1 to 10. These threads are located to the main subforum *Doctor Who Universes on Television* in the subforum *Doctor Who Series*. This is also where many members first turn to see the reactions of other members after viewing a newly aired episode. Here is an excerpt from this part of the forum, where members have rated and reviewed an episode called *Smile* from the 2017 season of the TV series.

> **Re: Rate and/or Review "Smile"**
>
> I quite liked that. I didn't have high hopes for it because of Frank's previous effort, but it wasn't too shabby.
>
> For me it was more 😊 and less 😠
>
> No masterpiece, however, so 7/10
>
> ---
>
> **Nil Mortifi Sine Lucre**
>
> [Quote]

#12   Click Here To Report This Post

> **Re: Rate and/or Review "Smile"**
>
> I enjoyed that. Lots of great dialogue and a convincingly realised alien world. I found the last third a bit rushed, and the music a bit intrusive, but I'm still loving Bil and Capaldi is absolutely at the top of his game. Lovely stuff. A definite 8/10.
>
> [Quote]

#13   Click Here To Report This Post

> **Re: Rate and/or Review "Smile"**
>
> 8/10
>
> A bit of a sudden resolution but Peter & Pearl kept it running for 30 minutes by themselves. Two strong performances.
>
> Much better than Mr Frank's first story.

Figure 4.3 *Poll: Rate and/or Review "Smile"*
The screen shot shows a part of a discussion thread called *Poll: Rate and/or Review "Smile"* which can be located to the subsubforum *2017 Doctor Who Series*, which in turn can be found in the main subforum *Doctor Who Universes on Television*. This particular discussion that this excerpt comes from took place 22 April, 2017 (screen shot taken 2017-05-17).

When discussing the rating threads with the members, I was told that this is not a place for discussing an episode.

> I would never want to do discuss an episode in the Rate thread. I just want to rate and leave a short comment regarding my opinion on the episode. But it is interesting to see what the other's think about an episode and to hear their opinion on it.

> The reason I don't discuss episodes here is because it can easily get heated. When the show is on air, I watch the show "live" whenever possible, will go into the "Rate the Episode" thread immediately afterwards and post a brief opinion. After that I will generally avoid further interaction on that thread. When I watch the show, I do sometimes think about what I will post, but I avoid conscious thought as much as reasonably possible - after all, it's only my opinion, and I don't want that to get in the way of enjoying the show! (Interview 39)

The rating and reviewing threads function as to a way see what others thought about a specific episode, rate it, and maybe leave a short comment – but apparently not to discuss an episode. According to the forum members, discussing an episode is something different from rating and leaving a short comment. These two things are described as different activities (Interview 39). So where would a member turn to discuss an episode?

Let's move to a second location, *The TARDIS Scanner*. In this part of the forum, subforums and discussion threads for each aired episode can also be found; these could also be found in the subforum *Doctor Who Series*. However, in *The TARDIS Scanner* the members do not discuss the episodes that are airing at that time like they do in the *Doctor Who Series* subforum. These two activities are placed in separate locations. However, in both locations members can discuss and analyse a specific episode rather than rating and stating one's opinion briefly. Here is an excerpt from *The TARDIS Scanner*. The thread, *A Fistful of Mirrors*, was started by one of the members of the forum to discuss matters referring to an episode called *A Town Called Mercy,* which aired in 2012.

> **Minor Thoughts:**
>
> - How very egg-like did Kahler-Jex's (sp?) spaceship look? It seems to fit right in with the egg theme we've been getting since "egg-sterminate."
> - "They could build a spaceship out of Tupperware and moss." This gave me pause on the second viewing, having known the origins of The Gunslinger that time around. In other words, the combination of organic material and man made material forged into one in order to serve its creator's purposes, just like the Cyborgs (human plus cybernetics) themselves were the product of the Kahler.
> - It was interesting to see Rory side against Amy and with The Doctor this time. The last time we saw a Whithouse episode, we had Rory telling The Doctor that it was unfair of The Doctor to turn Rory into him. Now we see that they are making similar moral choices.
>
> *"Looking at you, Doctor, is like looking into a mirror...almost." ~ Kahler-Jex*
>
> There were so many mirrors going on in this episode that it was a little overwhelming. I really enjoyed the way they played Amy's motherhood against Jex's "fatherhood." Essentially, Jex was the father of the Cyborgs. A.K.A. the weapons that had been created to end the war, one of whom chose to raise war against his own doctor/father/creator. Likewise, Amy was the mother of the child who was cultivated to end Kovarian's "endless, bitter war" against The Doctor.
>
> Honestly, I was a little disappointed that we didn't get to see Amy have a one-on-one with The Gunslinger about this, because they mirrored one another as well: Amy was also an innocent person taken, experimented on without consent, permanently damaged/altered in the aftermath, and was herself deeply full of rage and vengeance to the point where she murdered Kovarian in cold blood (which in itself parallels her actions with The Doctor from as soon as the last episode when he left Soloman to die for his crimes). Of course, Amy's crime didn't stick, but in her mind, she still remembers it and regrets it (as the conversation between her and River at the end of TWORS reveals) so much that it informs her actions and speeches in this episode (though they are tainted with hypocrisy because of her own actions, even though Kovarian is still very much alive in this universe/timeline). She has decided from that experience that killing is not the answer, even if it feels right in the moment (hence her "no guns" last episode, even though she'd been quick to pick up a gun to solve problems in the past – "Day of the Moon," "A Good Man Goes to War," "The Wedding of River Song").
>
> This has always ended badly though: the first two times she ended up pointing said gun at her own daughter (proving that rash and impulsive actions are not always the correct ones) and the last time she ended up killing several Silents and essentially Kovarian (putting her in a position in which she likely had no way to live). In that sense, the "justice" was immediate, but she learned that the violence only begets violence; fear breeds fear. That was how the legend of The Doctor rose into a position that made The Silence and Kovarian fear him so much in the first place in order to go to the lengths of kidnapping Amy, stealing her baby, and priming Melody into a weapon to bring The Doctor down. "When did we start letting people get executed?" I believe that after it had sunk in that her murder of Kovarian didn't stick, she took it as a way to start anew (like Kahler-Jex tried to do, like The Doctor has tried to do so many times, but without the blessing of having his/their defining sins washed away). It makes me curious about how Amy might react next time she's with River and River pulls out a gun to solve the immediate problem.

Figure 4.4 *A Fistful of Mirrors*

This is a screen shot from a discussion thread called *A Fistful of Mirrors* that can be located to the subsubsubforum *A Town Called Mercy*, which in turn can be located to the subsubforums *The TARDIS Scanner*, which in turn can be found in the main subforum *Doctor Who Universes on Television* (screen shot taken 2017-05-17).

There is a difference between the two activities of (1) rating and briefly reviewing and (2) discussing an episode. Moreover, it is two different things to discuss recently aired episodes and to discuss episodes from previous seasons. These two activities take place in separate locations on the Gallifrey Base.

Forum members gather around different things on the forum. They gather around rating and reviewing new episodes, they work together in

textual analysis of episodes, and they keep up to date with news about the TV series. That means that an activity in one location of the forum is not the same in another location. The fact that these activities are kept separate from each other on the forum signals that they are not the same. They are similar, but also different from each other. Because they are kept separated, both activities are possible.

4.4.3 Repertoires

On the Gallifrey Base there are different repertoires in terms of behaviour and attitudes, and different ways of doing things in different locations. Forum members have a couple of locations at a time that they visit regularly. The members can become familiar with other members that are in the same location as themselves during a specific period. Moreover, different subforums have different attitudes, different routines, and different "regular visitors". Subforums and discussion threads can even feel like "their own forums in a sense".

> There are a good variety of things going on to suit different tastes. For instance, I tend to avoid the subfora target at discussion of the TV show specifically because people get very worked up (some people enjoy a good argument, I don't) and I absolutely avoid any sections where spoilers are allowed. On the other hand, I do follow a number of threads in The Long Game (the marathon section) […] That tends to be a minority interest area and so is quieter and more civil. I'm also involved in the games, and help moderate the annual Non-Dynamic Rankings […] That's a fair amount of work, but again people are well-behaved there […] I have noticed that the more popular a topic or area is, the more likely it is that there will be arguments and unpleasantness. (Interview 53)

This member says that s/he avoids certain parts of the forum, but that s/he is a frequent follower of other parts. This does not only have to do with the fact that different topics are being discussed in different parts of the forum (Interview 53). As illustrated in the quote above, it also has to do with different ways of being. As this member points out, the members are not only discussing different topics, they *do* things differently.

There are great disputes of classic/modern happen in a number of the subforums, but barely touch places like the cosplay subforum, or the active television (non-Doctor Who) forum. Platform One has a lightness to it, and a whole lot of list threads (which people post in, but nobody really reads) but some other threads where people really engage as a community and lark about). The Past Doctor Who forum 'The TARDIS Scanner' shares users with other sections, but I get the impression that a lot of nostalgic (older posters, and people who have given up watching the new series) post in there a lot. Old disputes which have raged for decades (particularly comparing 20th century showrunners, producers and script-editors) find new expression there. (Interview 20)

There are more literary types in DW Books… more in-depth discussions. (Interview 50)

Discussions about the newer episodes and seasons just airing tend to be more heated than other discussions. The discussions of older seasons tend to be more quieter and thoughtful. (Interview 31)

There are different attitudes across different parts of the forum […] With the TV series, it's about good or bad, while there is no pressure in the audio and books sections. They are most placid. Things do not get as heated there… and since more people are more involved and there are more posts in the TV series sections, there is more to react to. (Interview 47)

The more popular a topic is, the more likely it is that there will be arguments and unpleasantness. (Interview 53)

People get to know each other in certain threads and only talk to each other. There are certainly some people who dominate some parts of the forum […] Leisure hive uses swearing, for example. And they're a bit more raunchy and talk about personal stuff. The Crater requires a steady head and not be afraid to get into disagreement. LH is more loose, friendly. People do not tend to post in both sections, in my experience. (Interview 41)

The stories told in the quotes above do not only tell us about the differences between locations, as the members see it. Members also distinguish between different parts of the forum in several ways. Some

locations on the forum have a "lightness", and in other locations people get easily worked up; in some locations spoilers are allowed; some locations are quieter than others; in some locations there are great disputes, and in some locations members get to know each other more than in others. The ways of being audience differ from one location to another.

> The subforum for discussing the 'classic' show (1963-1989) has a largely different population, I believe, from the subforums focussing on the 'current' version of the show. (Interview 25)

As illustrated throughout sections 4.4.1, 4.4.2, and 4.4.3, the members are involved in a couple of parts of the forum at a time. When moving between different activities and locations, the members also change their repertoire and act differently in different parts of the forum.

> I think the tone I use to respond to specific topics/posts depends on that of the people I am responding to […] The gaming and costume threads are very helpful, supportive environments so I feel comfortable asking questions and talking about things I might not understand, whereas in the review/episode discussion threads there is a lot more heated debate and strong opinions present so I can take a more argumentative tone at times. There are also threads where I feel comfortable being a lot more lighthearted, sometimes tongue-in-cheek type discussions such as the recent 'Discussion on who will play the 13th Doctor Megathread' and the older 'Adric is AWESOME!!!!!!' thread which I engaged with more for their comedy value than for serious discussion. (Interview 59)

> I like the fairly upbeat and carefree atmosphere that some parts of the forum have, while appreciating the sections for more serious discussion […] Mostly I just discuss Doctor Who. Sometimes that's in a light-hearted manner (eg. talking about silly things like which foods suit each Doctor best), sometimes it's more serious (eg. talking about the destructive nature of Clara's relationship with the Twelfth Doctor). I participate in forum games and I devour and discuss as many spoilers as I can find. I do occasionally pop into the general chat areas of the forum for a bit of a natter, but mostly I'm here for Who. (Interview 7)

It is also possible for the members to mobilize technological functions to avoid being exposed to certain repertoires. The Gallifrey Base forum has a function called the 'ignore list'. By putting another member on the 'ignore list', a member can avoid getting exposed to that member's posts on the forum.

It is also possible to block access to certain parts of the forum. For example, members who do not want to see any spoilers can block their own access to those parts of the forum containing spoilers.

> Some people, for example, ask to have themselves voluntarily blocked from subforums like the Spoiler or Politics sections because they don't want to tempt themselves and/or hate how hot the vitriol can get in those areas of the forum. (Interview 50)

Three *various modes of audience practice* on the Gallifrey Base have now been described: different locations, different activities, and different repertoires. In the next section, I attend to a fourth *mode of practice* – that of different concerns on the forum.

4.4.4 Concerns

In the interviews, the discussion about *Classic Who* and *New Who* was a topic frequently brought up by the members. The *Classic Who* refers to the episodes from the time when the TV series first aired, back in the 1960s up until around the 1980s, and *New Who* refers to more recent ones. It turned out that members had much to say about this distinction, and several stories included this topic in one way or another.

> I'll illustrate something for you. I make a thread talking about Peter Davison and it's *pretty* rare that someone would jump in and start slagging Peter off and saying William Hartnell was better. The thread will rumble on for a while till someone says something like: Peter was a great Doctor. My favourite of the classic run. I grew up with him. **Much better than the prancing ninnyboy Doctors we have nowadays**. I bolded that for emphasis. But it's there and it's visible and it's common. And naturally, people will say 'that has nothing to do with Peter Davison, piss off', *especially* to posters who do this kind of thing serially. I mean, build a wall between the two halves of the show, or somehow delude themselves that the original 26 years run was

some kind of unified, homogenous programme. And when somebody says 'Pack it in, We've heard you sing this song before' then you get a load of stuff about 'Why aren't I allowed to express my opinion'. That's a thing. Let me clarify, there is a haggard belief amongst some that Classic is good and New is crap. I think there is an elitist element involved. We had to wait 16 years for the revival. In that time some became very protective of it and even seem sometimes to resent the fact that it is popular or has a younger audience now. I suppose it's the feeling of having something taken away from you and given away to everybody. I'm sorry, I'm really going on here. (Interview 13)

Since the topic came up in the interviews, I turned to the forum to observe discussions about *Classic Who* and *New Who*. I quickly found a thread called *The Classic vs. New Debate [Part IV]* started by a member of the forum. This discussion thread is a very long one, divided into several parts due to its many posts. Here is an excerpt from this part of the forum and a discussion between two members.

Member 1:

Let's just look at this for a second, since these 3 scenes together are a good example of bad transition and integration. In the first scene we have the Dr chase the Master through a dump and is all very action orientated (I can't actually remember how that started), then we suddenly have a busload of old people Wilf has pulled together (admittedly set up prior by Wilf getting them together, but how so very convenient the first place they went to they immediately find the Dr, and if that's because they have some sort of tracker why did Wilf need a busload of people to help him find the Dr) and cues the comedic scene, then we cut to a cafe were Wilf and the Dr can have a heart to heart, forgetting/jettisoning the busload of people from the story (leaving a very blatant 'what was the point of them').

Member 2:

Well, good thing that's not what happened then. You're utterly and completely wrong. As that is, in fact, not what happens in that sequence. At all. Again, like beta, you're 'accidentally' forgetting some rather important bits to make your point.

Here's the actual sequence: Wilf and the old people on the bus talking about looking for the Doctor, Wilf specifically tells everyone to phone all these other old people they know. Master in the junkyard eating people. The Doctor chasing the Master through the junkyard. The Master escapes just as the old people arrive. As the Doctor is looking for the Master (but it's clear he's already gone), the handsy granny *explains exactly how they found the Doctor* (someone they called saw the TARDIS, someone else they called saw the Doctor running east on the street leading to the junkyard, so that's where they went). The Doctor is incredulous at the fact that they found him so easily, this gets the Doctor curious. Then the Doctor, Wilf, and all the old people ride the senior citizen buss back to town. The Doctor and Wilf get out and Wilf motions them into a cafe. The Doctor asks, what's so special about this place, Wilf doesn't answer. The Doctor starts talking about destiny and fate and Wilf's connection to him, mentioning others have waited centuries to meet him. And later we find that Donna's in the neighborhood, Wilf set the old boy up a bit.

So you're utterly, factually wrong. It would be wonderful if people had recently watched the episodes they bitch about. So you know, they wouldn't be so easily caught out being utterly wrong about things. If you don't like the episode fine -- matter of fact, End of Time is one of my least favorite -- but disliking it because you can't or won't remember the thing properly is just silly.

I guess the circle really is complete on this conversation. It's abundantly clear people haven't watched the classic series in years and utterly misremember the particulars, to the point they can fondly remember things that didn't actually happen with the rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia, whilst also actively avoiding watching the modern series so they can conveniently misremember the particulars in order to incorrectly hate it. Good times. Really.

Figure 4.5 *The Classic vs. New Debate [Part IV]*
Screen shot from a discussion thread called *The Classic vs. New Debate [Part IV]* that took place 11 December, 2014 (screen shot taken 2017-01-12).

In these posts, knowledge about *Doctor Who* and its history is a concern. This example demonstrates the importance of knowing things about *Doctor Who* and being able to compare what happened in the newer seasons to what happened in the older seasons. It also shows that it is important to understand what specific events mean. In this location of the forum, discussions usually get heated. This is evident from the observations of the forum as well as from the interviews.

Let's turn to another example. When I talked to forum members about the activity of discussing and analyzing an episode in detail, the members explained that they work together to "figure out" an episode, and by doing so, their own experience of an episode is enhanced. The members can even change their opinion of an episode by reading another member's analysis of that episode.

> I love the arguments that can actually manage to make me re-evaluate an opinion! (Interview 17)

> The forum is at its best when it's bringing up interesting discussions, which different people can engage in with an open mind. I love it when I find a thread where someone has given their thoughts on something, and it then opens up a whole avenue of discussion, where people can add their own thoughts, question things, and come out with some interesting new ideas. Sometimes, it can open up a whole new way of thinking about a particular episode or aspect of the programme, or make you look at it in a different way. (Interview 1)

Comparing these two last empirical examples, *The Classic vs. New Debate* and the two quotes above, the first one shows a concern regarding knowledge about *Doctor Who* and its history. In this location of the forum, it is common to find heated debates. In the second example, knowledge about the TV series' history was not relevant. Instead, the concern was about offering an interesting analysis of an episode. In both locations, analysis is being done. However, *knowledge* about *Doctor Who* seems to be important in order to take part in the activities in the first example but not in the second example. In the first example, having knowledge about *Doctor Who* and previous episodes matters, and, moreover, so does having the "right" opinion.

A third example comes from a discussion thread called *The Missing Episodes Megathread*. This thread can be found in the subforum *The TARDIS Scanner*. In this thread, members can speculate about which of the lost episodes could have been found. The BBC, in the 1960s and 70s, repeatedly deleted archived episodes for practical reasons. There are 97 missing *Doctor Who* episodes (which the BBC has confirmed), but all the episodes still exist in audio form, recorded by people in their homes. Both the BBC and private persons are looking for missing episodes. Here is an excerpt from *The Missing Episodes Megathread [Part 65]* and a discussion between two members.

Member 1:

> It is circumstantial. But we do know for certain that at various points in the last few years there have been plans to release it, no plans to release it, and then a release of it. It's the very definition of "We don't know what to do about this."
>
> Which would lead you to suspect that if they did have another orphan episode or two, they wouldn't want anyone to know (which might very well include the RT) until they were absolutely certain what their plans were going to be.

Member 2:

> I totally agree.

Member 1:

> This is just pure speculation, though. I'm just pointing out that there's no justification for believing, for example, that Phil's withholding stuff from the BBC any more than that it's the BBC who are withholding stuff from us. In other words, we just don't know and you can come up with plausible enough reasons behind any scenario you care to think up.

Member 2:

> I think there is *some* justification in this regard...given Phil's acknowledged proclivity to keep things close to his chest, plus the sieve like nature of the BBC (as experienced with Web/Enemy/the raw UWM episode among other things), I don't think it's that far a stretch to think that Phil (if he indeed has found any more Who) might withhold it until he is sure that nothing else is at risk. Whether Phil has anything else at all is pure speculation though - I agree.

Figure 4.6 *The Missing Episodes Megathread [Part 65]*
Screen shot from a discussion thread called *The Missing Episodes Megathread [Part 65]* that took place 13 August, 2016 (screen shot taken 2017-01-12).

Here is an example of a speculation debate from the forum, which does not have to do with what has happened in the TV series – not in relation to the plot, nor to the production of the TV series (there are subforums for such discussions as well). Instead, this kind of speculation is about the missing episodes. More specifically, topics of speculation include whether lost episodes have been found or not, where they could be found, and rumours that members have heard in relation to these missing episodes. Members also discuss the plausibility of people possessing these episodes. In this thread, however, members' credibility turns out to be a concern. In an interview, one of the members started to talk about the missing episodes and referred to another member that had claimed earlier on the forum to have found episodes.

> Someone posted stuff about going to a boot fair and being told by a guy there that he had lots of Doctor Who original films. When someone on Gallifrey Base asked him to get the registration number of the seller's vehicle the next time he saw him at the Boot Fair, the poster came up with some cock and bull story about the seller having a sheet covering his vehicle. Another poster showed a picture, purporting it to be one of the missing episodes in a film can he had bought. When people asked him to check the film inside, he said he had been too busy due to family issues, which didn't sound believable really. I tend to

point out the discrepancies in the other posters' stories. (Interview 48)

Here is another member, also referring to the missing episode thread, discussing how to determine if a member is credible.

> I tend to look at whether or not a person has provided consistently accurate or inaccurate information in the years that I have been on GB. I also look at a person's post count, since it's popular for some people to make false accounts with only a couple (brand new) posts to post foilers as an attention grab. But occasionally, someone will make a new account to post spoilers but they want to be anonymous, so you just have to take it on a case-by-case basis. But there can be other contexts too. There are people from all kinds of specialties on this site […] There are people involved in current production and people who have professionally written for *Doctor Who* expanded universe tie-in media. Some have firsthand knowledge of the inner workings of the business (or how it worked at one time). I'm sure there are also people who claim specialties they don't have too. It's the Internet, so I usually examine an argument based on what I already know. Sometimes I have to do my own research to see if I find it convincing or not. Some people I don't give the time of day because I've become familiar with their posting habits and I vehemently disagree with things they consistently beat others' over the head with. Some are trolls and enjoy saying things to stir up trouble. (Interview 50)

After hearing this story, I asked members in later interviews how credibility could be determined. It appears that in order to determine a member's credibility, members would sometimes go back and look at posts made earlier by that member. For example, if the member in question has posted inside information before that turned out to be true, then the member can be counted as credible. As mentioned earlier, it is important to the members to archive discussions. The archive makes it possible to return to earlier discussions. However, if the member in question has posted things in the past that turned out not to be true, the new information may consequently be treated as untrustworthy.

Convincing people to believe what you are saying requires credibility and the ability to account for details. On the Gallifrey Base forum, prior credentials are crucial in such situations. According to the members I

interviewed, if someone has been involved in spoiler debates before and turned out to be right, they are assumed to have knowledge about such issues. Members further explained that if a member claims to have inside knowledge, which then gets accepted by the other members of the forum, this could give that member a certain position on the forum – a position where the other members trust that member's information. The members described that this then would be a member that the other members listen to and trust. Therefore, according to the members, it is also crucial that a member who 'earns' this trust does not jeopardize his/her role as a trustable and credible person. On the other hand, the members explained that one should be careful with pointing out that they have provided accurate information in the past and that the other members should believe them based on their previous records. According to forum members, it is important to show the other members that you have confidence, and do not need other members to admire you. If a person has been a member of the forum for a long time and has long experience of *Doctor Who*, that is considered a good basis on which to work out whether someone knows what they are talking about.

The forum members show care in different ways and, in turn, there are different concerns about caring on the forum. Different things are made objects of care. What is cared for in one situation may be less cared for in another situation. For example, we saw how knowledge about *Doctor Who* mattered more in some situations than others. In another situation, an interesting analysis was what mattered. We also saw how members cared for, and made a point about, keeping this very difference between different parts of the forum. In the empirical examples, members made it clear that what is cared for in one situation depends on where on the forum it takes place.

Care, in this sense, is something that gets practised (Law and Lien, 2013; Law, 2014; Haraway, 2008; Mol *et al.*, 2015; Mol, 2008) when members make different things matter (Law, 2004b; Barad, 2003). The empirical examples above illustrate how the members care about *how* audience practice is enacted on the forum. This resonates with Heuts and Mol's (2013: 125) notion of care as involving "tinkering towards improvement". Accordingly, members care about how audience practice develops on the forum.

In this section (4.4), we have seen examples of *various modes of audience practice* on the Gallifrey Base. What can *various modes of audience practice* teach us about audience practice on the forum?

First, the empirical examples showed how members are involved in different activities, in different locations, where they in turn have different repertoires and different concerns. The *various modes of audience practice* that we saw in the four examples point to a multiplicity in audience practice and show how audience is enacted differently on the forum in multiple ways. Different ontologies are being produced. Consequently, multiple modes of audience practice produce multiple versions of the object audience.

Second, *various modes of audience practice* are related and hang together, which was shown in several illustrations of how individual members described their involvement in different activities, in different locations, where they acted differently and expressed care for different things. This, in turn, points to how *various modes of audience practice* are linked to each other and become relational.

Third, this illustrates the fluid boundaries in 'audience' as an object (Port and Mol, 2015). Sometimes 'audience' is about having knowledge about previous seasons of the TV series, and other times is about offering an interesting analysis. The boundaries defining what it is to be audience on the Gallifrey Base are not clear, and audience turns out to be many different things here (Mol and Law, 1994; de Laet and Mol, 2000). Audience on the Gallifrey Base is adjustable to the situatedness of the interactions on the forum.

Finally, there is something interesting happening when members move between various modes of practice. It is not a question of being in one or the other *mode* – these can overlap. One member can be involved in several modes at the same time. Although there are attempts made to neatly keep the various modes separated, they clash, compete, and intervene with each other. It appears difficult to separate the different activities on the Gallifrey Base forum from each other. The boundaries between them are not "clear-cut", as the forum staff explained. This also indicates an unstableness of boundaries between *worlds* and *words*. The various modes of practice go in and out of each other, and forum members also move between and in and out of different modes. However, something happens in these movements between and in and out of the various modes. It is not a question of being inside one mode

and then outside another. It appears to be more complex than that. Several modes are being enacted – and what it is to be audience on the Gallifrey Base forum turns out to be multiple things.

4.5 Conclusion: A Multiple Being

The diversity of activities described in this chapter show how audience practice is achieved in various ways in one site. What audience is on the Gallifrey Base, is not straightforward. In the introduction chapter, I discussed how audience practices can be found in many different locations, such as a movie theatre, in front of a television, or on the internet. Consequently, the answer to the question of 'what it is to be audience' has many answers, even if we consider just a single site. This chapter has also shown that in the achievement of audience, humans and technologies are mutually dependent on each other.

First, when I started to talk to the forum members about what happens on the forum, they told me about various enactments carried out on the Gallifrey Base. When following audience practice through different *locations*, *activities*, *repertoires*, and *concerns*, we could see how audience practice changed and shifted through what was identified as *various modes of audience practice*. Furthermore, each of these modes of practice shows to be complex and rich in nuance. When exploring this diversity, I pointed to the variety of modes within a single audience practice following how audience practice shifts and changes in relation to *locations*, *activities*, *repertoires* and *concerns*. When doing so, I paid close attention to how *various modes of audience practice* become relational. On the Gallifrey Base, various enactments are achieved in relation to the same thing – audience. If we were to compare different audience practices, such as viewing a film in a theatre in relation to activities carried out on an internet forum, the variations and differences between the two different activities (in terms of what it is to be audience) would not be surprising. However, while this study remains within a single practice – audience practice on the Gallifrey Base – this chapter has found differences and variations in terms of how audience is achieved and what audience is in just a single practice. To analytically embrace this finding, it becomes significant to inquire further into the relations between various modes of practice. This shape-shifting

audience practice highlighted the co-existence of different ways of being audience on the Gallifrey Base. As revealed by the four *various modes of audience practice* – *locations*, *activities*, *repertoires* and *concerns* – there is differentiation in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum, a single practice in a single site. Audience is achieved in many versions on the Gallifrey Base. The forum partakes in enabling different enactments of audience by allowing boundaries to be drawn. These modes of audience practice are similar to one another, but they are also slightly different from each other. Forum members' stories of what happens after they log in, are manifold. The members told me about different places, where they do different things and act differently. The fact that different things are placed in different locations suggests that these things are not seen as the same. Moreover, members described how they mediate between different modes, which related the modes to each other. The members told stories about their involvement in different enactments in different parts of the forum. What was done in one part of the forum, was different from what was done in another part of the forum. For example, certain things are not talked about in some parts, certain things are not done in other parts, things are also done differently in different parts, and what is possible and encouraged to do in certain parts are forbidden in others. Audience practice on the Gallifrey Base shows to be many things. The answer to the question of what it is to be *audience* on the Gallifrey Base – shows to have different answers.

Second, following such findings, this brings to the fore *the multiplicity of audience in a single practice*, on the Gallifrey Base. Important implications of this multiplicity are that audience is not achieved singularly or consistently, nor is audience practice coherent. The empirical examples show flexibility in audience practice that allows for various modes to be maintained within a single practice. This flexibility, in terms of modes of practice, also means that audience practice is not coherent. Being audience multiples within audience practice on the forum. On the forum, multiple modes of audience are carefully separated from one another, but they co-exist in a single practice and are allowed to be related. The relationships between these modes are what is at stake. The various modes make flexibility in audience practice possible on the Gallifrey Base. The various modes of audience practice are outcomes of different kinds of reality-making, which, consequently, produce several answers to the

question of 'what it is to be audience' on the Gallifrey Base forum – consequently, audience multiplies.

Third, the ontological multiplicity illustrated through the *various modes of audience practice*, points to the difficulties of any simplistic characterization of audience. The findings also offer reasons for widening the concept audience, beyond the act of viewing, stressing the need to include multiple versions of what it is to *be audience*. This chapter has explored connections between different entities, both humans and nonhumans; a relationship that shows to be relevant in the understanding of how audience is achieved.

In sum, audience practice on the Gallifrey Base is slowly starting to unfold. The empirical examples illustrated and detailed some of the different ways in which audience is achieved on the forum. This chapter has thereby started to illustrate what audience is on the Gallifrey Base. The variety of heterogeneous activities has brought forward an ontological multiplicity of what it is to be audience on the Gallifrey Base. Routines and relations have been identified, and *who* and *what* is involved in the ongoing actions has been highlighted. More specifically, the empirical examples have shown how *various modes of audience practice* in one site – the Gallifrey Base forum – achieves multiple ontologies in a single audience practice. This, in turn, raises further questions for audience ontology. What becomes of audience practice when *various modes of audience practice,* and multiple versions of the object audience are co-generated in a single site? How is such multiplicity dealt with and ordered on the Gallifrey Base forum? Such questions will be addressed in the following chapter.

5. Audience Multiplicity in Practice

> Ordering the chaos for the sake of sanity. (Interview 50)

In chapter 5, I will further the analysis of the multiplicity found on the Gallifrey Base in chapter 4. Attending to how multiplicity is managed, this chapter specifically addresses RQ 2. In chapter 4, different interacts on the Gallifrey Base was revealed. Chapter 4 also demonstrated how *various modes of practice* enable and generate multiple versions of audience practice in a single site, Gallifrey Base. The subforums and discussion threads are held together through the single site, the forum, and though they are similar to one another, they are also slightly different from each other, as chapter 4 showed. Furthermore, chapter 4 illustrated *how* audience is enacted differently in various locations on the forum, which appears to have ontological consequences. We witnessed that it seems important to forum staff and members that different *locations*, *activities*, *repertoires*, and *concerns* be kept separated, thereby distinguishing the various modes of audience practice from each other. In turn, the various modes of practice achieve and allow multiple ontologies in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base.

These findings raise questions about how audience practice on the Gallifrey Base manages this multiplicity of versions of what it is to be audience. What kind of activity is it to separate various modes of audience practice? And, how does audience practice coordinate and maintain different ontologies? In this chapter, I further explore the multiplicity that chapter 4 exposed, and examine how the diversity that comes with *various modes of practice* is dealt with and worked out on the Gallifrey Base forum – attending to *what* and *who* is involved in ordering audience practice?

Focusing on ordering activities, I will first start with a brief discussion on the classification scheme on the forum, taking a closer look at how subforums and discussion threads are divided into separate categories that hold various modes of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base.

Then, I will continue by discussing four identified examples, where challenges emerged which initiated different ordering activities of audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. The first example shows the work involved when deciding where things *belong* on the forum. The second example shows challenges involved in the activity of *moving and merging* discussion threads. The third empirical example shows what happens when things are *misplaced* on the forum. Finally, the fourth and last example shows what happens when a discussion thread *morphs* from one mode of practice into another.

Together, these four examples demonstrate the *struggles* and *strategies* involved in ordering activities. By attending to the practicalities involved in ordering multiplicity in audience practice, the examples of ordering activities work together to highlight how relations between ontologies are recognized and clarified. Forum members, and forum staff – assisted by ordering devices such as the descriptions of subforums, guidelines, rules, subscriptions and software – together participate in such work. In the analysis that follows of the empirical examples, I pay specific attention to what is cared for (what is made into a concern) in such work.

Rather than *a* natural and stable structure, this chapter demonstrates that there is a lot of work involved in trying to maintain multiplicity in the single audience practice in the case of the Gallifrey Base forum. I owe the analytical focus in this chapter to STS scholars before me who have shown, with a variety of empirical examples, the *multiplicity* and *fluidity* that we can expect in objects. By doing so, they have shown how to turn questions of ontology into empirical investigations (Mol, 2002; Lien, 2015; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; Law and Lien, 2013). The examples analysed here draw on such previous STS work, and specifically on Mol's ideas on the coordination of multiplicity (see Mol, 2002).

5.1 Classifying

> How is all this structured? The bulletin board as a whole contains various categories (broad subject areas), which themselves contain forums (more specific subject areas) which contain threads (conversations on a topic) which are made up of

individual posts (where a user writes something). The board home page has a list of categories and forums, with basic statistics for each - including the number of threads and posts, and which member posted the most recent message. (Quote from the forum)

One way that audience practice is ordered on the Gallifrey Base forum is through classification. We know, from previous STS work, that social relations are immersed with classification arrangements (Bowker and Star, 2000; Star and Griesemer, 1989; Lynch and Woolgar, 1990; Law and Fyfe, 1988). Bowker and Star describe a classification system as "a set of boxes (metaphorical or literal) into which things can be put to then do some kind of work" (Bowker and Star, 2000: 10). The Gallifrey Base was started with much of its lay out borrowed from its predecessor the *Outpost Gallifrey*.[37]

So, how does classification work, as an ordering device, on the Gallifrey Base? This ordering device categorizes the various modes of audience practice.[38] A classification scheme is composed to help members find what they are looking for (Bates, 1998). The classification scheme functions to guide the forum members to find the activities, locations, and repertoires that they are interested in, by categorizing them. The forum makes available different discussions and activities through these classifications, or what Star and Bowker would refer to as an "information infrastructure" (Bowker and Star, 2000; Star, 1999), that are in no way neutral. The classification scheme on the Gallifrey Base forum is embedded in audience practice. Embedded in the classification scheme are possible paths of action, or possible barriers. Consequently, the classifications on the Gallifrey Base support *some* modes of practice and not others.

It would probably be impossible for forum members to find anything on the forum without some sort of classification scheme. As one of the interviewees phrased it at the beginning of this chapter – "ordering the

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[37] The *Outpost Gallifrey* was created by Shaun Lyon and launched in 1995. The forum closed in 2009. Steven Hill took over the forum, named it Gallifrey Base*,* and transferred many of the subforums over to the new site, as well as many from the previous forum staff and forum members.

[38] A brief visit to the forum on 2017-08-25 showed 155 different main forums, subforums, and discussion threads to choose from on the forum's home page alone.

chaos for the sake of sanity" (Interview 50). Imagine the more than 10 000 000 posts just floating around. It would be a challenge for forum members to find the discussions they are interested in, and to keep any discussion going, without losing track of the discussion thread. It would be a mess. The forum members need the classification "for the sake of sanity".

The forum, like most other internet discussion forums, is a two-dimensional website, with topics running from top to bottom when scrolling up and down, as we can see in Figure 5.1. The rows and the columns each hold a classification and a description articulating what activities members can expect from certain locations on the forum. Each classification holds a collection of discussions. If the forum did not have any classifications, the members would be met by a cluster of posted messages when logging in. It would be impossible to find what they are looking for. The classification scheme is needed to help forum members and forum staff navigate the different activities and to get an overview of the forum.

The Greatest Show · The Doctor Who Universe (3 Viewing) General Doctor Who discussion - broad topics that cover the Doctor Who universe in and beyond television. ⬜ L.I.'n'D.A. · Clubs 'n' Chat for Characters and Actor's (796/875219) ⬜ The King's Demons · Characters, Actors, and Production Staff (699/17198) ⬜ T-Mat Control · Transmission & Broadcast (318/26635) ⬜ The Games of Rassilon · Doctor Who Game Threads (829/186103)	Today 12:20 pm	12,941	1,588,599
The Infinite Quest · DW Present & Future [SP] (16 Viewing) Discussion of the present and future of televised Doctor Who (onward from January 2017). SPOILERS PERMITTED.	Today 11:55 am	15,933	1,150,355
The Zero Room · DW Present & Future [NOSP] Discussion of the present and future of televised Doctor Who (onward from January 2017). SPOILERS NOT PERMITTED.	Today 9:26 am	2,463	128,706
The TARDIS Scanner · Past Doctor Who (6 Viewing) Discussion of televised Doctor Who from 1963 through January 2017. Includes missing episodes discussion. ⬜ 2009/2010 Doctor Who Specials ⬜ 2010 Doctor Who Series ⬜ 2011 Doctor Who Series ⬜ 2012 Doctor Who Series ⬜ 2013 Doctor Who Series ⬜ 2014 Doctor Who Series ⬜ 2015 Doctor Who Series ⬜ 2016 Doctor Who Series	Today 12:27 pm	26,994	1,313,357
Fluid Links · Doctor Who Spinoff Shows Spinoff series each have their own sections in here! ⬜ Class (151/8151) ⬜ Torchwood Institute ⬜ Bannerman Road · The Sarah Jane Adventures ⬜ The House of Gryffen · K9 (The Series) (125/2296)	Yesterday 7:14 pm	3,941	197,471
The Long Game · Viewing Marathons (3 Viewing) Launching or discussing an ongoing viewing marathon? This is your place.	Today 11:53 am	775	37,158

Figure 5.1 *Classifications on the Gallifrey Base*
Screen shot of part of the home page of the Gallifrey Base forum that shows how different things are classified (screen shot taken 2017-10-12).

The classification scheme tells us something about how differences are worked out on the Gallifrey Base. Differences are essential in classification work, since the idea of a classification scheme is to separate and detach one 'class' from another. The forum, subforums, and discussion threads are attached to different modes of practice (as shown in chapter 4). The subforums are arranged so that when members visit the forum they can get an overview of all available choices (although that view can be overwhelming). And with this classification scheme serving as a map, the members can differentiate between discussions and activities and then act upon them.

Classification systems are not 'just there' as structures operating in the background. The classification scheme makes its presence known and is involved in the interactions on the forum. The classification scheme is a device that makes room for some interactions and does not allow others. There are categories for the topics that are supposed to be discussed – what gets classified gets discussed. One of the interviewees described what kinds of activities s/he engages in on the forum. One of the activities that the interviewee told me about was discussions on politics. I asked why s/he would turn to a *Doctor Who* forum to discuss such matters, and s/he told me, "I guess I post on politics on a *Doctor Who* forum because it's possible" (Interview 57). What gets classified is also what gets discussed. This is an ordering device that steers the possibilities of what can be, and is expected to be, discussed. Consequently, classifications play a part in what audience can be on the Gallifrey Base.

Technology is closely interconnected with the classification scheme on the forum and serves as a way for the members to go where they want to with just a quick click on the subforum's or the discussion thread's title. The subforum and discussion thread titles are hypertexts, which means that every title functions as a link to that specific subforum or discussion thread. When members click on a link, they are within a second taken to the location referred to. These hypertexts allow the members to go to the location of their choice. The title, in turn, is connected to a description of what kinds of discussions and activities that particular location is for. By arranging audience practice into different classifications, the many discussions and activities can be separated and detached from each other. The classification scheme works to simplify and assemble a massive amount of information, which makes the forum manageable. Keeping

things separated, as we soon shall see, appears to be crucial in the case of the Gallifrey Base.

Does it matter where things are located on the forum? Apparently it does. The role of the forum staff is to order audience practice and make sure that everything is in its 'right' place, according to forum staff. For example, the staff make sure that spoilers and speculations are kept in the spoilers and speculations part of the forum, and that no activity is engaged with in the 'wrong' place on the forum. A quote from the forum explains the role of the forum staff in the following way:

> Gallifrey Base's Moderators are responsible for thread activities (merging, slitting, moving, removing) and general peacekeeping. They can help with forum problems. Moderators are not involved in member access issues or member-related business. Gallifrey Base's Administrators are responsible for higher level operations of the forum. They can help fix problems with your account, and have the authority to deal with member access issues. The Forum Directors […] are responsible for the daily operation of Gallifrey Base, and for supervising forum staff. (Quote from the forum)

The main forums and subforums created by the forum directors have a text attached to them, with a description. This description articulates what the forum directors think that the subforum should contain – what belongs there. Such notes are thus important because they say something about what the forum directors think the subforum *is*. It is the forum directors' description of the subforum ontology. The forum staff want subforums and discussion threads to be coherent with the articulation attached to the classification, describing what a particular location is for. All the various modes of audience practice, set up by the forum staff, can be located in a specific part of the forum. And not only that, the forum staff have also set up separate guidelines and forum rules – in the form of a link to an FAQ – on how to interact on the forum.

Classification schemes, descriptions, guidelines, maps, and rules are all displayed on the forum to help, guide, manage, and enable members to make decisions regarding their interactions on the forum. They also function as ordering devices. The forum members seem to have everything they need to manage the forum and guide their interactions.

However, as it turns out, it is more complex than that. Simplifying audience practice by classifying it in a classification scheme also makes things more complicated. As we soon shall see, the job of managing multiplicity in audience practice comes with a couple of challenges. Ordering audience practice, through classification work, demands a lot of work making sure that the various modes of audience practice are classified accordingly, and that the various modes are kept in their 'right' categories (according to the forum staff and members) within the classification scheme. The classification scheme demands work with ordering.

5.2 Ordering

Keeping things classified demands work that includes making decisions. However, the work of ordering audience practice also makes multiplicity possible. In the following four subsections, I bring to the fore, with empirical examples, some of the challenges and possibilities of ordering audience practice. These subsections demonstrate the work involved in dealing with multiple ontologies by: (1) trying to decide where things *belong* on the forum; (2) *moving* and *merging* things on the forum; (3) handling *misplacements*; and (4) trying to decide on the ontology of a thread that *morphs* and becomes something different. These are all processes of deciding a thread's ontology.

The four examples demonstrate consequences that ordering has for ontology. Only forum staff can decide where things belong and move and merge threads on the forum. Forum members, in turn, may intervene in the ordering work by *misplacing* things and *morphing* threads – by changing the topic discussed and changing the activities and repertoires in one particular thread. Moreover, ordering also includes the work of technologies that make it possible to move, classify, and link in certain ways (and not others). Turning to the ordering work of audience practice responds to questions of *how* it is possible for audience practice to be, and stay, *multiple*.

5.2.1 Belonging

As previously explained, forum staff are the ones behind the classification scheme, and the ones that have set up the main forums, subforums, and some of the discussion threads on the Gallifrey Base. The members can start their own discussion threads, but they cannot start their own subforums. That is something that only the forum staff can do. To guide the members on the forum, the forum directors have supplied the first main forum – *Welcome to the* Gallifrey Base – with the subforum *The Rescue – Advice and Assistance,* where members can guide and assist each other. The members can ask forum staff to merge, move, split, or delete posts or threads, but the members themselves are not able to execute these tasks. However, in various ways, members intervene in the negotiation of where threads and posts belong.

If, according to the forum staff, a post is placed where it does not 'belong' according to the forum's classification scheme, they can act on that misplacement. Forum staff can move or delete a post that they do not believe belongs where it is currently placed. Forum staff can also decide to ban members from the forum for a couple of days, the members told me.

So, if members want to post, where should they do so? Even though there are numerous places to choose from, sorted into different categories, accompanied by guidelines on how to operate the forum, official forum rules, an FAQ, and a separate forum set up to provide assistance and advice on how to manage the forum, it is still difficult to know where to post, according to the members.

> I would personally never dare contribute to the spoiler and speculation thread now – certainly since it started to tell me I might be banned. I don't really understand what manner of posts is acceptable and what isn't, so it is safer not to post at all! (Quote from the forum)

This post can be found in the first main forum, *Welcome to* Gallifrey Base, and its subforum *The Rescue – Advice and Assistance.* This member expresses that s/he is not sure about where to put things. During the observations of the forum, I came across posts like the one above repeatedly. In the quote above, the member describes how s/he avoids posting in certain

parts of the forum, afraid that s/he will post in the wrong section, afraid of getting banned from the forum. Another member replies to this post.

> I rarely post in S&S nowadays, however I do read it daily and even I'm confused about what's acceptable and what isn't. People will get told to only discuss spoilers and speculation of course, yet when the spoilers or speculation begins to drift into anything too specific, members are told off and asked to post elsewhere. For example, if people begin speculating on the possibility of the Master's return, they're told that S&S isn't the place to discuss him - even if members are using actual known spoilers/teasers/rumors to help justify whatever they're saying. It almost appears as if we're only allowed to discuss things at random. As soon as an actual discussion begins to form regarding anything, whether it be the Master, the opening title sequence, a new TARDIS or some random guest star, people get told "No no, do that in a separate thread." I'm not even sure what the moderators are afraid of. Eventually people *will* move on and discuss something else. Of course it's a problem if people are discussing something that has nothing to do with neither spoilers nor speculation, but other than that I see no reason to be so hard on natural discussion stemming around one particular topic. Online threads elsewhere do this all the time and they don't stay stuck on one particular topic for long. I don't mind that much btw, cause like I said I don't really post anymore. I'm just really confused about how it all works and why it works this way. (Quote from the forum)

The member behind this last quote also expresses confusion about where to post certain things on the forum. A third member responds to these posts.

> I was under the impression the Crater of Needles, along with most of the subforums in the "Outer World" section, were for discussions which were mostly unrelated to Doctor Who. If that's changed, fine, but it's not at all obvious to end users and makes the structure of the forum very confusing. Also, I'm not sure how you are going to reconcile it in the cases where discussions which cross this "undefined line" also involves spoilers, since we're not supposed to discuss spoilers outside the spoiler section. I can only go by my own experiences and observations on this site. (Quote from the forum)

The three members also tell us about reactions that they have gotten when posting. Even though the forum is divided into a range of subforums and discussion threads to make it easier for members to navigate, it turns out that the classification of the forum does not only make it easier to navigate – it also creates problems. In the three quotes above, the members describe their difficulties with translating the descriptions attached to the different subforums and discussion threads. These three empirical examples demonstrate that the forum structures are not self-explanatory.

The members are not the only ones experiencing difficulties in translating the descriptions of the differences between the subforums. Even forum staff, the ones behind the descriptions, have trouble explaining to members where they think things belong. Several of the sections on the Gallifrey Base are similar to one another and seem in need of some clarification. For example, in the third main subforum, *Doctor Who Universes on Television*, the forum staff explain, there are two similar subforums, *The Greatest Show – The Doctor Who Universe* and *The TARDIS Scanner – Past Doctor Who*. Here is what the forum staff have to say about how these two locations differ.

> We have two rather similar sections in this part of the forum, and this message is going to try to explain what the difference is. Admittedly, there are many topics that can happily reside in either section, and in those cases we're fine with the topic being in either. We're not going to get bent out of shape if a topic is "clearly" in the wrong section, we'll just move it, because "clearly" may not be all that clear. We understand this is not very clear-cut, but hopefully you do get the gist of the separation, and this can help you decide where to put your topic. (Quote from the forum)

As the quote above shows, separating and detaching one section of the forum from another one is not an easy, 'clear-cut' activity. These sections are not the same, according to forum staff. The forum staff try to explain what separates the two sections in the quote above. As explained, each subforum has its own descriptions attached to it that articulates what kinds of activities that particular section is for. So, what do the descriptions attached to these two sections articulate? Let's first look at

The Greatest Show – The Doctor Who Universe, which is described by the forum staff in the following way.

> Primarily for topics that cross between televised Doctor Who and other things (other shows, other people, other media, or even simply topics that cross many seasons/series of Doctor Who itself). (Quote from the forum)

The other subforum, *The TARDIS Scanner – Past Doctor Who* is described in the following way, by the forum staff.

> Primarily for topics that stick solely with televised Doctor Who, like questions about episodes, stories, or characters. (Quote from the forum)

Both members and forum staff are having difficulties translating the descriptions (and, in the case of the forum staff, difficulties explaining them!). Although classifications have been carefully arranged, and descriptions attached, to subforums and discussion threads articulating what kinds of interactions they are expected to hold, both forum members and forum staff still struggle to agree on how to translate such descriptions.

This section has shown that the question of where posts belong arises when there is tension between different classifications, and when the boundaries between the classifications are questioned. It is in such situations, like the examples we have witnessed here, that the classification boundaries remind the forum members and forum staff of their existence and become visible. Then, they need to be dealt with. When it all works, no one seems to notice or pay attention to the articulations belonging to the different classifications. This section has also displayed the unstable and fragile ontology of subforums, threads, and posts – highlighted by the uncertainty the forum members and the forum staff showed in relation to where things *belong* according to the classification scheme.

5.2.2 Moving & Merging

> If you're finding Dreamland threads elsewhere, let us know so we can move them! I mean, that goes for *any* threads that seem out of place. Report them. Moving threads is probably our most frequently performed task. (Quote from the forum)

According to the forum staff, who are behind the quote above, one of their most common activities is moving and merging discussion threads. In the work with moving and merging threads on the forum, things are put together or taken apart. Forum staff try to keep the discussion threads and posts (created by the forum members) in what they believe is their 'right' location. If the forum staff decide that a discussion thread or post does not belong where it is currently placed, then they move it.

What kind of act is it to move threads? If a thread is moved, the place to which a thread is moved must be deemed more compatible with the thread than its current location. Moreover, it needs to fit somewhere into Gallifrey Base classifications. Because of the established classification scheme, threads are made to fit somewhere in relation to the classifications that are already created. Forum staff do that by interpreting the thread's ontology and deciding whether the thread is in the 'wrong' location. If they decide that it is, forum staff then move the thread to where they believe it belongs. What a thread is, is consequently compared to the categories of the classification scheme. As Latour (2005) reminds us, there cannot be a transportation without a transformation. When the thread is transported it transforms, becomes something different from what it was at its current location to fit into the classification scheme. The thread is made connected and related to other things – due to its move to a new location – and a new set of relations is made. Therefore, when a discussion thread is moved, the ontology of the thread is changed through that act of moving it.

An example of such a thread is a discussion about the DVD release of an episode called *Robot of Sherwood*. In the *Spoiler and Speculation Thread*, in the subforum *The Infinite Quest,* there was a discussion about whether the BBC would release a DVD of an edited version of the episode *Robot of Sherwood*. This was then officially confirmed, and forum staff then set up a new discussion thread, *BBC decides to release edited version of Robot of Sherwood*. The new thread was also set up in *The Infinite Quest* subforum,

but outside the *Spoiler and Speculation Thread*, now being its own thread instead. All the discussion of the DVD release was then moved from the *Spoiler and Speculation Thread* to the new thread. The forum staff left a message in the *Spoiler and Speculation Thread*.

> The discussion about Robots of Sherwood dvd release isn't spoiler and speculation. I've created a new thread for you to continue it. Please move there. (Quote from the forum)

Discussion threads can also be merged together. Either with one or several other threads, if the forum staff think that the topics are similar to each other. Here is an excerpt from the forum, made by a forum member about merged threads.

> Back in June 2012, I started a thread: Why a Police Box?
> Okay so we all know that the chameleon circuit got stuck. But an interesting question is why it was a Police Box in the first place. Tardis are supposed to disguise themselves as something inconspicuous that won't get noticed. But a Police Box was already an out of place object in a junkyard. Ian and Barbara notice it, they even say "What's it doing here?" The disguise failed from the start, and in fact only drew attention to the Tardis. So, why a Police Box? Are there any stories, canon or otherwise, that address this? The question was, factually, why did the TARDIS chameleon circuit choose a police box as a disguise. It ran for 26 posts, and then ended. Then, in July 2016, another member started a thread called Why a Police Box? The question was, factually, why did the creators of Doctor Who choose a police box as the TARDIS exterior. In July 2016 a second thread with the same name was started. Is it documented anywhere as to why the production team chose a police box to be the TARDIS disguise as opposed to a wardrobe, car or garden shed for example? After the second thread had a few posts, the two threads were merged. I think this was a mistake. They are two significantly different questions […] On a general note, why be so quick to merge threads at all? Two threads on the same subject a few days or even weeks apart, yes, you could merge them. Two threads several years apart, I don't think so. Some old people will have left, some new people will have joined, perhaps there have even been episode recoveries. We could get a fresh perspective. I say we should leave them separate. (Quote from the forum)

I noticed that members and forum staff do not always agree about when a thread should be merged with another thread. In the example above, the forum staff merged two threads that were, to them, 'the same'. However, according to one of the members responsible for the thread in question, it was not 'the same'.

Other times when threads are moved by the forum staff, forum members have a hard time tracing the thread.

> Sometimes I feel annoyed of having to hunt down a thread in a part of the forum I usually don't go to, even though I consciously understand the rationale for moving it to a subforum suited for its topic. 99% of them die off fairly quickly because there are so few new posts and most people aren't bothering to find the threads to read the stragglers that are new. (Interview 56)

Posts get also get deleted on the forum.

> This was a catch-all thread for all reported spoilers and speculation about what might happen in upcoming episodes. It had a lot of traffic and a lot of posts every day, but the discussion would often meander, and the moderators felt that talking about anything EXCEPT strictly 'spoilers or speculation' was going off topic. People were always getting their posts deleted on this thread for being 'off topic' and it caused bad feeling. In the last few weeks, the mods have decided to abandon the thread, and people are supposed to make new individual threads in the Infinite Quest subforum for each new spoiler and associated speculation. There was a lot of complaining about this decision. (Interview 25)

> I understand the importance of keeping different sections separate but, for example, it seemed a bit over the top to move a thread about film scores to the music section of the forum instead of keeping it in the film section where many people would logically expect to find it. (Interview 58)

In the work with moving and merging threads, forum staff appear to focus on what the thread is not. In such work, forum staff focus on the tension between what they interpret the thread to be now, and based on that, they decide where it should be moved to fit the classification scheme. Then, when a thread is moved, it becomes something else in the

hands of the forum staff. The thread's ontology changes. The old and the new locations are connected through a link. This makes the thread's new location traceable. Now, two things that were related before are not related any more. Instead, new relations have been created. In becoming part of a new relationship, the thread has been changed.

> Also, there isn't always much of a warning left when a thread is moved. I guess it depends on the person moving the thread because sometimes there will temporarily be placed left saying something like, "Moved: [Thread Title]". If you click on the link to the thread, it will automatically redirect you to the thread's new location. Other times it will simply disappear and you have to be either subscribed to it or have the motivation to track down its new location. Out of sight, out of mind, basically. (Interview 56)

As the quote above explains, members can subscribe to discussion threads that they want to follow. A subscription is an important ordering device. This is not something that the members pay for. The members can subscribe to any discussion thread they want to follow. If members are subscribed to a discussion thread, they receive daily email notifications when something happens in the thread (that is, when someone has posted a new message in the thread). If members are subscribed to a discussion thread that is moved, the move does not necessarily affect them much since they get updates on the thread via email.

However, problems arise if a thread is moved or merged if the members have blocked locations. It is not uncommon for members to block locations that they do not want to take part in. Common locations to block are those that allow for spoilers or speculations. Let's say that a member has blocked such locations. They then start a discussion thread in *The Zero Room* (which does not allow for spoilers and speculations). If that thread then gets moved or merged to a location on the forum that does allow for spoilers and speculations, like *The Infinite Quest,* that would mean that the member in question can no longer take part in their own discussion thread.

5.2.3 Misplacing

Technologies and classifications make it possible for forum members to find the discussions they are looking for. There is a search engine on the forum, and there are also links to main forums, subforums, and discussion threads. Technologies play an important role in allowing members to scan which parts of the forum are the most active at any given time. The number of posts in particular parts of the forum are visible on the site. It is also possible to see when someone last posted in a particular location. Moreover, members can also see the number of other members that are viewing specific threads at the time. Through these technologies, members can see how active specific parts are, and have been, at specific moments in time. Forum members can sometimes post in the 'wrong' location on purpose because they want to post in a location that has high activity and thereby possibly increase the potential of getting responses.

> Occasionally if I post in the wrong section, a moderator will move my thread, or someone will give me a friendly or not-so-friendly comment asking me to re-post it in another section. For example, I made a thread in the Fan Video and Audio thread about an album I'd made on the twin subjects of Doctor Who and Cheese. Technically it was the right section, but a forum user advised me that the section was too quiet for the thread to get noticed, and encouraged me to repost the thread in a more popular, slightly less relevant section just to garner more interest. It proved to be good advice. (Interview 20)

> Threads are most often intentionally started in a section where they don't belong. I think I mentioned this before, but users are prone to starting off topic thread in subforums with high site traffic so other users will see and respond to their posts. The one that comes to mind most for me is the Spoiler section. People are always starting threads there that they know they shouldn't because it is such an active part. (Interview 50)

The examples above show that, by deliberately misplacing a thread in a location on the forum that has a lot of activity, the thread can stand a better chance of getting responses than it would had it been placed in a 'right' location with less activity. Therefore, misplacing threads, even if they risk getting moved, can enhance the possibilities of getting your topic

discussed. The right place for a post or thread can therefore mean different things. It can refer to the place where the post or thread fits the articulated description attached to that specific classification, and it can also mean the place where a thread or post is thought to have the best potential of getting responses.

> The primary reason is due to so many of the threads that are moved being moved because they were intentionally started in a high traffic section. The topic might be engaging enough to get a discussion going, but the big reason it got attention was because it was in a place where a lot of users frequent. When it's moved to a section a majority of those users don't typically hang out, the discussion dwindles and eventually dies. A thread might do all right if it's moved from a high activity to moderate activity section of the forum, but otherwise it has to be a pretty huge topic to survive a move to a fairly inactive section of the forum. For example, when the press release came out that Steven Moffat was stepping down as showrunner and Chris Chibnall would be replacing him in 2018, the Spoiler section was overrun with posts about the topic and the staff were constantly moving them from the Spoiler section to the Non-spoiler section (per forum rules, information released in official press releases are not spoilers). They moved and merged them all into the Steven Moffat leaving in 2017, Chris Chibnall taking over in 2018 thread. It was such huge news and the staff were so virulent about moving the threads into the Non-spoiler section that users finally relented and went over there to discuss it instead of the Spoiler section. The topic was so popular it eventually spawned a Part 2 thread that's stickied to the top of the subforum. As a byproduct, I think it's even garnered the Non-spoiler section a mild amount of longer term increased activity. With that thread in particular, I personally lost interest in it because there were too many disparate conversations going on and the thread moved too rapidly for me to keep up with. (Interview 50)

A thread that gets moved from a location with a lot of traffic is not likely to survive a move to a location with lower traffic. Then the discussion thread runs the risk of dying, the members told me. This was a refrain that I heard repeatedly during the interviews. I noticed members apologizing for putting posted messages in what they referred to as the 'wrong' sections. They told me that it was not just important that the post or thread is made in the technically 'right' section (the members often

used such expressions as the 'right' and the 'wrong' sections), but it is also important that the post is made in a location that has traffic, so that it is more likely to get responses. Sometimes, members therefore post in what they describe as 'wrong' locations for a particular post or discussion thread to increase the possibility of getting responses from other members. As one of the interviewees noted in an earlier quote, it is common for members to post in the *Spoilers and Speculations Thread* even though they know that the thread doesn't belong there.

> While there is some overlap, the staff often step in to tell people to stop discussing topics that should be discussed in other parts of the forum. They encourage members to report posts if they were erroneously posted in one subforum when they really should've been posted in a different subforum. For instance, the Spoiler subforum is a very popular section of GB and gets a lot of traffic, but the Non-Spoiler subforum, not so much. Members have a habit of posting non-spoiler threads in the Spoiler subforum because they want their thread to get attention and replies, even though they are well aware (as in, long time members, not just newbies making rookie posting errors) the thread doesn't belong there. In the last year the staff has tried to increase moving those types of threads to the Zero Room instead of letting them linger in the Infinite Quest. (Interview 50)

When a thread dies, no single actor can be blamed for its death. It is an execution in which several actors are involved. It is not just the actual move of the thread that causes its death; it is also what precedes that move and what happens after. As we have seen, the forum guides the members on where to post a thread. The members, in turn, have to consider where it is appropriate to place their particular thread. Is it about discussing the televised *Doctor Who*? In that case, it should probably go somewhere in *Doctor Who Universes on Television*, maybe *The Tardis Scanner*. If the thread intends to permit spoilers, then it might be most suitable for *The Infinite Quest*. After a decision about its location has been taken, the thread is set up. Then, someone, a member or someone on the forum staff, picks the thread up and identifies the content as placed in the *wrong* location. Then, movement is put to action, as we saw in the previous subsection (5.2.2). However, this is not an issue if the misplacement goes unnoticed. The matter of whether posts are in the wrong or right location

on the forum is made into a concern. A post is not inherently *right* or *wrong*, but it can be *made* either (or neither, if it is unnoticed). If a post is in the *right* or *wrong* place is not self-explanatory, but by invoking a concern with location a post can be *made* right or wrong. This emphasizes the significance of *achievement*.

Let's say that the thread is now placed in another location, where the forum staff have decided it 'fits' better. If this happens to be a move to a location with less action, the thread is at risk of dying, according to the members. A thread is dead for good if it is placed in *GB Archive - Closed section*, a section where action is no longer possible. Then the thread is completely dead, with no hope left. No more posted messages can be added to such a discussion thread, which means that the thread is now closed (what the members refer to as "dead"). But as long as the thread is outside the archive section, it always stands the chance of being brought back to life. Members can start to post in discussion threads that have not had activity in a while, but the members told me that this is rare. The life of a discussion thread is therefore ephemeral. It stands the possibility of coming to life again, as the same thread or something else. The discussion threads are shape-shifting beings. They can be manipulated repeatedly due to changes in topic, concerns, activities, or repertoires if the threads are not moved to *GB Archive - Closed section*. That means that a thread can die if it is moved to *GB Archive - Closed section*, but it can also be referred to as dead by the members of the forum if there is no activity in the thread.

5.2.4 Morphing

On the forum, discussion threads morph. They can go from being about one topic to being about another topic, go from one activity to another, or go from one repertoire to another – shifting ontologically what it is to be audience. This was also witnessed in chapter 4 (subsection 4.4). As we saw, one member can move between different parts of the forum, engage in different activities, and have different repertoires in different parts. In this section, I will further explore this phenomenon of change, not between different parts, but in one and the same part. On the forum, it is quite common for a discussion thread to start off by being about a specific topic, but then as the discussion continues, the topic leads the

discussion into new directions, like any other conversation. Or, the forum staff think that the discussion thread has morphed.

> I mainly post in the "Eye of Harmony – Lucky Lady Classic series discussion thread" which is up to about its 50th thread by now! We started in the "Past Series" section but got moved to the Eye of Harmony due to not discussing Doctor Who enough! The "Lucky Lady classic thread" […] went from the "Classic Who" area to another place, as we weren't discussing the programme enough, so we had gone "off topic"! I think one of the moderators came into the thread to explain. Again quite amusing and a bit of a running gag! I think if threads get moved, then the way to find out is just to go to your profile and check your last posts that way to get back to the parent thread. There are so many threads that I guess informing people is a low priority. Sometimes they get merged too if they are on a similar topic. (Interview 34)

The thread that the members is referring to had been moved from *The TARDIS Scanner* (a subforum within the main subforum *Doctor Who Universes on Television*). *The TARDIS Scanner*, where the thread was first started, holds discussions about *Doctor Who*. The member in the quote above explains that the forum staff thought that matters related to *Doctor Who* were not discussed 'enough'. The forum staff decided that the topic had become something else and that the thread now belonged somewhere else. The thread changed ontology – it became something else as the discussion continued. This resulted in the thread no longer belonging in the same location. It needed to be re-placed. This is an example of the challenges that come with a discussion thread that morphs. Should it stay where it is currently located, or should it be moved?

In the case with this thread, the forum staff thought that what was currently happening in the thread was not about televised *Doctor Who*, and that these activities should be placed elsewhere. So, the forum staff took action and moved the thread. But which location would be a better fit? And, how is audience enacted in this new location?

This thread got moved to *Eye of Harmony*, which is located in the main subforum *Outer Worlds*. *Outer Worlds* is a location on the forum that holds discussions about topics other than *Doctor Who*. This discussion thread was considered 'wrong' in *The TARDIS Scanner*. However, it seems that

what the members talk *about* is not as important as what they *do*. In *The TARDIS Scanner*, it is important that *Doctor Who* is discussed 'enough', otherwise threads get moved from there. From the story told in the quotes above, it seems like it is more important that *Doctor Who* is being discussed in *The TARDIS Scanner* than whether or not *Doctor Who* is being discussed in a location that is *not* about discussing *Doctor Who*, like *Outer Worlds*.

> Another popular reason for moving threads are because they go off topic or because multiple threads are started on the same topic. Sometimes moving occurs in the form of merging, where admin will combine two (or more) threads because they think the separate threads constitute similar enough discussion to warrant a single thread (and user's don't always agree with these decisions; sometimes a thread merge decision can be a little baffling but it's put of our hand). Similarly, post moving occurs too when admin decide to move a specific chunk of posts from one thread to another or from one thread into their own brand new thread. Typically, this happens when conversations go off topic. (Interview 50)

The members shift the footing of the conversation, and with that, their interactions, all the time, and consequently, threads get moved. The activity going on in the thread is categorized as something else when found by the forum staff. Furthermore, it is not just about what is being discussed, it is also about the kind of activity carried out in the thread. *Here*, the forum staff think that that activity is 'wrong'. It is the 'wrong' way of being audience for that specific location. The forum staff are engaged in arranging ontologies on the forum. They are trying to keep different things in different locations, separated from each other. They engage in ordering activities. This makes the event of threads dying particularly interesting for the analysis of ontology. When moved to a different location, a particular thread becomes something different and it may then, under its new conditions, appear less relevant. The ontological consequences of the work of the forum staff may help us understand why threads may sometimes not survive a move.

Before we leave the activity of moving threads around, a conversation on the forum between a member and the forum staff might help us further understand the moving of threads. This is what happened, in

short: A member of the forum raised an open question on the forum about threads being moved. He got an answer from the forum staff. Here is their conversation.

Member:

> For example, in the Mummy on the Orient Express forum, the thread "Gus knows the TARDIS phone number" was moved to the Infinite Quest but is still visible in the MotOE forum, just listed as "Moved". But in the Kill the Moon forum, the thread "Was there an abortion subtext in "Kill The Moon"?" was moved to the Crater but is no longer visible in the MotOE forum at all.
>
> In the particular case of the abortion thread, I understand why it was moved, but wish there were still a link, because much of it was on topic, and someone wandering into the Kill the Moon forum might want to see it. On the other hand, I hate that threads which are moved to the Infinite Quest are still visible, because now I know that the title relates to a spoiler. I always assumed that the thread had to remain visible in its original forum and was resigned to that, but if that's not the case, why do those stay but other ones disappear?
>
> Mostly just curious, but also putting in a vote for completely removing any existence of a spoilery thread!

Forum staff response:

> We determine each on a case-by-case basis. Frequently we won't leave any redirects when a thread is moved to the Crater of Needles, and *never* when a thread is moved to Inferno, due to the nature of those sections and the fact that many members have the Crater blocked or do not have access to Inferno. We never leave redirects when people post "for sale" threads in the wrong section and they get moved to Shada, because they don't merit the increased exposure. We also choose the duration of redirects - I myself most often use either 1 hour or 3 days (depending on the reason for the redirect), but if I feel a thread *should* have visibility in more than one place, I'll sometimes leave a redirect for 1 week, 2 weeks or more. The problem is that we have no "rules" to the application of redirects, only that they should generally be brief, so when you have a dozen different people applying them, there is bound to be a lot of variance. The GUS threads, for example, I left longer redirects because I knew the topic would just keep coming up, and the presence of a redirect could help dampen that.
>
> But when a thread is moved to IQ, that does not necessarily mean it has spoilers in it, it only means that was determined to be the best place for the thread - remember, the section is spoilers AND speculation, and we don't want to accidentally put a thread with spoilers into the Zero Room (instead of IQ). GUS threads speculating on GUS's identity were moved out of the episode section because if we DO ever find out GUS's identity, it'll be discussion of future events, not allowed in the episode section. But we may never find out.

Figure 5.2 *Rescue – Advice and Assistance*
Screen shot from a discussion thread called *Why do only some threads disappear when moved?*. This is a discussion thread that can be found in the subsubforum *Rescue – Advice and Assistance,* which in turn can be found in the main subforum *Welcome to Gallifrey Base*. The excerpt here is from a discussion that took place 13 October, 2014 (screen shot taken 2017-01-12).

When it comes to the *Spoilers and Speculation Thread*, the discussions do no longer count as spoiler or speculation if what the members have been discussing happens. In that case, it is no longer a speculation and the discussion gets relocated. This way, a thread can shift from being a matter of 'guessing' or 'speculating' to become a matter of 'knowing' – a concern with what is known rather than what might become. Discussing 'facts' is clearly distinct from speculations, and here we saw a distinction between

what cannot be known (yet) and what is known. Influenced by an external circumstance, the thread is now something ontologically different. This shows that discussing one and the same topic may be seen as different activities, depending on the (possibly shifting) conditions of what is being discussed. Moreover, it also points to the ephemeralness of the *various modes of practice*. It is what is happening at the time that gets to define the thread. Audience practice is in this sense fluid. Ontologies can at any time, and due to external circumstances, be renegotiated. No doors are closed permanently. It is always in relation to something else. Ontologies are never alone.

So even if the forum's archive, its history of collective and collected knowledge, is important to the members (as we saw in section 4.2, the forum archive has its own main subforum), it is what is happening *at the time* that defines the version of audience practice then and there, as it appears at that time. This says something about fluidity as well. As soon as some external event happens that opens a new negotiation opportunity, there is a willingness to renegotiate. This differs from earlier literature on multiple ontologies (Kaplan, 2008; Mol, 2002). Here, the reaction is not to resist change, or defend the current version, or make a definite decision on one version. Instead, the empirical material shows a continuous willingness to renegotiate ontology.

What does it mean for audience practice on the forum that the practice is not stable? As we have seen, a thread's ontology can change due to outside circumstances. A discussion thread can become something else, it changes, and the thread then risks being moved somewhere else. When, for example, something speculated about a topic actually happened, it was not a speculation any more. The thread changed, became something else, and therefore the thread was moved to another location that fit better with what the thread had become. Dying discussion threads exemplify fluidity in audience practice. A thread dies when no one or nothing engages in keeping it alive. When nobody or nothing cares any more, there is nothing to keep the discussion thread going.

5.3 Analysis

What can these empirical examples of ordering audience practice and its multiple ontologies tell us about how multiplicity is managed in audience practice?

In chapter 4, we learned that audience practice changes and shifts on the forum (in different locations, for example). There are multiple modes of audience practice on the forum. Adding another axis to this multiplicity, the forum appeared to be ordered in different ways as well (Haraway, 1991; Moser, 2005; Law, 1994). This chapter has addressed *how* it is that audience practice *becomes* multiple and *stays* multiple.

First, forum staff, forum members, and technologies are all part of ordering audience practice. The challenge that comes with ordering audience practice appears to be the work of dealing with multiple ontologies. One way of handling and allowing for such diversity is by merging and moving threads around on the forum. This is work that only forum staff can execute. One way to do this is to cut things apart and put them together in new ways. Forum staff move threads on the forum from one location to another, where they supposedly fit better than at their previous location. Another way of ordering audience practice is by putting two things that are considered 'the same' together. The forum staff seem to strive for consistency regarding where things belong, which is evident since the main activity the forum staff carry out is moving threads to their 'right' locations. We also saw that forum members play a part in both disturbing and changing the ontology of threads, by changing their activities, their topic of discussion, and their repertoire. A discussion thread can be morphed by members due to a continuous change in the topic discussed. We could also see that a thread dies if no one or nothing keeps it alive – which shows the work involved in keeping audience practice multiple and that it is a matter of care when it comes to what is and is not kept alive. Technologies are also involved in ordering audience practice on the forum by making threads traceable through links after they have been moved. By following the links, members can find threads that they are interested in, in their new locations. As the empirical examples illustrate, there is no single order on the Gallifrey Base forum, but ongoing multiple orders that co-exist (Haraway, 1991; Berg and Mol, 1998). More particularly, what the four subsections (5.2.1–5.2.4) have shown is that there are multiple ways of ordering a single practice. These

orderings are simultaneously ongoing. Consequently, by constantly (re)arranging the forum in different ways, multiple orderings of audience practice are enacted at the same time.

Second, the many classifications of subforums and discussion threads illustrate the attempt to order audience practice so that there is a place for different things, allowing for multiplicity in audience practice. As this chapter has shown, the forum staff and its members are not trying to agree upon one ontology, as suggested in previous literature (Kaplan, 2008, Mol, 2002). In Mol's (2002) case of atherosclerosis, one reality had to win.

> A hierarchy between diverging measurements may be established. This is often done. In cases where two facts contradict each other, one may be accorded more weight than the other. Coherence needs to be established. One reality wins – the other is disregarded (Mol, 2002: 59).

In the example above, coherence is strived for. Kaplan's (2008) article *Framing Contests* also addresses problems that occur when several ontologies appear, stressing that the solution is to try to agree on one. On the Gallifrey Base, in cases when two or more ontologies are clashing in one location, the same thing happens as in Kaplan's (2008) and Mol's (2002) cases – coherence is strived for, and one reality wins. However, in the case of the Gallifrey Base, it has been shown to be more complicated. The contest between realities is not over just yet. This is because the one that loses the competition is not disregarded; instead, it is moved to another location. Therefore, on the Gallifrey Base, trying to reach a single view is not the only thing that happens when several ontologies emerge. Instead, they are all offered room, but in separate locations. In contrast with Kaplan (2008), the forum staff and members are not striving to gather around one ontology. The assumption that these conflicts are resolved in such a manner is therefore not an explanation of what happens on the forum. Instead, on the forum, multiplicity and diversity are encouraged. This is evident in the attempts to make room for, and encourage, several ontologies in audience practice. This, however, requires work in the form of ordering activities. Forum members and forum staff make such multiplicity possible by engaging in ordering activities. Ordering includes dividing audience practice into different

locations, different subforums, and different discussion threads. By ordering audience practice, it is possible to move discussion threads from one part of the forum to another when the premises change. This shows that it does not seem to be of interest to try to solve ontological conflicts; instead, possibilities are created through ordering so that several can be ongoing at the same time. Both Kaplan's and Mol's cases showed that there is a complex of problems that need to be managed when more than one reality occurs.

Third, the ordering of audience practice has consequences for ontology. Not only did a move of a discussion thread change the thread's reality, we also saw that forum staff are open to the possibility of discussion threads being moved in the future due to possible changes. This indicates that forum staff do not want to stabilize what audience practice can be, but instead want to keep it open to be able to change it once again. The forum staff keep the practice fluid so that such changes are possible. What a thread *is* is therefore never certain, but left negotiable.

By not making any final decisions about discussion threads, closure can be avoided if boundaries are kept uncertain. The forum staff's decision-making process regarding where things belong is therefore left negotiable. In the ongoing ordering of audience practice, threads are being moved, locations are being negotiated, and changes to the forum are being made. Since a thread's ontology is left negotiable, the forum is intentionally kept fluid (de Laet and Mol, 2000; Law and Lien, 2013; Law and Singleton, 2005; Mol and Law, 1994). By not making permanent decisions about discussion threads, and thereby keeping things open for renegotiation, stability is not strived for. Nor is singularity.

Fourth, the work with ordering audience practice entails constant work with boundaries. Moving things around, in relation to classifications, raises questions about where the boundaries are between the classifications. A lot of classification work goes into trying to deal with the boundaries, but, at the same time, the boundaries are uncertain. In the empirical examples, we can see that the boundaries are fluid, challenged, and negotiated. Uncertain boundaries are strived for as a result, so that the ontology can be renegotiated. Consequently, if the boundaries are kept uncertain, they can be modified, which in turn makes the forum flexible in terms of where things belong.

Finally, the empirical examples in this chapter reveal that fluidity in audience practice is consciously strived for to deal with, manage, and acknowledge multiplicity. It shows that the structure of the forum is unstable, ongoing, and negotiable. Through the constant transformations and changes made to audience practice by constantly moving and merging threads from one location to another, audience practice is kept multiple, flexible, and changeable.

5.4 Conclusion: Encouraging Co-existing Realities

What can the Gallifrey Base, a discussion forum on the internet, tell us about co-existing realities?

First, the findings in this chapter highlight the importance of classifying and ordering audience practice as something that several actors are engaged in. The findings illustrate that the classification scheme on the forum is not something static that the actors can adjust accordingly to, but something that is ongoing. The structures of the forum are not self-explanatory but something to be worked with, something that constantly changes and that is never finished. One might think that the classifications would make it easier for audience practice to work. However, this work also seems to come with challenges. The empirical examples highlighted the relevance of activities such as classifying and ordering. These activities seem to matter, which is evident from all the work put into them. Ordering audience practice appears to be central in the day-to-day activities on the forum and reveals how things are separated and *made connected* in different situations. Classification and ordering work appears to be part of audience practice rather than something outside the practice. This work also plays a part in what audience can be on the Gallifrey Base, due to the classifications created and upheld.

Second, the examples in this chapter have illustrated the temporality and ephemeralness of different ontologies on the forum. Discussion threads can change, and, consequently, get moved when they turn into something different than before. Consequently, audience practice hangs together in a certain way only temporarily. Ironically, the work of ordering

audience practice – trying to keep audience practice stable (attempting to keep everything in its own place, where it belongs, and at a location that has been set up for it) – is done by constantly changing the forum, keeping it *unfinished* and *fluid*.

Third, keeping boundaries between the different parts of the forum fluid and fuzzy encourages *multiplicity* in audience practice. Keeping boundaries unclear (1) challenges the idea of any singular, fixed, and stable ontology; (2) encourages leaving discussion threads open-ended, which opens the possibility of renegotiating discussion threads at any time; and, consequently (3) makes it possible for several ontologies to co-exist. The empirical examples together highlight the importance of keeping different ontologies co-existing in a single audience practice, on a single site. The messiness, the complexity, and the incoherence of the ordering activities, including classification work, appears to be important for the function of the forum structures. This is evident in the apparent effort to keep discussion threads open for renegotiation. This further stresses that the work of "ordering is never finished" (Moser and Law, 2006: 58) but is constantly ongoing.

This chapter has offered an account of ordering work on the Gallifrey Base forum. Illustrating empirically how it is made possible for multiple ontologies to co-exist, without necessarily competing or cooperating, I have elaborated on some of the arguments in recent STS debates on *ontology* and *multiplicity*. This chapter has also indicated that it is by continuously transforming the forum that audience practice manages multiple versions of what it is to *be audience*.

However, this, in turn, raises questions about how this continuously changing and fluid audience practice is maintained. In the following chapter, I attend to such questions by examining how audience practice is maintained by exploring what happens when audience practice is not working, when it is disturbed and interfered with.

6. Audience Maintenance in Practice

This chapter finalizes part II of the thesis. In chapter 4, I started to unfold audience in the setting of the Gallifrey Base forum and its *various modes of audience practice*, and then in chapter 5, I turned to how multiplicity and the *various modes of audience practice* are managed. What is needed to maintain a practice that has conditions such as those described in chapter 5? In chapter 6, I will further the story about what it is to be audience by attending to how audience practice on the Gallifrey Base is *maintained*. This chapter thereby contributes to answering both RQ 1 and RQ 2.

I approach maintenance in two different ways. During this project, I have taken note of many stories that have continuously revealed the maintenance of audience practice through (1) the practice of an *interest* in *Doctor Who*, and (2) different types of *interruptions*. These two findings have resulted in the two main sections of this chapter (6.1 and 6.2).

Being interested in *Doctor Who* is a significant part of what it is to be audience on the Gallifrey Base. The forum was created as a place where people can come and practise their interest in *Doctor Who*. As we will see in the first section, however, being *interested* in *Doctor Who* may requires a lot of work.

In the second section, I will explore different moments of interruption that occur in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. The empirical examples in this section serve to exhibit different strategies for achieving continuation through *interruptions*. This section also functions as a provocation to chapters 4 and 5, challenging the findings and results from these chapters by taking the argument further. Chapters 4 and 5 explored and showed how audience practice is enacted on the forum and how audience practice managed multiple ontologies. In this chapter, I look at how audience practice is maintained by exploring what happens when audience practice is not working, when it is disturbed and interfered with.

6.1 Interessement

Textual communication is used as a means for participating in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. Members of the forum interact by textual communication in which they formulate opinions as part of practising their interest in *Doctor Who*. On the forum, as we have seen, countless opinions are circulating. But how do members formulate opinions?

> There's also the fact that these stories are impossible to watch in a vacuum. As soon as a new story is announced, you're judging it by the writer's previous work, or the cast's previous performances. (Interview 1)

Forum members are familiar with re-occurring circulating opinions, based on their day-to-day experiences with the forum. This TV series has been airing on and off since 1963. Several of the early episodes are no longer available for viewing, and therefore members must turn to other sources to learn about them. Since the TV series has been ongoing for so long, a myriad of different opinions and myths about episodes are circulating on the forum. As the member in the quote above describes, it is impossible to view *Doctor Who* in a "vacuum" and to come to these stories without already having taken part in such myths. It is therefore almost impossible to formulate opinions about an episode without relating to other opinions – either other people's opinions of the same episode or opinions about events that could also be applied to newer episodes. In the interviews with forum members, it was also evident that members explain their opinions in relation to other people's opinions. For example, in relation to the episode *Kill the Moon,* members mentioned that they knew that other members thought that it was silly that the moon was an egg but that they themselves did not mind or get upset over this.

   When the forum members described their opinions to me, they did so in relation to other members' opinions. When they come across an opinion of an episode posted on the forum, whether or not they agree with it, members react by wanting to state their own opinion. In fact, disagreement often proves to be an incitement to posting and discussing. Moreover, the matter of whether and what to post also depends on what other members are posting. Members post if they think they have

something to contribute to the discussion, which shows that it is important to them how the discussion is carried out.

> I do post on the forum, usually either to agree with something someone has said or, if there is a post which I strongly disagree with, I will usually respond to that giving my own perspective on the subject. Often when I'm reading a topic thread I see someone make a good point or highlight something that I feel myself, I would respond positively to that post either by quoting it and stating my agreement or by adding to the discussion with thoughts of my own. So for example if someone posted, "Michelle Gomez's performance as Missy has been excellent this year" I might post, "She's been a lot more nuanced in her portrayal, and is fast becoming one of my favourite characters" or whatever. On the other hand, sometimes I'll read something like "Clara was the worst companion in the history of the show. Dreadful actress, unlikeable character" and I'll feel compelled to respond, I might say "For me, Clara was the best companion the Doctor has had, she's independent, strong, relatable and likeable - and Jenna Coleman gave a great performance, her chemistry with Matt Smith in particular was a joy to watch". I don't know why I feel the need to post in these situations - I mean I could just smile at the positive stuff and ignore the negative stuff and move on without posting at all, but it seems fair to do so - I'd like to think that if I made a good point someone would acknowledge it, or if I made a point someone disagreed with they would feel comfortable stating their opinion. […] My opinions are changing all the time. (Interview 59)

> In discussions, I generally just post in response to what I see. Occasionally I'll post immediately, more often I'll leave it for a bit to simmer in the back of my brain. (Interview 53)

When formulating opinions regarding an episode, forum members 'bump' their experience of the episode against a number of things. The quotes above demonstrate how opinions are not only formulated as a reaction to something someone else has said, but also that opinions continuously change due to other people's statements.

Exploring the maintenance of interest in *Doctor Who* on the Gallifrey Base, I use the term *interessement*, which refers to the idea that "to be interested is to be in between (inter-esse), to be interposed" (Callon, 1986b: 8). Moreover, the 'process of *interessement*' emphasizes the work

involved in upholding links between the forum members and their interest (Akrich *et al.*, 2002). What we can learn from Callon (1986b) and Akrich *et al.* (2002) is how to approach the question of what it is to be interested, and that being interested in something takes work. Consequently, interessement is achieved and is regulated "only through action" (Callon, 1986b: 8). Hence, interest is not understood here as a stable position, which also emphasizes that there might be better ways to study it, for instance, as something that is practised.

To practise an interest in *Doctor Who* is to keep linking oneself to *Doctor Who*, to keep on relating to it (Stengers, 2000). Stengers (2000) also suggests that being interested is a *relational doing*. A way to keep the link to *Doctor Who,* and carry out that interest, is to engage with the forum. Through the forum, the interest in *Doctor Who* can be upheld.

On this basis, and for the purposes of this study, I suggest that formulating and reformulating opinions can be approached as the 'process of *interessement*' and that this can reveal something about how the process of practising an interest works. In this first section of this chapter, I will attend to actors involved in the 'process of *interessement*' in relation to how forum members formulate opinions. In the following subsections, I distinguish between three actors that seem to re-occur in the 'process of *interessement*' and that play roles in the process of members' formulating opinions. The three actors that I will explore more closely are: (1) a specific book, (2) norms, (3) and coherence.

6.1.1 The Book

In relation to how members formulate opinions, the notion of 'the book' cannot be ignored. Therefore, the first example of how forum members formulate their opinions is about that book, written by Jeremy Bentham in 1983. Bentham was one of the co-founders of the *Doctor Who Appreciation Society,* a society for the *Doctor Who* audience founded in 1976. The society produced a weekly magazine, and Bentham was one of the writers. In 1983, *Doctor Who* celebrated their 20th anniversary, and the book, *Doctor Who: A Celebration*, was published. This book contained reviews of each aired episode of *Doctor Who* so far.

With his position, Bentham was considered within *Doctor Who* spheres as an authority on the subject. In the book, Bentham was asked to write

reviews on the broadcast seasons between 1963 and 1982. His views on different *Doctor Who* episodes and stories became unavoidable in *Doctor Who* spheres when the book came out. Remember that this was in 1983, when it was not possible to get hold of VHS or other recordings of *Doctor Who* episodes that had aired between 1963 and 1982. Therefore, people formed their opinions on these episodes based on Bentham's reviews of them. Since people may have only faint memories of the episodes from this period – and some have never seen them at all – their opinions on these episodes might be based solely on Bentham's reviews. The book, in many ways, became the basis for the way people knew these *Doctor Who* stories, and forum members told me that this has survived largely to this day and that this is evident in their day-to-day experiences of the forum.

Forum members told me that there are narratives that everybody seems to know. These could even be stories that people themselves have never seen. However, they still seem to know about these stories because they have experienced them on the forum. Bentham's opinions on the episodes that aired between the 1963 and 1982 are still being reproduced on the forum, and to a large extent treated as the definitive interpretations of these episodes. Forum members told me about their first interactions with the forum and that it is common that you first look up certain stories' reputations before watching them, by reading about them on the forum.

The book exemplifies how members come to formulate opinions in relation to what is 'known' about that episode (according to a figure that can be considered an expert). This way, members can formulate opinions about episodes they themselves have never seen, based on what has previously been said about them. The (re)productions of these stalwart myths from this book circulate on the forum and are commonly mobilized as 'truths' about certain episodes. As a result, if the book says that an episode is the best, it is difficult for members to argue otherwise. At least, members experience such opinions as norms.

The opinions that become stalwart myths can sometimes only be implied, not explicitly articulated, because members tend to fill in the gaps in other people's statements and read such statements as norms (Garfinkel, 1967; Wieder, 1974; 1970; Zimmerman, 1970). As in any communicative situation, people interpret what is being communicated in specific situations. What is important to emphasize here is how significant previous opinions about an episode are in relation to members' formulation of opinions.

6.1.2 Norms

The idea of a norm, of what are popular/unpopular acts, is a central actor in the 'process of *interessement*'. Members formulate opinions in relation to what they imagine, or recognize, as norms. The book is not the only reference the members have for guidance on what to think about particular episodes. There are also opinions that are considered 'right' and 'wrong' with respect to certain episodes. This These can be based on the book, but they can also be an outcome of (re)production of certain opinions. Therefore, a way for members to formulate opinions about an episode is to look at what has previously been expressed about that episode on the forum.

On the forum, members engage in intense discussions about which episodes they prefer over other episodes. In fact, the forum's discussion threads showed extensive references to what seems to be understood as norms about *Doctor Who*. I mentioned what I had observed to the forum members, asking them if they recognized what I was talking about.

> Haha! I know exactly what you are talking about! I don't even know were to begin telling you about this. (Interview 1)

What I found was that forum members certainly seem to have a clear idea of what to think of specific episodes. Another member exemplifies this by describing what s/he believes are common responses to anyone on the forum who might go against what is regarded as a popular opinion.

> At the other end of that spectrum are the stories that are considered poor, and that you're simply 'wrong' if you suggest you rather like them. It's almost impossible to come to these stories without preconceptions, because they're constantly told if it's a good one or not. (Interview 1)

> If you vote against 'Genesis' in favour of 'Arc or Web' you tend to get the,
> you can't really believe that,
> you are just voting against the best stories,
> you just want a different story to win,
> or how dare you vote that way
> (Interview 1)

This last quote exemplifies a favouring of what is usually regarded a 'bad' episode over an episode that is usually regarded as a 'good' one. The members of the forum *know* which doctor is considered to be the best doctor. Members also know that they are likely to stir up a discussion in the forum if they express, for example, that they like a doctor or an episode that is not considered 'a good one'.

> You should think that Tom Baker is the best Doctor. In fact, THE Doctor. (Interview 16)

> The only Doctor I really don't like is William Hartnell. You want to see the sparks fly, just mention that you don't enjoy "the original Doctor". (Interview 10)

> I knew there would be a massive stink about the abortion metaphor in Kill The Moon and I knew that Clara being so dominant wouldn't be popular. (Interview 4)

Consequently, when viewing a new episode of *Doctor Who*, the members 'know' what the reactions to that episode are going to be in the forum.

> On the forum, it is common that you review and rate episodes from the Doctor Who television show. When a member has seen an episode that they did not like but that is referred to at the forum as a specifically good one, arguments arise. When a member expresses some sort of disappointment of an episode that is usually considered to be 'good' or a 'classic' they get questioned. Did you actually understand the episode? Do you know something about Doctor Who? Or, everybody knows that this is a great episode and to say otherwise is wrong. You need to appreciate when these episodes were made (excerpt from the observer's notes). (Interview 1)

When viewing a new episode, forum members compare what they thought about that episode with what has been said about similar events in previous episodes. Therefore, members presume certain reactions to certain opinions. These examples illustrate how members come to the forum with expectations about what kinds of opinions they will find there. This is especially true in relation to older episodes that have been more discussed than newer ones, but, it is also true of newer episodes, as members compare the events in a newly aired episode to how similar

events were received before. It is therefore up to a member to decide whether a statement is or is not in accordance with what is considered a norm (Garfinkel, 1967; Wieder, 1974; 1970; Zimmerman, 1970).

While older episodes, viewed or not, have been much discussed on the forum already, more recent episodes seem to be more open to negotiation than the older ones.

> I also like the individual series episode threads, for about the first week they come out with each new episode, that's where we discuss and dissect the most recent episode and thoroughly hash out what we like or dislike about that individual episode. It's fun in a way that threads about old episodes aren't because these threads are ones where we are all coming to the new episode at the same time (unlike other episodes, which some people may have already been watching for years, or who may only just now have discovered them.) The current series episodes are new to us all at the same time. (Interview 3)

Another member explains that since a recent episode has not yet been as heavily debated as episodes from earlier seasons, it makes it more open to negotiation, due to its lack of history.

> Kill the Moon, however, is a different matter. It's still current, having only aired in the most recent series. Hasn't quite passed into the Doctor Who mythology yet, hasn't got a general consensus to its name. (The fact that it was so controversial in the first place as well helps the fact that there's not really any majority opinion on it. I've never seen an episode of Doctor Who prove to be so polarising!) So the debate is still fresh. There are still new opinions and perspectives to be raised, and they still are raised quite regularly. There is something to be achieved from the discussion there, and for me (and several others I've seen) it achieved a complete reversal of opinion. Which is quite something, seeing as I clearly remember thinking to myself the exact words "I will never be able to like Kill the Moon" some time prior to the discussion that won me round! (Interview 17)

This member thinks that it is more interesting to discuss an episode where opinions can be more easily negotiated. This points to forum members' enjoyment of the ongoing process of formulating opinions. It illustrates a willingness to keep the act of formulating opinions ongoing and

negotiable. This also indicates an effort to avoid closing the act of formulating opinions by keeping opinions open-ended. More open discussion and flexibility in the formulating of opinions make it possible to keep the discussion going. Hence, formulating opinions in relation to a newly aired episode appears to be easier since the 'idea of a norm'-actor is weaker and less clear than in relation to more discussed episodes.

However, on the other hand, in the process of formulating opinions about newly aired episodes, negotiation is not without restrictions or possible guidance. Members can relate newer episodes to events in earlier ones. Not only that, members can predict, based on their previous experiences on the forum, how other members will react if certain opinions are expressed. Forum members not only 'know' how other members would react if the were to express a certain opinion about an older episode (as seen in the quote above), but they can also predict how other forum members would react to opinions about newer episodes based on what has previously been expressed as the 'right' or 'wrong' opinion to have.

> I have noticed on the forum that people are not so keen on when Clara gets much space. (Interview 2)

> I'm aware of the common complaints that the forum is finding with episodes – there's a lot of complaints that the focus on this season is too much on Clara as opposed to the Doctor (which seems to overlock the fact that the focus has *always* been more on the companion than on the Doctor). […] Because of that I've found myself thinking 'there's a lot of Clara in this episode … they won't like that …! (Interview 4)

On the forum, there are a lot of discussions about the Doctor's companions. The companions help the Doctor solve certain dilemmas and travel with the Doctor in his time machine, the TARDIS. A common (re)produced opinion is that the members do not appreciate it when the companion is given more attention than the Doctor in an episode.

Depending on how different opinions have been formulated and received earlier on the forum, forum members assume they will get certain kinds of responses if they express certain opinions. Members of the forum learn to recognize recirculating opinions and learn to connect those statements with popular and unpopular opinions. Members also

experience the consequences of expressing different opinions. This shows how members reason regarding how other members of the forum will receive and react to a certain opinion. This section has not only illustrated members' perceptions of what are popular and unpopular opinions to have about certain episodes and that there is pressure involved in what one should and should not agree to like. It has also shown that members can predict what kinds of reactions one can expect if expressing a positive opinion about a 'bad' episode, for example.

Furthermore, this section has described how forum members, before they view an episode from the earlier seasons, read the reviews in the forum, which points even further to the difficulty of formulating opinions about an episode without relating it to what has previously been expressed about it. Even before viewing an older episode, members consider what others might think about it. Judging by members' statements, it seems to be almost impossible to view episodes from previous seasons without an idea of how the episode has been received by others. This shows that the 'process of *interessement*' often begins even before the act of viewing, not only in relation to older episodes, but also in relation to new episodes (as we could see in the quotes from Interview 2 and Interview 4). This also indicates that the forum discussion continuously intervenes in the 'process of *interessement*'.

6.1.3 Coherence

> Because it is (nearly) 54 years old Doctor Who has produced a complex range of stories surrounding its central character. The science fiction aspect and the grand scale of the show's storylines (like rebooting the entire universe) inevitably create a sort of mythology because of its relative longevity […] I recognise that the show has gone through different formations and in fact is reinvented every time the Doctor regenerates, but, perhaps especially because the character is reinvented by new actors every few years, some consistency in terms of the history and characterisation is necessary for it to be believable that this is in some sense a story about "the same" person. Of course in a show about time travel you can always go back and change events (or offer a revised interpretation of old events) and also fill in apparent plot consistencies […] to suspend belief and enter into the story there does have to be a certain consistency in the story

of the character. I enjoy stories that revisit the mythology and enjoy speculating with others on GB about the backstory of the Doctor. (Interview 68)

Members have different ideas of consistency. To some it matters that the story around the main character, the Doctor, is coherent, to others it is important that the science in the series is in line with the TV series science, and to some it is important that the established history of events according to previous *Doctor Who* episodes is coherent. This third element in the 'process of *interessement*' relates to the significance of coherence. A way to formulate opinions is in relation to whether an episode is 'true' to what has been coherent in *Doctor Who*, and what therefore can be expected to be possible and believable. Coherence seems important to the members, both in relation to science (the TV series' own science and 'real' science), and in relation to the storytelling and how storytelling relates to all the previous iterations.

> The extent to which someone thinks all stories should be broadly consistent with the history of stories is the extent to which they think in terms of "the canon". Some fans argue that the Big Finish audio stories count but there is a hardcore of fans who will only ever accept something as "canonical" if it occurs in the context of the tv show. During the build up to the 50th anniversary special there was a minisode called "night of the Doctor" which preceded the anniversary special. Many fans got really excited because Paul McGann appeared as the 8th Doctor (from the 1996 film made during the long hiatus between classic series and modern series). In this short episode he mentioned many of his travelling companions from the audio stories which I know thrilled many fans as for them it established the canonical reality of those audio adventures. The story was also important because fans finally got to see the 8th Doctor die and regenerate into "the War Doctor" (played by John Hurt). This was important for many fans because finally they had the "missing link" that linked the 8 classic Doctors to the new series. (Interview 68)

Since the TV series has been on and off air since 1963, it is next to impossible to keep track of the overall 'science' that the series has produced. Regarding the TV series science in an episode, some members think it is important that an episode's science is in consensus with the

science in previous episodes. This can stir up discussions on the forum. If the episode mentions the Doctor's age, the regeneration history or something else that is important in relation to previous continuity, it will be a subject for discussion.

> It was funny, because I am usually one of the loudest voices criticizing the show for not being consistent enough with it's own storytelling within stories, or using science badly or just flat being dumb about some things. And I often get told off as too strict about it, or wanting big "long and boring scientific explanations of absolutely everything" (which I don't actually, but that seems to be the impression I've given some people, or that's how they interpret my criticisms. When actually, all I really want is for stories to be clear and consistent, and not obviously contradict commonly known science, because it throws me out of the story.) I was a loud voice of all the bad science in "Kill the Moon" for example. But I though "Into the Forest of the Night" was already a lyrical and fairy tale type of story. And I did roll my eyes at parts of it. (All the trees just conveniently disappearing in clouds of fairies at the end gave me a huge eye roll. But I think endings have been one of the weakest things about New Who, I think far more "nonsense" would be more easily forgiven in stories, if they had more dependably solid endings.) So, here I was, for once, willing to let the "science" go, because I enjoyed other aspects of the story (the beautiful production work, settings, locations, and attempts at lyrical, literary, and fairy tale integration into the story, the references to Hansel and Gretel and Red Riding Hood and how "The Forest is Mankind's nightmare," which I liked the idea of from a literary viewpoint.) So I found it really odd that people who had been lambasting me as being too strict and wanting too much science or the science to be too "hard scifi" were now the ones who were angry about the "science" while I was the one willing to let it go this time. (Interview 3)

This member explains that science can be overlooked if the episode is a 'good' one. But, if the science is 'rubbish', an episode stands the risk of being classified as a 'bad' episode because of it.

> *Kill the Moon* revealed that Earth's moon is really an egg, with a giant creature inside it. Of *course* that's scientific nonsense, but it's no more ridiculous that a hundred other ideas that have

cropped up in *Doctor Who* over the years. We've also had F*latline* this season, in which graffiti comes to life, and is able to kill people by dragging them in to two dimensions. Now, that's no more ridiculous than the idea of the Moon being an egg, but somehow it's already become fashionable to mock *Kill the Moon* for featuring nonsense science, while citing *Flatline* as one of the best episodes of the year. I'm not entirely sure where these decisions have come from, but it *seems* to boil down to "I didn't enjoy *Kill the Moon*, and the science is rubbish. But I enjoyed *Flatline*, so I'll overlook the science…" (Interview 4)

Formulating opinions in relation to coherence ties into what is previously known about *Doctor Who* through its storytelling. What event has happened in the series? And, in relation to that, what is possible and believable?

Believability is important to me. It doesn't have to be "realistic" in that it's something that could happen in the real world, Doctor Who isn't that kind of show. I *like* odd and improbable things happening. But I prefer those odd things when they are written in a believable way, or at least when they are consistent and coherent within themselves. Something that lets me feel like I'm peeking into another world that has laws and rules just like ours, even if it's a different world. (Interview 61)

This last subsection has illustrated how coherence plays a role in the 'process of *interessement*'. It seems important to members that an episode is reasonable and believable in relation to previous events in the TV series. It seems important to forum members that an episode is coherent in relation to historical events, to science, and to the series storytelling.

Together, these three subsections have illustrated how forum members formulate opinions in a 'process of *interessement*'. By doing so, four things about the re-occurring actors and their role in the 'process of *interessement*' have been indicated.

First, exploring the 'process of *interessement*' has shown how forum members, during the act of viewing, form opinions in relation to their experiences with the forum. It shows that members imagine the 'process of *interessement*' when viewing. The process of formulating opinions relates to the opinions on the forum and is ongoing during the act of viewing. In the process of viewing an episode, forum members think about what

others have said on the forum earlier about the event happening in the episode. If it is an older episode that has been frequently discussed on the forum, members think about what others thought about that specific episode. If it is a newer episode, members can relate the events happening in the episode to how similar events have been previously discussed and reacted to. Moreover, this also shows a way in which the act of viewing the TV series is associated with the interactions on the forum (which was shown in chapter 4).

Second, the three sections have together shown that formulating opinions is both the outcome of the other opinions and the beginning in the formulation of new opinions. Opinions are formulated in relation to already circulating opinions, which has been shown to have implications for the formulation of 'new' opinions. Accordingly, opinions do not exist independently of this process. Formulating opinions is, at the same time, both a beginning and an outcome of such a process. Practising an interest is not a stable position, but something that must be (re)produced (Callon, 1986b; Akrich *et al.*, 2002). This, in turn, emphasizes the ephemeralness of opinions, and that practising an interest is a process of ongoing (inter)actions.

Third, in the act of formulating opinions, forum members are at the same time (re)producing knowledge about *Doctor Who*. We saw, as well, that the act of formulating opinions is also a process of constantly testing and provoking the opinions already circulating on the forum. In turn, this produced knowledge can sometimes be interpreted by the forum members as norms about how to be audience of *Doctor Who*. The opinions and discussions on the forum can be read and translated as the correct ideas to have about *Doctor Who*. If certain opinions have been reproduced enough times on the forum, they can be interpreted and treated as a collection of 'truths'.

In sum, forum members formulate opinions in a 'process of *interessement*', which indicates a situatedness and ephemeralness both in terms of how opinions are achieved and how the multiplicity of audience is maintained in practice. Formulating opinions is a continuous process that involves the interpretation of other members' opinions and upcoming actions, and how these are understood. The forum members are not trying to agree on one collective 'view' on things. This is not why you 'bump' your interest against others. They want there to be several different views (which enriches the discussions). By attending specifically

to the process of formulating opinions, it was possible to explore how an interest is enacted and maintained in practice.

6.2 Interruptions

We have now left the part where we look at the 'process of *interessement*' as an approach to how audience practice is maintained. The second part of this chapter will now attend to *interruptions* as an approach to how audience practice is maintained. In the three coming subsections, I will explore how moments of interruption in audience practice further uncover the workings of audience practice and, foremost, how it is maintained. Attending to acts of failure has been shown to be an effective way to advance our understanding of how something functions (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013).

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* the word *interruption* denotes "the act, utterance, or period that interrupts someone or something".[39] In this light, 'interruptions' refers to the tensions and frictions that occur in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. These tensions cause disconnections, disruptions, and disturbance in audience practice. What happens in those situations when audience practice is disturbed and interfered with? Who is involved, and how does the situation play out?

First, I revisit the links between the act of viewing and the act of being on the forum (that were revealed in chapter 4), this time focusing on moments of tension between these two acts. Second, I investigate the phenomenon of interrupting audience practice by taking breaks from the Gallifrey Base forum. Third, I look at how ongoingness of audience practice is achieved, which is shown to involve different types of interruptions. Together, these three subsections will display the work of interruptions in audience practice and what happens when interruptions occur, and they will demonstrate the importance of interruptions in audience practice.

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[39] Online version of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, visited 2017-08-23.

6.2.1 The Viewing Experience

In chapter 4, we saw how the act of viewing the TV series and the act of being on the forum are two interconnected and interdependent acts. However, there is another side of the argument, one that illustrates how the act of viewing the TV series and the act of being on the forum also interrupt, interfere with, and clash against each other. In this section, I explore the tensions between these two acts to see what happens when they are not pleasantly associated with each other, but instead interfere with and disturb each another.

We have seen that the forum can influence the viewing experience of the TV series in different ways. Members, to a large extent, visit the forum to see what other people thought of an aired episode and possibly to discuss it. However, reading what others think has consequences for the viewing experience. First, the forum can enhance the viewing experience.

> On the forum, I read posts to see what other think of episodes, and to discuss particular aspects of the show. I visit the forum everyday and discuss various aspects of the show – episodes, characters, history and so on – and its various spin-offs… There are some fantastic discussion threads – there was a recent one where we re-watched Kill the Moon in the light of the comments made on it by Philip Sandifer on this academic blog TARDIS Eruditorium, in which we examined it through the lenses of both the pro-life abortion allegory many see it as in contrast to a vaster, idealistic outlook on optimism and embracing the unknown. The thread singlehandedly managed to change my opinion on it from "terrible" to "absolutely wonderful". (Interview 7)

> I find that discussion and textual analysis often mature my viewing. Watching and rewatching, spotting symbolism and patterns, mise-en-scène, reading or watching interviews with the cast and crew--those make me more appreciative of what I'm watching and the intricate character development and worldbuilding. (Interview 50)

Discussing and analyzing an episode after viewing it can enhance the experience of an episode. If, for example, a member did not like an episode, other people's experience, description, and analysis of that episode can change the member's view of it. A member's opinion of an episode can go from 'bad' to 'good', depending on other members'

analysis of it. Other members can therefore change each other's opinions based on their experience of an episode.

Second, the forum can also detract from or even ruin the viewing experience.

> I get sad when there's a new series on and try to keep out of the discussion of new episodes […] Then I look at the forums (like a fool) and they are angry, with some posters very vocally finding fault with every element. It's despairingly sad […] It really does mar the viewing experience for me […] I don't feel I can leave the forums behind - they'll be present in my mind even if I ignore them in person […] It's a wonder anyone on there finds pleasure in the series under these circumstances. (Interview 20)

As the quotes above illustrate, when members pay attention to other members' opinions about an episode, it is difficult for them to disregard what the other members think and not be influenced by that. It does not matter if an opinion is in agreement with the member's own opinions or not.

There is another side to having one's viewing experience ruined by other members. There are several parts of the forum that are created for discussing spoilers and speculations, things that might happen in the TV series or in relation to the production of the TV series.

> For example, before the episode 'The Name of the Doctor' aired in summer 2013, someone on the forum posted spoilers, explaining exactly what was going to happen in the episode and even quoting lines from the script. Now I didn't know at the time if these spoilers were real or not, but when all the things described happened in the episode as I was watching I felt a bit sad because I would rather all those things were a surprise. (Interview 59)

All these factors sometimes make forum members long to experience an episode without being exposed to opinions on the forum.

> The positive [*about the forum*] is that you know there are a lot of people like you watching the show, analysing it, and ready to jump online and discuss it as soon as the show is over. It makes you feel more connected to the audience, and that the show is an event. And also that watching it has a certain amount of

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importance; I may watch it on my own, but I'm not really, as it's important to all these other posters too.

The negative is that it rushes you to pronounce judgements on the show. As soon as an episode has finished, posters are online saying they loved it, or hated it, giving it marks out of ten...it's too fast, too binary, and it spoils the experience of watching it. It's like being part of a viewing panel and not just a viewer. For this reason, sometimes I miss episodes and wait for the DVD to come out, so the 'event' is over and it's just me watching an episode that everyone else has moved on from. (Interview 54, italicized text added)

This member says that s/he intentionally misses episodes, saving them for later when they are no longer a hot topic on the forum. This is a strategy to avoid damaging the viewing experience.

If I'm entirely honest, I've sort of fallen out of love with the forum over the past few years, and I don't use it half as much now as I used to. I find that fandom can be quite an insidious thing, and using the forum too much actively saps my enthusiasm for the programme. There's several voices on there which are incredibly negative about simply everything, and it really can erode the fun. As an example - I no longer watch the programme on a Saturday night, because I found that watching an episode, and then immediately seeing it get ripped to pieces online (not just on the forum, but across social media, too), really makes it difficult to enjoy. I'm lucky enough through my work to know people on the production, so I get sent a preview copy of the episode on a Tuesday morning, to enjoy in isolation! (Interview 1)

Another strategy to avoid letting the forum damage the viewing experience is to rewatch episodes.

Season 8 felt horrible under these circumstances — but then when I rewatched it 8 months later, I loved it, because I already knew what the forums had said (and what the media had said, and what the forums had said about the media), and I could enjoy it on its own merits, and I really enjoyed every episode so much more than I'd ever expected. Watching Series 9 was horrible again, because of the forums, and I can only hope I'll enjoy it on rewatch as I did with Series 8. I don't feel I can leave the forums

behind - they'll be present in my mind even if I ignore them in person, and I feel they need moderates who will mediate between the sides, so I feel I have a duty there. But they're certainly a part of being an audience member. A horrible part that damages the viewing experience. It's a wonder anyone on there finds pleasure in the series under these circumstances. (Interview 21)

Reading opinions on the forum when viewing the TV series and then re-viewing it is a way to enjoy a season or episode without the risk of having the experience ruined by paying attention to what other members thought about it. If members re-view an episode or season months after it originally aired, they already know what has been said on the forum about that episode or season and have distanced themselves from such opinions. After a while, an episode or season is not being discussed as intensely any more. Members move on to discussing more recently aired episodes. Paying attention to what members write about an episode that has just aired and then letting time pass reduces the risk that the forum might ruin the viewing experience. This also connects to what was seen in chapter 4, that the viewing experience is closely connected to the forum experience. This, in turn, once again connects the forum experience to audience experience. As we saw in chapter 4, the act of viewing the TV series and the act of being on the forum are interrelated through associations made between the two, linking them.

This section has shown that members work in two ways to associate the two acts. On the one hand, forum members connect the two acts (viewing the TV series and being on the forum), but they also disconnect them. Sometimes the forum members take action to interrupt the link and make efforts to keep the two acts disconnected. In this sense, *maintaining disconnection* gets related to audience practice and consequently becomes part of audience practice. This adds to the argument that the act of viewing the TV series is associated with the act of being on the forum (as shown in chapter 4) even though the two acts are disconnected. These acts, viewing and being on the forum, also interfere with, interrupt, and clash against each other. While these two acts are interrelated, they also appear, at the same time, to be intentionally disconnected.

However, connecting and disconnecting, in this sense, are not necessarily two opposite acts. Disconnection, as we have seen here, is done in relation to the intention of returning. Different from not connecting at all, disconnecting does something to the relationship.

Disconnecting does not completely cut off the connection, but creates a tension in the relationship. It is not a passive act, but rather a form of a nourishment to the relationship. The examples of disconnecting explored here were not definite, but functioned as promises of future connection. This disconnection functions as a pause – something to be picked up later and be continued. Moving on to the next section, we will see more examples of *disconnections* in audience practice, and hence further this analysis.

6.2.2 The Breaks

Since the forum can detract from the viewing experience as well as add to it, it not only attracts members, it also keeps them away. Keeping away from the forum by initiating a break from it has been shown to be a way to *enact care* for audience practice (Law and Lien, 2013; Law, 2014; Haraway, 2008; Mol *et al.*, 2015; Mol, 2008; Heuts and Mol, 2013). As illustrated in subsection 4.4.4, forum members care for how audience practice is enacted, which involves "tinkering towards improvement" (Heuts and Mol, 2013: 125). As a result of having the viewing experience ruined by the forum, members take breaks from reading and posting on the forum. Consequently, members think that it is necessary to sometimes distance oneself from the forum. There are a lot of conflicts on the forum. There are conflicts about the quality of different episodes, seasons, and eras; about the events going on in the TV series, including everything surrounding the TV series; about how the TV series should develop or is developing; about what has previously happened in the TV series, and so forth.

Although members are curious about what is being discussed and debated on the forum, they also feel the need to stop visiting the forum because of all the conflicts. They cut loose and break the associations in order to avoid having their experience of the TV series possibly ruined. The forum is a threat to that, and the link to it therefore needs to be cut. Members care about the TV series and get emotional when discussing it on the forum.

> Sometimes the forum gets me down and I have to take a few months off. People are quite full on, and react to new episodes, pieces of news about new episodes/releases/merchandise/bits

of casting in very harsh terms, which I find overwhelmingly aggressive, bordering on the cruel. I'm fairly diplomatic, so I occasionally try to mediate between extremes of opinion, but occasionally I get exhausted, or offended, or just sad, and I slip away to spend a month or two off the forum, then come back to lurk without posting for a while. (Interview 20)

Caring for something that other people do not feel the same about can be frustrating and prompts members to take a break from the forum. Although the members are curious and do want to hear about what others think about a certain episode or season, they also do not want to risk having the object they care for condemned by others.

The big shift in my attitude happened when Moffat took over as showrunner. I love his era. It is one of my all-time favorites (alongside the Baker/Hinchcliffe and McCoy/JNT/Cartmel eras), and so much more consistently in line with my tastes than RTD's was. Which, of course, shifted me from being one of the complainers to one of the defenders […] I also noticed how many of these people were the same who hated RTD's era too, and year after year after year they stuck around, trumpeting how bad "NuWho" sucked, giving the classic series passes for doing the same things that they were raging about in the new, and seemingly oblivious as to how hypocritical they were being about it. I think it was this willful disingenuity that bothered me the most. How can you have a meaningful discussion with those who aren't even behaving rationally, and who seem to be there only to spew venom and rain on everybody else's parade? But still, it grates, and there are times when you really want to give people a no-holds-barred piece of your mind for being so childish and ugly, but of course that is against forum rules - and rightfully so. This place can be volatile enough without letting things get personal. But, as a member, it can be frustrating to not be allowed to truly challenge some nonsense the way it should be challenged. It's a catch-22 really, and I don't envy the moderators at all. They have to walk a tightrope.

But it's not terribly accurate to say that I took a sabbatical because I felt held-back when debating the more extreme haters. It's more that I got tired of letting the debate color and influence my enjoyment of the show. I got tired of subconsciously anticipating what others would say while I was watching. I got tired of framing arguments instead of just sitting back and enjoying it. I wanted the purity of it just being between me and

my television again. (Well, computer, to be precise.) I just wanted to shut up and watch my Doctor Who. And even in the down time, I got tired of engaging in the same old arguments over and over and over and over and over and over ad infinitum. As with all things, it eventually got old. (Interview 35)

I'm 33 years old now, and I think the forum can be an utterly miserable place to be, so I don't take part in discussions with anywhere near the enthusiasm I did 11 years ago, and I tend to spend a lot more time lurking. (Interview 27)

I go through phases where I post a lot and then fall back and just read posts for long stretches. This forum can incite a lot of frustration and anger for me, so I have to force myself to step back or even put people on an Ignore/Block list for my own self care. (Interview 50)

Even though disappointment with the interactions on the forum can lead members to take breaks from it, they also at some point come back. Members even make New Year's resolutions to take a break from the forum. These resolutions can be hard to keep, and curiosity often wins, so that the members return to the forum earlier than anticipated. This also indicates a tension, yet at the same time an interdependency, between connectedness and disconnectedness. The last two sections have illustrated the tension between connectedness and disconnectedness, showing that being disconnected is also a way to care for the connection and for being connected. To keep the link to *Doctor Who*, members take breaks from the forum so as not to permanently break the relationship.

Moreover, this tension raises questions about the ongoingness of audience practice. If one way to keep audience practice ongoing is to create and nurture a disconnection, then what does that tell us about how audience practice works? And how is the work involving disconnections accomplished?

6.2.3 The Ongoingness

Having the viewing experience ruined and taking breaks from the forum are both examples of interruptions in audience practice. As demonstrated, how such interruptions could contribute to the ongoingness of audience practice, and how forum members sometimes

deliberately interrupt audience practice to continue being audience. However, forum members are not the only ones that interrupt audience practice. The TV series can initiate a break by going off air.

Breaks in the airing of the TV series are met by forum members' efforts to keep *Doctor Who* going by turning to the forum.[40] When a season has ended and there is no TV series airing, the members still visit the forum. The care that the forum members have for the TV series goes beyond enjoying it when it is airing. Members try to keep *Doctor Who* ongoing through discussions and activities on the forum. Consequently, members make efforts to keep audience practice ongoing.

> The forum is a way of keeping my toes in the water during the drought! […] For me, the show is always alive and stuff is always happening, and the forum allows me to touch that. (Interview 63)

One way to keep the practice ongoing when the TV series is not airing is to engage in discussions that do not concern the viewing of a new season. During times when the TV series is not airing, members visit other parts of the forum and do other things.

> 'Doctor Who' is by far my favourite television programme, in fact really it's the only TV show I watch regularly, and I think about it a lot. I have lots of thoughts and opinions about it and like to engage with discussions on 'Doctor Who' related topics. I do find that during the times when the series is not on the air, especially when the next episode is a long way off and there hasn't been a new episode for a while, I spend more time browsing/engaging with discussions of past episodes, whereas when it is on the air I spend more time discussing the current series. The other thing worth mentioning is that even when the show is not on the air, there tends to be a steady trickle of news such as casting, interviews with people involved in the show, filming photos (always very important in the cosplay threads!) so even when there isn't a new story on screen to discuss, you can have discussions about the making of the series. The short answer, I suppose, would be that I love 'Doctor Who' and spending time

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[40] This further stresses the importance of exploring audience activities surrounding the act of viewing, which has been a concern expressed by (Silverstone, 1994; Morley, 1986).

> reading, thinking and talking about it gives me a lot of pleasure. (Interview 59)

The members do not want audience practice to end. Therefore, they give it a lot of attention and keep it ongoing even between airings. Even if the TV series interrupts audience practice, forum members keep the practice going through interactions on the forum. There are enough main forums, subforums, and discussion threads to visit that are not about a currently airing season. By turning to the forum and discussing other things relating to the TV series, members keep audience practice ongoing between the TV series airings.

On a related note, Latour (1996) showed in the case of *Aramis* (an automated train system) that the project died because nobody loved it enough to keep it alive. In Latour's case, *Aramis* was found to be unloved and nobody fought for its existence. Consequently, the project was abandoned. However, here it turns out to be quite the opposite. Forum members not only care a lot about the TV series and other *Doctor Who* related issues so that they keep the object *Doctor Who* alive between airings, they also seem to care profoundly about audience practice. Keeping audience practice ongoing on the forum, between airings is a way to keep the forum members associated with what they are audience of, *Doctor Who*.

> Visiting the forum is usually the next thing that I do after watching an episode on TV - maybe it enhances my enjoyment of the show? Like I don't have to just move on and get on with normal life, I can stay in that world, or revisit that world, rather than just waiting for the next episode to come on TV. (Interview 59)

The quote above illustrates how the forum members care for not only *Doctor Who*, but also audience practice by turning to Gallifrey Base. Audience practice functions as a means to stay connected to *Doctor Who*. So, although the TV series initiates a break in audience practice, forum members take action and turn to the forum to continue the practice. Keeping audience practice ongoing by continuing to enact it is a means to stay associated with *Doctor Who*.

Together, these three subsections have illustrated what happens when audience practice is interrupted. The exploration of interruptions has

once again pointed to the work and effort involved in maintaining associations. Mainly, this second part of this chapter has shown three things.

First, these sections have shown how interruptions can be initiated by different actors: the TV series (when the TV series go off air); forum members (taking breaks from the forum to nurture the viewing experience); and Gallifrey Base (when ruining the viewing experience). It has also revealed that connecting and disconnecting are not necessarily opposite acts. Instead, disconnecting proved to be a way to avoid breaking the relationship between the forum and the TV series. Disconnecting was a way for forum members to feed the relationship between the forum and the TV series by creating tension in it. This tension was a means *not* to break the relationship, but to keep it.

Second, to further the analysis of the relationship between what it is to connect and disconnect, taking breaks from the forum proved to be a way for members not to damage the viewing experience.

Third, when the TV series initiates an interruption in audience practice, the members engage in keeping audience practice ongoing by turning to the forum. Members take breaks from the forum of their own accord, but they also turn to the forum to extend audience practice. Consequently, the forum both nurtures and damages audience practice. To handle that, forum members have a process of connecting with and disconnecting from the forum. This, in turn, is done by forum members at certain times and in certain moments. In both cases, forum members work with the forum to preserve audience practice. In sum, this section has shown that forum members have a method of working in an organized way with disconnections and connections. Surprisingly, *interruptions* have been shown to be a way to care for, nurture, and keep audience practice ongoing.

6.3 Conclusion: Interruptions to Maintain Interest

> Goodness. The beast that is the audience needs constant feeding!
> (Interview 56)

What have we learned about audience practice on the Gallifrey Base by approaching maintenance of audience practice as an analysis of *interests* and *interruptions*?

The empirical examples in this chapter have highlighted the ways in which the work of maintaining audience practice is carried out by several actors, such as the book, the norms, the coherence, forum members, forum staff, Gallifrey Base itself, and the TV series. Both human and nonhuman actors were shown to be part of this work. The two sections of this chapter, attending to *interessement* and to *interruptions,* have together shown how audience practice feeds on tension. The chapter demonstrates how working with tension – disconnecting, taking breaks, intervening, and disturbing – allows for the continuation of audience practice ongoingness.

This chapter also explains some of the issues raised in the two previous chapters (4 and 5) regarding expressing frustration on the forum as a means to continue discussions. It describes how the process of practising an interest includes bumping one's interest against other things, hearing what others think. The forum is a place to do that. Moreover, it shows how the initiation of interruptions in audience practice works as a means to continue audience practice, to continue to discuss. In this sense, communication needs and feeds on tension. In fact, interruptions allow for continuation.

A key finding of this chapter is that members do not like to see a definite end to discussions. To keep a discussion going and avoid its 'closure' it helps to keep the issue negotiable so that there are numerous ways it can be approached. Closure is reached by agreement, which forum members seem to work hard avoid. By not being 'done' with communication, and by not agreeing, the discussion can be continued. This, in turn, means that audience practice can be continued. This shows that forum members care for audience practice continuation. To forum members, audience practice matters, and they enable the practice to go on by working in an organized way to nurture it. It is not the forum that

the members necessarily care for, but *audience practice as such* – beyond their interest in a specific TV series. This chapter revealed that members take breaks from the forum for the same reason that they turn to the forum – to maintain their ongoing process of formulating opinions and, thereby, maintaining audience practice.

The findings of this chapter have implications for communication as interaction. Many communication theories take for granted that the purpose of communicating is to transfer a message. However, this chapter has illustrated that the members of Gallifrey Base engage in communication for the sake of the practice. Forum members need a reason to communicate, and tension accomplishes that. In the case of formulating opinions, approached as the 'process of *interessement*', it was a process that nurtured tension, allowing for opinions to be bumped against each other to practise an interest.

Analyzing the *process of interessement* shows that the significance of communication on the forum goes beyond sending and receiving messages. Tension needs to be created, maintained, and worked with to keep communication (and with that, audience practice) ongoing. Communication, in this sense, is no longer merely a means to send and receive a message (McQuail and Windahl, 2015), but sending and receiving messages are means to engage in the practice of communicating. The findings in this study raise a critique against such simplifications about communication, illuminating that communication can have other purposes than sending and receiving messages (this relationship may even be reversed!).

Moreover, communication could be argued to be something that, in some sense, occurs when something is not working. Otherwise, if it was working, communication would end due to a joint agreement. Communication, in that sense, seeks closure. For communication to continue, some sort of disturbance is necessary to continue the process. In the 'process of *interessement*', as well as in the case of *interruptions,* findings showed how tension was strived for in order to keep audience practice in an ongoing state. That is, forum members make efforts not to finish communication (which can be accomplished if agreement is not sought). This resonates with what was witnessed in chapter 5, where the ontology of discussion threads was kept open for negotiation, leaving a possibility of future ontological changes. In line with the discussion thread's ontology, discussions too are kept open for negotiation by not

striving to reach an agreement. The relations in audience practice are consequently maintained through tension, which demonstrates how tension is worked with to hold something together.

In sum, since objects are a result of practices (Law and Lien, 2013; Mol, 1999; Mol, 2002; 2013; Mol, 2016; Mol, 2011; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; 2015; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013; Lien, 2015; Latour, 1999; 2005), audience practice, arguably, needs tension to nourish its 'ongoingness'. To create and maintain tension between differences, tension is cared for by forum members. In the two previous chapters, we saw multiplicity and differences in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. In this chapter, we have seen that to keep audience practice ongoing, such multiplicity and differences are maintained. To maintain audience practice, the key maintenance work refers to the tensions that arise from the multiplicity we saw in chapters 4 and 5. In the 'process of *interessement*' we witnessed situated work with such tensions. The significance of disturbance and tension in audience maintenance emphasizes the situatedness of ontological multiplicity in audience practice. As witnessed in this chapter, it is by working with tensions in *interessement* and *interruptions* that forum members maintain the practice and thereby continue to achieve audience.

PART III: ACHIEVING AUDIENCE IN INTERNET PRACTICE

In part III, chapter 7 concludes the study by gathering the empirical findings from part II (chapters 4, 5, and 6) and relating them to the theoretical and methodological repertoire outlined in part I (chapters 1, 2, and 3). At the core of this, the findings are discussed in relation to the study's three research questions and the research aim. I elaborate on the study's theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions in relation to both *Science and Technology Studies* and *Audience Research*. I also outline implications in terms of how the study connects to wider concerns in the humanities and social sciences.

7. Concluding Discussion

This study's research questions have now been analysed in relation to the empirical material in chapters 4, 5, and 6. To conclude, I illuminate this study's contribution in relation to the development of the presented agenda. That is, this study started out by suggesting a reconsideration of audience in terms of ontology to advance our understanding of contemporary audience – an agenda that would urge us to think anew about audience and what might otherwise be taken for granted.

As stated in chapter 1, the contribution is twofold. On the one hand, the study contributes to audience research, and on the other hand it contributes to recent debates on ontology and multiplicity in STS.

7.1 Returning to the Research Questions & Aim

In response to the aim of this study – *to develop an alternative approach for theorizing audience* – three research questions were developed:

RQ 1. What is audience on the Gallifrey Base?
RQ 2. How does audience practice on the Gallifrey Base manage audience ontology?
RQ 3. What does the ontological significance of audience practice mean for the theorization of audience?

The first research question (RQ 1) addressed an empirical concern with how audience ontology is achieved in practice on the Gallifrey Base. The second research question (RQ 2) addressed a theoretical concern in relation to recent debates on *ontology* and *multiplicity* in STS. The third research question (RQ 3) addressed a theoretical concern with the underlying conditions for audience theorization.

First, I will discuss research questions 1 and 2 in relation to the findings in chapters 4, 5, and 6. Second, I will elaborate on research question 3 in relation to the overall findings of this study.

7.1.1 Discussion of RQ 1 and 2 in Relation to Chapter 4

The first concern presented was a concern with reality-in-practice and how audience is generated. When addressing this concern, I worked with guiding questions – such as *where and what is audience here? Who and what is involved in the actions? What is made a concern in specific situations, and under which circumstances are such concerns cared for?* – in the encounter with new situations when exploring what audience is on the Gallifrey Base.

In relation to the first research question, I demonstrated key *routines* and *relations* in audience achievement on the Gallifrey Base. In chapter 4, I began to unfold audience practice on the Gallifrey Base forum, analyzing the actions found there. This showed that the answer to what audience is on the Gallifrey Base is not straightforward – audience was shown to multiply.

The relations between the various modes of audience practice and how members mediate between these modes became evident through the forum members' stories. These stories expressed that certain enactments belong in certain places on the forum, which suggests that the members do not see these enactments as the same. These enactments are seen as different things done in relation to the same thing – audience. By separating different parts and enactments from each other on the forum, different enactments of audience are enabled. This highlights that *various modes of audience practice* offer several different answers to the question of what it is to be audience, even in a single audience practice in a single site – Gallifrey Base. The different enactments on the Gallifrey Base are achieved in relation to the same thing, audience. This shows variations in how audience is achieved in a single audience practice, in a single site.

The *various modes of audience practice* are outcomes of different forms of reality-making. Here, it was shown that room was made for multiple ontologies within a single audience practice, which pointed to implications for audience ontology. Chapter 4 identified different enactments on the Gallifrey Base – locations, activities, repertoires, and concerns – which were understood as *various modes of audience practice*. The

various modes of audience practice illustrated the multiplicity of audience practice and its variety of heterogeneous achievements.

For the theorizations of audience this means that audience practice on the Gallifrey Base, with its revealed *various modes of practice* and *multiplicities*, consequently problematizes the assumed ideal of audience as *one singular and distinct group,* which was identified in earlier explanatory foundations in audience research. Singularizing audience risks leaving out the complexity and changing nature of audience. The findings in chapter 4 have drawn attention to the unstableness in achievements of audience.[41]

7.1.2 Discussion of RQ 1 and 2 in Relation to Chapter 5

Chapter 5 showed that the ordering of audience practice was enacted continuously, by several different entities, in several ways. The chapter also showed how several orderings of audience practice are ongoing simultaneously (Haraway, 1991; Law, 1994). In relation to this finding, four examples demonstrated the implications that ordering has for ontology. I argued that these examples – (1) deciding where things *belong* on the forum; (2) *moving and merging* discussion threads on the forum; (3) handling what was identified as *misplacements* on the forum; and (4) trying to decide the ontology of a discussion thread that *morphs* – made it possible for audience practice to keep multiple ontologies. The four examples, in turn, were shown to have consequences for ontology in audience practice in that ontologies changed when transformations were enacted in audience practice through the work of ordering.

Earlier work on ontology has shown different scenarios in settings where several ontologies are brought to the fore. Mol (2002) showed that one reality out-ruled the others. Kaplan (2008) discussed how, when several ontologies appear, strategies are applied so that one ontology can win over the others. Thompson (2005) showed that several ontologies are made to cooperate. In relation to such earlier discussions and findings on ontology, this study's empirical material shows interesting findings. The empirical material suggests instead that multiple ontologies are not necessarily competing or cooperating. Allowing for several ontologies to co-exist on the Gallifrey Base is achieved by classification and ordering

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[41] Common points have been made by Law and Lien (2013) in the case of salmon farms.

work (which entails important enactments of technologies), as demonstrated in chapter 5. Moreover, chapter 5 also showed that ontologies are not kept stable. Instead, what things are, is temporary and kept open for renegotiation. This was exemplified through (1) the exposed ambitious work with moving and merging discussion threads and posts on the Gallifrey Base; (2) the possibility for discussion threads to morph; and (3) keeping boundaries between different things (e.g. between different subforums and discussion threads) fuzzy and fluid.

7.1.3 Discussion of RQ 1 and 2 in Relation to Chapter 6

In chapter 6, I then turned to how these conditions – the multiplicity and fluidity displayed in chapters 4 and 5 – are maintained in audience practice. Another dimension of multiplicity was then unravelled though the explorations in chapter 6, where I argued that *interruptions* and *breaks* are used to keep audience practice ongoing. I demonstrated, by turning to Callon (1986b), that in maintaining interest, *tension* was key.

I argued that when forum members formulate opinions, they are not trying to agree on *one collective view* on things. Instead, I showed that forum members want audience practice to allow for several different views, which also was experienced (by the members) as enriching. If everyone were to agree on one view on things, the discussion would be closed, so closure was deliberately avoided by not seeking to reach an agreement. This finding can also be related to findings in computer-mediated communication research. Recalling how Baltes (2002) compared the reaching of decisions in computer-mediated communication versus face-to-face communication, it may be surprising that the computer-mediated communication observed on the Gallifrey Base did not strive for closure.

In contrast to classic communication models (for an overview of communication models see McQuail and Windahl, 2015), the empirical material showed that the significance of *communication by other means* reaches beyond needs to send and receive messages. As an implication for the theorization of audience, the study showed that there can be other purposes with communication, as messages may be sent and received for the purpose of maintaining a particular communication practice. In chapter 6, I argued that (1) different *interruptions* were created for audience practice to continue. Here, I particularly highlighted that forum members

care for audience practice and want to be part of that practice. Different methods were used to care for audience practice and thereby care for its continuation. *Interruptions* in communication have traditionally been treated as something that challenges and contests communication. However, in this study, *interruptions* showed deliberately sought in order to keep communication going. Nor was the sole purpose with communication (2) to reach an agreement. The forum members told stories about how the viewing of the TV series *Doctor Who* could be enhanced by interacting on the forum. Here, interactions on the forum could be seen as an extension of the viewing experience. Continuing to visit the forum between airings could then, in turn, be seen as a way to enhance and extend audience practice. By not finishing conversations or reaching agreements, forum members can try to ensure that audience practice does not have to end or close.

Keeping the communication ongoing is a way to keep the interest in *Doctor Who* ongoing, which consequently keeps audience practice ongoing. *Interessement* is a *relational doing* – a process – and the forum members keep themselves linked to what they are interested in. Taking *breaks* and *interrupting* is part of keeping this link and maintaining interest. To maintain audience practice and keep *achieving audience*, *breaks* and *interruptions* were necessary and needed to be organized in audience practice to create a sense of distance and, eventually, an eagerness to return.

7.1.4 Discussion of RQ 3 in Relation to Overall Findings

The third and last concern outlined in this study was a theoretical concern in relation to audience research.

In chapter 2, I argued that such commonly held assumptions about audience have intensely affected audience research and have repeatedly been a starting point for developing audience research. In relation to re-occurring themes in audience research, this study has further developed recent critiques towards audience theories' tendency to approach audience as a homogeneous entity (Livingstone, 2015).

As I discussed in response to research questions 1 and 2, the analysis of audience practice explored on the Gallifrey Base demonstrated a multiplicity of various modes of audience practice and of *ontological*

ordering. We have also witnessed (most notably in chapters 5 and 6) a temporality, where possibilities of renegotiation are strived for. This suggests that what audience is cannot be assumed to be stable or fixed. This study's findings problematize audience theorizations, as was shown in the second part of chapter 2. This study has raised questions of audience ontology, pointing to difficulties in any simplistic characterization of audience. This is key when arguing against fixed and given characteristics being assigned to audience beforehand, as problematized in chapter 1. In the audience literature, audience is often addressed as *passive* (e.g. Gerbner *et al.*, 1986; Signorielli and Morgan, 1990), *active* (e.g. Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Morley, [1992] 2003), or even *fragmented* and *dispersed* (e.g. Wiard and Domingo, 2016; Webster and Ksiazek, 2012; Webster, 2011; 2005; Andrejevic, 2011; Bennett and Iyengar, 2008). Not only are such terms vague, but they also, perhaps unintentionally, lead to theorizing audience as a collective with a given status. This may not seem to be a critical issue, but commonly addressing audience this way, and understanding audience this way, creates an ideal of audience as a singular entity (and moreover, an entity that can be assigned characteristics beforehand). As this study finds, approaching audience as stable or given gets even more complicated in relation to contemporary dispersed audiences, streaming services, mobile media devices, the internet, multiple screens, and other communication possibilities.

In what follows I will conclude this study's theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions to (1) the field of audience research, and (2) to the field of STS.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions

In relation to *audience studies*, this study contributes *theoretically* by connecting insights from recent debates on ontology and multiplicity in STS to empirical explorations of audience. By doing so, it widens the scope of the theoretical explanatory basis. The study shows that (when) achieving audience on the Gallifrey Base, concerns are articulated regarding the maintenance of audience experience. The study pointed to the possible challenges of such maintenance. The findings suggest that

with the changing of conditions, even within the single audience practice on the Gallifrey Base, fixed and given notions of audience are not compatible with contemporary audience. As the findings indicate, audience practice may include a range of multiple modes, which calls for attentiveness to the situated work carried out by several actors in the achievement of audience. In relation to this study's findings, I argue that approaching audience as ontology-in-practice shows interesting possibilities for theorizing audience.

Had this study been exemplified with another TV series, or another internet discussion forum, it is likely that the modes of practice, the activities, and the concerns of the forum would have been different ones. However, this does not alter the theoretical findings that relate to *multiplicity in a single practice*.

In relation to *recent debates in STS* on ontology and multiplicity the study contributes *theoretically* with a study of how ontological achievements are managed in practice. Here, the study offered an exploration of multiplicity in a single practice, on a single site. Developing the analytical concept of *ontological ordering*, I focused on how multiple ontologies are achieved and maintained in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. In doing so, I suggested that audience could be explored as situated ontology, investigating how audience is brought into being, who and what is involved – and what is at stake – in such achievements, and how such achievements are dependent on disconnections, breaks, intervening, and disturbing. This was a way to challenge and interfere with commonly held given and fixed assumptions about audience, and to create room for other possible ways to think about audience.

With this study, I have furthered attention to multiplicity, in a single practice, in discussions on ontology in STS. In relation to Mol's (2002) discussion on multiplicity and Thompson's (2005) discussion on ontological choreography, I have contributed with a study that shows how multiplicity is ordered in practice, in contrast to Thompson (2005), who witnessed the work with coordinating different ontologies to simultaneously enact an object. In this study, we have seen work with *ontological ordering* to maintain multiple ontologies and multiple versions of what it is to be audience. The study displayed efforts to maintain multiple ontologies in *a single practice*. Where Thompson saw coordination to make different ontologies cooperate, the ontological work in this study was more concerned with maintaining differences and tensions. It was not

singularity that enabled the practice (as we saw for example in Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; Mol, 2002; Kaplan, 2008); instead, the practice feeds on tension, as we saw throughout chapters 4, 5, and foremost in chapter 6. Ontology is not just a problem that one tries to solve in practice (agreeing upon one ontology); ontological incoherence and multiplicity are not necessarily obstacles for action, but might be productive.

Ontological ordering on the Gallifrey Base proved to be messier in comparision Thompson's (2005) *ontological choreography*. Audience practice on the Gallifrey Base is indeed choreographed so that several ontologies can exist side-by-side. However, this study also shows that it has more to do with *multiple orderings* rather than *a* choreography.

The study has also showed how an object/practice constellation can be maintained through, and in spite of, both practice and object being multiple. Here, the notion of *ontological ordering* made it possible to further the analysis of the ongoing ontological work that we witnessed in chapters 4, 5, and 6. As these chapters illustrate, multiplicity is dealt with through multiple modes of ontological ordering. The analysis has contributed to insights into how the link between object and practice works and how it is maintained, by exemplifying with a single audience practice in a single site. Additionally, we have also seen that disconnecting (section 6.2.2) may be key to maintain the relations between object and practice. Potentially, these findings may also speak to other cases that explore relations between objects and practices.

7.3 Empirical Contributions

In relation to *audience studies*, the study contributes *empirically* with a detailed and rich account of the complexity in audience practice on the Gallifrey Base. Here, the study focused on the process in which audience is achieved, rather than on audience as an end product. Here, in contrast to many of the earlier ethnographies on the internet, I identified, documented, and analysed a process, a movement (Garcia *et al.*, 2009). When doing so, I accounted for both human and nonhuman actors entering the scene and acknowledged their cooperation and joint in work in achieving audience, thereby following an STS approach when studying audience as practice (e.g. Latour, 2005).

In relation to *recent debates in STS* on ontology and multiplicity, the study contributes *empirically* by broadening the scope of empirical STS research – typically focusing on scientific practices – with an ontological inquiry into the phenomenon of audience.

7.4 Methodological Contributions

The study contributes *methodologically* with an alternative research approach to audience as a phenomenon. Here, I have developed the notion of an *audienceography*. I argue that the notion of *audienceography* helps to put the focus on the complexities in the relations between humans and technology, and their interdependence in studies involving internet interactions. Traditional ethnographic methods were consequently tweaked and adjusted to this study's research design, which situates ontology in practice.

In relation to *recent debates in STS* on ontology and multiplicity, the development of the notion of *ontological ordering* is another *methodological* contribution. The notion of *ontological ordering* attends to how ontology and multiplicity are worked with in practice. For ontographies (Lynch, 2013) and other studies of ontology in practice (Lien, 2015; Mol, 2002; Thompson, 2005; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013; Law and Lien, 2013), *ontological ordering* provides and outlines a methodological alternative.

7.5 Contributions on a Broader Note

Connecting this study to wider concerns in the humanities and social sciences, a concern with audience is a concern with the processes and implications of how we interact with media material and media devices, which in the contemporary media environment is intensely technological. This is not only visible in media and communication practices but intersects broader parts of society. With this study, I have argued that audience practices on the internet can highlight the particularities of such relations between humans and technology. Technological artefacts are becoming a growing part of our day-to-day lives. This is specifically evident if we consider how we communicate and seek information. To

advance our understanding of social life in contemporary society, practices involving technological artefacts need to be further explored to capture how the social is assembled. This speaks to the close relationship between humans and technology in contemporary society, which requires further exploration. As a result, this study has introduced key aspects of the relations and roles of humans and technologies in internet practice.

7.6 Concluding Notes

Throughout this study, I have argued for an approach to audience as practice, resisting any pre-existing characteristics belonging to the object or to outside entities that are mobilized as explanations. In audience research literature, there are several examples of audience being treated as a stable and singular object. For audience research in the contemporary media landscape, it is crucial to be sensitive to the fluidity, multiplicity, and ephemeralness of the object of study. The variety in a single audience practice, exemplified in several ways in this study, has highlighted the significance of this significance.

Consequently, it is necessary to theorize audience as locally situated activities, stressing heterogeneity in audience as an object of study. Focusing on audience as a set of practices has not been central in prior audience research, yet for future studies this may open promising paths to further the theoretical understanding of audience and its complexity, attending to connections, relations, and interactions between humans and technology. To advance our understanding of audience, I have applied theories and methods that allow for audience to be studied in relation to, and not divorced from, the technology it depends upon and the conditions under which it is practised. I argue that the role played by technology, in studies of what audience is, is underplayed, while the role of human subjects is typically over-emphasized. This is in line with Hine (2017) emphasizing the need to attend to the complexities in interaction involving the internet, which ethnographic studies have repeatedly shown and which is supported by the findings in this study.

In relation to this study's findings, I would argue for approaches to audience as situated in time and space and as dependent on close human–technology relations. This study has shown that audience can be

understood, described, and explored differently. I argue that there is a need to widen existing theories and methods of audience, permitting and enabling more detailed studies of the relations between humans and technology which contemporary audience depends on. This also requires a theoretical repertoire in which a consideration of the multiplicity of the world is embedded. The multiplicity in audience practice, shown with this study, derives self-evident objects of their obviousness and urges an attentiveness to the situatedness of local practices. Lastly, I hope that this study can provoke other ways of attending to audience as an object of study, and thereby encouraging attempts to think anew about audience. One alternative, as proposed in this study, is to attend more carefully to the ontological ordering involved in the achievement of audience in practice.

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Appendix A: List of Interviews and Additional Fieldwork

Overview of the Electronic Interviews

Round 1 October 2014 – November 2015	
Interviewees	*Interview type*
Interviewee 1	Email
Interviewee 2	Skype chat
Interviewee 3	Forum
Interviewee 4	Forum
Interviewee 5	Skype chat
Interviewee 6	Email
Interviewee 7	Forum
Interviewee 8	Forum
Interviewee 9	Email
Interviewee 10	Email
Interviewee 11	Email
Interviewee 12	Forum
Interviewee 13	Forum
Interviewee 14	Forum
Interviewee 15	Email
Interviewee 16	Email
Interviewee 17	Forum
Interviewee 18	Forum

Round 2 February 2016 – May 2016	
Interviewees	*Interview type*
Interviewee 19	Email
Interviewee 20	Email
Interviewee 21	Email
Interviewee 22	Email
Interviewee 23	Email
Interviewee 24	Email
Interviewee 25	Email
Interviewee 26	Email
Interviewee 27	Email
Interviewee 28	Email
Interviewee 29	Email
Interviewee 30	Email
Interviewee 31	Email
Interviewee 32	Email
Interviewee 32	Email
Interviewee 33	Email
Interviewee 34	Email
Interviewee 35	Forum

Round 3 September 2016 – August 2017	
Interviewees	*Interview type*
Interviewee 36	Forum
Interviewee 37	Forum
Interviewee 38	Email
Interviewee 39	Email
Interviewee 40	Email
Interviewee 41	Email
Interviewee 42	Forum
Interviewee 43	Email
Interviewee 44	Email
Interviewee 45	Email
Interviewee 46	Forum
Interviewee 47	Email
Interviewee 48	Email
Interviewee 49	Email
Interviewee 50	Forum
Interviewee 51	Forum
Interviewee 52	Email
Interviewee 53	Email
Interviewee 54	Forum
Interviewee 55	Forum
Interviewee 56	Email
Interviewee 57	Forum
Interviewee 58	Email
Interviewee 59	Email
Interviewee 60	Email
Interviewee 62	Forum
Interviewee 63	Email
Interviewee 64	Email
Interviewee 65	Email
Interviewee 66	Email

Interviewee 67	Forum
Interviewee 68	Forum
Interviewee 69	Forum
Interviewee 70	Email

Additional Fieldwork

- Doctor Who Experience, Cardiff (visited April 19, 2015)
- Filming Location Walking Tour, Cardiff (visited April 19, 2015)

Appendix B: General Interview Guide

1. Can you describe what the Gallifrey Base is?
2. Can you describe why you turned to the Gallifrey Base? / What attracted you to an internet forum?
3. Why the Gallifrey Base? / Do you visit other internet forums/site as well? / Why/why not? / And in case, which?
4. Can you describe your activities on the Gallifrey Base?
5. Can you describe what happens after you log in to the Gallifrey Base? / What happens next? / Can you describe, in detail, what a regular visit might look like? / What do you usually do on the Gallifrey Base?/ What interest you on the Gallifrey Base?
6. Do you post or read (or both) on the Gallifrey Base? Why/why not?
7. Can you tell me about navigating the Gallifrey Base?
8. Do you visit the Gallifrey Base in-between airing seasons? Why/why not?
9. Is there anything that you think that I have missed touching upon that you think is important? Would you like to add something?

Appendix C: Forum Home Page

GALLIFREY BASE

| Home | Quick Links ▾ | CPanel | Forum Rules | FAQ | New Posts | Search ▾ | Calendar | Mark Forum Read | Chat Room | Log Out |

Notices

Do you like movies? Do you like to keep an eye on how much money the movies make? Do you want to try predicting next year's top movies? Check out the forum's 2018 Box Office Top Ten Predictor Game, it's fun and lasts the whole year long! ✕

Please read this from the forum owner:

Happy new year everyone! How about we all resolve to be friendlier to our fellow Doctor Who fans this year? That would be great. Out with the bad, in with the good! Cheers. -SWH ✕

DOCTOR WHO · TWICE UPON A TIME — CLICK TO DISCUSS!

TIMELASH VIII — CLICK TO DISCUSS THIS STORY! — **DOCTOR WHO THE TIME OF ANGELS**
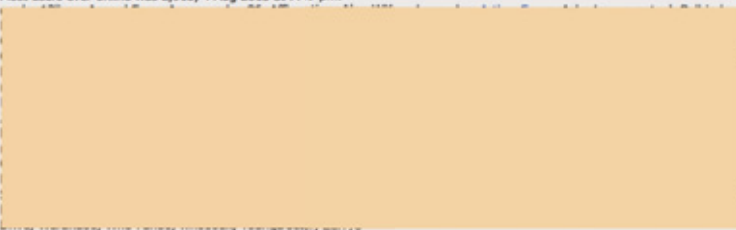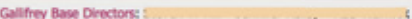
Forum	Last Post	Threads	Posts
Welcome to Gallifrey Base			⊛
Please donate to help keep the forum going! Click here for info! Click for information on how to be able to use privileged functions by donating just 11 USD!	-	-	-
The Rescue · Advice and Assistance Forum help section. Free for use of public. Advice and assistance obtainable quickly. Click to open.	Yesterday 6:50 pm	1,136	23,899
Strangers in Space · New Members Meet & Greet The place for new members to introduce themselves and veterans to greet them!	25 Jan 2018 12:03 am	5,269	39,611
Doctor Who News Page - Story Feed Headlines and stories from the Doctor Who News Page (automated RSS feed).	Yesterday 12:40 pm	5,036	5,036
The Gallifrey Base Water Cooler			⊛
The Gallifrey Base Water Cooler	17 Jan 2018 4:17 pm	1	936

Doctor Who Universes on Television

2017 Doctor Who Series
Discussion of the stories aired in 2017.

- 1. The Pilot (121/4764)
- 2. Smile (76/2692)
- 3. Thin Ice (68/3967)
- 4. Knock Knock (66/2897)
- 5. Oxygen (63/3323)
- 6. Extremis (91/3731)
- 7. The Pyramid at the End of the World (72/2863)
- 8. The Lie of the Land (81/3358)
- 9. Empress of Mars (54/2407)
- 10. The Eaters of Light (59/2796)
- 11. World Enough and Time (123/5109)
- 12. The Doctor Falls (166/6574)
- 13. Twice Upon a Time (133/7430)

| Today 7:26 am | 1,173 | 51,911 |

Dr. Who
READ SECTION DESCRIPTION BEFORE POSTING IN HERE! Discuss B.B.C. TV's new family programme for autumn 1963! (A special role-playing section)

| 29 Jan 2018 3:55 pm | 636 | 8,398 |

The Matrix · Help for New Fans of Doctor Who
A place where people can feel free to ask those basic questions about the history of Doctor Who and not be embarrassed - and get straight and friendly answers. NOT FOR FORUM RELATED HELP - use The Rescue section instead for that!

| Yesterday 1:33 pm | 778 | 13,301 |

Timelash VIII (2015)

- Timelash VIII: Completed: Part 2: The First Doctor
- Timelash VIII: Completed: Part 3: The Second Doctor
- Timelash VIII: Completed: Part 5: The Third Doctor
- Timelash VIII: Completed: Part 6: The Fourth Doctor
- Timelash VIII: Completed: Part 1: The Ninth Doctor
- Timelash VIII: Completed: Part 4: The Tenth Doctor
- Timelash VIII: The Eleventh Hour (11/105)
- Timelash VIII: The Beast Below (8/63)
- Timelash VIII: Victory of the Daleks (11/129)
- Timelash VIII: The Time of Angels (10/59)

| 30 Jan 2018 11:07 am | 1,529 | 15,118 |

The Greatest Show · The Doctor Who Universe
General Doctor Who discussion - broad topics that cover the Doctor Who universe in and beyond television.

- L.I.'n'D.A. · Clubs 'n' Chat for Characters and Actors (797/876659)
- The King's Demons · Characters, Actors, and Production Staff (707/17337)
- T-Mat Control · Transmission & Broadcast (321/26862)
- The Games of Rassilon · Doctor Who Game Threads (867/196589)

| Today 11:29 am | 13,096 | 1,604,388 |

The Infinite Quest · DW Present & Future [SP] (27 Viewing)
Discussion of the present and future of televised Doctor Who (onward from January 2017). SPOILERS PERMITTED.

| Today 12:29 pm | 16,119 | 1,177,780 |

The Zero Room · DW Present & Future [NOSP]
Discussion of the present and future of televised Doctor Who (onward from January 2017). SPOILERS NOT PERMITTED.

| Today 1:11 am | 2,484 | 130,742 |

The TARDIS Scanner · Past Doctor Who (17 Viewing)
Discussion of televised Doctor Who from 1963 through January 2017. Includes missing episodes discussion.

- 2009/2010 Doctor Who Specials
- 2010 Doctor Who Series
- 2011 Doctor Who Series
- 2012 Doctor Who Series

| Today 12:15 pm | 27,133 | 1,324,418 |

2012 Doctor Who Series
2013 Doctor Who Series
2014 Doctor Who Series
2015 Doctor Who Series
2016 Doctor Who Series

Fluid Links · Doctor Who Spinoff Shows Spinoff series each have their own sections in here! Class (151/8156) Torchwood Institute Bannerman Road · The Sarah Jane Adventures The House of Gryffen · K9 (The Series) (125/2300)	24 Jan 2018 9:19 am	3,941	197,503
The Long Game · Viewing Marathons Launching or discussing an ongoing viewing marathon? This is your place.	Today 9:14 am	790	39,685

Inner Worlds

Flight Through Eternity · DW Articles & Features (moderated) Scholarly, analytical or critical writings about the Doctor Who universes	7 Jan 2018 8:41 am	42	264
The Pharos Project Official Forums for Doctor Who and/or Gallifrey Base related projects BroaDWcast - Official Forum (6/212) The Doctor Who Cuttings Archive - Official Forum (1/19) Red White and Who - Official Forum (7/89)	11 Sep 2017 9:56 pm	14	320
The Sirens of Time · Big Finish Productions (20 Viewing) Section grouping for all Big Finish audio products. Please use the appropriate subsections. Big Finish Doctor Who & Torchwood (1994/125923) Big Finish Non-Doctor Who (102/7554)	Today 12:26 pm	2,096	133,477
The Braxiatel Collection · DW in Media (9 Viewing) Covering Doctor Who in all its media forms - books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, you name it! Frontios · DW DVD/BD & Home Media (2706/253636) Silence in the Library · DW Books (2148/80643) The Sound of Drums · DW Audio & Music (Non-Big Finish) (1979/79036) The Web of Fear · DW Websites, Internet, Podcasts (709/13231) Stars Fell on Stockbridge · DW Periodicals (1253/65429) The Celestial Toyroom · DW Merchandise (1902/209466) The War Games · DW Games & Gaming (241/14325)	Today 11:02 am	10,938	715,766
Argolis · DW Conventions and Events (1 Viewing) Is there a Doctor Who event of some kind going on somewhere every week of every year? Find out here. North America (400/6007) UK / Rest of World (1178/51123)	Today 11:08 am	1,656	58,149
Androzani Major · Worlds of Fandom Subsections on fan art, fan fiction, fan clubs, fanzines, fan video and audio, and Doctor Who costuming! The Monopticon · Fan Artwork (1759/60706) The Land of Fiction · Fan Writing (2625/43986) Fan & Regional Groups (288/18420) Fanzines (365/6186) Arc of Infinity · Fan Video & Audio (1201/11628) Reconstruction of the Daleks · Unofficial Episode Recons (123/961?) The Velvet Web · Costumes, Costuming, Cosplay (1396/33112) A Change of Identity · Roleplaying (16/326) Hi-Q Whovians America SIG (3/10)	Today 3:57 am	7,776	183,988

Outer Worlds

Satellite Five · Popular Culture & Media (28 Viewing)
- Televisuals: Active Television (3305/574327)
- Televisuals: The Museum of Television and TV (1942/157009)
- Movies, Theatre, Video and Radio (3647/276882)
- Books and Writing (1101/37887)
- Comics (790/19815)
- Gaming (1252/50307)
- Music (2961/154214)
- Technobabble (1701/25792)
- Sport & Automotive (636/386322)

Today 12:26 pm — 17,335 — 1,682,555

Platform One · Fun & Games
This is the place to unwind. Silly threads, general chat threads and game threads go here.

Yesterday 11:38 pm — 3,406 — 878,433

Crater of Needles · Current Events & Life (15 Viewing)
Discuss current events, random topics, and those old favorites, politics and religion.

Today 12:19 pm — 12,676 — 1,235,591

The Eye of Harmony · Recreational Pursuits and Personal Care
Health & Hobbies! Travel, nature, photography, diet & exercise, crafts, cooking, dining, meditation, and undoubtedly more!

Today 12:24 pm — 919 — 77,658

Tranquil Repose · In Memoriam
A place for tribute threads for those who have left us.

29 Jan 2018 9:00 pm — 1,954 — 23,157

Shada · The Gallifrey Base Market (1 Viewing)
Marketplace: For sale, for trade, for auction, wanted. Also any retailer-specific discussions.

Yesterday 8:51 am — 11,232 — 35,273

GB Archive - Closed Sections

The Complete Timelash Archive
Archive of "Timelash" discussions.
- The Timelash Archive
- The Timelash II Archive
- The Timelash III Archive
- The Timelash IV Archive
- The Timelash V Archive
- The Timelash VI Archive
- Timelash Cutaway II
- The Timelash VII Archive

25 Sep 2016 10:26 pm — 13,995 — 230,537

Who's Next? · 12th Doctor Casting Discussion [SP]
Your one-stop shop to contemplate and debate the casting of the 12th Doctor.

17 Aug 2013 10:35 pm — 611 — 26,107

Who's Next? · 13th Doctor Casting Discussion [SP]
Your one-stop shop to contemplate and debate the casting of the 13th Doctor.

17 Jul 2017 9:37 pm — 189 — 39,922

Doctor Who 50: Golden Anniversary Celebrations [SP]

23 May 2014 3:28 am — 1,108 — 63,826

Doctor Who 50: Golden Anniversary Celebrations [NOSP]

22 Jan 2014 4:10 am — 111 — 4,567

Contest Archive
Archive of our contests.
- Gallifrey Base's "Find the Crack" Contest (15/580)
- Gallifrey Base's "Madame Kovarian's Watching" Contest (4/708)

12 Sep 2011 2:44 pm — 19 — 1,288

Other Archived Sections
- Oh That Chatham (392/20187)

25 Nov 2013 12:14 am — 392 — 20,187

Private Sections

Mark Forums Read   Staff Contact Sheet

Your Current Mood   1   2   3   4   5

Thank you to all of our members for your support! - Gallifrey Base owners

Currently Active Users: 174 (153 members and 21 guests)

Most users ever online was 2,915, 4 Aug 2013 at 7:49 pm.

The Doctor Who Forum at Gallifrey Base Statistics

Threads: 233,452, Posts: 10,674,456, Members: 85,999
Welcome to our newest member,

Forum Administrative Staff

Gallifrey Base Directors:

Forum Administrators:

Forum Moderators:

Staff Contact Sheet