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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is the exploration of what I perceive as an emerging new culture, evolving, developing and shaping with a seemingly unstoppable force. For the purposes of my research I will refer to this collection of social and cultural practices and the participants that adhere to its rituals as the *Nano-Culture*; Nano referring to nanosecond, which is extremely quick. Nano-Culture is born out of a consumer culture, the age of technology and an all pervasive media. Furthermore I suggest that participants of this culture manage identity as brands, in order to present identity as desirable for consumption. Finally I propose a comedy that draws on the culture, assists in managing the culture and its constructed identities and ultimately critiques the culture.

The following written submission is divided into two parts.

Part 1

In the first chapter I extract pervasive features or symptoms pertaining to this culture specifically exploring connectivity, speed and isolation. In extracting the rituals of Nano-Culture my choice is to be predominantly observational.

In the second chapter I address notions of identity through branding and propose this to be a mechanism of the culture. By exploring shifting notions of celebrity and the concept of *Shadenfreude*, contemporary identity constructions can be explored and exposed.

The last part of the paper will explore comedy in society and then investigate Nano-Comedy- that emerges out of this culture with its identity constructions and which has the potential to simultaneously speak back to the culture. I will specifically examine click-X-cess, my thesis production, as a model for Nano-Comedy.

Part 2

Text and DVD of click-X-cess.

Social Comic Commentary – an exploration of contemporary identity constructions

Introduction

It is in my own fascination with online life, the media, celebrity and shifting notions of constructed reality and identity that my research began. The media machine as well as online life has shaped and shifted notions of identity and reality so rapidly that there simply has not been adequate time to properly identify these changing social behaviors. Marshall McLuhan's insights into the media and the ways in which people engage with it; has led to a rethinking of the relationship with the media and technology. His examinations have allowed for a better understanding of communications in order to more carefully consider its development. His conceptual framework and themes, especially those referencing the medium as message and technology as extensions of the self have driven my research and his thinking about media and communication in Understanding Media (1964) and The Global Village (1989) has guided me.

Some academic circles regard McLuhan as more of a popular theorist than an academic theorist and consequently do not take him as seriously as other writers in the field of media and communications. Megan Mullen writing in response to this says that: "Criticizing McLuhan for not demonstrating enough empirical evidence for his theories is akin to criticizing van Gogh for not carrying out proper meteorological research before painting a sky." Mullen continues saying that "we are living in the future that the book foretold." (Mullen. 2006. 47)

I will not attempt to defend McLuhan's work in this paper. I acknowledge his ambivalent standing in the scholarly world, but remain convinced that his work in the field of communications can be viewed as central to any writing on contemporary society and technology; consequently I align myself with his writing and predictions. McLuhan refers to the technological age as the 'Age of Anxiety' in that actions and reactions

happen simultaneously and have thus 'heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree.' (McLuhan. 1964. 5)

McLuhan writes that in the receding mechanical age, actions could be taken without concern and that slow movement insured that reactions were delayed for some time. Today the action and the reaction occur almost at the same time. (McLuhan. 1964. 4)

On 31 August 1997 Diana Princess of Wales was killed in a high-speed car accident. An estimated 1.2 billion people all over the world watched her funeral, thus making it one of the most widely *shared events* in human history. The accident itself raised questions about the individual right to privacy, because of the degree to which the paparazzi were held to be responsible. On another level it exposed the mechanism of the media machine and its ability to connect people. The media, technology, online social networking, surveillance cameras and shifts in the relationship between what is public and private; are connecting people more than ever before in a range of different ways.

I perceive these connections to be nothing more than an illusion. A 'buying in' to a set of values with no-value and the forming of intimate relationships with individuals who will never know each other outside of the constructed virtual and media sphere. Nonetheless, it is a new reality and this set of 'no-values' is at the core. Therefore in my view the shape of interpersonal relationships is changing in very real terms. Ultimately, it is in my view, a preparation for isolation, yet in this isolation it is quite possible that a (constructed) 'successful' new reality is emerging. McLuhan identifies a prevailing anxiety in society and argues that it is not caused by the increase in the human population, but by the close proximity in which we are all living because of technology. (McLuhan. 1964. 39)

TO ACCEPT the ways of the world means often to come to terms with a wayward world; to come to terms is less to affix an easy seal of approval than to contemplate the habitual and indeed incurable ironies of life in the world; the laughter that we often associate with this observing of waywardness implies something of good nature, some awareness that deviancy is "normal," some recognition that we ourselves participate in

disparateness, that we move in the imperfect scene as well as behold it from the gazebo. (Heilman. 1978. Epilogue)

In this quote Heilman touches on one of the most significant reasons for the existence and importance, of comedy in our society – the ability to deal with social issues. Comedy is a means to accept the often unacceptable. As Heilman suggests, we are compelled and perhaps even our very sanity depends on, the ability to laugh at ourselves and at society. It is in this laughter that we can find a space to unthreateningly and safely reflect on and consider our world.

In terms of my own research I have chosen to explore comedy that originates in and draws on stand-up comedy. Stand-up conventionally critiques society and as Heilman proposes, it could be a means of coming to terms with McLuhan's notion of a prevailing anxiety as well as other pervasive features that I will examine.

The paradox of what is essentially 'anonymous' intimacy that McLuhan writes about is indicative of our changing times. The constant interpersonal connectedness that technology and the media makes possible; can confirm feelings of being truly 'seen' or viewed. Consequently identities are being managed and constructed with such care and depth, that it could be argued that individual identities are evolving into elaborate brands of their own. Each brand of identity with its own set of values, rituals and morals, all 'wanting to belong' and vying to be part of this connected and viewed culture and simultaneously competing to be perceived as 'the best' in this culture. The nature of the emerging social constructs and systems that communications media is enabling, whether through the internet, social networking or other media; means that fame is now synonymous with brand recognition. Furthermore it is these very mediums that are the vehicles through which individual brand recognition and 'popularity' can be realised to a degree hitherto unseen.

To a certain extent I partake and live within this consumer, brand orientated culture. I have found myself *Facebooking my Top Friends from my Nokia while sipping on my tall,*

skinny, frappe, soy chino all the while contemplating whether to PVR TRL or rush home in my hybrid while I download the latest Madonna to my iPod.

Humour aside, it is the degree to which consumers effortlessly and without question buy in to the superficial and obviously constructed nature of this culture that fascinates me. Moreover I am interested in how this culture is constructing a new reality; one that is essentially a dislocated one. The question I pose is: How self-aware are these participants? Are they able to stop; to question why; to realize the extent to which they perpetuate and buy into this culture? If the answer to these questions is “No”, then it is my proposal that there emerges a space wherein it becomes essential to examine and critique this culture, in order to negotiate its pitfalls more successfully and self-reflexively.

Spurred by these observations this enquiry commences with an exploration of what I perceive as this emerging new culture; evolving, developing and forming with a seemingly unstoppable force. For the purposes of my research I will refer to this collection of social and cultural practices and the participants that adhere to its rituals as Nano-Culture; Nano referring to nanosecond, which is extremely quick. I will extract pervasive features of this culture specifically exploring notions of branding, celebrity and *shadenfreude*. “Culture becomes organized like an electric circuit: each point in the net is as central as the next.” (McLuhan & Powers. 1989. 92) In extracting the rituals of Nano-Culture my choice is to be predominantly observational. After I have looked at the social mechanisms of the culture, paying particular attention to identity construction, I will then explore the potential for a comic form that employs the systems of this culture in order to speak back to it.

Nano-Culture



Terry Eagleton addresses the term 'culture', saying that:

The concept of culture grew up as a critique of middle-class society, not as an ally of it. Culture was about values rather than prices, the moral rather than the material, the highminded rather than the philistine. ... By the 1960s and 70s, however, culture was also coming to mean film, image, fashion, lifestyle, marketing, advertising, the communications media. ... Culture in the sense of value, symbol, language, art, tradition and identity was the very air which new social movements like feminism and Black Power breathed. ... [It] also paved the way for the rampantly consumerist culture of the 1980s and 90s. (Eagleton. 2003. 24-25)

The consumerist culture that Eagleton writes about, as well as the age of technology and an all pervasive media has given rise to Nano-Culture that I am interested in- its patterns are evident in sets of rituals, traditions and codes of conduct. It is not only the rate of development but the kinds of development that concern me; it has become a culture that is ruled by connectivity, a culture to which modern technology has given the potential to connect to anyone, anywhere, anytime. It is a culture of individuals who by the simple click of a button can gain access to excess.

To identify who exactly participates in this culture and to what extent is no easy task. To some degree all urbanites participate in this emerging new constructed reality and I would term these participants 'tourists' (a term that has previously been used to describe those who are fairly unfamiliar with technology). But it is the 'natives' of Nano-Culture who truly interest me; those who without question accept the rules of this culture and enhance the stability and ultimately prolong the longevity of the culture.

It is logical to assert that those born into the age of computers- and specifically the internet- are more equipped to perpetuate Nano-Culture. These natives (who in the future will be referred to as the pioneers of the culture) are able to suspend traditional thinking in order to grasp the current explosion of information. The more you know the more there is to find out. And ultimately this is the 'too-much information generation'. These natives are equipped to absorb this explosion of information and are thus able to manage their constructed identities and realities accordingly. Of course, as with any culture, there

are those who choose not to partake in its rituals and thus counter the culture, but my interest does not lie with those tourists.

Because the culture investigated here is so new, there are as yet no definable boundaries, similarly, because this culture is developing so rapidly, no sooner have possible boundaries been identified than they are broken. Thus I am exploring what I perceive to be the more fixed and pervasive features of this culture.

Connectivity

We live in what McLuhan termed a 'global village', where technology and the media have given us the power to connect with people (or rather with identities) that we would previously not have been able to connect with. In 1967 US psychologist Stanley Milgram proved that anybody could reach anybody else with an average of six connections. Other research has upheld this theory.

Jeff Rodrigues found that technology, coupled with changes in social structures, had brought people closer together. Rodrigues, having done extensive research and having conducted interviews with people ranging from the ages of 18 – 55+ years says that social networking is changing Milgram's theory and bringing the number down to 3. (Anon. 2008. Skynews online)

Rodrigues' theory is evidence of Nano-Culture's social structures and the extent of connectedness. What sets the natives of the culture apart is that while they are seemingly aware of the constructed nature of their; and others identities, they still chose to invest in these identities as real and valid.

Nano-Culture allows its members to construct and change identity at such a rate, that new constructions of meaning and systems of understanding within the culture have been formed and accepted seemingly without question. This is evidenced in online social networking, cellphone communications, tabloid magazines and the rethinking around notions of celebrity. Furthermore it is a vehicle through which various constructed

identities interact and form relationships; this is evidenced in the phenomena of online social networking, reality television and an obsession with media.

McLuhan in The Global Village suggests that to partake in a technological age means to surrender your private identity. “More and more people will enter the market of information exchange, lose their private identities in the process, but emerge with the ability to interact with any person on the face of the globe.” (McLuhan & Powers.1989. 118) Although I agree with McLuhan, I would suggest that these people do not lose their private identities but rather in an attempt to partake successfully within Nano-Culture; they manipulate and construct their identities to the extent that their ‘true selves’ become hidden. McLuhan uses the example of the telephone to describe the loss of identity. If a person chooses not to identify himself on the telephone, he loses touch with a geographic location and a social function. “He becomes truly discarnate and, in that psychic sense, uncontrollable- a phone poltergeist, as it were”(…) (McLuhan & Powers. 1989. 124) It is this paradox of anonymous and yet intimate interaction that sets this culture apart.

This ‘anonymous intimacy’ is a primary characteristic of Nano-Culture and is indicative of the impact that an all pervasive media has upon society. Members of Nano-Culture rely or participate upon and with these rapidly changing technologies and medias to the extent that they provide a structure to living. Reality TV programs, tabloid magazines and online life, (including everything from speech jargon to online etiquettes) has been accepted without question and allows natives to the culture to efficiently participate in it. The simplicity of partaking in the culture, if you are capable, is so effective that it adds to the seductive nature of the culture. An example is the increasing use of cellphone and internet technology. According to the online source, Wikipedia, in the article; ‘Global Internet Usage’: “As of March 2007, approximately 1,114,274,426 people worldwide use the Internet.” (Wikipedia Contributors. 2007). The controversial cellphone chat service Mxit is one of the most commonly used pieces of technology in all communities, boasting around 8.6-million users around the country. (Nicholson. 2008. Online)

Speed

Nano-Culture is shaped by popular, consumer culture. Technology and media allow members of the culture to assimilate or reject aspects of consumerism, such as corporate brand names, in order to develop their own identity brand and this identity brand management evolves as rapidly as technology and consumerism allows. Unlike other cultures that have entrenched traditions that are resistant to change, this culture continues to transform itself in Nano-Time. It is structured around notions of brief and fleeting moments and the natives to Nano-Culture have become accustomed to living in Nano-Time.

In the 2002 release of the film About a Boy, Hugh Grant's character, Will, communicates his sense of the world:

I find the key is to think of a day as units of time... ..each unit consisting of no more than 30 minutes. Full hours can be a little bit intimidating... ..and most activities take about half an hour. Taking a bath: One unit. Watching Countdown: Okay...One unit. Web-based research: Two units. Exercising: Three units. Having my hair carefully disheveled: Four units. It's amazing how the day fills up. I often wonder, to be absolutely honest... ..if I'd ever really have time for a job. (Universal Pictures. 2002)

The above quotation captures the essence of Nano-Time. Although situated in the genre of comedy, this short monologue conveys how Nano-Culture exists in brief and fleeting moments. This notion of living epigrammatically alongside the concept of connectivity shifts our perception of Time. The understanding of time measured according to distance has shifted; whether travelling by ox wagon, plane or computer, information and connectivity have telescoped time. As information expands, time contracts. Technology has to a great extent negated the factor of distance in how we measure time.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the word 'evolve' as follows:

- V.1 Develop gradually.
2. (of an organism or biological feature) develop over successive generation by evolution.

Nano-Culture defies this definition of evolving because it exists in Nano-Time. Whilst Nano-Culture is instant and fleeting it should not be underestimated. It is developing in the moment, thus its very nature is self-sustaining.

Isolation

“What is happening at the present time is that changes are occurring so rapidly that the rearview mirror does not work anymore—at jet speeds, rearview mirrors are not very useful. One must have a way of anticipating the future.” (McLuhan & Powers. 1989.Viii Preface) Since technology is developing at an expeditious rate, it is not unfounded to assume that soon we could live very ‘happily’ without ever coming into contact with other people; our needs and desires can be met technologically. In this culture existence is becoming characterized by isolation or loneliness. Employment, communication and a kind of social interaction can all be obtained by the simple touch of a button or click of the mouse. But at the same time people are less *alone*, as they are constantly connected, albeit through technology, with far more people (identities) and thus a greater diversity of identities than before, at a rapid rate. And because there is so much choice, this culture becomes more particular about choice. Everything matters.

The degree to which natives of Nano-Culture rely on cellphones or the internet above that of face-to-face contact, suggests that there is a possible shift in perceptions and understandings of notions of connectivity; and thus how identities are constructed. These constructions may be merely innocent fibs in an online chat room in order to present a more ‘desirable’ self according to the culture, but it is this very technology, which has the ability to completely shift the way identities are constructed and viewed to a much greater degree than ever before. Because of the ever-increasing lack of face-to-face contact within the culture, identities can effortlessly and imaginatively be constructed to create the most appealing and desired identity. McLuhan relates the myth of Narcissus to how we perceive modern day technology. Noting that Narcissus did not see a reflection of himself in the water but in fact a replica, a distortion and thus a part of himself that he fell in love with.

To behold, use or perceive any extension of ourselves in technological form is necessarily to embrace it. To listen to radio or to read the printed page is to accept these extensions of ourselves into our personal system and to undergo the “closure” or displacement of perception that follows automatically. (...) That is why we must, to use them at all, serve these objects, these extensions of ourselves, as gods or minor religions. An Indian is the servo-mechanism of his canoe, as the cowboy of his horse or the executive of his clock. (...) Man becomes, as it were, the sex organs of the machine world, as the bee of the plant world, enabling it to fecundate and to evolve ever new forms. (McLuhan. 1964. 50 – 51)

This culture appears to be inexorably moving towards the paradoxical isolation of its participants from real, physical social interactions. Ironically, due to the beguiling powers of identity or brand management within Nano-Culture, its participants are rejecting real interactions as limiting and undesirable. While characteristics of Nano-Culture blur the boundaries between public and private, making instant, seemingly intimate connections across vast distances- this intimacy is only technological. Nano-Culture whilst appearing to promote a global socialization or sharing of its culture, is isolating its participant from real, physical interaction. Nano-Culture is a seductive culture and therefore incites unequivocal commitment. The natives to this culture are willing captives who enthusiastically serve it.

CHAPTER TWO

Identity as Brand



Taking into consideration the speed and constant connectivity of Nano-Culture, as well as the subsequent increase in personal identity management, questions of how and to what extent identity is being managed, arise. I perceive this culture to manage identity in the same way that corporations do; constantly finding innovative ways to express identity in accordance with the changes in consumer society. Nano-Culture draws from popular culture, entertainment, media, branding and technology. The impact of media and technology on society has influenced not only how people perceive or present themselves within these structures, but also how they shape themselves within the 'real world'.

Do we think of ourselves differently than those of the previous century because we are exposed to multifarious personalities and lifestyles through use of television, radio, and newspapers? (Gergen. 1991)

Nano-Culture operates within and from layered systems of meaning. The interaction of technology, media and consumerism put forward what is 'desirable' - and participants of Nano-Culture are able to take this on; shaping their identities accordingly. This is most evident in celebrity culture. Television and other forms of media not only mirror society; Nano-Culture now mirrors what the media puts forward. Nano-Culture consumes tabloids, movie and fashion show tickets, faster internet, cellphones etc in order to further define the culture and subsequently their individual brands within this culture.

This culture appears to be deeply-invested in brands in an ever-increasing product driven life. They buzz down the streets on their *Vespa*'s listening to their *iPods*, that they bought on *eBay*, on their way to *MacDonald's*, where they can use *Wifi* to *Inbox Member's* of their *Group* about an *Event* on *Facebook*.

More than just a collection of images and ideas representing a product or service, and more than a company name, logo or design theme, brands are the amalgamation of name, identity, personality, value and promise that evoke emotion. (Doke. 2008. 4)

Participants of Nano-Culture need to be constantly aware of their own constructions or brand management, in order to successfully operate within and simultaneously appeal to a culture that is interested in the mechanisms of the media.

But more than that, brands can be living personalities that hold specific appeal in themselves and by what they represent. British tycoon Richard Branson, golfer Tiger Woods, pop queen Madonna and talk show host Oprah are all examples of individuals who are brands in their own right, household names and highly regarded by millions. (Doke. 2008. 4)

By *brand* I refer to a carefully constructed identity that is being put forward as a 'product', which attempts to reach full market attractiveness and recognition. Brands seem to offer something to hide behind and a target to shift responsibility toward. Brands and the marketing of branding, is the model upon which natives of Nano-Culture replicate and administer to their own brand or identity construction.

"A brand is a symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to the product and serves to create associations and expectations around it." (Wikipedia Contributors. 2007) Consider some of the terms that form identities: *Goth, Hippie, Emo* and *Punk*. These terms refer to a certain personality that has been assembled and constructed to 'create associations'. The terms also create real expectations with each identity having its own specific fashion, speech patterns and jargon and its own set of values and customs. These terms are not just appellations thrown out at friends, they are signifiers of identity. Each 'group' classifying and declaring itself as *different* or in opposition to the other and each inevitably, perhaps unconsciously, forming complicated and highly structured brands for themselves.

Corporations form brands and:

Under the 'brand as person'-label they trace five sub-metaphors: brand personality, brand relationship, brand loyalty, brand reputation and brand values. All suggest that human capacities and characteristics can be attributed to brands. (Csaba & Bengtsson. 1998. 122)

While these terms are applied to a consumer market, I propose that these terms can now be applied to constructions of identity within Nano-Culture.

If, as the function of *Facebook* and other utilities allow, people are managing their own identities, then they are also each, managing different brands of identity. Each brand forming an own personality and developing beneficial relationships with other brands; growing in reputation and nurturing a specific set of values. Online life is perhaps the best example for addressing issues of identity as brand. People form their own websites, 'profiles' and 'spaces' where they are able to sell their 'product' to other users. By this I suggest that they view their *selves* as a brand in a marketplace fighting for popularity. As with any business or brand, image is central and Nano-Culture chooses to package and market these brands under appropriate labels.

"We imbue brands with personalities, reputations and values, or we form relationships with brands and sometimes even feel loyalty towards them." (Csaba & Bengtsson. 1998. 122) An example of the above quote being the Coca-Cola Company that reaches consumers in 200 countries. Consider actor celebrity Tom Cruise campaigning for *Scientology* to the masses and the immense power a well constructed brand wields over society becomes clear. As stated in the quote by Csaba & Bengtsson, we feel loyalty towards brands. When considering the *self* as brand it follows that the *self* can boast immense loyalty to its own brand(s) and the managing thereof.

Subsequently everything matters to this culture. Although natives to the culture are constructing their *own* brands, they are still basing every intricate detail of their brand on a consumer and media driven lifestyle. As Wickstrom attests:

Corporations produce subjectivity as aspects of their own brands through mimetic and identificatory process akin to those of performance, somatic and embodied. They reach into our corporeal desire to be like others, to take on shapes and forms unlike one's own. (Wickstrom. 2007. 2)

Corporations bent on trying to secure the market and attract more consumers intentionally seek to regulate what people need and more significantly what people desire and thus, inevitably, who people are. Natives to Nano-Culture can now participate in the culture from the safety and in the comfort of their own homes. However marketing the *self* is a consuming and dedicated task. To share in this culture means reinventing your own identity and administering it accordingly.

It is as if the culture sees identity objectively, as if natives within the culture are able to step out of them *selves* to make the most appropriate choices that will best suit their particular brand(s). Baudrillard's view of this phenomenon suggests that this brand management is a performance of sorts:

Everyone seeks their look. Since it is no longer possible to base any claim on one's own existence, there is nothing for it but to perform an appearing act without concerning oneself with being or even with being seen. So it is not: I exist, I am here! but rather: I am visible, I am an image look! look! This is not even narcissism, merely an extraversion without depth, a sort of self-promoting ingenuousness whereby everyone becomes the manager of their own appearance. (Baudrillard. 1993. 23)

Baudrillard claims an 'extraversion without depth'. My observations lead me to suggest that it would more suitably be referred to as a real attempt to 'manage existence'.

Individuals can constantly reconstruct their identities, meticulously choosing who they want to be and the choices are endless. More importantly, depending on the individual natives' capability, these brands can be constructed and changed by the simple click of a button. Although they are elaborate brands, the seductive nature of the culture lies in precisely the ability to adapt brands of identity to the speed of the culture. If the brand is the new image, then there is a great deal of depth and thought put into *managing* it; managing is the activity that suggests depth even though the look might be regarded as superficial. Simply because this culture is obsessed with the look and the image, does not imply that they have lost them *selves*. They have perhaps just shifted, become more public and therefore need to be continuously examined.

Fashion, hairstyles, body art, profile pictures, which social utilities individuals choose to subscribe to, where they eat and drink coffee; and how they speak has never been more significant. For this culture where they consume what, what they consume while they are there and in particular how they look whilst doing so- is very important. The constant connectedness and sensation of being viewed, keeps Nano-Culture under a microscope of scrutiny, specifically within the culture.

McLuhan, in Understanding Media (1964.4-6) states that people are somehow comforted by the fact that other people, often strangers, know intimate details about our lives. Natives to Nano-Culture can access each other's constructed identities and at the same time construct and edit their own accordingly. In The Sunday Times Magazine, Nikky Temkin wrote an article entitled Let's be Friends:

World famous for being the most popular person on the Social Network Service (SNS) www.myspace.com, 25-year-old American, singer/model/actress Tequila (real name Tila Nguyen) has carved out quite a brand for herself and at the same time become the Web's poster girl . The real reason behind Tequila's success is interesting. On joining MySpace in 2003, she soon felt lonely because all her mates were at other schools. Her solution? To mass e-mail close to 50000 people, asking them to join her "space". (...) Since then she's single-handedly turned her online persona into a money-making business. She has a VH1 reality-TV series in the works, magazine shoots, a clothing line and a cameo in Adam Sandler's new film. All this thanks to the 1.6 million-plus "friends" she has collected on MySpace. (Temkin. 2007)

The question that Facebook, MySpace and other utilities like it raises is that of the meaning of identity within Nano-Culture. If identity can now simply be changed by literally editing a profile on the internet, is the notion of identity becoming more and more destabilized?

In August 2008 an article entitled The confessions of mini-me appeared in the Lifestyle section of the Sunday Times. A 23 year old art student from The University of the Witwatersrand had legally changed her name from Roelien Brink to William Kentridge. 'He's famous. An icon' she answered when asked about the reason for the change of

identity. For the artist previously known as Brink, her change of identity document, driver license etc questions the notions of branding and authenticity. Although the artist-previously-known-as-Brink's change of identity might be an artistic statement, it does question the notion of branding and identity construction within Nano-Culture. I am not suggesting her to be a native of the culture, but it raises issues about the degree to which identity can be constructed and shaped and how many identities (brands) one native can manage at once?

In yet another article in the Sunday Times entitled; Create a name for yourself Anthony Swart argues that consumers, perhaps unwittingly, place more emphasis on brand awareness than brand reputation. He uses the example of Vodafone. Vodafone uses the 'big monolithic brand approach' and it works successfully as it is one of the biggest mobile brands but it is not necessarily the best. "(T)he fact is it is a constant in your face, ever present brand allowing it to be pervasive, top of mind and massively successful." (Swart. 2008. 7)

Considering that brands can be 'living personalities', Swart's notion that consumers place more emphasis on brand awareness than reputation is fascinating in terms of Nano-Culture's notion of brand construct. Examples of personalities (brands) who have seemingly little to no actual talent are endless, especially with the dawn of reality television and a culture determined to understand, affect and ultimately control the mechanisms and construction of celebrity. Nano-Culture is bored with the formula and that is exactly why artists such as Madonna and more recently Britney Spears have staying power; they recreate, construct and surprise and the lengths to which these celebrities go are boundless. The reason why I include notions of celebrity in this paper is that natives to Nano-Culture are constructions. Therefore I would suggest that these constructions influence all aspects of their lives, including how they perceive and manage their own icons and entertainment. Moreover, their better understanding of the mechanisms of branding and celebrity shapes their own branding processes.

Celebrity

“That’s hot!” – Paris Hilton

Through the ages societies have praised and admired certain people for their skills and talents and for contributing to humanity. Rituals or practices for honouring individuals for their contribution to society are commonplace within many cultures, from heads being engraved on coins, the naming of cities or calendar months, to commissioning portraits or books illustrating their contribution to the world. The rise of technology however has subsequently exposed society to the development of a whole new set of customs and rituals. The Hollywood machine and tabloid magazines give voice and influence to those who might not otherwise have been heard. But, what is most interesting is the sudden influx of personalities who are being applauded and admired for achieving seemingly next to nothing, apart from being able to socialise or agree to be followed by a lens.

In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes. – Andy Warhol

In 15 minutes everybody will be famous. – Andy Warhol

In the future 15 people will be famous. – Andy Warhol

Warhol’s quote speaks to several aspects of Nano-Culture- both the speed at which it evolves, as well as the irony behind technology making fame so accessible, that it has almost undercut its value as something difficult to achieve.

With the onslaught of surveillance cameras in public spaces predominantly originating in the UK in the 1980’s as part of a ‘Thatcherite’ attempt to stop football violence at stadiums it is now estimated that the average urbanite in western society is caught on CCTV approximately 300 times a day. (McGrath. 2004. 19-25) This recent notion of constantly being filmed or viewed not only questions notions of privacy but also how identities are shaped under surveillance. Not only are we viewed on the street, but as soon as we log onto our computers, switch on our cellphones or wear the latest Bluetooth enabled jacket our identities or the brand thereof comes into question.

In his policy discussion for the Demos think tank, *The Future of Privacy*, Perri 6 (1998:37) notes: "Privacy, it has rightly been lamented, cannot be defined very satisfactorily." He chooses A.F. Westin's definition as representing the most straightforward academic consensus: The claim of individuals, groups or institutions to determine for themselves when, how and to what extent, information about them is communicated to others. (Perri 6. 1998.37 in McGrath 2004. 56)

Westin's notion of privacy is without a doubt unattainable to natives within Nano-Culture. In the realm of celebrity and socialites (the modern day heroes), individuals (brands) such as Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, Amy Winehouse and George Michael use their 'run-ins' with the law and surveillance to their advantage. In April 1998, pop star George Michael was arrested in the public toilets in Los Angeles, by an undercover police officer, on charges of exposing himself. In his subsequent single and video released later that year, Michael took on the subject of sex 'outside'. (McGrath. 2004. 201)

The mass media bestow prestige and enhance the authority of individuals and groups by legitimizing their status. Recognition by the press...testif(ies) that one has arrived, that one is important enough to have been singled out from the large anonymous masses, that one's behavior and opinions are significant enough to require notice (Lazarsfeld & Merton . 1994.101)

If natives to Nano-Culture are aware of its falsehood then why are they so invested? This culture lives in a dual world, conscious of its constructed nature but at the same time the constructedness is what sets this culture apart from any other.

Examining the wonder of modern day celebrity status, as alluded to in the extract from The Sunday Times, it is clear that to achieve notoriety in Nano-Culture; you simply require an appealingly constructed brand. At the same time 'reality' television claims to portray real people and in often bizarre and dangerous situations - these situations and people are represented through the lens of a camera; and appropriately edited for the purposes of our viewing pleasure, another kind of constructedness that is consumed.

But I contend that celebrity culture has changed the way it operates, reflexively revealing some of its mechanisms. The structure of the apparatus is becoming as much an object of fascination as the individuals it promotes. (Mole.3.2004.)

Celebrities such as Madonna and David Bowie constantly reinvent who they are, thus creating new subjectivities and ultimately reflect a culture who's natives do the same. We are fascinated by their ability to manage their existence and the ever surprising depth of their existence as opposed to what Baudrillard claims as the 'extraversion without depth'. When entering Madonna's name on the Google search engine, the results exceed 117000 000 with Mother Teresa at 3210 000 and Ghandi at 4020 000, proving the significance of Madonna's successful packaging. The celebrities that stand the test of fame are the ones that know how to manage the brands of themselves and consequently reinvent themselves according to what is desirable within Nano-Culture. Simultaneously Nano-Culture and their media are reinventing and constructing certain brands of celebrities to suit certain brand expectations. But how do the natives to this culture choose brands of celebrities out of the multitudes of contemporary identity constructions that are currently available?

Shadenfreude

"Everybody hates me because I'm so universally liked." – Peter De Vries

One has the impression that being a celebrity was easier at any earlier time than it is now, when celebrity-creating institutions, from paparazzi to gutter-press exposé to television talk-shows, weren't as intense, as full-court press, as they are today. (Epstein. 13.2005)

Participants on talk shows and reality television question, as Baudrillard does, the 'banality' of civilization. McGrath on the other hand, in Loving Big Brother says:

The banality of reality television reveals to us that, however much the various systems surveying us may see, however many times they may catch us picking our nose or failing to pay our credit card bills, they know nothing about us, and the more they survey us the less they know. The superficial nature of Big Brother is, contrary to Baudrillard's argument, its triumph for us. It reveals how free we are. (McGrath. 2004. 205.)

Although McGrath raises a hopeful argument, I do not think that most of us watching these constructed 'real' performances are filled with a sense a freedom, rather a sense of relief. There is a pleasure to be gained from watching those who we perceive to be 'lesser' than ourselves. Because we watch through the editor's (or the constructor's) eye we are always one step ahead of the performer, always know that much more and that is what sets us free; the freedom is feeling superior. Ultimately, participants on talk shows, reality television, tabloid magazines, and online networks are constructed, whether by themselves or by producers, editors, camera crew, profile structures etc. And Nano-Culture (again not excluding certain tourists to this culture) is engaged with the desire to create, to change and change some more. They identify with the depth or lack thereof that these constructions of identities are displaying. They take pleasure in the creation they view and if it is worthy of their standards they will buy in to them and ultimately give them what they want; recognition and fame.

Some examples of identities under surveillance that Nano-Culture have praised with or elevated through fame are locally and internationally; Bad Brad (Big Brother), Ferdinand Rabie (Big Brother), Vernon Koekemoer, Celebrity children (specifically those from the Brangelina clan), The Kardashians (OJ Simpson's lawyer's wife, her new husband and daughters), Paris Hilton, Dina Lohan (Lindsay Lohan's mother who has her own reality television show), Girls of the Playboy Mansion, to name but a few. "The larger you are, the greater your impact on the social structure." (McLuhan & Powers.1989. 124)

In an episode of the American television series, Boston Legal, character Alan Shore states:

Recently a Stanford professor actually captured Schadenfreude on a brain scan. It's a physiological medical phenomenon. When we see others fall it sometimes causes a chemical to be released in the dorsal striatum of the brain which actually causes us to feel pleasure. (Alan Shore. Boston Legal. Season 2. Episode 2)

I too am intrigued by the notion of Schadenfreude and observe it to be one of the most defining emotions of Nano-Culture. Schadenfreude is described as perhaps one of the greatest words in any language from the German, *Schaden* (damage), and *Freude* (joy), it means the pleasure that one attains from another's misfortune. I suggest that, within Nano-Culture, Schadenfreude has become relevant to their social structure.

[T]he mass media and popular culture are the most important and powerful institutions, and control and shape all other types of social relationships. Popular cultural signs and media images increasingly dominate our sense of reality, and the way we define ourselves and the world around us. (Strinati. 2004. 205)

Nano-Culture follows 'celebrities' and their 'soap-opera lives' daily, but what makes it truly interesting is when celebrities fall from grace. Martha Stewart, OJ Simpson, Winona Ryder, socialite Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, Amy Winehouse or even the ridiculous frolics of the Tomkat duo are not only ridiculed and scorned, but once these celebrities 'hit rock bottom', the public applaud. Record sales skyrocket, blockbuster films are created and our country hands over gifts of ostrich feather scarves in adoration.

All heroes are envied and admired, but the dark hue of resentment must be added for Schadenfreude to fully emerge. This combination of envy and resentment makes it a close kin to jealousy (Melnick and Nevis. 2001). Melnick in an editorial entitled: Why Do We Knock Our Heroes Off The Pedestal (2002) goes on to say that jealousy traditionally is associated with loss of relationship. For Schadenfreude to exist there has to be an element of undeservedness of the individual's fame that fuels the resentment. For example, in a research study, the more students were seen as not deserving of their status, the happier people were about their fall from grace (Melnick. 2002. 1).

In the light of these observations and because of my own interest in the emergence of these social practises, I suggest that there is potential for comedic performance around these cultural phenomena. It appears that we not only gain pleasure from their fall from grace, we actually encourage it. Many tabloids have been accused of building celebrities up to reach cult status only to then crush them purely for economic gain, for example:

“The National Enquirer, The Star, The Globe, and other variants of the English gutter press. All these tabloids could as easily travel under the generic title of The National Schadenfreude, for more than half the stories they contain come under the category of ‘See How the Mighty Have Fallen’”(Epstein. 12. 2005)

Natives to Nano-Culture seem to gain so much pleasure out of celebrities fall from grace that the notion of Schadenfreude is affecting how they perceive all other brands of identities. The arrival of the ‘mockumentary’ style format on our television screens like The Office, People Like Us and Reno 911! are all based on the idea of Schadenfreude. I suggest, that this construction in mediating industries is being transposed onto ‘private’ lives and thus offers potential to comment, critique and represent this construction within the genre of Stand-up.

Locally, ‘Vernon Koekemoer’ has become a household name, with hundreds of websites, blogs, articles and even television commercials dedicated to him, his constructed persona has become a social phenomenon. Koekemoer received cult status from a photo that was posted online. The photo shows Koekemoer standing in the background at a rave, holding a glass of beer and sporting a fairly eccentric hairstyle and equally eccentric dress sense. His appeal lies in his identity as the other, because he has not managed his brand according to Nano-Culture’s standards, thus his status (as not part of Nano-Culture) is held up to ridicule. Suddenly the public ‘decided’ to make Koekemoer famous by photoshopping him into pictures of exotic places socialising with ‘real’ celebrities. The obvious constructedness of Koekemoer’s persona through this activity and exploits, as well as the irrelevance of his real name and identity is an example of the effect of Nano-Culture upon identity.

Those who seemingly have no voice, or who would not necessarily be heard about (Vernon Koekemoer, Paris Hilton) are awarded a huge amount of power by Nano-Culture particularly because of the constructed nature of these ‘celebs’. There is pleasure in holding him up to ridicule. Koekemoer was a guest editor for the popular tabloid

magazine Heat in April 2008, he made a guest appearance on the South African series Isidingo and had a brief cameo in a Vodacom advertisement on television.

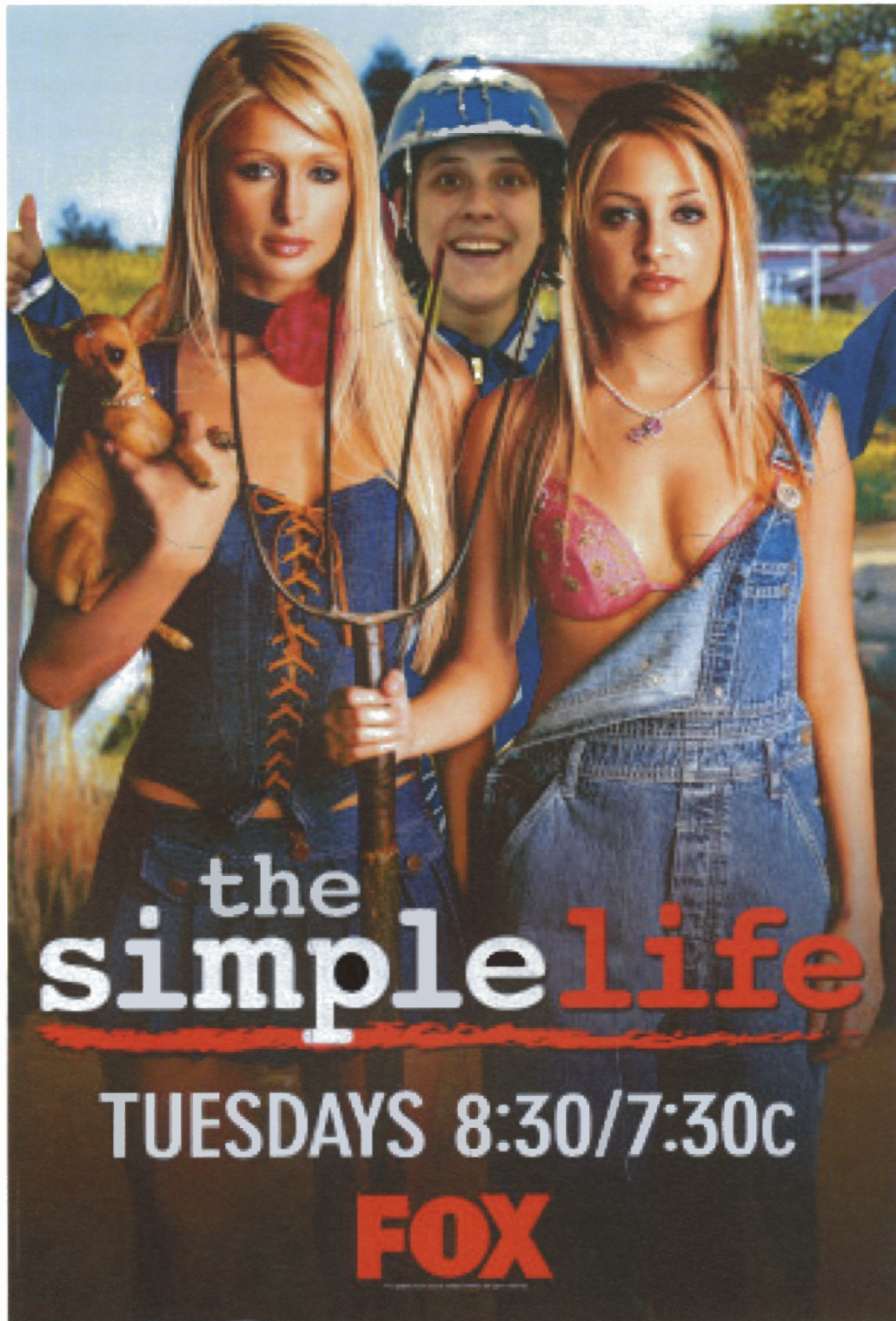
Once again referring to an episode of the popular Boston Legal, Alan Shore states:

A neuro-biologist at Duke University conducted an experiment where he gave a group of thirsty monkeys a choice of either having their favourite drink, which was some sort of cherry juice concoction, or of having the opportunity to look at pictures of the dominant, 'celebrity' monkey in their pack. Despite their thirst and the allure of the cherry juice, they chose to look at the pictures. Apparently monkeys have a part of their brain that specifically responds to the thrill of celebrity. As do we. (Alan Shore. Boston Legal. Season 2. Episode 17)

Returning to the example of Vernon Koekemoer; it is plausible to state that his sudden fame is rooted in Schadenfreude. This unsuspecting 'civilian' has become a whispered in-joke. Nano-Culture created his fame, they are his own personal assistants and agents and they are marketing him appropriately, all in the hopes of seeing him fall, only Koekemoer has already fallen. He is Nano-Culture's answer to Schadenfreude. The culture seems not to even have time to wait for 'real' celebrities to fall; they are now creating their own celebrities who have already fallen.

CHAPTER THREE

Nano-Comedy



Comedy

“If I had no sense of humour, I would long ago have committed suicide.” –Mahatma Gandhi

The examination and exposition of this culture; and more specifically the natives who participate in this culture and whose concept of identity is affected by it, offer vast potential for comic comment. I have explored the operations of Nano-Culture and its constructions and I will now draw on the comedy that develops out of Nano-Culture. This comedy is constructed in order to critique this culture as a way of coming to terms with it, potentially assisting identity management in more critical ways. The construction of the culture shapes the construction of the material for the comedy. Through my engagement with this culture on my own terms I consider myself to be an effective commentator of this culture and I have chosen to term this comedy; Nano-Comedy. As the culture does, Nano-Comedy draws on popular entertainment, notions of constructed identity (brands), connectedness, celebrities and their constructions often through shadenfreude. If as I posit a Nano-Culture exists then there is a need or a place for a Nano-Comedy.

Consider the work of legendary Pieter-Dirk Uys who, through comedy and laughter, has been able to mock and ridicule what so many were too afraid to even criticize.

A survivor of the ‘apartheid kultuur’ it has become his therapy and joy to expose the bones of that dinosaur for the entertainment of democratic audiences worldwide. Uys himself writes that he is delighted to still have a government who on a daily basis write his best material! (Anon. 2005)

If consecutive governments continue to write Uys’s material, then Nano-Culture’s shifting social identities that are constructed, commodified and freely available- although perhaps less credible- write the material for Nano-Comedy. If as Heilman suggests that ‘to accept the ways of the world means to often come to terms with a wayward world’ then Nano-Culture thrives on accepting the ways of its world by managing its existence in the face of a constant change. Social comic commentary in this existence is not only social comment but also another form of or possibility for managing identity.

Social comic commentary is often the most comfortable and accessible mode of dealing with change in society. Shortly after the attack on America on September 11th or the Tsunami wrecking the shores of Thailand in 2004, people all over the world mourned the loss of loved ones and grieved for the affected communities. However inappropriate or tasteless it may be seen as, it did not take long before cellphones and email inboxes filled with dark comic jokes about these disasters.

“The comic mode is social; the comic stage is not the soul but the world.”

(Heilman. 1978. 14) This quotation from Heilman suggests that within the forever transformative Nano-Culture there lies a potential for Nano-Comedy. It appears that things are moving at such a pace that if we do not laugh at ourselves today, tomorrow it will be too late.

A feature of Nano-Culture is the construction of identities that reach cult status; a similar process operates with comedians in our society. We need only look to the works of Eddie Izzard, French and Saunders or more locally Corne and Twakkie. Comedians have become the modern-day rock stars, influencing dress sense, the way people speak and how they spend money (to purchase Corne and Twakkie wax figurines please visit www.tmas.co.za). These comedians, as Heilman proposes, draw on society and often on topical socio-political issues. Humour becomes a means of moderating social cruelty. “Comedy, we may say, is society protecting itself-with a smile.” (Priestly in Heilman. 1978. 16). For if Nano-Culture, by its very nature, changes its participants as rapidly as it evolves, then comically subverting the day to day, often absurd lifestyles and touching on issues of social significance, even for a brief moment, allows those seduced into the culture to come up for some air.

Clothing range, Laugh It Off (LIO), emerged in South Africa in 1999. Essentially the company makes use of iconic brands in the country in order to produce clothing that attempts to comically subvert these brands whilst simultaneously illustrating the complicated social and political situation in which these brands operate. LIO, is perhaps most famous for their *White Guilt*, *Black Labour* t-shirt, which caused much controversy

and was an attempted word play on the local beer company *Black Label*. Other examples of their products are the *Say Maybe to Drugs* and *Enjoy Corruption. You can't beat the stealing* t-shirts, which is an intentional play on the *Coca-Cola* slogan. What is interesting is that it used quick, hard-hitting and yet very conscious ways to convey its message. People of all walks of life wore these t-shirts. It was a way of branding yourself and at the same time using humour to address very serious issues.

In understanding this new culture it is important, to be able to analyse, discuss and laugh at it. Nano-Comedy is a subgenre of comedy that is changing and transforming according to and influenced by all that Nano-Culture encompasses. But most importantly and ultimately at the core of my interest and research, it is a comedy that informs, exposes and assists in managing Nano-Culture. It enables us to look at life in a more conscious and considered way. I started my paper with a quote from Heilman suggesting that to deal with the pressures of modern society means to come to terms with its waywardness through accepting its imperfections. I believe that Nano-Comedy is a vehicle of coming to terms with Nano-Culture.

In this paper I have drawn on what I perceive are currently pervasive features of Nano-Culture; touching on issues of connectivity, identity construction, celebrity, privacy, branding and notions of time. Practically I have chosen to predominantly explore the genre of stand-up comedy. The immediacy of the genre, its participatory qualities and the notion of face-to-face contact within a theatrical context all appeal to certain aspects of Nano-Culture, speaking back to it.

click-X-cess – A Nano-Comedy

In my thesis production, which was created collaboratively with Alicia Price, a fellow Masters student, under our brand name Prisch Productions, I aimed to create a product that develops out of Nano-Culture. The piece, entitled click-X-cess, was a means of critiquing and exploring a culture that is constantly connected, viewed, constructed,

branded and isolated by the media and online networking. I will now refer to the production as a model for Nano-Comedy and how it draws on features of Nano-Culture.

The concept of the project emerged out of the excess of Nano-Culture and how accessible this excess has become. 'It's an allusion to how if you click on something you get access, all access- to whatever excess you want' (Prisch Productions. 2008) The marriage of stand-up comedy, technology, filming and multimedia and that of theatre within the piece draws on how natives of Nano-Culture would want to be entertained. Living in brief and fleeting moments and constantly connected to a multitude of different media would undoubtedly influence the aesthetic quality of the piece. The stage was dressed with three projections, simulating flatscreen television screens. All three screens were predominantly used simultaneously to yet again illustrate the excessive nature of the culture and its ability to multi-task. 'Everything has to be multifunctional, multitasked, multi-media' (Prisch Productions. 2008). It critiques and illustrates the explosion of information and sensory experiences that the culture confidently and seemingly without appreciation manage.

click-X-cess is a one woman show with assistance from third year drama students at The University of Cape Town. Employing stand-up comedy throughout the show enables me to foster a relationship with the audience. It subverts the lack of face-to-face contact within Nano-Culture and how the culture forms relationships. "(A)s in stand-up comedy, there is only a thin line between performer and audience, stage and auditorium."(Double. 2007. 44) Although it critiques the lack of personal interaction within the culture it also appeals to the immediacy of the culture. "By heckling (in stand-up) or stage diving (in punk), members of the audience can become part of the show. Unlike in straight theatre stand-up and punk both reject a fictional narrative frame and emphasize the here-and-now." (Double. 2007. 44)

When the comedian (as many do) also plays different constructed characters within the performance it comments and critiques on aspects of how the culture obviously constructs multitudes of brands for themselves. "It's a stylized persona based on an

aspect of personality in the person. So it's not invented...But it's an aspect of that person." (Interview with Johnny Green in Double. 2007. 43) As mentioned earlier in response to McLuhan, it is not that the persona loses his or her private identity, but rather that identity just becomes hidden. Just as Nano-Culture constructs brands of identities in society, so too does the stand-up comedian utilise a certain brand of identity onstage. Thus the comic becomes a reflection of identity in Nano-Culture and because it is situated in the genre of comedy it subverts these constructions.

The comic personas (Stand-up comedian, Tessa Teché and Patti Patter) are all introduced as constructions or identity brands. All three are introduced under the pretence of fame and are then revealed to be nothing more than elaborate constructions with no-value. Epstein accuses contemporary celebrities of "fraudulence (however minor); of inflating their brilliance, accomplishments, worth; of passing themselves off as something they aren't, or at least are not quite." (Epstein. 2005. 10) The revelation of these false constructions and the character's fall from grace is rooted in the notion of *Shadenfreude*. "Along with trying to avoid falling victim to schadenfreude, celebrities have to be careful to regulate the amount of publicity they allow to cluster around them." (Epstein. 2005. 13)

Minutes before the show started two photographers welcomed audience members outside the theatre and took pictures of those who were willing under the pretext that it was part of documenting the event. One image is then chosen backstage during the performance and photoshopped onto an incriminating front page image of a tabloid magazine. The image is revealed in a stand-up monologue and the notion of voyeurism, privacy and *Shadenfreude* is critiqued.

Prisch Productions

“Never send a human to do a machine’s job.” – Agent Smith, *The Matrix*.

As mentioned earlier, Alicia Price and I have developed our work under the brand name Prisch Productions- The word ‘Prisch’ originating out of our surnames Hirsch (my surname) and Price (Alicia’s surname). The logo and mascot for our production company, Heidi Hyena, is a pink laughing hyena with blue flames emerging from her body. As with the clothing range Laugh It Off, Prisch Productions attempts to comically subvert the notion of branding and simultaneously ironically illustrate Nano-Cultures management of lifestyle and identity.

Ultimately Prisch Productions and the project click-X-cess deliver social comic commentary as a means of coming to terms with Nano-Culture. Nano-Comedy has the potential to assist critique and comment on contemporary identity constructions that I perceive to now be well constructed brands. By exploring and exposing these brands of identities, their features and their mechanisms (speed, connectivity, isolation, branding and *Shadenfreude*) through Nano-Comedy; it allows both natives and tourists to this culture to potentially discover a means of unthreateningly coming to terms with this, because if we blink we might miss it!



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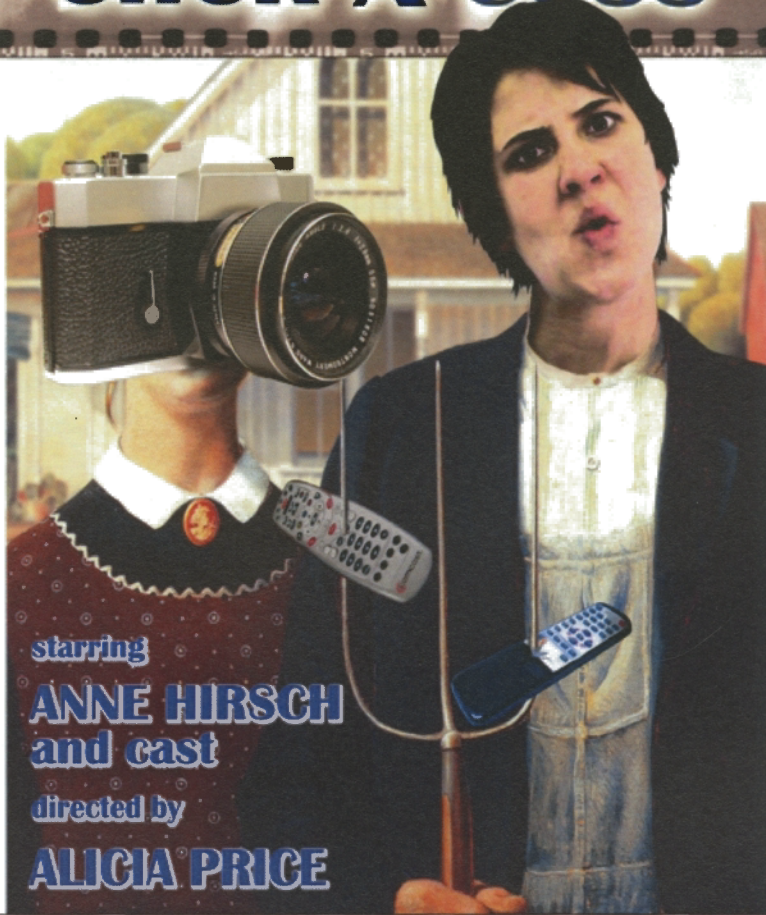
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starring
ANNE HIRSCH
and cast
directed by
ALICIA PRICE

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Prisch

OPENING MONOLOGUE

Music: Pussycat Dolls: 'When I grow up' accompanied by video.

Enter stage in camouflage, hidden behind two branches, while last bit of video plays.

Hi everyone. Sorry I'm late. It's so hectic running from the paps. I mean obviously you saw the opening credits of my show here, not that it's only my show of course, there are other people. Not that I am complaining, all this is what I signed up for. Life of a celebrity. I enjoy a bit of humble pie with my tall skinny frappe soy chino every now and again.

Hi everyone and welcome to click-X-cess. See what we did there? It's very clever it's an allusion on how if you click on something you get access, all access- to whatever excess you want. A play on words. A pun if you will, and I will, I already have. A pun is a very valid form of comedy. Also it has two dashes in it. Double dash, like two back to back episodes of Keeping up with the Kardashians. Another pun. The Kardashians. Obviously this show isn't about the Kardashians that is an incredibly entertaining reality show about OJ Simpson's lawyer's family. Obviously a subject worthy of our attention. Most famous is the daughter Kim who, I'm sure all of you would be interested to know that her boutique Dash is booming despite the release of her sex tape in 2007. Go Kimi! Double click. Access. Excess. Too much!!! UCT does not support the release of unsolicited private home videos. All the video material that you see here today has been approved by the South African Censor board.

So, my name is Anne, but you can call me Annie. Although, you probably shouldn't because we barely know each other. Maybe after the show when we are having a drink at the bar, hey, depending on how it goes, you can even call me tonight!! Or you can email me from your HOT MAIL account!!.... That's another pun. Click-access to Annie.

Click – the sound of our times – another allusion – see not the sign but the sound! See the click has given us an all access pass to excess. Click on TV – Living Lohan. Click on cellphone – Bluetooth. Click to upload to YouTube – Ha Kimi! I'll show you, think you're more famous than I am do you? Click click click click.

Excess people. We are living lives of click click click excess! We want our senses to be stimulated. Stimulation. No sir, not that kind of stimulation. Stop that, don't be a naughty nugget! I mean we want sensory overload. We want our senses to be overwhelmed. It's gimme, gimme, more, more, harder harder, faster, faster. Stop that...hmmm. We want sensory overload. There you are looking at me thinking: "Ugh, fine, you showed us the movie, the lights and the sound – but what else?" Well, fine – you will be pleased to know that today, I, your comedian, am a projected hologram. Jip, I am a hologram. Luke I am your father! Okay obviously I am not Luke's father or a hologram that is ridiculous; we didn't have that kind of budget. But we do have three very flat screens...very flat,

made out of cloth! Very cutting edge. No literally, we cut the cloth around the edges - to put it in our cardboard frames that we painted silver. Beat that LG!

click-X-cess! We can't even do one thing at a time anymore. Everything has to be multi-functional, multi-tasking, multi-media. Gone are the days of reading the newspaper while sipping on a cuppa Joe. Imagine you were actually drinking a cu of Joe? Joe- ground up as coffee. That's disgusting. What did poor Joe ever do to anyone? UCT does not support the grounding of human flesh to make coffee. Before you even go to work you click on snooze, click on the T.V, click on the computer, double click on your favourite celeb.com, click on your PVR to click onto MTV, click on your espresso machine, before you've even clicked it's actually Sunday?

In order to really understand where you are going you need to understand where you came from. That is a very true statement. Why? Because a famous person said it! Also you can Google it – click - which means it's very true. Well it all started in June of 1976 of course. When the Television was finally introduced to our country! Suddenly celebrity was accessible, excessively accessible. I mean even the test pattern was awe-inspiring. Click - Beep...shht, I'm watching. Something might happen. Ah, I missed it, the pink just turned brighter. Shht!

TV's edge is access – click – “Ooh, a celebrity in my home...oh Tom, you had me at hallo!” Television allows us to identify with celebrities, form relationships with them, invest in them, and obsess over them. Click channel 1, click 2, click 3, 4, 5, click, click, more, more, more; x-cuss, access, x-cuss, access: My TV, screensaver, background, fridges, t-shirts, pockets... Imagine celebrities where actually living in our pockets....hallo...J'lo, I am not fooled by the rocks that you've got! Okay that was silly, obviously Jennifer Lopez is not actually in my pocket. She could never fit in there, not enough space for her to do her sweet dance moves. Maybe, my back pocket. But these people are a part of our lives. I listen more attentively to Mahendra presenting the news than I do when my best friend from London phones me. We all get a little teary eyed when Jeff votes someone off the Island and I'm sure you can relate when I say that I can't sleep at night when Oubaas and Hilda fight in that little street named after a number.

We are obsessed by images of what we could be, would be, should be, will probably never be because we need a lot more money or until celebrity prosthetic faces become available on the Internet. I should write that down... on my palm pilot! Punner, I say Funner!! Imagine that: Celebrity prosthetic faces available on the internet. . Now you actually can slip into a celebrity. These faces are designed to fit as comfortably as a second skin... which they are!!! Click – Angelina Jolie's lips. Keira Knightly's cheekbones, and ugh I'm feeling wild, out of control, Sarah Jessica Parker's hair!!!

We are consumed by TV, celebrity and the media. And it has made us believe that if what you are doing isn't being documented and watched it is not worthwhile! I mean, has

anyone heard that ad on the radio – “come to our club and dance like nobody’s watching?” How is that a selling point? Why would I want to go to a club where everyone is blindfolded? Someone should always be watching. Example: If two Playboy Bunnies held a wet t-shirt competition in the middle of a forest with nobody there to record it or upload it to You Tube. What is the point? There is none! Why do anything if nobody is watching. Can one playboy bunny blackmail another playboy bunny to win favour with Heff if an episode of the forest scenario was not aired on reality TV? No. What’s the use if it can’t affect the ratings? But should a fully equipped reality TV crew just happen to be strolling in the forest at the time when the playboy bunnies spontaneously started a wet t-shirt competition and then managed to air the footage over and over again on a celebrity TV channel. No that’s worthwhile!!!

That little click has become the most powerful weapon of our time and the lens of a camera made celebrity accessible to us. The public. You and me. The average Joe. Obviously I am not average. I am slightly above average. Also, I think we’ve seen what happens to Joe’s. Little tip: If I were you I would stay away from coffee grinders!

I have reached a level of celebrity where I can’t even pop down to my local shop and grab some milk in peace anymore. I mean just this morning I was standing in the cue. No that will be all thanks. R5, 50 yes I think I’ll pay cash. No I don’t have a My School card. Nope, don’t want one. Bad person! Actually I’m not a bad person; I do all my own charity work. No I don’t want a bag I think I can manage those 500ml. I’ve got these puppies! Okay there she goes to get a bag. Smile you’re on CCTV. Closed Circuit Television Camera. TV, Okay there is a camera on me and I’m on TV. What! I’m on camera? No that’s fine. It’s just for security purposes. Safety first. It’s fine. I wonder what they do with the tapes. What control do I have once they have it on video? What if some crazed fan decides to put it on the internet? Streaming audio? I could be on Go TV right now. Hi mom! Okay, that’s a bit excessive; this is supposed to be for the safety of shop patrons. Feeling a little bit more like Kim Kardashian at the moment, except wearing a lot more clothes, obviously. They could have warned me. You could have warned me and I don’t want a bag. I am totally hideous. I do not have a single brand label or product on me, if someone Googled this image of me, I would die of shame. You bag lady! You’re probably in on it. Trying to keep me here longer to get more footage of me. You just focus on your bag obsession for a bit! I will be back.

Okay let me get out of this mall first. Pay my ticket, oh another camera. Forget the ticket; I’ll just tailgate someone out of here. Okay let me just get back into my little teeny tiny smart car. I feel so safe in this car, hi up there in the Tazz. Okay, need to speed now, this is an emergency. When I am under a dress I have the right to remain fabulous!! Ah! Ah a tour bus. Click click. Wow a lot of cameras. That makes sense. Click click click click. Hi. Hello. Wamkilikile. What was that? Another camera. Law enforcement by camera! Okay what next policemen with cameras on their heads. I mean are they going to lock me up in Photo First until someone bails me out.

Okay I’m home, beep driveway, beep gate, beep door, beep beep beep! Right finally out of the car. If that shop wants to get an all access pass to this then I need to be ready. So

now I'll just choose an appropriate celebrity prosthetic face. Ah, damn, damnsidoodles, end of the month salty crack, Amy Whitehouse it is then. Look, great for costume parties but you don't really want to baby-sit in one of these. Right, now I am ready to get my milk, they tried to make me go to rehab but I said 'noo nooo nooo'. Ah, back at the shop. Obviously you could tell from my excellent miming skills. One of the many things on my CV. Hi just coming to grab my milk I left here. No! No, bag lady, it's not Amy it's me Anne! I'm not really into music. I'm more of an actor, performer, mime artist, mc-er, comedian, dancer. I don't have any plans to bring out an album any time soon. I want to first complete my autobiography... Oh she fainted! Yip I get that all the time, it's because I'm so famous. Oh an autograph! Anything for my fans. Oh my slip! Thanks...humph!!

See cameras are everywhere. We are obsessed with being watched and watching. Obviously my phone is also a camera. Imagine it could just make calls. Ridiculous! Oh photo op! I've actually got mine here today. It's new, upgraded, and smaller for my convenience. There we go. Cute! It came with a pen, let me just show you some of the features. Oh! Broke the screen! That's okay; it should be off, now it will always be off. More. Ah. Great, snapped it in half. Okay that's fine; it should be off at any rate. Now it will always be off.

What we can click – access – excessively is what interests us! I mean there is nothing better than spending some time with the people that matter most to me. My friends and loved ones. Click - Parson's and Nandipa, Click - Ridge and Brooke, Click - Bo and Hope. I can't possibly wait until 6:30 to find out what will happen to them. They have too many ups and downs, trials and tribulations. Their lives are like sands through the hourglass. Not a pun, but a funner reference. Call me a modern Sherlock Holmes, Shirley if you will, but my obsession with TV is forensic.

Music: The Who: 'Who are you'

Exits

T.S.I.
TV SERIES INVESTIGATORS

Characters all played by company

The Timekeeper

The Forensic Expert

The Believer

The Panicker

Did You Knower- D.Y.K

Leader

*Lights up. All characters looking in the same direction, intense, brooding.
Law & Order sound bit plays.*

Panicker I can't take it anymore- what does it all mean, what's going to happen? People's lives hang in the balance here!

Leader I think that we need to go back to the evidence. What do we know for sure?

All pick up various magazines with T.V guides in them.

Timekeeper 6:24

Leader I know, I know. It seems we're just going to have to wait on the final analysis. Right now its just guesswork.

Timekeeper 6:25

Leader Our analyst is on their way. .

Believer From where? *Very dramatically looks in distance* Where have they been? Salem? Horizon Deep? Are they getting us takeaways from Oppikoffie? I do love my lattes just like Paula.

Enter Forensic Expert with Zip-Lock bag

Believer *only one sees who sees Forensic Expert. Haai vriendin!*

D.Y.K Did you know that Paula was recently promoted to fashion and beauty editor for the Hillside Times, that's certainly a step up from trying to get Mnr. Meintjies to even notice her journalistic potential. It just goes to show all it takes is a dash of talent, a generous sprinkling of ambition and of course the garnishing of beauty. That's why she is Paula van der Leq-table.

Panicker De Leq. Delectable. Delicious. Cannibalism. Hannibal. Hannibal Lector. Eating human flesh.
It's so obvious Paula is going to be eaten by a flesh eating creature. Invasions of the Bodysnatchers. Snatch. Guy Ritchie. Madonna. Oh my God. We only have four minutes to save the world!

Timekeeper 6: 27

Leader Pull yourself together man. I haven't seen you this emotional since Ross and Rachel were on a break.

Believer Friends

All characters bow their heads with their right hand on their heart and take a moment of silence

Leader *Still hasn't noticed Forensics guy.* At this stage it's nothing but a waiting game... *Finally see's Forensics* Ah. You're here. Thank God. Have you got anything for us? Anything at all?

Forensic *Holds up a Heat Magazine* Hot of the press. *Nobody Gets it. Starts to open Bag*

Panicker You are going to contaminate the evidence!!
Contamination. Germs. Virus. Uncontrollable loss of life. Body counts mounting up. Outbreak. Renne Rosouw. Thomas Crown Affair. Pierce Brosnan. 007. Halle Berry. Gothica. Theme Song: Behind Blue Eyes. Limp Bizkit. Oh my God, erectile dysfunction.

Forensic Good Point. How silly of me. *Puts on gloves and opens magazine*

Leader I think we have all learnt a valuable lesson here. You can never keep too safe on the job. Always remember your protective gear. Whether it is a vest, gloves or even a shower cap. Never leave home without your rubber derivative. Brand power, helping you buy better.

Timekeeper 6.28

Forensic *Reading from the Magazine* Tonight Ridge stumbles into his lounge because he tripped over an object in the dark due to his not switching on the light as a consequence of his absentmindedness over his preoccupations with his love life, only to find Brooke standing there awaiting his return, she too is distracted and hence unable to illuminate the space in which she stands. They talk about the possibility of discussing the things they need to air in conversation.

Leader That's a bold statement to make

Believer I think it's beautiful. Because they have two children together and it would be amazing if they could just sort it all out and live happily ever after.... I mean all the men in the family care about Brooke's happiness, particularly as its part of their divorce settlements. Stephanie however as the ageing matriarch in a world obsessed with youth might disagree

D.Y.K It's so obvious that they are going to end up together. Ridge is an earth sign and Brooke is a water sign and water over time changes the very shape of the earth. Which means that eventually they will just evolve around each other. All they need from us is our support and some time.

Panicker Earth, water ...mud... what does that mean?

Forensic There's something else.

*Shows on screen a picture of Robert Whitehead /Barker from Isidingo
None of them react. He circles his eye where there is no eye-patch.*

Leader Oh my God where is Barker's eye-patch!?

Believer It's a miracle he can see

D. Y. K Didn't you know- He recovered his sight in one eye soon after an attempted assassination by one of his many enemies that he's gathered over the years of his plots, schemes and manipulations. He then continued the elaborate charade in order to gain further intelligence about who betrayed him and made him vulnerable to attack...

Panicker Barker- woof

Forensics Beware of the dog

Believer	Electric fencing
D.Y.K	Live current
Leader	Hazard
Forensics	Dukes of Hazard
Believer	Daisy Duke
D.Y.K	Jessica Simpson
Leader	These Boots Are Made for Walking
Panicker	Cowboy Boots
Forensics	Save a horse, ride a cowboy
D.Y.K	Rodeo
Believer	Texas
Leader	Dallas
Believer	The screwings.
D.Y.I	And the doings
Forensics	Of the Ewings.
All	Who shot J.R?!
Timekeeper	6:30

Music: Dallas theme song

A spotlight comes up on a TV remote lying on a block. In slow motion they all move towards it.

Blackout

PATTI PATTTER

Patti with an "I"

Welcome to a night with the stars. My name is Patti Patter. Patti with an "I", no silly not those Eyes I have two of those. And I need them to look at the stars...because they will put a twinkle in your eyes. No I mean the letter. And not the letter you post to a friend or loved one, you can't put my eyes in those silly because then it would be drenched in blood because my eyes are in it. Welcome. Tonight are going live for the first time ever with a real live studio audience here with us. Yes folks live, alive like you and me *pinch*. Ouch! Alive. Alive like human beings, alive like arts and culture in our country! Live like a live wire. If you enjoy the show please feel free to clap...the clap not just a venereal disease, also something you do to show your appreciation. I mean clap, like when you put your hands together and take them apart and repeat that I few time.

Name the Celebrity Below:

(Picture of Anne as Patti)

- a- Patti PatterPatti with an "I".
- b- Oprah Winfrey
- c- Liewe Heksie

First sms charged at R5-00!

Terms and Conditions apply.

With an additional administrative fee of R399-00.

Thereafter sms's charged at R799-00

And tonight on E. And by that I don't mean the narcotic. Silly, silly, silly. Because that's technically illegal and if you should need help please phone a helpline near you. I also did not actually mean to say E in the first place....because where are channel C...a far better channel to choose mean merely another station of equal calibre, We certainly don't want to denigrate other stations and cause a liability suit against us. We certainly don't want that...we are a fledgling new station on television and that would certainly destroy us.

Alright enjoy your film tonight and then come right back, back where you belong....not just a song by Boyzone. That's all from me Patti Patter, Patti with an I, the letter, although I have two real eyes....which I am very thankful for.

Long pause

Ah we seem to be experiencing some technical difficulties. But I assure you our technicians are aware of the problem and are working on it. It's going to take longer than I initially anticipate; it might take much longer than I initially anticipated. I didn't foresee this happening on my first day.

Keep them entertained.

So read any good books lately? Not that you would, because we encourage the consumption of television media and not the written one, we need you to consume, consume, consume. We need those ratings. I don't want you reading, that's silly. you should be watching...watching all the time and never ever change channels while we are experiencing tech difficulties, that will be detrimental to our ratings. Because we need a strong viewer ship in order to make it in this industry and not lose the billions of Rands that our investors have poured into our new station That is why I am here entertaining to you, I need to prove my worth to the station otherwise I will lose my job that is paying for my mothers hip replacement...oops I shouldn't have said that was just the producer shouting in my ear....shut up...no really shut up...shut up....speak bitch goddammit! Ah that wasn't very nice...keep them entertained.

Horse walks in to the bar, barman says why the long face? That is funny. You see, when a human being has a long face you, like Celine Dion, you call them a horse face. Also it references the barman's relationship with his patrons. You know bleeding hearts syndrome. It is a pun if you will, and I will, I already have. Not that the horses heart is actually bleeding, because that would shift the joke away from an innocent pun to a more macabre joke of blood guts and gore, which would not be suitable for a pg rated prime time slot, like the one I am presenting now and then you as viewers might feel the need to contact the BCCSA. That's the Broadcasting complaints commission of SA, who would no doubt then descend upon this fledgling channel like the hammer of god. And shut us down, faster than Jacob Zuma would pick up weaponry and be prepared to kill...um shilywam, not just a catchy tune but also a manifesto promoting violence.

Two drums fall off a cliff, 'dedoef'. Okay not jokes. So seen any good movies lately, of course, on our channel, that's what you should be doing now. But instead I'm here. Making things up on the spot. That's called improv. That's what trained actors know how to do. I am not a trained actress. One min they say, sixty seconds...of hell. And I didn't graduate top of my class. Most continuity presenters can hold a pose for 60 seconds. I can only manage 20seconds. Let me show you. *Attempts to hold pose for 20 seconds*. That's why am not actually on E...although some E would be great right now. Oh don't panic. Yelling. Yelling. More yelling. It's not constructive. I don't like being yelled at. Patti Patter with an 'I' does not like being yelled at!! * takes out ear piece and stomps on it *

That's a lot of yelling. Patti with an "I" does not like yelling. No, don't go to music video. I can sing. I sang in the choir.

Starts singing 'Morning has broken'

Blackout

MUSIC VIDEO

Onscreen music video – Remixed version of ‘Knick Knack Paddy Whack’

CELEBRITY VOYERISM

Enters stage reading Heat Magazine

So did you hear celebrities are protesting against the paparazzi? Now that is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard. The paparazzi are just trying to make a living, feed their families! And thank god they’re doing it, because there is nothing better than a little voyeuristic treat at the beginning of every month. Ah, Giselle.

P3 Buying underwear

P4 Eating ice-cream, better be careful or you won’t fit into your underwear Gisellie!

P5 Watching a movie with Leo

P6 Doing palates’ ...bitch!

P7 Driving your SUV

P8 You look horrible in these pictures, ha-ha! You’re named after a deer, that’s weird! I feel so much better about my life!!

The camera is an incredibly powerful tool folks. Just look at little Jamie Lynn Spears, Britney’s 16year old sister. If it wasn’t for her I would not know how to advise adolescents on how to deal with unplanned pregnancy. But thanks to Jamie Lynn I can now tell them...throw a baby shower and sell the pictures to Hello magazine. Thank you Jamie!

Oh I want my privacy; the paps are too invasive, think about the children. Our children. but, but, but if you hand me a cheque of \$11 000 I will give you the right to pictures of my newborn twins!!! Click - Fresh from the womb!

Brangelina! Okay I am sorry but I have a very intimate relationship with Brangelina. They live in my pockets...Hey guys, oh no funny business with J’lo....okay that is a bit excessive, 3 such fabulous celebrities in one pocket. Obviously, obviously I would not put Brangelina in the same pocket as J’lo, her real name is Jennifer and that would bring up all kinds of emotions for Brad. I don’t want the Tomb Raider popping a cap in my ass. Congrats on the twins guys! Adopt me!

You agree with me right? There is nothing wrong with a little scandal rag for our reading pleasure. A little sensationalism never hurt anyone. Something that gives us an all access pass about people we care about, invest in, form relationships with, and obsess over. I mean some celebs are complaining that the tabloids are addictive, like drug pushers. I am sorry but imagine a whole globe going cold turkey! Nopesidoodles.

Oh my god, it is you! Ladies and gentlemen we have our own celebrity in the audience tonight. I didn't see you there. Did you know he was here? Oh you did and you have remained so calm this whole time, jokes on me!! You thought you could just sneak in without your camouflage. Please! The place is rife with the paps. The last time I saw you, you won the Golden Globe and that Oscar and what was that other little one? Oh yes, The Noble Peace Prize! You know it is really fascinating that you are here, because just this morning I was reading this article about you. *Onscreen a photo of the audience member appears and it has been photo shopped onto a scandalous tabloid magazine cover.*

Look not your best cover. I have seen a lot better, many, many. But this is great though.

You got to think Jamie Lynn. Turn this around. Make this work for you. I mean I completely understand I get this type of stuff all the time. I suggest getting some people in, get some photo's of you at a rehab clinic, something really cute like, harmony or serenity. Oh, I know The Little Rascal's Tree house!! Then obviously start some motivational speaking. Then definitely build a school, great photo-op with a shovel.

Adopt a kid, several kids. Middle East, Vietnam, Cambodia. You can name them anything achingly trendy, Maddox, Zahara, Shilo, Pax, Knox...just please don't name them Vivian!!! That is a ridiculous celebrity child name. Go on Oprah. Don't jump on the couch though, that's been done. Maybe just throw some furniture around. Throw 'Opie' around that will get you some attention. Of course you will need to join the UN. You'll start traveling as a Goodwill Ambassador and drag your kids along wherever you go. I

mean this time next year you can be on the cover of Forbes Magazine. Ladies and gentlemen the power of celebrity! Harnessing those tabloids and making excessive access work for you. If you see this man out tonight by him a beer, don't though because he just got out of rehab. UCT does not support alcoholism!

Blackout

CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE BY COMPANY

Music: Chemical Brothers: 'Hey Boy, Hey Girl'

TESSA TECHI
Techi to the Stars. Red carpet Ready.

Music: Darron Hayes: 'Popular'

Enters stage in a large white box similar to the cubes seen on stage

I didn't see you there! I was incognito. Yip, got to always be on guard for the paps.
That's celebrity speak for paparazzi – it's Italian. Tessa Tessa, show us your good side.
Who you with? What are you wearing? Shht!

I'm just trying to take a break here. I've had a hard day. But that's what it's like on the
set of reality TV. Anything can happen. Because it's real. R-E-A-L. A-L for all.

Tessa Tessa. That's amazing. That's fantastic. How did you think of that? Only someone
as fantastic and amazing as you could think of that?

Thank you.

Who are you? Tell us now. We can't take it anymore. And do you have a signature
move?

Of course.

Tessa Techi. Techi to the Stars. Red carpet Ready.

See it all started when I was very young. I needed some direction. A philosophy. An
ethos. So I came up with it. The secret! Shht! whatever you project into the universe will
come back to you.

I want to be a techi to the stars.

On reality TV.

Because it's real.

For all.

Happiness & health.

Opportunity to travel.

Love & passion

Higher cheekbones

Fast cars.

Nice clothes.

Bottles of bub in the club.

I want someone to slip me on like a brand new white T. And I'll hug their body tighter
than my favourite jeans.

They'll be Applebottom jeans and boots with the fur. The whole damn club will be
looking at her. I hit the flo, that's when you know, that Shorty got low..low...

And then I got the call from a fairly unknown at the time.

Picture of Donald Trump and Tessa appear onscreen.

You wouldn't have known him back then. He said to me. –Tessa! Tessa! You are amazing, fantastic I want you, I need you--- I said Donald. Donmeister. Trumpenator. Trump didi Trump. There is nothing anyone on this earth can do about your hair! But I could help you compensate in other ways. For instance if you were in a reality TV series, people would notice you. Take you seriously. He did it! I had achieved my goal. It was time to move on. He said, but Tessa I am your apprentice, you taught me everything. I said: Donnie. Donmeister. Trumpenator. You're fired... I thought of that. That was my catchphrase. I didn't get credited though. I'm not upset about it. I'm just saying.

Other people needed my help too.

Pictures of the Osborne's and Tessa appear onscreen.

Ozzy wasn't coping. So I said to Sharon. Old Shazzy. The Shazneister. Sha Sha Sha. Leave the kids to me. I said to little Jack – he was not so little back then. I said: Jack, you need to get out more, climb a beanstalk. I said to Kelly. Kelster. Kelstinator. Call C Vita. You should sing professionally and follow in your father's footsteps...don't eat bats though, that is unhealthy, they spread disease.

So I got another call, from Paris and Nicci. They said: "Tessie Tessie, help us." Our lives are so complicated. I said: girls, Paris, Nicci, what you need to do is get to your roots. You need to lead a simple life."

Picture of Paris Hilton, Nicole Richie and Tessa onscreen.

I thought of that. That was my catchphrase. Didn't get credited though. Not upset about it. I'm just saying. Those two girls were much wilder back then. It was before Nicci had a baby and Paris discovered self-help books. But I am not ashamed to admit that I was out of control. We started hanging out with the wrong crowd. There was a lot of bub in the club. They were into having sex, they weren't into making love. No one gave me a hug. Things were getting rough. I came up with those lyrics. Didn't get credited though. Didn't get a cent, not even 50.

And then one night they introduced me to Puff. My Puff Daddy, the Pufster. Puffenator. Puffaddor, don't be ridiculous he's not a snake.

Picture of Tessa with Puff the Magic Dragon.

Tessa! Tessa! That's amazing. That's fantastic. Only someone as amazing and fantastic as you could have an inter-special-relationship!

Thank you. But it wasn't easy. My magic dragon wanted to live by the sea. And I was losing sight of my dreams, hopes and ambitions. And I was so hungry all the time. That's when I realized I was the Biggest Loser.

Picture of Tessa as extremely overweight

I thought of that. That was my catchphrase. I didn't get credited though. I'm not upset about it. I'm just saying.

Fortunately I was offered sanctuary by some of my friends. People with real family values. A home. People who had their morals the right way round.

Picture of Tessa with The Girls of the Playboy Mansion

Holly and Bridgette, my little Kendra, thank you. They were there for me, just like I was there for them when they were having the wet t-shirt competition in the forest

Tessa! Tessa! That's amazing. That's fantastic. That you happened to be strolling in the forest at the time the girls spontaneously burst into a wet t-shirt competition!

Thank you

Tessa. Tessa, do your signature move.

I was sitting with the girls one day and I realized I need to pull myself together. So I did what anyone in my position would do. I brought out a fitness DVD and a weight loss programme.

Picture of Tessa with a very well toned and muscular body

Offers started rolling in, but I needed to make some choices, I was burning out. Tyra called me up. "Tessa! Tessa come on the show, you could be a model." No Tyra, I do not want to be America's next Top Model. I thought of that. That was my catchphrase. I didn't get credited though. I'm not upset about it. I'm just saying.

I said Tyra: That is a programme for amateurs. Give those homely girls a chance! I'm more Fear Factor than X-Factor." I thought of that. That was my catchphrase. I didn't get credited though. I'm not upset about it. I'm just saying.

And then I got the call of a lifetime. They said Tessa, come dancing. I said well what else do I have to do? They said you only need to dance. I said I will only do it if it's Strictly Come Dancing. Give those homely girls a chance!

They paired me up with some aspiring tapper at the time, some Michael Flatscreen fellow. I helped him as much as I could. I am not saying it wasn't tough. He said: Tessa, I am the Lord of the Dance and I said: Lord Michael, I am the Baroness of the Boogy. But

it wasn't easy. There were times he came into my dance space, but big girls don't cry. I said to him: Flatfoot, spaghetti arms. Sometimes he got hungry eyes. But I already had the time of my life with Puffy and I never felt that way before.

Voice over plays: "Tessa, come to the third floor immediately. There's been a toilet burst! There's shit everywhere!"

'Oooga chakka, ooga chakka." Oh, I forgot its tribal council.

Picture of Jeff Probst and Tessa

I said to him, Jeff you have to vote someone out every week. It's a game about strategy.

Tessa picks up a toilet plunger and starts climbing back in her box and slowly starts leaving the stage.

I said Jeff; you got to learn to Outwit. Outlast. Outplay. I thought of that. That was my catchphrase. I didn't get credited though. I'm not upset about it. I'm just saying.

Blackout

Reality TV show: YOU'VE BEEN TERRIFIED

Onscreen

CLOSING MONOLOGUE

That is great TV. When that guy clicks there's someone in his car he's going to have a heart-attack. How much further are they going to push it? Gimme, more, more, more!
Harder, harder, faster, faster. Buy it, use it, break it, fix it, trash it, change it, melt, upgrade it.

What we can click-access-excessively has changed the way we see our world. You have to live like Big Brother and your little sister, your neighbour, your neighbour's neighbour, everyone who owns a TV, camera, satellite, cellphone, computer or subscription to Heat magazine is watching. Click, click, click. The sound of our times.

It has become excessive, there are no rules. And that is horrifying, terrifying, disgusting, immoral, an invasion of privacy. It's eroding the very fabric of our society and we love it! We want more. The click gives us an all access pass to everything we could be would be should be might finally be when celebrity prosthetic faces become available on the internet. Click. Oh, special on Elizabeth Taylor's eyes. Vintage! And now thanks to the click anyone holds the potential to be the next big obsession.

Company impersonating paparazzi enter the stage and start taking pictures of comedian.

Music plays: Madonna: 'Vogue' (remixed version)

Whole company enter into a choreographed dance piece

Blackout

END CREDITS PLAY ONSCREEN

Music: Britney Spears: 'Gimme more'

Whole company bows

CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE PIECE

Whole company does final dance piece & images of celebrities flash onscreen

Music: Billy Joel: 'We didn't start the fire'

Blackout

THE END

Prisch Productions

“Never send a human to do a machine’s job.” – Agent Smith, The Matrix.

As mentioned earlier, Alicia Price and I have developed our work under the brand name Prisch Productions- The word ‘Prisch’ originating out of our surnames Hirsch (my surname) and Price (Alicia’s surname). The logo and mascot for our production company, Heidi Hyena, is a pink laughing hyena with blue flames emerging from her body. As with the clothing range Laugh It Off, Prisch Productions attempts to comically subvert the notion of branding and simultaneously ironically illustrate Nano-Cultures management of lifestyle and identity.

Ultimately Prisch Productions and the project click-X-cess deliver social comic commentary as a means of coming to terms with Nano-Culture. Nano-Comedy has the potential to assist critique and comment on contemporary identity constructions that I perceive to now be well constructed brands. By exploring and exposing these brands of identities, their features and their mechanisms (speed, connectivity, isolation, branding and *Shadenfreude*) through Nano-Comedy; it allows both natives and tourists to this culture to potentially discover a means of unthreateningly coming to terms with this, because if we blink we might miss it!

