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Literary and artistic expression in situation comedy : self-reflexivity and the surreal in "Green Acres"

Patrick Ferguson Michael

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Patrick Ferguson Michael entitled "Literary and artistic expression in situation comedy : self-reflexivity and the surreal in "Green Acres"." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication.

Barbara A. Moore, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Herbert Howard, Paul Ashdown

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Literary and Artistic Expression in Situation Comedy: Self-Reflexivity and the Surreal in "Green Acres"

A Thesis

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Patrick Ferguson Michael

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ABSTRACT

Metafiction is characteristic of post-modernism. Few have examined meta-television and its use of the literary device self-reflexivity, which occurs when television acknowledges other television literature or is aware of the tv industry apparatus that creates itself.

This study examined one series, "Green Acres" and investigated the question: What are the roles of self-reflexivity and self-reference?

A textual analysis was performed to examine the characters, setting, themes, and dialogue in order to identify self-reflexive techniques. This study reviewed more than 150 episodes and considered other studies of cinematic and televisual reflexivity, the state of television comedy during the 1960s, and the transitions that affected the genre.

The writers of "Green Acres" recognized television as a cultural force and were aware that audiences had consumed years of television. By combining the awareness of television with a surrealistic perspective, the creators of "Green Acres" put forth a world that was illogical and hallucinatory as if it were a statement about the world we live in.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

". . . It does look a lot more like Dali than Grant Wood's 'American Gothic.'"

(Stone, 1965, p. 21)

As television begins its second quinquagenarium, it has left a history that now allows for an examination of the evolution of the television text and its literary characteristics of self-reflexivity and intertextuality. Scholars might consider these to be factors of meta-television.

The term "meta" was believed to have first been popularized by Aristotle who chose to use the Greek prefix in the title for his work following Physics. Therefore "metaphysics" was to mean what came "after" or "beyond" physics. Thus "meta" has come to mean a "level beyond."

Over the last century academics realized that this concept opened whole new vistas for disciplines thought to have run their course. Subjects like ethics and

literary criticism became rejuvenated. For example "meta-ethics" became the study of adhering to an ethical system. "Meta-criticism," the criticism of criticism, has become a legitimate field of scholarship.

Therefore to speak of meta-television means to speak of television about television or television's perception of itself. The concept of self-referencing was called "America's latest social and pop-intellectual trend" by The New Republic in the late 1980s (p. 17). It can be seen in the media's growing coverage of the media. In 1987 a Pulitzer Prize was given for the first time to a journalist whose beat was covering the press. The trend can also be experienced in recent television programs such as "Murphy Brown" and "It's Garry Shandling's Show."

The frequent examples of meta-television and its crafty self-reflexive devices today have been present throughout television's first fifty years of development.

The Purpose of the Study

Assuming a reflexive position means realizing and recognizing the audience's knowledge of the process of producing a story; therefore to be reflexive is not only to be self-aware, but to be aware of what aspects of self to reveal to the audience with the knowledge that the audience understands the process and the purpose of

the reflexive self awareness.

This process is how viewers read a television program by interpreting the devices that make up television's naturalness. Television writers have to be aware of what devices the audience uses to unfold a narrative. For example, the audience can decode television's naturalness by interpreting wipes as a short time passage and a fade or a dissolve as a longer passage of time.

Because metafiction is an attribute of post-modernism, it is significant to examine its manifestation through a popular post-modern medium. Few critics have documented meta-television in a scholarly fashion and fewer still have organized and classified the way television texts are self-reflexive and self-referential.

This study will be a textual analysis of "Green Acres" through a literary and artistic perspective. By examining characters, setting, themes, and dialogue, self-reflexive devices and their uses can be identified. The research question this study will address is: What are the roles of self-reflexivity and self-reference in "Green Acres"? By textual and character analysis within the narrative, the usage of such techniques can be tracked on a seasonal basis which will demonstrate forms of usage.

Methodology

This study will examine one series, "Green Acres," and identify the intertextual plane within the television landscape and track the role and usage of self-reflexive devices within the evolution of the series. This paper will consider other studies of cinematic and televisual reflexivity, the state of television comedy during the 1960s, and the transitions that affected the genre.

The methodology will be analytical/interpretive. The study begins with a historical view of the series. There is also an examination of television narrative's relationship to the viewer. After a review of how meta-fictional devices operate within a text, they will be identified in the series by using a literary point of view as established by previous film and television analysis. One hundred and sixty episodes were analyzed. One episode will be examined in more detail to serve as the prototypical example to demonstrate "Green Acres'" self-reflexivity.

The basis for examining television's self-reflexivity can be found in studies dealing with the narrative structure of film and the way that information is presented in a story. It is the modes of film discourse that identify reflexivity. Within the narrative there is a question of how coercive is the relationship between the audience

and the players? How is the spectator encouraged to participate?

The Series

"Green Acres" premiered September 15, 1965 and lasted for six seasons with 170 color episodes. It was the third and final chapter in a trilogy of rural situation comedies produced by Paul Henning, beginning with "The Beverly Hillbillies" and continuing with "Petticoat Junction." The city slick characters of Oliver and Lisa Douglas were first introduced on "Petticoat Junction" and appeared in several episodes of that program before they were spun off to their own show.

The factor that most characterized the program and lead to its popularity is the use of what has been described by Nick at Night promotions, among others, as a surrealistic sense of humor (Stone, 1966 and Marc 1984). It is the use of self-reflexivity which sometimes contributes to the show's surrealism. This brand of humor was obviously appreciated by the viewing public because "Green Acres" was among Nielsen's 20 top-rated series for the program's first four seasons.

To describe the program as surrealistic refers to the artistic movement that took place among writers, painters, and later filmmakers, after World War I. The

movement had generally been interpreted as open to a bent perception of forms and symbols. Andre Breton used the word depaysement, the power to disorient. The idea of "Green Acres" and surrealism will further be addressed in Chapter 3.

"Green Acres" is about a New York City attorney, Oliver Wendell Douglas and his Hungarian-born wife Lisa. The couple move to the country so that Oliver can fulfill his life-long dream of becoming a farmer. Reluctantly Lisa follows and ironically has no problem coping with country living. Oliver, however, is constantly annoyed by the residents of Hooterville and ends up losing his patience.

The zany Hootervillians include: the Douglases' hired hand Eb Dawson, who acts as a pseudo-offspring calling the Douglases Mom and Dad; Mr. Haney, a con man who sold Oliver the farm; Hank Kimble, the absent-minded county agent; Sam Drucker, owner of the general store; Alf and Ralph Monroe, the brother/sister carpenters who constantly work on the Douglases' house without accomplishing anything; Fred and Doris Ziffel, pig farmers and the "parents" of Arnold, the pig who likes to watch television, among other things.

In the 1960s Paul Henning's name was synonymous with rural comedies. A native of the Midwest, Henning began writing for radio and made a successful transition to television. At station KMBC in Kansas City Henning was

a singer and came up with a program idea for Associated Grocers. "I wrote it. Another fellow and I sang. We were the Associated Grocers, and we would sing parodies of popular songs, which I didn't know was against the law. That was breaking into radio writing the hard way (Winship, 1988, p. 61)!"

Henning's first major break came when he submitted an unsolicited radio script for "Fibber McGee and Molly." After a year with the show in Chicago, he moved to California and worked for radio shows starring Joe E. Brown and Rudy Vallee. In 1942 he landed a job with George Burns and Gracie Allen. He wrote for Burns and Allen for ten years which included the crossover to television. Like many writers, producing was his a dream because that role would lead to more control over a script. Henning was given an opportunity to produce and write for Dennis Day, an offer that Burns couldn't match because he and his brother produced "Burns and Allen." Henning also wrote for a Ray Bolger television series and created "The Bob Cummings Show" (or "Love that Bob" as it is known in syndication). After a brief stint writing films for Universal, including the Doris Day and Rock Hudson vehicle "Lover Come Back," which was a behind-the-scenes look at a Madison Avenue advertising agency, Henning returned to television with an idea for a hillbilly comedy. After the established successes of Henning's series "The Beverly

Hillbillies" and "Petticoat Junction," then CBS president James Aubrey put in another order for a Henning product.

Jay Sommers, who had written several episodes of "Petticoat Junction," showed Henning the scripts to "Granby's Green Acres," a radio program Sommers had done with Bea Benaderet and Gale Gordon. The premise of this show was the exact opposite of "The Beverly Hillbillies." Once it was produced "Green Acres" provided a nonsensical or surreal element. "I used to be summoned to CBS meetings, and they would say, 'Can you tone it down?' Henning said, Jay Sommers and Dick Chevillat were writing the show, and I said, 'Listen, as long as the ratings stay up, leave it alone (p. 65).'"

There is minimal biographical information published on the two writers. Because both men have died, this researcher found it necessary to contact Barbara Sommers and Mildred Chevillat, their respective wives.

A press release biography written in 1969 by an unknown author begins:

> When Jay Sommers was 7-years-old, his step father bought a 160 acre farm in Greendale, New York. By the time Sommers was 9, his step father went broke. The farming operation had been a disaster but the memory of those two years on the farm were to stay with Jay Sommers.

Sommers was born in New York City and studied chemical engineering at the City College of the City of New York. He "drifted" into radio writing, with such credits as "Duffy's Tavern," "Alan Young Show," "Danny Kaye," "Joan

Davis," and "Granby's Green Acres." "Granby's" was broadcast on the CBS Radio Network during the summer of 1950.

His television credits included "Amos and Andy," and "The Great Gildersleeve," and seven years as head writer with "Ozzie and Harriet." In 1964 he was hired by Paul Henning as writer and producer of "Petticoat Junction."

Dick Chevillat was also born in New York and started in radio making the transition to television. His radio credits included writing for Rudy Vallee and Ray Singer. Television credits included "It's a Great Life," and the "Phil Harris and Alice Fay Show."

In the late 1950s what has now become known as the "golden years" of television were coming to an end as television programming entered a more mature stage of existence by shedding its wholesome look and altering its few of the world. Genres were already splitting into subgenres, shows were creating spinoffs, and television viewing grew into the most popular pastime.

"The rural situation comedy on television originated with "The Real McCoys" on ABC (October 3, 1957), (Hamamoto, 1989, p. 53). "McCoys" then moved to CBS where "The Andy Griffith Show" premiered in 1960. These shows, combined with "Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C." and the Henning trilogy became the staples for CBS sitcom programming. Despite its immense popularity with the viewing audience, this programming

fare was critized for being too lowbrow.

Network schedules in the 1950s were dominated by the Western. Situation comedies, having developed from radio, tended to be portrayals of the typical American middle-class family. Soon these domesticoms lead the way to the fantasy situation comedies. Families became more bizarre (e.g. "The Munsters" and "The Addams Family") and the supernatural became a hook among suburban households (e.g. "My Favorite Martian," "I Dream of Jeannie" and "Bewitched").

Television was already described as a vast wasteland in the early 1960s because of what was viewed as eroding quality. Critics often pointed to the success of "The Beverly Hillbillies" to make their case. Television had reached a level of banality and was accused of pandering to the lowest common denominator; hence quantity in ratings ruled over quality of product. Consider the simplistic triteness of "Petticoat Junction" and "Gilligan's Island."

The late 1960s not only saw an evolution in the situation comedy, but in comedy programming in general. The traditional variety shows, which were the first genre to create the spin-off, were beginning to transform into something more up-to-date rather than a throwback to vaudeville. "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" adopted "a decidedly controversial, anti-establishment, politically topical tone that was appropriate to the new audience but quite different from anything else on television (Castleman

and Podrazik, 1982, p. 192)"--that is, until "Laugh-In" premiered in 1967. "'Laugh-In's' frantic structure, slightly risque jokes, and many running gags set the show apart from everything else on television and injected life into a format that had seemed catatonic (Castleman and Podrazik, 1982, p. 198)."

Also among the changing faces of television comedy was the hyper-colorized "Batman." This program introduced a camp sense of humor and utilized superimpositions of onomatopoeia, colorful costumes, and awkward camera angles. However, one program of the 1960s comedic movement kept the attention of the critics and received several awards: "Get Smart," with its spoof of the super spy motif. It is only befitting that "Green Acres" would come about in an era of experimental comedic successes.

Programmers were trying to attract an audience that was younger (or at least youth oriented) and more sophisticated. This seemed to translate into having a gimmick or an extra element to lift a show out of its predicted format. Audiences had to have an awareness of what these programs were alluding to. For example viewers of "Get Smart" needed to be aware of the images and formulas familiar to James Bond, "Man from U.N.C.L.E.," and "Wild, Wild West." Audiences also had to be familiar with the Beatles in order to understand "The Monkees." Without knowledge of the comic book, "Batman's" art direction would

be unjustified. By utilizing the comedic devices of camp, spoof, parody, and satire, programmers attempted to raise the standards of comedy television while attracting audiences.

In "Green Acres" there is a cultural juxtaposition of a sophisticated city lifestyle within the confines of a rural hamlet and there are fantastic and supernatural occurrences combined with the characters' incongruous knowledge of the electronical apparatus which has created them. This unnatural combination creates a surrealistic reality for the viewer, who is not merely a voyeur, but an active participant in the reading and interpretation of the program. The "Green Acres" audience has to be familiar with other television fare as well as the folkloric tale of the cityslicker in the country.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section addresses the spectator's role in reading a television program. A displacement, either by pulling in or distancing the spectator, is crucial to creating interplay. The second section examines self-reflexivity as a form of interplay between text and reader. Literary matters such as intertextuality and self-reference are contrasted with self-reflexivity to better define reflexivity's role and to identify the devices that undermine a writer's own text.

The research on self-reflexivity is rooted in the ideas of the French film theorists. While scholars have done a thorough job identifying and defining meta-television, few have studied its role within the narrative. The concept of a story within a story has existed as long as storytelling. After the creation of visual recording, this concept began to be addressed by film scholars by way of theatrical criticism.

French film theorists have also played a part in defining the relationship of the audience as reader. Contrasting evidence has been put forth on how the spectator

is brought closer into the narrative and how a text may distance a viewer.

Section I: The Spectator's Relationship

Because it is the action of recognition on the part of the spectator that makes a work self-reflexive, many have theorized on the relationship between viewer and narrative.

Christian Metz (1987) provided theories on film narrative and the spectator's role. Metz defined narrative, which can be experienced both in literature and film as a closed discourse that proceeds by unrealizing a temporal sequence of events; that is, once a narrative is perceived to be a narrative, it is removed from reality. The spectator-created unity which gives continuity to the narrative is the diegesis. Metz also described this as the sum of the film's denotation; or the diegesis as the narration itself, but also the fictional space and time dimensions implied in and by the narrative.

Viewers of "Green Acres" understand and accept the format and codes of situation comedy. For example characters became familiar to the audience, the narrative is broken-up by commercial interruptions, and there was a closure of situation.

Nick Davis (1985) pointed out that traditional French

film theorists have seen the spectator's ability to supply narrative continuity as essential to the functions of the diegesis and conventional cinema. Communicating a story not only depends on the images shown but also how they are to be understood in their denoted aspect. The diegetic effect is a basic element on which all narrative cinema relies.

The denoted aspects of "Green Acres" not only include such mechanics as wipes and cuts within a familiar format, but also include the characteristics that construct the fiction.

Wolfgang Iser (1974) stated that the reader or viewer's faculties are activated by the text, enabling the reader to recreate the world that is presented. The product of this creative activity is what might be called the virtual dimension of the text, which endows the narrative with its reality. It is the coming together of the text and the imagination. Iser went further to identify "gaps of indeterminacy" found in any text. These gaps are unwritten parts of a narrative that must be filled in by the creative imagination of the reader, which thus evokes participation. For example, consider Lisa's complicated word play veiled by a Hungarian accent. The viewer must translate her lines before they are understood.

Sharon Buzzard (1988) took Metz's concept of "unrealization," which has the spectator interact with

the denotative images of film, therefore becoming more symbolic, and Iser's concept of "realization," which depended on the contributions of the spectator to fill gaps with connotative and symbolic capacities in language. Buzzard stated that although the terminology seems to imply an opposite process, actually both theories rely on a displacement of characters, setting, and action of a film or novel. This opens a private mental world inside the individual viewer or reader.

With this in mind, Buzzard presented a model from the final shot of "Singin' in the Rain" that demonstrated the bridge over the gap of reality and imagination. The final shot shows the faces of Don and Kathy, played by Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds, dissolve into another shot of their faces. The camera pulls back to show them standing in front of a billboard advertising "Singin' in the Rain," starring Don Lockwood and Kathy Selden, the fictional characters. The scene shows how viewers are confronted with the indeterminate line between their real world and their imaginary creation. By identifying gaps in a reflexive film, Buzzard showed how the reader is provoked into establishing the connection between perception and thought.

This idea of connecting perception and thought is used by the authors of "Green Acres" to create humor. For example, Lisa admits to having the ability to do

impersonations of Zsa Zsa Gabor. Viewers witness the imaginary world meeting reality in respect to the diegetic join with "Petticoat Junction." The characters who reside at the Shady Rest are part of the reality of Hooterville, yet Eb and Arnold, the pig, enjoy watching "Petticoat Junction" on television.

Seymour Chatman (1978) examined nonnarrated discourse. He said to understand the concept of the narrator's voice or absence of voice, one should consider three issues: the interrelation of the narrative transaction, the meaning of "point of view" and its relation to voice, and the nature of acts of speech and thought as they relate to the class of acts in general. Chatman refers to Wayne Booth's "implied author" which is reconstructed by the reader from the narrative. The implied author is not the narrator but the principle from which the narrator is invented. The implied author establishes the norms of the narrative but has no voice, no means of communicating, and therefore tells us nothing. Chatman also examined the implied reader which is presupposed by the narrative itself. Both the implied author and implied reader are always present. However, just as there may or may not be a narrator, there may or may not be a narratee. The narrator-character is one device in which the implied author informs the real reader how to perform as implied reader. In narratives without explicit narratees, such as with "Green Acres."

the position of the implied reader can only be implied and is understood as the spectator.

Also consider the reader/spectator perceptions. Thomas Leitch (1986) has discussed fictional discourse and the degree of commitment at the level of its implicata.

> Fictional stories are . . . committed at level of their implicated propositions, insofar as they commit themselves to the truth of any propositions. The audience for most novels and films, that is, is less concerned with their implicated propositions than with the way in which these propositions are implicated (p. 194).

In other words, audiences allow themselves to be taken in by accepting the make believe of Hooterville.

Because narrative is fundamentally cultural, it follows suit that television, as a story-telling appliance, is predominantly narrational in its mode. Chatman (1978) further defined narrative as a sense-making mechanism through two dimensions. The syntagmatic is the dimension which links events rationally according to the laws of cause and effect. The paradigmatic dimension involves narrative taking character and settings to make a nontemporal sense of them that acts as a unifying agent upon the syntagmatic chain of events; therefore narrative structure demonstrates that people and places are not anarchic and random, but rational. The two dimensions combine to form a signifying pattern.

In Roland Barthes' "S/Z" (1975), five narrative codes

are identified. Instead of examining the formal structure of the text, Barthes emphasized the reading/writing process that creates meaning from the structure and its intertextual relations. The codes are an interweaving of voices which are shared by the reader and writer. These voices cross the boundaries of the text and connect to other texts and to culture in general. Barthes viewed reading as an interdependent process by which meanings are constructed and circulated and therefore reality is created. The text then works as intratextual and intertextual. Thus, Barthes believed that realism consists not in copying the real, but in copying a depicted copy of the real.

In a similar light Jane Feuer (1986) characterized the series and the serial as television's dominant narrative forms. She argued that they are extremely open texts, especially the soap opera because many of the plots never reach a closure and there is never an established originating state of equilibrium. The series also has an unwritten or open text theme of the stable, happy family which is confronted weekly with conflict. Although plots may attain some closure, the ongoing situation is never resolved.

Feuer also argued that the television program, the commercials, and the viewing family are three diegetic universes that continually intersect. Feuer stated that the intertextuality of television, which intersects the

diegetic worlds, is more explicit in television than novel or film. She cited as examples a movie on teenage suicide that is followed by a discussion program on the topic, and Krystle/Linda Evans' hair color commercial being played within "Dynasty."

The relationship between the reader/spectator and the narrative mode, which includes the individual consciousness within the total ideological process, has been studied by Farrel Corcoran (1984). He pointed out that classical narrative modes have tended to cover or hide the process of narration in order to maximize the involvement of the spectator. This classical realist mode of representation can be seen in the development of the cinema and its technical advancements such as sound, 3-D, and Cinemascope. "Realism is thus perceived as a mode of representation, not as the mode of representation (p. 139)." Corcoran acknowledges the differences in the representational modes of film and television which Christian Metz (1974) calls "neighboring languages."

Corcoran noted that in television the spectator is often addressed directly, that sound not grounded in the fiction is utilized (e.g. music, canned laughter, and off-screen commentary), and that television calls attention to the apparatus that is characteristic of itself (e.g. instant replay and the freeze frame). He believed that television's divergence from realist film decreases

spectator involvement. He cited the spectator's engagement in other activities while viewing, commercial interruptions, and self-reflexive techniques, as causes for distancing the viewer.

A physiological view of intrapersonal message processing provides clues about how the spectators' relationship is constrained. Using electroencephalograms (EEG), Byron Reeves and Esther Thorson (1986) measured brain electrical activity to find differences in processing television content and structure. They found it took less effort to process structurally difficult messages than to process simple but engaging content. It takes more effort to construct meaning. While reliable interpersonal research shows that people physically retreat when others come too close, EEG measures show a similar response to perceived nearness of television performers. In this light, audience direct address, often relying on the close-up shot, is an example of television's reflexivity and how it distances the viewer.

Another school of thought addresses how the spectator operates through the accepted codes and conventions of a text. Frank P. Tomasulo (1988) applied phenomenology to identify the spectator's relationship to the text. He believed phenomenology can assist the role of the spectator which creates meaning. "It can be argued that film spectatorship is a two-way street, a Double Projection,

in that the film is projected onto a screen and then out at us, yet we also project into the film (p. 30)." He said there are historical and theoretical rapprochements between phenomenology and the cinematic methodologies of structuralism/semiotics, Marxism, and psychoanalysis.

Spectators of "Green Acres" automatically turn into subjects by engaging in the act of viewing. Viewers participate in translating, decoding, and interpreting through their individual psyche while agreeing to accept the conventions and codes of the text.

Because the viewer has to "get" a joke, a relationship develops between the viewer and the text. Henry Jenkins III (1986) identified the push-me/pull-you text. Using Ulrick Neisser's definition of schemata, "pre-exiting cognitive structures," Jenkins showed how comedy is a parasitic genre unable to construct its own narrative. It utilizes structures of other genres, classical Hollywood narratives, and threatens the schemata we use to make sense of social reality. Comedy must be communicated within the accepted codes and must closely resemble a reality that can be identified by the viewer. Therefore comedy requires the displacement of reality. We would not think slapstick funny if we could feel the pain.

> The displacement of reality is always measured against the traditional representation of that reality. This act of conscious comparison with the violated norms, distinguishes comedy from certain other genres. . . . The narrating structure erase one set of feelings, one type of identification, to make room for the next. . . . The comic text is a

> push-me/pull-you being torn apart by the demands of the comic for the displacement of reality in order to allow us to laugh and the demands of the base-level generic system for emotional involvement with the characters and affective participation within the narrative action (p.42).

Such is the case with the conversations between Lisa and Arnold, the Pig. Lisa is able to understand Arnold's oinking and the viewer is able to second guess such dialogue between the two. Oliver, on the other hand, is unable to interpret Arnold, and during the beginning of the series, it is as if Oliver doesn't even believe Arnold can speak.

Section 2: Self-Reflexivity

To better understand how self-reflexivity operates through television, it is necessary to note that the aesthetic anthropology used to understand television has its roots in film studies, which in turn, are rooted in literary studies. David Thornburn (1987) found that the vogue in film scholarship of looking for ideological structures controlling cinematic discourse has been adopted by the primitive academic writings devoted to television. Thornburn warned that the absence of traditional forms of scholarship in the case of television could create dangers. "A scholarly discourse intent on deconstructing texts, and audiences, risks severing itself from the way such texts [are] conceived and experienced by those who created them and the audiences who consumed them (p. 163)."

Therefore, researchers should be familiar with the literary or aesthetic dimensions of television programs.

The justification for using literary perspectives in television studies is that such perspectives are needed for historical and cultural interpretation. Television programs rely on the elements of characterization, plot, and genre. They are conveyed through cinematic techniques that have been established by our culture's eighty years of visual storytelling. Thornburn insists that critics of television "must be sensitive in part to literary matters; we must be able to read these texts in something of the way the audience experiences them: as stories or dramas, as aesthetic artifacts (p. 165)." It is only by employing methods of study traditionally used by critics of literature and film that one may understand a thorough investigation of television.

Scott Olson (1987) probably best defined the literary elements present in meta-television. He said meta-television "is the cultural expression of creators and consumers bored with and restricted by television's naturalness (p. 284)." He identified three varieties of meta-television.

Medium-reflexivity is an indication of an awareness of the medium of television. This occurs through recognizing the audience by dissolving the fourth wall or through intertextuality, the allusion to other television

literature.

Metagenericism, as Olson described, is borrowing the generic structure of another program. This would include the duplication of iconography, archetypes, and setting.

Autodeconstruction and ilinx are the third types of meta-television's self-reflexivity. Here the narrative style is disassembled or deconstructed as Gerard Genette (1983) divided narrative into duration, order, frequency, voice, and mood. These elements are self-reflexive concerning the passage of time and the role of the narrator.

For example, duration involves cues to show time passage or speed of execution. The order of events is often out of sequence because of dreams, flashbacks, and a character's ability to read the future. Frequency concerns the repetition between narrative and diegesis and would also include inconsistent repetitions. Voice concerns whether the narrator is in the story, homodiegetic narrative, or absent from the story, heterodiegetic. The self-reflexive mood is "the regulation of narrative informations." It can be described as a character's ability to read his own narrative.

While some elements take an active role in deconstructing the text, ilinx "is the use of narrative for narrative's sake (p. 295)." That is, a narrative function serves no purpose but to direct attention to itself.

Olsen contends that "at its broadest level, television deconstructs the medium of which it is a part by presenting medium-aware characters and through allusion to the literature of television." At its narrowest level, "meta-television becomes antinarrative through narrative nonsequiturs (p. 297)."

If we are looking at comedy television, we can say that "Green Acres" is less narrow than "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In." If we examine situation comedies, "Green Acres" would be less narrow than "It's Garry Shandling's Show," because of Shandling's competing narratives. "Laugh-In," of course, is a collection of narratives.

Nancy Pogel and William Chamberlain (1985) identified five devices used by the filmmaker which create comic and ironic contrasts that undermine his own art. These devices are:

> 1) allusions to classic films or film genres, 2) use of obvious film gimmickry, consciously artificial styles and settings, 3) allusions to stars, usually in parody of their very public personal lives as well, 4) references to filmic hardware-- to cameras, camera crews, and other behind-the-scenes personnel who work on films, [and] 5) allusions to film-related illusion/reality imagery such as mirror shots, still cameras, still photographs, film within film or action as theatrical performance or 'theatre (p.189).'

Writers Jay Sommers and Dick Chevillat have indulged in these devices at one time or another in their creation of "Green Acres." The characters constantly refer to television, both the apparatus and its programming. The

viewer experiences the characters' daydreams and flashbacks. James D. Stewart of the Department of Agriculture is mistaken for Jimmy Stewart. Bob Cummings, one of the few guest stars, appears as an airplane pilot. He was a pilot turned photographer in his own series. Lisa often has the ability to read "the names" or the credits as they are superimposed above her head. Also, the viewer can see Arnold the pig coming over to the Douglases' to watch a Western on tv. There are several mini-narratives and in one episode the Hooterville Players perform an episode from "The Beverly Hillbillies."

Marc Vernet (1989) wrote about "the look at the camera." He said the look at the camera can actually be directed to another character, to the actual camera, to the spectator, or to no one. For example, Vernet talked about a look of reverie as a "mute and iconic form of the soliloquy wherein one speaks to oneself (p. 55)." If the character looks at the camera it is to demonstrate that the character is actually looking at no one. He believed that the look at the camera can only be analyzed correctly by considering its causes and effects, its place in the fiction, its place in the film, and its place in the space of the theatre.

Pheobe Tyler Wallingford, the matriarch of "All My Children" is known to cast her eyes toward the camera to involve the viewer in the gossip of Pine Valley. Some

critics contend the actress is merely reading cue cards.

These ambiguous glances can also be detected in the character of Lisa. Although she does not directly address the audience, there is often a hint of Lisa breaking down the fourth wall, sometimes mugging for the camera, but directing her stares to no one.

Jane Feuer (1982) looked at the Hollywood musical where "the world is a stage." In such instances a proscenium or stage-like area is created and a performance becomes part of the narrative. Editing cuts included shots of an audience to compensate for a lost liveness. Therefore the film audience can take the place of the internal audience whereupon the film audience's subjectivity is placed within the narrative universe of the film. The internal audience is the "symbolic celluloid embodiment" of the film audience's subjectivity. Feuer concluded that:

> The proscenium creates distance so that we can watch distance being bridged. The audience in the film stands between us and the performance in order to make us identify even more closely with the experience of live theatre (p.47).

We see this "symbolic celluloid embodiment" in the role that the television plays in the Douglas household. In "Sprained Ankle Country Style," the neighbors and friends of Hooterville come over to comfort Oliver and his sprained ankle. They all end up on the bed enthralled in the "Multi-Million Dollar Movie." In "The Wishbook" a disgruntled audience at a lantern slideshow discovers the

art of hand shadows.

Brad Chisholm (1989) examined the phenomena of "on-screen screens." He believed the inclusion of video screens within the diegesis of film and television has increased and has had an effect on how viewers make sense of the moving image arts.

> When on-screen screens and the images on them are to any degree prominent in a shot, they become factors on our sense-making viewing strategy because they force us to posit a diegetic world inside of and subordinate to another one (p. 16).

He also said that viewers are more familiar with screens of all types than ever before.

Chisholm further described tactics used to compromise the viewer. "Framing" is the use of borders to cue the viewer of the presence of a film or television show. Use of the "video look" created by graininess, increased video noise, or snow is another tactile effect. However, "the on-screen screen also demands the viewer be conscious of the presence of a diegetic camera (p. 22)."

The television set in the Douglases' bedroom is a permanent part of the mise en scene and therefore an artifact. Viewers also see Mr. Drucker's and the Ziffel's television sets. During the run of this series television sets were a common fixture among American households. In 1965, more than 92 percent of the households had television.

Interestingly enough, it is the pilot of the series

that utilizes multi on-screen screens which set the mold for continued usage. In pre-Ted Koppel style, a narrator introduces the characters of the new show on three television screens placed behind him. Today when we see an on-screen screen, we see a clear picture without the screen dominating our screen. Thanks to the advanced technology of video tape and closed circuitry, an on-screen screen can achieve a "realistic" audio and visual presence. The Douglases' television has a chromo keyed, or special effect look with the screen symmetrically framed within the viewer's screen. Nonetheless, this was a realistic look at the time.

To understand reflexivity's role in the film narrative, Jay Ruby (1977) examined reflexivity in film. Ruby said reflexivity is to reveal the method of producer-process-product to an audience that is sophisticated and has a knowledge of all three. "To be reflexive is to structure a product in such a way that the audience assumes that the producer, the process of making, and the product are a coherent whole (p. 4)."

Ruby further separated the meanings of reflexive and self-reference. To be reflexive is to be sufficiently self aware to understand what aspects of self are necessary to reveal to the audience which is familiar with the process used and the resultant product. The audience also knows that the revelation is intentional.

On the other hand, self-reference is not autobiographical or reflexive, but an allegorical or metaphorical use of self. Spectators believe that it is common for producers to be self-referential. For example, viewers of various art forms make themselves aware of biographical data so that they can discover hidden meaning of an artist's work. Therefore, one can be reflective without being reflexive. Only if a producer decides to make his awareness of self a public matter and conveys that knowledge to his audience, it is then that it becomes reflexive.

Television viewers are familiar with decoding the introduction to programs. Text, or credits, appear at the beginning to inform the viewer of its creators. Lisa's ability to read "the directed by and the written bys," without Oliver's understanding is self-reflexive.

Unlike "Moonlighting's" David and Maddie or George Burns, who address the audience when they refer to the writers, "Green Acres'" characters lack awareness of the audience and are therefore more reflexive than reflective. Using Ruby's definitions one could put forth that "Green Acres" is self-referential due to its scheduling in the prime time line up. For the first three years "Green Acres" followed "The Beverly Hillbillies" on Wednesday evening. This programming decision may have not been limited to the idea of building an audience for "Green Acres" by riding

on the coat tails of the successful "Beverly Hillbillies." The newer program was a direct parody of the preceding program. Whereas the hillbillies move to the big city, here the city slickers move to the country.

Anna Whiteside (1988) identified ways in which theatrical reference is primarily self-reference, being manmade and therefore an artifact. She described self-reference as an occupational hazard of all involved in the theater. "It concerns all artistic creation and re-creation and is the inevitable correlates of our awareness of the poetic function (p. 27)." Film and theatre imitate historians by reinterpreting so-called historical facts and retelling a story. Therefore theater refers to itself as theater from a standpoint of both imitation and invention. For example, a theatrical sign is both a sign and a referent because it is an actual sign of something and it is also a thing that is referred to by the actors. Therefore the concrete theatrical referent seen onstage refers to itself as a mimetic theatrical sign.

To apply this to television, one must consider the decoding process by the viewer. When Lisa tells a story about how she and Oliver met, a mini-narrative is acted out. The viewer is knowledgeable about how to read the program and contents of wipes, fades, and dissolves. Because the spectator is familiar with such signifiers, there is an awareness that the viewer is watching a

television program.

To examine "Green Acres" textually would reveal a constant self-reference to television. The Douglases' have a white cabinet model in their bedroom. Residents of Hooterville often talk about television. In one episode the Douglases' television is hooked up to broadcast out in the community from their bedroom. In another episode the "Green Acres'" credits appear on the Douglases' set. And at one point Oliver telephoned the CBS Network to find out how a character on the soap opera "Tomorrow Will Be Brighter" solved a similar problem that he was having. By referring to television, it is mimicing itself.

Scholars have believed that a shift takes place between the reader and the text. Despite arguments that the spectator is drawn in or displaced, the reader is none-the-less altered in relationship to the narrative.

In the case of metafiction; where the concepts of the creator, the process of creating, and the creation are all acknowledged within a narrative, the spectator is altered in his voyeuristic endeavor. Such a literary examination is applicable with television because it deals with story telling and a regulation of narrative informations like self-reflexivity.

Most popular books have dealt with television shows in a sense of celebration. "The Making of Star Trek (1968) and M*A*S*H: The Inside Story of TV's Most Popular Show

(1981) concentrated on the program's actors and their personalities and not on the artistic merit of the show. On the other hand, Richard Kelly's The Andy Griffith Show (1982), examined a tv program as more than throw-away entertainment. Kelly provided a more extensive examination by researching more academic facets. He interviewed the actors as well as the executive producer, writer, associate producer, and director. He also examined an unproduced script.

Other academic approaches include Horace Newcomb's collection of essays, by various authors, Television: The Critical View (1982) which examined the landscape of tv from different perspectives. Also, Arthur Asa Berger compiled philosophies and concepts for application of Media Analysis Techniques (1982). John Fiske's Television Culture (1987) took a popular aesthetic approach to television.

This author has not been able to locate any comprehensive work devoted to an examination of "Green Acres." There have been references to "Green Acres" in various books of pictorial histories of television. "Green Aces" is also mentioned in books dealing with cults, fads, and popular nostalgia. The program has attracted some critical endorsement such as David Marc's Demographic Vistas: Television in American Culture (1984). Marc briefly examines the Henning phenomena and the successful Henning products with a literary analysis of the "magicom."

Chapter 3

FINDINGS

This chapter describes the findings interpreted from viewing more than 160 episodes of "Green Acres." Beginning with a brief review of surrealism, this chapter reports on the literary aspects of reoccurring themes, characterization, set design, and dialogue. Also, there is an examination of the modes of reflexivity found and a description of how they operate within the "Green Acres" text.

In the process of reading "Green Acres" it is obvious that the narrative operates within the standard codes of situation comedies -- to a point. The program conveys a cultural awareness which allows the operation of semiotic codes. For example, in Hooterville it is usually the men who are present in town meetings or have committees within the community. The women have the "Every Other Wednesday Afternoon Club." Oliver tends the fields and Lisa keeps the house. Also, there is the respectable merchant, Mr. Drucker, pitted against the huckster, Mr. Haney, who waits outside his store to lure away customers. And the Department of Agriculture, as represented by Mr. Kimble, is seen as a worthless agency at the taxpayer's expense.

What is most significant about the city people in the rural setting is the cultural imperialism that takes place. City attitudes and urban customs are virtually introduced into Hooterville. Lisa imports a hairstylist because women want to look beautiful to please their husbands. In another episode Lisa turns Mr. Drucker's store into a make-up boutique. She also brings a famous conductor to town, outlaws deer hunting, and organizes a Spring Celebration festival. Oliver alienates the town's men with his three-piece suits and gloves. He believes in and relies on assistance from the Department of Agriculture and actually strives to earn a profit with his farm.

Oliver also attempts to instill some sort of improvement with the local utility board, phone company, and farm bureau because of what he perceives as a lack of basic services. Often he is appointed by a Hooterville committee to chair some project which ultimately fails. For example, he ends up stuck with the ownership of the phone company, which operates with an old-style switchboard where calls are routed manually with wire plugs. No matter how hard he tries to improve the Hooterville way of life, his efforts are rejected by the residents whose rural lifestyle follows a unique Hooterville logic.

Oliver's and Lisa's attempts to improve life for all Hootervillians are unsuccessful. The inhabitants of the

Valley are stereotypically portrayed as a bucolic folk resistant to change, steeped in tradition, with a disregard for anything new.

In this invasion of an agrarian society Oliver drives a convertible to buy farm supplies from Drucker's store, while the other farmers drive trucks. While Lisa polishes her diamonds, Doris Ziffel pulls a plow and slops the hogs. The people of Hooterville accept things the way they are and remain isolated from a progressive world. They are friendly but lack polished manners.

The Hootervillian's reluctance to embrace this cultural imperialism is typical of any society where change is thrust upon its citizens. Of course, in absurdist Hooterville when something traditional is confronted with a new approach, the resulting conflict is humorous.

In "Green Acres" as well as "The Beverly Hillbillies," the characters who are new inhabitants of their environment do not try to integrate into society, (with the exception of Jethro Bodine) but rather continue to maintain their existing lifestyle with all its mores and customs. Hence, contemporary urban culture and traditional rural culture comically clash as the big city lifestyle, Los Angles via "The Beverly Hillbillies" and New York via "Green Acres," are held up to ridicule.

To textually examine "Green Acres," it is necessary to study the characters, setting, themes, and dialogue.

This program not only presents a contrast between city and rural living, but also contrasts class structures as evidenced by the characters' ethnography. Lisa claims to be part of the Hungarian royal family. Oliver has a WASP, upper-middle class background. There are rarely people of color in Hooterville. Once there was a female Mexican migrant worker whom Oliver hired as a telephone operator.

This rejection of progress is just one example of an illogical approach to logic. The Hootervillians have their reasons for refusing to adopt progressive changes and this, combined with the acceptance of supernatural phenomena gives the program its flavor.

The Use of Surrealism

As was mentioned previously, "Green Acres" has been described as surreal. There are many factors and subject matters dealt with by the surrealists that can be identified in "Green Acres." Subjects in common include the supernatural, hallucinations, and an illogical approach to logic all within a psychoanalytical technique of free association.

Popular surrealists such as Man Ray, Dali, and Chirico expressed an air of cynicism with a refusal to separate life from a dream state. The writings of Freud were current

at the beginning of the movement in the 1910s and the concept that the unconscious is revealed in dreams was often addressed. Williams (1981) concisely stated that the "main goal of all surrealist art is the liberation of the expressive powers of the unconscious from the inhibitory and rational powers of the conscious mind (p. 41)."

The surrealists would create a reality representing the norm and then disrupt the reality with terrifying, horrific images. The use of misrecognition is a trap for the viewer, not to identify with the reality but to identify the misrepresentation. Objects are separated from their usual surroundings and reintroduced in new relationships with other objects and settings. The darker side is utilized to emphasize the brighter side which was a manifestation of having come through a destructive world war.

"Green Acres" deals with such themes as supernatural phenomena, Nazis, alcohol and drugs, and the uselessness of logic all in a hallucinatory realism called Hooterville, which floats amid an unconscious rural landscape.

This hallucinatory realism created by the self-reflexive devices contributes to the narrative. However, this reality of the fantastic and the supernatural does not serve the role as "deus ex machina." Traditionally, in some dramas, the concept of "dues ex

machina" justifies a supernatural event to resolve the character's conflict. In "Green Acres," however, the viewer does not expect problem solving through "God in a box," because it is usually the supernatural phenomena that create the conflict. Such occurrences are not neccessarily unexpected by the viewer, nor are they expected to provide a contrived solution to an episode's conflict.

The rational powers of Oliver, as well as the spectator, are constantly challenged because there are several parallel laws of logic which operate. Within the narrative flow many things are very logical and are executed realistically. On the other hand, some events operate in the same universe with cartoon logic. When Lisa tries to unstop the kitchen sink, a hen out in the yard bobs up and down on its nest with each plunge Lisa makes. One of Oliver's chickens lays square eggs. And, strange names (the credits) appear on the Douglases' clothes as Lisa is hanging out the laundry.

Lisa's dialogue seems to operate within its own logic because it requires viewer deduction to interpret. Consider this conversation as Lisa tries to persuade Oliver to do some chores around the house.

Oliver: I'LL FIX IT TOMORROW.

Lisa: WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER STUFF YOU WERE GOING TO FIX TOMORROW WHICH WAS

YESTERDAY WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN, WHICH YOU DIDN'T.

Oliver: WOULD YOU MIND SAYING THAT AGAIN PLEASE.

Lisa: WELL STUFF LIKE THE LEAKY ROOF AND THE CRACKLE EMONUM.

Oliver: THE CRACK OF LELONIUM. LI . . . . . LIMO . . LINOLIUM. I'LL FIX EVERYTHING.

The televisual humor of a foreigner trying to master the English language can probably first be attributed to Ricky Ricardo. Whereas the "I Love Lucy" jokes about Ricky's language barrier usually dealt with a heavy accent and occasional mispronunciations, Lisa's language humor stems from how she uses the vocabulary to express herself. Her translations take on their own meaning and therefore a separate logic.

Her malapropisms include "separating the white from the choke," and "shifting the flour," and hypodermic becomes "hypochondriac needle." When the truck breaks down, Lisa says "My husband blew out his head basket." Lisa also has the habit of altering idiomatic expressions. Girdle your loins becomes "gurgle your lions." And, there is "Ruth is stranger than friction" and you "jumped on the wrong concussion." Her dialogue is constantly peppered with such misspeak.

Reoccurring Themes and Jokes

Also remaining constant throughout the series are some themes and ideas that represent the Douglases' lifestyle. There are many incidents that involve alcohol. The Hootervillians know the Douglases are drinkers and when Oliver's actions conflict with their reality they accuse him of "hitting the booze," or being "stoned." In one episode where Oliver invites a lady farmer over for dinner, a jealous Lisa proceeds to get drunk on champagne while they talk about soil samples. In another incident Lisa sees the names "like on the beginning of tv shows" printed on her hen's eggs. This prompts her to ask Oliver where he keeps the booze for "municipal porpoises." The significance of using alcohol as a reoccurring theme parallels the distorted Hooterville reality. Also, social drinking is seen as an urban vice while temperance is a rural virtue.

When Oliver and Lisa go to Eb's girlfriend's house for dinner, Mr. Wheeler, Darlene's father, interviews Oliver about his opinion on alcohol:

Wheeler: WOULD YOU LIKE A DRINK?

Oliver: YES, I'D LOVE ONE.

Wheeler: WE DON'T KEEP LIQUOR IN THE HOUSE. WE'RE TEA TODDLERS

Oliver: THEN WHY DID . . .

Wheeler: DO YOU DRINK MUCH?

Oliver: YES I LIKE A DRINK BEFORE DINNER.

Wheeler: HOW ABOUT AFTER DINNER?

Oliver: ONCE IN A WHILE.

Wheeler: DURING DINNER.

Oliver: WELL . . .

Wheeler: YOU DRINK PRETTY GOOD. EVER THINK OF TRYING A.A.

Oliver: I DON'T NEED A.A.

Wheeler: THAT'S WHAT ALL YOU ALCOHOLICS SAY.

Oliver: MR. WHEELER, I AM NOT AN ALCOHOLIC. I TAKE AN OCCASIONAL DRINK.

Wheeler: HOW ABOUT YOUR SON, DOES HE DRINK?

Oliver: HE'S NOT MY SON.

Wheeler: GOOD, THEN HE CAN'T INHERIT YOUR TENDENCY FOR BEING A BOOZER.

Although Oliver and Lisa are deeply committed to each other, as previous, tv relationships dictate, they often argue. The arguments usually involve Oliver losing his temper at something Lisa has done, often having to do with her lack of domestic skills. Lisa usually becomes angry with Oliver because of something he will not do, such as take her to New York or buy her a fur coat. Despite their

spats as subtext, the thematic scheme is romance. Many episodes open with Oliver and Lisa in the same bed as they often share personal moments in each other's arms. And, of course, Lisa is making the supreme sacrifice by living in the country to keep Oliver happy.

Matrimony is not always bliss, however. Lisa is often bored and whines for Oliver's affections. She frequently puts on a jealousy act. At one point, Oliver hires an English handyman to watch after Lisa and the farm while he and Eb are out of town. Lisa then becomes enraged when Oliver refuses to become jealous of the English gentleman, especially after her efforts to spark some kind of rivalry.

In so many conflicts between Lisa and Oliver the subject of divorce and physical violence arises. Lisa knows Oliver would never divorce her because "they hit you pretty good with the community property in this state." In another incident, when Lisa goes to the city by herself, the townspeople think they are splitting up and Eb acts like a child whose parents are divorcing. When Oliver gets mad in front of a federal agent from the Department of Agriculture, Lisa says, "Don't hit me in front of the government." Actually their marriage is never really threatened except when Lisa finds out that their Hungarian marriage license is, in fact, a license to practice dentistry.

Along with reoccurring themes there are also running

jokes and sight gags. Lisa's hotcakes are a continuous topic at the breakfast table, and the knob frequently falls off the front door. The closet door also plays a humorous role.

When Ralph and Alf enlarged the Douglases' bedroom, they installed a closet with a sliding door. However, there is no backwall in the closet and it opens to the outside. Therefore Lisa and Oliver, as well as any visitors, use the closet door to enter the house. So often when the closet door is opened, it is pushed off the tracks and smacks to the floor. This happens so often that on a few occasions when it does not happen, the camera cuts to the door to show it still standing. This effect is assisted by showing a "double-take" on the characters' faces. The closet door also may be read as an allusion to Fibber McGee, who was greeted with a "crash" whenever he opened his closet door.

This same idea is put to use again with Oliver's speech making. The other characters and the regular viewer can often anticipate when Oliver is about to launch into a monologue. As Oliver makes his speeches about the farmer being the backbone of society, who plants the little seeds in the rich soil that shoot up to the sky, "Yankee Doodle" or some other patriotic song plays in the background. Lisa usually hears the music and will ask the other characters if they hear the fife music or notice that the

fife player has a new tune. She even goes as far as to ask the fife player to play softer.

Because television viewing is a matter of habit and because an individual program tends to draw the same audience week after week, the use of running jokes demonstrates the authors' attempt to write for a consistent audience. It is this repetitiveness that narrows the gap of intimacy between creator and spectator. They share an in-joke which can not be appreciated by the new viewer. The audience can predict what is going to happen and enjoy an intimacy with the humor.

The Characters

Oliver was actually born on a farm in up-state New York near Saratoga Springs, but was raised in the city. He would not have been born in the country if his father hadn't waited to watch the last horse race. On his fourteenth birthday he told his parents he wanted to be a farmer. His father said that he and his mother had already decided Oliver was going to the Harvard Law School. After graduating, he practiced law for a short time before he was drafted. He served as a fighter pilot in Europe, where he met Lisa. After the war they were married. Oliver's mother believes he has problems and she always takes Lisa's side when the couple has domestic desputes.

Oliver has a Type-A personality. He loses his temper at the slightest provocation. Although he proclaims the virtues of country living, he can not tolerate the easy-going, carefree ways of the Hootervillians. When the viewer experiences the Hootervillians through Oliver's eyes, they are seen as slothful, dumb country folk. His condescending perspective overshadows his own failure as a farmer. Despite chiding by the other farmers and County Agent Kimble's attempts to help, Oliver will not admit to his failures and thus represses them. He constantly

preaches a style of Jeffersonian Democracy that includes the virtues of rural living with the American farmer as the backbone of the country. He works very hard to fulfill his dream but he is not successful.

His proletarian behavior earns the respect of the Hootervillians and he is often hoodwinked into holding public office. In the last episode he is actually elected King. Oliver often tries to rally the farmers to work together for the advantage of all. He has fired off letters of protest to the phone and electric companies, and the governor, among others. He has also fought for road improvements, served on the school board, and has been considered for state senator. His ideal of rural life extends to the citizens and their community.

Along with being perceived as a good citizen among the Hootervillians, Oliver has been perceived as a threat for inflicting his city ways on the people of Hooterville, more specifically, the urban vices of alcohol and divorce. Such bourgeois concepts threaten and alienate the Hootervillians. The other farmers especially resent Oliver wearing a suit to do his chores.

The fact is, Oliver always wears a tie, and if not a suit, at least a vest and trousers. He doesn't wear jeans or workclothes around the farm. When he goes into town he wears a suit or a coat with a tie and a hat. His attire further represents a class distinction. Oliver's

wardrobe is a visible symbol of the conflict underlying the series and its ridiculousness.

He is in perpetual conflict with his antagonistic paranormal surroundings. At times he is so overwhelmed by Lisa's illogical behavior that his psyche will absorb her train of thought.

Lisa, on the other hand, is coping with her surroundings. Despite her preference for city life, she wants whatever will make Oliver happy. She represents a patriarchal view of femininity. Lisa must sacrifice the role of socialite to assume the duties of a housewife. She is never able to learn to cook, but she does relish her role as the ornamental wife. Lisa brings a maternal stance to her relationship with Eb and with the farm animals.

Born in Hungry, Lisa grew up with her father, who was sometimes the King, and her mother, who is now a countess. She spent her youth fighting Nazis until she met Oliver during the war. Oliver does not believe that she was ever actually a royal.

Eva Gabor, the actress, can be read as a secondary text because of the mediated relationship she has with Lisa Douglas. Lisa perpetuates the Gabor myth. Eva Gabor left Hungry in 1939. Parts of her autobiography, "Orchids and Salami," (1954) have often been challenged by her sister Zsa Zsa. It has been disputed whether the Gabor sisters

were royalty or even part of the Hungarian aristocracy.

Although Lisa appears to be the dizzy housewife, she copes in her own way. Her method of washing the dishes is to clear the table by the corners of the tablecloth and drop the whole bundle in the top-load dishwasher. She saves money on groceries by purchasing cans without labels (the cans contained dog food or chili con carne). And the infamous meals she prepares are highlighted by her signature "hotscakes," served with coffee that pours like Hershey's Chocolate Syrup.

Lisa's zany reality is confirmed by the other characters. Her mispronunciation of a word or some ignorant belief (such as the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower being located in Washington D.C.) is collaborated by others who have the same reality. Although Oliver tells Lisa that these famous landmarks are not found in the nation's capital, Mr. Drucker and the airline ticket agent tell the Douglases to be sure and see the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower during their trip to Washington. Also, in the kitchen, where Lisa's reality is centered, Eb acts as a straight man to Lisa's whimsical antics, much to Oliver's disbelief. For example, Eb just loves Mrs. Douglas's cooking.

Lisa's wardrobe is mostly made up of negligees that she wears around the house. They are extravagant gowns, usually of a high-waisted Empire design, reminiscent of

Josephine. Others are trimmed in feathers or fur. When Lisa leaves home she wears tailored suits and dresses. Her tastes run to Parisian haute couture. She does have a pair of overalls, but they are made of satin with big bell bottoms. By the fourth season several of Lisa's outfits were designed by Nolan Miller. James Brady (1990, p. 30) reported that Miller is known as the "fashion designer to the stars-the man who 'threw away' the bras of Charlie's Angels and dressed Joan Collins on 'Dynasty.'" Lisa's blonde hairpieces, which constantly change, are very high and come in a variety of organic shapes.

Lisa and Oliver have a traditional relationship representative of the 1960s. Oliver tends the farm and Lisa is the homemaker. Lisa teasingly pretends to be jealous of Oliver's relationships with other women. She often threatens divorce when she doesn't get things her way. But she knows her station in life as foretold by Vic Mizzy's opening music:

Oliver: YOU ARE MY WIFE!

Lisa: GOODBYE, CITY LIFE.

Both: GREEN ACRES WE ARE THERE.

Ironically, since it is Lisa who comfortably fits into the surroundings, she has the gift of occasionally seeing the opening credits, whether they are printed on

eggs, laundry, or floating in the air over her bed. Although Oliver does experience some supernatural occurrences, he does not believe in them; whereas, Lisa accepts them as part of her reality.

Mr. Haney, the slimey opportunist, comes around soon after the Douglases discover they have a problem to solve. He represents the epitome of an exploitative capitalist. He always has something that will cure the Douglases' problems "for a small fee, of course." His attempts are industrious as he tries to palm off some piece of junk he has salvaged or the services of a little old lady whom he has recruited (e.g. a seedspitter or a cake decorator).

Haney drives an early 1920s truck with cattle slats and a rope in the seat that he uses for a safety belt. Other hucksters may be known to carry several different business cards for various occupations. However, Haney has a variety of window shades attached to the cattle slats. On each shade is painted a sign specifying the business he is in at the moment. And naturally for "Green Acres," the director's name Richard L. Bare appears on a shade during the opening credits of one episode.

The following is an example of a sales pitch. Oliver has decided it is time to pick apples. He is about to drive to Drucker's Store when Mr. Haney pulls his truck in front of the farmhouse:

Haney: NOW JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THESE. THESE BASKETS ARE MADE OUT OF STRIPS OF GENUINE BIRCH BARK WHICH HAVE BEEN RECLAIMED FROM OLD INDIAN CANOES AS PART OF THE CONSERVATION PROGRAM INSTITUTED BY THE CHEROKEE NATION.

Oliver: OF ALL THE . . .

Haney: IT'S THEIR WAY OF SAYING THANK YOU TO GENERAL CUSTARD FOR BEING SUCH A GOOD LOSER.

Oliver: THAT'S THE MOST . . .

Haney: NOW WITH THESE BASKETS YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR YIELD. FOR EVERY BUSHEL OF APPLES YOU PICK YOU CAN FILL TWO OF THESE BASKETS.

Oliver: HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?

Haney: THEY HAVE FALSE BOTTOMS. YOU SEE THESE WERE ORIGINALLY MADE FOR SMUGGLING IN MARIJUANA FROM TIAJUANA.

Haney was played by Frank Buttram who was previously known as Gene Autrey's sidekick in film and television. Buttram best described the Haney character when he said "He's like Colonel Tom Parker (Elvis Presley's manager). I knew so many of those guys who were just con men in the business (Mason, 1990, p. 4)." Haney is the stock character

of the charlatan.

Hank Kimble, on the other hand, is a simpleton who can not keep a thought in his head for very long. As county agent he visits the Douglases' farm often. He realizes Oliver's limits as a farmer and even the pamphlets from the Department of Agriculture do not seem to help. He is spellbound by Lisa, but is lustfully chased by Ralph Monroe.

Mr. Kimble exists in a cloud of confusion like the bureaucratic agency he represents. He operates very inefficiently yet insists on following the policies of the Department of Agriculture. He often forgets why he has made a house-call to the Douglases. He forgets Mr. Douglas's name. He forgets his own name. Unlike Mr. Haney, Mr. Kimble has the Douglases' best interest at heart. Here is a typical conversation between Mr. Kimble and Mr. Douglas:

Oliver: MR. KIMBLE, DID YOU BRING THE PAMPHLETS I ASKED YOU FOR?

Kimble: WHAT PAMPHLETS?

Oliver: THE ONES WITH THE PLANS FOR BUILDING A TOOLHOUSE. NOW DON'T TELL ME YOUR FORGOT IT?

Kimble: A COUNTY AGENT NEVER FORGETS ANYTHING. I HAVE IT RIGHT HERE. NO . . . UH

. . . RIGHT OVER THERE IN MY TRUCK.

Oliver: WHAT TRUCK?

Kimble: OH THAT'S WHAT I FORGOT MY TRUCK. LET'S SEE, WHERE DID I LEAVE IT? I WAS OVER AT, UH . . . .

Oliver: IT'S IN YOUR BACK POCKET.

Kimble: HOW DID MY TRUCK GET INTO MY BACK POCKET? OH HERE'S A PAMPHLET. WE HAVE SEVERAL PLANS. HERE.

Oliver: THANK YOU.

Kimble: HAVE YOU GOT A BUILDING PERMIT?

Oliver: WHAT DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT FOR?

Kimble: WELL, ACCORDING TO THE BUILDING CODE YOU NEED A PERMIT FOR A SCHOOLHOUSE.

Oliver: I'M NOT BUILDING A SCHOOLHOUSE.

Kimble: OH THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE BUILDING A POOLHOUSE.

Oliver: I'M BUILDING A TOOLHOUSE.

Kimble: OH, WELL, YOU'LL NEED A PERMIT FOR THAT.

Oliver: WHERE DO THEY ISSUE THEM?

Kimble: ISSUE WHAT?

Oliver: PERMITS!

Kimble: HAVE YOU TRIED THE NEAREST PERMIT ISSUING STATION?

Sam Drucker's store is a hub from which Hooterville social life pivots. He is probably the sanest person whom Oliver is exposed to in Hooterville. Mr. Drucker's displacement of reality is more back in time than out on some surreal plane. He grossly under charges for groceries and stocks such outdated items as button hooks for shoes.

Sam Drucker is a leading citizen of the Henning society having appeared in 152 episodes of "Petticoat Junction," and 145 episodes of "Green Acres." He also made 11 guest appearances on "The Beverly Hillbillies."

Eb Dawson, who lives in the barn's loft, is the Douglases' hired hand. He is also the pseudo-child and a unit of the Douglas household. He avoids his chores and loves Lisa's cooking. Eb operates with a hick naivete. He lacks self-confidence and looks up to Oliver and Lisa. He depends on their advice and guidance. In more than one instance the Douglases have offered to send him to college. Oliver and Lisa are always supportive in helping Eb improve himself.

Lisa and Oliver are especially available to help him with his relationship with girls. At one point he has a crush on Betty Jo Bradley (a deigetic join from "Petticoat Junction"). In the third season Eb elopes and is absent from eight episodes. Lisa and Oliver receive occasional postcards and telephone calls from him. They plan a celebration for the return from his honeymoon; only he

returns unmarried. He has formed relationships through the personal ads and finally does become engaged in the sixth season. He tells his girlfriends that Oliver and Lisa are his parents in an attempt to impress the girls and their parents.

Arnold Ziffel is the child/pig of Fred and Doris; however, he is intelligent and very talented for his age. He loves television, goes to public school with the other children, and is the team mascot. He upsets his parents when they think he has been "pignapped" and when he falls in love with Cynthia Haney, Mr. Haney's basset hound. Arnold is also very lucky. In a two part episode Lisa's friend produces a movie starring Arnold. In the same season, over three episodes, he becomes the sole heir to a twenty million dollar estate left by a meat-packing tycoon.

The animal actors that played Arnold, the pig, are amazing to watch. Before the days of the domesticated Vietnamese potbelly, pigs of course were usually found on farms. Therefore it is fantastic to see a pig do tricks like a dog. Arnold can carry a lunch bucket and pull a wagon. He substitutes on a paper route. He has a variety of costumes, can jump on and off of furniture, and can flick the switch on a television set.

Alf and Ralph Monroe are "brothers" who are carpenters; actually Ralph is the androgynous sister. The Monroe

brothers specialize in two-story chicken coups. It literally takes them years to finish working on the Douglases' house.

Alf and Ralph bring an air of slapstick to "Green Acres." They comically injure Oliver with falling hammers and long pieces of lumber always find a way to slap him about. Ralph is a man chaser. She flirts with Oliver and tries to snag Mr. Kimble, or "Hanky."

The characters are all varied and have distinct personalities, but basically they are flat. Although they are well defined, they do not evolve and become fully developed. The characters unfold minutely through the six years of their tv life.

Therefore "Green Acres" is not an ensemble comedy as much as it is situational. Actually it is more of a domestic comedy because it emphasizes setting and conveys a strong sense of place reflecting the lives and personalities of the characters. The predicaments that the characters find themselves in are always changing. The situation and the resolution of conflict come from a character's predictability, not from a character's emotional unfolding. Conflicts are usually resolved with the characters coping with an adjusted situation.

The Symbolic Nature of the Set

As mentioned previously, artistic movements are quite evident in "Green Acres." By the 1960s New York had succeeded Paris in becoming the international art center. Part of the New York scene was the Abstract Expression movement; several examples, of which, are found in the Douglas home mimicing the distinct styles of individual artists. During the opening theme there is a definite Piet Mondrian in the New York apartment and in the farm house there are several Krasner, Frankenthaler, and Gotlieb look-alikes. There are so many paintings in the farm house that they are stacked in a pile in the living room.

The use of abstract art serves to reflect the Hooterville environment. Abstract art was a movement that occurred after the invention of photography when a painting no longer had to be a reproduction of something. Abstract art is like the "Green Acres" series in that it involves the spectator. The viewer must interact and interpret the artistic expression.

The furnishings of the Douglas house also convey another artistic movement. The iconic role of the furnishings seems to allude to the Pop Art movement and its relationship to commercialism. Pop Art utilized everyday household items and pictured name brand products and their packaging. The New York glamour furniture

dramatically contrasts with the dilapidated farm house.

Consider the Douglases' automobile, not just a sedan, but a convertible Lincoln Continental with suicide doors. Whereas other television programs receive a new car for each season from the sponsor, "Green Acres" used the same car for the first four seasons. Eb is mesmerized by the car and is constantly asking to borrow it. In one episode he is so dazzled by the Lincoln's electronic options that he fiddles with the car's gadgets, much to the annoyance of Oliver.

The interior furnishings also represent a class differentiation. In the living room the graying paint and brittle, flaking wallpaper is decorated by the aforementioned art works and sconses with crystal prisms. A giant leopard-skin tuxedo sofa dominates the room. Perpendicular from the sofa is the fireplace with a painted wooden mirror built-in to the mantel.

The kitchen is filled with shiny harvest gold appliances; a refrigerator, washer-dryer combo, and a top load dishwasher. The original iron cast stove remains and is what Lisa chooses to cook on. The sink, counter, and cabinets are all old and worn. There is a round table that is usually covered with a cloth. The Douglases use fine china with gold-filled trim as their everyday dishes. A silver tea service and a silver three-legged flambee pan sit on the washer and dryer. On the wall there is

an old-fashioned box telephone that only works in one episode. The working telephone is outside on top of the pole.

Oliver and Lisa share the same bed, a practice that was beginning to become common among television couples during the mid-1960s.

The console television set is at the foot of a king-sized bed with a large ornate gold leaf headboard. Beyond the headboard, velvet drapes cover the wall. The other furnishings are French provincial.

The role of the furniture is so significant that it remains constant throughout the life of the series. Other situation comedies that revolve around a domicile tend to change furniture seasonally, if not every episode.

The furniture illustrates a contrast which can serve to represent a number of things; progressive versus traditional, city versus country, educated versus uneducated and rich versus poor. By surrounding themselves with such contemporary examples of the decorative arts, Oliver and Lisa demonstrate an attachment to "that modern feeling" which neither is completely willing to give up. They can not fully immerse themselves into what they see as their uncivilized environment and are therefore unwilling to adopt the rural folkways.

Modes of Reflexivity

The techniques of self-reflexivity and self-reference in "Green Acres" are put together in a combination that had never been used before. When some programs utilize reflexivity, they establish an awareness that the show is participating in creating a television show, and that it is being viewed by an audience. The devices are used to further the narrative and lead the viewer by directly communicating what is happening or what is about to happen. This is evident, for example, in "Burns and Allen," "Gidget," and "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis." Because a character talks to the audience and breaks the forth wall, the viewer becomes intimate with the narrator and is pulled through the story.

Other programs acknowledge the apparatus of making a television program but are not aware that they are within a television show. Examples of this would be "The Dick Van Dyke Show" where Rob Petry is a comedy writer for "The Allen Brady Show," or "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," where the character produces a local newscast. Yet, there are other programs that acknowledge the apparatus and the television reality that is created by the apparatus. An example of this would, again, be "The Burns and Allen Show" where George makes reference to his writers; another is "It's Garry Shandling's Show," where Garry will change

the location of a scene by walking between sets on a sound stage and acknowledge that he is doing so.

However, the characters on "Green Acres," while acknowledging the producer's and writer's names, as they are superimposed, are not lead to the realization that they, the characters, are existing within the confines of a television show, despite the comments that the names look like those found "at the beginning of tv shows." Therefore, rather than deconstructing the story by unfolding the narrative, self-reflexive occurrences serve as artifice to become part of the created reality.

Although all of the characters have seen the names at least once, it is Lisa who experiences them the most. She also has a personal relationship with subtitles when they are used. Lisa talks to them and has a controlling power over their usage. For example, consider the episode when Lisa's mother comes for a visit. They greet each other in Hungarian as subtitles appear to translate:

Lisa: (WHAT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE!)

Mudder: (IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!)

Lisa: (WHAT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE), (She turns her attention to the subtitles.) NO, NO, NO. I SAID YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT. (The subtitles change to the correct translation.) WE HAVE A LOT

OF TROUBLE HERE WITH THE SUBTITLES.

Mudder: SUBTITLES?

Lisa: YES, THAT'S MEANS WHEN YOU SAY SOMETHING IN ONE LANGUAGE AND IT SAYS UNDERNEATH YOU IN ENGLISH.

Not only does the appearance of a written text supply the narrative but it initiates more involment between the creators and the audience. The characters are not usually aware of this interplay, as it is put forth to accommodate the viewer. For example, in a flashback scene with Lisa and Oliver on a cruise liner, the camera pans across the top of a life saver fastened to the deck rail. On the life saver is printed S.S. Titanic. The camera tilts down to the bottom half of the life preserver which reads "Not the one you think." In one of the episodes concerning U.F.O.s, the iron cast stove turns green. A written note is superimposed explaining to those viewers with black and white sets that the stove has turned green. And still, in another example, in a scene change there is a cut to a slide of the New York City skyline. A superimposition asks "What city is this?"

In addition, the characters have an awareness of networks, the Nielsen rating system, and royalty payments. Oliver turns the television set off to get Eb to work. Eb begins to tell Oliver what a horrible thing he has done.

"You silenced the work of hundreds of technicians and actors, not to mention the relatives of the producer, those people who work in the fleshpots of Hollywood . . . ."

In another incident when Lisa's mother (who qualifies as a countess and a queen), visits Hooterville, Mr. Haney has sold the tv rights for her coverage to the Pixley station for twelve dollars. News reporters from the station converge to the farm and try to stage "the Queen" bringing groceries to the Douglas "hovel."

Another example of apparatus awareness is found on the Douglas television set when a movie is replaced because, as the announcer says, "They haven't finished showing that one at the county seat tv station." The same announcer is caught off-guard putting on a toupee as a spotlight rolls by. The cue cards come into the picture as he is trying to read the sponsor's name.

And still, another example is when a boy genius makes a television camera out of parts from the Douglases' tv set. An agent from the Federal Communications Commission comes to arrest Oliver for running an illegal tv station. Mr. Haney comes on the scene to give Oliver a royalty payment and to tell him about the overnight Nielsens. Oliver made the first and second position while third place was a tie between "The Beverly Hillbillies" and the WPIXL test pattern. And yet, in another episode, the townspeople engage in a debate as to which reports the most reliable

weather forecast, the tv or the radio station.

Along with an awareness of tv production apparatus within the program, "Green Acres" also utilizes the meta-televisual device of medium reflexivity by alluding to other television literature. This is demonstrated in two different ways. One way is a reference to actual television programs, personalities and commercial products. Another way is by creating fictitious television shows and movies and creating commercial products.

Lisa is very much a mediated character. She is very observant and aware of television. She learns words like "fuzz" and "dick" from police shows. When she is handcuffed to Oliver, who lost the key, she uses a hair pin like "Edgar J. (sic)" Robinson did on tv. When Mr. Drucker's safe is robbed Lisa suggests trying what they do on "Perry Mason:" "Look for the guy with the fancy wrist watch."

The awareness of specific tv texts is not limited to just Lisa. Lisa accuses Oliver about not knowing anything about love, and Oliver replies "I've looked at 'Peyton Place' a couple of times." When Arnold wants to stay home and watch tv, Fred says "You can miss Walter Cronkite for one night." In a flashback episode set during World War II, when Lisa and Oliver first meet, someone advises Oliver that if he is captured to ask for Stalag 13 and a fellow named Hogan (referring to "Hogan's Heros").

A characteristic of "Green Acres" that is unique is

the way the program alludes to tv commercials without mentioning the product name. In the episode when Lisa has amnesia and is able to cook, she makes biscuits that are so light that they float in the air, alluding to a flour commercial. In the last episode when Oliver is made king, Lisa says he only wears a crown when he eats that margarine.

"Green Acres" demonstrated a knowledge that motion pictures were becoming popular television programming fare. Among the fictitious names of tv shows are the names of movies. In fact, "The Multi-Million Dollar Movie" is a television show on the Pixley station. Movies named include "Frankenstien meets Mary Poppins," "Lassie flees the Gestapo," and "The Human Hamburger Goes to Hawaii." Soap operas that can be seen in Hooterville include "Tomorrow will be Brighter" and "Love is Never a Stranger." Among the sponsors there is "'Clurdo,' the wheat germ that fizzes." On the other hand there are the new "Crickly Wicklies," which are silent.

Along with references to both factual and fictional television, the characters of "Green Acres" have expressed many ideas about television in general. When Eleanor, the cow, swallows a radio, Mr. Kimble remarks that now "She'll want tv." The program ends with a renowned statement from Oliver:

Lisa: JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIES, OLIVER, EVERYTHING ENDS HAPPILY. THE FELLA KISSES THE GIRL AND THE COW'S STOMACH STARTS TO PLAY MUSIC.

Oliver: YEA, TELEVISION HAS A LONG WAY TO GO TO CATCH UP.

Or consider this romantic moment that acknowledges the diegetic join.

Oliver: ". . . I'M TALKING ABOUT LOVE. NOW ISN'T IT POSSIBLE THAT A MAN COULD MEET A WOMAN, FALL IN LOVE WITH HER, AND MARRY HER, AND NEVER WANT ANOTHER WOMAN?

Lisa: ON WHAT TELEVISION PROGRAM DID YOU SEE THAT?

Oliver: "THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES."

There is also a great deal of complaining about reruns. But perhaps the most profound statements about television are made in relation to the viewing habits of Arnold, the pig.

Arnold is quite the telephile and can usually be found at home watching television. Since he is the child of the Ziffels he does prefer children's programming and

his parents try to control his viewing habits. For example, Fred tells Arnold to finish his homework and turn off the tv. After Fred leaves, Arnold comes back in the room and flips the set back on. One of his favorite shows is "Lassie" and much to the dismay of Fred, Arnold has learned to bark. Fred has disciplined Arnold by sending him to bed without supper and tv. In one instance Arnold is wearing glasses because he has ruined his eyes watching television. One time he set his alarm for 5:00 am to get up and watch a Porky Pig festival. Another time he ran away from home after watching a documentary on how bacon is made. Lisa comments, "They shouldn't put such scary things on tv for children."

Another mode of self-reflexivity operating within "Green Acres" is the diegic join between the other Filmways productions. This connection is reached at two levels. "Petticoat Junction" is recognized as a tv show on one level, and the characters Joe Carson, Kate Bradley, Bobbie Jo, and Floyd Smut exist as part of the reality in Hooterville on another level. Furthermore the iconic existence of the Cannonball train and the Shady Rest Hotel are also part of the Hooterville valley. "The Beverly Hillbillies" is recognized as a popular tv show, but it is not acknowledged as "Green Acres" nemisis. Although none of the "Hillbillies" characters appeared on any "Green Acres" episodes, the Clampetts do visit Sam Drucker's store

on an episode of "The Beverly Hillbillies."

The Six Seasons

The evolution of "Green Acres" had been minute. There were a few subtle changes until the sixth season, which marked a definite transformation in the program's look. The first season has Lisa and Oliver go back and forth to the country and the city. When Lisa is in the city she appears confident and cultivated. She is portrayed as a straight character. Not until she is comfortably moved into the farm house does she assume the "dumb blonde" status.

The plots are as outrageous from the beginning of the show's run to the end. And the writers go through some of the tried and tested plot formulations familiar to all situation comedies. For example, someone gets amnesia, someone's mother comes for a visit, or a character gets arrested, etc. It is the unique plots that are found throughout the six years that best characterize the program. For example, one of the chickens lays square eggs, Lisa befriends a ghost and teaches her to use cosmetics, a little boy shows up with a beeping rock which he said he found on the moon, and Lisa's house guest is the son of a famous war hero who happens to be a duck.

During the third season the writers tried something

new by creating a storyline that carried over multiple episodes. Oliver takes over the phone company for four episodes. In the fourth season Arnold becomes a movie star in two episodes and becomes a millionaire in three episodes. During the sixth season a little girl named Lori comes to visit for several episodes. This represents the tried and tested method of adding a character to extend the life of a series.

Not only does the sixth season include the addition of a new character, but also a format change. At the start of the 1970-71 season, the first scene takes place before the opening theme music. Also, by the last season many of the sight gags and running jokes are no longer used.

The show started as a typical rural comedy and became more oriented towards popular culture with its drug and youth consciousness. This is probably due to the economic reasons of trying to generate new audiences for a mature program.

Despite its ability to remain strong in the ratings, "Green Acres" was canceled by CBS in 1971 when the network did a hatchet job on the highly-rated "Mayberry R.F.D.," "The Beverly Hillbillies," "Petticoat Junction," and "Hee Haw." The proverbial "cancellation of every show that had a tree" was the beginning of a new evolution of situation comedies that took a more realistic approach to society and its problems.

The fifth and sixth seasons developed a sense of realism that demonstrated an increasing awareness of the counterculture. In "The Confrontation" Arnold is expelled from school. The other students hold a sit-in to protest the prejudiced action. One of the students screams "Hitler" at the principal. When Oliver goes to the dry cleaners to pick up a dress for Lisa, he is treated like a female impersonator by the clerk. Lisa discovers the women's liberation movement and makes Oliver do the housework while she tends the farm. As a relationship develops between Eb and his fiancee Darlene, there is an emphasis on the youth culture. The kids are accused of being hippies because they like to kiss each other.

Additional Observations

One factor that has remained consistant throughout the series' run has been its inconsistency in detail. For example, in several different episodes Lisa tells the story of how she and Oliver met. Each tale that she tells is different. As another example, Lisa gives away the leopard skin sofa to the farm woman who can fry the best chicken, yet the sofa is back in the next episode. During the first season the phone company is run by Sarah, Mr. Kimble's mother. By the third season the phone company is owned by Roy Trundle and his mother is the operator.

In a most unusual scene, Sam Drucker, perhaps the most lucid resident, is confronted by a former bartender who comes to work for Oliver when Eb elopes. Oliver introduces them:

Oliver: THIS IS EB'S COUSIN WALTER. WALTER, THIS IS MR. . . .

Walter: DONT TELL ME, DONT TELL ME. YOU'RE THE BLOODY MARY, EASY ON THE TOBASCO BUT LEAN ON THE VODKA.

Sam: WELL I, . . . AH.

Walter: I NEVER FORGET WHAT A CUSTOMER DRINKS.

Sam: YOU MUST HAVE ME MIXED UP WITH SOMEBODY ELSE. I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THE STANKWELL FALLS COCKTAIL LOUNGE.

Oliver: HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT'S WHERE WALTER WORKS?

Sam: HOW . . . HOW . . . SOMEBODY MENTIONED IT.

Walter: YOU DID.

Sam: I . . . MAY HAVE STOPPED IN THERE ONCE.

Walter: GLADYS SENDS HER LOVE.

Oliver: GLADYS?

Walter: SHE WAS THE COCKTAIL WAITRESS. SHE HAD A THING FOR SAM.

Oliver: OH?

Sam: OH . . . WELL . . . IT WAS NOTHING. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU MR. DOUGLAS?

Walter: SHE NAMED THE BABY GEORGE.

Oliver: WHAT?

Sam: WELL . . . I . . I.

Walter: . . . FINALLY GAVE UP ON SAM AND MARRIED THE FRY-COOK DOWN AT THE ELKS HALL.

Although the characters remain well defined, they do not evolve much as individuals. This revelation about Sam Drucker is part of the fantastic world in which the characters reside.

Flashback episodes are a common form of self-reflexivity and are familiar to decode on the part of the viewer. Every "Green Acres" season has at least one episode that includes a flashback to previous episodes or a story within a story told by one of the characters. Several of these mini-narratives are told by Lisa and usually take place in Europe. Other story within story episodes play out events from a historical perspective where Lisa and Oliver play other characters who are in love.

In "The Vulgar Ring Story," Lisa tells the story of why every fourth generation of her family had to marry an American. Oliver plays a young American painter tramping through Europe and Lisa plays a gypsy learning how to steal.

In the episode "Das Lumpen," Lisa tells the story of how she and Oliver met during World War II. Portraying themselves, in a flashback perspective, Lisa hides Oliver from the Nazis under a pile of hay in her barn. The use of the mini-narratives allows the spectator to see Lisa and Oliver in different costumes and in different surroundings. The characters retain the same personality traits as Lisa and Oliver, however.

Although there are some "cornball" jokes present in "Green Acres," there is an absence of scatalogical humor. A rural setting would lend itself to quips about manure and outhouses. Despite CBS's survival of the "Leave it to Beaver" pilot which showed the first toilet on network television, there is no mention of bathroom humor except when Lisa mistakes an old-fashioned toilet flush-chain for a shower.

Approximately ten episodes of "Green Acres" were not written by Sommers and Chevillat. Some of those episodes were written by tv writers such as Al Schwartz and Dan Beaumont who wrote for a variety of programs but not one in particular. Some episodes were written by other collaborators in combinations with Sommers or Chevillat.

In trying to understand how the writers and producers of "Green Acres" arrived at formulating the program and its use of self-reflexivity, this researcher contacted Paul Henning and the widows of Jay Sommers and Dick

Chevillat. Of the show's self-reflexivity, Henning said, "I cannot recall ever having discussed that particular facet of the show" with Sommers and Chevillat.

Barbara Sommers suggested that "Green Acres'" awareness of "The Beverly Hillbillies" "is related to the fact that it was produced by the same company, Filmways. It was Paul Henning, producer of 'Hillbillies,' who was instrumental in getting 'Green Acres' on CBS." In a telephone interview, Mildred Chevillat said of her late husband, "He was not that kind of bland writer. There was always that ability of standing back and watching." She also said Sommers and Chevillat had a "wacky oblique look at things. They were just silly people. I think Dick and Jay initiated that sort of thing."

Oliver and the Cornstalk

Since we have examined the components that make up the series, it is necessary to look at the combined ingredients that comprise a typical episode. "Oliver and the Cornstalk" was chosen from the fifth season. By studying the major portions of dialogue from each scene, one can read how each contributes to a combined whole. This particular episode was chosen because of the various examples of self-reflexivity and self-awareness.

After the theme music and introduction, the episode

opens with Oliver and Lisa in their gigantic bed. Note that Lisa pronounces her "Ws" like "Vs" and "THs" like "Ds."

Scene I

Lisa: OLIVER.

Oliver: HUH?

Lisa: DO YOU LIKE THIS COLOR?

Oliver: YES, IT'S BEAUTIFUL. GOODNIGHT.

Lisa: WHAT COLOR WAS IT?

Oliver: IT WAS RED

Lisa: WHAT SHADE OF RED?

Oliver: I HAVEN'T GOT THE VAGUEST IDEA.

Lisa: IT'S CALLED "PASSIONATE EMBRACE". THEY USE IT IN ALL THOSE NEW SEXY MOVIES.

Oliver: SEXY?

Lisa: YOU KNOW, WHERE THEY DON'T HAVE ANY PLOT, BUT YOU DON'T CARE, BECAUSE THEY HARDLY WEAR ANY CLOTHES.

Oliver: LISA, I'D LIKE TO GO TO SLEEP.

Lisa: I'M SORRY DARLING. GOODNIGHT.

Oliver: GOODNIGHT. (The light goes out and the theme music begins to play. "executive producer Paul Henning" is superimposed in the dark.)

Oliver: (The light comes back on.) WHAT'S THE MATTER?

Lisa: THERE WAS A NAME IN THE DARK.

Oliver: A NAME IN THE . . . . LISA TURN THE LIGHT OUT.

Lisa: OH YES. SORRY. (The light goes out and "written by Jay Sommers and Dick Chevillat.")

Oliver: LISA, WHAT DO YOU . . . .

Lisa: THAT TIME THERE WERE TWO NAMES.

Oliver: LISA, I'VE GOT A BIG DAY TOMORROW. I'VE GOT TO GO TO DRUCKERS TO PICK UP MY SEED CORN. I'VE GOT TO OVERHAUL THE TRACTOR MOTOR. I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D TURN OUT THE LIGHT.

Lisa: OH YES, DARLING GOODNIGHT. (The light goes out again.) DO YOU SEE ANTHING?

Oliver: NO.

Lisa: THAT'S FUNNY. THERE SHOULD BE ONE MORE NAME. ("directed by Richard L. Bare" appears.) OH, OH, THERE IT IS. OLIVER DID YOU SEE THE . . . OLIVER, OLIVER, WHERE ARE YOU?

Oliver: ON THE COUCH IN THE LIVING ROOM. GOODNIGHT.

Lisa: GOODNIGHT DEAR. (The light goes out

again and the following message appears. "Passionate Embrace is now featured in your favorite sexy movie.")

Oliver is annoyed by Lisa's demand for attention about something so frivolous as nail polish, especially when he wants to go to sleep. It is as if he is saying "not tonight dear. I have a headache," and moves to the sofa by his own decision.

Lisa does not acknowledge the names as being individual people that she knows, but as independent entities. They are just some names that are floating in the dark. When the advertisement for "Passionate Embrace" appears, the music changes to a fast upbeat tune with a 1910s melody. The combination of the music accompanying the superimposition creates the effect of an artcard or slide advertisement shown at movie theaters before the feature.

This episode opens with a provocative bed scene in which Lisa experiences paranormal phenomena. At one point she says there should be another name because she knows from past experience and the spectator knows from past experience that when the names appear there are always four of them. The advertisement for Passionate Embrace is acknowledged in the following scene. Its appearance seems to symbolize the barrage of ads that are present in a commercial society.

The next scene opens at Drucker's store with a shot on a point-of-purchase display of Passionate Embrace.

Scene II

Lisa: OH, HELLO THERE MR. DRUCKER.

Drucker: GOOD MORNING FOLKS.

Oliver: HI.

Lisa: WHAT'S THAT?

Drucker: IT'S A NEW NAIL POLISH. IT'S CALLED PASSIONATE EMBRACE. IT'S SELLING LIKE HOTCAKES.

Lisa: WELL IT SHOULD. THEY ADVERTISE IT EVERYWHERE, EVEN IN THE DARK AFTER YOU TURN THE LIGHT OUT.

Drucker: I BEG YOUR PARDON.

Oliver: MY WIFE SEES NAMES IN THE DARK.

Drucker: OH WHAT KIND OF NAMES.

Lisa: WELL, YOU SEE THERE WAS THIS . . . .

Oliver: MR. DRUCKER I CAME OVER HERE TO PICK UP MY SEED CORN.

Drucker: I'VE GOT IT IN THE BACKROOM FOR YOU. OH, BY THE WAY MRS. DOUGLAS, BEFORE I FORGET, REMEMBER YOU WERE ASKING ME IF I WAS GOING TO GET IN SOME OF THAT GOURMET FOOD.

Lisa: OH, YES.

Drucker: WELL I CALLED A WAREHOUSE IN THE COUNTY

SEAT AND THEY SENT ME A WHOLE SELECTION OF THAT GOURMET STUFF (A display is topped with a sign that reads "Goormay.")

Oliver: MR. DRUCKER, I BELIEVE YOU MISPELLED GOURMET.

Drucker: WHERE?

Oliver: WELL, IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE G-O-U-R-M-E-T.

Lisa: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? ALL HE HAS IS SOME STUFFED OLIVES.

Drucker: WELL THAT'S ABOUT AS GOURMET AS THEY GET.

Lisa: DIDN'T THEY HAVE ANY CAVIAR?

Drucker: OH, YOU MEAN THEM LITTLE BLACK FISH EGGS. NO BUT THEY TOLD ME THEY'RE COMING OUT WITH A DO-IT-YOURSELF CAVIAR KIT.

Oliver: A CAVIAR KIT?

Drucker: YEAH, YOU COOK UP A BOX OF TAPIOCA AND YOU STIR IN SOME LICORCE FOR COLOR AND THEN ADD SOME SARDINE OIL FOR THE FISH TASTE.

Lisa: ORDER ME ONE OF THOSE.

Drucker: YES MA'AM RIGHT AWAY.

Oliver: MR. DRUCKER IF YOU'LL JUST . . . .

Lisa: DO THEY HAVE A PATE DI FOIE GRAS KIT?

Mr. Drucker proceeds to tell Lisa how he could order a frozen goose and she could de-liver it herself.

In this scene Lisa is trying to share her commercial-paranormal experience with Mr. Drucker. Oliver is at Drucker's Store to do what he sees as conducting business. Lisa, however, has come into town to socialize. As Lisa tries to share her experience with Mr. Drucker, Oliver tries to suppress her and treats he conversation sarcastically.

The humor of the gourmet food exemplifies a cultural clash by poking fun at pretentious hors d'oeuvres. The scene makes light of how high society/big city considers fish eggs and goose liver as delicacies. The fact that the warehouse in the county seat does not stock such Epicurean staples demonstrates just how remote and far removed Hooterville is from the rest of the world.

Meanwhile Fred and Arnold come into the store. Arnold is pushing a child-size grocery cart.

Fred: HOWDY FOLKS

Arnold: OINK. OINK.

Lisa: OH HELLO THERE MR. ZIFFEL. HELLO ARNOLD.

Arnold: OINK, OINK. OINK, OINK.

Fred: ARNOLD WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU'VE GOT YOUR GOURMET SECTION IN YET.

Drucker: RIGHT OVER THERE.

Arnold: OINK, OINK.

Fred: ARNOLD SAYS YOU AIN'T GOT GOURMET SPELLED RIGHT.

Oliver: FOR THE LOVE OF . . . LOOK MR. DRUCKER, IF YOU JUST TELL ME WHERE THE SEED CORN IS I'LL PUT IT IN THE CAR MYSELF.

Drucker: WELL, I'LL HELP YOU.

Oliver: THANK YOU.

Drucker: OH, BY THE WAY MR. DOUGLAS, DO YOU KNOW HOW TO PLANT THIS NEW HYBRID VARIETY OF SEED CORN?

Fred: HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO PLANT THE OLD KIND.

Oliver: HAVE YOU GOT ANY LITERATURE?

Arnold's taste are quite sophisticated, as he has identified the sign as being misspelled. This means he is able to read and probably is as intelligent as Oliver. Oliver is just in the background having no control. He is just trying to get his seed loaded which makes him vulnerable for Fred to tease him about the way he farms.

Oliver's request for literature shows his scientific approach to farming. This further conveys his reliance on a logical flow from a means to an end.

The next scene opens with Oliver outside of the barn. He is hoisting up the tractor motor with a pulley.

Scene III

Oliver: EB, EB.

Lisa: OLIVER.

Oliver: EB.

Lisa: OLIVER.

Oliver: WHAT?

Lisa: I'M LOOKING FOR . . . WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Oliver: I'M TRYING TO GET THE MOTOR BACK IN THE TRACTOR?

Lisa: WELL, YOU GOTTA NICE DAY FOR IT.

Oliver: EB.

Lisa: HAVE YOU SEEN EVELYN?

Oliver: WHO'S EVELYN?

Lisa: SHE'S A LITTLE WHITE CHICKEN.

Oliver: NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN HER. EB ! ! !

Lisa: EVELYN.

Oliver: EB.

Lisa: EVELYN.

Oliver: LOOK, WILL YOU STOP? THIS THING IS HEAVY.

Lisa: CAN I HELP YOU?

Oliver: NO THANKS.

Lisa: YOU NEVER WANT ME TO HELP YOU WITH

ANYTHING AROUND THE FARM.

Oliver: IF YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP GO FIND EVELYN.

Lisa: EVELYN

Oliver: EVEL . . . I MEAN EB ! ! !

Eb: WHO DO YOU WANT? ME OR EVELYN?

Oliver: I NEED SOME HELP RAISING THIS.

Eb: YES, SIR. (They raise the motor over their heads.)

Oliver: NOT SO HIGH.

Lisa: EB, HAVE YOU SEEN EVELYN THE LITTLE WHITE CHICKEN?

Eb: NO MA'AM, BUT CHARLIE OUGHT TO KNOW WHERE SHE IS.

Lisa: WHO'S CHARLIE?

Eb: THE ROOSTER.

Lisa: CHARLIE. CHARLIE.

Eb: EVELYN.

Oliver: WOULD YOU STOP YELLING IN MY EAR.

Eb: YES, SIR.

Oliver: LOWER IT.

Eb: HEY THERE'S EVELYN (Letting go of the rope.) MRS. DOUGLAS.

Lisa: YES.

Eb: I FOUND EVELYN.

Lisa: OH, GOOD. WHERE'S MR. DOUGLAS?

Eb: I DON'T KNOW. HE WAS AROUND HERE A FEW

MINUTES AGO.

Oliver: I'M UP HERE.

Lisa: OH, OLIVER, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR EVELYN, DON'T BOTHER, WE FOUND HER.

Oliver: YOU MISERABLE . . . .

Eb: MR. DOUGLAS, WE GOT THE MOTOR BACK IN. WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO NOW.

Oliver: GET ME DOWN.

Eb: WITH THE MOOD YOU'RE IN, I'M BETTER OFF WITH YOU UP THERE.

Oliver is hoisting the tractor motor in a vest and tie as Lisa flutters around in her negligee. He stupidly attempts to pull the motor himself and keeps it suspended as he calls for Eb. Since there is work to be done, Eb is nowhere to be found. Oliver is overwhelmed by Lisa's psyche and absorbs her train of thought as he begins to yell for Evelyn when he wants Eb. Again, he is a victim and is annoyed by Eb and Lisa.

Scene IV has Oliver and Eb out in the fields.

SCENE IV

Eb: IF YOU'RE GOING TO READ I MIGHT AS WELL TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF.

Oliver: EB, I JUST WANTED TO CHECK SOMETHING HERE.

Eb: BOY, YOU SURE ARE GOING AT CORN PLANTING SCIENTIFICALLY THIS YEAR.

Oliver: WELL, I DON'T WANT TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES THAT I MADE WITH MY CORN LAST YEAR.

Eb: I KNOW HOW YOU CAN DO THAT. PLANT TOMATOES.

Oliver: LOOK-.

Eb: THAT'LL GIVE YOU SOME NEW MISTAKES TO FOOL AROUND WITH.

Oliver: EB. WOULD YOU MIND?

Lisa: HELLO THERE. I BROUGHT YOU SOME SANDWICHES

Oliver: OH?

Eb: OH BOY, THANKS. DIDN'T YOU BRING ANY FOR MR. DOUGLAS

Lisa: I BROUGHT THEM FOR BOTH OF YOU.

Oliver: THANK YOU.

Lisa: EAT THEM WHILE THEY'RE HOT!

Oliver: WHAT KIND OF SANDWICHES ARE THEY?

Lisa LIVERWURST AND GRAPE JELLY.

Oliver: LIVERWURST AND . . . .

Eb: DID YOU PUT MAYONNAISE ON THEM?

Lisa: YES, AND KETCHUP.

Oliver: THANK YOU. LOOK, WE'LL EAT THEM LATER.

Lisa: IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED SIRE.

DO YOU WANT ME TO RUN THE TRACTOR WHILE YOU ARE EATING?

Oliver: LISA, WHY ARE YOU BEING SO HELPFUL ALL OF A SUDDEN?

Lisa: WELL YOU ALWAYS TELL ME THAT WHEN AN AMERICAN FARMER'S WIFE IS AT HER HUSBAND'S SIDE WHILE HE IS TOILING AND SWEATING IN THE FIELDS.

Oliver: THAT'S RIGHT. AND I APPRECIATE THE BAG OF . . . UH . . . OF . . . .

Lisa: WELL, IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED JUST WHISTLE AND I WILL BE WITH BECK WHEN YOU CALL.

Oliver: YOU'LL BE WITH BECK WHEN I . . . .

Lisa: BYE.

Oliver: EB START THE TRACTOR.

Oliver starts to drive the tractor around not realizing the plow is not attached. He notices Eb sitting on the plow eating his lunch and blows his stack.

The scene opened with Oliver consulting literature and research to achieve a good corn crop. Despite Oliver's painstaking methods of planting, he can not even get the plow hooked to the tractor. Lisa enters with her horrific menu which can only be appreciated by Eb, thus reinforcing her reality. Lisa's reference to the American farmer's

wife is an allusion to Oliver's speech making. She dutifully fulfills her domestic role by bringing the men lunch although Oliver has no appreciation for it.

In the next scene Eb and Oliver are unloading the seed, several hours later. The scene opens with a self-reflexive line that is part of television's naturalness for communicating the passage of time.

Scene V

Eb: WE JUST FINISHED PLOWING. WHY DON'T WE TAKE A REST AND PLANT THE SEED TOMORROW.

Oliver: BECAUSE THE FASTER WE PLANT THE SEED THE FASTER IT WILL GROW.

Eb: TELL ME WHERE IT SAYS THAT IN THE BOOK.

Oliver: IT DOESN'T HAVE TO SAY THAT IN THE . . . . (Mr. Haney drives up.)

Haney: MR. DOUGLAS. THANK GOODNESS I'M NOT TOO LATE.

Oliver: FOR WHAT?

Haney: YOU HAVEN'T PLANTED YOUR SEEDS YET HAVE YOU?

Oliver: NO.

Haney: THEN THIS IS YOUR LUCKY DAY!

Oliver: THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

Haney: MR. DOUGLAS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF

I TOLD YOU THAT ON THE BACK OF MY TRUCK I HAVE ONE OF THE MOST ASTOUNDING DEVICES FOR PLANTING SEED KNOWN TO MAN.

Oliver: MR. HANEY, IF YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO SELL ME SOME COCKAMAMIE MACHINE?

Haney: MACHINE! WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT A MACHINE. MAY I PRESENT MRS. AGNES CUTTAHAY, THE LAST OF THE AUTHENTIC SEED SPITTERS.

Oliver: SEED SPITTERS?

Haney: THE ONLY ACCURATE WAY TO PLANT SEED IN TWO FURROWS AT ONE TIME.

Oliver: MR. HANEY!

Haney: I'M WILLING TO BACK UP MY CLAIM WITH A DEMONSTRATION. CAN I HAVE SOME CORN?

Oliver: NO!

Eb: YEAH, HERE YOU GO RIGHT HERE.

Oliver: OH, COME ON.

Mr. Haney proceeds to demonstrate how Mrs. Cuttahay can spit seeds in a couple of cans. She can spit two at once into the cans. She accidentally spits out one of her teeth. Haney then presents a crow which will spy on the bad crows and report his findings.

This scene opens with Eb's typical reluctance to work.

Oliver is anxious to plant his seed while Eb can not identify with his enthusiasm. Knowing that Oliver was getting ready to plant, Mr. Haney arrives with a scheme in mind of how to hustle a fast dollar. On this particular occasion rather than trying to sell some harebrained device, Mr. Haney has recruited another little-old-lady to market her "skills." When that doesn't sell he pulls out a trained crow. Aware of Oliver's lack of farming knowledge, Mr. Haney tries to palm-off what he can.

The following scene has Eb and Oliver back in the field planting.

Scene VI

Oliver: EB. I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO COVER THE SEEDS WITH A HOE.

Eb: SORRY. I FORGOT. (He drops a couple of seeds in the ground.) HO, HO.

Oliver: I DIDN'T MEAN . . . .

Lisa: YOOHOO! HELLO THERE.

Oliver: HI.

Lisa: HERE I AM, THE WIFE OF THE AMERICAN FARMER WITH THE LEMONADE FOR HER TOILING AND SWEATING HUSBAND WHO'S WORKING IN THE FIELD.

Eb: OH BOY! I'M THIRSTY.

Lisa: WELL HAVE SOME.

Oliver: UGH . . . COUGH.

Lisa: DID YOU SAY SOMETHNG?

Eb: BOY, THAT SURE WAS GOOD. I NEVER TASTED LEMONADE LIKE THAT BEFORE. (Oliver pours out his glass.)

Lisa: WELL HAVE SOME MORE (filling up both glasses.) OH I SEE YOU ARE READY FOR SOME MORE. I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT.

Oliver: URGH.

Lisa: WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOUR VOICE?

Eb: CAN I HAVE SOME MORE?

Lisa: OH YOU LIKE IT EB?

Eb: YES MA'AM. (Oliver pours out his glass again.)

Lisa: WELL, I CAN SEE MY LEMONADE IS A BIG HIT.

Oliver: YEAH, IT'S A BIG HIT. (gasping)

Eb: THEN WHAT DID YOU THROW IT AWAY FOR?

Oliver: OH YOU BIG . . . .

Lisa: YOU THREW IT AWAY AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE I WENT TO TO MAKE IT.

Oliver: LISA, I WASN'T . . . .

Lisa: WELL THIS IS THE LAST TIME THIS WIFE OF THE AMERICAN FARMER IS GOING TO HELP THE TOILERS AND THE SWEATERS.

Oliver: LISA.

Lisa: DON'T BEG ME. NO MORE LEMONADE. THAT'S IT. (She pours out the pitcher onto the ground.)

Eb: WELL YOU MUST FEEL PROUD OF YOURSELF DUMPING OUT AN AMERICAN FARMER'S LEMONADE.

Oliver: EB, WHY DID YOU HAVE TO TELL HER?

Eb: JUST BECAUSE IT HAD A KEROSENE TASTE DIDN'T MEAN YOU HAD TO POUR IT OUT.

Oliver: LET'S GET BACK TO WORK.

Eb: YES, SIR.

Eb's shouting out "Ho" is a joke on the two similar sounding words. It also serves to foreshadow the "Ho" exclamations of the Giant that will soon be heard.

Again, aware of her role as the dutiful wife, Lisa attends to her husband and the field hand by providing a cool beverage, despite its questionable refreshing qualities. Naturally the lemonade gags Oliver while Eb laps it up. Eb gives Oliver away as he pours it to the ground. This reveals his somewhat Oedipal relationship to Lisa which pits Oliver as the antagonist.

Scene VII opens with Lisa and Oliver in bed after a long day.

Scene VII

Oliver: LISA. I'M SORRY ABOUT THE LEMONADE. I KNOW YOU WERE TRYING TO BE HELPFUL.

Lisa: I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

Oliver: FINE.

Lisa: WHY DID YOU DUMP IT?

Oliver: LISA, YOU JUST SAID . . . .

Lisa: HOW CAN I BE A GOOD AMERICAN FARMER'S WIFE WHEN YOU'RE A DUMPER?

Oliver: LISA IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'M TIRED.

Lisa: YOU WORK TOO HARD.

Oliver: THAT'S PART OF BEING A FARMER. ("Yankee Doodle" begins to play on the fife.) SINCE THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION, THE AMERICAN FARMER HAS WORKED FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN. PLANTING HIS SEEDS IN THE RICH BROWN SOIL. KNOWING THAT SOON THE COOL RAIN AND THE WARM SUN WILL GIVE THEM LIFE AND MAKE THEM BURST UP THROUGH THE SOIL, UP TOWARDS THE SUN IN THE SKY. YES I'M TIRED. BUT IT'S A PROUD TIREDNESS, AN AMERICAN TIREDNESS.

Lisa: GOODNIGHT OLIVER.

Oliver: GOODNIGHT.

Lisa: OLIVER, WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL THE FELLOW

TO STOP PLAYING THE FIFE. I WANT TO GO TO SLEEP.

Oliver: STOP PLAYING THE FIFE? (music stops)

Lisa: THANK YOU.

Oliver has worked hard planting his seed corn and has reached a state of grogginess. He is not interested in discussing the events of the day with Lisa. He prefers his physical tiredness due to the hard labors as an honorable farmer over the mental anxieties of being a corporate lawyer. He launches into some patriotic rhetoric without resolving his discussion with Lisa. His speech making about planting seeds could subconsciously be motivated by his inability to sire a child in his relationship with Lisa.

The fife music begins in the background and Lisa acknowledges it. The music serves to cue the audience that Oliver is about to make one of his speeches. Here, again, Lisa is aware of the music and Oliver is not able to hear it.

This next scene opens with a rooster crowing. Eb enters pulling Oliver by the arm.

SCENE VIII

Oliver: WILL YOU LET GO OF MY ARM?

Eb: I WANT TO SHOW YOU WHAT'S GROWING IN

YOUR CORN FIELD.

Oliver: HOW COULD THERE BE ANYTHING GROWING? WE JUST PLANTED IT YESTERDAY.

Eb: YOU'LL SEE. COME ON!

Oliver: NOW LOOK AT THAT? THERE'S NOTHING GROWING.

Eb: WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT. (pointing to a utility pole-size corn stalk)

Oliver: THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

Eb: THAT'S WHAT I SAID, BUT THERE IT IS. WHEN YOU PLANT YOUR LITTLE SEEDS IN THE RICH BROWN EARTH AND THEY BURST THROUGH, THEY REALLY BURST. IN FACT, THEY BURST, BUST, AND BOOM.

Oliver: I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW . . . .

Eb: IT'S JUST LIKE JACK AND THE BEANSTALK ONLY YOU DID IT WITH CORN.

Oliver: JACK AND THE . . . . (A little boy climbs down the stalk.)

Jack: HI, EB.

Eb: HI, JACK.

Oliver: JACK? WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

Eb: DID YOU SEE ANYBODY UP THERE?

Jack: JUST A GIANT IN A GREEN SUIT.

Oliver: THERE'S NO GIANT IN A GREEN SUIT.

Giant: HO, HO, HO.

Oliver: WELL, WHO COULD . . . (Oliver catches something that is thrown down.)

Eb: A CAN OF CORN. GOLLY, WE'RE IN A TV COMMERCIAL.

Oliver: THERE MUST BE SOME EXPLANATION.

Eb: OKAY, LET'S HEAR IT.

Oliver: WELL, I DON'T KNOW.

Eb: I'M GONNA TAKE A LOOK UP THERE. (He climbs up.)

Oliver: WILL YOU GET OFF OF THERE.

Kimble: (enters) GOOD MORNING.

Oliver: OH GOOD MORNING MR. KIMBLE.

Kimble: THAT'S RIGHT, HANK KIMBLE'S MY NAME AND COUNTY AGENTING'S MY GAME.

Oliver: MR. KIMBLE, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU.

Kimble: SEE ME WHAT?

Oliver: WELL, LOOK AT THAT.

Kimble: WHAT ABOUT IT?

Oliver: DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT IS?

Kimble: YEAH, LOOKS LIKE A HIGH-RISE CORNSTALK.

Oliver: HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT?

Kimble: YEAH, THERE'S A LOT OF THEM GOING AROUND. BEN MILLER HAD A 20 STORY CORNSTALK. NO IT WAS A 14 STORY TOMATO PLANT. IT WAS IN A POT.

Oliver: LOOK, HOW COULD A THING LIKE THIS HAVE HAPPENED?

Kimble: WELL THERE'S A SIMPLE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR THAT.

Oliver: YEAH?

Kimble: YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED HERE WAS--NO THAT'S FOR GIANT ARTICHOKES.

Oliver: IT JUST CAN'T BE.

Kimble: WHY NOT? IT HAPPENED IN JACK AND THE BEANSTALK. SEE THERE WAS THIS . . . . (Another little boy climbs down the stalk.)

Jack #2: HI MR. KIMBLE.

Kimble: OH, HI JACK.

Oliver: WOULD YOU GET OFF OF MY CORNSTALK?

Kimble: MR. DOUGLAS HAVE YOU HEARD ANYBODY GO HO, HO, HO?

Oliver: YES, YES.

Kimble: WELL THERE'S YOUR ANSWER. YOU'RE IN A TV COMMERCIAL. WELL, IF YOU NEED ANY MORE HELP GIVE ME A CALL.

Oliver: MR. KIMBLE, PLEASE.

Eb: LOOK OUT BELOW.

Oliver: WHAT THE . . . . (A giant ear of corn comes crashing down.)

Eb: HEY HOW ABOUT THAT EAR OF CORN, MR. DOUGLAS?

Oliver: THIS IS TREMENDOUS. I NEVER SAW ANY . . . .

Eb: THE GIANT HELPED ME PICK IT. THANK YOU GIANT.

Giant: HO, HO, HO.

Lisa: WHAT'S SO FUNNY (Wearing a blue gingham jumper)?

Oliver: EB IS TALKING TO . . . HEY LOOK AT THAT.

Lisa: WELL, YOU FINALLY LEARNED HOW TO GROW CORN.

Oliver: NO. I DIDN'T GROW IT. I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED. LOOK.

Lisa: WELL IT WAS PROBABLY A MAGIC SEED LIKE IN JAQUELINE AND THE BEANSTALK.

Oliver: NO. IT WAS JACK AND THE BEANSTALK.

(A girl climbs down the stalk.)

Girl: HELLO, MRS. DOUGLAS.

Lisa: HELLO THERE, JACQUELINE.

Oliver: I MUST BE GOING OUT OF MY . . . .

Eb: THERE'S A NICE GIANT LIVING UP THERE. WOULD YOU LIKE A CAN OF CREAMED CORN?

Lisa: I'D LOVE IT.

Eb: HEY GIANT, ONE CREAMED CORN. (The

corn comes slopping down) YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO PUT IT IN A CAN DUMMY.

Oliver: THIS WHOLE THING IS UTTERLY . . . .

Eb: (A can hits Eb in the head.) VERY FUNNY.

Giant: HO, HO, HO.

Oliver: I CAN'T . . . THERE MUST BE SOME EXPLANATION. HEY, MAYBE IT WAS THE SEED. MAYBE IT WAS SOMETHING IN THE SOIL.

Eb: THE SOIL. THAT'S WHAT IT WAS, THE SOIL, THE SOIL.

Oliver: WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Eb: THAT'S WHERE YOU THREW MRS. DOUGLAS'S LEMONADE

Oliver: THE LEMONADE? COULD THAT HAVE . . . . LISA, WHAT WAS IN IT.

Lisa: WHAT DO YOU CARE. YOU DON'T LIKE IT.

Oliver: LISA IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING IN IT THAT MADE THE CORN GROW. YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME. TELL ME.

Eb makes the statement that when Oliver plants his "little seeds in the rich brown earth and they burst through," thus alluding to Oliver's speech made in the

privacy of his bedroom. Yet Eb is able to directly quote phrases from Oliver's speech while not present when the statements were made.

This scene portrays a fantastic incident which includes a commercial reality, and an allusion to previous literature, "Jack and the Beanstalk." When the can of corn falls from the sky Eb deduces that the experience is a commercial, an allusion to the brand recognition of Green Giant Corn. Mr. Kimble is no help and after confirming the "Ho Ho Ho" slogan, his conclusion is that Oliver is indeed participating in a tv commercial. Interestingly both Mr. Kimble and Eb are familiar with "Jack and the Beanstalk" as a story. However, when these two experience the narrative in their own lives, it is manifested as a television commercial and is therefore to be believed. Despite the evidence before his eyes, Oliver will not accept the "commercial" theory but does accept the equally ridiculous lemonade theory as to why his corn has grown so well.

Although the events in this scene are fantastic, they are accepted by the viewer as Hooterville realism. It is not until Lisa enters the scene that the viewer may begin to develop some suspicion. She enters wearing an uncharacteristically blue gingham jumper and pigtails. After realizing her husband has not indeed mastered the art of farming, she concludes the phenomena was caused

by a "magic" seed. She incorrectly refers to "Jacqueline and the Beanstalk" and a little girl appears on the stalk, thus again confirming Lisa's illogical reality.

The transition into the next scene is done with a soft-edged wavy wipe which signals the reader that the previous scene was actually a dream. The last scene begins with Lisa and Oliver in bed.

Scene IX

Oliver: TELL ME, TELL ME.

Lisa: OLIVER. OLIVER. WHAT'S THE MATTER?

Oliver: OH BOY, DID I HAVE A NIGHTMARE. I DREAMED THIS CORNSTALK GREW WAY UP TO THE SKY, THESE TWO KIDS AND A GIANT OH, AND A EAR OF CORN SIX FEET LONG.

Lisa: WHAT ABOUT MY LEMONADE?

Oliver: THAT WAS ANOTHER NIGHTMARE. NO, I MEAN IT WAS PART OF THE . . . .

Lisa: YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE. MAYBE THE LEMONADE WASN'T GOOD. LIKE MY COOKING AND SEWING AND EVERYTHING ELSE I DO AROUND HERE. I GUESS I JUST DON'T HAVE THE STUFF
WHAT MAKES A WOMAN AN AMERICAN FARM WIFE.

Oliver: I NEVER COMPLAINED ABOUT YOUR STUFFING.

I LIKE YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE.

Lisa: DO YOU?

Oliver: YES.

Lisa: WELL I LIKE YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE.

Oliver: I GUESS WE'RE MADE FOR EACH OTHER.

Lisa: WE'RE AMERICA'S IDEAL COUPLE.

Oliver: I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.

Lisa: WE'RE THE SWEETHEARTS OF THE WORLD! THE LOVERS OF THE CENTURY.

Oliver: LISA!

Lisa: WE'RE ROMO AND JULIUS. ANTONY AND . . . WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THAT IRISH GIRL HE WAS ENGAGED TO . . . OH YES CLEOPATRICK.

Oliver: CLEOPATRICK! GOODNIGHT LISA.

Lisa: GOODNIGHT SWEET PRINCE, PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW. I'LL TURN OUT THE LIGHT. DON'T WAKE ME UP EARLY TOMARROW.

The writers cleverly enter Scene VIII with a cut to a rooster to convey the next morning. Oliver's dream is rooted in the subconscious uneasiness of being upset with Lisa before he falls asleep. Lisa expresses her insecurity about being a failure as a farm wife; however, it is her inaccuracy at making lemonade that has lead to Oliver's successful corn crop.

It is not until the end of the scene that the spectator is made aware that the giant and the cornstalk are all part of a dream, an illusion. In the last scene the couple finally reconcile their differences and Lisa declares they are the most romantic couple in the world. Oliver reassures his love and satisfaction with her as the scene closes on a romantic, yet humorous note. She closes the episode with a parody of Shakespeare.

The writers defy tv's naturalness by opening the dream scene with a cut and then closing it with the familiar squiggly wipe.

In this chapter we have found how reflexivity operates within the narrative and how literary aspects of the text interact to enhance such self-reflexive devices. "Oliver and the Cornstalk" is typical of the more highly reflexive episodes because several of the ongoing jokes are present. For example, the opening credits, the fife player, and the dream sequence with its jolly green giant combine to provide a highly self-aware and self reflexive reading.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study has looked at examples of literary and artistic expression within one television comedy series. The study has also attempted to identify some elements that would lead to a more comprehensive awareness of self-reflexivity in situation comedy by examining the roles of such devices amid one specific television text.

Major findings that characterize "Green Acres" would begin with the obvious cultural clash and Big City imperialism that takes place in the country. Ironically it was written at a time when rural populations were decreasing and suburbia sprawled from the increasing urban centers. "Green Acres" upholds rural values as the norm, although old-fashioned, while urban values are ridiculed.

Textual findings show characters that are round but are not complex and do not evolve. They are not stereotypes in the usual sense of the word, that is, in relation to race, gender, or occupation; but are standardized in relation to their rural setting and to each other. The portrayals of Expressionistic artistic movements are characterized to achieve a particular mise en scene.

Other textual findings include repeating topics such

as alcohol and drug consumption, Nazism, clashing cultures, along with romance, jealousy, and divorce. These are complemented by repeating sight gags such as Lisa's hotcakes, the falling closet door, and the "magical" appearance of the names. The frequent use of such motifs exemplifies the contrasts of the psyche that were used by the surrealists.

The findings also indicate a presence of both self-reference and self-reflexivity. Self-referencing devices include the acknowledgment of the show's credits, and reference to other Filmways products. Self-reflexive techniques include the characters ability to make use of television, the acknowledgment of other television programs and personalities, and an awareness of television apparatus and mechanisms.

Also identifiable is a surreal sense of humor which incorporates the themes of psychological hallucination, illogical reasoning, and supernatural phenomena. The six seasons of the series demonstrate some transformations, but within a consistent narrative of outrageousness.

Although the characters in "Green Acres" are well defined, their uncomplicated traits lead to a predictable response on the part of the spectator. For example, when Mr. Haney enters a scene the viewer knows he is going to try to con the Douglases. The viewer also knows that Alf and Ralph Monroe will bungle whatever project they are

working on and that Mr. Kimble will float through in a cloud of confusion.

Oliver is constantly called a "hot-head" because he loses his temper. He is in a psychological conflict with himself and has no control and no power over his world. Yet it is a world he has chosen and he is unwilling to admit to his failures dues to perhaps his masculine ego or some kind of urban, educated arrogance. Lisa, on the other hand, is a "witch" in a puritanical sense. She is able to reign over her surroundings and has control over supernatural forces. She triumphs because she is closer to nature.

The decoration of the set and furnishings seem to legitimize an attempt to illustrate a sophisticated level of status among television literature. On the surface "Green Acres" recognizes our culture's achievements in the field of 20th Century artistic expression which portrays the world as abstract, a concept that is also captured by the series. By using the glamorous urban furnishings in the farmhouse a consumeristic look is captured. Like the Pop Art movement, where mass-produced images and their consumer texts are raised to a level of Fine Art, "Green Acres'" recognition of the inclination makes the series seem "in-the-know" or trendy. "Green Acres" premiered in living color and never had a black and white history like its Filmways cousins.

The use of reccurring themes and running jokes takes advantage of the household's habitual viewing patterns. "Green Acres" depicts a culture with reference to drugs and alcohol in an age where members of the establishment indulged in three martini lunches. Despite the use of jealousy and divorce, sitcom naturalness dictated, at the time, that married couples have to love each other and be happy most of the time.

Repeating jokes and gags allows the audience to become familiar with the characters and their setting. This enables the creation of the bizzare reality that is made up of antics that are anticipated by the viewer. Radio listeners knew that if Fibber McGee needed something from the closet, there would be a huge crash when he opened the closet door. Likewise, viewers of "Green Acres" know that breakfast at the Douglases will consist of rock-hard hotcakes and coffee that pours like molasses. The running jokes also lend to the fact that Lisa's surrealistic ability is consistent (i.e. seeing the credits, hearing a fife, controlling subtitles) and gives "Green Acres" its self-reflexivity identity.

This self-reflexive identity is achieved by "Green Acres'" novel approach, which seems an attempt by the authors to raise the level of situation comedy to a high art status by engaging in forms of interplay between reader and text on a somewhat consistent but unintimate level.

This is similar to what the Pop artists did. For example, James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol both started their careers as commercial artists. By taking the same commercial images and painting them on huge canvasses they engaged in a form of interplay with the spectator who was already familiar with the graphic content, thus altering the expression to an art form.

The viewer sees this when Mr. Ziffle talks about watching "The Dick Van Dyke Show." The viewer has to be familiar with Dick Van Dyke and realize maybe somewhere in the back of his head that he is watching a fictional character in a television show talk about another tv show as if it where part of a shared reality. It is this shared reality which creates the intimate interplay and thereby improves the status between viewer and text.

Because of the awareness of other television literature, it might be concluded that television was a driving cultural force that was having an impact on society. Because the program names specific texts and alludes to specific products, this acknowledgment shows the importance of brand names, labeling, and image. The general statements about television made by "Green Acres" show that there is a specific awareness, which therefore demonstrates the intertextuality that readers possess. The constant references to old movies, particularly silent films, also demonstrate the mediated realities of the authors. Having

been veteran writers before the start of "Green Acres," Sommers and Chevillat must have been aware of the apparatus to produce a tv program and the industry mechanisms to keep it on the air.

The writers were also aware of the commercial mechanisms which historically were narratives within the discourse of the main text. Both Sommers and Chevillat started their careers in radio and moved to early television writing. Not only did they themselves write advertisements but they were writing programs where the characters endorsed products within the text of an episode. The recognition of commercialism conveys a subscription to post-modernism. It is as if the ultimate self-reflexive joke reveals a culture that is more interested in a reality that honors image above function.

The surrealistic passion of "Green Acres" constitutes a hallucinatory realism, which portrays an image of the "Transitional Sixties." By combining the awareness of television with a Pop Art perspective, the creators of "Green Acres" put forth a world that was illogical and hallucinatory as if it were a statement about the world we lived in. The absence of rational logic is replaced with "tv logic" which is the psychological state of the world.

During its six seasons, "Green Acres" went through an evolution like all situation comedies. While other

series become more ridiculous and slapstick during their run, "Green Acres" could already be characterized this way to some extent. Therefore "Green Acres" grew to be more hip and more socially conscious.

While "Green Acres'" outrageousness verges on the supernatural and illogical, programmers and producers soon began to seek shows that were more reality-based. This movement can be seen in the products of Norman Lear (e.g. "All in the Family and "Maude") and Grant Tinker's MTM ("The Bob Newhart Show" and "The Mary Tyler Moore Show").

The elements that remain consistent throughout the life of the "Green Acres" (furnishings, costumes, sets, themes) serve to sustain the created reality. However television dictates a certain amount of inconsistency. This alteration of previously established facts exhibits the writers artistic license to suit the needs of developing story lines at any convenience.

All of these qualities could be assimilated to declare that sometimes the world is just so crazy that one might think he was living a life of hallucination.

Like all television programs, "Green Acres" reflects part of a shared culture held by its viewers. The creators of "Green Acres" knew that audiences had consumed volumes of television and therefore tailored episodes to reflect such intertextual awareness held by the spectator. "Green Acres" reflects culture's use of television from a

consumer's point of view--not just as a consumer of mass-produced goods, but also as a consumer of mass-produced images that assist to define them.

"Green Acres" is filled with characters who have personality traits that can be identified by the audience. However, "Green Acres" has attempted to distance itself from the viewer by holding up a cockeyed position of the world at a perplex angle. By referring to other television literature that the spectator is aware of, "Green Acres" conveys the idea that the spectator shares the same reality as the Hootervillians, which is, indeed, a wacky world, full of liquor and drugs, hippies, UFOs, and Nazis. This same reality also includes a world with television reruns, outrageous product claims, where being on the late, late show can make you governor, and where life's conflicts can be foreshadowed on any soap opera.

Although the spectator will read such incidents as humorous, the jokes are not shared with the characters but rather shared with the creators. It is the writers who have the intimate relationship with the viewer because the characters are not aware of the spectators. On the other hand, the spectators are aware of the characters and are made aware of the producers, writers and technicians, more so than most programs. Therefore the spectator or reader comes full circle into the knowledge of Ruby's (1977) producer-process-product.

"Green Acres" created a new aesthetic sensibility among viewers, in that it is aware that the audience is watching a tv show. There is no acknowledgment of the existence of viewers on the part of the characters, but there is a consciousness that the audience is made up of television viewers. Because the spectator is not formally acknowledged, there is an off-set of reality and the anticipated deconstruction. Instead, the deconstruction comes by way of ritualized gags and archetypes such as the falling closet door and Lisa's syrupy coffee. Deconstruction also takes place with the flashback episodes. However, it is Lisa's surrealistic ability to read subtitles that best deconstructs the narrative.

Recommendations

Clearly, television's naturalness has evolved since the early days of performing live in front of an audience. To consider what aspects of self-reflexivity have evolved into television's naturalness requires a broader vein of exploration.

This author had a difficult time obtaining published biographical information and would therefore like to call upon more documentation of tv writer's lives. What biographical facts lead to the seething psychological impulses of "Green Acres?"

The next step in studying "Green Acres" might be a content analysis to chart out occurrences of self-reflexive devices and running jokes, and what mediated realities or myths are created by the use of self-reflexivity among all television literature.

Although this project dealt only with "Green Acres," it would be interesting to see how programs that are less demonstrative are read for self-reflexivity.

"Green Acres" has made a place in history by obtaining a cult following. However, it has not claimed a milestone status. Ironically it was a market reality put above popular aesthetics that lead to its cancellation.

Currently "Green Acres" is syndicated through Orion. In July 1990, twelve stations reported broadcasting the show along with the Nick at Night cable network.

The writers of "Green Acres" recognize the sensibilities of an audience that is familiar with the conventions of tv. This seems to say that being "well read" must apply to the avid tv viewer.

Historically, writers, ancient scribes and such were revered men who captured the soul of a society with command of the language. Today, popular writers, including tv writers, are not thought of so much as moralists or philosophers, but as entertainers. It is as if they are regarded as storytellers charged with diverting, rather than engaging in play with the spectator. Sommers and

Chevillat suspend belief by creating a new reality that acknowledges itself as pure creation.

Within the frame of reference of television, "Green Acres" is a literary expression that elevates situation comedy to a higher level of understanding and therefore appreciation. The utilization of self-reflexivity and surrealism contributed new parameters of participation between text and reader, or program and viewer. Perhaps it will never be known what the motivations and intentions of Sommers and Chevillat were; that is, beyond the basic premise of creating a show that was paradoxical. But because their creation upheld a partnership of recognition of the banal between the text and audience, it was launched into a high art context.

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APPENDIX

Eisner and Krinsky's Television Comedy Series is a virtual godsend and by their own encouragement I am able to submit some additions to their findings of "Green Acres."

One episode named "The Computer Age" is not cataloged among the episodes produced. Nick at Night has this numbered as Episode 54. In this episode Oliver is planning the most efficient way to run a farm and champions the use of computers. Ralph wants to borrow some money for a computer dating service, while Lisa tells her that is no way to catch a man. Therefore Oliver takes Lisa to the service to "prove" that the computer will match them together.

I have also found that the episode "Exodus to Bleedswell" was not written by David Braverman and Bob Marcus as reported by Eisner and Krinsky, but was written by Sommers and Chevillat. Also, "The Four of Spades" was written by Jay Sommers and James Greene. "A Home Isn't Built in a Day" was written by Sommers and Chevillat along with Elon Packard. "The Engagement Ring" was written by Dan Beaumont. "A Square is not a Round" was written by Elry Schwartz. "Lisa the Psychologist" was written by Dick Chevillat and Dan Beaumont. The pair also wrote "A Gift for Drobney."

VITA

In reading more than 160 of the 170 episodes, combined with applying the methods of literary scholars and film theroists, I discovered new fun that I did not remember as a child watching the original broadcasts of "Green Acres." I had no viewing patterns when "Green Acres" premiered in 1965.

Eventually my viewing habits began to emerge. At age nine, during "Green Acres" last season (1970-71), I was watching ABC's "Mod Squad" on Tuesday nights. To experience the show for the first time as an adult, some twenty years after it had been originally aired, it reads as a unique and bizarre expression of humor.