When the Late Victorian Period and YouTube Meet:
A demonstration of digital media literacy

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Abstract
Social media platforms allow media and digital literacy skills to be exercised before the public. Here, digital literacy is defined as a subset of media literacy. To use digital literacy as a subset of media literacy, a user utilizes three divisions of media usage as defined by Hoof and Boell and three spheres of digital literacy as outlined by Ng. Literacy, however, does not imply full social interaction; parasocial behaviors are part of the field. To demonstrate this, the genre of renovation/restoration videos on YouTube will be explored, with a focus on the channel *The 2nd Empire Strikes Back*.

Keywords *YouTube, Digital Literacy, Media Literacy, Parasocial Behavior, Marshall McLuhan*

1. Introduction

Social media platforms present users with many opportunities to interact with one another. A person may post, respond, like or in other ways communicate to a specific profile either as a public or private event. In similar fashion, a media platform personality can reciprocate to users through the same styles of response, although parasocial experiences are more frequent when a media personality has a large audience which makes individual personal interactions difficult.

YouTube is one of many social media platforms available in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Videos are the key means of communication from the uploader to the viewer. Responses from the audience are most easily seen through textual, public comments or messages posted beneath the video. Uploaders respond to comments they receive, sometimes in text form and sometimes on the video itself. Responses can be individualized, as in replying to a specific comment, but at other times responses are general, expressing thanks or offering clarification in to similar questions from multiple commenters.

Social media presents users with a unique form of interaction. For people with few viewers (aka followers), that interaction can be truly social, with one-on-one responses between uploaders and respondents. But for public channels with many hundreds, thousands or millions of views, the uploader may have great difficulty in responding to specific comments; for these channels, a parasocial relationship is formed between the viewers and the uploader. Parasocial relationships, as explained by Ferchaud et. al, are "one-way relationships with mediated personalities" which "lack reciprocity" by the mediated personality to the individual audience members (2018, p. 89). Viewers may know many details about the media personality's life, but the media person will not know as much about each audience member.

Because social media is a digital platform and one that involves many aspects of media literacy, the fields of digital and media literacy are closely related when we consider the realm of YouTube. In this article, digital literacy skills are considered a subset of the media literacy platform. Media literacy is considered to be the ability to consume and/or produce media in some form. Social media users must be literate with both media and digital tools of their field in order to attract and/or interact – at least in a parasocial if not fully social – way with other users. YouTube and its genre of renovation/restoration videos, exemplifies the way that the theories of Hoof and Boell, Ng, and Ferchaud et. al cooperate to demonstrate media literacy with a focus on digital literacy.

Before delving into the YouTube demonstration, a discussion of digital and media literacy and the media ecologies created by media literacy must be given. Key researchers utilized for this study include Marshall McLuhan, Lance Strate, Florian Hoof and Sebastian Boell, Arienne Ferchaud et al, John Tinnell, Wan Ng and Laura D'Olimpio.

2. Review of literature

2.1. From the Academic Perspective

Marshall McLuhan was pivotal in explaining our understanding of media literacy in the mid-twentieth century. Today we could view it as the development of the theory of media ecology or "a technology within which human culture grows" (Milberry, 2023). As people have developed different technologies, in parallel fashion the technologies have shaped peoples' outlook on objects, interaction and communication in general.

Lance Strate echoed McLuhan's perspective when he said, "language functions as a medium of expression" (2016, pp. 52-3). Strate went on to explain that "McLuhan came to his understanding of media through the lens of a medievalist," and thus the concept of image making meaning became a significant part of understanding McLuhan's view of media. A Roman Catholic, McLuhan was familiar with how "(t)he cathedral itself represents a physical environment that is quite distinct from everyday settings, which includes the powerful medium of iconography, stained glass windows, statues, and so on that Saint Gregory the Great had characterized as the books of the illiterate" (2016, p. 53). In other words, the entire atmosphere of the cathedral, from statuary to paintings and windows, was part of the media experience. All the elements of the cathedral were designed to be 'read' by the public and were, therefore, the media environment within which a specific knowledge developed.

Moving from Medieval media ideas to the twentieth century, McLuhan found other elements of daily life to be a new part of our media environment. From the lightbulb to the television, mechanical things help us read and respond to our environments, just as a written text - or a cathedral - could make an impression.

Media literacy, however, is not a replacement for literacy in general. Strate mentions educational reforms in the US during the 1960s and 1970s and how their impact on his experiences as a high school student at that time may have created a "less… effective form of schooling" (2016, p. 55). His communication arts classes focused on the technicalities of broadcasting through radio and television

by learning the mechanics of their functions. While interesting, it did not include the impact of said media or what consumers would read from the experience of a broadcast. Strate claims that his education had progressive teaching in a regressive style (2016, p. 55) because it was limited to only studying the mechanics, instead of the full spectrum of media impact.

McLuhan explained that literacy is something that affects our senses. It can be thought of in this way: before humans developed reading and writing, we had aural memory as our collective method of retaining and transmitting information. Then came the "silence of the literate world" when we would transfer information without speaking (i.e. solely through writing). And in the mid-twentieth century, sound was renewed as part of the literate world with modern media (Strate, 2016, p. 59). But literacy perception is not limited to one sense: instead, it is the involvement of many senses – from the eyes, to the ears, to the hands and the sense of touch.

"Coming to a clear understanding of the distinct differences between hearing and seeing, between the ways in which the ear and the eye mediate our experience of the world, is essential to unlocking McLuhan's approach to understanding media," Strate says (2016, p. 59). In the same piece, however, Strate touches on Bateson's idea, that everyone does not have the same experience even with the same tools for perception. "The body and the nervous system are our primary media, and differences in biological structure lead to differences in perception, cognition, emotion and behavior" (2016, p. 62).

Understanding the body as a primary media is also what Tinnell (2011) considers when he describes the mind and its interactions with new media. Tracing the lineage of the mind as being first a "mystic writing pad" capable of being an "ever ready receptive surface" (a nod to Freud), Tinnell then decides that our public psyche has shifted the role of the mind and social media to being more like Derrida's mind-surface which can record permanent traces faintly. Social media, with its ability to have things erased, deleted, and yet still stored in some databank, is becoming our public mind surface that records and becomes a medium for the digital self (Tinnell, 2011).

Because there are so many different ways of interacting with media (and so many different media platforms), the individual creation and response to these stimuli is going to be unique. To combine Strate and Tinnell's ideas, it could be said that individual experience affects the way things are created and how they are consumed. One person's purpose in posting to digital media may or may not be viewed and consumed in the same spirit by a different person. Yet it is through these experiences that the media is perpetuated: if nothing is given or received, the media fails.

Media and its digital appendages in some way share an experience for both creator and user. Shared experiences can be concrete, such as livestreaming a birthday party to family members; or they can be hypothetical, when a person posts pictures of a vacation destination and asks for feedback and suggestions. Media, to reflect upon McLuhan and Strate, is more than just flipping on the television. It involves atmospheric cues that create a specific experience. Understanding media literacy is key to comprehending the ways by which that phenomena affects producers and consumers.

Hoof and Boell explain that media can be broken into three branches:

> " [C]ulture and power focuses on media as structuring and being structured by cultural patterns in social systems; *technology and infrastructure* presents media as a technological infrastructure that facilitates and shapes modes of mediation; and *process and change* explores the ongoing shaping of mediation devices through already existing media" (emphasis added) (2019, p. 640).

Following Hoof and Boell's thoughts, "media are at the same time formed by society while also in general structuring society relations…" (2019, p. 640). In this way, a media format becomes a cultural touchstone while at the same time exerting power over the culture or offering power to new voices. Technology and infrastructure refer to the mechanical side of media. They "determine how and what kind of knowledge can be communicated and generated," say Hoof and Boell. "[T]echnology provides the infrastructure and the formats for storing, transmitting, and processing information" (2019, p. 642). Interestingly enough, they also note that "Media … also serve as a cultural storage system" (2019, p. 643). To borrow from Freud and Derrida via Tinnell, we could say that social media is always ready to broadcast a new message (an ever-ready surface); and although a message can be edited or deleted, copies of the original message can remain in the system for years (record permanent traces faintly). However, the method of transmission can evolve over time: with Hoof and Boell's concept of process and change, media format and consumer use are never static. "'[N]ew media' are structured by already existing and well-established technologies" (2019, p. 643). Media can be "remediated" or re-invented to serve the same purpose but present it in a new way.

As mentioned in the introduction, this study examines digital literacy as a subset to being media literate. Wan Ng defined the idea of digital native by quoting Prensky: "digital natives have a culture of connectivity and online creating and sharing … Digital natives are active experiential learners who like receiving information quickly, are multi-taskers and parallel processers and prefer graphics first over texts" (2012, p. 1065).

Ng emphasizes that digital natives are classified in the same way as other social groups like Baby Boomers or Gen Xers, and that they are endowed with certain characteristics. Being a digital native, however, does not mean that each person has the same skills; instead, it means that they are [probably] better equipped to learn skills for specific interfaces, like smart phones and social media (2012, p. 1066). In her study, Ng said that there are a "multiplicity of literacies associated with the use of digital technologies," (2012, p. 1066) and these can be broken down into three categories: cognitive, technical, and social-emotional.

Cognitive skills indicate that a person can "think critically" as well as "evaluate and select appropriate software programs" and be "knowledgeable with the ethical, moral and legal issues associated with online trading and content reproduction" (2012, p. 1068). Technical skills are typified as being "technical and operational skills to use (information and communication technologies) for learning and in everyday activities" as well as being able to connect and use input and peripheral devices," (2012, p. 1067). This includes knowing how to password protect an online account and being able to install/uninstall a program (2012, pgs. 1067-8). With regard to social-emotional skills, 'netiquette' is probably the most recognizable concept. Ng explains that online etiquette is similar to in-person etiquette – a point that

D'Olimpio (2018) makes. Socio-emotional skills include also the ability to keep one's personal information safe, and to accurately recognize and respond to threats (2012, p. 1068). "Central to all three dimensions of the digital literacy framework is critical literacy," Ng says, (2012, p. 1068).

Laura D'Olimpio expands on this platform. She explains that taking a "critical and moral disposition flexible enough to take into account the variety of contexts and perspectives presented by a range of media" is key to interacting with others in the digital realm. "The human experience is one with common shared elements, even more so as the global world is more connected than ever previously and the language of images prevalent in the media cut across nationalistic and geographical boundaries" (2018, p.76).

Because so much of the world is now digitally connected, users must have digital literacy as well as media literacy in order to adequately process information on social media. But, connected as we are, those relationships do not have to be reciprocal. Fully social relationships include give and take communication from all participants; parasocial relationships only have one-way communication. An example would be of a television personality who receives letters from viewers but does not respond to every letter. Communicators in parasocial relationships reach out but do not receive an equal, in-depth level of response. In their study of parasocial attributes and YouTube personalities, Ferchaud and her fellow-researchers established that modern digital media exhibits the same parasocial tendencies of earlier media platforms, like television and radio programs. "For new media entertainers looking to amplify the audiences for their account, YouTube is the ideal publishing platform" they note (Ferchaud et al. 2018, p. 88). The concept of parasocial relationships via media is not new; Horton and Wohl in 1956 explained "how celebrities in traditional media formats strategically cultivate parasocial relationships with their audiences" (Ferchaud et al., 2018 p. 89). Such relationships are voluntary and may provide companionship to the consumer; they are built through media techniques like breaking the fourth wall or allowing for self-disclosure (Ferchaud et al., 2018 p. 90, 92). Today, social media provides media personalities (whether famous or unknown) the same opportunities; and users seem to respond in the same way. Thus it has happened: as digital natives have increased their skills, and as technological devices have evolved over time, the opportunity and necessity for developing digital and media literacy has also increased to such a point that today users can develop para- and fully social relationships in ways that are similar in theory but different in mechanics from those of the past.

2.2. From the Popular Media Perspective

YouTube is a social media platform which utilizes videos as its main form of communication. Uploaders post videos while viewers watch posted videos. Viewers react to channel content (videos) when they like or share a video or subscribe to the channel. Viewers can also post comments under the video they watch, and comment or respond to other viewers' comments. Uploaders of videos can respond directly to comments, record a video response, or make return messages through the community tab of their own YouTube channel. Some uploaders may post an e-mail address by which people can reach them, as well as addresses to alternative social media platforms and fundraising or merchandise sites related to their media persona.

The mission statement of YouTube is "to give everyone a voice and show them the world." The platform has been doing this since 2005. According to Matt Novak, YouTube began as a platform for people to share videos they had created by themselves. The then-new platform was deemed the "Flikr of video" (Novak, 2020 quoting Mashable). While video sharing was not unheard of in 2005 (other platforms like Vimeo, Google Video and Revver were present), YouTube has since outstripped its competitors; in 2021, Statista published a telephone survey which found that YouTube was the social media selection of choice for 81% of adult internet users in the US (Dixon, 2022). A Pew study noted in 2022 that 95% of teens surveyed in the US used YouTube (Vogels et. al, 2022). Statista also reported that, as of January 2022, YouTube ranked as the second most popular social media platform worldwide (following Facebook) with 2,562 million users (Dixon, 2022). Over the past two decades, YouTube has become a giant among social media platforms.

Of the variety of videos which can be found on YouTube, one popular genre on the platform is devoted to the renovation/restoration of old properties. From cleaning up sidewalks and lawns to restoring individual homes and whole estates, these channels follow the journey of property renewal through daily, weekly, or more sporadic episodes. As of the writing of this article, channels in this genre include Our Restoration Nation; The Pethericks; Lawn Care Juggernaut; Blade Mate Lawn Care; Escape to rural France; Mapperton Live: this (un)Aristocratic Manor Life; and The 2nd Empire Strikes Back.

Restoration videos are by no means limited to uploaders within the United States. While there are restoration channels created with a focus entirely on American properties (Our Restoration Nation, 2nd Empire Strikes Back, Lawn Care Juggernaut) others are from international locations like England (Mapperton), France (The Pethericks, Escape to rural France) and Australia (Blade Mate). Channels are operated for a variety of purposes: the Mapperton channel opened when pandemic closures prevented the Viscount and Viscountess Hichingbrook from hosting tours at their estate. Although their channel started out as a substitute tour platform, it grew to include renovation and repair videos, showing how an old British manor requires appropriate methods for restoring and renewing a historic property (Mapperton Live, nd).

Lawn restoration videos mentioned above are of a similar vein; filming began as augmentation to the businesses that Kevin Hansen (Lawn Care Juggernaut) and Sean (Blade Mate) already operated. Both channels have since grown to focus more on gratis property care the uploaders do for lawns and sidewalks. Today the videos accrue funds for each vlogger, but the initial filming goal was to demonstrate neighborhood improvement when a lawn is mowed or a sidewalk cleaned. (Lawn Care Juggernaut, nd, Blade Mate Lawn Care, nd).

Finally, there are some channels which started without a specific stated business goal. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, channels like The 2nd Empire Strikes Back, The Pethericks, and Escape to rural France fit here. Kaleb Higgins (2nd Empire, nd) began filming his restoration as a way to communicate with family and friends. The French chateau and convent restoration channels (Escape, nd and Pethericks, nd) have no clearly stated business origin, however Petherick does mention from

time to time that the income generated by videos augments his abilities to restore the property (Pethericks nd).

As of the time of this writing, each of these channels average 100,000 or more subscribers: Lawn Care Juggernaut has 705,000 subscribers while Our Restoration Nation has 103,000 [See Appendix A]. Many of the repairs they film are done by the uploaders themselves; but outside help is contracted for major installations like wiring, plumbing, stonework or roofing. Uploaders usually do their own videography; however they do accept help from friends and family for some editing or filming needs. Video formats include timelapses, how-to instruction tutorials, tours of similar properties, and history chats.

The exact number of channels on YouTube fluctuates; Zippia and Tubics, estimated that there were over 51,000,000 YouTube channels (Flynn, 2022 and Funk, 2022). Of those millions, in January of 2022 Tubics estimated that only 306,000 channels or .6% - not even one percent - of the overall number of channels had garnered 100,000 subscribers. According to Intuit, "On average, YouTubers with 100,000 subscribers can make between $600-$1,000 per week, bringing in between $2,400-$4,000 per month" (current as of August 24, 2022). Since property renovation/restoration channels can draw over 100,000 subscribers and provide tangible financial benefits to uploaders, this genre carries a certain amount of weight on this social media platform.

3. Case study

For the purposes of this article, one channel, The 2nd Empire Strikes Back, will be analyzed. This channel was chosen because it is a relatively new channel that accumulated a high number of subscribers within a short amount of time; plus, it provided an interesting glimpse into an underrepresented genre of video media on YouTube.

The 2nd Empire Strikes Back is a YouTube channel which joined the platform on June 23, 2020. The uploader, Kaleb Higgins, is restoring a Second Empire Victorian-style house in St. Louis, Missouri. In his weekly postings, Higgins shows time-lapse videos that feature demolition, repair and restoration work he has completed for the week. Most of the videos focus on Higgins as he works; however his wife Kim, several family members, and occasional guests all appear on the program (2nd Empire, nd).

Videos are posted once a week, with rare exception. Most videos feature some facet of work on the house like insulating a ceiling, removing old paint or installing new windows. Higgins explains the tools and products he used, the length of time it has taken to get a segment done, and what he plans to do next. Higgins also mentions safety protocols he takes: and he explains his use of professional assistance for specific repairs. Kim will narrate and do timelapses of her own activities; she also posts videos to her own YouTube channel. However, since Kim has another job besides the house restoration, she appears less frequently on the videos than Kaleb.

While most videos are about the Higgins' house and experiences in restoration, occasionally they will feature a related event or place. They may take viewers on a tour of a restored house of similar age (like the Magic Chef Mansion) or to a building that has similar features (the St. Louis Old Post Office

and Custom House building). Some videos feature items that have been given or donated to Higgins, or that have been found on the property. Each video is framed so that viewers can understand what has happened during the week.

Through his work, Higgins hopes to preserve the history of his area and to beautify a neglected neighborhood. The architecture, the craftsmanship, and the artistry of the Second Empire style are noteworthy in any location, and Higgins wants to help his home city preserve some of its past. It is important to note that Higgins insists that he is doing a restoration, not a renovation: through restoration, he believes that he is allowing the original medium of the home to be seen while making the house compatible with twenty-first century living standards (The 2nd Empire, nd).

3.1. The House as Media

Let us frame the media ecology which frames the experience of the house. The subject of the 2nd Empire Strikes Back is an 1890 Second Empire Victorian home. The house has three floors plus a basement and a shingled mansard roof. The house was originally built by Charles Brown (1852-1932), vice president and later president of the Hall and Brown Wood Working Machine Company (Joslin, 2014). Brown was an innovator. Trained as a machinist, in 1877 he traveled with his superintendent, Gorman Hall, from the East Coast to St. Louis to open a new company – Hall and Brown Wood Working Machine Company (2nd Empire, 2021, Who Built My House). Although Hall died in the mid-1890s, Brown lived until 1932 and stayed with his company for many years. Brown's company remained in St. Louis, selling machinery and replacement parts for wood working machines to customers across the country (Joslin, 2014). Even in the twenty-first century, some of these machines are still in use for making wood accents for houses (2nd Empire, 2021, Who Built My House).

When the house was built (1889-1890), it cost $8000; its next-door home built by Gorman Hall three years earlier only cost $6500. The extra $1500 for the house could have been due to the amount of detailed woodwork that is part of the home's décor.

Situated in the neighborhood of St. Louis Place, the street which runs past Brown's home is St. Louis Avenue, once called "Millionaire's Row" (Zotos nd). Fittingly, the house was built with cutting-edge innovations, like indoor plumbing and dual illumination – both gas and electric lights. Constructed before circuit breakers or even fuses were the norm, wiring was run through the joists of the upper floor's floorboards in a post-and-knob style and the electric panel box (akin to today's circuit box) is mounted on a slate panel – which was fire retardant (2nd Empire, 2020, I Bought An Abandoned Mansion).

Brown lived in the home for 25 years until 1915 (2nd Empire, 2021, Who Built My House). Brown sold the home in 1915 to a German veterinarian, Dr. Jennemann, who updated the home with new bathrooms – one update happened in 1923 (The Second Empire Vlogs, 2021, Vlog 25 and 2nd Empire, 2022, How Do We Keep Getting This Lucky). Jennemann's daughters kept the house after his death in 1945, and one daughter ran a dog grooming business, presumably from the basement room (The Second Empire Vlogs, 2021, Vlog 25). The daughters sold the house in 1965.

Eventually the home was foreclosed and sat empty. During its vacancy, the house was one of about 10,000 properties owned by the city of St. Louis (Zotos nd). Starting in 2017, St. Louis passed Prop NS and began the Prop NS Program which has the goal of "stabiliz(ing) vacant residential buildings owned by the Land Reutilization Authority as a first step toward subsequent purchase and full rehab by others" (Prop NS Program, nd). In 2020, Kaleb Higgins purchased the property for $65,000 (Zotos nd). This was the beginning of his journey towards restoring the house, and it was the viewers' introduction to the media of the house as it was and as it is today.

"McLuhan's specific approach to media ecology emphasized the primary role that sensory organs play in our thought process," says Strate (2016, p. 59) Later on, he says "…different modes of sense perception lead to experiences of the world… a medium can be understood as a language in its own right, with its own particular vocabulary and grammar and its own way of helping us to know about the world" (Strate, 2016 p. 62).

The ecological atmosphere of the house can be experienced as Higgins describes, demonstrates and repairs its unique qualities. In the past, the home boasted of fine furnishings equal to an existence on Millionaire's Row. As the house and its neighborhood aged, parts of the house were renewed or changed, like the butler's pantry which was turned into a full bathroom in 1923, or the veterinarian clinic which opened in the cellar during the second homeowner's tenure. By the time Higgins purchased the home, the media language was that of a decrepit building: light fixtures were unsafe and old-fashioned; knob-and-tube wiring was not up to code. Through his work, Higgins has been changing that ecology: derelict wiring, plumbing, and roofing are replaced with similar yet safer implements. Woodwork is restored. Renovations speak of a sense of value for the past with attention paid to modern safety and comfort of the present. The harmony of the house is renewed to tell a story of historic life through the lens of modern living standards.

Moving from the media of the house to the medium of the social media platform, it can be said that the literacies portrayed by the 2nd Empire Strikes Back channel are fairly easy to trace. First, Higgins and his cohorts must have technical or digital facility to operate cameras, fly a drone, and manipulate software. Higgins must edit and abbreviate long sequences so that they make sense but are short enough to understand; he has to upload videos, and keep things on schedule. Digital literacy allows the story of the house to be recorded.

However, without his ability to manage a YouTube channel, Higgins' story would not be broadcast. It would have no platform. Media skills make the story available for consumption by the public. Through understanding the mores of YouTube's social media platform, Higgins is able to find, reach and interact with an audience. In a nod to Ng's concepts about digital natives and their tech savvy netiquette, Higgins works to promote those who would benefit from extra advertising, like Phil, who has metal detected Higgins' yard several times and wants to do more yards. For him, Higgins posts an e-mail address so others can reach out. But for other people, Higgins protects their privacy. When Kaleb and Kim were married in October 2022, Higgins explained that the ceremony was held at his grandma's property but he did not reveal his grandmother's address.

3.2. The Parasocial Aspect of YouTube

One of the key points about parasocial activity on social media is that it can be, for the most part, a one-way relationship. But with YouTube, this is not always the case. Relationships of necessity will be truly parasocial for uploaders who have millions of subscribers. The relationship of an uploader to an audience of 100,000 or more will tend towards the parasocial. But there are elements that can be more fully social than there would be with a more classic form of media, like a syndicated television program.

To examine the parasocial/semi-social aspects of YouTube, we can look at several examples from the property renovation/restoration genre. Higgins of 2nd Empire indicates that he reviews his viewers' comments frequently; he sometimes responds to specific questions. When he does a question and answer session, he is directly speaking to someone rather than addressing an amorphous whole.

Other YouTube channels in the renovation/restoration vein respond in the same way. The Pethericks, for example, demonstrate semi-social behavior at times when Billy Petherick refers to comments made from viewers who suggest alternative methods for installation, or comment on something that may be unsafe. Petherick will outright request help from the audience to learn more about objects he has found in the garden, or for design ideas. Witness the video titled "A Royal Mess!" when Petherick says, "It's amazing how much response I got, for when I asked for help to design this kitchen. I've got so many beautiful designs sent by many people, so thank you and from each of those designs, I will implement something from it, you know, just so everyone's had a bit of involvement…" (Pethericks, 2023).

This is evidence of the audience affecting the uploader in a way that will never be fully experienced by the viewers themselves. Unless each viewer is able to pilot the same project as Petherick or Higgins, audience members can only guess at the effect they might have. It's rather a case of parasocial behavior in reverse: the audience is guiding the uploader in his life journey. And with renovation/restoration videos, this happens frequently. Uploaders canvas the audience for ideas: viewers respond.

The level of audience involvement, however, is factor over which media personalities do not have full control, beyond blocking all comments for a video. Commenters chat with one another. Negative feedback occurs. Negativity may be due to the uploader's lack of digital skills, for example when the music is too loud or the video clips are poorly pasted together. Negative feedback may also be a result of the viewer's own lack of digital skills. Sometimes it's just a case of a lack of socio-emotional skills. A tagline Kevin Hansen has mentioned on multiple videos is, "Haters gonna hate." (Lawn Care Juggernaut, nd). A parasocial relationship through the digital lens means that we don't always understand why someone says something; but it should be noted that an uploader cannot usually change that negativity through the existence of digital or media literacy.

To retouch on D'Olimpio's words, "the human experience is one with common shared elements" (2018, p. 76). This means that in the case of property restoration channels, viewers with an interest or background in the same area will empathize with uploaders in this field. Social media is a meeting

ground of shared experiences. Viewers are excited when Higgins finally has running water since they may have had a similar experience. When Higgins offers to give away a bathtub, tiles and fixtures he has removed, he is trying not to waste historic pieces. Higgins is, as D'Olimpio puts it, "seeking solutions to problems that affect us all" (2018, p. 77). In this case, he is looking for a solution to an issue that people interested in his field may also share.

Digital literacy is what supports the media literacy of Higgins and his audience. Through a variety of skills, Higgins records and posts his work so that viewers can find and view his videos on the social media platform. If we had no YouTube, there would be no need for Higgins's (or our own) digital skills. But since the platform exists, those digital skills allow us to access information that might otherwise never be published or accessible. This is not to say that home restoration could not occur without media and digital literacy: instead, these literacies make restoration work something that is appreciable by a wide audience on the world platform through social media.

4. Conclusion

The human sphere includes many media and digital interactions. The media ecologies we live in are many, from the homes in which we live to the social media posts which give us a moderate social interaction with an entity. With the help of digital tools, the media of something we may never experience in-person, like a Second Empire house in St. Louis, becomes tangible and meaningful. We appreciate what other do to help us be part of their specific media universe. To echo Tinnel's thoughts, we are part of the scene-makers, whether we are viewers, participants or creators. As Ng explains, while we may not be fluent in all literacies, we can use what we know to help us reach a new level of fluency. Interactions may be parasocial, but they are also affective: uploaders impact viewer's lives through their content, and viewers affect uploaders' courses of action.

When we understand the three divisions of media literacy as put forth by Hoof and Boell; and we are able to use in some way the spheres of digital literacy that Ng recommends, then we are becoming media literate with a digital emphasis. We can be parasocially connected. YouTube, as a social media platform, gives us the opportunity to enhance and connect our lives through the use of digital media literacy.

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Appendix A

Renovation/restoration channel subscribers from least to greatest as of Jan. 2023:

Our Restoration Nation (US)	103,000
Blade Mate Lawn Care (Australia)	116,000
Escape to rural France (UK/France)	119,000
Mapperton Live (UK)	132,000
2nd Empire Strikes Back (US)	149,000
The Pethericks (UK/France)	247,000
Lawn Care Juggernaut (US)	705,000