In spite of all the ballyhoo about CD-ROMs as "new media," many commercial discs contain a high percentage of material recycled from other media. These CD-ROMs can mix together preexisting characters, clips lifted from videos and films, and game technology to create an interactive product that feels both new and familiar. This recycled material provides a CD-ROM with a crucial economic advantage in the multimedia market: built-in name recognition. Consumers may not have heard of the latest original CD-ROM game, but they probably know The Lion King or Toy Story in their film incarnations. For corporate giants like Disney, these CD-ROMs provide another way to squeeze out more merchandising dollars from current successful properties. For those media properties that have exhausted their life on broadcast/cable/video, CD-ROMs provide another opportunity to extend their profitability. To feed the desire for content for this new medium, multinational corporations often can merely reach for their own shelves.

Spin-off CD-ROMs do not necessarily make the fullest use of the new medium's capabilities. They often merely place icons from the old medium (e.g., Simba from The Lion King) into familiar game settings or provide multimedia trappings around the presentation of movie clips (which the viewer must watch without interaction). It is all too easy to neglect the importance of these overt products of corporate synergy and to assert that the future of the medium must lie in innovative texts such as Myst. However, these commercially successful products shape the way we conceptualize what a CD-ROM does. They experiment with balancing familiarity and novelty in a way that can provide instant commercial appeal and long-lasting interactive rewards to their player/owner. For commercial multimedia, this combination of old and new is the much-sought-after Holy Grail.

The trick is "creating a CD-ROM that actually enhances its source material—and then shoots off in rewarding new directions." This is how Entertainment Weekly described 7th Level's Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail, the CD-ROM it named the best multimedia product of 1996. Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail (hereafter referred to as Quest) has been heralded as an exemplar of how to recycle material from other media while taking fuller advantage of the CD-ROM's interactive capacities. This essay examines the strategies Quest uses to transform its source material. What characteristics of the original 1975 film Monty Python and the Holy Grail make it particularly adaptable to multimedia? How does a successful CD-ROM spin-off expand on its source? In addition, I will demonstrate how Quest satirizes the notions of logic and productivity that have become underlying assumptions for both computer games and the real world of work in a cybersociety. Quest revels in its assertion that CD-ROMs are a waste of time in a world all too geared toward efficiency and time management.

There are other issues at stake here besides a further appreciation of the aesthetics and social commentary of Monty Python and 7th Level. As media corporations continue to mine narrative film and television texts as sources for CD-ROMs, the difficulties of translating a linear narrative into a multilinear structure become more apparent. All Hollywood films are not equal in their adaptability to the new medium. The first half of this essay begins to enumerate the qualities that might make one film more appropriate than another as a source for CD-ROM adaptation. Close examination of Quest's successes can shed light on possible future interactions among film, television, and multimedia.
Sketchy Quotes

The troupe Monty Python began as a collaborative effort among experienced comedy players. John Cleese, Graham Chapman, and Eric Idle began their comedy work in revues at Cambridge, and Terry Jones and Michael Palin were writer-performers in the Cambridge cabarets. The various group members (including the American Terry Gilliam) sojourned in British television sketch comedy programs such as Do Not Adjust Your Set and At Last, the 1948 Show when they met to form Monty Python in 1969. Together the Python members created Monty Python's Flying Circus, an innovative comedy smash that ran on the BBC. The troupe's four seasons on television defined a particular comic style that came to be called "Pythonesque."

Pythonesque humor jumbled together bits and pieces of sketches in rapid succession. Dense verbal studio sketches would be followed by "something completely different": highly visual filmed slapstick, Gilliam's surreal animation, or stock footage of an audience of older women applauding. The Pythonesque involves a strange crossbreeding of low and high culture, an irreverent combination of farts and philosophy. They would simultaneously parody television shows and satirize intellectual pretensions (two of their favorite targets) in sketches such as the one that asked game show contestants to summarize Proust's novels in fifteen seconds. Python sketches would place stock characters in absurd situations that gave rise to escalating mayhem; for instance, a guidance counselor who encounters an accountant who wants to be a lion tamer, or a robber who mistakes a lingerie shop for a bank. Python members wrote these sketches and performed almost all the roles (including some memorable drag performances), which helped give them international celebrity after the program was syndicated. The Pythonesque blend of high and low, satire and parody, the absurd and the intellectual became a distinctively recognizable comic style around the world.

The international success of Monty Python's Flying Circus made it possible for the troupe to enter the world of filmmaking. Their rapidly assembled first film, And Now for Something Completely Different (1971), cobbled together bits from the first two seasons of Flying Circus. It was not until 1975 that the Python troupe created a film composed of original material done in the now familiar Pythonesque style.

The film Monty Python and the Holy Grail (hereafter called Grail) recycles the age-old tale of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and their quest for the Holy Grail (the chalice Christ drank from at the Last Supper). After receiving a charge from God, Arthur searches the land for knights to help him find the Grail, and soon they separate to pursue the Grail individually. Present are such familiar figures as Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot, although their stories have been made indisputably Pythonesque. Galahad the Pure is tempted by a castle of maidens who appear too eager to be punished by spanking. Lancelot, in his attempt to rescue someone he believes to be a damsel being forced into marriage, gets "carried away" and slaughters much of the wedding party before he discovers that the "damsel" is an effeminate man named Herbert. The Python film adds new players to the legend, such as Sir Robin, whose lack of bravery is proclaimed in minstrel song ("when danger reared its ugly head, he bravely turned his tail and fled").

The 1996 CD-ROM adaptation of the film is itself structured as a quest. The player ventures among virtual sites patterned after locations in the film, such as the Plague Village and the Castle Anthrax. Visitors at the sites can participate in the familiar scenes by clicking on characters and objects. If you successfully navigate a site, you are rewarded with an excerpt from the film that takes place at that location. The player needs to collect various objects from the sites that will enable him/her to cross the Bridge of Death to receive the final reward: not the Holy Grail, but a scene excised from the original film. What qualities of the original 1975 film are particularly well suited for adaptation to multimedia? Part of the answer lies in the film's unusual structure. Grail follows the exploits of one knight and then another, heralding the new protagonist with a portentous voice-of-God narrator (explicitly announcing "The Tale of Sir ———") and trumpet fanfare. In so doing, the film follows the picaresque structure of the wanderings of Arthur and his knights. Instead of one long linear story, the legend of the Grail quest is composed of a series of individual stories. These stories need not necessarily be told in any particular order (other than the charge to Arthur, which initiates the quest, and Galahad's final discovery of the Grail). Although Grail can hardly be considered a "faithful" retelling of the myth, it does rely on the time-honored structure of separate, individual stories placed in the overall framework of the quest.

In this sense, Grail is an exception to the Hollywood norm. The
classical Hollywood film tends to present a single chain of interlocking events bound together by a highly efficient type of linear causation. The film places the protagonist into a predicament and then presents his/her actions as he/she strives toward a goal. The spectator is constantly urged to ask, "What will happen next?" both at the local level ("Will the bandit get away in this car chase scene?") and at the global level ("Will the protagonist ever find the one-armed man who killed his wife?"). Classical film narration also aims to present its audience with little or no extraneous plot information. We can rest assured that if a mainstream film shows us a scene, the information in that scene will be necessary for us to make sense of the protagonist's pursuit of a goal.

To call such a structure merely "linear" does not accurately capture the taut structure of classical film. Hollywood films present linear stories, yes, but so do continuity comic strips (such as Dick Tracy) and soap operas. Hollywood films are constructed not only to present events in a particular linear order, but also to convince us that this is the only particular order in which the events could be portrayed. Classical narration gives a sense of inevitability to the particular arrangement of plot events. By promising to present a series of cause-and-effect actions with little extraneous material, the classical film makes it difficult to envision the story world as having alternative possibilities (other character qualities, other choices of action).

The classical Hollywood structure is so effective that many students find it difficult to conduct thought experiments in rearranging a film's plot structure ("Imagine how Forrest Gump would be different if it didn't start on the park bench"). This sense of inevitable plot order (and the expectation that everything we see will present crucial relevant information) makes the Hollywood film form particularly difficult to reshape. It is not merely difficult because Hollywood film is "linear"; it is difficult because most Hollywood films encourage us to believe that one could not leave out or rearrange anything without disturbing the whole.

Because Grail owes more to earlier picaresque storytelling forms than does to tautly linked Hollywood structure, the separate stories in the film become more easily adaptable to nonlinear media. Since it makes little difference whether we hear Sir Robin's tale before we hear Sir Galahad's story, this helps free the designers of the CD-ROM to consider these events independent. The designer need not worry about severing the narrative thread between two stories since the original film has already bracketed these tales off from each other. Galahad's tale, for instance, can then be located in a single virtual site on the CD-ROM (the Castle Anthrax). The CD-ROM does arrange these sites in a suggested order, which the player can follow by clicking the arrow pointing right, but players can also visit and revisit the sites in an order of their own choosing. Only one site has a specified place in a sequence (the Bridge of Death is the final obstacle, since it can be crossed only after one has collected and redistributed several objects). Constructing a CD-ROM as a collection of sites that can be visited in roughly any order is now characteristic of the medium. Grail's return to a picaresque structure of separate tales makes the transition to discontinuous CD-ROM sites easier.

But only some of the film is structured as overtly framed tales. In fact, most of the scenes appear without the fanfare, in a way more typical of Hollywood films. These plot occurrences give the appearance of classical scenes, but they can be more accurately thought of as sketches. Understanding the distinction between sketch and scene is important for understanding what makes the original Grail film so adaptable to nonlinear media.

Much of the audience for Grail was already familiar with Monty Python because they had seen Monty Python's Flying Circus. The Flying Circus was structured as a series of sketches, following in a long tradition that extended from the British music hall to the stage revues of Oxford and Cambridge to Spike Milligan's television shows Q5 through Q9, all of which influenced Python's particular version of sketch comedy. A sketch is a kind of scene and therefore tends to take place in a continuous block of time and space, thus betraying the theatrical origins of both sketch comedy and the cinematic scene. As we discussed earlier, Hollywood film scenes are interdependent units arranged into the highly interlocked chain of classical narration. They are rarely shown without some framework establishing the scene in the diegesis as a whole (necessitating talk show guests to provide a verbal "setup" before showing a clip). A sketch, however, is freestanding; it is an independent unit that can be placed in any of several different places in a vaudeville-style program. Unlike a scene, a sketch leaves no lingering questions of "What will happen next?" at its completion. When a sketch is over, something completely different will probably follow (a song, an entirely different time and space, etc.).
In addition, sketches are overtly performative. Hollywood scenes require performers, to be sure, but these scenes are constructed to downplay the fact that they are performed for an audience. The classical film strives to convince us (at least temporarily) that these scenes take place in a realistic facsimile of our world, and that we are watching people/characters, not actors. Only extremely rarely does a film actor turn to acknowledge the presence of an audience watching in the dark (and many of those, such as Groucho Marx, come from a background in sketch comedy). A sketch, however, tends to present a broader style of acting than the realistic style that dominates mainstream film. They are more likely to acknowledge that they are performing for an audience, not pretending to be “real” people.

The structure of sketches in an evening’s entertainment, in which members of the troupe play a variety of parts, often foregrounds this performative unreality. In a Python sketch the actor playing a game show host in one sketch might be a Minister of Silly Walks in another; little effort is expended to conceal the fact that this is the same person. In a classical film it is expected that different characters will be portrayed by different actors, continuing the realistic facade. If a classical film recycled its actors in different parts, it would either be a display of bravura acting virtuosity (e.g., Alec Guinness) or an admission of an extremely low budget. Following the tradition of sketch comedy, Grail flaunts the fact that its players play multiple roles. John Cleese plays both Sir Lancelot and the rude Frenchman who taunts Arthur’s knights. Eric Idle is Sir Robin, Roger the Shrubber, Brother Mayor, and one of the heads of the Three-Headed Knight. These multiple performances help signal that we are watching sketches, not merely scenes.

Since sketches are not as tightly bound into a narrative structure as are traditional scenes, they tend to be freer to pursue “extraneous” material. Without the scene’s requirement that it must further the protagonist’s quest for a goal, the sketch can be derailed by what would otherwise be “tangential” subjects. In Grail, for example, several conversations (at a castle wall, a witch trial, and the Bridge of Death) unexpectedly veer into a discussion of the relative airspeeds of African and European swallows. A king’s simple attempt to gain information from a peasant can change into an intellectual discussion of the rights to sovereignty (of the Lady in the Lake story, the peasant says, “Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government!”).

The sketch structure of Monty Python’s Flying Circus, And Now for Something Completely Different, and Grail makes it easier for this material to be lifted out of its original context and recirculated in others. Since sketches are relatively freestanding, they can be used without explanatory frames. The performative quality of Monty Python sketches has helped open up a new channel for circulating this material: in the everyday interactions of Monty Python fans. Before Quest recycled material from the Grail film, this material was primarily recirculated among Python fans. In order to better understand how Quest recycles Python quotes, we first need to examine (at some length) how fan culture recirculates “quotable” sections from Python sketches. The quotable structure of Grail, as we shall see, makes it easier for both fans and CD-ROM designers to resituate this material onto a CD-ROM or into everyday life.

Monty Python’s cult following does not depend solely on the texts themselves; instead, fans interweave sketch material into their own daily lives. “Jokes, characters, and catch-phrases became the secret signs of members of the cult, and the Pythons found their jokes replayed to them,” Robert Hewison (1981, 8) has noted. Grail’s status as a mainstay of midnight movie screenings has enabled countless fans to memorize crucial lines and often entire sketches from the film, storing them away for further use in everyday situations.

Here the performative nature of the material plays an important part in its recirculation. Part of the fun (particularly for American audiences) is nailing the “outrageous” accents of the Python troupe members. It is not simply enough to repeat lines from the film. Fans try to reperform the lines, mustering whatever impersonative vocal skills they have. My undergraduate roommate was fond of Sir Lancelot’s reply after he massacred the wedding party (Crowd member: “But you killed the bride!” Lancelot: “Sorry. Terribly sorry about that”). Merely saying the words does not mark the phrase as a Pythonesque quote; one has to imitate Cleese to bring off the rejoinder. Just as Python members slip back and forth among roles (from Sir Lancelot to Tim the Enchanter), Python fans slip back and forth among different performed voices (from their standard voices to Denis the Peasant to the King of Swamp Castle).
Henry Jenkins (1992) has shown how fan practices often convert consumers of media into producers of media, making stories, videos, and artworks based on their favorite TV texts. Python fans become producers as well, but they tend to do so with a slightly different emphasis than the Star Trek and science fiction fans Jenkins studied. Python fans produce through performing on the everyday stage. While Star Trek fans may latch onto the occasional catchphrase ("He's dead, Jim"), the sketch structure with its emphasis on verbal play encourages a much greater attention to language. Python fans tend to be performers who resituate familiar material into new everyday contexts.

These catchphrases, liberated from their original context, can be applied to a variety of everyday situations. Once you start using a phrase such as Lancelot's "Sorry. Terribly sorry," you begin to realize how frequently situations call for such an inadequate apology. Bits of Grail dialogue become quite useful in one's personal rhetorical bag of tricks. I am quite fond of the Frenchman's taunt, "Your mother was a hamster, and your father smells of elderberries." It's astonishing how often one needs a good, all-purpose insult like this one.

The tangential quality of Python sketches contributes significantly to the adaptability of these lines. Unlike more traditional Hollywood dialogue, these lines do not seem particularly bound to a specific narrative situation. In Grail, discussions of relative swallow velocities or the desire for a shrubbery have little bearing on whether or not Arthur and his knights find the Grail. Lengthy instructions to a particularly dense castle guard or Socratic dialogue concerning how to test for witches have bearing on the progress of the individual sketch, but not on the outcome of the whole film. This material seems just as well- (or ill-) fitted to my own everyday interactions with twentieth-century bureaucrats as it does to this medieval quest narrative. Because this dialogue is so tenuously tied to the subject at hand, it is easily resituated into fans' everyday lives.

Fans are not limited by the structure of texts, of course. They can choose whatever lines they want to circulate as catchphrases among themselves. But the point is that Grail's structure of freestanding, tangential, performative sketches makes it easier for fans to incorporate bits of the film into their lives. The sketch structure encourages this more than typical Hollywood construction.

The Quest CD-ROM reuses Grail material in a manner somewhat between film watching and everyday quote performances. Several of Quest's sites re-present clips from the film in a more overtly interactive fashion. One must click on the various characters to make them speak familiar lines from the plague sketch (in which a body collector is convinced to dispose of an old man's body, even though he's "not dead yet"), the witch trial scene, or the French taunting episode. This particular form of interaction gives the pleasure of anticipating and experiencing a familiar sequence of lines, just as rewatching the film does. After a member of the lynch mob testifies against the witch ("She turned me into a newt!") the clarifying addendum to his statement ("I got better") is only a click away on the CD-ROM. One can interrupt the familiar sequence by clicking on another object, but one cannot radically reshuffle the lines into an entirely new order. Although this form of interaction feels quite limited, it does give some sense of the performative quality of using Python quotes in everyday life. You control the timing of these lines' delivery. Without your clicks, the scene will not progress. Instead of participating alongside the diegesis in the film by saying the lines, one participates in the CD-ROM's diegesis. Like the Python fan who uses the lines in everyday situations, you control when the lines are spoken.

The designers of Quest, like Python fans, recognize that the Grail catchphrases can be used in a variety of situations other than their original contexts, and so they do not limit these quotes to their familiar settings. Instead, the quotes are scattered throughout the CD-ROM, demonstrating further how remarkably adaptable the lines are to different contexts. In the film, Arthur's stately attempt to introduce himself as king is met with the skeptical retort, "Pull the other one!" This line seems even more appropriate when spoken by a skeleton in the Black Knight's tent in Quest. Arthur's lines "We must watch and pray" and "You're a loony!" become useful in a variety of situations. "Run away!" and a dispirited choral "Yay" from the film become repeated structuring units in the CD-ROM. In linking quotes with different contexts in the CD-ROM, the designers take their cue from Python fans, who transplant quotes onto other situations. In so doing, Quest makes surprising connections between new and old material.

Henry Jenkins (1992), following Michel de Certeau, has discussed how fans "poach" from popular culture, appropriating imagery that they use for their own purposes in their daily lives (24-36, 44-49). Certainly Python fans who use bits of sketches in their everyday
These structural characteristics made it easier to treat the film as a series of "quotable" moments. Furthermore, the performative quality of these moments gave additional pleasures to the fans who integrated them into their lives.

I argue that certain pop culture texts are more "quotable" and therefore more likely to be poached. The term "quotable" is intended to indicate that both images (Marilyn Monroe's dress being blown upward) and dialogue may be removed from their original contexts and integrated into fans' everyday lives. What determines whether a film is quotable? An exhaustive list of characteristics is probably not possible, given the creativity of fan practices. However, from the preceding examination of Grail we can list some qualities that make a scene more quotable: the ability of the scene to stand alone; an emphasis on overtly marked performance; a tendency toward tangents.

This history of fan participation through the recycling of quotes helped inspire the creation of Quest, 7th Level cofounder George Grayson came up with the idea for the disc after noticing that computer programmers are frequently big Python fans (Smith, 1994). These same factors that make Grail quotable within the broader culture also help to facilitate its translation to CD-ROM. Because fans demonstrated how discrete chunks of the film could be used in a broad range of situations, Grail became an ideal candidate for the nonlinear medium of CD-ROMs. Given the participative nature of these sketches, the designers realized that this source material could be adapted to a more "participatory" medium.

What does this mean for translating films to the new medium of CD-ROM? The first thing to note is that the classical Hollywood narration is designed for spectator immersion, not quotability. The structure is set up to propel a viewer forward through the narrative, not to set apart certain sections for viewer poaching. The key factors in understanding Grail's translation to the Quest CD-ROM are those characteristics that distinguish Grail from most Hollywood films. This would seem to reassert the difficulty of adapting most Hollywood texts into CD-ROMs.

However, this is a statement of a trend, not a totalizing judgment on the prospects of film/CD-ROM adaptations. We need to look more closely at instances of quotability in the classical Hollywood system. For instance, recent action/adventure films have made a conscious effort to contain at least one catchphrase ("Hasta la vista, baby," "Go

---

Fig. 3.1. "She turned me into a newt!" A click on the witch's trial scene yields quotable lines from the film.

The processes by which fans choose to poach one thing and not another are complex and not very well understood, but this choice obviously must involve factors both in the text and in the individual. All texts are not equally susceptible to this process of poaching, although the text itself cannot exclusively determine whether or not it will be poached. It would have been difficult in 1975 to predict that a medieval parody/satire film would instigate decades of repartee among a devoted cult following.

With the benefit of hindsight we can see that certain distinctive characteristics of Monty Python and the Holy Grail made it more likely to be poached. The picaresque structure of Arthurian tales dovetailed with the sketch structure carried over from the Flying Circus to create a series of relatively self-enclosed sketches that did not rely on a strongly linear sequence. The tangential quality of the dialogue (which frequently wanders from the ostensible initial direction of the scene) further casts loose from the moorings of the film's overall plot.
ahead, make my day’’) that producers hope will circulate among the population at large, thus promoting the film. These moments are consciously intended to be quotable and marketable, and investigating the structure of these moments may help us understand quotability better.9

Although the classical narrational system does not promote quotability, the fact is that fans have always found a way to poach elements from it. As fans continually discover new poaching strategies, we should look to them for a better understanding of what makes a text particularly quotable. Fans integrating film quotes into their everyday lives could be considered a testing ground for multimedia adaptations of movies.

And Now for Something Completely Digital

Grail’s quotable structure makes it easier to import discrete elements (particularly dialogue and film clips) into the CD-ROM adaptation. But Quest is not composed solely of elements from the film rearranged into new contexts. 7th Level designers also translated several Python-esque strategies into their CD-ROM equivalents, and these translations help extend Quest beyond the influence of the original material. I will examine how several Python strategies (interruptibility, stop-motion animation, parody, and satire) are reconfigured into CD-ROM equivalents.

Although Monty Python’s comedy is clearly within the time-honored tradition of sketch comedy, it also departed from that tradition in significant ways. Graham Chapman noted that the Flying Circus differed “from most TV sketch shows by ignoring the conventions established over the years—that sketches must have a beginning, middle, and end, and a punch line, above all. They must also be interspersed with songs and dances—that was always the tradition, a holdover from stage variety or stage revue” (Johnson, 1989, 5). Python sketches did not always have the structural wholeness of traditional sketch comedy (“a beginning, middle, and end”). With little warning the comic proceedings might be interrupted by the figure of John Cleese, sitting behind a desk situated in an incongruous setting (such as a beach or a field), announcing, “And now for something completely different.” In other instances sketches might be rudely interrupted by a sixteen-ton weight crushing a particularly annoying character. Or a band of robed priests might burst into a sketch, bringing with them the Spanish Inquisition.

Monty Python presented sketches, but it also violated the conventions of British comedy sketch structure by frequent interruptions for “something completely different.” The troupe members were attempting to supplant the orderly structure of the TV comedy sketch with something nearer “stream of consciousness, like a hilarious bad dream” (Hewison, 1981, 8). According to this dream logic, it made just as much sense to interrupt a sketch with a short, irreverent animated sequence as it did to complete the sketch. Closing credits need not be seen only at the end of the program; instead, they could appear at the middle or the beginning of the show. Interruptions of the normal sketch structure became the norm in Flying Circus.

Grail continues this interruption strategy and the Python preoccupation with misplaced titles. The film’s narrative is interrupted by a misleading intermission title, animated monks in robes diving off a diving board, and an animated multi-eyed dragon (which in turn is interrupted by the death of the animator). The opening credits halt (after displaying a curious preoccupation with Sweden) while the credit writers are sacked, and then the credits continue (at great expense and with a curious preoccupation with llamas). The primary medieval story is intercut with scenes of a present-day historian authoritatively discussing Arthur’s quest. After the historian’s throat is cut by a marauding knight from the other plot line, police investigate the death, and the film occasionally (and briefly) cuts back to the investigation before returning to something different from the Middle Ages.

As discussed earlier, Grail’s primary narrative is already segmented into sketches. The interruptions further loosen the Moorings that bind this material to a linear narrative progression. The interruptible style of Python humor made Grail more easily adaptable to a nonlinear medium. Since Grail’s diegesis could obviously be interrupted by animated material, sequences from the present day, or nonsensical credits, the designers of Quest could easily interrupt the material with parodies and pop-up figures without doing violence to the original intention.

In fact, the Quest CD-ROM seems to carry Python interruptibility further. The intertitles from the film are repeated with numerous new
variations ("Did you know your fly's open?" "Fooled you"). As noted earlier, clips from the film are re-presented as interactive scenes that frequently halt, requiring our clicks to start the scene again. The CD-ROM opens up many possibilities for players themselves to create interruptions of their own, since players can choose to click on various objects or to visit other locations in the middle of the scene.

Because the CD-ROM offers both prescribed interruptions (e.g., the intertitles) and the opportunity for player-initiated interruptions (through clicking), it extends the innovative interruptible style of Monty Python's Flying Circus. The interruptions that helped make Python sketch comedy distinctive become a structuring principle for the construction of a nonlinear CD-ROM.

One of the most distinctive ways to interrupt Monty Python sketch material (both film and television) is to interject one of Terry Gilliam's stop-motion animation sequences, which he prepared without the troupe's collaboration to be inserted into the sequence of sketches. Gilliam made no pretense to be doing smoothly professional animation. Instead, the moving drawings and cutouts were intentionally jerky; they seemed as irreverent toward the standards of animation as they were toward the standards of propriety. The jerky motion reminds us that animation is based on a series of still pictures, not on an illusory continuous motion. Such animation gives these sequences a "homemade" quality that fits the low-budget aesthetic of the Flying Circus. This overt admission of budget constraints helps situate these sequences as lower-class puncturings of upper-class pretensions. The jerky animation tells us that Python's satire is from the less-well-funded margins, not from the center.

The Quest CD-ROM continues the Gilliam tradition of jerky animation and extends it throughout the Python text. In the film, stop-motion sequences of monks in hooded garb diving off a diving board or a cutout stained-glass Jesus waving a blessing are exceptions to the smooth motion of the rest of the film. In Quest the entire CD-ROM uses jerky stop-motion animation. Cutout figures of Arthur and his knights reenact scenes from the film, and these figures also pop up from the margins to give commentary (e.g., Arthur pokes his head in from offscreen to say, "We must watch and pray"). In each of these situations, the cutout versions of Python members in medieval costume speak with their mouths clearly not in sync with the dialogue. Instead, their mouths open and close as if hinged, resembling Gilliam's animated style more than the smooth motion of film.

Here the 7th Level designers have found an aesthetic justification for one of the CD-ROM medium's limitations. Because smooth computer animation requires considerably speedy processing and sizable memory, many CD-ROMs have rather poor animation quality. The Quest CD-ROM takes this limitation and turns it into an aesthetic asset. The jerky motion of the cutout figures seems to fit the animation style familiar to Python fans. Now the Python troupe members move according to the same rules governing Gilliam's creations. Just as Gilliam acknowledged the limitations of his low-budget stop-motion animation, the Quest designers acknowledge the shortcomings of the CD-ROM medium.

I have argued elsewhere (Smith, forthcoming) that when CD-ROM designers provide a diegetic rationale for the limitations of the CD-ROM medium, it helps hide the "computerness" of the program in a way that is elegant and involving. Myst, for example, tells the story of several islands whose populations have been wiped out; thus the CD-ROM's construction as a series of still images is justified (since nothing on these islands is left alive to move). Myst avoids awkward CD-ROM animation by creating a rationale for avoiding movement completely. This strategy (along with Myst's lack of an overt interface, such as a menu) encourages us to get caught up in the world of the story, not to contemplate the frustrations of the CD-ROM medium. Myst hides the "computerness" of the disc, which helps us concentrate primarily on the densely detailed worlds.

Quest relies on an entirely different strategy to encourage viewer involvement. Instead of concealing the "computerness" of the disc, it flaunts the fact that this is a CD-ROM. The intentionally jerky animation constantly reminds us of the medium's annoying limitations, but by incorporating this awkward motion into a Pythonesque aesthetic, the Quest CD-ROM makes available a different sort of pleasure. By emphasizing its computerness, Quest encourages the player to laugh at the medium's characteristics. While Myst's appeal depends on its seemingly invisible interface, Quest's pleasures depend on an awareness of how clunky a CD-ROM interface is. Both strategies encourage player involvement, but they do so in different ways. A disc that de-emphasizes the computerized nature of the text tends to promote
immersion in the story world. A disc that flaunts its computerness opens up the possibility of parodying the medium itself.

Parody and Satire: Wasted Time

Parody, as Linda Hutcheon (1985) discusses it, is repetition of elements from other works of art with the addition of critical ironic distance. It is imitation of formal properties with ironic intent. From its earliest *Flying Circus* seasons, Monty Python has parodied the formal properties of the television medium itself. We have already mentioned Python’s tendency to misplace titles; they also would break other unquestioned rules of station continuity by showing station identification from the other channel. Python sketches used television genre forms with an absurd twist (such as a game show in which Mao, Lenin, Marx, and Che Guevara eagerly answer English football trivia questions), which pointed up the ridiculousness of the original form. Pythonesque humor is not merely silly bits; it reuses existing forms, adding what Hutcheon would call an ironic distance.

Clearly *Grail* is a parody in Hutcheon’s sense, a send-up of the form and content of the Arthurian tales. By taking Sir Lancelot’s gung-ho attitude to an extreme (slaughtering people first, asking questions later), by placing Sir Galahad the Chaste in a situation promising orgiastic sex, and by inventing the cowardly Sir Robin, the film skewers the notion of knighthood as chivalrous, pure, and brave. When the fiercest obstacle in Arthur’s path is a man-killing rabbit, *Grail* parodies the structure of innumerable dragon-slaying tales. For those familiar with legends of the Grail, the film presents irreverent surprise after surprise.11

While its send-up of medieval imagery is quite funny, a medieval parody is a fairly arcane idea for a mass audience. *Grail’s* parody extends beyond the specific form and content of Arthurian tales to make fun of film itself. *Grail* continues the Python strategy of lampooning the medium it is using, violating its unquestioned assumptions just as the *Flying Circus* did with television. The film announces its parodic intent from its initial moments, in which we dimly see Arthur and his servant riding through the countryside accompanied by the sound of horses’ hooves. After a while we see Arthur and his servant top a hill, and only then do we see that the clopping sound is not made by horses but by two coconuts that the servant is banging together. By placing the sound effect process (normally hidden behind the scenes) in the foreground, the film exposes its own low-budget approach to parody. *Grail* even takes potshots at the medium’s tendency to provide orchestral background at a moment’s notice. Herbert, the “damsel” in distress, has a tendency to burst into orchestral occasional computer prompt “Do you want to play again from this point?” without the computer asking. After being commanded by the computer to “Shoot!” players can then access a not-very-helpful help function that speaks like Swedish (“Fur cursor to de left mooven, mooven de moose to de left”), find out “What’s Ni!” or simulate dialing in to purchase shrubbery “online.” *Quest* recognizes that a Python program should parody other programs, whether computer or television.

One of the most distinctive things about this CD-ROM is that it consistently lampoons basic assumptions about game play. Although heralded as a “new medium,” CD-ROM games have already established a set of norms, and *Quest* consistently makes us conscious of the medium’s conventionality. It poke fun at shooting indiscriminately at objects, a basic organizing principle for countless games. Instead of shooting at menacing monsters as in *Doom, Quest* asks us to chase down and shoot ridiculous objects such as flowers. *Quest* takes the conventional computer prompt “Do you want to play again from the same place?” rather literally in the encounter with the lethal white rabbit. After the bunny savagely dismembers your knights, you can choose to play again, an option that loops you back to exactly the same
Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail parodies the Mortal Kombat game in a bloody struggle between Arthur and the Black Knight.

place, where your knights can be massacred again and again (until you discover that you really want to “play again from a slightly different place”). It makes fun of the now-familiar process of answering “just a few questions” when registering a new CD-ROM. Quest presents you with a barrage of 125 questions, some of them familiar to Grail fans (involving velocities of swallows, for instance), some of them a bit too personal (“Are you wearing underwear? Do they fit snugly?”), and some simply inane (“Bing tiddle tiddle bang?”). The player cannot skip a single question in this interminable registration process if he/she is to complete the game.

Beginning with the product registration, playing a CD-ROM combines pleasure and frustration in alternate measures, and Quest constantly points out this frustration. Throughout the game Quest attacks the inanity and tedium of the central process of playing a CD-ROM: clicking. Clicking the mouse is the key to unlocking the pleasures of most non-joystick games, but such clicking results in enormous frustration. Players click on objects that don’t perform in the ways they hoped, leading the player to click on every possible object on the screen in an attempt to unravel the secrets of the virtual space.

Clicking in Quest flaunts how pointless such clicking can be. Mouse clicks elicit sound bites that can be overtly unsatisfying (“You’ve done it! You’ve clicked on the spot!”), misleading (“This is where you should’ve clicked in the last scene”), or scolding (“Don’t click here. This is my spot. I found it first”). Quest spoofs the interminability of game clicking with such phrases as “Click here 500,000 more times and you get a surprise!” and “Isn’t your finger getting sore yet?” At the same time, however, Quest overtly requires us to engage in the same frustrating, repetitive clicking it parodies. Several objects require multiple clicks before they will provide game-crucial information. To get to see the “gratuitous act of violence” promised in the plague scene, one must click repeatedly and determinedly. By simultaneously scoffing at clicking and forcing us into repetitive clicking situations, Quest reminds us of the frustrations that are part of computer game play. This CD-ROM encourages us to confront the ridiculousness of a medium that forces all interactions to take the form of a single button press.

In this manner, Quest veers more toward satire and away from pure parody. Linda Hutcheon usefully differentiates the two terms, which are often confused. She uses parody to refer to the ironic recirculation of material from other texts. The target of parody is other texts, particularly their formal qualities. Satire, on the other hand, points outward toward the outside world beyond formal texts to the foibles and follies of humankind. Its target is social and “extramural,” not “intramural” (between texts). According to Hutcheon, part of the reason satire and parody are often confused is that they often are used together. A satirist who wants to send up a particular social convention will often parody a textual form to gain attention. For instance, a Monty Python sketch satirizing upper-class pretensions might choose to do so by parodying television sports competition, creating the race for “Upper-Class Twit of the Year.”

Monty Python’s work has always had a strong emphasis on satire, with a particular focus on British aristocrats, bureaucrats, and petit bourgeois. Flying Circus featured an array of bizarre shopkeepers: one who alternates between being helpful and outrageously insulting; a pet shop clerk who refuses to take back a dead parrot; and a mortician who proposes that bodies be cooked and eaten. John Cleese
saturated useless British ministries in his Ministry of Silly Walks sketch. Clerics were also subject to ridicule, as in the “Dirty Vicar” sketch (where a vicar uncontrollably grabs women’s bosoms). Python made fun of national stereotypes, as in the sketch about an Australian philosophy department where they propose that all faculty members be named Bruce. They also bent gender stereotypes with singing lumberjacks who “put on women’s clothing and hang around in bars” and “Hell’s Grannies,” a violent gang of delinquent old ladies. Often through simple inversion, Monty Python would put stock figures into situations where they would normally never appear. They placed people who would never meet together in the same sketch. Removed from their usual context, these characters’ pretensions and vices become obvious targets for satire.

Grail is the single Python film that tends almost entirely toward parody and neglects the Python satiric tradition. Much of the fun in the film comes from the play with Arthurian myth, the conventions of film, verbal tangents, and blatant anachronisms, not from satire of real-life figures. Occasionally the film does veer toward real-life subjects (e.g., the confrontation between the decidedly modern politics of an anarcho-syndicalist peasant and the monarchic politics of a king), but it avoids the class-based satire that characterized much of the Python work in Flying Circus. 7th Level’s Quest, following the lead of the original film, tends toward parody, but it also reactivates the Pythonesque tradition of satire in an important way.

Quest enters into satiric territory by emphasizing the notion of wasted time. This concept, according to Jeremy Rifkin, was made possible by the invention of the clock:

Slowly, the bourgeoisie began to advance the idea of securing the future through the proper husbanding of time. The clock became the instrument to hoard and mete out time. The clock’s introduction into the economic life of Europe led to the idea that time could even be bought and sold.... If time could be bought and sold in units, it could also be accumulated or depleted. In the new clock culture, time and money became interchangeable and exchangeable. (161)

An economics of time developed, which continues in force to this day. If one packs more activity into a given period, one is “saving” time. There are values in this economy: if one engages in a worthwhile activity, one “spends” time, but activities that are considered worthwhile “waste” time. The spending and wasting of time is measured against the future. By purposeful and efficient husbanding of time in the present, one gains potential time to be “spent” in the future. Spending time is an investment; afterwards, one gains a certain return (by spending time with my child, I help our relationship to grow). Wasting time produces no such return. Spending time involves a sense of conscious choice to do an activity, while wasting time evokes a sense of aimlessness and lack of agency.

Much of popular entertainment is caught between these notions of spending and wasting time. People acknowledge that they watch television as a way of satisfying their need to unwind after a hard day’s work, which would indicate that they are spending time (actively choosing an activity that serves a need). However, watching television is widely considered a waste of time, characterized by aimless wandering through channels with little overt return on people’s time. Discussions on the value of popular entertainment often center on these discrepant perspectives. Pop culture either serves no overt purpose (and therefore wastes time) or serves a hidden purpose (which can be worthwhile, such as “letting off steam” or relaxing).

This dichotomy in the economics of time structures the way we think about new media, particularly computerized media. Time economics has increased in importance as the pace of society increased, and the computer is on the cutting edge of this speed-up process. Personal computers are now capable of multitasking, carrying out more than one process at the same time to provide maximum efficiency. The aim is decreasing the amount of time a user must wait for the computer to finish processing. Increasingly speedy processing chips and superfast modems offer the promise of quicker loading of programs and downloading of files. The computer has become a symbol of relentlessly efficient, rapid use of time.

The ever increasing expectation of computer speed often collides with the limitations of actual hardware and software. Lured by the promise of more efficiently spending our time, a computer user becomes increasingly aware of wasted time waiting for image files to download from the Internet or new programs to complete installation. As time economics speeds up, the computer that seemed fast to me a year ago now feels agonizingly slow. Increasingly, the experience of using a computer increases one’s time frustration. The user, once amazed at what the computer can do, is now frustrated that it can’t
do things faster. We internalize a computer pace that quickly escalates to outstrip the computer itself. Although the computer seems a device designed for ultimate time efficiency, actually using computers emphasizes the many small wastes of time.

While computers can magnify our perception of the frustrations of wasted time, they also can provide increased opportunities for pleasantly wasting time. Although the personal computer was initially marketed for its efficient, practical functions, the game capabilities of these computers became the key to their widespread purchase. Large numbers of people bought these purposeful devices only when it became clear that one could enjoyably waste time on them. Attuned to this tension between wasting and spending time, many computer games reiterated the economics of time, as Rifkin noted: “The ultimate goal in most computer games is to secure more time. Every aspiring video game player dreams of the perfect game, the game that goes on forever. Time, in computer video games, is a foil, a resource, and prize all wrapped up as one” (25). Computer games lure with the promise of a return on the time you've spent playing them. The lure is more playing time, which gives the player a sense of accomplishment. By rewarding the player’s efforts with “time,” games mimic the economics of time. However, the sense of accomplishment at gaining more playing time does not necessarily help allay the sense that game play overall is a waste of time. Just because you’ve been rewarded with more playing time doesn’t mean that playing isn’t a waste in the first place.

CD-ROM games are played in the context of this network of social meanings and values. These games, like television and other popular media before them, are often caught between the concepts of spending and wasting time. People sit down to play Myst or Doom for a few minutes and emerge hours later, astounded at the time that has passed and often guilty over the time they have wasted. But the very fact that these games are played on a computer accentuates the spending/wasting dichotomy. Playing a game (which, by definition, has no practical purpose) on the very machine that is supposed to bring time efficiency to one’s life simply increases the tension between spending and wasting time.

Quest is unusual in the way it overtly, wholeheartedly, unashamedly announces that it is a waste of time. It flaunts its own uselessness. Users determinedly clicking in their quest for the Holy Grail hear comments such as “To waste more time, click here again.” A player leafing through the pages of the Black Knight’s journal hears this comment: “I could keep turning pages all day” (which might easily have been said by a Myst player reading Atrus’s journal). Sound bites such as these begin to move into satire’s territory. Not satisfied merely to parody clicking, Quest pokes fun at modern time pressures, which few other CD-ROMs do.

Immersive CD-ROMs such as Doom do not encourage the player to consider that he/she is wasting time. Only after one finishes a playing session is one struck by how much time has passed (wasted). This awareness is not triggered when one plays the CD-ROM but when one makes the transition from game time to real time. But Quest contains numerous reminders that while you are playing, you are wasting your time. Not coincidentally, Monty Python’s first CD-ROM (composed mostly of famous sketches from Flying Circus) was entitled Monty Python’s Complete Waste of Time. From the titles of their CD-ROMs to the senseless tasks they set for the player, Python’s CD-ROMs flaunt the knowledge that other CD-ROMs hide (but which many of us secretly share): CD-ROM game play is a waste of time.

And why not? By joyously announcing its uselessness, Quest encourages us to confront the social stigma of time wasting. In a society that increasingly asks more and more of our time, a little wastefulness is illicit fun. It is a jab at the ever present voices that say, “Faster! Faster! More! More!” Part of the enjoyment of wasting time is the knowledge that one really should be doing something more productive. Quest doesn’t remind us that we’re wasting our time as a means of inducing guilt. Instead it emphasizes its usefulness to point out how silly the social pressures toward time efficiency are.

The computer game is an important factor in the time wars (as Rifkin calls them). Employees forced to do less-than-involved work on a computer can sneak in a little game playing (some games provide a built-in function to display a fake word processing screen to conceal the game from a passing supervisor). By snatch ing a bit of employer time to gain some personal pleasure (a strategy de Certeau calls the *perruque* [1984, 24-28]), the employee fights back against the time pressures. Taking back time by using the computer, the same resource your employer provided for practical purposes, accentuates the illicit pleasure of wasting time.

Quest is no different from many other computer games in its time-
wasting capacity. Much of the pleasure in *Quest*, as in many CD-ROMs, comes from clicking on objects and watching them do silly things (such as clicking on the witch to watch a long lizard tongue come out of her mouth). The difference is that *Quest* consistently reminds you that you are wasting your time, thus satirizing the logic of efficiency that interpenetrates the world of computers.

The early academic pronouncements on hypertexts and hypermedia emphasized these new media’s capacities to destabilize linear logic and embody more poststructural ways of thinking. As these forms have evolved into multimedia, they have become conventionalized, as all new media do. Within the conventions that have emerged through commercial development of CD-ROMs, however, there is little of this radical critique of logic. In fact, many CD-ROM games seem to reiterate the primacy of logic by emphasizing intricate puzzle solving and systematic exploration of the virtual space. Such programs reinforce the logic of the computer instead of restructuring it.

While staying within the context of commercial multimedia, the 7th Level designers have found a pleasurable way to break down this logic. The potential for this playful illogic came not solely from the structure of the CD-ROM medium but through the adaptation of Pythonesque strategies to the new medium. It is not merely the parody/satire of *Monty Python* that provides the illogic, nor does the nonlinear structure of multimedia alone result in a reconfigured logic. In fact, many CD-ROM games seem to reiterate the primacy of logic by emphasizing intricate puzzle solving and systematic exploration of the virtual space. Such programs reinforce the logic of the computer instead of restructuring it.

While staying in the context of commercial multimedia, the 7th Level designers have found a pleasurable way to break down this logic. The potential for this playful illogic came not solely from the structure of the CD-ROM medium but through the adaptation of Pythonesque strategies to the new medium. It is not merely the parody/satire of *Monty Python* that provides the illogic, nor does the nonlinear structure of multimedia alone result in a reconfigured logic. In fact, many CD-ROM games seem to reiterate the primacy of logic by emphasizing intricate puzzle solving and systematic exploration of the virtual space. Such programs reinforce the logic of the computer instead of restructuring it.

### Notes

1. Hollywood films that have been adapted to computer/video games include *Batman Returns*, *Predator*, *Wayne’s World*, *Fantasia*, *Rambo III*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Home Alone 2*, *The Last Action Hero*, and many others.

2. The quest is one of the primary organizing principles in the history of computer games. Following *Adventure*, many games are structured around wandering through a treacherous, unknown space trying to collect important objects. The Grail quest is the prototype of such narratives. This deep similarity between computer game structure and the source material for *Grail* aids in the translation of this material to CD-ROM.

3. It is interesting that this interactive CD-ROM rewards you not by giving you more interactive experiences but by giving you film clips, which we can only watch without interruption or interaction. The final reward is itself a film clip. Other CD-ROM games also present film (or rather, QuickTime) excerpts as payoffs. For instance, when you finally break through to another age in *Myst*, you are shown an aerial QuickTime flyby of the new age’s landscape, and this reward is quite satisfying and involving, in spite of its reliance on “old-fashioned” film/video images. Perhaps a switch to another medium within a multimedia text (from game to film, for instance) is enough to signal a “bonus” for the player. However, it may be more difficult to use a film clip as a final reward (as both *Quest* and *Myst* do), since we expect a more strongly marked payoff from moments of closure.

4. Hollywood has occasionally produced multiple story films using discretely framed segments (e.g., *Dead of Night*, *New York Stories*). Such films do not radically restructure classical Hollywood storytelling norms, since the individual tales tend to follow these conventions. However, the rarity of such films reminds us that they are an exception to the overall structure of feature film narrative.

5. The quality of this different form of participation has moral consequences. In the plague scene a body collector is finally persuaded to clonk an old man on the head, in spite of his protest that he’s “not dead yet.” I have laughed many times at this scene in the film with few moral twinges. It was quite another thing, however, when the fatal clonking required my click to silence the old man’s cries (“I feel happy!”). Similarly, watching on film as King Arthur hacks away all four of the Black Knight’s limbs provides a sort of moral distance that helps create the humor. When you are involved in a game situation in which your goal is to hack away his limbs, this emphasizes your own participation in the comic sadism. This is further accentuated because the Black Knight inexplicably scrambles away faster and faster as you hack away more of his limbs, which puts you in the position of clicking furiously as you wield a tiny sword and chase a torso with no legs. Similar
arguments could be made for the fast and furious participation required in the games included on Quest, including "Spank the Virgin" (where one raises red whelps on the lily-white bottoms) and "Burn the Witch" (a memory game that rewards you for setting afire the correct sequence of witches tied to the stake). I do not wish to sound puritanical about the violence in Quest. On the contrary, the ridiculousness of the violent tasks and the requirement of my participation set up a space for me to think about my own moral culpability.

6. Because the sketches in Grail are not particularly interdependent, it is difficult to remember the order in which they occur in the film. Is Sir Robin's tale before or after Lancelot's? Does Arthur's confrontation with Denis the anarcho-syndicalist peasant occur before or after the witch trial? Because the film does not have a strong chain of causality binding the episodes together, I find that the only way I can mentally reconstruct its sequence (without revisiting the text) is to recall which players are involved in the various scenes. Since the Wooden Rabbit scene involves Sir Bedevere, it must take place after the witch trial (where we meet Bedevere).

7. Given this brief, incomplete list, I note how well it describes some of the film texts that my undergraduate students quote most often. Grease, with its structure of self-enclosed musical numbers and mannered musical performances, frequently works its way into my students' interactions, as do the more talky, tangent-oriented John Hughes films such as The Breakfast Club. Certainly there are thematic factors involving adolescent confusion and pressure leading my students toward these two films. But there are also structural factors that make certain films such as Grease and Grail more quotable for fans.

8. In an article reporting on multimedia products (including Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time) premiereted at Comdex (the most important computer trade show), David English (1994) reported that the "highlight of the evening" was when the crowd of computer professionals sang Python's "Lumberjack Song" along with the CD-ROM.

9. The action/adventure film may also show how films may alternate between spectacle and narrative. The advancing plot in an action/adventure film frequently comes to a halt to present a moment of spectacle (a car chase, a city exploding under alien attack). These relatively self-enclosed moments may be more quotable and therefore more able to be included in CD-ROM adaptations. This harks back to the concept of "attractions" pioneered by Sergei Eisenstein and further advanced by Tom Gunning (1986). An attraction (like a circus sideshow or a sexy picture) appeals to an audience without requiring narrative setup. Gunning has used this term to describe early cinema, which tended to present such attractions without much narrative justification. To the extent that our blockbuster cinema is returning to a cinema of attractions, this may help designers adapt more quotable films to nonlinear media.

10. Hutcheon differentiates parody from other related forms. Parody is more specific than mere intertextuality, since intertextual citation can be made without ironic intent. Allusion emphasizes the correspondence between two texts, while parody emphasizes the difference. Parody's target is always another text or genre of texts (and so it tends to mock the form of these texts), while satire's target is something besides texts in the outside world (36-44).

11. Interestingly, many people who appreciate the film seem to have only the vaguest notion of the original Arthurian stories. In fact, one friend told me that most of what he knows about Arthur he learned from Grail. This reverses a basic assumption about the nature of parody: that one has to know the text(s) being parodied before one can make sense out of the parody. Since audiences who encounter the parody before they discover the original material can not only make sense but gain pleasure from Grail, this calls for a revision. Audiences can and do read parodies without knowing the original, although literary scholars may assume that one needs full knowledge to appreciate parodies.

12. For instance, see Landow (1992, 137-38) and Landow and Delany (1991, 6).

WORKS CITED


"Evil Will Walk Once More"
Phantasmagoria – The Stalker Film as Interactive Movie?

Angela Ndalianis

"The Intertextual Arena" and Cross-Media Convergences

Two distinct tales of horror. Two heroines. Two psycho-killers. Two small-town communities. In the first story, the horror begins when a deranged murderer (possibly also the bogeyman himself) interrupts the peace of a small town. Lurking in the shadows, he emerges only to butcher a stream of unsuspecting young victims. At the end of the tale, the story's victimized and only surviving character, Laurie, rises to status of hero as she confronts the "bogeyman" head-on. Trapped in a house with him, her life balancing on a fine line, she has no option but to bring him out in the open and lure him to his own destruction.

In the second story, the horror emerges when the heroine-to-be's husband develops psychotic, serial killer tendencies. The peace of their idyllic home and community is shattered and the psycho-killer's victim list builds up. Then Adrienne, the killer's wife, is left with no other option: she must engage him in final battle and, likewise, set him up for his own bloody annihilation. Two defeated psycho-killers. Two female victors.

Laurie and Adrienne's dilemmas and conquests sound like classic plot actions belonging to the stalker film tradition. A psychotic killer stalks members of a small community; a (usually) female hero is left as sole survivor of the story's main cast; and after a bloody and gory fest of mayhem and carnage, he hunts her down in an enclosed space (often a house), forcing her to meet his attack head-on. There is,