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The Brazilian Telenovela "El Clon": An Analysis of Viewers' Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences

Elizabeth Barbosa
Lynn University

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The Brazilian Telenovela "El Clon": An Analysis of Viewers' Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences

Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Lynn University

By
Elizabeth Barbosa

March 2005
The Brazilian Telenovela "El Clon": An Analysis of Viewers’ Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences

Elizabeth Barbosa, Ph.D.
Lynn University, 2005

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Dedication

In memory of my Mom and Dad, my number-one supporters.
Abstract

The Brazilian Telenovela "El Clon": An Analysis of Viewer’s Online Vicarious and Virtual Learning Experiences

Elizabeth Barbosa

Dr. William J. Leary
Dissertation Committee Chairperson

This research involves investigating Brazilian telenovelas as a medium to disseminate knowledge about different cultures and customs. Through a qualitative content analysis this study examines messages posted in the "El Clon" telenovela-world forum with reference to the Muslim cultural theme explored by the telenovela.

The theoretical framework overarching this study is the combination of Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory and Freire’s dialogical/participatory communication. In order to operationalize the study, a qualitative content analysis is undertaken utilizing the sub-dimension parasocial interaction model proposed by Sood & Rodgers (2000). The messages are analyzed in order to explore how forum participants engage in the discussion brought by the telenovela, in light of the proposed parasocial sub-dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioral interactions, and critical and referential involvement.

The different opinions voiced and exchanged in the forum verify that the message writers think about the educational content of the novela, in the case of this study the portrayal of the Muslim culture, and the repercussion of this portrayal not only among the Muslim community but also the non-Muslim.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Research has demonstrated that television can perpetuate stereotypes and foster prejudice towards specific social groups. However, television can also help to counteract prejudicial attitudes (Graves, 1999).

In January of 2002 the television network Telemundo aired the Brazilian telenovela “El Clon” (O Clone, The Clone). This telenovela had three main themes: Muslim culture, alcoholism, and human cloning. The theme of Muslim culture after the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania generated viewer curiosity about this telenovela and the cultural themes it explored.

It also caught the attention of the researcher. For many years, this researcher has observed how Brazilian telenovelas might influence their audience to learn about different topics that they otherwise would not have access to. To a Brazilian it is almost redundant to say that there is a strong interest about telenovelas. This researcher can still remember when at six years old she watched “O Direito de Nascer” (The Right to be Born). This researcher would retell the stories she saw the night before to her little schoolmates that had an earlier bedtime. And she also remembers her mother crying with the suffering of the novela’s protagonist, maybe relating her own story to that shown on the screen. This researcher got acquainted with classical music through the soundtrack of a telenovela named “Bravo”. It was the only avenue to be introduced to Beethoven or Mozart. One time when trying to explain to a niece that lives in Brazil about the life of
the Brazilian immigrants in New York and 46th street, also dubbed “little Brazil”, surprisingly, her niece proceeded to describe it, as if she had experienced it. How did she know all of that if she had never been to New York? Her niece explained that she had viewed a telenovela about Brazilians in the United States. These experiences explain the choice of exploring not only Brazilian telenovelas, but also their ability to disseminate cultural information.

A telenovela or novela (soap opera) is a serialized television drama. These terms are all used interchangeably in the literature and in this study. Latin-American telenovelas share a common origin with American soap operas; however, there are also differences that make the telenovela a distinctive narrative genre (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Martin-Barbero, 1995; Lopez, 1995; Mazziotti, 1993). Comparing the two broadcast dramas, it is noted that American soaps are life long engagements, while Latin American telenovelas tend to have around 180-200 episodes, with a well-delimited end (Lopez, 1991). American soaps were created to target a female audience, particularly women who stayed home during the day. Even though there has been a sharp increase in women working outside the home, soap operas are still written as a gendered narrative, formulated with relationship dramas to appeal to the female domestic audience, which makes up 80 percent of the market (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Harrington & Bielby, 1995). Recently, however, several American soap operas such as “Days of Our Lives” or “General Hospital” have also targeted their audience to teenagers. In contrast, telenovelas have broadened their appeal to reach all audiences. They are constructed to draw a diverse audience of men and women of all ages. Because of this broad appeal, telenovelas are shown on primetime television, usually five to six days a week, while soaps are
usually a daytime affair (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1995). In form, content, and targeted audience, Latin American telenovelas have therefore differentiated themselves from the American soap operas and over time have been transformed into a distinctive popular television genre.

Telenovelas in Latin America share common denominators such as the melodramatic storylines filled with characters that give life not only to romance but also to everyday struggles (Straubhar & Viscasillas, 1991, Mazziotti, 1992). However, while melodrama is in the heart of every telenovela, distinct flavors and styles have developed among the different Latin countries (Mazziotti, 1993). In Mexico, telenovelas follow the melodramatic tradition of the Cuban radionovelas. They tend to have a main romantic protagonist couple that will have to battle many difficulties to defend their love, such as class differences, secrets about the family’s origin or a villain that will do anything to break the couple apart. The characters are usually well-defined representations of good and evil; there is no room for questionable human moments of bad and good contradictions (Martín-Barbero, 1992). Brazilian telenovelas, on the other hand, have multiple and secondary storylines, allowing the author to create sub-plots within the main plot (Mazziotti, 1993).

This dissertation will investigate the use of the Brazilian telenovela “EL Clon” as a medium to disseminate knowledge about Muslim culture and customs. The primary object of the study is the messages posted on the telenovela-world “El Clon” forum, with reference to Muslim cultural themes explored by the telenovela. The theoretical framework overarching this study is the combination of Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory and Freire’s dialogical/participatory communication. In order
to operationalize the study, a qualitative content analysis was undertaken utilizing the sub-dimension parasocial interaction model proposed by Sood & Rodgers (2000). The messages were analyzed in order to investigate how forum participants engaged in the discussion that was brought about by the telenovela, in light of the proposed parasocial sub-dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioral interactions, and critical and referential involvement.

**Background and Statement of the Problem**

The representation of race, gender, and ethnicity on television has been the object of much research as evidence of the power of media characterizations achieve in perpetuating stereotypical ideas and preconceived notions about specific social groups (Giles et al., 1977; Macrae et. al., 1995; Graves, 1999; Harwood & Anderson, 2002). Television is an important medium where the relations and interactions between social groups, stereotyping, and group identity are presented (Harwood & Anderson, 2002).

Stereotyping is a concept that has been linked to television production and audience response. Stereotyping as defined here is when one evaluates and attributes oversimplified generalized characteristics to members of a certain group (Allport, 1954/1979; Macrae et. al., 1996). Some psychologists have suggested that a component of the process of stereotyping is categorization, which is a required process that people use to make sense of the world (Allport, 1954,1979; Stephan, 1985). However, stereotyping implies an uncritical thought, a pre-judgment response bias of what the other person might be or represent. It creates a rigid expectation of people, discounting their
individuality, and may ultimately lead to people’s prejudice against different groups (Devine, 1989).

Television portrayal of different social groups, not limited to race, but also to age and gender, received the attention of numerous studies (Harwood & Anderson, 2002). Some studies of frequent television viewers (Gerbner et al., 1982, 1984) argue that this mass medium plays a dominant role in defining people’s cultural and social values, and in shaping the viewer’s worldview. A recent quantitative research of race and gender representation in television advertisement in the US (Coltrane & Messino, 2000), demonstrated that TV commercials continue to reproduce many stereotypes of race and gender. According to the study, contrary to earlier studies, African American men are frequently portrayed as independent and respectful. However, they are depicted as aggressive and gaining visibility primarily through sports. While white women were shown more frequently as sex objects, African American women’s beauty was not as revered, and their commercials did not allow for the portrayal of romance and family bliss. From their observation, Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and Native Americans are practically invisible.

Regarding the influence of television portrayal of social groups, Graves (1999) points out that both forms of television representation, either by including or excluding race or ethnicity, influence children’s beliefs about racial and ethnic groups. Graves believes that by omitting certain ethnic or racial segments of society, there is an implication that viewers might infer that this group is not important, negligible, and powerless. However, television effects are not limited to children, as Harwood & Anderson (2002) point out:
...the media are transmitting and perpetuating stereotypes of social groups, and these images are affecting majority and minority group members’ perceptions of groups and intergroup relations (p.82)

As previously discussed stereotypes can lead to prejudicial attitudes towards a group. The Webster’s New World Thesaurus (1985) lists prejudgment, dislike, disgust, aversion, antipathy, racism, sexism, ageism, misjudgment, xenophobia, as synonyms of prejudice. While the dictionary explains that prejudice is a: “preconceived judgment or opinion, an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge, or an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics” (Marian-Webster online). Prejudice is permeated by ethnocentrism, meaning that usually people have a preference or attachment to their own group (Harwood & Anderson, 2002). Prejudiced people have problems viewing members of “other” groups as fellow citizens, and they are reluctant to learn about the people they prejudge. The difficulty in establishing the others as equals leads to feelings of self-proclaimed superiority, while thinking about a person of a different group as a lesser human being (Richard 2000).

On September 11, 2001 the World Trade Center Twin Towers collapsed as a result of a brutal terrorist attack. Many innocent people of all races and ethnicities lost their lives on this sad and unforgettable day. This atrocious act was condemned by a world that watched in disbelief. In the aftermath of this terrible occurrence, many Muslims, Arabs, and people that looked Middle Eastern, were threatened, attacked and even killed because people transferred their feelings from the Twin Towers’s attackers to the people that were or appeared to be Middle Eastern (Stubbs, 2003/2004).
Understanding that television plays a role in how people are perceived and consequently how this view can lead to sentiments and attitudes of prejudice and discrimination, a telenovela specifically portraying Muslims deserves attention. Thinking dialectically, television may also help counteract stereotypes and negative attitudes depending on how they portray or represent a social group.

Coming from the perspective that prejudice conveys difficulty in seeing the other as an equal being, Richard (2000) argues that to counteract it, it helps to recognize a common humanity when thinking of people of different gender, ethnicity, or class, as people who have the same rich life as ourselves. For instance, when getting to know something about the other's memories. Richard (2000) adds that:

Yet drawing attention to this fact is hardly the only way to eliminate prejudice. Another way is to get the prejudiced to see the stigmatized as having the same tendency to bleed when pricked as they themselves: they too worry about their children and parents; they are possessed by the same self-doubts, and lose self-confidence when humiliated; their difficulties in moving from one stage of life to another are much like everyone else's, despite the fact that their life-chances may be minimal. These ways of emphasising commonality rather than difference have little to do with "cultural recognition." They have to do with experiences shared by members of all cultures and all historical epochs, and which remain pretty much the same despite cultural change. (p.10-11)

To this effect, Young & Sharifzadeh (2003) agree that multicultural education needs to help students recognize that there are many more things in common between East and West than there are differences. One of the strategies to reduce prejudice is to involve students in vicarious experiences, such as films, books, and photographs. The authors give the example of the power of an image if a firefighter of Arab descent was portrayed heroically in the aftermath of 9/11. In line with this statement, Graves (1999)
agrees that television as a vicarious experience may influence children regarding prejudices and stereotypes:

Televised role portrayals and interracial interactions, as sources of vicarious experience, are relevant to the creation of cognitions about racial groups (stereotypes), the development of negative attitudes towards these groups (prejudice), and the performance of exclusionary behaviors (discrimination). Television could influence children by providing examples of people with or without prejudice, diverse social groups that stimulate positive and negative affect, and settings in which racial discrimination is endorsed or rejected. (p.708).

Taking into consideration the post 9/11 context and the demonstrated influence of television in perpetuating or reducing prejudice, this study will attempt to delve into a selected audience of a television series that had Muslim culture as one of its themes.

**Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to investigate Brazilian telenovelas as a medium utilized in the dissemination of knowledge about different cultures and customs. Through a qualitative content analysis, this study proposes to examine how participants in the forum for the telenovela “El Clon” on the website http://foro-telenovela-world.com engaged in the discussion of the Muslim theme presented by the program. It is not the intention of the study to analyze the cultural content of the telenovela since the researcher is not an expert in Muslim culture. Instead, the focus is to investigate the audience’s reaction to the telenovela theme.

In order to evaluate participants’ response to the novela, the messages were qualitatively analyzed based on the five sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction proposed by Sood & Rogers (2000): affective interaction, behavioral interaction,
cognitive interaction, and critical and referential involvement. The analysis of the exchanges among forum participants revealed their impressions about the telenovela and the rich context created by these dialogues.

Previous research on Brazilian telenovela’s audiences has been constrained to the geographical limitation of the country. This research contributes to the literary scholarship by studying the response to Brazilian telenovelas broadcast in the United States. Most of the messages posted in the forum were from participants in the United States. However, many messages originated from different countries, broadening the scope of the study and legitimizing its global perspective.

Research Questions

Through a qualitative content analysis, based on the parasocial interaction sub-dimension model proposed by Sood & Rogers (2000), this research will explore the following questions:

1. How did participants express affective interaction to the cultural thematic and characters that symbolized or portrayed the Muslim culture in the telenovela “El Clon”?

2. How did forum participants verbalize cognitive interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural issues portrayed in the telenovela “El Clon”?

3. How did forum participants express behavioral interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?
4. How did forum participants disclose and report referential involvement to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

5. How did forum participants express critical involvement, report opposing views, or agree upon the cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

**Significance of the Study**

Studies have demonstrated how television can perpetuate stereotypes and foster prejudice towards specific social groups. On the other hand, television can also help to counteract prejudicial attitudes depending on how the groups are presented. With the perspective that there are positive and negative interactions among different social groups in the world today, it is crucial to understand how television may contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about other countries and customs, perhaps breaking stereotypes and helping to counteract prejudices (Graves, 1999).

Miguel Sabido (1989) studied the effects of a Peruvian telenovela “Simplemente Maria” (Simply Mary) on its audience and based on his observations, he elaborated on the concept of entertainment-education. Entertainment-education is the intentional combination of an entertainment activity along with an embedded educational message. This strategy now has expanded beyond the telenovelas to include all forms of entertainment. Brazilian telenovelas have been incorporating different educational messages in their narrative since 1971-1972 with “Meu Pedacinho de Chão” (My Small Piece of Land). This process named social-merchandising in Brazil, claims to have contributed to the discussion of different themes approached by the novelas (Fernandes, 1994). It also corroborates Singhal & Rogers (1988) argument that the demonstrated
effectiveness of the entertainment-education strategy is in creating knowledge about an issue.

The aftermath of September 11, 2001 stirred many anti-Muslim/Arab sentiments. Given the wide penetration of telenovelas in the global market, this study proposes to investigate the Brazilian telenova “El Clon” as a medium to disseminate knowledge about Muslim culture.

This study might be beneficial to governmental or non-profit agencies that have the intention of promoting multicultural education and understanding, as they may consider alternatives to disseminate cultural knowledge. This research might also be beneficial to organizations that intend to utilize entertainment-education soap operas with the intent of health promotion, or any other pro-social initiative, as it proposes a combination of theories that include social learning/cognitive theory and participatory communication as a way to promote dialogue and critical thinking.

Limitations of the Study

Several facts contributed to the limitations of the analysis of this study. The lack of triangulation to complete the qualitative investigation was one of the limitations. Even though participant observation was also employed, the research data is based on the qualitative analysis of the messages. Financial and time constraints curtailed a more diversified inquiry.

This research analyzed messages posted by a highly involved audience, comprised of the telenova’s fans, which does not support extrapolation of findings to the general
telenovela audience. However, the results provided detailed data that might certainly contribute to the understanding of how audiences engage with the telenovela text.

Another element that needs to be taken into account is the researcher's background. The researcher for this study had many recognizable influences not only for the choice of the subject but also for the theoretical orientation selected. The researcher's Brazilian nationality certainly played a role in the choice of topic to be studied. As Tufte (1995) poses, most Brazilians were born with telenovelas as part of their everyday life. Nevertheless, measures were established to try to curtail research biases. The methodological approach, which employed a pre-selected model of categories for the qualitative analysis is part of this strategy. In addition, the use of the web site search engine to generate the sample messages, therefore impeding any influence of the researcher in the selection of the messages, was another measure applied.

**Definition of Terms**

The following are the definitions for some of the most important terms utilized in this research.

1. Affective oriented parasocial interaction refers to the level an audience member identifies with or rejects a media character.

2. Behavioral oriented parasocial interaction is the level that the audiences overtly interact with the characters, talk among themselves about the characters, or predict what is going to happen to the characters (Rubin & Perse 1987).

Behavioral interaction will also be considered as Freire's notion that action and reflection equates praxis and Bandura's concept of self-efficacy and collective
efficacy. For example, if posters search for other source of information, if they report that they bought books, go on the Internet, or if they enroll in classes, all of these examples are considered as behavioral interaction..

3. Cognitive oriented parasocial interaction is the degree to which audience members pay careful attention to the educational content of a soap opera episode, reflecting on its meaning and importance. (Sood & Rogers, 2000)

4. Collective efficacy: the common belief in the power to create desired effects by collective action. (Bandura, 1997).

5. Critical involvement is when the audience suggests different plots and engages in the artistic construction of the program (Liebes & Katz, 1986). For our purposes, critical involvement is also interpreted as the suggestions for different approaches, corrections and disagreement to what was expressed in the telenovela “El Clon”, as understood by the message posters.

6. Dialogical Pedagogy: the concept of liberating education, championed by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. It is the combination of education as dialogue, participation, and critical thinking.


8. E-E, Enter-edu, enter-educate, info-tainment, and pro-social entertainment are used interchangeably.

10. Lurker is a forum participant who reads the messages without contributing to the discussion (Baym, 2000).

11. Merchandising: is how product placement is known in Brazil. It is a form of advertisement inserted in a media program to increase the visibility of a product or service, which has the unique advantage of not breaking away from the program, but is intended to be part of the context, usually endorsed by the characters (La Pastina, 2001).

12. Posters are forum participants that write messages (Baym, 2000).

13. Referential involvement is the degree to which the viewers relate a media message to their own lives. This happens when audience members discuss the television content in reference to their own experiences, placing themselves in the situation of the television program (Liebes & Katz, 1986).

14. Self-efficacy: is one’s belief about their ability to exercise control over events that would affect their lives (Bandura, 1997).

15. Social merchandising: is the insertion of social relevant subjects in the telenovela storyline.

16. Social marketing is “the adaptation of commercial market technologies to programs designed to influence voluntary behavior of target audience to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part.” (Andreasen, 1994).

17. Telenovelas (soap operas): also known as novelas, are television serialized dramas; lasting for 180-200 episodes, with a narrative that usually has a definite beginning, middle and end. (Lopez, 1991).
18. Television fans: viewers which participate in a variety of activities that go beyond the private act of viewing, such as writing letters, participating in chat rooms, buying television related publications, reflecting a deeper emotional involvement with a television narrative (Bielby et. al. 1999).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Part I-Telenovelas

Overview
In this section a historical context of the telenovelas is presented. The origin of the telenovelas is traced back to European newspaper novels, followed by radionovelas, to the American soap opera, and finally to the formation of a distinctive television genre named telenovela. The regional differences within the Latin American novelas are presented along with an outline of telenovela commercialization in the Global market. Special consideration is given to the Brazilian telenovelas, from its inception to the redefinition of the concept that gave telenovelas a distinct style. The importance of Rede Globo (Globo Television Network) in the development of the genre is also discussed.

Definition and Historical Perspective
Telenovelas (soap-operas) or simply novelas as they are called in Brazil are traced back to nineteenth-century European feuilletons (fascicles), which were newspaper novels printed in installments (Rogers & Antola, 1985; Martín-Barbero, 1988; Marquez de Melo 1988; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990). Around 1830 newspapers in England and France started publishing serialized novels that became popular with subscribers (Rowe & Schelling, 1991). Newspapers subscriptions increased dramatically due to the readers’ attraction to the adventurous nature of the novels. The formula was simple: storylines
were created with a “to be continued” cliffhanger keeping up the interest and curiosity of the readers (Museum of Television and Radio, 1997).

The publishers, attempting to secure the success of this enterprise, hired the most famous novelists of the time. In 1836, publishers Chapman and Hall offered Charles Dickens the opportunity to write a story in monthly installments, to accompany the illustrations of then popular cartoonist Robert Seymour. That was the first time a serial novel was published in installments that did not have an ending in sight (Museum of Television and Radio, 1997). At the same time, French publishers courted and hired Honoré de Balzac to write serial narrative stories. However, Eugène Sue, a French writer, was the first to demonstrate the viability of the serial narratives through mass consumption. Sue's serial “Le juif errant” (The Wandering Jew) (1842) helped to increase the newspaper's circulation from 3,600 subscribers to the neighborhood of 23,000. Much of his success was attributed to his concoction of sensational plots including suicides, murders, conspiracies, and to his mastery of the serialized narrative. Sue left readers in suspense when he ended his narrative stories at a point of unsolved tension. His followers were people from different backgrounds, from businessmen and lawyers to cooks and day laborers (Hagerdorn, 1995). Ortiz et al. (1991), on the other hand, thinks that at this time Sue's work may not really be considered popular. Initially newspapers were obtained through subscription, which restricted its access to the middle class. He argues that it was only after the second imperial period, around 1863, that the masses had access to newspapers, when they started to be sold on the streets. By this time, the popularity of the feuilleton exploded with the urban population and the people of the rural provinces.
Here we can link some similarities shared by the old form of serialized written dramas with the contemporary Telenovelas. Both genres share the suspense at the end of the episode that guarantees readers will buy the next newspapers or viewers will tune in the next day. Another commonality is the popularity that cuts through the social strata. Characterizing telenovelas Lopez (1995) affirms: “these are a prime-time entertainment for all audiences”.

Martín-Barbero (1998, 1992) characterizes the feuilleton as a “cultural matrix” for the telenovela, along with the melodrama. Telenovelas include the episodic aspect of the feuilleton and the dramatic tension and emotional excess that were characteristic of the melodramas displayed in the “popular theatre” of the eighteen-century. Around this time, the high culture's "official theatre" was restrained and cold, in contrast to the representations of the popular theater, filled with an abundance of gestures and feelings. The authorities only allowed people to see representations without dialogue. People, on the other hand, wanted to see actions and great passions. Therefore, the exaggeration of visual cues was the answer to the people's desire.

Martín-Barbero (1995) includes the telenovela or soap opera genre into the realm of oral culture, which allows the stories to be permeated with the same characters and plots brought by popular forms of story telling. He cited the Mexican “corridos” and the Brazilian “cordel” literature as examples of this oral tradition. The “cordel” literature acquired its name by the cord that holds the pamphlets together. The stories are recited or sung and are sold at popular markets mainly in the northeast region of Brazil. At the core of these genres lies the melodramatic story line, permeated with secrecy, the son/daughter that ignores his/her real parent, or the struggles of good against evil. For Martín-Barbero
(1995), the wide presence of the melodrama in the Latin American cultural history is a form of expression of resistance:

The melodrama speaks of a primordial sociality, whose metaphor continues to be the thick, censored plot of the tightly woven fabric of the family relationships. In spite of its devaluation by the economy and politics, this sociality lives on culturally, and from its locus, the people, by "melodramatizing" everything, take their own form of revenge on the abstraction imposed by cultural dispossession and the commercialization of life (p. 277).

In Europe, readers' reaction to the story line greatly influenced the writers of the serialized novels. Authors would make modifications to the next written installments tailored to the public's desire (Ortiz, 1991). This exchange allowed the serials to become fuelled with contemporary life, sometimes blurring the borders between fiction and life. The combination of these elements is also a vital component in the telenovela narrative and its success (Martín-Barbero, 1995).

In the late 1800's in the United States and in England, readers of the serialized novels actively pursued communication with fellow readers to discuss what would happen next. Many publications offered a space for readers to convey their feelings on the developing plot. This regular discussion forum was a precursor to contemporary online discussions of soap operas and telenovelas (Museum of Television and Radio, 1997).

Translated versions of European serials reached Latin American newspapers around the same time. However, local flavor was added to the papers in Argentina with the publishing of gaucho stories written by Eduardo Gutiérrez in 1870 (Rivera, 1968). Even though the majority of the publications of serialized novels in Brazil were translations, exceptions occurred, such as the publication of "O Guarani" by José de Alencar in 1857. According to Ortiz (1991), the Brazilian authors did not write the novels
in installments. The story was apparently written beforehand and then published in its serialized form. At that time, the publications were scarce, making it difficult for Brazilian writers to publish their books. Therefore, they found newspapers to be an important vehicle to reach the readers. The serials though, did not enjoy the same popularity as in Europe, since the majority of the population in Brazil was illiterate.

**The Melodrama Continues from the Printed Pages to the Airwaves**

In the twentieth century, radionovelas and photonovelas were predecessors to the televised narrative (Cambridge 1992; Rogers & Antola, 1985). While Europe was the first to diffuse the printed serialized drama, the United States was the first to explore radio for the narration of daily stories.

By the late 1920's, broadcast radio in the United States had become a commercial venture. Advertising interests dominated the airwaves and most programs were created in order to draw sponsorship (Hagedorn, 1995). The fundamental goal of the industry was to attract large audiences since they depended on the financial support of advertising sponsors. On the other hand, the advertisers themselves began getting involved in the production and the scheduling of programs (Hilmes, 1990).

Radio programming, which consisted mostly of music and talk shows, got help from famous stars such as Fred Allen and Will Rogers who were brought in to host variety shows (MacDonald, 1979). However, "Amos'n'Andy" was the most popular show by the end of its first year, in 1929. NBC's Blue Network broadcasted the comic show, sponsored by Pepsodent, which attracted 40 million listeners, six nights per week. This fifteen-minute show was the first incursion of serialized programming in radio broadcasting and proved that this format had the power to attract large audiences.
(MacDonald, 1979). Radio also became a form of affordable entertainment. CBS estimated that in 1934, ninety percent of urban families owned a radio.

According to Allen, (1985), the radio soap opera officially started on October 20, 1930, with the launch of "Painted Dreams", by Irna Phillips. The stories aired for fifteen minutes and were centered on domestic problems and emotional conflicts. This radio soap lasted less than a year, but it began the practice of targeting women consumers using dramatic serial narrative linked to a corporate sponsor (Hagedorn, 1995). The formula proved to be successful. The ten major radio programs one decade later were soap operas. The sponsorship for this kind of program encompassed ninety-two percent of the advertising at the time (Allen, 1985). This was a fertile ground for companies such as Procter and Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive, and Lever Brothers to advertise their products. They started to produce daytime drama serials targeted to housewives in order to sell cleaning products, personal health and hygiene products, and beauty products (Ortiz, 1991).

Allen (1985) points out the inevitable link between the creative production of the soap operas and their commercial objectives. The soap companies had total control over the production of the serials, contracting the writers, actors, and producers. Keeping audience ratings high at a cheaper cost was one of their objectives. However, the main goal was to influence housewives, the primary consumers, to buy their products. In 1932, audience research found that the female audience preferred entertainment shows instead of educational programs while doing their chores. More importantly, it showed that the woman of the house was the one who made the purchasing decisions for the household (Cassata, 1983). The female-targeted audience influenced the subjects and themes of the
story lines, which were filled with family and marriage conflicts. During the depression era, protagonist characters such as Ma Perkins, Mrs. Moran (Today's Children) or Mrs. Moynihan (Painted Dreams), represented women's courage and determination overcoming the hardships of the time. Therefore, we can understand the female role as a double fold. First as a central character in the household, the one that determines what to buy, and the ultimate consumer, second as the role of central protagonist of a feminine universe that landed in a territory explored by the fictitious narrative (Ortiz, 1991). For Robert Allen (1985), the soap opera's characteristic as a specific female narrative genre is at the center of the paradox of its status in the United States. While highly valued by advertisers and broadcasters, critics continuously underestimate soap operas as a woman's format. Undoubtedly, North American Radio soap operas were also an important part of radio programming in the Latin American countries.

In Latin America, the radio was of fundamental importance to the development of this new “verbal feuilleton” (Hippolyte-Ortega, 1988; Gambaro, 1996; Martin-Barbero, 1992). The radionovela (radio soap opera) initially appeared in Cuba and Argentina in the form of radioteatro (radio theater), embracing the melodramatic recipe once more.

Initially in Argentina radionovelas were called radioteatros, because the circus brought the stories to the theatrical stage. The "circo criollo" (Creole circus) was a combination of circus ring, acrobatics, and dramatic performances, which traveled the country retelling the stories of myths and legends of the Argentinean cowboys (Franco, 1985; Seibel, 1993). The gaucho theme incorporated in newspaper serials merged with the melodramatic antics of the circus and found its way into the radionovelas. Radio actors would tour the country enacting the same melodramas they once broadcast in the
radio format in order for the radionovelas followers to be able to see what they had previously heard (Martín-Barbero, 1992).

Cuban radionovelas had great impact in Latin America, having Havana as the major exporter of radio programs to the entire region (Mendonza, 1996, Sinclair, 1999). The historical progression of the radionovelas in Cuba goes back to the practice of reading aloud to tobacco factory workers. Originating in European prisons and convents, this custom of reading books and serialized stories was first introduced in the middle of the nineteen-century to Cuban prisoners who worked rolling cigars and later it spread to the tobacco factories (Ortiz, 1973). The radio language incorporated the same rhythm and tones utilized by the factory lectors to emphasized the emotions of the stories, giving Cuban radionovelas a characteristic accent (Martín-Barbero, 1992). The airwaves soon began to compete with the readings, and many lectors went on to work for the radio. Eventually, in the cigar factories, the readings were substituted by the new broadcast medium (Ortiz, 1973).

To understand the reasons behind Cuban radionovelas dominance throughout the Latin American region, we need to review the structure of this country's radio broadcast system. American companies such as RCA, General Electric, and Westinghouse provided the necessary technical equipment to its neighbor. However, the United States' influence went beyond technical support. Cuba also adopted the U.S. model of privately owned commercial radio broadcast (Schwoch, 1990). Since the 1920's when the Cuban Telephone Company implemented the local radio system, listeners tuned into American radio stations. There were no training centers to form professionals knowledgeable in radio technology, programming, or advertising. There was also a lack of specialized radio
literature, which made American books the most sought after resource on the subject. Audience potential was impressive, with the estimation that, in 1933, Cuba was the fourth country in the world in the number of radio sets, coming right after the U.S., Canada, and the USSR (Lopez, 1981). Therefore, Cuba built a radio broadcast system that mirrored the US’ most advanced commercial model, staffed by highly specialized technical and artistic personnel (Ortiz, 1991).

The radionovela genre was born in Cuba in 1935 with "El Derecho de Nacer" (The Right to be Born), written by Cuban author Felix Caignet (Martin-Barbero, 1992). This radio soap opera turned out to be a classic and was considered a radio link between all the countries in the continent (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990). It had all the melodramatic ingredients to reach the audience's emotions. It told the story of a single mother, living in the conservative society of the early twentieth Century Cuba. Her tyrant father did not accept his out of the wedlock grandson. The loyal family maid takes the boy and raises him as her own. At the end, the boy, who becomes a physician, saves his grandfather's life (Fernandes, 1994). This story proved to be a success not only as a radionovela, but also as a telenovela, with several TV adaptations in different countries including Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela. More recently, in 2001, Mexico broadcast the latest version of this soap classic.

Following the United States commercial model, local soap factories provided sponsorship for radionovelas. American companies later on acquired these factories. Procter & Gamble became the leading adverting sponsor for radionovelas in Cuba (López, 1998; Ortiz et al., 1991). The American concept of targeting radionovelas to a female audience was also implemented. However, the cultural differences made the
Cuban versions favor a more melodramatic and tragic style. The scripts, created to bring about emotions and tears, had the goal to sell products. This strategy paid dividends and, with the help of the advertisers, this formula was diffused to the rest of Latin America. For many years, Havana was the major exporter of artists and radio directors, but above all radionovelas scripts to different countries, including Brazil (Ortiz et al., 1991).

Brazil became familiar with the radionovelas through adaptations from Cuba and Argentina (Mattelart & Matterlart, 1990). Financed by Colgate-Palmolive, an adaptation of a Cuban original, “Em Busca da Felicidade” (In Search for Happiness) aired in Brazil, in 1941. As previously proven to be the magical formula for radionovelas, commercial sponsors targeted primarily the female audience with a melodramatic flavor that was the center of this new genre.

Gessy-Lever and Colgate-Palmolive advertising agencies had their own radio departments. They would function as production companies, with their own staff of writers, translators and actors to create their own successful shows (Ortiz, 1991). The imported Cuban texts gave place to national creation, molding writers to the future televised versions. Famous Brazilian telenovela writers such as Ivani Ribeiro and Janete Clair began working their craft in radio (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990). Radio sets became more affordable during the 40's, contributing to the popularization of the radionovelas, which proved to be a success among different social classes (Ortiz, 1991). A clear example of the dominance of this genre on the airwaves was Rádio Nacional, which broadcasted a total of 11,756 hours of radionovelas during the period of 1943-1955. Almost half of this radio programming was soaps, with up to 14 novelas a day (Bonavita, 1982).
The Telenovela is Born

The television industry in the United States had its start by the late 1940's and by the late 1950's soap operas were already a key component of daytime programming (Brown, 1994). As it happened with radionovelas, there is an undeniable link between American televised soap operas and their Latin American counterparts, the telenovelas. However, researchers are quick to point out that even though Latin-American telenovelas share a common origin with the American soap operas, many differences abound, which make the telenovela a distinctive narrative genre (Mattellart & Mattelart, 1990, Martin-Barbero, 1995, Lopez, 1995, Mazziotti, 1993). Comparing the two broadcast dramas, it is noted that American soaps are life long engagements, while Latin American telenovelas tend to have around 180-200 episodes, with a well-delimited end (Lopez, 1991). American soaps were created to target the female audience, housewives to be exact. To this day, even though there has been a sharp increase of women working outside the home, soap operas are still written as a gendered narrative, formulated with relationship dramas to appeal to the female domestic audience, which makes up to 80 percent of the market (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Harrington & Bielby, 1995). Again, this may be changing as more soap operas are being geared towards teenagers. In contrast, telenovelas had broadened their appeal to reach all audiences. They are constructed to draw a diverse audience of men and women of all ages. Because of this broad appeal, telenovelas are shown on primetime television, usually five to six days a week, while soaps are usually a daytime affair (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1995). Latin American telenovelas have therefore differentiated themselves from the American soap operas and over time transformed into a distinctive popular television genre.
The new popularized “reality television” genre is beginning to appear in Latin American TV. Telemundo began with “Protagonistas de Novela”. It is not surprising that the theme was about telenovelas. In this show, contestants lived together in a house and competed for the prize of being a telenovela protagonist. The public voted on the ones that better performed telenovelas scenes the best. Many contestants from this show are now working as actors and actresses on Telemundo productions.

Telenovelas in Latin America share common denominators, such as the melodramatic storyline filled with characters that give life not only to romance but also to everyday struggles (Straubhar & Viscasillas; 1991, Mazziotti, 1992). However, while melodrama is in the heart of every telenovela, distinct flavors and styles have developed among the different Latin countries (Mazziotti, 1993). In Mexico, telenovelas follow the melodramatic tradition of the Cuban radionovelas, they tend to have a main protagonist couple living a romance that will have to battle many difficulties, such as class differences, secrets about the family of origin or a villain that will do anything to break the couples apart. The characters are usually well-defined representations of good or evil; there is no room for questionable human moments of bad and good contradictions (Martín-Barbero, 1992). Brazilian telenovelas on the other hand, have multiple and secondary storylines, allowing the author to create stories within the story (Mazziotti, 1993).

Aufdeheid (1993) described Latin American television as filled with humor, social relevance and national cultural style. He points out that Brazilian novelas have dealt with government corruption, single motherhood, and environmental problems, while Mexican novelas have displayed class differences. Lopez (1995) characterizes the
Mexican novelas as the weepers, with no context provided. The intentional use of a "generic" space, that is, the unidentifiable location of Mexican soaps is a devise to provide audiences around the world with the fantasy that the plot might as well be happening in their neighborhood. Martin-Barbero (1995) corroborates this description adding that while the Mexican telenovela takes place in a particular country, it does not correspond to any national reality, and it seems to float above the immediacy of everyday life. Lopez (1995) adds that Colombian telenovelas are more of a humoristic genre with emphasis on the context, while Brazilian novelas are the most realistic, with clear historical narratives, and time and space context is easily identified. In Peru, there is an attempt to mix the romantic characteristics with significant social themes (Quiroz, 1993).

Even though regional differences are still strong and noticeable, the lines are starting to blur, with the increased competition within the two largest markets, Brazil and Mexico (Hernandez & McAnany, 1997). In Brazil the television network SBT (Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão) has popularized Mexican telenovelas, which are dubbed in Portuguese. SBT imports most of the telenovelas shown in the network from Mexico. SBT is also producing Brazilian versions of Mexican soaps, as the recent (2003) "Canavial de Paixões" (Sugar-cane fields of passion). On the other hand, TV Asteca in Mexico has started to produce more politicized dramas, and showing Brazilian soaps. Even Televisa has changed the formula setting the story in an undisclosed location in order to give it a sense of universality, and started to set the novelas in a more identifiable location. "Acapulco Cuerpo y Alma" (Acapulco with body and soul), a 1999 Televisa production, exemplifies that.
The Brazilian Way

Television started to develop in Brazil in the 1950's. TV Tupi was the pioneer, funded by Assis Chateaubriand in São Paulo, on September 18, 1950. In 1951, TV Tupi Rio was born. Chateaubriand was a Brazilian entrepreneur, head of a successful publishing business called "Diários Associados". It all began when he brought into Brazil around 300 TV sets to sell to the local elite. Apparently, he wanted to be known as the television pioneer, and went on with this new venture against the opinion of US consultants that he had hired for a feasibility study (Fox, 1997; Vink, 1988). At that time, telenovelas were not a daily affair; they were broadcast twice a week, for twenty minutes. The first televised soap aired was "Sua vida me pertence" (Your life belongs to me), in December of 1951. It was on the air twice a week for fifteen minutes and lasted for three months (Vink, 1988).

There were many operational difficulties in producing the soaps, including the challenges of live broadcast, small studios, and lack of expertise. A common problem was to get the actors, usually coming from the radio, to memorize their texts, because they were used to reading the scripts. The interpretation would also lack the necessary body language; even though the verbal inflection was usually perfect (Porto & Silva, 1995). The economic and commercial aspect of the television business also played a role in the development of this new media. During the 50's, television advertisements were mostly from small, local stores. Television broadcasting was limited to some large cities such as São Paulo (1950), Rio de Janeiro (1951), and Belo Horizonte (1955). However, geographical limitation was not the only reason television attracted a restricted audience during that time. The combination of the high cost of TV sets, along with the limitations...
of the signal reach, and the type of programming, constricted television’s early appeal to
the upper-middle class (Straubhaar, 1982). Therefore, multinational firms would prefer to
spend their money advertizing in newspapers or radio, which had a far greater audience
(Ortiz et al., 1991).

During this period, the most popular program was a televised theater, called
"teleteatro". This was a weekly two-hour program that broadcasted live plays and had the
greatest names of Brazilian theater in the line up. Universally recognized theater plays
such as Shakespeare's Othello, Hamlet and Macbeth, among others were part of the
production repertoire (Ortiz et al., 1991). "TV de Vanguarda" was the prototype for this
kind of program, it was offered by TV Tupi in 1952, and it was on the air until 1967
(Távola, 1996). The preoccupation with this form of high art program gave teleteatro the
honor of being one of the most prestigious programs in Brazilian television during the
1950's. However, this generated a dichotomy between the directors and actors that came
to television from the theater and cinema and the ones that came from the radio. Most
producers and actors looked down on radio, which was not believed to be as sophisticated
or prestigious as the theater. Therefore, the telenovela, by past association and origins on
the radio, was considered a lesser form of entertainment (Távola, 1996).

During the 1960's, the number of TV sets in Brazil rose dramatically. Between
1960-1965 there was a 333% increase in the number of sets, and in 1966, 408 thousand
units were sold, which was almost the same number sold during the last decade. Another
contributor to the expansion of television was the introduction of new technologies such
as the videotape, which allowed the stations to have greater geographical area coverage,
including medium sized cities (Ortiz et al., 1991). The increase in advertising money
coming in, in contrast to earlier years, was definitely a sign of the consolidation of the television as a mass medium. In 1958, only 8% of the total advertising money went to television, against 22% to radio and 42% to newspapers. In 1967, television had 42% of the publicity money, against 16% to radio and 15% to newspapers (Caparelli, 1982). The growing number of television audience translated the appeal of television to different social groups, as opposed to its elitist beginning.

Television has a huge influence on almost all facets of Brazilian culture and society. Televised programs are usually a favorite conversation topic at work, home, or school. Television is also a very important information resource for Brazilians of every socio-economic level. People of all socio-economical backgrounds refer to the latest news broadcasted in the daily newscast "Jornal Nacional", or talk about the intricacies of the telenovela's plots. The expansion of the audience also increased the demand for telenovelas. The rise of telenovelas was the result of the romantic, melodramatic themes' public appeal, in combination with lower production costs. TV executives realized that telenovelas were cheaper to produce than the more elaborate production of the teleteatros (Straubhaar, 1982; Reis, 1999).

The soap companies, not diverging from the American experience, introduced the daily soap opera, or the "telenovela diária", in Brazil. Because TV stations were dependent upon the advertising sponsors, soap companies had the power to dictate the format of the programs, and the melodramatic tendencies such as their style (Ortiz et al., 1991).

The first daily soap opera to air in Brazil was "2-5499 Ocupado" ("2-5499 Busy"), on July 1963, on the seven p.m. time slot. The story was adapted from an Argentine
production, by Dulce Santucci, who had only written for radio before (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990). "2-5499 Ocupado" was the story of a convicted woman (Glória Menezes), working as a telephone operator in the prison where she was serving her sentence. On the other side of the line, happens to be a man (Tarcísio Meira) that falls in love with her through her voice, without realizing her real situation (Fernandes, 1994). A husband and wife team in real life, Tarcísio and Glória are icons of Brazilian novelas. They starred as the leading couple in many telenovela productions. "2-5499" was sponsored by Colgate-Palmolive and even though it was not a huge success at the time, it blazed the trail for other telenovelas, which would become the most successful type of TV programming in Brazil (Fernandes, 1994).

The melodramatic formula, inherited from the early newspaper serials (feuilletons), marked the initial phase of telenovela productions. During this time, imports from Argentina, Cuba, and Mexico dominated the market (Vink, 1988, Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990). The dramas were filled with stories of forbidden love, family relationships, and unknown paternity/maternity conflicts. These well-known themes of love and family struggles attracted the audience, which in turn started to form the habit of watching their daily soaps. The adaptation of foreign scripts was initially limited to translations; however, the originals started to be injected with Brazilian themes, making it easier for the audience to identify with the stories (Ortiz et al., 1991). The first successful telenovela was an adaptation of an Argentine script, written by Ivani Ribeiro, who exercised her creative freedom to modify the story to Brazilian taste (Fernandes, 1994).

While some authors had the preoccupation to make sure their stories had a local flavor, Cuban scriptwriter Gloria Magadán had a different opinion of what a successful
telenovela should be. Gloria Magadán was in charge of telenovela productions for the Brazilian television station TV Globo until 1969. She favored melodramatic stories that were set in exotic countries, like Morocco, Spain, Japan or Russia (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990). Magadán remained loyal to the Cuban tradition of radio and telenovelas to remove the plot as far away as possible from national references. However, her influence in the creation of Brazilian telenovelas cannot be dismissed. She started a series of innovative practices, including testing the audience using surveys, to assess the acceptance of the plots, a practice that was carried over through the years (Vink, 1988).

The telenovela conquered its place as a mass medium, able to mobilize a sizable audience, with the very successful broadcasting of “O Direito de Nascer” (The Right to Be Born). Requested by a cosmetic company, it was the product of a contract between an advertising agency and TV Tupi. The first episode aired on December 7, 1964, at the nine-thirty p.m. time slot. The final episode on August 13, 1965 was celebrated by a huge crowd that filled a soccer stadium in Rio de Janeiro to share this moment with the characters of the soap. Instead of the usual soccer chanting, people cried for their favorite characters and chanted their names. It was the proof that advertisers and TV executives needed to establish the soap as a cornerstone of TV programming. After such success, TV stations started to show three to four novelas daily (Fernandes, 1994).

Tufte (1995) explains that telenovelas are part of Brazilian culture, to the extent that “most Brazilians have been born with novelas as part of their everyday life” (p.30).

In his analysis of telenovelas in Brazil he reports:

In 6-8 consecutive months a telenovela is screened daily, six days a week. Three, four or even five telenovelas are screened everyday, just on TV Globo, the largest TV network in Brazil. Average ratings are 50-55, often reaching peaks of 60, 70 and even more. If the multitude of secondary media texts in radio, TV and print
media, telenovela constitute a genre that has a popularity, a presence and an influence on everyday life, that must be difficult to find likewise any other place in the world (p.29).

Since the mid 1960s-1970s telenovelas in Brazil began taking distinct characteristics and flavor. Researchers agree that the landmark of a new mode of creating and performing soaps, the Brazilian way, was a telenovela produced and launched by TV Tupi called "Beto Rockfeller", which aired for one year from 1968-1969 (Hippolyte-Ortega, 1998; Távola, 1996; Mattelart & Mattellart 1990; Straubhaar, 1982; Fernandes, 1994). "Beto Rockfeller" (Luis Gustavo) was a charming young man who worked in a shoe store, but through his socialite girlfriend could infiltrate into the upper class, passing as a millionaire. The name was no coincidence. Beto was the representation of a working class individual, while Rockfeller, meant the sophisticated, smooth player. His heart was divided between two female characters, Cida (Ana Rosa) who is his girlfriend from the neighborhood, and Lu (Débora Duarte) the rich girl (Fernandes, 1994). Bráulio Pedroso, the telenovela's author, brought the colloquial adventures of an urban anti-hero to the small screen. The author implemented many innovations, beginning with the choice of protagonist. Instead of the courageous, above all evil hero of past melodramatic productions, Beto was a cheating, manipulative, but adorable character who used many tricks to infiltrate Rio's high society. The style of the novela was as close to reality as possible, unlike the more pompous and erudite style of previous telenovela work. The director, Lima Duarte, gave the actors more freedom to interpret their characters. He allowed more room for improvisation, more use of outdoor locations, and a faster narrative. (Ortiz et al., 1991; Fernandes, 1994; Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990).
Technological advancements of the time also helped the popularity of "Beto Rockefeller". This telenovela production was the first to use videotape (Lopez, 1995).

According to Fernandes (1994), this novela served as the blueprint for future productions, not only in the format, but also in the structure of the storyline. Because of the lack of organization at the time, even the mishaps, which forced the cast and production to be experts in improvisation, are used as a reference to this day. "Beto Rockefeller" combined the many characteristics of what was called by Straubhaar (1982) as a "Brazilianized telenovela". The concoction of the new formula was created by combining the use of colloquial language, the infusion of humor and improvisation, the preoccupation with portraying the reality of the country, and the incorporation of characters representing the vast spectrum of society. Mattelart & Matterlart (1990) well describe the impact of Beto Rockefeller in the terms of a national production:

Beto Rockefeller" coincides with the period of the so-called Brazilian miracle, which saw an average annual growth rate of 11 percent before brutally deflating toward 1973. This model of growth benefited only a middle class minority (20 percent), but installed the consumption patterns of this well-off group as a point of reference for the aspirations of the whole population. "Beto" the first novela with a self-consciously modern feel, represented the coming together of a national genre and appealed to a mass national audience that cut across social categories, age groups, income differences, and professions (p.16).

Globo realized that the formula created by Gloria Magadán was no longer working. To counteract the success of its rival network, they implement a new vision for their production department, dropping Magadán and hiring Janete Clair. Until her demise in 1983, Janete Clair was essentially responsible for the success of the 8 p.m. novelas. Janete Clair was able to fuse the new tendency towards realism and Brazilian themes with known melodramatic plots, proving to be the "Queen of novelas" (Tavola, 1996). One of
the most memorable novelas in Clair’s repertoire was "Irmãos Coragem", aired in 1970. It was the first novela to be broadcasted nationally (Hamburger, 1999). The story was set in Coroado, a fictitious village in the countryside.

The action starts when the eldest brother working in a diamond mine had his diamond stolen. The script combined western style and romantic plots of forbidden love (Fernandes, 1994). Representing the tendency to show the reality of the country, Clair infused the dialogues with slang and regionalisms. She touched social and political issues through Colonel Pedro Barros, a feared character depicted as arbitrary and authoritarian, and the most powerful figure in Coroado (Távola, 1996). She also added a soccer player to the plot, in the height of the soccer World Cup (Fernandes, 1994). However, the most important claim to fame this novela can make is that of being the first to attract the male audience. Ortiz et. al. (1991) argue that this production can be viewed as a "masculine novela", revolving around a diamond mine and soccer, reclaiming the style of a Hollywood western. They added that the telenovelas considered realistic were the ones able to attract the male audience.

The recreation of the melodramatic formula brought a modernization of themes to the novela along with the use of Brazilian writers coming from the theater and cinema (Lopez 1991; Straubhaar 1982; Martin-Barbero 1992). The inclusion of well-known writers such as Dias Gomes (Clair’s husband), Lauro César Muniz, and Bráulio Pedroso consolidated the transformation of the telenovela genre in Brazil. Their work was anchored in the reality of the country and personified a more complex narrative form. They created characters that struggled with the same obstacles faced by the audience in everyday life. However, there was still room for a diversified narrative, including love,
humor, irony, and the use of colloquial speech and popular expressions (Martín-Barbero, 1995). By adding the reality of the country in the thematic scheme of the novelas, Globo brought the discussion of current issues into Brazilian households (La Pastina, 1999). Hoineff (1996) criticized Brazilian television representation of reality saying that it has transformed into an expression of reality itself, he argues that the networks have abused their power by influencing viewers, dictating behavior and fabricating public opinion.

In his study of the influence of telenovelas in the 1994 presidential election, Porto (1998) affirms that telenovelas were a "key public forum in the discussion of political and social issues." Page (1995) talked about the enmeshment of the fiction showed in the novelas and reality, making these two distinctive phenomenons blur into one "fictional reality". To illustrate his point, the author cites the case of the brutal assassination of a young actress in December of 1992. Several hours before her murder, the actress had filmed a scene in which her character angrily broke up with her boyfriend. It turned out that the actor who played her boyfriend along with his pregnant wife committed the crime. To add to this surreal situation, the author of the novela "Corpo e Alma" Gloria Perez was the mother of the victim. There was a tremendous popular interest in this case in Brazil, and even the announcement of the resignation of the country’s president Fernando Collor at that time, appeared to pale in importance. In talking about telenovelas and Brazilian culture, Page (1995) justifiably named this relationship a "national obsession".

Mattelart & Mattelart (1990) cited Dias Gomes’ definition of Brazilian telenovelas as an “open work” or an “open genre”, to explain the uniquenesses of this genre. The telenovela production is concurrent with the broadcast; therefore, the author
can modify the script while watching the work on the air. Many times popular opinion
determines the fate of a character, or the telenovela’s final episode. The writers receive
numerous influences directly or indirectly, by fans, church, politics, advertisers,
government, and activist groups (Hamburger, 1999). There is also a sophisticated system
developed by Globo to evaluate public outlook, with the use of opinion poll research,
focus groups, and the analysis of the large volume of letters that are addressed to the
network and to the author throughout the telenovela (Mattellart & Mattelart, 1990).
Ismael Fernandes (1994) lists thirty-four telenovela authors in his work compiling all
Brazilian telenovelas. The production schedule is rigorous, forcing long hours of work;
therefore, it is becoming customary to have a co-author sharing the work. The writer also
has the assistance of two apprentice scriptwriters and one documentalist, responsible for
the cohesiveness of the reality represented in the drama (Mattellart & Mattelart, 1990).

**TV Globo**

The history of TV Globo goes back to 1957 when Juscelino Kubitschek, the
Brazilian president at the time, gave a television franchise to the media tycoon Robert
Marinho. Marinho was the owner of a media empire that encompassed a daily newspaper,
a publishing company, and a radio station. In 1962 he activated the first TV channel in
association with Time-Life.

The US group Time-Life had strategic interests in exploring the Latin American
communication market, and had previously offered a partnership with the group "Diários
e Emissoras Associados" (TV Tupi), which they declined (Herz, 1987). The agreement
between Globo and Time-Life was only possible through the direct intervention of
President Castelo Branco, since it was against the Brazilian constitution to have foreign participation in the form of ownership, partnership, management and/or intellectual orientation of a television franchise (Mattelart & Matterlart, 1990). Channel 4 began operating in Rio in 1965. The following year, Globo entered the market in São Paulo buying TV Paulista. The military government had a clear idea of what they wanted to accomplish with this partnership. They had a political and economic plan for national integration and they knew that telecommunications were vital to the implementation of their strategy. The dictatorial government wanted to foster the development of a national identity that was compatible with their repressive agenda (Ortiz, 1985).

In 1975, the Ministry of Culture and Education (MEC) published "Política Nacional de Cultura" (National Culture Policy), which summarized the guidelines and policies for the creation and management of cultural productions in Brazil. The document justified the need to utilize mass communication media as a mechanism to disseminate culture, assuring that the communications outlets would utilize high cultural standards. The reinforcement came in the form of censorship, and the guidelines spelled out the prohibitions that in their view would affect the productions. The new policies prohibit showing any one with physical, mental, or moral deformities. It was also forbidden to present or mention anything that would exploit the popular belief in superstitions, healers, fake physicians, or any other form of fraud (Muniz, 1977).

To accommodate the demands of the modernizing society and those of the state, Globo introduced in the 6 PM and 10 PM time slot telenovelas that fulfilled the requirements of the government. They knew that there needed to be a focus on national and educational themes. The 6 PM slot was reserved for themes that were more
educational and geared towards a younger audience, while well-known writers created a more sophisticated telenovela for the 10 PM time slot (Ortiz et al., 1991).

Globo bought Time-Life shares in 1969 and by this time, it had already built a system for centralized production and distribution. At this same year, Globo launched "Jornal Nacional", which was the first news program transmitted on a national scale (Mattelart & Matterlart, 1990). There is a consensus among researchers that Globo mushroomed to the top due to special favors and incentives received throughout the years of the dictatorial regime, in exchange for collaboration in diffusing governmental ideologies. The daily newscast had the double duty of delivering the news and also be the official voice of the military regime (Lima, 1988; Mattos, 1982; Queiroz, 1992; Straubhaar, 1989).

In the 1970s, state-owned corporations sponsored most advertisement, with the biggest slice going to Rede Globo because of their audience leadership (Ortiz et al., 1991). Brazil was the fourth country in advertising dollars spent in 1976, only topped by the US, the UK and Japan. The military regime also granted 67 new television licenses in the country, an exceptionally high number in comparison to 22 licenses granted during 1955-1964 (Mattos, 1982). Following their goal of national integration, the dictatorial regime invested in microwave and satellite telecommunications infrastructure, which contributed to the formation of national television networks (Straubhaar, 1991).

The competition between TV Globo and TV Tupi reached its peak in the 1970's. TV Tupi, as we know, was part of the conglomerate "Diários e Emissoras Associados" owned by Assis Chateaubriand. Chateaubriand's group also owned more than thirty daily newspapers, eighteen TV stations, and thirty radio stations. This empire also owned its
own news agency, advertising agency, and many public relations agencies. They also published "O Cruzeiro", the largest selling magazine in Latin America until 1987 (Tunstall, 1977). The two networks became embroiled in a dispute to attract and affiliate local stations. Globo ended up winning and selling the image of a national vehicle to the advertisers. During the period of 1975-1980, TV Tupi lost three of its stations to Globo. The decisive component in this dispute was the corporate style of the two enterprises. Globo had a centralized organization, while Tupi had organizational difficulties, reflective of systemic problems that afflicted the "Diários Associados". Consequently, Tupi had problems recycling its equipment, enhancing the technical aspect of the productions, as well as establishing high quality standard programs. It culminated with its bankruptcy, the result of internal disputes and poor management. TV Tupi crumbled in the beginning of the 1980's when the government closed it down, citing irregular practices. TV Globo, on the contrary, consolidated its leadership through the development of a program line up that included news programs and telenovelas, making the most of what modern technology had to offer (Straubhaar, 1989). At this time, Globo had between 50 to 70 percent of the audience, and was competing with the three other networks: Rede Bandeirantes, Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão (SBT), and Rede Manchete (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990).

The empire created by Rede Globo in the 1980's encompassed 48 affiliated stations, covering 98% of the Brazilian cities and reaching 17.6 million households with a TV set. This would make for an audience estimated at 80 million viewers (Melo & Souza, 1984). According to Straubhaar (1989), Globo managed to create a pattern of taste among the audiences that was translated into the network slogan "Padrão Globo de
Qualidade", meaning Globo's Standard of Quality. The preoccupation with the production, with more expensive sets and out-door shootings have been a trademark of Brazilian novelas, more precisely linked to TV Globo.

Describing Rede Globo's efforts in creating telenovelas, Reis (1999) compares the production of a novela to that of a Hollywood movie, where entire location sets are built to fit a specific storyline. Another distinction cited is the inclusion of many outdoors scenes, at least as many as indoors. For Reis (1999), "the nearest format in American television would be well-produced network miniseries, or made-for-TV movies." The network's vision to strive for quality differentiated it from the competitors. Globo was the first network to create an international department and the first to create research marketing and training departments (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990).

There is a link between the establishment of TV Globo as the leading television network and its mastering of telenovelas, the most popular television program in Brazil. Globo developed the ability to produce an average of fourteen hours of original programs a day, all primetime programming, including three telenovelas, being in-house creations. Telenovelas dominate national programming and surpass in audience all the other genres, including imported productions (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Ortiz et al., 1991).

Besides being the viewer's number one choice, telenovelas are, economically speaking, the pillars of television in Brazil. This is well articulated by Zevi Ghivelder, cited by Ortiz et al. (1991), when he poses that "telenovas are the most profitable product in the history of television." He affirms that there is not a great television network in Brazil without novelas. Even though production costs may be high, they are offset by the
price tag of advertisement and merchandising. The production cost is also diluted in the many chapters of the serial drama. Merchandising is how product placement is known in Brazil. This form of advertisement inserted in a media program to increase the visibility of a product or service, has the unique advantage of not breaking away from the program, but is intended to be part of the context, usually endorsed by the characters (La Pastina, 2001). Historically, telenovelas have an intrinsic relationship with merchandising, since they were created with the purpose of selling soaps and beauty products. Scholars agree that product placement in Brazil had long been a way to boost revenues (Ortiz et al., 1991, Melo, 1989; Straubhaar, 1982, 1989, 1991). La Pastina (2001) contends that Beto Rockfeller was the first novela to utilize product placement, popularizing a hangover medicine used by the protagonist. Even though the networks did not officially disclose the price for merchandising, it is the consensus that it is well over thirty percent of what is charged for a minute of standard commercial time. Knowing the financial importance of that practice, Globo created its own merchandising agency, which is responsible for the planning and elaboration of carefully inserting subtle ads into their production. While commercial time in Brazil is regulated to no more than fifteen minutes an hour, merchandising is not (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990, Ortiz et al., 1991). To sell to the international market, scenes are taped twice with and without product placement.

Another successfully crafted enterprise conquered by Globo is the music business with the selling of telenovela soundtracks. Original scores are created for the specific story. A common practice now is for songs to be arranged for the novelas, without necessarily being created for the telenovela. To every new TV drama launched, there are
two new records on the market, one with Brazilian songs and the other with international hits (Fernandes, 1994).

Globo built its media empire by vertical and horizontal integration. Besides the dominance in the television market, Globo Organizations is a business comprised of newspapers, radio stations, a publishing firm, an advertising production company, a recording company, a show business production, cable and satellite television, and Internet among other sectors (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990; Amaral & Guimarães, 1994; Britos, 2000). Rede Globo is the fourth largest television network in the world, capturing 70% of television viewers in Brazil (Nechi, 1991; Allen, 1995). As its trademark, the competition battle does not stop in the homeland. Globo is also fighting to spread its wings abroad. In the United States, Globo International offers programs through satellite TV.

*Latin American Telenovelas and the Global Market*

Over the years, telenovelas have strengthened their position as the leading product of Latin American television production. The consolidation of the telenovelas as a marketable product in the Latin American region is defined by the audiences’ preference to this genre over American productions. According to Rogers & Antola (1985), imports of US programs into Brazil and Mexico decreased from 50 to 20% compared to two decades ago. In his study of television preference in Brazil and the Dominican Republic Straubhaar (1991) confirms Latin American television viewers’ preference for regional and local TV programming. His findings show three layers of preference: domestic, regional, and US programming.
The increased flow of telenovelas exported to developed countries and the US Hispanic market have some scholars questioning the idea of media imperialism. Rogers & Antola (1985) offered the notion of "reversed media imperialism" citing the telenovelas' success as a rare example where a developing country's product penetrates into the first world media market. Counteracting this argument is the notion that the contra-flow, from the South to the North, tends to be over emphasized on marginal contra-movements, disguising the real power structures in global communication (Bilteereyst & Meers, 2000).

Even though Brazil and Mexico dominate the export market, Peru, Colombia, and Argentina are also contenders. However, the production and export of telenovelas is not limited to the regional market, or the United States Hispanic market. Different countries as far as China have imported this television genre; the international market also includes Russia, Spain, Egypt, Morocco, and the Philippines to name a few (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1990).

Globo first exported the serial drama to Portugal in 1976, selling the telenovela "Gabriela" to Radio Televisão Portuguesa (Portuguese Radio and Television). One year later, an international division within the network is implemented to support the export of telenovelas to Latin America. By the mid 1980's, Globo not only retains its leading position in Brazil but it is also exporting its cultural products to 128 countries (Melo, 1988). In order to commercialize the telenovela in the export market, TV Globo needs to make some modifications in the original work. They realize that they need to transcribe the taped scenes, instead of using the original script. This is in order to provide a more accurate translation, since the actors sometimes modify the initial script while taping.
Therefore, a new script needs to be obtained, making it the starting point for future translations. High costs make it impossible to translate the work into English and French; even though it occurs in the initial phase, it is no longer viable. Globo maintains a Spanish translation service in Peru and Venezuela (Ortiz et al., 1991).

Novelas from Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and other Latin American countries are also exported to more than 100 countries (Melo, 1988). Mexican Televisa reported a strong audience rating in Europe in 1994, 86 points for “Yo Comprare Esa Mujer” (I Will Buy this Woman) in Hungary, 30.9 for “Rosa Salvage” (Wild Rose) in Switzerland, 45.9 for “Los Ricos Tambien Lloran” (The Riches Also Cry) in Turkey, and 41 points for “Simplemente Maria” in Russia. In promoting their novelas, Televisa emphasizes they easily cross borders and appeal to a wide demographic audience in each country (Variety, 1993).

In the United States, telenovelas dominate the Hispanic television market. They are a major part of television programming, airing in the morning, afternoon and prime time. The Univision network is the predominant leader importing novelas primarily from Mexico's Televisa for the Hispanic audience. Telemundo, owned by NBC, is trailing in second place, importing telenovelas from Colombia (Betty la Fea), and Brazil (El Clon, Terra Nuestra) (Barrera & Bielby, 2001). Telemundo now is beginning to produce their own soaps, to take advantage of product placement and the revenues it generates. A Telemundo production premieres in December 2004, the telenovela “La Mujer en el Espejo” (The woman in the mirror). It is filmed in Colombia, and tells the story of a woman that is ugly during the night and beautiful during the day thanks to a magic
mirror. It promises to include all the usual melodrama, the rich father who has not met the daughter, the expected villains, and also humour (Morales, 2004).

**Social Merchandising**

Researchers have delineated telenovelas' influence in many levels of society. In research of media framing and citizen competence, Porto (2001), set up to study the daily newscast "Jornal Nacional". His study focuses on television audience's interpretations of politics in Brazil. At first, he explains, it is not his intent to include telenovelas in the research, even though he knows of the importance of this genre in understanding Brazilian cultural politics. However, the participants in the study keep bringing the telenovela "Terra Nostra" into the discussion even when not asked about it, or when the topic is not relevant to the novela. Porto (2001) is forced to include the telenovela in his study, as he points out: "I realized that the genre was unavoidable". Part of the explanation for the strong audience appeal rests on the ability of the telenovelas' themes to cross socio-economic, genre, and age barriers. Telenovelas are part of the daily conversation among all sorts of individuals in Brazil, as Page (1995) points out:

> The addictive appeal of the telenovelas has become a kind of glue that binds the disparate elements of Brazilian society. Residents of shacks in frontier towns in Amazonia and high-rise apartments in São Paulo, wealthy matrons and humble maids, children and their grandparents, attorneys and janitors (and even many intellectuals who insist that they despise television) all share a common fascination with the characters and the plot convolutions of hit novelas (p.447).

Hamburger (2000) analyzes the impact of the interaction of viewers of the telenovela “O Rei do Gado” (The Cattle King) on the redefinition of politics and intimacy in Brazil. One of the main themes this novela address is agrarian reform, but it also deals
with infidelity, and violence against woman. Among other debates, "The Cattle King"
generates discussions about marriage, and perceived ideas of womanhood and manhood.

Hamburger (2000) describes viewer’s interactions as follow:

Viewers take telenovela plots and characters as references to that which they
share with their fellow viewers. The yellow, blue, and green national colors
mobilized in previous telenovelas define Brazil as the place where these narratives
happen. References to the agrarian conflict identify Brazil as the territorial base of
this genre’s narratives. These references signal the geographic boundaries of an
imagined collective that does not define itself by one dominant content or by a
homogenous body. This imagined national collective exists as a heterogeneous
community that debates certain issues brought up by telenovelas. Because they
have a well-known, cross-class, cross-gender, cross-age, and cross-regional
audience of viewers, and because of their references to national symbols and
repertoires, viewers understand telenovelas as displays of models of behavior.
This does not mean that they agree or assume these models. Rather, it means that
they position themselves in relation to them. In doing so, they take topics that
telenovelas address as legitimate topics for public discussion... But beyond
simply inspiring opinions about polemic issues, telenovelas provide a repertoire
through which viewers engage their personal experiences in public terms, that is,
in terms that are recognized as legitimate by fellow viewers (p.160).

Like "The Cattle King", other telenovelas have incorporated social messages into
their plots. This model is borrowed from the same concept of product placement, or
merchandising. In Brazil, the insertion of socially relevant subjects in the telenovela
storyline is therefore, appropriately called "social merchandising". There are many
examples of social merchandising in the Brazilian telenovelas, where the author
incorporates socially relevant themes into the telenovela context. Perhaps the first
Brazilian writer to intentionally use the televised serial drama as an educational medium
was Benedito Rui Barbosa with the telenovela "Meu Pedacinho de Chão" (My Small
Piece of Land). According to Fernandes (1994), this is the first educational novela in
Brazilian television. It aired August of 1971 to May of 1972, co-produced by TV Cultura
and TV Globo, for this novela the writer focuses on rural themes, the struggles of farm
workers, and he also includes agricultural information. Other novelas that venture into social and political issues followed. "Explode Coração" (Explosion of the Heart), by Glória Perez, aires by Globo in 1996, and brings up the discussion of missing children and child labor. Mixing fiction and reality, Glória Perez takes one of the characters into a scene where real mothers protest for their missing children in Rio’s downtown area. The scene alludes to the well-publicized massacre of street children by the police on July 23, 1993, at Rio’s Candelária Square. There are claims that this actually helps reunite some families and it encourages non-governmental organizations to continue the campaign (Fernandes, 1994; Hamburger 2000). Another topic introduced in this novela is the traditions and beliefs of the gypsy culture, through a gypsy woman’s love affair with a non-gypsy man. This old melodramatic formula of impossible love helps Glória Perez display the music, dance and secular traditions of gypsy culture. Later, she uses the same recipe to spice up the telenovela "O Clone. " Silvio de Abreu explores homosexuality in the telenovela "A Próxima Vítima” (The Next Victim). This telenovela aires in 1995 by TV Globo, dealing with polemic themes, such as racial prejudice, which is seen on the screen by a middle class African-Brazilian family.

Social merchandizing can also be displayed in the telenovelas without incorporating the message in the main storyline. That is the case with a plug to the public health campaign about Hanseniase in the telenovela “O Clone”, 2001-2002. In this case, a popular Brazilian singer visited Dona Jura’s bar, showed her a poster and talked about the campaign. The telenovela "Pátria Minha" (My Homeland), written by Gilberto Braga and broadcasted from July 1994 to March 1995, exemplifies the use of both tactics of social merchandising, including or not including the topic in the storyline. This novela is shown
in the year of the soccer World Cup in the United States and Brazilian presidential elections. It does have an optimistic view, and according to Fernandes (1994), Braga wants to affirm that it is worthwhile to live honestly in Brazil. The themes built in the telenovela plot are about the Brazilians that live and work in the United States, affectionately called “Brazucas”, (no translation) along with housing, racism, and female adultery. It also portrays coming of age scenarios such as the first sexual experience, condom use, and communication between parents and their children. A more recent (2003) Globo production "Mulheres Apaixonadas" (Passionate Women) takes on various pro-social themes, such as domestic violence, female alcoholism, and violence in the streets. Manuel Carlos, the author, writes a very poignant scene where one of the characters is killed by a stray bullet. The characters are caught in a shootout between the police and robbers in the streets of Rio. It sparked popular clamor against violence, even an organized march in the streets of Copacabana. "Mulheres Apaixonadas" also touches on the subjects of organ donation, breast cancer, prostitution, and elderly abuse. Coincidently, in October of 2003, Congress approves the "Estatuto do Idoso", a compilation of laws for the protection of senior citizens (Estatuto do Idoso, 2003). Sergio Cabral (2003) a Brazilian senator praises the telenovela for tackling these themes and helping raise awareness about the problems, pressuring the legislature to expedite the approval of the measures that were idle in the Senate for five years (Cabral, 2003).
Table 2.1: Top TV Programs in Brazil in Number of Social Merchandising in 2002

| TV programs in Brazil with the highest number of insertion of social messages in 2002 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Malhação                          | 330            |
| Coração de Estudante              | 248            |
| Desejos de Mulher                 | 51             |
| O Clone                           | 269            |
| Esperança                         | 91             |
| O Beijo do Vampiro                | 52             |
| Sabor da Paixão                   | 97             |

Font: TV Globo

Part II - Historical Overview of Media Studies

Overview

To understand the different approaches to media studies it is necessary to review the historical context and the development of this field. In this chapter the principal paradigms that guide media effects studies and reception studies are discussed. Of major importance is the review of development communication for the context of the study, since it gives an overview of the different approaches and theories in place in order to utilize the media for pro-social change.
Hypodermic Needle and Limited Effects Theories

The concern for the potential social effects of mass media has been present since the advent of the press, television, film, radio and now the Internet. Researchers have developed various interpretations and theories addressing the impact of media on the audience, in an attempt to explain this relationship, which is still in debate.

The Magic Bullet Theory originated in the 1930’s, believes that the audience is impressionable, passive and equally susceptible to media messages. This notion of mass audience is highly influenced by the definition of mass society, at the time, with the increase of modernization, industrialization and urbanization believed to be the culprits of rising criminality (Reis, 1998). The media is assumed to have the ability to influence the masses and persuade public opinion toward any given subject, depending on the author of the text. The belief is that messages are like “magic bullets”, they strike all members of the audience uniformly, creating even effects among them. Likewise, the “Hypodermic Needle Theory” shared the same premise. Audiences are injected with a “shot” of information, which is believed to be capable of equally affecting audience’s thinking and behavior. The classical example that illustrates this theory is the Orson Welles’s radiobroadcast “The Invasion from Mars” in 1938. In the eve of Halloween, a radio broadcast is interrupted with information that Martians have begun an invasion of earth in Grovers Mill, New Jersey. People actually believe that a serious invasion is in progress, establishing panic in households and in the streets. The effect of this broadcast suggests how the theory works; a shot of information by the media is able to influence a more
vulnerable audience in a uniform manner. Studying the panic provoked from this broadcast Hadley Cantril (1947) surveys listeners of the program in an attempt to understand why some listeners confused the fictional program with a real news bulletin. Results indicate that the reason some listeners do not verify the authenticity of what they are listening to on the radio is their preexisting mind sets, which make it possible for them to understand what is being broadcasted. High religiosity and beliefs about the end of the world are some of the factors that are raised about what made the program believable.

A prominent critic of the “Hypodermic Needle” model is Paul Lazarsfeld, an Austrian born scholar who arrives in the United States in 1933, and has a decisive role in the development of communication and social studies (Katz, 1987). Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University develop the “limited effects theory” based on studies about opinion formation in the presidential elections in the United States and about the influence of opinion leaders in the communication process. Their theory posites that media messages have only indirect and limited effects on the public; to be more effective these messages need to be mediated by opinion leaders. Therefore, the idea of the powerful media is debunked, and it is concluded that there are several intervening variables that mediated the media-audience connection. Lazarsfeld and his group then created the “two-step flow of communication” model, which states that ideas flow from the media to opinion leaders and from them to less active sections of the population. In this relationship, the tendency of the media is to reinforce predispositions, rather than change them. Therefore, individuals only search for
information that goes with their beliefs, avoiding media content that challenge their position, determining a process of “selective exposure” (Czitrom, 1982).

Critics of the limited effects model link Lazarsfeld’s research to the media industry and to government money as important financial sources, which according to them, might have an influence on the selection of the respondents and questions asked to them (Noelle-Neuman, 1983; Simpson, 1993).

*Agenda-Setting, Cultivation Analysis, and Uses and Gratifications*

A new perspective in media effects research starts to develop after the dominance of the “limited effects” paradigm. The new approaches emphasize long-term effects, instead of short-term campaign periods, a move from behavior and persuasion to cognition, and a transition from minimal to more significant media effects (Katz, 1980). One of the major developments in media effects is the emergence of theories about the agenda-setting role of the media. McCombs & Shaw (1972) present a hypothesis that the mass media establish the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the prominence of attitudes toward political issues. Drawing from Bernard Cohen’s theory, the authors posit that the press may not be successful most of the time in telling people what to think, but they are very successful in telling readers what to think about. This approach intends to investigate how the media set the agenda of subjects that are considered relevant by the public in political and electoral decisions, therefore attempting to mold the political process. Critics of this approach contest that nobody can tell people what to think about. The initial position fails to consider how diverse forms information is presented might affect the process of opinion formation (Williams et al., 1991).
The agenda setting approach contributes to broaden the horizons of media effects research. However, another theory develops that emphasized more long-term effects and proposes an even more powerful media effects in the form of cultivation analysis (Gerbner et al., 1994). George Gerbner (1982, 1984) and his colleagues propose the theory that mass media, specifically television, plays a dominant role in defining people’s cultural and social values. They argue that television “cultivates” those values, opinion, and concepts over an extended period of time; therefore studies of exposure to television effects should always be analyzed on a long-term basis instead of short-term response. They conducted studies on how exposure to television’s dramatic content will shape a viewer’s worldview. This exposure will lead to the cultivation of shared understanding of reality, mainly among heavy viewers, that otherwise will have little in common besides television. Cultivation effects were established by comparing social perceptions of reality by light and heavy viewers of television with media representation of violence and crime. The cultivation perspective is criticized at the methodological and conceptual levels. Some of the criticism is for its simplistic understanding of television reception, translated in terms of “exposure”, that is, the number of hours people report to stay in front of the screen. Missing from this approach is a more comprehensive understanding of the process by which people interpret television programs and elaborate their own meanings (Livingstone, 1998).

The uses and gratifications approach claims to offer a more complex approach understanding the media-audience relationship within a wider social context. Audience members are now viewed as active and rational participants that choose what and how to use specific media content with the goal to achieve different gratifications and needs.
This framework explains the audience selection and interpretation of a media message by anchoring it on satisfaction (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Blumler, Brown, & McQuail, 1970). Critics of this approach have stressed its lack of a sociological framework, contesting that uses and gratifications’ main assumption is ambiguous in dealing with power relations in society as well as in media organizations (Elliott, 1974).

**Reception Analysis**

In the 1980’s the development of the reception research tradition is greatly influenced by the encoding/decoding model proposed by Stuart Hall (1980) and his associates at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCS) of the University of Birmingham. Hall criticizes the traditional mass communication research, mainly the linearity of its sender/message/receiver model and the concentration on the level of message exchange. Based on Marx, he proposes to address this process in terms of distinctive but linked periods: production, circulation, consumption, and reproduction. Hall also points out that the process of “encoding” messages, developed by TV broadcasters, and the process of their “decoding” by the TV audiences, are relatively autonomous, they are not identical processes, but related. Hall articulates that a message can be encoded with a “preferred meaning” and the audience can decode it with an opposite or different meaning, or with the same meaning. He then identifies three hypothetical positions for a possible decoding of a television message: dominant-hegemonic position, that is when the viewer embraces the meaning of the television program in their straight form; negotiated position, the viewer might agree with some of
the hegemonic definitions, having a critical position about some issues; and oppositional position, that is when the viewer decodes the message in a totally contrary way.

In 1980 David Morley published a research applying Hall's model. In his book *The Nationwide Audience* he studies variations in audience decoding of a British program called “Nationwide”, according to their socio-economic position. He explains decoding as a process constructed according to viewers' discourses, such as knowledge or prejudices. This is considered by some to be one of the most influential approaches in the study of media audiences and is a reference to reception studies that follow. Some critics have pointed out that Morley’s studies minimized variations within the groups studied and try to generalize the responses obtained (Turner, 1990). Hall's encoding/decoding model is also criticized for assuming that the preferred meaning and preferred reading of a text always expresses the dominant ideology (Pillai, 1992). In a later article, even Hall agrees that it is possible for some TV texts to not work within the dominant meaning, or even against it, therefore, questioning the notion of preferred meaning, and consequently the three response positions: the dominant, the oppositional, and the negotiated (Hall, 1994).

The encoding/decoding model opens the doors to a new ethnographic tradition of research, constructed on the basis that audiences are different, active and selective, but also influenced by socio, cultural and economic factors within their environment. Special emphasis is given here to the studies of how women find pleasure and develop different interpretations while watching soap operas (Hobson, 1982; Ang, 1985) or reading romance novels (Radway, 1991). These studies are important in validating soap operas and their audiences as a legitimate object of study, counteracting prejudices and
rejections common in academic and social arenas (Brunsdon, 1997). In *Reading the Romance* Radway (1991) investigates how female readers relate to romance novels. Through the analysis of responses from discussion groups, interviews, and questionnaires, Radway (1991) points out how the readers express pleasure in reading the romances, which helps them escape from their own day-to-day routine and problems. The readers identified with the romance’s heroine who has little to do with their own lives. Radway called romances “compensatory literature”, one that relieves tension and allows women to fantasize and feel good over an extended period of time, even after the readers return to their obligations. Morley (1995) cites Radway’s study as one of the best examples of media consumption study that took place in the 1980’s.

A major distinction between reception analysis and uses and gratifications studies relies on methodology. While reception studies favor qualitative methods such as ethnographic studies, media effects research prefer a quantitative approach to collect data. The preference for qualitative work usually stresses small and less representative sample sizes; therefore, these studies can rarely be generalized to the population, bringing about one of the criticism of the reception approach (Jensen & Rosengreen, 1999). The samples are not only small, but usually they tend to be formed by fans, which are individuals with strong engagements with the medium analyzed in the study. This practice also adds to the limitations of reception studies, making it easier to confuse more involved individuals with the average (Hermes, 1993). Radway’s (1991) *Reading the Romance* is criticized for its small sample and lack of representation. The sample for her study consists of avid romance readers who are regulars at a bookstore.
**Development Communication**

To better understand media effects and reception, attention now will focus on development communication theories and strategies, which are highly related to entertainment-education. According to Stevenson (1994) the basic concept behind development communication is the utilization of media to the promotion of social change.

Development communication starts with post-war international aid programs to countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa that are struggling with poverty, illiteracy, poor health and other socio-economic plagues. Therefore, development equates values of western society translated into political democracy, high literacy ratings, increased industrial production, and other factors that third world countries are thought to emulate (Inklet & Smith, 1974). Even though the path of communication theory is not a linear one, concepts and strategies have been utilized simultaneously. Recent definitions of development education equates its purpose to a better quality of life, not only by raising income and well being, but also by promoting social justice, land reform, and establishing community centers for leisure and entertainment (Melkote, 1991). There is now a trend to search for equalization and participation. Non-Govermental Organizations, as well as government agencies, and international organizations are involved in development communications. The definition given by the World Bank division of development communication appears to embrace their efforts for a more collaborative approach:

The Development Communication Division (DevComm) supports the Bank's mission of reducing poverty by providing clients with strategic communication advice and tools they need to develop and implement successful projects and pro-poor reform efforts.
Development communication involves creating mechanisms to broaden public access to information on reforms; strengthening clients' ability to listen to their constituencies and negotiate with stakeholders; empowering grassroots organizations to achieve a more participatory process; and undertaking communications activities that are grounded in public opinion research (The World Bank Group web site).

To further understand the myriad concepts and disciplines that contribute to the formation of development communication, some of the different approaches will be described.

**The Dominant Paradigm**

The basis of the dominant paradigm in development communication is the concept that the causes of problems with development are related to lack of knowledge; therefore, information is the chosen route to change behavior. Consequently, behavior change models abound in this early period (Waisbord, 2001).

Modernization theory is a leading tenant in the early stages of development communication. It is thought that behind development challenges are a lack of culture and information. Problems such as the high rate of fertility and mortality, high rate of illiteracy, and slow productivity are consequences of a traditional culture that inhibit modernization. It is believed that to close the gap between Western societies and third world countries, the solution would be to transfer ideas of modernization, culture and information from the developed world to the struggling under developed nations, utilizing communication and media (Waisboard, 2001; Sigh, 2002).

Daniel Lerner (1958) and Wilbur Schramm (1964), proponents of the dominant paradigm, believe that the dissemination of information through the media, along with
urbanization and literacy would lead to political participation and economic growth. According to Schramm (1964) transfer of knowledge is the first and central step in order to bring social change. He also advocates the creation of opportunities for people to voice their opinion and participate in the decision-making process and for leaders to provide the necessary leadership to implement projects. The third step is to teach needed skills. Lerner (1958) and Schramm (1964) focus on the media's ability to assist in the transition between the traditional and modern society through persuasion and innovation.

This approach is conceptualized based on two communication models. The Shannon-Weaver (1949) sender-receiver model, originally developed by engineering studies to explain how machines operate, is embraced by communication studies. This linear model encompassed five elements: communicator, message, medium, receiver, and response (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). The other influence is the magic bullet media effects approach, which believes that the media has the power to persuade the audience and influence public opinion towards attitudes and behavior changes (Waisboard, 2001). Development communication is understood as the utilization of media technologies to promote modernization; communication interventions are intrinsically attached to the widespread consumption of radio, television, newspapers, and cinema. Based on this belief, an indicator of favorable attitudes towards development and modernization is materialized in terms of media penetration (Inkles & Smith, 1974).

Critics of the modernization theory point out that a major flaw of this approach is not taking into account the economic and political environment of the developing nations and how it might influence the acceptance of mass media information campaigns (Singh, 2002). Another critique is the preference for the trickle-down flow of information, often
times not taking into consideration the needs and desires of the people at the grassroots level, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised (Nain, 2001).

**Diffusion of Innovations**

Still part of the dominant paradigm, the diffusion of innovations theory conceived by Rogers (1962, 1983) posits that:

Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. It is a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas, including the implementation of social concepts and information in society (1983, p.5).

According to this model, populations are divided according to their ability in incorporating and implementing innovation. The early adopters would serve as models to imitate, creating a fertile atmosphere for change. The ones that are not so fast to adopt innovations are laggards, which are presumed to describe most of the population in the underdevelopment regions (Waisboard, 2001).

A revisited model of the information-decision process establishes five stages for the adoption of innovations: knowledge, when the individual becomes aware of the innovation and how it works; persuasion, which is when the individual forms an opinion for or against the innovation, implementation, and confirmation, when the individual looks for reinforcement to either continue or discontinue the innovation (Rogers, 1983). This model of transmission of information shares Lerner and Schram’s concept of unilateral and top-down approach. However, differing from the modernist theorists, diffusion of innovation are not anchored in the “magic bullet’ communication effects, favoring the two-step flow of communication theory. Rogers concludes that the media
has an important role in increasing awareness, but interpersonal communications and personal sources are vital to ultimately adopt the innovation. Therefore, the emphasis on interpersonal communication resonates with Lazarsfeld's "two-step flow of communication" model, which states that ideas flow from the media to opinion leaders and from them to less active sections of the population (Waisbord, 2001). Reardon & Rogers (1988) reiterated the importance of peer networks in the decision to adopt a new idea, not withstanding media influence. The diffusion of innovations model proposes that both media and interpersonal communications are necessary to bring change.

Responding to critics of the dominant paradigm, Rogers recognized that the top-down approach did not demonstrate to be effective in bringing transformation and change. Besides recognizing the importance of paying attention to local socio-cultural environment, he also stressed the importance of participants' reciprocal sharing of information to accomplish a common goal (Rogers, 1976).

Nevertheless, diffusion of innovations has been widely incorporated and utilized in the realm of communication development, being one of the models that dominate this field. Particularly important for this study is the relationship between this framework and the entertainment-education strategy. The utilization of mass media to inform and carry pro-social messages and campaigns is one of the premises of entertainment-education.

Singhal & Rogers (1999) earlier definition of entertainment-education carried the basic components of the diffusion of innovations model: "designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, and change overt behavior" (p. xiii).
Evaluation studies of entertainment-education strategies have also pointed to the importance of interpersonal communication to stir behavioral change (Morris, 2003).

Entertainment-education

The insertion of social oriented messages in telenovelas is not exclusive to Brazilian television. In 1951, a radio serial program broadcast by the BBC aimed to entertain and promote modern farm practices (Fraser, 1987). Also during the period of 1975-1981, the Mexican network Televisa broadcast six pro-social telenovelas, with subjects varying from adult literacy, family planning, and gender equality, among others (Nariman, 1993). These novelas were the creation of Miguel Sabido, a Mexican producer and scriptwriter who was partially responsible for the development of the entertainment-education strategy. Entertainment-education was initially defined by Singhal & Rogers (1999) as the purposeful planning and use of educational messages in entertainment programming with the goal of entertaining and educating, intended to expand knowledge about an issue, create favorable attitudinal and behavioral changes (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal, Obregon & Rogers, 1994). Recently, the authors explained that they consider this definition limited, due to the implication of behavior-change in an individual level as the main objective of the entertainment-education strategy. The authors now define entertainment education as “the intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages” (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). This new definition gives entertainment-education a broader meaning. Even though earlier projects did have the goal to ultimately change behavior on an individual level, the researchers recognized that
in many instances, circumstances outside of the control of the individual also play an important role in changing behaviors. Entertainment-education is utilized in different media formats, such as radio, music, and theater, but it had its roots in the analysis of telenovelas.

Miguel Sabido studied the success of a Peruvian telenovela called "Simplemente María" (Simply Mary), broadcasted in 1969. It was shown in many countries with the same result. "Simplemente María" tells the story of a peasant young woman that moves to the big city, falls in love with a rich man and becomes pregnant. As a single mother, María faces many adversities; she is fired from her job as a maid, and finds work as a seamstress. María works during the day and goes to literacy classes at night. Through hard work and her ability with a Singer sewing machine, she is able to climb the social ladder and becomes a famous fashion designer. This novela had great popularity, with strong identification with the main character, mainly among poor, working-class women, who massively enrolled in literacy and sewing programs (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

Stemming from his analysis of this telenovela, Sabido developed the theoretical structure of pro-social novelas, which later became the entertainment-education strategy. Borrowing from various disciplines, Sabido formulated a multidisciplinary and integrated approach to the creation of his entertainment-education soap operas. The theoretical framework was grounded on Albert Bandura's social learning/cognitive theory, which states that individuals learn from observing role models in day-to-day life and also from movies and television. Carl Jung's archetype theory helped build soap opera's representation of myths, as part of the collective unconscious. Sabido created soap characters that could be positive or negative role models. Paul McLean's concept of a
triune brain, translated in the realm of entertainment-education soap operas, meant that to reach their goals, soaps should induce cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional) and animalistic (physical) responses in the audience. Sabido also used Eric Bentley's dramatic theory, which combined elements of five theatre genres: tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, farce, and melodrama. Sabido also used elements of communication theory as part of his strategy (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

Miguel Sabido also helped in the elaboration of Hum Log (We People). This was an India television soap opera that had pro-social messages regarding family harmony, the status of women in society, and small family size in India (Svenkerud, Rahoi & Singhal, 1995; Torres, 1994, Nariman, 1993).

Entertainment-education had gained space among development communication organizations, and has been used in different media formats in many developing countries. Population Communications International has produced various health related pro-social soap operas in Africa, Asia and Latin America focusing on family planning, reproductive health and AIDS (Ryerson, 1994). Soul City, a South African project to promote health related issues incorporated a three-month prime time television drama, as part of its strategy (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). In Tanzania, a long running entertainment-education radio soap opera "Twende na Wakati" (Let's Go With the Times), promoted HIV and AIDS prevention (Vaughan et al., 2000). These are some examples that illustrate the use of the entertainment-education strategy to promote social messages. Entertainment-education has been mainly employed to market health related issues such as family planning, HIV prevention, and reproductive health (Waisbord, 2001). It is Singhal & Rogers' (2002) vision that these messages be broadened to include issues such
as peace, conflict mediation, and race relations. They also envision utilizing different media in the entertainment-education strategy such as the Internet, arts and crafts, or other creative endeavors. The telenovela “El Clon” illustrates the possibilities of combining the discussion of issues such as alcoholism and Islamic culture not only in the television soap opera, but also through the Internet forums and web pages.

In the United States the inclusion of social issues in prime-time television or daytime dramas is not a new concept. Issues such as breast cancer, alcoholism, abortion, teen pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS have been portrayed by Hollywood in diverse shows such as ER, Beverly Hills 90210, General Hospital, and Ellen to mention a few (Glik, 1998).

Many researchers have conducted studies on entertainment-education efforts in promoting health related issues. An evaluation component is usually part of the campaign strategy. Vaughan et. al. (2000) claim that the radio soap opera “Twende na Wakati” (Let's Go with the Times), broadcasted in Tanzania had a definite influence in relation to listener’s knowledge, attitude, and implementation of HIV/AIDS preventive measures. The authors concluded that the effects of the radio soap opera achieved a reduction in the number of sexual partners by both men and women, and an increase in the use of condoms. Some of the intervening variables that helped influence the behaviors were the self-perception of the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, self-efficacy in preventing HIV/AIDS, interpersonal communication about HIV/AIDS, and identification with and role modeling of the principal characters of the soap. These findings reinforce the premise of Entertainment-education, which is the idea that individuals learn behavior by
observing role models, particularly in the mass media, since influence and imitation are expected outcomes of the strategy (Waisbord, 2001).

Papa et. al. (2000) investigated the effects of “Tinka Tinka Sukh” (Happiness Lies in Small Pleasures) on its audience in India. “Tinka Tinka Sukh” was an entertainment-education radio soap opera broadcasted by All India Radio in 1996-1997. Some of the educational themes encountered in this soap opera were gender equality, dowry related issues, family size, and HIV prevention, among others. Through listeners’ interview survey data and content analysis of listeners’ letters, the researchers concluded that conversation about the education theme presented in the soap opera is important in creating an environment for learning and it may lead to community action and social change.

However, many researchers question the effectiveness of entertainment-education in changing behavior. Sherry (1997) analyzing the pro-social soap opera experiments, found scarce support for the success of those attempts. His conclusions affirm that most evaluations of the entertainment-education experiments are limited and do not support claims of behavioral effects. Another criticism of the entertainment-education model is that it tends to ignore certain cultural, behavioral patterns that sometimes extrapolate the individual decision-making process, but that relate to the social context (Yoder, Horner, & Chirva, 1996). Singhal & Rogers (2000) have also addressed those claims as previously discussed; the emphasis of entertainment-education is no longer on the individual behavior change, because of the various circumstantial factors involved. Singhal & Rogers (1988) have also acknowledged that an “entertainment-education
strategy is much more effective in creating knowledge of an issue than changing the behavior regarding this issue” (p.141).

Another problem encountered by the entertainment-education strategy evaluation is the difficulty in isolating the amount of behavior change that can be attributed to the specific entertainment-education message, whether in a television or radio soap opera, or any other medium. Yoder, Horner, & Chirva (1996) identified this problem in their follow up evaluation of a radio soap opera in Zambia addressing HIV prevention. Their results show that behavior changes are most likely due to previous exposure to HIV/AIDS information, or other factors such as interpersonal beliefs or moral values.

The “Archie Bunker effect”, the degree to which certain audience individuals identify with negative role models in the media, is also cited in the literature as criticism of entertainment-education (Sherry, 1997). Archie Bunker is the protagonist of “All in the Family”, a sitcom broadcast by CBS in 1971. The character is a very prejudiced but funny man, who uses a lot of racial slurs, and demeaning remarks. The intention of the show’s creator is to call the attention to bigotry. However, Vidmar & Rokeach (1974) found that “All in the Family” reinforces, instead of reduces racial and ethnic prejudice among already prejudiced viewers. Singhal & Rogers (1999) agree that this effect is observed in many entertainment-education productions; however, they contend that it is only in a small percentage of the audience.

Ethical considerations also surfaced in the studies of entertainment-education (Papa, et. al., 2000; Brown & Singhal, 1993; Singhal & Rogers, 1999). Questions are raised about who decides what pro-social messages to include in entertainment, and what/whose values should be observed. Another concern would be with the
responsibility of the programmers about the changes that they are bringing for viewers and society with entertainment productions. Collaboration and discussion among all stakeholders involved, producers, researchers, policy makers and audiences is the key suggested to answer these questions (Papa et. al. 2000).

Social Marketing

Social marketing originates in response to the pressures of the political climate in the 1960’s to attend to social issues and to the creation of nonprofit organizations that utilizes marketing as an effective tool (Elliott, 1991). Social marketing derives from theories of consumption and human behavior, and from the disciplines of marketing and advertising. It consists of placing into practice standard techniques such as market segmentation and formative research to promote social behavior. One of the definitions of social marketing states that it is “the adaptation of commercial market technologies to programs designed to influence voluntary behavior of target audience to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part” (Andreasen, 1994).

Social marketing mirrors advertising campaign objectives, which consist of making a product visible, with public awareness of its benefits and costs. The emphasis should be on changing behavior, more than the diffusion of ideas or altering attitudes. Changing behavior is the core of social market, for some of its theorists, and is what distinguishes it from education and propaganda. In the United States it is used in a myriad of public information campaigns such as smoking cessation, seat belt use, and drug and alcohol issues, among others. In developing countries social marketing is utilized to promote breast-feeding, immunization programs, family planning, etc. (Waisbord, 2001).
Comparing social marketing with marketing, accusations of manipulation and
deceit are some of the criticisms of this approach. Some of the criticism is also directed
towards the utilitarian ethical model implemented by social marketing, where the end
justifies the means (Buchanan, Reddy, & Hossain, 1994). Advocates of social marketing
rebutted these arguments stating that the methods utilized are not intrinsically good or
bad and that judgment should be subject to the goals they are suppose to achieve. They
also contest the notion that campaigns have the ability to manipulate people, which they
say is unfounded. According to social marketing proponents, the fact that campaigns need
to be tailored according to the local socio-cultural and moral values, along with the
resistance encountered by some campaigns, attest to the inability of audience
manipulation by the campaigns (Waisbord, 2001).

Because social marketing subscribes to the ‘trickle-down” approach of
transmission of information it is highly criticized by participatory theorists. They argue
that the social marketing approach excludes the community from the discussion and that
their goal is to persuade people to engage in behaviors that were previously defined to
them (Beltrán, 1976). Answering these criticisms, social marketing theorists respond that
the utilization of input from targeted audiences coming from focus groups and in-depth
interviews represents the emphasis on the consumer and not on the experts (Novelli,
1990).


Participatory Model

One of the criticisms of the social marketing/entertainment-education strategies is that these are top down approaches formulated by outsiders, without corroboration from the local community. Critics claim that in these approaches the receivers of the messages are passive recipients of information, with the underlying concept that local people are badly informed or misunderstand a particular subject (Servaes, 1989). Communities do not feel responsible for the interventions, since they are dictated to by outsiders, usually bringing the voice of the government or agencies. Consequently, communities feel that if anything goes wrong with the innovation, the government is the one to solve it. The lack of opportunities for rejecting or modifying an intervention, also contributed to this feeling of disempowerment (Waisbord, 2000). According to Dragon (2001) the concept of establishing dialogue with the beneficiaries is based on these two perceived criticisms. The involvement of the beneficiaries in the intervention is important to foster a sense of “ownership” in the community. This would be helpful in terms of continuity of the project once the external input ceases. This sense of ownership can not be built without input from the recipients and their participation in the decision making process even before the start of the project.

Another important focus for participatory theorists is the attention to cultural diversity and the specific contexts, which they claim, are overlooked by persuasion theorists (Waisbord, 2001). According to the subscribers of the participatory model modernization projects overlook the importance of local traditions and knowledge, and the contradictions between local and foreign cultures. In explaining the failure of some agricultural projects, McKee (1992) cites that it is difficult to convince people to start
using pipe water, since they dislike the taste. They use the water mostly for washing, rather than cooking or drinking.

For the participatory model communication means a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the foundation for development, rather than information transmission (Agungal, 1997). Differing from the dominant paradigm, the channels of communication are horizontal and not vertical. The process of knowledge acquisition is contributory and interactive, rather than unilateral.

The central ideas of the participatory approach are dialogue and community empowerment championed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970). The alternative offered by Freire is the concept of liberating education, the combination of education as a dialogue, participation, and critical thinking, namely "dialogical pedagogy." Education in dialogical pedagogy is not the transmission of information from those who have knowledge to those who lack it, or from the powerful to the powerless, but it is a mutual discovery of the world (Freire, 1970). Therefore, this model argues that the objective of development is to empower people to have greater control over decisions that affect their lives, hence fostering social equalization and democratic practices (Morris, 2003). The core of the participatory model is to work with the community to determine their needs, rather than imposing an intervention. Describing the view of participatory scholars, Waisbord (2000), states:

Communication is the articulation of social relations among people. People should not be forced to adopt new practices no matter how beneficial they seem in the eyes of agencies and governments. Instead, people needed to be encouraged to participate rather than adopt new practices based on information (p.18)
Attesting to this concept, Freire criticizes developmental agencies mainly in northeastern Brazil arguing that development programs introduce foreign concepts, to enforce Westerns ideas and practices without asking how these match the existing culture. He contends that the programs failed to educate small farmers because it tried to persuade them about the benefits of adopting certain innovations. This went directly against the real meaning of communication, which is translated into community interaction and education (Waisbord, 2000).

Even though some participatory projects are criticized for not fully applying this concept, genuine participatory projects are considered to be those in which there is grassroots control over key program decisions (Servaes, 1996).

In a report to the Rockefeller Foundation, “Making waves: stories of participatory communication for social change” Gumucio Dragon (2001) relates the efforts of participatory communication for development around the world. Kothhmale Community Radio one of the projects converging the Internet and radio. The Kothhmale Radio is created in 1989 to help families relocated for Sri Lanka’s largest damming project. The local authority set up the radio mainly to inform people about self-employment and health issues. In 1998 UNESCO (United Nations Education Social Cultural Organization) made a financial contribution to start the implementation of the Internet aspect of the project. Listeners of the station ask questions to the radio station about a specific subject, in turn, trained volunteers research the web for appropriate information and return the information to the audience in their language. It also provides two free of charge Internet access points to community libraries. Another component of this program is the creation of a computer database from the information researched on the Internet.
TV Maxabomba, a popular video project in Brazil is one of the examples cited by Dragon (2001). This project started in 1986 with the help of the “Centro de Criação da Imagem Popular” (Popular Image Creation Center), as an experimental video laboratory working in Nova Iguaçu, in the Baixada Fluminense district of Rio de Janeiro. From the start, TV Maxabomba asks the house associations (associação de moradores) about their needs and since then, the crew goes almost daily into the neighborhoods to record short videos of residents expressing their opinion on different topics, for example condom usage or sanitation. The videos are divided into fifteen minutes segments, with a discussion after each exhibition (Vicki, 1998; Dragon, 2001). An important component of this project is the use of the mini telenovelas to address issues and stir up discussion.

According to Vicki (1998):

By managing the tension between representing both an entertainment medium and a political motivator, TV Maxambomba's videos negotiate two different notions of the word "popular" in popular culture. The group's ability to negotiate different meanings of the popular has led to the survival of a medium that is at one time pleasurable and political to its viewers. Perhaps as a result, TV Maxambomba has survived where other video projects have failed. Certainly, both participants and sponsors for the project are attracted by TV Maxambomba's ingenuity at avoiding partisanship while stirring a rousing democratic dialogue in working-class towns (p.233).

Some of the subjects discussed at the community level are the creation of a small factory to help unemployed youth, a health center built by the community, a national women’s meeting, among others.

As the main tasks of development communication, the participatory model encourages participation, stimulates critical thinking, and stresses process, rather than specific outcomes associated with the dominant paradigm of modernization and progress (Altafin, 1991).
The participatory paradigm is criticized for not acknowledging that in some cases, such as epidemics, quick, top down government intervention is not only necessary but also effective.

Another point of contention for this theory is that it does not clarify what participation involves. When planning a project, some decisions are made a priori, outside of the community. The role of the local residents would be to implement and evaluate the project. However, this participation is not linked to the conception of the project, limiting the power of the community to act on already set decisions (McKee, 1992).
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Overview

The theoretical frameworks that overarch this study are presented in this chapter. Social learning/cognitive theory and Paulo Freire's dialogical communication are delineated. Finally a rational for the combined theories is presented.

Bandura's Social Learning/Cognitive Theory

As described earlier, one of the tenets and perhaps the most important theoretical underline of entertainment-education is Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. This theory developed from experimental psychological studies, which demonstrate how children learn and imitate modeled behaviors. It is a general theory of human behavior, even though derived from the field of social psychology. This framework is also greatly utilized in health promotion campaigns, education and communication research. Bandura stresses the influence of symbolic modeling derived from television, films, and other visual media. Because of the extensive possibility of modeling in mass media production, communication research usually applies social learning theory to explain media effects.

Bandura (1977) argues that people learn from observing role models in day-to-day life, as he explains it:
Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. Because people can learn from example what to do, at least in approximate from, before performing any behavior, they are spared needless errors (p. 22).

According to social learning theory, modeling influences learning primarily through its informative functions. Observers retain a symbolic representation of the modeled behavior, which then serves as a blueprint for the behavior. Observational learning incorporates four components: attention, retention, motor, and motivational processes that help to understand why individuals imitate socially desirable behavior (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura additionally (1977) stresses the accessibility of television and the amount of attention that it easily commands when explaining the attention process. Other factors involved in this component are the influence of social groups, and the structural arrangement of human interactions. Retention processes deal with the ability to remember the observed model, as well as mentally organizing and rehearsing the behavior. Motor reproduction comes through trial and error, observation of the behavior or skill, but the motor refinements also need to be present to emulate the behavior. Finally, motivational processes explains that people usually enact behaviors that seem to be effective for other people; “they are more likely to adopt modeled behavior if it results in outcomes they value than if it has unrewarding or punishing effects” (Bandura, 1977, p. 28). This concept explains the choice of characters in entertainment education soap opera, the play between good and bad, and their punishments and rewards according to their behavior. For example, if a soap opera character does not use a condom, the story line might have
him acquiring a sexually transmitted disease. The reward/punishment factors are important in bringing the audience’s attention to the behaviors. The vicarious observation of the consequences of the behavior in turn increases the observational learning experience (Bandura, 1977). In summary, the notion of modeling and vicarious experiences is typically the way human beings learn.

In 1986 Bandura refines Social Learning Theory into Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura posits that children and adults operate cognitively on their social experiences; these cognitions then influence behavior and development. The influences of behavior, individual, cognitive, and environmental factors determine how people interact and learn from each other (Bandura, 1986). The main concepts of social cognitive theory explain human behavior as a dynamic and correlated interaction between the person and the environment. Bandura posits that individuals learn from their interactions and observations, and named the dynamics that are vital to this process: reciprocal determinism, symbolizing capability, vicarious capability, forethought capabilities, self-regulatory capabilities, and self-reflective capabilities (Bandura, 1986).

The concept of self-efficacy and collective efficacy are incorporated in numerous studies in different subjects. Bandura (1995) defines self-efficacy, as the belief that people have in the ability to exercise control over events that affect their lives. Human behavior is affected by self-efficacy beliefs through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes (Bandura, 2003). According to Bandura (2003):

Among the mechanisms of human agency none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy. Whatever other factors serve as guides and motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce desired effects by one’s actions, otherwise one has little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties (p.270).
Self-efficacy comes through experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, or physiological feedback (Bandura, 1989, 1995, 1997). However, social cognitive theory does not stop with the concept of self-efficacy beliefs. Equally important is the notion of collective efficacy. This component comes about later, after the realization that certain cultures are more likely to bring collective action for behavior change, rather than individual action. Many times in behavior change efforts encounter institutional and infrastructure problems that require collective action. Therefore, collective efficacy is defined as the common belief in the power to create desired effects by collective action (Bandura, 1997). This common belief goes beyond the aggregation of the efficacy beliefs of individual members; it also represents “an emergent property that embodies the coordinative and interactive dynamics of group functioning” (Bandura, 2003, p. 271).

In a study about self-efficacy in relation to Hofstede’s (1980) dimension of individualism and collectivism, Oettgen (1995) demonstrated that culture does have influence over self-efficacy. For Hofstede (1980, 1994) individual cultures, represented in the Western universe, reinforce and accept personal achievement and competition. While Eastern cultures favor collectivism, emphasizing cooperation and agreement between people, personal achievement and competition is suppressed. Oettgen realizes that the degree to which a culture promotes dependence on the collective effects one’s own and the group’s perception of self-efficacy, which means, setting goals and striving for their attainment, the degree of satisfaction with personal and group achievement. Ultimately, efficacy is to be analyzed in a cultural context.

Bandura (2003) points that a high belief in efficacy is equally important to group directedness as to self-directness. He stresses the differences that exist among cultures,
calling attention to the fact that in individualistic cultures there are also collective oriented individuals. Bandura cites as an example, that to lump such different cultures as Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and Spaniards into a Latino category, establishes homogeneity on intra-ethnic diversity. Therefore, cultural diversity may generate “a lot of misleading generalizations” when comparing members of a single individualist culture with members of a collective culture.

Furthermore, he argues that there is a “contentious dualism” in the cross-culture field, characterized by autonomous versus interdependent, personal agency against social structure, and individualism against collectivism. Under this light, he considers it erroneous to equate self-efficacy with individualism, against collectivism. As Bandura (2003) explains:

> Perceived efficacy does not come with a built-in individualistic value system. Therefore a sense of efficacy does not necessarily spawn an individualistic lifestyle, identity or morality. If belief in the power to produce effects is put to social purposes, it fosters a communal life, rather than erodes it. People with resilient efficacy and strong pro-social purposes often subordinate self-interest to the benefit of others (p.277).

Social learning/cognitive theory is widely utilized as a framework for various studies in diverse fields such as health care, psychology, communications, organizational management, physical education, etc. Studying the role of children’s television in race stereotyping, Graves (1999) concludes that through vicarious experience, televised role portrayals of race and race interactions contribute to the development of stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination among children. On the other hand, programs like Sesame Street have a positive influence on children’s racial knowledge, attitudes and preferences. In a recent content analysis study examining the ethnic/minority portrayal in television
advertisement, social cognitive theory is utilized as a framework to help understand their
impact on possible audience self-perception (Mastro & Stern 2003).

Social learning theory is also extensively used in research concerned with the
construct of sex roles and sex stereotypes. At an initial stage of acquiring sexual
behavior, children learn about their sex roles through observational learning. There is a
historical tendency in advertisements to stress the natural differences between male and
female. Advertisers themselves incorporated these perceptions through stereotypical
definitions of gender (Smith, 1994). Male oriented advertisements and male characters
have predominated children’s television commercials (Smith, 1994; Kolbe & Mulhling,
1995).

The entertainment-education strategy, based on Bandura’s social
learning/cognitive theory, contends that people can learn about HIV/AIDS prevention,
family planning, among other socially oriented issues, through intentional messages
engraved in entertainment programs (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Piotrow et.al., 1997).
Various research attests to that effect. One example is a study conducted on the effects of
entertainment-education radio soap opera on family planning and HIV prevention in St.
Lucia. Researchers conclude that the soap opera influences listeners to increase their
awareness about the use of contraceptives and adopt family planning methods (Vaugh,
Regis & St. Catherine, 2000).

Some criticism of Bandura’s theory extends to the entertainment-education
strategy. Health communication researchers contest that social cognitive theory is a
predominant preoccupation with the individual, while in some cultural contexts decision-
making is intrinsically related to the family, group, or community affiliation. Therefore,
family relations and other environmental factors might ultimately affect behavior change (Piotrow et al., 1997, Montgomery, 1990).

**Paulo Freire’s Dialogical Communication**

One of the most influential thinkers behind the participatory paradigm, Paulo Freire (1970) championed the concepts of dialogue, critical thinking, and liberation in order to transform society. His line of work and arguments are derived by critical theory, which believes that social theory should extrapolate the realms of information recording, to become an active player in the transformation of the world (McCarthy, 1991).

In his influential work “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” Freire (1970) explains his belief on man’s ability to become Subject transform the world. Another principal of his theory is the notion that every human being is able to critically look at the world and dialogical meeting with the other. In this encounter, the individual may become gradually conscious of his personal and social reality and his ability to critically deal with it (Freire, 1970).

Paulo Freire born in the Northeast region of Brazil, an area characterized by contrasts of wealth and poverty, makes him familiar with the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy (Freire, 1996). His vocal defense of the dispossessed rural workers and criticism of the official literacy programs do not resonate well with the military government in the 1960’s making him “persona non grata” for the dictatorial regime. Freire is arrested and latter exiled to Chile where he lived until another military coup forces him out. He returns to Brazil in 1988 and becomes Secretary of Education for the city of São Paulo, where he died in 1997 (Mayo, 2000).
In Freire’s view, both oppressor and oppressed are actors in the construct of the social reality in which they live. Dehumanization affects both sides, but only the oppressed can change the status quo because they are the ones who know by experience the meaning of an oppressive society. Therefore, Freire believes that the oppressed must see their situation not as an act of destiny, but as a result of the actions that maintain the unjust world and the status quo. He believes that freedom is fundamental to the construct of a new reality. However, the knowledge and perception of the social context is not enough to bring humanization. It is also necessary to act, to praxis in order to transform a perpetual state of injustice (Freire, 1970, Weiler, 2003).

Through the critical recognition of reality, allied with reflection and action, the oppressed cease to be objects and become Subjects, able to transform reality and be liberated from oppression. Freire compares the liberation process as painful childbirth. He understands that man and woman come out of this process as a new person, however, it is only viable if the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is replaced by the humanization of all people.

Paulo Freire is an educator critical of the traditional methods of teaching. Banking education is his metaphor for a system where students passively receive information, memorize it, and repeat it without critically understanding it. The students therefore are the banks that receive information deposited without questioning it. With this analogy, Freire criticizes the idea of transmission of knowledge from the ones who know it all to the ones that do not know, in his terms, from the subject to the object. This didactic format, where students only store information, do not raise critical consciousness and therefore do not contribute to the transformation of the world. On the contrary, it
required the students to be passive and to adapt to their reality, preserving the oppressor
dominance. For Freire believed that every person has a critical contribution to the
equation, teacher and students should work together, both subjects in the task of
recreating reality (Freire, 1970).

Freire proposed a problem-posing education instead of the traditional
methodology. The role of the problem-posing educator consists in creating the
appropriate conditions to move knowledge beyond the level of the memorization to the
level of learning. Through dialogue, educators help in forming an understanding and
awareness of one’s reality, mainly the identification of the contradictions of oppression,
in a world where only the Subjects have power.

This process, called by Freire “conscientização” (conscientization, or raising
consciousness) meant to break predetermined concepts, helping students to construct a
new reality with a committed involvement in the struggle for liberation (Freire, 1970).

Therefore, dialogue is a key concept for learning. Freire believed that the educator
must include the students, viewed not as objects but subjects, in the educational process.
As he points out, liberating pedagogy cannot maintain distant from the oppressed by
treating them as unfavorable and presenting them with models that come from the
oppressors. That is why for Freire interventions needed to be only in the light of dialogue.
The transformation would come with praxis, a combination of action and reflection,
which is translated in dialogic action. He believed that dialogue was a horizontal
endeavor that could not exist if one was placed above the other. Therefore it needed to
come from an empathetic perspective, where both sides are engaged in a joined search
(Cavalier, 2002). Also fundamental to dialogue are critical thinking, communication, and
intercommunication. As Freire (1998) emphasizes,"without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education." (p.73)

He defines the opposite of dialogue as anti-dialogue, a vertical, top-down relationship (Freire, 1973). Freire conceives communication as dialogue and participation, therefore, for some, his ideas opposed the diffusion model, the sender-focus concept and behavioral, persuasion models of the dominant paradigm (Waisbord, 2001; Morris, 2003). For Freire, the difficulties of the Third World are problems in communication, not in information as proposed by the persuasion theorists. Communication needs to take into consideration community interaction and values. Communication within the dialogical pedagogy theory needs to strive for conscientization, to provide a sense of empowerment to the participants by exchanging views and experiences (Waisbord, 2001). However, empowerment should not be viewed as something one person can grant the other. It is, instead, processes of discovery and action, the dialectic reflection and action that make the praxis of transforming reality in an individual and collective effort.

Coming from the perspective that media is seen as an outsider to local communities, it should be used as an additional tool and not the principal method of communication. Instead, the focus should be on community-based forms of communication, where participation in group interactions can be fostered (Hamelink, 1990). Therefore, interpersonal communication and the importance of community level decision making processes are the focus of Freire and other proponents of the participatory model (Waisbord, 2001).
The focus on interpersonal communication, downplaying the importance of the media is one of the criticisms of the participatory model. Especially in Freire’s dialogical pedagogy theory where the focus is towards group interaction, consequently paying little attention to the contribution of the media. However, the power of the media cannot be ignored since populations are exposed to media messages even in remote locations (Waisbord, 2001).

Critics of the participatory paradigm challenge the proposed notion of mutual process of learning, where objects become subjects in the construction of a new reality. They contend that Freire contradicts himself because his theory involves manipulation of the oppressed by elitist outsiders, in other words, the teacher is the one who ultimately has the power (Facundo, 1984). Refuting this argument, Freire clarifies the need of the teachers to have authority through the knowledge of the disciplines they teach. However, he explains, the role of the educator is of a non-authoritarian directiveness, preserving the students’ critical capacities; otherwise, this directiveness might degenerate into authoritarianism and manipulation (Freire, 1994; Shor & Freire, 1987).

In his later work, he reiterated his hope for a changing world through praxis, as he explains:

Hope of liberation does not mean liberation already. It is necessary to fight for it, within historically favorable conditions. If they do not exist, we must labor to create them. Liberation is a possibility, not fate nor destiny nor burden. In this context, one can realize the importance of education for decision, for rupture, for choice, for ethics at last (Freire, 1998, p.44).
Common Ground

The theoretical framework proposed to anchor this research will be based in these two conflictive theories, social cognitive learning and dialogical communication (participatory communication). Even though differences exist between these two theoretical approaches, it is also possible to identify points of convergence.

Morris (2003) studied 44 projects of developmental communication by comparing their outcomes and analyzing the gaps and overlaps between the two approaches. She argues that even though many scholars establish diffusion and participatory models at opposite ends of the spectrum, they are not totally opposite. The diffusion model has expanded to incorporate participatory practices since its initial creation, and participatory processes have to involve some form of information transfer. By the same token, social learning theory, well used in the entertainment-education strategy and part of the dominant paradigm, intersects with important components of the dialogical pedagogy theory.

At the heart of this convergence is the concept of empowerment, defined by Bandura (1977) as the process through which an individual perceives that he or she controls their own situation. Freire and Bandura believed that reality is not fate. Both theorists share the understanding that one can actually intervene in the construct of a new reality. Through self-efficacy, people believe in their ability to exercise control over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1995), which can be correlated to the notion of empowerment advocated by the dialogical theory. Empowerment and self-efficacy are
both based in self-reflection. Bandura (1997) continues to explain his perception of empowerment:

Empowerment is not something bestowed through edict. It is gained through development of personal efficacy that enables people to take advantages of the opportunities and to remove environmental constraints guarded by those whose interests are served by them. Those who exercise authority and control do not go around voluntarily granting to others power over resources and entitlements in acts of beneficence. A share of benefits and control must be negotiated through concerted effort and often times through prolonged struggle (p. 477).

Even though the concept of empowerment lacks a single definition, according to the participatory model it is also extended to the collective, to social and community empowerment (McLaren 1997). Empowerment can be related to “communities making decisions for themselves and acquiring knowledge”, as in the case of health issues (Waisbord, 2001). Collective efficacy, according to Bandura’s definition, relates to the common belief in the power to create desired effects by collective action (Bandura, 1997). Freire believes that Subjects are able to liberate themselves and transform reality through praxis; in other words, actions and reflection bring change in the social construct. Analyzing Bandura’s statement, one can infer that the struggle between oppressor and oppressed is conquered through a collective effort, which is similar to what Freire says.

It is evident that subscribers to these different theories disagree on the expected outcome of the strategy used; behaviorists expect a short-term impact, while participatory theorists believe in long-term policy and political changes. Behavior modification is the goal of the diffusion paradigm, while participatory interventions aim for social and policies change (Waisbord, 2001). Nevertheless, these theories are not completely divergent. It is not proposed here to assemble them together as if they were one, but to understand them in their essence, and to be able to find a common ground.
Some studies of interventions based on the dominant paradigm conclude that community participation is of essence to the effectiveness of the programs. On the other hand, some evaluators of the participatory approach recognize also the need of transmission of knowledge including the role that outside experts can play in the development and implementation of projects (Morris, 2001). Freire recognizes that even though the teacher learns from the student, they are not on an equal footing; there are many differences between them, one of them being a generational difference (1985). Freire (1987) further explains that “at the moment the teacher begins the dialogue, he or she knows a great deal, first in terms of knowledge, and second in terms of the horizon that he or she wants to get to” (p.103).

The dichotomy between the diffusion model and participatory theory appears to be breached when theorist from both ends incorporate elements of importance for both theories. Rogers (1983) realizes that the media has an important role in increasing awareness, but interpersonal communications and personal sources are crucial in the adoption of innovations. Therefore, he incorporates some participatory component in his rationale. Reardon & Rogers (1988) reiterates the importance of peer networks in the decision to adopt a new idea, not withstanding media influence. The diffusion of innovations model proposes that both media and interpersonal communications are necessary to bring change. In his own words:

Other types of diffusion are more accurately described by a convergence model, in which communication is defined as a process in which the participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding (Rogers, 1983, p.xviii).
Moacir Gadotti (1996) calls attention to the importance of evaluating the power of audiovisual communications in education, either to inform or to narrow minds. He argues that the purpose of the school is to teach how to think critically, therefore it is necessary to dominate language, including electronic language. In this assertion, the participatory paradigm goes beyond the teacher-student dialogue to also include other forms of communication and electronic interaction in the equation.

Some of the current approaches to entertainment-education consider the integration of media channels and interpersonal communications for effective intervention strategy (Flay & Burton, 1990). Aligned with this concept, this research comes from the perspective that the media is a valuable tool to raise awareness and knowledge about a given problem, combined with Rogers’ (1998) conclusion that the media are able to expose a large amount of people to a subject and generate conversations among audiences and others who otherwise would not be exposed to the specific message. Furthermore, it comes from the understanding that Subjects (audience, forum participants) are able to critically act and reflect about the media message, in this case the Muslim culture. Praxis is evident by the participation in the dialogue through the forum website.

Pulling from these two theories, the theoretical framework for this research will combine the social learning/cognitive theory notion of vicarious learning, self-reflective capabilities, and Freire’s theory of dialogue and critical thinking. At the heart of these theories lie their commonalities: the belief that individuals and communities have the intrinsic power to bring change through self-efficacy and empowerment.
CHAPTER IV

THE STUDY

Overview

This chapter presents the Brazilian telenovela “O Clone”, “El Clon” in the Spanish form broadcast in the United States. The telenovela’s contextual importance in Brazil and the US is presented. A summary of the telenovela is outlined. This section is also dedicated to the description of the study methodology and design. The model of parasocial interaction sub-dimension is detailed, along with the context of the study. An overview of the Internet as a research site is given, and The Telenovela-World Forum website and the forum participants are presented.

“O Clone” - “El Clon” (The Clone)

“O Clone”/“El Clon” (The Clone) is an important telenovela for TV Globo for many reasons. “O Clone” obtained one of the highest telenovela audience ratings in Brazil in the last few years. In its final episodes reached 60 points of audience in the IBOPE (Instituto Brasileiro de Pesquisa e Estatística), which meant that about three million households were watching the final episode in the city of São Paulo (Padiglione, 2002). Each point corresponds to 47,000 households in the Great São Paulo area. In its final week it was watched by 75% of households that had the TV turned on.

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In the USA on Telemundo network, “El Clon” reached an average prime-time share of 37.2%, which was higher than average for this specific time slot at Telemundo. In June of 2002, “El Clon” reached first place in audience share in the U.S. Hispanic market (Globopar, June 2002). The Clone had 221 chapters; it was broadcast in Brazil Monday through Saturday at 9 pm, from October 2001 to June 2002. In the US Telemundo aired the Spanish-dubbed version Monday through Friday at 10 pm., from January 2002 to December 2002. In the United States closed captioned in English was also offered. Many participants in the Telenovela World forum did not speak Spanish, so this was well utilized by the participants. Currently, Telemundo is also showing reruns of the novela Monday through Friday at 10 am.

“O Clone” has been exported to 62 countries, including Israel, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, and of course Latin American neighbors such as Peru, Argentina, Venezuela. It won various awards and recognition such as “Cidadania Brasil de Exportação” (Brazilian Citizenship Export Award) in the category of “Prêmio Destaque” (Prominent Award), sponsored by the Arab-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, The Brazilian Institute for the Development of Citizenship (Insitituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento da Cidadania), the Export Promotion Agency (Apex, Agência de Promoção de Exportações), and the Foreign Relations Ministry (Ministério das Relações Exteriores). The reason for the award was the “brilliant novela’s contribution in bringing together cultures and peoples and valuing Brazilian products in the international market” (Folha Online, 2002). In the United States, “El Clon” received the 2003 Inte Award for best novela, best actress: Giovanna Antoneli (Jade), and best writer for Glória Perez (Castro, 2003). This annual award is in recognition of Ibero-American television excellence.
The Rio de Janeiro Anti-Drugs Council and the Brazilian Alcohol and Drugs Association officially recognized Gloria Perez’ work in “O Clone” dealing with problems related to alcohol and drugs. As a whole, this theme did not stir the same controversy as the Muslim theme did. Perez toned down the poetic license when dealing with drug addiction, preferring to use a more realistic approach, with scenes where real people, addicts in recovery talked about their experiences in close-ups that made the scenes more verisimilar. During the telenovela broadcast, the National Antidrugs Council (Secretaria Nacional Antidrogas) registered a 570% increase in calls, from 900 in January 2002, to 6,000 in May 2002. And there are reports of a 120% increase in calls asking for help to the organizations specialized in helping drug addicts (Andaló, 2003).

A debate sparked among forum participants when a post called attention to an award that the telenovela received in the United States for its anti-drug message. While the drug theme is not explored in this study, the messages posted show the richness of the exchange, with divergent opinions, and different contextual situations. Some posts from the United States were very critical of the way the writer explored the subject. It was a consensus among the participants from the United States that the theme was boring and somewhat disconnected from the reality. While in different countries and contexts, the posts reflected that the author’s approach to the alcohol and drug focus seemed pertinent.

Gloria Perez, the author of “O Clone”, is not new to social merchandising. She also wrote “Explode Coração” (Explosion of the heart), a telenovela that brings to the small screen the problem of missing children and child labor, along with Gypsy culture. For the story of “O Clone”, Perez assembles three issues in the telenovela’s plot: human cloning, Muslim culture, and drug addiction. The cultural thematic and cloning,
according to the author and the press have already been established before the attacks of September 11, 2001. These issues are the result of surveys and focus groups conducted by Globo that reveal a curiosity among the population about these subjects. After the attacks, some actors refuse to participate in the novela, fearing retaliation (Mattos & Castro, 2002).

Table 4.1: Gloria Perez’s Work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telenovela</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TV Station</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partido Alto</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Clone</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecado Capital</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>Machete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulher</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explode Coração</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De corpo e Alma</td>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriga de Aluguel</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eu Prometo</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mini-series</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TV Station</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desejo</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Manchete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilda Furacão</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
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Perez concocted a true “folhetim”, utilizing the old melodramatic formula of impossible love, paternity identification (this time with a modern twist), and many tears in between. Contrary to the Brazilian tradition of reality-based novelas, Perez allows her imagination to run free with “O Clone”. Even though there is an attempt to show Morroco and its culture, what the novela portrays cannot be correlated specifically to Morroco or any other country, for that matter. The author combines different traditions and customs from diverse countries, touching on controversial themes such as polygamy,
adultery, and women’s rights. This mixture of traditions from different parts of the world spark harsh criticism, not only from the press, but also from the community the telenovela is trying to portray (Veja, 2002; Padiglione, 2002; Hamburger, 2002). From the perspective of the audience in the United States, the telenovela not only discusses Islamic culture, but also Brazilian culture, with numerous scenes comparing and contrasting these two different cultures.

In a bulletin board posted on the embassy website, the Moroccan ambassador to Brazil, sheik Abdelmalek Cherkaoui Ghazouani states that the telenovela “O Clone” conveys erroneous images of the origins and culture of the Arab-Muslim community. He states that since the beginning of the novela, Brazilians got excited about Morocco and everything related to the Arab-Muslim world, to the point of a so called “Clonomania”. However, at the same time, the novela turned out to be a gross farce, portraying mediocre images, and a sham of the Arab-Muslim culture and reality. The ambassador cites and clarifies four main stereotypes portrayed by “O Clone” in his opinion:

- Polygamy – Conveyed as a normal practice, accepted by all, mainly by the women, but in reality, it is almost extinct and without any strength inside Moroccan society.

- The women do not work outside of the home, and according to the novela, their universe is limited to the husband and belly dancing. This is divergent to the reality of the Arab world and Morocco in particular, where 43% of university students are females. Women have been in male dominated professions such as military and commercial airplane pilots, Ministers, Ambassadors, Judges and Legislative areas.

- Belly dancing has never been part of the Moroccan cultural heritage. The dance is presented only in touristy places and nightclubs, the same as in Brazil.

- Contrary to the telenovela portrayal, women have a major role in the Moroccan family, they are responsible for the children’s education and the welfare of the family, they are the only ones to have this job, and not a so-called “Tio Ali” (my translation) (Ghazouani, 2002).
It is important to notice the testimonies of the people that actually understand about the culture and can express an informed opinion about the portrayal of Morocco and Muslim culture. While this study is not intended to delve into the merit of the portrayal of the culture, there is certainly a concern about what is conveyed in the telenovela in contrast to reality. As the ambassador did, many participants of the forum can also express their opinion in this regard, therefore, the focus of the study is in analyzing the opinions in contrast to what is expressed in the telenovela.

The production for “O Clone” is very elaborate. The first scenes of the novela are taped in Morroco in a 40-day tour of five cities. Beautiful scenarios of the Medina in Fez, Sahara desert takes, and people on the streets capture the audience’s attention. Jayme Monjardim is responsible for the direction of the telenovela. Under his leadership scenarios are chosen to capture the experience that he and his crew have in Morocco. In his website he writes:

It was a unique experience for us. We shot in the Sahara desert, under a heat of 127 degrees Fahrenheit; we mobilized a caravan of 25 camels and 12 desert man; transformed shops in Fez into dressing and editing rooms; shot up to ten scenes a day. 
And always with the care to not interfere with the life of the Moroccans. We could not stop a city (JaymeMonjardim.com)

It is also documented in his website that in Rio at the Globo studio in Jacarepaguá, they built a copy of the city of Fez where 50 extras circulated in each scene. They also create the set for the neighborhood of São Cristovão, Lucas and Maysa’s house along with Mohamed and Latifa’s, and Albieri’s clinic.
Table 4.2: Jayme Monjardim’s Direction Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telenovela</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TV Station</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braço de Ferro</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Bandeirantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amor Com Amor Se Paga</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Alto</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voltei Para Você</td>
<td>1983/1984</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpo a Corpo</td>
<td>1984/1985</td>
<td>Rede Globo</td>
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<td>A Casa das Sete Mulheres (Mini-series)</td>
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“El Clon” Summary

The author fabricates a storyline that starts in the 1980’s in Morocco, when a young Brazilian man Lucas meets an attractive Brazilian woman Jade. Jade is born in Brazil from Moroccan parents, where she lived most of her life until the death of her mother, when she is forced to move to Morroco and live with her uncle “Tio Ali”. That is when the romance starts; only to be cut short by Jade’s arranged marriage to Said. In between escapes back and forth from Morocco to Brazil, and long fights with her uncle with promises of 50 whips in Fez’ central market, Jade fulfilled her love to Lucas in an
enchanted night of dance and seduction. This is the romantic storyline; Jade actually marries Said, however they divorce three times later in the novela. They also have a daughter, Kadijah, who will be in the middle of a custody battle when Jade decides to leave Said for Lucas. This proves to be a wrong decision. Lucas who is married to Maysa does not keep his part of the bargain. On the other hand, Maysa ends up having an affair with Said when she discovers that Lucas is seeing Jade. It is in this context that the writer explores the contradictions of the Brazilian-Arab cultures and religious traditions.

The subject of human cloning is introduced when Lucas’ twin brother Diogo dies in a helicopter accident. Diogo’s godfather happens to be a geneticist, Albieri, who cannot bear the thought of his beloved godchild’s death. The opportunity is created for Albieri to finalize his experiments in cloning, making the first human clone out of Luca’s cells. Albieri is the head of a fertility clinic in Rio and through artificial insemination he introduced the cloned cells into Deuza, a good-natured woman who did not know about the experiment. Leo, Lucas’s clone, had many questions about his origin, always searching for the truth about his paternity without avail.

The thematic of drug addition is explored when Mel, Lucas and Maysa’s daughter starts to experiment with marijuana and goes into a spiraling downward fall into cocaine addiction.

The author uses the telenovela plot to discuss and present these issues to the audience that in turn responds in terms of increased ratings, letter writing, website forums, and e-mails dedicated to the telenovela.
Methodology

This research stems from an axiological philosophical approach; therefore it incorporates the role of values in a study (Creswell, 1998).

The overall purpose of this study is to investigate how Brazilian telenovelas may be used as a medium to disseminate knowledge about different cultures and customs. In particular, this study proposes to examine how participants in the “El Clon” forum for the telenovela in the website http://foro-telenovela-world.com engage in the discussion of the Muslim culture themes brought by this telenovela.

This research comes from the perspective that media is a valuable tool to raise awareness and knowledge about a given problem, combined with Rogers’ (1998) conclusion that the media is able to expose a large amount of people to a subject and generate conversation among audiences and others who otherwise would not been exposed to the specific message. Nevertheless, as presented before, the media by itself rarely affect individual behavior change (Papa et. al., 2000); therefore interpersonal communication needs to be taken into account as it is argued that it indeed is vital to initiate behavior change (Rogers, 1988). As Papa et. al. (2000) concluded: “Conversations about the educational content of a media program can create a socially constructed learning environment in which people evaluate previously held ideas, consider options and identify steps to initiate social change” (p. 50).

Therefore the theoretical framework for this study combines the social learning/cognitive theory notion of vicarious learning and self-reflective capabilities, and Freire’s theory of dialogue and critical thinking. To evaluate the messages in the light of the proposed framework, the concept of parasocial interaction is introduced in order to
analyze the messages and to make the link between the message’s posted by the forum participants and the telenovela cultural theme.

**Parasocial Interaction**

Parasocial interaction is a key construct for understanding the effects of the entertainment-education strategy as well as different commercial productions. Researchers of entertainment-education initiatives have pointed out that the parasocial relationship between the viewers and the characters can influence the emulation of the desired modeled behaviors. It can be a facilitator to promote attitudinal and behavioral changes (Papa et. al. 2000; Sood & Rogers, 2000).

The concept of parasocial interaction first elaborated by Horton & Wohl (1956), describes a type of interaction between an audience member and characters represented in mass media as if it is a usual social relationship. However, unlike face-to-face interactions, parasocial interactions are unilateral, controlled by the performer, and not subject to reciprocal development, according to the theorists. Initially, Sood & Rogers (2000) explain, parasocial interaction stems from the concept of “pseudo-gemeinschaft”, which is defined as a simulation of interest to another individual in order to manipulate the other person more successfully (Rogers, 1994). It is a fictitious friendship between a person from the audience and a media character. Studying the effects of a 1943 successful 18-hour U.S. War Bond radio marathon, Merton, Fiske & Curtis (1971) conclude that the popular singer that led the broadcast is responsible for generating in the audience feelings of reassurance and a need to believe. Merton and colleagues believe that people who are alienated and estranged from society need a sense of reassurance,
which is fulfilled by a dedicated and sincere portrayal of the singer. Therefore, in its
inception, parasocial interaction originates in the field of psychiatry, and is viewed as an
abnormal behavior, derived from feelings of loneliness, fear, inadequate leisure activities,
and limited social interaction (Sood & Rogers, 2000; Giles, 2002).

Studies of parasocial interaction in the context of mass media communication
research are not intensified until the introduction of the uses and gratifications theory in
the 1970's (Giles, 2000). These new lines of research encountered a different
interpretation for the parasocial behavior, which is no longer viewed as a problem of
solitude, but rather as a normal occurrence with key long-term effects (Nordlund, 1978).
As explained by Myrowitz (1985) audiences view television characters as members of
their social group, as if they were their friends:

> Even among ‘average’ people, the para-social relationship takes its place among
daily live interactions with friends, family, and associates. Indeed, ‘real’ friends
often discuss the antics of their para-social friends (p. 120).

Most recent studies of parasocial interaction have been conducted in the
psychometric tradition of uses and gratifications research, along with other behavioral
measures to predict media use (Giles, 2002). Mark Levy (1979) is responsible for
important developments in the research of parasocial interaction. Levy studies the
relationship between older adults and local television news. He conductes focus group
interviews, concerned mainly with viewers’ parasocial interaction with newscasters. Then
he uses this data to elaborate a 42 item psychometric scale to measure the strength of
parasocial interaction with local newscasters. Subsequently, this scale is correlated with a
number of demographic variables in a sample of viewers in a larger age range. Some of
the items that fit the category of “most strongly agree” are, “I compare my own ideas
with those of the newscasters” and “When the newscasters joke around with each other it makes the program easier to watch”.

Rubin, Perse, and Powel (1985) modify Levy’s scale into a 20-item scale, also to measure parasocial interaction with television newscasters, with a range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. They then eliminate nine redundant items from the scale. Some items included in the scale are “I feel sorry for my favorite newscaster when he makes a mistake”, “I look forward to watching my favorite newscaster on tonight’s news”. Variations of the 20-item scale are used to measure parasocial interaction with soap characters (Rubin, & Perse, 1987), comedians (Auter, 1992), TV shopping host (Grant, Guthrie, & Rokeach, 1991), and favorite TV personalities (Rubin & McHugh 1987; Turner, 1993). A. M. Rubin & Pearse (1987) condense the scale to 10 items, still with high internal reliability and internal correlation with the 20-item scale.

Qualitative research of parasocial interaction is undertaken by scholars evaluating not only dimensions and sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction (Sood & Rogers 2000), but also effects of entertainment-education initiatives (Papa et. al. 2000).

According to Rubin & Pearse (1987) three dimensions of parasocial interaction between the audience and the media character or the media program can be identified. These dimensions are recognized as affective interaction, cognitive interaction, and behavioral interaction. Liebes & Katz (1986) identify audience referential and critical involvement as components of the audience interaction with the television soap opera Dallas. Sood & Rogers (2000) argue that the concept of parasocial interaction should include sub-dimensions of affective oriented, behavioral, cognitive, and critical and referential involvement, which are further explained.
Affective oriented parasocial interaction refers to the level at which an audience member reacts positively to or rejects a media character. Sood (2000) extends this notion to audience identification with important components of the program, such as the environment, a place or a community (Sood, 2002). Researchers contend that the greater the identification with a character, the more likely that character's behavior will influence the audience at the attitudinal and behavioral level (Papa et. al. 2000).

In the case of this study, affective interaction is also translated into the identification with the characters that represent the telenovela's Muslim world, and also its cultural theme. Affective oriented parasocial interaction can be clearly identified in the following examples from messages posted in “El Clon” Telenovela World’s forum. All the messages presented in this study are in their original form:

1- GRRRRRRR!!! I was BEYOND FURIOUS when I saw Said give his bedroom key to Nazira, making Jade look like a chump. All of la Medina would have heard me cursing and screaming, that's for sure! If there's one thing I value....it's my PRIVACY. That would have been the end of the marriage. HAH! I would never tolerate my husband putting his sister before me like that. No way toots! No way in hell would I tolerate such a marriage. I would have packed my bags, said “Feet, don’t fail me now”, and I would have never looked back. How outrageously infuriating!

2- Gloria Perez is a genius. She managed to take characters like Nazira and, over time, make us change our opinions of them. In the beginning I couldn't stand Nazira, she was so bossy, demanding, nasty, etc.

But then came all the fairy-tale stories she told and I loved every one of them. Those were some of the funniest scenes in the novela.

But the best Nazira moment was when she had pity on Jade and allowed her to see Kadija behind Said's back. I thought she was magnificent then, and it showed that beneath all the nastiness was a woman who's dreams had been frustrated by her brothers but who had a woman's tender heart after all--and a woman's courage. She did what was right--and was always good to the children in the family.
Cognitive oriented parasocial interaction is the degree to which viewers focus on a media character and reflect about the character’s behavior (Papa et. al., 2000). In a broader understanding, Sood & Rogers (2000) define cognitive interaction as: “...The degree to which audience members pay careful attention to the educational content of a soap opera episode, reflecting on its meaning and importance.” (p.390)

The expanded notion of cognitive interaction is exemplified in the following posted messages from the studied forum:

1. A question about a Muslim wedding night: is everyone really waiting outside the door to see the "bloody" sheets? (I still think it's pathetic that they expect women to bleed all over the sheets) I would think that maybe they'd be in their own houses waiting and then the sheets would be taken sheets? (I still think it's pathetic that they expect women to bleed all over the sheets) I would think that maybe they'd be in their own houses waiting and then the sheets would be taken

2. I was wondering the same thing... Are they overdramatizing the whole situation with the bloody sheet or is this true to life?

3. As a muslim.. i can assure you... this pathetic display of waiting for bleeding.. is not a requirement or part of religion. But, unfortunately, there are some close minded people that do this... or make it a part of marriage rituals. It is more of a cultural thing than muslim. Like in my culture i am suppose to be wearing a red dress rather than white like latifa and jade did.
And, i think since jade let the suspicion of her virginity out in public. That is why tio ali had to proove his dignity and let nazira witness the virginity. Incase of Latiffa... no one stood outside her room it was done the next day in the morning,, and only women looked at it.

The level that the audiences overtly interact with the characters, for example, sometimes talking to them, or crying with them defines behavioral oriented parasocial interaction. It is also established when audiences talk among themselves about the characters. When viewers predict what is going to happen to characters or they think about the program after it is over are also exhibitions of behavioral interaction (Rubin &
A classical example of behavioral parasocial interaction is the case when viewers dressed up and actually went to church to attend the wedding in “Simplemente Maria” (Singhal, Obregon, & Rogers, 1994).

Because of the context that the research takes place, an online message board, it is already implied that the message writers demonstrate behavioral interaction since they are talking among themselves about the novela and also thinking about it after it is over. However, keeping true to this study theoretical framework, behavioral interaction is also considered as Freire’s notion that action and reflection equates praxis, and Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy and collective efficacy. For example, if posters search for other source of information, if they report that they bought books, go on the Internet, or if they enroll in classes, all of these examples are considered as behavioral interaction. Some excerpts of posted messages illustrating behavioral oriented parasocial interaction are as follow:

1. ...Now Said, on the other had, I'm liking more and more. He had to have his suspicions regarding Jade's virginity (or lack there of). When he asked his uncle about the punishment for the man who dishonored a woman, you could see how he quickly discarded the idea of having Lucas punished when he found out that Jade would be punished as well. As I saw him cut his own arm and tell Jade that his own sin was even bigger than hers, I found myself almost screaming at Jade through the tv. How can you not see how incredible this man is? Heck, I fell in love with Said!

2. I found the following article on the internet, giving an explanation of the Muslim calendar, followed by a list of the Muslim holidays. I thought it was interesting, so I decided to share it with all of you....

Referential involvement is the degree to which the viewers relate a media message to their own lives. It happens when audience members discuss the television content in reference to their own experiences, placing themselves in the situation of the television
program (Liebes & Katz, 1986). Papa et. al. (2000) posit that behavior change as a result of exposure to a media character is less likely to occur if the audience members cannot relate their experiences to the ones of the media character. Following are some posted messages that exemplify referential involvement:

1. If I were in Jade's shoes, I would have loved Said and forgotten Lucas, but that's not the way the novela was written. I think most women here would cherish being loved by a man the way Said loved Jade, and if he was a bit restrictive, it's to be understood because it was his culture and background. But he was in fact much less restrictive than other Muslim men would have been; how many Muslim men (or men of other cultures which insist on virginity) would have done what he did on his wedding night?

2. I am also a Muslim born woman, but to be honest I can see some members of my family reflected somehow in the characters LOL!!, it makes me laugh the way the present if, but we always need to keep in mind it is a soap-opera! and the purpose is to entertain the audience. I do also think it shows more about cultural behavior, it's fun to watch!!

Critical involvement is when the audiences suggest different plots and engage in the artistic construction of the program (Liebes & Katz, 1986). For research purposes, critical involvement is also interpreted as the suggestions for different approaches, corrections and disagreement or concordance to what is expressed in the telenovela “El Clon” regarding Muslim culture, as understood by the message posters. Here are some examples:

1. I love the novela EL CLON dearly i am obsesed with it, lemme just tell you that before i start. i dont wanna anger any fans i am one of the biggest fans i know that!!!

I am Morroccan and muslim and i want you to know a lot of stuff is done wrong!

Muslim women have a lot more rights than el clon shows. A woman cannot be forced to marry It i s haram!!! under any circumstances it is haram(forbidden). a woman has her own rights and property under islam. A man can't remarry whenever he feels like it. A new law in morocco and Egypt is written consent of the first wife Also, the custody of children is ususally to the mother. Yes the kids
belonging to the father, meaning that they have his last name and his religion and belong to his family not hers, but in case of a divorce they go w/ the mother until they are old enough to decide. There is alot of other things I can't remember. Oh and I havent seen this episode but D summaries said for and episode Jade asks if her opinion counts for anything and he says men are higher in the quran the women!!!! i wanted to punch the computer screen. thats not true the are equal in the eyes of god it says that.

They overdid things and made stuff up just to fit the story and I felt insulted being moroccan and muslim. They insulted me, fellow fans of el clon you have to understand i dont know of there is another arab or morroccan here.

Also i havent seen it from the beginning and i see alot of you guys have the tapes of el clon where did u get them!! I really want it on vhs too! if anyone can sell me a copy or something i will ove them forever.

I just posted this cuz i dont want anyone to have any wrong ideas about my land or my religion.

2. Doesn't Khadija ever learn.... Doesn't she ever get tired of the same old refrain...much oro...inshala!!!! Come on girl, can't you see how your mother is suffering for taking that path! You've got a good brain, use it!

In any case, I hope she winds up with the chubby kid and he makes her work for a living. It will be really funny if she loved him madly but he gave her no oro inshala.

Audience involvement and parasocial interaction can also occur in more than one sub-dimension at the same time, which are shown in previous research. Analyzing the content of letters written to “Hum Log” (We People”), an entertainment-education soap opera broadcast in India, Sood and Rogers (2000) conclude that the three levels of interaction and the two types of involvement are interrelated. They actually cannot categorize 16% of the letters as either critical or referential, therefore the category applied to the letters are critical/referential. In a study of audience involvement with a radio soap opera “Tinka Tinka Suckh” (Happiness Lies in Small Things) Sood (2000) describes that
there is an overlap of referential-affective and cognitive-critical involvement in the
survey responses. In the present research, the messages are categorized according to the
most prevalent sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction exhibited. Some messages reflect
more than one category; this will be reflected in the final overall result analysis. For
instance, analyzing the first example cited, the affective interaction becomes obvious:

GRRRRRRRR!!! I was BEYOND FURIOUS when I saw Said give his bedroom
key to Nazira, making Jade look like a chump. All of la Medina would have heard
me cursing and screaming, that’s for sure! If there’s one thing I value…it’s my
PRIVACY. That would have been the end of the marriage. HAH! I would never
tolerate my husband putting his sister before me like that. No way toots! No way
in hell would I tolerate such a marriage. I would have packed my bags, said “Feet,
don’t fail me now”, and I would have never looked back. How outrageously
infuriating!

But it also exhibits referential involvement, with the writer expressing how she would act
in the same situation as the character Jade. Therefore, for the purposes of the study, the
messages are categorized according to the sub-dimensions more strongly expressed. In an
attempt to actually reflect the complexities of the messages and of the audience
involvement exhibited, the qualitative analysis will supply additional information
concerning the intricacies of the messages.

There are also nuances in the levels of the sub-dimension of parasocial
interaction. As in the example of “Simplemente Maria”, viewers dressing up to attend the
wedding of the two main characters show a high degree of behavior interaction, while in
other instances, it does not go to this extreme. An important example from “Simplemente
Maria” that can also be correlated to behavioral interaction is the large number of maids
that enrolled in literacy and sewing classes, as the main character of the telenovela did.
This phenomenon can also be related to empowerment and self-efficacy concepts.
The theoretical framework that anchor this research, formulated by the combination of social learning theory and dialogical communication, is materialized with the utilization of the main concept of the parasocial interaction sub-dimension model suggested by Sood & Rogers (2000) to qualitatively analyze the content of messages posted in the “El Clon” Telenovela-World forum. The vicarious learning notion is evident when writers express how they affectively interact with characters and/or how they learn from the novela. The fact that the forum participants are already engaging in interpersonal communication through the messages that they post, and therefore, in a true dialogical sense learning from one another also helps to solidify the theories that guide this research. The critical commentaries and the display of actions taken stemming from the telenovela viewing or the forum participation corroborate the concepts of empowerment and self/collective-efficacy.

As described earlier, it is important to emphasize that researchers argue that media needs to be combined with interpersonal communication to bring change (Rogers, 1983). As Papa et. al. (2000) state:

The mass media alone seldom effect individual change, but they can stimulate conversations among listeners, which create opportunities for social learning as people, individually and collectively, consider new patterns of thought and behavior (p. 33)

The difficulty in studying telenovelas’s influence under the prism of media effects or even reception studies is to isolate the phenomenon. In the day-to-day life of the audience there is much input and feedback received from different sources. In Brazil for example, it is practically impossible to rule out the primary source of influence, since the novelas are not only part of the social conversations, in the home, at work, at school, but they are also in the press, in television news, and even in the parliamentary speech. One
might not watch the telenovela, yet cannot escape the subject. The topic will always surface. In this research, this challenge is also present when trying to elucidate the influence of the telenovela “El Clon” under the foundation of the Internet forum. This can be viewed as one of the research limitations. However, if we take the premise postulated by Rogers (1983) that media needs to be coupled with interpersonal communication; the study of the telenova influence through the discussion forum can also be seen as a strength, since it analyses the communication of messages between posters in a dialogical format. With the understanding that it is not possible to dichotomize the media-interpersonal communication effects, the aim of this study is to do an investigative work encompassing these two modes of communication.

Research Questions

Through a qualitative content analysis, based on the parasocial interaction sub-dimension model proposed by Sood and Rogers (2000), this research will explore the following questions:

1. How did participants express affective interaction to the cultural theme and characters that symbolized or portrayed the Muslim culture in the telenovela “El Clon”?
2. How did forum participants verbalize cognitive interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural issues portrayed in the telenovela “El Clon”?
3. How did forum participants express behavioral interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?
4. How did forum participants disclose and report referential involvement to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

5. How did forum participants express critical involvement, report opposing views, or agree upon the cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

**Research Design**

In order to answer the research questions previously outlined, this researcher conducted a qualitative content analysis of posted messages discussing the Muslim culture as it was portrayed in the telenovela “El Clon” on the web site http://foro-telenovela-world.com. According to Babbie (2001) content analysis is the study of recorded human communications and posted messages are one of the forms suitable for study.

Media content analysis has been a long tradition of communication research. Content analysis has been utilized to investigate various media formats such as advertising, news, cartoons, and also issues present in the media such as violence, sex, health, and race issues.

Through a quantitative approach, content analysis was defined as a research method to analyze the manifest media content in a systematic, objective and quantifiable way (Berelson, 1952). The quantification of manifest content means that it must be coded as it appears, rather then as the coder feels it is intended (Stempel III, 1981). Critics to Berelson’s work, represented by Siegfried Krakauer (1952), argued that the quantitative strategies were inadequate. They contended that when attempting to establish the
meaning of texts by breaking them down into quantifiable units (words, expression, statements, etc), analysts defeat the main objective of their study. For the fragmentary characteristic of the resultant data hampered the examination of the text as a meaningful whole (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991). Responding to the qualitative versus quantitative debate, Berelson (1952) replied:

Much “qualitative” analysis is quasi-quantitative: first we must make the obvious, though often overlooked, observation that there is no strict dichotomy between “qualitative” and “quantitative” analysis. Just as quantitative analysis assigns relative frequencies to different qualities (or categories), so qualitative analysis usually contains quantitative statements in rough form. They may be less explicit but they are nonetheless frequency statements about the incidence of general categories (p. 116).

The situation presented once more, was where this researcher faced the duality and the duel of choice between contrasting traditions. The matter of the question was not of preference for quantitative versus qualitative methodologies when posed as either/or strategies. The methodology of choice in this study was caused by the need to investigate the meaning of the text through the analysis and interpretation of the posted messages as a latent content, instead of a manifest content, in order to reflect the answers for the research questions. On the other hand, it was also a quantifiable exercise. The emphasis however, was on the interpretation of the meaning of the text as its latent content, instead of its apparent content. Nevertheless, both exercises will be presented in the results of this research.

Some of the previous research on audience response to entertainment-education programs has been conducted with the content analysis of audience letters. Law (2000) favors the study of soap opera audience letters as a unique way to obtain information and insights that would be inaccessible otherwise. He argues that audience letters could be a
significant cost-effective, practical, and realistic information source for evaluating media interventions. A parallel can be traced here to the analysis of the posted messages, which are cost-effective, practical and public information with easy accessibility through the Internet. Previous studies that explored the information potential of audience letters were Sood 1999; Rogers et al, 1997; and Sood, Singhal, and Law 1997. Law (2000) praises the value of audience letters as one of the most conveniently available information sources for evaluating the impact of mass media interventions. However he also points out that letter writers are a group of highly involved individuals, and most of the times are not representative of all audience members who might have been influenced. The same applies to the participants of the forum. These are highly involved individuals; furthermore, they are self-entitled “Clonaholics”, meaning that they are “El Clon” fans, which challenges the results of the study to be correlated to the general population. However, this study might be important in providing the basis for further research, and given the sparse amount of online telenovela audience research, this study might be contributing to the enrichment of current literature.

Other positive aspect of studying audience correspondence is that they provide an unbiased self-report, since the writers are usually unaware of the research (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). The study of posted messages can be traced as a parallel to the study of audience letters; it is also a description of the audience response to the content of the telenovela, in their own words, without the researcher’s interference. The value of this methodology can also be compared to the ones specified by Law, and the same criticism applies.
The Internet and Television Fans

It is important to clarify the difference between television viewer and television fan since this research will be analyzing mostly messages posted by fans of the telenovela “El Clon”. According to Bielby et. al. (1999) television viewing is a relatively private engagement. On the other hand, television fans participate in a variety of activities that go beyond the private act of viewing instead, reflecting a deeper emotional involvement with a television narrative. These activities might be purchasing or subscribing to fan magazines, writing letters to actors, producers, writers, or to fan publications, attending events, and certainly exchanging messages with other fans on electronic bulletin boards.

Nancy Baym (1997) conducted an initial research on the online communication of soap opera fans through participant observation and discourse analysis of posts and online surveys of the rec.tv.soaps Usenet newsgroup. Baym focused her studies of the newsgroup as a community, narrowing the research to the sub-group of the soap opera “All My Children”. Some of her conclusions about the Internet influence in changing fan groups are as follow:

... First, the Net has allowed audience communities to proliferate. Where geography might not have allowed the critical fan mass to let a community coalesce, the removal of that boundary lets fans of even the most obscure shows, films, bands, and the like find one another. As fans access one another with greater regularity and frequency, interpretations of the media are increasingly collaborative (Bayam, 1997, p. 215).

The melting of geographical barriers can be observed in the forum for the telenovela “El Clon”. Even though this forum is for the US broadcast by Telemundo, many posters disclosed that they were participants from different countries, such as Venezuela, South Africa, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and Turkey.
The research conducted by Bird (1999) of the television series “Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman” reports an ethnographic study of an e-mail list devoted to fans of the show. For three years, the researcher observed and participated in this electronic fan group. Her conclusions suggested that there is a sense of community expressed by the members, and that ethnographic study can indeed be conducted online.

While there has been little research on message boards for telenovela or soap opera audiences, studies of online message boards have been conducted to evaluate different subjects such as the impact of a specific message board on the stock market (Turmakin & Whitelaw, 2001); to evaluating how NFL (National Football League) fans use the message boards to publicly display their association with their teams (End, 2001), or studies of the X-Files fans’ community (Wakefield, 2001; Nellis, 2002) among others.

**Methods/Sample**

*Telenovela-world.com*

The initial idea proposed for this telenovela research was to follow previous research in entertainment-education that utilized letters written to the soap opera as the main data source for the study. However, by chance, the telenovela-world.com forum was found after an Internet search for anything “El Clon”.

Following the posts and threads was fascinating, and for hours this researcher kept reading and observing the message exchange. Due to the logistic problems in obtaining letters, either from the networks or from the telenovela’s writer, or actors/actresses, using the messages posted in the forum for the research started to be more appealing. The more this researcher thought about it, the more it made sense to just transport the research to
cyberspace. Then, a search was implemented to investigate the different forums available online for the telenovela “El Clon”. Globo had already discontinued its forum when the search started; besides, the main interest was to research the telenovela in the US. However, Telemundo no longer offered a forum for the telenovela at that time. Now, with the rerun, a forum is available at the network web site, but it is not offered in the threaded format. The telenovela-world “El Clon” forum was then confirmed as the site that would be used to collect the data. Even though the content analysis is the pillar for this research, this researcher also spent numerous hours reading the messages, following their conversations, and getting to know the participants in an incognito way. As previous discussions in this study indicates, it is rather important to know the context and the environment of the study. For the purposes of learning how the system works, one meaningless message is posted; however, that was is the only active participation in the forum by this researcher.

A brief history of this web site, will tell us that it is initially created as Rinconlatino, where fans of telenovelas can converse about their preferred programs in English, Spanish, and “Spanglish”. Univision likes the idea and buys Rinconlatino, creating a different site. The original creators then organized telenovela-internet.com, which is also bought by Univision. Without one of the pioneers, telenovela-world.com is set up to continue the work of providing a friendly forum to discuss the novelas (Diane & Ben, telenovela-world.com).

In the first page of the forum we can find links to telenovelas’s sites, general forums, telenovela forums grouped by country, television networks, foreign broadcast available in the US via cable or satellite, actors/actresses forums and web sites. There are
also different advertisements displayed throughout the web site. The studied forum for "El Clon" is under telenovelas in the United States, Telemundo. There is also a different forum under the same legend, with the specification TDM.

This "El Clon" forum is a World Wide Web based bulletin board system. A bulletin board system allows for asynchronous interaction where messages are posted from other participants to read and reply at their convenience. Other forms of asynchronous online fan organization are Usenet discussion lists, where the messages come directly into the registered member's mailbox. Synchronous discussions are chat rooms or Multi-User Dungeons (MUD) (Nellis, 2002).

In this forum, guests have access to all the messages. There are three rules for participation: mark spoilers well, no rude, abusive or foul language, and treat one another with respect. Participants may post messages in the US forums in English, Spanish, Spanglish, or Portuguese. The web site administrators reserve the right to remove any postings that are abusive or contain obscene language. There is no registration requirement to reply to the messages. There is a reply form on the end of the page with name, e-mail (optional), and space for the message. There is also a check box to be marked if the poster wants e-mails replies to the message. Posters are participants that write messages. Lurkers read without contributing to the discussion (Baym, 1997). The messages are formatted in threads, which make it easier to follow the dialogue, resembling a conversation. With the exchange of ideas, the flow of the discussion is easily identified.

The copyright disclaimer for the news and summaries is that the content may be distributed freely, as long as credit to the web site is given and proper citations are kept
but it cannot be sold. There are also links to various web sites dedicated to the telenovela. Globo’s web site for the telenovela “El Clon” unfortunately is disabled. It has pictures, summaries, and information about the three different themes that the telenovela embraced. It presents some of the scenes of the telenovela and explains the culturally related issues that are portrayed. It also has a list of the most common used Arabic phrases from the novela and their respective translations.

*Participants and Messages*

The first message posted in the forum for “El Clon” is on January 5, 2002 in anticipation of the start of the telenovela January 14, 2002. At the time of this research, the message board for the telenovela “El Clon” has around 48,135 messages posts in 7,803 threads. The messages are written in English, Spanish or Portuguese. Translations into Spanish or English are available in the page. Postings continue to this date.

The messages on the research are posted mainly in English, some in Spanish, a few in Portuguese, and as they like to say, Spanglish, a mix of the languages was also utilized. To illustrate this scenario, here are some answers that surface when a poster asks if they all speak Spanish:

**Does everyone here speak Spanish fluently?**
Does everyone here speak and understand Spanish?

*I do, hola, como estas?, no texto (nt)*

nt

**Re: Does everyone here speak Spanish fluently?**
Yo entiendo 100%
Hablo 90%
Escribo...55%
de Brasil!

No, not I. Pero trato de mejorarme cada día.

nt

Re: No, not I. Pero trato de mejorar me cada día.
Hello all, I do not speak/understand Spanish very well, but I am learning.

Re: Yo hablo Portunol. :) nt
mmmm......

Re: Does everyone here speak Spanish fluently?
Yo hablo Ingles, Español y por Telefono.

Besides giving a glimpse of the linguistic diversity of the participants, this thread shows how the subject line is frequently used as part of the messages or it is actually the intended message, therefore, from now on, when giving examples, the subject lines will also be included, in bold characters to differentiate from the message body. This also mimics the display of the bolded subject line in the web site. The vast majority of the messages analyzed in the study are in English. The messages are cited here as they are posted, in order to truly capture their flavor. However, to keep participant’s confidentiality their screen name will not be disclosed, a letter will be used instead, when their name or another participant name is part of the message. The messages can be short, with no text as seen previously, and they can also be extensive narratives, sometimes with the inclusion of articles.

The participants of the forum are very welcoming of new comers, and in the following interaction, it is possible to see how they display this camaraderie:

Clon
i’m new on this foro
but have been watching novelas for a few years' now!!! ...i love them, although my spanish comprehension is basic, at best!! ...i remember m from paz's foro, that originated a few years ago with terra nostra!!! ...i see that foro is "no more", though :((
anyway, i started watching el clone from day 1 and am totally mesmorized with it...i missed it the first time around, and am sooo happy to see it has returned now!! ...this combination of brazilian and moroccan culture is awesome and the scenery and music are just brilliant...the actors too are great...what wonderful chemistry jade and lucas have together!! ...
i live in canada but worked in saudi arabia for 8 years (between 1984 and 1992) so "reliving" this arab culture again really adds a special interest to the novela for me....
i've read all the posts below and have learned alot from them...thankyou to everyone for the information...what a great way to learn more about the differences in our world!!!
G

Welcome!!!
Bienvenida! It is wonderful to see another forista with a first hand experience with the Arab culture.
Normally, M is the one we turn to for some answers...
Hope you have a good time with El Clon and this foro....

Hi and welcome, G...you
will LOVE being a participant in this forum...nice people, good conversation, stimulating topics, and most importantly, a common bond......WE ARE ALL CLONAHOLICS!

In more recent interaction with the start of the “El Clon” rerun, one of the participants asks who the other participants are and if it is their first or second time watching the telenovela. This question, answered promptly by the other members of the forum, allows for some additional information about the forum’s participants at that time. Some of the participants write they are from New York, New Jersey, Florida, Northern California, Southern California, Idaho, some disclose their background, Iranian, Moroccan, Puerto Rican, and English/Irish. The majority of them stated that they are watching the novela for the second time. Many also have tapes that they watch.
Forum participation is dynamic, members come and go, but there is certainly a core of members that have been with the message board since the beginning. As previously outlined, forum participants have also disclosed that they are posting from different parts of the world, here are some examples:

Re: Where is everyone from?
hi i am C from israel born here and grew up in the senter of israel in a city that called tel aviv

Re: Where is everyone from?
Family from Spain, born in France, raised in Switzerland and the USA...............Now I am in Dallas Texas

Re: Where is everyone from?
I live in Silver Spring, MD, born and raised in the D.C. area. I'm a product of a Philly Mom and a Bronx dad who met on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, fell in love and the rest is history. I spent summers as a kid w/grandma in Philly and down the shore (A.C.). I spent 2 years living in Madrid, Espana, having a wonderful experience abroad, living a totally different life than what I was accustomed to. Ironically, I had many brasilian friends that were living and studying in Spain and the one thing I remember most about them was how great they were. The guys were totally hot and as nice as could be, to boot. Real down-to-earth, easy to be around, and a real zest for life. Not surprising now, that I should love watching the brasilian telenovelas! SALUDOS TO ALL

Re: Where is everyone from?
born and raised in Istanbul/TURKEY.

Re: Where is everyone from?
i'm from a small kibbutz in the south of Israel, i was born and raised here, spent 3 years in my childhood in buenos aires, argentina with my parents who took us to a grand trip through all of south america, including Brazil. and then when i grew up i spent a year and a half, studying, working and touring in new york city, and the states. my first boyfriend was from Brazil and i had lots of friends from there, i like that rythm they carry in their blood... brazilian music was always part of my life... and recently i started studying portuguez , i guess this time it was because of "el clon".

Re: From Romania...
...with my regards! :))) anyone else from Romania?

Re: Where is everyone from?
Hello Everyone,
I would like to tell you all that I am from Tucson, Arizona. The hot Sonoran Desert! Born and raised. I lived in San Diego for 2 years and came back, why? I have no idea! I plan to move back there soon, and as for traveling around the world like some of you, I still need to get my feet wet! I would love first to go and see Brazil and Morocco, of course inspired none other then by the best novela ever made! El Clon! and then go visit the European Countries...I want to learn about every culture!

From LA!!
Hi! I am from Los Angeles, California, USA. I love it here! Hispanic with a Mexican dad and a Guatemalan mom!

T ;o)
...loves her novelas!

This thread has more posts, but these are just to give an idea of the vast universe that the forum’s participants compose. Some participants are Muslims, either because they are born into the religion or they converted to it. These participants usually share their knowledge and feelings in the forum regarding the novela’s content.

The posts can be visualized as a threaded view, with collapsed threads, or with the messages displayed in a flat view. The posts are normally viewed in chronological order with the more recent messages topping the list. The site also provides a list of posts by dates. The telenovela-world site allows 87 maximum participants at a time, and there is a display on how many participants are online.

The site has a search engine that provides the options to search “El Clon” forum, all the forums, all words, any word, and exact phrase. The time frame for the search is from the last 30 days, last 60 days, last 90 days, last 180 days, or all dates. The search can
also be by author, subject or message bodies. This mechanism is welcome because it curtailed claims of research bias, since the engine provides the selection. The initial intention is to search not only for words like Muslim, Islam, but also to include character names such as Tio Ali, Tio Abdul, or Zoraide. A search for Tio Ali resulted in 2689 posts. Unfortunately, due to time and financial constraints, the search needed to be paired down. The researcher then decided to search for the word Muslim in all dates, subject and message bodies. This search returned 714 messages. At the time, it is thought to be a good amount, and the researcher proceeds to copy and paste the posts for the study. What the researcher did not realize was that 714 is not an absolute number if the intention is to represent all the exchanges that take place regarding the searched theme. When opening a post, the threads and additional postings that follow make it too cumbersome for the time and financial constraints of this research. At about three hundred pages of copied messages, the researcher realizes that it already captures more than it was possible to handle. Therefore, in order to focus the research, and make it a more reasonable study without compromising the purpose of the study it is decided to search for the word Muslim on the subjects, and all dates. This search results in 101 posts and a final count of 314 messages, from February 8, 2002 to August 26, 2004. Four messages are discarded because they are not related to the subject; they specifically talk about a forum participant that is no longer posting. They are questioning where this participant might have been. Even though this is a valuable discussion, it does not directly pertain to the sphere of this particular study.

The returned messages and their threads are then copied and pasted in a word document and saved in a computer disc for subsequent coding and analysis. Repeated
messages are discarded, and at this time the researcher is able to register all the threads, which makes the dialogue more cohesive.

The unit of analysis identified for this research is the thematic content of the message posted. According to Babbie (2001) unit of analysis is the “individual units that we make descriptive and explanatory statements about” (p.306).

The data collected is then printed and the messages numbered. The final count was 310 messages. The printed form helps with a global understanding of the content. After many readings, the messages are analyzed and coded accordingly. The sub-dimension parasocial interaction model proposed by Sood & Rogers (2002) is the platform for the analysis. Each post is coded according to one of the sub-dimensions, as discussed previously; in some cases the messages exhibited more than one sub-dimension. For this academic exercise the messages are coded according to the category that is more strongly emphasized. The intricacies of the messages will be explored in the qualitative analysis results that follow this chapter.

After the messages are coded, and results tabulated, the researcher goes back to the research and recods it. Another set of data is printed to make sure the researcher is not influenced by the first code analysis. This procedure is performed in order to answer questions of reliability, the researcher’s questioning inclusive, since a different coder was not used in this research. The recode has a 90% percent agreement, which certainly reassures the reliability of the analysis. According to Stempel III & Westley (1981), the recoding and the account of the agreement in a percentage form are appropriate and acceptable for reporting reliability. Content validity of the content analysis categories is
piloted tested by individuals that have some experience with the telenovela issues and are former viewers of the telenovela themselves (Law, 2000).

**Ethical Considerations**

Privacy and protection: Even though the messages are on the public domain of the Internet users, this researcher is concerned about the issue of maintaining confidentiality of the message writers. The messages are posted with a screen name, that might include, or not, a last name. To insure confidentiality posters’ names are referred in this research as a letter, instead of their screen name. Informed consent for the utilization of the messages on the research was not obtained since the access and availability of the World Wide Web implies that the posted communications in this web site occur in a public mass medium. This is in conformity to the Lynn University Institutional Research Board. However, this researcher has to duel once more, with the choice of telling the forum participants about the research or going along as an unobtrusive observant of their forum activities. It is opted to conduct the research without interfering with the communications. Therefore, subjects do not know that a research is being conducted. The researcher will make this disclaimer after all efforts for the finalization of the research is concluded.
CHAPTER V

THE RESULTS

This research has as an overall goal to investigate the use of Brazilian telenovelas as a medium to disseminate knowledge about different cultures and customs. The primary object of the study is the qualitative content analysis of messages posted in the “EL Clon” telenovela-world forum with reference to the Muslim cultural theme explored by the telenovela. The theoretical framework overarching this study is the combination of Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory and Freire’s dialogical/participatory communication.

Figure 5.1: Theoretical Framework

Bandura ← Vicarious Learning ← Self-reflective Capabilities ← Self-efficacy ← Empowerment

Freire ← Dialogue ← Critical Thinking
To operationalize the study, a qualitative content analysis is undertaken utilizing the sub-dimension parasocial interaction model proposed by Sood & Rodgers (2000). The messages are analyzed in order to investigate how forum participants engage in the discussion brought by the telenovela, in light of the proposed parasocial sub-dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioral interactions, and critical and referential involvement. Therefore, the research questions that guide this study are:

1. How did participants express affective interaction to the cultural thematic and characters that symbolized or portrayed the Muslim culture in the telenovela “El Clon”?
2. How did forum participants verbalize cognitive interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural issues portrayed in the telenovela “El Clon”?
3. How did forum participants express behavioral interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?
4. How did forum participants disclose and report referential involvement to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?
5. How did forum participants express critical involvement, report opposing views, or agree upon the cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

This chapter will present the discussion of the research findings in response to the aforementioned research questions.
Research question # 1

How did participants express affective interaction to the cultural thematic and characters that symbolized or portrayed the Muslim culture in the telenovela “El Clon”? The posts are analyzed and categorized as an expression of affective interaction when they reflect a reaction, positive or negative, to either the characters of the telenovela or the cultural thematic associated with them. In the 310 messages analyzed, 11% (35) are categorized as predominantly presenting affective interaction. As previously posited by different studies, (Sood 2002; Sood & Rogers, 2000) these categories are multilayered constructs with overlapping dimensions.

Posters are vocal in expressing their feelings about the characters, many times offering their point of view regarding the character’s behavior. In the following post we can see how the message writer feels positive affective interaction towards Mohamed, and displays criticism regarding Jade’s behavior:

Poor Mohamed
“Still trying to clear things up with Noehmia. I love his character now. He's good comedy relief. I loved how he had to explain to Latifah why Noehmia was so upset about being called a gallina.... "Tio Abdul" would have thought this about her. haha I also adore how he and Latifah are still very much in love and making love whenever they can. I think that is just so adorable, especially for a non-Muslim to see this kind of affection in a Muslim marriage. I can't wait to see Mayisa's response to Mel's boyfriend/bodyguard. And when the heck is Jade going to be smart and stop doing all these sneaky things in front of Said. and is she just not thinking about her daughter at all?! Apparently not because she thinks that she'd be able to have custody of Khadija. Hello, the little girls knows only one man as her father and Jade is going to take that away from her. Gosh, how selfish!!!!!!”
In this post the writer comments about a scene of the novela where a miscommunication happened between Mohamed and Noemia due to cultural and linguistic differences. Mohamed tries to pay a compliment to Noemia and ended up calling her a “gallina”, which supposedly is a compliment for him, while in Brazil calling a woman a chicken is a grave insult. Gloria Perez with this scene tried to convey in a humorous way the difficulties of multicultural communication. For this poster, the character Mohamed inspired positive feelings. However, the message writer uses a qualifier to describe that the love for the character is not granted since the beginning of the novela. The phrase ‘I love his character now’ explains it. While this novela is a melodramatic series, and is many times criticized for that, Gloria Perez is cautious not to present the characters as a black and white composition. The totally bad, or totally good character so common in the melodrama, only happens with the character Alicinha. This character is added later in the script, maybe to accomplish just that, to be the novela’s villain. Even in this post, the writer disagrees with the protagonist’s behavior that in her opinion did not think much about her daughter, before attempting to sneak out of the house to see Lucas.

While “O Clone” is not an entertainment-education soap opera per se, it brings the theme of Muslim culture to the screen and sheds some light towards the beliefs and customs associated with Islam. One of the premises of entertainment-education is the concept of observational learning championed by social learning/cognitive theory. The poster talks about how rewarding it is for a non-Muslim to see displays of affection in a Muslim marriage: “I also adore how he and Latifah are still very much in love and making love whenever they can. I think that is just so adorable, especially for a non-
Muslim to see this kind of affection in a Muslim marriage.” One of the components of observational learning is motivational process Bandura (1977), which posits that people are more likely to adopt a behavior if it is projected in a rewarding outcome. It is not intended to comment here if the poster is going to adopt a more affectionate behavior, however, it can be understood that the message writer appreciates seeing affection displayed by Mohamed and Latiffa, and that this may be counteracting stereotypical notions of man-woman relationships and pre-arranged marriage. The modeled behavior, an affectionate Muslim couple, might be adopted by the message writer as a concept to bring down barriers of pre-existing notions of Muslim marriage.

In the same message the writer also displays critical interaction towards Jade’s behavior. The poster expresses disagreement with Jade’s attempts to see Lucas behind Saids’ back, risking the custody of her daughter, which the poster perceives as a selfish behavior. Under Freire’s notion of critical pedagogy, the writer, based on the concepts she knows and the values that she has of paternity/filial rights to try to formalize her concerns, not taking the scene for what it is being portrayed, a woman fighting for her love, but further analyzing the consequences of Jade’s behavior. The affective interaction is strongly noted with the poster talking about Jade as if she was actually a person, able to configure her situation and decide upon it.

In a response to the previous analyzed message another poster writes:

**some more misconceptions to clear up**

omg dont get me started! i hate how they twist things around in this novela lool. ok first of all no arab man calls a woman a hen. goodness! no guy would be that stupid in real life.
yeah the love between latiffa and mohammad is really sweet, but believe me the misconceptions u see about muslims and how the men aren't good to the women and there is no love and stuff isn't true. i know that we always see stuff on the news about how arab men beat their wives, but its condemned in islam as
something terrible. there are many men who are mean to their wives and many couples who have bad relationships regardless of culture or religion. just wanted to clear some stuff up, sorry for going on and on lol.

In this message the poster expresses affective interaction with the theme presented by the telenovela. Even though it is in a negative expression “I hate” it nevertheless provokes a reaction in the writer in an affective level. This writer also critically processes the telenovela scene. The poster disagrees with the choice of the term used by the telenovela’s writer to convey the miscommunication. “ok first of all no arab man calls a woman a hen. goodness! no guy would be that stupid in real life.” The writer then jumps from the scene of linguistic miscommunication, to the stereotypes that exist in real life regarding Muslim man: “but believe me the misconceptions u see about muslims and how the men aren't good to the women and there is no love and stuff isnt true.” This poster wants to counteract some preconceived notions of the man-woman relationship in the Arab/Muslim world. The message writer also clarifies that beatings are condemned by Islam and explains that bad relationships are not privilege of one culture, but it happens “regardless of culture or religion”.

In this exchange it is also possible to identify the interpersonal communication that is brought by the discussion of the telenovela scene. In a dialogical communication way, the discussion of the telenovela’s scene “raised consciousness” about problems of stereotyping, confronting preconceived notions of relationships in the Muslim world, and power structure between man and woman regardless of culture or religion. This interpersonal communication among the forum participants about the issues raised by the telenovela scene is also a demonstration of parasocial behavioral interaction, with the audience talking among themselves about the character, and in this case, also the issue
that the character represented. These conversations among audience members can create a social learning environment (Papa et. al. 2000). In reflecting and talking about the educational content of the telenovela, these messages are also expressing cognitive parasocial interaction. The many layers of the parasocial interaction construct can therefore be identified.

The continuation of this thread presents more messages that express affective interaction with the same theme. As an example the next message shows that the poster feels for Latiffa, who is afraid her husband Mohamed will get a second wife. This writer also talks about the portrayal of the other Muslim characters in the novela:

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**
Tio Ali, who must have a doctorate in philosophy, presents the rational view and bends over backward to tolerate and support his family within religious teachings. He is admirable and presents many other aspects as well in a logical light. Even Abu appears to me not to be a fanatic within his own environment, just very literal and strict. However, the woman in a prison everywhere she looks aspect and more than one wife seem to me to be very offensive. No amount of gold or protection can make up for individual freedom and living in a state of fear. Poor prima who is in constant fear that her husband will take another wife. Overall, I think the novela presents the characters in a friendly yet realistic light. What I particularly like with the Moroccan characters is the sense of playfulness, innocence, and comedy. By contrast, the Brazilian characters, Yvetee excepted, tend to be on the dramatic side.

This writer expresses affective interaction when conveying: “Poor prima who is in constant fear that her husband will take another wife.” Here the poster feels for Latiffa’s struggle to contend with the possibility of a second wife in her marriage. The poster also articulates the representation of Tio Ali as an understanding figure, in contrast with Tio Abdu, that even though seems to be more strict does not reach the point to be considered a fanatic. The message expresses cognitive interaction when the poster talks about the
characters and their representations. The poster also touches on the telenovela’s author strategy of representing two opposite spectrums Tio Ali, the one that is responsible throughout the novela to teach, interpret, and recite the Koran and Tio Abdul, the one that has a more strict interpretation of Islam, without transforming the characters into a positive/negative polarization. This poster also expresses an understanding of the representation of the characters as friendly and realistic. This insight about the telenovela characters as affable and at the same time real, might be interpreted as a vicarious learning experience, where the modeled behaviors portrayed by Tio Ali and Tio Abdul are used to possibly debunk stereotypical images of religious Muslim men.

Messages commenting about the topic of women’s rights are a strong presence in the forum when scenes of the telenovela allude to this subject. The next example shows the poster’s reaction when the novela shows Jade’s struggle to keep her daughter after her divorce from Said:

im muslim but ...
i am really pissed off about the stupid cultural thinkings that always get mixed up with religion. I hate the fact that if a woman divorces, men think they can just take the child from the mother. HORRIBLE. Islam says heaven is under the foot of your mother, three times more than the father! How can a child obtain heaven if he is torn away from his mother’s arms. It makes me sick how some people use religion as an excuse when its just the culture that promotes these ridiculous notions to give men power. this happens alot in islamc countries unfortunately. let me tell you as a muslim woman i know my rights, and hell if my husband whenever i get married that is, if we divorce ill be damned if anyone takes my child, i will shoot the bastard and his entire family, sorry about my language haha. i know its difficult though in countries where men seem to rule all of society. it just enrages me though. poor jade she really doesn't have any choice it seems but to win back said so she can stay with her child. but man if i were jade, id have ran away with lucas when i had the chance, religion be damned! love is the true religion and God understands that. why cry your whole life with someone you don’t love. true said was great to jade and she didn't try to get over lucas when the relationship ended and he also married, but still arranged marriages suck! i'd never have one! but culture always seems to play a key factor in many people's lives. im just so glad that i had the blessing to be born in america and have very
liberal muslim parents, or i'd have been in the hugest depression ever if i had to live like that. sorry i had to vent this way!

Besos, N (name)

And the responses that his message received were:

Re: im muslim but …

te apollo N

Re: im muslim but …
Go N you rule girl. Now I really sympathize with Jade a child's place is with his or her mother.

Agree with you, N. Ok to vent here in the forum. We are with you.

In this example, the poster expresses affective interaction with comments of strong feelings aroused by the telenovela's representation of a women's right or lack thereof to keep the child after the divorce. The message writer places herself in the character's shoes and articulates what would be her reactions to the same situation “but man if i were jade, id have ran away with lucas when i had the chance, religion be damned!” The poster explores her own feelings regarding the women’s situation not only represented in the novela, but also making the bridge to the outside world: “It makes me sick how some people use religion as an excuse when its just the culture that promotes these ridiculous notions to give men power. this happens alot in islamic countries unfortunately.” The message writer also refers back to her own condition as a Muslim woman when expressing her views and feelings, which reveals the sub-dimension referential parasocial interaction.

In this forum's dialogue, the first posted message initiates a discussion about women's rights. Her statements are strong affirmations of empowerment and self-
efficacy. “let me tell you as a muslim woman i know my rights, and hell if my husband whenever i get married that is, if we divorce ill be damned if anyone takes my child, i will shoot the bastard and his entire family.” For a moment, the writer feels that she knows her rights as a woman and as a Muslim, and that this knowledge somehow would give her the strength to fight against established rules. She believes she is able to change the established power structure. However, on the same breath reality hits, it is as though the writer sees the real world context, and acknowledges the difficulties that women experience in countries where men have all the power to rule society. The poster then recognizes that the character, Jade, does not have any choice but to go back with her husband in order to have her daughter back.

In the above example, the messages that follow encourage the poster, her ideas, and her clamor for justice, agreeing with it in the form of cheering posts: “you rule”, “te apollo”. This interaction while intentionally directed to the poster might also be interpreted as an agreement with the feelings of outrage when dealing with the power struggle to assert woman’s rights. The social learning environment here is demonstrated when the interpersonal communications exhibited reflect the discussion of the theme but also the feedback of encouragement from the other posters (Papa et. al., 1995). This can also be seen as an expression of “conscientization”, or the process of raising consciousness, as Freire (1998) posited: “… the individual can gradually perceive personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his or her own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it ( p.14)”. 

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On the same subject of women’s rights, this time when Jade needs her husband’s permission to travel from Morocco to Brazil, the posters comment on their own experiences or feelings regarding this subject:

Re: Not so many years ago

Hi, F.

Actually, the suppression doesn't even go that far back as the suffragettes. There were plenty of things that my generation was "not allowed to do" or places we couldn't go, and I remember meeting an older woman once, a highly respected and well-known book editor, who was not allowed into the Princeton Club in New York City for a professional awards dinner because she was a woman. She said it was the most humiliating experience of her life to be turned away at that door. If I'm not mistaken, it was only in the 1980's that the Princeton Club was forced to open its doors to women guests.

Re: Not so many years ago

Q, the whole topic of "Equal Rights" is such a pet peeve of mine. I get so upset when hearing about inequality regarding gender, race, religion, or whatever. I know we have come a long way since our ancestors had to struggle with such issues, but you would think in the 20th and now 21st centuries that we would be so much more ahead, but I guess not. What really depresses me is reading about the places in the world that are still where we were many years ago. Thanks for your input.

This conversation takes place when the posters start to relate the problems present in the novela and translating it to their own experiences. Here the comments are not related to women’s rights in the Muslim world, but the message writers are able to transport the subject to their own culture and analyze it in the light of gender repression, not limited to a cultural problem. While expressions such as “I get so upset when hearing about inequality...” or “What really depresses me is reading about the places in the world...” are examples of affective interaction, the fact that the messages disclose the posters own experiences adds another layer of referential interaction. The shared
knowledge and experiences are part of the construction of the social learning
environment and the participatory communication. The exchange of shared experiences
and stories help to facilitate the process of change. In an entertainment-education
scenario, the fact that the audience can relate the message to their own experience is
considered a precursor that facilitates behavioral change (Papa et al., 2000). The posters
can relate Jade's struggles with the conditions of women in countries where their rights
are curtailed and then refer it back to their own experiences and knowledge of gender
inequality. These manifestations of interpersonal communication also express notions of
dialogical communication, where the interpretation of the transmission of information is
not from those who have knowledge to those who lack it, or from the powerful to the
powerless (Freire, 1970), for it is also an exchange of experiences.

On the other hand, Said's character also sparks affective interaction demonstrated
by the following posts:

Re: The real hero
Honey, I agree with you completely. Said is the man. He loved Jade enough to go
against everything to save her. She just doesn't see it right now. but don't worry,
without giving away anything, you'll discover lots of surprises as the story
unfolds. this is only the beginning! I still like Lucas though, he's still hot!

Re: The real hero
"I felt deeply, incredibly sorry for Said on his wedding night with Jade. And saw
aspects of kindness in him afterward. But I learned to hate him, too.

As M and others have said, these characters are like real people with faults as well
as virtues.

But I don't think you can like both Lucas and Said. Sooner or later you will be in
one camp or the other.

Re: The real hero
I also like Said, though my favorite will always be Lucas. As far as Said & Jade,
we already see Jade scheming that she'll start taking jewels from Said and use
them to escape. Irrespective of whether she had fallen in love with Lucas, I'm sceptical of whether she ever would've fallen in love with Said. Said was very restrictive on what she was allowed to do and she's rebellious by nature. She still wanted to go to school and he wouldn't permit it. I think part of her falling in love with Lucas had to do with the power and freedom Lucas yielded to her.

Although I always enjoy Jade's acting, she was the least sympathetic of the main characters to me. I always saw her as the domino that caused everybody else's suffering because she stupidly married Said when she was in love with Lucas.

Re: The real hero
I really admired what Said did to save Jade. I also felt bad for him at his wedding. Jade was really unhappy. I loved her acting job so much that I sort of despised her for it. Why not fake a little bit of happiness for Said's sake. It's his wedding too. But I'm sure they are used to have unhappy brides since these things are pre-arranged.

Re: I like Said too
I still think they're both hot. It's ok, I'll take them both! ha ha! Remember Lucas is really young, and he's insecure, he gets confused. He tried to fight for her but it was too late. Said is a real man if you ask me. but whatever, that's soap operas!

In these messages regarding Said, the posters demonstrate ambiguous reports of the parasocial sub-dimension affective interaction in relation to the character. Said is supposed to be the antagonist, the man that Jade marries against her will. However, the messages talk about feeling deeply sorry for him, while also learning to hate him. Other post expresses approval of the character saying that he is the man, still, on the same message the writer also articulates her liking for Lucas “he’s still hot!” While some posters express negative affective parasocial interaction towards Jade “I loved her acting job so much that I sort of despise her for it.” They also suggest that she could have been a little sympathetic towards Said, faking a “little happiness”, even though they are marrying in a pre-arranged agreement. The suggestion of a different attitude by the
character might also be seen as a critical involvement, without going into the merit of the suggestion; this would be appropriate in another study. Jade is also seen as the “one that caused everybody’s suffering”, and the least sympathetic of the characters. In these messages feelings of sympathy are geared towards Said, the one that ultimately is impeding Jade’s happiness. However, the feelings expressed are also ambivalent; the messages are not totally in favor of Said, or totally against Jade. Even these feelings mimic the telenovela’s author’s intentional use of complex characters in order to generate a wide range of feelings instead of the like/dislike so commonly encountered when characters have a more unilateral dimension.

However, some posters have a different take on Jade’s behavior, expressing affective interaction in response to some criticism that the character receives:

**Selfish Jade!**
That girl is so selfish! I’m talking about the previews. She doesn’t care that Soraide will surely get "70 azotes" for helping her escape. She doesn’t think about anybody but herself! What about Said? I know she doesn’t love him, but she did marry him and now she should stand by the decision she made. I have no sympathy for Jade!

**Re: Selfish Jade!**
if i were in her position i would do the same thing shoot.......being married with a guy that i dont love or feel attracted to......(and at that age of 17 everyone is selfish no matter what situation they are).....and it is Zoraide's decision whether to help her or not and she does, so why judge? i mean this is a girl that was brought up in Brazil and was not raised like a real muslim as many people saw in the first episode she barely knew anything just a few certain things...i think it was very ignorant for her uncle to give her to Said when her mother just died and when he knew that she did not totally understand the religion......and i dont feel pity for Said everyone warned him about her.......she caused so much trouble before they go married and told him she wasnt a virgin.....then why did he insisted? thats his fault and i hope he suffers with her more.he deserves her hatred and selfishness.......and much more than that.........and about her escaping with Yvette......remember she meet her like 2 days before Yvette told her to live with her....so she was a total stranger and she did not know whether she was going to be able to stay with her without Lucas since she did gave permission to both ......not only her......plus she was mad cause it was the second time he left her
This thread contains many posts regarding the writers’ opinion about Jade and Said’s behavior, some favoring Jade, others Said, and some even splitting the blame. The character Jade has many contradictions to deal with. As the poster recognizes, she is raised in Brazil and suddenly needs to embrace a whole different set of values. Some posters identify with the difficulties relating to that struggle, but not all. These messages reflect affective interaction with the character Jade in contrasting ways. The posts also reflect the value of the message writer, one that thinks that once you are married you should stick to it, and the other that places herself in Jade’s position and according to the writer’s values would do the same as Jade. The discussions are rich in contrast and commentaries about ideas of marriage, again woman’s rights, and religious commitments. Sharing different and contrasted opinions also foster the idea of participatory communication and critical thinking. While the posters debate about the characters’ behavior they are also clarifying positions and learning from one another, which can also be viewed as a social learning experience.

**Research question # 2**

How did forum participants verbalize cognitive interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural issues portrayed in the telenovela “El Clon”?

The analysis and categorization of the messages according to the parasocial sub-dimension cognitive interaction, is based on the messages expressions of reflection about
a character’s behavior, or considerations about the educational content of the novela, more specifically, when reflecting about “El Clon” portrayal of the Muslim culture.

By definition and due to the method of selecting the messages, practically all of the messages can be categorized in this sub-dimension. To select the sample that is utilized in this research, the search is conducted with the word Muslim in the subject of the messages. However, as previously emphasized, the messages reflect a layer of sub-dimensions that are interconnected and interrelated. This means that other sub-dimensions are also expressed in the posts. The messages are then categorized according to their strongest expression of a given category. In the 310 messages analyzed, 51% (160) are categorized as cognitive interaction. It makes sense, since in one way or another in the sample the posters are talking about Muslim culture and characters. However, the intricacies of the messages and the expressions of the sub-dimensions can only be appreciated through a qualitative analysis of their content.

The participants that are knowledgeable about Muslim culture enrich the discussion of the cultural issues presented by the telenovela. Some of them are born into the religion some are converts. In many instances the forum participants recognize their valuable contribution to the discussion.

“El Clon” has Morocco and Brazil as the background for the telenovela. In the following posts we can see some of the reactions and thoughts of the Moroccan board participants towards the portrayal of their country in the telenovela and the response by other Muslims and non-Muslims participants. For this example, most of the posts in the thread are presented here in an attempt to follow the dialogue without interrupting the flow of thought or the discussion. As previously discussed, these messages also show the
intricacies of the sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction. The examples shown are messages that might have been classified as having referential or critical involvement as their strongest characteristic for the purposes of this study, however, for the sake of congruency; the researcher is including them in the example bellow in order to not interrupt the discussion. It is also important to recall that all the messages reflect the poster’s cognitive understandings of the portrayal of Morocco and Muslims by the novela. These posts are all part of the thread in response to the previously analyzed message “some more misconceptions to clear up”:

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**
I'm confused.
Are you saying the misconceptions are in real life or in this novela? You said this novela twists everything. It seems to me this novela shows people as people. Some are loving and some are not. There's nothing twisted, biased, mistaken or misconceived about that.

When you consider what's been in the news every day over the past two and a half years, I think that "El Clon" has put Islam and Arabic/Moroccan culture in a better light than any other medium anywhere else. We have learned more about all the positive aspects of these cultures than we possibly could have otherwise. Be happy for that.

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**
T, just because El Clon overall portrays Muslims/Moroccans in a bitter light than any other medium, does not, mean that it is enough. F has the right to expect more, this is 2004 after all.

**F, I... you are not the only muslin..**
on this board.I'm a born Muslim and I don't see anything wrong or twisted in this novela this is A NOVELA.a fiction based on some research by the a very good author..she has taken different aspects of Islamic life and added her own imagination and made a novela..a beautiful one at that.. the characters in this novela are fictional what they say or do are based on the truth but not the whole TRUTH..you can't deny that.. there are some things that ARE exaggerated,but then that is the whole concept of the novela that's why we are enjoying it so much..they are not insulting any Muslim
countries, or Muslim people & their beliefs. They are using Islamic costumes and beliefs and adding their own imagination.

I haven't been participating in this forum that much, but I can't help but notice that some posters don't like the way they are showing Islam in El Clon. Then why watch something that in your opinion is twisted or offensive? regards.

M.

**thanks guys don't get me wrong.....**
i love the novela. and it is true that they portray Muslims much better than any other show. i do love that about the novela. i am Moroccan and when i watch the show i see a lot of things that aren't remotely having to do with Moroccan culture. i know that it is a fictional story but for a lot of people who have never been to Morocco or ever been exposed to Moroccan culture, this is Moroccan culture to them. When i watch a movie or show about a foreign country that i don't know a lot about i assume that the country is like its portrayed in the movie. i just thought id tell people how Moroccan culture really is. i appreciate all your opinions on what i said. once again i wasn't being offensive or anything, el clone is my favorite show on tv :)

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**
I'm Moroccan. And i do HATE the way they portray the culture and everything sometimes, but i get over it. The people on this phorum are intelligent, but numerous people have asked me silly questions about Morocco because they believe the novela word for word and then i get pissed, because i feel like they're misinforming. And they are. But whatever, everyone does it anyway. I got over it. And they do show positive stuff too, so. And they did it all for the sake of the story. Because if they say that Said has to have Khadija, then that's a good storyline. If they portrayed it for real, then there goes the whole JadeiKhadija story. They do that in all movies.

But it's just annoying because people who were feeling animosity towards Muslims cuz of 9/11 anyway, got to go around screaming: "Muslim women can't take their kids after divorce!"

-I

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**
Funny, I haven't heard anyone going around "screaming" that Muslim women can't take their kids after divorce.

You're making assumptions about other people, I, that may be at the core of your problem with defensiveness and over-sensitivity to the "stupid" questions that people ask in their desire to learn.

In fact, no question is stupid. Questions show that people want to learn. Questions
show that people want to clear up their own confusion or misconceptions. Questions show that people are NOT making assumptions or swallowing everything they hear or see.

Think about it.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up
good point T. I really appreciate when people ask me things about Morocco and Islam. And infact if u or anyone else ever had a question, feel free to ask no matter how small or anything.

T,
T, I'm not talking about people who want to learn, and ask curious questions. I'm talking about the people who had this NOVELA raise their ignorance even more. And I've run into a lot of people like that. Quite a few. And that upsets me, it really does. It doesn't bother me if someone asks me a sincere question, I don't like attacking islam questions because they now think they are islam experts because they've seen el clon. Once I was at my Brazilian's friend's house being attacked. It was horrific. I was so angry.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up
ur really speaking my mind I. thank u for that. yes the novel is really good and they portray muslims positively overall, but u know u cant blame us for feeling like we need to defend everything we can about islam and our culture because it is true that now a days people think "o muslim women are oppressed" and this and that. when i watch on el clon how the women are forced to cover and how women cant keep their children and they're just married off and all the men go around having many wives like its something normal, i get mad. i feel like i need to inform people how islam really is and how life really is in morocco. i feel like islam is so misunderstood and i jump on edge everytime i see something thats not true on tv or the news and stuff. cant blame me :-/.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up
Wow you guys I wasn't going to participate in this discussion just read all your comments but after finishing I have to say that I see all of you have really good points. I really appreciate our Muslim foristas clearing up misconceptions or giving us your opinion on how your religion is being portrayed on this novel. I'm glad we have you guys here to answer our questions. I also have to say that I'm impressed with how we argue about disagreements with class and no insults like on other forums.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up
i agree, i really love this forum because i feel i can state my mind and no ones going to attack me. we can discuss our views and everyone respects each other. i really like that. i love answering peoples questions too, about my faith and religion or anything.

**Why can’t the world be like our forum?**

What a lovely, intelligent group we are! I still love how Tio Ali and Abu fight and then hug up. And Tio Ali and Albieri. Tio Ali is super.

Liebs & Katz (1986) suggest that a research on audience involvement should include all of the following discussed components. The study of the posts allows for this unique opportunity to observe the reactions and comments of the telenovela viewers as it happens in the forum, without an outside interference and in their own words. It gives a glimpse on how they understand the subject, how they help each other to do so, how they translate what they see into their lives, and how they critically interpret the content.

One of the reasons this researcher tries to include the messages in their dialogical format is to present the interactions that occur at the message board close to their context. Throughout the research the importance of the context in understanding the audience, their reactions and decoding of the television message is emphasized (Hall, 1980; Morley 1980, Blumler & Katz, 1974, Yoder, Horner, & Chirva, 1996). The analysis of posted messages in and of itself has its value but the provision of the context in which the communication occurred provides for a more comprehensive examination. The message writers however, are not a representation of the telenovela’s viewers. As mentioned before, the posters are fans of the telenovela, even when they criticize it; they make sure that they clarify their love for the novela.

In this dialogue the discussion is generated by the representation of the Muslim culture and Morocco in the novela, but it also extrapolates to representations of Muslim in
the news and television and then reports of personal encounters with people that has their own interpretation of the religion and culture, maybe also influenced by the telenovela or by television. “Are you saying the misconceptions are in real life or in this novela?” This poster understands that the novela represents people as people, some are good, and some are bad but thinks that the content of the novela is fair to the representation of the Muslim culture. The following message denotes cognitive but also critical involvement with the representation of the telenovela’s theme. For this poster, the telenovela needs to do more than just portray Muslims in a better light. Throughout the dialogue, referential involvement is also demonstrated, with numerous references to the writers’ own experience or disclosure of their background. The complaint about showing Morocco in a different light than it really is echoes the criticism of the Moroccan ambassador to Brazil. “for a lot of people who have never been to Morocco or ever been exposed to Moroccan culture, this is Moroccan culture to them.” The forum participants have the additional resource of the discussion for clarifications and debate about the cultural theme portrayed by the novela. According to Singhal & Rogers (1988) an “entertainment-education strategy is much more effective in creating knowledge of an issue than changing the behavior regarding this issue” (p.141). The telenovela in this case is the catalyst for the discussion, even though after 9/11 the subject of Muslim culture has been more widely incorporated in the media, the novela provides the viewers with the opportunity to engage in the discussion, at least for the forum viewers.

The messages reflect the posters views and values and also their backgrounds. As previously discussed, forum participants come from different countries and origins, propitiating a multicultural dialogue. According to Prabhu (2001), “multiculticulturalism
implies a fundamentally democratic spirit, the ability and willingness to engage with others in dialogue to find common ground. This by no means precludes criticism.” (p.32)

The messages regarding poster’s views of the portrayal of Morocco and Muslim culture by the telenovela gives space to the exchange of different opinions and criticisms. While the poster makes sure that her status as a fan is clear, “don’t get me wrong, I love the novela’, this position does not deter her criticism of the novela’s portrayal of Morocco and Muslim culture that might be misunderstood by some people. Continuing the dialogue, another poster expresses her notion of oppression: “It has been my observation that, in most cultures, wealthy women are free women. The farther away you get from wealth and/or cities, the greater the chance you have of seeing suppression in countries around the world.” The discussion’s ability to generate involvement in the form of message participation is also demonstrated when one of the posters indicated: “Wow you guys I wasn't going to participate in this discussion just read all your comments but after finishing I have to say that I see all of you have really good points.” Even thought the poster does not intend to actively participate in the discussion, the debate is able to stimulate an active response.

The messages analyze for this research present many observations and questions associated with the novela cultural thematic. Polygamy, virginity, Muslim’s wedding night, woman’s rights, honor killings, these are all themes covered by the novela and present in the messages. Also present are topics such as belly dancing, woman’s make up and clothes, headscarf, and jewelry. Some posts that reflect cognitive interaction are exemplified as follow:
Thank you V
I really enjoy knowing, learning and appreciating other cultures. I started to listen to Arabic Music back in early 90's, because of a friend. Thanks to this novela and forum and I've been able to re-introduce myself to this beautiful and enchanting music. Now my collection includes......Amr Diab, Tarkan, Natasha Atillas, Tony Mouzayek.................. and I'm still listening.................

Re: hahahahahha t/n
What people are failing to realize about the veil thing, is that in their world there is no other option, a woman who throws down her veil is a disgrace, b/c in their customs a veil is a beautiful thing, a thing to be admired. The way some people are just saying, she should say no is not realistic.

This is just an illustration of the many subjects touched by the sample messages that are analyzed and categorized as reflecting cognitive parasocial interaction.

Research Question # 3

How did forum participants express behavior interaction in relation to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

By definition, the parasocial sub-dimension behavioral interaction is considered when the audiences overtly interact with the characters, or when the audiences talk among themselves about the character, or think about the program when it is over. In the qualitative analysis of the messages in this research, the messages are also categorized as behavioral interaction if they express or reflect the poster behavior besides participating in the forum. Messages that demonstrate behaviors such as posting articles, or reporting buying books, enrolling in classes, etc., are all coded in this category. Taking into account that behavioral interaction might be considered when audiences talk among themselves about a character, or in the case of this study, when they also discuss the telenovela cultural thematic or think about the program when it is over, most of the
messages qualify for this classification. The fact that the context in which the study takes place is a message board where participants exchange ideas, opinions, and questions, implies that a behavioral interaction is already taking place. In keeping with the notion that the messages reflect overlapping sub-dimensions, the messages that are classified as behavioral interaction show a strong component of behavior, even though, by definition, all of them would fit into this category. Of the 310 messages analyzed 8% (25) are qualified as demonstrating behavioral interaction.

In the following example, the message writer posts an article in hopes that it would clarify a discussion:

Re: A: Why women convert to Islam

Wow. good question. The thing is female converts to Islam find LIBERATION in the religion, they don't see it as jumping into a religion w/ restrictions. half of the restrictions you see in El Clon by the way is NOT Islam at all. Like the traveling thing doesn't have anything to do w/ Islam. And there are many female converts, not just a handful.

I'm not a convert, so I can't explain it to you that thoroughly.

BUT Here's an article that a convert wrote: Read it.

When I Covered My Head I Opened My Mind

(by Shariffa Carlo)

The article is not included in this example. However, the message reflects the idea that the writer not only ponders the subject, but also searches and finds an article that helps the discussion since the writer does not feel qualified to answer the question from her own experience. As seen previously, a social learning environment is one where the
participants share their stories, even though the post does not share her story, she brings another person’s account to raise consciousness about the issue that is discussed.

The messages are a reflection of the posters’s reaction not only to the telenovela’s characters but also to the discussions of Muslim representation in “El Clon”. In the following article, the poster demonstrates behavioral interaction when calling a friend in an attempt to clarify the depiction of Muslims in the telenovela.

**Re: Inaccurate depictions of Muslims en El Clon**

That is what occurred with Said and Jade during her Nikah she replied that she would marry him. And this is their third divorce and they were told this would be their final divorce ...so I guess according to what you wrote the program did not do it correctly.

Thanks for the information. I find myself calling my friend (who is Sunni) to ask questions about whether the things that take place are true. I sometimes wondered if the way the women or the religion was portrayed offended some of the Muslim fans of the show. Thanks for enlightening us!!

Take care,

----

This message also demonstrates the multilayer construct of the model. While it is appreciate the sub-dimension cognitive interaction, the message is expressing reflection about a character’s behavior it is also possible to discern critical involvement, since the writer did not take the novela’s portrayal as representation of truth, but searched for other forms of information to clarify her doubts. However, the act of calling the friend to ask questions about the novela demonstrates self efficacy and empowerment, the writer is able to go a step further than just reflecting about the issue, and searches for a different source of knowledge, which embraces the idea that action and reflection equates praxis.
The example below also reflects behavior interaction in the sense of overtly interaction with the character, as the writer discloses that the character Nazira makes her laugh.

So I'm guessing Nazira...

So I'm guessing Nazira is definitely not shown as a good example of a muslim woman, but I have to say she makes me laugh a whole lot.

Another message has an article posted in Portuguese about a meeting by the Arab first ladies to discuss women's issues.

**Muslim First-Ladies meeting**

Sexta, 1 de novembro de 2002, 10h11  
Primeiras-damas árabes se reúnem para tratar da situação da mulher.  
http://noticias.terra.com.br/mundo/interna/0,5502,0165933-El294,00.html

The article is not included in this example but is posted in the message in its totality. It clarifies that the meeting will discuss the challenges faced by women from the Middle East. In posting this article, the writer demonstrates reflection and action, in an attempt to raise consciousness about the situation of the women in the Arab world. It is also possible to see that the poster is able to transcend the themes brought by the telenovela universe to the real world. In a response to this article the message states “it would be really nice if more first ladies were to join in this meeting. We also need the support of all the leaders in the world.” The poster is not from that part of the world, therefore, the reference to we need support, means we collective, as women, all need support for our causes. The critical conclusion that it is necessary to mobilize political power to bring change reflects the poster's involvement with the telenovela educational theme expressed by her ability to transcend the women issues in the novela to the women
issues in the world. The message also reflects that the writer goes further to the point of being able to see that the problems also relate to her universe.

The messages and interactions that follow the previous posts and are displayed in the next sequence of examples, reflect behavioral interaction in the form of participants' conscientization, their belief that they could do something to change the situation that is presented, translating the behavior into empowerment, self-efficacy and collective efficacy, therefore praxis:

**Want to try and save a Muslim woman’s life?**
I heard about a Muslim woman, Amina Lawal, from Nigeria, who is to be stoned to death for having had a baby out of wedlock. As soon as her baby is old enough to stop nursing, she'll be killed. She's to be buried in sand up to her neck...leaving only her head exposed...then she'll be battered with stones. This could take hours. When I first heard the story, it left me chilled. Then yesterday, someone sent me an e-mail, that Oprah did her show on this topic, and offered an address on her website, where people can petition the Nigerian ambassador to try and stop this barbaric plan. Anyone who's interested can read more about it on www.oprah.com

**Oh my God and I thought this was only in** Novela Land. I guess it never stops to amaze me how bad some countries have it and/or how good we have it. I say we right to the Nigerian Consulate to save this poor women.

Oh God that's horrible! Thank You for the info K E

**Thank you. Yes, the same thing happen**
a couple of months ago with another woman and I wrote an email to the Nigerian Ambassador, I think that because of the letters she was saved. I can't believe people are so barbaric (sp?) nowadays. I mean I know that we do horrible things to eachother all the time, but this? Do these people even have feelings? I really think is time for people to stop using religious beliefs to oppress others or better yet people need to adjust their beliefs and get rid of those beliefs that only serve to destroy... I am sorry but I have come to the conclusion that organized religion is the reason behind all our animosity and unwillingness to live in peace.

L...
“religion is why we have been fighting wars since the begining of time. remember that john lennon said in his song imagine, to imagine no religion to live in peace, among other things of course, but i also believe that religion started it all.”

You can count me in
All done. Thanks for that information. I got goose bumps all over I feel for all these women. God bless them all.

K....
i heard about this months ago and even thought that she had already been stoned to death....i also thought that something should be done. when is it going to stop? why dont they let women choose their own religion? it not only makes me feel mad, but also tied....im afraid we're just going to witness this stoning without being able to save this poor woman....it's sad. imagine how many things are being done to women all over the world and we cant do anything for them.....how depressing.
i'll sign the petition anyway. thanx K.

Here’s the Oprah Show link
oprah.com/tows/pastshows/tows_2002/tows_past_20021004.jhtml

Please e-mail this link to all the people in your e-mail address book.

Thanks K for posting this message in the Forum. A couple of years ago I also sent a petition to the UNO requesting help for the women under the Taliban regime. We know the rest of the story but there's still far more work to do everywhere. We just need to spread the word and help each other because any crime against a man/woman is a crime against all of us. By lending a hand we can also help ourselves.

K and O
K thanks for bringing up this issue.....a letter was mailed under my name. And O, thanks for posting the link. I hope that these atrocities stop once and for all.....It's so barbaric......PLEASE EVERYONE SEND A LETTER TO SAVE THIS HUMAN BEING........

I signed the petition about a month ago
Thanks for bringing it to the forum for attention.

In this interaction, the messages convey that the forum participants become Subjects in the struggle to save the woman’s life. They believe that they can exercise some control over an event that indirectly affect their lives, demonstrating self-efficacy.
That belief is extended to the collective, when calls for letters to the Nigeria consulate and requests for the petition’s signing, reflect the notion that they believe collective effort will bring change, therefore demonstrating collective-efficacy. The precursor of this movement in the forum is the cognitive understanding of the situation, the conscientization of the problem and the awareness that the participants, collectively and individually can influence the outcome of the situation. In this example, we can see that the participants left the position of oppressed to become Subjects. According to Freire (1970) through the critical recognition of reality, allied with reflection and action, the oppressed cease to be objects to become Subjects, able to transform reality and liberating themselves from oppression.

**Research question #4**

How did forum board participants disclose and report referential involvement to the Muslim cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

In an attempt to answer this question the qualitative content analysis of the posted messages considers referential involvement as the degree to which the messages relate the telenovela content or the subject discussed in the forum to their own lives. Once more emphasizing that the messages reflect different sub-dimensions, the messages are categorized according to the strongest sub-dimensional component expressed. In many of the examples cited previously it is possible to clearly identify referential involvement, even though the messages are also expressing affective, cognitive, or behavioral interactions. Many of the posters refer to their Muslim background when talking about the subjects brought by the telenovela educational theme. However, non-Muslims also
demonstrate referential involvement in their posts. From the 310 messages analyzed, 17% (52) express referential involvement.

In the following set of examples, the messages reflect referential involvement by non-Muslim participants. They are able to make the correlation between the experiences played by the telenovela characters, to the experience of Muslim women in general, and then relate it to their own life.

The posts relate to the divorce of Jade and Said according to the Muslim law, as it is portrayed in the novela.

**how can muslim women stand it**

These men! THEY are the only ones who could divorce the women and the women have to stay married to them even if they don't want to and THEY are the only ones that can remarry them if they so choose?

**Re: how can muslim women stand it**

Part of it is what you've grown up with.

Part of it is the customs of the country you're in.

And part of it is ignorance or misuse of the Koran which does state that women can divorce their husbands, too. Of course, if the women are stuck in a country in which they need the "protection" of a man to survive, forget it.

In Jade's case, she does have the option of not accepting the terms of marriage at the time of the ceremony, but that would bring down disgrace on the entire family and I doubt that anyone, even her beloved Tio Ali, would support her in that. Certainly not in the early years of this story. The family reputation would have been ruined, making it difficult to find spouses for other family members. This had been a fear of Latifah's for herself and, later, of Mohammed for the futures of their children.

In tightly knit communities, family reputations and the threat of social stigma are huge factors in controlling the behavior of individuals.

Remember, too, Jade is currently wrestling with the power that Said has over her with regard to Kadijah.
That's very true T..it really is what you grow up with
I think and I don't think it's really too far beyond understanding to see why it would be accepted by most women when it's what they've grown up with...realistically we who have been raised in our culture here would never ever be able to understand it fully...but for me the question is: why would a woman want to CONVERT to Islam..knowing the restrictions that Muslim women face? I know that there are good reasons but I just can't imagine it...especially if one were forced to move to the country that will enforce each and every restriction..one of the things that I found terrifying in Clon was the fact that Jade couldn't even TRAVEL and leave when she wanted to...not without permission...I couldn't imagine that at all!!!!
A

Re: That's very true T..it really is what you grow up with
I agree with you on being puzzled about why a woman would convert to Islam with all of its restrictions. Having been raised a Catholic at a time when there were plenty of restrictions on women's freedom, to me it would be like "jumping out of the frylng pan into the fire."

But, then again, there's the factor of marrying into a particular culture. As we've learned on this forum, it's very often the various cultures that impose restrictions on women, not Islam itself. For a basically religious woman, it might not be any different than it was for the millions of Catholic women who used to willingly become nuns. Now there was a restricted life! It's remarkable that, in the Sixties, when Pope John XXIII lifted the restrictions and ordered the nuns to leave off their habits to rejoin the world, they left the convent in droves. In effect, he singlehandedly destroyed the backbone of the Catholic Church.

Frankly, I'm pretty fed up with ALL religions anymore. There are other ways to communicate with your god or goddess and lead a rich spiritual life.

As previously noted, according to Papa et. al. (2000) behavioral change as a result of audience exposure to media characters is less likely to occur if the audience does not experience referential involvement, if they cannot relate the experience of the telenovela character to their own life. In these messages there is an attempt to understand and relate the situation lived in the novela by Jade and by association by other women that convert to Islam. While one message tries to situate Jade's behavior in the context of her background and the required rules of her social environment, other message encounters
some difficulties in relating to the situation. The message expresses the writer's dialectic struggle trying to relate the restrictions suffered by women and imposed on Jade's character in the novela to her own experience. The writer discloses that for her, it is not possible to imagine living with such restrictions. In an attempt to answer these contradictions, the writer poses a question trying to understand why some women convert to Islam. In Freire's (1970) terms this can be analyzed as though the writer has opened herself up to the dialogical encounter with the other. Moving back and forth between Jade's struggles and the Muslim religion restrictions on women, the message conveys referential involvement, even though in absolute terms the writer affirms she “couldn't imagine it at all”, for she already does.

Another participant answering this message refers to what she has learned from the experiences and knowledge from other forum participants, agreeing with Bandura's (1977) concept of vicarious learning. The concept of vicarious learning refers to the human capability to learn not only from one's own experiences but also through the observation of others. The poster also discloses her own religious background, compares restrictions between the religions and shares her own feelings about the subject: “Frankly, I'm pretty fed up with ALL religions anymore.”

These following examples are also in response to the same thread that questions why women convert to Islam. This time the posters relate to the article that is previously posted telling a story and reason why the article's author converted to Islam. The first example is a message from the same poster that has difficulties in imagining herself in the shoes of Muslim-converted women. In the second example, the message reflects the posters' ability to translate into her life what is said in the article:
I...thank you for the article

That's certainly another aspect and definitely filled with truths...western society's emphasis on the physical beauty is getting so out of hand and leading to anorexia nervosa and an overabundance of diet books and of plastic surgeries...

That statement "I was able to see that the relationship between men and women was unfairly stacked in the man's direction." was interesting...because if I had seen that out of context I would associate that with the Muslim world and not the western one of today!

And...it's true that it's quite difficult for us to differentiate between the rules governed by culture and custom and those governed by the Koran but that's why I love forums like these...people are generous enough and patient enough to explain when they're able and I love gathering bits of knowledge about an unknown subject....

Sensible

That makes so much sense! As Mother to daughters, now out in the dating world it really makes sense. Its so true that our girls dress to attract boys. It has gotten out of hand, not just the lengths Westerners, specifically in the U.S. will go to obtain beauty, but the behavior of girls towards boy. Too, too often they do not develop real relationships before giving their bodies away. They try to keep boys and men through sex. Men don't learn that lasting relationships require commitment and work.

Reading someone else's experience appears to have shed some light in terms of added outlook on the subject. At this time, the poster can critically look into her values and absorb a different take on the subject. She can see the other one perspective, in a dialogical and vicarious way. She is able then to refer to her “western” world and critically see some problems derived from the focus on physical beauty: “That's certainly another aspect and definitely filled with truths...western society's emphasis on the physical beauty is getting so out of hand and leading to anorexia nervosa and an overabundance of diet books and of plastic surgeries...”
The examples that follow are from a different thread, a discussion sparked by “El Clon’s” character “Samira”, Mohamed and Latiffa’s daughter refusal to wear the veil. Samira’s story is more a coming of age tale, however, this adolescent has to contend with the contradictions of living in Rio, and having to follow the rules of her religion (as present in the novela) enforced by her conservative father. Some posters respond in a humorous way, nevertheless expressing referential involvement.

**about the veil thing…**
First off: Hi! I'm new!

All right. To the subject matter:
I have met a number of muslim women here in my country (venezuela) and none of them wear the veil. I'd say that its use depends on the level of traditionalism the family has in respect to the Coran, if Samira knew more muslim families living in the west, she'd realize that matter can be discussed wisely...
The problem is: her family is heavy on muslim law, and I don't think they can change their views that easily, she'd have to "work them" to convince them that not wearing the veil is an actual option.

What I think samira needs is libian friends... they are more relaxed. ^_^

**I wouldn’t mind wearing a veil in a bad hair day! nt**

nt

**I think I look awful in a veil because**
I can't even find a ski hat that looks flattering on me so I opt for a band just to cover my ears and I freeze my head when it's breezy on top of the mountain. Vanity first! LOL!

I have an oval shape face and for some reason I can't wear hats either. Perhaps is how I think I look but I don't want to look any worse. LOL!

Some women look good in hats, like the late Princess Di. Other women look good in veils, like Nazira. Some women look ugly with the veil, like Ranya's sister (isn't she ugly? She's mean and ugly; terrible combination!) I think Karima looks uglier with the veil, too.
I'm also glad I don't have to wear one, except when my hair looks really awful!

By the way, I don't criticize the veil. I do think it takes a lot of courage to wear the veil when you don't really have to. I mean, not all Muslims wear the veil. I heard Carlos Ponce's (the singer) wife is Muslim but she doesn't wear a veil. I wonder whether it's OK for him to have other wives. I'll get in line! My selfishness will go away in a second. He's so cute and seems like a really good family man. LOL!!! That's a joke, of course!

**Remember when we had to wear hats.....**

all the time, and we Catholics had to wear a veil to attend mass on Sundays? I miss the hats. My face looked better with a hat on.

h

**Re: Remember when we had to wear hats.....**

Yes, that's right...at one time, Catholic women had to wear a chapel veil or hat to church. If you think about it, the veil goes back for centuries...and not just Muslim women had to wear them. Again, Catholic nuns used to wear veils. Brides wear veils to this day...even in America. The Blessed Mother is never painted without a veil...Hassidic Jewish women and I think Orthodox Jews also have to wear a "shmatta". I might have spelled that wrong. But the point is, the Bible says that the hair is a woman's crowning glory...a beauty asset. That's why a modest and respectable woman covers her beauty, so as not to sinfully entice a man to be filled with lust. Well, me personally....I don't think my long stringy hair would drive a man to lust...so I'm safe!

The messages discuss the subject, even when the participants are joking, demonstrating referential involvement, relating the use of the veil to their own experiences. One poster even refers Samira to her own friends, in order to help her deal with her situation.
Research question #5

How did forum participants express critical involvement, report opposing views, or agree upon the cultural thematic presented by the telenovela “El Clon”?

The content analysis of the sample messages shows that the posts many times combine the different sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction. With the understanding that the messages display layers of sub-dimensions, the messages are coded as demonstrating a strong critical involvement when their content suggest different plots or engage in the artistic construction of the novela. It is also considered critical involvement when the messages suggest different approaches; offer corrections and disagreements or concordance to the telenovela’s portrayal of Muslim culture. The qualitative content analysis of the 310 sample messages categorizes 14% (40) of the messages as strongly displaying critical involvement.

In trying to respond to how the posters demonstrated critical involvement with the characters and the theme, the following examples will be illustrating the whole gamut of the critical thinking displayed by the posts, corresponding to the criteria used for the message analysis and classification.

The following examples voice criticisms of the author’s portrayal of family life in the Ali’s household, while some messages justify Gloria Perez use of belly dancing and Ali’s constant recital of verses from the Koran.

Do you think people of the Muslin faith
feel offended by some of things that are shown about the life style. Last night it appeared that the people at Tio Ali's spent all their time playing music, singing and Latifa dancing through her pregnancy. I know it is a wonderfully happy occasion for the couple and their family but I think this is strictly from Gloria Perez imagination. Beautiful but unreal.

Re: Do you think people of the Muslin faith

I don't know about the Muslin people, but that was a little too much for me. Pregnant woman don't dance all the time, not even a few time. What they are is uncomortable, tired and heavy. I found myself wondering what was the point? We all know she was happy but to be dancing most of the time??

I think it was done so as to find a good technical way to showed that time had passed. It is a transition shot, the same was done when Leo came running to Albieri on the beach. A beautiful transition shot. besides Latifah is wealthy so I am not surprise she does nothing at home with some many maids who would?

Re: Muslims have Shown
Dislike to the way this ovela has portray them. They caim that Gloria Perez has exagerated a bit.

It is different in each country, and it is only>

a novela.regarding Latifa's dance,well it may be a little too much, but it reflects her joy in being pregnant, in some muslim households the women are pampered, specially when they are rich and pregnant, they don't have anything else to do, specially in 30 or 40 years ago. but i think now it's different. but i can't be sure about that. as i said each country is diferent.

M.

Yeah, I've wondered about this too
All this belly dancing is becoming a bit gratuitious. I don't think they are always quoting the Koran either

Koran plays important role
From my experience (mostly reading), it is true that the Koran plays as important role in the life of most practicing Muslims as does the Bible for many practicing Christians. I know many people who regularly quote the Bible in daily life -- and not necessarily the clergy!

Memorization of the Koran chapter and verse is important, generally more so for the Muslim male, but knowing the word of Allah is an essential part of practicing and living the faith.
And I'd have to concur that while a pregnant woman would perhaps not be so light on her feet at say 6 or 7 months pregnant, the dancing is a lovely way to show that Latifa is a pampered and beloved woman in a state that is especially revered (she's the potential mother of the first born son) in the culture (heck, in most cultures!), as well as someone who still inspires passion in her husband's eyes. Her seductive dance suggests too that she holds him in her thrall and he's a willing captive. And, unlike Western women who feel less sexually desirable as they increase in size because of our cultural preference for slim shapes, many cultures feel much more positively about the more rounded, shall we say, figure because it implies prosperity. If you look at it from this perspective I don't find anything negative in the portrayal at all.

Re: Do you think people of the Muslin faith
I feel that this novela has over exaggerated! I'm a muslim women and in our religion we don't go around dancing all day long and playing music besides to much music and dancing is haram (forbidden) and the way they celebrate with belly dancers dancing around all the men this is haram also so who ever came up with this novela doesn't know much about islam because they try to make Ali to be such a holly man and he has all this stuff going around in his home. In Islam no women should be dancing around men that are not her immediate family members or like they showed last night episode where nazida didn't cover her hair in front of Ali also in islam this is haram a women must wear her veil in front of men she can marry. :)

This forum exchange demonstrates the many facets of the poster's critical involvement with the telenovela. While some of the messages question the exaggeration of the use of belly dancing and recital of the Koran, others believe that this might be a little bit exaggerated but justifiable in the name of the fantasy. The posters also refer to their own experience and knowledge to make their points. "I don't know about the Muslin people, but that was a little too much for me. Pregnant woman don't dance all the time, not even a few time" in this message, the writer relates to what she knows and understands about pregnancy and thinks that the dancing does not correspond to reality, or her understanding of it. The messages also comment on the many maids that helped
with the housework, leaving Latiffa free to dance and seduce her husband, which is certainly a reality strange to many. This behavior is justified by some of the messages as a product of her wealth, “Latifah is wealthy so I am not surprise she does nothing at home with some many maids who would?” The message also exhibits referential involvement with this comment; the poster places herself in Latiffa’s position and somehow justifies her behavior.

Divergence is also noticed among the opinions of Muslims regarding the subject. While one post says that in the Muslim household the pregnant women are pampered, she agrees that maybe Latiffa’s dance was a little bit too much. On the other hand, she forgives the poetic freedom of the telenovela’s writer in portraying her culture “and it’s only a novela”. The opposing view of this comment comes from a Muslim who states that too much belly dancing is “haram.” This poster also disagrees with the representation of Tio Ali, who has the responsibility throughout the novela to translate and enlighten the viewers with the recitals of the Koran. Apparently in his household there is too much dancing and partying, which according to the message is also “haram.”

The messages show that the writers are able to be critically involved with the novela, sometimes disagreeing with the telenovela author’s choice of portrayal of the Muslim culture, other times giving her permission to write a melodrama full of fantasies and quasi representations of reality.

Some messages also contest the behavior of the novela’s characters and suggest different narratives for the story, exhibiting the parasocial sub-dimension critical involvement. The following post exemplifies that:
STUPID DECISIONS BY ALL THREE!

Lucas: Lucas was not the alpha male like Diogo was, so it is almost expected for him to mess up 99% of the time. When he dumped Jade the first time it was understandable, but fifty times later? He just made me hate him more and more! Agh, and then he tops it off by marrying Maysa, the damn horse! Lucas should have stuck to his promise! He shouldn't have wasted all that time in his home where he had the perfect opportunity to meet and hide with Jade. They should have had a quickie marriage! Lucas disappoints as a man and that leads me to wonder if that is the same case in bed? Hmmm?!

Jade: She never had left Yvette's house! Imagine all of the tricks she would have learned to get Lucas to stay with her? Ugh, a wasted opportunity! She should have never accepted to have been married and run off the morning of the wedding or locked herself into a room and not come out. Jade should have kept pretending to like Said and then when she got his complete trust, she could have asked for them to visit Mohammed then she could have escaped with Lucas. Since she has a promise with God, she should have just told Lucas the truth!

Said: A great looking man that committed the dumbest thing in his life. Why couldn't he accept Jade not liking him? Jade is pretty, but she isn't that good looking for him to act that way? The dancer was beautiful, why didn't he just go through with the second marriage and Jade could be returned! Said, why don't you just marry me instead! Hehehe!

T;o)
I smell Telerisa around here!

The dialogue that is formed through the exchange of opinions, knowledge, and values in the forum creates a social learning environment. Some posters refer back to what they know to formulate criticism of the telenovela content. Critical thinking and dialogue are pillars of Freire’s (1970) theory. He believes that the learning process is an equal contribution by teachers and students, both engaged in discovering the world. As Freire (1998) posits, “every human being, no matter how "ignorant" or submerged in the culture of silence he or she may be, is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with others” (p.14).
While Singhal & Rogers (1999) agree that an entertainment-education program is more effective in creating knowledge of an issue than changing the behavior regarding the issue, the addition of the interpersonal communication is essential to generate behavioral change (Rogers, 1976). If behavior change is considered in the form of breaking stereotypes and acquiring knowledge about a different culture, the forum allows the participants to converse with each other and expand their horizons with the many inputs from different perspectives. The messages show that in many occasions the posters seek clarification of the issues that are portrayed by the telenovela, and in many instances the messages articulate how they can learn from both, “El Clon” and its fan forum.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings in the study, the implications for theory, methodology, practice, and future research.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This study is conducted in an attempt to investigate the use of Brazilian telenovelas in disseminating knowledge about different cultures by qualitatively analyzing messages posted in the “El Clon” online forum about this issue. The telenovela “El Clon” aired in the US from January 2002 to December 2002 and has three themes associated with the storyline: Muslim culture, alcoholism, and human cloning. Of great importance is the time and context that the telenovela is broadcast in the post-September 11 atmosphere.

This research studies messages posted in the United States forum for the telenovela “El Clon” in the Telenovela-World web site. The messages are posted mostly in English and many of the participants disclose that their knowledge of Spanish was limited. Most of them utilize closed-captioned in order to understand the novela. Most participants are from different parts of the United States, but there are posters from different parts of the world such as Israel, Russia, Brazil, and Venezuela. Therefore, the participants for this study are mainly international fans of telenovela.

Throughout the literature researchers have studied Brazilian soap operas and their audiences in the context of a national broadcast. McAnany & La Pastina (1999) in a
critique of Latin American telenovela audience research point that there is a need to undertake a Global study of the genre to see how various audiences react and incorporate the stories. Therefore, this study takes their admonition to start exploring the US audience reaction to the story narrated by the Brazilian telenovela “El Clon”.

In this study, it is possible to identify different reactions of the posters to specific themes of the novela depending on their context. In some cases, the messages express boredom when the novela geared toward the Brazilian characters, showing Dona Jura’s bar and all the famous people that paid her visits. While in Brazil this was one of the hits of the novela. This is understandable because the International audience, maybe with the exception of Pelé, did not recognize many of the visitors. Globo and other television networks that plan to export and import telenovelas should pay attention to these differences in order to meet the audience’s demands.

The messages show that the participants from the United States had a deeper understanding about drug addiction and found that the writer’s approach unconvincing for the American audience. As the examples illustrate:

“simply the story's Lack of Credibility/educational value to native-born Americans.”

But, yes, you're right about our American attitudes towards how lengthy were the scenes devoted to Mel, drugs, etc. I found them incredibly boring after a while even though they were well done—especially Lobato's scenes. Because there has been so much drug education in our schools and in our media, this was all "old hat" to us and boring.

On the other hand, a Canadian poster disagrees with this view and thinks that the drug issue was one of the very best highlights of “O Clone”.

This demonstrates the importance of taking the context into consideration when planning the message to be delivered. The American audience cannot believe that the
parents of a drug addict would not know about rehabilitation clinics and the importance of continuous treatment, while in Brazil and other countries, unfortunately, this knowledge is not widespread. The messages, however, do not question the value of discussing the theme, but how it is presented. Television executives should pay close attention to the audience’s needs when planning and delivering educational messages. As many of the forum participants suggested, it is possible to edit the novela in a way that it can be pertinent to the local audience.

This research does not explore the production side of telenovelas. The attempts made to contact Globo, Telemundo, the writer, and director of “O Clone” were not fruitful. However, future researchers should not be discouraged and studies should be conducted to investigate the challenges to write and produce a telenovela and its educational components. Since the telenovela is exported to different countries, an interesting consideration would be to understand how the decision process is made to include or not a scene when the telenovela is shown in a different country. Investigating the market challenges of this cultural production is also a possibility for future research.

The next Globo production is a telenovela named “America”. It tells the story of a Brazilian cowboy that comes to the US and triumphs in the rodeo competitions. The main argument is based on a true story and Gloria Perez is once more at the helm, responsible to translate reality into fantasy. This theme presents a different segment of Brazilian society to Brazilians and to the world. An ethnographic study with actual immigrants in the United States and their response to the writer’s exploration of the theme will further elucidate the main questioning of this research. This will also allow for further Internet study. There have been studies pointing to the possibility of conducting ethnographic
studies using online communities. Future research might want to explore the different web sites dedicated to the telenovela. Another avenue would be to explore different reactions from the American audience.

The theme of immigration is a controversial one and this telenovela will certainly delve into the legal aspect of foreigners living in this country. The United States is a country of immigrants. There is however a need to further understand the struggles and sacrifices that the immigrant goes through when choosing to live in a different country.

There are some movies about this issue such as “El Norte”, “Mi Familia”, “La Ciudad”, however, the inclusion of this theme in mainstream television programs have yet to be explored with the intension to shed some light into this subject. In Brazil, also a land of immigrants, telenovelas have been used to address this subject. “Terra Nostra” (Our land) and “Esperança” (Hope) tells the story of Italian immigrants to Brazil in the 1900’s. The same author, Benedito Rui Barbosa also told the story of Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish immigrants to Brazil in “Os Imigrantes” (Immigrants). Currently, Telemundo is airing “Anita Non Te Rajes”, which shows the protagonist having legal problems with Immigration and being deported to México. However, in a true melodramatic tradition, her American father recognizes her paternity and she is able to come back. The educative possibilities of telenovelas should not be constrained to homes, but schools should be able to utilize this medium to teach about immigration, race relations, prejudice, and other subjects explored by telenovelas.

One of the problems encountered in the execution and planning of this study is the lack of financial assistance and time constraints. A well-financed study can devote more time and resources to undertake a comparative research between audiences from different
parts of the world. Future research may also include mixed methodology with the inclusion of surveys and quantitative analysis. It is important to have a deeper understanding of the different audience responses not only to make the product more marketable in the international arena but also to deliver messages more efficiently.

This research makes an important contribution to the Latin American telenovela audience research through the exploration of a new territory, which is only possible through the medium chosen for the study. The Internet has made it possible to shrink the geographical borders and facilitate the formation of this global community. This new technology brings about new forms of communication that allow the participants to express their concerns in a free forum. In expressing their vision for the future of entertainment-education, Singhal & Rogers (2002) express that it should include not only themes such as peace, conflict mediation, and race relations, but also the utilization of different media, such as the Internet. There are many other possibilities for the use of the Internet. Development communication initiatives by governmental and non-governmental organizations might want to consider the utilization of message boards to further receive and give feedback regarding their projects. Utilizing the message boards to be aware of the concerns of the population, their views and struggles might help counteract the criticism that entertainment-education initiatives are vertical programs that do not involve the population in their decision making process.

The Internet can also serve as a vehicle to share knowledge. In a Freirian perspective, this knowledge should be an exchange, an act of dialogue that the Internet can very well perform. It might be said that the Internet is a medium restricted to the upper classes, requiring computer literacy and online access, which is certainly
something to be considered. Taking this into account, organizations should plan for the facilitation of Internet access to the population. Computers and Internet access should be available to community organizations, schools, churches and other segments of society involved in developmental projects. The use of the Internet will also allow for follow up and monitoring of the projects in a long-term basis.

Television organizations might also use the Internet message boards as a rich medium to investigate audience response. TV Globo did have a message board for the telenovela, as well as Telemundo. However, the message board on Telemundo does not use the threaded format, which makes it difficult to have the posts as a dialogue. The web site for the telenovela might also be used as a continuation of the educational process that is initiated by the telenovela. For example, in the Globo “O Clone” web site there are many additional sources of information regarding alcoholism and Muslim culture. Visitors to the web site can learn about the different Arabic words used in the novela and their translation, as well as having deeper explanations of the themes touched by the novela.

This research methodology collaborates to the practice of audience studies, with the utilization of the Internet and the discussion board as the background for the study. The study of the posts allows for the observation of the reactions and comments of the forum participants in their own words, through the analysis of the messages, and without the researcher’s interference. It helps to comprehend how they translate the telenovela message, how they help each other to clarify misconceptions and misrepresentations, and how they relate what they see in the novela into their lives and how they critically interpret the cultural content of the soap. The message writers are highly involved with
the telenovela, their participation in the forum attest to that. It is important to emphasize that the differentiated audience, fans of the telenovela, does not allow extrapolation of the conclusions to the general population of viewers of the telenovela. However, this limitation should not overshadow the significance of the study. The research results can be important to generate additional examination and inquiry efforts in an area where there is need of further exploration (McAnany & La Pastina, 1999).

This dissertation has an axiological philosophical approach where the values of the researcher are expressed, not only in the selection of the theme, but also in the theories that sustain the investigation. The theoretical framework for this research combines Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory notion of vicarious learning, self-reflective capabilities, and Freire’s theory of dialogue and critical thinking. These theories share a common belief that individuals and communities have the intrinsic power to bring change through self-efficacy and empowerment.

The utilization of the media as an educational tool has been implemented in Entertainment-educational programs, based on Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory model of vicarious learning. These programs are usually based on the dominant paradigm of development communications, which believes in the utilization of the media in the promotion of social change. On the other hand, Freire’s dialogical communication believes in interpersonal communication and community participation to accomplish change. Participatory strategies advocate including the needs and wants of the population in the process. Scholars that examined entertainment-education strategies have established the need of interpersonal communication in order to change behavior (Papa
et. al, 2000). And some evaluators of the participatory approach have also recognized the need of transmission of knowledge in the implementation of projects (Morris, 2001).

This study is an indication that it is possible to find a common ground in both theories and come up with a construct that will allow the utilization of the media as an important font of information dissemination, but also take into account interpersonal interactions, dialogue, and critical thinking. The online messages are related to the telenovela content related to Muslim culture, and the shared knowledge and experiences that take place in the forum can be analyzed as part of the construction of the social learning environment and the participatory communication. The viewers learn vicariously by watching the televised drama and by sharing their understanding and doubts in the message board.

Even though these theories are sometimes seen as opposite, in this research they are actually complementary. The intention here is not to mix Bandura and Freire and come up with a third theory, but it is rather to understand these theories in their essence and find a common denominator. At the heart of these theories lie their commonalities: the belief that individuals and communities have the intrinsic power to bring change through self-efficacy and empowerment.

The effectiveness of this construct is demonstrated in using these two theories to anchor this research. This new approach allowed for the elaboration of a proposed model that extracted the ideas of vicarious learning, self-reflective capabilities from Bandura’s social learning theory and the notions of critical thinking and dialogue championed by Freire along with their common belief in self-efficacy and empowerment.
Another essential component of the study is the utilization of the parasocial sub-dimension model suggested by Sood & Rogers (2000), in order to materialize the study. The parasocial theory helped in categorizing the messages in five sub-dimensions: affective interaction, behavioral interaction, cognitive interaction, and critical and referential involvement. These sub-dimensions facilitate the understanding of the relationship between the audience of the telenovela, embodied by the message writers, and the characters and the Muslim themes represented in the novela.

Results from the qualitative content analysis of the messages confirmed previous studies indicating that the sub-dimensions might be viewed as overlapping constructs. Many of the posts display different identifiable sub-dimensions. The messages reflect a layer of sub-dimensions that are interconnected and interrelated. However, it is possible to identify the messages according to their strongest characteristic, as it is shown in the study. The qualitative analysis let the intricacies observed in the messages be fully translated and presented in the research results.

Quantitative studies of parasocial interactions are conducted using psychometric scales to measure the strength of parasocial interaction between the viewers and TV characters. Future researchers might want to take this route in order to complement the qualitative work. It is also important to observe that research results might be different depending on the context of the study. In this particular study, the results were influenced by the theme chosen and the search mechanism utilizing the word Muslim, which made most of the messages relate to the topic discussed and by definition classified as cognitive interaction. Time and financial constraints also need to be factored into account in
analyzing the results. Further research should be undertaken to investigate if a more extensive study, perhaps a longitudinal study would provide different outcomes.

The model of investigation proposed here combines Bandura, Freire, and the parasocial interaction theory. It allows for researchers, development organizations, and governmental agencies to broaden their possibilities without having to be restricted to one theory. This approach is important to further develop the scholarship in reception and media effect studies, and development communication.

Figure 6.1: Model for theoretical framework
To understand the research results it is necessary to take the research context into consideration. The messages are a form of dialogue or conversation among the different posters. The parasocial sub-dimension behavioral interactions, by definition, is embedded in all the messages, since behavioral interaction is considered when viewers talk among themselves about the character, or think about the program when it is over. Therefore, the fact that the context in which the study takes place is a message board where participants exchange ideas, opinions, and questions, implies that a behavioral interaction is already taking place.

Another factor that needs consideration regarding the results of the study is the method utilized for the selection of the sample. Using a search engine provided by the web site, a search is conducted with the word Muslim in the subject of the messages. While this method provide an unbiased sample, which does not interfere with the general purpose of the study, it provides a sample that by definition is mostly composed of messages that express the sub-dimension cognitive interaction. Cognitive interaction is when an audience member pays careful attention to the educational content of a soap opera.

The results of the qualitative content analysis of the messages reveal that posters express affective interaction verbalizing positive and/or negative feelings towards the characters or the cultural thematic of the novela. Some express empathy for the characters and others show disapproval of the character’s behavior. Some messages are also vocal about the writer’s feelings towards the portrayal of the Muslim culture, sometimes condemning and disagreeing with it, other times being glad for it.
Messages commenting about the topic of women’s rights are a strong presence in the forum especially when this issue is portrayed in the telenovela. The posters often refer the struggles of the character to their own reality, and then to the struggles of the women in the world in general. Women who are denouncing the problem and speaking out against women’s oppression post the majority of the messages. The forum has a more visible male participation in the beginning of the novel, but it decreases with time and the later messages are mainly posted by women.

By exchanging their views, values, and ideas in a dialogical communicative manner, the discussion of the telenovela’s scenes also “raised consciousness” about problems of stereotyping, confronting preconceived notions of relationships, in the Muslim world, and the power structure between men and women regardless of culture or religion. In doing so, the participants create a social learning environment.

The different opinions voiced and exchanged in the forum expressing critical involvement verify that the message writers have thought about the educational content of the novel, in the case of this study the portrayal of the Muslim culture, and the repercussion of this portrayal not only among the Muslim community but also the non-Muslim. By thinking about the characters or the novel they are also demonstrating cognitive parasocial interaction. The dialogue that is formed with the expression of different values, experiences, and backgrounds, enriches the discussion and helps to form a learning environment.

It is important to note that some of the Muslim participants in the forum voice a similar concern to the Moroccan ambassador to Brazil, that the telenovela does not portray their country in a realistic light. The messages convey that the novela
incorporates different customs from the Arab world and sometimes confuses the viewers
as to whether it is a custom or a religious teaching. Even though Gloria Perez had a
consultant to help to elaborate the novela in order to avoid misrepresentation, careful
attention needs to be drawn upon a real characterization of cultures. The forum
participants can clarify their doubts and learn to differentiate what is culture and what is
religion, while the average viewer might not have the opportunity to further clarify their
doubts, taking the portrayal of the novela as accurate.

These bring us to the initial inquiry about the utilization of the Brazilian
telenovelas as a medium to disseminate knowledge about different cultures and customs.
According to Yoder, Horner, and Chirva (1996) one of the challenges of evaluating the
effectiveness of an entertainment-education initiative is the difficulty in attributing the
behavior change to the specific message. In the reception studies scholarship the same
problem appears. People receive many different influences and it is therefore quite
complicated to link the acquisition of knowledge or behavior change to the telenovela in
particular. However, the qualitative analysis of the messages allows the verification of the
posters’ opinion about their own learning of the Muslim cultural issues portrayed by the
telenovela. It is also important to say that this knowledge is further enhanced by the
interactions in the web site. Therefore, in the posters own words:

...the problem i have understanding about Arab culture (I've learned not to apply
all of Islam to this) is this crap about dishonoring the family, aka honor killings.

We have learned more about all the positive aspects of these cultures than we
possibly could have otherwise.

In fact, no question is stupid. Questions show that people want to learn. Questions
show that people want to clear up their own confusion or misconceptions.
Questions show that people are NOT making assumptions or swallowing everything they hear or see.

your one of the people who is really openhearted about islam and i really appreciate that. it feels good to know there are people like you who want to learn about it and see everything neutrally. u can see that there are women oppressed in every culture and every person has their faults. unfortunately not everyone is like you. there are alot of ignorant people who automatically assume that its the teachings of islam that allows those terrible people to commit their crimes.

I really enjoy knowing, learning and appreciating other cultures. I started to listen to Arabic Music back in early 90's, because of a friend. Thanks to this novela and forum and I've been able to re-introduce myself to this beautiful and enchanting music. Now my collection includes......Amr Diab, Tarkan, Natasha Attlas, Tony Mouzayek...................... and I'm still listening..................

But, then again, there's the factor of marrying into a particular culture. As we've learned on this forum, it's very often the various cultures that impose restrictions on women, not Islam itself.

Therefore one might say that the use of the telenovela as a medium to disseminate knowledge about other cultures might be one avenue to explore in the effort to improve cultural knowledge.

While these research results are limited to the population studied, it can nevertheless provide important insights about the international audience of the telenovela's fans. It also contributes to the Latin American telenovela's scholarship and proposes a theoretical model for future research.

Last year, while watching an interview in Brazil with a little girl that was training to be a gymnast, the reporter asked the girl to show some dance steps, and the girl promptly starts belly dance. It is certainly not possible to confidently say that the girl learned to belly dance watching “O Clone”, however, this telenovela might have introduced this dance to many of its viewers. The lasting effects of this telenovela are yet to be studied and the possibilities of research are infinite.
These men! THEY are the only ones who could divorce the women and the women have to stay married to them even if they don't want to and THEY are the only ones that can remarry them if they so choose? what if they don't want to remarry them?

Part of it is what you've grown up with.

Part of it is the customs of the country you're in.

And part of it is ignorance or misuse of the Koran which does state that women can divorce their husbands, too. Of course, if the women are stuck in a country in which they need the "protection" of a man to survive, forget it.

In Jade's case, she does have the option of not accepting the terms of marriage at the time of the ceremony, but that would bring down disgrace on the entire family and I doubt that anyone, even her beloved Tio Ali, would support her in that. Certainly not in the early years of this story. The family reputation would have been ruined, making it difficult to find spouses for other family members. This had been a fear of Latifah's for herself and, later, of Mohammed for the futures of their children.

In tightly knit communities, family reputations and the threat of social stigma are huge factors in controlling the behavior of individuals.

Remember, too, Jade is currently wrestling with the power that Said has over her with regard to Kadijah.
I think and I don't think it's really too far beyond understanding to see why it would be accepted by most women when it's what they've grown up with... realistically we who have been raised in our culture here would never ever be able to understand it fully... but for me the question is: why would a woman want to CONVERT to Islam knowing the restrictions that Muslim women face? I know that there are good reasons but I just can't imagine it.. especially if one were forced to move to the country that will enforce each and every restriction.. one of the things that I found terrifying in Clon was the fact that Jade couldn't even TRAVEL and leave when she wanted to.. not without permission.. I couldn't imagine that at all!!!!

Camelia

I agree with you on being puzzled about why a woman would convert to Islam with all of its restrictions. Having been raised a Catholic at a time when there were plenty of restrictions on women's freedom, to me it would be like "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire."

But, then again, there's the factor of marrying into a particular culture. As we've learned on this forum, it's very often the various cultures that impose restrictions on women, not Islam itself. For a basically religious woman, it might not be any different than it was for the millions of Catholic women who used to willingly become nuns. Now there was a restricted life! It's remarkable that, in the Sixties, when Pope John XXIII lifted the restrictions and ordered the nuns to leave off their habits to rejoin the world, they left the convent in droves. In effect, he singlehandedly destroyed the backbone of the Catholic Church.

Frankly, I'm pretty fed up with ALL religions anymore. There are other ways to communicate with your god or goddess and lead a rich spiritual life.

Re:: Why women convert to Islam

Author: (---)
Date: 08-22-04 18:52 PDT
Wow. good question. The thing is female converts to Islam find LIBERATION in the religion, they don't see it as jumping into a religion w/ restrictions. half of the restrictions you see in El Clon by the way is NOT Islam at all. Like the traveling thing doesn't have anything to do w/ Islam.

And there are many female converts, not just a handful.

I'm not a convert, so I can't explain it to you that thoroughly.

BUT Here's an article that a convert wrote: Read it.

When I Covered My Head I Opened My Mind
(by Shariffa Carlo)

As a non-Muslim living in Western society, the idea of modesty was not exactly foremost in my mind. Like all other women of my generation and mind-set, I thought such ideas were antiquated and excessive. I felt pity for the poor Muslim woman who had to "wear all that junk," or "walk around in bed - sheets" as I used to call it

I was a modern woman, educated and liberated. Little did I know the awful truth. I was more oppressed than any Muslim woman in the most culturally oppressive village in the Muslim world. I was oppressed not by an inability to choose my clothing or to choose my life-style, I was oppressed by an inability to see my society for what it really was. I was oppressed by the idea that a woman's beauty was public, and that lustful admiration was equal to respect.

It was when Allah guided me to Islam, and I put on the hijab, that I was finally able to step out of the society in which I lived and see it for what it really is. I could see how the highest paid women were those who exposed themselves to public display, like actresses, models and even strip-tease dancers. I was able to see that the relationship between men and women was unfairly stacked in the man's direction. I knew I used o dress to attract men. I tried to fool myself by saying I did it to please myself, but the painful reality was that what pleased me was when I was admired by a man I considered attractive.

I now know that there is no way for a person to know that he is dirty if he has never been clean. Similarly, I was not able to see that I was oppressed until I stepped out of the darkness of this oppressive society into the light of Islam. With that light shined on the truth, I was finally able to see the shadows that had been so obscured by my Western philosophies. It is not oppression to protect yourself and society; it is oppression to voluntarily throw yourself into the quagmire while denying it is dirty.
I am grateful to Allah that He allowed me to recognize that when I covered my head, I was taking away from people any means for judging me other than my mind, my soul and my heart. When I covered my head, I took away the incentive for exploitation based on beauty. When I covered my head, I made people respect me because they saw that I respected myself, and when I covered my head, I finally opened my mind to the truth.

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**thank you for the article**

Author: (---)
Date: 08-23-04 06:31 PDT

That's certainly another aspect and definitely filled with truths...western society's emphasis on the physical beauty is getting so out of hand and leading to anorexia nervosa and an overabundance of diet books and of plastic surgeries...

That statement "I was able to see that the relationship between men and women was unfairly stacked in the man's direction." was interesting...because if I had seen that out of context I would associate that with the Muslim world and not the western one of today!

And...it's true that it's quite difficult for us to differentiate between the rules governed by culture and custom and those governed by the Koran but that's why I love forums like these...people are generous enough and patient enough to explain when they're able and I love gathering bits of knowledge about an unknown subject....

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**Re: ..your welcome**

Author: (---)
Date: 08-23-04 21:04 PDT

These converts actually teach me a thing or two also, because before I didn't think like that either...

---

**Sensible!**

Author: (---)
That makes so much sense! As Mother to daughters, now out in the dating world it really makes sense. It's so true that our girls dress to attract boys. It has gotten out of hand, not just the lengths Westerners, specifically in the U.S. will go to obtain beauty, but the behavior of girls towards boys. Too, too often they do not develop real relationships before giving their bodies away. They try to keep boys and men through sex. Men don't learn that lasting relationships require commitment and work.

Re: how can muslim women stand it!!

Author: (---)
Date: 08-20-04 21:36 PDT

The question is not how they stand it, it's really why they stand it, because they don't have to at all. But this is a soap, so you know everything is scripted so they're not gonna have Jade say no at the ceremony, but she could. And if she did, there would really be nothing they could do about it.

If Islam is like what you're saying, and if I had to stand all that, I wouldn't be a Muslim woman. Trust me on that. The men aren't the only ones that can divorce, and a woman does not have to stay married or remarry if she doesn't want to.

A lot of that stuff is Arab and Middle Eastern culture before Islam. Arab culture mistreats women a lot and Islam corrected all that stuff, but Islam and the Quran is disregarded a lot and people stick w/ the culture. And they even play w/ the Quran w/ this marrying Zein for a day thingie. Arab Christians are the same way, like they are very strict, etc... I've even met some Arab Christian families that were a lot worse than some Muslim families in respect to women. It's not the religion, it's the culture. So actually another good question would be, "How do Arab women stand it?" Ya that's the question we're looking for.

Re: how can muslim women stand it!!

Author: (---)
Date: 08-21-04 09:19 PDT

From the most of the names listed, it seems that the women are the ones who are commenting on this, whereas the men watching and reading all this are silent. Could it be because ALL the men would secretly love to rule the roost in this way and by not posting their disgust with the treatment of women, they are secretly agreeing with it?
the problem i have understanding about Arab culture (I've learned not to apply all of Islam to this) is this crap about dishonoring the family, aka honor killings. I was reading a July issue in Time magazine and it was talking about that. There was a girl who had been raped and because she wasn't a virgin anymore her parents had her brother kill her. And then a 17 year old kid killed his mother and half brother because he SUSPECTED they were having an affair. This is taking place a lot more now in Iraq ever since the war because there really isn't any stability, plus a lot of judges will just fell for the members of the family and let the murderers go. But there are a few safe house for raped women to go but they can never go back to their families. Another thing that's bothering is all this stuff that's going on in Sudan, these Arab Muslims killing both Christians AND black Muslims. It's terrible. Of course, that's what happened during the Crusades, too. Anyway, I honestly wouldn't convert to Islam myself, I appreciate their modesty and the way the children are raised, but in some cultures it's very intense.

Jordan has a serious problem with honor killings, but the king and queen are fighting that pretty hard.

Yes u are beautiful !! And jade, I don't think she's muslim but I could be mistaken. A lot of bellydancers take middle eastern names for bellydancing. Is that your case?

is ........! Glad u like it. and thanks for the compliment!

where are u moving too?? good luck!
Re: ...yes that;s me..my muslim name...

Author: (---)
Date: 07-09-04 12:13 PDT

.... means "princess"

Re: ...yes that;s me..my muslim name...

Author: (---)
Date: 07-09-04 20:09 PDT

I'll still be in the same general area of Queens, perhaps ten minutes drive from my old apartment. But this is a co-op garden apartment. Very pretty. :)

Re: ...yes that;s me..my muslim name...

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-04 14:33 PDT

Yes u are beautiful ---!! And jade, I don't think she's muslim but I could be mistaken. A lot of bellydancers take middle eastern names for bellydancing. Is that your case ---?

-

Just saw the website!

Author: (---)
Date: 07-11-04 16:47 PDT

.../.... how captivating! It's a cool website, and you're a pretty girl. Looks like you're having a lot of fun. Lucky you! Thanks for sharing....

Re: ...yes that;s me..my muslim name...

Author: (---)
Date: 07-11-04 20:58 PDT

--- is a very pretty name. your muslim? and u bellydance too....CALIENTE! hehe. i bellydance as well :- (-). wow we have alot in common :-)

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Still trying to clear things up with Noehmia. I love his character now. He's good comedy relief. I loved how he had to explain to Latifah why Noehmia was so upset about being called a gallina. "Tio Abdul" would have thought this about her. haha I also adore how he and Latifah are still very much in love and making love whenever they can. I think that is just so adorable, especially for a non-Muslim to see this kind of affection in a Muslim marriage.

I can't wait to see Mayisa's response to Mel's boyfriend/bodyguard. And when the heck is Jade going to be smart and stop doing all these sneaky things in front of Said. and is she just not thinking about her daughter at all?! Apparently not because she thinks that she'd be able to have custody of Khadija. Hello, the little girls knows only one man as her father and Jade is going to take that away from her. Gosh, how selfish!!!!!!

omg dont get me started! i hate how they twist things around in this novela lool. ok first of all no arab man calls a woman a hen. goodness! no guy would be that stupid in real life.

yeah the love between latifaa and mohammad is really sweet, but believe me the misconceptions u see about muslims and how the men aren't good to the women and there is no love and stuff isnt true. i know that we always see stuff on the news about how arab men beat their wives, but its condemned in islam as something terrible. there are many men who are mean to their wives and many couluples who have bad relationships regardless of culture or religion.

just wanted to clear some stuff up, sorry for going on and on lol.

I'm confused.

Are you saying the misconceptions are in real life or in this novela? You said this novela twists everything. It seems to me this novela shows people as people. Some are loving and some are not. There's nothing twisted, biased, mistaken or misconceived about that.

When you consider what's been in the news every day over the past two and a half
years, I think that "El Clon" has put Islam and Arabic/Moroccan culture in a better light than any other medium anywhere else. We have learned more about all the positive aspects of these cultures than we possibly could have otherwise.

Be happy for that.

---

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 07:26 PDT

Tio Ali, who must have a doctorate in philosophy, presents the rational view and bends over backward to tolerate and support his family within religious teachings. He is admirable and presents many other aspects as well in a logical light. Even Abu appears to me not to be a fanatic within his own environment, just very literal and strict. However, the woman in a prison everywhere she looks aspect and more than one wife seem to me to be very offensive. No amount of gold or protection can make up for individual freedom and living in a state of fear. Poor prima who is in constant fear that her husband will take another wife. Overall, I think the novela presents the characters in a friendly yet realistic light. What I particularly like with the Moroccan characters is the sense of playfulness, innocence, and comedy. By contrast, the Brazilian characters, Yvetee excepted, tend to be on the dramatic side.

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Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 12:00 PDT

Kathleen, just because El Clon overall portrays Muslims/Moroccans in a bitter light than any other medium, does not, mean that it is enough. Jade has the right to expect more, this is 2004 after all.

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.../.....you are not the only muslim..

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 11:32 PDT

on this board.I'm a born Muslim and I don't see anything wrong or twisted in this novela this is A NOVELA.a fiction based on some research by the a very good author..she has taken diferent aspects of Islamic life and added her own imagination and made a novela..a beautiful one at that..
the charaters in this novela are fictional what they say or do are based on the truth but not the whole TRUTH..you can't deny that..
there are some things that ARE exaggerated,but then that is the whole concept of the
novela
that's why we are enjoying it so much...they are not insulting any Muslim countries, or muslim people & their believes...they are using Islamic costumes and believes and adding their own imagination.
I haven't been participating in this forum that much..but I can't help but notice that some posters don't like the way they are showing Islam in El Clon.
then why watch something that in your opinion is twisted or offensive?
regards.
-

thanks guys, dont get me wrong.....
Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 15:54 PDT
i love the novelas. and it is true that they portray muslims much better than any other show. i do love that about the novelas. i am moroccan and when i watch the show i see alot of things that aren't remotely having to do with moroccan culture. i know that it is a fictional story but for alot of people who have never been to morocco or ever been exposed to moroccan culture, this is moroccan culture to them. when i watch a movie or show about a foreign country that i dont know alot about i assume that the country is like its portrayed in the movie. i just thought id tell people how moroccan culture really is. i appreciate all your opinions on what i said. once again i wasnt being offensive or anything, el clone is my favorite show on tv :-)
It seems to me that quite a long time ago you said that you were born and raised here in America. That makes you an American of Moroccan descent, not a Moroccan.

I am an American of Irish descent. I am not an Irishwoman by any stretch of the imagination.

I was born and raised in New York. I was partly raised in Pennsylvania but that does not make me a Pennsylvanian. I am a New Yorker, pure and simple.

Please correct me if my memory does not serve. Thanks. :)

I'm Moroccan. And I do HATE the way they portray the culture and everything sometimes, but I get over it. The people on this phorum are intelligent, but numerous people have asked me silly questions about Morocco because they believe the novela word for word and then I get pissed, because I feel like they're misinforming. And they are. But whatever, everyone does it anyway. I got over it. And they do show positive stuff too, so.

And they did it all for the sake of the story. Because if they say that Said has to have Khadija, then that's a good storyline. If they portrayed it for real, then there goes the whole Jade/Khadija story. They do that in all movies.

But it's just annoying because people who were feeling animosity towards muslims cuz of 9/11 anyway, got to go around screaming: "Muslim women can't take their kids after divorce!"

Funny, I haven't heard anyone going around "screaming" that Muslim women can't take their kids after divorce.

You're making assumptions about other people, ..., that may be at the core of your
problem with defensiveness and over-sensitivity to the "stupid" questions that people ask in their desire to learn.

In fact, no question is stupid. Questions show that people want to learn. Questions show that people want to clear up their own confusion or misconceptions. Questions show that people are NOT making assumptions or swallowing everything they hear or see.

Think about it.

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**

Author: (---)  
Date: 07-03-04 18:53 PDT

good point ---. i really appreciate when people ask me things about morocco and islam. and infact if u or anyone else ever had a question, feel free to ask no matter how small or anything.

Author: (---)  
Date: 07-03-04 19:15 PDT

..., I'm not talking about people who want to learn, and ask curious questions. I'm talking about the people who had this novela raise their ignorance even more. And I've run into a lot of people like that. Quite a few. And that upsets me, it really does. It doesn't bother me if someone asks me a sincere question, I don't like attacking islam questions because they now think they are islamic experts because they've seen el clon. Once I was at my Brazilian's friend's house being attacked. It was horrific. I was so angry.

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**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**

Author: (---)  
Date: 07-03-04 18:51 PDT

ur really speaking my mind ---. thank u for that. yes the novela is really good and they portray muslims positively overall, but u know u cant blame us for feeling like we need to defend everything we can about islam and our culture because it is true that now a days people think "o muslim women are opressed" and this and that. when i watch on el clon how the women are forced to cover and how women cant keep their children and they're just married off and all the men go around having many wives like its something normal, i get mad. i feel like i need to inform people how islam really is and how life really is in morocco. i feel like islam is so misunderstood and i jump on edge everytime
Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 20:13 PDT

---, here you are pretending to be two people and you're saying discordant things to a forum full of people who have EMBRACED Islamic and Moroccan culture with love and understanding.

You're like the Catholic priests who used to tell people IN CHURCH that they would go to hell if they didn't go to church! That misplaced haranguing is called "preaching to the choir." Those priests should have gotten their rear ends outside of church grounds and looked for the Catholics who never went to church to threaten them with hell. Yes? In fact, this reminds me that, years ago, one of our parish priests was doing that preaching so much that he got a LOT of complaints from parishoners who were mad as the devil at him. So, one Sunday he "apologized" by telling the attendants at Mass how good they were. Of course, he was being facetious and snotty through the whole sermon--because he was a facetious and snotty man--but he was given hell for that, too, so he finally cleaned up his act and started treating people with the respect they deserved. He had to learn that he was an imperfect human being no better than anyone else.

---/--- you sound to me like you are very young. Well, I am getting very old. And I can tell you that NO CULTURE, NO PEOPLE, NO RELIGION IS PERFECT. Women all over the world are suppressed--dare I say it--even in some of the Muslim cultures that you try to convince yourself are perfect. Only God is perfect.

Look at Queen Noor of Jordan. A wealthy woman of great influence. She has more freedom than all of us put together. AND, she makes no bones about the fact that the suppression of women in Jordan, particularly with regard to "honor killings," is a terrible problem that she and her husband the king are striving to overcome. (I like him and her very much. Loved his father, too.) I have to love and respect her for that honesty and courage because such honesty is the only thing that will ever put an end to such crimes against girls and women. Denying the problem exists would not achieve that.

The great prophet, Jesus, cautioned his followers not to try to take the speck out of a friend's eye until they had removed the blinding beams in their own. Every time you say that you're "pissed off," or "annoyed" or "so angry" over people's questions or misconceptions, you're insulting the very people who are making an honest effort to learn and understand. Americans, by the way, who were grievously wounded by the horrendous deaths and injuries of 9/11. And, yet, in spite of that disgraceful crime by Muslims, we tolerant and open-hearted Americans are still willing to learn, to understand, to embrace Islamic culture. You don't want to be insulting to the very people who are trying to be friendly to you.
The hardest thing in the world is to learn to be honest with yourself. I think you're old enough and smart enough to start examining your own thought processes. I've said many times that you've done a lot of good when you answer questions that people ask. BUT, you're so blinded by your own prejudices and lack of experience that you turn around and undo that good in spades with your negative remarks which are the product of your negative thinking. Be honest with yourself. Moroccan culture and Muslim culture may be wonderful, but they're no more perfect than any others. It has been my observation that, in most cultures, wealthy women are free women. The farther away you get from wealth and/or cities, the greater the chance you have of seeing suppression in countries around the world.

There are Muslim women on this forum who I've come to dearly love as special friends. It never would have happened without El Clon, and this forum, and their gracious answers to our many questions. Not one of them ever got "pissed off" or "so angry" or "annoyed" at any of us.

I have been fond of you, and just wish you would stop that.

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 20:31 PDT

But I'm not talking about getting annoyed with ANY of you guys. I'm talking about my own experiences. I can usually tell when people want to sincerely learn, at least in person. The people I spoke about in my post were NOT trying to be friendly to me, hun. They weren't, unfortunately. I was actually really upset that day, because they insulted me, but I got over it and realized that friends like that aren't worth it anyway. And I did not ever say that my culture is perfect, arab culture is pretty bad because a lot of has not changed from before islam, like "honor killings". But it's true I do defend it the best I can, because people have to see the other point of view, I think. I believe my religion is perfect, BUT the people practicing it are the farthest from perfect. They are the ones that mess it up of course. WE are the ones that mess up Islam. The muslims. I do believe that only God and his Books, The torah, the bible, and the quran, are perfect. You don't have to tell me that. I don't say that Morocco or other countries don't oppress women, I say Islam doesn't oppress women. Everytime I post something, everyone seems to think I've said something else. I repeated it, I have never gotten mad at you guys. You are not understanding me.

I'm very thankful to the Americans who are still open-hearted after 9/11, because it's had to be. BUT not all of them are like that, unfortunately. Not the ones that physically attacked muslims or anyone that looked Muslim...

It's just that you don't understand what I'm saying.
It seems like I'm speaking a different language sometimes...
Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 21:09 PDT

... i completely understand u and agree with u and i want u to know that. we feel, or at least i feel like i know our religion and how wonderful it is but others cant see it because of the stupid acts of people who claim to be muslims. like whenever a man named mohammed beats his wife "omg those muslims" but if some "other" man did it hes just a bad guy. no one blames his religion.
--- your one of the people who is really openhearted about islam and i really appreciate that. it feels good to know there are people like you who want to learn about it and see everything neutrally. u can see that there are women oppressed in every culture and every person has their faults. unfortunately not everyone is like you. there are alot of ignorant people who automatically assume that its the teachings of islam that allows those terrible people to commit their crimes.
people have to understand that when we see anything on tv that depicts islam in a way that isn't true, we want to correct it so people can know the truth. this phorum gives us a chance to do that.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 21:24 PDT

I do apologize, because I know for sure, I am not eloquent. I can never seem to communicate or get a point across well. I always use the wrong words. Some of us were meant to be talented speakers...

I do usually have to go back and clarify what I said...
I guess if you misunderstood, it was cause I made you misunderstand. makes sense.
Sorry

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-03-04 21:09 PDT

Ah, now that's more understandable.

But you do have to specify sometimes, rather than make general statements that lead to misunderstandings.
I can understand that some people are not friendly, etc. Sometimes I used to get questions about Catholic practices that were amazing to me. But that was when I was younger and quicker to misunderstand myself, and take offense. I don't do that any more. As you say, such "friends" are not worth it.

If you're offended by someone's question or remarks, sometimes you have to stop for a moment, say that you're not quite clear on what they're asking, and give them a chance to explain their question more clearly. Very often people don't know how to phrase a question clearly in the first place simply because they're puzzled by what they heard or saw.

Several years ago there was a live discussion by satellite TV between an American woman and a Muslim woman. I wish I could remember what country the Muslim woman was in. At one point the American woman asked the Muslim woman why Muslim women always wore black. The Muslim woman got very defensive and insulted and denied that they always wore black, saying that they wore many colors just like other women do. That response embarrassed and confused the American woman. A few minutes later, a clip was shown of Muslim women walking on a city street in that country, and ALL of them were were black hijabs!! (Not sure of the spelling.) "There! That's what I mean," said the American woman. "They're all wearing black." "Oh," said the Muslim woman, "that's just being formal for outside in public. Inside, they wear all colors."

Obviously, no one here had ever seen Muslim women inside their homes in their regular clothes. Women in black is all we ever see of Muslim women in other countries (until El Clon, probably). That was the reason for the American woman's innocent question, but the Muslim woman, not asking for clarification of the question, had at first taken offense and caused embarrassment to the American woman for her honest desire to know.

Communication skills are so important, especially when discussing things that may be of a sensitive nature. It might be helpful to keep it in mind that some people just don't communicate well unless you ask for clarification.

**Re: some more misconceptions to clear up**

Author: (---)  
Date: 07-04-04 07:11 PDT

As I am understanding these discussions, we have cleared up that the setting of Marruecos has become a composite of all the area countries; thus, taking a woman's passport from her upon arrival on the soil, renouncing her three times, and not allowing her to take the children in the case of a divorce, and the gilded cage scenario in general would not be practised in Morocco--at least not ordinarily--is that correct? Remember about 10 years ago when political correctness reached its height and it was impossible
to label a villain from any country in the movies such that he had to come from Finland? Might I presume that this was the case with Marruecos?

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-04-04 10:29 PDT

yes things are different in morocco. a woman's passport is not taken from her when she arrives, she is allowed to call for a divorce, she doesn't have to wait for the man to do it, and she is allowed to take the children in a divorce i think. also rules have changed with the arrival of the new king and things are much better for women now, im not sure what the new rules are but i know that a woman can't get married before 18 now. so yes i think u summed it up perfectly, morocco is a melting pot for many arab cultures in this novela.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-04-04 17:15 PDT

My family is a little ticked off about the 18 years old thing. Because a family member of mine wants to marry this girl that's 17... go figure, it's not like he has to wait that long. I think she just needs special permission though. The kid is usually given to the mother after divorce in Morooco. It's like in America though, the kid decides, it could go either way. If the kid is young to decide, then that means it has to stay with mommy.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
Date: 07-05-04 15:23 PDT

Wow you guys I wasn't going to participate in this discussion just read all your comments but after finishing I have to say that I see all of you have really good points. I really appreciate our Muslim foristas clearing up misconceptions or giving us your opinion on how your religion is being portrayed on this novela. I'm glad we have you guys here to answer our questions. I also have to say that I'm impressed with how we argue about disagreements with class and no insults like on other forums.

Re: some more misconceptions to clear up

Author: (---)
i agree, i really love this forum because i feel i can state my mind and no ones going to
attack me. we can discuss our views and everyone respects each other. i really like that.
i love answering peoples questions too, about my faith and religion or anything.

Why can't the world be like our forum?

Author: (---)
Date: 07-06-04 09:44 PDT

What a lovely, intelligent group we are! I still love how Tio Ali and Abu fight and then
hug up. And Tio Ali and Albieri. Tio Ali is super.

some questions - bodyguard & Muslim customs

Author: (---)
Date: 06-14-04 14:56 PDT

I miss some episodes once in a while and I was wondering why Mel needs a bodyguard.
Did something happen?

Also, after watching the scene where Jade was applying eyemakeup and lipstick, it got
me wondering if Muslim ladies are allowed to wear such exotic looking makeup.

Jade looked beautiful in her hot pink veil today. Can they really wear such bold colors?
It seems a contradiction to me. Maybe that's Jades little way of rebelling?

One more question: In real life, is belly dancing common at parties and family
gatherings

Re: some questions - bodyguard & Muslim customs

Author: (---)
Date: 06-15-04 06:29 PDT

No specific event led to Mel's family deciding she needed a bodyguard, just a desire for
greater security. Kidnappings of the wealthy (or even the perceived wealthy) for ransom
is apparently a common crime in Latin America. Mexican actress Laura Zapata and one
of her sisters (both of them sisters of actress-singer Thaila), were kidnapped for ransom
I think last year or the year before. Since Mel is the granddaughter and daughter of two
prominent and very wealthy businessmen, her family felt that she might be at risk. I
think it would have been better if the writer had had the Ferraz family find out about
some other kidnapping and make that the cause for worry, rather than just deciding out
of the blue that Mel needed a bodyguard. There is a reason, though, that the writer
needs to get Xande into this part of the picture. If you have not yet seen the novela, you
will soon find out what the reason is.

As for the exotic makeup and brightly-colored veils, I recall reading somewhere that Muslim women are not allowed to wear makeup, but I do not know how accurate that is. I suppose it varies from country to country, and from family to family. Certain families are stricter than others. A lot depends on what your husband or father will allow you to do. Pay attention the next time there is a "party scene" in the novela.

Notice that Jade will be the only woman in the room not wearing a veil, and sometimes wears outfits that are rather revealing, even in mixed company, while all the other women are fully covered. We suspect that this is because whoever designed the scene wanted to draw attention to Jade as the main character. On the forum (or was it the last forum?), we've decided to explain this anomaly by pointing out that Said is a less strict husband than, say, Mohammed. He doesn't mind so much that his wife be unveiled, as long as she is indoors and the men who see her are relatives or trusted friends of himself or his host.

Also to remember when observing the dress of the characters: these characters are from wealthy families. Ordinary women in any part of the world, not just Morocco, would not wear the beautiful embroidered silks and expensive jewelry on a daily basis the way the novela characters do.

I have read that in real life, bellydancing, or rather "Middle Eastern" style of dance (it has various names), is what regular people, hosts and guests, dance at the parties, the way that people in the West might dance a waltz or any other dance. As for hiring a professional dancer to entertain, I hear that it is most common at weddings (again, whether or not there is a dancer and how covered-up she is depends on the strictness of the particular area). In the novela, however, there seems to be at least one hired dancer at every family get-together. How common this is in real life, though, we'd have to get one of the forum members who's lived in North Africa or the Middle East to tell us.

everything depends on the COUNTRY, FAMILY AND TRADITION.

there is so much misconceptions.regarding..

Author (---)  
Date: 06-15-04 10:53 PDT

Muslim women...  
they use make-up..they use revealing dresses..they drink..they dance..they wear bikini's..  
everything depends on the COUNTRY,.FAMILY AND TRADITION..  
it's the same in any Country..not all the Christians are the same..they are quakers.sp?  
Amish..that are very conservative,  
we won't see an amish woman dressed in a revealing cloths do we?  
what jade wears and her make-up is nothing unusual...even her use of the jewelery is very common practice.some women are decked in them from head to toe..even if they
are using hegab.
got to go..
if you have more questions, please feel free to ask.
....

Re: there is so much misconceptions.regarding..
Author: (---)
Date: 06-15-04 12:35 PDT

--- and --- - Thank you very much for your help. The tone of my post may have sounded judgmental but I was only confused. I really appreciate your insights and knowledge! I understand so much more now.
Thanks again,
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Re: there is so much misconceptions.regarding..
Author: (---)
Date: 06-15-04 14:42 PDT

That's one thing I love about this forum--the patience and generosity of the women here who know about these things and can teach us so much. I love it!

No ..you were not judgemental..
Author: (---)
Date: 06-15-04 14:55 PDT

I was in a hurry. maybe I sounded a little hurried lol...

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A husband's permission to
Author: (---)
Date: 05-20-04 05:46 PDT

leave the country???? Just curious as to why Jade would need Said's permission to get on a plane and leave the country.....is this a Moroccan law????

A muslim law..
Autor: (---)
Data: 05-20-04 08:27 PDT

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------, thanks for the response
Autor: (---)
Data: 05-20-04 11:17 PDT

n/t

you are welcome..I didn't go into..
Autor: (---)
Data: 05-20-04 11:43 PDT

details it is a stupid law..and I think we already discussed it the first time around.

----

Re: you are welcome..I didn't go into..
Autor: (---)
Data: 05-21-04 05:53 PDT

Hmm, i must've missed this topic since i missed the beginning of the original broadcast. So how would the airport authorities know if a muslim woman is wearing western style clothing?? Would the religion would be noted in the passport?? Of course, if it is muslim law, it must be obeyed, but i think it's somewhat cruel and demeaning to a woman. What if a woman were in a very abusive marriage?? Thanks, ---

Not so many years ago ...
Autor: (---)
Data: 05-21-04 06:32 PDT

There were laws right here in the good ol' USA that weren't much different. I had a friend whose grandmother, aunt, and uncle all had a big farm in Minnesota. When the uncle died, the two women discovered that they could not inherit the farm, because in Minnesota at that time (the early 80's, I believe), women could not own farmland. And until the early 20th century, wives were "chattel" under English Common Law (which is
the basis of the US system, too), which meant they were counted as possessions.

And if you read writers like Edith Wharton, you'll see that societal norms also worked to keep women dependent on their husbands. So we really aren't that much more "advanced" socially.

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**Edit Wharton and Muslim law..**

Author: (---)
Date: 05-21-04 08:44 PDT

I read two of M. Wharton's books... the THE AGE OF INNOCENSE is one of my favorite movies.
M Wharton heroine's do struggle for independence...
now shell-bell..I will tell you how it works
you need a written document from your husband,
my sister lives in US..
a few years back she went to Iran for a visit..when it was time for her return, we heard that she couldn't leave the country ..BECAUSE..she didn't have her husband's written permission.
her husband lives here in Us ,and we all had but forgotten about this stupid law.
somy brither-in-law had to send his passport and his permission to W-DC ,,because of the non existing relationship between US & Iran..they didn't have a consulate, so the Algerian Consulate used to do all the necessary arrangements.
now if you are divorced or a widow..you have to show them proof.
it is a hassle..that's what it is.

 ----

**Divorced, widowed, how about single?**

Author: (---)
Date: 05-21-04 10:01 PDT

----,

So a divorced or widowed woman can travel of her own will as long as she has documents to prove her status? What about a woman or girl who has never been married? Does she need the permission of her father? Wouldn't a divorced woman, one who has been "devuelta," i.e. returned to her family, need her father's permission to travel?

I was under the impression that in the countries where the rules are stricter, a woman always had to have a male relative as her guardian, be it her father, uncle, husband, brother, or son, so I did not think that even divorced or widowed women could travel freely. Am I wrong?
Re: Divorced, widowed, how about single?
Author: (---)
Date: 05-21-04 10:28 PDT

the rules has changed..Iran wasn't one of those strict countries when I used to live there.but still you needed your guardian.husband's permission to travel..we used to have A "permanent " one for travels.
yes a girl under age needs the father's written permission.
but a divorced woman had to show the right document. no need for a guardian. as much as I remember.
as I said I don't know much about the laws and rules right now...but I know that they are more strict.

Re: Edit Wharton and Muslim law...
Author: I (---)
Date: 05-21-04 12:20 PDT

What a hassle is right...... your poor sister had to go thru all that just to come back to the U.S. I appreciate all your valuable info and explaining this to me. Somehow it still doesn't seem fair that a woman should have to be subjected to this, but if it is a law, then one must obey or pay the consequences. All this is so interesting and informative.
Thanks so much for all you bring to this forum!

you are welcome ----some of us..
Author: (---)
Date: 05-21-04 13:41 PDT

are in this unique position to shed some lights on the ,El clon's story lines regarding the Muslim laws.and make it more understandable..

Re: Not so many years ago...
Author: (---)
Date: 05-21-04 12:27 PDT
Really interesting, ---. I guess women have come a long way, but maybe not far enough. I'm glad I didn't live in those earlier times...i don't think i would've been happy in that type of environment......knowing my personality, most likely I would've joined the suffragette movement in my neighborhood....lol!! Thanks for your comments.

Re: Not so many years ago...

Author: (---)  
Date: 05-21-04 17:23 PDT

Hi, ----.

Actually, the suppression doesn't even go that far back as the suffragettes. There were plenty of things that my generation was "not allowed to do" or places we couldn't go, and I remember meeting an older woman once, a highly respected and well-known book editor, who was not allowed into the Princeton Club in New York City for a professional awards dinner because she was a woman. She said it was the most humiliating experience of her life to be turned away at that door. If I'm not mistaken, it was only in the 1980's that the Princeton Club was forced to open its doors to women guests.

Re: Not so many years ago...

Author: (---)  
Date: 05-24-04 06:11 PDT

----, the whole topic of "Equal Rights" is such a pet peeve of mine. I get so upset when hearing about inequality regarding gender, race, religion, or whatever. I know we have come a long way since our ancestors had to struggle with such issues, but you would think in the 20th and now 21st centuries that we would be so much more ahead, but I guess not. What really depresses me is reading about the places in the world that are still where we were many years ago. Thanks for your input.

Re: A husband's permission to

Author: (---)  
Date: 05-22-04 17:01 PDT

I don't believe that's a Muslim Law. It's actually. It's the laws made up by the Middle Eastern machos. That has nothing do with our actual religion. But laws like that are made to suppress women...(sigh)

---
As a first time watcher of this novela, there's something I've been asking myself: am I missing something in Lucas? I know this is not your traditional soap opera (thank God!), if it was I wouldn't be watching, but does our hero have to be such a weakling? I tried to be lenient in my judgement of him right after Diogo's death. I know he was disoriented and out of sorts when Jade came to Brazil. But for heaven's sake, the girl made everything possible for them to be together. She was the one who was on 24/7 watch at Latifah's house, and still managed to sneak out several times to use the phone, go Yvete's house and arrange for them to stay there. All he had to do was show up!!! Of course, we all know how that turned out.

Now Said, on the other hand, I'm liking more and more. He had to have his suspicions regarding Jade's virginity (or lack there of). When he asked his uncle about the punishment for the man who dishonored a woman, you could see how he quickly discarded the idea of having Lucas punished when he found out that Jade would be punished as well. As I saw him cut his own arm and tell Jade that his own sin was even bigger than hers, I found myself almost screaming at Jade through the tv. How can you not see how incredible this man is? Heck, I fell in love with Said!

Am I alone in this?

~

Honey, I agree with you completely. Said is the man. He loved Jade enough to go against everything to save her. She just doesn't see it right now. but don't worry, without giving away anything, you'll discover lots of surprises as the story unfolds. this is only the beginning! I still like Lucas though, he's still hot!

many times in this novela you will root for one or the other..and again as many times you will despise one of them!
that's the beauty of this novela..there is no black or white.everything and everyone has as many shades to his personality..as those colorful scarves in the Medina..
Re: The real hero

Author: (---)  
Date: 04-26-04 11:38 PDT

I felt deeply, incredibly sorry for Said on his wedding night with Jade. And saw aspects of kindness in him afterward. But I learned to hate him, too.

As --- and others have said, these characters are like real people with faults as well as virtues.

But I don't think you can like both Lucas and Said. Sooner or later you will be in one camp or the other.

I like Said too!

Author: (---)  
Date: 04-26-04 13:20 PDT

This is my first time watching this novela but I've read summaries before and I always wonder what did Jade see in Lucas? since he doesn't really fight for their love. Now Said truly loves her but she doesn't appreciate that.

Re: I like Said too!

Author: (---)  
Date: 04-26-04 19:21 PDT

I still think they're both hot. It's ok, I'll take them both! ha ha! Remember Lucas is really young, and he's insecure, he gets confused. He tried to fight for her but it was too late. Said is a real man if you ask me. but whatever, that's soap operas!

A question about a Muslim wedding night:

Author: (---)  
Date: 04-26-04 23:06 PDT

is everyone really waiting outside the door to see the "bloody" sheets? (I still think it's pathetic that they expect women to bleed all over the sheets) I would think that maybe they'd be in their own houses waiting and then the sheets would be taken sheets? (I still think it's pathetic that they expect women to bleed all over the sheets) I would think that maybe they'd be in their own houses waiting and then the sheets would be taken
**I was wondering the same thing...**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-27-04 09:43 PDT

Are they overdramatizing the whole situation with the bloody sheet or is this true to life?

**Re: A question about a Muslim wedding night:**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-27-04 10:58 PDT

Many years ago I read an article about such waiting at the wedding. May have been some country like Turkey though I can't for the life of me recall. At any rate, in many countries (Poland, for instance) wedding celebrations can last three days. Yep. There are plenty of people at the house to be waiting for that sheet or handkerchief. Seems to me I saw an old movie with such a scene as well.

**Re: A question about a Muslim wedding night:**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-27-04 11:15 PDT

I can speak from my own experience -- at the Muslim weddings I have attended -- that this practice is not observed.

But I could tell you stories... Brides (mostly older) who have had friends and family outside the bedroom doors on the wedding night, banging on the windows and making a racket while the newlyweds tried to get some privacy. The women laugh when they tell the stories, but I always shudder! Fortunately, no visible 'proof' was required afterwards. It is always assumed that a good girl from a good family -- especially ones who have always lived at home until marriage, and are married at an early age -- are of course virgins.

A little more amusing are the stories I've been told about what lengths the bride and groom will go in order to foil the nosey friends and relatives and consummate their wedding vows in peace and quiet.

It has always been my personal feeling that to take something so private as this and "parade" it around for others to observe and comment on is a contradiction in (my understanding of) Islam.

I think in some countries -- particularly the ones that are more strict and focused closely on 'family honor' this tradition may still take place.
As a Muslim... I can assure you... this pathetic display of waiting for bleeding... is not a requirement or part of religion. But, unfortunately, there are some close minded people that do this... or make it a part of marriage rituals. It is more of a cultural thing than Muslim. Like in my culture I am supposed to be wearing a red dress rather than white like Latifa and Jade did.
And, I think since Jade let the suspicion of her virginity out in public. That is why Tio Ali had to prove his dignity and let Nazira witness the virginity. Incase of Latiffa... no one stood outside her room it was done the next day in the morning., and only women looked at it.

Unfortunately for Said, timing was not in his favor. I think had Lucas and Jade not met prior to the plan to wed Said and Jade, she probably would've been happy with him and grown to love him....what's not to like about Said?? He's a handsome guy, beautiful green eyes, treats her like a princess, strongly motivated to become a successful businessman......but again, unfortunately for Said, her heart already belongs to someone else, our darling Lucas. Poor Lucas......he's suffering from many "issues", especially since losing Diogo. Now he finds it very hard to go on without the security of his twin. Always trying to figure out what Diogo would do in a situation and how Diogo would've come thru for him....you can't help but feel sorry for him. I think if Diogo didn't die, perhaps Lucas would have the strength and determination to go after Jade, regardless of the consequences. But, alas, it wouldn't be "Cloneland" then, would it???

I also like Said, though my favorite will always be Lucas. As far as Said & Jade, we already see Jade scheming that she'll start taking jewels from Said and use them to escape. Irrespective of whether she had fallen in love with Lucas, I'm sceptical of whether she ever would've fallen in love with Said. Said was very restrictive on what she was allowed to do and she's rebellious by nature. She still wanted to go to school and he wouldn't permit it. I think part of her falling in love with Lucas had to do with
the power and freedom Lucas yielded to her.

Although I always enjoy Jade's acting, she was the least sympathetic of the main characters to me. I always saw her as the domino that caused everybody else's suffering because she stupidly married Said when she was in love with Lucas.

---

Re: The real hero
Author: (---)
Date: 04-27-04 06:24 PDT

I really admired what Said did to save Jade. I also felt bad for him at his wedding. Jade was really unhappy. I loved her acting job so much that I sort of despised her for it. Why not fake a little bit of happiness for Said's sake. It's his wedding too. But I'm sure they are used to have unhappy brides since these things are pre-arranged.

Re: The real hero
Author: (---)
Date: 04-27-04 11:56 PDT

I always thought said was a hottie, and Lucas a dud. I also never liked Jade much. Sure, she's a beauty to look at, and her clothes and belly-dancing were worth admiring... but she treated Said so coldly. She'd always look at him with that defiant frozen face. He did everything he could to win her over, but she'd hardly crack a smile at the poor man. No wonder he turns harsher towards her later on. But Said is "THE MAN" as far as I'm concerned.

Said (SPOILER)
Author: (---)
Date: 04-27-04 16:54 PDT

It looks like writer Gloria Perez really did her job well on this novela. I think we are meant to like Said and feel sorry for him during this time of his life with Jade. Our opinions of him may change as time passes (although mine never did, I still liked Said towards the end), but right now he is supposed to be a very likeable character.

If I were in Jade's shoes, I would have loved Said and forgotten Lucas, but that's not the way the novela was written. I think most women here would cherish being loved by a man the way Said loved Jade, and if he was a bit restrictive, it's to be understood.

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because it was his culture and background. But he was in fact much less restrictive than other Muslim men would have been; how many Muslim men (or men of other cultures which insist on virginity) would have done what he did on his wedding night?

**Re: Said (SPOILER) I agree**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-28-04 12:02 PDT

I've always loved Said. I think he's hot. He really loves Jade and would do anything for her. He knows she doesn't really love him and he feels the challenge. Later on he changes out of frustration because imagine spending so many years with a person whom you try so hard to please, and in the end they never really want to be with you? It must be difficult for him. If I were Jade, I would forget about everything and be content with Said. he's hot. he he!

**Re: The real hero**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-28-04 19:56 PDT

Said is REALLY nice. And you can help him get over his restrivenness if you're nice to him and Jade is not. But she didn't love him...

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**Re: Will muslims protest?**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-11-03 18:57 PDT

Since Sultanna Freeman has to reveal her face for her photo ID will she and other muslims think it unfair that jewish men are not asked to remove their yarmulke when issued a driver's license? I ask this, because the kippah only covers the back of the man's head. I have seen several photo ID's of my male jewish friends with their yarmulke's on. It does not cover the color of the hair.

**Re: Will muslims protest?**

Author: aida L. (---)
Date: 06-11-03 19:30 PDT

There is absolutely NO comparison!!! The reason for the rulling was for the security of the public in general. I live in Florida and I certainly agreed with the ruling .... The woman was acting quite overboard. She even a few years according to the newsreports had to take a mug shot for some law she violated and with her children in her "own"

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words cross out the faces in the cereal boxes saying they are yucki!! What kind of problems do you think these kids will have in the future!!! Quite sad don't you think!!! Pick your battles I say!!

---

Let's not get into this nonsense... NT

Author: (---)
Date: 06-11-03 19:40 PDT

NT

Re: Will muslims protest?

Author: (---)
Date: 06-11-03 19:47 PDT

---, I think these are two different things. In her case, she was covering her entire face, making it difficult to identify her. The purpose of the photo on a driver's license is to identify that the person carrying the license is in fact, the person whose vital statistics are listed on the license. Because of this, Driver's Licenses are legal proof of identification in the State of Florida, just as valid as a U.S. passport. Sultaana Freeman will be allowed to cover her head if she wishes, just as a Jewish man can cover his head if he wishes. The Muslim women I have known do not cover their faces, only their heads, so I really don't think this is going to be an issue.

Re: True ---, but

Author: (---)
Date: 06-11-03 22:58 PDT

both veils and yarmulkes are considered religious clothing. The muslims might see that as a loophole to debate the matter.

THE JUDGE'S RULING IN THE FLORIDA MUSLIM WOMAN'S CASE...

Author: (---)
Date: 06-06-03 14:34 PDT

JUDGE: WOMAN CAN'T WEAR VEIL IN ID PHOTO

By MIKE BRANOM, Associated Press Writer
Friday, June 6, 2003-

A Florida judge ruled Friday that a Muslim woman cannot wear a veil in her driver's license photo, agreeing with state authorities that the practice could help terrorists conceal their identities.
After hearing three days of testimony last week, Circuit Judge Janet C. Thorpe ruled that Sultaana Freeman's right to free exercise of religion would not be infringed by having to show her face on her license.

Thorpe said the state "has a compelling interest in protecting the public from criminal activities and security threats," and "having access to photo image identification is essential to promote that interest."

Assistant Attorney General Jason Vail had argued that Islamic law has exceptions that allow women to expose their faces if it serves a public good, and that arrangements could be made to have Freeman photographed with only women present to allay her concerns about modesty.

"Nothing is more important than making sure that our people are safe, and (Thorpe's) good logic in making sure Floridians continue to be able to be safe is very, very important," Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist said Friday.

Freeman, a convert to Islam previously known as Sandra Kellar, started wearing a veil in 1997. She had a mug shot taken without the veil after her arrest in Illinois in 1998 on a domestic battery charge involving one of twin 3-year-old sisters who were in her foster care.

Child welfare workers told investigators that Freeman and her husband had used their concerns about religious modesty to hinder them from looking for bruises on the girls, according to the police records. The girls were removed from the home.

---

**Wow!..... n/t**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-06-03 15:34 PDT

...n/t

**Re: Wow!..... n/t**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-06-03 16:20 PDT

---, this doesn't mean she can't wear a veil over her head, what it means is that she can't cover her face so that it's unrecognizable. This is her photo, the way she originally appeared on her driver's license:
The State of Florida later revoked her license because she refused to take a new photo showing her face, and she sued the State. The judge's ruling says that she can't cover her face. It doesn't say that she can't cover her head.

"wow" means surprised...

Author: (---)  
Date: 06-06-03 20:09 PDT

... I was afraid that in our ultra-"politically correct" country, I feared the judge would be afraid to rule against her. I said "wow" because it didn't work out that way -- I am very pleased with the decision.

There will probably be some outcry with an "un-Islamic" spin. Still, the law is clear... and the judge ruled correctly.

I have absolutely no patience for people who try to break the rules, no matter what the excuse. As I said in an another post on this topic last week, I personally find this type of complete covering a bit extreme, and this woman's checkered past just adds more questions to her motives for covering to start with.

I wonder if her lawyer plans an appeal.

Re: THE JUDGE'S RULING IN THE FLORIDA MUSLIM WOMAN'S CASE...

Author: (---)  
Date: 06-06-03 17:10 PDT

From the moment I heard about this woman, I was suspicious of her motives. I even posted a statement wondering if she had a criminal history. Then lo and behold....later on, it was found out that she did! I now predict that this woman will re-surface again in some kind of a brush with the law. It'll be just like Rodney King. Let's wait and see..... Bravo to the judge for her logical decision.

Re: THE JUDGE'S RULING IN THE FLORIDA MUSLIM WOMAN'S CASE...

Author: (---)
Very interesting use of religion to cover up your bad behavior!

Good. I'm glad she lost her case.

I found the following article on the internet, giving an explanation of the Muslim calendar, followed by a list of the Muslim holidays. I thought it was interesting, so I decided to share it with all of you.

(---, if any of this information is incomplete or incorrect, please add any necessary corrections).

****

Islam is a universal religion founded in Saudi Arabia by the Prophet Muhammad, following the first revelation of the Qu'ran to him by the Angel Gabriel in 610. The Muslim holy scripture is the Qur'an. Muslim holy tradition is also reflected in the Hadith. The Muslim creed is: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God." Muslims recognize the one Deity to have a multitude of names and attributes. They pray 5 times daily facing Mecca. Muslims also attend Mosques for prayer, Qur'anic readings, and Qur'anic interpretation on Fridays. Muslim denominations include the Sunni, the Shi'a, and the Sufi. The main difference between the Sunnis and the Shi'ites relate to the recognition of different successors to Muhammad. Sufis are the mystics of Islam.

The Islamic year is a lunar year, not grounded in the solar year. The Islamic year and Islamic months begin at the first sighting of the New Moon. Islamic days begin and end at sundown. In calculating the beginning of the year and the months, some Muslims use the sighting of the New Moon at their own location; other Muslims use the sighting of the New Moon in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, because Saudi Arabia is 8 hours earlier than North American Eastern Standard time, some Muslims will observe the holiday on the day before the date celebrated here.

New Year - The First of Muharram marks the new year. The date fluctuates (in the Gregorian calendar) from year to year as it is based on the Islamic lunar calendar.
Ashura is celebrated on the ninth and tenth month of Muharram. The word ashura means "ten" and is a time of fasting, reflection and meditation. Jews of the city of Medina fasted on the tenth day in remembrance of their salvation from the Pharaoh, and the Prophet Muhammad pledged he would fast for two days instead of one in this same remembrance, but he died the following year and so never fasted as he had hoped.

For many Muslims there is joy in commemorating all of the wonderful events traditions say occurred on this day, including: Noah's ark came to rest, the Prophet Abraham was born, the Kaaba was built. Among Shiite Muslims, it is a day of special sorrow commemorating the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson Hussain and his followers at the battle of Kerbala in Islam's first century. It is commemorated in Shiite communities with reenactment of these events and is a time of mourning.

Mawlud Al-Nabi is the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. It occurs on the twelfth of Rabi Al-Awal of the Islamic calendar. Speeches are given about the life of the Prophet in gatherings, and dinners are held. This occasion was not celebrated in the early times of Islam and is therefore unevenly celebrated today, with great and festive celebrations in many Muslim countries (i.e. Egypt and Turkey) and none in others (i.e. Saudi Arabia).

Isra wa Al-Miraj - Laylat Al-Isra wa Al-Miraj ("the night journey and ascension") commemorates the journey of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Jerusalem, his ascension into the seven heavens, and his return in the same night. These events acknowledge that all the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) have one and the same God as their source. In this night, Muslims believe, the Prophet was instructed to establish the five daily prayers in their current form. On this night, Muslims believe, Muhammad prayed together with Abraham, Moses and Jesus in the area of the Al-Aqsa mosque.

The rock from which he is believed to have ascended to heaven to speak with God is the one seen inside the Dome of the Rock. Isra wa Al-Miraj as it is sometimes called is celebrated on the twenty-seventh of Rajab of the Islamic calendar.

Ramadan - Month of fasting Believers abstain from food, drink or tobacco from sunrise to sunset, and abstain from intimate relations. The beginning of the fast starts at dawn Sahar and the end is sunset, Iftaar when a meal is enjoyed with family and friends.
Laylat Al-Qadr ("the night of power.") falls on one of the last ten days of Ramadan on an odd numbered day (such as the twenty-third, twenty-fifth or twenty-seventh). In the Qur'an this night is said to be equal to one thousand months and on this night the prayers of the sincere Muslim are certain to be answered. Muslims pray throughout the night seeking Allah's glory.

Eid Al-Fitr The Feast of the Breaking of the Fast. Just as festivity becomes the atmosphere when the fast is broken each day at sunset, happiness becomes doublefold when the month of fasting is finally completed and the Eid Al-Fitr is celebrated.

The most elaborate dishes are served at large banquets to which relatives and friends are invited. These colorful celebrations are the climax of the sense of fulfillment characterizing a month of fasting and hardships, increasing the bonds of connectedness among humankind and between humankind and God.

Eid Al-Adha ("The Feast of the Sacrifice") commemorates Abraham's willingness and obedience to sacrifice his son Ishmael to God (and God's mercy in substituting a lamb for Ishmael). This feast is part of the Hajj, and takes place on the tenth of Dhu Al-Hijja of the Islamic calendar. For those on the Hajj and for many others the day begins with the sacrifice of an animal in commemoration of the Angel Gabriel's substitution of a lamb as Abraham's sacrificial obligation. One-third of the meat is given to the poor, with the remainder shared with neighbors and family members.

This holiday is then celebrated in much the same way as Eid Al-Fitr - with good food, gifts for children and general merrymaking.

Rabi Al-Awwal commemorates the Hijrah ("migration") of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Medina, and marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar in history (622 A.D.).

Yom Arafat falls on the ninth of Dhu Al-Hijja, when people on the Hajj are assembled for the "standing" at the plain of Arafat (in Mina near Makkah) during the Haj. Muslims around the world gather at the local mosque (masjid) for prayer in spiritual solidarity with those at Arafat.
Laylat Al-Baraa has been translated as "the night of repentence." (Laylat means night). It is the night when forgiveness is granted to those who repent. Muslims believe it is a night when God is setting the coming year's course for each person. It is therefore a time when one asks for God's blessings as well as for any specific request.

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**Re: Muslim Holidays**

Author: (---)
Date: 12-26-02 11:47 PST

"...as far as I know those are correct dates. But I wish Berry was around to confirm it. It was interesting for me too, because most of this are according to the Sunni's Calendar...the Arabic countries!! The month of Muharram, is the month of mourning, not celebration for the Shi'at. No wedding or festivities on this month specially on Tasua and Ashura days...
---

---

**---, what happened to ---?**

Author: (---)
Date: 12-29-02 20:17 PST

I hope she is O.K.

---

**---I have no Idea..I hope..**

Author: (---)
Date: 12-30-02 09:21 PST

Everything is well with her. I have no way of communicating with her, the only thing I know is that she lives in MV near LA.
---

Thanks ---, NT
so yesterday when zein realized that jade had not gone to fez with leo, it seems interesting and really nice how he was supporting her decision even though he loves her...im not sure if she had money enough for two tickets...but i can only assume that it was he who purchased them (i think it was implied)...well i just thought it was such a sacrifice for him to provide jade with a place to stay in fez and to help her even though until that moment he thought she had gone off with leo...now that's love... i wanted to also comment on samira...ze roberto is willing to convert to be with her even though it seems like he doesn't really know what that means, and samira when her mother's happiness was at stake refused to go along with their customs...i realize the whole independence thing but...i find it unfair and hipocritical that samira would tell roberto that he has to convert to be with her when her lil but doesn't follow the customs of her familiy.... i though lucas looked pretty dainty fighting...hehehe...he threw a 'sucka' punch... somtimes the dialogue is so redundant...leo waits on lucas to find out where jade is and when lucas realizes (because leo tells him) that jade is not with him he demands leo to tell him where she is....hello? would leo have been waiting for lucas and chased after him (even though lucas saw him) if jade was with him? sheesh... i do like the changes maysa has made, she seems to really be coming to terms with the reality of what her life really is... okay escobar is a doctor/scientist and he doesn't realize what is happening to his son?howcan he be so ignorant to think that clarisse is 'only running to him when she needs him', did he already forget about the financial trouble he left her in when he fell for alicihna? what an idiot!!! when i saw him just standing there in the middle, i thought he is truly a lost cause....
Can you imagine spending 18 years with Escobar? That man is so insensitive that he used every excuse to avoid Nando and his problems. It was left to co-workers to persuade him that it was his fatherly duty to go. Poor Clarice!

---

Re: just a few comments....

Author: (---)
Date: 12-04-02 22:39 PST

It bothered me that Zein didn't say anything about Leo...after all there's this guy who looks exactly like the other except younger and Jade had been staying with him????? Are the wheels in his head not working? Yeah Lucas did look funny, had no idea what the hell he was doing...disappointed in him, his fight against Leo was so much better. Escobar is just hopeless and he's one of those guys will never see the light about themselves, even Leonidas's parenting skills looks good compared to him.

I think Samira wants to be an independent muslim woman and not a matt to be to

Author: (---)
Date: 12-05-02 12:41 PST

stepped on! Have you noticed Latiffa never got her two maids like it said in her contract? She mentioned it more than once to Mohammed but he always came up with some excuse!

21st Century Muslim Update?

Author: (---)
Date: 11-05-02 16:29 PST

Here in the States, polygamy is not allowed regardless of how the Mormons behave in Utah or whatever goes on in the hippie communes in Oregon. Can you believe it? I'm amazed about the subcultures we have and how people beat the government by creating a so-called religion that will entitle them not only to a tax shelter but also the freedom to quote their "Book" to get what they want, even if it infringes State or Federal laws. Tough luck!

Can someone update me on how common it is for Muslims to have more than one wife when they live abroad? When I saw Said with Ranya and Jade at the mall, I became really curious about the polygamy issue in Brazil or here in the States, i.e., when Said brought his 2 wives to Brazil, do the government care about him having 2 wives? If it were in the States, how will the government treat this family? It would be interesting to
see how he’d fill out the US Census Report. Perhaps Said wouldn’t apply for US citizenship because he might only be interested in creating a business empire, have investments to secure his money in US dollars, etc. and live happily ever after in Fez.

That is a very good question!!

Author: (---)
Date: 11-06-02 17:57 PST

Hope somebody can answer you soon.

Re: 21st Century Muslim Update?

Author: (---)
Date: 11-07-02 14:28 PST

well, and this is just my opinion. said got married in fez, where it is allowed to have up to 4 wives. there is no documentation about their marriages in the us or brazil, etc....but since they all live under the same roof, i think the law would probably consider them as roommates. i dont know how the law goes there but im pretty sure said can afford it. besides he's an investor, it's not like he's trying to get a job at burger king....lol.... you know when it comes to rich people they are welcome anywhere, no matter what their religion, habits or customs may be.

i know it sounds biast, especially for a country that prides itself for equlity but thats how it is.....:(

Re: 21st Century Muslim Update?

Author: (---)
Date: 11-07-02 14:32 PST

oh, also i think that in that case either jade or ranya would have to go to the police and file a report that he has married both of hem, with proof of course....this if they lived in the united states.....i think....

Muslim womens names, Help Please?

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 17:34 PST

Hi,
My sister in law is having a baby girl, I have 2 boys, and this is going to be the first baby girl of the family.
We are looking for a name for her and will love to get help from all of you.
Thanks in advance.

---

**Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 17:55 PST

try these names here!! :0)

http://carlospaz.com/elhincha/odalisca.htm

**Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 22:03 PST

I like the name yasmine or Jasmin..or Jamillah..which means "beautiful"

**Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 23:18 PST

I love the name Solange.

**Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?**

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 06:04 PST

Fatima
Dounia (I think it means world)
Nadia
Malika
Amina
Farah
Nawal
Fedia
These are the names that I like. I have a friend of my and these are the names of the women in her family.

**Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?**

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 10:09 PST
Here are some more.
I don't think this are Arabic names!!
mostly Persian:
SURMEH...MARYAM......MALEKEH......FATTANEH
SANAZ......FARIDEH......FERYAL....FLORA
SANAMBAR......NEGAR.......SHAHLA....SHAHRZAD
MINA.......SHILA......SHAMS......SUDABEH
NILOOFAR.....YASAMAN.....GOLY.....PARI....
PARVIN......GISOU......BARAN......ZARI....
SHIRIN......SHOHREH......GALEH...GILA.
---

Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?

Author: (---)
Date: 11-03-02 00:51 PST

Here are some muslim names:

Aisha
Aliyah
Amal
Amina
Asiya
Dalia
Farah
Fatima
Hala
Khadija
Lamese
Maha
Maleeha
Manal
Maryam
Mona
Nadia
Rania
Saba
Safiya
Sana
Samira
Shireen
Soraya
Yasmine
Re: muslim womens names, Help Please?

Author: (---)
Date: 11-03-02 00:29 PST

Solange is not a muslim name!

Muslim First-Ladies meeting

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 05:58 PST

Sexta, 1 de novembro de 2002, 10h11
Primeiras-damas árabes se reúnem para tratar da situação da mulher

As primeiras-damas árabes, esposas ou irmãs de dirigentes de países do Oriente Médio e do Magrebe, vão se reunir nos próximos domingo e segunda-feira, em Amã, para discutir os desafios que enfrentam as mulheres daquela parte do mundo. "A cúpula visa, em primeiro lugar, a melhorar a situação das mulheres no mundo árabe e mudar os conceitos errôneos sobre as árabes e muçulmanas difundidos depois dos ataques de 11 de setembro contra os Estados Unidos", declarou a porta-voz da reunião, Suzanne Afanéh. As participantes também farão um apelo para o fim das guerras no Oriente Médio.

A cúpula será precedida, no sábado, por um seminário de especialistas que analisarão o informe 2002 sobre o desenvolvimento humano no mundo árabe publicado pelo Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (PNUD). Esse informe, o primeiro do tipo consagrado exclusivamente ao mundo árabe, traz um panorama pessimista do desenvolvimento dos recursos humanos no mundo árabe e assinala que a situação das mulheres árabes em muitos setores é muito inferior a dos homens.

A publicação do informe foi recebida com reserva por várias capitais árabes. Segundo o PNUD, mais da metade das árabes são analfabetas e as mulheres só ocupam 3,5% das cadeiras nos parlamentos árabes. Entre as participantes do encontro estão Suzanne Mubarak, mulher do presidente egípcio, Hosni Mubarak; as mulheres dos presidentes do Líbano e do Sudão: Andrée Lahoud e Fatma al-Bechir; e a irmã do rei do Marrocos.

O secretário-geral da Liga Árabe, Amr Mussa, que apoiou a realização das cúpulas anteriores, chegará este sábado em Amã para participar da reunião.

http://noticias.terra.com.br/mundo/interna/0,5502,Ol65933-El294,00.html

Re: Muslim First-Ladies meeting

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 18:25 PST

Agradece muito para a notícia! Seria realmente amável se senhoras mais primeiras eram unir-se neste encontrar. Nós também necessitamos o apoio de todos os líderes no mundo.

Thanks a lot for the news! It would be really nice if more first ladies were to join in this meeting. We also need the support of all the leaders in the world.

---

Want to try and save a Muslim woman's life?

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 07:55 PST

I heard about a Muslim woman, Amina Lawal, from Nigeria, who is to be stoned to death for having had a baby out of wedlock. As soon as her baby is old enough to stop nursing, she'll be killed. She's to be buried in sand up to her neck...leaving only her head exposed...then she'll be battered with stones. This could take hours. When I first heard the story, it left me chilled. Then yesterday, someone sent me an e-mail, that Oprah did her show on this topic, and offered an address on her website, where people can petition the Nigerian ambassador to try and stop this barbaric plan. Anyone who's interested can read more about it on www.oprah.com

---

Oh my God and I though this was only in

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 08:20 PST

Novela Land. I guess it never stops to amaze me how bad some countries have it and/or how good we have it. I say we right to the Nigerian Consulate to save this poor women.

Oh God that's horrible!
Thank You for the info Mika
---

Thank you. Yes, the same thing happen

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 08:25 PST

a couple of months ago with another woman and I wrote an email to the Nigerian Ambassador, I think that because of the letters she was saved. I can't believe people are so barbaric (sp?) nowadays. I mean I know that we do horrible things to each other all the time, but this? Do these people even have feelings? I really think is time for people to stop using religious beliefs to oppress others or better yet people need to adjust their beliefs and get rid of those beliefs that only serve to destroy... I am sorry but I have
come to the conclusion that organized religion is the reason behind all our animosity and unwillingness to live in peace.

---

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 10:30 PST

religion is why we have been fighting wars since the beginning of time. remember that john lennon said in his song imagine, to imagine no religion to live in peace, among other things of course, but i also believe that religion started it all.

---

You can count me in

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 08:44 PST

All done. Thanks for that information. I got goose bumps all over I feel for all these women. God bless them all.

---

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 10:24 PST

i heard about this months ago and even thought that she had already been stoned to death....i also thought that something should be done. when is it going to stop? why dont they let women choose their own religion? it not only makes me feel mad, but also tied....im afraid we're just going to witness this stoning without being able to save this poor woman....it's sad. imagine how many things are being done to women all over the world and we can't do anything for them.....how depressing.
i'll sign the petition anyway. thanx ---.

---

Nigeria

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 10:52 PST

The radical fundamentalists have set up a theocratic state governed by Islamic law in this northern province of Nigeria. The problem, however, is that the national government is secular and controlled largely by the Christians in the south. There are ethnic divisions too in addition to the religious. Last I read, the national government has promised to stop any execution, but if they do so, it's going to set off a civil war between Christians and Muslims. So, the solution they (meaning everyone involved) seem to be trying is just forget about it and maybe if nobody does anything it will go away. Haven't heard anything recently about this so maybe its working?
Here's the Oprah Show link

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 18:10 PST

oprah.com/tows/pastshows/tows_2002/tows_past_20021004.jhtml

Please e-mail this link to all the people in your e-mail address book.

Thanks --- for posting this message in the Forum. A couple of years ago I also sent a petition to the UNO requesting help for the women under the Taliban regime. We know the rest of the story but there's still far more work to do everywhere. We just need to spread the word and help each other because any crime against a man/woman is a crime against all of us. By lending a hand we can also help ourselves.

--- and ---

Author: (---)
Date: 11-01-02 19:42 PST

--- thanks for bringing up this issue.....a letter was mailed under my name. And Marysol, thanks for posting the link. I hope that these atrocities stop once and for all.....It's so barbaric.....PLEASE EVERYONE SEND A LETTER TO SAVE THIS HUMAN BEING........

I signed the petition about a month ago

Author: e (---)
Date: 11-02-02 07:30 PST

Thanks for bringing it to the forum for attention.

to the muslim clon fans....???

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 20:11 PST

I might be wrong, but I thought that I read something when trying to learn about the prophet's wives (after the one who died), that they also bickered and fought among each other. and that seeing this, the prophet then limited the number of wives to 4 since he already had 16. Please, forgive me if I misquote or have interpreted something wrong..

..here is the thing...if what i just said is true, then how can Abdul say that in the past wives got along, when even the prophet's wives had their issues?? I mean, he even divorced one if I am not mistaken!!
am I wrong? please correct me!

**muslim**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 10:00 PST

---
This is what I know: when the Profet (s.a.w.) was 24 he married his first wife Khadija (she was 40 then) then she died and he married a total of 13 wives (when he was 49 till 63) being Ayesha his most beloved one. And yes there are stories about domestic disagreements between them. No wives in the past didn't get along either, because it's human nature to get total attention from your husband.

--- --- ---

**Re: muslim**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 10:03 PST

Thanks ---!!!
someone should give a bood to Tio Abdul about this!! :0)

**Re: muslim**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 10:30 PST

I agree... he is tooo much, ugly ill-mannered man. But believe me... he is a kitten compared to all fundamentalists running some middle-eastern countries right now, that's the sad part.

---

:0( nt

Author: (---)
Date: 10-31-02 10:50 PST

nt

**Influence of the El Clon on Understanding the Muslim Cultures**

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 09:23 PST
I am amazed to see the influence of this novela on non-Muslims in teaching them the Islamic culture, music, dance, language, and traditions. This could be a result of the unfortunate 9/11 events which has led the non-Muslims to try to better understand the people from Middle Eastern societies. I have moved to the states 27 years ago from Turkey and I have never seen such interest in the Middle Eastern culture until this year. We grew up with this culture and it seemed normal for us. I am happy to see so many people take interest in the music, traditions, and the folklore of the Middle East.

This year, there seems to be a great interest in taking up belly dancing all over the world. I read an article in the Time magazine last week regarding the latest craze about belly dancing which you may find interesting. I am sure that stars like Shakira has played a key role in introducing the beauty of belly dancing throughout the world. I also know that the Turkish singer Tarkan is popular in the Spanish-speaking countries. He also has introduced belly dance moves in his new look this year through his latest CD: Karma.

Middle Eastern dance form is as esthetic and holistic as it is misunderstood. The Belly Dance is a spiritual connection between mind and body and offers a total experience, a sense of well-being, joy, freedom and most importantly, is a celebration of the femmine soul and inner spirit through movement.

I am happy to see such interest in the Middle Eastern culture. I enjoy reading the postings.

---

Hi ---!

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 09:31 PST

I've been studying bellydancing now for a little more than 2 years. It's a hard dance and takes a long time to learn well since western bodies aren't accustomed to moving that way. In any case, I was interested to hear you are from Turkey since I just started learning the Turkish and Gypsy styles of dance....very different...a lot of karsilama's and other unique rhythms....I'm esp. hooked on the gypsy styles which fuse spanish and indian elements.

---

Thank U----

Author: Angel (---)
Date: 10-30-02 11:45 PST

I am Colombian and I am very much to the Music, the dancing, the culture and more. My two best friends are Colombians married to a turkish and Pakishtan men respectively. I see how different they are but in a great way and I get invited to their parties and just love them.
Also proud to say that Shakira is Colombian from a libanese descendent. I am also glad of the interest on the culture.

Congrats to you and all the Muslums in the forum

---

Re: Thank U----

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 16:18 PST

for your kind thoughts

Thank you ---

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 21:56 PST

I really enjoy knowing, learning and appreciating other cultures. I started to listen to Arabic Music back in early 90's, because of a friend. Thanks to this novela and forum and I've been able to re-introduce myself to this beautiful and enchanting music. Now my collection includes......Amr Diab, Tarkan, Natasha Attlas, Tony Mouzayek..................... and I'm still listening..................

Khadiha the little monster...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 08:49 PST

I generally root for Khadiha...she's just trying to get her parents back together. I admire her zest. But whoa......yesterday I almost gasped! She might have gone a bit too far by snatching those fabrics right out of Ranya's hands! And that moron Said just stands by, letting her get away with it! If I were Ranya, I'd ask for a divorce! Who'd want to live their life competing with such a step-daughter?! Every waking moment of life would be sour!

Doesn't Khadija ever learn....

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 09:01 PST

Doesn't she ever get tired of the same old refrain...much oro...inshala!!!! Come on girl, can't you see how your mother is suffering for taking that path! You've got a good brain, use it!

In any case, I hope she winds up with the chubby kid and he makes her work for a
living. It will be really funny if she loved him madly but he gave her no oro inshala.

Re: Doesn't Khadija ever learn....
Author: (NY) (---)
Date: 10-29-02 09:06 PST

Oh not don't curse Karthija, she only taking her mother side. I love the way she makes Ranya life miserable, the sameway Ranya and her sister make Jade life misarable and Khadija too if she lets them. As for her love of gold that is the way she raised, and Tio Ali and Zoraide approve of her expression.

yes, but unfortunately....
Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 13:00 PST

ranya is her father's wife. kadija had no right to do what she did. i dont like ranya either, but kadija is a little girl. she needs to be taught that she has to show respect for her elders nomatter who they are.

lol
Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 11:21 PST

You're right, that's all she ever says. "mucho oro, inshala"...ENOUGH!!!

Re: Khadija the little monster...
Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 09:30 PST

-----how funny...wishing that Khadija ends up with the chubby kid! His name is Duda, isn't it? What kind of a name is that?! In Spanish, it means "doubt"...ha,ha! If she marries him and has his kids, she'll have a lot of little doubts. Ha,ha! Or she can call him "Howdy-Duda". Why does he get invited to all the parties anyway?!

Re: Khadija the little monster...
Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 10:05 PST

That DUDA has to go!!!! He is one ugly kid!!! Little Khadija is being the little spoiled brat that we love. Even though she is spoiled she is LOYAL. I LOVE THAT ABOUT HER.
Duda gets invited to all the parties, because his father is a shareholder in Said's company.

She blames Ranya for the unhappiness in the family. If you remember, Khadija didn't mind her dad having a second wife in the beginning. She's just upset because she doesn't understand what's happening. She's been very clever in getting her way with Ranya. If Ranya wasn't such a "big" baby; she'd just ignore Khadija because kids outgrow their jealously when the step-mother is nurturing and caring. But we know better than that. Ranya doesn't like Kadija either. They'd be on each other's throat competing till the end! LOL!

She really dislike khadija's behavior towards ranya...i mean like diana said...she was happy about said getting a second wife...she is only upset now because she thinks ranya is taking her father away from her mother...i dont see why they dont sit her down and tell her the whole truth about lucas...i realize she's young but...jade cant continue being this loving person in her eyes when she was willing to gamble her future with her daughter in exchange for lucas...ranya is just frustrated and she is completely
powerless...i think the reason she argues back with khadija is because khadija says things that are true that noone else is willing to admit outloud...like how said is still in love with jade and the power jade still has over him and how ranya will always be number two.

Re: khadija should know the whole truth

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 16:04 PST

Ranya tells Khadija horrible things, forgetting that this is a child. Ranya also insults Jade to Khadija, over and over again and rubs it in that she can change the house, etc., etc., to put Kadija in her place. But Khadija is No. 1 in her Daddy's heart, in Jade's absence. Ranya? I have yet to see a scene where Said is truly loving with Ranya. Did I miss something?
But even when the baby was born, he was celebrating the baby.
---

Said really loves his children!

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 16:33 PST

Ranya unfortunately hasn't been able to get in his heart like Jade. Ranya knows this and she should be happy that she has a nice husband and enjoy her baby and forget about vengeful thoughts. She can't make Said fall in love with her because he married her in spite.

Ranya needs to grow up and understand that children will be children. She shouldn't get at the same level at Khadija's. Ranya's the grown-up and needs to set the example. She can always buy whatever she pleases because she's not in a budget when it comes to money! Why argue about fabrics! Just go shopping and buy whatever she wants! Better yet, get online and buy some nice outfits!

Re: khadija should know the whole truth

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 16:34 PST

I KNOW....I SORT OF FEEL SORRY FOR RANYA BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING TO HAVE A PEACEFUL MARRIAGE. YOU'RE RIGHT, SHE SHOULD NOT STOOP TO KADIJAS LEVEL. BUT THAT WAS HORRIBLE THE WAY SAID TREATED RANYA WHEN SHE HAD HER BABY....POOR THING,
I think they use mid-wives to deliver the babies

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 18:10 PST

Although in this soap the mid-wives were the female relatives around.

I couldn't believe Latiffa was the mid-wife for Ranya. She had 2 kids but she was at the other end of the delivery; it's quite a different story. I think these women, including Jade, were far luckier than most Westerners. It seems that Cesarian are not practised in their culture. And God forbids if they ever need one! This is a soap, right?

Re: khadija should know the whole truth

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 18:39 PST

You are so right. I hadn't thought of Ranya not ever knowing how it feels to be really loved. And on top of that Said could get tired and say (4x) I divorce you and she will be gone with the wind. She should control that temper. But she was sweet at the beginning.

Re: Khadiha the little monster...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 16:40 PST

"duda" means worm in Arabic?! So that's two strikes against the name, cause in Spanish, it means "doubt". So he's a "Doubting Worm". You know how people say "I haven't a doubt in my head"? Well if he married Khadija, and then he died...she could say "I haven't a Doubt in my bed." Boooo! Okay, okay...bad pun...somebody stop me!

I think the little worm has a crush on her...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 16:44 PST

He's always teasing her...like pulling her hair in the playground.
BUT IS HE MUSLIM?

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 16:49 PST

KADIJA CLEARLY LIKES HIM AND EVERYONE CAN SEE THAT BOTH KIDS TEASE EACH OTHER....THE GIRLS LOOK MUSLIM BUT HE DOESNT. MAYBE SAID DOSENT CARE THAT MUCH LIKE MOHAMMED? I BET IF SAMIRA HAD BEEN TALKING TO A BOY AT A PARTY LIKE THAT AT THAT AGE, HE WOULD HAVE SCOLDED HER.....WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I get the impression that he despises Khadija.

Author: (---)
Date: 10-29-02 18:16 PST

He doesn't appreciate her values. For example, he doesn't understand why she'd have to support a wife, (let alone, dress her in gold!) clearly a Western culture value.

Amin, on the other hand, wouldn't think of his wife making a living. I think the writer wanted to show how the values are instilled in the children at an early age.

There's always a "rotten" apple. That was Jade in her generation. Now is Samira's turn in this generation. Someone has to rock the boat!

The worm totally likes her

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 08:52 PST

No way...the worm has a crush on her and big time! Otherwise, why would he want to hang out at Khadija's house all the time and watch her dance? The last thing boys that age want is to hang around with girls doing girl things unless either they like them or they float the other way. And the teasing is just his way of getting her rilled up and getting a reaction...like pulling her pigtails in the playground. Boys are silly!

Lolol!!!!!!!!!!! n/t

Author: (---)
Date: 10-30-02 09:26 PST

Jade: Don't do as I act...do as I say

Author: (---)
I know she was trying to help the situation, but I found it very funny that Jade was giving Samira advice Zoraide gave to Jade-- advice Jade has never really followed. Jade has never avoided conflict like Zoraide told her to...instead she tries to be sneaky and winds up making bad compromises that get her even into more of a mess.

I think Samira realized this and that's why she really wasn't listening. Why would she want to wind up like Jade...who hasn't gotten anything she wanted.

In any case, I know she was trying to be helpful, but Jade should worry about fixing her own life before she gives others advice. :-) I hope Samira manages to resist all the pressure thats coming against her and she has no role models or other support to help her. She needs a friend like Telminha!

---

outside her family. The young people she meets are the ones in her school who don't visit her at home. And, worse, she does not have jewels to sell if she wants to be on her own.

---

First off: Hi! I'm new!

All right. To the subject matter:
I have met a number of muslim women here in my country (venezuela) and none of them wear the veil. I'd say that its use depends on the level of traditionalism the family has in respect to the Coran, if Samira knew more muslim families living in the west, she'd realize that matter can be discused wisely...
The problem is: her family is heavy on muslim law, and I don't think they can change their views that easily, she'd have to "work them" to convince them that not wearing the veil is an actual option.

What I think samira needs is libian friends... they are more relaxed. ^_^
Shame on her! Mohamed should slap her silly and then make her eat some kus kus (or something). Not to wear a veil! Who does she think she is?? My god, what's the world coming to, women without veils... well i never!

Re: about the veil thing...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-25-02 20:58 PDT

Quesito...I suspect that you're Fidel Castro......

Mika, you're so smart!!! nt

Author: (---)
Date: 10-25-02 21:37 PDT

nt

hahahahahaha t/n

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 07:58 PDT

wemd to jo mamma

Re: hahahahahaha t/n

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 15:50 PDT

What people are failing to realize about the veil thing, is that in their world there is no other option, a woman who throws down her veil is a disgrace, b/c in their customs a veil is a beautiful thing, a thing to be admired. The way some people are jsut saying, she should say no is not realistic.

I wouldn't mind wearing a veil in a bad hair day! nt

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 16:29 PDT

nt
I think I look awful in a veil because

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 16:44 PDT

I can't even find a ski hat that looks flattering on me so I opt for a band just to cover my ears and I freeze my head when it's breezy on top of the mountain. Vanity first! LOL!

I have an oval shape face and for some reason I can't wear hats either. Perhaps is how I think I look but I don't want to look any worse. LOL!

Some women look good in hats, like the late Princess Di. Other women look good in veils, like Nazira. Some women look ugly with the veil, like Ranya's sister (isn't she ugly? She's mean and ugly; terrible combination!) I think Karima looks uglier with the veil, too.

I'm also glad I don't have to wear one, except when my hair looks really awful!

By the way, I don’t criticize the veil. I do think it takes a lot of courage to wear the veil when you don’t really have to. I mean, not all muslins wear the veil. I heard Carlos Ponce’s (the singer) wife is Muslim but she doesn’t wear a veil. I wonder whether it’s OK for him to have other wives. I’ll get in line! My selfishness will go away in a second. He’s so cute and seems like a really good family man. LOL!!! That’s a joke, of course!

Remember when we had to wear hats...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 18:27 PDT

all the time, and we Catholics had to wear a veil to attend mass on Sundays? I miss the hats. My face looked better with a hat on.

---

Not all Muslim women wear veils...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 20:57 PDT

specially when they are out of their Countries but i encountered a young Arab girl on the plane to Europe...she was with a young Arab man. we thought they were husband and wife, but later found out they were cousins and were going to an Arab Country, she was coverd from head to toe, she even had gloves on. her face was coverd too. she had one slit for her mouth to eat.
and her head was as covered as Leo was in that black thing, the eyes were hidden behind that tule!!!
she was seating behind us. then she started talking, and i was amazed, she was very educated and was attending I think UCLA .. she spoke perfect English .. but what I couldn't understand was why was she so covered up? was it her choice? or did she have to do it? having a father like mo perhaps? how the heck did she attend school? I had known that some women are always behind Purdah .. but even I a muslim born had never seen anything like it and in US of all the places. that was too much, I had this urge to look behind me to see how the H*** would she manage to eat?
so Jade's veil is nothing. it is flattening .. specially the ones she wears or Nazira or Latifa wear ....
the real thing is an ugly black cover, that is something that I would never ever wear.
sorry for the long post, it's Saturday and I have nothing to do .. lol ....

---

Re: Not all Muslim women wear veils...

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 21:10 PDT

---, I like reading your postings ..... it's like opening a window "into a different fascinating world" - When, I was attending college there were girls wearing veils but only covering their hair no their faces. "El Clon" is making us share part of our culture isn't?

Yes we are ----but honestly>>

Author: (---)
Date: 10-26-02 22:04 PDT

...covering the head is nothing !!! covering your whole body is hard.
I haven't been back to my country for 23 years
but those who have talk about how they have to cover their head. and body ... but lol ..
Iranian ladies are very creative, they can make it so fashionable.
and to think that in my youth I used to wear mini jupe" skirt" .. it was so short!! that one of my aunt's used to tease me and tell me have you forgotten to wear your skirt again:) and nobody would even look your way! Iran was an Islamic country, but very modern! we used to go to the imperial club and wear bikini's .. lol .. to go to the pools!!!!
and now the men and women have to go to separate pools and when they go to the sea side . they go to separate section and the women have to be covered like Latifa was !!!! and we used to wear bikinis? how can we think it's the same country?
I'm never going back. let me remember it the way it was not the way it is!!!!
it's a good place for mohammed to visit, lol, he will like it :)
My daughter brought back a black burka from Pakistan. We had seen women wear this garment in different colors, and the area for the eyes was crocheted in the same color yarn. My daughter modeled the garment for relatives and their response was a shocked silence--something we did not expect because we had seen it a little more often. By the way, I saw men eating in the streets but not women.

---

for sharing your life experiences with us. I could understand you not wanting to visit.......it's like the part of the world went back in time.....bikinis and now covering up.......not just clothing there are more issues right? ----- I feel for those people that live in a country where freedom does not exist.......not even to choose how to dress.

Yes, that's right...at one time, Catholic women had to wear a chapel veil or hat to church. If you think about it, the veil goes back for centuries...and not just Muslim women had to wear them. Again, Catholic nuns used to wear veils. Brides wear veils to this day...even in America. The Blessed Mother is never painted without a veil... Hassidic Jewish women and I think Orthodox Jews also have to wear a "shmatta". I might have spelled that wrong. But the point is, the Bible says that the hair is a woman's crowning glory...a beauty asset. That's why a modest and respectable woman covers her beauty, so as not to sinfully entice a man to be filled with lust. Well, me personally....I don't think my long stringy hair would drive a man to lust...so I'm safe!

thanks for reminding me,we had,or have something called Chadoor,,it covers the whole body, the more conservative muslims wear them.they are mostly in black, but the face is always open..but they can cover the face if they want, but it is not a must!!!
I had never seen a BURKA even in Holly places until this year with the Arab girl on the plane, and of course Leo and Lucas had them on on El clon...lol... or maybe my memmory is failing me!

N.

**Muslim pray**

Author: (---)
Date: 08-25-02 11:30 PDT

can anyone tell me how many times a day do the muslims make their prayes ? 5 times ? and what time of the day ?

**Re: Muslim pray**

Author: (---)
Date: 08-26-02 09:21 PDT

I think it is 5 times. In my Arabic class I used to watch them during our break. They pray to the east. They are pretty much programmed to do these prayers. I remember we had to call some of the members back to class after the break.

**Re: Muslim pray**

Author: (---)
Date: 08-26-02 14:31 PDT

The first of their prays is in the morning before sun rise but I don't know the rest...

---

**Re: Muslim pray .......**

Author: (---)
Date: 08-26-02 16:08 PDT

it goes like this >>>>
morning before sunrise, two RAKAT... it means two time.
Midday and afternoon each four RAKAT...
Evening prayers three Rakat..
the ASAHA the last prayer of the day...four Rakat.
I hope this helps,
---.

Re: Muslim pray ......

Author: (---)
Date: 08-28-02 14:52 PDT

Man that is a lot of praying. I thought us Catholics over did it. I still want to know about the 78 virgins the men get when they die. What do the women get? I feel that we should get more because we have a monthly visitor and we give birth. Oh man now I have sinned, I have to go to confession. LOL

to all muslim fan...what did tio...

Author: (---)
Date: 08-19-02 20:13 PDT

ali mean about the 78 virgins waiting in paradise? and the rivers of milk?
also, where can one buy a Quran???

Re: The Qu'ran can be ordered.

Author: (---)
Date: 08-19-02 21:40 PDT

---:
You can order a Qu'ran at either Waldenbooks, B. Dalton or barnes and Noble.

--- ;)

Author: (---)
Date: 08-20-02 09:15 PDT

In the muslim paradise you will find rivers of waters, milk, and wine... I used to ask my grandma how come? isn't it wine forbidden, and she would reply "Allah compensate us for what we did not do during our life on earth".... About the virgins, it is said between 70 to 100... what you want me to tell you on this one.....no comments.
---

Re: ---??

Author: (---)
Date: 08-20-02 10:23 PDT
So what is heaven for us ladies? Do we get 70 male virgins to delight us?

---??

Author: (---)
Date: 08-20-02 11:31 PDT

La...we wish....

---

Re: ---??

Author: - (---)
Date: 08-20-02 11:50 PDT

so each man gets 70 virgins??? dammmmm! and isnt the muslim paradise same as christian or other religions??

About Muslim women...

Author: (---)
Date: 08-10-02 09:04 PDT

I am confused about Muslim married women...why can Jade and Ranya dress the way they do, but Tio Ali's wives dress the other way? Does anyone know?

I'm not muslim but I'll take a guess....

Author: (---)
Date: 08-10-02 16:02 PDT

I'm thinking tio Ali's wives are older women, more traditional, and they just dress that way. Jade and Ranya on the other hand are more hip, they travel, they are young, and they like wearing things a little bit more modern.

Re: I'm not muslim but I'll take a guess....

Author: (---)
Date: 08-11-02 13:11 PDT

I agree with Minerva, thats probably the reason...also i guess said doesnt mind.....cuz if
he did he would say something....

**question for Muslim viewers re 3rd divorce**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-27-02 17:30 PDT

Ali seemed to me to be saying that the Koran provided a loophole to the finality of the third divorce and, in essence, instructed men to have their wives marry and divorce another man so they could marry again.

But in the translation of the Koran that I have (see previous message), I found this passage:

Surah II, 230. And if he hath divorced her (the third time), then she is not lawful unto him thereafter until she hath wedded another husband. Then if he (the other husband) divorce her it is no sin for both of them that they come together again if they consider that they are able to observe the limits of Allah.

It seems to me that this is more descriptive than prescriptive. In other words, it seems to fit, say, Elizabeth's Taylor's situation. She married Richard Burton, divorced him, married another, divorced him, then remarried Burton (at least I think that was the sequence). But she didn't marry the "in-between" guy so she could marry Burton again; it just happened.

Also, if Jade has to re-marry Said after divorcing Zein, doesn't that mean that she has the option to say "no"? I remember that in the discussion about this divorce, Said said she had a chance to say "no" when they married but didn't.

Forgive me if I have misunderstood what I have read. I realize that it is hard to accurately translate sacred texts, and that Muslims accept no translations. But, since I can't read Arabic, I have to rely on the English translation.

---

---I like to help you understand>>

Author: (---)
Date: 07-28-02 00:30 PDT

but my English is not that good,and this is a very complicated subject, and the interpretation is so different in each culture and country,and sects, another lady on this board knows more on this subject than i do..if you go back a few pages you can find me and Berry discussing this. whatever the costum,it's wrong,and it makes no sense,the only good thing about this costum that comes to mind is that this is as an obstacle for a triple divorce,but only an obsesed man like said will agree to it,
my G Jade has to sleep with a complete stranger!!!!!!! or maybe Said will forbid it. and the funny thing is any muslim man and woman knows bout this, how come said didn't? and without going into detail Said is trusting the wrong guy!!!!!!! let him fall into his own trap.
take care, and I hope it helps a little,

---

**Zein the don juan of Egypt! What**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-28-02 08:24 PDT

is Said thinking! LOL! :o)

**Re: question for Muslim viewers re 3rd divorce**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-28-02 10:53 PDT

I don't know if this will be of help, but once I read an article in which an Arab sheik (a Muslim leader) said that a woman didn't need to marry another man to remarry her ex-husband. He said that it was not a rule of the Muslim religion. Besides, nowadays a woman has the right to choose a man whom she wants to get married with. Is that true? I'd like to know!

Well, I knew that Gloria Perez (the author of "O Clone") researched a lot on the Muslim rules before starting to write the soap opera. She had some consultants who helped her, and she read the Koran as well.

---

**There is a difference between reading the Qu'ran and understanding it.**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-28-02 11:06 PDT

I also wanted to add that reading a translation of the Qu'ran is not the same as understanding the actual text of the Qu'ran and its meaning (in Arabic). Let me give you an example. Those of you who are bilingual in English and in Spanish know that anytime any literary work or song that is in Spanish is not translated the same in English and it loses its meaning all together. I am Muslim but I do not speak Arabic and I cannot read Arabic. That is why I attend Arabic classes and also consult with an Iman at my Mosque if there is something I don't understand by reading the translation of the Qu'ran. It is so important to be able to understand the Arabic language and text in the Qu'ran. It is a very rich language and unfortunately if you speak with an Arabic speaker, they will tell you that the common Arabic they speak everyday is not the same that was
spoken during the Prophet's (pbuh) time. Same goes with the text of the Qu'ran. It is a
great work of literature in itself and it challenges any one of great prose to try to copy or
create any sentence like it. It hasn't been done since its creation 1400yrs ago. Any well
read muslim can testify to that. If you guys have any questions feel free to e-mail and I
will try my best Allah willing of course, to give you the best information regarding
Islam.
Salams.....................---

Re: question for Muslim viewers re 3rd divorce

Author: (---)
Date: 07-28-02 11:53 PDT

I have to add that even in the Islamic countries they interpret Quran differently.
each Imam has a different opinion on this subject or any subject,
GP did a good job in her research this is a very controversial subject good for the
storyline look how many posts are about this triple divorce and the aftermath of it? if
you ask 10 muslim's regarding this you will get 10 different answers JMHO!!!!!
--

Re: question for Muslim viewers re 3rd divorce

Author: (---)
Date: 07-28-02 10:55 PDT

Ok.....here is the deal with this whole divorce three times thing. The last e-mail I sent I
said it was only two divorces and that would finalize the relationship and the two parties
had to move on. I was wrong, it was three divorces. Everytime a Muslim couple
divorces, if they want to remarry both parties have to consent and the man has to
provide with a gift to the woman even though he has married her once before and has
done this already. After the third divorce, if the woman no longer wants to remarry the
man she doesn't have to. She is free to marry anyone she wants lets say after her fourth
marriage to another man fails and her former husband wants to marry her she can either
accept or deny this fourth proposal from her former husband. Yes , she does have a say
in this matter. It is not a matter of custom, you either abide by Islamic principles or you
don't Islam is not a culture, it is an ideological faith. Islam was not just sent to the
pagan Arabs 1400yrs ago, it is the final testament God sent down to man and his last
messanger was Muhammed peace be upon him. I suggest for all clarifications you
should check out some websites about Islam so that you understand it better...here are
some


This two websites I recommend for you guys to check it out. If this doesn't help contact
a local Mosque in your area and ask to speak to the Iman concerning your questions. It is always important to get the right information and unfortunately I am not a scholar and you will have to forgive me if a error in anyway. Salams..............................---

thank you all nt

Author: (---)  
Date: 07-29-02 22:25 PDT

nt

Inaccurate dipictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (---)  
Date: 07-25-02 07:31 PDT

Saludos a todos. Queria tomar el tiempo para buscar un forum sobre El Clon para educar a la gente que estan facinados de esta estoria que se trata de musulmanos y sus costumbres. Queria decir que yo soy Muslimana y Mexicana, y que hay muchas cosas que ocurren en la novela que no es parte de Islam. Es una novela y en nigun momento las cosas que ocurren entre Jade y Said son cosas parte de Islam. Ok enough spanish because my spanish is awful. If you have any questions regarding El Clon and Islam you can e-mail me and I will be happy to answer your questions. Some things in El Clon might hold true about Islam, but keep in mind Islam is not a culture, it is a religion and you have to separate the two. Alot of the things that happen on the soap opera is very offensive to me personally as a Muslim because there are many people who have never been exposed to Islam before and they watch El Clon and assume this is how muslims are and this is what Islam is. Please take the time to write me or the forum and ask questions regarding the accuracy of Islam being depicted en El Clon. Gracias Salam Alleikum...................---

Re: Inaccurate dipictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (south africa) (---)  
Date: 07-25-02 09:42 PDT

hi ---

I do agree with you in that not everything is true. I am now engaged to a Muslim guy from South Africa and they are very different. and yes what you see in "el clon" is mostly culture and not only religion.
However, I must say that even with its inaccuracies, I am glad that such a novela exists for our Latinos who have no idea of what Muslims are about and often referred to them as "those people." I have many friends that now see that Muslims are not only terrorists who abuse women and wear all those crazy clothes. Many of them joke with me about what my life will be when I marry my fiancee but now its not about terrorism, but about silly things they see in the novela (i.e. wives, etc). I am sure that people are smart and will understand that this is not all that is about Islam, but that El Clon really depicts the version of the "ARAB culture" (remember there are Muslims in Europe, Asia, Latin America, etc.) If El Clon were to be recorded between Brazil and China Muslims you will probably get a very very different Muslim culture portrayed.

I am glad that you are very concerned about the way Muslims are being portrayed and are opening yourself up for questions. That is very good of you and you will receive many "Dua’s" for this.

But I have to admit...I am totally taken by the Novela and don't miss one night (or now aleidas recaps).

Salaams!!!!

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Re: Inaccurate depictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (---)
Date: 07-25-02 09:58 PDT

I am a Muslim born. A lot of the things that are shown in El Clon is true BUT, every country is different, maybe my Grandmother could relate to it more than I do because at her time things were like that!!!!!

---

Re: Inaccurate depictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (---)
Date: 07-25-02 21:18 PDT

Salam Alleikum ---, InshAllah you are in the best of health and Iman. What are the certain things that your grandmother has experienced that are similar to EL Clon? How were things like during her time. Also, what country is your family originally from? Please write back when you get the chance.
Salam Alleikum Wa Rahmatullah......................---

Re: Inaccurate depictions of Muslims en El Clon
The bellydance is kind of the same way--not always totally authentic. In many ways, the portrayal of Morocco is more like the version you find at the Epcot Center than the real thing. It's the same with the Brazilians...most middle class people don't run around full of themselves like Tavinho or Su Lidianne, nor do working class people act silly like Rapasao or Odete...and they never touch on the really poor or show the favelas. But it's a novela...so you can only take it so seriously. But they've done their research and most of what they do say, while not always accurate, like most caricatures has a basis in fact.

I am also a Muslim born woman, but to be honest I can see some members of my family reflected somehow in the characters LOL!!, it makes me laugh the way the present if, but we always need to keep in mind it is a soap-opera! and the purpose is to entertain the audience. I do also think it shows more about cultural behavior, it's fun to watch!!

So I'm guessing Nazira is definitely not shown as a good example of a Muslim woman, but I have to say she makes me laugh a whole lot.

in the Muslim countries,believe me,not everyone abides by the rules,and it;s fun to
break the rules once in a while, specially when you don't believe in them.:::)))
---

"depictions" and "decir" of muslims on the soap

Author: (---)
Date: 07-25-02 16:34 PDT

what's in " " are the correct spellings. I think We should all try a little harder to not "eat" words, i know we get excited and type quickly, but we should at least try to spell correctly even if we omit words.
As for being a muslim of Mexican descent, where you born into or converted as an adult. I know there is a small community in Mexico of Muslims and from what one hears there is no chance it will grow to be significant in Mexico were 90% it estimated to be Catholic, but then again they said that in the USA and for many Americans it is daunting to see how fast it is growing.

Re: "depictions" and "decir" of muslims on the soap

Author: (---)
Date: 07-25-02 21:29 PDT

Thank You for taking the time to show me how to spell correctly depictions and decir. I guess I should also take the time to proof read your message and let you know that we should also try to use correct grammar. In the beginning of a sentence, you should always capitalize the first word, e.g. "i" is "I." I'm not trying to be rude, it's just that I am not an English major and I make mistakes just like you do as well. It's a forum not a spelling bee contest or lets try to make the other person feel bad because they misspelled some words

Re: Inaccurate dipictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (---)
Date: 07-25-02 21:13 PDT

Yes as a matter of fact I converted recently to Islam in December, and believe me, it was not the most popular thing to do after September 11th. I wear Hijab and I cover from head to toe by my choice of course. I did not marry into Islam as some people assume women do. I did it on my own accord because of the validity that Islam holds and the rights that women have in Islam. I watched tonight's episode on where they were deciding Jade's fate and I was so shocked how they misquoted the Qu'ran regarding divorce. Islamically, a woman can divorce her husband if she has a genuine case. In Jade's case she is permitted to divorce Said. As a legal entity, a muslim women's marriage is not possible without her consent. Granted, there are people who do not
follow Islam according to its tenets and that is due to ignorance in culture not Islam. In a translation of the Qu'ran it says "A divorce is only permissible twice. After that the parties should either hold together on equitable terms or separate with kindness. It is after the second divorce of the same couple that the man is not permitted to remarry the women until she marries another man, and if that man divorces her, then the former husband can remarry the same woman for the third time. I don't know if that was the case in El Clon between Jade and Said. When a marriage proposal was given to me I accepted and in my Nikah "wedding ceremony" I was asked several times throughout the ceremony if I was forced or coerced to marry my husband at which case I replied no. It is UnIslamic to force a woman into marriage.

Re: Inaccurate dipictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (---)
Date: 07-25-02 23:34 PDT

That is what occurred with Said and Jade during her Nikah she replied that she would marry him. And this is their third divorce and they were told this would be their final divorce so I guess according to what you wrote the program did not do it correctly.

Thanks for the information. I find myself calling my friend (who is Sunni) to ask questions about whether the things that take place are true. I sometimes wondered if the way the women or the religion was portrayed offended some of the Muslim fans of the show. Thanks for enlightening us!!

Take care,
---

Re: Inaccurate dipictions of Muslims en El Clon

Author: (---)
Date: 07-26-02 06:30 PDT

Thank you ---, Yes, I have a question. HOW is that after three (3) repudios from Said if he wants to get back to Jade she needs to get married with someone else and then get back to him? I don't get it. Doesn't she have a voice on this? If he repudia a Jade three times is still the marriage legal? Please answer.

Said and Maysa - a contradiction

Author: (---)
Date: 07-11-02 17:31 PDT
I find it interesting that the conventional, conservative, traditional Muslim Said who seems to enjoy treating the women in his life like doormats appears to be truly interested in Maysa who, whatever else she is, is a very modern, Western woman.

---

**Exactly!!!**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-11-02 17:51 PDT

I was thinking about that, as well.
There is a double standard.
It is really sad because although Maysa and Said are together, they are very lonely.

**Re: Exactly!!!**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-11-02 20:59 PDT

I felt bad for Ranya, the poor girl, shame on Said for using her that way.

**Re: Said and Maysa - a contradiction**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 00:27 PDT

Wait, are you trying to say that "traditional" ((whatever that means)) mean aren't interested in "modern" women, as if a muslims woman can't be both modern and muslim at the same time??

**I think it would be better said**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 07:17 PDT

to simply describe Maysa as an "Occidental", the way Zoraide refers to Lucas. All of the women in the novela are "modern" strictly speaking as they all exist in modern times. Where they differ is in their cultural approach to life.

She's not modest (neither in dress or behavior), she's not submissive to a man, and she's betraying her husband. Said is willing to condemn Jade for similar behavior, but he seeks it out in Maysa.

According to the tenets of Islam, Said is committing grave sins: not only is he having an affair, it's with a married woman. You could say that in fact he's committing the
greater sin (as the man in the relationship)

**at leat Jade did it for love.I'm not making>>**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 08:04 PDT

any excuses for Jade, she is my favorite!!!!but she did betray her husband ,but it was out of love,
Said on the other hand started this as revenge,and now lust.
the greater sin in Islam is to get involved with a married woman .I wonder what tio abdul's reaction would be? will he condemn Said ?
i don't think so.he is a man after all and they can get away with anything,why shouldn't he loose Khadij now that he commited this sin?
Islam gives too much power to men over women.
---

**Certainly the Muslim women in**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 16:09 PDT

this novela do not seem to me to be "modern" in the American sense.
Latifa is a grown woman who lives in fear of her husband leaving her , must use tricks rather than confront him and argue something out, and acts like a child most of the time.

Ranya is like a Barbie doll devoted solely to making Said love her.

Nazira is loosening up and confronting her brothers more openly.

More to the point, Said and Mohammed have demonstrated over and over and over again that they not only want their women to be hidden and submissive but expect them to obey all their orders.

That's why Said's reaction to Maysa is a contradiction.

---

p.s. I'm not saying that a woman can't be "modern" and a Muslim but, I must admit, it is hard for me to imagine a Muslim woman being, say, the president of a corporation.

**Re: Said and Maysa - a contradiction**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 07:27 PDT

However, you did notice that Mohamed was telling Said that cheating on his wife is
against their religion. Said didn't seem to care about that. He rebounding from losing Jade and that is evidently who he really loves. I suppose he lusts after Maysa. Rayna is out of luck.

**Said isn't really religious**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 09:03 PDT

Said isn't really ultra religious. He isn't so conservative like Sidi Abdul... he doesn't have facial hair, or wear the traditional clothing, or constantly talk about the faith like Abdul and Ali... his clothing is very western and he even goes into bars. He just picks and chooses which customs he's going to hold Jade to (mostly the ones that keep her down). The religion is just like his money or friends to him... a way to get what he wants.

**Re: Said isn't really religious**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-14-02 15:16 PDT

Excellent observation and interpretation of his actions.

**Re: Said and Maysa - a contradiction**

Author: (---)
Date: 07-12-02 09:23 PDT

Said's extramarital activities are 'underground' and hidden from everybody in his family (sneaky hipocrite LOL); contrary to Jade's situation, all her family knows about her affair with Lucas, reason why everybody condemns and finger-point to her, very sad... in Islamic society, extramarital affairs are condemned as in many other western societies, Said's family would not accept either his relationship with Maysa (married also) if they knew. They would give him hell as well.

---

**Re: Said and Maysa - a contradiction**

Author: c (---)
Date: 07-12-02 17:51 PDT

Yeah I notice even Mohammed wears robes, does Said drink liguor. Oh I wonder if he dances?

**Let me told you about my class of today**

Author: (---)
I am taking a political science class, como una government class y ahi nos enseñan los tipos de goviernos del mundo(se empiza asi y luego va a especificar el de los Estados Unidos) bueno por supuesto uno de estos goviernos es de Theocracy(governando basado en religion) pues fue obligatorio hablar de uno de los pueblos gobernados por musulmanes asi que el maestro tuvo que explicarnos que es el Islam y basicamente nos dio ejemplos de reglas que ellos tienen y me sorprendio que en efecto Gloria Perez si estuvo muy bien informada y fue conciente de incluirlos en su novela(claro siendo ella tan profesional no hay discusion) estas son las cosas que pude relacionar con el clon.

1. En efecto se les corta la mano a los ladrones.
2. No se permite beber alcohol y el castigo son 80 latigazos entonces por supuesto que hay latigazos y numero exacto para el castigo.
3. Los Musulmanes como regla tienen que visitar la Meca lugar donde vivio su mayor profeta Mohammed, por lo menos una vez en su vida, (recuerdan que tio Ali se lo recordó una ocasion a Said cuando apenas se iba o estaba resien casado con Jade. Este dato fue el que me sorprendio mas.
4. Los resos hacia la meca 5 veces al dia sorprendente el video donde muestran la meca con por lo menos 1000 gente a su alrededor y no exajero antes me quedo corta chicos
5. Sorprendente el otro lugar sagrado es la ciudad de Medina donde tambien vivio el profeta y justamente el nombre que le dan en El Clon al lugar donde estan todos los comercios o como diriamos en Mexico al mercado.

RE: Let me told you about my class of today

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 14:25 PDT

"Madinah" in arabic means city (and is used as the word "downtown" in english for the main area of a city where all business/shops are located)

Correct, they start with the right hand....and it still happens nowadays on countries that are run by fundamentalists as Saudi Arabia for instance, very backwards for our times.

In Islam there is "Halal" (or "Haram" (forbidden).
Alcohol is forbidden (haram) and they can punish the agressor with all power of law , for instance if a person visiting Saudi Arabia on business did not take serious rules about alcohol and is caught at customs with a bottle of wine, he/she does not only goes to jail but his/her government has to send letter to the Saudi government apoloysing for the offense so can be released and expelled to origin country.

What you probably saw in the video is the peregrination or Hajj which takes place every year in Mecca, one of the 5 pillars (foundations) in Islam is to visit Mecca the city in Saudi Arabia where the profet Mohammed was born at lease once in your life time. Something like saying that you should visit Bethelehem where Jesus was born at least
once in your life time, if it was one of the foundations of Christianity.

I hope this helps to open your point of view a little bit more....

---

**Halal vs. Haram**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 14:30 PDT

Ooops, I did not mention that "Halal" means lawful, contrary of "Haram" word used a lot in "O clone".

---

**Thank you**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 14:36 PDT

I am really surprised of all the new things I learned today I am really sorry for the mispelling of the Mecca and Madinah it was still a very interesting film my teacher mainly showed to us because none of my classmates are muslims and living in the west coast is hard to get in touch with Muslims of course don't think that was the only religion we look at We also reviewed the Catholic city of Vatican. thank you again

---

**Thank you both...--- and ---l...**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 14:43 PDT

for a most interesting post. It's amazing the new worlds that this novela has opened up for me, both through watching it and through reading the posts on this forum.

---

**RE: Thank you both..... and ---...**

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 16:32 PDT

is there such a thing as islam-light...sorta like reform judaism compared to orthodox judaism? the reason i'm asking is that on the E channel i saw a club scene, i think in marakkesh, where people were partying the night away and one guy was TOW UP drunk...and it didn't seem like they gave two craps about haram. then on a travel advisory about morocco they gave all sorts of warnings about stuff, so i'm kinda confused as to what is cool and what is not.
RE: Thank you both...--- and ---

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 17:13 PDT

Well, it's simple Morocco is run by the King of Morocco who might be muslim but not too religious or fundamentalist (extreme) as some other countries (e.g. Afganistan was run by extremist religious people "taliban" and now luckily they're gone and trying to build up what is left)

In the middle-east it all depends on who is running the country. Another example would be Iran, which after Ayatollah died began to open a little more, and it's happening slowly.

---

--- is right.as a muslim born and >>

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 20:37 PDT

Iranian I can attest to it but still they have a long way to go to be where we were when the Shah was alive & ruling.
each country is different. we never had restriction .it wasn't ruled by Religious.Iran was like any Europian country. free to choose .free to practice in your belifes.Jews.
muslims.Christians ,even Bahai's. lived free there was never any problem..
Haram and Halal is for those who practice all the rules.
but not everyone does.
like any other religieon Islam has it's own fanatics,like those crazy Talibans
but even the muslims look at them with horror for what they do and have done in the name of Islam.

---

RE: Thank you

Author: (---)
Date: 06-20-02 20:27 PDT

I am looking for some one that knows about the Banda Sonora the El Clon ?

The music is wonderful.
Thank You, Please let me know for this way.
Thank you again
A question about veils and dress of Muslims

Author: (---)  
Date: 06-17-02 00:24 PDT

Jade and everyone in the novela with the exception of Sumaya and Zoraide always wear beautiful veils that have designs and spangles and wear clothing that I would not consider conservative...but when I see women from the middle east on tv, they're wearing dark or dull colors without any designs whether they're being interviewed or just shots of women in the street. So is El Clon just trying to make everyone prettier and more interesting looking?

RE: A question about veils and dress of Muslims

Author: (---)  
Date: 06-17-02 08:32 PDT

I don't think so Isabel....just remember Jade and the rest walking en la Medina de Fez, all covered by black or brown long non-attractive gowns....the deal with muslim women is that they cannot display their beauty in front of strangers, but they should be pretty in front of family (especially the husbands)

RE: A question about veils and dress of Muslims

Author: (---)  
Date: 06-17-02 12:33 PDT

Interesting looking? You can bet on it.

At the same time, you need to remember that tv shows only people on the streets, and the characters in the soap were rich. But I'm really wondering how they do dress inside home and in their parties.

RE: A question about veils and dress of Muslims

Author: (---)  
Date: 06-17-02 17:54 PDT

I remember ABC did a show on Muslim women. Barbara Walters interviewed a group of middle to upper class Saudi women. They showed that in Saudi Arabia there are western style malls with western clothes that women wear inside the house. Saudi Arabia is one of the more conservative countries. Women can't drive there but there is a booming cab industry to take women anywhere. I think money has a lot to do with it. Not many people in the Middle East are millonaires like Jade's family

I suspect it depends
on the country and the social strata. The acquaintance I have who lives part of the time in a village in Morocco says the women generally wear cotton "house dresses" at home or jogging suits and put on a burka-like covering when they go outside. Different villages differ in how much, if any, of the face must be covered.

Said is very rich so I suppose that is the excuse for the finery.

---

**Question for our Muslim/Arabic friends...**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-24-02 20:21 PDT

What does "ham-do-lee-lah" (spelled phonetically) mean? Mohammed and Latiffa are always saying it... as was Abdul last night.

**RE: Question for our Muslim/Arabic friends...**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-24-02 20:46 PDT

It mean's thank God, the last word is ALAH..al - ham-do-alah....with the grace of God, or thank God.

---

**RE: Question for our Muslim/Arabic friends...**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-24-02 22:27 PDT

For us is kind of "God willing" or "si Dios quiere", I guess.

**That will be" INSHALAH"...-nt**

Author: (---)
Date: 04-24-02 22:31 PDT

nt,

**RE: Oh! ok.Thanks ---. nt**
Lucas gets into a fistfight outside the night club with the woman’s date when he tries to buy the jade necklace from her. Meanwhile Jade talks to Zoraide telling her how if she still had her necklace it would be protecting her from everything. Karima enters and talks about the gathering that will be held at Said’s house for his intended wife. Jade tells Zoraide to invite Said’s intended wife to Tio Ali’s house before the gathering at Said’s house takes place.

Edvaldo surprises a delighted Nazira by paying her a visit. In their conversation, Nazira tells him that marrying her would be a good business deal for him because she is worth 15 camels and that each camel is worth a shipment of gold. At the dance hall, Edvaldo tells his friend that he’ll marry Nazira, wait a while, get the camels, and then exchange the camels for gold and thereupon return to Rio and establish a fleet of camels on the beaches of Rio.

As Edvaldo flirts and dances with another woman, Laurinda comments to Norma that
she thought Edvaldo would never get over Deusa. Norma admits to Laurinda that she had lied to Edvaldo, telling him that she didn’t know of Deusa’s whereabouts.

Deusa tells Doña Mocinha that she’s tired of having to hide. She can’t even go to town without being subjected to comments over whether Leo is really her son. Doña Mocinha tells her that she’s not surprised at the comments since Leo doesn’t resemble Deusa in any way; nor does he resemble anyone in the family, not even that great grandfather who he supposedly takes after.

Tio Abdul and Said go shopping for an engagement gift for Said’s intended, who at the same time is at Tio Ali’s conversing with Jade. Jade greeets her warmly, compliments her and says nice things about Said to her; Jade even tells her how to really win Said over...she should remove her veil when she first meets him...knowing full well that such behavior will drive Said away from her, as she flashbacks to how Said had once told her that it was a superstition of his that if upon meeting him a woman she looked at him and took off her veil on purpose, that woman would not bring him good luck. Later, at the celebration, when Said approaches his intended and opens the box to show her his engagement gift, she takes off her veil, causing Said to snap the box closed and walk away. Later, Jade is quite pleased to hear that her plan worked to perfection.

Albieri discusses with Julio that you could replace a loved one with a clone; that they would have the same genetic characteristics. Julio agrees but argues that even if the characteristic were the same, for instance too much aggressiveness, the clone could use that trait to either succeed as an entrepreneur or as a criminal. Albieri argues that if you brought up the clone in the same manner as you had the original, the two would be the same. Julio agrees and says that it makes for an interesting experiment. While Albieri leaves to call the detective to find out if he has any leads as to Deusa’s whereabouts, Edna comments to Julio that her marriage has certainly improved since Deusa left the scene.

Days later, Lucas meets a friend at the place where had seen the woman wearing Jade’s necklace, and tells him that he goes there every day in the hopes of seeing her again. He has even left his phone number with one of the waiters so that he can be contacted if she shows up.

Jade runs off with Khadija in the middle of the night, knowing that she will have to turn her over to Said tomorrow. She takes Khadija to the desert tent where she had been with Lucas. Upon discovering Jade’s disappearance with Khadija, Said and Tio Ali organize search parties to look for them.

The woman who Lucas saw wearing Jade’s necklace goes to Yvete’s store to offer it for sale, and Yvete buys it from her.

Jade and Khadija are found by Tio Ali’s men and are returned to Tio Ali’s house where Said waits outside the house with open arms to claim his daughter. Jade tearfully pleads with Said to take her back, that she will never again cause him any problems, that she
will be the best wife a man could have, but please not to separate her from Khadija; even if he no longer wants her as a wife, she wants to be Khadija’s wet nurse; she wants to be close to her, to see her grow. Said relents and tells Jade to enter the house, which she does with Khadija in her arms.

Years later, we see Khadija, who appears to be about 10 or 11 years old, dancing with Jade at a family celebration. Among those in attendance are Abdul and Nazira who talk about Nazira’s relationship with Edvaldo. He tells her that it is not proper for her to go out alone with Edvaldo, that although she might know him, she doesn’t know his family, and to know a man you have to know his family. Nazira tells him that nowadays things aren’t like they were before, but Abdul persists in his belief that the religion prohibits such things. Also celebrating in Brazil are Maysa and Lucas, as they applaud their daughter Mel, who now looks to be about 18 years old, as she takes the stage to accept an award.

RE: RECAP: MON 4/1 (Chapter 56)
Author: (---)
Date: 04-02-02 12:29 PST

thanks aleida!!!!I was wondering if the celebration was for Khadija? maybe a birthday? I don't know why, but it seems she was the center of attention. I loved the way she danced. lol.. flashbacks to my own childhood, the same kind of music. and similar dancing. and music....sigh!!!!!!!
---

RE: RECAP: MON 4/1 (Chapter 56)
Author: (---)
Date: 04-02-02 14:10 PST

I was wondering are you muslim? because my question is: Jade able to take her veil off and dress provocatively and show cleavage even thought she is muslim? I think she dresses to provocatively not even I would dress that way?

---> yes I'm a born muslim>>
Author: (---)
Date: 04-02-02 17:20 PST

But I’m from another country, and yes we wear anything we want whenever we want!!!!!! it used to be like that. very modern. bikini, mini skirt, halter top... strapless. but everything changed when the new regime took over. they went backward!!!!!!! more than 50 years!! even right now under the Vail or” the cover up” they still dress that way. but there is some restriction in the parties, like in the weddings, it's more like what we are seeing in
the novela. no outsiders are allowed in, grrrrrrrr.
glad I'm not living there, couldn't stand that.
Jade is among those who are MAHRAM, her husband uncle, close male family, and if the husband doesn't mind she can wear whatever she wants but still this is a novela. she has to look beautiful and sexy. her dresses are quite different from the rest, like yvet!!!! but then her upbringing was different too, sorry for the long explanation, hope it helps.
---

im muslim but...

Author: (---)
Date: 03-30-02 01:16 PST

i am really pissed off about the stupid cultural thinkings that always get mixed up with religion. I hate the fact that if a woman divorces, men think they can just take the child from the mother. HORRIBLE. Islam says heaven is under the foot of your mother, three times more than the father! How can a child obtain heaven if he is torn away from his mother's arms. It makes me sick how some people use religion as an excuse when its just the culture that promotes these ridiculous notions to give men power. this happens alot in islamic countries unfortunately. let me tell you as a muslim woman i know my rights, and hell if my husband whenever i get married that is, if we divorce ill be damned if anyone takes my child, i will shoot the bastard and his entire family, sorry about my language haha. i know its difficult though in countries where men seem to rule all of society. it just enrages me though. poor jade she really doesn't have any choice it seems but to win back said so she can stay with her child. but man if i were jade, id have ran away with lucas when i had the chance, religion be damned! love is the true religion and God understands that. why cry your whole life with someone you don't love. true said was great to jade and she didn't try to get over lucas when the relationship ended and he also married, but still arranged marriages suck! i'd never have one! but culture always seems to play a key factor in many people's lives. im just so glad that i had the blessing to be born in america and have very liberal muslim parents, or i'd have been in the hugest depression ever if i had to live like that. sorry i had to vent this way!

besos, --- (---)

RE: im muslim but...

Author: (---)
Date: 03-30-02 01:36 PST

te apollo ---

RE: im muslim but...
Go --- you rule girl. Now I really sympathize with Jade a child's place is with his or her mother.

**Agree with you, ---. Ok to vent**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-30-02 11:02 PST

here in the forum. We are with you.

**RE: im muslim too. but I married>>**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-30-02 12:54 PST

a christian. i did it and never regret it for one minutes.now back to the subject>> if i remember correctly, if the father decides to take the child away from the mother, there is a seven years period. i think that the child will stay with the mother, i think even it was diferent if it was a boy or a girl. and you are right, it depends on the culture, not Islam. the upbringing and the country.

---

**RE: im muslim too. but I married>>**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-30-02 15:18 PST

Yes, from what I've seen in muslim nations, it goes all the way from women being beaten and wearing berkas all the time to women having important jobs and having a family. It seems to always be about power. Thanks for bringing that up!

Saludos,

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**RE: im muslim but...**

Author: a (---)
Date: 03-30-02 17:05 PST

So are you saying that these things are not in the Koran? that people say it is just to benefit them? It makes me sad the way women are treated like they are half of what a man is. I am christian and the bible teaches that the man is to protect and honor his wife. The man and woman have their roles because we were created differently but a man and woman are equal before God
yah culture has changed alot of things and say the quran said it. quran says to protect your wife also, it also says that women are put three times before men. the horrible treatment of women is not just common in muslim countries but also eastern christian countries like eastern europe and russia, but heck it happens everywhere where men are close minded and want to gain and maintain power.

IT SUCKS!

I think that Quran is interpreted in

Author: (---)
Date: 03-31-02 10:38 PST

different ways like the Bible. Everyone thinks that theirs is the true belief, religion or faith. These are taken out of context and used to whatever advantage that particular group wants it to be.

don't know about the 80's but

Author: (---)
Date: 03-31-02 20:43 PST

in Morocco today, in the event of divorce, women retain custody of female children until they marry and of boys until they reach puberty. Not perfect, of course, but an improvement.

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More on Muslim world today...

Author: (---)
Date: 03-22-02 09:35 PST

I found this article in today's Wall Street Journal online and thought that it offered an interesting side glimpse into the contemporary Muslim woman's perspective. Seeing as how there have been a number of posts on the Muslim viewpoint, I figured that I'd share it with you all.

Muslim Woman Raised in the U.S. Nervously Dips Into Beauty Pageants

By MEI FONG
Neelam Noorani has only one real bathing suit. It's a floral purple number that her mother saved after her daughter stopped wearing it at age seven.

Now 20, Ms. Noorani needs another swimsuit. Born in Pakistan, she follows the Muslim faith and some of its rules of modest dress. For swimming, she wears a kind of abbreviated wet suit that covers her from neck to knees.

But she plans to enter the international Miss Earth beauty pageant this fall, for which she must wear something more revealing during the swimsuit segment. Ms. Noorani, a striking woman who stands 5 feet 6 inches and weighs about 110 pounds, won the Miss Pakistan Earth contest in Karachi in January without going through the bathing-suit parade. Fearing the anger of Muslim extremists, pageant organizers decided against holding one.

Instead, judges were told to guess if contestants had "nice healthy bodies" beneath their roomy tunic-and-trouser shalwar kameez costumes, says Muhammed Usman, the contest's chief organizer.

Along with the Muslim world's larger worries in recent years has come a small but growing pressure to hold beauty pageants. Like fast food, they are viewed as a barometer of Westernization. Some countries won't hear of it. Some try to adapt the Western version to Muslim standards -- not an easy task given the Islamic injunction that followers act and dress modestly.

Ms. Noorani finds herself caught between cultures. Her family moved to Virginia when she was three, and she holds both U.S. and Pakistani passports. She danced hip-hop and played basketball at Annandale High School. But she doesn't date, wear short skirts or expect anything other than an arranged marriage. She returns to her native country for visits and has close family ties there.
A student of computer engineering at Northern Virginia Community College, she is preparing for a conventional career. Before that, though, she says she wants to try her hand at modeling or acting. An uncle is a film star in Pakistan's Lollywood, named for the movie business centered in Lahore. Her mother was a recording artist who specialized in Islamic hymns. Looking to beauty pageants as a steppingstone, Ms. Noorani won the first one she entered, Miss Pakistan Earth.

Mr. Usman, the contest's main organizer, hopes to put Pakistani beauty on the world map. The 22-year-old undergraduate at Griffith College Karachi, a Pakistan branch of the Dublin college, has been dreaming since 1994 about a Pakistani contest that could lead to international recognition. That was the year beauty queens from rival India swept the Miss World and Miss Universe crowns.

Both countries "have nuclear weapons," Mr. Usman says. "Why not beauty queens?"

Last year, he roped in relatives, friends and his old high school to help fund Miss Pakistan Earth. Mr. Usman warned the contestants that the winner would automatically be entered in the Western-style Miss Earth pageant and would have to wear a swimsuit. The Miss Earth contest, which originated last year in the Philippines, has a "green" theme. Contestants are called "beauties for a cause."

Mr. Usman also is organizing two male beauty pageants, Mr. Earth Quest and Mr. Pakistan Manhunt. He says "men in Speedos" are far easier for Muslims to accept than females in swimsuits.

Pakistan has had only a few beauty contests, such as Miss Karachi and Miss Indus Peninsula, and they were confined to larger cities. Rural areas are more conservative but disapproval can be found anywhere. "In Pakistan, if you take part in beauty contests," Ms. Noorani says, "everyone thinks you're a slut." Currently back in the country on a promotional tour, she asked her actor uncle to hire a bodyguard for her -- not to fend off fans, she says, but to protect her from Islamic extremists.

In countries where Islamic fundamentalism has flourished, beauty pageants have been forced to adhere to strict rules or have been forbidden by religious edicts. Egypt's Grand Mufti Nasser Farid Wassel issued such a fatwa last year, saying beauty pageants with swimsuit segments contravened Islamic law -- although Egypt continued to send a contestant to the Miss Universe contest last year. The grand mufti also proposed staging a Miss Morality contest that would showcase "the woman who adheres to righteous principles best," according to Islam OnLine (www.islam-online.net), a Web site with headquarters in Doha, Qatar.

Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population, allowed its citizens to participate in overseas contests during the 1960s, but it now bans the activity. Even in Malaysia, where the government is secular and the Muslim practice moderate, mullahs ordered the arrest of three Muslims in a Miss Malaysia Petite pageant in 1997. Where no explicit ban exists, social stigma usually keeps women out of contests.
Zohra Yusof Daoud would like to see the stigma removed. Now 48, and an activist for women's rights who lives in Malibu, Calif., she was Miss Afghanistan in a 1972 contest. There wasn't a swimsuit segment, and Mrs. Daoud, who fled the country after the Soviet invasion, liked it that way. She would like to bring beauty contests back to Afghanistan, so the world can see that Afghan women aren't just "faceless people in burkas." But it would have to be in a way "that incorporates Islamic values," Mrs. Daoud says, and she isn't sure how this can be done.

Several Muslim nations, including Indonesia, Pakistan, Brunei and Uzbekistan, have been holding beauty pageants as long as they don't show too much skin. Contestants typically wear gowns, dance and get quizzed on current affairs. Few of the winners ever reach the international stage.

Esther Swan, a spokeswoman for the Miss Universe pageant, says would-be entrants who are Muslim often ask if they can skip the swimsuit segment. "They usually bow out" when they hear they can't, she says.

January's Miss Pakistan Earth was a low-key affair. Just 73 people turned up at Karachi's Fosterian Academy, a small theater school run by Mr. Usman's older sister, Yasmina, to watch the 18 contestants dance to local pop tunes, sing or recite Urdu poetry. Ms. Noorani, a Britney Spears fan, chose a Pakistani disco song called "Aja Suniya" ("Come Home, My Love") to provide the beat for an energetic bump-and-grind. As the winner, she received $400 and temporary ownership of a three-pound zirconium tiara.

These days, Ms. Noorani is gearing up for October's Miss Earth pageant, in Manila. She says she still isn't comfortable with the idea of wearing a Western-style swimsuit in public. "The world has not seen much of my legs," she says. But she likes the idea of showing off her beauty. "We are Allah's creation," she says. "We have a right to come out and represent womanhood."

Such Western frankness made her "an outcast" among the other girls during the contest in Pakistan, she says. Unaccustomed to Karachi food, she also suffered from diarrhea. Back in America, her friends don't always understand why she can't go club-hopping or drink alcohol. She and her mother cut down on trips to the shopping mall after Sept. 11, fearing an anti-Muslim backlash.

"Don't laugh," Ms. Noorani says, "but I really want world peace."
article.

Take care,

---

RE: Excelent ---. Bring it on:>) nt
Author: (---)
Date: 03-22-02 14:34 PST

nt

Interesting, thanks for the article, ---. n/t
Author: (---)
Date: 03-22-02 16:25 PST

n/t

Do you think people of the Muslin faith
Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 11:55 PST

feel offended by some of things that are shown about the life style. Last night it appeared that the people at Tio Ali's spent all their time playing music, singing and Latifa dancing through her pregnancy. I know it is a wonderfully happy occasion for the couple and their family but I think this is strictly from Gloria Perez imagination. Beautiful but unreal.

RE: Do you think people of the Muslin faith
Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 12:06 PST

I don't know about the Muslin people, but that was a little too much for me. Pregnant woman don't dance all the time, not even a few time. What they are is uncomforatable, tired and heavy. I found myself wondering what was the point? We all know she was happy but to be dancing most of the time??

I think it was done so as to find a good
Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 12:23 PST
technical way to showed that time had passed. It is a transition shot, the same was done when Leo came running to Albieri on the beach. A beautiful transition shot. besides Latifah is wealthy so I am not surprise she does nothing at home with some many maids who would?

**RE: Muslims have Shown**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 13:22 PST

Dislike to the way this ovela has portray them. They caim that Gloria Perez has exagerated a bit.

**it is different in each country,and it is only>**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 13:37 PST

a novela.regarding Latifa's dance,well it may be a little too much,but it reflects her joy in being pregnant, in some muslim households the women are pampered,specially when they are rich and pregnant, they don't have anything else to do, specially in 30 or 40 years ago. but i think now it's different.but i can't be sure about that.as i said each country is diferent.

---

**Yeah, I've wondered about this too.**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 13:30 PST

All this belly dancing is becoming a bit gratuitious. I don't think they are always quoting the Koran either

**Koran plays important role**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 14:03 PST

From my experience (mostly reading), it is true that the Koran plays as important role in the life of most practicing Muslims as does the Bible for many practicing Christians. I know many people who regularly quote the Bible in daily life -- and not necessarily the clergy!

Memorization of the Koran chapter and verse is important, generally more so for the
Muslim male, but knowing the word of Allah is an essential part of practicing and living the faith.

And I'd have to concur that while a pregnant woman would perhaps not be so light on her feet at say 6 or 7 months pregnant, the dancing is a lovely way to show that Latifa is a pampered and beloved woman in a state that is especially revered (she's the potential mother of the first born son) in the culture (heck, in most cultures!), as well as someone who still inspires passion in her husband's eyes. Her seductive dance suggests too that she holds him in her thrall and he's a willing captive. And, unlike Western women who feel less sexually desirable as they increase in size because of our cultural preference for slim shapes, many cultures feel much more positively about the more rounded, shall we say, figure because it implies prosperity.

If you look at it from this perspective I don't find anything negative in the portrayal at all.

RE: Do you think people of the Muslin faith
Author: (---)
Date: 03-20-02 19:33 PST

I feel that this novela has over exaggerated! I'm a muslim women and in our religion we don't go around dancing all day long and playing music besides to much music and dancing is haram (forbidden) and the way they celebrate with belly dancers dancing around all the men this is haram also so who ever came up with this novela doesn't know much about islam because they try to make Ali to be such a holly man and he has all this stuff going around in his home. In Islam no women should be dancing around men that are not her immediate family members or like they showed last night episode where nazida didn't cover her hair in front of Ali also in islam this is haram a women must wear her veil in front of men she can marry. :)

RE: Do you think people of the Muslin faith
Author: (---)
Date: 03-21-02 20:15 PST

I think that if you are a dancer, which they always show them dancing, being pregnant won't stop you. I know people who are dancers and being pregnant doesn't stop them, besides Latifa is a young woman that help because I know that things don't hurt as much when you are a pregnant young woman.

Muslim reation to EL CLON
Author: (---)
Date: 03-15-02 03:46 PST
Does anyone know if there has been any? I read in an article where Telemundo was prepared in case there was a backlash from the muslims in the US concerning the subject matter in El Clon. I think this is part of the reason why they are putting the captions in english as well.

But I haven't heard of any and I wonder if they are even aware of the novela. And in terms of their accuracy, I have a Morrocan, muslim friend who says that the people in Morroco tend to be more relaxed and not so orthodox as the novela paints them to be. And they definately don't cut thieve's hands off! I was suprised to hear Latiffa and Mohammed acting all shocked that they didn't do that in Brasil. As far as I know, the only country that does that is Saudi Arabia, and maybe the Taliban used to do it as well.

**Selfish Jade!**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 11:35 PST

That girl is so selfish! I'm talking about the previews. She doesn't care that Soraide will surely get" 70 azotes" for helping her escape. She doesn't think about anybody but herself! What about Said? I know she doesn't love him, but she did marry him and now she should stand by the decision she made. I have no sympathy for Jade!

**RE: Selfish SAID!**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 11:43 PST

He knew the truth since day one.
NOW HE MUST < EAT IT!
Zoraide is doing exactly wht a mother, would do for a daughter.
Nobody is forcing Zoraide to do it or fallow Jade's order.
Es solo la Ley de la srovebivencia.
No culpa a Jade, se usted, mirasen los capítulos de hoy en Dia en Brasil, veran que Said es casado con Jade, casado con la insuportable GUI Rahnya 7 trata a Jade comoi Bassura.
Jade tiene que escapa >>
pero..
Spoilers abajo:
Ella no logra desta vez.
Pero lo capitulo de hoy es maravilloso, mana mejor todavia.
Para escapa no solo so de Said pero de su tio & hermana, la manipuladora Naizra.
Go Jade.
Fabio

**RE: Selfish JADE & SAID**
Both of them are selfish in their own way. Said knew about Jade since day one. Now, he has to stand the consequences for being a moron.

As for miss Goody Two Shoes, jade, she only thinks about herself. She doesn't stop to think for her actions and the consequences they will drag.

RE: Selfish SAID!

he is a bad man.
i can't take him, he is so bad with Jade now.
i am watching episode number 135 from Brasil

She didn't make the decision!

What episode did you miss? She was forced to marry him. I would try to escape no matter what, Zoraide is the one choosing to help her

She missed her chance..

She should have stayed at Yvette's place when she escaped from Latiffa's house that afternoon ...

Now I am glad she cannot get away from her husband .. she knew exactly what she was getting into since day one. Now it is simply too late.

PS: by the way, her uncle Ali will never help her leave Said, he would have to return the money Said paid for her ...

thank you

PS: by the way, her uncle Ali will never help her leave Said, he would have to return the money Said paid for her ...
took the words right out of my mouth. She had Ivette's support then she had every chance to stay in Rio and now where is she going to stay? Yes she is selfish, Would you put your mother in danger for your own selfish gain? Why is she so miserable anyway, Said doesn't treat her bad.

Don't agree...

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 15:14 PST

Said does treat her badly. The woman has no freedom. He will not let her get an education, probably because he realizes that an educated woman has more choices in life.

Don't agree either

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 15:20 PST

Said did treat her right it was only when she started doing those stupid things that he started treating her that way. As far as the educated woman, these people are muslims and they have certain beliefs about women, none that I agree with, but the woman is subject to the husband and what the husband says goes. And if she embraces her religion she will follow it.

RE:I Don't agree either.she is muslim yes>>

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 17:44 PST

but she is not a slave,"this people" have a mind of their own too, she was brought up differently. she wasn't brought up to be at her husbands back and call. I think Jade's problem is she feels trapped.and she is trapped,in a loveless marriage not of her choosing. she wants out at any cost,yes she may be selfish.but in her situation the only thing she can think of is herself & getting FREE!!!!!I can't blame her,and i love Zogeideh for trying to help her at any costs, Jade is lucky at having her at her corner, she is in a man's world.where a woman's wants and needs doesn't count,it's hard very hard,to be subject to that,to have no say in your life,to endure others making decissions for you. to have a sister in-law like Nasirah, JMO

---

Jade is 17!

Author: (---)
What 17 year old girl would be able to have that much courage. Yes, she had Ivette but she didn't have Lucas. And no, I would not stay with Said even if he were George Clooney (wait, maybe if he was George I'll think about it)

**So now she has courage?**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 15:22 PST

It is even harder now for her, she has to get out of the country! She doesn't have Lucas now. And if Said were George Clooney i would certainly not hestiate to leave!

**What's funny is that if Jade were a whiner who....**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 15:45 PST

just spent the novela crying about her destiny people would complain too. I agree with Daniela there has to be love in a relationship and she does not have to love a man just because he is supposedly so nice as some think. He knew exactly what he was getting into by marrying Jade. I hope she will get the freedom she wants so much because noone should be forced to love. I hope she always fights for what she wants, the only thing I feel bad about is that Zoraide ends up paying for it.

Take care!

**Why does it have to be**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 17:06 PST

either whinning or crying? why can't it be in between? All I am saying is that she is not even giving her life a chance. Lucas is certainly giving his life a chance.

**RE: So now she has courage?**

Author: (---)
Date: 03-12-02 17:13 PST

I agree with what both you said, Jade had every chance when she was in Rio, to stay with Yvette and gotten away to another country, but she didn't take it, now she is making life misarble for her childish ways, she could gotten anything she wanted from Sayid even a education, but Jade is blinded by her emotions and these will be her down fall.

---
Sorry, I tuned in late. You folks have been saying something about Jade at Yvette's in Rio. When was Jade ever in Rio and why was she hanging with Yvette? By the way, where was Jade born, in Brazil or Morrocco?

in Brazil.she lived there till her mom died,,i will let the others tell you the rest. they are more qualified than i am.

Jade was born in Brazil but moved to Morocco when her mother died. After Mohammed and Latiffa got married, they went to Rio where Mohammed has a store. Jade went with them and it so happens that Lucas went back on the same flight. Jade and Lucas planned to run away and get married but Lucas found out about his brother's death. He left Jade sitting alone on a beach. She was mad at him so he asked Yvete if she could straighten things out with her. She spoke with Jade and they became friends. At one point Yvete offered her apartment to Jade and Lucas. Then the next time they tried to run away, Lucas got cold feet. Jade basically said "The heck with you" and flew back to Morocco where she was forced into marriage with Said.

if i were in her position i would do the same thing shoot.......being married with a guy that i dont love or feel attracted to......(and at that age of 17 everyone is selfish no matter what situation they are).....and it is Zoraide's decision whether to help her or not and she does, so why judge? i mean this is a girl that was brought up in Brazil and was not raised like a real muslim as many people saw in the first episode she barely knew
anything just a few certain things...i think it was very ignorant for her uncle to give her to Said when her mother just died and when he knew that she did not totally understand the religion......and i dont feel pity for Said everyone warned him about her......she caused so much trouble before they go married and told him she wasnt a virgin....then why did he insisted? thats his fault and i hope he suffers with her more.he deserves her hatred and selfishness........and much more than that..........and about her escaping with Yvette......remember she meet her like 2 days before Yvette told her to live with her....so she was a total stranger and she did not know whether she was going to be able to stay with her without Lucas since she did gave permission to both .....not only her.......plus she was mad cause it was the second time he left her hanging i would be pissed and afraid.....go with someone you barely knew...or return home to ur family?

STUPID DECISIONS BY ALL THREE!

Author: (---)
Date: 03-13-02 02:11 PST

Lucas: Lucas was not the alpha male like Diogo was, so it is almost expected for him to mess up 99% of the time. When he dumped Jade the first time it was understandable, but fifty times later? He just made me hate him more and more! Agh, and then he tops it off by marrying Maysa, the damn horse! Lucas should have stuck to his promise! He shouldn't have wasted all that time in his home where he had the perfect opportunity to meet and hide with Jade. They should have had a quikie marriage! Lucas disappoints as a man and that leads me to wonder if that is the same case in bed? Hmmm??

Jade: She should never had left Yvette's house! Imagine all of the tricks she would have learned to get Lucas to stay with her? Ugh, a wasted opportunity! She should have never accepted to have been married and run off the morning of the wedding or locked herself into a room and not come out. Jade should have kept pretending to like Said and then when she got his complete trust,she could have asked for them to visit Mohammed then she could have escaped with Lucas. Since she has a promise with God, she should have just told Lucas the truth!

Said: A great looking man that committed the dumbest thing in his life. Why couldn't he accept Jade not liking him? Jade is pretty, but she isn't that good looking for him to act that way? The dancer was beautiful, why didn't he just go through with the second marriage and Jade could be returned! Said, why don't you just marry me instead! Hehehe!

--- ;o)
I smell Telerisa around here!

If, if, if, if...

Author: (---)
Yes, at the time Yvette was practically a stranger to her... however, where is she planning to go when she arrives in Rio? She told Zoraide she will visit some friends from school... well, couldn't she go with those same friends 3 years ago?

If she was mad because Lucas had left her waiting twice before, then she should stay mad and realize this guy is an a**hole.

However, if she wanted to accept is a**hole status, she should have stayed in Rio at Yvette's (or friend's house) and continue to fight for that love.

Now she is taking greater risks... what she did last night by taking that woman's burka while the woman urinated is just too risky. How long does she think that woman will remain in the bathroom? Enough time for her to board the plane? Did she read this in crystal ball?

She should take after Lucas, he was young at the time (just like her), he made stupid decisions and has learned to live with them.

---

that Jade and Lucas did the dirty in Brazil???? Remember, I tuned in late. When he and Maysa went to Morrocco just after they were married and he met with Jade, they seemed like the timid lovers. I didn't think they had ever "consummated their love". Are you telling me they did and I missed that part? Damn!

---

nt

---

cuchi cuchi a la clon style...:)

Think about it!
It's easy to understand why radical, fundamentalist Muslim terrorists are so quick to commit suicide.

Just look at their lifestyle:

* No organized sports of any kind. That's right -- NO sports!!..
* Women have to be completely covered and wear veils. No thongs.
* No Victoria's Secret
* Very, very, very few cars. Camels. Lots of camels. Stinking, filthy camels.
* Sand. *^% sand everywhere!
* Big scorpions everywhere.
* More sand.
* Ever try to fish at an oasis? No bass boats. No bass. No fish.
* Sandstorms. More **$#@ sand everywhere!
* Rags for clothes and hats.
* Camel and goat burgers cooked over burning camel dung chips.
* Eating with your right hand only -- because you wipe yourself with your left hand. Toilet tissue considered "decadent, Western."
* Constant wailing from next door ... no...wait, that's their music!

And when you die it's supposed to all get better......

No wonder they volunteer!!"

**RE: Think about it!**

Author: (---)
Date: 02-08-02 18:09 PST

that's a very narrow view of a vast and rich culture. Although I respect your opinion I
am not sure how relevant it is to the clone.

I'm afraid you are wrong. I'm a muslim>

Author: (---)
Date: 02-08-02 19:19 PST

and Iranian muslim, even now after the revolution the women dress to the nine under their long cover ups, i don't know what to call those? like a long rain coat... victoria secret? they go for their shopping to Duby.... the young girls and boys go to all kind of sports, clases, they all speak many languages, and before the REV..... they were famous for their Europian shopping spree's!!! so don't go by the way they are showing the BAZAR and the women there. they don't dres like that in all the Muslim countries, not even the arabic countries.

---

Hello!

Author: e (---)
Date: 02-08-02 19:38 PST

She was talking about extremist not the whole muslim culture, sheesh lighten up!

please no insult, I'm just stating some facts>&

Author: (---)
Date: 02-08-02 19:52 PST

and my opinion and experience as a muslim, --.

RE: Think about it!

Author: (---)
Date: 02-08-02 21:42 PST

But Gloria Peres, the writer, will tell the other side... the good side... that's good & bad, everywhere!
sorry, but not true!

Sense of Humor?

Author: (---)
All --- was trying to do was make us laugh. Do any of you have a sense of humor? How many Cuban jokes are out there? Do I get offended no, I laugh right along, Leanne didn't mean to hurt anyone, she was just making fun of the Taliban. Do u like them?

Even though it may have been written

Author: (---)  
Date: 02-09-02 10:59 PST

in jest. Since 9-11 many ignorant people have treated people of the Muslin faith unfairly and yes it does offend them. There good and bad people in all people and we cannot stereo type the Muslins.
I recently met a young man from Morocco at a Mexican Restaurant we frequent. He works as a waiter part time and I was sharing with him that i was watching EL CLON and that some of it was filmed in his country. He shared with us the beauty he sees in his country and said he would try to see the show (he speaks Spanish among 4 other languages. I would like to see him again to get his opinion of the novela and how he thinks the people of his nation are being portrayed and their customs.
By the way, the Morrocon's ruled Spain for 500 years and many of the architecture and art, jewelry in Spain is influenced by them. Toledo is a city that is famous for its' gold jewelry influenced by Morocco..

RE: Even though it may have been written

Author: (---)  
Date: 02-09-02 13:11 PST

Okay than, than lets not make any more Puerto Rican, Jewish, Black, jokes in fact was just not be miserable, right? no one was bashing the Muslim people and excuse some of us who did care for those who died on Sept 11.

RE: Even though it may have been written

Author: (---)  
Date: 02-10-02 00:05 PST

Actually Spain was ruled by Arabs first and for quiet a long time. I believe it was the Abbasids. It was only much later that the Moors from Morocco took over. But it was a Golden Age for Spain. Poetry, art, architechure, and medicine all blossomed. During that period Muslim culture was way ahead of Western culture which was in the Dark Ages. I guess these things are like a wheel some cultures are up and others are down then it changes.
That was a joke someone sent to me and I thought I share it with ya'll.

--- is the only one who noticed it was just a joke!

I don't have anything against Muslims and/or Taliban members. But I will tell you one thing, since September 11 I have become very vigilant, somewhat paranoid about those who surround us.

I live in a suburb of Tampa, FL and it is here where the professor was fired from USF for "allegedly" having tides to terrorist groups. It is also in the West coast of Florida where most of the psychos who flew the planes into the World Trade Center resided and took flying lessons.

I understand there is good and bad in every culture, Cubans were stereotyped in the early 80's as "Marielitos" and early 90's as "Balseros" ... Believe me when I tell you, I know exactly how it feels when your culture is the butt of jokes.

-Lighten Up!

Most of these people walk around with a stick up their butt, so don't worry about it ---, I still love ya.
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