

*Revised Submission to Journal of Business Research –  
Special Issue: Introspection and Introspective Thought (August 2010)*

**“SAVED!” BY JENA MALONE:  
AN INTROSPECTIVE STUDY OF A CONSUMER’S FAN RELATIONSHIP  
WITH A FILM ACTRESS**

**Markus Wohlfeil**, Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, UK

**Susan Whelan**, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland

**Keywords:** Film Star Fandom, Parasocial Consumer-Celebrity Relationships, Human Brands, Narrative Transportation Theory, Subjective Personal Introspection

**The Authors:**

**Mr. Markus Wohlfeil**, Lecturer in Marketing, Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK. Tel: +44 1603 597397, Email: [m.wohlfeil@uea.ac.uk](mailto:m.wohlfeil@uea.ac.uk).

**Dr. Susan Whelan**, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies, Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, Ireland. Tel: +353 51 302438, email: [swhelan@wit.ie](mailto:swhelan@wit.ie).

**Acknowledgements:**

The lead author would like to thank in particular Ms. Debbie Malone for her encouragement, support and all the invaluable insights that she has provided for this research. Further thanks go to Ms. Jena Malone for inspiring me (though obviously without her knowing) to this study and paper, which has been funded by the Waterford Crystal PhD Scholarship. Finally, the authors also like to thank Morris B. Holbrook, Donncha Kavanagh, Anthony Patterson, the two anonymous reviewers and, last but not least, Stephen J. Gould for their helpful comments and suggestions.

**Abstract**

While consumers have always been fascinated by the works and private lives of celebrities, some consumers experience a significantly more intensive level of admiration for a particular celebrity and, subsequently, become what are commonly known as *fans*. However, scant attention has been paid to how the relationship between fans and celebrities expresses itself in everyday consumer behavior. Thus, in order to explore celebrity fandom as a holistic lived experience from a fan's insider perspective, the lead author uses subjective personal introspection to provide insights into his private fan relationship with the actress Jena Malone. Drawing on narrative transportation theory, the study finds that a consumer's fan experiences may derive from one's personal engagement with the celebrity's artistic work and public persona. The latter is essentially the consumer's private intertextual reading of what s/he perceives to be relevant and '*reliable*' media texts, which can result in a feeling of '*knowing*' the celebrity like a personal friend – or even of '*love*'.

*'Saved!' by Jena Malone: An introspective study of a consumer's fan relationship with a film actress*

**1. *The dangerous lives of celebrity fans***

Since the dawn of the Hollywood star system in the early 1920s, consumers have always been fascinated by the works and private lives of film stars and any other celebrities (Barbas, 2001; Dyer, 1998; McDonald, 2000). The public demand for celebrities has even grown so strong these days that film stars, directors, rock/pop stars, athletes, novelists and models have without doubt become an essential part of our everyday culture (Gabler, 1998; Geraghty, 2000) and contemporary market economy (McCracken, 1989; Thomson, 2006). Surely, most people tend to have merely a fleeting interest in celebrities per se and enjoy primarily the exchange of gossip with other like-minded individuals (Turner, 2004). But some consumers experience a significantly more intensive level of interest and admiration for a particular celebrity and, subsequently, become what are commonly known as *fans* (Leets, de Becker and Giles, 1995; O'Guinn, 1991; Smith, Fisher and Cole, 2007) or *celebrity worshippers* (McCutcheon, Ashe, Houran and Maltby, 2003). And as it happens, I'm one of them. Ever since I bought by chance the DVD of the indie-film *Saved!* (US 2004) back in April 2005, I have been a devoted fan of the young, attractive and talented actress Jena Malone, who features primarily in lesser known, yet much more interesting and challenging indie-films such as *Donnie Darko* (US 2001), *The United States of Leland* (US 2003), *Four Last Songs* (UK 2007), *Into the Wild* (US 2007), *The Ruins* (US 2008) or *The Messenger* (US 2009). But what is it exactly that attracts an ordinary consumer like me to become and remain a devoted fan of a film actress? What does the lived experience of being the fan of a film actress (or any other celebrity for that matter) mean for the individual consumer? And how does celebrity fandom express itself in everyday consumer behavior? Because these are some very interesting questions, it is quite surprising that little research has sought to address them so

far. In fact, the growing interdisciplinary body of literature on fan studies lacks even a coherent understanding of what exactly constitutes fandom in the first place. Instead, the interpretation of what a fan is seems only too often to be extremely dependent on the underlying agenda of the respective researcher studying the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2007).

What is clear, though, is that both academic literature and popular media have placed fans consistently on the receiving end of negative stereotyping, ridicule and *bad press* (Barbas, 2001; Jenson, 1992). As desired, fans are conceptualized either as uneducated, gullible and vulnerable '*numbs*', who are easily manipulated by a dangerous and controlling popular mass culture (Boorstin, 2006; Fiske, 1992; Gabler, 1998; Schickel, 1985), or as subversive and creative rebels against the corporate establishment, who poach and utilize commercial media texts to create their own new textual products (Barbas, 2001; Jenkins, 1992; Turner, 2004). Some scholars portray fans as members of neo-religious cults, who worship celebrities like gods through shared rituals and the sacralization of associated products within like-minded communities (Jindra, 1994; Kozinets, 1997; O'Guinn, 1991). Others describe them as geeks and alienated, lonely social misfits, who experience for various reasons deficits in their social skills and networks (Horton and Wohl, 1956). While often being intelligent, well-educated and very successful at work or in school, these consumers feel lonely, stigmatized and rejected in their private lives especially by those others, who may be less intelligent and creative, but are much more privileged in terms of social skills, status and/or physical attractiveness (Cusack, Jack and Kavanagh, 2003; Kozinets, 2001). Thus, fandom provides them with a means of compensation and social interaction with similarly isolated individuals. In following Munsterberg's (1916) legacy, however, some social psychologists have recently set out again on a deliberate quest to confirm the century-old popular stereotype that fans are essentially cognitively inflexible, gullible, dull and uncreative individuals (McCutcheon et al., 2003) or, even worse, delusional, pathological-obsessive stalkers (McCutcheon, Scott,

Arugate and Parker, 2006). Indeed, McCutcheon et al. (2003, 2006) go even so far to suggest that *celebrity worship* would actually constitute a '*serious mental illness*', although each of their arguments is strongly contradicted by their own published statistical data.

In light of those devastating views of fans, admitting to my infatuation with a film actress and risking to be branded with one of those common stereotypes may seem to be an unwise move. But as any of these conceptualizations neither describe nor fully capture many facets of my own everyday fan consumption experiences, I can't stop wondering whether there is maybe much more to a consumer's personal fan relationship with a celebrity than previous studies have uncovered so far. This suspicion is further strengthened by the fact that previous studies have investigated fandom primarily from an outsider-looking-in perspective, whereby scholars impose their own preconceived abstract ideas onto the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2007). As a result, they have two main things in common. Firstly, previous research has studied only certain, more '*extreme*' subgroups of fans on specific occasions like Star Trek Conventions, football fan-clubs or fan-blogs (Jenkins, 1992; Kozinets, 1997; Richardson, 2004) while paying little attention to the ordinary everyday lived experiences of the '*normal*' fan in daily life. Secondly, all those studies have focused either on the social dynamics and symbolic relationships that consumers experience with other fans within their respective consumption subcultures (Jenkins, 1992; Kozinets, 2001; Richardson, 2004) or on the mental well-being of *gullible, obsessive* celebrity worshippers (Leets et al., 1995; McCutcheon et al., 2003, 2006) instead of actually exploring the nature of fans' personal relationships with their objects of admiration in the first place. Hence, using a narrative transportation approach may provide some alternative explanations to address this literature gap and to reconceptualize our understanding of fans. Narrative transportation theory (Gerrig, 1993; Green and Brock, 2000) was developed to understand the phenomenon of '*getting lost in a book*', where a reader is so absorbed in a story that s/he becomes temporarily unaware of one's surroundings. Gerrig

(1993) describes narrative transportation as a psychological process, whereby a consumer ventures mentally to a narrative world by some means of transportation (i.e. the text) and by performing certain cognitive and emotional actions such as imagining the story, characters and sceneries. In doing so, the reader travels some distance away from one's daily life, which even becomes temporarily inaccessible, and returns back home after some time again; though *'somewhat changed'* by the experience of the journey (Green, Brock and Kaufman, 2004).

In allowing the consumer to immerse oneself into exciting narrative worlds, where one could experience a different self and engage with fictional characters like real friends, the narrative transportation process provides the consumer with a temporary means of escape (Batat and Wohlfeil, 2009). But in addition to our engagement with media texts, narrative transportation theory may also provide a suitable approach for explaining a consumer's fan relationship with a celebrity when linked to the stardom literature. The stardom literature (Dyer, 1998; Geraghty, 2000; Hollinger, 2006) views film stars essentially as living textual images or human brands, whose on- and off-screen persona, personal identity and reflected values are carefully designed (*'authored'*), positioned and managed in the media by talent agencies (or previously by the Hollywood studios) to suit specific market needs (Thomson, 2006). The consumer's interest in the admired celebrity can thus be interpreted as *'losing'* oneself into the factual melodramatic narrative (Argo, Zhui and Dahl, 2008) that is the film star's public life as presented by various media texts that may include film characters, interviews, articles and gossip. Hence, the fan may sympathize (= feel with the film star as an observer), empathize (= share the film star's feelings due to similar personal experiences) or even identify (= feel the film star's feelings as one's own) with the admired celebrity like a media character (Cohen, 2001; Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2008). After all, it is highly unlikely that we would ever get to know the real private person behind the film star's public image in the media (Dyer, 1998). Thus, in order to both understand what meaning the fan relationship

with a celebrity has for the ordinary consumer and to answer the earlier questions, the present introspective study takes an existential-phenomenological perspective (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Thompson, 1997) to gain some holistic insights into a consumer's everyday lived experiences with one's admired film star from a fan's insider point of view (Smith et al., 2007). Using a narrative form of subjective personal introspection (Gould, 2008; Holbrook, 1995, 2005), I first describe in a narrative essay how my own personal fan relationship with the film actress Jena Malone developed and translated into lived consumption experiences over a period of 20 months. Then, with the helping hand of my co-author, I examine the recorded introspective data hermeneutically through a narrative transportation approach and discuss the findings.

## ***2. Into the wild***

In order to gain some truly holistic insights into a consumer's personal everyday lived fan relationship with one's favorite film star, the consumer should be given a voice by focusing from an insider perspective (Smith et al., 2007) on the consumer experience in the way it presents itself to consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Thompson, 1997). In taking an existential-phenomenological perspective, I use a controversial research method known as subjective personal introspection (SPI), which Holbrook (1986, 1995) introduced to consumer research over 20 years ago and which Gould (1993), Brown (1998a, b) and Carol Rambo's (1992, 2005) impressive autoethnographic articles have advanced further. In its purest form, SPI is an *“extreme form of participant observation that focuses on impressionistic narrative accounts of the writer's own private consumption experiences with a phenomenon from the viewpoint of an informed and deeply involved insider”* (Holbrook, 2005, p. 45), where the researcher is also the sole informant. One of the major advantages of this research method is that it allows the researcher an unlimited 24-hour access to an insider's everyday lived experiences with the research phenomenon without having to wrestle with ethical concerns regarding the informant's privacy (Brown, 1998b). Moreover, SPI enables the researcher to

explore the subjective nature of human feelings, daydreams, sensations and streams of consciousness related to consumption (Gould, 1993, 2008) in the very way they are experienced by the individual, but have remained inaccessible through traditional *scientific* or *qualitative* research methods. Hence, I provide some introspective insights into my own private lived consumption experiences as a devoted fan of the film actress Jena Malone in the form of a narrative essay that summarizes the two collected types of introspective data.

My lived fan experiences in the period from April to September 2005 were obtained as retrospective data in a 36,000-words essay, which was written in September 2005 to describe how I became a Jena Malone fan. My everyday lived experiences as a Jena Malone fan from 11<sup>th</sup> September 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 were then collected as contemporaneous data while they occurred in real time to ensure a high degree of '*data accuracy*' (Wallendorf and Brucks, 1993). Contemporaneous introspective data field the unique advantage of providing a large pool of *emotional data* on consumption experiences that would be inaccessible to any other research method that is based on retrospective recall or pure observation and, therefore, inevitably lost forever (Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2008). To ensure data accessibility for external review, I have recorded the data systematically, unfiltered and on the spot in a specifically assigned diary (Patterson, 2005). In total, I obtained more than 150,000 hand-written words as raw contemporaneous data for a thorough hermeneutic part-to-whole analysis (Gadamer, 2004; Thompson, 1997). First, I read the entire transcript together with my co-author to gain a first sense for the overall picture. As the recorded data represented essentially a '*plotless*' sequence of individual instances collected over a certain timeframe, they were summarized in an extensive consumer narrative that reflects the chronological order of events and stays true to the emotional consumption experiences and feelings to gain a better overview. Based on the early impressions, we broke the data into manageable, logically coherent chunks to be examined individually. Emerging key themes were then put in context to each other and the



overall consumer narrative to be scrutinized further in order to identify key patterns of meaning (Thompson, 1997). The following essay is an extensive summary of the consumer narrative and focuses on some interesting emic themes that have emerged iteratively from the recorded data. I would like to remind the reader that the emphasis is placed less on the factual recollection of observable consumption practices, but more on how my everyday lived experiences (i.e. inner feelings, thoughts, fantasies and daydreams) derived from or translated into my fan relationship with the actress Jena Malone.

### **3. ‘*Saved!*’ by Jena Malone**

“I still remember the day in April 2005, when I saw Jena Malone for the very first time. Her lovely smile and her beautiful eyes captivated me so much that my entire body was filled with the same prickling warmth that I feel each time I fancy a particular girl/woman. But to be honest, there was something special about her entire persona that fascinated me and let her stand out from the crowd. The only problem is, unfortunately, that I’ve never met or seen Jena Malone in person (and most likely never will!), because she is an extremely talented young US film actress and, so far, my closest social encounter with her was watching Jena on the screen or reading articles about her in magazines. It all started when by chance I bought the indie-film *Saved!* (US 2004) in a 3-DVDs-for-€20 sale. I can’t really explain why, but I simply had this sudden urge creeping up in me that I had to own this particular film. I recalled suddenly Jonathan Ross’ glowing review on his BBC program, but I never watched the film before, as it was never released in a cinema near me, and I had forgotten all about it – until now. Thus, I didn’t let this second chance slip away again. When I finally viewed the film on the same day, I was so intrigued by this gem that it has become one of my favorite films ever since! Moreover, from the very first moment I watched it, I was absolutely blown away by Jena Malone’s acting performance in portraying the lead character Mary Cummings – a good Christian girl who tries to save her boyfriend from being gay by sacrificing her virginity, but

gets pregnant as a result and is, subsequently, ostracized exactly by those hypocrites, who preach the Christian values of love, tolerance and forgiveness.

Although I have to admit that I was very much attracted to her beautiful eyes, her charming smile and her natural beauty, I was also totally captivated by her believable, natural acting performance that I simply had to watch it at once for a second time. But this time, I switched to the commentary of the leading actresses Jena Malone and Mandy Moore. While I listened to Jena Malone explaining how she developed her character and talking about the context of particular film scenes, I became even more fascinated by her. Not only is she pretty and an extremely good actress, but she also seemed to be an exceptionally interesting, smart and surprisingly mature young woman. Of course, there is always the danger of mistaking the actress with her role – unless you have seen her in a variety of other roles. Therefore, a really good actress for me is one who makes each of her characters appear to be believably ‘*real*’ and who manages through her performance to allow you enjoy even those films that you would have never watched otherwise. Because only few actors and actresses would meet these criteria, I wanted – no I needed – to find out more about Jena Malone as a person and actress as well as to watch other films with her. The next morning, I started therefore to browse the Internet for any information about her that I could get my hands on. Only, I could hardly find any at all... Incredible! While there are hundreds of sites and articles for virtually every single talented and more often untalented (wannabe) celebrity on earth, frustratingly little was available on Jena Malone and most of it hadn’t been updated for years. Nonetheless, IMDb presented me with a surprisingly long list of films in which she had featured so far. Despite being merely 20 years old at that time, Jena Malone had already 20 film roles and 3 guest roles in TV soaps to her credit<sup>1</sup>, participated as a lead character in an audio recording of

---

<sup>1</sup> By summer 2010, at the age of 25, Jena Malone has already featured in 33 films, 5 TV soap guest roles, 2 animation film voice-overs, one audio-recorded theatre-play and performed on stage in 2 Off-Broadway plays.

a theater play, voiced a character in the animation film *Howl's Moving Castle* (JPN 2004) and had two further films already in post-postproduction. Quite an astonishing achievement!

Yet, I was particularly surprised to learn that I had actually seen Jena before in another film, when I saw *Contact* (US 1997) in 1998, in which she played Jodie Foster's character as a child. But back then, I obviously paid little attention to a merely 12-year old girl and was also a bit annoyed by the film's underlying religious connotations – though the acting was quite good. Anyway, armed with this list I started over the next weeks to buy DVDs of *The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys* (US 2001), *Donnie Darko* (US 2001), *Stepmom* (US 1998), *Life as a House* (US 2001) and *Cheaters* (US 2000). As I could relate empathetically to every one of her characters as if they were 'real' people, each of her films that I watched confirmed her exceptional talent as an actress and increased a strong desire in me to acquire ALL of her films for my private film collection; a feeling that I had never experienced before. In fact, I was really hungry for Jena Malone and her films and somehow in danger of starvation, if I couldn't watch them all. However, that was easier said than done, as I soon discovered that most of her films have only been released in the US as region 1 DVDs, but not as European region 2 DVDs. This means that they don't run on our DVD players without locking them into the wrong region. I felt totally heartbroken! What could I do? In the past, this would have been the end of my efforts. But this time I began desperately to look for suitable alternatives. As an interim solution, I managed to buy on eBay *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple* (US 2000) as a VCD and three other films on VHS until I could replace them with a more suitable DVD release. Finally, I purchased an external DVD drive, which I locked into region 1 to watch all those US DVDs that I increasingly bought on Amazon or eBay to satisfy my hunger for her films. Yet, all the time, I also felt in me this strong desire to learn more about Jena Malone as a private person; again something I have never experienced before.

Hence, when I found Rommelmann's (2000) well-researched article, I was (and still am) absolutely fascinated by what I learned about Jena's personal background and my admiration for her increased even more. Jena was born on 21-11-1984 in Sparks, Nevada, as the unplanned result of a one-night stand and spent basically most of her childhood in the poverty of trailer parks. With her single mother Debbie being a struggling actress in an amateur theater, Jena wanted to be a performer (actress, singer/songwriter, writer or dancer) from early on and responded as a 10-year old to the ad of an acting school. While this acting school turned out to be a fraud, Jena nonetheless caught the eyes of both Beverly Strong, who signed her at once to become her personal manager, and Anjelica Houston, who cast her for the title character in her directorial debut *Bastard Out of Carolina* (US 1996). Anjelica Houston also introduced Jena and her mother Debbie to Toni Howard, an influential agent who specialized in child actors and signed her on the spot for International Creative Management. Yet, what really impressed me most was that, even as an 11-year old, Jena preferred (to her manager's frustration) to feature only in those film projects that were dear to her heart rather than in commercially promising blockbusters. Thus, she turned down roles in *Air Force One* or *The Parent Trap* (Lindsay Lohan got the part instead) to portray the lead characters in *Bastard Out of Carolina* (US 1996), *Ellen Foster* (US 1997) and *Hope* (US 1997), for which Jena received critical acclaim, some film awards and even a Golden Globe nomination. Still, Jena Malone and her mother experienced life in Hollywood as anything but rosy and glamorous. As Debbie was required by law to be present on set at all times, she couldn't work herself and Jena became the sole breadwinner of the family. It also meant that Jena only received home-school education on the set; although concluding from her interviews (i.e. Cohen, 2002; Miller, 2006, Rems, 2004) she seems to be very well read.

But worst of all, after approx. 30% of her gross salaries were already deducted as fees for her manager, agent, accountant, lawyers, etc., her full income was taxed at 45%, although

production companies were required by Coogan's law to pay 30% of a child actor's salaries into blocked trusts, which only become accessible at the actor's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (Rommelmann, 2000). This meant that Jena was rarely left with more than 7% of her earnings to live on. When finally faced with a bill of \$150,000 in back taxes and near bankruptcy, Jena filed, aged 14, for legal emancipation from her mother, which was granted on her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, in order to work legally like an adult in the film industry and to access her blocked trusts to pay off her debts. Since then, she is managing her own career without interference and approval from others (Calhoun, 2003; Cohen, 2002; Rommelmann, 2000). This step also included firing her manager Beverly Strong and any other stakeholders, who had profited from her in the past, and switching to United Talent Agency, who offered much more favorable fees and absolute creative freedom. Furthermore, Jena focuses on portraying complex female characters with genuine problems in challenging and artistically creative independent film productions rather than fulfilling certain ominous teenage stereotypes in typical teen-comedies (Calhoun, 2003; Lyon, 2008; Miller, 2006). That's why she also refuses to do glamour photo shoots for fashion or celebrity magazines that would *"present girls with false beauty ideals they can hardly fulfill and only make them feel inadequate"* (Rems, 2004, p. 47). In contrast to many other young film actors, she shunned the glamorous LA party life as well by moving back to Lake Tahoe, where she felt happy as a child (Calhoun, 2003; Lyon, 2008). Maybe this also explains why Jena Malone managed the transition from child actress to a serious young adult actress so effortlessly without losing her personal integrity, while so many other former child actors like her contemporary Lindsay Lohan have struggled or even failed in their careers.

I was really impressed by her life story and how she managed, despite her young age and the economic and personal pressure she was under, to remain true to herself. Somehow, I felt inspired by her. Back in Germany, my childhood involved growing up as one of the latch-key kids in an *'impoverished'* working-class neighborhood. Fortunately, my parents were among

the very few, who were steadily employed and earned a regular income, which allowed us to move to a somewhat better neighborhood when I was 12. Anyway, like Jena, I also made a list of what I wanted to become, which included actor, athlete, psychologist and filmmaker. Because films had always provided me with a mental means of escape, being an actor was a passion of mine from very early on. I even joined the drama group in school, which was pretty much the best experience of my entire schooldays. Yet, in contrast to Jena, I lacked her determination to follow my dreams. Furthermore, my parents insisted, due to my poor grades, that I had to focus exclusively on ‘*practice-relevant*’ subjects and forced me to quit the drama group. To be fair, I probably wasn’t good enough to succeed as an actor anyway. But when I finally graduated from school with Fachhochschulreife, I had lost nearly all my childhood hopes and dreams and started working in sports retailing instead, living aimlessly from one day to another. Only when I watched *Dead Poets Society* years later, I felt inspired again to go to university, study marketing and become a lecturer; and I succeeded. But I still regularly have this nagging feeling inside of me that something is missing. While reading now Jena Malone’s personal life story, I felt the deepest respect for her as to how she succeeded against all the odds in doing what she wanted to do. She is not only very talented, but also managed to resist all the temptations of fame, party-life and the commercial exploitation of the Hollywood machinery without losing her personal integrity. As I said earlier, quite an astonishing achievement for a young woman from a poor social background!

By October 2005, I had become so fascinated by Jena Malone that I wanted to hear and read more about her in order to understand her thoughts and feelings as a person. But because she doesn’t fit the typical celebrity life-style, the media seem to ignore her and meaningful articles are scarce. Nevertheless, I still managed to acquire a few magazines with interesting articles on or interviews with Jena Malone (i.e. Calhoun, 2003; Lyons, 2008; Miller, 2006; Rems, 2004) by usually paying more than the actual retail price for them. But for me, it was

totally worth it! At the same time, my excitement was further enhanced by the first chance to watch Jena Malone on the big screen in *Pride & Prejudice* (UK 2005). Moreover, I had finally acquired all her films either on DVD, VCD or VHS – except of *The Ballad of Jack & Rose* (US 2005) and *Pride & Prejudice* (UK 2005), which I added in January and February 2006 respectively – for my private collection. While I continued to download photo images of Jena Malone into the designated digital photo collection folder on my laptop and to look up eBay for Jena Malone-related items, my frantic hunt for her films, articles, posters, which I used to decorate my room (Photo 1 + 2), and any other memorabilia decreased suddenly and significantly from early-November 2005 to February 2006. Yet, my emotional attachment to Jena Malone remained very strong, as my material possessions of her films and memorabilia were not the only means through which I experienced her increasing presence in my private life. In fact, Jena Malone was literally always on my mind.

While I honestly believe that I have been quite successful in my professional career so far, especially since entering academia, my private life, unfortunately, feels more like a failure to me. Like anybody else, I suspect, I was imagining since my early teenage years what it is like to go out with a girl, to be in love with her, how it feels like to share the first kiss, the first time with each other, etc. But the years passed by and nothing really happened in this regard. While everyone else around me seemed without much effort to be falling happily in and out of love with their special ones, I suffered one rejection after another, as no girl found me attractive or interesting enough to date me. In fact, in my entire life I've only been in a few relationships with females, which never lasted very long and the last one ended some time ago. It hasn't been for the lack of trying, but I believe that my social skills are somewhat ... '*underdeveloped*'. For most of my life, I felt socially excluded at school and work, so that my circle of friends has been rather limited. A strong contributing factor is surely that I'm privately very shy, have a low self-esteem in private matters and '*don't converse easily*' with

attractive women I don't know. And when I finally have the courage to talk to a female whom I fancy, my pulse rises, my hands become sweaty, my nerves run amok and I mumble through my dry mouth something idiotic that is often the wrong thing at the wrong time. Previously, I compensated the feeling of loneliness with an extensive active participation in sports, but my social network there turned out to be superficial rather than true friendship. And with every year that I'm getting older, this feeling of loneliness, emotional starvation and the lack of romantic love experiences turns into frustration, helplessness and desperation. But what exactly has my private misery to do with Jena Malone? At the beginning – nothing!

Though I felt sexually attracted to her, my initial interest and admiration for Jena Malone was mainly based on her work and achievement as an actress. But the nature of my emotional attachment to her changed after suffering another major disappointment in my private life. As I hadn't been on a date for a long time, I was filled with an enjoyable and arousing feeling of excitement, anticipation, happiness and nervousness mixed together, when a nice girl finally agreed to go out with me. But I was also very insecure and scared that I would lack the social skills and experience in knowing how to behave appropriately in this kind of situation. The date didn't work out so well, as I wasn't really sure whether she was really interested in me. If she was, then I failed to interpret her signals correctly. Anyway, frustrated with having to live my lonely life as an involuntary single again, I started to seek romance and love from a very different source – Jena Malone. While this might sound quite weird, I can assure you that it is actually an innocent example of Horton and Wohl's (1956) parasocial relationship concept. It started approximately two weeks after my date when I finally watched *Pride & Prejudice* (UK 2005) in the cinema. That night, I was dreaming to be of Prussian decent and just moved to the English countryside of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, where I suddenly saw this beautiful girl and knew she's the one – even though the local people seemed to shun her for unknown reasons. As it turned out, this girl was Lydia Bennet (= Jena Malone), who had returned to her family



in shame after Mr. Wickham had seduced but not married her. Yet, my dream character didn't care, started to court her and finally asked for her hand in marriage. But before I could receive an answer, I was rudely awakened by the alarm clock.

Anyway, over the following nights I really enjoyed those fictive dreams about Jena Malone and me so much that I was increasingly looking forward to them. Because they filled me with inner warmth and made me feel better about myself, I was quite devastated when the dreams, without warning, stopped from one day to another. In response, I started to imagine what it would be like meeting and talking to Jena Malone in person, going out with her or even dating and kissing her – like I would do when I secretly fancy a girl but am too shy or scared of rejection to talk to her. Each time I was feeling lonely, unattractive and ignored/rejected by the females around me when I was sitting in a café, in a pub or just walking through town, I engaged in daydreams, in which I was in a '*real*' and '*serious*' romantic relationship with Jena Malone as my girlfriend. I imagined walking hand-in-hand with her through the park on Sunday afternoons, maybe fooling around on a park bench like young lovers do, going to the movies or theater, having a chat and a drink together in a pub or cuddling in front of the TV after a romantic dinner. In doing so, I kind of wrote in my imagination my very own fictional narrative about a romantic everyday relationship between Jena Malone and me, in which I could lose myself mentally for awhile and fulfill my emotional, romantic and, to some extent, even my sexual needs. However, the sexual fantasies I did experience on very rare occasions played only a minor, rather supplementary role in my overall romantic narrative. But as girls, especially actresses, like Jena Malone are unlikely to meet and fall in love with ordinary guys like me on the street, I imagined myself becoming an actor by chance as well. Indeed, while reading Stephen King's *Rage*, I experienced the story as a film, in which Jena Malone and I as actors were playing each a certain character. I thereby created the illusion that we met on the

set, started dating, fell in love and became a loving couple. From there on, I imagined every novel I was reading as a film production that featured Jena Malone and me.

While I could drop in and out of those imagined narratives to attend to my everyday affairs like closing a book after a few chapters, I started to look for some personalized items of Jena Malone, such as original hand-signed photos, that would in some way symbolize her physical presence in my life. But I couldn't really find anything until Jena Malone gave her Broadway debut in the theater play *Doubt* from January to June 2006. Suddenly, a few professional autograph traders were offering original Jena Malone autographs priced from \$45 to \$85 on eBay, which she had personally signed in front of the theater as evidenced by the bonus proof photos. Back in February 2006, there was no doubt in my mind that I needed to have as many as I could afford to buy and for the next 3 months a much more intense and targeted buying spree began. As most sellers offered basically the same photos signed by her, my purchase decisions were often influenced by those proof candids that were the most recent and natural photos of Jena Malone. Hereby, I came into contact with a professional autograph hunter, who offered me to get Jena Malone to sign personally any photo image that I would email him. A few days after emailing him my most recent and precious Jena Malone photo files, he asked whether I would like to have Jena address them to me personally. Are you kidding me? What kind of question is that? If that is possible, I obviously would love to! And he managed to have Jena Malone address 21 hand-signed photos to me in person, which have become my most valued treasures, my private crown-jewels (Photo 3). All the time, I was also tempted to fly to New York to watch her performing live on stage and maybe even meet her backstage. But fearing that I may burst my imaginary bubble, I didn't go ahead with it. As long as I had my imaginary relationship to fall back on, I could cope with loneliness and rejection in my life. But what would happen, if I lost even that one?

However, I soon didn't need to worry about those things, as I had an increased email exchange with a very nice, attractive and intelligent young woman, whom I met the previous year at a conference. As I really liked her from the first moment we met, I was absolutely excited when we arranged for me to visit her in August 2006. But while I was looking forward to visiting her, I suddenly stopped dreaming about having a relationship with Jena Malone; although I still enjoyed watching her films and cherishing her hand-signed photos. Yet, although the first days were perfect, my visit increasingly turned into a disaster due to many unforeseen circumstances. Maybe I was too overexcited, but I guess that my poor social skills let me down once again. As I tried desperately to make up for it at another conference in September, external interferences shattered all my hopes for reconciliation and pushed me into a disastrous emotional turmoil filled with the intense emotional pains of hopelessness, sadness, loneliness and the complete absence of any feeling that may promise some form of happiness. While I functioned quite well on the outside, internally I locked myself in. Hence, I turned to Jena Malone as the only person that promised me love, comfort and emotional warmth and allowed me to join her symbolically through her films, photos and the hand-signed photos that she had personally addressed to me. Over the next weeks, I watched in particular *Saved!* (US 2004) at least a dozen times and enjoyed looking at her photos, her beautiful eyes, her charming smile and signatures for hours. It felt like she was there with me. Somehow, her imagined love and support helped me back on track and I finally started to brighten up again. Of course, I know that I will never meet Jena Malone in person nor ever be given the opportunity of actually dating and kissing her. In fact, she most likely will never know who I am or that I even exist. Moreover, I will also never be in the position of knowing what kind of person Jena Malone in her private life really is. Nevertheless, her artistic work and her textual persona has provided me with meaning, purpose and a source of inspiration to enjoy life despite all the frustrations and disappointments I have suffered so far. Therefore, I

honestly believe that Jena Malone actually Saved! (US 2004) me from perhaps something worse by giving me something nice and exciting to feel about.”

#### **4. *Four Last Songs***

The essay offers some interesting insights into how a consumer’s fan relationship with a film actress expresses itself in everyday consumer behavior and what meaning it carries for the individual that have emerged iteratively from the obtained introspective data. In the past, academic literature has treated fandom mainly as an inherent and static personality trait based on some pre-defined ‘*abnormal*’ characteristics and behavior patterns by which fans could be differentiated quite conveniently from ‘*normal*’ consumers (Jenson, 1992; McCutcheon et al., 2003; Munsterberg, 1916). The introspective data, however, provide clear evidence that a consumer’s fan relationship with an admired celebrity actually constitutes a dynamic process that is constantly evolving with permanently varying levels of significance and experienced intensity for the individual. Moreover, while previous studies have conceptualized fandom primarily as a *participatory culture*, where like-minded consumers socially interact with each other within their respective consumption subcultures (Jenkins, 1992; Kozinets, 1997, 2001), the introspective data clearly show that my personal fan experiences and any subsequent consumption practices focus exclusively on my emotional attachment to Jena Malone herself and my admiration for her creative work as an actress. Indeed, during the entire 16 months of my contemporaneous self-observation, I have preferred to enjoy my admiration for her just by myself and never shown the slightest intentions to share it with any other fans either online or in person. The only exception would obviously be Jena Malone herself – but that’s quite a different story and unlikely ever to happen. Now, it can be argued that the main reason why my observed fan experiences revolve entirely around the personal emotional attachment to the film actress rather than the participation in some ominous fan community is that I could actually ‘*be in love with her*’ – which may not be so untrue. After all, romantic and sexual

attraction have surely played a role in capturing my initial interest in Jena Malone and, in some way, continue doing so as part of an ongoing romantic infatuation. But how can you actually ‘love’ somebody you don’t know, have never even met in person and most likely never will? It is in particular this intimate – but in the literature largely neglected – aspect of fandom that drawing on narrative transportation theory provides some interesting insights in.

Although the introspective consumer narrative shows that my ongoing admiration for Jena Malone derives from my personal engagement with her artistic work as a film actress as much as with her off-screen persona, it is hereby interesting to note that the findings contradict the present stardom literature already with regard to how consumers relate to film stars. In his seminal book *Stars*, Dyer (1998) views film stars as systems of semiotic images that personify the consumer society’s cultural ideals of success, glamour, the extraordinary and even the divine. Thus, in drawing on selected examples from the Hollywood studio era of the 1920s to early-1950s, Dyer theorizes that fans would admire film stars as ‘*flawless, superior*’ human beings, who display a consistent public image both on- and off-screen by portraying only those film characters that would mirror their own ‘*true*’ personality and life-style in real life (Hollinger, 2006). This view is also shared by McCracken (1989), who describes celebrities as complex and individualized sets of culturally constructed meanings that they accumulate through their fictional roles. Yet, my admiration for the performer Jena Malone results from her ability and flexibility as an actress to portray a diversity of characters that significantly differ from her private persona as much as from each other. But even more importantly, my emotional attachment to Jena Malone derives from actually seeing her as a ‘*normal, ordinary*’ young woman with all her personal strengths and weaknesses rather than as a semiotic signifier of some cultural ideal, which is also evidenced by my romantic and sexual attraction to her. This means that I see her primarily as an interesting, intelligent, beautiful, natural and talented young woman, who also has flaws, some ‘*bad habits*’ and makes mistakes from time

to time – just like you, me and anybody else. These feelings of empathy and infatuation are further enhanced by engaging in out-of-text intertextuality (Hirschman, 2000; Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2008), whereby I link Jena Malone’s personal life-story to my own life experiences to the extent that I even partially identify with her. For example, by comparing my own personal experiences of growing up in a socially disadvantaged neighborhood to hers, “*I know only too well what it means to overcome the obstacles she had to face*” and, hence, admire her courage and determination in following her dreams; especially as I failed to do the same under less severe circumstances. Thus, ‘*sharing*’ similar life experiences helps to strengthen the emotional bond that the fan experiences in relation to the admired celebrity.

However, as I’m unlikely to ever get to know Jena Malone personally, my impression of her personality is essentially a personalized intertextual reading of those media texts that I, as a consumer, perceive to be relevant and ‘*reliable*’, such as her TV and print media interviews, her personal websites and detailed articles in ‘*better*’ magazines. But while Dyer (1998) argues that a consumer’s image of a film star is fixed and externally managed by the media, the presented consumer narrative suggests instead that this image is actually constructed within the consumer’s mind and constantly evolving; similar to our images of the people we regularly encounter in our everyday lives. This is clearly evident in my deeply-engaged, but also quite selective reading of Rommelmann’s (2000) article, when I genuinely empathized with Jena Malone in how she “*handled so maturely all the problems she had to face at such a young age*” and admired how she developed, in my opinion, into “*such a smart, nice and interesting personality without losing her personal integrity*”. The consumer internalizes the celebrity’s off-screen persona thereby psychically within oneself through a selective reading of media texts and loads it with one’s own thoughts, feelings, fantasies, values and meanings. Then s/he projects the created personal impression back onto the celebrity, just to internalize it once again with freshly obtained imageries from the media. This finding would also explain

why my reported impression of Jena Malone's personality especially emphasizes those traits of her character and life-style that resonate strongly with my own private life experiences, ideals, dreams and desires and, as a result, strengthen my emotional attachment to her as a '*genuine person*'. More importantly, this continuous process of introjection and projection (Gould, 1993) allows for the feelings of actually '*knowing*' the film actress like a close friend, whose career and life choices are empathetically followed in the same way as that of a fictional media character in an ongoing melodramatic narrative.

This experienced feeling of knowing the celebrity personally, including his/her private thoughts, feelings, personality and way of life, can at times become strong enough to elicit an emotional feeling within the fan of '*personal friendship*' or even '*love*' towards the adored celebrity; a phenomenon that Horton and Wohl (1956) have termed *parasocial interaction* or *relationship*. While the literature acknowledges parasocial relationships with media figures as quite a common phenomenon, especially among adolescents (Giles and Maltby, 2004) and the elderly (Chory-Assaad and Yanen, 2005; Rubin, Pearse and Powell, 1985), the term itself has become increasingly loaded with largely negative connotations in both academic and popular literature. This is not surprising, as a number of social psychologists (i.e. McCutcheon et al., 2003, 2006), in recent years, discuss parasocial relationships primarily as a mental illness that is associated with a consumer's alleged cognitive inflexibility, impressionability, gullibility and pathological-obsessive behavior. However, this narrow, but increasingly popular view is quite unfortunate, because Horton and Wohl (1956) actually suggest the opposite by clearly highlighting the beneficial and healthy cathartic effects that parasocial relationships would provide for the lonely and socially isolated, but otherwise "*mentally normal*" people. In their opinion, "*nothing could be more reasonable or natural than that people, who are isolated and lonely, should seek sociability and love wherever they think they can find it*" by forming a compensatory emotional attachment to a particular celebrity, who is "*readily available as an*

*object of love*” (Horton and Wohl, 1956, p. 223). Parasocial relationships with celebrities would therefore provide lonely individuals with a cathartic experience that helps to restore their emotional well-being in times of psychological distress. Leets et al. (1995) also add that a parasocial relationship only turns into pathological and dangerous behavior on those rare occasions, when it proceeds into fanatical obsession and an absolute defiance of reality.

The introspective data seem indeed to support Horton and Wohl’s theory. One theme that is dominant throughout the entire consumer narrative is the feeling of loneliness deriving from my unfulfilled longing for a romantic, affectionate and loving relationship with a female, which has so far failed to materialize in my life. As any social relationship involves essentially two people mutually reciprocating their feelings for each other, experiencing constant rejections by females on expressed grounds of not being attractive and interesting enough for them have resulted over time in low self-esteem, shyness (“*don’t converse easily with women*”) and growing insecurity (“*don’t know how to behave appropriately or to read her signals correctly*”) when interacting with women I fancy. With little opportunity for a romantic relationship with a female available in real life, Jena Malone lends herself perfectly as a readily available object of love for me to compensate for the experienced deficits; especially as her physical appearance and public persona match very closely “*the type of girl I’m always falling for*”. My impression of her personality is thereby a projection of my own unfulfilled desires and, especially, of what a potential girlfriend for me may be like as a normal person. My relationship fantasies with her essentially reflect how I imagine an ideal romantic relationship to be like in everyday life. However, that my parasocial relationship with Jena Malone is of a cathartic nature becomes apparent by the fact that it is not constantly present, but develops and recedes as a direct psychological response to external events in my real-life relations to women. Indeed, I engage most intensively in a parasocial relationship with Jena Malone in those particular moments, when I have just suffered another serious



interpersonal disappointment or have been rejected again by a female I fancy. My imagined relationship with Jena Malone provides me thereby with a temporary means of coping with feelings of loneliness, perceived unattractiveness and the lack of romantic love that would eat me up from the inside. But every time a new possibility emerges for me to develop a real-life relationship with a female, the parasocial experience quickly recedes again.

## **5. Hope**

In heeding Smith et al.'s (2007) call, this introspective research studied celebrity fandom from an '*insider*' perspective to explore the nature of consumers' everyday fan relationships and emotional attachment to their favorite celebrity. Obviously, I don't imply that the introspective data and the proposed interpretations can be generalized. Nor do I pretend that my presented interpretation of the complex introspective data would be the only possible one; far from it. What I do suggest, however, is that some really interesting insights into celebrity fandom emerged from this introspective study that previous studies based on traditional research methodologies have overlooked or failed to describe. The main finding that has emerged iteratively from the introspective data is that a consumer's fan experiences revolve around one's personal engagement with both the celebrity's creative work as a performer and the celebrity's off-screen persona. The latter is essentially the fan's mental construction that evolves from the personal intertextual reading of what s/he perceives to be relevant and '*reliable*' media texts and is determined by the fan's inherent desires. Hence, drawing on narrative transportation theory can explain in particular how and why fans often develop and experience the feeling of '*knowing*' the celebrity personally, including his/her private thoughts, feelings, personality and way of life, despite having actually never met the real person. This experienced '*bond of emotional closeness*' can at times be strong enough to elicit a feeling of '*personal friendship*' within the consumer or, in some way, even a feeling of '*love*' towards the admired celebrity (Barbas, 2001) that can express itself in a parasocial

relationship. It also provides an explanation as to why fans sometimes feel enormously disappointed, when their most desired dream of actually meeting the adored celebrity in person comes true, because the celebrity turns out to be a different person in private life or just can't live up to the (perhaps unrealistic) imaginary person that the consumer has created in one's own mind (Gross, 2005).

## References

- Argo J, Zhui R, Dahl DW. Fact or fiction: an investigation of empathy differences in response to emotional melodramatic entertainment. *Journal of Consumer Research* 2008; 34 (3): 614-23.
- Barbas S. *Movie Crazy: Fans, Stars and the Cult of Celebrity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 2001.
- Batat W, Wohlfeil M. Getting lost 'Into the Wild': understanding consumers' movie enjoyment through a narrative transportation approach. *Advances in Consumer Research* 2009; 36: 372-77.
- Boorstin DJ. From hero to celebrity: the human pseudo-event. In: Marshall PD, editor. *The Celebrity Culture Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006. pp. 72-90.
- Brown S. Romancing the market: sex, shopping and subjective personal introspection. *Journal of Marketing Management* 1998a; 14 (7-8): 783-98.
- Brown S. The wind in the wallows: literary theory, autobiographical criticism and subjective personal introspection. *Advances in Consumer Research* 1998b; 25: 25-30.
- Calhoun D. From 'Stepmom' to 'Donnie Darko': Jena Malone's LA story. *Dazed & Confused* 2003; 2 (3): 66-69.
- Chory-Assad RM, Yanen A. Hopelessness and loneliness as predictors of older adults' involvement with favorite television performers. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 2005; 49 (2): 182-201.

- Cohen J. Defining identification: a theoretical look at the identification of audiences with media characters. *Mass Communications & Society* 2001; 4 (3): 245-64.
- Cohen SL. Jena Malone: emancipated at 15, can she do the same for the movies?. Interview 2002; March: 128-33.
- Cusack M, Jack G, Kavanagh D. Dancing with discrimination: managing stigma and identity. *Culture and Organization* 2003; 9 (4): 295-310.
- Dyer R. *Stars – New Edition*. London: British Film Institute; 1998.
- Fiske J. The cultural economy of fandom. In: Lewis LA, editor. *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*. London: Routledge, 1992. pp. 30-49.
- Gabler N. *Life: The Movie – How Entertainment Conquered Reality*. New York: Vintage; 1998.
- Gadamer HG. *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Continuum; 2004.
- Geraghty C. Re-examining stardom: questions of texts, bodies and performance. In: Gledhill C, Williams L, editors. *Reinventing Film Studies*, 2000. pp. 105-17.
- Gerrig RJ. *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading*. New Haven: Yale University; 1993.
- Giles DC, Maltby J. The role of media figures in adolescent development: relations between autonomy, attachment and interest in celebrities. *Personality and Individual Differences* 2004; 36: 813-22.
- Gould SJ. The circle of projection and introjection: an introspective investigation of a proposed paradigm involving the mind as ‘consuming organ’. In: Costa JA, Belk RW, editors. *Research in Consumer Behaviour Vol. 6*. Greenwich: JAI Press, 1993. pp. 185-230.
- Gould SJ. An introspective genealogy of my introspective genealogy. *Marketing Theory* 2008; 8 (4): 407-24.
- Green MC, Brock TC. The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2000; 79 (5): 701-21.

- Green MC, Brock TC, Kaufman GF. Understanding media enjoyment: the role of transportation into narrative worlds. *Communication Theory* 2004; 14 (4): 311-27.
- Gross MJ. *Starstruck: When a Fan Gets too Close to Fame*. New York: Bloomsbury; 2005.
- Hirschman EC. Consumers' use of intertextuality and archetypes. *Advances in Consumer Research* 2000; 27: 57-63.
- Holbrook MB. I'm hip: an autobiographical account of some musical consumption experiences. *Advances in Consumer Research* 1986; 13: 614-18.
- Holbrook MB. *Consumer Research: Introspective Essays on the Study of Consumption*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1995.
- Holbrook MB. Customer value and autoethnography: subjective personal introspection and the meanings of a photograph collection. *Journal of Business Research* 2005; 58 (1): 45-61.
- Hollinger K. *The Actress: Hollywood Acting and the Female Star*. New York: Routledge; 2006.
- Horton D, Wohl RR. Mass communication and parasocial interaction: observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry* 1956; 19: 215-29.
- Jenkins H. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge; 1992.
- Jenson J. Fandom as pathology: the consequences of characterization. In: Lewis LA, editor. *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*. London: Routledge, 1992. pp. 9-29.
- Jindra M. Star Trek fandom as a religious phenomenon. *Sociology of Religion* 1994; 55 (1): 27-51.
- Kozinets RV. I want to believe: a netnography of the X-Files' subculture of consumption. *Advances in Consumer Research* 1997; 24: 470-75.
- Kozinets RV. Utopian enterprise: articulating the meanings of Star Trek's culture of consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research* 2001; 28 (2): 67-88.

- Leets L, de Becker G, Giles H. Fans: exploring expressed motivations for contacting celebrities. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 1995; 14 (1-2): 102-23.
- Lyon J. Miss independence: quirky, charming actress Jena Malone has never followed anyone's rules. *Page Six Magazine* 2008; June 1<sup>st</sup>: 14-17.
- McCracken G. Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of Consumer Research* 1989; 16 (3): 310-21.
- McCutcheon LE, Ashe DD, Houran J, Maltby J. A cognitive profile of individuals who tend to worship celebrities. *Journal of Psychology* 2003; 137 (4): 309-22.
- McCutcheon LE, Scott Jr. VB, Arugate M, Parker J. Exploring the link between attachment and the inclination to obsess about or stalk celebrities. *North American Journal of Psychology* 2006; 8 (2): 289-300.
- McDonald P. *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*. London: Wallflower; 2000.
- Merleau-Ponty M. *Phenomenology of Perception*. New York: Routledge; 1962/2002.
- Miller K. Jena Malone: I find inspiration in the weirdest and strangest places. *Tokion* 2006; 53 (June/July): 34-39.
- Munsterberg H. *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*. New York: Appleton; 1916.
- O'Guinn TC. Touching Greatness: the Central Midwest Barry Manilow fan club. In: Belk RW, editor. *Highways and Buyways: Naturalistic Research from the Consumer Behavior Odyssey*. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1991. pp. 102-11.
- Patterson A. Processes, relationships, settings, products and consumers: the case for qualitative diary research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 2005; 8 (2): 142-56.
- Rambo C. The reflexive self through narrative: a night in the life of an erotic dancer/researcher. In: Ellis C, Flaherty MG, editors. *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on the Lived Experience*. London: Sage, 1992. pp. 102-24.

- Rambo C. Impressions of grandmother: an autoethnographic portrait. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 2005; 34 (5): 560-85.
- Rems E. Girl uncorrupted: Jena Malone – our favourite screen teen. *Bust* 2004; Summer: 42-47.
- Richardson B. New consumers and football fandom: the role of social habitus in consumer behaviour. *Irish Journal of Management* 2004; 24 (1): 88-100.
- Rommelmann N. Jena at 15: a childhood in Hollywood. *LA Weekly* 2000; June 16-22: available for download on: <http://www.nancyrommelmann.com/jena.html>.
- Rubin AM, Pearce EM, Powell RA. Loneliness, parasocial interaction and local television news viewing. *Human Communication Research* 1985; 12 (2): 155-80.
- Schickel R. *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity*. New York: Gideon; 1985.
- Smith S, Fisher D, Cole SJ. The lived meanings of fanaticism: understanding the complex role of labels and categories in defining the self in consumer culture. *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 2007; 10 (2): 77-94.
- Thompson CJ. Interpreting consumers: a hermeneutical framework for deriving marketing insights from the text of consumers' consumption stories. *Journal of Marketing Research* 1997; 34 (6): 438-55.
- Thomson M. Human brands: investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities. *Journal of Marketing* 2006; 70 (1): 104-19.
- Turner G. *Understanding Celebrity*. London: Sage; 2004.
- Wallendorf M, Brucks M. Introspection in consumer research: implementation and implications. *Journal of Consumer Research* 1993; 20 (3): 339-59.
- Wohlfeil M, Whelan S. Confessions of a movie-fan: introspection into a consumer's experiential consumption of 'Pride & Prejudice'. *European Advances in Consumer Research* 2008; 8: 137-43.



**Photo 1 + 2: Evidence of Jena Malone's "physical presence" in my life**



**Photo 3: Original hand-signed photos that Jena Malone addressed to me personally**