



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

**The Presence of Performance and the Stakes of Serial Drama:
Accrual, Transience, Companionship**

Elliott Logan

MPhil (University of Queensland, 2013)

BA, Hons (University of Queensland, 2009)

BA (University of Queensland, 2007)

*A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
The University of Queensland in 2018
School of Communication and Arts*

Abstract

This thesis shows how performance is a critically neglected but crucial aspect of serial television drama as an art form. One of serial drama's obvious storytelling attractions is its ability to involve viewers in relationships between characters over long periods of time. Such involvement takes place through a recurring structure of episodes and seasons, whose unfolding reflects the extensive, ongoing history through which interpersonal bonds form and develop, deepen and decay. The characters we watch onscreen are embodied and performed by actors. Television studies, however, has persistently overlooked screen performance, hampering appreciation of serial drama's affinity with long-term relationships as a resource for aesthetic significance. Redressing such neglect, this thesis directs new critical attention to expressive stylistic relationships between serial form, screen performance, and the subject of companionship in some recent US serial dramas.

The focus of that attention is a particular aesthetic quality: the provisional, which emerges through serial drama's distinctive tension between permanence and transience. In the first chapter, I argue that the provisional is central to an affinity between screen performance, seriality in television drama, and companionship as an aspect of human life. Chapters Two and Three then show how the art of the provisional in particular series has been underappreciated due to television studies' neglect of performance and expressiveness as dimensions of serial form in television fiction. The final two chapters of the thesis highlight contrasting treatments of provisionality, performance, and the survival of social bonds in two critically celebrated US dramas of the mid-2000s: *Mad Men* (AMC, 2007–15) and *Homeland* (Showtime, 2011–19). In doing so, this thesis illuminates the significance and value to be found in an under-explored dimension of experience made available by performance in particular serial dramas. Its original contribution is to highlight overlooked features of this medium whose potential aesthetic significance should be a priority for the criticism of serial drama in television studies.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, financial support and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my higher degree by research candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

I acknowledge that an electronic copy of my thesis must be lodged with the University Library and, subject to the policy and procedures of The University of Queensland, the thesis be made available for research and study in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968 unless a period of embargo has been approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

I acknowledge that copyright of all material contained in my thesis resides with the copyright holder(s) of that material. Where appropriate I have obtained copyright permission from the copyright holder to reproduce material in this thesis and have sought permission from co-authors for any jointly authored works included in the thesis.

Publications during candidature

- Logan, Elliott. 2019. "Faces of Allegiance in *Homeland*: Performance and the Provisional in Serial Television Drama." In *Television Performance*, edited by Lucy Fife Donaldson and James Walters. Basingstoke: Red Globe Press.
- . 2018. "Kristen Stewart in *Clouds of Sils Maria*." In *Close-Up: Great Cinematic Performances Volume 1: America*, edited by Murray Pomerance and Kyle Stevens, 276–85. International Film Stars. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- . 2017a. "Depths of Black in *The Night of the Hunter*." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 15, no. 1: 95–107.
- . 2017b. "Making-Over Mise-en-Scène." Rev. of Adrian Martin's *Mise en Scène and Film Style: From Classical Hollywood to New Media Art*, John Gibbs's *The Life of mise-en-scène: Visual Style and British Film Criticism, 1946–78*, and Lucy Fife Donaldson's *Texture in Film*. *Projections* 11, no. 1: 121–32.
- . 2016a. "*Breaking Bad*" and Dignity: Unity and Fragmentation in the Serial Television Drama. Palgrave Close Readings in Film and Television. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2016b. "'Quality Television' as a Critical Obstacle: Explanation and Aesthetics in Television Studies." *Screen* 57, no. 2: 144–62.
- . 2015. "How Do We Write About Performance in Serial Television?" *Series* 1, no. 1: 27–37.
- . 2014. "The Ending of *Mad Men*'s Fifth Season: Cinema, Serial Television and Moments of Performance." *Critical Studies in Television* 9, no. 3: 44–53.

Publications included in this thesis

- Logan (forthcoming) – incorporated into Chapter Four.
- Logan (2016b) – partly incorporated into Chapter Two.

Contributions by others to the thesis

No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None.

Research Involving Human or Animal Subjects

No animal or human subjects were involved in this research.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has taken a long time to write, and I have accrued debts to many people along the way.

First of all, to my three advisors: Jason Jacobs, Lisa Bode, and Steven Peacock. Each has been unfailingly generous in sharing with me their time and insight, not only into television fiction, screen performance, and criticism, but also the difficulties and pleasures of scholarship and writing. Without their help, I would not have found my way to this project, nor been able to see it through in this form. It has been a great privilege to benefit from years of their teaching and friendship – I look forward to many more.

The School of Communication and Arts at the University of Queensland has been my scholarly home for the last eight years. During this time, my thinking about television has been deepened by countless conversations with many people, including Tom O'Regan, Frances Bonner, Ted Nannicelli, and Angela Tuohy (who is a boundless resource on the wonders of *Twin Peaks*). The work in this thesis has also benefited from the insights I gained while teaching film and television to undergraduates with the guidance of Ted Nannicelli, Lisa Bode, Tom O'Regan, and Jane Stadler.

The more difficult aspects of postgraduate study have been leavened by the good company and encouragement of my fellow students, in particular Pratik, Amanda Van Der Drift, Richard Murray, Matthew Cipa, Melanie Piper, Mairead McKinnon, Robyn Emerson, Graham Akhurst, and Pearl.

Among the school's greatest treasures are its administrative staff, who are a seemingly endless source of cheer and unflappable help. Jennifer Yared has had a welcome greeting for me nearly every early morning for almost five years; Stormy Wehi is a model of how to share happiness at work; and Angela Tuohy has been a sage lifesaver for me on many occasions.

From November 2015, I was fortunate to spend six months of my candidature working closely with Steven Peacock at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK, where many of the ideas underpinning the thesis started to come together. I have endless thanks to Steven for his encouragement and financial support, and also to his colleagues at Hertfordshire for their warm welcome and enjoyable discussions, especially Sylvie Magerstadt. My time away from home was made less painful by many friends in London and elsewhere. Peter Hubert was, as he always is, a source of hilarious and serious conversation. Hillary Emmett showed wonderful hospitality, not only during our morning teas at the British Library and meals at her home, but in making sure I would have a place to stay. Without her I would not have met Chin Tee, who was a welcoming housemate and became a good

friend, as did Tom Wright. Jessi and Tom Drewett, along with Maggie Webster and Ryan Bishop, helped me feel less far away from Australia, as did Tom O'Regan when he met with me to appreciate Dali's "Christ of Sain John on the Cross" at Kelvingrove, during a trip to Glasgow. Thanks to Tom and Jessi, I was lucky enough to find another circle of friends in Rob, Jen, Phil, Callum, and Al. I was grateful for the company of Dim and Aidan, and the deep conversations about television and meaning modern life with Rico Tice.

Visiting the UK allowed me to present a seminar at the University of Bristol, which developed some of the ideas driving the thesis. Thank you to Alex Clayton for inviting me and being a generous host, and to the members of his school for being a thoughtful audience, in particular Sarah Street and Hoi-Lun Law. Other material related to the thesis was presented at the Film-Philosophy conference in Oxford, the *Mad Men* conference at Middle Tennessee State University, and SCMS in Toronto. My thanks to the audiences for those papers, whose feedback and discussions provided encouragement and new inspiration.

While at Oxford, Murray Pomerance introduced me to the late Victor Perkins, whose company and conversation I enjoyed on two afternoons in the sun, discussing actors on television; Victor was kind enough to visit me during one of his trips to London. I will not forget the two hours he gave of his time to talk with me in a Mornington Crescent café – his insights and encouragements from that meeting have been with me throughout the writing of this thesis. My good fortune in meeting him I owe to the kindness of both Murray and Jason Jacobs.

Alberto Garcíá was a welcome visitor in the school over the last twelve months, and was a constant source of enthusiasm, even when my own was low. Murray Pomerance visited the University of Queensland in April 2015; he has been a good friend in writing and in person ever since, getting me to think in new ways, and to lift my head up and keep writing.

My two brothers and my sister – Tim, Calum, and Shani – have always been a source of quiet encouragement and good fun. My parents, Fran and Gil, always told me I would get there.

As always, Rowena is the strongest source of love and purpose in my life, who was there with me for every day of this project, even for the long period of time it kept us apart, on other sides of the world.

Financial support

This research was chiefly supported by a University of Queensland Research Scholarship.

Additional funding was provided by a School of Communication and Arts Completion Scholarship.

Parts of the research and writing were undertaken in the United Kingdom and the United States.

This travel was supported by a University of Queensland Graduate School International Travel Award. My time in the United Kingdom was also made possible by a bursary from the Mass Media Communications subject group of the Arts and Humanities Research Institute, University of Hertfordshire.

Funding from the School of Communication and Arts, University of Queensland supported my attendance at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference in Atlanta, and archival research at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the UCLA Film & Television Archive, and the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles.

In October 2017, my plan to deliver a paper at the Aesthetics of Serial Television conference in Gandia, Spain had to be cancelled due to a medical emergency. I am deeply grateful to the School of Communication and Arts for their financial assistance in meeting these unexpected costs.

Keywords

serial television drama, performance, acting, criticism, aesthetics, *Homeland*, *Mad Men*

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

ANZSRC code: 190204, Film and Television, 100%

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification

FoR code: 1902, Film, Television, and Digital Media, 100%

Table of Contents

List of Figures	11
Chapter One. Introduction: Claims of Companionship	14
1. The Aims of Criticism and the Art of Serial Drama	21
2. Provisionality, Performance, and the Stakes of Companionship	31
3. Screen Performance and Serial Drama Criticism	42
Chapter Two. The Absence of Performance in Television Studies	47
1. Overlooking Performance in Serial Drama	48
2. Writing About Performance in Serial Drama	61
Conclusion	73
Chapter Three. Expressiveness and Seriality in Television Drama	76
1. The Ending of “The Phantom” and the Primacy of Narrative	77
2. Performance as an Expressive Thread	83
3. Gestures of Betrayal	87
4. The Bonds of Belief	95
Conclusion	108
Chapter Four. Faces of Allegiance in <i>Homeland</i>	111
1. Self-Reflection, Performance, and Genre in <i>Homeland</i>	113
2. Accumulation, Revision, and the Undoing of Intimacy	117
3. Motifs of Homecoming, Mirrors, and Reflection	126
4. Ultimate Convictions in “Marine One”	135
Conclusion	144
Chapter Five. Unspoken Bonds in <i>Mad Men</i>	147
1. Sedimentation and Renewal: The Ending of “The Suitcase”	148
2. Amnesia and Carelessness in Season Four	166
3. The Weight of Transience	174
Conclusion	188
Conclusion	193

List of works Cited	202
1. Written Works and Web Pages	202
2. Films and Television Series	223

List of Figures

- 2.1 Fixating privacy and unknownness: Christina Hendricks as Joan
2.2 Matthew Weiner directs Jon Hamm on the set of “The Phantom”
- 3.1 Neither special interest nor a sign of refusal
3.2 Alone in a sphere of isolation
3.3 Don’s immaculate self-presentation begins to fray
3.4 Megan’s concealed tension
3.5 “There’s our Beauty”: Megan handed across to the client
3.6–9 Watching the screen test: the fading of conviction
3.10–11 The title sequence echoed in “The Phantom”
3.12–13 From confident belief to a face of confusion
3.14–15 The barrier of the screen: Don and Megan in different worlds
3.16 A machine’s glare linked with Don’s gaze
- 4.1 Brody’s stare in Dana’s home video
4.2–3 Mirroring within the fiction, reflecting our own spectatorship
4.4 A new lining of her mother’s gaze
4.5 Claire Danes performing Carrie’s absorption
4.6–7 From mediation by the camera to reflection in the mirror
4.8 An overly revealing perspective: the unused wide shot in a Showtime trailer
4.9 Editing and disembodiment: the hand in close-up
4.10 The seeing mind divorced from an image of bodily intent
4.11 Measuring innerness: Diego Klattenhoff and Damian Lewis in profile
4.12–13 Seeing himself for the first time in years
4.14 Wide-eyed astonishment to lethal commitment: Damian Lewis in *Band of Brothers*
4.15 An echo of his somnambulant stare: Brody’s first attempt
4.16 Expressive amplification: Brody’s second attempt
4.17 An emptying absence of emotion: Brody’s life-saving promise
4.18 A final, haunting image of the provisional
- 5.1 Peggy wakes to see Don’s grief
5.2 Personal connection in a desolate mood
5.3 Peggy’s morning-after approach to the closed office door

- 5.4–5 Our familiar view of Don, perfectly returned
- 5.6 Don and Peggy side-by-side as she admits the idea's promise
- 5.7 Don's hand as he squeezes Peggy's
- 5.8–10 A silent exchange
- 5.11–12 Peggy takes Don's hand in the pilot; its echo in "The Suitcase"
- 5.13 Measuring distance
- 5.14–15 Don and Peggy in the wake of their fight
- 5.16 A reminder of loneliness towards the end of one's life
- 5.17–18 The Acropolis unveiled
- 5.19–20 From close-up intimacy to public exposure
- 5.21 A new glow
- 5.22 Peggy's smile at a story of death
- 5.23 "Someplace darker": side-by-side intimacy
- 5.24 "You don't want to start giving me morality lessons, do you?"
- 5.25–26 A dull horror sinks in
- 5.27–28 Don and Peggy's silent exchange of looks
- 5.29 Peggy vanishing from sight (and from our thoughts?)
- 5.30 "Open": Equal measures of the transparent and opaque

“Which aspects of a human’s behaviour, which of his or her postures, movements, or expressions, are relevant to an assessment of them – in which places and at which moments?”

(Klevan 2005b, 218)

Chapter One.

Introduction: Claims of Companionship

This thesis shows how performance is a critically neglected but crucial aspect of serial television drama as an art form. Through close attention to the handling of performance in particular series, I aim to shed new light on a frequently observed attraction of serial drama: its ability to involve viewers in relationships between characters over long periods of time. In television studies, scholars have found the basis for this aspect of the form in the way its structure and viewing experience reflect the conditions of human companionship. Horace Newcomb, for example, argued that because serials present a story that continues across episodes, they afford “a far more extensive examination of motivation, character, and event [. . .]. The extension of time allows for a fuller development of the idea of intimacy, for we are allowed a broader as well as a deeper look at individuals” (1974, 255). Where television’s intimacy was historically related to the size of the screen and the domestic viewing context,¹ Newcomb also saw it as a product of the serial’s ongoing continuity, which meant our involvement in the drama could mirror the growth of familiarity in personal relationships. Decades after Newcomb, Jason Jacobs wondered if “the development of excellence in television dramatic serials was predicated on the medium’s ability to explore long-term relationships between characters”, in particular – through the medium’s tendency towards ruin – their “gradual decay” (2001, 445). Discussing *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999–2007), Glen Creeber notes how the structure of serial drama resembles “the prolonged and enduring process of psychoanalysis; complete with its developments, regressions, and frequent psychological blockages” (2004, 6). From this, Creeber claims that “long-form drama is intrinsically better suited to explore and dramatise the complexity of character psychology as a whole” (2004, 6).² Scholars also draw links between serial drama and long-term relationships when characterising the viewer’s

¹ On discourses of intimacy concerning early British television drama, see Jacobs (2000).

² These comments from Newcomb, Jacobs, and Creeber have been frequently echoed elsewhere. For clear examples, see Jacobs (2003, 34–35), Sconce (2004, 95), Newcomb (2007, 569), Gray (2008, 27), Lotz (2013, 22), Williams (2014, 29), and C. Perkins (2015, 784). For studies concentrated on serial drama’s opportunities for developing relationships between characters, see Jacobs (2012), Bruun Vaage (2014), Mittell (2015, 118–63), and Logan (2016a).

continued relation to the ongoing fiction. For Ted Nannicelli, what keeps us returning to *The Sopranos* across the “less narratively interesting” stretches of its fourth and fifth seasons is simply “the pleasure afforded by ‘being with’ Tony” (2017, 70). Our time spent watching him is like time spent with a fond companion. This echoes Robert Blanchet and Margrethe Bruun Vaage’s (2012) argument that our attachments to fictional characters in serial drama are analogous to the bonds of friendship. For many television scholars, then, the aesthetic interest and pleasure of watching serial drama has its basis in the long duration of our involvement with the characters. The drama’s seriality allows their lives and relationships to gradually evolve – and often erode – within a recurring structure of episodes and seasons.

I recognise the soundness of the idea that serial drama’s affinity with long-term human relationships is crucial to its interests as a form of storytelling. This much about serial drama is obvious in its persistent use of the fiction’s continuity across episodes to explore the ongoing development – including, often, the eventual failure – of bonds between friends and co-workers, enemies, family members, neighbours in a community, or partners in a marriage or romance. But it seems a mistake to assume that, in itself, this tendency of serial drama says much about the form’s aesthetic depth and value. As the philosopher Martin Shuster reminds us, “the items on the screen could have been any way, but [. . .] they nonetheless hold our attention *arranged in the way that they are*” (2017, 78). Or, he might add, they fail to hold our attention arranged in the way that they are. There is no given interest or value in watching the lives of fictional characters unfold over an extended period of time, across dozens of episodes and multiple seasons. Why, then, does the presentation of certain characters’ lives – in precisely *this* way, in *this* form – earn our continued attention, and occasionally provide the basis for powerful, sometimes mysterious aesthetic experiences?³

The premise of this thesis is that a satisfying response to this question depends on close attention to the texture of performance in particular moments of serial drama. This claim is based on the fact that serial television dramas are filmed, and so the characters we respond to over time are incarnated and performed by actors. Their presence on the screen is often the principle source of our interest in the drama, and the basis for our sense of its significance and value. V. F. Perkins’s words on the attractions of film apply as well to the most compelling aspects of many serial dramas. The “sensitive” viewer, Perkins says, watches movies for “the extraordinary resonances which a director can provoke by his use of actors, décor, colour, shape, of all that can be seen and heard. [. . .] Primarily, one sees and hears actors” (1976, 252–53). For Alex Clayton, the “texture of

³ For the purposes of this thesis, it will suffice to think of aesthetic experiences as those arising from an aesthetic attitude towards the artwork; that is, from “a disposition which wishes to engage with the form and style of an artwork, and where there are many aspects to the engagement: for example, sensory, imaginative, intellectual, emotional, pleasurable, and evaluative” (Klevan 2018, 21).

performance” in film concerns “the fine detail of what is offered by actors to microphone and camera, and the manner in which that work is woven into the fabric of the film” (2011b, 77–78). The concept’s value is found in the way it “captures the need for close attention to surface details and also to their integration [with the work as a whole]” (Clayton 2011b, 78). Among other pieces of performance-centred criticism in film studies, Clayton’s (2011b) study of *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960) in comparison to its remake (Van Sant, 1998) demonstrates how the work of the performers onscreen may be central to the success and depth of particular moments in film.⁴ Until recently, however, television studies has largely overlooked acting and performance as a priority for serial drama criticism.⁵ This thesis reveals the discipline’s inattention to performance as a major critical oversight. It shows how performance can be a crucial stylistic element in long-form television drama – central to the design, effect, and significance of seriality in particular series. In doing so, the thesis develops an under-explored approach towards the value of serial drama as a medium for depicting the bonds of human companionship over long periods of time. What is at stake in those bonds, I argue, gives the seriality of particular dramas its depth, and is inseparable from our often-neglected relation to the expressiveness of the human beings presented onscreen.

I make this argument by focussing on expressive relationships between performance, serial form, and companionship in two recent US dramas: *Mad Men* (AMC, 2007–15) and *Homeland* (Showtime, 2011–19). Both were emblems of achievement in serial drama at a time when the form had come to great cultural prominence.⁶ On these grounds, each could be taken to reveal something

⁴ Other valuable work on film performance includes Affron (1977, 1982), Zucker (1990), Naremore (1990), Stern and Kouvaros (1999), V. F. Perkins (1999), Baron, Carson, and Tomasulo (2004), Wojcik (2004), Kouvaros (2004), Klevan (2005a), Baron and Carnicke (2008), Kouvaros (2010), Toles (2011b), Taylor (2012), Springer and Levinson (2015), Pomerance (2016a), Bode (2017), and Pomerance and Stevens (2018a, 2018b).

⁵ Only in the last ten years has a substantial body of scholarship on acting and performance in television emerged. Much of that work, however, examines the contextual conditions of television acting; see, for example, Pearson (2010), Hewett (2013, 2014, 2015), Fortmueller (2016), and Cantrell and Hogg (2016, 2017, 2018). Detailed expressive criticism remains an under-utilised approach. The basis and implications of this oversight are explored in Chapter Two.

⁶ This prominence can be seen in at least two ways. One is in terms of the increasing number of series being produced following the success of original drama productions on cable networks in the United States, often taken to start with *The Sopranos*. In 2002, 182 scripted series were produced by American networks, 47 of which were screened by basic and premium cable networks; in 2016, 455 scripted series went to air, of which 217 were produced by cable networks and 93 by on-demand subscription services (Littleton 2017); see also the economic account of what has been called “peak TV” in Adalian and Fernandez (2016). Another dimension is the extent to which the seriousness of serial drama as art is a subject of public discussion. This can be tracked across journalistic coverage of television fiction, from Charles McGrath’s 1995 *New York Times* column “The Triumph of the Prime-Time Novel” (2000), through to the routine production of detailed and thoughtful responses published daily in venues such as *Vulture*, *Slate*, the *New Yorker*, and many others. A parallel growth of academic interest in the artistry of serial drama is discussed in Chapter Two.

about the wider concerns of serial drama during this period.⁷ The present study might prove useful to such wide-ranging synoptic inquiry, but it is not my aim to pursue that direction of interest. My purpose in looking closely at performance in these two dramas is to instead deepen our sense of the precise significance they make available through their serial form. In doing so, I hope to highlight a dimension of serial drama's aesthetic value that may otherwise go unappreciated.⁸

The values of *Mad Men* and *Homeland*, I argue, are found in their handling of performance to reflect on the provisional as an attribute of serial form in television drama. Provisionality in serial drama emerges in the medium's distinctive tension between accrual and transience – between the permanence of what is laid down in each episode, and its susceptibility to change, revision, or loss as further episodes continue to unfold the series' internal history. The provisional is a useful term for serial drama criticism because it evokes the way that objects, states of being, or relations between individuals may be – in any one moment – complete, definite, settled, but not yet finished. They remain open and susceptible to the continued unfolding of the future, subject to an eventual but yet-to-be-realised historical fate. The provisional thus has bearing on our understanding of serial drama as a medium in which each episode and season is complete unto itself, yet still linked to the series as a larger whole that was created and watched piece-by-piece, across months and years, and so which is riven by resulting tensions between unity and fragmentation.⁹

In this chapter's final section, I will have more to say about provisionality as an attribute of serial form in television drama. At the outset, however, my claim is that the provisional is a useful critical concept because it allows more refined appreciation of serial drama's opportunities for handling time. The distinctiveness of serial drama's extended duration – running across episodes and seasons, for months and years on end – has been framed in terms of *accumulation*. The use of this term to describe serial form in television drama has a long history.¹⁰ But one example

⁷ For a valuable study along these lines, see the account of “new television” in Shuster (2017). Other categories used to historicise serial drama's development since the early 1980s include “quality” (Feuer, Kerr, and Vahimagi 1984; R. J. Thompson 1996; McCabe and Akass 2007b), “high-end” (Nelson 2007c), “beautiful” (G. M. Smith 2007), and “complex” (Mittell 2015).

⁸ Aesthetic value, for Andrew Klevan, consists in “assessment, based on close examination, of the merits (or demerits) of *the form* that something takes” (2018, 1). In the following section of this chapter, I have more to say about the relationship between the form of an artwork, the experience it makes available to us, and our appreciation of its value.

⁹ Sérgio Dias Branco (2010) provides a useful account of seriality in television drama in terms of part-whole relations that are formed (and transformed) over time. For other discussions of the medium's intrinsic tensions between unity and fragmentation, see Jacobs (2001, 432 ff.) O'Sullivan (2006, 2010), Nannicelli (2012), Jacobs and Peacock (2013a, 6–7), and Logan (2016a, esp. 16–26).

¹⁰ Among the earliest is Horace Newcomb's account of “cumulative narrative” in *Magnum, P.I.* (CBS, 1980–88), which stresses the role of memory in that program, the way its fictional history “accumulates” so that each episode “is distinct, yet each is grafted onto the body of the series, its characters' pasts” (1985, 24). For echoes of the term as used by Newcomb, see Pearson (2007) and Mittell (2013, 52; 2015, 18).

especially pertinent to this thesis is more recent. In “Reframing Television Performance”, Philip Drake describes the distinctive interest of performance in serial drama in terms of “the accumulation of an actor’s performance *across* a television series”, which consists in “the building up of detail and the use of familiar facial expressions, gestures, movements, and vocal signs” (2016, 8, 9). Through the repeated presentation of a performer’s work over the seasons of a serial drama, Drake argues, viewers spend hours “accumulating knowledge” about the character being performed (2016, 9).¹¹ This emphasis on accumulation seems to fit the nature of television serials as ongoing fictions with a memory, where past events remain in a deepening bank of the series’ history, from where they can lend weight to the depiction of events that follow. Across the thesis, I analyse moments of serial drama that appear to support Drake’s idea of accumulation. The effect and significance of these moments is – to borrow from Newcomb’s discussion of cumulative series – based in their “resonance” with earlier or later parts of the fiction (1985, 25). But my readings bring into question the appropriateness of too heavily emphasising accumulation as an aesthetic feature and value of performance in serial drama. It is clearly important for the writers and other creative workers on a serial drama to keep close track of the fiction’s history, so that events which transpire later in a series can be accepted as credible in relation to what has already happened. It seems a risk, however, to create a long-running serial that requires the viewer to notice and remember all that has taken place, and how it has been shown. If the later parts of a series depend on our close recall of earlier parts, what are the chances for their success if we have forgotten the crucial details? The series discussed in this thesis, along with many others, *do* work upon our memory in such a way – the question is to what degree, and how. As Sean O’Sullivan has observed, once a serial moves into and beyond its third season, it becomes increasingly difficult for the viewer to keep hold of the drama’s “increasing sprawl” – at this point, he writes, “we lose containment” (2009, 326–27). A critical question thus concerns the way a serial drama allows us to register details without forcing us to notice their importance, and how that registration or absorption is then drawn upon over time, so that we may enter into a changed or deepened sense of its now-present significance.¹² It is a question not simply about the fact that serial dramas ineluctably build up or accumulate a fictional history. The crucial issue concerns how we notice certain things over others, what of those we remember and what we forget, and why particular moments of a drama move us to recall the features and qualities that we do.

¹¹ Accumulation is also a key term in Lucy Fife Donaldson’s discussion of television performance, which concentrates on repeated features of Timothy Olyphant’s performances across both *Deadwood* (HBO, 2004–06) and *Justified* (FX, 2010–17). See Donaldson (forthcoming). I was fortunate to hear Donaldson’s presentation of this material at SCMS in March 2018.

¹² On the issue of registering details without noticing, and what we cannot help seeing but nevertheless overlook, see V. F. Perkins’s (2017) discussion of *High School* (Wiseman, 1968).

In contrast to the emphasis on accumulation, this thesis draws attention to the provisional as an alternative quality of serial drama, produced by a tension between the form's accrual of history and its tendency towards the transient. The provisional is a condition, I will argue, that is crucial to a set of close links between serial form, the nature of screen performance, and companionship as an aspect of social life. It is through their crafting and treatment of these connections that the series examined by this thesis give depth to serial drama's affinity for the depiction of close bonds over long periods of time. Relationships between performance and the provisional thus emerge as vital to appreciating the significance given to serial form by some of the most prominent US dramas of the period under discussion.¹³

My interest is in the way both *Homeland* and *Mad Men* use the provisional as a means to contrasting ends in relation to their very different fictional worlds and generic frameworks. *Homeland* is set against the historical context of the War on Terror, which it addresses by drawing on the tradition of the spy thriller, specifically the paranoid kind in which the protagonist fears the existence of a far-ranging, nefarious conspiracy.¹⁴ *Mad Men* employs two genres firmly established in television fiction: the workplace or professional drama (see Bailey 2001) and the historical drama (see Rymsza-Pawlowska 2014; Bartley 2014). These it handles in relation to both film and literary fictions of suburban life in postwar America, such as the melodramas of Douglas Sirk and the stories of both Richard Yates and John Cheever. Discussing these literary influences, *Mad Men*'s creator Matthew Weiner has said: "Yates holds my attention," but "Cheever holds my attention more than any other writer. He is in every aspect of *Mad Men* [. . .] Cheever's stories work like TV episodes, where you don't get to repeat information about the characters. He grabs you from the beginning" (2014). Unlike Cheever's work, however, the art of *Mad Men* – like that of *Homeland* – is not only in its writers' use of words, but also in the mediation of those words by actors, whose performances are presented as part of the screened world of the fiction, which unfolds across a continuous but fragmented structure of episodes and seasons. The distinction of both series lies in

¹³ Both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* have been subject to considerable attention in both journalistic commentary and scholarship, where each – and especially *Mad Men* – is seen as a marker of the artistic ambition, cultural significance, and industrial value of signature serial drama during the mid-2000s. For examples of such discussion regarding *Mad Men*, see White (2011) Mendelsohn (2011), Stoddart (2011), Steinberg (2012), Goodlad, Kaganovsky, and Rushing (2013), Bartley (2014), Beail and Goren (2015), Sepinwall (2015), and Seitz (2017). On the cultural significance of *Homeland* in relation to its historical context of terrorism and national security, see Aleaziz (2011), Edgerton and Edgerton (2012), Steiner (2012), Bevan (2015), Castonguay (2015), Negra and Lagerwey (2015), Shapiro (2015), Steenberg and Tasker (2015), Zanger (2015), Echart and Castrillo (2016), and Letort (2017).

¹⁴ In his discussion of "paranoia films" in 1970s Hollywood, Robert Kolker (2011, 52) cites *The Parallax View* (Pakula, 1974), *The Conversation* (Coppola, 1974), *Three Days of the Condor* (Pollack, 1975), *All the President's Men* (Pakula, 1976), and *Blue Collar* (Schrader, 1978).

the way each reflects on its serial form through its self-conscious treatment of performance – as a crucial stylistic element, and as a central aspect of human expressiveness and sociality.¹⁵

Vital to the significance of performance in both series is their interest in the formation and long-term sustenance of social bonds in settings that seem inhospitable to their survival. Both *Homeland* and *Mad Men* articulate this concern through their concentration on various forms of companionship – of family and marriage, and of friendships developed in the workplace. In *Homeland*, for instance, a long-lost soldier and husband who is presumed dead returns home to his wife, who has embarked on a new life with his best friend; as the returned husband comes under suspicion as an enemy of the state, he has an affair with the spy who is sworn to guard America against him. Set in a world of espionage and duplicity, the series presents a drama in which the surface of human expression becomes a site of treacherous mistrust. Its characters' deepest commitments to themselves and one another – and to the society in which they live – thus become haunted by opacity, betrayal, and scepticism. *Mad Men* follows the professional and private lives of the executives and other employees of a Manhattan advertising agency in the 1960s, measuring the development of their workplace relationships and success against the fortunes of marriage and family. Set in a ruthless commercial environment, the series' world is a mercantile one, in which loyalty to personal bonds is in frequent tension with the demands of competitive self-interest. Furthermore, the characters work in advertising, and so their skills lie in the manipulation of appearance and impression on a grand scale, skills that must be finely calibrated in person within the theatrical context of business relationships. In an echo of Cary Grant's Roger Thornhill from *North by Northwest* (Hitchcock, 1959), the central character of *Mad Men* is an advertising executive whose selfhood is – to a greater degree than most – an achievement of performative fabrication, having assumed his identity by playing the part of another man, thus abandoning the person he was.¹⁶ Throughout *Mad Men*, he is repeatedly shown to shed himself of his past, and so of the relationships that go with it, raising the question of what weight human sociality can carry in the face of such transience and forgetting.

One of the most salient ways that companionship figures in both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* is in the form of marriage, or its possibility. For Stanley Cavell (1981), the significance of marriage in the films he calls “remarriage comedy” is to be understood in terms of the struggle to find and sustain a worthwhile form of community. Marriage, he writes, “understood as remarriage, as a

¹⁵ On the one hand, performance is the work of the actor that forms “an internal element of film style in synthesis with other aspects of film style” (Klevan 2005a, preface). But it is also a prominent feature of social interaction within the fiction, as characters adjust self-expression and display in relation to an audience of others (or, in private, of themselves). For discussions of performance along these lines, see (Goffman 1959), Naremore (1990, 68), and Pomerance (2012; 2016b, 78).

¹⁶ On performance and self-fabrication in *North by Northwest*, see G. M. Wilson (1988, 62–81).

search for reaffirmation, is not merely an analogy of the social bond, or a comment upon it, but it is a further instance of experimentation in consent and reciprocity” (1981, 182).¹⁷ Another of Cavell’s remarks from elsewhere captures the sense of marriage – or of friendship – as an image for the bonds of human sociality. Speaking of the unexpectedly violent amidst the familiar in Hitchcock, Cavell writes:

what is revealed is the radical contingency of convention – as though society’s web of expectancies may at any moment be torn, as though to span the abyss of the unexpected (that is to say, the future) were society’s only point, and its work about to come undone unless the efforts of one or two ordinary souls are successful. (1979, 83–84)

The bonds of companionate marriage, like those of Platonic friendship, stand as instances of the larger social bond. As Cavell observes, it is one that is not permanently achieved through its initial formation, but which needs to be tended and sustained if it is to hold into the future. The task of the endings in remarriage comedies, Cavell writes, “is to get the pair back into a particular moment of their past lives together. No new vow is required, merely the picking up of an action which has been, as it were, interrupted; not starting over, but starting again, finding and picking up the thread” (1981, 126–27) – the thread, we might say, of “society’s web”.

The parallels between these conditions of marriage and the ongoing nature of serial drama should be clear – what is at issue is the capacity to survive and recover a world against the forces of repetition, interruption, and the fading of the past. Thus, I argue, *Mad Men* and *Homeland* treat the subject of companionship – whether in marriage or friendship – as a route to the significance of serial drama as a form in which individual actors inhabit the same character and world across many episodes and seasons of storytelling. The series’ achievements in this respect depend on their expressive use of links between screen performance, the bonds of companionship, and the provisional as an aspect of seriality. The remainder of this introductory chapter is dedicated to establishing these links, and their relevance to the criticism and the art of serial drama.

1. The Aims of Criticism and the Art of Serial Drama

Criticism is an approach that is not only fitting to the aims and topic of this thesis, but necessary to their pursuit. In what follows, I argue that criticism is indispensable to any satisfying account of serial drama as a medium for art, to which the expressiveness of performance poses a special challenge but is also especially vital.

¹⁷ For more on links between remarriage comedy and serial drama, see Shuster (2017, 158–69).

Criticism has a contentious history in television studies.¹⁸ Given this, it is worth setting out my understanding of its aims and principles in order to establish their usefulness to the field. To begin, I take criticism to consist in writing that articulates the significance and value of an experience made available by one's relation to the details of an artwork.¹⁹ The emphasis on experience is crucial but not absolute. Worthwhile criticism provides more than a report or evocation of feeling. As Michael Fried writes in relation to the paintings of Morris Louis and the sculpture of Antony Caro, "the viewer's 'experience' matters in the sense of providing a channel of insight into the overall structure of intentions that made the work what it is; but [. . .] the viewer's merely subjective response cannot stand in for the work itself" (2011, 6). Our experience of any moment in a serial drama is had in response to the purposive writing, designing, performance, recording, and selection of filmed material – filmed views of what we take to be a fictional world and its inhabitants. Unlike the everyday "performances of self" we encounter in real life (Goffman 1959), the detail and overall situation of the performances in a serial drama are fully *meant*. They are part of a larger design that is, to adapt Robert Pippin's words on film, intended by "the collective intelligence we can postulate behind the making of the [television drama]" (2017, 6). Our appreciation of the drama thus requires that we interpret and assess both what is shown within the fiction and how it is presented.²⁰ What, we need to ask, was meant by depicting these events in this way, patterning them within this structure, and what qualities of expression and significance were achieved (or not)? Our sense of a particular moment's value and significance will often depend on judgements of tone and attitude, and thus on our sensitivity to fine gradations of feeling, both in our own response and within the work itself. The discipline and value of criticism requires us to clarify and assess the source of our experience in the artwork, and the validity and significance of that response. Is it justified by what is there for others to see? What is the value and meaning of a work that invites and supports such experience? As V. F. Perkins says of detailed film criticism, its

¹⁸ Concerns chiefly relate to the socio-political bases and implications of value judgements. James Zborowski (2016) notes how these arise from a tradition of media and cultural studies influenced by the work of Pierre Bourdieu ([1979] 2010). Such scholars, writes Zborowski, view aesthetic judgements as "displaced demonstrations of the cultural capital and distinction of their authors and the class fractions to which they belong" (2016, 9). Contributions to the debate around criticism and value in television studies include Brunson (1990, 1997), Jacobs (2001), Geraghty (2003), Cardwell and Peacock (2006), Cardwell (2006), Geraghty (2006), Jacobs (2006), Cardwell (2007), Corner (2007), Lury (2007), McCabe and Akass (2007a), Hills (2011), Jacobs (2011b), Dasgupta (2012), Newman and Levine (2012), Jacobs and Peacock (2013b), Logan (2016b), Nannicelli (2016), and Piper (2016). These debates inform my discussion of television studies' inattention to performance in Chapter Two.

¹⁹ My sense of criticism in these terms is based on the principles articulated in Cavell (1981, 11–16; 2004, 238–39), V. F. Perkins ([1972] 1993, 1990), Jacobs (2001, 431–32), Britton (2009a, 376), and Fried (2011, 5–6).

²⁰ See V. F. Perkins ([1972] 1993, chap. 6).

motivation springs “from a desire to make statements about film that [are] accurate in relation to the text [. . .], where there [is] some basis in observation for the things one wanted to say about the film” (quoted in Gibbs 2013, 132–33).²¹

Satisfying this desire involves a particular mode of evocative description. In Fried’s words: “looking closely and trying to find words for what I see in an attempt to direct the reader’s attention to features and aspects of these works that either have not been previously remarked or the significance of which has been – to my mind – misunderstood” (2002, 13). Note here a detail that seems obvious but the importance of which is easily overlooked. Fried’s procedure, he tells us, is “to find words for what *I* see” (emphasis added), so that the reader’s attention might become more sensitive to overlooked aspects of both form *and* significance. Criticism, that is to say, articulates a personal viewpoint of the artwork, but one whose aim is less to provide insight into the mind of the critic than it is to deepen the reader’s future encounters with the artwork in question, illuminating underappreciated points of detail, aspects of intention, and qualities of expression and significance. Fried’s account of his critical procedure thus reminds us how good criticism often draws no clear distinction between description and interpretation, nor between an account of the work’s form and of the experiences and perspectives it invites. In the hands of some especially talented film critics, notes Andrew Klevan:

Description is not merely a necessary step on the way to the meat of analysis, it contains the analysis. Through careful choices about how to describe, discriminations are made subtly and implicitly. [. . .] A film may be experienced differently, some things noticed, others not, and by reading the description we come to see a point of view. This may be *a* correct way of seeing the film, but not the only correct one: it is a *way of seeing* the film. (2010, 71)

Description and interpretation are bound together. As Clayton reminds us, “any descriptive word choice necessarily embodies an interpretive stance” (2011a, 32). Interpretation also involves acts of evaluation or judgement. How we characterise the significance we find in some part of an artwork, and in its relationship to the whole, will be revealing of the qualities we ascribe to it. As Alexander Nehamas argues in relation to Émile Zola’s positive appraisal of Édouard Manet’s *Olympia*:

The moment interpretation begins and gives the first hint that different elements may be parts of a whole, an evaluation has already been made: ‘Her look has the sourness of someone prematurely aged, her face the disturbing perfume of a *fleur de mal*; her body

²¹ In addition to the works cited in the main text above, and in n. 19, see Klevan (2018) for a helpful articulation of aesthetic evaluation, specifically in regard to film.

fatigued, corrupted, but painted under a single, transparent light, the shadows light and fine, the bed and pillows put down in a velvet, modulated grey.’ The first critic to have something positive to say about the *Olympia* saw a connection between its form and content that calls for explanation and makes the picture worth another look: the search for significance cannot be separated from a judgment of value. (2007, 41)

The straightforwardness of this description-led approach is captured well by the passage from Fried quoted above: “looking closely and trying to find words for what I see”. This reminds us that the practice of criticism is related to ordinary viewing, whether of paintings, films, or television dramas. As Gibbs and Pye note, the eloquence and depth of good criticism “should not be mistaken for something which is only perceivable by the academic critic”. Instead, they argue, criticism is “closely associated with normal viewing”, which is itself “a highly sophisticated experience” (2005, 13).

It is nevertheless difficult to find words that do justice to certain moments of film, or of television drama. This is especially true in relation to performance. As V. F. Perkins suggests, in comparison to “camera, design, or editing procedures”, there is a distinctly “elusive” quality to the expressive significance of the actor’s movements, gestures, tone of voice, and presence onscreen.²² There is, he says, “a ‘magic’ about a Barbara Stanwyck, a Katherine Hepburn or a James Stewart that I don’t expect to see explained” (quoted in Cameron et al. 1975, 13). Perhaps what we want is not explanation, but clarification. The difference can be framed in terms of two contrasting interests we might take in a phenomenon: between, on the one hand, “an enquiry into its causes and conditions”, and, on the other hand, an exploration “towards an enhanced grasp of the impression it produces, or the ruminations it incites” (Cioffi 1998, 1). Performance is a crucial aspect of film style (Klevan 2005a), and should be central to our exploration of the impressions that moments of serial drama produce. Clarifying the significance of those impressions, and their basis in the texture of performance, requires more than an accurate, detailed accounting of what we see or hear of the actor onscreen. Writing about a moment from *Caught* (Ophüls, 1949), V. F. Perkins notes that his description:

is far from exhaustive but I believe that it is accurate and illuminating. In order to describe Leonora’s gestures I have had to interpret them. The image would not be evoked, or properly spoken of, by a more extensively physical account. (A moment-by-moment plot of the intricately patterned and unavoidably meaningful eye movements performed by Bel

²² On the elusiveness of significance made available through screen acting, see also Klevan (2012).

Geddes and Ryan would be tedious and unrevealing.) It is necessary to reflect on what the gestures mean and where they come from. (1990, 1)

Human gestures are intrinsically expressive, meaningful. Any satisfying account of a person's actions thus involves more than a granular report of what they physically did in a given moment. We want a sense of the expressive qualities to be found in the way a gesture is turned, a word spoken, an object handled, an opportunity for eye contact made or avoided. What do these qualities reveal or speak to? How do they strike us, and what significance do we find in them?

These are questions that close attention to performance in serial drama ought to address. But such attention needs to account for more than the actions and gestures of the character, or of the actor playing them. As Perkins goes on to say of the moment from *Caught*: “No neat distinction can be drawn between the meanings that Leonora offers to Smith Ohlrig, that Barbara Bel Geddes offers to the camera and that the film offers to its audience. An appreciation of this sequence should encompass all three” (1990, 1–2). Our involvement with the characters in a filmed fiction, in other words, has its basis in our responsiveness to the performers onscreen, whose expressive actions and gestures are framed and coloured by their presentation within the formal texture of the work as a whole. Like worthwhile film criticism, criticism of serial drama ought to heighten our attention and sensitivity to the details of performance *and* to their integration. The end of that attention is to find words that clarify the qualities and significance of the impression that a particular moment makes.

Criticism relates personal experience to purposive, objective detail. This helps to address some fundamental objections to the validity of critical judgement: that on the one hand, it stands for nothing more than a subjective opinion or an expression of socially habituated taste; and that, on the other hand, aesthetic judgements assume and impose the value of certain taste regimes over others.²³ These two strands of objection appear to diverge: aesthetic judgements are simply opinions and so don't carry much weight; or they are weighty impositions of class hierarchy that reinforce social inequalities. Both are answered by the principle that, although criticism “originates in personal experience”, its assessments of significance and value are based in the details of a work that are available to the scrutiny of others (Clayton and Klevan 2010a, 3). The implications of this critical principle are teased out by John Gibbs and Douglas Pye's (2005a) discussion of detailed film criticism. Because the insights of criticism are based in the details of an object, they write,

processes of argument and of persuasion are involved, rather than merely the demonstration of a position: that what I have found in the film is not simply my view but represents an understanding capable of being shared or challenged and, in the process, enhanced,

²³ Clear examples in television studies include Hills (2011) and Newman and Levine (2012).

reworked, or replaced. Interpretation developed through reasoned argument is therefore not simply ‘subjective’ or rooted in the tastes of an individual or group but, in establishing shared understanding, becomes a form of knowledge. It implies that a basis for dialogue and mutual understanding exists, that we are not locked either into our individual subjectivity or into our class, gender and ethnic identity to such an extent that dialogue and argument become hopeless or meaningless. (2005a, 4)

Criticism is at once personal and public, drawn from subjective experience while depending for its social validity on the existence of an object in the world. It involves an effort to discover, clarify, deepen, and publicly articulate one’s sense of the significance and value that is available if the details of an artwork are seen in a certain light, and responded to with a particular sensitivity of attention and feeling. Seen differently, another aspect may come into view, whether favourable to our sense of the work’s value or not. A condition of interpretation and judgement is that other valid appraisals must be available; part of the work of criticism is to explore these in order to test the sense of our experience, and that of others (Cavell 1981, 36–37). As Gibbs and Pye remind us in the passage quoted above, criticism assumes the possibility of shared understanding and value. Even if we do not agree, the process of testing our judgements through argument and conversation may refine our sense of what we value, and why.

At stake in acts of criticism, then, is the creation of community. But it is not a community that depends on universal assent to a judgement or sense of value, if “universal” is taken to mean that the value in question should be accepted and shared by all.²⁴ Nehamas (2016) makes this point by drawing a connection between the nature of aesthetic judgements and the bonds of friendship. “When I judge that something is beautiful,” he writes,

I hope that others – but only *some* others – will join me in a community centred around that object and I issue an invitation to them to do so. I want to find people who will share my enthusiasm, and I hope that some of them will already be among my friends, while others may become my friends as our paths cross in our pursuits. But the invitation is not open to everyone – better said, I don’t *expect* everyone to accept it and in many, perhaps most, cases I won’t blame them if they don’t. In fact, I would be devastated if everyone accepted even one of my aesthetic judgments. Something on which, for whatever reason, everybody agrees is no longer, as aesthetic preferences are supposed to be, a matter of taste. For the same

²⁴ On the universal as a requirement of aesthetic judgement in Kantian aesthetics, see Crawford (2013) and Pippin (2014, 9–17). The work of Pierre Bourdieu is relevant to the hostility with which television studies treats any claims for universal value. On Bourdieu and Kantian aesthetics, see Mangrum (2015). For the influence of Bourdieu in television studies, see Seiter (2004).

reason, I would be equally devastated if even one person accepted every one of my judgments. (2016, 182–83)

Like the bonds of friendship, aesthetic judgements can provide a basis for community with others, but not with all. Criticism requires that we discriminate between objects and their qualities, as friendship requires we do with people. We care about our friends more than we do about strangers, and the bond between friends necessarily excludes others; we likewise care more deeply for one artwork than we do for another, and our sense of its significance might set us apart from a great many people (Nehamas 2016, 184).²⁵ This is not a mark against the judgements expressed through criticism – it is instead vital to their importance. As Nehamas argues, “universal friendship is no more desirable than universal beauty. Both signal the end of individuality” (2016, 184).

Works of criticism cannot give another person our experience of a painting, a film, or a moment of serial drama. And we need not presume that everyone will recognise our experience or care about it as we do. But in reporting what we can of our encounter with an artwork, and by relating its qualities to a way of seeing and thinking about certain of its features, we might afford, to some extent, a shared perspective; in trying to communicate an experience that has been a source of pleasure and significance in my life, I hope to make something similar available to someone else.

Central to my interest in many television dramas are moments whose expressive qualities and significance are inseparable from the drama’s serial form. In exploring such moments, this thesis addresses the distinctiveness of serial drama as an art form, or what are often referred to as “the possibilities of the medium”.²⁶ The practice of detailed criticism is vital to this line of inquiry. At the start of this chapter, I noted that serial drama’s distinctive attractions have been found in the ways the form can involve viewers in relationships between characters over long periods of time. As Nannicelli argues, storytelling in television series is distinguished from that in film not because the two forms are made from different materials, but because their respective creative practices take place over different measures of time (2017, 64–65).²⁷ Unlike films, serial television dramas are divided into episodes and seasons, “regularly created with no sense of when or how they might end,

²⁵ As with our friends, our fondness for particular aspects of an artwork might blinker us from its less admirable features. One of the values of criticism as a disciplined form of response is to test our sense of a work’s qualities, so that we might come closer to a true measure of its worth.

²⁶ For examples of this expression, see Jacobs (2001, 430), Creeber (2004, 2), and Mittell (2009, 76). As Jacobs and Peacock note, this reflects a long-standing concern in television studies with the specificity of television as a medium, and of the forms it has developed, such as the single play, the sitcom, or the ongoing serial (2014, 1–2). For recent discussions of how to characterise television as a medium, see Buonanno (2008), Jacobs (2011a), Nannicelli (2012), Cardwell (2014), Nannicelli (2017, 51–87), and Shuster (2017, 13–81).

²⁷ On the differences and similarities between film and television series in terms of their material form, see Ellis (1992), Carroll (2001), Cardwell (2014), Logan (2014), and Shuster (2017, 13–49).

and are temporally prolonged, bit by bit, for years on end” (Nannicelli 2017, 65). There is undeniably something distinctive, even peculiar about the kind of experience that is afforded by watching the lives of fictional characters unfold over such time, segments of those lives selected and shown in episodic instalments, bound together into seasons. In “The Fact of Television” (1982), Stanley Cavell treats this observation as common sense, while at the same time evoking a mystery that lies in our relation to serialised fiction on television. “Here I am merely assuming,” he writes,

without argument, that eleven weekly hour-length episodes of *Brideshead Revisited* command an order of time incommensurate with film time. It is equivalent in its effect neither to something on film that would last eleven hours, nor to something that would last eleven weeks (whatever such things would be), nor, I think, to eleven films of an hour each. (1982, 93)

What distinguishes serial drama’s command of time, in other words, is not simply its structure of episodes as such, but the way that structure affords distinctive effects and experiences. This is to say that the source of serial drama’s interest and power as a medium is not made any clearer by noting that its fictions go on over time, “bit by bit”, “with no sense of when or how they might end”. Any number of television dramas do this, but only some of them matter to me, and to others. What is wanted, then, is a deeper understanding of the way seriality in television drama is used to compelling or meaningful effect in relation to some aspects of our lives that we care about.

For Cavell, such inquiry is central to the discovery of a medium and its possibilities. In his book *The World Viewed* (1979), he argues that any medium for art is not given in the materials from which its works are made. Instead, he writes, a medium is “something through which or by means of which something gets done or said in particular ways. It provides, one might say, particular ways to get through to someone, to make sense” (1979, 32). A medium is not defined by the properties of its materials, such as a filmed drama being segmented into instalments one hour in length, which are produced in runs of ten or thirteen. It is instead “discovered” by the *use* of those properties in ways that “realize what will give them *significance*” (1979, 31).²⁸

This idea is put forward in the fifth chapter of *The World Viewed*, where Cavell responds to some remarks in Erwin Panofsky’s “Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures” ([1934] 1959). Cavell quotes Panofsky at length on the way that early movies adopted folk art. For Panofsky:

²⁸ For a valuable discussion of the term “medium” as it does (or does not) apply to television, see Cardwell (2014). On the implications of Cavell’s account of a medium, see Costello (2008).

Those primordial archetypes of film production on the folk art level – success or retribution, sentiment, sensation, pornography, and crude humor – could burst forth into genuine history, tragedy and romance, crime and adventure, and comedy, as soon as it was realized that they could be transfigured – not by an artificial injection of literary values but by the exploration of the unique and specific possibilities of the new medium. (quoted in Cavell 1979, 30; see Panofsky [1934] 1959, 18)

Film's "unique and specific possibilities", Panofsky goes on to argue, are "*dynamization of space* and, accordingly, *spatialization of time*" ([1934] 1959, 18). That is, "in a movie, things move, and you can be moved instantaneously from anywhere to anywhere, and you can witness successively events happening at the same time" (Cavell 1979, 30). Cavell does not deny that these are opportunities made available by film, nor their importance. He goes on to ask, though, not "how one would know that these are *the* unique and specific possibilities of film", but "what it means to call them possibilities at all" (1979, 31).

Cavell approaches this question by considering the development of film editing, from "one shot just physically tacked onto another" (as in early newsreels and actualities) towards the deliberate arrangement of selected viewpoints found in narrative movies. These opportunities of film are made "possibilities of the medium" by the way particular films "give them *significance*" – as examples, Cavell points to "the narrative and physical rhythms of melodrama, farce, and American comedy of the 1930s" (1979, 31). The point is that film's opportunities for selecting and arranging viewpoints in space over time did not have any significance at all prior to particular achievements of filmmaking. They were instead *given* significance by their use in particular films. What this means, Cavell goes on to say,

is that you can no more tell what will give significance to the unique and specific possibilities of projecting photographic images by thinking about them or seeing some, than you can tell what will give significance to the possibilities of paint by thinking about paint or by looking some over. You have to think about painting, and paintings; you have to think about motion pictures. (1979, 31)

In their reading of *The World Viewed*, William Rothman and Marian Keane (2000) offer a succinct summary of the implications that follow from Cavell's response to Panofsky. Any account of a medium's aesthetic possibilities, they argue, cannot be sustained "on theoretical grounds, in advance of criticism", but "must be motivated by discoveries that emerge through acts of criticism" (2000, 80).

Cavell's idea of a medium brings into question how well we understand the interest and power of serial drama's opportunities for depicting relationships between characters over long periods of time, across episodes and seasons. As Cavell reminds us, the fact that film editing can select and order framed viewpoints of the world onscreen has no significance in itself. Likewise, there is no intrinsic significance or value in serial drama's ability to depict the lives of fictional characters within the regular, ongoing structure of instalments made possible by the segmentation and continuity of the broadcast schedule, and now also supported by the different "flow" of on-demand streaming.

Developing our sense of serial drama's value as a medium requires that we articulate the qualities and significance to be found in particular uses of the form. As V. F. Perkins argues,

Criticism and its theory are concerned with the interplay of available resources and desirable functions. They attempt to establish what the medium is good for. They cannot determine what is good for the medium, because the question is senseless. [. . .] Anything possible is also permissible, but we still have to establish its value. We cannot assess worth without indicating function. ([1972] 1993, 59)

In order to indicate function and assess worth, Perkins argues, "we have to find ways of defining not only images, actions, and interpretations but also the nature of our involvement" ([1972] 1993, 141). This is because the way a film influences the viewer's experience is as crucial to its significance as the filmmaker's control over what is seen and heard onscreen (V. F. Perkins [1972] 1993, 140–41). In the light of these remarks, which echo those of Cavell above, we might wonder what sense it makes to say that the bonds of long-term relationships are a good subject for serial drama. Good relative to what else? (What else could such dramas present?) If seriality in television drama intrinsically lends itself to the depiction of long-term relationships, why do only some of those make a powerful and lasting impression, while others do not? It is not wrong to say that some of the most compelling and distinctive effects of seriality in television drama are based in our long-term involvement in the bonds between the characters onscreen. But what is the nature and value of that involvement, and the source of its effects and significance? Our appreciation of serial television drama as an art form depends on the depth of our response to these questions, which cannot be given a satisfying answer without paying close attention to the treatment of performance.

This thesis explores moments of expressive achievement in performance that are measures of serial drama's aesthetic significance and value. Central to their distinction in this respect is the way they involve us in the stakes of close companionship. In each case, the depth of those stakes – and the quality and significance of our involvement – depends on the handling of a critically under-

explored resource in serial drama: the expressive presence of the performers onscreen, and its relationship to the provisional as an attribute of serial form.

2. Provisionality, Performance, and the Stakes of Companionship

As both a concept and an expressive quality, the provisional offers a useful handle on the material basis of serial drama's distinctive affinity for depicting long-term relationships. Provisionality is a condition of textual meaning that is intrinsic to seriality in television drama. It is also a feature of human identity or selfhood that is a fundamental subject of screen performance, and a condition that lies at the heart of interpersonal bonds such as friendship. The provisional thus forms a link between the seriality of television drama, its most salient human element (performance), and one of its principal dramatic subjects (companionship). If we attend to relationships between performance and provisionality, we might refine our understanding of seriality in television drama as a resource for the compelling onscreen treatment of companionship over long periods of time.

Serial drama is often distinguished from more episodic forms of television fiction by its greater emphasis on a continuous history within the fiction, one that accrues episode-to-episode, season-to-season.²⁹ The potential depth of that accrued history seems an obvious basis of the medium's distinctive ability to depict long-term relationships, such as those of marriage or friendship. Both marriage and friendship are aspects of life that, by their nature, unfold over long stretches of time, through regular and repeated interactions, across months and years. "Romantic love," writes Kierkegaard, "can be portrayed very well in the moment; marital love cannot, for an ideal husband is not one who is ideal once in his life but one who is that every day" (quoted in Fried 2002, 145).³⁰ Likewise, friendship is a bond embodied in gestures that cannot be understood as such within any one moment alone – they need to be appreciated in relation to the longer history that two or more friends share. Nehamas makes this point when he considers friendship as a subject for painting. He notes that no painted gesture can, on its own, be taken as a sign of friendship "because no specific mode of acting is associated with friendship closely enough" (2016, 81). The reason, he argues, is that:

whether an action expresses friendship or not depends crucially on the context within which, and the motives out of which, it occurs. To discern an action's motive we must place that action within a wider context, fitting it into a pattern that accounts for its particular character. But that is where painting reaches its limits: friendship, like the pattern of

²⁹ The relevant literature is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

³⁰ These words are written by Kierkegaard, but in the guise of "Judge William", the fictive author of "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage" in Volume 2 of *Either/Or* (Kierkegaard [1843] 1987).

behavior it exhibits, takes time to manifest itself, and painting is not suited for the representation of time.³¹ (2016, 81)

A painting may depict a moment in a way that evokes longer passages of time. Serial dramas, however, “like the serialised novels of Eliot, Dostoevsky, Dickens and Melville”, are able to “encompass the broad slices of time, to articulate the sweep of history and weave complex patterns of repetition and development that build and then draw on our memories of their fictional action” (Jacobs 2012, 43). Serial drama’s “temporal prolongation” (Nannicelli 2017) – its ongoing accrual of a past, and its extension into a yet-to-be-determined future – is central to its special ability to explore how the bonds of human companionship form, grow, develop, deepen, falter, and recover or fail over time. This presents a difficulty for serial drama criticism. Unlike stand-alone, spatially and temporally contained art forms such as painting, it takes time for us to watch, absorb, and become familiar with long-running television dramas. As Michael Fried writes, certain paintings and sculptures achieve a sense of what he calls “*presentness*” or “*instantaneousness*”, as if “a single infinitely brief instant would be long enough to see everything, to experience the work in all its depth and fullness, to be forever convinced by it” (1998, 167).³² To find satisfying purchase on a particular moment of serial drama, by contrast, and to develop a sense of its place in the whole, we may need days or weeks to revisit and recall the season in which it sits. We may need to go back to the beginning. There is also the challenge of providing the reader with sufficient scaffold to find a way in to the aspects of the drama being referred to on the page; those details may be less familiar to the reader than they are to us, and unlike a painting or feature film, it may require considerable devotion of time to match the critic’s relationship to the work in question. Our sense of a serial drama is not achieved instantaneously, once and “forever”, to use Fried’s word. We remain familiar and close to some series but not others – certain moments linger with the deepest familiarity, while others slip away in time and evade us.

To appreciate the series discussed in this thesis thus requires sensitivity to their use of the provisional as an aspect of serial drama’s ability to unfold and accrue a deep fictional history. Provisionality in serial drama arises from the way a series’ parts – its scenes, episodes, and seasons

³¹ An objection to Nehamas’s point about painting can be found in Michael Fried’s discussion of time and the everyday in the drawings and paintings of Adolph Menzel. Fried argues, for instance, that the drawing *Dr. Puhmann’s Bookcase* “conveys an impression not exactly of ‘lived’ time passing in the present tense [. . .] but rather of ‘lived’ time having passed extensively, hour after hour, day after day, over years or decades” (2002, 141).

³² For more on “presentness” in relation to duration in animated works like Thomas Demand’s *Pacific Sun* (2012), see Fried (2014, 257–59). Fried’s reading of *Pacific Sun* in terms of Demand’s modernist internalisation of intention connects with the relationships between intention, judgement and time in the dramas discussed here.

– are joined over time to form the whole; or, more accurately, *come* to form that whole.³³ Like movies, we experience and reflect on serial dramas as works composed of moments.³⁴ But in serial drama, the place of the moment within the whole is different to that in film, and our relationship to any one moment, how it makes sense to us, is also different.³⁵ As Jacobs and Peacock have observed, the gradual unfolding of a serial drama – episode by episode, towards a future but indeterminate end – means the relationship of the part to the whole is not fixed, but unsettled, uncertain (2013a, 6–7). Individual episodes of a serial, writes Jacobs, “belong to a larger group. Alone, they have their own patterns and emphases but these are also intended to form part of a larger development even if that development *is not yet filmed, written, or planned*” (2001, 435; my emphasis). This not only troubles the criterion of coherence during the show’s initial unfolding – it also produces a *provisional* structure of intention and judgement. Serial drama involves an ongoing interplay between intention and duration, as what was meant at a certain point is placed under the pressure of what comes to follow. With the introduction of each new episode, the form of the whole itself expands and changes, shifting the place – and, potentially, the significance – of preceding episodes and moments. “This is why the judgement of dramatic serials is necessarily provisional,” writes Jacobs (2001, 435). Of course, we are able to make immediate judgements of a moment or an episode, and these might stand the test of the time. But they may also come to be shadowed, informed, or altogether changed in the light of episodes and events that follow. It would be a “mistake”, Jacobs argues, if we confined judgement within our immediate response to a moment or episode, “because then we would confine ourselves to what the program is just then – and how it was taken just then – rather than what it might become” (2001, 435). Our sense of a particular moment, episode, or season of serial drama may be tested, that is, not only by repeat viewings of the part in question, but also by the changed interpretive context created by the addition of further parts. In this sense, the provisional is more than an aspect of our “first viewing” experience alone. It is a feature of the conditions under which serial dramas are made – an implication of the fact that, in

³³ This emphasis on relations between part and whole helps to distinguish the kind of serial drama discussed in this thesis from other forms of serial television drama, such as soap opera. The key difference is that series such as *The Sopranos*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2007–08), and *Billions* (Showtime, 2016–), for example, are made of contained seasons with distinct endings, and which lead to an ultimate conclusion of the series as a whole. This relative containment affords a stronger emphasis on the closeness of part-whole relationships, and the availability of unity and coherence achieved in tension with the story’s fragmentation into episodes and seasons. On this point, see O’Sullivan (2009, 324), Mittell (2015, 233–43), and Shuster (2017, 93). On soap opera, see Allen (1985), Geraghty (1991), Ford, De Kosnik, and Harrington (2011), and De Kosnik (2013).

³⁴ On the moment as a constitutive feature of film form and viewing experience, see Klevan (2005b), Pomerance (2008), Brown and Walters (2010), and Pomerance (2016a).

³⁵ This raises the increasingly frequent serialisation of films; the difference is not one of kind but degree, given the heightened regularity and frequency of our encounters with serialised television fiction, and the greater length of fictional history they unfold and recruit as a resource.

Nannicelli's words, serials are planned, written, filmed, and put together over long periods of time, across months and years, "bit by bit", "with no sense of when or how they might end" (2017, 65).³⁶

To clarify the distinction between the provisional as an aspect of one's first viewing, and as an intrinsic feature of the work itself, compare Jacobs's (2001) discussion of a scene from *ER* (NBC, 1994–2009) with George M. Wilson's reading of the film *You Only Live Once* (Lang, 1937). Wilson's account – put forward in his book *Narration in Light* (1988) – explores how Lang's film internalises the issue of viewpoint in cinema, specifically how the camera's selective viewpoint reflects our own view of the real world, and may lead us to misperceptions and false judgements. Throughout the film, Wilson writes, "the audience is led into making a mistake of perceptual judgment after which a wider context is revealed in terms of which the judgment is shown for the mistake it is". In this way, "We are asked to reconsider what it is that we have seen and what, from that, we know" (1988, 18, 19). The provisionality of knowledge that is so crucial to the complexity and significance of *You Only Live Once* thus derives from the filmmaker's control and patterning of the camera's selective viewpoint. The filmmakers' achievements in this regard are based in their ability to pattern viewpoint within a contained work over which they have been able to exercise not only sufficient control but overall foresight. The provisional is here a feature of our understanding on a first viewing alone, rather than a condition of the film's creation that colours the significance of the filmmakers' choices.

Unlike more discrete works of art such as films, serial dramas are published before the intentions embodied in them have been settled and can bear the final authority of the artists who decided them. Consider, for example, Jacobs's account of the *ER* episode "Blizzard" (1.10). Set at Christmas, the episode follows the efforts of the hospital's doctors and nurses to treat the grievously wounded victims of a multiple car pile-up. Following this horror, the staff gather to celebrate the festive season, while central character Dr Mark Greene (Anthony Edwards) leaves to be with his wife and child at home. On his way, he is greeted by the parents of a baby he delivered earlier in the episode; we close with an ascending crane shot and the faint sound of sleigh bells as the image fades out. The apparent sentimentality of the ending, Jacobs argues, needs to be weighed against our knowledge that Greene's relation to home and marriage "tends toward the side of obligation rather than satisfied love" (2001, 437). "This should colour our judgement of that final shot," Jacobs writes, "or at least make our judgement what it has to be, provisional" (2001, 437). Reflecting on

³⁶ To say they are made with "no sense" of when or how they might end may be too strong. The makers of a show might set out with an idea of where they want to end up; they might even get there, or land somewhere nearby. Whatever significance the imagined ending had in the mind of the series' creator, however, it will undoubtedly have changed by the time it is filmed and put onscreen. The realised ending will be placed in a context whose precise texture could not plausibly have been part of the initial concept, however detailed it was.

the ending of “Blizzard” in the light of what subsequently befalls Greene, Jacobs notes how the sentimentality of the ending’s mood comes to be tinged darkly, to an extent that could not have been available or meant at the time it was made. Across the following six seasons of *ER*, Greene’s personal and professional life disintegrates. Seen again in the light of that fate, Jacobs argues, “the nonchalance of that look back at parents and emergency room is cruelly paid out, perhaps excessively so. That final image is haunted by the possibilities of his future” (2001, 437). This is not to say that we do not – or should not – make a judgement, one we might have confidence in, and perhaps remain committed to. It is to recognise that the moment was designed and crafted in relation to a larger, yet-to-unfold context, one whose eventual realisation may provide reason for us to see it differently, to revise our sense of its qualities and of their value – whether to greater or lesser degrees, and for better or worse.

Part of the modernism of the serials discussed in this thesis lies in the degree to which they internalise and dramatically reflect on the provisional nature of intention and judgement that follows from their serial form.³⁷ Crucial to the series’ value in this respect is their treatment of performance. As an attribute of serial form, the provisional is an intrinsic condition of performance in serial television drama. The degree to which actors in serial drama conceive of and execute their performances on provisional grounds comes into relief through comparison with acting in other, more narratively contained forms such as theatre and film. In *Moment of Action: Riddles of Cinematic Performance*, Murray Pomerance (2016a) notes film director Nicholas Ray’s distinction between two different dimensions of the actor’s work. The distinction is between “activity” and “action” – between what the actor physically does within the space of the frame, and what drives or motivates that behaviour. Pomerance uses the example of Dustin Hoffman’s character making his son French toast in *Kramer vs. Kramer* (Benton, 1979). “If we ask, ‘What is Hoffman doing?’ and think, ‘Making French toast,’” writes Pomerance, “we have found his activity. If we think, ‘Bringing his son close,’ we have found his action, one that will necessarily occupy scenes beyond this one. The cooking lesson is a node in a much longer arc” (2016a, 9). In serial television dramas like the ones discussed in this thesis, the actors rarely if ever know what awaits their character beyond the horizon of this week’s script, this week’s episode. The “much longer arc” of the performer’s “action” is even longer in serial drama, and often unknown. As Jacobs notes:

³⁷ Listing the features valued in modernism (specifically literary modernism), Amy Hungerford notes “linguistic difficulty, allusive density, *formal self-consciousness*, a marked individual voice, ambition (manifested in the work’s scope, innovation, intensity, allusiveness, or sheer size)”, together with “the expectation that readers should work at the reading” (2016, 157; my emphasis). These features of literary modernism map fairly neatly onto the characteristics of serial drama praised as “quality”, “complex”, or “high-end” since the early 1980s, and even before; see the discussion of serial television’s allusive self-reflexiveness in Newcomb (1978). The critical issue concerns the value of the self-consciousness found in particular dramas.

performances and characters are to some extent bound by the forms in which they appear: in novels, plays and films, characters and the actors playing them tend to know their complete story, where they are ‘coming in to land’. This permits the actor to telescope and plant (or have to conceal) aspects of the character’s destiny within a performance, but it also concentrates and constrains a character, shutting their possibilities down. [. . .] By contrast, long-form serial drama is rarely written with an ultimate destination finalised, unusually for fiction, it often comes to the consumer with its characters and plots unfinished. (2012, 53)

For an actor to be unaware of their character’s “complete story” or ultimate narrative destination presents both challenge and risk. Consider how certain film actors depend on such knowledge to prepare and deliver their performances. Robert Donat, for example, during production on *The Citadel* (Vidor, 1938), assembled detailed “emotion charts” to plan and track the appropriate emotional pitch of his performance from scene-to-scene across the film (Lowe 2007). This allowed him to create a performance of emotional and psychological coherence within the discontinuous, fragmented conditions of film production (Lowe 2007, 75). In serial drama, by contrast, actors do not necessarily know the place that any one moment of performance will come to have in relation to the whole, which is often unfinished or even unplanned – or, to the actor, simply unknown. Actors in serial drama will thus often have to judge and measure their choices without knowing what the ultimate narrative significance of their action will be.

An example can be found in the penultimate episode of *Breaking Bad*’s fourth season. In “End Times” (4.12), Walter White (Bryan Cranston) is holed up in the living room of his family home, fearing violent retribution from his nemesis Gustavo Fring (Giancarlo Esposito). There is a foreboding knock at the front door – is it the arrival of Walt’s killer? Walt peers through the peephole to find his partner Jesse Pinkman (Aaron Paul), who demands to be let in. Thinking himself in the presence of an ally, Walt lets down his guard, leaving his handgun unattended as he rambles about the threat from Fring, which could come from anywhere, at any time, in any form. It is with Walt’s back turned that Jesse picks up the gun and points it at his mentor. “Why’d you do it?” he says. “*Why?*” Jesse accuses Walt of poisoning his girlfriend’s son Brock, using ricin meant for Fring to instead target the young boy as an act of revenge against Jesse himself. During the episode’s production, this turn of the plot presented Bryan Cranston with a problem. Cranston’s practice was to read the series’ scripts week-by-week, so that as a performer his access to the fiction’s future was always matched to that of his character (Weintraub 2011). He therefore didn’t

know whether Walt was responsible for the poisoning or not.³⁸ Would he play the scene as if the character were desperately lying to save himself, or as if he were truthfully pleading his innocence? Cranston chose the latter, telling himself his character had no part in the boy's poisoning, which was instead the doing of Fring in his plot against Walt (Cranston 2012). The script for the following episode, "Face Off" (4.13), revealed that Cranston had it wrong – it was indeed Walt who poisoned the little boy. Once we are aware of this contextual information about the making of "End Times", how does it inform our sense of Cranston's performance in the scene of Walt's standoff with Jesse? Perhaps it helps us to see Walt as a person who, in these moments, utterly believes what he is saying even as he knows it is untrue. A split is introduced between the actor's belief in the character's innocence and the character's knowledge of his own guilt. Within the fiction, Walt needs to deliver to Jesse a faultless performance of ignorance to make credible his claims of guiltlessness, and so Cranston must in turn be perfectly convincing, allowing no sign of secret knowledge or ulterior motive to show as a wink to the viewer. In this way, the scene makes part of its significance the criterion that a good performance elicits belief, which is here given a darkly ironic twist. Acting without knowing what his character had in fact done, Cranston commits himself to a belief that was in fact untrue. The credibility of his performance becomes a measure of the deepest self-deception.

Actors in serial drama have an incomplete knowledge of their character's future because that future continues to unfold with each new episode and season, thus deepening the fiction's history. This affords the opportunity for performers to work themselves into a role, and for the role itself to be informed by the qualities and skills of the actor performing it. As Bonner and Jacobs note, while characters originate in writing they are embodied in the performances of the actors, which influence the scripting of subsequent episodes and seasons; the characters thus "become more 'themselves' as a run continues", because writers and viewers "come to know their defining qualities" (2017, 14). The accrued history of an actor's performance, and of its presentation within a wider fabric of filmmaking choices, becomes a resource available to the makers of a serial drama. Jacobs and Peacock observe that series "alert to the possibilities of significant patterning in forms of narrative and narration may rhyme or counterpoint moments from different seasons" (2013a, 6). Performance is a crucial element of film style, and so – as I demonstrate in Chapter Three – it can be central to patterns that link parts of a serial across its extensive history. But as I observed earlier in this chapter, the accrual of a serial's history exists in tension with the medium's tendency towards the

³⁸ Another good example is *The Sopranos* episode "Whoever Did This" (4.9). Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini) accuses his mafia captain Ralph Cifaretto (Joe Pantoliano) of burning to death their race horse for insurance money. Neither the audience nor the cast knew who was responsible; Pantoliano asked the writers, but they had not decided. The character is killed by Tony in revenge, without the truth ever being disclosed. See the episode's discussion in Biskind (2007).

transient, as moments slip into the past and are forgotten or otherwise lost, and established understandings – between characters, and between the viewer and the fiction – are altered or altogether undone in the changed light cast by a new turn of events. This tension is observed in Jacobs and Peacock’s reference to both rhyme and counterpoint as strategies of serial patterning. Rhyme evokes a return or recall of the familiar. It is not the same, but the similar – a repetition that negotiates the repetitive thorough degrees of differentiation. Counterpoint, by contrast, upsets a familiar pattern. It is the emergence of the unanticipated that breaks against a backdrop of engendered expectation. Seriality in television drama especially lends itself to these strategies due to the regularity of its repetitions, which affords intimate familiarity with developing behavioural patterns in the fiction, and with formal patterns in its presentation. Thus the opportunity, in the words of Bonner and Jacobs, for the characters to “become more ‘themselves’” over the course of a series as the relationship between actor and character becomes increasingly close (2017, 14). It is a self that doesn’t only solidify over time, but is also open to change – to moments of counterpoint that upset settled familiarity and expectation. Think of *Mad Men*, when John Slattery appears as Roger Sterling in the first episode of season seven’s second part (“Severance”, 7.8), now sporting sideburns and a moustache, in a tuxedo with wide lapels, looking almost – to us – out of character.

To say that we can watch the characters in a serial drama “become more ‘themselves’” is to recognise that who the characters are – to themselves, to one another, and to us – is not fixed. As William Rothman writes of Timothy Olyphant as Raylan Givens in *Justified*: “[he] incarnates, in the way every real human being does, the mystery of human identity: the fact that we are mysteries to each other and to ourselves; that our identities aren’t fixed, that we are in the process of becoming” (2013, 178). The episode-by-episode history of a serial drama is a history of the characters’ lives and futures being gradually realised – their shape authored, their significance achieved or discovered. The fictional lives that are inhabited by performers in serial drama accrue a deep history over time, but are also subject to the transience of time’s ongoing passage: to the solidification, change, and erosion or loss that it brings.

In this way, characters and performers in serial drama especially manifest the provisional as a condition of human identity, and of our bonds to one another. For Robert Pippin, one’s identity or self does not consist in some stable “inner” knowledge or essence that is simply externalised through action. It is instead achieved – or fails – through the social acknowledgement of a person’s actions over time. Pippin provides a concise picture of this condition in discussing what he calls “a characteristic problem in modern Western life” (2005, 307), one whose treatment through the handling of performance is crucial to the distinction of both *Homeland* and *Mad Men*. The problem consists in our fear that “in our official or public roles we are not really or authentically ‘who we are’, that we are not who we are taken to be by others” (Pippin 2005, 307). Related to this concern

is the inverse anxiety: that others, whom we can understand and judge only by their appearances and actions, might not be who they seem. What is at issue here, Pippin argues, is a “practically relevant self-knowledge”, which involves more than “introspecting an inner essence”, such as looking inside oneself to decide whether one is a good husband, wife, or friend (2005, 309). Practical identity or self-knowledge is “more like the expression of a commitment, usually a provisional commitment, which one can sustain or fail to sustain, and so is something one can always *only* ‘be becoming’ (or failing to become)” (Pippin 2005, 309). A person’s identity does not simply accumulate with time, solidifying and condensing, becoming ever more familiar – while it develops out of an accrued history, it leans toward the promises of an open future, however constrained that future might seem by the weight of one’s past. It is because our futures are not yet fixed (or not fully) that we can commit to being something other tomorrow than we were today. But this tension – between the permanent facts of our past, and the openness of our future – makes the question of “who one is” – and who others are to us – an especially difficult and unstable one, which calls for sustained and retrospective interpretation over time. As Pippin writes:

it is only *in* trying to become who one (provisionally) thinks one is that one can begin to find out who one really is (what one would really do), even though that putatively discovered result is only a provisional pledge of sorts to act in certain ways in the future. That is, this finding out does not discover a stable self simply revealed in action. We get, at best, another temporary resting place that further demands on us could and very likely will dislodge. In this context, the question of whether there can be any end to this provisionality, reformulation, and re-engagement is obviously a pressing one.

So is another necessary struggle: for some perspective from which the unity of such deeds and manifestations can be made out. We need to achieve some such coherent connections among deeds – to be able to understand why someone who would do *that* would do *this* – or we will not be able to recover the deeds as *ours*, to recognize ourselves in them. (2005, 310)

The ongoing provisionality and retrospective understanding of “who one is”, or who one turned out to be, provides the ground on which it makes sense to see all human actions, in Martin Shuster’s words, “as *expressive*, as the *expression of persons*, and thereby as demanding persistent analysis” (2017, 54). What is given expression in human action – as through screen performance – is a person, but one whose identity and relations to others are not fixed. Like the form of a serial television drama and its characters, our identities and relationships are in “the process of becoming” (Rothman 2013, 178). “What we ‘really’ are,” writes Nehamas, “is not a hidden, unchanging nature

that is in us from the beginning, sometimes unearthed and brought to light. It is something that we become – the result, but not the overall purpose, of countless activities and the vagaries of life” (2016, 211). Through the formation of their bond over time, friends and other close companions “do not discover their ‘real’ self” – each helps the other to create it (Nehamas, 212). There is a dark side, however, to this promise. Once we feel there is nothing more to discover in ourselves and in our friend through one another, “once our interaction promises nothing new, freezes what has already happened [. . .] our friendship is effectively over” (Nehamas 2016, 213). How do two people sustain their bonds and keep their promises if one or the other (or both) can no longer be seen as the person they were, or as having in them the person they want to become?

The fear that we are not who others take us to be, and the struggle to recognise ourselves in our deeds and what others make of them, lies at heart of the two series examined in this thesis. As a spy thriller, *Homeland* is fixated on the threat of deception, at both a personal, intimate level and on the larger scale of national security. Season one focuses on the suspicion that Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis) – returned home after years of captivity by al-Qaeda – is secretly a terrorist sleeper agent. Central to the drama is the question of who Brody has become and where his allegiances now lie. It is one that puts great pressure on the meaning of his smallest actions and gestures – what do they reveal of his intentions, of his mind? Our scrutiny of Brody’s behaviour (and so of Damian Lewis’s performance as well) is further encouraged by the first season’s surveillance plot, which sees CIA agent Carrie Matheson (Claire Danes) secretly install cameras and microphones throughout the Brody home in order to watch his every move. Our interrogation of Brody, of what he is really up to, is then mirrored in our relation to Carrie when she develops a romantic attachment to her target; together with the characters (and the actors), we are faced with the difficulty of judging whether their romantic bond is genuine or whether it is a deceptive act, or somehow both at once. Throughout the series, our judgement of Carrie’s judgement is troubled by the fact she has bipolar disorder, which makes her interpretation of reality badly unreliable.

My reading of *Homeland*’s first season in Chapter Four builds on existing commentary that notes how Carrie’s sustained, long-term surveillance of Brody internalises our own activity as viewers of long-form television drama.³⁹ This feature of the show speaks to Cavell’s account of television’s “mode of perception” in terms of “monitoring” (1982, 85–86), and further reflects on serial drama’s promise of deepened intimacy with, and knowledge of, the characters, even as that promise is undercut by the challenge of reading the actors’ often ambiguous performances. *Homeland* thus gives expression to a central subject of its interest in absence and homecoming: estrangement, by which the intimately familiar – whether one’s spouse, or even one’s own face – comes to seem foreign, unintelligible, or otherwise opaque. The stakes of that condition are

³⁹ See Jacobs (2011c) and Shapiro (2015).

heightened by the series' use of its spy thriller plot, through which the fate of the characters' personal bonds is linked with that of the nation. The terms of that link's significance are, I argue, inseparable from the interpretive challenges raised by some of the first season's most intriguing moments of performance.

Mad Men is also a story about a man who returns from war and whose life is subsequently shadowed by theatricality. Don Draper (Jon Hamm) – who assumed the name of his commanding officer killed in Korea – is the central figure of the series' interest in performative self-creation, which is further articulated across the ensemble cast, especially in regard to its female characters.⁴⁰ For both Draper and *Mad Men*, theatricality is not simply a trap – to avoid for oneself and condemn in others – but is instead revealed to have a double aspect. Draper stands for the freedom that can be won by treating one's life as a role to be played. In him, we see a man willing to shed his past and inhabit a new self, as though an actor slipping from one part to another; he is not trapped by who he has become. But *Mad Men* explores the costs of such freedom in its treatment of fraudulence. Having “eras[ed] his ties to a shameful past” (Toles 2013, 168), Don lives with the fear that he will be exposed acting-out a life that is not his own. He is thus haunted by the possibility that the bonds of his close relationships will be discovered as false, as based in a lie or misapprehension. In these terms, Don can be seen as a figure for *Mad Men*'s wider interest in the corporate workplace. In a way that is typical of workplace television drama, the characters in the advertising world of *Mad Men* are drawn together by the instrumental requirements of the job, but, through the intimacies of their work, come to form close relationships that seem to have a deeper, more personal basis. This tension between personal commitment and competitive self-interest introduces a dramatic question regarding the nature and perdurance of the characters' bonds. In *Mad Men*, what looked like loyalty or friendship can appear as little more than a mercantile transaction, one's commitment to another contingent on continued commercial advantage. At the same time, what might seem the chiefly commercial basis of the characters' relationships provides rich ground on which to test the depth and weight of close personal bonds such as friendship.

Chapter Five looks in detail at an episode that condenses these larger concerns of *Mad Men* as a workplace drama. Season four's “The Suitcase” (4.7) is a test of the relationship between Don and Peggy (Elisabeth Moss), his former secretary whom Don has mentored into a promising young copywriter. Echoing Chapter Four's interest in the failure of bonds in *Homeland*, “The Suitcase” concerns the apparent breakdown of Don and Peggy's partnership, its gradual erosion into hostility and resentment. The episode's tracking of this disintegration, however, comes to measure the

⁴⁰ See Toles (2013), who places Draper in a tradition of self-made male characters within American literature such as Jay Gatsby; I return to this connection in the final chapter of the thesis. See also my discussion of Joan (Christina Hendricks) in Logan (2014).

renewal and deepening of their bond, culminating in a moment of silent exchange and contact in Don's office at the episode's end. The success and power of this reconciliation depends, I argue, on the handling of the provisional as an expressive quality that is crucial to the episode's tensions between remembrance and forgetting, which together inform its compelling picture of Don and Peggy's companionship. My focus on a single episode, which culminates in a reading of its final moments, especially raises the issue of relationships between part and whole that is so amplified by the textual expansiveness of serial drama. Part of my interest here lies in the way that certain moments of "The Suitcase" exert such a vivid grip on my memory of the series. What does it say about the art of this show, and about the possibilities of serial drama, that a sense of its value can adhere so powerfully to a few gestures, such small parts of an otherwise unwieldy, sprawling whole?

Performance is crucial to the art of serial drama because the performers onscreen give moving human incarnation to the focus of our involvement in the fictional world: its characters. It is obvious that characters in serial drama are performed by actors. As I demonstrate in the following chapter, however, this fact has been largely overlooked by television studies work on serial drama, an oversight that leaves a central source of the medium's aesthetic interest underexplored. The aim of this thesis is to clarify and deepen our sense of the significance to be found in serial drama's opportunities for presenting and patterning screen performances over time. My original contribution is to highlight the provisional as a condition of both serial form and long-term human relationships, which *Homeland* and *Mad Men* give expressive significance through their handling of performance, as both a crucial stylistic element and thematic subject. Highlighting the significance these dramas find in relationships between performance and the provisional, the thesis refines and deepens our appreciation of the series' achievements, and of the medium in which they are realised.

3. Screen Performance and Serial Drama Criticism

Central to this thesis are questions of value that hinge on judgements of performance and its relationship with the drama's serial form. The interest of companionship as a subject for serial drama depends on the quality of its treatment in certain moments of individual shows. Those conditions of performance and themes of companionship that are such prominent features of both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* can be found across television fiction, and so their mere presence in these dramas is hardly surprising, nor is it a point of distinction as such. As Claire Perkins (2015) notes, issues of self-realisation and the shifting nature of identity over time are a pervasive feature of contemporary American serial drama. "The artistic possibilities of serial television," she writes,

have always been linked to its capacity to offer shifting perspectives on events and situations and to represent characters that change over time [. . .]. In the millennial era, though, the concept of profound transition has become *the* defining characteristic of American quality television. Most often couched in terms of self-actualisation that is achieved, attempted, desired, and/or *problematized*, transformation is valued as an effect that is specific to long form television. (2015, 784)

Not only self-transformation, we should add, but also self-annihilation. Think of the many scenes from *Breaking Bad* that picture Jesse's willing dissolution as he sinks into depraved hedonism, or, in *Billions*, the image of Bobby Axelrod (Damian Lewis) celebrating a triumphant victory by giving himself over to numbing intoxication and anonymous sex in a home emptied of family but filled with strangers ("Not You, Mr Dake", 3.7). And there are, of course, instances of transformation and change between characters – whether achieved, attempted, desired, or otherwise – that we don't find valuable, for any number of reasons. Over time, we might find the development of a character or relationship implausible, forced, overly didactic in pointing to a political or moral message, or sentimental and cloying. We might also find the fate of some characters to be a sign of the artists' barren cruelty. Other avenues of potential aesthetic failure lie in the moment-by-moment crafting of the drama as it appears onscreen. As V. F. Perkins observes of film:

Cameras and microphones are instruments of selection. What they bring us is brought to the exclusion of everything else. The camera demands placement; each image declares its angle of vision. The availability of the cut means that the decisive moment occurs once every fraction of a second. (2012, 94)

Reflecting on this passage, Alex Clayton (2016) teases out its implications for film spectatorship. Alongside "our involvement in the drama", he writes, "we follow the stream of perceivable choices embodied in its presentation onscreen; we judge these choices in terms of what they offer, what they refuse, what they claim, and what they betray" (2016, 212). Any dramatic sequence, however brilliantly conceived, may disappoint as well as please through its execution. Questions of serial drama's artistic possibilities thus concern the value and significance to be found in the handling of the form's opportunities – the choices available to the makers of a drama in each moment of its unfolding creation. The sequences of *Mad Men* and *Homeland* discussed in this thesis were chosen for the degree to which their designs internalise and reflect on the drama's serial composition. Crucial to their success and significance in this respect are choices that cohere around screen performance. But seriality in television drama does not always support the kind of criticism that is

traditionally invited by performance in film. “Watching a movie in a relaxed way,” writes V. F. Perkins, “we’re interested in what the characters are doing, but it’s at least as important for criticism to ask what the *actors* are doing, and to see performance as a matter of patterns as well as moments” (quoted in Cameron et al. 1975, 13). The patterning of performances across a film’s length naturally raises the relationship between actor and director. In his review of Andrew Klevan’s *Film Performance* (2005a), Adrian Martin (2008) observes the danger of neglecting directorial agency as a crucial part of performance in film. Having noted Klevan’s tendency to overlook direction in his emphasis on actors’ performances, Martin questions a passage in which Barbara Stanwyck:

is praised for ‘playing off’ the resonances of a previous scene in *There’s Always Tomorrow* that (in all likelihood) she would not have attended the shooting of (since she does not figure in it) nor watched its rushes. Only one person was in the position to seize, develop, and take advantage of these resonances, and his name [. . .] is Douglas Sirk. (2008)

Appreciating film performance often calls for the critic to consider not only the qualities and actions of the actor, but also their relationship with the choices and sensibilities of the director. For a number of critics, the measure of a film is taken by weighing how a director has been able to make use of their actors. Cavell, for example, argues that *It’s a Wonderful Life* (Capra, 1946), *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1957), and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (Ford, 1962) each depend on the ways Capra, Hitchcock, and Ford use James Stewart’s ability to project “a willingness for suffering” (1978, 254). Certain directors, of course, repeatedly return to particular actors, and we might wonder how the qualities of the person onscreen satisfy or reward the attention of the person behind the camera (or fail to); think of Ingmar Bergman and Liv Ullmann, Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro, or Olivier Assayas and Kristen Stewart. V. F. Perkins’s remarks on Tim Holt’s performance in *The Magnificent Ambersons* (Welles, 1942) especially reveal how the relationship between actor and director may be crucial to film criticism. “Very few actors,” he writes,

could have given a performance as unselfish as Tim Holt’s, and very few directors would have asked for it. Holt’s refusal to tip us the wink on his own judgement of George is matched by a camera that does not tip winks of this kind. Though the visual style is as overt as Lang’s or Sternberg’s or Hitchcock’s, and while the cutting can punctuate with pronounced rhythms normal in Hollywood only in farce, these devices are not used to construct a knowledge of character more certain or clear-cut than the knowledge we can derive from deeds and gestures. (1999, 61)

Here, considerations of performance and direction are mutually informing. Perkins appreciates a fit between the values of Holt's "unselfish" performance (one that does not grant the viewer an easy, self-congratulatory position of superiority) and Welles's approach to the presentation of the film's world (one "that does not tip winks of this kind"). The qualities and attitude of Holt's performance shed light on those of Welles's direction, and on the kind of artistry embodied in his film – one in which the significance of the film's world is not reductively imposed by the camera, but instead emerges if we meet the director's sensitive attention to the "deeds and gestures" of both character and actor at once.

Do the performances of Claire Danes and Damian Lewis in *Homeland*, or of Elisabeth Moss and Jon Hamm in *Mad Men*, reward the same kind of questions, and afford the same kind of appreciative criticism? The fifth and final chapter of this thesis provides a close reading of one episode from *Mad Men*'s fourth season: "The Suitcase", directed by Jennifer Getzinger. Scott Hornbacher directed the previous episode, "Waldorf Stories" (4.6); the following instalment, "The Summer Man" (4.8), was directed by Phil Abraham. The texture of film performance refers to "the fine detail of what is offered by actors to microphone and camera, and the manner in which that work is woven into the fabric of the film" (Clayton 2011b, 77–78). On *Mad Men*, however, Jon Hamm offered the fine detail of his vocal work and bodily gestures to a microphone and camera that was, in each episode, overseen by a different director. Who, then, can we say is responsible for developing the resonances that sound across the length of Jon Hamm's appearance in *Mad Men*, or of Claire Danes's presence in *Homeland*?⁴¹ Perhaps in either case we might nominate the showrunner. Matthew Weiner oversaw the writing and production of *Mad Men* and was by all reports fastidious in his attention to the detail of the fictional world.⁴² But was Weiner on set for each moment of every day, interacting with and instructing the performers, making choices in the design and handling of each scene? Did Alex Gansa do the same on the set of *Homeland*? Given the extensive writing and production duties of the showrunner role, it seems doubtful. Regardless, if we find that the choices made across the length of a serial resonate or otherwise cohere in a significant way, our primary task is to clarify and articulate the terms of that significance. We might do so by appealing to the oversight of the showrunner, or by evoking what Pippin calls "the collective intelligence we can postulate behind the making of the film", or of the television drama (2017, 6). In some cases, a film or television drama may undeniably speak of an individual's artistry; in other cases, we may be struck by undeniable artistry, while remaining unsure of whose it is. V. F. Perkins's appreciation of the performances in both *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *La Règle du jeu* (Renoir, 1937) leads to insights regarding the art of both Welles and Renoir. Unlike Perkins, my

⁴¹ A valuable source on issues of authorship in television is Nannicelli (2017, 18–50).

⁴² For example, see Barkhorn (2011).

interest in what passes between Elisabeth Moss and Jon Hamm in the closing moments of “The Suitcase” does not lead me to an appreciation of Jennifer Getzinger’s art as a director. The finely judged choices embodied in the episode’s ending are (presumably) hers. But the ending’s deep resonance has sources that lie beyond the limits of the episode, in both earlier and later parts of *Mad Men* over which Getzinger did not have control. The relationship between actor and director is important to film criticism.

It seems less relevant, however, to the kind of significance made available through performance by serial dramas such as *Homeland* and *Mad Men*.

That these dramas do not raise critical issues which are central to the best film criticism is not a mark against their ambition and achievement and need not diminish our sense of their value. Instead, it is a reminder of the need to discover what kind of criticism, and what terms of value, might deepen our sense of the moments and qualities of serial drama that we are moved by, and that we care for. What we care most about in serial drama, as in film, are the human beings onscreen. Our relationship to the film actors we care about is one that emerges, in large part, as we recognise their performances across a number of roles and characters, a variety of films and fictional worlds. Our attachment to actors in television fiction differs by degree. We might recognise them from earlier roles, whether in film or television. If they emerge as visible actors by a single television performance – as in George Clooney, or Jon Hamm – we might come to know them in different roles as their careers expand.⁴³ But it is only in the case of television series that appreciating an actor’s performance requires us to reflect on their inhabitation of a single character within a unified fictional world, both of which unfold across dozens of instalments over many months and years. The serial unfolding of television drama, I have argued, gives rise to a provisional structure of intention and judgement that is analogous to the provisionality of human identity and social bonds. These are features of serial drama and its relationship to human life that can be identified in nearly any example of the form. What distinguishes the dramas discussed in this thesis is the degree to which their handling of performance, provisionality, and the bonds of companionship makes available a depth of resonance that rewards continued curiosity about its sources and implications. To appreciate their qualities calls for us to articulate what is at stake in our relationship to the human beings onscreen – both the characters whose lives we follow, and the performers who embody them.

⁴³ It is now more frequently the case that star or character actors from film are occupying both limited and recurring roles on television, such as Matthew McConaughey and Colin Farrell in the first two seasons of *True Detective* (HBO, 2014–), or Paul Giamatti in *Billions*. For discussions of public personae produced by television as against film, see Ellis (1991), Butler (1991a), Mann (1991), Bennett (2011), and Bonner (2011).

Chapter Two.

The Absence of Performance in Television Studies

The central place of performance in our relation to serial drama is not matched by its more marginal status in serial drama scholarship. This speaks to television studies' persistent oversight of the degree to which the expressive significance of serial drama is bound up in screen performance. In what follows, I bring this oversight into relief in two parts. The first highlights how the place of performance in the study of serial drama has long been marked by its absence. This absence can be seen in a range of scholarship that we might expect to pay close attention to performance as central to serial drama's significance and value. Certain work on quality television, for example – such as by Jane Feuer (1984), Charlotte Brunsdon (1990), and Robert Thompson (1996) – acknowledges acting and performance as vital to the form's distinction, while ignoring the texture of performance onscreen. This partly reflects a direction of interest towards the political economy of serial drama. But it is more deeply symptomatic of a central argument in the scholarship on quality television: that claims for the value of particular shows merely reflect the marketing discourse of the television industry and its appeal to regimes of socially habituated taste.⁴⁴ Arising from this view is a sceptical attitude toward the idea that particular dramas matter to us by virtue of their individual expressiveness and its significance to our lives. Performance in serial drama is the most salient human embodiment of such expressiveness, and so, within the quality television framework, it is naturally met with avoidance. Even outside discourses of quality television, however, performance is persistently overlooked. In monographs and edited collections that focus on the form and thematic significance of particular dramas, for example, the texture of performance is often missed as part of a wider tendency to neglect style as the basis of expressive effect and significance. This oversight also appears in a body of work where the onscreen presence of performance seems most pressing: the study of characterisation as a distinctive feature of serial drama, and the central dimension of our attraction to it.

Across the last five years, however, an increasing number of studies have focussed on acting and performance in television drama, and so the second part of the chapter considers the topics and

⁴⁴ Clear examples of this argument include Polan (2007), Feuer (2007), Hills (2007), C. Anderson (2009), Hills (2011), and Newman and Levine (2012)

approaches taken up in this body of work. Many of these studies echo the avoidance of expressive texture and significance discussed in the first part of the chapter. Contextual, off-screen matters predominate, such as the working processes of television actors (Hewett 2013, 2015, 2017) and the economics of acting labour in the contemporary television industry (Fortmueller 2016). Other work, however, raises critical issues that are more salient to this thesis. Most relevant are studies that address the distinctiveness of performance in serial drama as a medium of extended storytelling over time, which – as I noted in the previous chapter – Philip Drake addresses in terms of “accumulation” (2016, 8). Largely missing from this body of work, however, is writing that strives to make intelligible the depth of significance that individual series achieve through their handling of relationships between performance and seriality. The chapter then highlights pieces of writing on performance in film that provide models for pursuing this ambition: how its challenges may be acknowledged through criticism, rather than avoided. In the first section below, I bring television studies’ absence and oversight of performance to light, thus opening up the space in which the present study makes its contribution.

1. Overlooking Performance in Serial Drama

By referring to television studies’ “oversight” of performance, I do not mean a necessary and justifiable act of selection and exclusion, but a species of critical neglect. The difference is made clear by V. F. Perkins (2017) in his discussion of “omission and oversight” in the close reading of film. Where “strategic omissions” may reflect the choices and priorities of the critic, Perkins argues, “oversights [. . .] concern features that, once observed, could hardly be left unremarked” (2017, 384). Actors, and the presentation of their performances onscreen, are the focus of what we observe when we watch serial television drama. On the basis of this fact alone, the relative absence of detailed attention to performance in television studies is surprising. It is even more so in the light of powerful remarks, published early in the history of television studies, that identify performance as central to the aesthetic interest of television series and which call for scholars of television to explore this aspect of the form. In his 1976 essay “Television Melodrama”, David Thorburn argues that the television series’ “essential artistic resource is the actor’s performance, and one explanation – there are many others – for the disesteem in which television melodrama is held is that we have yet to articulate an adequate aesthetics for the art of performance [in television]” ([1976] 2000, 440).⁴⁵ To understand television drama, he argues, and “to find authentic standards for judging it as art”, we must learn to “recognize and value” achievements of expressive significance that have their

⁴⁵ Thorburn’s essay is of historical value but, due to the period of prime-time television it addresses, does not engage with the issues of performance and seriality explored in this thesis. Thorburn was writing at a time when prime-time series were largely episodic, distinguishing between soap opera and prime-time series in terms of the former’s serialisation; see Thorburn ([1976] 2000, 450 n. 3).

basis in the particular conditions of performance in television fiction ([1976] 2000, 440–41). Television’s history “as a dramatic medium”, Thorburn goes on to say, “is, at the very least, a history of exceptional artistic accomplishments by actors” ([1976] 2000, 441).

In the decades since Thorburn’s essay was first published, however, the continued absence of attention to performance in television studies has been repeatedly noted. For example, John Caughie has expressed surprise that, in a discipline which emphasis the practice of “reading the screen, there is very little attention to reading the actor” (2000, 162). More than ten years later, Jason Jacobs was moved to note “how odd it is that so little has been written in television studies about specific performance, specific actors and their skills” (2013). “Perhaps I am reading the wrong thing,” he writes,

but celebrity studies and accounts of style and narrative seem to somewhat bypass, hurriedly in embarrassment, what is I think for many of us the primary aesthetic experience of television – fiction and non-fiction – which is the compelling presence of performing human beings in front of us. I wonder why? (2013)

This question is briefly addressed in a special issue of the *Journal of Film and Video* dedicated to “Recentering Television Performance” (Rawlins and Tait 2016b).⁴⁶ In their editors’ Introduction, Justin Owen Rawlins and R. Colin Tait argue that prevailing views of television as a writer’s medium, combined with the emergence of naturalistic acting styles early in the history of television, has obscured the labour of television actors and the part their performances play in the effect and significance of television fiction (2016a, 3–4). This is not, however, a satisfying answer to the question – it is merely another way of raising it. Why was television historically seen as a writer’s medium at the cost of attention to performance as the focus of television’s aesthetic interest? And why should naturalism necessarily be an obstacle to the critical appreciation of performance in television fiction? Most people we know behave in low-key, naturalistic ways. But if we were to ignore their expressiveness, pointing to their everyday naturalism would hardly count as a good reason for our failure of care and attention. Why, then, has a humanities discipline dedicated to the study of television so studiously avoided its most salient human dimension?

One reason for television studies’ silence about acting and performance in serial drama lies in the scholarship on quality television. This body of work addresses the formal distinctiveness, together with the increasing industrial and cultural prominence, of certain prime-time or otherwise

⁴⁶ The contents of the issue are addressed in the second section of this chapter.

highly promoted comedy and drama series on US television from the early 1980s to the present.⁴⁷ Scholarship on quality television is relevant to this chapter in part because it reveals inattention to performance in serial drama as not simply an absence but a pointed and telling oversight. As Philip Drake remarks, the large volume of scholarly work on quality television since the early 2000s makes this absence appear “especially odd”, given that “performances are quite clearly central to the shows’ achievements and audience engagement. The distinctiveness of such quality television as *The Sopranos*, *The Wire*, *Breaking Bad*, and *House of Cards*, it seems to me, is at least partly due to their screen performances” (2016, 6). Drake’s remarks echo Thorburn’s call to recognise the history of television fiction as, “at the very least, a history of exceptional artistic accomplishments by actors” ([1976] 2000, 441). The quality television framework provides a history of changes in the form and status of serial television drama. These changes are chiefly related, however, to transformations in the television industry, its distribution and reception technologies, and the size and makeup of its audiences. Central to the account is the increasing fragmentation of television and its audiences as new distribution networks and platforms have proliferated. This has allowed networks to target increasingly lucrative niches of the audience, developing and branding “premium” programming as a means of achieving distinction in an increasingly competitive market.⁴⁸ The formal hallmarks of such distinction have been identified in controversial subject matter (such as profanity, sex, and violence), so-called “cinematic” style that takes advantage of widescreen, high-definition television sets, and a complexity and density of serialised narration that rewards attentive repeat viewing and so also supports demand for the ownership of profitable ancillary products such as DVD and Blu-Ray boxed sets.⁴⁹ Through the lens of quality television,

⁴⁷ For clear examples of work that set this agenda for the study of serial drama as quality television, see Feuer, Kerr, and Vahimagi (1984), R. J. Thompson (1996), Jancovich and Lyons (2003), and McCabe and Akass (2007b). Of course, the association between quality television and prime-time has been weakened by the rise of on-demand, menu-based streaming services such as Netflix. But the industrial status of “quality” programming can still be determined by the degree to which particular programs are promoted on platforms and in advertising, and are given ancillary release in forms like Blu-Ray; on the relationship between quality status and DVD/Blu-Ray, see Hills (2007). For two recent studies of on-demand platform-based television, see Lotz (2017) and Dunleavy (2018). While the balance of work on quality television addresses US series, the concept also has roots in relation to British television and has been applied to other national output. For work on quality television in Britain, see Broadcasting Research Unit (1989), Brunson (1990), Mulgan (1990), and Independent Television Commission (1996). For examples of work on quality television in relation to other national contexts, see Dhoest (2004), Buonanno (2013), Dhoest (2014), and Steenberg and Tasker (2014).

⁴⁸ See the discussions regarding media and audience fragmentation, and related strategies of branding and distinction, across Feuer, Kerr, and Vahimagi (1984), R. J. Thompson (1996, 36–45), Reeves, Rogers, and Epstein (1996), Rogers, Epstein, and Reeves (2002), Jaramillo (2002), Feuer (2003), Holt (2003), Nelson (2007a, 2007b), and Johnson (2007, 2012).

⁴⁹ On content and subject matter, see R. J. Thompson (1996, 15), McCabe and Akass (2007c), and Holt (2013); for cinematic style, high-definition, and DVD/Blu-Ray, see Caldwell (1995), Hills

the form and cultural grip of particular shows is addressed in terms of relationships between the economic and technological conditions of the television industry, and taste formations within socially and economically privileged audience demographics (Logan 2016b, 147).

Despite this emphasis on the form's sociohistorical conditions, some of the earliest publications that develop the notion of quality television acknowledge acting and performance as important to the distinction of such programs. In her discussion of sitcoms such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS, 1970–77) and *Rhoda* (CBS, 1974–78), for example, Jane Feuer notes how their distinctiveness stemmed in part from the choice to hire actors with not only television experience, but also training in theatre comedy and improvisation (1984, 32). Feuer also claims these sitcoms are of interest for the particular qualities of their characterisation and comedy, specifically in terms of “a new kind of femininity”, a fine “balance of warmth and sophistication”, and the way they not only provoke laughter *at* the characters, but also what Feuer calls “empathetic laughter” *with* them (1984, 63–37). These qualities and effects are inseparable from the texture of specific comic performances. In Feuer's discussion of the “MTM Style” (1984), however, little is said for the onscreen presentation and comic performances of Mary Tyler Moore, Valerie Harper, Ed Asner, or Betty White.

Other early work on quality television suggests that performance is central to the interest of seriality and time in long-form drama series, although this suggestion is not developed in depth. Robert J. Thompson, for example, in his book *Television's Second Golden Age* (1996), outlines what he considers to be the defining characteristics of quality television drama. One distinguishing feature is their large ensemble casts ranged across multiple, serialised storylines, which allow a range of viewpoints, and for characters to “develop and change as the series goes on” (1996, 14–15). Acting and performance have an implicit presence here. The success of an ensemble cast in a television series is an achievement of casting, writing for, and directing multiple actors to work as a group, to discover how they best play off one another over an extended period of time. In whatever way the writers gradually develop a character on the page, that change is ultimately embodied in the history of an actor's performance, which can be registered and tracked in adjustments to its presentation as part of the series' wider formal fabric. In his discussion of seriality and time later in the book, Thompson comes closest to engaging with the centrality of filmed human beings to the interests of the series he discusses. It is only in “soap operas and long-running series”, Thompson argues, that “we can *see* characters age and develop in a way that even Wagner's longest operas or

(2007), Newman and Levine (2012, 100–28), Jaramillo (2013), and Mills (2013); on narrative, see Dunleavy (2009, 132–63) and Mittell (2015, 17–54).

Dickens's most extended novels didn't allow" (1996, 32; my emphasis).⁵⁰ Despite his observation that the television series is a distinct form because it allows us to *see* characters age and develop, Thompson's subsequent discussion of seriality in prime-time drama is focussed on writing and narrative (see 1996, 32–35). The matter of performance in serial drama, so prominent onscreen, briefly comes into view; but almost as soon as it is glimpsed, it is once again forgotten.

Such inattention to performance might reflect a simple matter of priority – a valid direction of scholarly interest. As outlined above, scholarship on quality television tends to approach serial drama through the lens of political economy. That is, it examines “patterns of media ownership, revenue sources (such as advertising), technological changes and various economic or institutional factors that influence the way media companies operate and the content they produce” (Casey et al. 2008, 205).⁵¹ From this approach, serial drama's formal development, cultural prominence, and the critical acclaim of particular shows, is accounted for in terms of industrially manufactured distinction as a means to gain competitive advantage in an increasingly fragmented television market. The tendency of work on quality television is to address broad formal trends, such as cinematic style, narrative complexity, and modernist self-reflexiveness as means for attracting “quality” demographics.⁵² Serial drama's formal dimensions are thus framed not in terms of their aesthetic significance and value, but as indicators of shifting relationships between the commercial conditions of the television industry, its technology, and its audiences.

This view has particular implications for the appreciation of performance, which emerge in Charlotte Brunsdon's (1990) discussion of quality British drama from the 1980s.⁵³ Among the “quality components” of both *Brideshead Revisited* (ITV, 1981) and *The Jewel in the Crown* (ITV, 1984), Brunsdon lists “The Best of British Acting” (1990, 85). “The presence of name and theatrical actors and actresses,” she writes,

adds the international dimensions of British theatre in the programmes. Again, the point here is not whether British theatrical acting, as exemplified by Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Jeremy

⁵⁰ This may be true, but what it adds up to is another, more difficult issue. Perhaps the more salient distinction between the art of Wagner and Dickens, and that of television series, concerns the authority or confidence with which we can measure their respective artistry and value. No television series has yet lasted nearly long enough for us to say it has the cultural value of the operas by Wagner, or the novels of Dickens.

⁵¹ For another overview of political economy and television studies, see Sussman (2002). On the relation between “critical” political economy and other schools of economics, see Gandy (2003). For seminal works of political economy in relation to television and media, see the entries under “Political Economy” in M. G. Durham and Kellner (2006); see also Murdock and Golding (1973).

⁵² For two clear examples, see the discussion of *Six Feet Under* (HBO, 2001–05) in Feuer (2007) and of *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO, 2010–14) in McCabe (2013).

⁵³ For a useful analysis of the historical context of British public broadcasting and government policy that informed Brunsdon's argument and rhetoric, see Jacobs (2011b).

Irons, is better than other traditions of acting, but that there is a comfortably established international (hence, foreign sales) body of opinion to that effect. (1990, 85)

Note how Peggy Ashcroft and Jeremy Irons are not viewed in terms of their performances in these dramas, but as marketable “names” and exemplars of an esteemed tradition. Then consider how the value of that tradition is itself framed in terms of television commerce. The acting of Ashcroft and Irons is not measured by its expressive significance; its value is weighed only in relation to a “comfortably established [. . .] body of opinion” in lucrative television markets. Judgements of intrinsic significance and value are not only sidestepped, but their very relevance is undermined. The appearance of the performers in these shows is instead accounted for by a relationship between commercial imperatives and the taste of certain audience segments. It is assumed that the expressive presence of the human beings onscreen is without particular interest or depth, and so it goes unexplored.

The oversight of performance in quality television scholarship thus emerges from more than a simple direction of interest towards issues of political economy. My argument is that it stems from the vein of scepticism running throughout the quality television framework: namely, that our relation to particular dramas is accounted for by the web of economic and social conditions under which they were produced – that specifying those conditions exhausts what there is to say about our encounter with an individual drama’s expressiveness.⁵⁴ Such scepticism is vivid in Dana Polan’s essay “Cable Watching: HBO, *The Sopranos*, and Discourses of Distinction” (2007). Polan argues that the extraordinary attention paid to *The Sopranos* does not reflect the series’ intrinsic significance or value, but is instead the product of a confluence between the show’s promotional discourses and the class status of its viewers. “*The Sopranos*,” he writes, “clearly taps into an audience that has been trained (through, for example, years of high school and college courses in literary study as theme-hunting) to understand cultural work as hermeneutic – as meaning-making” (2007, 265). In staking public claims for *The Sopranos*’ depth of significance and value, then, critics merely reflect the network’s strategy of marketing the series “through the language of relevance and meaningfulness, of theme and profound depths” (2007, 265–66). For Polan, the grip of *The Sopranos* and other HBO dramas of the same period is an effect of the network exploiting aesthetic discourse in the pursuit of brand distinction. In this aspect of contemporary television, Polan concludes, “we encounter another reason perhaps why the interpretation of individual shows seems beside the point. In the larger economy of media circulation, culture is a mere pretext to reach consumers, and it matters only so long as it continues to do so” (2007, 281).

⁵⁴ I have made this point elsewhere; see Logan (2016b).

Polan's scepticism might account for the ambivalence that lines his cautious praise for *The Sopranos*' actors. In his later monograph on the series, Polan connects *The Sopranos* to the tradition of 1950s Golden Age dramas, a "lineage of televised dramatic works that emphasize the close interactions of a few characters in ways that demonstrate both individual and ensemble acting skill" (2009, 99). But as to the value and significance of such performances in *The Sopranos*, Polan is only prepared to "hazard some suggestions" garnered from "the discourse of acclaim" which the series has attracted from critics and awards bodies. This approach results in a catalogue of general qualities such as "realism and plausibility", "understatement and volatility", "psychological depth and layers of implication", together with a "perfection" of acting technique that renders the imperfections of ordinary behaviour (2009, 100). Earlier in the book, Polan writes in appreciation of Edie Falco's performance of a monologue while Tony lies comatose after being shot (2009, 27–28). A reference to the scene later in the series makes clear that Tony was unaware, or has no memory, of Carmela's outpouring of feeling for him. For Polan, "this serves [. . .] as a self-reflexive assertion that Carmela's soliloquy existed only for its momentary, sheer quality of performance by the actress playing her and for the delight of the spectator watching her" (2009, 28). Polan's suspicion that the values attributed to shows like *The Sopranos* have no intrinsic basis means that he is reluctant to commit to, clarify, and substantiate what is clearly his own admiration for the series' central performances; it is also telling in this regard that he is drawn to highlight a moment of performance that he considers to be ultimately empty of depth, and which (on his view) calls for no more than a hollow recognition of intense and skilful "performative display" (2009, 27).

Sudeep Dasgupta (2012) has shown how the sceptical view expressed by Polan is characteristic of quality television discourse more broadly. His essay "Policing the People: Television Studies and the Problem of 'Quality'" (2012) examines work that sets out to critique the industrial imperatives and marketing discourses of quality television, such as that by Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine (2012), Kirsten Marthe Lentz (2000), and Jane Feuer (2007). Feuer, for example, takes references to modern European film and magical realist literature in *Six Feet Under* to be no more than a strategy to achieve demographic appeal and brand distinction, a way to elevate the show in relation to the rest of television by drawing on "non-televisual" artistic resources. As Dasgupta points out, however, Feuer's own judgements reflect HBO's marketing of *Six Feet Under* as a work of "high culture, literary experimentation which 'the American viewing public' is incapable of understanding" (2012, 43). In this way, Dasgupta argues, critiques such as that offered by Feuer merely reiterate the marketing logic of networks like HBO, which assume a fixed relationship between privileged segments of the audience and the value of certain artistic forms. Detailed consideration of a particular program's design and expressiveness, and of its significance

and value in those terms, is short-circuited by a prior assumption of value derived from the show's commercial origins and market orientation.

This occludes attention to the expressive dimensions of performance in serial drama because it rejects the idea that such works are *individual* bearers of human meaning, to be interpreted and judged as such. The performers onscreen are not only the focus of the particular significance that is embodied in the form of a serial drama – they provide a vivid analogy of such meaning, and so their presence in serial drama presents a special problem for the sceptical tendencies of quality television discourse. As Robert Pippin (2014) argues, the meaningfulness of creating and displaying artworks mirrors or parallels the embodiment of meaning in human action and gesture.⁵⁵ This is a view succinctly expressed by V. F. Perkins, for whom the meaning of a film is manifest in the perceptible details of its form. “The meanings I have discussed in the *Caught* fragment,” he writes, “are neither stated nor in any special sense implied. They are filmed” (1990, 4). This is a concept of artistic intention and significance as being manifest “in the deed” – in the actions and choices of the artist that gave form to the artwork.⁵⁶ Like bodily actions and expressions, artworks are a form of intrinsically meaningful address to another. As Pippin writes in his discussion of pictorial modernism in nineteenth century French painting:

to a certain, very general extent, we can say that the complex relation between the materiality of paint itself and painterly meaning mirrors or echoes the relationship between visible corporeal surface and human intentionality generally. (And it will give rise to the same skeptical problems.) We can say that we ‘take’ the painted surfaces that we see to mean what they do in something like the way we comprehend the mindedness we take to be expressed in corporeal movement and visible facial surface. [. . .]

This ascription of meaning is not an inferential or two-stage relation. We don't see bodily movement and then infer intentions, any more than we see painted canvases and infer represented objects and intended meaning. But such intelligibility is a conceptual articulation that is an *achievement* of some sort; understanding what we see is always in some sense provisional and revisable (especially, contestable with others), and that characteristic is an aspect inherent in seeing or understanding itself. (2014, 55–57)

⁵⁵ See especially the discussion of this idea in Pippin (2014, chap. 2).

⁵⁶ On filmmakers' choices as the basis of filmic meaning, see V. F. Perkins (2006) and Gibbs (2006). For a more general discussion of this view of artistic intention, see Cioffi (1963). In certain cases where there is disagreement between our interpretation and the artist's avowal of intention, argues Cioffi, “The work will be considered more conclusive evidence of his intentions than his own statements” (1963, 98). For a discussion of the philosophical complexities of this view in relation to human agency more generally, and from a specifically Nietzschean perspective, see Pippin (2010b, 72–84).

To see a representational painting as simply paint on a surface, or as *only* an item of commercial or exchange value, or as a symbol of social prestige, and not as something that manifests a set of intrinsically meaningful human actions that ask to be understood, is to miss something fundamental about what the painting is. It is to fail to see or understand the work *as a painting*. And that failure is analogous to the refusal to see another person's actions and gestures as expressive, as manifestations of that person's mindedness and individuality, of their very personhood.⁵⁷ Actors and acting demand from the viewer the recognition of human actions and gestures as expressive in this way, and so as calling for interpretation and judgement in response. Work on serial drama as quality television is largely resistant to, or thoroughly sceptical towards, the treatment of serial dramas on these terms – as individual bearers of expressive significance that call for acts of judgement in response to our experience of the work and our sense of its qualities. It should thus be unsurprising that scholarship on quality television has produced little sympathetic attention to performance in serial drama. It is a space in television studies that is inhospitable to the expressive presence of performance, and to the kind of intuitive feeling, interpretation, and judgement it elicits.

Such occlusion of performance in the study of serial drama is not limited, however, to work pursued under the rubric of quality television. It is also marked in publications that concentrate on the analysis of individual shows, and studies that examine characterisation in serial drama. In monographs and edited collections on individual dramas, there is a tendency to avoid close engagement with stylistic relationships, and to consequently articulate significance in terms that are distant from what is shown onscreen. For example, *“Mad Men”: Dream Come True TV* (Edgerton 2011) includes two sections where one might expect the handling of performance to be foregrounded. These are “Visual and Aural Stylistics and Influences” and “Sexual Politics and Gender Roles”. In the section on style, Jeremy Butler (2011) considers how *Mad Men*'s cinematography and set design signifies themes of social conformity and repression, and echoes certain films from the early 1960s, such as *The Apartment* (Wilder, 1960). Sound is the focus of the two other essays on style. Tim Anderson addresses the series' use of recorded music to “complicate our collective memory of early 1960s America” (2011, 73), while Maurice Yacowar (2011) treats silence metaphorically, not as the absence of sound but as what goes “unsaid” by the series – a contrast between explicit and implicit meaning. That the performances in *Mad Men* receive little to no discussion across these essays is indicative of approaches that are insensitive to stylistic integration as the basis of effect and significance. Instead of attending to relationships between

⁵⁷ As Shuster notes, such actions and gestures are “*the expression of persons*” (2017, 54). See also Pippin's observation that what a person means is frequently to be found not in the words they say, but rather the look in their eyes as they say them (2014, 49), and Cavell's claim that works of art are special objects because “they *mean* something to us, not just the way statements do, but the way people do” (2002, 198).

choices, individual elements are discussed in relative isolation, kept apart from the intricacies of their dramatic context. The oversight of performance here is especially pressing in Yacowar's analysis of what he considers silence in *Mad Men*. Some of the series' richest moments are ones that carry extraordinary weight of unspoken significance, where we are shown nothing more than the eloquence of faces and gestures.⁵⁸ But Yacowar's essay is distanced from such detail on the screen by its untenable distinction between explicit and implicit meaning.⁵⁹ Reduced to pointing out blatant moments of irony, it overlooks *Mad Men*'s true moments of silence, which hang on the significance of bodily gesture and facial expression, about which the author has nothing to say.

Of the three essays in the section on sexual politics and gender, Kim Akass and Janet McCabe (2011) come closest to the issues of performance and theatricality that are inseparable from *Mad Men*'s interests in the conditions and possibilities for women in its world. In this respect, their essay is distinct from the two other contributions (White 2011; Haralovich 2011), which offer little consideration of *Mad Men*'s visual, performed dimensions at all. Akass and McCabe address the characters of Joan Holloway (Christina Hendricks) and Peggy Olson (Elisabeth Moss). "*In and through* the dislocation between representation and critique, between silence and language," they write, "these women make visible the halting logic of our age of troubled emancipation with its diverse culture wars, uneasy legacy of second-wave feminism and the lingering trauma of 9/11" (2011, 181). This sentence contains the unbalanced tension that characterises the essay as a whole. On the one hand, there is a desire to clarify the visual, expressive significance of the characters as performed by Hendricks and Moss ("these women *make visible* the halting logic of our age"). But on the other hand, there is a tendency to articulate that significance in abstract terms received from elsewhere, formed apart from the authors' reflection on the involvement that particular moments of the drama invite.

A good example is Akass and McCabe's discussion of Joan's knowing exhibition of her body as a spectacle in the season one episode "Babylon" (1.6). The firm's secretaries are being used as subjects of focus group research, invited to apply makeup in a room as they are unwittingly observed by the male executives from behind one-way glass. Akass and McCabe attend to the moment when Joan, aware of the surveillance set-up, "bends over in front of the mirror displaying her voluptuous derriere for extra erotic allure" (2011, 184). In accounting for the significance of

⁵⁸ See Chapter Five of this thesis.

⁵⁹ The key rebuttal to this distinction as it applies to meaning in film (and, by extension, television) is V. F. Perkins's argument that meanings in film "are neither stated nor in any special sense implied. They are filmed" (1990, 4). The basis for the meaning one finds in a film thus ought to be available on the screen "for all to see, and for all to see the sense of" (V. F. Perkins 1990, 4). See also his discussion of the implicit/explicit distinction in V. F. Perkins (2017, 387–88).

these theatricalising gestures, the authors lean heavily on general concepts developed by Laura Mulvey (1989):

Joan displays her body as a sexual object, ‘coded for strong visual and erotic impact’. She ‘holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire’. Temporarily halting narrative flow; confirming what Mulvey describes as, ‘The presence of woman [as] an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film . . . her visual presence tends to work against the development of a storyline, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation’ (Mulvey 19). The camera and its movements (determining her as spectacle through close-up, fetishization of her hour-glass figure) reanimate production practices that have long made such representational forms possible in the first place. (2011, 184)

It is a mistake to frame this moment as one in which Joan’s “visual presence” works “against the development of a storyline”, as though it were nothing more than a moment of sheer “erotic contemplation” for the viewer – one reflected in the men watching from behind the one-way glass, as we do. The scene makes a special point of Roger Sterling’s (John Slattery) late arrival for the session, and of his ritual anticipation of these semi-regular occasions; it is only once Roger is settled-in as a spectator that Joan delivers her performance, and we are asked to measure the weight of his response against the levity of the other men. This connects with an earlier part of the episode, where, after one of their hotel room trysts, Roger expresses his desire to keep Joan for a week in a room without doors and windows. She replies that “a week is a considerable length of time, and I have my own world”. How deeply should we read Joan’s performance before the mirror in the light of this claim to her own world? The hotel room scene (part of which plays out before a mirror) is notably marked by Joan’s relative silence, as for long stretches Roger talks about their relationship while our attention remains fixed on Christina Hendrick’s face and eyes as she listens without speaking (figure 2.1). (In her mode of privacy here and throughout *Mad Men*, we might see Joan as related to the figure of the unknown woman in Hollywood melodrama; see Cavell [1996].) Echoing those moments in the hotel room, Joan’s spectacular gestures before the one-way glass are capped by Hendricks gazing straight ahead, through the mirror, as though Joan addresses her audience with a direct challenge. But who does she take that audience to be? Does she assume that Roger is among them, and how might that matter to our sense of the gestures she performs? What does *this* look – performed this way, by her, in this moment – mean? Missing from the abstract account quoted above is the significance of these gestures for the particular woman onscreen – for Joan herself, but also for Christina Hendricks as she performs them. In their quotation of Mulvey on “the presence of woman” in general, Akass and McCabe fail to acknowledge the mindedness of the



Figure 2.1 Fixating Privacy and unknownness: Christina Hendricks as Joan

particular woman who is present onscreen. If Joan (as performed by Hendricks) is the bearer of some general significance, its depth will be found in the universal resonance of her individuality.

The writing discussed above is representative of a tendency that characterises much of the scholarship in edited collections and special journal issues dedicated to individual serial dramas. For Jacobs and Peacock (2013a), these studies promise attention to the particularity of specific instances of television. But too frequently, they argue,

such analysis becomes systematic, determined to ‘solve’ the text’s engagement with a specific subject, rather than employing critical principles to feel through its tensions and complexities, keeping them in play. Further, such work resists a dedicated and sustained scrutiny of television style, attempting to undertake ‘close textual analysis’ without getting close to the text’s integral compositional elements. (2013a, 2)

The same can be said for much of the academic commentary on the two dramas addressed in this thesis. *Homeland*, for example, has been approached by Anat Zanger (2015) as an adaptation of the Israeli series *Hatufim* (Channel 2, 2010–12), analysed in terms of neoliberal economics and middle-class precarity in contemporary America (Shapiro 2015; Wessels 2016), and – more understandably – as an illustration or symptom of national trauma and the emerging security and surveillance

society in the aftermath of 9/11.⁶⁰ To echo Steven Peacock's remarks on collections that impose similar conceptual frameworks on *Mad Men* (Beail and Goren 2015), *The Wire* (HBO, 2002–08) (Keeble and Stacy 2015), and *Breaking Bad* (Pierson 2014), the pieces cited above tend to be characterised by their “analytical and linguistic remoteness from the series’ knotty offerings of dramatic business” (Peacock 2017, 82).

Similar qualities of “analytical and linguistic remoteness” also run through the scholarship on characterisation in serial drama. Characters in television fiction are, like their counterparts in film, inseparable from the actors who perform and incarnate them. Given this, one might expect studies of characterisation to provide one of our richest sources of writing that grapples with and illuminates the intricacies (and mysteries) of acting and performance in serial drama. However, this body of work has tended to approach character in conceptual terms that are divorced from the corporeal reality and significance of the character's embodiment in the fictional world onscreen. One of the clearest expressions of this tendency can be found in Roberta Pearson's (2007) essay on the central character Gil Grissom (William Peterson) from *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (CBS, 2000–15). “Anatomising the televisual character,” writes Pearson, “requires identifying the elements that constitute a character *abstracted from* the design of the text and existing in the story, that is, in the minds of producers and audiences, rather than conducting a close textual analysis of individuals scenes/episodes/codes” (2007, 43; my emphasis). Pearson's desire to abstract away what we see and hear of the human beings onscreen is not unique. It is also evident in work that, from cognitivist approaches, addresses the psychological underpinnings of our long-term involvement with characters in serial drama. Such work aims to develop plausible models of how we engage with characters over the long duration of such shows. Its attention is therefore directed not towards the concrete actuality of the people we care about onscreen, and why we do, but towards the conceptualisation of hypothetical spectators and the cognitive basis of their experiences.⁶¹ The central object of our interest in serial drama is thus sidelined from the account.

The cost of such remoteness from the human beings presented onscreen is revealed in the language Jason Mittell (2015) uses to account for a painful and disturbing scene from *Homeland*. In the closing sequence of the first season's penultimate episode, “The Vest” (1.11), Carrie suffers a crippling psychotic episode. Mittell describes the presentation of Carrie's breakdown only as “Claire Danes's manic performance”, and characterises its significance as follows:

⁶⁰ For good reason, this latter topic constitutes the balance of work on *Homeland*. For examples, see Edgerton and Edgerton (2012), Steiner (2012), Bevan (2015), Castonguay (2015), Negra and Lagerwey (2015), Steenberg and Tasker (2015), Echart and Castrillo (2016), and Letort (2017).

⁶¹ See, for example, M. Smith (2011), Blanchet and Bruun Vaage (2012), and Bruun Vaage (2014)

Our sustained allegiance through her breakdown marks Carrie's shift as a mid-level behaviour change, rather than a high-level moral shift – Carrie is still motivated by noble ethics and consistent beliefs, even if her actions and attitudes differ radically from where she started the season, and we believe the shift to be temporary, anticipating her renewed stability following psychiatric treatment. (2015, 135)

This writing betrays a desire for neat certainty of scientific detachment and clear categorisation.⁶² In a perverse irony, its remove from the realm of bodily expressiveness and intelligibility echoes the condition of Carrie herself: in her madness, Carrie's actions, gestures, and words are rendered meaningless and obscure to those around her, cutting her off from their world.⁶³ Mittell thus overlooks the fate and horror of sceptical isolation that is at stake in the scene, even as that condition is coldly echoed in the writing's quasi-scientific detachment from the expressivity and pain of another.

Such cognitivist-led approaches to character in serial drama thus share a likeness with the work on quality television discussed above. Both bodies of work betray a reluctance to acknowledge and meet the challenge of responding to human expression through criticism – of attending to and evoking its qualities, and of articulating, through fine acts of judgement, its sometimes-mysterious depths of significance. The following section addresses more recent scholarship that does take up matters of acting and performance and serial drama. Nevertheless, we will see that the expressive significance of performance remains an aspect of the medium that is regularly overlooked, or underappreciated.

2. Writing About Performance in Serial Drama

Nearly two decades have passed since John Caughie observed “the absence of theoretically informed critical writing about acting [in television drama]” (2000, 162). During that time, there has been a remarkable increase in the volume of scholarship that directly addresses acting and performance in television fiction. However, this growing body of academic writing on performance in serial drama remains characterised by the kinds of absence and avoidance detailed in the first part of this chapter. Even when directly addressing acting and performance as an explicit focus, television studies scholars tend to write around the concrete, bodily matters of performance presented onscreen. It remains rare to find pieces of writing that examine our relation to the presence of performance in serial drama through detailed, expressive criticism. As a result, the

⁶² For the origins of Mittell's terms such as “allegiance”, and the emphasis on the division of our relation to characters into levels and categories, see the cognitivist study of our engagement with film characters in M. Smith (1995).

⁶³ See my reading of the scene against Mittell's account in Logan (2015, 29–31).

depth of the relationship between the expressiveness of performance and the significance of seriality in television drama has been largely underexplored.

Until the mid-2000s, very few pieces of writing in television studies directly addressed acting and performance in television fiction. A few years before Thorburn's call to prioritise performance as a focus for television criticism ([1975] 2000), Wurtzel and Dominick (1971) developed a theory relating shot scale and performance style to the value of plays presented on television. More than fifteen years after Thorburn, Jeremy Butler's essay "'I'm Not a Doctor, But I Play One On TV': Characters, Actor, and Acting in Television Soap Opera" (1991a), together with his edited collection *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television* (1991c), marked the next major contributions to the field. The contents of the collection are telling as to the imbalance between the volume of work on performance in film studies against that in television studies. It is worth noting that by the early 1990s, the study of film had already generated a considerable body of writing on acting and performance that could be reprinted in Butler's collection, including essays by Constantin Stanislavski, V. I. Pudovkin, Lee Strasberg, Lev Kuleshov, Bertolt Brecht, Robert Bresson, Charles Affron, and James Naremore, among others.⁶⁴ By contrast, as Butler notes in his Introduction, "The empirical, social-scientific approach of most television research has led to a nearly total neglect of the significance of performance and star image in television" (1991b, 14). Of the 20 essays included in the collection, only three are dedicated to television. Patricia Mellencamp (1991) undertakes a Freudian reading of performance in relation to themes of feminism in *I Love Lucy* (CBS, 1951–57), while the other two essays – by John Ellis (1991) and Denise Mann (1991) – consider the circulation of stardom between the Hollywood film industry and its television counterpart. This focus is echoed in Butler's (1991a) essay on acting in soap opera, which concentrates on the actor-character relationship in soaps in comparison to the star system of the film industry, and, from a semiotic approach, considers "re-casting" as it highlights the distinct signifying capacities of different actors in the same role.

Across the 1990s, two collections primarily addressing British television featured a number of essays that engage with acting and performance. *British Television Drama in the 1980s* (Brandt 1993) includes essays that engage with performance as central to the achievements of particular programs. Albert Hunt (1993) appreciates Maggie Smith's response to the demands of the long take in "Bed Among the Lentils", an episode of Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads* (BBC, 1987), and John Adams (1993) writes thoughtfully about the conditions and handling of sitcom performance in *Yes, Prime Minister* (BBC Two, 1986–88). Published five years later, Jeremy Ridgman's collection *Boxed Sets: Television Representations of Theatre* (1998) contains the essays "Actors and Television" (Reynolds 1998) and "Screen Play: Elements of a Performance Aesthetic in Television"

⁶⁴ See Parts One and Two of Butler (1991c).

(Adams 1998). Reynolds argues that the conditions of television performance diminish the industrial, cultural, and creative status of acting on stage; Adams explores the relationship between the conditions of acting in film, and those of acting in both live and recorded forms of television. The opposition between liveness and recording, however, limits Adams's consideration of performance in long-form television, which is recruited to an idea of the "cinematic" and discussed in hypothetical, densely abstract terms that float free from the particularities of concrete example.⁶⁵

Appearing in the years between the collections from Brandt (1993) and Ridgman (1998), Karen Lury's essay "Television Performance: Being, Acting and 'Corpsing'" (1995), considers various aspects of performance across television as a whole. Reflecting the essay's broad scope, Lury approaches particular forms of television in terms of general performance styles. For example, she argues that performance in sitcom and soap opera has its basis in the "low" traditions of musical hall performance (1995, 122–23). This low tradition is refined in "quality" British dramas, where "theatrical performances" are "about expressiveness, subtlety, and [. . .] inspire empathy"; such performances are "mannered and expressive", foregrounding the actor as such, and inviting the viewer to "appreciate them *acting*" (1995, 123). By contrast, in her discussion of acting in American serial drama, Lury is ambivalent about the integration of the performer into a larger stylistic fabric. She notes in particular how the "Method-like twitches" of David Caruso as John Kelly in *NYPD Blue* (ABC, 1993–2005) are "reinforced by the technology employed by the programme", such as its "quick, repetitive, and fussy camera pans" and its use of lighting (1995, 124). "Is it Kelly or the lighting that we fall in love with?" Lury asks. "What would his performance be, without the lighting?" (1995, 124). Whatever it would be, it would not be the performance that is screened as part of the world of *NYPD Blue*. Certain performance styles in British television drama may draw on theatrical acting tradition, but they are nevertheless filmed and screened. The critical issue is that of significance and value, as these are achieved through the mediation of performance in particular television dramas.

In a striking contrast to the rarity of work that was generated across the prior three decades, dozens of studies on acting and performance in television have been published during the 2000s. John Caughie's essay "What Do Actors Do When They Act?" (2000), was followed by: Durham

⁶⁵ Consider, for instance, the argument that:

differences and distinctions of 'character' (frequently in a context of narrative fatigue) are increasingly located in the 'aura' of the actor, where iconographic qualities acquire a self-contained, quasi-moral authority. In this context, an aesthetic of performance necessarily centres on the point of reception rather than enactment, drawing on those elements of genre, narrative address, characterisation and iconography by which enactment is mediated. (1998, 155)

(2002) on acting processes in the context of British television production in comparison with stage practices; Turnbull (2005) on moments of performance in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (The WB/UPN, 1997–2003); Mills (2005, 67–99) on performance as a crucial aspect of sitcom; Ytreberg (2006) on the “premeditation” of performances in live, seemingly unscripted programming; Goode (2006) on the expression of intimacy in television monologues; Becker (2009) on actor processes and techniques in the context of multi-camera sitcom production; and Ellis (2009), who develops a history of stylistic presentation around changing norms in the performance of emotion across both fiction and non-fiction television. A notable contribution during this period is Christine Cornea’s edited collection *Genre and Performance in Film and Television* (2010). The contents of the book mark a contrast with the imbalance between studies of film performance and television performance in Butler’s *Star Texts* (1991c). Of the 10 essays assembled by Cornea, four are dedicated to film, while six address performance in various forms of television. The essays on television consider acting within the horror genre in 1970s British drama (Hand 2010), the performance conventions of docudrama (Bignell 2010), serial form and performance in *Deadwood* (Peacock 2010), the satirical performance of news and current affairs on *The Colbert Report* (Comedy Central, 2005–14) (Foster 2010), comic acting in British sitcom (Mills 2010), and the conditions of industrial context and generic framing as determining factors of performance in long-running series (Pearson 2010).

More recently, there has been further growth in the field. The collection *Television Aesthetics and Style* (Jacobs and Peacock 2013b), while encompassing a broad range of critical issues, includes a variety of essays that make consideration of performance central to their discussion of particular programs and moments.⁶⁶ Additionally, a number of essays and monographs on particular dramas published during this period engage with performance in serial drama. McCabe’s (2012) monograph on *The West Wing* (NBC, 1999–2006), for example, includes a chapter on the series’ performances as part of a wider discussion of Aaron Sorkin’s authorship.⁶⁷ Other examples include Turnbull (2011) on *Veronica Mars* (UPN/The CW, 2004–07), Jacobs’s monograph on *Deadwood* (2012), and my own study of *Breaking Bad* (2016a). The growing place of performance in television studies has become especially clear in the last five years. Between 2013 and 2017, for instance, certain lines of inquiry have attracted sustained exploration. This can

⁶⁶ See esp. Jacobs and Peacock (2013a, 13), Clayton (2013), Walters (2013), Rothman (2013, 177–78), Donaldson (2013), and Logan (2013, 222–24).

⁶⁷ Reflecting its place within a consideration of writing, the section on performance consists largely of summaries concerning the challenges of delivering Sorkin’s dialogue, and evocative, capsule descriptions of specific actors; see, for example, the discussion of Roger Rees’s “polished English vowels” against the “textured, gravelly tones of [John] Spencer” (McCabe 2012, 44). McCabe does not make space for drilling down into the detail and layers of particular moments and of their integration as part of the series as a whole.

be seen in Richard Hewett's continued work on the changing conditions of acting in British television as it has moved from live, multi-camera production in the studio to single-camera, recorded production increasingly filmed on location (Hewett 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). The contextual conditions and processes of actors are also given sustained, in-depth examination by Tom Cantrell and Christopher Hogg in their article "Returning to an Old Question: What Do Television Actors Do When They Act" (2016) and their subsequent monograph *Acting in British Television* (2017); the latter employs an interview format to explore the experiences and labour of actors as professionals within the television industry.⁶⁸ It is notable that the title of Cantrell and Hogg's article references Caughie's essay first published fifteen years earlier. This points to the emerging solidity of the field's history, on which subsequent work is being built. The growing interest in acting and performance as a focus of inquiry in television studies is also evident in the special issue of the *Journal of Film and Video* dedicated to "Recentering Television Performance" (Rawlins and Tait 2016b), and a special issue of *Critical Studies in Television* titled "Acting on Television: Analytical Methods and Approaches" (Lacey and Knox 2018).⁶⁹ Moreover, the field's continued development is promised in two collections that were yet to be published at the time of writing: *Exploring Television Acting* (Cantrell and Hogg 2018) and *Television Performance* (Donaldson and Walters forthcoming). Across this increasingly large volume of scholarship, detailed stylistic criticism that relates the expressive presence of the performers onscreen to the significance of serial drama remains rare. Consider, for example, the contents of the special journal issue "Recentering Television Performance" (Rawlins and Tait 2016b). The essays collected there largely focus on contextual matters, such as the economics of acting as a form of labour (Fortmueller 2016), or approach particular series through a variety of theoretical lenses, akin to the work on *Mad Men* and *Homeland* cited in the section above.⁷⁰ Likewise for the journal issue edited

⁶⁸ For other examples of the historical and contextual inquiry pursued by both Hewett and Cantrell and Hogg, see McNaughton (2014) on the relationship between the actors' equity union and the form of postwar British television drama, and Sexton (2015), who interviews actor Philip Jackson about the changing conditions of acting on British television over 40 years. See also Holliday (2015), who addresses the presence of British actors in American television in terms of discourses of stardom and television's economy of prestige; the thematic significance of performed accents in *The Americans* (FX, 2013–18) and *Homeland* is given only brief consideration.

⁶⁹ The issue stems from the 2016 symposium "Acting on Television: Analytical Methods and Approaches", held at the University of Reading in April 2016. Reflecting the tendency towards historical and contextual inquiry, the symposium featured a keynote address on the historical conditions of performance in television, and of its four panels, two were devoted to actor training and processes. Another considered the conditions of acting in particular genres and forms; only a single panel was dedicated to "Value and Evaluation".

⁷⁰ See, for example, the discussion of performance as authorship (Hunter 2016), theatrical influences on themes of performance in *The Leftovers* (HBO, 2014–17) (Murphy 2016), the visibility of acting labour in the case of body doubles in *Orphan Black* (Space/BBC America, 2013–17) (Shacklock 2016), or, in the same series, the trope of the "unruly woman" (Stutsman

by Lacey and Knox (2018), with the exception of the essay by Donaldson and Walters (2018), which appreciates the interaction of performers and the interior settings of vehicles in a range of recent programs.

Somewhat surprisingly, this neglect of criticism follows, in part, from the way some scholars have tried to emphasise and highlight the creative agency of television actors. For Cantrell and Hogg (2016, 2017), for example, attending to the work of the actor involves looking past, or behind, the presentation of their performance as part of the drama's formal texture. Citing the examples of Naremore (1990) and Klevan (2005a), they argue that:

richly detailed analyses of textual cases tend to neglect the perspectives and approaches of actors themselves [. . .]. Indeed, there exists a long-standing critical tendency within screen acting research to prioritise the analysis of end performance products over an understanding of the professional or artistic processes on the part of the actor. (2017, 1–2)

The concern here is that by attending to the stylistic mediation of performance in television fiction, critics threaten to obscure the actor's distinct creative skill and input. The formal context of the artwork as a whole, Cantrell and Hogg write elsewhere, "should not conceal the work of the television actor" (2016, 286). (This concern echoes Lury's hesitance in regard to the stylistic mediation of Caruso's performance in *NYPD Blue*.) What worries Cantrell and Hogg is that in filmed media, the actor's performance becomes integrated with other formal elements, and so also with the larger collective agency behind their design. "The particularities of the screen actor's work," they write,

often become overshadowed by the more visible 'authorial' status of the director, writer, producer or televisual 'showrunner' hyphenate, or conflated with the more easily discernible formal components of the finished performance text, such as framing, editing, lighting, costume and set design, for example, as parallel/intersecting performative elements. (2017, 2)

It is from this view of the actor's presence onscreen that Cantrell and Hogg seek to illuminate the "particularities of the screen actor's work" by discussing, through interviews with working actors, the preparations and processes that go on behind the screen. In this respect, the direction of their interest is somewhat echoed by Hewett's historical work on the changing conditions of acting from

2016). Philip Drake's (2016) analysis of *The Americans* comes closest to the concerns of this thesis, and is discussed towards the end of this chapter.

live, studio-bound production to recorded filming on location (see Hewett 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). Across both research programs, the expressiveness of the actor's appearance and presentation, as part of the significance and value of particular programs, is avoided in favour of studying contextual matters.

How actors develop their performances is a compelling mystery, captured in a photograph of Matthew Weiner in conversation with Jon Hamm on set for the closing sequence of the *Mad Men* episode "The Phantom" (5.13), which was directed by Weiner himself (figure 2.2). What is shared in such moments? What questions does each ask the other, or what advice do they give? And how does their exchange shape what the actor does, and what we see in their performance? What actors have to say about their work may provide information that helps to answer these questions, or it may not.⁷¹ But why should close attention to the details of a television series' form necessarily mean the elision of the actors' skill, and of their contribution to the series' effects, significance, and value? Actors are as visible as anything else onscreen, and as audible as anything else on the



Figure 2.2 Matthew Weiner directs Jon Hamm on the set of "The Phantom"

⁷¹ As Pomerance notes in response to Philip Seymour Hoffman's account of developing his performance in *Boogie Nights* (Anderson, 1997):

Hoffman's words offer precious little about how as a working civilian this actor managed to manufacture his characters. The specific attentions he must have given, the manoeuvres he must have learned to execute (and how he learned them), the postures he struck, the vocal work, the tricky habitation of a stranger's body and space – all this we see in accomplishment but not in preparation, retrospectively through the actor's recollection. (2016a, 123)

soundtrack. As V. F. Perkins notes, “An action [on film] cannot be captured minus the features of the actor, nor can microphones detach the spoken word from the character of a voice or the rhythm of an utterance” (2017, 386). Indeed, the detail of their performances may be crucial to the formal design and success of not only individual moments and scenes in a television drama, but of the work as a larger whole.

This principle reflects the views put forward by a range of film critics who see issues of style and meaning in narrative film as inseparable from performance. As Klevan observes, “Rather than obeying verisimilitude, the credibility of performance [in film] is created out of coherence and harmony with the film’s environment – including the camera and other elements ‘outside’ the visible fictional world” (2005a, 5). For Klevan, performance in film “is an internal element of style”, whose significance and value is achieved “in synthesis with other aspects of film style” (2005a, preface). Klevan thus echoes Durgnat’s point that the performance of character in film is “nuanced by, affected by, ‘seen through’ all the ‘secondary characteristics’ of style” (1971, 173). The choice of the word “secondary” here indicates how the fabric of compositional choices made in the design of a film (or of a serial drama) may be organised primarily around the actions of the performer. In this respect, consider two capsule definitions of *mise-en-scène* in film, in which actors are given a central place. During the roundtable discussion published as “The Return of *Movie*” (Cameron et al. 1975), V. F. Perkins offers the following: “the things my view of *mise-en-scène* has supremely to do with are performance and decor, the spatial disposition of people in relation to their environment” (quoted in Cameron et al. 1975, 7). For John Gibbs, working in the tradition of the *Movie* critics, *mise-en-scène* consists in the “organisation of the contents of the frame”, which “encompasses the relationship of the actors to one another and to the décor, but also their relationship to the camera, and thus the audience’s view” (2002, 5).

For these film critics, accounting for the integration of formal elements in film involves addressing the relationship between framing, space, and viewpoint, which have as their central focus the performances by the actors. This sense of the integrated relationship between performance and film style underpins a concept that is central to my approach in this thesis: what Clayton terms “the texture of performance”, which is “the fine detail of what is offered by actors to microphone and camera, and the manner in which that work is woven into the fabric of the film” (2011b, 77–78). Treating performance as part of the texture of a film or television drama means that detailed stylistic criticism need not elide or diminish our appreciation of, in Cantrell and Hogg’s words, “the particularities of the screen actor’s work” (2017, 2). The practice of detailed criticism should instead be seen as a vital route to such appreciation, one that can magnify our sense of performance as crucial to the interest and value of serial drama.

Television studies is not entirely without writing that strives to look closely at the detail of performances onscreen. For example, in “What Actors Do” – a series of blogs for *Critical Studies in Television Online* – Gary Cassidy and Simone Knox pay close attention to the work of individual actors in specific moments of drama and comedy.⁷² Like Hewett (2017) and Cantrell and Hogg (2017), Cassidy and Knox display a keen interest in the conditions under which actors work, and the techniques and processes they draw on to fashion their performances. They also bring the technical vocabulary of actor training to bear on their examples, such as in their discussion of Jennifer Aniston’s performance in *Friends* (NBC, 1994–2004) through a Stanislavskian framework (see Cassidy and Knox 2015c). Unlike scholars who primarily look to contextual conditions to highlight the skills and creative contributions of television actors, however, Cassidy and Knox turn their attention towards the detail of what we see and hear of the actor onscreen. But their interest is less with the handling of performance as part of a series’ wider texture, and more with the work of the performer as an individual creative agent.

Take, for example, their discussion of Adam Driver’s performance as Adam Sackler in *Girls* (HBO, 2012–17). Claiming to draw on Clayton’s notion of performance as “texture”, they write the following about a scene in which Adam, tormented by anxiety as he leaves a message on a woman’s voicemail, paces his cramped apartment and performs all manner of nervous business with the various oddities of furniture that surround him:

Driver has clearly paid attention to the texture of the space available to him, both vertically and horizontally. For him, the apartment is not a ‘shell’ within which to deliver his lines and execute his actions, but a materiality to be explored and interacted with (almost as a character in itself): the available free space/air is to be swayed and bent through, the precarious workbench (a pallet on a crate) is to be climbed on, the wooden ladder is to be rested against, and the evenly spaced rungs in the ladder provide holes that one can (and therefore, in some ways, must) stick something through. (The timing of Driver’s engagement with these spatial objects shows the carefulness of his attention to textures of space during rehearsals: his head is fully through the ladder when his call switches from voicemail message to ‘live’ phone conversation.) These textures provide a kind of obstacle course for him to master, allowing him to feel the texture of his physicality – his joints and muscles, his weight, his height – in turn. (Cassidy and Knox 2016a)

Clayton’s concept of “texture” is here stretched beyond breaking point. The term is meant to specify how filmmaking choices are woven around the details of an actor’s performance. Here it refers not

⁷² See Cassidy and Knox (2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e, 2016a, 2016b, 2017).

to the fabric of the integrated elements onscreen, but to the pro-filmic situation and experience of the actor himself (the “texture of the space available to him”, and “the texture of his physicality”). On my reading, Cassidy and Knox are seeking to appreciate the way that, in Klevan’s words, “responsive performers [. . .] inhabit the world built for them; they live in it” (2011). But this requires attention to relationships between the performer and the spaces they inhabit – not only those of the set, but the fictional space of the world their character lives in, which – through the actor’s conviction – is made imaginatively real.

Consider how Klevan’s sense of responsiveness as a value is based in his observation of a particular moment: Humphrey Bogart as Philip Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* (Hawks, 1946), slapping the top of a fire hydrant as he crosses a busy Los Angeles street (staged on a Hollywood backlot). The gesture, Klevan writes, “suggests Marlowe’s fluency and ease in the city, and Bogart’s on the set” (2011). Each imparts the other; we see Bogart’s “fluency on the set” – his capacity to be at home amongst its distractions, and to find reality in its artifice – as his character’s “fluency and ease in the city”. Clayton’s essay on “The Texture of Performance in *Psycho* and its Remake” (2011b) highlights another moment of fine responsiveness to space and setting, when Norman (Anthony Perkins) pauses upon rounding the corner of the motel veranda while carrying a tray of food for Marion (Vivien Leigh). To Norman’s surprise, Marion is waiting outside her room and has likely overheard the argument between him and his mother.

In both films [the pause] allows Norman to gather himself, after the distressing quarrel with Mother, to face the public world once again. But [in the remake] Vaughn’s steady, almost robotic turn with the tray highlights a detail of Perkins’ performance so slight that it would likely otherwise go unremarked. Only Perkins allows the topography of the setting (downhill into upward step) to justify a little teeter on his left leg, so the corrective shift of his body weight as he moves towards Marion becomes a resumption of balance from a position of instability.

That sense of equilibrium regained is echoed in the visual composition of Hitchcock’s shot, in that it places Norman and Marion at either side of the widescreen frame and keeps them both in focus across the depth of the space. When the camera moves to show them from the side, the symmetry across the frame is maintained by their mirroring profiles at almost equal height. (Clayton 2011b, 74)

For Clayton, the significance of Perkins’s performance is inseparable from its relationship to Hitchcock’s choices and how they shape our sense of the drama. This does not elide the actor’s contribution, but instead deepens our appreciation of it. Hitchcock’s framing of Marion and Norman

by the motel room door, for example, gains part of its effect from Perkins's fine negotiation of the veranda step. (While Perkins's "slight teeter" might have been incidental, not consciously intended by the actor [Clayton 2011b, 78], it is nevertheless this particular take that Hitchcock selected for inclusion at this moment of the film; in analysing screen performance, one needs to be mindful not only of the actor's behaviour but of the filmmaker's framing and selection of it.⁷³) Moreover, Clayton is alert to the way the actor's inhabitation of the dramatic moment (as framed by the camera) gives particular meaning to the scripted actions of the character, and inflects our attitude and relationship to the happenings within the fiction. As Perkins approaches Marion, writes Clayton,

he breathes a sigh which doesn't seem to grant relief from his troubles. The delivery of the tray is an act of modest heroism, a defiance of Mother's orders, and the import of this miniature rebellion is conveyed by the way Hitchcock's camera curls in an arc around Norman, precisely co-ordinating with his movement so they come to a stop together. Such elegant camera moves have hitherto been associated with Marion; this gesture is the first shift towards an alignment with Norman's plight that will become total in a few scenes' time. (2011b, 74–75)

Clayton writes in sympathy with the feeling that Perkins's performance expresses, and with the way in which that feeling speaks to Norman's personal situation (unrelieved from trouble, a grown man whose "modest heroism" is to defy his "Mother's orders"). That closeness to the imagined reality of the fiction does not blinker an awareness of the rhetoric employed by Hitchcock in its construction. Our access and relationship to the performer's expression of feeling is granted by the position and perspective of the camera; where Hitchcock might have played on and heightened our sense of embarrassed distance from Norman, the performer and the camera are instead placed in rapport, subtly drawing us in to sympathetic proximity.

By contrast, in their passage on Adam Driver in *Girls*, Cassidy and Knox (2016a) place an overriding emphasis on what Driver does alone. They neglect the mediated presentation of his performance, its integration with the larger dramatic and formal context in which it appears to us on the screen. This does not amplify our appreciation of his work, but rather diminishes our sense of

⁷³ See also V. F. Perkins (2017) on issues of selection in the ending of *High School*, where he argues that criticism should better attend to the inclusion of details that are not the product of deliberate design. "When choice is equated with invention," he writes, "nostalgia for unconstrained freedom [of design] may deceive us. It may obscure the relationship between intention and contingency, distract us from the role that the incidental plays in the expressive. Since the apparatus seizes all it is allowed to see and hear, skilled film artists know the abundance of detail for a resource rather than a limitation" (2017, 386).

the part that Driver's performance plays in the design, effect, and significance of the scene, and of its place in the context of our relation to his character over the course of the series. Attending only to what the actor does in the pro-filmic moment thus dissolves our sense of their relationship to the set and the camera. It is this through relationship, however, that the fictional world – and the lives of the characters who inhabit that world – is presented and given significance.

The difference between Clayton's writing and that by Cassidy and Knox helps bring into relief the focus and contribution of this thesis. Cassidy and Knox take moments of television drama and comedy as vivid instances of actorly skill.⁷⁴ Clayton's writing on *Psycho*, on the other hand, is aimed at clarifying how, "with each new viewing", he finds "the acting contributions of Janet Leigh and Anthony Perkins ever more decisive in its achievement" (2011b, 73). The distinction is one of degree, not kind. Clayton is necessarily interested to highlight the skill and intelligence of the performances by Perkins and Leigh, but this is not an end in itself. The purpose is to explore new avenues for deepening our appreciation of the film.

This thesis aims to illuminate the texture of performance as crucial to the artistry and achievements of particular serial dramas. In doing so, it addresses a lingering oversight in television studies: the depth of the relationship between expressiveness in screen performance and the significance of serial form in television drama. Drake (2016) has raised repetition and accumulation as distinctive temporal conditions of performance in serial television. But in addressing his case study of *The Americans*, he chiefly attends to moments of the pilot episode in terms of "cues" that signify the layering of performances within the fiction. Thus whatever qualities and meanings develop through repetition and accumulation across the series go unexplored, while the mystery and complexities of performance and identity in the series are flattened out by the imposition of abstract terms derived from Goffman (1974).⁷⁵ Similarly, Turnbull (2011) draws on Klevan (2005a) in writing about the performances in *Veronica Mars*, but her focus is on shifts between melodramatic and comedic modes within scenes, rather than the development and patterning of the performances across the drama's serialised relationships between part and whole.⁷⁶ Peacock's essay on "Borders and Boundaries in *Deadwood*" (2010) evokes how the drama's "heightened language, at once florid and foul, achieves depth and complexity over the length of the series", as the "expansiveness of television's serial form allows for a gradual and intricate development of [the characters'] negotiations" (2010, 100, 99). Reflecting the constraints of the essay form, however, Peacock dedicates the balance of his writing on the series' performances to the detail and richness of Ian

⁷⁴ For a clear and thoughtful example, see their discussion of Charles Dance as Tywin Lannister in *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011–19) (Cassidy and Knox 2015b).

⁷⁵ See Drake (2016, 10–16). The essay's claims regarding accumulation, and their relevance to *The Americans* and *Homeland*, are addressed in more detail in Chapter Four.

⁷⁶ For more on this point, see Logan (2015, 31–33).

McShane and Jeffrey Jones's work in a particular scene from early in season two (2010, 100–07). Monographs on *Deadwood* (Jacobs 2012) and *Breaking Bad* (Logan 2016a) contain valuable reflections on the conditions of performance and characterisation in serial drama, and provide accounts of certain moments of performance across the length of both series.⁷⁷ Neither study, however, is dedicated to the scrutiny and understanding of performance in relation to the serial form of either drama. In his essay on Don Draper in *Mad Men*, George Toles (2013) evokes the way that Don's capacity to continually rebuild and compose his identity from moments of collapse and fragmentation gives human embodiment to the condition of the drama's continued, serialised unfolding.⁷⁸ Elsewhere, the relation between seriality and human embodiment is given more explicit expression by William Rothman (2013) on *Justified*. Rothman asks how the series' pilot – its story and dialogue almost unchanged from the story on which it is based – suggests that “beneath the ground it stakes out are rich veins to be mined in episodes to come” (2013, 177). This is achieved, he argues, partly through small changes to the story. But more crucial for Rothman is the fact that:

The people on the television screen are flesh-and-blood human beings, subjects of a camera that really filmed them. [. . .] Timothy Olyphant's Raylan [. . .] incarnates, in the way every real human being does, the mystery of human identity: the fact that we are mysteries to each other and to ourselves; that our identities aren't fixed, that we are in the process of becoming. (2013, 177–78)

These words evoke a link between the conditions of serial form and the nature of human identity that is inseparable from issues of human individuality and self-knowledge. Such matters hinge on our judgement of one another's actions and expressions, and thus, in their artistic representation in serial drama, on the handling of performance. The depth of our appreciation depends, therefore on how we respond to the interpretive challenges presented by the performers as they appear onscreen.

Conclusion

The persistent absence of performance in television studies is related in part to the discipline's scepticism towards the kind of writing required to articulate the significance of bodily expression. Consider Jacobs and Peacock's observation of a gesture in *Mad Men*, when Joan's mother Gail (Christine Estabrook) puts down a coffee pot upon hearing that her daughter's marriage has just ended (“Mystery Date”, 5.4):

⁷⁷ See, for example, the discussion of Ian McShane as Al Swearngen against Keith Carradine as Bill Hickock in Jacobs (2012, 52–54).

⁷⁸ See my discussion of this aspect of Toles's essay in Logan (2015, 34)

That gesture, the holding with two hands – one on the handle the other protected by a cloth under it, taking its weight in two ways before abandoning it, is marvellous, eloquent. But it is difficult to translate such eloquence into words, hard to be expressive in the face of such expressivity; indeed, we might feel haunted by the sheer apparent *obviousness* of what it must be, had we the words to express it. (2013a, 13)

As Caughie (2000) has observed, the intuition and evocation of the actor's presence, and of their elusive expressivity, does not sit well in a discipline sceptical of subjective perception and the expression of judgements. The presence of the performer onscreen, he argues, "is a messily humanistic component of the specific signifying practices of film and television, a kind of impressionistic marshland without shape or solidity", at odds with the "quasi-scientific language of [the] analytical procedures" through which television studies gained its "firm academic footing" (2000, 163). Caughie betrays, however, his own disquiet at the apparent loss of the reassuring certainties offered by such "quasi-scientific language", which promise to master the "messy" expressiveness of what we see and hear of human beings onscreen. "Acting," he writes,

is, of course, very difficult to nail down analytically in a way which goes beyond the impressionistic vocabulary of honesty and truth to life, and while we have a vocabulary that describes and understands the effect of a cut or close-up, we lack a critical language to describe and understand an expression that flits across a face, or a hesitation in the voice. (2000, 162–63)

I do not believe we either possess or lack what Caughie seeks. How could we already know the words to describe and understand the effect of a specific device, whether of shot scale or image transition, prior to our experience and judgement of it? (Terms such as "close-up", or other technical specifications, hardly count as descriptions of effect and certainly do not express any substantial understanding.) The particularity of any actual use of a filmic device – such as a close-up or a cut in an actual film – has its analogue in the individuality of human beings onscreen, and of the actions and gestures they perform. Writing about performance in serial drama, as in film, thus calls for us to discover and test words that strive to articulate such individual expressiveness and the significance it manifests.⁷⁹ This is a kind of account that depends on, but ultimately exceeds, the description of observable physical detail. For Stanley Cavell, film criticism involves "the necessity to become *evocative* in capturing the moods of faces and motions and settings, in their double existence as transient and as permanent" (quoted in Rothman 2010, 107; my emphasis). Evocative

⁷⁹ For this point as a principle of film criticism more generally, see Clayton (2011a).

writing of the same kind is just as much a necessity for the criticism of serial television drama. As the next chapter will show, “the moods of faces and motions and settings” are crucial to serial composition in particular television dramas, and a powerful resource for the medium’s tensions between the transient and the permanent.

Chapter Three.

Expressiveness and Seriality in Television Drama

This chapter builds on the last by demonstrating how television studies' oversight of performance has inhibited the discipline's understanding of seriality in television drama. My aim is to show how the expressiveness of performance may be a crucial dimension of seriality, one that often escapes the terms of serial drama criticism, but which is nevertheless central to the significance and values of both *Mad Men* and *Homeland*. The chapter develops its claims through a reading of the closing sequence from the final episode of *Mad Men*'s fifth season, "The Phantom" (5.13). To clarify the source of the sequence's effects and significance, I argue, we need to think about seriality in ways that go beyond the sheerly narrative aspects of form that are routinely emphasised by television studies scholars.⁸⁰ The *Mad Men* example at the core of this chapter appears to support narrative-centric accounts of seriality, in the way its closing moments emphatically interrupt a story that promises to be ongoing. My reading of the scene, however, shows how it crafts meaningful points of continuity across episodes not only through its story events, but also – and rather more deeply – through stylistic choices concerning the presentation and expressive presence of the performers. The point is not to fully overturn the emphasis given by other writers to matters of ongoing

⁸⁰ Much of the scholarly literature defines seriality in television drama in terms of the sequential unfolding of narrative events across episodes and seasons. For example, the definition offered in the textbook *Television: Critical Methods and Applications* reads as follows:

Unlike the *series*, the *serial* expects us to make specific and substantial narrative connections between one episode and the next. [. . .] In the serial, the connection is fundamental to its narrative pleasures. The main difference between the series and the serial is the way that each handles the development of the narrative from episode to episode. (Butler 2012, 41; original emphasis)

This is echoed in Jason Mittell's *Complex TV* (2015). "When we talk about a serialized program," he writes, "we are usually referring less to the ubiquitous presence of storyworld and characters and more to the ongoing accumulation of narrative events" (2015, 22–23). For Mittell, the principal interest and pleasure of serial television lies in its play with the structure and unfolding of events, as in his discussion of the "operational aesthetic"; see Mittell (2015, 41–53). See also the emphasis on narrative in the descriptions of serial drama in Nelson (1997, 30–34), Creeber (2004, 2–7), and Dunleavy (2009, 140). I discuss other accounts of seriality as narrative structure further below.

narrative structure, which are indispensable to the designs and effects that are my focus.⁸¹ My account simply shows how, in certain moments, we register the drama's serialisation in features other than the episodic interruption of narrative and its promise of continued story developments. More crucial to the depth of *Mad Men*'s seriality is the expressiveness of the performers as they are presented onscreen, an aspect of the series' form that is inseparable from the significance of its concern with the bonds of companionship – how the threads that hold the characters together threaten to fray, or eventually break, over time.

1. The Ending of “The Phantom” and the Primacy of Narrative

“The Phantom” is an especially useful example of *Mad Men*'s self-conscious reflection on serial form, closing on a moment that foregrounds the interruption of an otherwise continuing narrative. In the episode's final scene, Don sits at the bar of a cocktail lounge, where, keeping to himself, he orders an Old Fashioned and lights a cigarette. Our view of Don is coloured by the concerns of the prior scene, where he visits his wife Megan (Jessica Paré) on the set of the *Beauty and the Beast*-themed commercial in which she is the star, and which is being produced for one of Don's clients. Aspiring to become an actress, Megan has moved out of her position as a copywriter working under Don's supervision. That role was granted by Don's elevation of Megan from secretary, and so her ensuing pursuit of independent professional success has developed into a source of tension in their marriage. Earlier in the episode, Megan accuses Don of wanting her to fail in order to prove her reliance on his gifts, while Don frames his resistance to her proposal as a mark of support for her independence. “You don't want it this way,” he tells her. “You want to be somebody's discovery, not somebody's wife.” Against his protests in that scene, Don eventually grants Megan's wishes, putting her forward for the role which is, in the end, given to her. (We might wonder whether, in doing so, Don quells or capitulates to Megan's fears, both about herself and about him.) Don's gesture is meant to rebuild the couple's bond, but may be read as re-affirming their lack of faith in one another. Thus our doubts about the nature and quality of Don's commitment to Megan are in the air when, sitting at the bar, he is approached by a beautiful young woman, who asks him to light her cigarette. After Don obliges, she poses to him – on behalf of her equally young and glamorous friend, who catches Don's eye from the other end of the bar – a coy question: “Are you alone?” Don turns towards her and us. Jon Hamm's face extends neither special interest nor a sign of refusal (figure 3.1). Before we can witness any definitive response, the image cuts to black. Both the episode and the season abruptly end.

⁸¹ Those designs are, to borrow from V. F. Perkins, “significant only within [their] context of narrative and character development” ([1972] 1993, 79).



Figure 3.1 Neither special interest nor a sign of refusal

Six weeks after “The Phantom” first aired on AMC, an essay in the *New Yorker* emphasised the importance of cliffhangers to serial television drama.⁸² In “Tune in Next Week”, Emily Nussbaum (2012) traces a history of cliffhanger interruption in narrative fiction, from both prime-time and daytime television drama back to nineteenth century literature published by instalment.⁸³ “Primal and unashamedly manipulative,” Nussbaum writes, “cliffhangers are the signature gambit of serial storytelling” (2012, 70). And for Nussbaum, not only are cliffhangers “part of some of the silliest shows on TV”, they are also “key to understanding many of the great ones” (2012, 74). The interruption of the narrative – and the experience of anticipation to which it gives rise – is thus for Nussbaum a defining aspect of serial television drama during the period in which *Mad Men* was produced. “In this changing [television] landscape,” Nussbaum writes,

it’s worth acknowledging how cliffhangers, broadly defined, link disparate genres: they connect *Fringe* with *The Good Wife* and the languid, dreamlike *Mad Men* (which hung off a cliff for more than a year after Don ran off to marry his secretary). They echoed through the

⁸² “The Phantom” was broadcast on the 10th of June 2012; the *New Yorker* essay was published on the 30th of July the same year.

⁸³ See the discussion of both Dickens and Thomas Hardy in Nussbaum (2012, 70, 72). For a more extended account of seriality in nineteenth century publishing, see Hagedorn (1988), and the discussion of British, French, and Russian serial literature in Sassoon (2006, 362–83). Both Hagedorn and Sassoon note the nineteenth century development of the narrative break as a focal point for the distinctiveness of serialised literature, particularly in relation to the success of Eugène Sue’s stories in the French daily press.

finales of the smart thriller *Homeland*, the exquisite dark comedy *Enlightened*, and the delirious melodrama *Revenge*, in which Madeleine Stowe stepped onto a jet rigged to explode [. . .]

These shows may have very different aims, but each of them uses the gap between episodes in a deliberate manner: they make manipulation a virtue. (2012, 74)

The focus of Nussbaum's appreciation is the parcelling-out of the story's events so that we are left wondering what happens next, hanging on the narrative in suspense – just as at the end of “The Phantom”, the moment at which both episode and season are brought to a close is chosen to separate a pressing question from its looming answer.⁸⁴ The interruption of a still-unfolding story is here seen to lie at the heart of serial drama, and of the interest and value it holds for us.

In these respects, Nussbaum's essay provides a clear example of a prevalent view in the television studies scholarship on seriality in television drama.⁸⁵ A common tendency is to treat seriality as a mode of principally *narrative* part-whole composition. This emphasis on narrative is clear in a number of sources, considered below, that address the emergence of serialised prime-time drama in American television, and which seek to describe the distinctiveness of serial drama's form and viewing experience. Although undertaken from a variety of approaches, this scholarship shares a common logic: that seriality in television drama is a way of relating the story's events and the characters' actions across episodes, and so it is therefore in terms of narrative structure that the interest and significance of serial drama is to be understood.

This view reflects the assumption that serial drama is not distinguished by its stylistic dimensions and their expressive affordances, but by the segmentation of the story into sequential instalments. Clear examples of this idea can be found in work that approaches television seriality through a particular model of film “poetics”, one that treats story events (what happens) and their presentation (how they are shown) as separable dimensions of a film's form.⁸⁶ In *Storytelling in*

⁸⁴ As noted, this represents the continuation of a long-held, persistent picture of seriality in narrative fiction, with origins in the nineteenth century publishing context mentioned above. As Sassoon says of writing by instalment during that period: “Readers required a cliffhanger, if not quite at the end of every episode, at least – where subscriptions were to be renewed quarterly – before the date of renewal” (2006, 363–64). This is reflected in Louis Reybaud's 1842 satirical novel *Jérôme Paturot à la recherche d'une situation sociale*, published in a daily French newspaper. Sassoon quotes a scene from the story in which a newspaper editor instructs his new writer: “The crucial thing is to master the art of the ‘cut’, that is, when to suspend the story until the next issue. This is the real trick” (Reybaud quoted in Sassoon 2006, 370).

⁸⁵ Nussbaum's essay draws upon a pre-publication edition of Mittell's *Complex TV*, making concrete the link to ideas of currency in television studies; see Nussbaum (2012, 73).

⁸⁶ The two key resources here are David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson's *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (1985), and Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978).

Film and Television, for example, Kristin Thompson aims to identify “storytelling techniques that may help constitute the specificity or at least the salient differences characterizing television [fiction]” from movie fiction (2003, 18). The basis for Thompson’s comparison is provided by Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson’s model of “the classical Hollywood cinema”.⁸⁷ In their description of the model, Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson treat the sequential linking of story events, and the presentation of those events on the screen, as discrete formal systems. This is marked in their distinction between story (“the events of the narrative in their presumed spatial, temporal, and causal relations”) and plot (“the totality of formal and stylistic materials in the film”) (1985, 12). The events of the film’s story are thus given existence apart from their presentation in the “totality of formal and stylistic materials in the film”. (The “totality” of form and style is not so total as to include the structuring of “spatial, temporal, and causal relations” between the events themselves.) This is not incidental, but is instead crucial, to Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson’s model. “In Hollywood cinema,” they write,

a specific sort of narrative causality operates as the dominant [formal system], making temporal and spatial systems vehicles for it. These systems do not always rest quietly under the sway of narrative logic, but in general the causal dominant creates a marked hierarchy of systems in the classical film. (1985, 12)

Note the many evocations of layering, together with the contrasts between passive and active relations (“vehicles for”; “rest quietly under the sway of”). These word choices express the view that a film’s sequential relating of events is an aspect of form more or less independent of stylistic presentation. Moreover, it is the narrative structure of the classical Hollywood film that is considered to be fundamentally definitive of the form.⁸⁸ Thus, in her account of television

⁸⁷ “In analyzing mainstream commercial television fiction,” Thompson writes, “the most obviously comparable type of film is what has been called ‘the classical Hollywood cinema’”, the “norms [of which] have been adopted or adapted by television precisely because they have been so suited to telling straightforward, entertaining stories” (2003, 18). The model of the classical Hollywood cinema on which Thompson draws is put forward in Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson (1985) and Bordwell (1985a).

⁸⁸ The problems of attempting to define Hollywood cinema as a distinct, homogeneous “type” of film are beyond the scope of my argument. A sustained critique of the project put forward in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* can be found in Britton (2009b). See also the criticisms of Bordwell’s related essay “Widescreen Aesthetics and Mise en Scene Criticism” in Gibbs (2013, 223–35). That essay by Bordwell makes clear his assumed split between event and presentation. In response to the critical “schools” associated with *Movie* and *Monogram*, represented by figures such as Charles Barr and V. F. Perkins, Bordwell writes: “These critics presupposed a denotative narrative level achieved and maintained in the course of the film. Personal style was *added* to that level; critical interpretation had as its job to treat the stylistic *overlay* as thematic commentary” (1985b, 20; my

storytelling, Thompson brings into relief what she considers to be the specificity of television fiction against a model of Hollywood film that emphasises not only the formal separateness of narrative structure, but also its primacy.

As a result, Thompson's study bypasses television drama's potential to afford distinctive opportunities of stylistic expression. Thompson observes at the outset that both movie and television fictions "certainly share the ability to tell stories with moving images, using photography, editing, staging, and so on" (2003, 1). Of this fact, however, Thompson notes only that "[t]hese common technical means offer some of the same possibilities and limitations to both media" (2003, 1). The assumption, however, is that the expressive possibilities of style in television drama do not exist in relationship with its series of roughly thirty- or sixty-minute episodes, organised into seasons. This is clear in the focus of Thompson's study on "the sorts of programs an aspiring screenwriter might be given as models of how television should be done" (2003, 2), its devotion of a central chapter to "Theory and Practice in Screenwriting" (2003, 36–73), and Thompson's claim that the extension of ongoing storylines or arcs, "along with the innovations in interwoven multiple plotlines", represent "some of the most intriguing areas where an analyst might explore the aesthetic specificity of series television" (2003, 105).⁸⁹

Thompson's approach is not peculiar, but is rather one instance of a wider tendency, evident in a number of other articles of the early-to-mid 2000s that draw upon similar sources from film studies. Michael Z. Newman (2006) and Jason Mittell (2006, 2015), for example, each propose a poetics of the period's prime-time serial drama that is informed by the work of Bordwell.⁹⁰ For both Newman and Mittell, what distinguishes serial television drama – in terms of form and viewing experience – is described primarily in regard to narrative structure. Consider how Newman's emphasis on the practice of television writers reduces our interest in a drama's characters to the skeletal framework of screenwriting vocabulary, such as in his discussion of character arcs, which, on his account, provide the core unifying thread of our involvement in a serial drama.⁹¹ "The device

emphasis). From this view, a film is not understood to be a synthesis of interrelated parts that form a whole, but as composed of separate layers, which may be peeled apart by the critic, and seen to function independently of one another.

⁸⁹ In making the last of these points, I do not mean to deny that these ways of organising a drama's story may be important to the question of serial drama's "aesthetic specificity". For now, I mean only to highlight the tendency to accord such story structures an importance that is independent of stylistic presentation.

⁹⁰ Newman cites Bordwell (1988) and Bordwell (1989); see Newman (2006, 26 n. 2). Mittell cites Bordwell (1985a); see Mittell (2006, 29). While Mittell's "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television" forms the basis for his 2015 book *Complex TV*, the earlier publication remains my focus here as part of a body of scholarship in the early-to-mid 2000s that shared a specific set of resources based in particular theories of film narration.

⁹¹ For other studies that consider television drama principally in terms of screenwriting, see G. M. Smith (1995, 2006) and A. N. Smith (2011).

that best ensures the [viewer's] commitment to the narrative," he writes, "is the character arc" (2006, 23). For Newman, "arc is plot stated in terms of character. An arc is a character's journey from A through B, C, and D to E" (2006, 23). Mittell similarly describes the kind of viewer involvement encouraged by what he calls "narrative complexity" in television fiction. One of the values Mittell finds in narratively complex series is their self-reflexivity, which prompts the viewer to reflect on the work's mediation of the fictional world.⁹² The mode of narrative complexity does not provide an "unmediated window" onto that world, writes Mittell, but "demands you pay attention to the window frame, asking you to reflect on how it provides partial access to the diegesis and how the panes of glass distort your vision of the unfolding action" (2006, 38). The metaphor of the window as framing device suggests a formal self-consciousness in the camera's selection and shaping of viewpoint. The examples Mittell provides, however, are not based in choices of style and presentation, but in the structuring of events – the parcelling-out of story information. He finds value in moments of "*narrative special effect*", which work by "calling attention to the constructed nature of the narration and asking us to marvel at how the *writers* pulled it off" (2006, 35 my emphasis). The "new mode of viewer engagement" that Mittell values, then, is one that directs the viewer's "detailed dissection of form" onto "complex questions of *plot and event* in addition to storyworld and character" (2006, 38; emphasis added). Self-conscious handling of form in serial drama is here identified with the structuring of story events alone.⁹³ In the work of Thompson, Newman, and Mittell, then, what we respond to in the fictional characters who populate a serial drama is made equivalent to a set of narrative turning-points – not as concrete happenings viewed on the screen, but as nodes plotted-out along a chart that hangs, in the space of our minds, on the wall of an imagined writers' room.⁹⁴

⁹² For similar claims regarding the self-reflexive play of series like *The X-Files* (Fox, 1993–2002), see Sconce (2004).

⁹³ One could object that Mittell's use of "plot" in this last claim might mean "totality of form", as per Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson's definition quoted above. Mittell's examples of "*narrative special effect*", however, make clear his more common-sense understanding of plot as synonymous with storyline.

⁹⁴ See also Porter et al. (2002), in which long-form television drama is defined by ongoing character development, understood in terms of the "story arc" (2002, 23–24); the study applies to television drama the narrative theory of Seymour Chatman, which reflects the features of Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson's work outlined above. In his key 1978 work *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Chatman rests his account of narration on the separateness of event and presentation. "I posit a *what* and a *way*," he writes. "The *what* of a narrative I call its 'story', the *way* I call its 'discourse'" (1978, 9). The particular way the fictional world and its events are made available is thus treated as a dispensable element, rather than as constitutive of the fiction. "My primary object," Chatman writes, "is *narrative* form rather than the form of the surface of narratives – verbal nuance, graphic design, balletic movements [. . .] I am concerned with stylistic details only insofar as they participate in or reveal the broader, more abstract narrative movements" (Chatman 1978, 10–11). The use of the word "surface" here should clinch the kinship with Bordwell, Staiger,

Like that of a movie, however, the fiction of a serial drama is *shown*. V. F. Perkins ([1972] 1993) makes clear the critical implications of this fact about movies. “Since stories do not exist except as they are told,” he writes, “and since film worlds can be discussed only as they are seen and shown, to discuss the opportunities available within the discipline of [movie] fiction must involve us in considerations of authorship and viewpoint” ([1972] 1993, 70).⁹⁵ An event that takes place as part of a film’s story is one that takes place at a specific moment, within a particular fictional world, upon which the filmmakers grant a selected – and selective – point of view. Our understanding of the events related by a film is then at best only partial, at worst badly distorted, if we disregard the film’s presentation of its world, which provides the primary context for the events’ significance.⁹⁶ The same extends to television fictions. If we are interested in the opportunities for significance afforded by the serial unfolding of television drama, we must attend to the relation between viewer and fiction made available by the presentation of its world onscreen – that is, how the colour and significance of our experience is informed by the design and patterning of what we see and hear. In the case of “The Phantom”, such attention brings into focus a picture of seriality in television drama somewhat different to that outlined above.

2. Performance as an Expressive Thread

On first viewing, the ending of “The Phantom” gains part of its force by so sharply reneging on its promise of resolution, leaving a tantalising proposition to hang in the air around Don. On later viewings, though, we know the turn of Don’s head in response to the woman’s question – “Are you alone?” – will yield no definitive answer. We know to expect nothing more than the silence starkly imposed by the cut to black, over which we continue to hear the voice of Nancy Sinatra as she sings her beguiling James Bond theme “You Only Live Twice”. If we continue to be magnetised by this moment in which the closing sequence culminates, what is the source of the powerful force or pull it exerts? Perhaps it might be found in the way that, although we are no longer so surprised by the

and Thompson’s conception of film form that has already been detailed. (Each has its basis in Russian and French structuralist theory, such as that of both Vladimir Propp and Tzvetan Todorov.) For an earlier example of work in television aesthetics that proceeds from the basis provided by Chatman, see Kozloff (1987).

⁹⁵ Cf. Chatman’s (1978) distinction between the “what” and the “way” with Perkins’s chapter in *Film as Film* ([1972] 1993) titled “How is What”.

⁹⁶ See his further discussion on the importance of the presented fictional world for interpreting film narrative in V. F. Perkins (2005, esp. 22). For Perkins, partiality of vision and the potential for distortion are also conditions of viewpoint in cinema. But our awareness or acknowledgement of partial and distorted understanding *produced by the film’s presentation of its world*, as part of a self-conscious engagement with its conditions of viewpoint, would constitute a kind of knowledge in itself; see also G. M. Wilson (1988). In certain cases, then, to overlook the fiction’s structuring of viewpoint is to miss something of crucial importance to the meaning of the work.

sudden ending, we are nevertheless aware that the fiction of the serial drama is ongoing. We thus remain held in suspense by the promise of Don's future that is held out.

Our suspension in an interrupted moment is a crucial part of the experience this ending affords. But we should be cautious in assuming it accounts for how the sequence's effects and significance are related to the drama's serial form. This is because the sense that a fiction continues beyond the narrative's ending is not the sole preserve of serialised drama. Consider V. F. Perkins's remarks on endings in film, from his study of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. His words not only apply to narrative fiction more broadly, but also have pertinent resonance with the idea of serial television drama as being distinctively "open". "In plot terms," Perkins writes,

any point of conclusion is arbitrary, chosen. We may go out on a death or a birth. If we end, as so often, on a prospect of marriage we cannot leave with a guarantee of bliss, but we may be encouraged or forbidden to hope. The world does not end with the story's finish. It has a future and the future cannot be closed. So the key question remains at the completion of a movie story as it was throughout, that of the relation between event and viewpoint.

(1999, 71–72)

The world depicted in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, however, was created, recorded, and presented – and continues to be watched – with the knowledge that, following the film's final moments, no more will be shown. *Mad Men*, by contrast, was made and watched in the light of a different belief. The future within the fiction would not only, for a time in the wake of each episode's ending, lie open in the space of our minds – it would then also, episode-by-episode, come to be realised onscreen, filled-in, up to a contingent, unknown point at which the series' world would be further shown no more.

The ending of "The Phantom" achieves its persistently impressive force, I believe, through the particular way it acknowledges these conditions of serial form. The weight of the fictional world's accrued history – and its fragile, provisional significance – is expressed through the handling of performance. It thus stands to be overlooked if the episode's reflections on seriality are found only in its emphatic highlighting of narrative interruption, and its promise of a continuing story. What is of most importance about *Mad Men*'s seriality bears only a weak relation to the "falling domino" logic of cause-and-effect, "A through B to C", "what happens next?" narrative sequencing. Matthew Weiner's design of the season's closing sequence hardly suggests a deep investment in connecting the parts of his vast fiction by a web of consequentially related events. Instead, the ending of "The Phantom" makes points of connection to earlier episodes and moments

through a range of expressive echoes and undercurrents, which sound and course through the views of *Mad Men*'s characters and world that the closing sequence presents.

These aspects of *Mad Men*'s seriality can be found in a guiding expressive thread that runs through the scenes which end "The Phantom". It is a thread that further links those scenes to disparate earlier moments of *Mad Men*, which are raised from the sediment of the series' past. This form of linkage is especially important to the cohesive design of the closing sequence because of the degree to which its four scenes bear otherwise weak narrative relationships. The sequence is notable for its relative absence of dramatic moment or consequence, and much is elided in the gaps between each scene. With the exception of the closing dialogue, not one scene is chiefly concerned with a moment of climactic, decisive action; even Don's concluding choice is withheld from our view. We rather seem to linger quietly in the shadow of a future decision, or in its wake. Although we go out when a choice of great consequence hangs in the air, much of the final scene is coloured by a mood of quiet introspection – of Don sitting heavily at the bar where he blankly stares ahead, as if absently looking within himself. The tone of privacy and solitude is heightened by the camera's slow move away from Don, expressing the sphere of isolation that is projected by his retreat to inner reflection (figure 3.2). As it helps to express the mood emanating from Don, the camera's withdrawal also suggests, in the style of a classical film ending, that we are taking leave from our involvement with the character.



Figure 3.2 Alone in a sphere of isolation

In doing so, the camera's retreat ushers in the brief montage that divides the closing scene – of Don at the bar – in two. The montage presents three other central characters – Peggy, Pete Campbell (Vincent Kartheiser), and Roger – in their own states of quiet aloneness. Echoing Don's privacy at the bar, our views of Peggy, Pete, and Roger are washed with isolation. Each character is pictured alone in a domestic setting, albeit one that provides only a facsimile of home: Peggy settles in for a night in a Virginia motor inn, just wine and work to keep herself company; Pete sits by himself in his darkened living room, distant from his family, who lie asleep elsewhere in a house he cannot stand; and Roger, high on LSD, poses nude before his hotel window overlooking Central Park. The separateness of the characters is emphasised by the montage, which in linking them together highlights their disconnection. These concerns are also felt in the scenes preceding Don's arrival at the bar: his viewing of Megan's screen test; the partners' inspection of the firm's new office space; and then Don's visit to Megan on the set of his commercial. In the screen test scene (which I discuss in detail shortly), Don silently watches Megan's image projected before him as he appears to consider the gulf that has opened between them, while Don's visit to Megan on the set is marked by a sense of his apartness from the new world of acting she is stepping into. Likewise, the office space inspection scene culminates with an image of the partners standing on the cusp of their firm's new future – not, however, as a unified group, but as five individuals, bound to a common concern while nevertheless held apart from one another.⁹⁷ Each scene of the closing sequence thus feels isolated and discrete, tightly self-contained as a dramatic unit. Yet each is closely related by a shared set of concerns expressed through ranges of deepened intimacy held in tension with a threat of abiding separateness.

Across “The Phantom”, these stakes play out in a number of scenes focussed on the possibility of companionship (or, more frequently, on its unavailability or failure). The most compelling of these are characterised by moments that give expression to a sense of temporary or fragile coalescence, the undoing of which is either immediate, or is – in the form of a lingering tone or promise of disquiet – suggested to lie in the future ahead. These expressive patterns are presented so we register their submerged but pressing kinship with past struggles in similar emotional territory. The significance of the fifth season's ending is thus to be understood in terms of the way its handling of performance crafts a set of links with earlier parts of *Mad Men*, to which “The Phantom” may otherwise appear unrelated.

⁹⁷ For a more detailed reading of this scene in terms of tensions between unity and fragmentation, see Logan (2014).

3. Gestures of Betrayal

Two scenes from the closing sequence provide especially rich instances of the expressive thread described above. They are Don's viewing of Megan's screen test, and his visit to her on the set of the *Beauty and the Beast*-themed commercial. Both are notable for the degree to which they organise moments of "temporarily, fragile coalescence", and its undoing, around the readability of the body. To appreciate the scenes in these terms, they need to be read in the light of earlier parts of the episode that concern Megan's aspiration to become an actor, and its implications for her marriage to Don. These are worth considering in detail because they reveal how deeply the significance of *Mad Men*'s drama is embodied in performance, specifically in qualities of gesture and vocal tone. It is through our sensitivity to gesture and voice that we – like the characters – intuit the fearfully secret terms of Don and Megan's bond to one another, which are brought forth earlier in the episode by her proposal to audition for his commercial.

In the opening scene of "The Phantom", we learn that Megan, struggling to make herself visible in New York's cutthroat acting world, had earlier commissioned a screen test in the hope of finding an agent. On the morning the episode begins, however, the reel has been quickly returned to Megan by mail with no offer of an agent attached, only the much less valuable invitation to expensive acting classes. It is clear to Megan that she has been the victim of a mild scam playing on the hopes of undiscovered talent that are shared by other aspiring actors like her. "It is cruel," says her mother Marie (Julia Ormond), in halting English, "to take advantage of hopeless people." In her embarrassment, Megan hides the existence of the reel from Don, and with it her increasing sense of struggle and failure. Later the same day, Megan learns of a professional acting opportunity that lies somewhat closer to home than does a fictional or faceless agent on the other side of town. An actor friend advises Megan that Don is producing a television commercial for Butler shoes, themed around *Beauty and the Beast* – would Megan do the favour of recommending her friend to Don? An undercurrent of intimate deception and betrayal thus runs through the scene in which Megan later approaches Don on her own behalf. As he responds to her proposition, the couple's hidden views of one another are painfully excavated, and inflicted as a hurtful awakening, which might be absorbed as part of a new perspective, or blinked away. Seeking privacy from her visiting mother, who occupies the apartment living room, Megan makes her move while Don has retired to their bedroom to change from his work clothes for dinner. For reasons both known and unknown to Megan, it is a less than ideal time for her to broach the issue she carries into the room. In the opening images of the episode, we saw Don tending to an inflamed toothache, the throbbing agony of which he steadfastly refuses to address directly. He delays any visit to a dentist, preferring to absorb with great irritation the shuddering waves of pain that throughout the episode momentarily stop him in his tracks. That Don is not his usual self, in fact mildly debilitated by his aching jaw, is

indicated by his inability to shave clean, evidenced in the build-up of an increasingly dark stubble that interrupts his usually immaculate self-presentation (figure 3.3). It is thus made a feature of the episode that Don is suffering an infection he cannot bring himself to face. Specifically, it is one that has taken root in his mouth, which as the organ of human speech provides the instrument for one of Don's greatest working talents, as so often displayed in the miraculous oratory of his famed advertising pitches, and the persuasive gravity of voice with which he insinuates himself onto others. Related as it is to Don's professional life, his self-image, and the means of his weighty success, the otherwise ordinary toothache can be taken as a correlative for a more submerged, obscure source of pain and personal anguish. It is one that concerns the agency's recent triumph in securing the Jaguar account, a conquest that has driven the hive of activity shown to capture Don's pain-haze stare throughout the episode as he walks the office hallways, haunted by visions of his long-dead brother Adam. Of this hidden turmoil, Megan is, by no fault of her own, unaware. Nor is Don's under-the-surface burden likely to be at the forefront of his own mind, drawn as he is by more prosaic, corporeal complaints. Through Megan's impending request, however, what is eating away within Don is nevertheless teased out to a place just below the skin, where it can be blindly grasped by him and projected onto his wife.

Although the full depths of Don's present disquiet are unknown to her (and may not yet register on us, the first time we watch the episode), Megan busily quiets inner tenterhooks of apprehension as she goes about preparing her husband for the proposition she is soon to voice. As Don returns home, Megan waits by relaxing on the couch and flipping through fashion magazines



Figure 3.3. Don's immaculate self-presentation begins to fray

with her mother while drinking red wine. Both women are thus engaged together in an ordinary pastime, one they may have practised as routine since Megan was a girl. But in the present context, the comfort of a familiar evening drink might also provide cover for pressing worries – a means to relax into a nerve-racking role whose successful performance requires resolute but fluid self-command. Whether or not we intuit Megan’s plan to take personal advantage of her friend’s insider information, we know she is tasked with asking a likely uncomfortable, potentially inappropriate favour of Don. So as the scene begins, the conduct of the ordinary is inflected with a special edge. This further develops as Megan first greets Don with bright enthusiasm, and then pursues her welcome of him as he moves into their bedroom. Megan asks if Don is feeling any better, noting that he didn’t make time to give her a kiss as he paused for a perfunctory stop on his way through the living room. Don musters up a promise of swelling recovery: “I swear I’m feeling better,” he says, and then kisses Megan on the lips. Yet in the tone with which Don participates in this daily ritual of their intimacy, Megan must sense the unfriendly terrain on which she will have to make her pitch. Despite his statement of positive reassurance, Don’s voice is not upbeat, but tired – it bears the frustration of a claim’s repeated insistence against feelings to the contrary.

That sense is then given further, unthinking ratification by Don as he withdraws from his wife’s embrace and continues to the bed where he sits to remove his shoes. As Jon Hamm draws away, his left hand, which had been extended to Jessica Paré’s hip, retires by falling with a muffled, slack pat against his own thigh, having now performed its role during their moment of closeness. In sonic concert with the dragging tread of Don’s feet on the carpet as he moves towards the bed, the unconscious gesture with his arm is part of a more thoroughgoing comportment of resignation. Whether he knows it or not, Don conveys the sense of getting done with a necessary piece of tiring business. The way Don deliberately presents himself towards Megan thus pushes against the more convincing, unselfconscious pull of his mood when turning away from her. And our sensitivity to this expressive strain is amplified when we see a ripple of tension run through Megan’s face as she takes Don’s measure while his back is turned (figure 3.4). Don’s posture is then most careless of Megan when he sits exhaustedly on the bed. As though still shrugging-off the effort of his insistence on good health, and of its sealing kiss, Don raises his eyebrows in a moment of interior irritation and dismissal, appearing privately astonished by the trials he must endure in dealing with others. These moments following Don and Megan’s kiss are ones of failure to conceal from another what is hidden within oneself. And as their conversation unfolds after Megan puts forward her proposal to audition for Don’s commercial, Don finds himself drawing on a deep well of contemptuous feeling, which, refusing to recognise as his own, he takes to issue instead from her. In his view of Megan that Don brings to the surface, however, we find uncovered an inner source of the “infection” that is given external form in the festering rot of his gumline.



Figure 3.4. Megan's concealed tension

Understandably tentative in the face of the atmosphere surrounding Don, Megan contrives a bit of business that promises a tactful means of introducing her screen test as an audition piece for Don's commercial. As though giving an otherwise aimless report on an aspect of her day that happily coincides with Don's interests at work, Megan mentions – while fetching Don a sweater from their wardrobe – her friend's information about Butler shoes looking for a "European" girl. Then, in a hesitant, roundabout verbal circling, Megan floats her own suitability for the role without making an emphatic or imposing claim on it. By the time the cat is out of the bag, Megan has sat on the bed beside a painfully confused Don, who is in no mood for indirectness or gameplay. "All I want you to do is put my name in a pile," she explains. "I know they're going to want to see what I look like on film, and I happen to have it." Megan holds out to Don the pile of his thick woollen sweater, atop which sits a small green canister of film. Rather than easing Don into her suggestion, however, Megan's gesture embodies aspects of her proposal that stoke the contemptuous terms of Don's response.

His opposition to her request is motivated by more than his discomfort with any potential charges of favouritism he might face, were he to endorse Megan for the audition. When she shows her enthusiasm for the opportunity of appearing in a commercial, Don gives voice to the lingering echo of an earlier, submerged hurt, felt in his understanding of Megan's choice to leave the career he opened to her and which has in every way come to define him. "I thought you hated advertising?" he asks her. "I never said that," Megan replies. She is trying to soften the sharp defensiveness of Don's question, but he now starts to slide into an increasingly accusing, slightly

supercilious tone, bordering on a mocking impersonation of what he takes to be Megan's higher aspirations. Higher, anyway, than his own, although the question Don next levels at his wife could just as well be asked of him – so not only is Don projecting his image of who Megan takes herself to be, but is also, like a double exposure, developing a picture of his own self-image. “Well, you certainly don't think it's art,” he tells her, “and you're an artist, aren't you?” His voice rising, Don lists the worlds of respectable performing art from which Megan's ambition for the advertising role falls short: “It's not theatre,” he says, “it's not Broadway – it's not film.” In delivering words of ostensible praise or encouragement (“You're an artist, and you should aim higher”), but at a malign theatrical pitch, Don performs for Megan his vision of her self-image. It is one that has a sardonic edge, inflected, in part, by Don's sense of how Megan, seeing herself in the way he imagines, must therefore also look down on him. Don is thus looking to hurt Megan, and in a way that is suggested to be a reflex response to the pain of his own self-loathing, a pain that is physically amplified in the ever-present throb of his toothache.

This emerges in the way Don wounds Megan (a later scene will show how deeply) by implying not just that it is low of her to want what she does, but moreover, having set out on her own, to now want it from – or at least through – him. Don is of course right when he eventually says to Megan that it would be difficult, potentially embarrassing and inappropriate at a professional level, for him to ask “Charles Butler, Jr. to hire my wife”. But these are not the terms in which he immediately and most aggressively objects to what Megan is proposing. When Don expresses surprise at her interest in appearing in one of his commercials, she notes the prized practical benefits that promise to flow from the commercial job – union membership, exposure – but Don cuts her off: “You get *money* – you don't need that”. The tone with which Don reduces Megan's ambition to a tawdry financial exchange (one made redundant by Megan's access to Don's own cash) expresses something approaching disgust on a scale that exceeds any simple practical concern with her finances. Don instead seems to feel most intensely and painfully that the favour being asked – even if it is not cognisant to him in these terms – is akin to pimping and prostitution.

“The Phantom” is an episode that is haunted, after all, by more than Don's dead, lost little brother Adam, whose fully fleshed-out spectre ghosts Don as he walks the hallways of the agency, reminding us that it was first from the office, in season one, that Adam was thrown out of Don's life – a five-thousand-dollar cash payment for Adam's exile being Don's final brotherly act (“5G”, 1.5). The episode is also shadowed by the events surrounding the signing of Jaguar, which unfold across the preceding two instalments: “The Other Woman” (5.11) and “Commissions and Fees” (5.12). That shadow is felt in the absence of Lane Pryce (Jared Harris), which is registered by us and the characters in the form of his empty seat at the partners' meeting. In the previous episode (“Commissions and Fees”), Lane's desperate forgery of a cheque in Don's name is exposed by Don

(while being kept private between them); Lane consequently hangs himself in his office rather than face the shame of resignation and a return to life in England. His downfall is tragically linked to the signing of Jaguar, which motivated the suspension of bonuses, and led Bert Cooper (Robert Morse) to discover the forged cheque (while remaining ignorant of its status as a forgery). Lane accuses Don – and the firm at large – of having driven him to embezzle by exploiting his talent and generosity, failing to recognise his essential contribution to the firm's very existence. This accusation is cashed out when his initial suicide attempt results in another moment of failure. At first, Lane tries to kill himself in the brand-new E-type Jaguar purchased by his wife, a celebration of his success that has painfully perverse irony for Lane (further trapping his family in his secret financial failure). But when the vehicle won't start, Lane changes his plan and stages a much more publicly significant final act. In allowing his corpse to be discovered not by his wife but by his workmates, Lane must want the gross fact and spectacle of his death to be imprinted on this place, and on these people, for them to have to confront the violence of his death and wonder "why", to consider their part in it. We see this in the silent emptiness of the office after his body is found, and most vividly in the powerful effect of the news on Don, who more than anyone knows the likely motor that drove Lane's hand as he threaded the noose (and who also bears the guilt of his brother's suicide after he was – like Lane – exiled from Don's world). Now Don's magnanimous words from his final meeting with Lane come back to haunt him, as they do us. "Take the weekend," he said to Lane, as the snow fell outside the windows behind them. "Think of an elegant exit."

In the way it works on the events laid down around the signing of Jaguar, "The Phantom" marks the culmination of a movement towards social fragmentation that has built across the fifth season. Both episodes feature moments of long-awaited success tainted by gestures of betrayal and loss, which fracture the potential unity of a collective achievement. In "The Other Woman", for example, Don's satisfaction in earning the Jaguar account is ruined when the partners come together to celebrate. To his surprise, Joan enters the room, her presence confirmation the account was won not by Don's creative skill alone, but by her agreement to a deal (brokered by Pete) which Don had vehemently opposed: that Joan sleep with a member of the Jaguar selection committee in exchange for his vote, and for her partnership stake in the firm. As though no longer sure what is worth celebrating, Don leaves the group to be alone in his office, but is stopped on his way by Peggy, who has important news. Don invites her to stay with him and have a drink, an offer that to my ear seeks nothing more than the pleasure of her companionship, one he can find with no one else – a consolation and relief from the disappointments of his success. It is in this moment of his need for her, however, that Peggy thanks Don for his mentorship and tells him she is leaving the firm. The measure of Don's torn emotional response can be taken from two gestures: wounded by what he sees as Peggy's ungrateful rejection of their relationship, he officiously cuts short her two-week

notice, telling her to pack her things immediately, that freelancers can take up her slack; but when Peggy goes to formalise their goodbye with a handshake, Don does not stand to meet her, instead remaining in his seat, leaning forward to take her hand tightly in his own and – in the manner of a prince on his knees – delivering to the back of her hand a pained, long-held kiss, as though he might hold on forever (or for just these last moments) to something he knows he has already lost.

Both Peggy's decision to leave the firm, and Joan's to make the bargain that seals her partnership in it, are – like the manner of Lane's suicide – motivated in part by the resentment each has built up over the years they have been mistreated, and their contributions gone without due recognition or reward.⁹⁸ The crowning achievement of the firm's young history is thus lined by a sense of failed solidarity and the consequent breaking apart of its members. Central to this concern is the pattern described above, in which the characters' continued commitment to one another, and to the larger group of the firm, hinges around moments of cash payment or other financial transaction. Consider how the link between Adam's ghost and the spectral absence of Lane is closed by the arrival of a payment on Lane's life insurance. Further echoing Don's too-late offer to give Peggy a raise, he delivers the cheque to Lane's widow Rebecca (Embeth Davidtz), unable to summon anything more as a final gesture in honour of his friendship with her dead husband. As Don leaves, offering one last expression of condolence, Rebecca makes a stinging rebuke of his motive in paying back the money, which, she reminds Don, already belonged to her husband anyway. "Don't leave here," she says, "thinking that you've done anything for anyone but yourself." It is in the wake of these events that Megan's way of putting herself forward for the commercial audition touches so sensitive a nerve. Placing her film atop a kindly gathered sweater, Megan folds into an act of otherwise close affection a bid for personal advantage that has the insinuation of professional favour and obligation.

That Megan understands the implications of the way in which Don responds to her proposal becomes clear in a later scene that also takes place on the edge of the couple's bed. Arriving home late from work, Don finds Megan drunk, and takes her to bed where she throws herself on him, wanting sex as a desperate token of validation. "Please," she says, "it's the only thing I'm good for." As if now striking back against his earlier slights, Megan accuses Don of blocking her career, so she can remain his kept woman, to be found in the apartment each night, "waiting" to receive him upon his return home. Either that, Megan says, or – in what would be a mirrored denial of her freedom – Don sees her lack of talent but hides from her what he knows. He fails to trust that she has what it takes to withstand failure. Don might feel relieved that in this moment he can hide

⁹⁸ In just the prior episode ("Christmas Waltz", 5.10), Don rewards Peggy's brilliant salvage of a nearly lost account by giving it away to Michael Ginsberg (Ben Feldman); he responds to her protest by throwing crumpled dollar bills in her face, a demeaning insult that surely laces his later attempt to have her stay by offering a long-refused raise.

behind Megan's drunkenness, which licences him to refuse any substantial reply to what his wife claims to see in him. He may well feel relief because, despite being so drunk, Megan might in fact see something with a clarity from which she shrinks when sober. This is suggested by the first moments of Don's later visit to her on the set of his advertisement, which plays out as a trade in which the object of exchange is a man's claim over a woman's body. The opening shot of the scene is staged so it appears as though Don is handing Megan across to his client, whose gaze fixes on her breast as the object of his praise ("There's our Beauty"), words for Megan directed in large part to Don (figure 3.5).

Across the moments from "The Phantom" discussed above, we understand what passes between Don and Megan – and how it relates to the story events that background the episode – through the actions and expressiveness of the performers onscreen. The terms of the crisis in which the couple find themselves are not fully inherent to the scenario that has been written. They rather emerge through, and are inseparable from, attitudes, understandings, and buried aspects of psychology that are *embodied*. This is especially fitting, indeed necessary, for a passage of drama concerned with those parts of the characters' inner lives that remain obscure to them – either unavailable to, or kept from, conscious articulation. Hence my degree of interest in the way Megan

raises her proposal to audition for Don's commercial by presenting her screen test film atop his bundled sweater. This gesture, which blurs lines between marital affection and the gaming of professional advantage, might bring home to Don more than the self-loathing that still lingers from the events at the centre of his agency's success with Jaguar. That loathing might also awaken in



Figure 3.5. "There's our Beauty": Megan handed across to the client

Don, within the sphere of belief upon which his intimacy with Megan rests, a growing void of gnawing and ugly doubt, as to whether they truly possess the better images of one another which they profess to hold. “What is it,” he might wonder, thinking of the commitments he has seen made and broken by Joan, Lane, and Peggy, “that keeps the two of us bound together?” Given the emergence of this doubt as to how they truly see one another, it is fitting that the most immediate context for understanding Don’s choice to put Megan forward for audition is one in which he literally projects her image and subjects it to his scrutiny.

4. The Bonds of Belief

It is having registered these stakes of wavering belief and rising doubt, expressed in both bedroom scenes, that we approach the screen test viewing and Don’s visit to Megan on the studio set. For Don, the sustenance or failure of belief – and of its various cousins, such as faith, trust, intimacy, and openness – is shown to be more than a matter of consciously held position or stated avowal. It is rather pictured as something like one’s grip – whether newly vitalised, or otherwise slackened – on the readily assuring container of a certain comportment towards others and the world. Tensions between sustained belief, stalking doubt, and loss of faith thus find a natural home in performance as both a stylistic element and thematic concern. Performance in fact comes to provide a crucial focus for the overall stylistic organisation of the two scenes, not merely within each, separately, but in ways that are linked across them. In the screen test scene, Don watches Megan present herself for audition on film. Then, in his visit to her on the set of the advertisement, he stands in the darkened space off-stage and watches Megan take her place under the camera lights, where she readies herself for filming to begin. The crisis that has arisen within Don and Megan’s marriage thus culminates in two scenes which are set up as self-conscious reflections on filmed performance. Moreover, these reflections are put forward in ways that form resonant connections with a range of earlier moments from the series. They include the title sequence, the opening scene of the pilot episode (“Smoke Gets in Your Eyes”, 1.1), and the Carousel pitch from the final episode of the first season (“The Wheel”, 1.13). Through the expressive presentation and presence of performance, then, an interpretive context is formed beyond the chained links of story causality that are so often a defining focus of serial drama criticism. It is a context that turns out to be central to the terms in which the seriality of *Mad Men* asks to be understood.

As the first of their two arguments concerning the proposed audition peters out, Don tries to reassure Megan of his belief in her. “You know I would if I could,” he says, in an earnest bid for reconciliation. Megan smiles and nods, making a silent compact. But when she excuses herself for a bath, and sees her face reflected in the privacy of the bathroom mirror, she bursts into tears. There is a telling connection between this collapse into despair and another moment towards the end of the

couple's second, more searing fight later in the episode. There, Megan wonders aloud if her failure to gain any notice as an actress is because she is "terrible", and that Don's refusal to put her forward for the audition is in recognition of this. "But then," she says to him, trying to rescue herself from pity by gaining the acid strength of accusation, "how would you even know?"

Earlier in the chapter, I observed how the first bedroom scene positions us to notice that Megan registers Don's ordinary, unthinking disregard for her: in full view of his audience, Don drops his mustered-up performance of a dutiful greeting kiss. This moment must be part of the reason that Megan only feigns her belief in Don's pledge – that he wants to help her, but cannot. Her faint is revealed when she confronts her own face in the mirror, and, after a momentary effort to maintain her composure, breaks down. Megan's reflection presents her appearance as others see it; she is brought closer to seeing herself "from the outside", as Don does. So perhaps what Megan confronts in the mirror is the fact that Don often looks at his wife in a way that counts as a failure of her. To hold as a secret his inner disregard for Megan's fledgling life as an actor might be one way of treating his wife as "kept", kept from what Don knows of his relation to her. Might it be even worse, though, for Megan to discover, or come to think, that the very possibility of her realising a latent talent is fully closed-off to her husband, that he only cares if she is fit to inhabit the roles that *he* has led her into: secretary, copywriter, wife?

We can therefore imagine that it was with Megan's words ringing in the space of his conscience ("But then how would you even know?") that Don, alone after hours in the darkened office conference room, wound the flimsy thread of Megan's screen test through the wheels of the projector. Even if we imagine this, it nevertheless remains difficult to say what exactly Don is looking for, or hoping to find, in the images that shine up on the screen before him. Whatever he sees there, it is linked with his eventual decision to acquiesce to Megan's wishes and put her forward for the role – only thirty seconds of narrative time separate Don's viewing of the screen test from his visit to Megan on the set of the commercial. Whatever ground we have on which to make sense of Don's choice, it seems to take its elusive shape across the moments in which Don – watching Megan prepare for and move into her performance for the camera – briefly gains hold of something renewing in his relation to Megan, but then finds it mysteriously slipped from his grasp, and replaced with a different kind of realisation.

As the screen test reel runs noisily through the projector, we watch Don witness and respond to Megan while she undergoes a transformation before the camera and on the screen. She stands in one corner of a rundown loft, perhaps somewhere in the West Village, holding a slate scrawled with chalk; we make out her name ("Megan Calvet", not Draper) and that of the agency: "Actor Service Co.". Megan's denial of her husband's name (as though to pretend she were single), together with the word "service" and the casting-couch echoes of the scenario, lends a touch of seediness to her

situation, a tone that – given the connotations of Megan’s request to audition for the role – might inflect Don’s view of what he sees. When the projected image zooms-in on Megan, isolating her in close-up, she smiles broadly at a person off-camera, but then also seeks to hide her face in a modest display. The flash of Megan’s smile and eyes projects an inviting guardedness, as if to freely welcome the attention her beauty earns, while keeping to a shy unavailability. We cut to Don, whose expression gently betrays a quiet smile of private recognition. The screen test image cuts jaggedly to a closer view of Megan in profile. We see her try to foster, through the bodily projection of acting, the belief that she inhabits a fictional world onscreen, an imagined reality existing in the off-camera space into which she gazes. Lowering her face and allowing it to be covered by her hair, as if to avoid the scrutiny of an unseen beholder, Megan works with the off-camera space to self-consciously construct a sense of inner privacy that had no great force only moments ago. She now tucks her hair behind her ear, to reveal her face, and looks up towards the imagined person off-screen to whose stare she is subject, acknowledging the pressure of their eyes upon her, but refusing to yield. As if in response to those eyes, Megan allows the beginning of a smile to play briefly across her face. But something is reserved; her mouth is pursed. The smile’s withdrawal leaves just the shadow of a pout, the glimpse of a hardened look. Until now, the faint musical score that accompanies Don’s watching has imparted, in its delicate piano keys, a sense of mysterious curiosity, its gradually rising chords welcoming and bringing home the pleasant familiarity expressed in Don’s smile. But as Megan moves into her more distant mood, the pitch deepens, and as a sense of gravity quickly settles the piano falls away, leaving in its wake the long notes of a fragile woodwind. On these plaintive tones, we cut back to Don in time to see his expression fade. What had been his evident pleasure dissolves into a stare of unmoored blankness. He appears to no longer see in the image passing before him what had, only an instant earlier, been such a ready source of affirmed feeling (figures 3.6–9). The emptiness in Don’s look is given further expression as the reel of the screen test runs out, and Megan’s image vanishes into the burning white blank of the projector’s light. This loss of object is tinged with a sense of meaningless chaos, as words scrawled in red ink on the tail of the print flicker indecipherably on the screen before Don. The final shot of the scene is a wide view of Don in profile leaning back in his chair. His cigarette burning down but forgotten, Don stares without fixation at the now-blank screen, in utter stillness. In his stasis, he yields what had earlier seemed strong belief. To my eye, the shot images Don’s change of mind. It is pictured not as his arrival upon a newly clarified position of stated resolve, but rather as a kind of felt inner loss – as the fading, in an instant, of conviction.



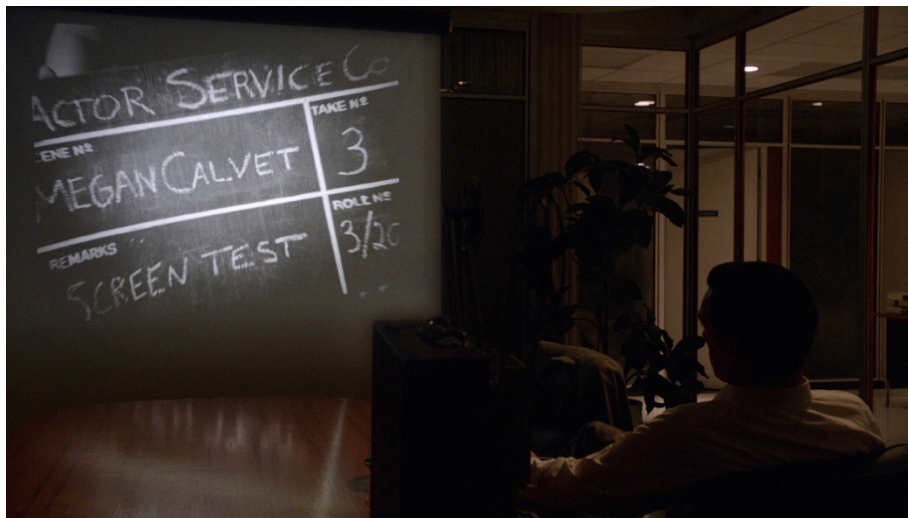
Figures 6–9. Watching the screen test: the fading of conviction

The most immediate weight of the screen test scene, as I have described it, is felt in relation to a single storyline of “The Phantom”, which in turn draws on the thread of Don and Megan’s marriage that has been gradually developing across *Mad Men*’s fifth season, together with the backdrop of the Jaguar signing and its aftermath. In the views of Don which the scene presents, however, we are meant to also feel a weight – emergent in relationships between the performer and the camera – that has a different, more narratively distant source. By the time the scene begins, Don is already reclined in his seat, left arm outstretched beside him to hold his lit cigarette over the conference table ashtray. Matthew Weiner, the episode’s director, does not then grant us Don’s perspective by cutting to a view fully encompassed by the projector’s screen. We are instead placed some way behind Don, watching as if from the back of the room. From this position, Don’s posture is outlined for us against the backlight cast by the projector and reflected off its screen. The light traces Don in part as a shadow figure, his head tilted back in distanced consideration of the images before him, and his arm casually resting open to one side, holding his own projection of easy but alert remove (figure 3.10–11). We soon cut to a closer shot, so we are sitting just behind Don, his silhouette now reduced to a head and shoulder, made prominent in the right-hand side of the frame.

We might register in these shots a certain degree of care being taken to craft what are, by the end of *Mad Men*’s fifth season, familiar visual compositions. In his account of the series’ opening title sequence, George Toles describes the way in which the silhouette stand-in for Don, despite tumbling in free-fall through the air,

magically averts what seemed to be certain disaster. Don’s silhouette re-organizes itself; he takes his final form with his back to us, resting on an office couch – arm outstretched on the rear cushion to perform relaxation for whoever encounters him. He is the embodiment of focused composure: alert, ready to do business, ready to confront and prevail over muddle. (2013, 148–49)

In *Mad Men*’s first episode (“Smoke Gets in Your Eyes”), this picture of “focused composure” is evoked again after the title sequence. At the end of the opening tracking shot through a cocktail bar, the camera settles in behind Don, who is seated with his face turned away from the viewer. We are shown the back of his head and of one shoulder, occupying the left-hand side of the frame. Don’s face withheld from our view, his presence is here imbued with a sense of self-contained privacy. And so, in its views of Don, the screen test scene deliberately echoes the iconographic images by which the character was first introduced. It evokes not only the outline of Don presented at the close of *Mad Men*’s title sequence, but also its echo in the opening shot of the pilot episode, in which we see Don for the first time, not as a graphic abstraction, but rather as flesh and blood, given human



Figures 3.10–11. The title sequence echoed in “The Phantom”

incarnation by the actor Jon Hamm. These compositional echoes might be understood as sheer self-reflexive play with form, meant to consciously foreground the deliberately structured presentation of the fiction. Maybe they are intended to afford no more than the simple enjoyment of noticing.⁹⁹ Yet the resemblances of framing that I have pointed to are only part of a deeper, more thoroughgoing, and resonant set of connections between the ending of “The Phantom” and earlier scenes, moments, and images of *Mad Men*. More than incidental decorative touches, such echoes – which centrally issue from the presentation of the performers, from their expressive presence onscreen – form an altogether crucial focus for the design of the episode’s closing sequence.

The point of framing Don in silhouette is not just to remind us of the character’s iconographic pose from the title sequence and pilot episode. It also prepares us to register a more fundamental relationship between the opening of the series, and the much later scene of Don

⁹⁹ This would be in keeping with the idea of “artistic motivation” described by Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson; artistic motivation, they argue, explains the use of elements or devices in a film that appear to have no other “justification” than to draw attention to themselves (1985, 21–23).

watching Megan's screen test. *Mad Men* opens in a lively cocktail lounge where Don sits alone. Our initial view of him as self-contained in private composure is undercut by our first sight of his face, which reveals him to be mired in a state of anxious frustration, as he scribbles-down and crosses-out words on a cocktail napkin. We soon discover the object of his worry when he engages in conversation with the busboy, an older Black gentleman whose name we soon learn is Sam (Henry Afro-Bradley). Having asked Sam for a light, Don notices that he holds in his hand a particular brand of cigarette. "Old Gold man, huh?" asks Don. "Lucky Strike, here." Don then probes for the inner source of this stranger's brand allegiance, seeking some universal resonance that might answer his problem of how to advertise Lucky Strike cigarettes, their allure now clouded under the dark shadow of reports on the health effects of smoking. As Don tests the ground of Sam's commitment to Old Gold, he seizes and writes down a simple statement that Sam offers up – "I love smoking" – as though discovering a thought that he himself might have held all along. With this concentrated expression of belief in hand, Don closes-off their conversation with a luminous smile of ease and newly found assurance. We cut to Don's view of the cocktail napkin on which he has written the words that struck him with such clarity. Quickly returned to a shot of Don's face, however, we find his assurance vanished. It seems as though, in the simplest turn of an instant (one masked from us by the cut to the napkin), what had held such promise is found, when externalised as an expression of Don's own hand, to have been nothing but vaporous, illusory – its clearing leaves behind just a face of confusion. Don's eyes flick and his jaw falls in unconscious signals of near-panic as he looks towards the other patrons drinking and smoking happily at the bar (figure 3.12–13). He appears to seek in their faces something that would hold a return to the secure centre of understanding that had so brilliantly arrived upon him, but then so abruptly slipped away. At the same time, we might see that in his view of these others, Don experiences a larger extension of the transient and evasive meaningfulness that has greeted him in his relation to the now lifeless words printed shabbily on the paper napkin. In the reverse shots of the bar's other clientele, we share in Don's obscure perspective of these distant strangers, sensing through the weight of the slow-motion image what remains an undefined significance. The opening scene ends on this note of the world's opacity, which has been shown to undo Don from within. Despite lacking any ties that would link them as part of an ongoing cause-and-effect narrative chain, the fifth season screen test scene and the opening of the pilot episode are thus closely related by the purposeful and fine crafting of expressive echoes, which have as their focus Don's embodiment of mysterious fluctuations in self-composure and belief. These echoes that link Don's viewing of the screen test with *Mad Men's* titles and opening scene continue to sound through the remainder of the episode. Consider the way in which a sense of alienation colours the framing of the partners as they inspect

the new office space into which the firm, in its growing success, will soon expand. As I write elsewhere:

The scene's final image is of disconnection as the partners fan out across the space horizontally, into their individual compartments of privacy, sealed from one another by the vertical divisions marking one window from the next. The partners' shared collapse into fragmentation here measures the fragile impermanence of their mutual success as something that can bond them to one another. (2014, 51)

The same sense of isolation and disappointment lingers in the brief montage of Peggy, Pete, and Roger in their own states of "quiet aloneness". Peggy, having reached the milestone of her first business trip and flight on an aeroplane, steps into her Richmond motel room basking in recently showered freshness; but then, lifting aside the window blinds to take in a view of her destination, she finds only the befuddling and grubby sight of two dogs mating in an asphalt parking lot. Her



Figures 12–13. From confident belief to a face of confusion.

romantic ideal is befouled by a picture of animal reality. We then see Pete recovering from the violent dissolution of his affair with the psychologically troubled Beth (Alexis Bledel). Alone in the living room of his darkened home, his family asleep, he listens to music through headphones with his eyes closed, retreating – like Howard Givings at the end of Richard Yates’s *Revolutionary Road* – not into a “thunderous sea of silence” ([1961] 2007, 337), but rather an ocean of sound only he can hear. As Pete closes his eyes, does he return in his mind to the afternoon spent with Beth at the Hotel Pennsylvania, where he spoke to her of running away and starting a new life together? Or does he imagine taking the route Beth chose: to be freed from the pain of one’s past by having one’s mind and memory erased? In an alternative image of escape, we see Roger standing naked before his hotel room view of Central Park and the glittering Upper West Side beyond, its brilliance magnified for him by the magic but temporary insight of LSD; the odd chaos of his “revelatory” perspective is captured in his ungainly perch atop an antique chair, lit by an ornate lamp tumbled on the bedspread. Each of these moments is coloured by the threat of loneliness, which appears to have fallen upon Pete, but is kept at bay by Peggy through the solitude of work, and by Roger through the reassurance of intoxication.¹⁰⁰ The screen test scene is thus linked with the series’ titles and its closing sequence through an expressive thread that concerns the promise of meaningful attainment, in tension with its undoing or dissipation.

The echoes of the title sequence are nowhere more powerful than in Don’s visit to the studio set and his subsequent arrival at the cocktail bar in the episode’s final moments. As the titles begin at the start of each episode, the silhouetted figure that stands for Don is pictured as being apart from the world into which he appears to step. Again, Toles (2013) provides an apt description. “All the lavish trappings of [Don’s] office domain,” he writes, “fail to solidify and contain him. They gently scramble, dissolve, and sink beneath his feet before he begins his plummet” (2013, 148). Don’s feet find solidity on an office floor that also holds his firmly placed briefcase. But what at first seems to be a fully dimensional space shifts into a flat surface that holds nothing, against which Don’s silhouette is merely placed, or projected, as he falls downward in a different plane of reality.

Tensions between the promise of a real, available world that one can inhabit, and a fake or imagined, illusory vision that is beyond reach, also runs throughout the presentation of Don’s studio set visit with Megan, which is staged as a renewal of their marriage but lined by a sense of divorce. In the scene’s opening images, Don regards a beaming Megan, albeit with his client standing more

¹⁰⁰ Loneliness is also at issue in one of the episode’s only scenes of close, friendly companionship: when Don is surprised to bump into Peggy when they both attend the same screening of a film. Each takes genuine, spontaneous pleasure in seeing the other again, and shows they have retained their capacity for rewarding talk, free of formality, and touching in the depth of its honesty. Set against a public space that discourages interaction, and in which we see only isolated individuals, their renewed mode of conversation speaks of what stands to be lost if such a sphere of friendship were to collapse or otherwise corrode. I consider this theme in more detail in Chapter Five.

closely by her side. He is once more presented as a profile silhouette, this time cut-out against the clear, bright glow of the set against which he stands. Despite the real tactility of the set's surfaces and objects – the lushness of its curtains and carpets, the hard sheen of the furniture and fittings – its every detail is picked out and glows flat under the insistent clarity of the soap operatic key light. The advertisement is set in what looks like a princely medieval bedroom, the stone walls and sharply arched windows evocative of a church, which, together with the garlands in Megan's hair and her place by Don's side, makes the image resemble that of a wedding. It is, however, something like a cartoon image brought near to life but kept within the artificiality of a sanitised fairy-tale, thus placing their vows to one another against a backdrop of disbelief. As Don and Megan stand together at the edge marking the studio space from the set, a call for the cast and crew to take their positions interrupts the couple's pleasantries with Don's client. Before she takes her place, Megan embraces Don, whose back faces towards us. "You know I love you," she whispers, and kisses him on the cheek; we sense that, below the frame, she presses her hands into his. Megan then walks past her husband onto the set, as she does so passing between him and the camera; hence Don has to turn to his right, fully around, in order to watch her go. Walking away from us into her position, Megan spins to her left and stops sharp in order to face out towards the on-set camera that waits ready to film, out there in the same dark space in which Don stands alone. Megan here takes her first real steps into the world of professional acting, steps prefaced by a grasping and insistent declaration of love for Don. Yet she and Don find themselves, if they are to look towards one another, having to turn in opposite directions.

Don's presence on the set, and Megan's responses to him, are offered by both as expressions of closeness and devotion. Yet more developed stylistic echoes of both the title sequence and the screen test scene suggest, in tension with what Don and Megan tell one another, the nature and depth of their profound separateness. As I have already pointed out, the design and lighting of the set for the *Beauty and the Beast* commercial makes it a world not unlike the office into which "Don" steps in the title sequence, one that presents an illusory surface image of tangible reality, but which resists any attempt to secure a convincing and sustainable grip. Megan at first stands with Don, also outside the set's theatrical artificiality, in the darkness of the studio surrounds. But in her "Beauty" costume, she is made vividly a part of the soon-to-be fictionalised world of the commercial set, from which Don is so conspicuously marked apart. And as Megan finds her place, she holds still in a delicate pose while final make-up is applied. No longer moving, she stands fixed in a tableau, appearing as if an object of set dressing. When Don looks at Megan in this moment, as she stands in a rectangle of light and prepares herself for presentation to the waiting camera, there



Figures 14–15. The barrier of the screen: Don and Megan in different worlds

lingers a significant trace of his watching her screen test – the boundary of light outlining the different spaces that Don and Megan occupy is linked to the barrier of the movie screen onto which she was projected (figure 3.14–15). “Like the surface of a mirror,” writes William Rothman, “the movie screen is a border between an image of reality and reality itself; it is also where the two touch” (2014, 121). What is the significance of the way Don and Megan, in this moment, are shown to part?

To develop a satisfying answer to this question calls for us to clarify and trace the thoughts embodied in, and evoked by, the presentation of the actors and characters onscreen, how they are shown as part of *Mad Men*’s unfolding world. Notably, it is the empty void on the side of the camera (the camera that creates an “image of reality”) into which Don strides as he walks away from Megan, who remains frozen behind him in her sealed box of light. Accompanying Don’s walk, as if called up by it, is the opening timpani roll and sharply swelling violins of “You Only Live

Twice”. The pressured, high-octave anxiety of the opening bars is followed by a graceful, measured fall of the strings, which, as Don moves further and further into the darkness, echoes the fatal but harmless plummet of the title sequence. With each step – imbued by the fullness of the music – Don (as though inhabiting the fantasy of isolated masculine grace embodied by James Bond) seems to gather density of purposeful containment as he lets himself slip from Megan’s world and glide into another, the key light picking him out more sharply the further he moves away from marriage. As Don walks beyond the view of the camera, we cut to the interior of an oriental-themed cocktail bar, the décor harmonising with the Japanese touches of the song and of the film from which it comes. As though without breaking his stride, Don walks into the room and down the few steps that lead from the foyer to his seat at the bar, where the episode will end. Just as Don deftly takes the stair, the music slides, in perfect concert with the fall of his foot, into a new, changed movement, featuring the cheery pluck of simplified strings, freed from the bombastic drama of the preceding orchestral arrangement. There is a sense of landing on one’s feet, of shaking off, as though it never happened, the fall from which one has effortlessly recovered. These qualities are helped by the fluency with which Jon Hamm, having just strode the stair and without breaking his step, licks a finger then in one smooth motion frees the button of his jacket in preparation to sit. The gracefulness of Don’s movement through the bar has its primary source in the music’s orchestration with Jon Hamm’s bodily command. But it also flows – through Don’s unbroken stride from the studio floor into the bar – from the power of filmic ellipsis, by which Don appears to seamlessly, magically leave behind one world, or state of being, for another.¹⁰¹

In the screen test scene, Don’s very view of his relation to others – and through them, to himself – is linked to the barrier of the movie screen as described by Rothman. This is in the way that his vision is associated with the light by which Megan’s image is projected onto the screen before him. In an early wide shot showing him reclined in profile, Don – not yet captured by what he sees – drags deeply on his cigarette. He then blows with satisfying smoothness a cloud of smoke, which catches and spills like a slick across the arc of light shining from the projector. Don’s placement in the frame is such that the smoke, as it glides away from him, reveals the projector’s beam to issue as though from Don’s own eyes, the machine’s glare and his gaze coming together as one (figure 3.15). It is this moment, more than any other, that draws the screen test scene into its close relation with the scene of Don’s Carousel pitch from the final episode of season one (“The Wheel”). As Don delivers his pitch to the Kodak executives, the beam of the slide projector’s lamp

¹⁰¹ For a related but somewhat different account of this moment, see O’Sullivan (2013, par. 34), which proposes that the “manifestly absurd” relationship between these two spaces “can be read as a lampooning of connection”, a “satire of seamlessness”.

(at once tangible and spectral in the clouds of cigarette smoke) delivers up to Don a series of images from past episodes and moments of his life spent with Betty and their young children.

The relationship crafted between these two scenes highlights the need to explore seriality in television drama through criticism that is sensitive to more than narrative designs alone. As I have shown, the closing sequence of “The Phantom” is carefully handled to place its views of Don and Megan in relation to earlier parts of *Mad Men* that have no narrative importance to the later scenes, but which form an ambient echo that colours our experience and informs the sense we make of it. A satisfying account of the drama’s serial form, then, would need to measure the significance and value to be found in these choices. The terms of that account would likely have little to do with matters of narrative causality – they would instead reflect and clarify *Mad Men*’s interest in serial drama as a medium able to study the fate of expressive gestures, and the bonds they form, over time. In the ending of “The Phantom”, through its relation to the series’ opening scene and the Carousel pitch, what is at stake here is pictured as nothing less than the continued inhabitation and survival of a shared world, or of its collapse and abandonment.

Consider how, sealed in their visual recording, the permanence of the moments on display in the Carousel pitch is vividly encapsulated; they have passed – as they did then – in an instant, but are nevertheless forever of Don’s life, and seemingly brought back to him now. But as Toles notes in his reading of what Don sees while he shuttles these pieces of his past through the slide projector, the images bring with them, in their renewed presence, a seemingly unbridgeable distance, an



Figure 3.16. A machine’s glare linked with Don’s gaze

impenetrable barrier. “He recognizes himself as *literally* taking part [in the lives of his family],” Toles writes,

being right in their midst, so in that sense he was *Don*, that unmistakable figure resurrected by the mechanically whirring time machine, *being there*. And yet, as many of us feel revisiting photos commemorating days of imagined felicity, there can be a wall as thick as stone separating us from our face and the role we assumed for the camera, to meet expectations. The aloneness, the apartness are faintly inscribed in the frozen visual record of that outing or ordinary bit of daily doing, like the ‘pain from an old wound’. (2013, 170)

The sense of aloneness and apartness “inscribed” in the images does not emerge, however, from a straightforward gulf in time. “It is not simply the case of photographs transmitting the ache of distance from experiences that had once been undeniably possessed and *felt*,” Toles writes. It is rather that “Don confronts his absence and exclusion *then*, in the time of pleasure, as though the images supplied a piercing burden of proof” (2013, 170). Despite their permanence, what is to be understood about the moments from Don’s past that are pictured in the photographs, the significance those moments hold for him, is not settled. What may have once seemed a moment of “undeniable possession” is now evidence of “absence and exclusion”.

Don’s experience there is echoed in a fleeting instant as he watches Megan walk past him to her place on the set of his commercial. Feeling the excitement of her new start, Megan has just pressed her hands into Don’s, and, having thanked her husband, whispered to him, “You know I love you.” Megan then skips past Don, and he turns to watch her go. As he does, Jon Hamm slightly furrows his brow, his eyes refocussing, as if disturbed by a troubling but indistinct current of feeling that causes him to look again. In an echo of his watching her screen test, and, even more distantly, his own life made part of the Carousel pitch, Don seems to briefly glimpse Megan as a familiar stranger, a view that must involve a sense of his own incomprehensibility. Don might feel, for a moment, not only adrift from Megan, but also from the person he himself was, who thought he knew that he loved her. This glancing moment of subdued dislocation quickly fades – Don’s expression frees itself, as if shrugging-off a light *déjà vu* haze. As Nancy Sinatra sings of double lives that go un-lived in dreams, Don walks, with the distant air of his usual self-command, into the surrounding void.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that to understand the impression certain serial dramas make on us – to clarify the aspects of our lives they touch – we may need to treat their seriality in terms other than

those of narrative structure. At the same time, the chapter has demonstrated a prevalent tendency in television studies to approach seriality on precisely such terms, as a matter of narrative composition alone. In writing inspired by Bordwellian accounts of Hollywood film aesthetics, for example, the structure of inter-episode narrative causality is given critical primacy as a dominant formal element, one that is further seen as separable from the stylistic presentation of the fiction, which is effectively disregarded or avoided.

Drawing on the film criticism of V. F. Perkins, however, I have argued that the significance of seriality in certain moments of television drama depends on the fact that the drama is *filmed*. One implication of this fact is that the significance of a serial drama is not reducible to the structure of its story events alone but is rather embodied in the moment-by-moment presentation of particular viewpoints on those events. In the case of “The Phantom”, attention to presentation and viewpoint allows us to register an expressive thread formed by the patterning of performance over time, from the final moments of season five to the opening of season one. In this way, the expressiveness of the characters and actors, as they are presented onscreen, provides the basis for meaningful links between parts of the drama that are unrelated by narrative concerns. What seems most important to *Mad Men*’s art as a serial drama is found less in questions of causal narrative connection, and more in its repeated views of people and places, specifically the way those views are shaped and coloured by an acknowledgement that the series’ fiction is subject to its own continuous, ongoing history.

In the closing sequence of “The Phantom”, the presentation and expressive presence of Don during both the screen test scene and his visit to Megan on the studio set call to mind much earlier parts of the series: the title sequence, the opening scene of the pilot episode, and the Carousel pitch. One effect of these echoes is to impart a sense of deepening history and significance. Whether or not Don recalls the Carousel pitch when he sees Megan’s face projected in the screen test – or, when he visits Megan on the studio set, is returned to the images of his previous wife Betty (January Jones) modelling in a Coca-Cola commercial (“Shoot”, 1.9) – these resonances and connections are nevertheless made available for us to register. There is a sense that we have been somewhere like this before, and so that the significance of the present moment is to be measured in relation to its expressive links with a now-distant past. But the building-up or accrual of meaningful patterns in the presentation of the fiction is held in tension with the ways in which the actors’ performances are expressive of the temporary or transient, both in the screen test scene, the studio visit, and in other moments across “The Phantom”. Within a dramatic context that concerns the fragility and impermanence of the characters’ bonds, these aspects of the performances can be understood as a focus for *Mad Men*’s reflection on the provisionality of its own meaning. Just as the screen test scene gives a resonance and significance to the Carousel pitch it was not initially intended to have, Don’s alienated glance towards Megan – his view of her as a stranger – casts a

changed light on his (and our) understanding of their marriage. Yet even the significance of that look, what it means for him to see her that way, may only become clear in retrospect.

What “The Phantom” suggests is at stake in such moments, I have argued, is not only the survival of the characters’ bonds, but also of the shared human world those bonds create and sustain. In the following chapter, we will see how those stakes are given heightened articulation in *Homeland*, whose drama pivots on the readability of the face, or the threat of its blank opacity.

Chapter Four.

Faces of Allegiance in *Homeland*

In the penultimate episode of *Homeland*'s first season ("The Vest", 1.11), there is a moment of surprising resonance with the screen test scene from *Mad Men*'s season five finale "The Phantom".¹⁰² This resonance brings into focus the present chapter's concern with faces and intelligibility in *Homeland*, which extends and deepens the links between seriality and expressiveness identified in Chapter Three. The relevant strand of "The Vest" follows Brody as he takes his family to see the Civil War battlefields at Gettysburg, a final trip together before their lives are to be upturned by his impending run for a seat in Congress. During the weekend away, Brody's daughter Dana (Morgan Saylor) uses a small video camera to make a recording of their ordinary family life before it is disrupted by her father's new public role. But on returning home, she discovers an unsettling piece of footage. Sitting on her bed with her boyfriend Xander (Taylor Kowalski), Dana tells him the video confirms her sense that Brody had been "strange all weekend". Xander leans in to watch closely, and so do we do, the image cutting to a close-up of the laptop's screen and the video of Brody it displays. Dana's camera appears to have been accidentally left on the railing of a lookout over the battlefield, the device continuing to surveil and record the comings and goings of visiting tourists. Among them, Brody stands alone in the middle ground of the image, looking out toward the fields behind the camera, which were the site of a seemingly suicidal but decisive Union charge. Against his stark isolation and fixated stillness, school groups and families swirl in and out of the frame. Their movements are especially rapid as the footage plays in fast-forward, its accelerated speed evoking a degree of extended duration that accentuates the oddity of Brody's unmoving stance and stare. His behaviour seems even more strange, is given a touch of sinister mystery, due to the music that emerges on the soundtrack: amid lingering metallic chimes that lurk low in the mix, tremulous piano chords oscillate in a minor key, lining the image with a sense of the anxious and uncanny. The music helps us share in the view of Brody's strangeness suggested by Dana, intensifying the off-kilter qualities of the video's canted angle and murky pixellation, and its picture of a disquieting human stillness set against the world's movements. This

¹⁰² "The Vest" was first screened by Showtime on 11 December 2011, six months before "The Phantom" was shown by AMC on 10 June 2012.



Figure 4.1. Brody's stare in Dana's home video

latter interest of the video is heightened when the series' image cuts to a tight close-up of Brody's staring face (figure 4.1). His eyes remain still but his body slightly rocks, almost automatically, like the flickering of the leaves and branches we see in the background, sent to-and-fro by the wind. The sense of deliberate mindedness evoked by Brody's meditative stare is thus set against an image of causally determined, mechanistic movement. Are these qualities the source of the alienating strangeness Dana detects in her father – the way his presence on the screen of her laptop embodies a deep well of purposeful intention, together with the inner emptiness of an automaton?

Dana's encounter with the look of Brody's face when he does not know she is watching is one that tests her knowledge of him, how she understands her father and the bond they share. This scene from "The Vest" thus condenses a larger interest of *Homeland's* first season, which as a spy thriller is preoccupied with the depiction of surveillance and interrogation, and the suspicious scrutiny of what others do and say, how they look and sound. The world the central characters inhabit, moreover, is one that requires skill at deception, and at reliably seeing through it. Like the screen test scene from *Mad Men's* "The Phantom", then, moments from *Homeland* such as the one described above present us with a mystery of human innerness onscreen. This chapter shows how the terms of that mystery in *Homeland* clarify a dimension of serial drama's aesthetic significance

that is somewhat at odds with values such as “intimacy” and “complexity”.¹⁰³ The close-up of Brody’s face in “The Vest” is not presented as a fixture or focus of intimacy, but as a source of alienation and estrangement. And what draws Dana and Xander’s curious attention to the image – together with our own – is not the glimpse of a puzzle piece that might fit into and unlock a currently scrambled pattern; it is instead the picture of a persistent human mystery, which is, in Denis Donoghue’s words, a condition that asks to be “acknowledged, not resolved or dispelled” (1983, 11).

In what follows, I demonstrate how the first season of *Homeland* gives significance to the retrospective and provisional conditions of seriality through a concern with the mystery of faces, their intelligibility or opacity, on which the survival of the closest personal bonds and the deepest political allegiances are put equally at stake. Central to this is the way the drama’s first season reflects on serial form and screen performance through a motif of faces and mirroring. In its unfolding of this motif, the series articulates a deep concern with the relation between human innerness and its outer expression – of the link between self and world, or its collapse into the isolation of scepticism.

1. Self-Reflection, Performance, and Genre in *Homeland*

One notable aspect of *Homeland*’s first season is how deeply it internalises the interpretive issues raised by serial drama as a medium for performance. This is the case for season one in particular because of the extent to which its early episodes centre on the watching of closed-circuit television surveillance. The subject of that surveillance is US Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody, who was presumed to have been killed during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but now, eight years later, has been discovered alive in al-Qaeda captivity and is returned home to be feted as a war hero. In the prologue of the first episode, however, set ten months before Brody’s rescue, CIA agent Carrie Mathison receives intelligence from a source in Baghdad, who tells her (or so she claims) that “an American prisoner of war has been turned” (“Pilot”, 1.1).¹⁰⁴ Upon Brody’s repatriation, Carrie suspects that *he* is the turned prisoner planning an attack against America. Unable to convince her CIA supervisor Saul Berenson (Mandy Patinkin) that Brody warrants surveillance, Carrie secretly installs cameras and microphones throughout the Brody house, and pursues her own program of illicit watching.

In what is the clearest emblem of *Homeland*’s self-consciousness, Carrie’s monitoring of Brody is repeatedly presented as a reflection of television viewing. For example, as Stephen Shapiro

¹⁰³ On intimacy as a quality that develops from repetition in television seriality, see McLoone (1996); on complexity as a value in recent serial television fiction, see Mittell (2013, 2015).

¹⁰⁴ We only hear the words spoken by Carrie herself when she later recounts the exchange.



Figures 4.2–3. Mirroring within the fiction, reflecting our own spectatorship

notes, this strand of season one affords a small “*mise en abyme*” in episode two (“Grace”, 1.2), when we see Carrie on her couch at night watching Brody as he lies on his own couch watching basketball, a mirroring within the fiction that reflects our own spectatorship of it (2015, 155) (figures 4.2–3). Elsewhere in the same episode (“Grace”), Carrie’s off-book helper Virgil (David Marciano) describes the surveillance footage as akin to a soap opera; he enlivens the torpor of his work by happily speculating about the infidelity of Brody’s wife Jessica (Morena Baccarin) with Brody’s best friend and fellow Marine, Major Mike Faber (Diego Klattenhoff). Characters also frame the operation in terms of reality television such as *Big Brother*, acknowledging both the voyeurism and potential boredom of so relentlessly observing another person’s inhabitation of domestic routine.

Such self-reflexive moments often mirror not only the basic fact of our television viewing as such, but also the specific kind of response to televised performance that *Homeland* itself requires.

Writing about his experience of the pilot episode (“Pilot”), Jason Jacobs recalls being “struck by how similar Carrie’s intense scrutiny of Brody’s words and gestures was to my own practice of studying television: sitting up close to a big screen, notebook nearby, pen in hand, rapt, honing-in on the slightest details – dare I say *clues*? – in order to assess a performance” (2011c). The central problem facing Carrie – and us as well – is that of reading Brody’s actions, gestures, and expressions, of somehow accurately linking them with his intentions, and in doing so reliably discerning who he “really is”: simply a traumatised war veteran alienated from domestic life, or a treasonous sleeper agent bringing the War on Terror back home and turning it against the nation he has sworn to defend? The question of what Brody is up to – how we are to understand what he is doing, and what is moving him to do it – is one the series quickly raises about Carrie herself, in light of the bipolar disorder she keeps hidden from the CIA and which brings into doubt the soundness of her judgements and actions. Like Brody, Carrie’s behaviour is clouded by a shadow of deceptiveness: trained as a spy, her craft is to dissemble while manipulating the trust of others. A stable, reliable reading of Carrie’s actions is then made even more difficult because her capacity for calculated performance is less than total. Far from a figure of machine-like inscrutability, Carrie appears driven by obscure inner feelings over which she seems to exert weak control. These aspects of her character are made vivid in Claire Danes’s face, the actress adept at rapid, extreme shifts of expression, able to contort her mouth and eyes as though in the grip of a consuming force. Such moments heighten the uncertainty of what intention or purpose can be read into her character’s actions and gestures – we cannot even trust that what we are seeing is a deliberate veneer or subterfuge.¹⁰⁵

The difficult interpretive issues presented by performance in *Homeland* are given further layers by the many scenes between Carrie and Brody. The pair are frequently engaged in direct or implicit interrogation of one another, passages of the drama in which we are asked to take account of their expressions not individually in isolation, but within a shifting interactional process, as each reads and responds to their moment-by-moment assessments of the other, and their own awareness of being assessed by them in turn. This builds to its greatest density after Carrie’s electronic surveillance is closed down and she continues to investigate Brody in person, eventually pursuing a sexual relationship with him (“The Good Soldier”, 1.6; “The Weekend”, 1.7). It soon becomes increasingly difficult (not only for us, but for the characters as well) to determine the extent to

¹⁰⁵ Compare her to George Smiley as played by Alec Guinness in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (BBC, 1979). A more recent, even starker contrast is with Gustavo Fring as performed by Giancarlo Esposito in *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul* (AMC, 2015–). Notably, these two exemplars of performative constraint and inscrutability are male. Carrie’s relative emotionalism is of undeniably gendered significance; on this point, see Bevan (2015) and Steenberg and Tasker (2015). For a detailed discussion of Danes’s facial expressiveness, see Logan (2015, 29–31).

which their romantic intimacy is genuine or a fraudulent cover, or somehow both at once. Indeed, whether the distinction can be drawn with any clarity or sustained confidence is itself brought into question, such as when – during their weekend tryst at her family’s cabin by the lake – Carrie is so deeply absorbed in the fantasy of their romantic escape that she forgets the illicit, secret means by which she learned of his affection for Yorkshire Gold tea, accidentally betraying that she knows a fact about Brody which he had never revealed to her (“The Weekend”). They may be playing one another, but their performance of romantic interest and connection is so believable because it is real, even as it remains an instrumental fabrication. Such shifting indeterminacy of intention is also a live issue for both Claire Danes and Damian Lewis as they perform their roles as Carrie and Brody. As Jacobs has observed – and as I demonstrated with the example of *Breaking Bad* in Chapter One – actors in long-form television drama will often not know where their characters are “coming in to land”, what the character’s plans or intentions at any one moment will end up amounting to (2012, 53). Reflecting on what it was like to act on *Homeland* week-by-week, David Harewood (who plays CIA Assistant Director David Estes) recalls his understanding of the character being undone by subsequent turns of the plot. “I would write myself a backstory,” Harewood says, “and then you’d get a script that would completely contradict that backstory” (quoted in Hogan 2014). In key parts of *Homeland*, the provisionality that follows from the drama’s serial unfolding means that Danes and Lewis must, to a certain degree, act without certitude – neither actor knowing what their characters may later turn out to have known (or failed to know). Their success in the roles thus especially depends on their gestures and expressions being able to hold in suspension a delicate balance of potential meanings – neither playing a certain card too firmly, nor settling-in to blank contradiction – while at the same time allowing for the significance of their performances to be credibly recast in the light of the story’s future unfolding.

The central performances in *Homeland* thus internalise and reflect on the provisional as a condition of seriality in television drama – that with the serial unfolding of the fiction over time, intentions and judgements become susceptible to revision, to being retrospectively altered, or discovered as somehow false or mistaken. The previous chapter highlighted the way such retrospection informs the significance of the closing sequence from *Mad Men*’s “The Phantom”, and its links with earlier moments from the drama’s first season. In *Homeland*, the provisional and retrospective conditions of seriality are heightened through frequent moments of dramatic reversal, and also distinctly coloured by a deep sense of scepticism and radical distrust, which lines the series’ world and the relationships between its characters. These qualities stem in large part from the drama’s framing within the genre of spy fiction, in particular the more paranoid variant characterised by the protagonist’s pursuit of a far-ranging, nefarious conspiracy – one that may in

fact not exist, being no more than a figment of the character's deluded mind.¹⁰⁶ In what follows, I explore the way *Homeland* links these concerns of its generic subject matter to a persistent emblem of television's aesthetic interest: the human face in close-up, presented to us repeatedly within the structure of television fiction's serial form.¹⁰⁷

2. Accumulation, Revision, and the Undoing of Intimacy

A number of early moments in *Homeland*'s first season link the hermeneutic challenge of reading the face with issues of time and serial form in television drama. In doing so, these early parts of the season reflect on links between duration in serial drama and the development of intimacy in close relationships. A good example is the pattern that develops across the opening scenes of episode two ("Grace") and episode four ("Semper Paratus", 1.4). "Grace" opens with a flashback to Brody's captivity, building on earlier flashbacks from the pilot episode. Those revealed Brody to be a liar, contradicting the account he had given of his imprisonment, specifically that he had never met the terrorist mastermind Abu Nazir (Navid Negahban), and that he overheard but did not witness the bashing death of his fellow prisoner, Marine Corporal Tom Walker (Chris Chalk).¹⁰⁸ Not only do the pilot episode flashbacks show Brody receiving Nazir's comfort, but in the episode's closing sequence we also see him beat Walker's face with his own fists and then, distraught, accept

¹⁰⁶ Key spy fictions of this kind that are invoked by *Homeland* include *The Parallax View*, *The Conversation*, and, most crucially, *The Manchurian Candidate* (Frankenheimer, 1962); the series also cites or brings to mind John Le Carré's novels *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* ([1963] 2001), *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* ([1974] 2002), and *Smiley's People* ([1979] 2008). These works, among many others, fit within the third phase of what John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg (1987) call "the cycle of clandestinity", which, by their account, has characterised the historical development of the spy genre. In the third phase, they argue, spy fiction becomes "increasingly obsessed with the themes of loyalty, betrayal, and double agency", reflecting the paranoia that grows from an individual's immersion in the "schizophrenic" mindset of the clandestine (1987, 29). For other accounts of spy fiction in literature, film, and television, see Miller (2003), Walker (2004), Hepburn (2005), Jenkins (2012), Walker (2014), von Hallberg (2015), Oldham (2017), and Shaw and Jenkins (2017).

¹⁰⁷ A range of scholars have observed the association between television and close-ups of the face. Horace Newcomb, for example, argued that "Television is at its best when it offers us faces, reactions, explorations of emotion registered by human beings" (1974, 245–46). Jason Jacobs has noted that, for early critics of television drama, "the television 'microscope' was an instrument that, when properly controlled, revealed the hidden small scale of the dramatic performance, concentrated in the face of the performer. Such a close observation of performance detailed required a responsive production technique that favoured the close-up" (2000, 121). See also the comparisons of film and television in terms of shot scale in Ellis (1992, 127–44). On the close-up and the face as a foundation of cinema's aesthetic attraction, see the essays "The Play of Facial Expressions" and "The Close Up" in Balász (2011); see also Gunning (1997).

¹⁰⁸ Brody and Walker formed a two-man sniper team, Walker the shooter and Brody his spotter. This has more than practical importance to the plot – it is also thematically significant, evoking acute ocular sensitivity, a mortal bond of trust between soldiers, and the sniper's protective "overwatch" role, which echoes Carrie's conception of her CIA duty.

consolation from Nazir, his sworn enemy. The flashback at the start of “Grace” shows Brody under guard in the desert as he digs a grave, into which Walker’s lifeless, shirtless body is dumped without ceremony. While Brody sings the “Marines’ Hymn” with increasing strength and defiance, the muzzle of a handgun is pressed against the back of his head, Brody wincing in anticipation of the impending gunshot. As it rings out, we cut to Carrie waking in fright on her couch, where she has fallen asleep watching Brody on the monitor. For a fleeting moment, the flashback is reframed as Carrie’s dream, in which she imagines Brody’s experience as a prisoner. But her shocked gasp overlaps on the soundtrack with Brody’s scream coming through her speakers, which we now recognise as the source of Carrie’s fright; the image cuts to Brody in his own bed, gripped by terrified confusion as he emerges from his nightmare. The scene’s reversals of perspective and overlaps of subjectivity evoke Carrie’s growing but obscure sense of one-way intimacy with Brody, of which she herself may not even be aware.

The idea that Carrie’s sustained surveillance of Brody promises a growing closeness with him is further developed in the first sequence of episode four, “Semper Paratus”. We open on images of daily routine, which for Carrie is shown to be structured around, and mediated through, the surveillance monitor. Neatly dressed for the office in a grey suit, Carrie places her coffee and breakfast on the table as she resumes her work of watching. Our introduction to Carrie following the pilot episode’s prologue established her home life as chaotic: she bustles-in, running late for work, still dressed in the clothes she wore overnight; her living room is a mess of files, folders, photographs, and unpacked moving boxes; we later learn she keeps no fresh food in her kitchen. She seemed a bad fit for the structure of domesticity. But now, by episode four, Carrie’s growing habituation to routine reflects the subject of her surveillance: we see Brody’s wife Jessica preparing breakfast in the kitchen, and through the diegetic speakers we hear what turns out to be a running shower. It is as though the shape of Carrie’s life starts to sympathetically conform itself to the one she studies onscreen. Carrie has arrived back at her observation post in time to see Brody step from the shower as he dries himself with a towel, and then proceeds to dress for another day giving televised speeches in support of the war. When Brody stands before his wardrobe in briefs and a white undershirt, Carrie narrates in advance his adherence to Marine Corps uniform protocol. “Service A’s today, Marine – shirt first,” she says, and then, “green pants”. Each is called a beat before Brody takes the items from their hangers. When he searches for his missing necktie, Carrie anticipates and answers Brody’s question to Jessica before it is even asked: “It’s on the back of the bathroom door,” she says. To Carrie’s amusement, Jessica echoes her words only moments later. In terms of its bare, scripted action, the scene might be taken to indicate Carrie’s deepened attunement to Brody, insofar as she is able to predict his actions and therefore, to a degree, what he intends to do.

The opening scenes of “Grace” and “Semper I” thus resonate with ideas of serial drama’s interest as a medium for characterisation and performance, specifically in regard to the form’s durational aspects. In their rhyming echo, the scenes measure Carrie’s increasing alignment with Brody over time. (On the same morning she watches Brody dress, we learn that one month of surveillance has passed – upon reporting to Langley, Carrie is reminded that her four-week warrant will expire the next day.) The opening of “Semper I” draws on our memory of the earlier opening scene from “Grace”, both beginning with the start of a new day as viewed by Carrie through her surveillance monitors. But where the “Grace” scene is marked by the disorienting violence of Brody’s nightmare, the example from “Semper I” is characterised by calm routine, evoking the accrual of regular repetition as a basis for firm familiarity. In these terms, the latter scene accords with Philip Drake’s (2016) description of our interest in performance in serial drama. Seriality, he writes, makes available the “*accumulation*” of an actor’s expressive presence and performance work across numerous episodes and seasons, and “the familiarity one builds in the repeated viewing of that performer over a significant duration” (2016, 8). The term “accumulation” echoes other remarks on the way seriality shapes our relation to performers and the characters they inhabit in television fiction, as affording heightened familiarity and depth of psychological understanding.¹⁰⁹ In his study of intimacy in early British television drama, Jacobs (2000) quotes Martin McLoone, who sees intimacy in television fiction as a product not only of the domestic viewing context and close-up camera technique, but also of the repetitions and accretions of seriality. “The intimacy results from the context of viewing,” argues McLoone, meaning “the home, most commonly imagined as the family home. But intimacy also comes from the continuity of the television series or serial, the recurring characters, locales and situations that become part of the habituated viewer’s domestic experience” (McLoone 1996, 89; quoted in Jacobs 2000, 116). For Jacobs, this meant that “a new sense of intimacy as a familiar pattern – external, in the order of the timing of programmes, internal in the weekly repetition of situation and characters – was strengthened” (2000, 116). Through such familiarity, Drake argues, serial drama affords “the ability to illuminate the accumulation of character *knowledge* through performance” (2016, 13; my emphasis).

Homeland realises an alternative possibility of duration and performance in serial drama. To help bring that alternative into relief, it is worth noting that Drake’s account of “accumulation” is offered in response to *The Americans*, a series with close links to *Homeland*, in that both use the spy thriller to unfold a deeply self-reflexive drama of performances nested within performances, one that puts at stake issues of political and national allegiance. Beginning in the early 1980s, as

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, the accounts of seriality and characterisation in Sconce (2004, 95), Pearson (2007), Gray (2008, 27), Blanchet and Bruun Vaage (2012, 18–41), Lotz (2013, 22), Mittell (2013, 52), and Williams (2014, 29)

US-Soviet relations are deteriorating with the election of Ronald Reagan, *The Americans* tells the story of married travel agents Philip and Elizabeth Jennings (Matthew Rhys and Keri Russell), who live in a suburb of Washington, DC, where they raise their two children. The Jennings, however, are in fact a pair of KGB agents: Mischa (Rhys) and Nadezhda (Russell), trained to live convincingly as a married American couple while they seek to infiltrate the US government and its intelligence agencies, chiefly by – in an echo of their own marriage – befriending or becoming romantically involved with potentially valuable “sources”. The dramatic and performative architecture of the series is thus set up for moments in which long-established identities and relationships are revealed as part of an elaborate, theatrical performance. It therefore presents a saturated exploration of what James Naremore calls “performance within performance”: those moments in film that require “actors [to] dramatize situations in which the expressive coherence of a character either breaks down or is revealed as a mere ‘act’” (1990, 70).¹¹⁰ *The Americans*, however, exposes the inadequacy of Naremore’s terms for such sustained layering of self-performance. Part of the show’s mystery is that it brings into question not only whether we can say that the characters are acting or not, but what it would mean for genuine feeling or commitment to be expressed through an entire persona that is, regardless, a fabrication.¹¹¹ What happens to our sense of another, and of ourselves, in the face of such retrospectively shattering discoveries?

The confidence with which Drake frames our knowledge of the characters as simply cumulative thus seems somewhat at odds with the object of his remarks. In *The Americans*, as in *Homeland*, what we and the characters – and the performers – know at any one point is often not simply “built on” by subsequent events, but may be undermined or altogether obliterated by them. A good example is provided by the tenth episode of *The Americans*’ third season (“Stingers”, 3.10), when Philip and Elizabeth are forced to tell their teenage daughter Paige (Holly Taylor) that her parents are not Americans but Russians, working covertly for the interests of a foreign adversary, one which Paige – growing up in the United States during the Cold War – has been educated to fear and distrust.

Following her initial shock, confusion, and outrage, the deeper effect of this revelation on Paige’s sense of the world is given expression in the episode’s closing scene. It is nearly dinnertime in the Jennings household. While her brother Henry (Keidrick Sellati) lies on the couch playing a hand-held computer game, Paige does homework at the living room table, her parents preparing to serve the meal from the nearby kitchen. The electronic bleeping and automatism of Henry’s video game inflects the atmosphere with a background sense of hazardous competition and risk,

¹¹⁰ See also the discussion of “performed performance” in Pomerance (2012).

¹¹¹ For a skilful treatment of this paradox – as a mystery without solution – see Kristen Stewart’s performance in *Clouds of Sils Maria* (Assayas, 2015), and my discussion of it in Logan (2018).

negotiating a maze of dangers in a near-inevitable movement towards open conflict and ultimate destruction – “Game Over”. While Philip gets ready to carve the meat and Elizabeth takes the roast from the oven, each finds a moment to glance in Paige’s direction. They are seeing in their daughter a new source of suspicion. They are now monitoring her not only for indications of growth and maturity, but also for emerging signs of psychological strain that might suggest a dangerous weakening of her sworn secrecy, of the oath to her parents that draws Paige towards a treasonous betrayal of her nation. Before the meal can begin, however, there is a knock at the door. It is the Jennings’ neighbour from across the street, Stan Beeman (Noah Emmerich), who just happens to be an FBI agent working in counter-intelligence, tasked to track down and unveil the very spies who are living under his nose and whom he has befriended.¹¹²

Having invited himself in for dinner, Stan engages in small talk as he drinks a beer and makes himself at home. But he is then discomfited as he feels Paige’s eyes on him. Sitting motionless at the living room table, she stares at Stan unblinkingly, her face blank. He asks if she is okay, but she is barely able to respond, as though failing to comprehend an interaction that is by all appearances ordinary and unremarkable. Seeking to quell the odd silence, Philip steps in with an explanation: “She takes everything in a little differently since being baptised,” he says, continuing to sharpen the carving knife, “a lot more observant.” This mention of Paige’s perception provides the cue for a point-of-view shot that gives expression to Paige’s changed viewpoint of her parents and their neighbour. The shot gives a sense of both heightened attention and stunned incomprehension through its use of slow motion and muffled sound. We are able to register the smallest movements and shifts of eye contact and expression, even as we sense a foggy remove from what is done and said. The most pointed effects of the shot are felt in the relation between the sound design and the face of Keri Russell. The sound of Philip getting ready to carve cuts a steady, relentless rhythm as Paige looks from one staring parent to the other – the quick metallic scrape of the blade against the sharpening steel casts the distant cold of Elizabeth’s parental gaze with the promise of violence, a new lining of lethal mendacity (figure 4.4). Returning again to Cawelti and Rosenberg’s observations on clandestinity and viewpoint (1987, 17), we can say that what is presented here is not Paige’s induction into a simply additional sphere of knowledge, one that builds on what she already understood; what has been revealed is rather a new picture of her life that radically alters the sense, credibility, and value of all that she previously knew. Her parents’

¹¹² Stan is thus linked with Hank Schrader (Dean Norris) in *Breaking Bad*, who for so long overlooks the true face of his nemesis, blinkered by the understandings and assumptions developed across the course of their long association and friendship – which are then utterly and irretrievably devastated by the revelation of Walt’s secret. See the discussion in Logan (2016a, 87–94).



Figure 4.4. A new lining of her mother's gaze

revelation of their secret has irrevocably transformed the “ordinary” world (and her memories of its past), which now exists “outside” the secret realm in which she is forced to live – one that separates her from everyone outside of it.

The episode's final moments further develop these implications that follow Paige's discovery. Philip and Elizabeth lead Stan out to the dining room table to sit for their meal, the trio visible to Paige through the frame of the kitchen pass, as though she now sees her relation to them through a distancing aperture. Watching her parents within this domestic proscenium, she thus comes to a view of their life – and so also of her own – as a staged fiction. Called to the dinner table to join her parents in the theatrical performance of their life as the Jennings – an activity outwardly unchanged from any of the hundreds of meals she has enjoyed in the past – Paige rises from her seat and closes the notebook in which she has been writing. The closing of the book is the final gesture of the episode, met with a swift, resolute fade-out into darkness. It captures the sense that a prior realm of experience, memory, and meaning is for Paige now sealed-off, shrouded and forever inaccessible in the form it once took.

A similar moment of discovery and revision marks the first episode of *Homeland's* second season, “The Smile” (2.1). When Brody admits to his wife Jessica that he is a Muslim, and that he has been using the family garage as a space of prayer, she ransacks its cupboards and shelves as though she needs to grasp some objective proof of his deception. Eventually, she finds her husband's hidden copy of the Quran. Clutching the holy book in one hand, she rails against Brody's

faith in its teachings. “I don’t understand,” she says. “These are the people who tortured you! These are the people who if they found out Dana and Xander were having sex, they would stone her to death in a soccer stadium!” Jessica dashes the book to the dusty concrete floor, a sacrilegious gesture to which Brody responds with instinctive care as he tries to rescue the Quran from being spoiled. “That’s not supposed to touch the floor!” he says, desperately dropping to the ground and cradling the book like an injured pet. His voice quavers with concern, but almost as soon as the words have left his lips, Damian Lewis resumes a straitened silence, in the realisation that his voice has betrayed to Jessica a foreign and deeply disturbing passion. Silence settles between husband and wife. “Did you actually just say that?” asks Jessica. We remain in close-up on Morena Baccarin, the choice forsaking the image of Brody’s exposure, instead giving priority to Jessica’s encounter with a radically new sense of her husband. As she voices Jessica’s astonishment, Baccarin allows her expression of righteous anger to drain away. It is replaced, however, not by understanding or resigned acceptance, but instead with something much worse. As though finally comprehending what she has seen, her eyes quicken as they grow wide, in response to a dawning that takes place within. She draws a hand to her mouth as she is gripped by a cold horror. She seems momentarily petrified, her body frozen as she withdraws from the sight of her husband, who of course appears the same but is now – in every way that matters – unrecognisable.

For the characters in *The Americans* and *Homeland*, the meaning of their actions and of their lives does not simply accrue from a stable, unchanging foundation. Instead, it is continually negotiated through an ongoing, retrospective process of interpretation and counter-interpretation. The resulting provisionality of this condition is captured in Robert Pippin’s (2000) summary of “the problem of meaning” as a central theme in the novels of Henry James. “One can imagine a memory of a time with someone in the past,” Pippin writes,

a memory for a long time sweet and completely uncomplicated, ruined forever by a later revelation that the assumptions made by one party then were false, that someone was untrue or unfaithful in some way. Nothing about what it was then, for one of the parties, how it felt then has changed, but it can no longer really be remembered that way, even as a memory of ‘then’, the falseness in what one took it all to mean changes everything, irrevocably and forever, and ‘how it was’ is no longer one’s own. (2000, 172)

These words resonate with much of *Homeland*, a drama whose central tropes concern betrayal, the breaking of fidelity, trust, and faith, and the subsequent recasting of how the characters understand

who they are, and were, to one another.¹¹³ In its treatment of these concerns, the series presents the challenge of coming to understand “who one is” – whether oneself or another – as an ongoing and unstable interpretive process that takes place in a context of great theatricality and thus potential deceptiveness. Hence it is always shadowed by uncertainty, and by the possibilities of misplaced trust, betrayal, or grave misunderstanding.

Reflecting these conditions, details of performance in the two *Homeland* openings discussed earlier in this section work to complicate any sense of straightforward accumulation, instead casting light on alternative opportunities that seriality affords. In “Grace”, for instance, consider how the briefly held sense that Carrie is becoming psychologically linked with Brody is achieved by means of a perceptual trick. The scene exploits settled expectations of dream sequence convention to overturn assumptions of privileged access to character interiority. Woken by Brody’s scream, Carrie looks to the monitor to discover its source. But in Lewis’s performance of Brody’s terror, there is no such thing to be found – only the image of a man lost in confusion and fright, overwhelmed by an obscure sense of threat that has no outer object but which resides everywhere within. And in the opening of “Semper I”, the certitude of Carrie’s pre-emption is coloured by hints of unintelligibility. The knowledge Carrie demonstrates by predicting Brody’s actions is that of habit, the observation of a codified military procedure. Akin to the superficiality of trivia learned by rote, Carrie’s “knowledge” hardly counts as understanding another – “knowing their mind” in the way she needs to know Brody’s. When Brody thinks he sees Abu Nazir in the bathroom mirror, it appears to Carrie as only another instance of his inexplicable terror at a looming threat which remains, to her, invisible. Carrie is right when she notes down the words “Another hallucination?”, but despite her time watching Brody she cannot make any meaningful sense of what she sees.

Danes’s performance gives further hints of a submerged dimension to Carrie’s interest in Brody, one the character might wish to overlook. As Brody steps from the shower, Danes performs Carrie’s attention as being driven by more than her sense of professional mission. When her character’s target comes into view, Danes resists her ready expression of sceptical scrutinising, marked elsewhere in the series by a narrowing of the eyes and brow to project an unyielding, scalpel-like gaze – Carrie’s instrument for peeling back the layers of another’s self-presentation. Here, while Brody is emerging from the shower offscreen, Danes allows a quiet smile to show, and then plucks a piece of melon from her fork; the work of surveillance, of spying, has become lined by the perverse amusement and anticipation of “peeping”, and the satisfaction of the appetites it serves. In the key gesture of the passage, Danes lightly presses her tongue against her upper lip and then faintly bites her lower, an absent-minded expression of barely apprehended erotic desire that

¹¹³ As Steenberg and Tasker note, the issue of fidelity – “to one’s spouse, employer, mentor, family, and country” – emerges as the chief “structuring concept” of *Homeland* (2015, 137).



Figure 4.5 Claire Danes performing Carrie's absorption

appears as mere reflex. Eyes fixed on the monitor, Danes has Carrie appear absorbed in the spectacle of Brody's body so that her gestures in response (biting her lip, for example) seem to be moved by something below direct awareness and control (figure 4.5). The success of the gesture's significance in these terms stands as an example of *Homeland's* sensitivity to precise calibrations of expressive behaviour, insofar as the moment's effect depends on a fine handling of scale. If the action were too strongly pointed out by the camera or too insistently pointed up by the actor, it would stand as something conspicuously declared by both for the viewer to notice. As it is, we are placed by the camera at sufficient distance from Danes so that her minimal movement does not forcibly distract from the more immediate interest of her fixated, and fixating, eyes. The subconscious act is thus, unavoidably, present in plain sight, and so is unmissable even as it remains easily overlooked. We then cut to a closer view. In a moment which suggests the re-emergence of Carrie's self-awareness, Danes breaks from her reverie as though being caught out. She looks down from the screen, running a hand through her hair and sipping from her coffee with a hint of embarrassment. Carrie is here shown to sublimate unwanted, troubling desires while recovering a more deliberate, albeit deceptive, self-presentation – one delivered, in this moment, to herself.

The opening of "Semper I", together with that of "Grace", thus brings into question the view of serial drama's extended duration as simply allowing determinate knowledge of character interiority to accumulate. Instead, the sequences' linked reflections on television viewing, performance, and time are coloured by hints of unknownness. This is particularly marked in the closing images of the "Semper I" sequence, in which Brody stands before the bathroom mirror, now

neatly dressed in his Marine Corps service uniform. His reflection is a reminder of the theatrical role he has assumed since returning to military service, one whose purpose is to craft a compelling public image that will help to further inspire and sustain America's commitment to the War on Terror. That Brody is adept at theatricalising himself is established early in the pilot episode, when he gives a speech upon arriving at Andrews Air Force Base with great ceremony. While en route from Germany, he is wracked by crippling anxiety, seeming unable to meet the public pressure about to be applied. But on taking the podium before an audience of assembled Marines and politicians, and while being televised live to the nation, he comfortably improvises a suitably charismatic, disarming speech of well-measured feeling. Intercut with his speech is a scene of Carrie and Virgil watching the broadcast as they install the surveillance devices throughout his home, Carrie seeming both at once drawn to, and sceptical of, Brody's performance. "Guy's got game," says Virgil, admiring not the content or sincerity of the presentation but rather the performative skill of its execution. Later watching Brody before the mirror at the start of "Semper Paratus", Carrie acknowledges his appearance as a façade. "Smile for the camera," she says. Carrie's line is answered by the scene's final image, which is presented through the black-and-white pixellation of the surveillance monitor, this layer of mediation a reminder of our limited viewpoint on Brody's reflection, as he instantly breaks from an inscrutable stare into a beaming smile.

3. Motifs of Homecoming, Mirrors, and Reflection

Across *Homeland*'s first season, the innerness of Damian Lewis's face is often made a fixture for the series' interest in seriality as a medium for the provisional and retrospective. The drama's patterning repeatedly invites us to look back on the significance of moments that rested on a particular understanding of Lewis's facial expressions, and to revise our sense of them. At Andrews Air Force Base, for example, as Brody crosses the tarmac to the podium at which he will speak, we see him make his way through a gauntlet of reporters and photographers while a Marine band performs a loud brass number; as cameras flash and the pomp of the music blares, Lewis plays a smattering of sharp flinches in response. This is a familiar convention, of the traumatised war veteran disturbed by a jubilant welcome home ceremony, which in its moments of violent bombast ironically echoes the shocks of war. But a darker lining to Lewis's expression is subsequently suggested by the flashbacks that open the following episode. As discussed above, "Grace" begins with Brody digging Tom Walker's grave as he sings the "Marines' Hymn". In his faltering voice, we might recognise the tune of the brass music that accompanied Brody's homecoming at Andrews Air Force Base, his "welcome back" thus returning him to the horror of his captivity. A different reading of his discomfort is then made available: as a sign not simply of his reluctance to face such

public attention and exposure, but as the expression of an interior encounter with a shameful, secret part of himself he might wish to avoid or altogether deny.

The sequence at Andrews Air Force Base forms part of the wider motif of homecoming around which a great deal of the pilot episode is organised, in which the stakes of *Homeland*'s drama are first planted. Although Brody's repatriation is at the centre of the episode and provides the spine of its story, it is intertwined with the implications of another homecoming, in the form of Carrie's return to the United States from Iraq. We see that she now lives in Washington, DC, where she works as an analyst behind a desk at CIA headquarters. The series begins, then, with both a man and a woman returning from war to the relative peace, settlement, and security of home. *Homeland* is thus one of a number of recent films and television programs set during wartime – such as, among others, *The Hurt Locker* (Bigelow, 2010), *American Sniper* (Eastwood, 2015), *The Americans*, and *Quarry* (Cinemax, 2016) – that addresses a tension between the promises of peace and security offered by modern bourgeois life and the incompatible attractions of conflict and war. These fictions, including *Homeland*, treat war as a setting that exemplifies the more dangerous but less constrained, relatively lawless social environments that modern societies replaced, and in doing so they participate in a long tradition that takes in genres such as the Western and film noir.¹¹⁴ The Hollywood Western, argues Robert Pippin, presents a mythical account of the transition “from the feudal patriarchal authority that arose in the pre-legal situation of the frontier to a more fraternal, more modern form [of social organisation]” (2010a, 22). For Pippin, many Westerns are interested in the “psychic costs of such a transition” (2010a, 22), and dramatise that cost through the scenario of a soldier returning from war to a state of peaceful, domesticated settlement, a figure perhaps best exemplified by the character of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) in *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956).¹¹⁵ And in film noir, as Pippin notes, “bourgeois domestic life – the peaceful, secure, commercial, and domestic activity many heroes in Hollywood Westerns were trying desperately to establish – [is portrayed] as so stultifying and banal that even crime began to look attractive to those trapped in it” (2012, 7). One context that helps to make sense of this aspect of film noir, and which resonates with the story of *Homeland*, is of the genre's emergence shortly after the end of the Second World War, “when hundreds of thousands of men returned from years of living with violence and death (and

¹¹⁴ Deborah Thomas (2000) frames the melodramatic mode of Hollywood film in terms of such a tension, between spaces of peaceful domesticity and some “alternative” space where the constraints of the domestic break down. On the treatment of this theme in terms of pre-modern and bourgeois society Hollywood Westerns, see Pippin (2010a), and for its adjacent development in film noir, see Pippin (2012); on the relationship between the two, see Pippin (2012, 9–12).

¹¹⁵ At the beginning of *The Searchers*, Ethan is returning home from America's Civil War (concluded years earlier), still dressed in his Confederate uniform, having refused to pledge his allegiance to the Union, or even to recognise the surrender. As suggested by the scene discussed at the outset of this chapter, the long shadow of the Civil War is important to matters of allegiance in *Homeland*. However, this aspect of the series' significance is beyond the scope of this chapter.

what some have called the thrill and exhilaration of war) and had to adjust to the quiet and routine of bourgeois domesticity” (Pippin 2012, 7–8).

In Westerns and film noir, then, along with the more recent films and television series cited above, an ostensibly welcome homecoming from war is instead attended by a sense of isolation from the society or home being returned to. At issue is the question of whether or not the characters can, in the wake of their experience at war, wholeheartedly participate, or find meaning and value, in the prosaic virtues of ordinary, domesticated life. In *Homeland*, this issue is most clearly foregrounded in the possibility of Brody’s treason – that he may not only have difficulty adjusting to the “quiet and routine of bourgeois domesticity”, but that his purpose in returning to the United States might be in fact to wage war at home, *against* that home. The theme of homecoming in the series is thus coloured by the spectre of betrayal, and an unsettling thread of estrangement.

Early in the episode, we witness a briefing at CIA headquarters during which Brody’s discovery is announced and a video is shown of his rescue. Here we get our first view of Damian Lewis as Brody. The character having been stunned by a flash grenade, he is hauled onto his knees by the American soldiers, his face obscured by dirt and his overgrown hair and beard. Brody mutters a phrase in Arabic, and then repeats the same in English: “I’m an American”. A ripple runs through the briefing room audience. In the guise of an enemy terrorist fighter, this man reveals himself to be, “on the inside”, American. In the words of Deputy Director Estes, he is “one of ours”. The briefing scene ends on the video of Brody’s rescue, which is frozen in a close-up of a bearded and bedraggled Damian Lewis. We then dissolve to another close-up view of Lewis, one no longer mediated by a screen within the fiction, but by the steamed-up bathroom mirror in which his face is reflected (figures 4.6–7). The handling of this mirror scene is rich in thematic resonance. Now safe and secure at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Brody has been able to shower, to begin shedding the detritus of his captivity that had clung to him as though a second skin. We appear to be seeing the first steps in what will be a long process of restoration – of trying to become again the person he was. Brody stares at his bearded reflection in the mirror, and Lewis presents a picture of transfixed stillness as he gazes into his own eyes. Where the video of Brody’s rescue raised the indeterminate, potentially deceptive relationship between inner and outer, here that matter is further deepened and complicated. In addition to issues of character interiority, the mirroring also brings out the always lurking question of the actor’s own subjectivity. Within the fiction, it seems, Brody sees himself. But this is not in any straightforward way what we are shown. We are presented with an image in



Figure 4.6–7. From mediation by the camera to reflection in the mirror

which the English actor Damian Lewis stands before a mirror and is filmed as he acts the part of the American Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody (who is at this point in the story already shadowed, both for us and the actor, by the suspicion that he is not who he appears to be).¹¹⁶ Who, then, does Lewis

¹¹⁶ It is of course the case that throughout *Homeland*, as in any other fictional television show or movie, the people we see onscreen are almost always actors being filmed as they pretend to be their characters. My point is that this mirror scene raises this issue to the extent that it becomes especially

see as he watches himself pretend to be someone else? Arguably, he sees what we all might as we catch our reflection in a mirror or passing window: the face and body as a theatrical object, one that is inseparable, but somehow still strangely “apart”, from our inner sense of self.

In the scene’s next moments, theatrical self-objectification is related to issues of agency and the purposiveness or meaning of bodily action. While Lewis conveys a state of fixation as he gazes into his own eyes (performing Brody’s gaze at himself), the stare appears strangely empty. It is not one of intent, but is rather deadened, or somnolent. There is an echo in Lewis’s eyes of what Pippin notes in the archetypal performances of film noir. “The actors are portrayed doing things,” writes Pippin, “but as if hypnotized, dazed, or sleepwalking, as if they are all trying to portray what something like a kind of ‘passive agency’, what agency but not on the reflective model, *looks like*” (2012, 17). The sense that in this reflection we see the look of a hypnotic – of a person in a puppet-like state – is then heightened by the cut to a close-up of Lewis’s hand, as it takes up a pair of hair scissors and begins to trim his beard in slow, heavy snips. An official trailer for season one (see Showtime 2011) reveals these editing choices as decisive to the scene’s achievement. In the trailer, we see an alternative way of presenting Brody’s confrontation with the mirror and his removal of the beard using hair scissors. The camera is set back from both performer and mirror, allowing a full view of Lewis’s torso (gnarled with the scars of his torture), his body and its reflection simultaneously visible, while his face and eyes are made less available to our scrutiny by their distance from us (figure 4.8). Not only does the wide shot give away the hidden scarring that is crucial to the scene in which Brody and Jessica spend their first night together, the single take denudes the scene of all but its most basic expositional function; Lewis’s presence before the mirror has none of the haunting qualities and significance achieved in the choices that ultimately made their way into the pilot episode. Consider how the fragmentation of the actor’s body by camera and editing provides the appearance of a disembodied hand acting on its own autonomy (figure 4.9). It thus feeds our sense of a person separated from the face he sees in the mirror.

This suggestion of hypnotism, disembodiment, and passive agency is further deepened if we consider *Homeland*’s source not only in the Israeli television series *Hatufim*, but also in John Frankenheimer’s 1962 film *The Manchurian Candidate*. That film is invoked towards the end of the pilot episode, when, after giving his first televised speech, Brody is picked as having the charisma of a potential political aspirant, a remark that is later cashed-out when he is approached to run for a seat in the House of Representatives (“Representative Brody”, 1.10). The hypnotic, disembodied qualities of Brody’s agency (and of Lewis’s performance) are accentuated again in another mirror scene, which, following shortly after the first, depicts the completion of his cosmetic transformation

salient to the scene’s subject matter, difficult to put aside without overlooking a crucial aspect of its significance.



Figure 4.8. An overly revealing perspective: the unused wide shot in a Showtime trailer

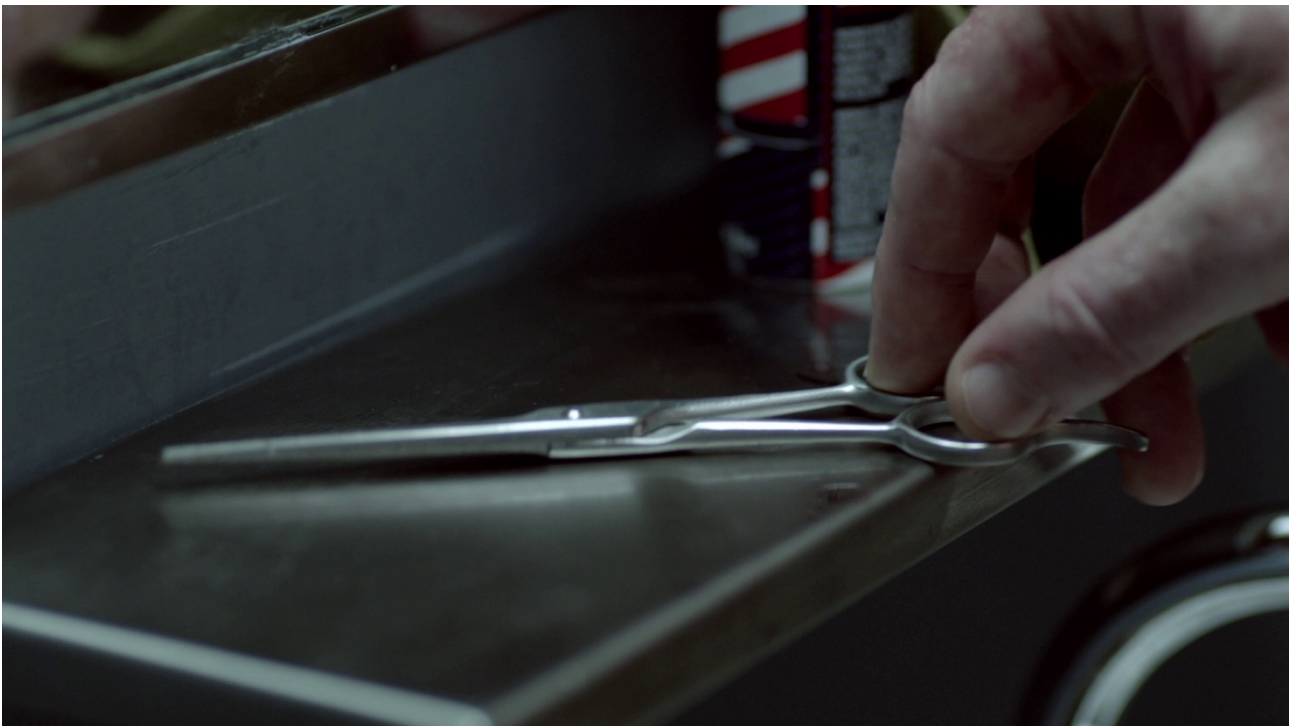


Figure 4.9. Editing and disembodiment: the hand in close-up

while recuperating in Germany. Now sitting in a barber's chair, Damian Lewis's face is shaved clean, his hair cut short in the style of a Marine Sergeant. Scenes of barbering can be found throughout the history of film and television fiction, where they have afforded a rich aesthetic resource.¹¹⁷ Think, for example, of Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* (Chaplin, 1940), wielding

¹¹⁷ My thanks to George Toles for pointing out the scene's relationship to this trope.

a straight razor to the music of Brahms. The rhythmic energy of his movements is choreographed to the tune, becoming increasingly violent as the tempo escalates, the viewer flinching with the man in the barber seat as the blade flicks and slashes harmlessly against his throat. A contrast is the presence of the barber attending to Al Capone (Robert De Niro) in a scene from *The Untouchables* (De Palma, 1987). We look down on Capone who lies reclined in the chair, surrounded by journalists, his neck exposed as the barber – who hovers about the top edge of the frame – applies shaving cream with a brush before pressing the cutthroat razor to the gangster’s cheek. The topic of Capone’s talk with the journalists is his role in the violence roiling Chicago, and so we are especially attuned to the immediate potential for bloodshed; the shaving is thus presented as a display of Capone’s bravado, his preparedness to expose himself to risk, while also testing his temper and capacity for revenge when the barber (understandably nervous) nicks his fearsome client and draws blood.

Homeland takes a very different, austere approach to the depiction of a character in the barber’s chair, minimising the presence of the barber and refusing the evocations of trust, violence, and death that depictions of barbering make easily available. Our view of Brody shows his face almost perfectly in profile, an angle that necessarily reveals and conceals in equal measure. Standing behind him is the barber, who is visible only in the form of a pair of hands, which in an abrupt insert shot are shown as they pick up a can of shaving cream and then – at the very edge of the wide shot of Brody before the mirror – use thumb and forefinger to delicately nudge the foam against the hairline on Brody’s nape (figure 4.10). Damian Lewis’s staring eyes here seem more enlivened than in the earlier mirror scene, now providing an intense evocation of a seeing mind within, but one divorced from the image of purposeful bodily activity supplied in the barber’s precision handiwork.¹¹⁸ Lewis’s achievement in this scene is to resist blankness in a moment where there is little context and no dialogue to help define our sense of the character’s thoughts. What exactly he is thinking is ambiguous, but that ambiguity is not produced by an expression of emptiness. Lewis has spoken in interview of discovering the camera’s power to register signs of inner thought, without the content of that innerness being projected or declared. “Onstage,” he says,

you have to in some small nuanced way give a demonstration of what you’re thinking so that the people at the back can see it, whereas on camera you just quite literally have to think it. [. . .] I realized that you could actually have a whole range of thoughts in a short space of time and the camera would see them all. (quoted in Collins 2016)

¹¹⁸ Later in the season, on the morning of his climactic mission, we see Brody practising with his son before his karate tournament, the young boy pummelling his father’s outstretched palms. Damian Lewis, his face lit up with a zealous spirit, exclaims: “I can’t feel my hands!”



Figure 4.10. The seeing mind divorced from an image of bodily intent

Lewis's talents in this respect are made clear in a scene that measures the innerness of Brody against the qualities of his best friend Mike, with whom Jessica has had an affair in his absence. The question of whether Mike would be a good partner to Jessica, what kind of life one could desire or find in a man like him, is not resolved by the fact that he has accepted the peace and constraints of settled life, but is instead troubled by the casting and performance of Diego Klattenhoff. Opposite Lewis, Klattenhoff is revealed to be an actor who is lacking in the capacity for expressiveness, depth of feeling, mystery, and thought that is so much a feature of Lewis's magnetism in his performance as Brody. This is nowhere more evident than in a scene late in episode two ("Grace"), where Brody harangues Mike for trying – on the orders of his politically motivated superiors – to convince Brody that he should re-enlist in the Marines. The two men are facing one another outside Brody's house, a foot or so apart. Rather than cut between over-the-shoulder set-ups showing one actor and then the other, the director Michael Cuesta chooses to cover the scene largely in a single medium shot that presents both Brody and Mike in profile, so that we can read the expressions of the two actors simultaneously, or, more accurately, that our attention is to be guided not by the demands of editing but by the draw of each performer (figure 4.11). Most of the dialogue is given to Lewis, as Brody delivers to the silent Mike an impassioned rant against America's ongoing war in the Middle East and what it has cost him, that he wants nothing else to do with "their" war, that he only wants the last eight years of his life back. In a negative illustration of the dictum that good acting is mostly listening, Diego Klattenhoff's face and eyes are flatly unresponsive throughout – there is no flicker of movement, no feeling of life, or spontaneous reaction of thought. There is no



Figure 4.11. Measuring innerness: Diego Klattenhoff and Damian Lewis in profile

sign, in other words, that he – the actor, and so also the character – has inside him the capacity to grasp the significance of what he hears, and to share that understanding, to make it intuitively available or intelligible to others through facial expression. Unlike Damian Lewis’s Brody, Klattenhoff’s Mike is a blank, but one that appears to conceal nothing.¹¹⁹ (What, then, does Jessica see in Mike, and in the kind of life or future that he represents and promises?)

By highlighting the innerness, theatricality, and self-division of Lewis’s work as an actor, the two pilot episode mirror scenes thus make especially vivid the sense of a split between Brody’s mind – his inner subjectivity and intentions – and the outer corporeal surfaces of eye, face, and gesture. In this way, the scenes reflect on the series’ larger theme of homecoming. As discussed above, homecoming in the historical context of wartime and the generic context of film noir raises the issue of unseen psychological transformations and the spectre of questionable loyalty to the nation – a potentially weakened allegiance to its way of life, which, as noted by Pippin (2012, 7–8), is one that has its foundation in the commitments of bourgeois domesticity. Lewis’s face, especially his staring eyes that confront an image of himself he may now only see as a stranger, colours the picture of his return home with a sense of unmoored alienation; does he still possess within him whatever it is that keeps us bound to the commitments we hold?

¹¹⁹ Compare Klattenhoff here to Timothy Olyphant as Seth Bullock in *Deadwood*, whose “shining handsomeness” is described by Jacobs as “something of a blank”, but which forms a beguiling cover for the deep reservoir of rage and feeling that animates Bullock from within (2012, 56–57).

4. Ultimate Convictions in “Marine One”

These earlier scenes of mirroring and reflection are given a further turn later in the season, one that provides a light by which to read a central ambiguity of the final instalment, “Marine One” (1.13). In the penultimate episode (“The Vest”), Brody’s allegiance to Nazir is cemented in horrific fashion when, under the cover of his family holiday to Gettysburg, he visits a tailor who has made for him a suicide vest. (Horrorific is the episode’s opening scene, where the tailor’s hands are a visual focus as we watch the crafting of the vest; the delicate care of his fingers in its assembly embodies a finely-honed dedication to the shredding and destruction of other human beings.) Brody’s mission then unfolds in the season finale. As Vice-President Walden (Jamey Sheridan) declares his run for President with Brody by his side, a sniper attack by Walker (who, it turned out, was alive all along) forces Walden and a host of other high-ranking political and military figures into a secure underground bunker, any security screening impossible in such an emergency.¹²⁰ Brody is hustled along with them, wearing the explosive suicide vest beneath his Marine Corps service uniform. Summoning all his sense of purpose, Brody approaches Walden and flicks the switch – but nothing happens, the vest’s crucial wiring having come loose in the chaos of Walker’s attack. An increasingly fraught Brody then repairs the device in a bathroom stall and returns to his target. But in the instant before he can once again pull the trigger and detonate his explosives, he is interrupted by a phone call from his daughter Dana, alerted to Brody’s plan by Carrie, who has recently fallen into the grip of a manic episode. Dana’s call, writes Jason Mittell, “inspires [Brody] to abandon his plan, as he realizes what his suicide attack would do to his wife and children” (2017, 173). Replacing the red plastic cap that guards the detonator from accidental activation, a shaken Brody promises Dana that he will return home.

We might explain the writers’ choice to save Brody from his mission by citing the conditions of drama production in an industrial context where ongoing series are the norm, and a cultural context in which it might be considered unacceptable to show a protagonist wholeheartedly dedicated to a terrorist cause.¹²¹ Damian Lewis was a star of the show, and so his character’s death (one that would seal his unalloyed status as a murderous traitor) may have posed a potentially fatal disruption to the series’ format and of its interest to viewers, jeopardising hopes of a long, commercially successful run. Even so, what needs to be accounted for is *this* way of keeping the character alive and the actor onscreen for future episodes. Mittell’s account of the plot point’s

¹²⁰ Giving the Vice President the name “Walden” is a rich choice for a drama that not only evokes America’s “second founding” in the crucible of the Civil War, but also features a pivotal episode in which a man and a woman (Brody and Carrie) seek a new start by escaping to a cabin in the woods.

¹²¹ On this latter point, it is worth noting that, upon reading the script for “The Vest”, Damian Lewis was adamantly opposed to the idea that a United States Marine would don a suicide vest; see the discussion in Collins (2016).

significance, quoted above, represents an interpretation that is unsatisfying when considered in light of the performance details – patterned across *Homeland*'s first season – that I have highlighted in this chapter. To neatly explain Brody's refusal to destroy himself as clearly motivated by a newfound sense of familial love, we must overlook much of what we are shown of Brody through Lewis's performance, especially in the mirror scenes that introduce the actor's inhabitation of his character. I have already pointed to the sense of disembodiment, hypnotism, and self-division that characterises Lewis's presence before the mirror. These qualities express a sense of Brody's weak or passive agency, and so bring into question the relationship between the character's deeds and his intentions. But a subsequent episode, which ostensibly explains Brody's terrorist allegiances, further brings into question what could have been meant *by the actor*, Damian Lewis, as he performed Brody's encounter with his own reflection in the early scenes of the pilot episode.

In "Crossfire" (1.9), a series of flashbacks show Brody, five years after he was first captured, being received at Nazir's compound in Northern Iraq, where he is to teach English to Nazir's youngest son, the ten-year-old Issa (Rohan Chand). Brody and Issa develop a firm bond over time, as though it is through this young boy that Brody might retain some sense of contact with the memory of his own children. But Issa – along with 82 other classmates – is killed in a drone strike ordered by Vice-President Walden, who was at the time the Director of the CIA. The significance of these flashbacks extends beyond their expository function. When Brody arrives at Nazir's compound, he resembles the figure from the rescue video in the pilot episode, a man reduced to an almost animal state of sheer survival. He is allowed to bathe, his beard is trimmed with scissors and his face shaved clean, his hair neatly cut. Before his bath, Brody looks at himself in the mirror for what might be the first time since his capture; soon after, another shot echoes his cosmetic restoration in Germany (figures 4.12–13). These are moments that raises the question as to how he sees the person staring back – whether he recognises himself in those eyes, or finds in his own face that of a stranger. Cleansed in Nazir's bath, restored to an image of the man who so many years ago left for war, Brody is here not returned to the person he was, but is instead remade as the one Nazir desires him to be. Our thoughts might be cast back to the shot of Damian Lewis in the pilot episode, staring into his own eyes in the mirror, performing Brody's reflection on himself as he returns home. That stare is then cast in a changed light: seeing himself again become the Nicholas Brody who left for war, the character also watches himself undergo once more his transformation into an agent of the enemy he went to fight. This retrospectively available aspect of the scene's significance, however, was likely not meant by Damian Lewis in the delivery of his performance – as noted earlier in this chapter, the actors on the first season of *Homeland* were given



Figures 4.12–13. Seeing himself for the first time in years

the script of each episode only days before its filming would begin.¹²² A sense of the provisional and uncertain is thus made part of the shot's very texture, as an image of an actor whose expressions and gestures come to mean something he did not intend – could not have intended – when he performed them.¹²³ Placed so early in the pilot episode, the two mirror scenes thus teach us how to read Lewis's performance and so to understand Homeland's depiction of Brody: as someone who inhabits an impossible tension between competing purposes, and who does not necessarily know why he is moved to act as he does. This tension is echoed in our involvement in the climactic sequence of "Marine One", when we want Brody to complete his mission, even while opposing his

¹²² See the interview with David Harewood in Hogan (2014).

¹²³ In this respect, the retrospective linking of the two mirror scenes can be seen as something like an extended version of the "Kuleshov effect", in that the significance made available by a particular moment of performance is informed or influenced by its placement within a larger formal pattern that has not been designed at the time the performance was delivered before the camera.

terrorist tactics and wishing for his survival. As Toles writes, “There are few dramatic circumstances more propitious for enhancing spectator involvement than a daunting, unfinished task” (2013, 152). Like certain moments of Hitchcock – for example when Norman is faced with the disposal of Marion’s body in *Psycho* – our commitment to the morally “right” point of view is rapidly surrendered, and we find ourselves acting on the behalf of a deeper allegiance that has suddenly emerged and taken hold.¹²⁴

This aspect of our experience is crucial to the significance of the choice to keep Brody alive, and has its source in Lewis’s performance as Brody undertakes his two attempts to kill Walden. In its presentation of these two moments, the sequence exploits one of Damian Lewis’s signal qualities onscreen: his capacity to embody a person of decisive courage, but one whose heroism and willpower is leavened and made human by a reticence to take up the burdensome mantle which is his to hold. It was Lewis’s performance of Dick Winters in *Band of Brothers* (HBO, 2001) that first made these qualities clear, especially his role in the pivotal fifth episode, “Crossroads”. There we see Lewis’s aptitude for expressions of resolve when, singlehandedly storming a German position, he comes face-to-face with a teenage soldier. Momentarily stunned, Lewis’s eyes widen, and he pauses – but the look of wide-eyed astonishment becomes, in an instant, an expression of quickened alertness and full-blooded, lethal commitment (figure 4.14). The look in his eyes unchanged, Winters grits his teeth and squeezes the trigger, killing the young boy and then turning his weapon



Figure 4.14. Wide-eyed astonishment to lethal commitment: Damian Lewis in *Band of Brothers*

¹²⁴ On the slippery nature of moral alignment in Hitchcock, see Toles (2011a).

on its next targets, gunning down his scrambling enemy one-by-one. The link between Lewis's performance in this moment of "Crossroads", and his presence during Brody's mission in "Marine One", consists in the way both sequences tap Lewis's talent at simultaneously inhabiting incompatible states of being.

While his thumb hovers over the detonator of his suicide vest for the second time, Brody listens to his daughter as she pleads with him to promise that he will return safely; it is a promise he makes and keeps. Treated simply as a plot event, this resolution might be read sentimentally, Brody having been rescued by the power of familial love over the promise of meaning achieved in a public spectacle of vengeful, violent death. But this would be to forget that not long before he speaks with Dana, we see Brody flick the detonator's switch, the decisiveness and finality, the absoluteness of his choice expressed in the sound mix by the sharp, resolute "click" that resonates at the moment of intended death, which by sheer luck (and writerly intervention) does not come. Brody shows that he has what it takes, that he is sufficiently committed to his terrorist cause that to see it through he would destroy himself, betray his oath to his nation, and forever ruin and stain the remainder of his children's lives and their memories of him. In a number of scenes across both "The Vest" and the earlier parts of "Marine One", we are shown Brody implicitly farewelling his wife and children, attempting to leave them with memories that would let them make sense of his actions in the way he wants them to be understood. (This is the other secret purpose of the family's trip to the Civil War battlefield at Gettysburg, which is saturated in a sense of meaning that for Brody's children is only provisional, will only really make sense later, but then surely not in the way he intends or hopes.) As his mission proceeds, Brody appears increasingly agitated as he approaches the decisive moment. In contrast to Chris Chalk's unfaltering lethality of purpose as Tom Walker, Lewis interprets Brody's sense of mission as conflicted. But when Brody dresses in the suicide vest, he is well aware of that mission's terrible cost, and he subsequently proves it is one he is not only willing to accept for himself, but to also impose on those he loves. The ambiguity of Brody's two central choices in "Marine One" lies in their apparent contradiction of one another. The sentimental reading of Brody's survival thus has the problem of integrating what we are shown of his ultimate commitment to self-destruction in the name of a terrorist cause, one that is held with a clear understanding of how his actions will devastate the family he leaves behind.

The interpretive challenge of Brody's aborted attack in "Marine One" echoes that of the famous reversal at the end of *The Searchers*, where Ethan's genocidal murderousness is in a single instant set aside for a gesture of familial love and reconciliation. Noting the difficulty of accurately defining why Ethan makes the choice that he does, Robert Pippin suggests that:

Ethan has not acted impulsively nor revealed that he is weak-willed with respect to deeply held beliefs, nor that he has been transformed by the quest, nor that the scalping of Scar has shamed or humanized him. What we and he discover is that he did not know his own mind, that he avowed principles that were partly confabulations and fantasy. (2010a, 131)¹²⁵

In Brody's case, the handling of Damian Lewis's performance suggests not a sharp break but a disturbing overlap between the state of mind that underpins his suicidal murderousness, and that which provides the basis for his subsequent choice to return home to his children. As Brody advances towards Walden, the detonator in hand, Lewis is framed in a tight close-up, to the almost total exclusion of the space and the people around him. He stares straight ahead as Brody steadily closes on his target step-by-step, face and eyes unmoving, an echo of his somnambulant stare from early in the pilot episode (figure 4.15). Our sense of Brody's trance-like remove from the world is heightened by the sound design that reduces the background noise of the room to a distant hum, while Damian Lewis's breathing is loud and close, which might register as Brody's heightened sensitivity to the inner thrum of his own body. In contrast to any suggestion of attunement, however, the sound of his breathing is set apart from the face and body on the screen, out of scale and time with the actor's visible intake of air, the dubbing of Lewis's breath not smoothly integrated with the image but instead set at odds with it. Our view of Brody preparing to make his



Figure 4.15. An echo of his somnambulant stare: Brody's first attempt

¹²⁵ For his larger discussion of Ethan's choice, see Pippin (2010a, 126–32).

ultimate choice is then intercut with a flashback to Brody's training by Nazir, the actor Navid Negahban equally framed in a tight close-up as he looks into the lens, as though Nazir is staring directly into Brody's eyes. "There is nothing left to think about," he intones. "Clench your teeth. Say the Holy words. Remember Issa." Our access to Brody's subjectivity as he prepares to detonate his bomb is thus marked by a sense of the character's self-remove, dissociation, and thoughtless, unreflective physical action. His capacity to carry out the act – to fully realise his commitment – appears to depend less on holding to a conceptual proposition or logic and more on the grip of a corporeal state.

These qualities are then echoed as Brody makes his promise to Dana. Having repaired the device at considerable risk of discovery, Lewis plays Brody as agitated when he approaches Walden for a second time. His repeat attempt is presented in a way that resembles the first, but expressively amplified in recognition of the heightened force of will that is required to kill oneself not once, but twice. Lewis stands beneath a ceiling light, and, as he prepares to detonate the bomb, he casts his gaze upward, eyes wide and mouth frozen as his face glows in an evocation of glory achieved through martyrdom, the camera pushing in as the buzzing strings crescendo in anticipation (figure 4.16). An insert shows his thumb tense as it readies to apply the final pressure. We hear Brody grunt with exertion, but there is a pause, a break between mental intention and bodily act – the hand stays frozen, a hesitation that allows a Secret Service agent to interrupt with Dana's phone call, in which she begs him to return safely. "Dad, you have to promise me," Dana says. "I need you. You know that." What does Dana believe about her father when she makes this call, and



Figure 4.16. Expressive amplification: Brody's second attempt

implores him to express this commitment? Why does she think he is responsible for the outcome of a terrorist attack? Measured against Lewis in this scene, Morgan Saylor is not always as convincing in her lines as we might hope. But this helps to support the impression that Dana is not entirely truthful when she insists that she believes in her father's innocence. Consider how – like a film director – she coaches his performance when he makes his first, halting commitment to come home. “No,” she pleads, “don’t say it like that.” Say it, in other words, in a way that lets me set aside my knowledge of you that motivated this call – allow me to believe in what I suspect is untrue.

In contrast to the contained innerness that is elsewhere in the series such a mark of his performance as Brody, Lewis plays his halting responses to Dana in a way that charts the swift disintegration of whatever psychological fabric has until this point allowed the character to pursue any purposive course of action at all. With each question and plea from Dana, there is a caught-breath pause from Lewis, his eyes darting from side-to-side like a trapped animal while he struggles to calculate a fitting answer; his face spasms, nerves misfiring; words come forth in fits and starts, as though they were the issue of nothing more than a reflex on the verge of stuttering breakdown; and when Dana pleads for her father to come home, Lewis produces a voice that sounds strangled from within, struggling to emerge, at once machine-like in its rapid robotic tempo but pitifully human in its helpless, panicked desperation. The closeness of the camera now works in concert with the actor's changed manner to evoke not concentrated, intent dissociation from the world, but a state of paralysed terror and disoriented mental spinning. It is in emerging from this condition that Brody is able to make credible his promise to Dana, but as performed by Lewis the moment is not one of reassuring sentiment for the viewer.

As though in response to Dana's many repetitions of the word “promise” and “dad”, Lewis brings his performance to breaking point, his face shaking, chest heaving in silent sobs as tearful gasps escape with each tiny, crushed breath. But then there is a change. Lewis's brow relaxes, and the strain runs from his face. His eyes glaze and settle on some distant but invisible point. Stillness overtakes him, at once within and without, as silence falls, his panicked breathing calmed. The greatest intensity of distress and confliction is in a passing instant replaced by an emptying absence of emotion (figure 4.17). It is in this newly opened void that Brody at last speaks with a measure of certainty: “I’m coming home, Dana,” he says. “I promise.” Lewis delivers the line with a dead calm, the distance in his eyes further colouring his cold vocal tone, as though Brody's speaking of this promise were akin to the rote incantation of a mantra. Lewis's performance of Brody's reversal thus brings to mind not the rediscovery of a submerged love, but the words of Abu Nazir that underpinned the suicidal murderousness of which he had proven himself capable only moments earlier: “There is nothing left to think about. Clench your teeth. Say the Holy words. Remember Issa.”



Figure 4.17. An emptying absence of emotion: Brody's lifesaving promise

Brody's pivotal reversal is aesthetically credible not because "Marine One" supplies a plausible set of motives that can be ascribed to explain the character's actions. It is instead because previous moments of performance – most fundamentally the treatment of Damian Lewis in the pilot episode's dual mirror scenes – have prepared us for just such a sudden and seemingly inexplicable loss of what seemed to underpin a person's ultimate convictions. The significance that *Homeland* gives to the provisional in serial drama is thus an unsettling one. It is vividly captured in a storyline from episode eight ("Achilles' Heel", 1.8) which forms a pre-echo for Brody's change of heart. In pursuit of Tom Walker, the FBI enlists his wife Helen (Afton Williamson) in a sting operation. Knowing Walker will call Helen's home to hear the voice of his ex-wife and son on their answering machine, the authorities trace the line and encourage Helen to entrap her former husband, saving him from Nazir's plot and protecting her nation from further attack. When Walker calls in the middle of the night, Helen manages to keep him on the phone, talking to him even though he does not respond. Eventually, as the trace is about to close-in, Walker speaks: "Helen," he says. On hearing her long-lost husband speak her voice, she turns in horror towards Carrie. "Oh baby," she says into the phone, "I've done a horrible thing." As Carrie tries to seize the handset, Helen screams down the line: "They're tracing this call – you've got to get out of there!" As in the case of Brody's call to Dana in "Marine One", long-held commitments to another person, and to a larger body of collective belonging, are brought into irreconcilable conflict, and the switch of allegiance from one

to the other is little more than the sound of a particular voice speaking a certain word. It is not a reassuring picture of love or loyalty, but more like an image of hypnotism and a deep unknownness.

Conclusion

In the unfolding structure of serial drama, *Homeland* finds a fitting medium for its story of deep scepticism about identity, personal loyalty, and national or political allegiance. The series features multiple layers of performance within performance, and its drama and mood are marked by the great suspicion and doubt to which such theatricality gives rise. The first season of *Homeland* thus provides a contrast to views of serial drama as a storytelling form whose principal interest resides in what Philip Drake (2016) describes as the straightforward “accumulation” of character knowledge, gained through our familiarity with a particular performer over time. The performances in *Homeland* are instead coloured by a sense of radical provisionality. Our understanding of their meaning in any one moment is often uncertain, or temporary, retrospectively undone or revised in the light of later dramatic revelations or reversals. In exploring this aspect of the series, I have concentrated on Damian Lewis’s performance as Brody, specifically in regard to the treatment of his face as an emblem of innerness within a larger pattern concerning the intelligibility of corporeal human surface. The revelation of feeling and character interiority through repeated scrutiny of the face in close-up has historically been considered a fixture of television’s aesthetic attractions. But in the first season of *Homeland*, pivotal scenes that invite the reading of Lewis’s facial expression work to extend but ultimately frustrate such a promise of meaning.¹²⁶ These scenes discussed in this chapter have been revealed as crucial to the significance of allegiance and fidelity in *Homeland*, in particular the series’ linking of domestic, intimate commitments of personal loyalty to larger schemes of national and political belonging. These are shown to be connected by their basis less in a purely rational set of propositional understandings, instead more in a certain kind of corporeal grip or state. Each is thus characterised by unfathomable depths and a disturbing fleetingness or fragility. By highlighting this aspect of the series, the chapter helped to refine the terms in which we value the first season of *Homeland* and understand its achievement. The distinction of the series does not lie in its intricately complex puzzles to be solved by analysis, but in the way it heightens our awareness of deeper, more persistently troubling mysteries, to be contemplated and reflected on.

¹²⁶ There is a link here to the interpretive challenges of “facingness” as a pictorial strategy in nineteenth century French modernist painting, as exemplified by Manet. See the discussion in Pippin 2014, (59–60); see also the related account of nineteenth century French painting in terms of theatricality and anti-theatricality in Fried (1980, 1990, 1996). The connections between issues of theatricality and facingness in nineteenth century modernism and the interpretive issues made prominent through screen performance in recent serial drama are deserving of an independent study.



Figure 4.18. A final, haunting image of the provisional

As performed by Damian Lewis, Brody's decisive moments of commitment in the season one finale – like Helen Walker's dual betrayals in "Achilles' Heel" – represent not a firm achievement or realisation of will, but, disturbingly, something closer to a loss of self. In these moments, the characters barely look like deliberate agents purposively doing something, instead seeming more like puppets to whom something happens. Why they acted as they did, what purpose it had or meaning it revealed, is not intelligible in the moment but may only come into focus later, as a provisional and retrospective reading of the past in light of the present. In *Homeland*, the central characters of Carrie and Brody are increasingly unsure of their capacity to do this, finding themselves thrown up against their own and others' actions in ways that appear to defy confident understanding. In Carrie's case, Brody's choice to abort his mission appears to prove that, when she decided Brody was indeed a terrorist, and warned Saul accordingly, she was badly mistaken in her reading of who he is, and of what he was capable of doing. Hers is a misreading made all the more difficult and painful in the context of their love affair, itself clouded by shadows of deception and what may have been the pair's instrumental objectification of one another. The price for Carrie is the acceptance that she is insane, as she prepares to undergo electro-convulsive therapy in a bid to not only submerge her bipolar symptoms, but also to forget, a desire that has pointed resonance with serial drama as a medium of history and memory. As Carrie is laid down – her mouth gagged by a plastic splint, electrodes fixed to her head – *Homeland's* first season offers its final, and most awful, haunting picture of the provisional: the wiping of Carrie's mind and with it her sense of the past. As she slips into her anaesthetic twilight, memories of her relationship with Brody float up. The final of

these images, a flashback to “The Weekend”, shows Carrie comforting Brody in the log cabin as he again wakes from a nightmare, crying out the name “Issa”. The drug taking hold, Carrie gingerly forms the final link in her puzzle, realising the connection between Brody and Nazir, tragically seeing that she was right just at the moment she is about to irretrievably lose this part of her mind. “Don’t let me forget,” she whispers to no-one, and passes into unconsciousness. The meaning of Carrie’s loss is captured in our view of her body as she undergoes the procedure (figure 4.18). Her face is deathly white, and under the spell of the anaesthetic she appears lifeless, but for the autonomous, reflex jerking of her body. As the coherent pieces of her mind are erased, what is left appears as little more than an animated corpse. In the following chapter, we will see how *Mad Men* develops an alternative picture concerning the dissolution of memory, and its implications for the survival of the future.

Chapter Five.

Unspoken Bonds in *Mad Men*

The previous chapter explored *Homeland*'s use of performance and provisionality to depict moments of estrangement, and the undoing or erosion of social bonds. In this final chapter, I highlight related but contrasting treatments of the provisional in *Mad Men*, appreciating moments in which it is made crucial to the credibility of gestures that express not the failure of companionship, but its renewal and enrichment. The chapter thus reveals how the provisional is not only a resource for portraying the fragility or collapse of social bonds in serial drama, but may also be a measure of their continued survival and depth. The chapter's central example is from episode seven of season four, "The Suitcase" (4.7), which concentrates on the fraying of Don and Peggy's relationship. Like the other examples from both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* looked at in Chapters Three and Four, the moments addressed in this chapter make valuable use of performance to draw on the fiction's deep internal history. "The Suitcase" finely handles that history in order to successfully negotiate the aesthetic risks posed by scenes of reconciliation and renewed closeness.¹²⁷ While a friendship needs to acknowledge its cherished history, it must also remaining open to a different future, one we hope to be better, but which holds as much potential for further pain and failure.¹²⁸ It would thus be easy for a scene that depicts the apparent healing of the characters' bonds to take advantage of nostalgic longing for a romantic memory of their past, or, in a related form of sentimentality, to express the wish for a future together that will be free from the wounds and hurt inflicted before. These tensions are intrinsic to the subject of companionship, and so are not unique to its depiction in serial drama. But in the examples discussed below, expressive relationships between performance and seriality in television drama are made crucial to their successful negotiation, and lend them special force.

My argument is that the success of "The Suitcase" depends on key moments of performance that achieve a fine balance between the evocation and release of the past. This internalises a prominent issue in the art and criticism of serial drama: how and why certain moments make a lasting imprint on our memory, while others fall away, to either be submerged or, at a later time,

¹²⁷ The idea of aesthetic risk is from Clayton's (2016) discussion of "aesthetic suspense" as a concept suggested by V. F. Perkins, to be developed in more detail below.

¹²⁸ See Nehamas (2016, 206–14).

once again lifted from the past. In doing so, the success of “The Suitcase” depends on the eloquence of silent gesture to convey a sense of accrued intimacy, while acknowledging its fragility and transience. The depth of the ending’s power lies in its palpable sense of unspoken communication and exchange, the expression of which is fully visible and deeply felt, but which resists our articulation.

1. Sedimentation and Renewal: The Ending of “The Suitcase”

The ending of “The Suitcase” pivots around a central motif in *Mad Men*: those many moments in which Don faultlessly recovers from experiences of failure and collapse. The episode concentrates on the relationship between Don and Peggy, using the deadline of the Samsonite pitch to separate them from the rest of the cast. While the others leave the office to watch the boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Sonny Liston, Don insists that Peggy stay behind after hours to work with him. Don’s insistence is motivated in part by his desire for her company on the night that his close friend Anna Draper (Melinda Page Hamilton) – the wife of the dead soldier whose name Don assumed in Korea – is dying. In the face of this news, Peggy becomes a source of distraction from the return telephone call to Anna’s niece that Don cannot bring himself to make. By agreeing to stay behind, Peggy finds herself torn between her obligations to Don and her romantic commitment to her boyfriend Mark (Blake Bashoff), who has made an expensive dinner reservation for her birthday. As the evening unfolds, long-simmering tensions between Don and Peggy break out into open conflict. These scenes are eventually followed, however, with gradual displays of reconciliation. By the end of the night, once they have returned to his office, Don is badly drunk, his shirt stained with vomit, as he asks Peggy for another drink. “I have to make a phone call,” he explains, “and it’s going to be very bad.” He passes out on the couch, Peggy eventually falling asleep beside him, his head resting on her lap. Don wakes at dawn, and makes the call which confirms the inevitable: that Anna died overnight. As Peggy wakes, Don breaks down in grief, before asking her to go home. Instead, she sleeps on the couch in her own office, woken mid-morning by the raucous arrival of Danny, Joey, and Stan.

As we enter the final scene with Peggy, we might reasonably expect to find Don in a state of grieving disarray. Our expectations, however, are sharply overturned. Instead of an image expressing the pressure of past events, our morning-after view of Don sees him miraculously restored – he seems free of any physical or emotional hangover, which brings into question how heavily one’s history ought to weigh on the present. That Don appears impervious to what passed between he and Peggy overnight might move us to wonder whether their rediscovered closeness has survived, or whether it has once again dissolved or been abandoned, having left no lasting imprint on Don’s sense of their relationship to one another. The opening moments of the final scene thus

prepare us to register the weight of the ending's crucial gestures – of Don placing his hand atop Peggy's, and then holding her gaze in a sustained exchange of mutual contact. We are invited to take that gesture as one that renews Don and Peggy's bond through his acknowledgment of their shared history, which his impervious recovery appeared to avoid or deny. What is at stake in this sense of the episode's ending, I argue, is our larger understanding of *Mad Men*'s interest in serial form: namely, as a medium for exploring the place of the past in the present, which may either strengthen or break the ties of human sociality.

A sense of the past's weight on the present is felt as Peggy first approaches Don's closed office door to check-in, the action lined by a muted sense of anxious anticipation. Abruptly woken on the couch in her own office, Peggy is still dressed in the same clothes she wore yesterday, eyes puffy and tired, her hair a mess. We might imagine that Don also bears the residue of his experiences overnight, but even more so, given his slide into drunkenness, and his fall into a state of absolute grief, to which Peggy alone was witness. That scene marks the depth of Don's unravelling in "The Suitcase", and so is crucial to our sense of the episode's closing passages. As Peggy pauses to knock at Don's door, we know it was only a few hours ago that Don, sitting dishevelled behind his desk, finally made his long-avoided telephone call to confirm the news he had spent the episode secretly dreading. Our view of Don as he absorbs the news of Anna's death provides a measure of what he has lost. Chiefly through the performer's wracked gaze, it is an image marked by the sense of finding oneself profoundly alone, one's most cherished contact with another forever out of reach.

Don's total collapse into grief does not come upon hearing the news, or being left alone with it, but instead when he looks up to find Peggy, who is now awake on his office couch, watching him (figure 5.1). The shot is only brief. But from the camera's shallow-focus perspective across Don's desk – our view held back even as it seems close – we register Elisabeth Moss balancing a fine tension between sympathetic involvement and impersonal distance. Sitting fully upright as she lets the soft couch take her weight, she appears attentive without adopting a stiffened posture, which might evoke politeness as a veil for discomfort. Likewise, one hand lies folded over the other on her lap, but they are not clasped with worry, feeling instead like a gesture of respectful observance, and a channel for the subconscious desire for consoling touch. Most striking is that she sits perfectly still, not shifting her weight or hands in response to Don catching her, nor averting her eyes in embarrassment, nor heightening her expression in a self-conscious performance of concern. Peggy's face is unmoving even as she appears moved by what she has seen. By holding Don's gaze, she makes a claim to their closeness – that she can unexpectedly find him in such a private moment and feel no need to look away, instead keeping his eye contact, letting him know that she sees him.



Figure 5.1. Peggy wakes to see Don's grief

Staring back at Peggy, his eyes widen as he takes a desperate, constricted breath, then collapses into sobbing tears. Even as Peggy senses his distress, it does not become a source for her own. She is courageous for Don, not trying to mirror his pain, but instead providing a bolster for it. It is in the face of Peggy's intimate strength that Don finally breaks.

What most strongly binds us to Don, writes George Toles, is the character's "intricate helplessness" (2013, 147), a state he falls into more deeply at this moment than at any prior point of the series. We have never seen him unravel so thoroughly, stripped of all the internal fixtures upon which his self-image hangs together. As though a mirror for our own spike of surprise and reflex sympathy, the suddenness and extremity of Don's implosion seems to draw Peggy to her feet, instinctively moving to help Don as he falls apart, buckling over in his seat as he sobs, his face hidden from her as he tries to control his jagged breathing. She does not look for a way out, or try to keep her distance, but instead goes closer while giving him space, waiting a few paces from Don's side. Once his sobbing dissolves into a tearful quiet she asks him what happened. Without looking up, Don wipes his eyes and catches his breath, his voice sticking to the back of his throat. "Someone very important to me died," he tells her. She asks who. "The only person in the world who really knew me," he says. Don's confession of absolute isolation moves Peggy to close the distance between them, placing a comforting hand on his back. "That's not true," she says, her voice nearly a whisper, her touch offered as a sign that she knows him, too – at least well enough to make this gesture, as though such contact were itself some seal of knowing shared between them. We have been cutting back and forth between medium shots of Hamm and Moss, keeping each in



Figure 5.2. Personal connection in a desolate mood

their own frame. So it is notable that Peggy's gesture is shown by cutting to a more expansive viewpoint which, for the first time in the scene, places Don and Peggy together (figure 5.2). We thus get an image of deeply personal connection in a scene whose otherwise desolate mood has its source in Don's irretrievable loss of a good friend.

Even though Peggy's touch and presence ease the intensity of Don's grief and allow him a measure of recovery from his collapse, he is nevertheless moved to restore the pair's earlier distance, as though being so exposed to Peggy is more than he can bear. Still catching his breath against jagged sobs, he tells her to go home, that she can come in late. "I'll be fine," he says. Together with a gentle squeeze of his shoulder, she gives her condolences ("I'm so sorry"), to which he responds by simply wishing her "Goodnight". She then leaves, Jon Hamm turning away in his seat to avoid any possibility of further eye contact. As we approach the episode's ending, then, we are to be concerned with a tension between the desire or need for personal closeness, and the adjacent wish to avoid such intimate exposure to another at a time of acute grief, one that is private to him, and so is suitably experienced alone.

These thoughts colour our view of Peggy when, after waking amid the bustle of a new workday, she goes to knock at Don's closed office door. Informing our sense of her approach is the camera's viewpoint, which places Don's doorway in the centre of the image, Miss Blankenship's secretarial outpost occupying the foreground, her seat empty. As Peggy enters the frame from the corridor at our left she passes another woman walking in the opposite direction, who exits just as Peggy appears, as though one were replacing the other. Aside from the muted background ringing



Figure 5.3. Peggy's morning-after approach to the closed office door

of telephones, the emptied-out wide shot makes available a suggestion that Don and Peggy are once again alone together. We may thus have a sense that last night's mood of privacy continues to linger in the light of the new morning. The events overnight saw the emergence of the pair's fondness, re-discovered amid the fraying of their relationship across the earlier parts of season four, and the opening passages of "The Suitcase". Despite their revived friendship, there is nevertheless a hint of trepidation as Peggy prepares to see Don again – Moss just hesitates as she knocks, raising her hand toward the door but stopping short of contact, before finally following through. Even then, her knock is delicate, as though wanting to gently announce one's presence without disrupting another's need for privacy. Like us, Peggy might wonder what state Don will be in, and how she will be able to respond – how might the events of last night have changed the terms of their relationship? The depth of their personal exposure to one another might mark a pivotal shift in who they take each other to be, for better or for worse. It is a possibility that colours the sense of this interstitial moment, which finds expressive use for not only the ordinary fact of a closed door as a sign of refusal to be seen, but also for the floor-to-ceiling panes of frosted glass that stand on either side (figure 5.3). Through them we can only see blurred outlines of furniture, vague shapes of colour that dissipate into blank whiteness. In contrast to Don and Peggy's openness to one another last night, we are this morning faced with a wall of concealment.

Our eventual sight of Jon Hamm further develops these qualities, his vocal and bodily presence overturning any expectation that Don might still be stricken by overwhelming grief. Not only does Don issue an immediate and sharp invitation to enter – the fullness and strength of



Figures 5.4–5. Our familiar view of Don, perfectly returned

Hamm's baritone speaking of undiminished self-command – but then, on coming through the door with Peggy, we see a man who appears shockingly untouched by what happened the night before. Our sense that the pall of Anna's death should still be felt is immediately swept away. We last saw Don left alone in his office by Peggy, trapped in a mood of utter desolation. But now, our familiar view of Jon Hamm as Don Draper is perfectly returned (figures 5.4–5). Reclined in his chair, newspaper in hand, he enjoys a commanding elegance in the smooth swivel of his seat as he shifts

his attention from the paper to Peggy. Don cuts a picture of composed equilibrium – set between the vertical window panes that stretch across the background, he sits square at the centre of his desk which spreads out before him. He thus anchors the compositional symmetry of the image, as though despite falling apart overnight he has effortlessly regained his place as the office domain's centre of gravity. Free of the charcoal jacket that hangs on his seatback, the brilliant white of his crisp shirt glows in the morning sun, which streams through the background Venetians and shines in his sharply fixed hair. Unlike Peggy, who is still in yesterday's clothes and wears every sign of exhaustion, Don has emerged into the new day clean and bright – unburdened. In the abruptness and totality of his transformation, we might have the slightest sense of waking from a dream. Given the magnitude of loss he experienced only hours before, what does it mean for Don to suddenly appear so free of affliction?

The sense of Don's restored appearance emerges in relation to a larger motif of *Mad Men*, in which Don displays his ability to recover from moments of collapse as though he were untouched. It is through its relation to this motif, moreover, that we should appreciate the ending's use of performance to reflect on the significance of serial form. As I noted in Chapter Three, *Mad Men's* title sequence reminds us of the series' interest in Don as a person especially able to craft a solidified self-unity from moments in which his persona frays or fragments.¹²⁹ Toles's (2013) account of Don's miraculous recovery in the pivotal Lucky Strike pitch of the pilot episode suggests how this aspect of our attachment to him is central to *Mad Men's* reflection on its serial form. "The reconstituted figure addressing the group," writes Toles,

is not a man scrambling to make amends for prior blunders. [. . .] Don does not defensively recoil from whatever demonstrative foolishness happened before. Because he has dropped all signs of being tied to his previous lavish display of weakness, it does not limit his present stance in any way. (2013, 157)

Don's escape from prior signs or displays of weakness effectively denies that very history, thus freeing him from its potential grip on his "present stance", and so also on his stance towards the future. For Toles, this places Don among a long line of figures from American literature – such as Jay Gatsby – who embody America's mythology of new beginnings as an escape from history (2013, 156). These are men, he writes, who "embark on a grand design after concocting a new identity (on the scale of lofty childhood fantasy) and erasing their ties to a shameful past" (2013, 168). In making such an escape, trying to erase and outrun one's ties to the past, one must also evade the potential trap of close attachments to others. In the eyes of those who knew you "before",

¹²⁹ See the description in Toles (2013, 148–49).

you might find a reminder of the person you no longer wish to be. And if someone new gets too close, they might glimpse or otherwise uncover those shameful parts of the past you wish to forever disavow. Don's repeated failures of romantic commitment are thus a product of his "fear of closeness", of what are, to him, the "unhinging terrors of dependency" (Toles 2013, 169).

Although the moment quickly passes, our view of Don as Peggy enters his office thus has impressive force because, in his newly clean, unburdened lightness, we register Don's erasure of the pain and grief he displayed the night before. It seems almost as if those events had never happened, that they exert no continued pressure or claim on him at all. "You look fresh," Peggy says. "Did you go home?" He points toward the corner of his desk (where, together with Peggy, we know he keeps clean shirts in a drawer), then uses the same hand to sharply slide his now-forgotten newspaper away up the desk, moving on to other things. "I spruced up," he says. It is all the explanation he gives before asking Peggy to come and look at some work on his desk. There is quiet surprise in Peggy's voice as she comments on his freshness, this both a surrogate for our own upended expectations, and an implicit reminder that Peggy bears the residue which Don has, for himself, so thoroughly washed away. Does Moss also give the line just a hint of Peggy's buried disappointment at what she sees? If we hear this, it might be because Don appears equally indifferent to the fact of their intimate exchanges overnight, whereas Peggy still seems affected, indeed visibly "stuck" in their wake. (She resisted Don's advice to go home and come in late, implicitly to "wash off" and start over, as he is able to do.) The contrast between them resonates with Stanley Cavell's observation about endings in remarriage comedy. The task of those endings, Cavell writes, "is to get the pair back into a particular moment of their lives together. No new vow is required, merely the picking up of an action which has been, as it were, interrupted; not starting over, but starting again, finding and picking up the thread" (1981, 126–27). In the image of Don's stark reconstitution – which defines the mood of the closing scene's opening moments – that thread appears cut, the weight of such ties having been shed. Don and Peggy, it might seem, do not pick up the thread of feeling that held between them in the wake of Anna's death. Perhaps they are back where they started at the episode's beginning, in an echo of Peggy's audience with Don to rehearse the Samsonite pitch, a scene in which she is subject to his relentless criticism of her work and judgement.

Don's fear of close attachments and the forms of personal exposure they involve, Toles argues, draws him toward isolation, a state he frequently seeks out and imposes on himself by breaking the bonds of belonging he craves, severing his ties with those parts of his own history (2013, 168–69). He is thus the central human figure through which *Mad Men* internalises the conditions of serial drama, as a medium characterised by tensions between fragmentation and unity, and one in which the ongoing accrual of the past is weighed against the promise of an "open",

as-yet unrealised future. These features of Don's character, and their resonance with the conditions of *Mad Men's* serial form, are crucial to the significance of the pivotal gestures around which "The Suitcase" ends. The opening moments of the ending exploited Jon Hamm's ability to perform Don's faultless recovery from failure and collapse – to slip easily back into his comfortable state of put-together handsomeness. Our entry into the closing scene thus echoes the aftermath of Don's miraculous transformation during the Lucky Strike scene, when the character's exposure morphs into a state of self-concealment as he celebrates his success with Roger. "He has already retreated into hardness," writes Toles about the earlier scene, "his genially opaque, imperial mask has been reinstated," behind which he is "not accessible to Roger's probing [. . .] nor to ours" (2013, 163). As I noted above, such a shift at the end of "The Suitcase" brings into question whether Don is prepared to recognise, or will otherwise avoid and retreat from, the closeness that emerged between he and Peggy the night before. The ending is thus related to a famous scene from the remarriage comedy *It Happened One Night* (Capra, 1934). After spending what Cavell calls a "chaste" night together under the "transcendental" imagery of the open sky (2004, 156–57), Peter (Clark Gable) and Ellie (Claudette Colbert) wake at dawn and walk down a country road, trying to hitch a ride. The two scenes can be linked in terms of Cavell's interest with the way that, in Capra's film, the previous night's mood continues to be felt in this very different setting, one where the characters' tone towards one another seems at odds with their intimacy before. For Cavell, the pair's words and expressions are a "covering" for the attraction that still holds between them. "Even the variance of the pair's individual manners," he writes,

suggests the covering – the man somewhat depressed, the woman somewhat manic. So I imagine them as moving together but each keeping to himself and herself, filled with thoughts of each other, trying to accommodate to what has passed between them and to their knowledge that they each know what the other is going through, including an unreadiness to become, or a perplexity in discovering the right to become, explicit. (2004, 157)

It seems right to say that the ending of "The Suitcase" concerns Don and Peggy's respective efforts at "trying to accommodate to what has passed between them". And the idea of "covering" is apt as a term for Don's reconstitution, one which, as Toles (2013) argues, elides or denies past experience in favour of beginning again, starting over without the burden of that history. At issue, then, is what it means for their relationship if the previous night's mood lingers only as an absence to be avoided, something to be denied, its ties to the present cut loose.

After Don invites Peggy behind his desk to examine the new work, however, the mood between them undergoes a shift, moving around a gesture that raises their shared past to the surface

of the present. It would have been easy for Don to preserve their places opposite one another, simply by turning the sheet around for her to see, or by handing it across the desk. But instead they stand side-by-side as Don shows Peggy his rough pencil drawing of two suitcases in a boxing ring, one knocked out flat on the canvas by the other, alluding to the photograph of Ali's victory over Liston which Don has seen on the front page of that morning's *Daily News*. The tag-line on the sketch reads: "The Champ". He places his copy of the newspaper beside the sketch for her appreciation. But she is sceptical. Unimpressed by the allusion ("I think you have to know the photo"), and worried about the clarity of the idea and the practicality of its execution on television, Peggy meets Don's work with a series of fault-finding objections. As he responds to each of her criticisms, she raises another, her eyes fixed downward in scrutiny of the drawing, unmindful of Don's sideway glances that seek her returned look. Testing the strength of the pitch is of course Peggy's job. But given the fractiousness of their relationship across the episode and the season, Don and Peggy's back-and-forth tussle bears a lining of quietly resumed conflict. As Peggy asks the last of her testing questions ("How do you put it on TV? Are they animated?") we cut to a close-up of Don that amplifies the personal tenor of Jon Hamm's delivery in reply. "Why are you shitting on this?" he asks. The proximity of the camera is fitting with the changed tone of the actor's voice, which falls toward a whisper. What had been a look of bemused exasperation now carries just a hint of anger and hurt. In light of the sense that last night's intimacy has been let go by Don, we might wonder if they are sliding back into their earlier state of mutual animosity and wounding. Perhaps this is what Don feels, or fears, as his tone turns newly serious with hurt. And it might be what Peggy recognises when Don's changed tone moves her to lift her eyes towards him, a resigned sigh softening her attitude of relentless critique. "I'm tired," she admits, the surrender offered as an apology. We cut to a wide frontal shot of the pair side-by-side as she admits the idea's promise (figure 5.6). "It's good," she says, breaking into a smile as she returns her gaze to the work. "It's very good." Peggy places an appreciative hand atop Don's sketch as a seal of approval. Quiet settles, and sunlight shines through the thin gap between his arm and hers, accentuating how close they are to touching, but how they are careful to keep that distance. The wide portrait framing also measures how Jon Hamm is noticeably taller than Elisabeth Moss, registered as well in her need to look up at him in order to meet his gaze, their stance a reflection of the ad that Don has drawn, or perhaps it is an expression of their relationship to one another. There is a question, then, of whether the drawing counts as a form of apology or acknowledgment, or whether it suggests an unthinking continuity of his inclination to exercise authority by repeatedly putting her down. These thoughts give weight to Don's invitation for Peggy to examine the work from behind his desk, by his side, which resonates with their earlier meeting near the episode's start. There, she stood stiff in the no-man's land between desk and door – the pair facing-off against one another. Measured alongside



Figure 5.6. Don and Peggy side-by-side as she admits the promise of his idea

that earlier scene, the physical imbalance between the two actors brings into relief the otherwise overriding sense of equality that holds between them. In the personal tenderness of their mutual involvement, Don and Peggy reveal their preoccupation with professional matters as a cover, under which their overnight intimacy persists.

The implications of their changed tone lie in the way Peggy expresses her appreciation for Don's sketch. Although they end up looking down together, seemingly occupied alike with thoughts of the work before them, Don's eyes do not follow hers. Even from the distanced viewpoint of the wide two-shot, we see how Don's gaze instead traces and settles on Peggy's hand as she voices her approval of the idea. Why does this gesture, performed in this way, in this moment – by both Peggy and Elisabeth Moss at once – make such a claim on Don's attention, and on that of Jon Hamm as he inhabits Don's response?

In light of the scene's opening moments, we can understand Don's response to Peggy's gesture in terms of his (and our) renewed contact with the weight of the pair's shared past. Not only is his eye caught by the placement of her hand on his desk, but it appears to stir a well of feeling or thought in Don, who now finds himself reaching out with his own hand and placing it atop hers. Their touch is presented in close-up – Don setting his hand on Peggy's, then wrapping his fingers around hers, lifting her hand from the desk as he squeezes it (figure 5.7). Up close, we see his knuckles turn white, and hear what sounds like the cracking of his joints, a measure of the pressing silence that has fallen, and of how tightly he holds her. Don's grip has force as an exertion of feeling, but one that is concentrated and reduced in scale to just this point of physical contact. In

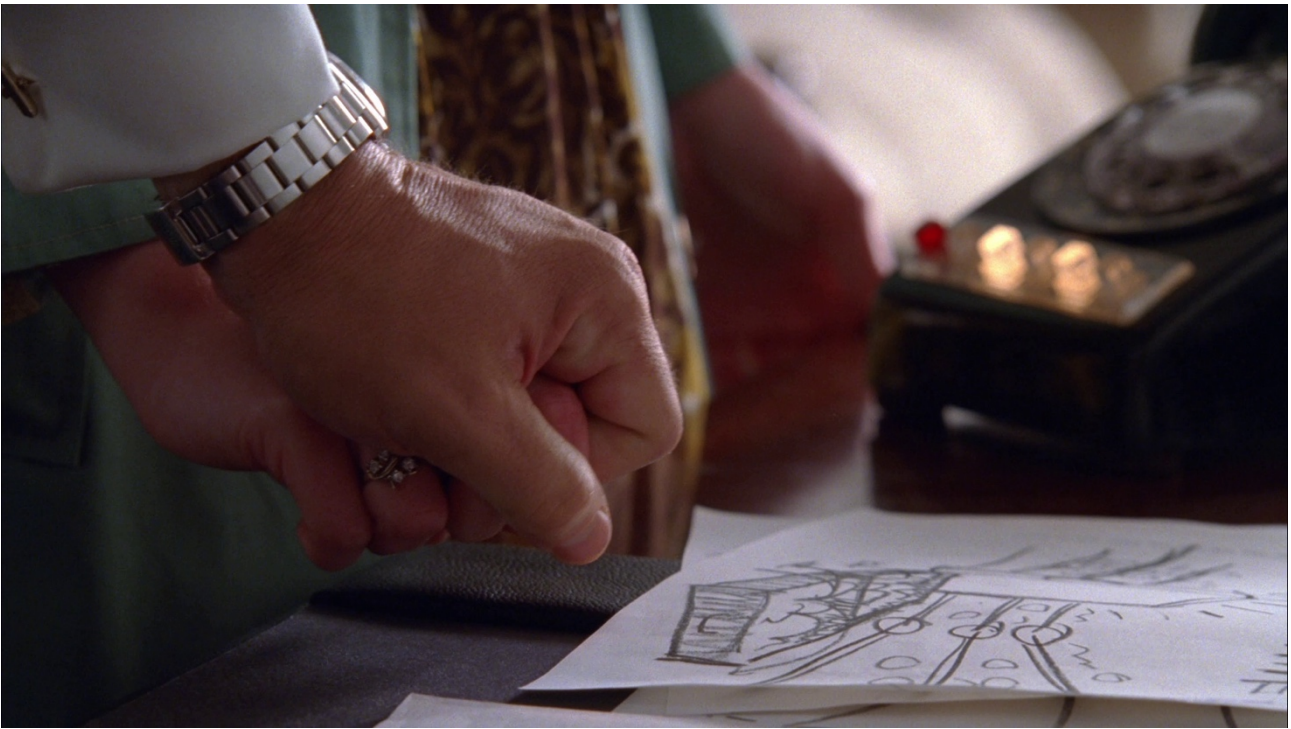


Figure 5.7. Don's hand as he squeeze's Peggy's

this respect, the emphatic close-up is an apt choice. It is necessary if we are to appreciate the intensity of this otherwise subdued act, a restraint of heightened feeling that carries across the following moments, during which the scene approaches but does not overstep the edge of declared sentiment or meaning, while nevertheless allowing us to register a great depth of shared understanding between Don and Peggy. As Don squeezes Peggy's hand, we cut to a close view of her face as she looks up towards him, then to an answering shot of Don, and back again to Peggy (figures 5.8–10). Each view of their faces is presented as if that moment of the actor's expression was perfectly called for in response to the other, applying to their silence the shot/reverse-shot conventions of talk. The editing thus contributes to a sense of emotional expression building through its shared communication. Although it is structured by an editing pattern, the deepest source of this effect is to be found in the onscreen presence of the actors. Notice how Jon Hamm's breathing quickens in the rise and fall of his chest, just visible at the frame's edge in our first view of Peggy as Don squeezes her hand; and how, after we cut back to Elisabeth Moss from the intervening shot of Don, she appears just able to hold herself away from an approaching verge of tears. The overall sense is of a sustained exchange of palpable understanding achieved between the characters, by the actors – that something wordless passes between them, silently testifying to everything they know of one another.

These moments – of Don taking Peggy's hand, and the pair holding one another's gaze – mark the greatest height or intensity of the ending's emotional power. Whatever is the source of the impression these images make on us, it is to be found in the play of feeling that trembles across the



Figures 5.8–10. A silent exchange

surface of these two faces, and that we register in their stillness, or see in their eyes, project onto the touch of one hand on another – clasped down on the desk, unmoving and out of the pair’s sight. What is the meaning of a gesture or look, such that we can reliably say what it communicates or conveys, and thus ground and justify our sense of its expressive significance? This question is central to appreciating these culminating moments of “The Suitcase”. It was clearly important to the makers of the episode that they present Don and Peggy’s closing reconciliation through a silent exchange of gesture, rather than by an exchange of words. In an interview about the production of “The Suitcase”, Matthew Weiner recalls the crucial choice to elide a scripted declaration of feeling spoken by Don to Peggy. “There was a line in there,” says Weiner to Jon Hamm, “where you said, ‘Thank you,’ and we cut it out. [. . .] The point is so much more powerful without it. At that big moment, you have a line in there, because you’re afraid that it won’t visually read” (quoted in Lacob 2011). That is to say, the pair’s silent gestures are trusted to carry the weight of the scene. They were evidently judged as bearing a quality of significance that would be obstructed if the scripted words were allowed to define the terms of Don and Peggy’s contact. As a moment of television, then, the closing scene of “The Suitcase” stands out for the degree to which its success depends, ultimately, on the fine bodily expressiveness of the actors onscreen, and the sensitivity of our imaginative response to them. The episode’s ending thus bears comparison to the esteemed final moments of *City Lights* (Chaplin, 1931), whose significance lies in the rich alloy of feeling to be seen in the final close-up of Chaplin’s face, which the camera presents as clearly and starkly as anything else onscreen, but which the film refuses to neatly define.¹³⁰

In “The Suitcase”, the choice to cut the line is not valuable as an embrace of ambiguity over clarity (although it does afford depth of suggestion in place of reductively imposed meaning). The elision of dialogue instead creates the space for a particular achievement of significance, which is brought to light by again returning to Cavell’s account of endings in remarriage comedy. For the couple to reaffirm their bond, he argues, there is no need for any “new vow”, but rather “the picking-up of an action” that has been interrupted – they are “not starting over, but starting again, finding and picking up the thread” (1981, 126–27). Don could say “thank you” to any number of people in Peggy’s position (imagine Roger, or Joan, or even Pete), and it might mean something like: “I am grateful you were able to be at my side when I had no-one else – that despite everything which has come between us, you cared enough to be a consoling presence”. But there is no-one else in the office to whom he could, or would, extend such an intimate gesture as he does. And – even more critical to the weight and emotional power of the ending – there is no-one else in the world to whom this act would mean what it does to Peggy and Don.

¹³⁰ On the “inexhaustible” richness of the final close-up in *City Lights*, see Toles (2011b, 100–06).

Although not a spoken vow, the gesture of one hand placed atop the other – standing here, behind Don’s desk at the start of a new day – embodies the recognition and renewal of their friendship by joining back together what had seemed to be the abandoned or severed thread of the pair’s shared past. This intimate, privately meaningful contact is an offer to cherish that history as the basis of their close bond, to sustain and tend to it against the threat of its fraying or erosion. We can appreciate the significance of the gesture in these terms if we view it in the light of Don’s words to Peggy in the wake of Anna’s death. When asked by Peggy who had died, Don said to her: “The only person in the world who really knew me”. As an act of consolation, Peggy placed her hand on Don’s back and said, “That’s not true”. When Don later places his hand atop Peggy’s, is this meant – by him, and by the writers and the actors – as an answer to Peggy’s earlier words? Even given the terrible loneliness we experience in the face of death, and the singular knowledge of Don’s identity that Anna held, for Don to declare such abject isolation in Peggy’s company might sound like his refusal to see their long experience of one another as adding-up to any meaningful knowledge of him. In his book about the crucial role of the hand as a locus for human intelligence and culture – for our creation of a meaningfully shared world – Frank R. Wilson (1998) takes a view of knowledge as not simply cognitive but also corporeal.¹³¹ A wounded bullfighter’s knowledge of the animal that gored him, Wilson writes, is kept not only in the matador’s thoughts but also in the scar on his torso – “it is a registration *on and in* the body of the bullfighter, a permanent reference to and symbol of the bull and of the encounter with it” (1998, 51). Through the touch of Don’s hand on Peggy’s – as they stand side-by-side at his desk – he shows Peggy he recognises the knowledge they share of one another. His gesture embodies such knowledge by evoking previous occasions of special contact between them. Like Don’s sketch that works by reference to the photograph of Ali and Liston, the image of his hand placed on hers achieves its significance as a historical allusion. The contact between his hand and hers not only corresponds to the touch of Peggy’s hand on Don’s back at dawn – it might also recall a similar moment at their relationship’s very beginning. In the pilot episode (“Smoke Gets in Your Eyes”, 1.1), towards the end of her first day as Don’s secretary, Peggy finds herself alone with Don in his office, where she thanks him for defending her against the demeaning attentions of Pete Campbell. The staging of their exchange resembles that of the final scene from “The Suitcase”. Having closed the door for privacy, Peggy has moved by Don’s side at his desk, where he stands while examining some documents on the tabletop, his weight resting on both hands planted in each corner. While she voices her gratitude, Peggy reaches out and places her left hand on his right. From a viewpoint that comes to be echoed in “The Suitcase”, we see their

¹³¹ Frank R. Wilson’s account of knowledge in these terms is from his reading of Plotkin (1993). On the fundamental corporeality of human knowledge in certain contexts, see also Pippin (2010b, 40). See also chapter two, “Knowing How and Knowing That”, in Ryle (2009); see also Ryle (1945).

contact at close range (figures 5.11–12). The delicate uncertainty of her touch resonates with the tone of her voice, nearly a whisper, seeking to make their physical closeness into an envelope of emotional intimacy. Don looks from Peggy’s hand to her eyes, and a close-up shows her in a restrained yet unmistakable performance of sexual invitation. But her act fails to conceal a tremor of anxiety that betrays her uneasy inhabitation of the role. In the silence that has fallen, Don takes Peggy’s hand and gently places it on the desk. Now standing upright, having reclaimed his dominant posture, he is able to look down at Peggy as he issues a reminder of who they are to one another. “I’m your boss,” he says, “not your boyfriend.” He admonishes her for having allowed Pete Campbell access to his office, threatening her job if she slips up again. The harshness of his tone strips away Peggy’s performance of sexual confidence; the refusal and failure of her gesture leaves her exposed, choked with shame. She tries to recover a sense of rectitude by withdrawing the invitation so clearly extended only a moment ago. “I hope you don’t think I’m the kind of girl—,” she says. “Of course not,” Don replies, agreeing to paper over what happened as though it were no more than a mutual misunderstanding, easily made. “Go home, put your curlers in – we’ll get a fresh start tomorrow.” Her eyes reddened with tears, Peggy nods and goes back to her station outside his door. She is stopped on the way out as Don asks her to place a call, giving her one last task for the day.

When Don is so struck by the sight of Peggy’s hand placed on his desk at the end of “The Suitcase”, is it because he faintly recalls this earlier encounter? Is that what gives rise to the mood in which he finds himself reaching out to make such intimate contact with Peggy? If we recall Frank R. Wilson’s point that knowledge may be registered “*on and in the body*” (1998, 51), then perhaps the touch of each hand on the other cannot help but carry – for both of them – some trace of that history. Consider that performing the action might likely stir the memories of both Jon Hamm and Elisabeth Moss, evoking the very beginning of their working relationship together. “In the touch,” writes Murray Pomerance, “the character descends as far as possible toward the precinct of the actor who secretly inhabits him [or her]. Characters cannot touch, after all, unless actors do; and when we see a character feeling a touch we imagine the actor feels it too” (2016a, 135). Whether or not the characters are attuned to this historical resonance, the scene’s design is clearly meant as an allusion, and thus makes the memory available to us.¹³² “Allusion,” Christopher Ricks tells us, “is always a return” (2010, 156). Allusions take us back to something, and they bring something back to us. Why are we returned to the very beginnings of Don and Peggy’s relationship at this moment in their lives, and by means of this silent gesture? Why does that earlier event – so long forgotten – return now?

¹³² See Jon Hamm’s discussion of the gesture as a “callback” to the pilot episode in Lacob (2011).



Figures 5.11–12. Peggy takes Don’s hand in the pilot; its echo in “The Suitcase”

The significance of the allusion needs to be measured against the scene’s opening moments, in which Don seemed to recover from the night before as though untouched by Anna’s death, and by the intimacy shared between he and Peggy. In contrast to the earlier mood of avoidance, I see the placement of Don’s hand on Peggy’s as the episode’s culminating act of reconciliation, in which Don admits to the intimacy of the evening before and makes a promise to keep that bond. The choice of *this* gesture to embody that meaning suggests a link between the survival of their relationship and the continued observance or remembrance of the deep personal history they have shared. As viewers of the scene, we participate in this process of joining the present with a long-forgotten past. The significance of the hand gesture depends not only on events within the fiction, but also on their prompting of our own recall – on whether or not the image and its mood is able to stir our distant recollection of a similar moment we have seen some time ago, perhaps years

before.¹³³ We are reminded that the series' history is entwined with the history of this pair, and so the renewal of Don and Peggy's bond at the end of the episode exploits a specific feature of accrual in serial television drama. The long-term unfolding of serial fiction, argues Sean O'Sullivan, not only "offers [. . .] the promise of the new", but "also draws us into the past, as old characters appear and disappear, as old green covers pile up by our nightstand, or old episodes of a program burrow into our memory, creating a history commensurate with our lifespan" (2006, 117). What brings Don and Peggy back together in the closing moments of "The Suitcase", we might say, is Don's acknowledgment of the past that has accrued between them – of their relationship's sedimentation, and of its continued imprint on their experience and knowledge of one another in the present. In the joining of their hands, we might see a gesture that, by evoking the accrual of the past, stems the erosion of the history between Don and Peggy, and thus of the shared world their friendship has created.

To take the ending in these terms alone would be in keeping with a conception of serial drama as a medium whose unfolding over time is chiefly characterised by qualities of accumulation. But this emphasis might pose a problem for a scene of reconciliation in which a pair renew their bond through a gesture meant to heal the wounds of their past. The rhyme that is crafted between "The Suitcase" and the pilot episode risks a sentimental view of Don's gesture, which we might see as an act that invites a romantic nostalgia, providing salve against the pair's more painful present, and reassurance in the face of their uncertain future, as though what grounds their continued commitment to friendship is simply a recognition of how long they have known one another, from which springs a desire to cherish that history.¹³⁴ Perhaps echoing Don's initial recovery, such a reading stands to overlook the strains of the past that have so tested Don and Peggy. If the ending is not to replicate the form of avoidance or denial we see in Don at the scene's beginning, then the tensions of Don and Peggy's conflict need to be acknowledged as part of who they are to one another, even as those features of their relationship come to be seen in a changed light. Their past would thus not simply be evoked or returned to, but seen in a new way, its meanings transformed. A history of failure might be made the basis for a continued promise to the future.

To avoid the sentimentality it courts, the ending of "The Suitcase" successfully handles a fine expressive balance, one that takes advantage of serial drama's capacity for accrual in tension

¹³³ In this respect, the ending of "The Suitcase" is related to (among other examples) the ultimate ending of *Justified*, the final episode of which ("The Promise", 6.13) includes a line of dialogue that echoes the same words spoken by another character in the pilot episode ("Fire in the Hole", 1.1). As Shuster notes in his reading of *Justified*: "the viewer has an important role to play in the success of this final scene", giving weight to the "invocation of [the characters'] shared history" and thus "bringing them together" (2017, 199–200).

¹³⁴ This might mirror our own tendency as viewers, looking back with fondness on those now-distant, early parts of the program that were the ground in which our attachment first took root.

with its tendency towards the transient. The scene's depiction of Don and Peggy's renewed companionship is thus an achievement of what V. F. Perkins termed "aesthetic suspense" – "where a relationship between elements is more acutely felt as delicate because it is on the verge of upset" (Clayton 2016, 210). Delicacy and fragility are qualities of the ending that are easily overlooked if we emphasise the strength of Don and Peggy's physical contact, and the sedimented weight of an allusion which reaches back to the series' beginning. Balanced against those features of the ending, I argue, is a contrasting concern of the episode (and of the season) with forgetfulness. This relationship between accrual and transience is crucial to the significance of Don's gesture as part of *Mad Men's* larger interest with the survival of social bonds in its competitive workplace world.

2. Amnesia and Carelessness in Season Four

Early in "The Suitcase", Peggy and her team rehearse their Samsonite pitch for Don. Having watched their clumsy, slapstick performance stony-faced – and having sat through her automatic rebuttals to each of his objections – Don asks to be left alone with Peggy. Now in private, he makes an acidic assessment of her efforts by extending a painfully backhanded compliment. "Peggy," he says, leaning forward onto his desk as though preparing to offer some hard but kind advice, "I'm glad this is an environment where you feel free to fail." There is a touch of deliberate cruelty to the remark, in the way that – as performed by Jon Hamm – Don paces out the delivery so the line's initial promise ("glad") sets Peggy up for its harsh punchline verdict. Don and Peggy's quick back-and-forth exchange – during which she stands rigid, hands clasped at her waist, offering only clipped responses to his criticisms – reminds us how fractious their relationship has become across the season, a state of discord measured by their failure to join one another in conversation. When Don insists the problem is not Danny's idea ("Only Samsonite is Tough") but instead Peggy's execution, she accepts the reprimand with only a terse "Okay", then asks if it should be funny. "Actually funny?" he replies. "Maybe. Funny like what I just saw? No." Peggy does not answer. With a few quick blinks, she turns her eyes from Don, as though letting his sharp, near-sarcastic criticism sink-in, or allowing it to slide off, trying not to care. She leaves without a word, her exit shown in a wide shot that places Don and Peggy at opposite edges of the frame (figure 5.13). The camera's viewpoint not only measures the distance between them, but also lets us see that Don does not even watch Peggy leave – as she reaches for the door, he instead looks down to the legal pad on his desk. With the slight shift of his eyes comes a flick of his wrist to swiftly turn over the page, the paper's arc a mirror for the door swinging closed. As Peggy steps out, Don starts over with a clean sheet. This evokes his singular ability to leave things in the past – to forget, or to think he has forgotten. In the wake of the episode's opening scene (and the return of the pair's lingering resentment), the gesture expresses serial drama's tension between continuity and fracture over time.



Figure 5.13. Measuring distance

It figures those aspects of the medium in Don's status as an amnesiac, a person able to stand outside the events of his own life as though they happened to someone else, or who, through his self-annihilating alcoholism, constructs blacked-out voids of memory as a means of escape from what he has done. Don's dismissive, clean-start gesture with the legal pad also has significance as the culminating moment of a scene that depicts his unsympathetic treatment of Peggy and the pair's gradual drift apart. The gesture thus measures the potential shallowness and fragility of long-held personal bonds in *Mad Men's* workplace world. In this way, it crafts a link between the series' reflection on the conditions of serial form, its concerns as a workplace drama, and the implications of Don's figurative amnesia.

To treat Don as an amnesiac is to read the larger motif of his recoveries from ruin in terms of memory. This view is implicit in Toles's account of Don introduced earlier, which places him in a tradition of American characters who, after "erasing their ties to a shameful past", are free to create themselves anew, unencumbered by their history (2013, 168). Such characters define themselves by forgetting what they have done. In this way, Don's creation of himself from the ruins of Dick Whitman's abandoned past thus echoes wider stories of amnesia in film. In his essay "The Gift of Amnesia in John Brahm's *The Locket*", Toles notes that, in film narrative, the affliction of amnesia may have more than one face. "Amnesia is, on the one hand," he writes,

a means of disburdening oneself of crime and guilt, and of forgetting the inducements for past behavior that others deem indefensible. On the other hand, construed more actively, it is

an experimental trip, or flight, to a moral and mental nowhere. This somehow vibrant limbo is a space temptingly wiped clean of public and private expectations, where one can try for a time to dwell without the qualities that anyone (including oneself) has ideas about. (2009, 35–36)

Both aspects of amnesia characterise Don's ability to slip the ties of his past and start over new. Ashamed of and trapped by his origins as Dick Whitman, he sheds that burden and "takes flight" by trying on another man's name, which gives him the freedom ("a moral and mental nowhere") to perform and inhabit a different vision of himself, thus carving out an otherwise unimaginable life. As with his miraculous re-composure in every title sequence, Don's recovery towards the end of "The Suitcase" pictures him in something like a "vibrant limbo", one where he appears "wiped clean" of whatever unwanted history is known about him. The term "limbo" is apt, speaking to the scene's faint sense of having woken from a dream, as though Don's overnight calamity were only a figment of dark imagination.

By reading the episode's ending as a drama of amnesia, we can weigh the significance of its culminating gestures in relation to a motif of forgetfulness that marbles earlier episodes of season four. This aspect of the season provides a thematic context in which to appreciate key moments of performance in "The Suitcase", treating Don's desire to forget as a measure of his carelessness with others. It forms an index of his tendency to dissolve the ties of interpersonal history, through which two people may form, inhabit, and sustain a shared world. The crucial dramatic event in this respect arrives in the season's second episode, "Christmas Comes but Once a Year" (4.2). Towards the episode's end, when he is drunk from the office Christmas party, Don sleeps with his secretary Allison (Alexa Alemanni) after she drops off the house keys he accidentally left at work. It is fitting that their tryst should come about through Don's absent-mindedness. His impulsive crossing of a boundary between the professional and the personal is thus able to become part of a larger pattern linking failures of memory with shallowness of social ties.

"Christmas Comes but Once a Year" is preoccupied with instances of forgetfulness, whether actual or performed. In the opening scene, while buying a Christmas tree with her mother and stepfather, Don's daughter Sally runs into her childhood friend Glen Bishop (Marten Holden Weiner), whom we have not seen since he moved away in season two ("The Inheritance", 2.10). Glen re-introduces himself to Sally, assuming that she and her mother have forgotten who he is, after they pretend not to see him when they arrive at the tree lot. Their interaction is echoed later in the episode when Don is woken before work by his neighbour, a hospital nurse (Nora Zehetner) who is hammering decorations into the corridor wall in preparation for her own work Christmas party. Don goes to call her by name but realises he doesn't know what it is. "Phoebe," she says,

shaking his hand, “and you’re Don. I know.” The tone of her introduction suggests she is not telling Don her name but instead reminding him of it. Phoebe notes how close to one another they live (“I’m right across the hall”), then recounts their string of increasingly specific interactions, not one of which stirs even a flicker of recognition from Don. The scene’s weight as an indication of Don’s amnesia is deepened by the way it immediately follows a scene between he and Allison. Soon after being introduced to the new consumer research consultant Dr Faye Miller (Cara Buono), Don walks out of her presentation. As he takes refuge in his office, Allison asks if he wants ice. “Yes,” he says. Before his door has time to close, we cut to Don awoken in bed the next morning by the painful banging of Phoebe’s hammer, as though the previous afternoon and evening were lost in the void of a drunken blackout.

It is in the aftermath of Don’s impulsive, alcohol-fuelled sex with Allison that the season’s trope of amnesia is strongly connected to the nature of social ties in *Mad Men*’s workplace world. Among a number of “morning after” scenes that prepare us for the ending of “The Suitcase”, the final act of “Christmas Comes but Once a Year” takes place the day after the Christmas party.¹³⁵ Arriving for the day’s work, Don politely refuses every offer Allison extends, insisting the door be kept open (she seems to expect they might talk together alone), and even turning down his usual morning coffee. Hamm’s performance is one of disguised discomfort, Don having become unsure what any sign of kindness or familiarity will now mean, while Allison – in her furtive glances that anxiously search Don’s response to her presence – appears to hope he will say or do something to reveal that his desire for her last night continues today. Hence the depth of her incomprehension when Don, at last, directly acknowledges her visit to his apartment. “Thank you for bringing me my keys,” he says, trying to find something like the tone one might adopt on bumping into a kind stranger, or a next-door neighbour, the day after receiving their help. “I really appreciate it. I’ve probably taken advantage of your kindness on too many occasions.” Allison appears drained of whatever hope or fantasy had propped up the brightness which had so far provided cover for her morning-after nerves. After Don more firmly reiterates that he just wants to thank her for the favour, we see her withheld mood of crushed emptiness in close-up, allowing us to register a sharp eye-blink that has the force of something blunt and heavy hitting home deep within.

There is more here than just a disappointed romantic wish. Piled on Don’s desk are brightly wrapped Christmas presents for his children, whose purchase he earlier arranged through Allison, peeling off twenty dollars bills as he dictated the list of gifts, the Christmastime ritual of loving exchange folded into a gesture of fiscal tabulation – a payoff. It is against this backdrop that Don breaks the silence between he and Allison by returning to their discussion of her Christmas bonus,

¹³⁵ An especially good one comes towards the end of episode three, after Lane and Don spend New Year’s Eve together in the company of two prostitutes (“The Good News”, 4.3).

which, days earlier, Don had personally guaranteed. Reaching down and opening a desk drawer at his right – the rough scrape of wood-on-wood lending a sense of the awkward and haphazard – he rummages for an envelope, and gently hands it over. “This is the bonus we talked about,” he says. “Merry Christmas.” It is clear from the business with the desk drawer (Don does not produce the envelope from his chest pocket) that he had attended to the gift prior to the events of the Christmas party. But it also seems clear from his ungainly fossicking that Don is giving Allison the gift earlier than he had planned. Thus it is an act of generosity unavoidably shadowed by his desire to disown any romantic intimacy they might have shared. The money – and, through it, his view of her – is made tawdry, reducing their relationship to the most basic transactional instrumentalism. Allison cannot know it, as we do, but the night before the Christmas party, Don showed that nearly any woman in her position would have been treated as she was. After drunkenly dropping his keys at his front door (a pre-echo of the events with Allison), Don is put to bed by Phoebe, whose kindness he exploits by trying to sleep with her. As she is thanked for performing Don a favour and handed an envelope of cash as though in exchange, Allison must realise that Don sees in her nothing of what she wishes him to see – that rather than meaning something to him, their intimacy last night is being dispensed with, and that, for Don, nearly anyone else would have done just as well.

After Allison resigns in the season’s fourth episode (“The Rejected”, 4.4), Don seals the end of their relationship with one final act of amnesiac erasure. Asked to provide her a recommendation, Don makes what he seems to think is one last display of generosity. “Absolutely,” he says. “What would probably be even better,” he then continues, sounding like he has suddenly discovered an overlooked avenue of help for her, “is if you type up whatever you want, and I’ll sign it.” As when Don thanked her for returning his keys, Allison is stunned, nearly speechless. All she can do is express her disbelief, simply asking: “What?” Given the scale of its extended cast, and the vivid excellence of its most central actors, Alexa Alemanni’s performance is not one of the series’ most memorable. But her handling of Allison’s response to Don is sufficiently well-judged that it might remind us how easily we take for granted the skill and quality of the show’s supporting players, whose often underappreciated talent is crucial to the overall richness of the experience *Mad Men* routinely makes available. Her close-up delivery of the one-word line finds a fitting balance between surprised offence, crushed hurt, and repulsed accusation. She sounds quietly shocked by what Don has said, as though he has confessed to an act that exposes some irreparable flaw of his character, or, more accurately, that he has unexpectedly asked her to do some demeaning thing which shows how little he thinks of her. He is unprepared to testify to their past, to express his own appreciation of who she has been to him. That history is, to Don, nothing more than a blank for her to fill in as she pleases, its detail of little concern. Don’s permission for Allison to write her own reference is – like her debased Christmas bonus – another casual payoff, or severance. Later that

night, he returns home drunk, and in his dim apartment threads a sheet of paper through his typewriter. “Dear Allison,” he writes, and begins to type an apology explaining his treatment of her. “My life at the moment is very –”, he writes, but the keys fall silent as he runs out of words. Reflecting on what happened between them, he finds nothing to say.

The interweaving of Don’s status as an amnesiac with the disintegration of his relationship to Allison prepares us for the depiction of Don and Peggy’s fraying bond in “The Suitcase”. It establishes a link between Don’s frequent failures of memory and his carelessness with others. The idea of carelessness as a failure of one’s bond to another links Don not only with Fitzgerald’s Jay Gatsby, but also with Nick Carraway’s description of Tom and Daisy Buchanan when, towards the novel’s end, Nick runs into Tom while walking on Fifth Avenue. “It was all very careless and confused,” Nick writes:

They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made . . .

I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to, for it felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child. Then he went into the jewellery store to buy a pearl necklace – or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons – rid of my provincial squeamishness for ever. (Fitzgerald [1925] 2000, 170)¹³⁶

Like Tom and Daisy, Don is characterised by his tendency to easily sever or otherwise disregard his personal ties, to throw them away, treat them as disposable, others’ attention to and care for him lightly tossed aside. Think of Adam Whitman, the little brother who, in a measure of Don’s wish to forget him, haunts Don’s memory after being cast out of his world, the price of their bond stuffed into a paper envelope, just as the meagre remains of Adam’s life are returned to Don in the tattered cardboard box that acts as both coffin and makeshift suitcase (“Nixon vs. Kennedy”, 1.10). Another way to frame Don’s carelessness with others is in terms of Danny’s idea for Samsonite, which seems to speak powerfully to Don: “Only Samsonite is Tough”. To make oneself into a person unaffected by others is to adopt a tough stance towards everyone else: to imagine oneself as impervious to the world, as though, in reasonable fear of being absorbed by others, one becomes cut off from them completely.

This aspect of Don is central to the drama between he and Peggy in “The Suitcase”, the terms of their relationship’s testing in that episode laid down in the previous instalment. It is worth noting that “Waldorf Stories” (4.6) is an episode structured by recollection, its narrative built

¹³⁶ Thanks to Jason Jacobs for bringing this passage to my attention.

around a series of flashbacks motivated by Roger's effort to write his memoirs, in which he recalls the origins of his relationship with Don (which itself only comes about through a failure of memory on Roger's part, having gotten so drunk he forgets whether or not he offered Don a job).¹³⁷ And it is in "Waldorf Stories" that Don's alcoholic desire to erase his memory – and its cost for his connection with those who are close to him – is given its most vivid expression. Drinking heavily in the celebratory aftermath of the Clios, Don goes to bed on Friday night with a dark-haired woman who had pursued him at the after-party. As he passes out, the light on Don's face turns from night to day, and he is woken by the harsh ringing of his telephone. A furious Betty (whose voice Don does not recognise) demands to know why he has not collected their children as agreed. Don tells her he is coming on Sunday, to which she replies: "It *is* Sunday!" As the woman sleeping beside Don stirs awake, we see that her hair is not dark but blonde. A mirror for our sense of temporal dislocation, Don has no memory of meeting her. The extent to which he has lost his grip on himself is revealed when the woman in his bed calls him not Don but "Dick" – his birth name, but which he has for years consigned to a secret part of his long-abandoned past.

The amnesiac seam of season four that becomes concentrated in "Waldorf Stories" seeps into our sense of Don and Peggy's fraying relationship from the opening sequence, where – after interviewing Danny – they discuss the Clio nomination for Glo-Coat. As they talk, Don's casual disregard for Peggy's need of his approval is expressed in terms of having forgotten one's own actions – no longer recognising oneself as the person who performed them. "I look at Glo-Coat," she says to Don, "and see how far everything's come. You know, my work." But the mention of the award only moves Don to regretful introspection, in which their past efforts together are not appreciated, but seen to dissolve. "Glo-Coat," Hamm says, looking away from Peggy into the middle distance, his tone derisive. "You finish something, you find out everyone loves it right around the time that it feels like someone else did it." Blind to her need for credit from him (and deaf to the ironic echo his words must have), he instead looks with scant regard upon the apparent weightlessness of his own recognition from others, self-absorbed in the face of Peggy's anxiety about her own standing in his eyes. Their exchange condenses the pair's conflict in terms of Peggy's resentment at what she takes to be her lack of recognition, and Don's apparent need to batter down her growing self-confidence. Peggy's bitterness deepens across the episode as Don blames her for not managing the whims of Stan Rizzo (Jay R. Ferguson), his new art director ("he is talented"), and then drunkenly demands Peggy and Stan work across the weekend in a hotel room, about which – when Peggy later visits his apartment to tell him he sold Danny's tagline – Don entirely forgets. But she stands her ground against her hungover boss, insisting he bring Danny in to

¹³⁷ The spur for this flashback is the second-to-last scene of the episode, where Roger reminds Don that he has forgotten to thank him after the Glo-Coat success.

the office, that he “fix it”. Don submits with a deep, resigned sigh, dropping his head and cursing in exhaustion as he realises Peggy is right. We cut to Elisabeth Moss to see a small act of composure: pulling back her shoulders and holding her head high, she purses her lips, and her eyes become stern. Her face turns to a picture of quiet condemnation, even as we might sense she is preparing to perform a grudging acceptance of the apology she anticipates. But it doesn’t come – Don remains silent in his sunken posture of self-pitying avoidance, refusing to meet Peggy’s stare, or perhaps altogether oblivious to its pressure. As she will do again after the Samsonite rehearsal, Peggy turns and leaves without a word.

Part of the background to “The Suitcase”, then, is a growing discord between Don and Peggy – her stewing resentment of the way he takes her for granted, and his impatience with her increasing tendency to chafe against his authority. Their discontent with one another strains the mood between them, as in their stilted trading of barbs during the rehearsal for Samsonite. But, among all the people he knows, Don wants to be with Peggy on the evening he faces the loss of Anna: the pressing professional task is a pretence to warrant her personal company, which Don cannot otherwise ask for, or expect. At the same time, Peggy chooses to stay and work with Don, forgoing her birthday dinner with her boyfriend Mark. As the evening wears on, it is a choice that leads to the ultimate collapse of their relationship, after which Don and Peggy proceed to wound one another in an especially bitter exchange of words. Peggy’s commitment to Don is thus placed in conflict with her desire for the world of romance, domesticity, and family life that is shown to await her outside the world of work. The fight between Don and Peggy, and the handling of its aftermath, can therefore be understood as a test of Peggy’s decision to forego her promise to Mark, and so also of her attachment to Don. Most of the episode’s remaining scenes concern Don and Peggy’s attempts to recover from the pain that has been inflicted between them. How deep, or fragile, is the bond they share? What can their partnership survive, and how can it continue? Why should it?

In posing these questions, “The Suitcase” most deeply internalises *Mad Men*’s serial form by exploring how Don and Peggy’s shared history may return as a weight upon them, one that risks eroding the understandings and views of one another which hold them together. The question is whether – in spite of its permanence – that past can be healed, allowing the pair to renew a worthwhile commitment to their continued companionship. The ending of the episode addresses the question of what gestures, words, or expressions might have this power. As I argued in this chapter’s first section, it might seem that what looks like Don’s silent testimony to their shared past seals the renewal of their bond. The placement of his hand on hers might overcome Don’s amnesiac refusal of close attachment, which has otherwise marked his personal relationships across the earlier episodes of season four. But the handling of performance in two pivotal scenes of intimacy between Don and Peggy towards the end of “The Suitcase”, I will argue, allows us to take its final moments

in a different light, and to reconsider the valence of transience and forgetting as aspects of serial form and human companionship in television drama.

3. The Weight of Transience

Immediately after their fight, neither Don nor Peggy is pictured ruminating over what has happened. Sitting in their respective offices, each is shown to be occupied with their thoughts about the work on Samsonite, which offers them a way to put aside the turmoil of personal discord. Don reclines in his chair behind his desk and speaks into a Dictaphone, trying to clarify what “toughness” means, while Peggy, ensconced at one end of a sofa, silently reads some research files (figures 5.14–15). They are thus set apart from each other. But through their respective retreats into the comfort of work they appear alike, and to this extent joined, even as they remain isolated and alone. The silence of their separation is then interrupted by Don’s voice, booming from offscreen into Peggy’s



Figures 5.14–15. Don and Peggy in the wake of their fight

office, muffled as it travels through the walls dividing them. “Peggy!” he calls out. “You have to come here right now!” In a way that informs the episode’s handling of the past as we move towards its end, Don invites Peggy to join him after he discovers a recording of the notes for Roger’s memoir. Perhaps feeling it would be unpalatable to listen to the tape alone, he wants to share his amusement, and evidently trusts Peggy to keep whatever secrets they find. Considered in relation to season four’s larger motif of forgetfulness, it is significant that Don and Peggy return to a mood of conversation by listening to a tape recording, a lasting imprint of the past. Unlike the fight between Peggy and Don, or the culminating gestures of the closing sequence, the scene in which they listen to the tape does not stand out as a moment of dramatic import. It is rather quiet, comical, free from the weight of seriousness. But in its deft lightness, Don and Peggy’s talk around the tape of Roger’s memoir sets a tone that carries across their ensuing conversations in the diner and the bar, scenes which concern intimacy and memory as the characters discuss their pasts. The evocation of that history, however, is delicately weighed. In finely scaled relationships between performance and space, we register how the past remains a persistent lining of the present. But we are also asked to accept that the past’s residue might nevertheless need to lift, or be somehow dissolved, if we are to keep alive our promises to the future. These scenes thus teach us how to measure the allusion to *Mad Men*’s past that is so crucial to the significance of the episode’s ending.

Given its concern with the renewal of a social bond, it is fitting that the scene in the Greek diner marks the first time in the episode that we see either Don or Peggy in public. The design of the setting is especially apt, deepening the episode’s interest in reconciliation and the passage of time. The latter is evoked in terms of both persistence and loss, while the intimacy between Don and Peggy is balanced against the diner as an icon of urban isolation, evoked in the scene’s final image, which reveals the solitary figure of an old man sitting alone, perhaps facing the end of his years without a companion (figure 5.16). Providing only temporary access to an anonymous domesticity, the Doric touches to the restaurant’s décor bearing roots to the ancestral homeland of its owners (who are likely migrants, or their offspring), while presenting an itinerant place we have not seen before and will never visit again. Don and Peggy are seated opposite one another in an alcove against a wall, their situation allowing for framings of both intimate confinement and open exposure, such as when the image cuts from alternating close-ups to a wide, profile view of the pair. The wider viewpoint allows others in the diner to intrude into the frame, and also reveals a large painting of the Acropolis that dominates the background wall. These features of both setting and staging inform the scale and tone of the performances by Hamm and Moss, becoming especially crucial to the quality and significance of Don and Peggy’s exchange towards the scene’s end, when each character shares the memory of witnessing their own father’s death.



Figure 5.16. A reminder of loneliness towards the end of one's life

That they end up discussing such memories is an index of their gradual shift from the professional into the personal, from their shared work problems of the present into private experiences of the past, a shift the scene uses to measure the pair's re-emerging intimacy. When we first cut to the diner, it is clear that Peggy's makeshift birthday dinner with Don has become a continuation of their work. Finishing a mouthful of his burger while Peggy crunches on a pickle, Don gets back to business. "What's the most exciting thing about a suitcase?" he asks. She is stuck for a moment, hesitating while she consults her feelings, the excitement in question not immediately available. Moss's eyes flit to her left, as though Peggy is searching her mind, but they seem to alight on something outside her thoughts. The answer appears to her, and she looks back to Don. "Going somewhere," she announces. We cut to our first wide view of the diner, the backdrop painting unveiled by a waitress walking from left to right across the frame (figure 5.17–18). "The Acropolis," Peggy suggests, pointing to the artwork, as though imagining a Samsonite campaign built on the allure of exotic travel. Their discussion of the suitcase's emblematic significance is coloured by Peggy's inspiration in a painting of far-away ruin (which, we might notice, includes in its background the urban landscape of contemporary Athens). They talk of their desire to leave for overseas destinations, Peggy wanting to fly anywhere, never having experienced air travel, while Don recalls his wartime flight to Korea. "My Uncle Mack," Don remembers, "said he had a suitcase that was always packed. He said, 'A man has to be ready to go at any moment'." Struck by his own



Figures 5.17–18. The Acropolis unveiled

words, Don pauses, as though troubled by some dawning realisation. “Jesus,” he says, “maybe it’s a metaphor.” The writers offer Don’s afterthought as a self-reflexive wink. However, its point in this respect seems not to mock or undermine such an interpretive discovery, as crude, say, or a stretch, “reading-in” to what is not there. We might chuckle, but he is not wrong about the object’s potential significance. Given the prominence with which the painting of the Acropolis looms over the scene, and is drawn into its discussion by Peggy, I take Don’s line about metaphor to be instructive as to how directly *Mad Men* can present its concerns without reductively spelling them out. Don and Peggy’s talk, for example, resonates with the subject of the painting behind them, and with the space in which they sit. They speak of the transient and the left-behind, even as their thoughts emerge from the springs of memory, through which fragments of long-ago experience float back to the present.

In contrast to the season's earlier motif of forgetfulness, transience here becomes expressive of Don and Peggy's closeness, how well they accommodate moments of intimate exposure to one another. Pivotal to this achievement is the handling of the passage when Peggy finds herself making a series of personal admissions to Don. Following the anecdote about his Uncle Mack, we have been invited to enjoy the resumption of their partnership as one of mutual goodwill. Peggy's expressions of uncertainty ("I can't tell the difference anymore," she says, "between something that's good and something that's awful") are met by Don with quietly steadfast reassurance. Moss understands Peggy's words as an invitation to Don, a display of her humility that asks for his encouragement and support. Notice how she prepares a space for "awful" with an anxious intake of breath, which on the word's delivery is released with a condemnatory shake of the head, her eyes glancing up to his, just giving the line a small flourish of performed self-admonition. Don has spent most of the episode and the season finding occasions to knock Peggy down. But now he surrenders that antagonism, his voice softened towards pragmatic resignation. "Well," he tells her with a sigh, "they're very close. But the best idea always wins." After a beat, he adds one more thing. Holding her gaze, he tells her not to lose heart: "And you know it when you see it," he says. These are words of encouragement, meant to lift Peggy by saying that she and Don are not so far from one another, that despite his elevated position and authority, they are alike, joined by a shared condition, one they confront together. The line's significance in these terms is not a product of the script alone but also of the weight given to the words by Hamm's pacing and emphasis. Crucial is his sustained eye contact and the extension of a pause after telling Peggy that "the best idea always wins". The line could be taken as a statement of general principle, which it is, but Hamm makes available a more personal lining, something Don wants Peggy to know about his view of her. They are gradually rediscovering a mood of friendship after their caustic fight during which Peggy accused Don of disregarding her contribution to his success with Glo-Coat. He responded with derision, barely remembering her idea at all ("It was something about a cowboy – congratulations"), framing it as just one idea he chose among faceless dozens, none of which Peggy can claim as her own, every piece of her work belonging instead to "the agency". Don's sustained eye contact and his pause invite Peggy to understand more than is stated, that in the words "best idea" he is trying to tell her something he earlier failed to acknowledge. If the line extends to Peggy the recognition she had been refused, its power in this regard is strengthened in proportion to the extent that it goes unsaid. The success of the moment in these terms depends on Hamm's pause being long enough for the connotation of the words to become available, registered in passing, while not being held so long that subtle implication becomes a laboured point. What is at stake in this balance is more than the value of the suggestive over the explicit. Too heavy a reference to their earlier conflict might return them to that place of recrimination, rather than allowing them to leave behind and recuperate from –

while still not denying – the anger, guilt, and blame which lurks in that part of their past. In the way Jon Hamm performs them, Don’s words are thus an admission to Peggy that avoids the risk of embarrassment to them both, while making possible the unspoken understanding that their hurt has been overcome.

During their fight, Peggy implied that her relationship to Don was not worth holding onto, threatening to walk out on him in the same way she broke-off her relationship with Mark. Soon after Don’s conciliatory words described above, however, she admits what she earlier refused, telling him how she values her work more than anything else in her life. But her words convey a deeper acknowledgment, one whose expression depends on a preparedness to let the significance of a gesture go unremarked, without being overlooked. After Don and Peggy first began to reconcile while listening to the Dictaphone tape of Roger’s memoirs, she insisted that they don’t have personal conversations. “And I think you like it that way,” she said, before adding, with prickly self-defensiveness, “I know I do,” a claim immediately followed by a lament of her failed romance with Mark. The diner scene presents a further passage into the personal when Peggy turns their satisfied anticipation of the work being “done” into another moment of regretful introspection. “I know what I’m supposed to want,” she says. “It just never feels right. Or as important as anything in that office.” When Moss begins to deliver these lines, she lowers her gaze, Peggy averting embarrassment as she risks a personal exposure. But when she admits that their work together exerts the strongest claim on her life, Moss once again looks up, meeting Hamm’s gaze, Peggy holding Don’s eye contact even in the quiet that settles after she speaks. As when Don reminded Peggy that “the best idea wins”, the extension of silent eye contact – together with a gentle nodding of her head that gives a hint of muted insistence – lends weight to what goes unspoken. Perhaps she looks to him in this moment in part because she is hoping for his blessing, to confirm that he shares her sentiments, that they are not alone in their wholehearted commitment to the workplace, and in their related tendency toward isolation from others.

But there is more. Even though she tells Peggy that nothing is more important than the work in “that office”, her silent address to Don might speak more deeply as an admission of his personal importance to her. If it does, however, the meaning is only briefly available – this sense of Peggy’s look slips away as quickly as it is glimpsed, the image cutting sharply from a close-up of Moss to the distant wide-shot of the pair in profile (figure 5.19–20). Throughout their conversation, we have been cutting back and forth between close-ups of each character, our perspective aligned with their viewpoints. The breaking of that pattern in this moment is not arbitrary. Resisting the temptation to answer Peggy’s sustained eye contact with a corresponding close-up of Jon Hamm, the choice of the wider viewpoint provides relief from the pressure of the camera’s proximity. The potentially imposing intimacy of eye contact is thus balanced by a reminder of the pair’s public exposure, but



Figures 5.19–20. From close-up intimacy to public exposure

in a manner that does not weigh heavily, the opening-up of our perspective instead freeing us from confinement to the more closed-in space of the booth.

This is crucial to the qualities and significance of Jon Hamm's gesture in response to Moss's words, which a closer viewpoint would occlude. As we cut to the wide shot of both performers in profile, it is timed so the stillness of Moss's held eye contact is measured against Hamm's shift into movement. Dropping his eyes away from Peggy's, he shows a lithe smile as he reaches across the table with his right hand. But it does not settle on hers, which remain tucked under her folded arms. Watched by Peggy, Don instead takes two French fries from her plate. The pluck of his gesture is echoed in a cocky arch of his eyebrows and a slight backward tilt of his head, which, although his eyes are still cast down and away from Peggy, opens his face to her while catching the ceiling light from above. His smiling face has a new glow, which chimes with the jaunty piano of the diner's background radio (figure 5.21). It is a moment of playful brightness, one which is shaded, however,



Figure 5.21. A new glow

by teasing concealment. The camera is far from close, and the profile angle does not make it easy to read the feelings that rapidly play across Jon Hamm's face, half of which is kept from our view. He seems pleased by what he hears, even as his manner keeps a measure of reticent distance. Reaching to her side of the table, he moves closer, while folding that hint of potential intimacy into an ordinary gesture, pecking over the remains of a meal rather than observing the silence with special weight of attention. By the time Don has taken a bite of her fries and returned his eyes to hers while slackly dropping his forearm to the table, Peggy has understood his signal to leave it at that. With a releasing shrug of her shoulders, she changes the subject and moves on, returning to their earlier chat about Don's experience of war. "I didn't know you were in Korea," she says. Hamm's performance incorporates the sentiment that Peggy's personal admission has implied, even as his ambivalent silence encourages the moment to pass.

These two passages of conversation between Don and Peggy express the pair's rediscovered closeness and their acknowledgments of care for one another. They are moments characterised by a mood of intimacy, albeit graded by the public nature of the interaction, and the distance imposed by Don and Peggy sitting opposite one another across the table, a situation that allows the proximity of direct eye contact while preserving the physical boundaries set by their professional relationship. These features of the in-between are reflected in the performances by Hamm and Moss, which hold the transient in tension with a sense of what lasts. As I noted earlier, these concerns are first put in play by the setting of the diner, but especially by the choice to place the conversation against a backdrop painting of the Acropolis. The presence of the painting links the episode's focus on the

fraying and potential failure of Don and Peggy's friendship with not only the inevitability of ruin in human affairs, but also the persistent residue that may remain in the wake of such erosion or collapse.¹³⁸ This makes the diner scene central to the episode's reflection on the links between companionship and serial form. As Jacobs has noted, serial drama's special interest in the survival of long-term relationships can be characterised in terms of the medium's tendency towards ruin (2001, 445). The depiction of both bitter falling-out and quietly tender reconciliation in "The Suitcase" realises this aspect of the medium in a particular way, exploring how the appearance of such failure may be a test or measure of a friendship's value, when one is forced to face its loss, and what one's life will be like without it. Perhaps the survival of one's bond to another may sometimes depend on letting go of how things were. As Nehamas notes, "even when motivated by a desire to regain a common past, [friendship] is also crucial in forging a different future" (2016, 3). This thought helps to develop a sense of the diner scene's fine handling of the transient in moments that otherwise present the renewal, and thus the continuation, of Don and Peggy's bond. In a way that crafts a strong link with the episode's closing moments, an abiding concern of the diner scene is with the need to let certain feelings and moods dissipate – not so they may be avoided or denied, but so they might be absorbed into one's sense of the past, without becoming a pressure that weighs on the present, or hangs over the future.

"The Suitcase" gives further depth to these qualities of the diner scene by relating them to the episode's larger concern with death. Peggy's breezy change of topic to Don's time in Korea is followed by a curious question delivered with little sign of compunction. "Did you shoot anybody?" she asks. "Nope," he replies, chewing on a French fry. "Saw some people get killed," he adds. "That was memorable." Hamm's casual mention of those images – as if they were little more than a vivid sightseeing spectacle – has a special punctum if we recall the scenes of Don's deployment to Korea from season one ("Nixon vs. Kennedy"). There, we see Dick Whitman witness the grisly death of his commanding officer, Lt Donald Draper, from whose charred remains he peels the man's identity-bearing dog tags, which he swaps for his own, creating a new self from the corpse of another. Is this the sight Don recalls as he happily chews on a chip while chatting with Peggy? How far from his mind might those memories be, on the night he knows Anna will die? His gruesome theft of the dog tags was, after all, the act that brought the two of them together, her forgiveness of his crime offering Don the redemption of friendship – proof that the shameful secrets of his past

¹³⁸ A sense of residue may be further part of our experience if we remember Don and Peggy's work together on the Hilton campaign during season three, in which they argued over her proposal of an image showing the Acropolis outside a hotel window – a sight whose impossibility Don criticised, his realism again colliding with her tendency towards a romantic ideal that does not exist ("Wee Small Hours", 3.9). That aspect of their relationship is evoked here when she spots "a dog" in the Parthenon. "That's a roach," Don replies. "Let's go someplace darker."



Figure 5.22. Peggy's smile at a story of death

need not sever all meaningful future connection to others. Hamm's performance gives no positive indication that any such memories weigh on Don in this moment, and it is precisely the lightness of his mood that invites further conversation and disclosure from Peggy. She tells him that as a twelve-year-old she watched her own father die, that she was alone with him as he suffered a violent heart attack on a Saturday afternoon, the television playing in the background. "That's why I hate sports," she says. The tone of Moss's delivery is at odds with the scene Peggy describes. She makes the observation as an afterthought, offering it to Don with a smile, nearly a small laugh, as if at the ungainly mismatch between the mortal scale of a parent's death and the emergence of an inconsequential quirk of taste (figure 5.22). The line also feels like something she may have said before, a now-comfortably rehearsed telling of a terrible episode she will never forget, but the hurt of which is better kept submerged, or has by now become something less painful.

What becomes of such a loss is a central concern of the following scene, where Don and Peggy drink at a bar, sitting on stools side-by-side. Their deepened intimacy is reflected in the mise-en-scene that places them alone at the centre of the image, their backs turned to the camera, isolated together in the darkness of the room, the other patrons only just visible at the margins of the frame (figure 5.23). In a way that sets their conversation here apart from the scene in the diner – while connecting it to the episode's ending – their side-by-side positioning allows for a greater sense of privacy between them. Even as they are physically closer, they may feel less exposed, and thus more able to be open. As V. F. Perkins notes of Welles's mobile long-take staging in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, the side-by-side placement of the actors "imposes a limit on eye contact



Figure 5.23. “Someplace darker”: side-by-side intimacy

that can give weight to particular moments of inspection or of contact sought and contact evaded” (1999, 58). Together with the dim lighting and the loosening effects of alcohol, it is fitting that their talk here is more personal than at any other point of the episode, their conversation touching on subjects we have never seen them broach before. After Peggy laments her romantic failures and expresses her contempt for dating, and Don tries to lift her spirits by complimenting her looks, they talk about their lack of sexual history together, as though inquiring into what it is that attracts and binds them to one another. As the conversation unfolds, Peggy tells Don of the widely held assumption that she slept with him to get her job as a copywriter, in the face of which their strictly platonic bond becomes akin to a secret shared between them. As she teasingly exposes the hypocrisy of his line about boundaries at work (“Not as attractive as some of your other secretaries, I guess?”), Peggy raises his tryst with Allison and in doing so touches a nerve. The playful nature of her jibe comes across in a shot favouring Moss, which lets us note her sideways glance as she probes Don’s response, while finding cover behind her raised cocktail glass as she takes a coy sip. Although the answering two-shot presents the pair together in profile, its symmetry evoking a sense of good rapport, we see Peggy’s implication weigh on Don – as he registers the words’ meaning his head falls a little, and he releases a tired huff. His absorption of the unwanted reminder is visualised in the suspended stillness of his whiskey glass, which hangs in the air between two fingers, its weight carried through his arm into his bent elbow, which holds his body up against the bar. He slowly breaks the quiet. “You don’t want to start giving me morality lessons, do you?” he asks. Don is turned towards her now, his eyes cocked in challenge, grave where she was playful, having



Figure 5.24. “You don’t want to start giving me morality lessons, do you?”

remembered something that she has not (figure 5.24). If we do not immediately know what he means, we see that Peggy does – with two quick eye blinks she appears struck by something deeply familiar but utterly unexpected. She looks at him, her eyes betraying a crushed smile within, which doesn’t show on her stone cheeks; she nods twice, both small, just enough for him to tell that she knows the same things he does. “People do things,” Don tells her, his voice lowered in volume and pitch. He asks for her agreement (“Right?”), but it is delivered less as a question, more as an application of pressure. He means to remind Peggy of her own attempts to slip away from her deeds, to leave them sealed in a cut-off part of her history that is, to almost everyone else, unknown.

If it has not dawned on us yet, the subject of their oblique words becomes clearer as Peggy tells Don something from which she has, until now, protected him. “My mother thinks you were responsible,” she says, “because you were the only person who visited me in hospital.” It was from a flashback in episode five of season two (“The New Girl”, 2.5) that we first learnt of Don’s knowledge about Peggy’s pregnancy, which was the cause of her mysterious disappearance from Sterling Cooper between the first and second seasons of *Mad Men*. Where the flashback structure of “Waldorf Stories” was motivated by Roger’s attempt to remember his past in order to construct his memoirs, the retrospection of “The New Girl” stems from Peggy’s contrasting promise to Don after she pays his bail in the wake of a potentially scandalising car crash.¹³⁹ “You’ll have to believe me that I’ll forget this,” she says, driving him back to the city in the dead of the night; unlike Allison,

¹³⁹ These events are faintly raised at the beginning of season four, when Peggy asks Don for bail money after her Sugarberry Ham stunt goes badly awry (“Public Relations”, 4.1).

Peggy is wise enough to know that sometimes things have to go back to the way they were. “I don’t want you treating me badly because I remind you of it,” she says. Perhaps it is these words which, towards the episode’s end, stir Peggy’s memory of waking to find Don by her hospital bedside. Leaning forward in his creaking wooden chair, Don implores her to escape the melancholia in which she has become trapped, to do or say whatever “they” want to see, or hear, in order to let her go. He shares with her the words that have been, for him, the keys to freedom from the prison of his own history. “This never happened,” he says, slowly enunciating each word, as though working a spell. “It will shock you how much this never happened.” If these long-ago events are in the air for us during the bar scene in “The Suitcase”, they deepen the implication of the moment when, after Peggy implicitly refuses to discuss who the father is, Don says to her: “Do you ever think about it?”

It is here that the scene’s side-by-side staging of the actors is exploited to its richest effect, as they delicately avoid contact with one another, before meeting each other’s gaze. Having dared to quietly ask the question, Don turns away from Peggy to take a long drink, retreating back into himself, giving her space if she wants to answer; there is also a sense of introspection, as if he is thinking of his own attempts to blot out parts of the past. “I try not to,” she says, nodding matter-of-factly, turning briefly to Don, who continues to look away. Quiet settles as her eyes fall to a vacant spot on the bar, looking away from Don as they both stare towards the same distant point. “But then it comes up out of nowhere,” she says, before again trailing off. The words stir something in Don that prompts him to face her, and we cut to an angled two-shot favouring Jon Hamm, his expression gripped with deep worry, as though in sight of something terrible. He does not look away, or move at all, as Peggy senses his stillness and turns to him, the image cutting with her. She meets his eyes and offers a single word of explanation. “Playgrounds,” she says. After a beat in which we register Peggy holding her gaze to Don’s, we cut back to Hamm, as the concern creased into his forehead slackens and dissolves, a dull horror quietly sinking in (figures 5.25–26). Perhaps the source of this feeling lies in the way that Peggy’s line, condensed into a single word, offers the image of a glancing moment that evokes an entire life unlived – a lost, parallel world of one’s past that remains an inescapable lining of the present. So it is fitting that the softness of Moss’s voice nearly allows the quickly breathed word to sink below the harsh din of the radio announcer in the background, whose voice fills the silence between them, his excited commentary moving to a crescendo as the fight between Ali and Liston reaches its premature climax. At once, both Don and Peggy break their contact with one another, their attention drawn to the radio behind the bar. The image cuts to the wide shot on which the scene opened, Don and Peggy facing away from the camera, but now joined at the bar by others, the pair becoming part of a public audience to the unseen boxing spectacle. “Get up!” the others yell. “Get up!” We cut back to their faces to see Don joining-in under his breath, perhaps thinking of his bet with Stan, as Peggy takes an unworried sip of her cocktail,



Figures 5.25–26. A dull horror sinks in

looking about as if a bystander to something that is not her concern. The drama playing out in sound over the radio provides a fitting background to, and eventual distraction from, the mood that is drawn by Peggy’s delivery of the word “playgrounds”. During the diner scene, we were invited to picture Peggy as a twelve-year-old, watching her father suffer a violent heart attack, eventually lying still and dying as the sound of televised sports filled the silence left by his departure. We might imagine her pleading with him to wake up and come back to her. “Get up!” Don urges, just as he years ago impelled Peggy to stand up and get out of the hospital. If Peggy hears these echoes, Moss does not allow us to know, her performance of oblivious indifference to the drama around her withholding any sign of the past’s painful return.

In the episode’s final scene, the intimacy of close friendship that Peggy and Don rediscover through their conversation in the diner and the bar is briefly resumed. As they stand side-by-side

behind Don's desk, in quiet appreciation of the Samsonite sketch on the tabletop before them, he takes her hand in his, holding it tight as they share a sustained moment of silent exchange. As with the scenes in the diner and the bar, this culminating gesture of "The Suitcase" reflects on companionship and serial form through its allusion to earlier parts of *Mad Men*. The placement of his hand on hers admits the mood of the night before into the new day and evokes a moment of shared contact from the very beginning of their relationship. It thus seems to renew the strength of their bond through an act of remembrance that testifies to the persistent force and unifying pressure of the pair's shared history. If we take the episode's ending in these terms alone, it is perhaps only in part because such a view reflects the qualities of the scene itself; it might also reflect the idea of serial drama as a medium distinguished by its opportunities to express accumulation or accrual. In the light of Don and Peggy's conversations in the Greek diner and the bar, however, we should appreciate the qualities and significance of the ending somewhat differently. I have shown how the handling of those scenes is preoccupied with a reflection on the past as a persistent lining of the present, but in a way that is coloured by a simultaneous concern with transience. This is crucial to the depiction of Don and Peggy's reconciliation, as the hurtful events of their history are not overcome through avoidance or denial, but instead faintly evoked while being allowed to dissipate, providing release from continued resentment and blame.

Conclusion

At issue in the parts of "The Suitcase" I have discussed is the force and valence of memory in long-form television fiction, and in the pictures of companionship its seriality is used to develop. The critical challenge of the episode's ending, as of the scenes in the diner and the bar, concerns the degree to which past and future moments of the series should inform our sense of what we are shown. Don and Peggy's silent contact and exchange at the end of "The Suitcase", I have argued, appears to express the renewal of their bond by acknowledging the sedimented weight of their deep personal history. This view of the episode's ending accords with conceptions of serial drama that encourage us to value the medium chiefly in terms of accumulation. My reading of the episode as a larger whole, however, brings to light an alternative value to be found in serial drama's tendency towards the transient. On my view, the episode's concluding evocation of the past is significant in relation to a motif of amnesia threaded across the earlier parts of season four. That aspect of the season links Don's failures of memory – his desire to forget the past – with his frequently careless neglect of personal bonds, whether with Allison, his abandoned brother Adam, or Peggy. But the scenes of reconciliation in the diner and the bar – in which Don and Peggy are brought closer as they discuss their pasts – depend for their success on a fine handling of the ephemeral. Together

with the design of the two settings, the presentation of the performances is finely graded to evoke the continued presence of the past, while involving us in a sense of its dissolution.

A similar sense of the transient is made available when Don takes Peggy's hand in the episode's closing moments – not alongside or in contrast to the gesture's status as an act of remembrance, but as part of it. Go back to their silent exchange of looks (figures 5.27–28).



Figures 5.27–28. Don and Peggy's silent exchange of looks

What does the expression on Jon Hamm's face ask Peggy to understand? And in Moss's tremulous restraint of welling emotion – together with a barely perceptible nod, channelled into an eye blink – what do we see Peggy recognising and agreeing to? The challenge of these images is captured by V. F. Perkins on a close-up of Nora Gregor in *La Règle du jeu*. “The camera is placed to reveal everything that her face and gestures make available to view,” he writes, “but it is less easy to determine her reaction than to say what it is not” (2012, 58). Don's face is not a picture of romantic return to warm memory, nor an attempt to display a tenderness he must otherwise disguise at work. Hamm resists the easy temptation of obvious sentiment – such as a muted smile, or a softening of the eyes. His stare is hard, unmoving as he looks at her askance from under a furrowed brow. It does not look as though he is arriving at a place of familiar intimacy, instead appearing unsettled by an obscure worry. His mouth is just open, but its corners pursed. It seems less like he is holding back from a desire to speak and more like he is imploring another to silence. Perhaps this is the pledge that Peggy enters into. Against the clean-slate beginning of the scene, he is admitting to what they have shared the night before, not in order to remember, but so they might both agree to forget. They are not denying what happened, or pretending to avoid it, but promising to leave this part of their past, from now on, untouched and unsaid. Like so much else between them, it will remain something they know of each other, but have no need to again revisit or relive. They agree to let this experience dissolve into the vast sea of their memories, not erased or undone, but absorbed.

With a few quick taps of his thumb and a turn of his gaze back to the drawing, Don gently breaks free of the mood that has come over them. He scoops up the pages and, after a light shuffle, hands them across to Peggy as she blinks away the remnants of her emotion. “Give them to Joey,” he says. “No – Stan. Then go home, shower, and come back and give me ten tag lines.” With her first assignment for the day in hand, Peggy walks to the door, Don watching her go. Just before she leaves, Peggy turns back one last time. “Open or closed?” she asks. “Open,” he says. The first bars of Simon and Garfunkel's “Bleecker Street” rise on the soundtrack, almost blocking out the sound of Don's chair as it again takes his weight; the choice of these artists to set the closing mood of the episode is perfectly apt, embodying a singular partnership that broke apart in acrimony, but was years later reformed. We watch Peggy leave from a wide shot outside the office, an echo of our earlier perspective on her arrival at his door. As the music grows louder, Peggy walks offscreen down the corridor to our left, vanishing from sight at the exact moment another woman appears at the same point, striding in the opposite direction (figure 5.29). As we hear the first lyrics of the song – which speak, in the singers' beautiful harmony, of an elusive but transcendent sense of meaningful connection on a New York dawn – the image is emptied of all human presence apart



Figure 5.29. Peggy vanishing from sight (and from our thoughts?)



Figure 5.30. "Open": Equal measures of the transparent and opaque

from Don, who is open to public view through his office door, as he turns back to the paper and resumes his reading. Our sight of his transparency is balanced by the opacity of the frosted glass to the side of the doorway, inviting us to wonder about the availability of his thoughts (figure 5.30). How much does his encounter with Peggy still linger in his mind or feelings? We might take this

image as another picture of Don's tendency towards amnesia and isolation. But it is not one in which his connection to a shared world is carelessly cut away. It is a picture of transience as the basis for a pair's continued promise to make their future anew.

"The Suitcase" is an episode haunted by loss and which chooses for its concluding moments a scene that concerns the immediate aftermath of a close friend's passing. Perhaps this is part of what Don is both returning to and putting behind him when he takes Peggy's hand. He will never again have the opportunity to touch Anna in this way, and he may feel regret at all the times he wanted to but did not. We might then take the episode's closing reflection on *Mad Men's* serial form not as a clash between amnesiac carelessness or the accrued weight of inescapable memory, but in terms of a reconciliation between the permanence of loss and the fading of grief. The lasting power of these moments is to find credible expression for the promise of morning in the wake of death.

Conclusion.

Towards the end of “The Suitcase”, during Don and Peggy’s conversation in the diner, she admits to being unsure of her judgements. “I can’t tell the difference anymore,” she says, “between something that’s good and something that’s awful.” Her condition is not uncommon. But we can sometimes find the confidence Peggy lacks. It is clear to me, for instance, that the images of reconciliation at the end of “The Suitcase” stand as a measure of how good serial drama can be. They have company in the close-ups of Damian Lewis as he performs Brody’s lifesaving choice in “Marine One”, together with the picture of Don and Megan’s marriage developed in the closing sequence of “The Phantom”. This thesis has revealed what we stand to gain by trying to justify such intuitions about the value of serial drama, and what we might lose, or fail to understand, if they remain unexplored. Perhaps it is unremarkable to claim that the moments of *Homeland* and *Mad Men* cited above are so good, at a time when the artistry of television is so widely celebrated in academic criticism, journalism, and everyday conversation. In this respect, the esteem of television fiction has come a long way since the publication of an early essay which attempted to clarify television’s distinctive aesthetic attractions. Stanley Cavell begins “The Fact of Television” (1982) by wondering about the source of television’s widespread “disapproval”. The popular idea of television’s relative “poverty”, he suspects, “lies not in the medium’s discoveries [what it has been used for], but rather in our understanding of those discoveries, in our failure as yet to grasp what the medium is for, what constitutes its powers and its treasures” (1982, 76). Serial television drama is now subject to a great deal of appreciative attention. The catalyst for this thesis, however, is that we (scholars who write about serial drama) have nevertheless tended to miss one of the most prominent features of these works. It is one that embodies an aspect of their significance which is crucial to any satisfying appreciation of their value, and thus of the medium’s “powers and its treasures”.

What television studies has largely overlooked is the expressiveness of the performers as they are presented onscreen. In response to that oversight, this thesis has shown how the handling of performance lies at the heart of key moments from both *Homeland* and *Mad Men*. Each chapter explored how close attention to the “texture of performance” (Clayton 2011b) clarifies the experiences those moments make available, and brings to light the depths of significance to be found there. In doing so, this thesis demonstrates how relationships between performance and the

provisional are an overlooked resource of serial drama. Through those relationships, both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* reflect on a set of links between the temporal conditions of seriality and those of human companionship. My attention to performance as a crucial aspect of serial form has thus revealed the provisional as an underappreciated aesthetic quality of serial drama – one that is vital to the significance of seriality in two of the most prominent US series of the early twenty-first century. The thesis therefore makes an original contribution to knowledge by clarifying the source and value of the experiences both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* afford.

Some might wonder why an effort to share and reflect on my experience should count as knowledge. Perhaps my observations and judgements in the preceding pages are merely subjective impressions without consequence or normative weight for others. In the first chapter, I addressed such concerns about the basis of criticism in personal experience. Drawing on principles expressed by film critics such as V. F. Perkins (1990), and John Gibbs and Douglas Pye (2005), I argued that the admittedly personal insights of good criticism find social validity in their purchase on the verifiable details of an object. Claims for significance and value that arise from subjective experience might thus provide a basis for intersubjective agreement and understanding, or, as Alexander Nehamas suggests, community (2016, 182–83). Throughout this thesis, I have argued that key passages from both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* ought to be understood and valued in certain terms rather than others. Doing so, I have not merely shared an opinion, but opened-up deeper ways of seeing these dramas – of coming to better terms with the pictures of human life they develop.

A premise of the thesis is that such judgements are fundamental to any meaningful account of what distinguishes serial drama as a medium. This premise is based in Cavell's notion of artistic medium put forward in *The World Viewed* (1979). There, he argues that any medium for art is not defined in advance of its works by the materials from which they are made; a medium is instead discovered through uses of those materials which give them significance (1979, 31–32). Hence my readings of *Mad Men* and *Homeland* offered in chapters Three, Four, and Five – along with the more meta-critical observations in the first and second chapters – are intended as interventions in the literature on serial drama's medium specificity. Each chapter refines our understanding of what distinguishes serial drama as an art form by bringing into question certain prevalent views of the medium. The most basic of those is the truism that serial drama's distinctive attraction as a storytelling form lies in its affinity for depicting personal relationships over long periods of time. But if this is an intrinsic value of the form, I asked in Chapter One, why do only some series earn and keep our attention, or make a powerful, lasting impression on us, while others do not? Precisely how is serial drama's extended duration – unfolding a continuous fictional history over dozens of episodes and seasons, across months and years – a rich resource for depicting close human bonds, such as friendship, which also take shape over long, indeterminate periods of time?

Chapter One responded to conceptions of serial drama that value the form's expressive opportunities primarily in terms of accumulation. There I put forward an alternative, more clearly developed picture of the affinity between seriality in television fiction and the bonds of human companionship. Central to that picture is the concept of the provisional. The continued unfolding of serial drama, I argued, results not only in a deepening sedimentation of the fiction's history – it also entails a provisional structure of authorial intention and textual meaning, within which significance becomes subject to an ongoing process of retrospective interpretation.¹⁴⁰ Established meanings are thus susceptible to loss or erosion; accrual is set in tension with transience. It is this attribute of serial form that most tightly links the conditions of long-form television drama with those of close interpersonal bonds like friendship or marriage. Who we are to another – what Robert Pippin calls our “practical identity” (2005, 309) – does not simply deepen or accrue over time, becoming more fixed in its familiarity. As with the meanings laid down in an episode or season of television drama, finding out “who one is”, Pippin writes, “does not discover a stable self simply revealed in action. We get, at best, another temporary resting place that further demands on us could and very likely will dislodge” (2005, 310).

The value of both *Mad Men* and *Homeland*, I argued, ought to be appreciated in terms of the way each drama handles performance to internalise the provisional – as a link between seriality in television drama, and the nature of human companionship as one of its central dramatic subjects. In this respect, both series are distinguished by their treatment of theatricality as a condition which threatens to undermine the bonds of belief and trust, casting doubt on the depth of the commitments and intimacies holding the characters together. *Homeland* articulates these concerns through its use of the spy thriller. Driving the first season is the question of Brody's allegiance, and thus of who he has become during his captivity. This is presented as an issue of bodily expression – whether his actions and gestures, the tone of his words, might betray his intentions and thus reveal who he is. *Mad Men* is built around a theatrical figure in the character of Don Draper. Having refashioned his identity after returning from the Korean War, Don lives in the shadow of a prospective fraudulence. He embodies the fear that who we are to others, and perhaps to ourselves, will be discovered and exposed as false, as based in some fatal lie or misapprehension. Don thus provides a rich focus for a drama more widely concerned with the nature of personal relationships in the corporate workplace, where friendship may be confused with the shallower, impersonal ties of mercantile transaction. The aesthetic attractions of both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* lie in the way each series puts pressure on the expressive gestures that form and sustain close personal and social bonds. In dramatic contexts that appear so inhospitable to the survival of those bonds, what weight do such expressions carry?

¹⁴⁰ This argument was based on pieces of criticism in Jacobs (2001) and Jacobs and Peacock (2013a).

By highlighting these features of *Mad Men* and *Homeland*, the thesis has further revealed how the priorities of television studies are at odds with the most salient human aspects of serial television drama. In Chapter Two, I undertook a survey of television studies scholarship in which one might expect to find close attention to performance, such as in studies of quality television, or of characterisation in serial drama. What I discovered was a glaring absence. This lack of reflection on the expressiveness of television performance, I argued, suggests more than a simple direction of interest towards other matters, such as political economy, or the contextual conditions of television acting as a form of labour. My analysis was that these tendencies of the discipline instead ought to be seen as acts of avoidance. Reading the literature on quality television, for example, I was struck by how often scholars explain away the form and value of particular programs by reference to an apparently determining web of economic conditions and socially habituated taste regimes. The specific intentions and significance embodied by particular programs are thus met with an abiding scepticism – a refusal to acknowledge their individual expressiveness. A similar refusal was found in scholarship that overlooks matters of style in serial drama, and in work that attends to contextual issues of television acting, but which fails to consider the presence and achievements of the performers onscreen. Both are ways of escaping our obligation to judge and appreciate the actions of other human beings – not only the people visible onscreen in television drama, but also the other, unseen artists responsible for framing, selecting, and patterning the presentation of the performers.

Television studies' oversight of performance is especially striking given how deeply recent serial drama is concerned with the stakes of paying attention to such expressiveness, or of failing to. The thesis revealed the depth of this concern in *Mad Men* and *Homeland* across chapters Three, Four, and Five. Each chapter was organised around a scene or sequence that stands out as a vivid and rich instance of a series reflecting on its serial form. How we choose to read these scenes will thus produce – or reflect – different views of what distinguishes serial drama as a storytelling form, which will further shape the terms in which we appreciate the medium's value and significance. In Chapter Three, I used the ending of the "The Phantom" to address television studies' misleading view of seriality as a mainly narrative aspect of form in television drama. The episode's cliffhanger cut to black seems meant to highlight the fiction's serial form by emphasising the suspenseful interruption of an ongoing train of narrative events. While acknowledging this feature of the ending, I questioned how deeply it points to a distinctive expressive opportunity of serial drama; as V. F. Perkins reminds us, all narratives end at an arbitrary point, beyond which the world of the fiction continues, holding out the promise of an unseen future which may invite a mood between hope or despair (1999, 71–72). The principles of Perkins's *Film as Film* ([1972] 1993) helped me to show that, in contrast to the emphasis on narrative in the work of Michael Z. Newman (2006) and Jason Mittell (2015), issues of viewpoint, style, and expressiveness should be vital to accounts of seriality

in television drama. My reading of “The Phantom” made clear how the design of the episode’s ending is most deeply organised around the patterning of the series’ viewpoint across its seasons, specifically in the way the presentation of the performers echoes earlier, long-distant moments of *Mad Men*. Performance, I argued, becomes the crucial expressive thread linking the series’ parts over time. This point runs through each chapter of close reading. In Chapter Four, the potential sentimentality of the plotting in *Homeland*’s season one finale is redeemed by Damian Lewis’s performance of a divided self, and of his ultimate choice as arising from a moment of inner loss. These qualities resonate with earlier images of Brody’s alienation from himself as he confronts his reflection in the mirror, casting his commitment to Dana with unnerving shadows of disembodiment and hypnotism. Chapter Five’s account of “The Suitcase” likewise revealed how the richness of that episode’s best scenes depends on a fine handling of performance that balances the sedimentation of the past against contrasting qualities of the transient, or ghostly. This tension is pivotal to the credibility of the episode’s concluding gestures of reconciliation – restrained images of unspoken exchange that risk the sentimental while avoiding the traps of cheaply declared feeling.

In each chapter, then, the aim of my judgements was to show how the success of these sequences depends on their fine handling of performance and the provisional, in dramatic situations concerning the survival of long-held bonds, whether those of marriage, family, nation, or friendship. The thesis has thus brought to light shortcomings in familiar ways of accounting for serial drama’s aesthetic value. I have proposed that notions of narrative enigma and complexity may blinker us from the deeper mystery of innerness presented by the human face, and that well-worn intimacies may be undone by a momentary gesture. Appreciating the examples in these latter terms has helped bring to light discoveries of serial drama’s power as a medium for companionship which may have otherwise gone overlooked. Both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* discover how serial drama may give credible aesthetic form to the idea that our pasts can, despite their permanence, be transformed, for better or for worse. We might keep alive the promise of a new future, or confront the erosion and loss of the life we had imagined. In the images of close companionship addressed by this thesis, the stakes of either outcome are shown to be nothing less than the survival of a shared world – the creation and sustenance of which depends on the history and fate of a pair’s gestures, looks, words, and expressions.

In this study, I considered only two dramas from the mid-2000s, both of which mattered to me a great deal when I first watched them, and which continue to have an important place in my life as I write. Some readers might think this focus is too narrow to reveal much about “the medium” of serial drama, which is more than ever remarkable for its expansive number and diversity of works. The aim of this thesis, however, has been to show that if serial drama has value as art, it can only be appreciated by reflecting on our experience of particular moments from individual series, and by

clarifying the source of the impressions they make. This study will have satisfied its aims, then, not if readers agree with my judgements, but if they find themselves prepared to take these moments from *Mad Men* and *Homeland* as measures of serial drama's potential value – of how good it can be, and in what terms. From experience, I know that not every reader will share my appreciation of these series. The preceding pages might nevertheless provide the impetus for those individuals to share their own claims about which series or moments reveal the medium's value. At the very least, I hope my observations about *Mad Men* and *Homeland* demonstrate the depth of careful attention to human expressiveness which the best examples of the medium expect from us, and richly reward.

More remains to be said about both series, not only of their internal significance, but also their relation to the wider landscape of television fiction, and the deeper history of modernist art. By attending to the fine details of performance in *Mad Men* and *Homeland*, I found myself needing to concentrate on small moments or individual scenes as the focus of each chapter. In contrast to my earlier study of *Breaking Bad* (Logan 2016a), which was not so dedicated to performance, huge swathes of both series had to be omitted from the discussion, leaving further questions to answer. How does *Homeland* exploit the talents of Claire Danes and Mandy Patinkin in its later seasons? As the drama continues, how does it develop the concerns articulated through performance in season one – as Brody and Carrie's relationship further unfolds and unravels, and is eventually let go by the writers altogether, for instance, or as Carrie becomes a mother? My discussion of *Homeland* in this thesis does not offer a comprehensive account of the series (whatever that could possibly look like). It does, however, provide a foundation from which to further appreciate the show's significance, not only in its later seasons, but also in early heights of excellence I did not touch, such as the sequence in which Brody confesses to Carrie during "The Weekend" (1.7). The same issues of scope and selection apply to my account of *Mad Men*. Matthew Weiner's drama ran for seven seasons; I have concentrated on the endings from two episodes of seasons four and five. However limited in scope, my analyses of *Mad Men* in chapters Three and Five uncover a set of concerns and aesthetic qualities that are fundamental to the series' overall achievement. In particular, there is more to say about *Mad Men*'s fascination with Jon Hamm's face in moments of quiet isolation at the ending of many episodes, where we are left with an image of his stare, coloured by silence and music. In this regard, Chapter Five's account of "The Suitcase" is the starting point for a study addressing the art of the unspoken in *Mad Men*; an essay remains to be written that explores the echoes of "The Suitcase" which sound in some of the best parts of the later seasons, such as "In Care Of" (6.13), "The Strategy" (7.6), and the concluding moments of the series finale "Person to Person" (7.14).

The actors onscreen are the most prominent human feature of television fiction, crucial to our investment in the shows that matter to us, and provisionality is an intrinsic condition under

which their performances are created and presented. Relationships between performance and the provisional might therefore provide the focus for larger studies of television fiction that extend the insights of this thesis. A clear opportunity is to explore how the achievements of *Homeland* and *Mad Men* highlighted here are linked with the concerns, qualities, and values of other recent dramas, from the United States and elsewhere. I am thinking, in particular, of *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under*, *The Wire*, *Friday Night Lights* (NBC, 2008–11) *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul*, *The Americans* (more of it than I discussed here), *Quarry*, *True Detective*, *Billions*, *Mindhunter* (Netflix, 2017–), *Twin Peaks: The Return* (Showtime, 2017), and, from the UK, *Broadchurch* (ITV, 2013–17) and *Happy Valley* (BBC One, 2014–).¹⁴¹ Towards the end of Chapter One, I addressed the issues of authorship raised by serial drama. More work on acting and direction in television fiction remains to be done. It may be fruitful to concentrate on individual shows or episodes, thinking about the relationship between actors, directors, and writers under different production conditions. One could compare the first two seasons of *True Detective* in terms of performance, testing what light this may shed on the direction of both seasons – the first overseen singlehandedly by Cary Joji Fukunaga, the second divided between Justin Lin, Janus Metz, Jeremy Podeswa, John Crowley, Miguel Sapochnik, and Daniel Atlas. And if the artistry of *Mad Men* can be traced to the overarching responsibility of Matthew Weiner as showrunner, then the insights of this thesis may help to read and appreciate his later work in *The Romanoffs* (2018, Amazon Prime Video). Weiner’s return to a host of actors from *Mad Men* (such as John Slattery, Christina Hendricks, and Jay R. Ferguson) provides the opportunity to further explore what he has discovered of them as performers on television. Likewise, a larger study of television performance (whether concerned with the thematic preoccupations of this thesis or not) might trace the work of particular actors (in both central and supporting roles) across a number of series and formats.¹⁴² How are the powers of a certain performer discovered in particular series, or episodes, or moments, to be then drawn upon and developed in new ways by later works? How do some actors in particular thus reveal the powers of television as a medium for drama and comedy?

¹⁴¹ Any such study would, I imagine, have the potential to further deepen the insights of Martin Shuster’s *New Television: The Aesthetics and Politics of a Genre* (2017), which argues that the defining concern of contemporary serial drama is the bond of “family” (understood figuratively, not biologically), a social unit whose ties offer a possibility of value and meaning in a world without normative authority. Shuster’s interest in philosophical explication leads him away from the details of style and thus from performance. In the dramas I have addressed here, however, it is the palpable but non-semantic expression of significance through gestures, faces, eyes, and tones of voice that carry a promise of meaning – of “something deeper”, the content and fate of which is mysterious.

¹⁴² There is ample work in film studies that might show the way here, such as Andrew Britton’s study of Katharine Hepburn (1995), Edward Galfant on Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire (2000) and Susan Hayward (2011), together with the monographs of Bloomsbury’s Film Stars series.

Another potential direction of inquiry is suggested by the gravity of both *Mad Men* and *Homeland*, which more often than not depict their characters' failures of one another, and present worlds that are in many ways oppressive, even malign. But television can also reward us with happier moods. If the bonds of companionship are something we value and cherish, it is in part because they can bring us joy, a possibility celebrated by television comedy.¹⁴³ The pictures of companionship discussed in this thesis are a measure of serial drama's value, but we might find other, no-less profound values in those of comedic series, such as, among other examples, *Party Down* (Starz, 2009–10), *Parks and Recreation* (NBC, 2009–15), *Broad City* (Comedy Central, 2014–19), and *Derek* (Channel 4, 2012–14). Earlier sitcoms would also reward close attention in this regard. I am thinking, especially, of *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1989–1998). Although this thesis has focussed on contemporary programs, its value to potential historical studies should not be overlooked. In Chapter Two, I quoted David Thorburn's observation that television's history as a dramatic medium "is, at the very least, a history of exceptional artistic accomplishments by actors" (2000, 441). While this thesis contributes to such a history of our present, relationships between performance and the provisional may also prove useful in studying earlier periods of serial drama. Consider Todd Gitlin's account of *Hill Street Blues*. Reading the series' depiction of urban America in the early 1980s, Gitlin writes: "In a crumbling society, all human bonds are provisional", a condition reflected by the series' dramatic structure, in which, Gitlin argues, the "payoff [. . .] was usually not really a deed done, a criminal caught. Instead, it was a provisional sort of knowledge" (1994, 312, 275). To what degree are the concerns of *Mad Men* and *Homeland* explored by this thesis a development of serial drama's interests, qualities, and achievements in earlier periods?¹⁴⁴ How might such comparison further inform our understanding of the medium, both as it was then, and as it is now?

In closing, it remains striking to me how prominently "The Phantom" internalises screen performance through its many images of film projection, auditioning, and the creation of artificial studio sets, evoking the power of the camera to record and thus preserve an image of the world as it once appeared (which may represent reality, or a distorting fantasy). Serial drama as a medium of screen performance is likewise worked into the plot and visual texture of *Homeland*, in its central narrative device of long-term video surveillance, its motifs of mirrored self-reflection providing an image of the split between inner and outer, further dramatised in its many scenes of interrogation

¹⁴³ Deborah Thomas's *Beyond Genre* (2000) shows how Hollywood film can be approached in terms of its melodramatic, comedic, and romantic worlds. US television fiction may be understood the same way, which would help us link the concerns of its dramas with those of its comedies; see Arras (2018), who reads sitcoms such as *Friends* alongside dramas such as *NYPD Blue*.

¹⁴⁴ Projecting the thesis backward in this way might extend Paul Arras's study of US television in the 1990s, which addresses the period in terms of community and isolation; see Arras (2018).

and bodily scrutiny. The salience of performance as a thematic concern in both series is thus to be understood in terms of theatricality, as a threat to be unveiled or a condition to be mastered, offering the freedom to become and inhabit a new self, or presenting a trap – the loss of a stable identity that has any meaningful mooring, the discovery of “who one is” either endlessly shifting, or absorbed into the expectations of who one ought to be. The interpretive stakes of these issues concern the grounds on which our bonds to others are formed, tended, kept, understood, and valued or lost. As I noted in Chapter One, by internalising and reflecting on their medium in these terms, both *Mad Men* and *Homeland* participate in a tradition of artistic modernism with roots in nineteenth century literature and painting, where the promise and fate of meaning in the modern absence of authority was expressed, in large part, as a challenge of reliably reading and judging the expressions and actions of others.¹⁴⁵ To explore these connections in their proper depth would depend on the kind of attention to performance modelled in this study. This thesis thus opens a further inroad towards our deepened appreciation of serial drama’s status, and lineage, as art.

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, Robert Pippin’s analyses of Henry James (2000), Proust (2005, 307–38), and French pictorial modernism (2014, esp. 39–62).

List of Works Cited

1. Written Works and Web Pages

- Adalian, Josef, and Maria Elena Fernandez. 2016. "The Business of Too Much TV". *Vulture*, 18 May 2016. <http://www.vulture.com/2016/05/peak-tv-business-c-v-r.html>.
- Adams, John. 1993. "Yes, Prime Minister: 'The Ministerial Broadcast' (Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay): Social Reality and Comic Realism in Popular Television Drama". In Brandt 1993, 62–85.
- . 1998. "Screen Play: Elements of a Performance Aesthetic in Television Drama". In Ridgman 1998, 141–57.
- Affron, Charles. 1977. *Star Acting: Gish, Garbo, Davis*. New York: Dutton.
- . 1982. *Cinema and Sentiment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Akass, Kim, and Janet McCabe. 2011. "The Best of Everything: The Limits of Being a Working Girl in *Mad Men*". In Edgerton 2011, 177–92.
- Aleaziz, Hamed. 2011. "Interrogating the Creators of *Homeland*". *Mother Jones*, 4 November 2011. <http://www.motherjones.com/media/2011/10/homeland-season-2-claire-danes-howard-gordon-alex-gansa?page=1>.
- Allen, Robert C. 1985. *Speaking of Soap Opera*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Anderson, Christopher. 2009. "Producing an Aristocracy of Culture in American Television". In *The Essential HBO Reader*, edited by Gary R. Edgerton and Jeffrey P. Jones, paperback edition, 23–41. Essential Readers in Contemporary Media and Culture. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Anderson, Tim. 2011. "Uneasy Listening: Music, Sound, and Criticizing Camelot in *Mad Men*". In Edgerton 2011, 72–85.
- Arras, Paul. 2018. *The Lonely Nineties: Visions of Community in Contemporary US Television*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bailey, Steve. 2001. "'Professional Television': Three (Super)Texts and a (Super)Genre". *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 47: 45–61.

- Balász, Béla. 2011. *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory: Visible Man and The Spirit of Film*. Edited by Erica Carter. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. 1st paperback edition. Film Europa: German Cinema in an International Context. New York: Berghan.
- Barkhorn, Eleanor. 2011. "Matthew Weiner". *The Atlantic*, November 2011.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/11/matthew-weiner/308674/>.
- Baron, Cynthia, and Sharon Marie Carnicke. 2008. *Reframing Screen Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Baron, Cynthia, Diane Carson, and Frank P. Tomasulo, eds. 2004. *More Than a Method: Trends and Traditions in Contemporary Film Performance*. Contemporary Approaches to Film and Television Series. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Bartley, William. 2014. "Mad Men, the Historical Novel, and Social Change". *CineAction*, no. 94: 12–21.
- Beail, Linda, and Lilly J. Goren, eds. 2015. "Mad Men" and Politics: Nostalgia and the Remaking of Modern America. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Becker, Christine. 2009. "Acting for the Cameras: Performance in the Multi-Camera Sitcom". *Mediascape* (Fall).
http://www.tft.ucla.edu/mediascape/Spring08_ActingForTheCameras.html.
- Bennett, James. 2011. *Television Personalities: Stardom and the Small Screen*. London: Routledge.
- Bevan, Alex. 2015. "The National Body, Women and Mental Health in *Homeland*". *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 4: 145–51.
- Bignell, Jonathan. 2010. "Docudrama Performance: Realism, Recognition, and Representation". In *Cornea* 2010, 59–75.
- Biskind, Peter. 2007. "An American Family". *Vanity Fair*, April 2007.
<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2007/04/sopranos200704>.
- Blanchet, Robert, and Margrethe Bruun Vaage. 2012. "Don, Peggy, and Other Fictional Friends? Engaging with Characters in Television Series". *Projections* 6, no. 2: 18–41.
- Bode, Lisa. 2017. *Making Believe: Screen Performance and Special Effects in Popular Cinema*. Techniques of the Moving Image. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Bonner, Frances. 2011. *Personality Presenters: Television's Intermediaries with Viewers*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Bonner, Frances, and Jason Jacobs. 2017. "The Persistence of Television: The Case of *The Good Life*". *Critical Studies in Television* 12, no. 1: 6–20.
- Bordwell, David. 1985a. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London: Methuen.
- . 1985b. "Widescreen Aesthetics and Mise En Scene Criticism". *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 21: 18–25.

- . 1988. *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1989. *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. Harvard Film Studies. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. 1985. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1979) 2010. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Routledge Classics English language edition. Routledge Classics. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Branco, Sérgio Dias. 2010. “Strung Pieces: On the Aesthetics of Television Fiction Series”. PhD dissertation, University of Kent.
- Brandt, George W., ed. 1993. *British Television Drama in the 1980s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Britton, Andrew. 1995. *Katharine Hepburn: Star as Feminist*. London: Studio Vista.
- . 2009a. “In Defence of Criticism”. In *Britton on Film: The Complete Film Criticism of Andrew Britton*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 373–77. Contemporary Approaches to Film and Television Series. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- . 2009b. “The Philosophy of the Pigeonhole: Wisconsin Formalism and the ‘Classical Style’”. In *Britton on Film: The Complete Film Criticism of Andrew Britton*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 425–57. Contemporary Approaches to Film and Television Series. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Broadcasting Research Unit. 1989. *Quality in Television: Programmes, Programme-Makers, Systems*. London: John Libbey.
- Brown, Tom, and James Walters, eds. 2010. *Film Moments: Criticism, History, Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brunsdon, Charlotte. 1990. “Problems with Quality”. *Screen* 31, no. 1: 67–90.
- . 1997. *Screen Tastes: Soap Opera to Satellite Dishes*. London: Routledge.
- Bruun Vaage, Margrethe. 2014. “Blinded by Familiarity: Partiality, Morality, and Engagement in Television Series”. In *Cognitive Media Theory*, edited by Ted Nannicelli and Paul Taberham, 268–84. New York: Routledge.
- Buonanno, Milly. 2008. *The Age of Television: Experiences and Theories*. Translated by Jennifer Radice. Bristol: Intellect.
- . 2013. “The Transatlantic Romance of Television Studies and the ‘Tradition of Quality’ in Italian TV Drama”. *Journal of Popular Television* 1, no. 2: 175–89.
- Butler, Jeremy G. 1991a. “‘I’m Not a Doctor, but I Play One on TV’: Characters, Actors, and Acting in Television Soap Opera”. *Cinema Journal* 30, no. 4: 75–91.

- . 1991b. “Introduction”. In Butler 1991c, 7–16.
- , ed. 1991c. *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- . 2011. “‘Smoke Gets in Your Eyes’: Historicizing Visual Style in *Mad Men*”. In Edgerton 2011, 55–71.
- . 2012. *Television: Critical Methods and Applications*. Fourth edition. Routledge Communication Series. New York: Routledge.
- Caldwell, John Thornton. 1995. *Telesuality: Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television*. Communications, Media, and Culture. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Cameron, Ian, V. F. Perkins, Michael Walker, Jim Hillier, and Robin Wood. 1975. “The Return of Movie”. *Movie*, no. 20: 1–26.
- Cantrell, Tom, and Christopher Hogg. 2016. “Returning to an Old Question: What Do Television Actors Do When They Act?” *Critical Studies in Television* 11, no. 3: 283–98.
- . 2017. *Acting in British Television*. London: Palgrave.
- , eds. 2018. *Exploring Television Acting*. London: Bloomsbury-Methuen.
- Cardwell, Sarah. 2006. “Television Aesthetics”. *Critical Studies in Television* 1, no. 1: 72–80.
- . 2007. “Is Quality Television Any Good? Generic Distinctions, Evaluations and the Troubling Matter of Critical Judgement”. In McCabe and Akass 2007b, 19–34.
- . 2014. “Television Amongst Friends: Medium, Art, Media”. *Critical Studies in Television* 9 (3): 6–21.
- Cardwell, Sarah, and Steven Peacock. 2006. “Introduction”. *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 3, no. 1: 1–4.
- Carroll, Noël. 2001. “TV and Film: A Philosophical Perspective”. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 35, no. 1: 15–29.
- Casey, Bernadette, Neil Casey, Ben Calvert, Liam French, and Justin Lewis. 2008. *Television Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.
- Cassidy, Gary, and Simone Knox. 2015a. “What Actors Do: Robert Lindsay in *G.B.H.*” *CST Online Blog* (blog). 23 January 2015. <http://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-robert-lindsay-in-g-b-h-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- . 2015b. “What Actors Do: Charles Dance in *Game of Thrones*”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 13 March 2015. <http://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-charles-dance-in-game-of-thrones-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- . 2015c. “What Actors Do: Jennifer Aniston in *Friends*”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 8 May 2015. <https://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-jennifer-aniston-in-friends-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.

- . 2015d. “What Actors Do: Merritt Weaver in *Nurse Jackie*”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 13 June 2015. <http://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-merritt-weaver-in-nurse-jackie-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- . 2015e. “What Actors Do: Benedict Wong in *Marco Polo*”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 30 October 2015. <https://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-benedict-wong-in-marco-polo-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- . 2016a. “What Actors Do: Adam Driver in *Girls*”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 7 January 2016. <http://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-adam-driver-in-girls-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- . 2016b. “What Actors Do: Alec Baldwin in *30 Rock* (Part I)”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 8 April 2016. <http://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-alec-baldwin-in-30-rock-part-i-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- . 2017. “What Actors Do: Alec Baldwin in *30 Rock* (Part II)”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 13 January 2017. <http://cstonline.net/what-actors-do-alec-baldwin-in-30-rock-part-i-by-gary-cassidy-and-simone-knox/>.
- Castonguay, James. 2015. “Fictions of Terror: Complexity, Complicity and Insecurity in *Homeland*”. *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 4: 139–45.
- Caughie, John. 2000. “What Do Actors Do When They Act?” In *British Television Drama: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Jonathan Bignell, Stephen Lacey, and Madeleine Macmurrough-Kavanagh, 162–174. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cavell, Stanley. 1978. “What Becomes of Things on Film?” *Philosophy and Literature* 2, no. 2: 249–57.
- . 1979. *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*. Enlarged edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 1981. *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*. Harvard Film Studies. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 1982. “The Fact of Television”. *Daedalus* 111, no. 4: 75–96.
- . 1996. *Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2002. *Must We Mean What We Say?: A Book of Essays*. Updated edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2004. *Cities of Words: Pedagogical Letters on a Register of the Moral Life*. First Harvard University paperback edition, 2005. Cambridge: Harvard-Belknap Press.
- Cawelti, John G., and Bruce A. Rosenberg. 1987. *The Spy Story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Chatman, Seymour. 1978. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Cioffi, Frank. 1963. "Intention and Interpretation in Criticism". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, no. 64: 85–106.
- . 1998. *Wittgenstein on Freud and Frazer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clayton, Alex. 2011a. "Coming to Terms". In Clayton and Klevan 2010b, 27–37.
- . 2011b. "The Texture of Performance in *Psycho* and Its Remake". *Movie: A Journal of Film Criticism*, no. 3: 73–79.
- . 2013. "Why Comedy Is at Home on Television". In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 79–92.
- . 2016. "V. F. Perkins: Aesthetic Suspense". In *Thinking in the Dark: Cinema, Theory, Practice*, edited by Murray Pomerance and R. Barton Palmer, 208–16. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Clayton, Alex, and Andrew Klevan. 2010a. "Introduction: The Language and Style of Film Criticism". In Clayton and Klevan 2010b, 1–26.
- , eds. 2010b. *The Language and Style of Film Criticism*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, Lauren. 2016. "Blue Blood, Blue Collar". *The New Yorker*, 18 January 2016. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/01/18/blue-blood-blue-collar>.
- Cornea, Christine, ed. 2010. *Genre and Performance in Film and Television*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Corner, John. 2007. "Television Studies and the Idea of Criticism". *Screen* 48, no. 3: 363–69.
- Costello, Diarmuid. 2008. "On the Very Idea of a 'Specific' Medium: Michael Fried and Stanley Cavell on Painting and Photography as Arts". *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 2: 274–312.
- Cranston, Bryan. 2012. "Bryan Cranston Picks 13 Favorite *Breaking Bad* Moments". *The Daily Beast*, 12 July 2012. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bryan-cranston-picks-13-favorite-breaking-bad-moments>.
- Crawford, Donald W. 2013. "Kant". In *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes, Third edition, 46–55. Routledge Philosophy Companions. London: Routledge.
- Creeber, Glen. 2004. *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen*. London: BFI.
- Dasgupta, Sudeep. 2012. "Policing the People: Television Studies and the Problem of 'Quality'". *NECSUS* 1, no. 1: 35–53.
- De Kosnik, Abigail. 2013. "*One Life to Live*: Soap Opera Storytelling". In Thompson and Mittell, 355–63.
- Dhoest, Alexander. 2004. "Quality and/as National Identity: Press Discourse on Flemish Period TV Drama". *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 7, no. 3: 305–24.

- . 2014. “It’s Not HBO, It’s TV: The View of Critics and Producers on Flemish ‘Quality TV’”. *Critical Studies in Television* 9, no. 1: 1–22.
- Donaldson, Lucy Fife. forthcoming. “The Same, But Different: Adjustment and Accumulation in Television Performance”. In Donaldson and Walters, forthcoming.
- . 2013. “Camera and Performer: Energetic Engagement with *The Shield*”. In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 209–17.
- Donaldson, Lucy Fife, and James Walters, eds. Forthcoming. *Television Performance*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2018. “Inter(Acting): Television, Performance, and Synthesis”. *Critical Studies in Television* 13, no. 3: 352–69.
- Donoghue, Denis. 1983. *The Arts Without Mystery*. First American edition. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Drake, Philip. 2016. “Reframing Television Performance”. *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 6–17.
- Dunleavy, Trisha. 2009. *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2018. *Complex Serial Drama and Multiplatform Television*. New York: Routledge.
- Durgnat, Raymond. 1971. *Films and Feelings*. First MIT Press paperback edition. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Durham, Kim. 2002. “Methodology and Praxis of the Actor within the Television Production Process: Facing the Camera in *EastEnders* and *Morse*”. *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 22, no. 2: 82–94.
- Durham, Meenakshi Gigi, and Douglas M. Kellner, eds. 2006. *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*. Revised edition. Malden: Blackwell.
- Echart, Pablo, and Pablo Castrillo. 2016. “*Homeland*: Fear and Distrust as Key Elements of the Post-9/11 Political Spy Thriller”. In *Emotions in Contemporary TV Series*, edited by Alberto N. García, 189–204. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Edgerton, Gary R., ed. 2011. “*Mad Men*”: *Dream Come True TV*. Reading Contemporary Television. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Edgerton, Gary R., and Katherine C. Edgerton. 2012. “Pathologizing Post-9/11 America in *Homeland*: Private Paranoia, Public Psychosis”. *Critical Studies in Television* 7, no. 1: 89–92.
- Ellis, John. 1991. “Stars as a Cinematic Phenomenon”. In Butler 1991c, 300–15.
- . 1992. *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video*. Revised edition. London: Routledge.

- . 2009. “The Performance on Television of Sincerely Felt Emotion”. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 625: 103–15.
- Feuer, Jane. 1984. “The MTM Style”. In Feuer, Kerr, and Vahimagi 1984, 32–60.
- . 2003. “Quality Drama in the US: The New ‘Golden Age’?” In *The Television History Book*, edited by Michele Hilmes, 98–102. London: BFI.
- . 2007. “HBO and the Concept of Quality TV”. In McCabe and Akass 2007b, 145–57.
- Feuer, Jane, Paul Kerr, and Tise Vahimagi, eds. 1984. *MTM: “Quality Television”*. London: BFI.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. (1925) 2000. *The Great Gatsby*. Reprint. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin.
- Ford, Sam, Abigail De Kosnik, and C. Lee Harrington, eds. 2011. *The Survival of Soap Opera: Transformations for a New Media Era*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Fortmueller, Kate. 2016. “Pay to Play: Booking Roles in the Post-Network Era”. *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 115–28.
- Foster, Gwendolyn Audrey. 2010. “*The Colbert Report*: Performing the News as Parody for the Postmodern Viewer”. In Cornea 2010, 113–29.
- Fried, Michael. 1980. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1990. *Courbet’s Realism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1996. *Manet’s Modernism, or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1998. *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2002. *Menzel’s Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 2011. *Four Honest Outlaws: Sala, Ray, Marioni, Gordon*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 2014. *Another Light: Jacques-Louis David to Thomas Demand*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gallafent, Edward. 2000. *Astaire and Rogers*. Moffat: Cameron & Hollis.
- . 2011. “Susan Hayward in the 50s”. *Movie*, no. 2: 1–12.
- Gandy, Oscar H., Jr. 2003. “The Political Economy Approach: A Critical Challenge”. In *Television: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, vol. 3, edited by Toby Miller: 1–19. London: Routledge.
- Geraghty, Christine. 1991. *Women and Soap Opera: A Study of Prime Time Soaps*. Cambridge: Polity.
- . 2003. “Aesthetics and Quality in Popular Television Drama”. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1: 25–45.

- . 2006. “Discussing Quality: Critical Vocabularies and Popular Television Drama”. In *Media and Cultural Theory*, edited by James Curran and David Morley, 221–32. London: Routledge.
- Gibbs, John. 2002. *Mise-En-Scène: Film Style and Interpretation*. Short Cuts. London: Wallflower.
- . 2006. “Filmmakers’ Choices”. In *Close-Up 01: Filmmakers’ Choices/The Pop Song in Film/“Buffy the Vampire Slayer”*, edited by John Gibbs and Douglas Pye, 1–87. London: Wallflower.
- . 2013. *The Life of Mise-En-Scène: Visual Style and British Film Criticism, 1946–78*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Gibbs, John, and Douglas Pye. 2005a. “Introduction”. In Gibbs and Pye 2005b, 1–15.
- , eds. 2005b. *Style and Meaning: Studies in the Detailed Analysis of Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Gitlin, Todd. 1994. *Inside Prime-Time: Revised edition*. Communication and Society. London: Routledge.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. First Anchor Books edition. New York: Anchor Books.
- . 1974. *Frame Analysis*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Goode, Ian. 2006. “The Quality of Intimacy: Revelation and Disguise in the Dramatic Monologue”. *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 3, no. 1: 107–14.
- Goodlad, Lauren M. E., Lilya Kaganovsky, and Robert Allen Rushing, eds. 2013. “*Mad Men*”, *Mad World: Sex, Politics, Style, and the 1960s*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Gray, Jonathan. 2008. *Television Entertainment*. London: Routledge.
- Gunning, Tom. 1997. “In Your Face: Physiognomy, Photography, and the Gnostic Mission of Early Film”. *Modernism/Modernity* 4, no. 1: 1–29.
- Hagedorn, Roger. 1988. “Technology and Economic Exploitation: The Serial as a Form of Narrative Presentation”. *Wide Angle* 10, no. 4: 4–12.
- Hallberg, Robert von. 2015. “*The Maltese Falcon*” to “*Body of Lies*”: *Spies, Noirs, and Trust*. Recencies Series: Research and Recovery in American Poetics. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Hand, Richard J. 2010. “Captured Ghosts: Horror Acting in the 1970s British Television Drama”. In *Cornea* 2010, 38–58.
- Haralovich, Mary Beth. 2011. “Women on the Verge of the Second Wave”. In Edgerton 2011, 159–76.
- Hepburn, Allan. 2005. *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Hewett, Richard. 2013. "Acting in the New World: Studio and Location Realism in *Survivors*". *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 10, no. 2: 321–339.
- . 2014. "Spaces of Preparation: The 'Acton Hilton' and Changing Patterns of Television Drama Rehearsal". *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 34, no. 3: 331–344.
- . 2015. "The Changing Determinants of UK Television Acting". *Critical Studies in Television* 10, no. 1: 73–90.
- . 2017. *The Changing Spaces of Television Acting: From Studio Realism to Location Realism in BBC Television Drama*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hills, Matt. 2007. "From the Box in the Corner to the Box on the Shelf: 'TVIII' and the Cultural/Textual Valorisations of DVD". *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5, no. 1: 41–60.
- . 2011. "Television Aesthetics: A Pre-Structuralist Danger?" *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 8, no. 1: 99–117.
- Hogan, Mike. 2014. "David Harewood, *Homeland* Actor, Says Nicholas Brody Deserves to Die". *Huffington Post*, 24 January 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/david-harewood-homeland_n_2403901.
- Holliday, Christopher. 2015. "The Accented American: The New Voices of British Stardom on US Television". *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 12, no. 1: 63–82.
- Holt, Jennifer. 2003. "Vertical Vision: Deregulation, Industrial Economy and Prime-Time Design". In *Quality Popular Television: Cult TV, the Industry, and Fans*, edited by Mark Jancovich and James Lyons, 11–31. London: BFI.
- . 2013. "NYPD Blue: Content Regulation". In Thompson and Mittell 2013, 271–80.
- Hungerford, Amy. 2016. *Making Literature Now*. Post 45. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hunt, Albert. 1993. "Talking Heads: Bed Among the Lentils (Alan Bennett)". In Brandt 1993, 19–39.
- Hunter, Aaron. 2016. "Performance as Authorship: Sarah Michelle Gellar in *Buffy* Season 6". *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 51–68.
- Independent Television Commission. 1996. "Diversity and Quality in Television (ITC)". In *Television Times: A Reader*, edited by John Corner and Sylvia Harvey, 234–35. London: Arnold.
- Jacobs, Jason. 2000. *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama*. Oxford Television Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2001. "Issues of Judgement and Value in Television Studies". *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 4, no. 4: 427–447.
- . 2003. *Body Trauma TV: The New Hospital Dramas*. London: BFI.

- . 2006. “Television Aesthetics: An Infantile Disorder?” *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 3, no. 1: 19–33.
- . 2011a. “Television, Interrupted: Pollution or Aesthetic?” In *Television as Digital Media*, edited by James Bennett and Niki Strange, 255–80. Console-Ing Passions. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . 2011b. “The Medium in Crisis: Caughie, Brunsdon, and the Problem of US Television”. *Screen* 52, no. 4: 503–11.
- . 2011c. “Inner and Outer in *Homeland*”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 2 December 2011. <http://cstonline.tv/inner-and-outer>.
- . 2012. “*Deadwood*”. BFI TV Classics. London: BFI-Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2013. “Preacher Man”. *CST Online Blog* (blog). 25 January 2013. <https://cstonline.net/preacher-man-by-jason-jacobs/>
- Jacobs, Jason, and Steven Peacock. 2013a. “Introduction”. In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 1–20.
- , eds. 2013b. *Television Aesthetics and Style*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- . 2014. “‘The Liveliest Medium’: Television’s Aesthetic Relationships with Other Arts”. *Critical Studies in Television* 9, no. 3: 1–5.
- Jancovich, Mark, and James Lyons, eds. 2003. *Quality Popular Television: Cult TV, the Industry, and Fans*. London: BFI.
- Jaramillo, Deborah M. 2002. “The Family Racket: AOL Time Warner, HBO, *The Sopranos*, and the Construction of a Quality Brand”. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 26, no. 1: 59–75.
- . 2013. “Rescuing Television from ‘the Cinematic’: The Perils of Dismissing Television Style”. In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 67–75.
- Jenkins, Tricia. 2012. *The CIA in Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Johnson, Catherine. 2007. “Tele-Branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand”. *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5, no.1: 5–24.
- . 2012. *Branding Television*. Comedia. London: Routledge.
- Keeble, Arin, and Ivan Stacy, eds. 2015. “*The Wire*” and America’s Dark Corners: *Critical Essays*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. (1843) 1987. *Either/Or*. Edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Vol. 2. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Klevan, Andrew. 2005a. *Film Performance: From Achievement to Appreciation*. Short Cuts. London: Wallflower.
- . 2005b. “Notes on Teaching Film Style”. In Gibbs and Pye 2005b, 214–27.
- . 2010. “Description”. In Clayton and Klevan 2010b, 71–86.

- . 2011. “Expressing the In-Between”. *LOLA* 1.
http://www.lolajournal.com/1/in_between.html.
- . 2012. “Living Meaning: The Fluency of Film Performance”. In Taylor 2012, 33–46.
- . 2018. *Aesthetic Evaluation and Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Kolker, Robert. 2011. *A Cinema of Loneliness*. 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kouvaros, George. 2004. *Where Does It Happen? John Cassavettes and Cinema at the Breaking Point*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2010. *Famous Faces Yet Not Themselves: The Misfits and Icons of Postwar America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kozloff, Sarah Ruth. 1987. “Narrative Theory and Television”. In *Channels of Discourse*, edited by Robert C Allen, 43–73. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Lacey, Stephen, and Simone Knox, eds. 2018. “Acting on Television: Analytical Methods and Approaches”. *Critical Studies in Television* 13, no. 3.
- Lacob, Jace. 2011. “*Mad Men*: Matthew Weiner, Jon Hamm, Emmy Nominations, ‘The Suitcase’”. *The Daily Beast*, 6 September 2011. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/mad-men-matthew-weiner-jon-hamm-emmy-nominations-the-suitcase>.
- Le Carré, John. (1963) 2001. *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*. First Pocket Books trade paperback reprint. New York: Pocket Books.
- . (1974) 2002. *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. First Pocket Books trade paperback reprint. New York: Pocket Books.
- . (1979) 2008. *Smiley’s People*. First Scribner trade paperback reprint. New York: Scribner.
- Lentz, Kirsten Marthe. 2000. “Quality versus Relevance: Feminism, Race, and the Politics of the Sign in 1970s Television”. *Camera Obscura* 15, no. 1: 44–93.
- Letort, Delphine. 2017. “Conspiracy Culture in *Homeland* (2011–2015)”. *Media, War, and Conflict* 10, no. 2: 152–67.
- Littleton, Cynthia. 2017. “Peak TV: The Count of Scripted Series in 2017 so Far”. *Variety*, 9 August 2017. <http://variety.com/2017/tv/news/peak-tv-scripted-series-count-2017-1202521118/>.
- Logan, Elliott. 2013. “Flashforwards in *Breaking Bad*: Openness, Closure, and Possibility”. In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 219–26.
- . 2014. “The Ending of *Mad Men*’s Fifth Season: Cinema, Serial Television, and Moments of Performance”. *Critical Studies in Television* 9, no. 3: 44–53.
- . 2015. “How Do We Write About Performance in Serial Television?” *Series* 1, no. 1: 27–38.

- . 2016a. *“Breaking Bad” and Dignity: Unity and Fragmentation in the Serial Television Drama*. Palgrave Close Readings in Film and Television. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2016b. “‘Quality Television’ as a Critical Obstacle”. *Screen* 57, no. 2: 144–62.
- . 2018. “Kristen Stewart in *Clouds of Sils Maria*”. In *Close-Up: Great Cinematic Performances Volume 1: America*, edited by Murray Pomerance and Kyle Stevens, 274–85. International Film Stars. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lotz, Amanda D. 2013. “*House*: Narrative Complexity”. In Thompson and Mittell, 22–29.
- . 2017. *Portals: A Treatise on Internet-Distributed Television*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9699689>.
- Lowe, Vicky. 2007. “Acting with Feeling: Robert Donat, the ‘Emotion Chart’ and *The Citadel* (1938)”. *Film History: An International Journal* 19, no. 1: 73–85.
- Lury, Karen. 1995. “Television Performance: Being, Acting and ‘Corpsing’”. *New Formations* 27: 114–27.
- . 2007. “A Response to John Corner”. *Screen* 48, no. 3: 371–76.
- Mangrum, Benjamin. 2015. “Bourdieu, Cavell, and the Politics of Aesthetic Value”. *Literature & Theology* 29, no. 3: 260–83.
- Mann, Denise. 1991. “The Spectacularization of Everyday Life: Recycling Hollywood Stars and Fans in Early Television Variety Shows”. In Butler 1991c, 333–60.
- Martin, Adrian. 2008. “Secret Agents”. *Undercurrent* 4.
http://fipresci.hegenauer.co.uk/undercurrent/issue_0407/martin_secret.htm.
- McCabe, Janet. 2012. *“The West Wing”*. TV Milestones. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- . 2013. “HBO Aesthetics, Quality Television and Boardwalk Empire”. In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 185–97.
- McCabe, Janet, and Kim Akass. 2007a. “Introduction: Debating Quality”. In McCabe and Akass 2007b, 1–11.
- , eds. 2007b. *Quality TV: Contemporary American Television and Beyond*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- . 2007c. “Sex, Swearing, and Respectability: Courting Controversy, HBO’s Original Programming and Producing Quality TV”. In McCabe and Akass 2007b, 62–76.
- McGrath, Charles. (1995) 2000. “The Triumph of the Prime-Time Novel”. In *Television: The Critical View*, edited by Horace Newcomb, 7th paperback edition, 242–252. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McLoone, Martin. 1996. “Boxed In?: The Aesthetics of Film and Television”. In *Big Picture, Small Screen: The Relations Between Film and Television*, edited by John Hill and Martin McLoone, 76–106. Acamedia Research Monograph 16. Luton: University of Luton Press.

- McNaughton, Douglas. 2014. "'Constipated, Studio-Bound, Wall-Confined, Rigid': The Influence of British Actors' Equity on BBC Television Drama, 1948–72". *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 11, no. 1: 1–22.
- Mellencamp, Patricia. 1991. "Situation Comedy, Feminism, and Freud: Discourses of Gracie and Lucy". In Butler 1991c, 316–332.
- Mendelsohn, Daniel. 2011. "The *Mad Men* Account". *The New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2011. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/02/24/mad-men-account/>.
- Miller, Toby. 2003. *Spyscreen: Espionage on Film & TV from the 1930s to the 1960s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, Brett. 2005. *Television Sitcom*. London: BFI.
- . 2010. "Comedy Performance in British Sitcom". In Cornea 2010, 130–47.
- . 2013. "What Does It Mean to Call Television 'Cinematic'?" In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 57–66.
- Mittell, Jason. 2006. "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television". *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 56: 29–40.
- . 2009. "The Aesthetics of Failure". *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 64: 76–77.
- . 2013. "The Qualities of Complexity: Vast Versus Dense Seriality in Contemporary Television". In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 45–56.
- . 2015. *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*. New York: NYU Press.
- . 2017. "The Ends of Serial Criticism". In *Media of Serial Narrative*, edited by Frank Kelleter, 169–82. Theory and Interpretation of Narrative. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.
- Mulgan, Geoff, ed. 1990. *The Question of Quality*. London: BFI.
- Mulvey, Laura. 1989. *Visual and Other Pleasures: Language, Discourse, Society*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Murdock, Graham, and Peter Golding. 1973. "For a Political Economy of Mass Communications". *The Socialist Register* 10: 205–34.
- Murphy, Cason. 2016. "Augusto Boal Is Alive and Well and Living in Mapleton: The Guilty Remnant in HBO's *The Leftovers*". *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 104–14.
- Nannicelli, Ted. 2012. "Ontology, Intentionality, and Television Aesthetics". *Screen* 53, no. 2: 164–79.
- . 2016. "In Defence of the Objectivity of Evaluative Television Criticism". *Screen* 57, no. 2: 124–43.

- . 2017. *Appreciating the Art of Television: A Philosophical Perspective*. Routledge Advances in Television Studies 5. New York: Routledge.
- Naremore, James. 1990. *Acting in the Cinema*. First paperback printing edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Negra, Diane, and Jorie Lagerwey. 2015. “Analyzing *Homeland*: Introduction”. *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 4: 126–31.
- Nehamas, Alexander. 2007. *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2016. *On Friendship*. New York: Basic Books.
- Nelson, Robin. 1997. *TV Drama in Transition: Forms, Values, and Cultural Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2007a. “HBO Premium: Channelling Distinction through TVIII”. *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5, no. 1: 25–40.
- . 2007b. “Quality TV Drama: Estimations and Influences through Time and Space”. In McCabe and Akass 2007b, 38–51.
- . 2007c. *State of Play: Contemporary “High-End” TV Drama*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Newcomb, Horace. 1974. *TV: The Most Popular Art*. Garden City: Anchor Books.
- . 1978. “Toward Television History: The Growth of Styles”. *Journal of the University Film Association* 30, no. 2: 9–14.
- . 1985. “Magnum: The Champagne of TV?” *Channels of Communication* (May-June): 23–26.
- . 2007. “‘This Is Not Al Dente’: *The Sopranos* and the New Meaning of ‘Television’”. In *Television: The Critical View*, edited by Horace Newcomb, Seventh Edition, 561–78. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Newman, Michael Z. 2006. “From Beats to Arcs: Towards a Poetics of Television Narration”. *The Velvet Light Trap*, no. 58 (Fall): 16–28.
- Newman, Michael Z., and Elana Levine. 2012. *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status*. New York: Routledge.
- Nussbaum, Emily. 2012. “Tune in Next Week”. *The New Yorker*, 30 July 2012.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/07/30/tune-in-next-week>
- Oldham, Joseph. 2017. *Paranoid Visions: Spies, Conspiracies and the Secret State in British Television Drama*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- O’Sullivan, Sean. 2006. “Old, New, Borrowed, Blue: *Deadwood* and Serial Fiction”. In *Reading “Deadwood”: A Western to Die For*, edited by David Lavery, 115–29. Reading Contemporary Television. London: I. B. Tauris.
- . 2009. “Reconnoitering the Rim: Thoughts on *Deadwood* and Third Seasons”. In *Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives*, edited by Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, 323–23. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- . 2010. “Broken on Purpose”. *Storyworlds* 2: 59–77.
- . 2013. “Serials and Satisfaction”. *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 63. <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ravon/2013-n63-ravon01450/1025614ar/>.
- Panofsky, Erwin. (1934) 1959. “The Style and Medium of the Motion Pictures”. In *Film: An Anthology*, edited by Daniel Talbot, 15–32. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Peacock, Steven. 2010. “Borders and Boundaries in *Deadwood*”. In *Cornea* 2010, 96–112.
- . 2017. “Review of ‘*Mad Men*’ and *Politics: Nostalgia and the Remaking of Modern America*, ‘*The Wire*’ and *America’s Dark Corners: Critical Essays*, and ‘*Breaking Bad*’: *Critical Essays on the Contexts, Politics, Style, and Reception of the Television Series*”. *Critical Studies in Television* 12, no. 1: 79–82.
- Pearson, Roberta. 2007. “Anatomising Gilbert Grissom: The Structure and Function of the Televisual Character”. In *Reading ‘CSI’: Crime TV Under the Microscope*, edited by Michael Allen, 39–56. Reading Contemporary Television. London: I. B. Tauris.
- . 2010. “The Multiple Determinants of Television Acting”. In *Cornea* 2010, 166–83.
- Perkins, Claire. 2015. “Translating the Television ‘Treatment’ Genre: *Be’Tipul* and *In Treatment*”. *Continuum* 29, no. 5: 781–94.
- Perkins, V. F. 1976. “The Cinema of Nicholas Ray”. In *Movies and Methods*, edited by Bill Nichols, 1:251–261. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1990. “Must We Say What They Mean? Film Criticism and Interpretation”. *Movie* 34/35: 1–6.
- . (1972) 1993. *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies*. First Da Capo edition. Da Capo Press.
- . 1999. *The Magnificent Ambersons*. BFI Film Classics. London: BFI.
- . 2005. “Where Is the World? The Horizon of Events in Movie Fiction”. In Gibbs and Pye 2005b, 16–41.
- . 2006. “Moments of Choice”. *Rouge* 9. http://www.rouge.com.au/9/moments_choice.html
- . 2012. *La Règle Du Jeu*. BFI Film Classics. London: BFI-Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2017. “Omission and Oversight in Close Reading – The Final Moments of Frederick Wiseman’s *High School*”. In *The Philosophy of Documentary Film: Image, Sound, Fiction*,

- Truth*, edited by David LaRocca, 381–93. *The Philosophy of Popular Culture*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Pierson, David P., ed. 2014. *“Breaking Bad”*: *Critical Essays on Contexts, Politics, Style, and Reception of the Television Series*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Piper, Helen. 2016. “Broadcast Drama and the Problem of Television Aesthetics: Home, Nation, Universe”. *Screen* 57, no. 2: 163–83.
- Pippin, Robert. 2000. *Henry James and Modern Moral Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2005. *The Persistence of Subjectivity: On the Kantian Aftermath*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2010a. *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth: The Importance of Howard Hawks and John Ford for Political Philosophy*. The Castle Lectures in Ethics, Politics, and Economics. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- . 2010b. *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2012. *Fatalism in American Film Noir: Some Cinematic Philosophy*. Page-Barbour Lectures for 2010. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- . 2014. *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2017. *The Philosophical Hitchcock: Vertigo and the Anxieties of Unknowingness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Plotkin, Henry. 1993. *Darwin Machines and the Nature of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Polan, Dana. 2007. “Cable Watching: HBO, *The Sopranos*, and Discourses of Distinction”. In *Cable Visions: Television Beyond Broadcasting*, edited by Sarah Banet-Weiser, Cynthia Chris, and Anthony Freitas, 261–83. New York: NYU Press.
- . 2009. *“The Sopranos”*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Pomerance, Murray. 2008. *The Horse Who Drank the Sky: Film Experience Beyond Narrative and Theory*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- . 2012. “Performed Performance and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*”. In Taylor 2012, 62–75.
- . 2016a. *Moment of Action: Riddles of Cinematic Performance*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- . 2016b. *“The Man Who Knew Too Much”*. BFI Film Classics. London: Palgrave.

- Pomerance, Murray, and Kyle Stevens, eds. 2018a. *Close-Up: Great Cinematic Performances Volume 1: America*. International Film Stars. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- , eds. 2018b. *Close-Up: Great Cinematic Performances Volume 2: International*. International Film Stars. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Porter, Michael J., Deborah L. Larson, Allison Harthcock, and Kelly Berg Nellis. 2002. “Re-(de)Fining Narrative Events: Examining Television Narrative Structure”. *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 30, no. 1: 23–30.
- Rawlins, Justin Owen, and R. Colin Tait. 2016a. “Introduction: Recentering Television Performance”. *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 3–5.
- , eds. 2016b. “Recentering Television Performance”. *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4.
- Reeves, Jimmie L., Mark C. Rogers, and Michael Epstein. 1996. “Rewriting Popularity: The Cult Files”. In *Deny All Knowledge: Reading “The X-Files”*, edited by David Lavery, Angela Hague, and Marla Cartwright, 22–35. London: Faber and Faber.
- Reynolds, Peter. 1998. “Actors and Television”. In *Ridgman 1998*, 159–71.
- Ricks, Christopher. 2010. *True Friendship: Geoffrey Hill, Anthony Hecht, and Robert Lowell Under the Sign of Eliot and Pound*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ridgman, Jeremy, ed. 1998. *Boxed Sets: Television Representations of Theatre*. Luton: John Libbey.
- Rogers, Mark C., Michael Epstein, and Jimmie L. Reeves. 2002. “*The Sopranos* as HBO Brand Equity: The Art of Commerce in the Age of Digital Reproduction”. In *This Thing of Ours: Investigating “The Sopranos”*, edited by David Lavery, 42–57. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rothman, William. 2010. “Silence and Stasis”. In *Clayton and Klevan 2010b*, 107–20.
- . 2013. “Justifying *Justified*”. In *Jacobs and Peacock 2013b*, 175–83.
- . 2014. *Must We Kill the Thing We Love? Emersonian Perfectionism and the Films of Alfred Hitchcock*. Film and Culture. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rothman, William, and Marian Keane. 2000. *Reading Cavell’s “The World Viewed”: A Philosophical Perspective on Film*. Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Ryle, Gilbert. 1945. “Knowing How and Knowing That: The Presidential Address”. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 46: 1–16.
- . 2009. *The Concept of Mind*. 60th Anniversary edition. London: Routledge.
- Rymsza-Pawlowska, Malgorzata J. 2014. “Broadcasting the Past: History Television, ‘Nostalgia Culture,’ and the Emergence of the Miniseries in the 1970s United States”. *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 42, no. 2: 81–90.

- Sassoon, Donald. 2006. *The Culture of the Europeans: From 1800 to the Present*. London: HarperCollins.
- Sconce, Jeffrey. 2004. "What If?: Charting Television's New Textual Boundaries". In *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, edited by Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson, 93–112. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Seiter, Ellen. 2004. "Qualitative Audience Research". In *The Television Studies Reader*, edited by Robert C. Allen and Annette Hill, 461–78. London: Routledge.
- Seitz, Matt Zoller. 2017. *"Mad Men" Carousel: The Complete Critical Companion*. Paperback Edition. New York: Abrams Press.
- Sepinwall, Alan. 2015. *The Revolution Was Televised: How "The Sopranos", "Mad Men", "Breaking Bad", "Lost", and Other Groundbreaking Dramas Changed TV Forever*. Touchstone trade paperback edition. New York: Touchstone.
- Sexton, Max. 2015. "Philip Jackson: The Craft of Acting". *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 12, no. 1: 121–26.
- Shacklock, Zoë. 2016. "Two of a Kind: Revaluating the Work of Acting Doubles in *Orphan Black*". *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 69–82.
- Shapiro, Stephen. 2015. "*Homeland*'s Crisis of Middle-Class Transformation". *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 4: 152–58.
- Shaw, Tony, and Tricia Jenkins. 2017. "From Zero to Hero: The CIA and Hollywood Today". *Cinema Journal* 56, no. 2: 91–113.
- Showtime. 2011. "*Homeland* Season 1 (2011) Official Trailer". *YouTube*. 8 April 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyFmS3wRPCQ&t=109s>.
- Shuster, Martin. 2017. *New Television: The Aesthetics and Politics of a Genre*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Anthony N. 2011. "TV or Not TV? *The Sopranos* and Contemporary Episode Architecture in US Network and Premium Cable Drama". *Critical Studies in Television* 6, no. 1: 36–51.
- Smith, Greg M. 1995. "Plotting a TV Show About Nothing: Patterns of Narration in *Seinfeld*". *Creative Screenwriting* 2, no. 3: 82–90.
- . 2006. "A Case of *Cold Feet*: Serial Narration and the Character Arc". *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 3, no. 1: 82–94.
- . 2007. *Beautiful TV: The Art and Argument of "Ally McBeal"*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Smith, Murray. 1995. *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford-Clarendon Press.

- . 2011. “Just What Is It That Makes Tony Soprano Such an Appealing, Attractive Murderer?” In *Ethics at the Cinema*, edited by Ward E. Jones and Samantha Vice, 66–90. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Springer, Claudia, and Julie Levinson, eds. 2015. *Acting. Behind the Silver Screen*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Steenberg, Lindsay, and Yvonne Tasker. 2014. “North of Quality? ‘Quality’ Television and the Suburban Crimeworld of Durham County”. In *Detecting Canada: Essays on Canadian Crime Fiction*, edited by Jeanette Sioniowski and Marilyn Rose, 257–74. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier.
- . 2015. “‘Pledge Allegiance’: Gendered Surveillance, Crime Television, and *Homeland*”. *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 4: 132–38.
- Steinberg, Brian. 2012. “*Mad Men* Is Great Art, Not Such Great Business”. *Advertising Age*, 27 March 2012. <http://adage.com/article/special-report-mad-men/mad-men-great-art-great-tv-business/233736/>.
- Steiner, Tobias. 2012. “Dealing with a Nation’s Trauma: Allegories on 9/11 in Contemporary US Television Drama Narratives and the Case of *Homeland*”. MA Thesis, Birkbeck College.
- Stern, Lesley, and George Kouvaros, eds. 1999. *Falling for You: Essays on Cinema and Performance*. Sydney: Power Publications.
- Stoddart, Scott F., ed. 2011. *Analyzing “Mad Men”: Critical Essays on the Television Series*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Stutsman, Staci. 2016. “The Unruly Clones: Tatiana Maslany’s Melodramatic Masquerades in *Orphan Black*”. *Journal of Film and Video* 68, no. 3–4: 83–103.
- Sussman, Gerald. 2002. “The Political Economy of Television”. In *Television Studies*, edited by Toby Miller, 7–10. London: BFI.
- Taylor, Aaron, ed. 2012. *Theorizing Film Acting*. Routledge Advances in Film Studies. New York: Routledge.
- Thomas, Deborah. 2000. *Beyond Genre: Melodrama, Comedy, and Romance in Hollywood Films*. Moffat: Cameron & Hollis.
- Thompson, Kristin. 2003. *Storytelling in Film and Television*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Thompson, Robert J. 1996. *Television’s Second Golden Age: From “Hill Street Blues” to “ER”*: “Hill Street Blues”, “Thirtysomething”, “St. Elsewhere”, “China Beach”, “Cagney & Lacey”, “Twin Peaks”, “Moonlighting”, “Northern Exposure”, “L.A. Law”, “Picket Fences”; with Brief Reflections on “Homicide”, “NYPD Blue”, “Chicago Hope”, and Other Quality Dramas. New York: Continuum.

- Thorburn, David. (1976) 2000. "Television Melodrama". In *Television: The Critical View*, edited by Horace Newcomb, Sixth edition, 595–608. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Toles, George. 2009. "The Gift of Amnesia in John Brahm's *The Locket*". *Film International* 7, no. 6: 32–55.
- . 2011a. "Occasions of Sin: The Forgotten Cigarette Lighter and Other Moral Accidents in Hitchcock". In *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, edited by Thomas Leitch and Leland Poague, 529–52. Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Film Directors. Malden: Blackwell.
- . 2011b. "Writing About Performance: The Film Critic as Actor". In Clayton and Klevan 2010b, 87–106.
- . 2013. "Don Draper and the Promises of Life". In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 147–73.
- Turnbull, Sue. 2005. "Moments of Inspiration: Performing Spike". *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 8, no. 3: 367–73.
- . 2011. "Performing *Veronica Mars*". In *Investigating Veronica Mars: Essays on the Teen Detective Series*, edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and Sue Turnbull, 35–48. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Walker, Cynthia W. 2004. "Spy Programs". *Museum of Broadcast Communications Encyclopedia of Television*, edited by Horace Newcomb, 2181–85. New York: Fitzroy Dearborn.
- . 2014. "Mr. Bond's Neighborhood: Domesticating the Superspy for American Television". In *James Bond and Popular Culture: Essays on the Influence of the Fictional Superspy*, edited by Michelle Brittany, 80–102. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Walters, James. 2013. "Better or Differently: Style and Repetition in *The Trip*". In Jacobs and Peacock 2013b, 113–23.
- Weiner, Matthew. 2014. "Matthew Weiner, The Art of Screenwriting No. 4". Interview by Semi Challas. <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6293/matthew-weiner-the-art-of-screenwriting-no-4-matthew-weiner>.
- Weintraub, Steve. 2011. "Bryan Cranston Talks *Breaking Bad* Season 3 and 4, *Total Recall*, *Drive*, *Rock of Ages*, *Larry Crowne* & *Lincoln Lawyer*". *Collider*, 1 June 2011. http://collider.com/bryan-cranston-interview-breaking-bad-total-recall-drive/94188/?awesm=fbshare.me_Ac2ia&utm_content=fbshare-js-small&utm_medium=fbshare.me-facebook-post&utm_source=direct-fbshare.me.
- Wessels, Emanuelle. 2016. "*Homeland* and Neoliberalism: Text, Paratexts, and Treatment of Affective Labor". *Feminist Media Studies* 16, no. 3: 511–26.
- White, Mimi. 2011. "Mad Women". In Edgerton 2011, 147–58.
- Williams, Linda. 2014. *On "The Wire"*. Spin Offs. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Wilson, Frank R. 1998. *The Hand: How Its Uses Shapes the Brain, Language, and Human Culture*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Wilson, George M. 1988. *Narration in Light: Studies in Cinematic Point of View*. Johns Hopkins Paperbacks. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wojcik, Pamela Robertson. 2004. *Movie Acting: The Film Reader*. In-Focus: Routledge Film Readers. London: Routledge.
- Wurtzel, Alan H., and Joseph R. Dominick. 1971. "Evaluation of Television Drama: Interaction of Acting Styles and Shot Selection". *Journal of Broadcasting* 16, no. 1: 103–10.
- Yacowar, Maurice. 2011. "Suggestive Silence in Season One". In Edgerton 2011, 86–98.
- Yates, Richard. (1961) 2007. *Revolutionary Road*. Vintage Classics. London: Vintage Books.
- Ytreberg, Espen. 2006. "Premeditations of Performance in Recent Live Television: A Scripting Approach to Media Production Studies". *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 4: 421–40.
- Zanger, Anat. 2015. "Between *Homeland* and *Prisoners of War*: Remaking Terror". *Continuum* 29, no. 5: 731–42.
- Zborowski, James. 2016. "Television Aesthetics, Media and Cultural Studies and the Contested Realm of the Social". *Critical Studies in Television* 11, no. 1: 7–22.
- Zucker, Carole. 1990. *Making Visible the Invisible: An Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting*. Metuchen: Scarecrow.

2. Films and Television Series

- All the President's Men*. 1976. Dir. Alan J. Pakula. Warner Bros.
- American Sniper*. 2015. Dir. Clint Eastwood. Warner Bros.
- Band of Brothers*. 2001. Prod. Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks, Gary Goetzman, et. al. HBO.
- Better Call Saul*. 2015–. Cr. Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould. AMC.
- Billions*. 2016–. Cr. Brian Koppelman, David Levien, Andrew Ross Sorkin. Showtime.
- Blue Collar*. 1978. Dir. Paul Schrader. Universal Pictures.
- Boardwalk Empire*. 2010–14. Cr. Terence Winter. HBO.
- Boogie Nights*. 1997. Dir. Paul Thomas Anderson. New Line Cinema.
- Breaking Bad*. 2007–08. Cr. Vince Gilligan. AMC.
- Brideshead Revisited*. 1981. Prod. Derek Granger. ITV.
- Broadchurch*. 2013–17. Cr. Chris Chibnall. ITV.
- Broad City*. 2014–19. Cr. Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson. Comedy Central.
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. 1997–2003. Cr. Joss Whedon. The WB/UPN.

Caught. 1949. Dir. Max Ophüls. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

City Lights. 1931. Dir. Charles Chaplin. United Artists.

Clouds of Sils Maria. 2015. Dir. Olivier Assayas. IFC Films.

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. 2000–15. Cr. Anthony E. Zuiker. CBS.

Deadwood. 2004–06. Cr. David Milch. HBO.

Derek. 2012–14. Cr. Ricky Gervais. Channel 4.

ER. 1994–2009. Cr. Michael Crichton. NBC.

Friday Night Lights. 2008–11. Dev. Peter Berg. NBC.

Friends. 1994–2004. Cr. David Crane and Marta Kauffman. NBC.

Game of Thrones. 2011–19. Cr. David Benioff and D. B. Weiss. HBO.

Girls. 2012–17. Cr. Lena Dunham. HBO.

Happy Valley. 2014–. Cr. Sally Wainwright. BBC One.

Hatufim. 2010–12. Cr. Gideon Raff. Channel 2.

High School. 1968. Dir. Frederick Wiseman. Zipporah Films.

Homeland. 2011–19. Cr. Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa. Showtime.

I Love Lucy. 1951–57. Prod. Jess Oppenheimer and Desi Arnaz. CBS.

It Happened One Night. 1934. Dir. Frank Capra. Columbia Pictures.

It's a Wonderful Life. 1946. Dir. Frank Capra. RKO Radio Pictures.

Justified. 2010–17. Dev. Graham Yost. FX.

Kramer vs. Kramer. 1979. Dir. Robert Benton. Columbia Pictures.

La Règle du jeu. 1937. Dir. Jean Renoir. The Gaumont Film Company.

Mad Men. 2007–15. Cr. Matthew Weiner. AMC.

Magnum, P.I. 1980–88. Cr. Donald P Bellisario and Glen A. Larson. CBS.

Mindhunter. 2017–. Cr. Joe Penhall. Netflix.

North by Northwest. 1959. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

NYPD Blue. 1993–2005. Cr. Steven Bochco and David Milch. ABC.

Orphan Black. 2013–17. Cr. Graeme Manson and John Fawcett. Space/BBC America.

Pacific Sun. 2012. Dir. Thomas Demand.

Parks and Recreation. 2009–15. Cr. Greg Daniels and Michael Schur. NBC.

Party Down. 2009–10. Cr. John Enborn, Rob Thomas, Dan Etheridge, and Paul Rudd. Starz.

Psycho. 1998. Dir. Gus Van Sant. Universal Pictures.

Psycho. 1960. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Universal Pictures.

Quarry. 2016. Cr. Graham Gordy and Michael D. Fuller. Cinemax.

Rhoda. 1974–78. Cr. James L. Brooks and Allan Burns. CBS.

Seinfeld. 1989–1998. Cr. Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld. NBC.

Six Feet Under. 2001–05. Cr. Alan Ball. HBO.

Talking Heads. 1987. Cr. Alan Bennett. BBC.

The Americans. 2013–18. Cr. Joe Weisberg. FX.

The Apartment. 1960. Dir. Billy Wilder. United Artists.

The Big Sleep. 1946. Dir. Howard Hawks. Warner Bros.

The Citadel. 1938. Dir. King Vidor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The Colbert Report. 2005–14. Cr. Stephen Colbert, Ben Karlin, and Jon Stewart. Comedy Central.

The Conversation. 1974. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Paramount Pictures.

The Great Dictator. 1940. Dir. Charles Chaplin. United Artists.

The Hurt Locker. 2010. Dir. Kathryn Bigelow. Summit Entertainment.

The Jewel in the Crown. 1984. Cr. Christopher Morahan, Jim O'Brien, Ken Taylor, et. al. ITV.

The Leftovers. 2014–17. Cr. Damon Lindelof and Tom Perotta. HBO.

The Magnificent Ambersons. 1942. Dir. Orson Welles. RKO Radio Pictures.

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance. 1962. Dir. John Ford. Paramount Pictures.

The Manchurian Candidate. 1962. Dir. John Frankenheimer. United Artists.

The Mary Tyler Moore Show. 1970–77. Cr. James L. Brooks and Allan Burns. CBS.

The Parallax View. 1974. Dir. Alan J. Pakula. Paramount Pictures.

The Romanoffs. 2018–. Cr. Matthew Weiner. Amazon Prime Video.

The Searchers. 1956. Dir. John Ford. Warner Bros.

The Sopranos. 1999–2007. Cr. David Chase. HBO.

The Untouchables. 1987. Dir. Brian De Palma. Paramount Pictures.

The West Wing. 1999–2006. Cr. Aaron Sorkin. NBC.

The Wire. 2002–08. Cr. David Simon. HBO.

The X-Files. 1993–2002. Cr. Chris Carter. Fox.

Three Days of the Condor. 1975. Dir. Sydney Pollack. Paramount Pictures.

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy. 1979. Prod. Jonathan Powell. BBC.

True Detective. 2014–. Cr. Nic Pizzolatto. HBO.

Twin Peaks: The Return. 2017. Cr. Mark Frost and David Lynch. Showtime.

Veronica Mars. 2004–07. Cr. Rob Thomas. UPN/The CW.

Vertigo. 1957. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures.

Yes, Prime Minister. 1986–88. Cr. Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn. BBC Two.

You Only Live Once. 1937. Dir. Fritz Lang. United Artists.