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Primary Features of Popular Culture in *Mad Men* TV Series

Abstract. This paper undertakes an analysis of the *Mad Men* TV series through the lenses of *popular culture*. Three of the popular culture primary features will be discussed: transmediality, the conservative and mimetic nature through the presence of the recyclable prefabs and of entertainment/ pleasure present in the series. Based on this analysis, looking for classical ingredients as well as for new ones, the paper will try to answer the question: which is the level of innovation in its structure? The challenge would be to decode it in a key of interpretation based on the balance between the classic *popular culture* recipes and the moderate amount of new, uncharacteristic and bold elements to satisfy the wide audience.

Keywords: popular culture, transmediality, TV series, advertising, television, intertextuality, product placement, conservative and mimetic character.

“Advertising is a great way to talk about the image we have of ourselves, versus who we really are. And admen were the rock stars of that era, creative, cocky, anti-authority. They made a lot of money, and they lived hard.”

(Matthew Weiner)

Introduction

On May 17th, 2015, America watched the last *Mad Men* episode, the fourteenth of the seventh series concluding, according to its creators, the production for good. Broadcast since July 17th 2007, the series offered the audience a number of 92 episodes that were deemed to have had, according to most *popular culture* standards, a great success. To extend Marshall McLuhan’s expression of the

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“narcissistic television”, in *Mad Men* we’re faced with “narcissistic advertisement”, as this is about a cultural product that is based on the story of the design of cultural products, namely those in the advertisement industry. *Mad Men* is an American TV series broadcast on the AMC channel and tells the story of an advertisement agency in the 1960’s and, through this lens, it touches upon key events and themes of recent history and American society in the second half of the past century (adultery, alcoholism, identity, memory, the war, racism), “science fiction in the past” as its creator, Matthew Weiner¹, calls it, thus drawing attention to the product’s extent of innovation. Narcissism and egotism are manifest from the very theme, since producing a TV series on the pleasure of making advertisement entails some considerable amount of reflexiveness translated into admiration of one’s self from the product’s perspective in a predictable circle that is closed most of the times.

This paper undertakes an analysis of the *Mad Men* series through three of the popular culture primary features, as these are grouped by Monica Spiridon²: transmediality (of the *barter* and accompanying type), the conservative and mimetic nature through the presence of the recyclable prefabs and of entertainment/ pleasure present in the series. As it is a quite recent cultural product, the series innovates the various execution structures. Thus, the challenge is to decode it in a key of interpretation based on the balance between the classic *popular culture* recipes and the moderate amount of new, uncharacteristic and bold elements to satisfy the wide audience.

Transmediality as Feature of Popular Culture

Transmediality, a term that Monica Spiridon employs to analyze the relation between popular culture products, is based on the conceptual core of a different term, already rooted in the literature, namely that of intertextuality. Roland Barthes mentions it in a relevant context: reading a text written by Stendhal, and then a text by Flaubert, another text, written by Proust, comes to mind. The interweaving of the works produces pleasure: “I savor the sway of formulas, the reversal of origins, and the ease which brings the anterior text out of the subsequent one.” And continues: “this does not mean that I am in any way a Proust “specialist”: Proust is what comes to me, not what I summon up; not an “authority”, simply a circular memory. Which is what the inter-text is: the impossibility of living outside the infinite text – whether this text be Proust or the daily newspaper or the television screen: the book creates the meaning, the meaning creates life” (Barthes, 1975: 35-36). The expression that Barthes chooses, in his playful manner, to describe the term, namely “the impossibility of living outside the infinite text”, therefore we can state the impossibility of living inside the finite text, expresses something characteristic of the reception by the audience and a feature that is typical of cultural products, representing the endeavour of each creator at creating sense. Theoretically, the term of “intertextuality” is assigned to Julia Kristeva who, reinterpreting the Russian formalism and Bakhtin from the

perspective of her studies in the West, proposes an in-depth analysis of the dialogism: “Julia Kristeva thus discovers in Bakhtin’s texts an alternative pattern to the statical cut of the texts, where the literary structure isn’t simply there, but is designed through a reference to a different structure. Such a dynamisation would only be possible based on the thesis according to which <the word (literary)> is not a point (with fixed meaning), but the confluence of textual surfaces, the dialogue of several writing styles belonging to the writer, the addressee (or the character), the actual or previous cultural context. By introducing the notion of the <status of the word>, Bakhtin places the text into the history and society, themselves being regarded as texts that the writer reads and into which he introduces himself by rewriting them” (Jeanrenaud, 1999: 374-375).

The term of transmediality is placed in correspondence with Bakhtin’s dialogism and the intertextuality assigned to Julia Kristeva; however, unlike the latter term, which generally analyses the relation between a text and a different set of texts that are included or mentioned, transmediality functions across media channels.³ Continuing with Fiske’s classification (Friske, 2001: 107-126) into horizontal (primary) and vertical (secondary), Monica Spiridon speaks of transmediality of the barter or of exchange and subsidiary or of escort type. A third type of transmediality would be represented by the proximity to every day life or Umberto Eco’s hyperreality.

The barter type transmediality may be identified when products on the same channel or on different channels mention one another explicitly or implicitly, transferring audience segments from one to the other in mutual supporting (Spiridon, 2013: 134). Transmediality helps cultural productions to make more sense, it enhances their meaning, but it is however not a practice belonging exclusively to popular culture. Through transmediality, the popular culture nurtures upon itself and manages to lead a life parallel to reality, constructing a series of *simulacra*. Fiske even claims that the popular culture text can only be studied by taking into account this circular character given the intertextuality.⁴

Mad Men is a product that sets a large number of transmediality relations to other products. Firstly, transmediality may be identified in the way the theme of the series was designed, as well as the credits and, mostly, throughout the scripts of the episodes. *Mad Men* is a series on advertisement and how commercials are made, often actual commercials for renowned products and services. The presentation of the entire creation process represents a major part of the story. However, this is by no means a documentary series. It abounds in such references: the third episode of the first season opens with Don analysing the famous “Think Small” Volkswagen Beetle ad, while his colleagues discuss the same commercial produced by their competitors, represented by the DDB Agency and its owner, Doyle Bernbach, one of the iconic figures of advertisement of all times. The caption titles of the series presents the credits on a background represented by an animation of a business man similar to Don represented as a black and white figure falling from heights between

skyscrapers reflecting posters from the advertisement of the times. It includes a reference to different caption titles, those for the movie *North by Northwest* (1959) by Alfred Hitchcock where skyscrapers are represented in similar graphic design, as well as to the poster for the movie *Vertigo* (1959), by the same director, representing a man falling from up high.

An extremely controversial topic of the TV series related discussions was related to what we call *product placement*, the presence of international brands in nearly every episode. Either it is implicit when Don changes his car and purchases a Cadillac, or explicit as it is the case with the numberless discussion on the main client of the agency, Lucky Strike, the series features dozens of brands that are still present on the actual market. The producers of the series answered such accusations claiming that these references were rarely paid or ordered by a certain client (as was the case of Heineken, appearing in the series as a client of the agency wishing to popularise the beer among Americans and thus resorts to their services; parallel to integrating the brand in the story, the ad breaks of the series featured however contemporary commercials to the same products) and that, most of the times, the use of the brands has as purpose the aim for authenticity. Is therefore *product placement* a method of the barter type transmediality? There are reasons to believe so. Essentially, the two products (the series and the brand) support one another and, regardless of whether the references are positive or negative⁵, they create a relation of mutual support between several cultural products.

One even more obvious example of the barter type intermediality is when, during the fourth season, Unilever created a series of six commercials, copying the retro style in *Mad Men*, and that were broadcast during the ad breaks of the series. The spots are filmed in a different, fictive, advertisement agency, and take place very much during the same period that *Mad Men* is set. The products advertised belong to famous brands by Unilever: Dover, Breyers, Hellman's, Klondike, Suave and Vaseline. The audience is basically carried through a similar world during the ad break. It seems that the audience is allowed to peek in the garden of Don Draper's neighbours and see what they do, what campaign and products they are currently working on.

The migration between channels in order to reach to other segments of the audience is also included in the type of the analysed transmediality. *Mad Men* appears on the internet in various ways, from reruns of certain scenes and cuts created by amateurs and posted on *YouTube* to more sophisticated games and presentations of the characters. One of the most successful such related content was the game that appeared as Facebook application called "Which *Mad Men* Character Are You?" Facebook users were able to install this application, take the test by answering to a series of questions and then their Facebook profile showed a posting with the character that represented the answer to the question asked by the game, while virtual friends were able to see the result and make comments.

Another form of horizontal transmediality was represented by other products that made a parody of the production, and for *Mad Men*, a parody of the same channel. There are plenty of examples. Among the most popular are *The Simpsons* parodies of *Mad Men*. The episode "Treehouse of Horror XIX", shown in America in November 2008, included a part called "How to Get Ahead in Dead-Vertising", representing an imitation of the *Mad Men* credit titles: Homer Simpson, holding in one hand a lunch box, instead of Don's briefcase, enters a sitting room and floats on the background of the window showing ad posters, with the same music as in *Mad Men* in the background. The parody of the credit lines is not the only such case; *Mad Men* characters appear some other times in *The Simpsons*, for example in the episode "The Mad in Blue Flannel Pants", shown in November 2011, when Bart is employed by an advertising agency.

Lighter forms of the barter transmediality are constantly present. To mark the end, Sally Draper, the daughter of Don Draper, reads the letter her Grace Kelly looking mother wrote to her as a goodbye letter when being diagnosed with cancer, having a *Peanuts* calendar on the wall behind her, the famous American comics which ran from 1950 to the year 2000. Furthermore, Twitter channel immediately responded by numerous postings of "#Did you see the Peanuts calendar?".

The classical press articles around the series primarily represent the *escort* type of transmediality. Many newspapers, in both print and online medium and all across the world, have taken the challenge to make extensive analyses of the show. These were heavily reblogged and communicated, especially on the internet. *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Indiewire*, *The New Yorker*, *Adweek*, *Vulture* are to name just some of the publications which dedicated numerous reviews to the shows. *The New Yorker* dedicated some of its famous cartoons (by creator Christopher Weyant) especially to *Mad Men* final episode and its ending, and Logan Hill wrote for the same newspaper some detailed post-episode analysis, especially for those in the last season. Beyond press, the series was also escorted on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest through dedicated pages supported by fans all over the world.

The Conservative and Mimetic Character: Reusable Prefabs

Any cultural product has its balance between what's predictable because it is conservative and what's unpredictable because it is new. Matthew Weiner addresses this issue rather directly in an interview: "I like to respect the popular culture, mass production and also people's eccentricities. The temptation is to become Mannerist. People have old things and new things, and as someone who loves the period, it's very hard to resist the idea of getting the perfect 1960 everything, but I want it to feel like a slice of life. People's hair is messed up, there are sweat stains, and their collars are not perfectly flat. The actors tie their own ties a lot of the time, and it makes a big difference."⁶ Even so, in popular culture, the balance leans towards stability, conservation, and the already known (Spiridon, 2013: 86). The conservative and

mimetic character of popular culture is manifest, among others, through the prefabs it uses. "Prefabs" are already present in various "stocks" and can be just taken and successfully *recycled*. We're talking mainly of the myth and mythic paradigms, a term also undertaken by the theory of popular culture and used to analyse the cultural products (Spiridon, 2013: 100).

From a classic perspective, to Mircea Eliade the myth is a story, which, in a different world, is considered exemplary, a narrative whose characters belong to the sacred world. It offers model characters and models of existence scripts, of life and death. In the everyday reality, these models are taken from the sacred into the profane, serving as in interpretation of the everyday⁷. Eliade supports an understanding of the myths as "facts of culture" which organise the world, regardless of the type of civilisation and the time they manifest into.

A different category of definitions mention the fact that the myth represents an account of exemplary events, repeated in time, but they can also be taken from history, memory, models fixed in the contemporary discourse. Ultimately, the mythical quality can be assumed by a mere image or word, as Barthes claims (Barthes, 2002: 211), as long as it brings along an entire scheme of meanings. The success and frequency of the myth apparition in diverse areas of existence give life consistency and sense.

The myth is a term with a multitude of meanings, but popular culture however chooses specific areas of understanding. The myth is a scheme organising the world and offering models to be followed. Monica Spiridon explains the actual phenomenon: "Specific to popular culture remains however the progressive reduction of the narrativeness of the containers and its focus into a poignant image which at the limit is equal to a logo or to various marks of the <media brand>. Once more, during the process of recycling mythic models, the popular culture genesis involves an assimilation by the common contemporary individual of the symbolic joys pre-existing in stock and functionally adapting them to the needs of his everyday experience and existence" (Spiridon, 2013: 118-119).

In *Mad Men*, the theme of constructing the identity of the main character, Don Draper, bears a mythical appearance. Basically, he embodies one of the most popular American myths: that from starting anew, from the scratch, by erasing the past and constructing a new person. Don Draper reawakens what is commonly known as the "American dream", a fact clearly stated by Jon Hamm, the actor who plays Don: "It's a story about people trying to do the best they can with what they have. Which in many ways is the American dream. It's using what you have to get what you want"⁸. The character, who is originally a farmer named Dick Whitman, passes as his superior officer whose death he witnessed in the Korean War and builds a completely new identity, to include a successful job in Manhattan and an exemplary family with two children⁹. Don experiences one by one all the advantages of a happiness created by a successful American life style. He is handsome, intelligent, has a beautiful, young

wife, successful job as the Creative Director of a large advertising agency working with the major clients at the time. Together with his colleagues in the Board of Directors he settles office issues as in a microcosm where they are the gods. This is a frame similar to the one described by Liebes and Katz in *Dallas*, the first analogy to the Genesis script, when the characters basically share the world between them: "the characters in *Dallas* fill the whole of the frame dwarfing governments and shutting out any aspect of the real world that they do not control" (Liebes & Katz, 1990: 118). This resuming if the fundamental mythologies are labelled by the two researchers as a *primordially* characteristic of the cultural products construction. Similarly, in his small universe, Don acts and is treated like a God. The distance he permanently keeps from everyone around helps construct his mysterious and charming personality. He seduces ladies, clients, colleagues. In spite of it all, Don is unhappy most of the times. Often he takes distance from his own existence that he made up just as he makes up the commercials employing all his mastery and casts a critical eye on the American dream he is living, just like Frank Wheeler, the central character in "Revolutionary Road". He realises he is just a fake, similar to the ones advertisement is selling. His discourse turns critical¹⁰. He tells one of his ladies: "The reason you haven't felt it is because it doesn't exist. What you call love was invented by guys like me, to sell nylons."¹¹ In such moments, Don's character invokes the myth of the unhappy artist, of the solitary and misunderstood creator. He notes ideas on pieces of paper at bed time or during a restaurant dinner, he takes refuge in alcohol and his romances. He embodies the model of the genius who is alone at the end of the day because no one understands him. He looks for more in life, is perpetually looking for highly authentic experiences or for a person to truly understand him, most often, a lady. He easily revives and gets enthusiastic at the beginning of each romance with a new lover or wife. He is actually constantly looking for the mother he never had, to complete an oedipal relation.

Thus, *Mad Men* features myths that are easily recognised by the audience and that guarantee the success of the production, Don Draper being the main character accomplishing this exercise of the mythic image by excellence. Similar to the example given by Barthes (Barthes, 2002: 220) in relation to the immediate mythic meanings of the black young man in the military uniform saluting on the *Paris-Match* cover, Don Draper's image becomes sufficient to embody an exemplary and recognisable model of existence¹².

And again as a materialisation of the repetitive, formulaic character of popular culture, we see in cultural products elements that we might easily recognise and call a stereotype. Stereotypes are simplified models of various aspects of reality, offered by the media, and accepted as such, regardless their degree of negativism or authenticity. Unlike the myth, the once recognised stereotype is charged negatively (Spiridon, 2013: 109). When we recognise a myth, the value of the cultural product increases; however, once detected, the stereotype created an impression of fake reality, just like

that nylons that Don is trying to sell. Popular culture is a vehicle circulating many stereotypes that the public opinion takes as such.

When speaking of the repetitive nature of everyday existence coming from the need to create sense, Barthes¹³ means specifically such a stereotype: "The stereotype is the word repeated without any magic, any enthusiasm, as though it were natural, as though by some miracle this recurring word were adequate on each occasion for different reasons, as though to imitate could no longer be sensed as an imitation".

A large series of stereotypes is featured in *Mad Men*, mainly in relation to that moment in the history of America, to the socio-cultural context of the 1960's¹⁴. The plot takes place in New York, on the Madison Avenue, the advertisement heaven at the time. Betty Draper, Don's first wife, presents many well known stereotypes. She initially is the "silly blond", a model in her teen years, immediately married and turned into one of the suburbs wife. She begins to have problems translated into moments of unhappiness when she turns into the woman who intensely psychoanalyses herself, situation widely detailed in the series, as the practice was recent to America and extremely popular among well off wives. Don and Betty together represent the stereotype of the American couple at the time which, at least during the first part of their marriage, are intensely preoccupied with something that was very important in society: maintain appearances.

The agency on the Madison Avenue also plentifully features stereotype images: the role of the secretary is of extreme importance in the economy of the characters. This is the occasional lover secretary, the secretary who manages to change her social status by marrying her boss, the secretary who manages to get a professional promotion into a position (that of a copywriter) previously reserved for men exclusively (Peggy Olsen) and, eventually, the secretary ends up in the board of directors of the agency (Joan Holloway). Another stereotype specific of the times and that also gives the name of the production, "Mad Men", was that men turn to vices in the advertisement industry of the times. All of them drink alcohol and constantly smoke during the day, as if it were in their job description, and most of them cheat on their official partners or at least flirt with other women. Another stereotype outlined in the series is also that of *the new girl*, the newly employed who necessarily looks very well and is intensely courted by all the men in the office.

The Pleasure / the Entertainment

The pleasure that the audiences of the popular culture get when consuming, most of the times actively, these products is the main drive for the development of this type of culture. One of the critical points of the Frankfurt School related to the American capitalist society was the instrumentalisation of pleasure and of laughter as a form of "release"¹⁵. In *culture industry*, as they call it, laughter is compulsory in order to control the audience: "Nevertheless, the culture industry remains the entertainment business. Its control of consumers is mediated by entertainment." (Horkheimer &

Adorno, 2009: 108). Entertainment turns into form of labour or an extension of labour in classic sense. The members of the school blame the *culture industry* of serving the audience with products that no longer invites to interpretation and reflection. Their statement: “the culture industry is pornographic and prudish. It reduces love to romance” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2009: 111) seems to be supported by Don’s line saying that love does not exist.

Leaving behind the criticism based exclusively on theory of the Frankfurt School, the Birmingham School and, in particular, John Fiske analyses the pleasure and entertainment from the perspective of the theories on the semiotic French school, namely those issued by Roland Barthes (Spiridon, 2013: 176-180) to be more specific.

When discussing the generic category of the text, Barthes distinguishes between the pleasure (*plaisir*) felt by an intellectual taking delight in a text in full consciousness of it and the satisfaction (*jouissance*) referring most of the times to a physical instinctual pleasure produced by the text. Texts producing *jouissance* provide a refuge, a release of the control. They are often direct set-ups of erotic games. Naked pieces of bodies, suggestions of the actions that might take place give rise to pleasures related to discovery and the satisfaction of learning the outcome (Barthes, 1994: 18).

Mad Men generously presents the mechanism mentioned by Barthes. The delight (*jouissance*) is offered by the entire life style of the characters. For the audience it is love at first sight. From the way women dress to that in which characters easily end up having sexual relations in the most unexpected moments with the most surprising partners, with no hint of upsetting promiscuity, everything manages to be pleasant from the very first moment, and create the *loss* that Fiske mentions on analysing the two terms from Barthes. Fiske takes further the analysis and puts forward the theory according to which pleasures coming from popular culture are of two types: those of escape, focused on the body and those of production of meaning, focused on social identity and relations (Fiske, 2010: 45). *Mad Men* successfully weaves the two analysis directions. Thus, at the first level, women represented in the series have the qualities required to produce aesthetic pleasure, including by frequently engaging in various flirts and erotic games. At the secondary level, they all stand for various typologies, and are engaged in meaningful social relations to those around them. Joan, the chief secretary, is a character including all the ingredients meant to produce both types of pleasures, from the body masterfully highlighted by the producers of the series, to her relations to the rest of the characters, both in the office and in her private life.

Fiske also proposes other sources of pleasures to be found in popular culture products. He identifies and validates with the support of an empirical study the pleasure given by following the marital and, in general, genre conflicts present in various cultural products, in particular, in the TV series and shows (Fiske, 2010: 51). *Mad Men* presents various such conflicts. Each of the main characters goes through at least one divorce and domestic conflicts are a routine that tickles the senses of the audience. The key equation to the success of a product is the one including pleasure,

relevance and power. The audience may create its own meanings from what it sees and this creative freedom is what provides the satisfaction of the sensation of power. Thus, when recipes are applied with such success, Barthes' preoccupation seems to be fully justified when he says: "Imagine an aesthetic based entirely on the pleasure of the consumer – the consequences would be huge, perhaps even harrowing" (Barthes, 1975: 59).

Conclusion:

Going the Fine Line between the Expected and the Unexpected

One of the key lines of Matthew Weiner, its creator, about the show is rather ironic. He says "I don't want it to look like a TV show"¹⁶. It may "look" like more than a TV show, but it certainly functions like one. The perfect equilibrium in which the series was developed and further conducted testifies to its huge success. The public voice was heard and even partially addressed. This was the case of Peggy and Stan, the co-workers that never really had anything in common, but who ended up together by audience demand, as most critics realised. Still, the similitudes the public began to make between the main character and one of his wives, Megan, and two real world people¹⁷ were not nurtured in the end and fans were "not given everything they want"¹⁸. Remaining in this perfect television frame he carefully develops, the creator Matthew Weiner allows himself even small errors, which he admits to the delight of a specialised audience: "The big blunder was that Joan quoted Marshall McLuhan. He had a bunch of books out in 1960, but not the one where he said, 'The medium is the message.' Unless she was in his class in Canada, she wouldn't have known. He was probably using it already, but it was not in print."¹⁹

Notes

- 1 Bernie Heidkamp, (August 24, 2007). "New 'Mad Men' TV Show to reveal Racism and Sexism of Today". Altnet.org seen in March 2016. He explains his perspective claiming that, while science fiction employs future worlds to tackle subjects we're currently interested in, *Mad Men* employs the past in order to discuss aspects we're interested in at present, although we rarely discuss them openly.
- 2 Monica Spiridon, *Popular culture: Modele, repere și practici contemporane* [*Popular Culture: Models, Landmarks, and Contemporary Practices*]. Craiova: Scrisul Romanesc, 2013.
- 3 Monica Spiridon, *Popular culture: Modele, repere și practici contemporane* [*Popular Culture: Models, Landmarks, and Contemporary Practices*]. Craiova: Scrisul Romanesc, 2013.
- 4 John Fiske, *Understanding popular culture*. London: Routledge, 2010, p. 101. "Popular culture can be studied only intertextually, for it exists only in this intertextual circulation. The interrelationships between primary and secondary texts cross all boundaries between them; equally, those between tertiary and other texts cross the boundaries between text and life."
- 5 Lucky Strike ends up being criticised by the end of the Fourth Season, because it abandons the agency as a client and Don publishes a harsh article against tobacco producers.

- 6 Alex Witchel, "Mad Men" Has Its Moment, June 22, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/magazine/22madmen-t.html?_r=0 seen in March 2016.
- 7 Mircea Eliade, *Aspecte ale mitului*. [*Aspects of Myth*]. București: Univers, 1978.
- 8 World Screen, *Mad Man Interview*. YouTube, 21 October 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbFFEF1pHO0>, seen in March 2016.
- 9 The character exchanges identities with his dead army superior, by swapping the identification plates. His efforts in hiding the truth about himself represent one of the most intense plot lines of the series. During the first season, none of the other characters knows anything about the past of the Creative Director, and nor does his wife. Harry Crane, one of Don's colleagues in the agency makes a comment on it, during the third episode of the first season: "Draper? Who knows anything about that guy? No one's ever lifted that rock. He could be Batman for all we know."
- 10 His harsh criticism however is immediately counteracted by the reply of his partner saying: "For a lot of people, love isn't just a slogan.", a text that seems to be resuming the balance disturbed for a moment.
- 11 Season 1, episode 4. The scene is played on YouTube in various cuts and posted an impressive number of times, most often with the title: "Don Draper's Best Reply".
- 12 Furthermore, Don is explicitly presented in the series as such, as an exemplary model. Roger Sterling, one of the directors of the agency, tells Peter Campbell, one of Don's employees, who had nearly been fired: "Now, I know that your generation went to college instead of serving, so I'll illuminate you. This man is your commanding officer. You live and die in his shadow. Understood?"
- 13 Roland Barthes. *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975, p. 40-41. "All official institutions of language are repeating machines: school, sports, advertising, popular songs, news, all continually repeat the same structure, the same meaning, often the same words: the stereotype is a political fact, the major figure of ideology. Confronting it, the New is bliss. Whence the present configuration of forces: on the one hand, a mass banalization (linked to the repetition of language) – a banalization outside bliss but not necessarily outside pleasure – and on the other, a (marginal, eccentric) impulse toward the New – a desperate impulse that can reach the point of destroying discourse: an attempt to reproduce in historical terms the bliss repressed beneath the stereotype."
- 14 This is a society recovering after the Korean War and then during the Vietnam War, when Nixon is defeated by Kennedy who is later assassinated; the beginning of the fight against tobacco use, the legalization of contraceptives, Woodstock Festivals, Marilyn Monroe's death over an overdose, the fight for women's and racial rights.
- 15 Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. California: Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 112. "Laughter, whether reconciled or terrible, always accompanies the moment when fear is ended. It indicates a release, whether from physical danger or from a grip of logic. Reconciled laughter resounds with the echo of escape from power; wrong laughter copes with fear by defecting to the agencies which inspire it. It echoes the inescapability of power. Fun is a medicinal bath which the entertainment industry never ceases to prescribe. It makes laughter the instrument for cheating happiness. "
- 16 Alex Witchel, "Mad Men" Has Its Moment, June 22 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/magazine/22madmen-t.html?_r=0, seen in March 2016.

- 17 Brian Edwards, *Is Don Draper a real life hijacker?*, April, 2015 <http://www.mirror.co.uk/usvsth3m/don-draper-is-lukes-father-5510683>, seen in March 2016.
- 18 Jason Lynch, *Mad Men Creator Hopes Finale Will Delight Fans, but Not 'Give Them Everything They Want'*. Adweek, January 10, 2015. <http://www.adweek.com/news/television/mad-men-creator-hopes-finale-will-delight-fans-not-give-them-everything-they-want-162293>, seen in March 2016.
- 19 Alex Witchel, *"Mad Men" Has Its Moment*, June 22, 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/magazine/22madmen-t.html?_r=0, seen in March 2016.

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