Lucky Strikes and a Three Martini Lunch

Lucky Strikes and a Three Martini Lunch

Thinking about Television's *Mad Men* (Second Edition)

Edited by

Jennifer C. Dunn, Jimmie Manning
and Danielle M. Stern

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Lucky Strikes and a Three Martini Lunch:
Thinking about Television's *Mad Men* (Second Edition)

Edited by Jennifer C. Dunn, Jimmie Manning and Danielle M. Stern

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7545-7
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7545-5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Each chapter in this volume was peer-reviewed with thought and care by a team of anonymous scholars who graciously offered their time to strengthen this collection. We offer profuse thanks for their selfless service. We also thank our partners, Anthony, Adam, and Michael, for their love and support; and our friends, both in the academy and out, whose conversation and insights made this collection possible. That certainly includes Igor Ristic, whose hours of editorial assistance greatly enhanced the collection; and Lindsay Falkner and Jenna Sabatini, who designed our beautiful cover. Finally, we want to acknowledge the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, as well as the Central States Communication Association, two academic organizations that helped to nurture our academic and spiritual growth. May all scholars be so blessed with such a community of care and support.

FOREWORD

"IS IT TRUE BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN?" MY LIFE AND TIMES WITH MAD MEN-ERA ADVERTISING SUPERSTAR SHIRLEY POLYKOFF – THE ORIGINAL PEGGY OLSON

MARY-LOU GALICIAN

I'd been a blonde for decades when I attended the marvelous *Mad Men* session the three contributing editors of this book presented at the 2009 national convention of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender in Los Angeles. My husband and I are life members of OSCLG, and we're also devotees of the AMC series. But I was a brunette in 1974 when I first met advertising's legendary Shirley Polykoff[1] - considered by many to be the inspiration for the creation of Peggy Olson, *Mad Men*'s secretary-turned-copywriter. Although the fictional character is far from a carbon copy of the inimitable real-life original, the two share more than just their Brooklyn roots and writing talent.

As Foote, Cone, & Belding's newly hired sole female copywriter, Shirley created Clairol's gutsy 1950s' blockbuster campaign "Does She or Doesn't She? Haircoloring So Natural, Only Her Hairdresser Knows for Sure." Its suggestiveness shocked the public but sold the then-new beauty product to millions of women, for most of whom (in that era) dyeing their hair had been beyond belief (and propriety). A couple of years later at FCB she wrote the Clairol line "Is It True Blondes Have More Fun?" And then "If I've Only One Life to Live, Let Me Live It as a Blonde."

I was still a school girl then, so I hadn't yet met Shirley. But although I'd never thought about pursuing an advertising career, when I listened to the guest speaker superstars from all segments of the media world who addressed the graduate seminars at Syracuse University's Television

[1] 1908-1998

program where I was the department's University Fellow a few years later, I was most intrigued by the Mad Men. With my master's degree nearly in hand, I applied to dozens of New York City ad agencies. However, it would be a few more years before I became a Mad Woman. (Instead, I was hired as a producer-director and nighttime talkshow host at the newest "educational" TV station in the nation, in Michigan.)

Growing up as a New Englander and the daughter of an entrepreneurial mother, I'd not faced (or perhaps just never noticed) sexism – even back then. I'd been elected president of my student council. I'd directed plays. I'd won the coveted S.U. fellowship in competition with both sexes (and males were the vast majority in that discipline at the time). However, at my TV job, I was shocked to run across a few men who told me I'd have to "prove" myself" by measuring up to the men. (They later acknowledged that I had.) And a few years later when I was recruited to be an advertising manager at the Maybelline Company, a number of my new colleagues automatically mistook me for someone in a clerical rather than a managerial position until they got to work with me or visit my private office. In fact, I'd had to assert myself even before I started. When the company balked at moving my mother's car from our Cape Cod home to Memphis, I said, "If I were a man, you'd move his wife's car!" The car was duly transported. At an important meeting I had to correct a man who referred to several of us as "you girls" in a condescending tone, though at least there *were* a few women at the table by then.

Shortly after I joined the company, Maybelline – long a leading eye make-up (only) brand that had started life in Chicago with one product, "Lash-bow-ine" (a petroleum jelly-like eyebrow and eyelash enhancer) – planned the nationwide launch of a line of face make-up products. Although the Chicago ad agency that had our eye make-up business pitched for the new line along with half a dozen other national agencies, the contract was awarded to Shirley Polykoff, who had just retired from FCB after nearly two decades of success and every advertising accolade imaginable and established her own eponymous agency. Hers was a small but efficient and creative shop: Shirley, her art director (and longtime collaborator at FCB – not unlike Peggy's art director partner), a TV producer, and a business coordinator.[2]

[2] When she won our account, Shirley hired an account executive: Jane Blanchard, the live in girlfriend of then-J. Walter Thompson Advertising VP James Patterson, who eventually departed the Mad Men scene to write best-selling books fulltime. Jane and I developed a close friendship that lasted through her early death from a brain tumor. (I did get to know Jim, who tended to Jane until her death, kept me

As Shirley tells it in her autobiography *Does She…or Doesn't She? And How She Did It* (my personalized autographed copy of which I treasure), 82-year-old Abe Plough[3] himself insisted on personally interviewing her by speaking only to her art director as if she weren't there! But she held her own, and he signed the contract.

For our new Fresh & Lovely face products, Shirley created the line "Hello! Fresh Face. That's *you* with a little help from Maybelline." Like most of her "conversational" copy, it was golden. We shot our "Go from Naked to Natural" commercials that montaged from a shot of an adorable naked infant (I try to erase from my mind's eye the disturbing vision of hundreds of mothers pushing and pulling and prodding their poor exhausted babies – some well beyond the casting call's stated age range – who had to wait hours for a minute with the casting director) to a shot of the model Erin Gray standing on the breezy Maine coastline with a lighthouse in the background and seagulls artistically appearing under the direction of (Yes!) a bird-wrangler.

I admired Shirley Polykoff as a professional, and I also immediately liked her as a person. Of course, her stellar reputation preceded her, so many of us felt honored to be working with her. She was brassy (unlike Peggy, though even she finally demonstrated her independence at the end of season five) and brilliant. It was fun to watch her square off with our equally brilliant, creative, and tough though refined Vice President of Advertising (to whom I reported) – a woman (unusual at the time; in fact, the man who recruited me asked if I'd "mind working for a woman") who had worked with Maybelline's founder in Chicago and who described herself as "the guardian of the Maybelline image."

What was so great about Shirley was that she was also earthy and unassuming – unless challenged or pushed into a corner. And she had a gentle, folksy side. Unlike Peggy, she'd been a widow for a decade after a very happy marriage that produced two daughters. Somehow (unlike the denizens of the AMC series), she did get it all – the top of her profession and a happy personal life.

And she gave it all, generously. In addition to honoring me with that autographed 1975 book, she presented me with an extravagant Christmas gift: six Tiffany brandy snifters. Another time she gave me a huge Lucite punch bowl. I've carefully kept these mementos (and Shirley's thoughtfully hand-written gift tags) through a great many long-distance moves.

---

posted on her condition, and later graciously sent me a great video compilation of JWT ads to share with my advertising copywriting students.)

[3] Maybelline was owned by Plough, Inc.

I only worked with Shirley Polykoff for a year or two because my tenure at Maybelline was relatively short. One day in Memphis when all our team members were seated around a conference table debating the color of a cap of a tube of mascara for seemingly endless hours, I had an epiphany: Although I cared about the length of *my* eyelashes, I could no longer care about connecting the products we produced with the consumers to whom we promoted them. I felt I had a different mission, so I returned to academia to earn my doctorate. In 1983 I joined the faculty of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Arizona State University.

As a media literacy advocate, I am now a critic of a great deal of advertising. My mission is to empower consumers to "use the media rather than have the media use you." That's the purpose of *Realistic Romance*®, which I created to bust media myths about sex, love, and romance that ruin real-life relationships. (I'd love to help Don Draper and his pals!)

Nevertheless, Shirley's influence has remained with me to this day. Before I left Maybelline, I had become a believer in those compelling slogans Shirley had written for Clairol. I'd decided to live my one life as a blonde. When I came to work on the morning after the long evening I'd spent at a hair salon that gave me a totally different look, my co-workers (who were, after all, specialists in this thing) approved. They said my newly blonde hair suited my fair skin better than my natural color. And when Shirley saw it a few weeks later, she also gave me her blessing. A longtime blonde herself and *the* expert on the topic from her years of lab and field research, she gave me several pointers about maintaining my new image.

For nearly four decades, I have indeed had lots of "fun" living my life as a blonde. (I'm even known affectionately as "Dr. FUN" because of the *FUN-dynamics!*® Musical motivation problem I created.)

So you can imagine how thrilled I was to walk into that conference room at the 2009 conference of OSCLG and listen to a dynamic discussion about something far more important and interesting than the color of a cap of a tube of mascara. Three intelligent and articulate young scholars – Jimmie Manning, Jennifer C. Dunn, and Danielle M. Stern – had organized an outstanding program to analyze the new AMC series *Mad Men*. It drew a very large audience of academicians and some members of the general public. After offering their own contributions, Drs. Manning, Dunn, and Stern masterfully engaged us and included us in a spirited dialog that was incredibly stimulating. Their presentation incorporated the various aspects of my own work: advertising, product placement, and sex,

love, and romance in the mass media – and a favorite show that encapsulates it all. We bonded immediately.

That an excellent book would evolve from their excellent 90-minute convention session is not surprising. The three editors have worked wisely and well to create an accessible interdisciplinary volume that has multiple uses for researchers and instructors and students as well as for the general public. The diversity of topics and approaches is appealing, and the 18 essays are well chosen: nostalgia, identities, relationships, sex/gender/sexuality, mass-mediated communication, and learning. I commend the three editors for their diligence in securing the very best and most pertinent selections to serve a range of readers – academics and fans (not necessarily mutually exclusive terms).

We're all hungry for more about Don Draper and his professional and personal life. And although the setting is advertising in the 1960s, that's not what this show is really about – any more than Shakespeare was writing about the reality of the Forest of Arden in *As You Like It.* Indeed, *Mad Men* is about so much more.

I bet Shirley Polykoff would have appreciated both this television series that pays homage to her achievements and this book that illuminates it. You, too, will be delighted with this sterling anthology.

Phoenix, Arizona
2012

Mary-Lou Galician (Ed.D., Memphis State University) is a media literacy advocate and award-winning researcher, educator, author, and performer who came to academia after enjoying a successful career in print journalism, television, public relations, advertising, and marketing. As the Founding Head of Media Analysis and Criticism at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication, she has taught thousands of students across all majors to "use the media instead of being used *by* the media" in her popular media literacy classes, including the course she created and for which she wrote the pioneering textbook – *Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media*. Her books (including the first book in English on product placement) are used worldwide, and she maintains the media literacy website RealisticRomance.com.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

JENNIFER C. DUNN, JIMMIE MANNING, AND DANIELLE M. STERN

> "If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation."
> —Donald Draper (3.02)

The declaration above from the central protagonist on AMC's *Mad Men* serves as not only a major theme of the series but also our inspiration in compiling this collection of critical essays. Set in the 1960s in New York, the Emmy and Peabody-winning series *Mad Men* follows the competitive, seductive, and oftentimes ruthless lives of the men and women of Madison Avenue's advertising agencies. Many alluring and captivating qualities constitute the *Mad Men* experience: the way it evokes nostalgia, even from those who did not live in the era being portrayed; its interrogations into identities, and how these interrogations of the past illuminate viewers' concepts of the present; the compelling (and often heartbreaking) relationships between characters who are trying to make their way in an ever changing and increasingly complex world; the titillation of the characters' discovery of the powers of mass mediated communication and its abilities to allow learning, information sharing, manipulation, and connection; and, of course, the striking differences in sex roles and sexuality in the workplace that simultaneously celebrates and challenges views of gendered progress in contemporary times.

The series has won numerous prestigious awards including 15 Emmys (with four consecutive wins for Outstanding Drama Series); four Golden Globes; a Peabody Award; four Writers Guild Awards; two Screen Actors Guild Awards; American Film Institute Awards for one of the Top 10 Outstanding Television Programs of 2007, 2008, and 2009; the 2009 and 2010 British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award for International Program; and six Television Critics Association Awards, including Program of the Year. Although they have not won more recently, the show continues to garner critical acclaim and award nominations, including a series record 19 Emmys for the 2011 awards (The Emmy Nominations 2011), and 33 subsequent nominations between

2012-2014 (Emmys 2015). Clearly, the show has a resounding critical impact that makes it an exemplary television text of our times. *Mad Men*'s life extends beyond the series itself with numerous blogs, websites, and other contemporary social commentary. People feel there is a relevance to *Mad Men*, a deeper impact that is not found in many other series. What is particularly fascinating about the discourses on *Mad Men* is that they are not strictly intellectual or academic; there seems to be just as much indulgence in storyline matters such as character choices or aesthetic qualities (such as fashion or strategic—and nostalgic—product placement) as there is the deeper social impact and meaning or the literary qualities of the program. *Lucky Strikes and a Three-Martini Lunch: Thinking about Television's Mad Men* explores the attributes of *Mad Men* that allow it to be such a popular and vital contribution to contemporary cultural discourse.

Our goal with this second edition, as with the first, was to compile a collection of essays that speaks to both fans of the show who may not typically embrace theory and criticism as well as those who do. Upon review of the first edition and consultation with our authors, eight of the seventeen chapters included were revised for this edition. Some of those revisions related to integrating material from all seven seasons of the series and others gave further depth to the analysis included. We also chose to eliminate three of the original chapters and add three new chapters. The decisions to make these revisions and changes hinged almost exclusively on the evolution of the show and the media environment in which it now airs. The new chapters add further understanding of *Mad Men* as it relates to women's relationships with one another at work (Young and Dunn, Chapter 10), television aesthetics (Batchelor, Chapter 14), and fan perceptions of the show (Hayes et al., Chapter 16).

What we also found after the first edition of the book was published in 2012 was that in addition to scholarly and casual readers there were many educators using this book in classes. For this reason, this volume still includes engaging essays that critically analyze the show from a multitude of perspectives, but now they are organized in a way to facilitate easy use in the classroom. Educators could simply construct and conduct a course using this book as a primary textbook and organize the course according to the way it is laid out. This class could focus on social and cultural issues of the 1960s, gender and media studies, and/or interdisciplinary studies of media, to name a few possibilities. Alternatively, the units of this volume could be used within like courses. For example, one of the editors uses Part Three of this volume in a Gender and Media course to teach about women, gender, and the workplace as represented in media.

In addition to the organization and content of the volume overall, we have included a revised version of Peggy O'Neal Ridlen and Jamie Schmidt Wagman's chapter, "Pedagogical Possibilities," as the introduction to this edition. Their chapter includes both summaries of all the chapters in this collection and puts them in the context in which they could be used as an entire course or as separate units. O'Neal Ridlen and Wagman have also included their own analysis of exemplar episodes of the series which demonstrate how they could be used to teach lessons related to these units. Finally, this introduction includes suggestions of supplemental materials, from books to movies and from art exhibits to advertising campaigns, that could be implemented to develop such a course or units.

Beyond this introduction, there is also a final section of this edition with additional pedagogical materials for educators. These include an additional chapter about teaching about feminisms, from the *Mad Men* era to today, as well as sample syllabi and lessons that educators have implemented in various curricula. The final chapter also provides a table of suggested scenes that could be used in lessons and a complete list of *Mad Men* episodes. These materials and organization of this volume should help educators use the book for teaching students, while at the same time still make the book accessible to scholars and fans alike.

Writing, selecting, and editing chapters for the second edition of *Lucky Strikes and a Three Martini Lunch: Thinking about Television's Mad Men* was an ambitious undertaking from start to finish. While not comprehensive by any means, we hope that the perspectives we included in this volume provide a breadth of insights about the show overall while each chapter gives depth to the issues it explores. Sharing chapters with our students, friends, and colleagues has led to increased interest in the show from those who have not watched it yet and added fuel for debates and discussions from those who already consider themselves fans. Wherever you fall in that spectrum, we hope that this edition provides you with food for thought, just as the series has provided us with sustenance in our consumption of popular culture.

INTRODUCTION

PEDAGOGICAL POSSIBILITIES OF *MAD MEN*

PEGGY O'NEAL RIDLEN
AND JAMIE SCHMIDT WAGMAN
(WITH JENNIFER C. DUNN)

Mad Men provides powerful pedagogical potential for teaching the lessons of the 1960s in an academic setting. Its artful portrayal of major historical movements, social issues, and cultural icons of the era can help students understand why the 1960s were a time of political strife and social upheaval. In *Mad Men Unbuttoned: A Romp Through 1960 America*, Natasha Vargas-Cooper (2010), historian, author, and film critic, aptly describes *Mad Men* as a show:

> about the culture clash and contradictions that occurred during the twilight of the Eisenhower era, the great societal shake-up of the 1960s, and how that pressurized time formed modern America, its families, its consciousness and its consumers. (xi)

This description gives credence to the idea of using *Mad Men* as a fictional but thoroughly researched source to teach about the cultural shift in 20th century America. Students can study the social construction of race, gender, and sexuality by watching scenes from pivotal *Mad Men* episodes that highlight the sexism, racism, heteronormativity, advertising, style, literature, art, consumption, and workplace of the era.

As instructors, we present teaching strategies gleaned from *Mad Men* to illustrate 1960s social constructs that will stand alone as a single dedicated course or as a supplemental unit incorporated into any course that includes a social history or cultural study of the 1960s. We show the many ways in which *Mad Men* episodes can provide a framework for class discussions about the American dream, happiness, masculinity, feminism, popular art, style, fashion, and corporate culture. Furthermore, we examine

Mad Men as a primary resource in the classroom that reflects upon the 1960s and how it became the decade "when everything changed."[1]

Mad Men, the American Dream, and Happiness

The ideal of the American Dream is deeply rooted in American history and provides the framework for the first section of this volume. The Puritans moved to the United States imagining their destiny, and many immigrants followed in their wake. The American Dream is what French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville referred to as "the charm of anticipated success" in his classic *Democracy in America* (de Tocqueville 1904, 556). Author James Truslow Adams described the dream in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*:

> [It] is a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement … It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable. (American Radio Works 2010)

Soon Americans began associating this term with material wealth, not just economic comfort as Bob Batchelor explains in Chapter 1 in this volume, "Spin the Carousel: *Mad Men*, Nostalgia, and the American Dream." Batchelor interrogates how *Mad Men* operates on two levels—a television program that capitalizes on the audience's nostalgic feelings about the 1960s era and as an analysis of nostalgia's role in its characters' lives. As a result, the show provides a framework for examining nostalgia within a historical and popular culture perspective. Through a close examination of scenes in which nostalgia plays a central role, Batchelor investigates how *Mad Men*'s characters entwine nostalgia and personal history to construct real and imaginary narratives that enables them to achieve their goals and aspirations. From a broader perspective, Batchelor includes analysis of how the show's setting in the Camelot era becomes like an additional character. From Don Draper's tear-jerking scene introducing the Kodak carousel to his flight to California, *Mad Men* uses nostalgia—particularly as a facet of the American Dream—as a guiding tenet to both drive the storyline and draw an audience. After viewing the *Mad Men* pilot, Season

[1] Gail Collins' *When Everything Changed: the Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present* would help set the stage for any study of social change in the 1960's in American history.

1's "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," [1.01] and reading Batchelor's chapter, educators might ask students if they can relate it to this discussion about the trope of the American Dream.

In this episode, Don Draper tries to market unhealthy cigarettes to consumers. Students might be asked to comment on Draper's declaration:

> Advertising is based on one thing, happiness. And you know what happiness is? Happiness is the smell of a new car. It's freedom from fear. It's a billboard on the side of the road that screams reassurance that whatever you are doing is okay. You are okay. ("Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" [1.01])

One might bring in secondary literary sources such as Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* or John Updike's *Rabbit* books to complement this episode and spark class discussion on finding happiness through consumerism. Both fiction authors expose a sadness that accompanied suburban family men, a sadness that was not eradicated by prosperity or family love. No matter what the men or their wives do, their fears are not reduced by their purchasing power.

To bolster this discussion on happiness, students might also watch the scene Batchelor referenced from Season 1's "The Wheel" [1.13] during which Don wows Kodak clients with his presentation on the Kodak wheel. As he shows photographs of himself, Betty, and their children during happy moments such as birthdays and barbeques, he explains:

> This is not a spaceship, it's a time machine. It goes backwards and forwards, and it takes us to a place where we ache to go again. It's not called 'The Wheel.' It's called 'The Carousel.' It lets us travel around and around and back home again. ("The Wheel" [1.13])

Don's use of nostalgia is effective, and is discussed in depth in Ann Ciasullo's Chapter 2, "Not a Spaceship, but a Time Machine: *Mad Men* and the Narratives of Nostalgia," and it manipulates the Kodak clients into canceling their meetings with other advertising agencies. Through Ciasullo's eyes, *Mad Men* functions as a literal time machine. But many aspects of its authenticity - the sexism, homophobia, and racism, for example - make the viewers' voyage an uncomfortable one, and thus the show taps into a second definition of nostalgia provided by Don: "the pain from an old wound." Interestingly, there exists a dissonance between the narrative of the show itself - which seldom intentionally glamorizes the early 1960s - and the narratives about the show, which seem to be characterized by an "ache to go again" to that time period. Ciasullo

explores both the fact and the nature of this dissonance, speculating why a show as brutally realistic as *Mad Men* can nevertheless produce what Don calls a "sentimental bond" in its viewers. At the end of the day, Don Draper can sell any product, but he still lies to his wife, hides his identity, and cheats his family out of getting to know their father and husband.

Hiding oneself is a theme that Jimmie Manning, one of this volume's editors, explores in Chapter 3, "Finding Yourself in *Mad Men*" His highly personal essay explores how connections are made between viewers and the show, particularly how the lives of the characters virtually beg viewers to compare them to their own lives. Even though most viewers of the program probably do not have a connection to Madison Avenue, they do have a connection to the situations and issues those characters face in their everyday lives, such as alcoholism. To illustrate this point, Manning looks to a brief moment in the series—one where Betty Draper's eyes fleetingly indicate the helplessness she feels—and takes it back to his childhood and a moment where he noticed a similar look in his own mother's eyes. The candid narratives from the author's own life, blended with analysis of similar narratives in *Mad Men*, illustrates how we try to make sense of the program. Just as Batchelor and Ciasullo explore how *Mad Men*'s representations of the past may allow us to see our present, Manning's focus on the personal helps us find ourselves in the popular, as we see these characters attempts to hide their unhappy selves.

Similarly, Betty Draper lives in a suburban home, travels to Rome, rides horses, and attends fashion shows – yet fans are increasingly made aware of her profound unhappiness and despair. A college class may use this same episode to generate discussion over the ways in which postwar cultural values began to change around this time. More and more white, middle-class people began buying and owning houses in the suburbs and purchasing vehicles, and *Life* magazine, Hollywood films, and commercial advertisements consistently framed and thus celebrated the image of the nuclear white family, as historian Natasha Zaretsky explains (2007).[2] Many parents in white suburban communities who had fled their urban centers to live in largely white communities were worried about miscegenation at this time, and many black families were shut out of buying homes in groomed suburban communities – as viewers see in the Drapers' Ossining, New York, suburb (Freidrichs 2011). Lizabeth Cohen's 2003 *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* and Zaretsky's *No Direction Home: The American*

[2] Page 5 discusses *Life* magazine's use of the white nuclear family on its cover.

Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980 give a broad historical overview on this time period.

Instructors might also discuss Americans and the issue of happiness, a popular theme of many college courses across the country today. One might bring up the Declaration of Independence's claim that our pursuit of happiness is one of our "unalienable Rights" or perhaps draw on national surveys that have asked Americans how happy they consider themselves (Pew Research Center Survey 2006). Beyond these abstract concepts, students might be able to relate to Michael Robert Dennis and Adrianne Kunkel's "No One Knows What It's Like to Be the Mad Men: Inadequate Comforting and Coping with 1960s Life," in Chapter 4, where they explore how coping and social support perspectives allow us to identify deficits in emotional expression, functional coping, and comforting as major factors in the series. Informed by Pennebaker's (1997a, 1997b) emotional disclosure paradigm and Lazarus' (1991a, 1991b) appraisal theory, their analysis of *Mad Men*'s characters reveals them to be immersed in solitary palls of oppression, largely unable to cope fully with their own problems or console adequately those around them in need of support. With only some exceptions, the themes of individualized isolation, indifference toward others, and inadequacy in comforting, predominate across the seven seasons of the *Mad Men* series.

Don Draper cloaks his past and true identity from almost everyone else, pays little attention to the plights of others, and offers little more than problem-focused fixing of situations when he does try to help. When Don does allow colleagues or romantic partners, such as first wife Betty Francis, girlfriend Dr. Faye Miller, or even their successor, Megan Calvet, into his circle of secrecy, they usually wind up worse for it. Pete Campbell is almost unfailingly selfish in his professional and personal lives and mostly unappreciative of his career accomplishments and the support of others, particularly his wife, Trudy. Peggy Olson and Joan Harris display the ability to recognize the struggles of others and to say or do what is perceived as caring and supportive, but are inconsistent in their efforts and efficacy. Betty Francis is rarely inspired to reach out to others and Roger Sterling faces down loss with dark humor. Perhaps nothing better embodies the lonely downward trajectory of the lives portrayed in *Mad Men* than the show's opening sequence imagery of descent. Students may connect this chapter with an interdisciplinary approach to study how happiness has evolved in the 20th century, examining the different ways happiness, or lack thereof, has been measured and defined in ways that include material wealth, career success, and securing the nuclear family unit in a country with an upsurge in divorce in the 1970s – a theme that

played out in *Mad Men*'s Season 4. In fact, one can trace happiness as a major theme as the characters develop throughout the 1960s.

Male Identity and Authenticity: *Mad Men* and *The Man in a Gray Flannel Suit*

Mad Men's exploration of themes such as gender identity, individual authenticity, and masculinity, explored in the second section of the book, reveals why the 1960s were a time of political strife and social upheaval doomed for radical change. To fully expose these themes, the series draws heavily upon classic literature and films of mid-twentieth century America. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, a novel by Wilson Sloan and a 1956 feature film set in the 1950s, is perhaps the most suitable literary and cinematic work for examining the shift in masculine identity and authenticity that occurred in the 1960s. Author Jonathan Franzen writes in the introduction of the 2002 reprint of the novel, "The first half can be read (viewed) for fun, the second half for a glimpse of the coming sixties. It was the fifties, after all, that gave the sixties their idealism – and their rage" (Wilson 1955).[3] The novel and film capture the spirit of the nuclear family's lifestyle, the male identity crisis, and the conformity of the consumer driven era that created the *Mad Men* characters and their milieu.

Consequently, students will easily notice and enjoy discovering the similarities between *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*'s Tom Rath and *Mad Men*'s Don Draper. This comparison sets the stage for a lively discussion about the personal motivation behind the conflicted identities of both men and post-war consumerism. Both are ambitious but discontented public relations men caught up in the hectic pace of the corporate world. Both wear a hat and suit and take the same train every day into Manhattan from a nearby suburb. Both routinely down martinis to cope with day-to-day life. Both seem bored with their wives. Both want the best for their three small children. They harbor secret dual identities and struggle to reconcile haunting experiences from war in a responsible manner. Both Tom Rath and Don Draper represent a shift in the portrayal of the masculine hero from a confident, patriarchal man to someone who is much less self-assured. Mass consumption of the late 1950s and early 1960s perpetuated this shift in masculine identity. The twin concepts of good

[3] In Wilson's book, Franzen writes, "Tom Rath is in a Consumer Age pickle. With three kids to support, he dare not venture down the road of anomie and irony and entropy….but the treadmill of consumerism, the comfortable program of desiring the goods that everybody else desires, seems scarcely less dangerous."

consumerism and good citizenship emerged during the postwar period as a new ideal that prevailed throughout the second half of the 20th century to create a "consumers' republic" defined by historian Lizabeth Cohen as a society that is built economically, culturally, and politically around the "promises of mass consumption" (2003, 8).[4] Both men sometimes exhibit a lack of purpose and personal fulfillment associated with work. They begin to question if success in a society driven by mass consumption is worth their lack of self-worth, soul-less conformity, and sacrifice of personal identity. Rath is portrayed as a dutiful, dedicated man who plods along and follows the rules but worries that his contribution to the world is not worthwhile beyond making money.

The following passage, a paragraph that shows Tom struggling to compete for a job interview, reveals his confused identity and quest for authenticity:

> The most significant fact about me is that for four and a half years my profession was jumping out of airplanes with a gun, and now I want to go into public relations. The most significant fact about me is that I detest the United Broadcasting Corporation, with all its soap operas, commercials, and yammering studio audiences, and the only reason I'm willing to spend my life in such a ridiculous enterprise is that I want to buy a more expensive house and a better brand of gin. The most significant fact about me is that I've become a cheap cynic. (Sloan 1955, 13)

After deliberating for less than the allotted hour, Tom concludes that he should not be asked to write an autobiography as part of a job application and will not do so. Two weeks later he is offered the job.

Mad Men's Don Draper is slightly more mysterious than *Gray Flannel Suit*'s Tom Rath. In the opening scene of Season 4, Episode 1 "Public Relations" [4.01], Don flounders in an attempt to explain his identity to a reporter during an interview for *Advertising Age*, just as Tom struggled in his essay for a job interview.

---

[4] Cohen describes three evolving consumer-citizen types. "*Citizen consumers* of the New Deal and WWII era put the market power of the consumer to work not only to save a capitalist America…but to safeguard rights…and the 'general good.' The competing ideal of the *purchaser consumer*… championed pursuit of self-interest in the marketplace confident that purchasing power improves quality of life; in wartime, however, such behavior would undermine home front needs. An alluring compromise emerged---the *purchaser as citizen*. Now the consumer, satisfying personal material wants, actually served the national interest, since recovery from the depression and a war depended on a dynamic mass consumption economy."

> REPORTER: "Who is Don Draper?"
> DON DRAPER: "Excuse me?"
> REPORTER: "Who's Don Draper?"
> DON DRAPER: "What do men say when you ask them that?"
> REPORTER: "Well they usually say something cute. One creative said a lion tamer."
> DON DRAPER: "What else?"
> REPORTER: "Like…I got a wife, two kids, house in Westchester….take the train ...*maybe you take your car now that you can afford it* ...
> DON DRAPER: "Who told you that?"
> REPORTER: Anything else? Now's your chance…"
> DON DRAPER: "Well, I'm from the Midwest. We were taught it's impolite to talk about yourself."
> REPORTER: "Very good then. I think I have all I need. The picture may be bigger than the article." ("Public Relations" [4.01]).

The reporter selected Don Draper for this interview, which resulted in an unflattering article entitled "A Man from a Town with No Name," because he created a successful Glo-Coat commercial that attracted media attention. Author Jesse McLean (2009) explains:

> …he pulls inspiration out of thin air and wows his clients, yet Don takes little joy in his triumph…his personal life is shadowed by a sense of constantly running after something. (40-41)

At the beginning of Season 4, Don Draper is starting over and figuring out who he wants to be. In his visit with Anna Draper, Don/Dick becomes a more wholesome person. The truth is both Don Draper in *Mad Men* and Tom Rath in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, are tortured because they can't reconcile their present, past, or future. Both are stymied when asked to answer personal questions. Both wear their gray flannel suits to symbolize the conformity of success. Janie Bryant (2010), costume designer for *Mad Men*, comments that Don wears his suit like a "shield of disguise, the uniform of a warrior going through life." Vargas-Cooper (2010) concludes that:

> *Mad Men* re-creates a discrete period of historic transition when cultural trends and social mores that would come to dominate the second half of the decade [1960s] are percolating and bubbling to the surface. (xi)

The feeling that the masculine identities of both characters hinge on impending social change is foreboding. Utilizing Strasser and Lair's chapter, along with the *Mad Men* series and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* as teaching tools to facilitate a comparison of Don Draper and Tom

Rath, can enable students to understand the shift in gender identity and individual authenticity that occurred in the 1960s.

In Chapter 5, Daniel Strasser and Daniel J. Lair provide background that will transition perfectly to a class discussion about "masculinity-in-crisis" and the show's portrayal of Don Draper as the masculine ideal. As the authors point out, *Mad Men* is frequently noted for its illustrations of social change in the 1960s, but these discussions often elude how masculinity was shifting in profound ways. Strasser and Lair argue that masculinity is often framed through a lens of nostalgia in the program; even so, *Mad Men* is an ideal text to illustrate how masculinity is not static. In addition to pointing to intriguing portrayals of masculinity as it is created and sustained throughout the program, the authors also examine how notions of masculinity carry a temporal weight that play integral parts in cultural constructions of gender. Ending on a hopeful note, the authors point to the way viewers can learn from Don Draper's mistakes and his triumphs in terms of masculine performance, especially in how he grapples with what a man is supposed to be in comparison to what a man is. As the authors frame it:

> Throughout the series, Don's continued dominance and survival depend on the successful performance of manhood acts to maintain his position as the icon of hegemonic masculinity. Just as Don remains the fictitious ideal, his position would not remain intact if it were not for the constant challenging of the other men and women of Sterling Cooper. This, in essence, is the basis of hegemonic masculinity. But Don's success as such an icon, and his success in business, lies not in his ability to merely conform to the masculine ideals of his era, but in his prescient ability to anticipate, and sometimes push back against, sweeping social changes to come, even if he cannot fully see how they will take shape. In this regard, Don is emblematic of *Mad Men*'s nostalgic, but complicated, invitation to audiences to think about 50 years of changes in masculinity.

Clearly, the chapter would allow fertile ground for students to consider their own masculine identities or the masculine identities of others in their lives. The chapter also serves as a good introduction of queer theory to prepare students for Danielle M. Stern's upcoming essay in the collection.

In Chapter 6, Stephanie L.Young's "The Consumer Has No Color," offers a rich text with excellent examples for teaching about male identity, including intersecting issues of race and gender in *Mad Men.* As Young points out, *Mad Men* viewers rarely see African-Americans who aren't maids, waiters, or elevator doormen. The show portrays an age in which Jim Crow laws were still enacted, and racial discrimination can be traced in any episode that features whites' interactions with blacks. Roger

Sterling's blackface serenade of his wife in Season 3's "My Old Kentucky Home," [3.03] would also be a conversation starter for an overview of the antiracist and social justice movements of the 1960s. Young's discussion of white men of privilege feeling decentered during the Civil Rights and feminist movements may also prove useful for students thinking about gender identity today. For example, a 2010 Morning Edition episode on National Public Radio, "Mad Men Haven't Changed Much since the 1960s," reported that the country's top advertising firm executives are still white. Young's thorough exploration of white studies and white male privilege can also be used to facilitate meaningful class discussion about identity, race, and gender issues in contemporary society.

Young contends that the show encourages the viewer to take up a "white gaze," one in which whiteness is omnipresent and, to some extent, invisible; the show also subtly makes whiteness visible through the discursive and visual policing of its characters. She critically analyzes how various characters enact white masculinity in conjunction with gender and class, identifying key moments in which racial boundaries are acknowledged, maintained, and/or resisted. Young's critical analysis of Paul Kinsey is especially apropos. Instructors might draw on her chapter and also highlight episodes that feature interoffice dating and mating rituals, the paucity of Jewish employees at a large corporate firm, or the treatment of a white male colleague dating an African-American woman. In Season 2's "Flight 1," [2.02] when Paul Kinsey introduces Joan Holloway to his African-American girlfriend Sheila – whom we later learn is a freedom fighter – Joan reacts by passive-aggressively telling Sheila that "the last thing I would have taken him for is open-minded" [2.02]. Such moments should allow students to explore how constructions of race and gender, then and now, would benefit from intersectional analyses.

Chapter 7, "Resisting Queer Bodies by Illuminating the Televisual Closet on AMC's Mad Men" by Danielle M. Stern (one of the co-editors of this collection), wraps up this section with her exploration of a popular culture landscape full of more diverse images of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality than ever before. In its return to nostalgic portrayals of a male-centered advertising agency in Manhattan in the 1960s, Stern argues the series' creators responded to overt threats to hegemonic—White, heterosexual—masculinity within popular culture. The series' first three seasons included only one major queer character—the married, closeted art director Salvatore Romano—and stereotypical representations of male and female roles in and out of the workplace, which can be unpacked in the classroom according to the episodes she elaborates on in her chapter. Episodes in season six and seven reveal the ambiguous sexuality of Bob

Benson. Stern connects Benson's story arc with events of the Stonewall riots of 1969, which provide a historical lens of the link between history and popular culture. Given this portrayal, one could argue that *Mad Men* offers a critique of the limited, unsafe space occupied by queer people as well as heterosexual men and women in a bygone era. However, Stern interrogates an understanding of the prime-time closet as a metaphor for the pressures of conformity for all people, not just those in the sexual minority. Bringing together critical theory and the political economic motivations of the television industry, Stern argues that the *Mad Men*'s creative directors are implicated in constructing the televisual closet as narrative resistance to the current queered space of popular film and television. Taken with Lair and Strasser's and Young's chapters, this section of the book should allow readers to explore a variety of masculinity identities represented in the show that are increasingly discussed in classrooms today.

A Tale of Two Bettys: *Mad Men* & Expectations of Women's Roles Yesterday and Today

Volume co-editor, Jennifer C. Dunn's Chapter 17, about teaching second wave feminisms through *Mad Men,* substantiates the rationale for "historicizing feminism" and connecting course content with contemporary popular culture to authenticate student experience. Betty Friedan's landmark feminist work, *The Feminine Mystique*, and the chapters in the third section of this book offer a lens through which to do this. Dunn aptly explains that the behavior of another Betty – *Mad Men*'s Betty Draper – exemplifies Friedan's frustrated housewife. Friedan (2001/1963) asked, "Why have so many American wives suffered this nameless aching dissatisfaction for so many years, each one thinking she was alone?" (79). Various episodes throughout the entire series point to pivotal moments in which Betty Draper attempts to shift her role from submissive to dominant in order to gain personal independence and political power. This shift parallels many of Betty Friedan's declarations about womanhood. Friedan also urged middle and upper-class suburban housewives like *Mad Men* heroine Betty Draper to stop ignoring their desires for "something more" than their roles as wives, mothers, housekeepers, and hobbyists (121).[5] Students might read Chapter 1, "The

[5] Friedan asked her readers: "Why should women try to make housework 'something more,' instead of moving on the frontiers of their own time, as American women moved beside their husbands on the old frontiers?"

Problem That Has No Name," from *The Feminine Mystique* to enhance their classroom discussion about women's roles in the early 1960s.

Betty Draper is most often portrayed as a suburban wife and mother who is beautiful yet coldly detached, a woman working to overcome her position as a woman cheated upon and lied to by her husband. She is a woman shaped by institutional pressures to be beautiful yet aimless. In Season 1's "Shoot," [1.09] Betty ponders what she should do with her life now that she has found a husband and a safe motherly lifestyle in the suburbs. She says of her mother:

> She wanted me to be beautiful so I could find a man. There's nothing wrong with that. But then what? Just sit and smoke and let it go 'til you're in a box? ([1.09])

Adrian Jones' Chapter 8, "All About Betty: Selling the Suburban Housewife in *Mad Men*," also uses this scene, among others, to discuss both cultural expectations of housewives in the mid-20th century and Betty's gender performativity. Jones analyzes this domestic space and suggests different ways of reading the suburban housewife in *Mad Men*. Jones contends that Betty Draper is visually constructed through her relationship to decor, furnishings, and appliances, similar to Bob Batchelor's aesthetic analysis of Peggy Olson (in Chapter 14). Jones argues that Betty's character offers insight into the role of the housewife as it was advertised to women throughout the 1950s and 60s, as well as its unhappy realities. The essay also explores the depiction of Betty's interior life in fantasy sequences and on the therapist's couch. Ultimately, Jones shows the impact of the physical and mental confines of the suburban housewife

Betty's exploits continue in the same episode. After her daughter reveals that their neighbor threatened to shoot the Draper family dog if it attacked another of the neighbor's pigeons, Betty grabs a rifle and perches herself on her perfectly manicured lawn in her nightgown, dragging on her cigarette, taking out the pigeons one by one as her neighbor shouts at her. Betty Draper might smoke until she's in a box, but she's not about to "just sit" idly while her neighbor threatens the security of her family unit. Instructors might encourage students to discuss other parallels between the two Bettys, especially since so many critics and scholars have been noting the tie between the two. *Ms.* Magazine recently noted their parallel lives: "Betty's hesitant understanding of her own potential is instructive of the ways patriarchal culture confined women of her generation, but her journey is more passive than deliberate" (Dove-Viebahn 2010, 34).

Students might consider whether they find Betty Draper's actions passive, too.

In another episode in Season 3, "Souvenir" [3.08] Betty and Don travel to Rome on his business trip. Reminiscent of Jacqueline Kennedy's much celebrated visit to Paris with her husband, President John F. Kennedy, Betty wows Italians with her perfect accent, glamorous wardrobe, and attitude (JFK Library and Museum 2010).[6] In Rome, Betty Draper upstages her husband, usually the one applauded and awarded by his admiring and jealous staff at Sterling Cooper. *Mad Men* enthusiasts may have forgotten that Betty Draper is a member of a very educated group of white women in the 1960s who married shortly after graduating from an elite private school. Betty Draper graduated with a degree in anthropology from Bryn Mawr. Betty Friedan, who graduated from Smith College in 1942 and trained as a psychologist who never pursued a career in that field, wrote her epic book when she was a suburban housewife and mother (Fox 2010). A teacher using *Mad Men* and Friedan's text might point out that Friedan wrote to women just like herself – the educated and privileged white woman, and she projected her own set of unhappy disappointments upon her readers. However, Betty Draper's characterization affirms Betty Friedan's criticism of the 1960s by portraying the lonely housewife of the era as a woman in need of psychiatric help, friendship, and parental and marital love.

Overall, Betty Draper personifies a caged bird, exemplifying feminist theorist Marilyn Frye's 1983 definition of "oppression." Frye (2008) explains that oppression occurs when a person lives within a structure in which he or she is harmed by any direction in which she turns.[7] If Betty Draper leaves her marriage; her suburban community will spurn her, just

---

[6] After Mrs. Kennedy was warmly welcomed and applauded by Parisians, President Kennedy made his famous remark, "I do not think it altogether inappropriate to introduce myself...I am the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris, and I have enjoyed it." JFK Library and Museum, Accessed April 1, 2010. http://www.jfklibrary.org

[7] Frye writes, "Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires. If your conception of what is before you is determined by this myopic focus, you could look at that one wire, up and down the length of it, and be unable to see why a bird would not just fly around the wire any time it wanted to go somewhere;… …It is now possible to grasp one of the reasons why oppression can be hard to see and recognize: one can study the elements of an oppressive structure with great care and some good will without seeing the structure as a whole, and hence without seeing or being able to understand that one is looking at a cage and that there are people there who are caged, whose motion and mobility are restricted, whose lives are shaped and reduced."

as she spurns the divorcee in her neighborhood. If she stays in her marriage, Don will repeatedly humiliate her. Studying the two Bettys and gender as a category will help reveal social mores and pressures placed on women throughout the 1960s. Katherine J. Lehman's Chapter 9 on national assumptions about postwar femininity will also be useful to students here. Lehman's exploration of Joan and Peggy as multifaceted characters in the series adds to our understanding of women navigating the sexist terrain of the 1960s workforce. Lehman also effectively underscores the ways in which women – not men – faced consequences for emphasizing or deemphasizing femininity and sexuality. In addition to raising good questions about women and work that will be further explored in Jennifer C. Dunn and Stephanie L. Young's upcoming chapter about feminine relationships in the workplace, Lehman also takes special care to examine choices that writers made in trying to recreate notions of how cultural influences—particularly second wave feminist texts—would impact *Mad Men*'s workplace. She also makes good uses examples not only from the show itself, but from the actors who are expected to have opinions or insights about what the show portrays. For example, she carefully documents the ways actress Christina Hendricks has advocated for equality in the workplace outside of the program, pointing to her recent online comedy sketch and other public appearances. The chapter allows readers to consider how *Mad Men* is both a text and a political influence.

In line with this theme of women's labor, students in an upper-level American Culture Studies class in St. Louis, Missouri at Fontbonne University were asked to view a portion of *Mad Men*'s pilot episode, Season 1's "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes," [1.01] and then reflect on the scene in which Joan Holloway, secretary/office manager, escorts a new secretary, Peggy Olson, around the office introducing her to co-workers. Some students were surprised at the nature of the sexist comments directed at Peggy on her first day at Sterling Cooper, and one student commented that she could not understand why a show was being lauded for its portrayal of racial and sexist discrimination. The students astutely commented that "Women had no real say in business matters," "women's understood role in the corporate culture was, largely, to provide eye candy," and that they were considered "free labor" (Fontbonne University student interviews 2010). Their comments about the series provided much material to discuss, from the history of sexual harassment in the workplace and an overview of the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas controversy to a discussion about whether or not women can ever escape the body. While another classroom might raise completely different questions, watching clips that highlight sexual tension and harassment in the workforce is sure