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CINEPHILE

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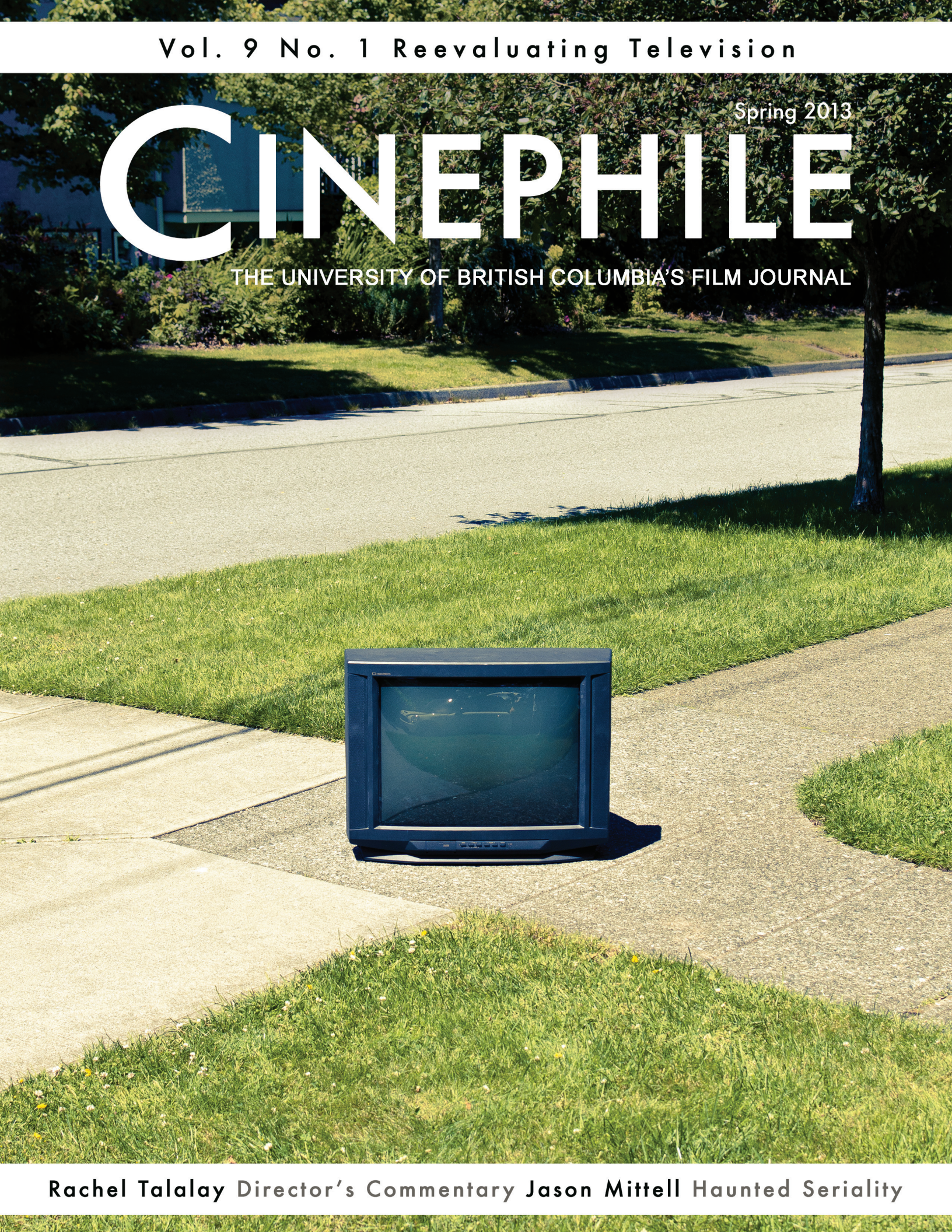

Rachel Talalay Director's Commentary Jason Mittell Haunted Seriality

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Editors' Note

Television has reached a juncture.

No longer are we required to gather around a communal TV set on a daily, or weekly basis to consume our desired programing. With content at our fingertips, television is being repurposed for the digital age. We can now decide when, where, and how to watch our favourite shows. Viewing practices span from the traditional format—tuning in regularly to watch one episode at a time—to the binge-viewing, or marathoning of seasons on a tablet, or cellphone. In addition, viewers can now interact with their shows via social media outlets, which provide an open platform for debate, analysis, contextualization, and fandom.

Not only are the consumption methods and the reception of television in flux, but the narrative format itself is becoming increasingly complex. Since the early 2000s, with the onset of television shows such as *Sex and The City* (1998-2004), *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), and *The Wire* (2002-2008), the medium, which has been widely regarded as subpar to film, seems to have entered its renaissance. While many past television shows have adhered to the procedural format, which favors stand-alone, or case of the week episodes over character development and multi-episode/season story arcs, modern television dramas such as *Mad Men* (2007-), *Game of Thrones* (2011-), *Justified* (2010-), and *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013) find common ground through their complex characters, intricate plotlines, puzzling narrative devices, and oftentimes controversial themes and content. We are now forced to confront the ways the onset of the digital age has altered, and will continue to alter the medium.

This issue of *Cinephile* seeks to reevaluate the current state of modern serialized television shows, specifically calling attention to our present moment in history. Are cinematic traditions altering the ways we as viewers engage with television content? To what point are the boundaries between TV and film being blurred? How does the social media sphere impact the medium? Is there a link between narrative complexity and the prolonged success of a series?

To open, Rachel Talalay comments on the current state of modern television production as seen from a director's point of view. Talalay sheds light on the easily overlooked production process and calls for a new model that gives new talent, and female directors in particular, the opportunity to prove themselves. This is followed by Michael L. Wayne's discussion of post-racial ideologies as a means of challenging colourblind racism in prime time cable drama. Wayne examines the relationship between moral standing and race, arguing that modern audiences are often forced to identify with overtly prejudice characters. Graeme Stout analyzes the narrative intricacies of the short-lived AMC show *Rubicon* and reflects on how the form of the show relates to Eco's theory of the paranoid viewer. Maria San Filippo's analysis of *Louie* and *In Treatment* takes note of television's current identity crisis in the wake of the post-network era. San Filippo specifically pays attention to the minimalist aesthetic and its relation to on-screen representations of middle-aged masculinity, thus addressing how serial television and millennial manhood are straining to survive. Jason Mittell unearths the serial past of David Lynch's *Mullholland Drive*, calling attention to how the film evolved from a failed television series into a feature film haunted by its production history. Lastly, we have included a brief translated piece by the late Mark Harris that fittingly explores the art of film and television translation. The article, originally written by Patricia de Figueirédo, discusses the technical constraints and restrictions that adaptors face when dubbing or subtitling for film. De Figueirédo has graciously agreed for us to publish her work in this issue.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our devoted *Cinephile* family for all of their efforts and continuous encouragement with this issue. Firstly, we would like to acknowledge our editorial team: Peter Lester, Chelsea Birks, Dana Keller, Kevin Hatch, and Kelly St-Laurent; The Department of Theatre and Film Studies; and our faculty advisor, Lisa Coulthard. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Babak Tabarraee for his efforts in bringing Mark's *In Memoriam* piece to light; Shaun Inouye for his masterful design and layout skills; and Joshua M. Ferguson for his rigorous fundraising efforts. Finally, we would like to thank our featured photographer, Max Hirtz, for all of his time, patience, and talent. Without all of you, this issue would not have made it past the pilot.

—Andrea Brooks & Oliver Kroener

Contributors

Patricia de Figueirédo is an actress, television writer, and communications specialist from France. She has been published in numerous journals including, *Le journal du Théâtre*, *L'Entracte*, *Le Film Français*, *Vocable*, and *Synopsis*. She has also served as Director of Communications for *The Journal of Parliament*.

Mark Harris (1951-2013) was a seasoned lecturer, scholar, and senior film critic for the *Georgia Straight* in Vancouver, British Columbia. He obtained his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of British Columbia in 1998 and went on to win the Governor General's gold medal for his dissertation, "Fantasy America: The United States as seen through French and Italian eyes."

Max Hirtz is a Vancouver-based journalist and freelance photographer, as well as a part-time film buff. He specializes in live concert photography, has worked for a number of local culture publications, and has shot for several theatre production companies throughout the Lower Mainland.

Jason Mittell is a Professor of American Studies and Film & Media Culture at Middlebury College, Vermont. He is the author of *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture* (Routledge 2004), *Television and American Culture* (Oxford UP 2009), and co-editor (with Ethan Thompson) of *How to Watch Television* (New York UP 2013). His newest book project, *Complex Television: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, is to be published by New York University Press and available in-process for open peer review via MediaCommons Press. He writes the blog *Just TV*.

Maria San Filippo is the author of *The B Word: Bisexuality in Contemporary Film and Television* (Indiana UP, 2013), and is Visiting Assistant Professor in Gender Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. Her new book manuscript explores twenty-first century film/digital convergence and its implications for screening sexualities.

Graeme Stout earned his Doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of Minnesota in 2006. He also holds M.A. degrees in Philosophy (Carleton) and Theory and Criticism (Western Ontario). His teaching and research focus on the nature, deployment, and transformation of power in the modern age and the relationship of aesthetic form to social consciousness. Graeme currently lectures in both the departments of Liberal Arts at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and Cultural Studies, and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota.

Rachel Talalay acquired her B.A. at Yale in Applied Mathematics and has spent the past twenty-five years producing and directing dramatic film and television in the US, UK, and Canada. Her credits range from the cult classic, *Tank Girl* (1995), to *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare* (1990), to *Hairspray* (1986), to *Wind in the Willows* (2007). Talalay has garnered varied award nominations from BAFTAs, to West Coast Emmys, to Gemini Awards. She teaches Film Production at the University of British Columbia.

Michael L. Wayne is a Ph.D. candidate in the Sociology department and a graduate instructor in the Media Studies department at the University of Virginia. His dissertation research addresses the relationship between audience location, social class, and contemporary American television as a form of popular culture.

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"No Exit"
Blue Revisions
INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS
They hear VOICES. Someone's coming.
Shh.
DEAN
Sam quietly closes the door and they hide in an alcove as...
08/31/06
MAN'S VOICE
It's a great building, they fixed it up real nice. Apartments come furnished, too.
YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE
That's so convenient.
Dean and Sam know that voice. They step out of hiding.
Coming straight toward them are Ed and... JO.
DEAN
What the hell are you doing here?
JO
(without missing a beat)
Oh there you are, honey.
(to Ed)
This is my boyfriend Dean and his buddy Sam.
ED
Good to meet ya. Quite a gal you got here.
He sticks out his hand. Dean has no choice but to shake it.
DEAN
Yeah, she's a pistol.
JO
So, didya already check out the apartment?
Dean isn't quite sure what con job she's driving at. Sam
more POINTED--
JO
The one for rent?
DEAN
Yeah. We did. Loved it.

Rachel Talalay

Will Television Sound the Death Knell for Directors?

Not long ago, a "seasoned television director" was a euphemism for a hack. Over the past decade, however, with new economic models and digital advances, television has started to change. First, HBO enticed high profile feature directors to improve the image of television, and recently, Netflix has begun redefining the broadcast medium by creating a new financial strategy that has resulted in them becoming leaders in this fast-changing digital economy. *The Wrap* recently posed the question "Emmy vs. Oscar: Which Honors the More Substantial Work?" (June 27, 2012). In true Hollywood headline hype, television pitches itself as *the* transformational medium to save the entertainment world. But is it?

It is widely accepted that feature films are a director's medium while TV belongs to the writers and producers. On feature films, the director is the key creative lynchpin of the product whereas in television, the director is generally a part-time hire whose creative input is limited. With this new model, in which high profile Hollywood directors work in television, the uneasy relationship between television producers and directors is testing the old adages. The hope would be that these changes could improve the situation for directors in the television medium. As an experienced television director, I see a variety of pitfalls arising from the glorification of the television medium that might result in the demise of the director as auteur.

To understand this disquietude, it is necessary to examine the differences between the film and television business models. The two media are on separate branches of the entertainment industry that, while jointly motivated by profit, have entirely different financial structures. Big budget films are predominantly financed by major studios, who, given the state of the current marketplace, are attempting to decrease financial risk by making tent-pole movies (attractive summer blockbusters full of stars, action, and computer graphics). Conventional wisdom states that the marketplace is primarily male and aged fourteen to twenty-four, and that if a film's marketing entices that core audience, female viewers will follow suit. Successful blockbusters such as Marvel's *Iron Man* (2008), *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011), or *The Avengers* (2012) are the capstones of this model. Hot male leads bring both sexes. Therefore, adrenaline-driven, male-dominated stories rule. Statistical trends show that the youth-male audience actually prefers to play video games or watch programming on their computers. However, it only takes one *Avengers* movie, with its worldwide box office of $1.4 billion dollars, to affirm this outdated model that leaves almost no money for other types of movies (least of all to the ones that cater to any other audience demographic).

The economic mysteries of this model are apparent when one examines the minority demographic of women. In March 2013, the Directors Guild of America (DGA) hosted its first ever summit for women directors. This small population (13% of the guild) included some fiercely independent voices, a few of whom had been chosen to direct a whopping 5% of the guild movies made this past year. At a forum devoted to discussing these distressingly low numbers, some astonishing statistics were revealed: 55% of the movie ticket buyers are women, and women do somewhere in the neighborhood of 77% of the shopping. Yet, the feature film business continues to cater to the male-oriented and male-dominated demographic.

One of the most compelling participants in the forum was an independent producer with years of experience in the studio system. She described the movies she makes as "movies women want to see and men do too." The box office market tally for films she has produced, or supervised, tops one billion US dollars. This lone producer did not cast herself as a champion of women—women buyers, women directors, women actors, and women's stories—but she is. Her mission is to fill a huge gap in the marketplace with the moderately budgeted (10 to 30 million dollars) movie. This type of film, which has immense profit potential and lies somewhere between the blockbuster and the independent film, has nearly disappeared. These are the movies that once

worked to establish auteurs while allowing them to survive without having to mortgage the house or max out the credit cards for a film that might never see the light of day (let alone Sundance). Unfortunately, one such producing maverick alone cannot save independent filmmakers. This brings us to the much more lucrative and varied world of television, with its cable specialty channels, vast audiences, and constant demand for new product. It seems as if television would be a brilliant training ground for new talent, an opportunity-maker for the struggling indie filmmaker, and a safety net for mid-career talent looking for variety.

The business model for television is first and foremost about volume of material (number of episodes). In order to churn out an American TV season of twenty-two to twenty-four episodes per year, vast machinery is put in place to expedite the production with maximum efficiency. Few people outside the industry understand the grind of a television series. Take, for instance, *24* (2001-), a visual feast of adrenaline-pump. This medium to high budget hour-long drama includes twenty-four episodes per season. Each hour is shot in approximately eight to nine days. In comparison to most low-budget TV, this would be considered a luxurious schedule. Let us take a look at a typical production schedule for this type of series: while episode five is shooting, episode six is prepping and episodes one to four are in various stages of editing. At this time, scripts seven to twenty-four are in development, from various script-writing stages all the way down to a notion of a concept scribbled on a white board. In comparison, *The Avengers* spent twice the amount of time and money to shoot one ninety-five-page script.

For the cast and crew of television, each day is massive. A show's star can easily work 170 to 190 days per season, learn six to ten pages of dialogue every night, arrive on set at 6:00am or earlier for hair and makeup, shoot twelve to fourteen hours per day, and return to work only to find new pages awaiting. Days off are spent on publicity, re-

The business model for television is first and foremost about the volume of material.

shoots, and sound work. Given that one episode is prepping while another is shooting, it is impossible for one director to shoot all episodes. Few audience members realize that television directors rotate. This means a series with twenty-four episodes could have between ten to eighteen different directors, each learning the ropes of the show, getting to know the crew, the actors, and the style within a one-week period. These directors are then expected to shoot six to ten pages of script per day: action, drama, emotion, exposition, etc. Once completed, directors are given a limited number of days to edit prior to being rotated. This is where the concept of television director as hack comes into play. The circumstances do not invite Cecil B. DeMille-type auteurs. Instead, directors are expected to be expeditors for the TV machinery.

While the director is involved with a single or a few episodes per season, the producers, writers, and creators are busy supervising all twenty-four episodes—from writing through to production and broadcast. In television, they answer to two sets of executives, the network/broadcaster and the studio/financier (discrete entities often with differing agendas). With as many as a dozen executives on a show and so little time, any disagreement regarding content in a script can wind up slowing down the machine. The writers attempt to create a script that will appease everyone while the production team busy themselves with the physical shooting process. Each individual episode is budgeted prior to shooting and frequently requires modification to keep on track. The writer, now on the tenth draft, is left hairless and frustrated. Her eloquent baby is riddled with rushed

changes, and with the pressures of the next episode's script weighing her down, she may finally hit the point where getting it done trumps getting it right. At this time, the actors would like to see the scripts in advance to learn their lines and work out kinks. Their faces and reputations grace the screen, but the time crunch can leave them feeling marginalized—a stress that is only intensified by the rotating door of directors.

In this catch-22, directors frequently meet the actors for the first time on set, which could very well be the exhausted actor's 150th shoot day. There is no time to build trust, the essence of the actor-director relationship. In a classic conflict of positions, the actors will know the role better than the director, who has now become a marginalized party. At this stage, the director risks falling back into the expeditor trap of answering production demands: be on time, on budget, and on schedule (hence, the hack). The final obstacle for the TV director is the editorial process. The minimum time a director is guaranteed on a feature film is ten weeks, versus the two to three days given per TV episode. The producer, who by this time is already massively overworked from supervising the entire production, then takes over.

Internationally, the television methodology is quite different. The higher quality of some British shows results from a model of fewer episodes per series. These shows might only consist of three, four, or six episodes and do not go into production until all the scripts are completed. This way, a high profile actor such as Dame Judi Dench, for example, will know exactly what scripts she is committing to. In addition, this limited time period allows an actor to perform in a television series and feature films within the same year (a rarity for most North American stars). In Britain, actors make the transition from television to film with relative ease. North American television stars, on the other hand, have onerous time commitments that often include multi-season contracts. As a result, it is difficult for them to build a body of other work. A series with limited episodes works well for directors who, if not assigned to direct the entire series, can work closely with the other directors to make the process (and final product) creative, cohesive, and collaborative. That being said, the financial model of a limited series is significantly less lucrative than that of a US network, which, with over twenty-two episodes, can be sold in large volume orders.

In many ways, networks such as HBO, Showtime, and Netflix have started adhering to the UK model of fewer episodes for greater quality. *Breaking Bad*'s fifth and final season is a good example of this trend, with its fractured season format dividing sixteen episodes over two summers. Fewer episodes per season permits networks to entice higher profile directors and cast members, emphasizing quality over quantity. This all sounds like the new ideal—network shows continue their economic models devoted to large quantity while cable outfits cater to smaller, more diversified audiences. In a perfect world, these niche markets would be better served and would create greater opportunities for diversity, and opportunities for emerging and minority directors.[1] Unfortunately, this system has already proven to be flawed, especially where directors are concerned. The attractive format of a limited series with greater involvement of the directors is almost exclusively available to the experienced names. If David Fincher and Martin Scorsese take over these niche projects, younger and less established directors are deprived of opportunities to hone their craft, expand their creativity and experiment. If newer directors work on an episode of television, they barely have a moment to work with actors. They do not design the show, choose the color palette, work with composers, complete visual effects, or mold their shows in editorial. Episodic television loses the director from the process at a critical juncture as practicality trumps creativity.

While Netflix is having what appears to be an economically unsustainable love affair with a new model of television—the high budget; binge viewing; released-all-at-once series—the rest of TV remains the high-volume, budget-led, time-squeezed product. Directors need a venue to create the whole picture. They need to make feature films where they are the creator: respected, supported, and allowed to fulfill their visionary dreams. If they are not to become a dying breed, television needs to embrace them as the creative spirits they are.

The survival of mid-level features may lie in supporting projects for the 55% majority of its ticket-buying audience: women. Directors may look to television and look away quickly as they are forced into the role of expeditors (hacks) while the glamour roles are going to those who are pre-established. As such, the struggling newcomers are relegated to paying for their own movies or working for their five seconds of fame as YouTube sensations. To enhance its growth and success, the television model must shift to one that respects its directors, champions new ones, embraces minorities, views woman on equal footing, and encourages all directors to bring in fresh visions and expand their creativity.

1. Minority and women directors are so underemployed in production roles in the entertainment industry that there have been discussions with the American Civil Liberties Union about taking on a court case against the industry.

Graeme Stout

Overinterpreting Television
Rubicon and the Limits of Viewership

Although cancelled after only one season, AMC's *Rubicon* (2010) offers an example of a televisual text that challenges viewers by presenting little in the way of narrative explanation, alongside a complex plot structure that plays with contemporary fascinations with conspiracies and the flow of global power. Following a group of intelligence analysts at the API (American Policy Institute), *Rubicon* portrays the actions and decisions of the members of the think tank as they attempt to track a previously unsuspected individual, who they quickly decide is the central agent within an international ring of fundamentalists, mobsters, and foreign intelligence agents. Here, the show draws on larger cultural anxieties over power, information, and terror.

What the thirteen episodes illustrate is twofold: the first is a model of paranoia and overinterpreting information that is at once the content of the show as well as its form, inviting the audience to participate in the fantasies, theories, and anxieties of the lead characters; the second is a critique of the function of power in the twenty-first century. These two qualities work in tandem to invite the audience into the narrative of *Rubicon*, allowing viewers to partake in a process that critiques power while being impotent in the face of its labyrinthine machinations. Without the current configuration of global power, the form of overinterpretation and paranoid reading in which the show participates would only be a pathological form of interpreting the world. With it, we see *Rubicon* as a critical text that reflects the anxieties and uncertainties created by immaterial and amorphous systems of political decision-making. At our current historical juncture, a paranoid reading is both a highly entertaining and a critical reading of the world. One cannot simply dismiss a paranoid reading of power and information when the current structure of power engenders such a reading. Two semiotic concepts, or models, from Umberto Eco—the open work and overinterpretation—will serve as a foundation for the following analysis. With these semiotic (perhaps even psychological) concepts, we can understand the problems that audiences pose to a text and its own act of reading. In addition, Gilles Deleuze's concept of control, as well as N. Katherine Hayles' information theory, will serve to investigate the manner in which the complexity of the digital age forces us to rethink the nature and function of power.

Rubicon demands the audience to take on the position of the lead character, Will Travers (James Badge Dale)—an intelligence analyst with API who, as we quickly learn, has lead a half-life since the deaths of his wife and daughter on 9/11. Travers tries to unravel a series of common references planted in six major international newspapers. As the series unfolds, we assume the role of interpreter: the one who must figure out how the various events and actions can be composed into a narrative. The audience then suffers the same level of paranoia as Will while he moves toward either truth or madness. In part, our interpellation as active viewers is foisted upon us by the lack of narrative intervention on the parts of the writers, directors, and characters.

This invitation to interpretation offers us an example through which we can understand the limits of television shows that base their following on an integrated and interactive model of viewership. Through its paucity of narrative closure over the season, *Rubicon* was unable to develop a sustained mass audience. The formal elements of *Rubicon* illustrate a logic of intense and committed viewership that invariably fails given that it offers us no cathartic resolution, nor a geo-political picture predicated on a threatening other (e.g. *Homeland* [2011-]).

As with shows such as *Lost* (2004-2010), the *X-Files* (1993-2002), and *Fringe* (2008-2013), the audience is offered an overarching narrative that bases its appeal on the possibility of a truth that will be revealed. *Rubicon* differs

in its lack of hyperbole or fantasy. The world of *Rubicon* is one of the banally ordinary and the characters are anything but powerful or heroic. They are neurotic, weak, and compulsive in their behaviors. As intricate and conspiratorial as *Rubicon* becomes, the actual conspiracy at work—that the very institute that the analysts work for is part of a conspiratorial body that seeks to impose a specific interpretation of the truth upon the global politics—is not a radical conspiracy by either the standards of television or American popular culture. In the end, the goals of the conspirators are revealed to be nothing more than self-interest and the continued geo-political strength of the American empire.

Rubicon provides us with a forum through which we can understand how power functions in the new world order and how this generates a paranoid reaction on the part of the viewer, which is what Eco refers to as textual overinterpretation. It is through Eco's concept of the open work that we can initially read *Rubicon*. What *Rubicon* offers viewers is the possibility of engaging with a field of meaning, instead of being limited to a specific, determined chain of symbolic and formal meanings. Eco argues that every work of art is inherently an open work in so much as its semiotic nature demands an act of interpretation on the part of the audience. This act is admittedly one that follows prescribed practices of interpretation. In the twentieth century, however, Eco sees an extension of this general pattern of openness. He writes:

> In every century, the way that artistic forms are structured reflects the way in which science or contemporary culture views reality. . . . Hence, it is not overambitious to detect in the poetics of the "open" work . . . more or less specific overtones of trends in contemporary scientific thought. . . . Perhaps it is no accident that these poetic systems emerge at the same period as the physicists' principles of complementarity, which rules that it is not possible to indicate the different behavior patterns of an elementary particle simultaneously. . . . Hence one could argue, with Bohr, that the data collected in the course of experimental situations cannot be gathered in one image but should be considered as complimentary, since only the sum of all the phenomena could exhaust the possibilities of information. (1989, 13-16)

Here, the text does not simply exist as a determined system of meaning that we must give into, but rather an open system we must add to in order to produce its full meaning. Although Eco prioritizes scientific discourse as the inspiration of interpretative strategies, he certainly leaves room to consider cultural and technological models as influences for the radical openness of the post-modern. Our contemporary moment of complexity and digital communication multiplies the initial level of indeterminacy that lies behind all meaning.

Rubicon treats the openness of its text as the very object of its paranoid reaction to complexity. Its adherence to a level of realism that avoids the open appeal to the extraordinary, the fantastic, or the supernatural, curtails any utopian or transcendental possibilities. This realism forces us back upon our own world and marks it as a televisual text that engages with contemporary anxieties over power, information, and surveillance. Here, we move away from the utopian impulse of Eco's open work and transition to the realities of interpretation that he discusses in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, in which he analyzes the ramifications of his earlier concept as one that necessarily produces improper readings. In particular, he focuses on those readings that interject the reading subject and his or her interests into the text. Eco argues that such a model of overinterpretation produces a form of paranoid reading.

For Eco, the paranoid reading does not distinguish between the internal relationship of a reader to a text, and the external relationship of a reader and the text to the social world. In the act of interpretation, the paranoid reader is unable to make distinctions between various registers of meaning, types of texts, and forms of symbolic expressivity. This inability to mark distinctions is witnessed in the obsessive inclusion of the reader within, not only the act of interpretation, but within the text itself. All symbols turn back upon the reader, who finds necessary meaning in even the most contingent of chances. There is always a reason that explains the workings of chance:

> [T]he difference between the sane interpretation and the paranoiac interpretation lies in recognizing that this relationship is minimal, and not, on the contrary, deducing from this minimal relationship the maximum possible. The paranoiac is not the person who notices that 'while' and 'crocodile' curiously appear in the same context: the paranoiac is the person

> who begins to wonder about the mysterious motives that induced me to bring these two particular words together. The paranoiac sees beneath my example a secret, to which I allude. (1992, 48)

Suspicion is, for Eco, the very force that drives the paranoiac, but it is not necessarily a pathological one as it is also the force that drives all intellectual investigations. The problem is one of economy. Where the sane person looks for the most economical, simple explanation to any interpretive situation, the paranoiac finds the least economical, least obvious explanation to be the correct one. In other words, the paranoiac rejects Ockham's razor: the most economical explanation is *not* the correct answer. The expansive and the over-produced are where truth can be found. Suspicion falls upon the very act of explanation, which involves a removal of superfluous details.

The paranoid reading is not a pathological inability to read signs and symbols practically. There is something healthy about paranoia, or, to be a little less aphoristic, paranoia is the natural response to a discursive system in which most—if not all—experience is placed within a system of meaning that opens up beneath our feet. It is a response appropriate to a world of visual experience, limited by digital media and communication to such a degree that they become the arbiters of truth. To Eco, paranoid reading is not necessarily a form of error as it points out an underlying cynical relation to the structures of truth. These structures are external and autonomous entities that control the experience of truth. Here, paranoia is not simply the reaction of the narcissistic subject to its own impotence. Paranoia gives birth to a drive to see external connections that undermine the truth, or, transform the economy of truth into one of infinite productivity.

We find in *Rubicon* an example of this overinterpretation of information, based on the seemingly innate desire to construct patterns out of clues, random and anomalous data, and suspicion. In a pivotal scene, Will goes to discuss his theories with Ed Bancroft (Roger Robinson), a burnt-out analyst considered to be the most gifted reader and designer of codes. When Ed does not answer the door, Will enters his house to find his dining room wall covered in notes that detail every last event in the growing series of communications and clues that Will and Ed have collected. What we see, through Will's eyes, is a seemingly random collection of papers that we read as paranoid pastiche. At this point, we are also encountering a common symbol of the past twenty years of cinema and television: the textual collage of information collected in order to draw connections that could not be made without these visual cues. This inter-textual collage is instantly recognizable as a sign of mental lack (amnesia), or mental overproduction (paranoia). Will's reaction suggests that he is concerned for the health of his friend, whose precarious mental state has always defined his brilliance. The significance of this scene comes from Ed, who has given away the plot of the series. The connections between the various go codes, the history of the mysterious Donald Bloom (Michael Gaston), the troubles in Nigeria, and the threat to Houston are all real within the narrative. Ed stumbles across the reality of the *Rubicon* plot and yet, his reasoning is dismissed by us, given our suspicion of his mental and emotional instability. Will's lies to Ed are also significant: he claims that they have been pursuing the wrong Donald Bloom when, in fact, they have been pursuing the correct target.

Our contemporary moment of complexity and digital communication multiplies the initial level of indeterminacy that lies behind all meaning.

Throughout the series, Will and his colleagues have an ambiguous relationship to the institution they work for and the military industrial complex it reports to. In the previous episode, Will goes to Washington along with Truxton Spangler (Michael Cristofer), the head of API, to appear before the funding board at the NSA (National Security Agency). In a darkened room across from the various heads of the United States' military and intelligence organizations, Spangler argues for the importance of an independent voice in the intelligence industry. In particular, he draws attention to the silent Will, whom he praises for his excessive intelligence (comparing him to a computer) as well as his absolute indifference (suggesting his pseudo-autistic nature). The effect of Spangler's speech is the continuation of their funding, but it also moves Will away from his conspiratorial pursuits and, for a while at least, back into the folds of the intelligence industry. Will lies to Ed because he has once again been drawn in by the promise of knowledge and power that his work at API (including his recent promotion) has granted him.

Will's ambiguous relationship to his work, his employer and his supervisors is due to the models of power that define the shift from an industrial, institutional society to the one defined by models of digital information and surveillance. This shift in the deployment of power is what Deleuze referred to as the movement from a society of discipline to one of control. As Deleuze argues in "Postscript on the Societies of Control," what distinguishes control from discipline is the difference between open and closed systems. Control functions on a general level in which it

provides the logic through which every institution or site of power also functions; it is more totalizing in that it creates a society in which all forms of communication and expression are reducible to a single system or form of power. For Deleuze, control functions according to a digital logic in which power can distribute and duplicate itself at any point. Power is, therefore, nowhere and, potentially, everywhere. He describes the distinction between discipline and control through its virtuality and immanence:

> "Control" is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future. Paul Virilio also is continually analyzing the ultrarapid forms of free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system. (Deleuze 4)

Control, in as much as it is dynamic, attempts to produce entities and subjects that are malleable, and responsive to the shifting configurations of power.

The conflict between these two forms of power comes across in the inter-agency conflicts that emerge throughout the series as various intelligence groups protect their own information and fret over the security of classified paper documents. It also comes across in that electronic surveillance is regarded as the background noise of the entire narrative. What we see in the world of *Rubicon*—in the world of our twenty-first century—is the reduction of individuals, bodies, and the world to information. Here, Hayles' discussion of information as the new paradigm can be used to understand the forms and functions of knowledge:

> It is a pattern rather than a presence, defined by the probability distribution of the coding elements comprising the message. If information is pattern, then non-information should be the absence of pattern, that is, randomness. This commonsense expectation ran into unexpected complications when certain developments within information theory implied that information could be equated with randomness as well as with pattern. Identifying information with *both* pattern and randomness proved to be a powerful paradox, leading to the realization that in some instances, an infusion of noise into a system can cause it to reorganize at a higher level of complexity. Within such a system, pattern and randomness are bound together in a complex dialectic that makes them not so much opposites as complements or supplements to one another. Each helps to define the other; each contributes to the flow of information through the system. (70)

Reading Hayles' account of pattern and randomness against Eco's discussion of overinterpretation allows us to understand how both pattern and randomness are not polar opposites, but involved in a symbiotic relationship that allows them to produce information at new levels of complexity. This suggests that Eco's notion of the paranoiac reading should not be read pathologically, but exceptionally. The paranoiac is the one who can see and create new models of information that go beyond the intended or regulated sense of a specific text.

Control, in as much as it is dynamic, attempts to produce entities and subjects that are malleable, and responsive to the shifting configurations of power.

Unlike the image of the autonomous computer tasked with supervising unruly human populations, in *Rubicon* we see a decidedly low-tech approach to intelligence. In the API, we have an institution that relies on the work and communication of individuals who analyze data and propose actions of geopolitical import. We do not find a group of normal individuals, but a collection of excessive personality types, united by their seemingly uncanny ability to work through complex problems. The people at the API stand in for digital technology and its potential; they are able to interpret data and determine its meaning, pattern, or probability. It is the exceptional human mind that is able to process information, not as a set series of rules that must be followed, but as a creative field. However, this creative field is also at risk as it is tied to mania, compulsion, and instability. Deleuze argues that the computer represents the perfect technological description of our age:

> Types of machines are easily matched with each type of society—not that machines are determining, but because they express those social forms capable of generating them and using them. . . . [T]he societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers, whose passive danger is jamming and whose active one is piracy and the introduction of viruses. (6)

One could use Deleuze's description of computers in order to read Will, Ed, and all the analysts in *Rubicon* as susceptible to a series of active and passive threats, based on their own eccentric genius that seeks to pursue connections and codes. Eco's earlier discussion of the relationship between scientific discourse and cultural practices of interpretation adds to Deleuze's analysis of technological metaphors. The link between science, technology, communication, and power is one not easily broken in a contemporary digital society.

It is with power as a form of organizing information that we might find the greatest sense of instability. When Spangler presents his closing remarks to the funding committee, we have a sense that he exposes the impotence of government institutions: they do not know what they are doing or why they are doing it and wait for people like Spangler to tell them what they must do. As pointed out by Deleuze, the age of the state is over:

> But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. (Deleuze 4)

The irony is that the API is the new force kicking in the door of the state's traditional institutions. It is also the force that uses intelligence to facilitate a terrorist attack in Houston in order to disrupt the flow of oil into the US. The model of power used by the API is one based on a global deployment of force and coercion through its interpretation and creation of information. Will's paranoia emerges when he realizes that the intelligence he and his team analyze has a definitive pattern—one that bears the hallmark of their own particular brand of analysis. Our suspicion is generated by the openness of this conspiracy as it is offered within the show's narrative. The audience is not presented with clear signs, symbols, patterns, or clichés. Instead, what is seen is a series of random codes, events, shots, and scenes that we suspect to have meaning and intention behind them. Unlike Eco's claim that this is what the spectator projects onto a text, we also understand that, in an age where power can manifest itself anywhere in the world in order to destroy or confine, we have a right to suspect coincidence as coincidence can be read as part of a larger pattern (even if this pattern is not discernable to us). *Rubicon* succeeds in engaging us, as an audience, in a pattern of overinterpreting political reality. Although the final judgment of this act of interpretation is correct (*i.e.*, there is a conspiracy at the heart of the intelligence community), its method and form is one marked by uncertainty, instability, and paranoia—all of which render it unable to act in order to challenge, or change the "ultra-rapid forms of free-floating control" that exemplify power's manifestations (Deleuze 4). *Rubicon* offers no consolation to this post-modern anxiety. The conspiracy comes off and no one is able to stop it. We once again witness the world through Will's eyes as something out of control. It is something that cannot be predicted, but only interpreted after the fact, a mute and indifferent fact in the face of which we are powerless to act.

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Michael L. Wayne

Moral Ambiguity, Colourblind Ideology, and the Racist Other in Prime Time Cable Drama

For the majority of its history, from Newton Minow's "vast wasteland," to the anti-TV activist groups who believed the medium to be a public health concern akin to illegal drug use, television has been labeled a low cultural form. As television entered the post-network era in the late 1990s, this began to change. Today, some critics assert that the cultural significance of televised serial drama has surpassed that of Hollywood films (see Epstein, O'Hehir, Polone, Wolcott). Such assertions are supported by the increasing cultural legitimacy (see Newman and Levine) associated with prime time cable shows like *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), *The Wire* (2002-2008), *Mad Men* (2007-), and *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), which "advance a particular moral view of the universe and operate in the Dickensian tradition of morality tales and social critiques dressed in the guise of realism" (Kuo and Wu n. pag.). Nonetheless, by failing to account for the distinct economic realities of broadcast networks, advertiser-supported as well subscriber-supported cable channels, these broad comparisons fail to address the ways in which differing contexts of production are reflected on a textual level (Lotz 87).

This essay explores the correlation of such distinctions by examining the degree to which prime time dramas, produced by subscriber-supported and advertiser-supported cable networks, challenge the racial ideologies of white Americans. Following the civil rights movement and its backlash, the dominant racial ideology in America has become "colourblind" through assertions of essential sameness between racial and ethnic groups despite unequal social locations and distinctive histories (see Frankenberg). As a consequence, racial inequality is explained as "the outcome of nonracial dynamics" by whites that rationalize minorities' status as "the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks' imputed cultural limitations" (Bonilla-Silva 2). In the context of this colourblind ideology, racism becomes othered. Furthermore, as Nancy DiTomaso notes, whites frequently "attribute the problems of racial inequality to 'those racists' (often defined in terms of prejudiced people who are still holding on to hostility toward blacks and other nonwhites) . . . They do not see themselves as racist or prejudiced people" (7). Yet, as I argue below, the HBO dramas *The Sopranos* and *The Wire* challenge this ideology with depictions of morally ambiguous main characters that display overt racial prejudice. In contrast, the FX dramas *The Shield* (2002-2008), *Sons of Anarchy* (2008-), and *Justified* (2010-) support colourblind racial ideology by positioning morally ambiguous characters as superior to and victorious over racist others.

Racist White Characters on HBO

Until recently, morally complicated characters were the exception on American television, as producers attempted to attract large audiences with the least objectionable programming. With some notable exceptions including "Hawkeye" Pierce (Alan Alda) on *M.A.S.H.* (1972-1983) and Andy Sipowicz (Dennis Franz) on *NYPD Blue* (1993-2005), prime time scripted content was largely comprised of likeable and idealistic personalities. In his analysis of network era conventions, Todd Gitlin observes that the main characters in dramatic television programs are typically heroes who "confront forces that are convincingly wicked" (256) in the context of episodic narratives with happy endings that allow "the irreconcilable to be reconciled" (260). Yet with the onset of cable technology and the emergence of new networks and niche channels, the economics of the television industry have altered the ways in which content becomes socially relevant.

In contrast to the economics of the network era, in which advertisers were reliant upon large audiences, producers have now begun to move away from the least objectionable programming model by producing nice-driven content. It was not until the post-network era that the subscriber-supported channel HBO introduced audiences to Tony Soprano (James Gandolfini), "a character at the center of the story whose goals you did not relate to, whom a decent person would, by and large, not cheer for" (Poniewozik n. pag.). In years since, both subscriber and advertiser-supported cable dramas have similarly featured morally ambiguous protagonists, often described as anti-heroes (see Bennett). This includes *Breaking Bad*'s Walter White (Bryan Cranston), *Mad Men*'s Don Draper (Jon Hamm), *Boardwalk Empire*'s Nucky Thompson (Steve Buscemi), and *Damages*' Patty Hewes. Despite this diffusion of moral ambiguity, the moral standing of white characters in subscriber-based cable texts are further complicated by their overt racial prejudice.

In the macho Italian-American mobster world of David Chase's The Sopranos, *the assumed hypersexuality of African-American characters is a recurring source of anxiety.*

In the macho Italian-American mobster world of David Chase's *The Sopranos*, the assumed hypersexuality of African-American characters is a recurring source of anxiety. When meeting his daughter's half African-American, half-Jewish boyfriend, Noah (Patrick Tully), Tony makes no attempt to conceal his bigotry. During the exchange Tony tells the young man, "So we do understand each other? You're a *ditsoon*? A charcoal briquette? A *mulignan*?" When Noah asks Tony what his problem is, Tony responds:

> I think you know what my problem is. You see your little friend up there? She didn't do you any favors bringing you into this house. Now I dunno what the fuck she was thinkin'. We'll get to that later. See, I got business associates who are black and they don't want my son with their daughters and I don't want their sons with mine. ("Proshai, Livushka")

In this instance, and throughout the series, Tony remains unrepentant about his overt racism. According to Dana Polan, to avoid the risk of alienating viewers, shows such as *The Sopranos* rely on racist behaviours and actions to establish a relationship with its urban, educated audiences as the show "plays into stereotypes to play on them" (121).

Similarly, with *The Wire*, David Simon provides a realistic depiction of inner city life which includes the brutalization of young African-American men at the hands of white police officers. In the show's second episode, Polish-American detective Roland "Prez" Pryzbylewski (Jim True-Frost) visits a drug-infested Baltimore housing project where he drunkenly pistol-whips a young African-American man without serious provocation ("The Detail"). The episode ends with Prez's superior receiving a phone call informing him that the young man has lost his eye. However, in the third season, the one-time perpetrator of racial injustice becomes a victim of a police department that is all too eager to appear politically correct. During a nighttime operation, Prez accidentally shoots an African-American police officer after mistakenly identifying him as a suspect ("Slapstick"). Once the potentially racially motivated incident is leaked to the press, Prez is forced into early retirement. In this moment, the audience comes to empathize with Prez as another victim of the malfunctioning bureaucratic machine. Nonetheless, this character is never absolved and his moral ambiguity hangs over much of the fourth season, colouring the audience's understanding of his new career as a math teacher at an inner city middle school. According to Paul Klein,

> the series does not engage in the sleight of hand whereby generalized injustices are resolved through the salvation of the individual, or in which moral certainty is offered as a viable solution to the otherwise complex realities of contemporary social problems. (179)

It is through such realism and moral complexity that *The Wire* challenges its audience.

For both Tony in *The Sopranos* and Prez in *The Wire*, the characters' moral standings along with the audience's feelings towards them become complicated through their problematic relationships with African-American characters. In the context of colourblind ideology, identifying

with such characters forces viewers to confront overt prejudice, thereby calling "attention to the political, economic, [and] status privileges that whites enjoy" while simultaneously "raising questions that might undermine the legitimacy of the stratification system" (DiTomaso 6). The same cannot be said about FX dramas such as *The Shield*, *Sons of Anarchy*, and *Justified*, in which conflicts between colour-blind white characters and racist others serve as a narrative device.

Race and Moral Ambiguity on FX

Although the increasing cultural significance of post-network television is most frequently identified with subscriber-supported cable networks, FX's *The Shield* was the first show created for advertiser-supported cable to "be likened to HBO hits like *The Sopranos* and distinguished from broadcast programs in industrial and critical discourse," and thus, "helped initiate a key transition in convergence-era television, one that allowed legitimated programming to come not just from exclusive world of premium cable, but also to exist in advertiser-support spaces" (Newman and Levine 33). Created by Shawn Ryan and set within the multicultural communities of contemporary Los Angeles, the show follows Vic Mackey (Michael Chiklis), a loyal, family-oriented protagonist who murders a fellow police officer in the pilot episode. Over the course of *The Shield*'s seven seasons, the narrative is primarily driven by the conflict between Mackey and his second-in-command, Shane Vendrell (Walton Goggins). One exchange between Mackey and Vendrell usefully illustrates the narrative deployment of the latter as racist other. At the beginning of the fourth season, Mackey and Vendrell are discussing the recent birth of Vendrell's son Jackson ("The Cure"). After hearing the boy's name, Mackey, with a grin on his face, unthinkingly asks, "As in Michael?" After a brief pause, Vendrell looks up from his son and replies, "As in Stonewall," which immediately wipes the grin from Mackey's face and the scene ends with an uneasy air hanging between them. As this veneration of confederate history implies and as his choice of "Dixie" as a ring-tone later confirms ("Postpartum"), Vendrell represents ideology associated with the pre-civil rights movement. As a consequence, Vendrell's moral standing is less ambiguous than Mackey's despite the fact that each character engages in nearly identical behavior. For example, although both characters violate the taboo of murdering fellow police officers, only Mackey's murder of Terry Crowley (Reed Diamond) is presented as a justifiable response to the situation at hand. In contrast, Vendrell's murder of fellow Strike Team member Curtis Lemansky (Kenny Johnson) at the conclusion of the fifth season, appears impulsive and fundamentally unnecessary ("Postpartum"). Subsequently, Vendrell's guilt exacerbates the audience's antipathy towards him as he descends into the reckless underworld of drug addiction while creating a slew of additional crises. *The Shield* ultimately

The heroes in these FX dramas are morally ambiguous white men, conveniently placed into conflict with racists yearning for the return of segregation.

provides audiences with an unambiguous narrative resolution in the series finale when Vendrell murders his pregnant wife and young son, before shooting himself in the head as his former coworkers storm the house ('Family Meeting'). On a textual level, the juxtaposition of colourblind Mackey and Vendrell as racist other serves two functions. First, it provides a realistic (as compared to more traditional crime dramas) depiction of contemporary America by acknowledging the existence of overt prejudice. Second, by identifying with Mackey, the audience is allowed to conceptualize his triumph over Vendrell as a rejection of an anachronistic, marginalized racial ideology, thereby supporting the colourblind belief that systemic inequality can be resolved through individual action.

In *Sons of Anarchy*, Kurt Sutter's Shakespearean family drama set within the context of an all-white outlaw motorcycle club, the show's central conflict between the young Jax Teller (Charlie Hunnam) and the usurper Clay Morrow (Ron Perlman) similarly relies on the juxtaposition of colourblind ideology and the racist other. During the show's second season, for example, Jax repeatedly asserts that the justification for the club's conflict with their Latino rivals, the Mayans, is economic rather than racial ("Albification"). In contrast, Clay sets in motion a plan to frame an African-American street gang, the One-Niners, for the murder of a club member thought to be a snitch in order to reignite racial conflict, and draw attention away from himself. In the fourth season, colourblind ideology is again on display when Jax convinces a military commando, who works for a Mexican cartel, to spare the lives of several One-Niners, proclaiming, "[w]e have to work with other people. We have to build relationships. You do this—no one will trust us" ("Kiss"). Indeed, his ascendency to the rank of club president at the conclusion of the fourth season could, like the conclusion of *The Shield*, be read as a rejection of overt prejudice ("To Be, Act 2").

Although there are some significant differences, Graham Yost's modern western *Justified*, inspired by the fiction of Elmore Leonard, includes similar dynamics between the main character and racist others. Set in contemporary Kentucky, the series begins with Deputy U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens (Timothy Olyphant) being reassigned to his home state as punishment for conspicuously shooting a drug dealer in Miami. Working from the Marshal's office in Lexington, Raylan has frequent opportunities to travel to rural Harlan County, where he must confront the backwoods culture he left behind. For example, in the pilot episode, a Marshal investigation into the bombing of an African-American church ends with the protagonist shooting the leader of the neo-Nazi gang responsible for the attack. In subsequent episodes, similar opportunities arise as Raylan

pursues a seemingly endless stream of local criminals sporting the confederate flag. Raylan never commits cold-blooded murder, so his moral standing is arguably less ambiguous than Mackey and Teller's. Nevertheless, *Justified* is predicated upon the embodiment of colourblindness, successfully opposing an urban, multicultural form of law and order against the wishes of a resistant local populace of racist others. Here, as in *The Shield* and *Sons of Anarchy*, the racialized morality tale is the same. The heroes in these FX dramas are morally ambiguous white men, conveniently placed into conflict with racists yearning for the return of segregation.

Conclusion

In response to claims that television has qualitatively improved in recent years, Newman and Levine argue the medium's elevated status in the post-network era is indicative of a bifurcation where "new is elevated over old, active over passive, class over mass, masculine over feminine" (5). As a result, prime time cable dramas like those produced by HBO and FX are celebrated because of their association with the active viewing experiences of elite post-network audiences while prime time network dramas like *CSI* and *Desperate Housewives* are devalued because of their association with the passive viewing experiences of network era mass audiences. In particular, the use of "terms such as 'original,' 'edgy,' 'complex,' and 'sophisticated'" in the dis-

courses surrounding legitimated cable texts allows them to be "seen as more engaging, addressing a committed and passionate viewer" (Newman and Levine 81). This analysis, however, indicates that some prime time cable dramas are more ideologically challenging than others.

Although *The Sopranos*, *The Wire*, *The Shield*, *Sons of Anarchy*, and *Justified* position their hyper-masculine anti-heroes in relation to the dominant colourblind racial ideologies of contemporary America, the use of the racist other as a narrative device creates the opportunity for FX viewers to have a more passive viewing experience than HBO viewers, who must actively confront racist behavior and then reconcile this with their feelings of attachment to the characters. As such, the advertiser-supported dramas discussed above provide white audiences with the opportunity to "attribute the problems of race to 'those racists' and exclude themselves from that category" and continue to "think of racial issues as something that is about others but not about them" (DiTomaso 8). In contrast, it seems these particular subscriber-supported cable dramas are more able to challenge the status quo associated with colourblind ideologies. This interpretation bolsters arguments that note the slogan "It's Not TV, It's HBO" goes beyond marketing and "acknowledges the very different industrial practices and capabilities of subscription networks relative to those of advertiser-supported broadcast and basic cable" (Lotz 86). Therefore, even if the existence of culturally legitimated content relies on the same imbalanced binaries associated with the medium's historical degradation, the relationships such content forges with audiences nonetheless vary with the context of production.

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Maria San Filippo

Television's Mid-Life Crisis
Moderate Minimalism and Middle-Aged Masculinity in *In Treatment* and *Louie*

Though frequently bemoaned for allegedly having threatened the survival of the traditional screen media of film and television, the so-called digital revolution has, in fact, fostered rich new economies of production and perception. Of primary interest is the way in which these recent screen artists exploit the possibilities of digital media while relying on an indie-style film aesthetic and ethic, particularly those who do so in order to ponder the emotional intricacies and material realities of contemporary American sexual mores and romantic lives. What *New York Times* critic A.O. Scott calls a "neo-neo-realist" mode of locally produced, micro-budgeted everyday stories striving for truthful, socially conscious authenticity—the converse to hundred-million-dollar-plus, CGI-outsourced, merchandizing-friendly fantasy franchises—constitutes digital technology's other momentous offering to twenty-first-century screen culture, and not merely by allowing affordability and accessibility to far greater numbers of creative media-makers ("Neo-Neo Realism," n. pag.). In coining the term "neo-neo-realism," Scott was also singling out what he perceived to be the promising re-emergence of films using "lived-in locations and non-professional actors and their explorations of work, neighborhood and family life, all hallmarks of the neo-realist impulse," helped along by millennial developments in independent production, marketing, and distribution tactics ("A.O. Scott Responds," n. pag.). In recent years, what I would call "moderate minimalism" has been resuscitated cinematically, which is no coincidence, but rather one manifestation in wider cultural movements for environmental sustainability and compassionate capitalism movements, pitted against excess waste, outsourced manufacturing, and deficit financing. Sizing up American society in the decade following 9/11, Scott observes that "magical thinking has been elevated from a diversion to an ideological principle," and suggests that neo-realism's "engagement with the world as it is might reassert itself as an aesthetic strategy" ("Neo-Neo Realism," n. pag.). Tracing the neo-realist impulse's global movement since its origins in post-World War II Italy, Scott ventures that neo-realism "might be thought of less as a style or genre than as an ethic" ("Neo-Neo Realism," n. pag.). With Hollywood spinning $100+ million yarns of escapist denial or (occasionally) self-aggrandizing heroism, and Must-See TV continuing to dish out formulaic sitcoms and legal procedurals while premium cable indulges in mere titillation more than genuine transgression, refusing to swallow these wish-fulfilment fantasies and escapist extravaganzas becomes an ethical imperative.

Scott's proclamations provoked *New Yorker* film blogger Richard Brody to protest, "[w]hat Scotts praises is, in effect, granola cinema, abstemious films that are made to look good for you but are no less sweetened than mass-market products, that cut off a wide range of aesthetic possibilities and experiences on ostensible grounds of virtue" ("About," n. pag.). Where Scott praises *Wendy and Lucy* (2008) and *Goodbye Solo* (2008), Brody prefers *Frownland* (2007) and defends *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), leading Scott to retort in a follow-up response, "[i]t's clear enough that Mr. Brody and I have different tastes: one man's granola is another man's meat, after all ("A.O. Scott Responds," n. pag.). Because Scott's and Brody's differing viewpoints are both supported readily by recent filmic exemplars of their respective compendia, perhaps the most valuable insight of their somewhat vexed debate seems to be in noting just how alive indie-style cinema remains—and in reminding us how unfortunately infrequent such debates in contemporary film criticism have become. Their struggle is seemingly more a

result of conflicting sensibilities between formalist Brody and humanist Scott, for they appear to agree on the existence of a contemporary aesthetic trend that encompasses both those films that Brody praises for their "audaciously expressive images, coming through but not staying with realism" alongside what he attests that Scott favours: "a restrained camera style, without risking provocative minimalism or overtly fragmentary compositions" ("About," n. pag.).

What critic Susan Morrison, also writing about twenty-first century art cinema, names "slow film" perhaps gets closest to the mode and mood of what Brody and Scott collectively describe:

> [Slow film] refers to a type of art film that, while seemingly minimalist, in fact requires intense audience concentration and effort to produce meaning. By this neologism, I mean to draw an analogy between the recent phenomenon in cooking (and eating) habits termed the "Slow Food" movement wherein time functions as an arbiter and guarantor of good taste, with those films that work off similar emphases of duration, films that reject the flashier aspects of Hollywood filmmaking . . . short takes, rapid editing, continuously moving camera and action, etc. . . . substituting instead a much slower approach to crafting a film. (*Slow Film*, n. pag.)

The localism promoted by the Slow Food movement intrinsically characterizes the production, distribution, and exhibition networks of the films Scott and Brody describe, as well as signaling temporality's crucial importance to their narratives for the way intensity and duration enhance everyday understandings of character and story. Characterizing this particular aesthetic as "moderate minimalism" signals the approach most vividly employed by filmmakers like Richard Linklater or the "mumblecore" directors I discuss elsewhere while also accommodating the less dialogue-driven, more stylized films of Sofia Coppola, Kelly Reichardt, and Gus Van Sant (San Filippo 2010). The term could equally be extended to include European art film ingénues such as Andrea Arnold, Radu Muntean, Joachim Trier, and Cristian Mungiu. Ultimately, moderate minimalism also has seeped into, or concurrently developed within, two similarly styled twenty-first century television series of note: *In Treatment* (2008-2010) and *Louie* (2010-).

Television's identity crisis in the post-television era yields a corollary to cinema's blockbuster/indie dichotomy in its polarization between the edgy extravagance of paycable series and the reversion by broadcast networks to formulaic, low-cost, reality-style fare. These two recent and highly unique shows, *In Treatment* and *Louie*, take their lead instead from the moderate minimalist aesthetic of slow film as well as that of online digital media such as *YouTube* and web series, all aesthetically and ethically favoured by Millennials and their middle-aged confreres who make up the majority of viewers subscribing to HBO (or piggy-backing on their parents' HBO GO subscriptions among other, more illicit means of content acquisition) and tuning in to basic cable channel FX (or watching recent episodes online). Formally and narratively innovative, yet organically rooted in televisual style and seriality, these series indicate ways in which digital technologies are preserving not just the Hollywood-style spectacular, but also an artisanal indie aesthetic. These shows are pushed increasingly to the cinematic margins, whose real time, dialogue-driven, micro dramas—filmed in close-up compositions and with handheld cinematography—are ideally suited to modern viewers' ways of seeing intimately, actively, and obsessively (often on personal viewing devices such as laptops). Moreover, these two singular shows engage formally as well as narratively with middle-aged masculinity in a way that could also be described as moderately minimalist. They depart from fictional television's prevailing pattern of using sensationalist melodrama and celebrated machismo to represent middle-aged men in crisis, still on display in shows such as *Californication* (2007-), *Hung* (2009-2011), *Rescue Me* (2004-2011), and *Shameless* (2011-).

. . . these series indicate ways in which digital technologies are preserving not just the Hollywood-style spectacular, but also an artisanal indie aesthetic.

In Treatment's psychiatrist Dr. Paul Weston (Gabriel Byrne), and the eponymous "Louie" C.K., a New York-based comic playing a version of himself, serve less as representatives of the newfangled cultural mentality that "50 is the new 30" and more as confirmations of what Patricia Cohen, author of *In Our Prime: The Invention of Middle Age*, names as that identity construction's chief emphasis: "loss—the end of fertility, decreased stamina, the absence of youth" (n. pag.). As such, Paul and Louie endure quotidian trials and muted tribulations aimed at authentically depicting age-related negotiations of profession, finances, divorce, parenting, friendship, health, and sex. Both shows' adherence to naturalistic plot and performance, low-budget production, and slow-build revelations conjoins the voyeuristic intimacy, real time flow, and DIY authorship of web content with television's contemporary trend of single-camera docu-comedies such as *The Office* (2005-2013) and *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2000-). Exceptional instances of treating

middle-aged American masculinity seriously, *In Treatment* and *Louie* are also noteworthy for negotiating television's changing landscape by successfully blending aspects of the classic soap opera and sitcom with the contemporary dramedy, of observational documentary with reality television, and of cinematic neo-realism with *YouTube* exhibitionism.

In Treatment ran on HBO from 2008-2010. In its first two seasons, it hemmed closely to the acclaimed Israeli series *BeTipul* (2005-2008) from which it was adapted—airing five episodes per week with a format that echoed that of the daytime television soap opera. Each half hour features a different patient in conversation with Paul and then concludes with his own session with former mentor now therapist Dr. Gina Toll (Dianne Wiest). Following his divorce, he relocates from Baltimore to Brooklyn where he begins anew with another therapist, Dr. Adele Brouse (Amy Ryan). The third and final season to date, with an original script and new showrunner, scaled back to four episodes per week; as of now, plans for the show's revival as a web series have been reported but are still unrealized. Notably, the first season is bookended with Paul in conversation with Gina—indeed, they could be said to constitute the show's central coupling—in which his embittered dissatisfaction with his aging body and flagging professional commitment is punctuated by the anticipatory, then deflating impact of his prospective affair with younger female patient Laura (Melissa George). In the transition between their first and second exchanges below, appearing in adjacent season one episodes, Gina coaxes Paul into a wary recognition of his older, but wiser self-worth without resorting to the pat solutions and positive thinking of so many approaches to contemporary psychotherapy *and* conventional serial television.

Gina: You seem antsy.

Paul: I just keep thinking I need to go to the bathroom.

Gina: Oh, you remember where it is—the door on your right [*gestures behind her*].

Paul: No, I mean all the time. [*Sheepish*] It's a urinary thing.

Gina: [*sympathetically*] Oh, I see. Have you seen a doctor?

Paul: Yeah, getting better. But it's still a terrible sensation. You got to the bathroom, you stand there, you will it to happen, and nothing. Not a drop.

Gina: So uncomfortable. This, and the stress you're under.

Paul [*looks at her sharply*]: Jesus. You think it's psychosomatic.

Gina: No, not at all.

Paul: A symbolic urinary infection.

Gina: Symbolic how?

Paul: My head's telling me one thing, my body's telling me another. My precise issue manifesting itself as a physical malfunction of the…

Gina: Yes?

Paul: Shit… did you say it was on the right?

("Paul and Gina: Week Nine")

Paul: [Laura] said that what I was doing was that I was using her to bail myself out of my own life, that actually I was having a 'mid-life crisis.' [*Laughs bitterly*] Hilarious description. That's your theory, isn't it?

Gina: No. But that doesn't matter now… it doesn't matter. What matters, Paul, is that you did the right thing for you, and for your patient.
Paul: She could be the last love of my life… and I let her go. What's left for me now, Gina?
Gina: We'll have to talk about that.
("Paul and Gina: Week Nine")

As this dialogue-driven exchange, ranging from the banal to the melodramatic to the ultimately anticlimactic, represents, *In Treatment*'s formal and tonal structures, despite their inherent televisuality, are nonetheless unparalleled in television drama. The hypnotic pacing and intense immersion, required by the show's painstaking self-reflection and reliance on cumulative knowledge, engages more gaze than glance, befitting the intimacy and immediacy of contemporary spectatorship's personal, mobile screens and time-shifted, compulsive viewing. While this degree of minimalism is traditionally standard in certain televisual modes that foreground confessional conversation, namely the interview show and the daytime soap opera, the infotainment-izing of the former has left PBS's Charlie Rose as virtually the last man standing while after decades on air, stalwart soaps like *The Guiding Light* (1952-2009) and *All My Children* (1970-2011) are calling it a day. *In Treatment* hardly ever ventures outside Paul's office, nor does almost anyone save his recurring patients venture in. Not only do viewers bear witness to the labour of psychotherapy, they are also shown the minutiae of Paul's everyday life—ranging from mundane tasks such as unclogging his toilet and filling out paperwork to bickering with his wife and attempting to overcome his alienation from his children. Despite being played by the soulful Gabriel Byrne, Paul is portrayed as an aging sad sack lacking the skirt-chasing virility and bad boy charm that his middle-aged cohort—namely Ray Drecker (Thomas Jane) in *Hung* and Hank Moody (David Duchovny) in *Californication*—dispense with ease. After nearly breaching professionalism in his encounter with Laura during the first season, Paul is rendered impotent by a panic attack that leaves him humiliated and abandoned, though potentially more self-aware and open to therapy. Yet his next romantic relationship with a yoga teacher waits until season three to commence, *in medias res*, keeps her largely off-screen, and ends with her subdued surrender to his lack of investment and emotional reclusiveness. Surely, then, Paul's most fraught psychosexual entanglements are with his two female therapists, Gina and Adele, who have him vehemently denying and pursuing the erotic transference he projects onto each woman in turn. On top of this, his relationship with his estranged wife and children remains rocky. In her work on the contemporary experience of middle age, Patricia Cohen cites research that suggests more hopeful associations with the middle decades are being forged by reporting of greater happiness and fulfilment, a sense of purpose and good judgment, personal growth, and psychological resilience. Perhaps *In Treatment*'s most radical move, then, was in concluding on such a resoundingly bleak note, with Paul alienated from family and friends, concerned over his manifesting possible symptoms of Parkinson's disease, and resigned to ending both his practice and his treatment.

In a show of intertextual commiseration, *Louie* launched its first season in 2010 on the men-behaving-badly network FX with footage from one of his stand-up comedy routines in which Louie laments, "I'm 41, single… not really single. Just alone" ("Pilot"). He goes on to end this stand-up segment by saying "I don't cry like a little bitch about it because I'm a man," but as regular viewers and fans know, it is not uncommon for Louie to cry—both as his fictionalized character on the show and as himself in interviews he's done with NPR's Terry Gross, fellow comic Marc Maron, and others ("Pilot"). Another sad-sack divorcé, Louie is even less successful with the ladies than *In Treatment*'s Paul: witness a season three promotional spot featuring testimonials in character by co-stars Parker Posey and Maria Bamford as to Louie's lack of prowess on dates and in bed. Louie's depiction of sex and its vicissitudes is analogous to that of *Girls* (2012-), the HBO show created by Lena Dunham, which unabashedly puts her own similarly imperfect physical form (and that of the middle-aged actors who play her parents) on unconventional display, as I

. . . Louie*'s moderate minimalism hybridizes art film and whimsy avant-garde flights of absurdism with the unvarnished crudeness and cringe-inducing intimacy of online media.*

discuss in a recent *In Media Res* essay (San Filippo 2013). As the awkward encounter during a Miami vacation between Louie and a hunky Latino lifeguard who saves him from drowning demonstrates, *Louie* is exceptional for confronting the homophobia and bro-mantic bonding that constitutes men's relationships with one another. With uncensored honesty, Louie confirms and consequently owns his abjection with regular references to chronic masturbation, sexual fantasies that range from the perverse (season one's "bag of dicks" daydream, season two's mental desecration of a virginal Christian woman), to the wistful (his tragically unrequited fixation on his cocksure pal Pamela). In this and all his erotic/romantic relationships, Louie often positions himself willingly in the submissive, emasculating, and relentlessly unrepressed position that Paul so anxiously avoids.

Formally, *Louie* is as groundbreaking as *In Treatment*—perhaps more so—for its unprecedented auteurism as a scripted television drama. *Louie* is written, directed, edited, and produced by its creator, Louis C.K., who is also its star. He shoots with the Red digital camera, uses laptop-editing software (though he ceded editing duties after the first two seasons), and retains complete creative control over the series. In the past year, C.K. has also proven the commercial viability of self-distribution by circumventing cable distributors to deliver his comedy shows directly to fans via pay-per-file Internet sales.

No matter how cutting edge and digitally savvy this mode of making, selling, and circulating content, *Louie*'s stylistic experimentation also borrows from televisual conventions. The show's purposeful character discontinuity has some viewers flummoxed: the same actress played his date in one episode ("Bully") and his mother two episodes later ("God"), while his ex-wife, initially seen only as a Caucasian-appearing pair of limbs signing divorce papers in the pilot, later called by an epithet for Italians, ultimately is played by African-American actor Susan Kelechi Watson with no explanation as to her character's positioning as biological mother to two blonde, fair-skinned children. Not so radical a technique, perhaps, given such narrative discontinuity is an accepted custom of soap operas while the corresponding lack of narrative continuity (the niece who was put in his custody at the end of season two is yet to reappear) exploits the episodic containment that sitcoms have long enjoyed, yet in *Louie* it irreverently cuts across genres and narrative modes. Similarly snagged from modes and tonalities disparate from each other and the show itself, *Louie*'s moderate minimalism hybridizes art film and whimsy avant-garde flights of absurdism with the unvarnished crudeness and cringe-inducing intimacy of online media. Surely, the consummate sequence displaying *Louie*'s experimental subversion of televisual convention and online amateur exhibitionism is the much-discussed long take of Louie, while driving his daughters to visit an elderly relative, singing along and air drumming to The Who's "Who Are You," which is diegetically heard playing on the radio in its three-minute-fourteen-second entirety during season two episode "Country Drive." *Louie* achieves its wry, improvisatory, everyday appeal through stylistic techniques (including handheld camera, jump cuts, long takes, improvisation, and naturalistic mise en scène) that serve as a fitting conduit considering the moderately minimalist content, its glimpse into the real world, and the real drama of middle age.

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Silencio

Jason Mittell

Haunted by Seriality The Formal Uncanny of *Mulholland Drive*

The most acclaimed American film of this century was a television program.

I am not referring to *The Wire* (2002-2008) or *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), or any of the other landmark television series that many critics hail as equal to, or surpassing, most of recent cinema. Rather, the twenty-first century American film ranked highest on the standard-bearing *Sight & Sound* critics' poll (at #28 in the 2012 poll) actually was a television show, at least before it became a film. *Mulholland Drive*, David Lynch's 2001 mind-bending film noir, literally was a television program, conceived and produced as a pilot for ABC in 1998, before they rejected it the following year for being too violent and strange. The French company Studio Canal Plus asked Lynch for permission to see the pilot a year later, then purchased its rights, and provided funding to shoot more footage to create a feature film version.

This unusual, and perhaps even unique production history is typically treated as a footnote for critical and scholarly analyses—often just as an aside marveling that such a remarkable film could emerge out of such initial commercial failure.[1] Some critics outright reject the significance of the film's origin story; as one writes in reference to its television beginnings, "People often talk about this fact like it was some kind of obstacle, but to [me] it is the least important thing in the world. Especially given [my] interpretation it shows just how in control Lynch is regarding every bit of what we see" (Film Crit Hulk n. pag.).[2] However, I contend that a key part of what makes *Mulholland Drive* truly remarkable is precisely its televisual origination—not because it transcends the limits of televisual failure through a twist of cross-media fate, but because its initial design for television is essential to its cinematic achievements, and provides a crucial key to understanding the film's power and emotional resonance. But to get there, we first need to look at how the film has been typically talked about by viewers and critics.

Not surprisingly for a film that is so oblique and unconventional, the primary question that critics and viewers alike have focused on is "What does *Mulholland Drive* mean?" Although this question seems fairly straightforward—or at least simpler than its potential answers—there are two distinct ways to think about a film's meaning.[3] The first is a question of comprehension, trying to make coherent sense of the film's narrative events, especially involving the shift that occurs at the 110 minute mark, where the narrative reality transforms and nearly all of the characters take on new identities and relationships. The most common explanation for the film's narrative is that the first 80% of *Mulholland Drive* is Diane Selwyn's (Naomi Watts) dream imagining herself as Betty Elms while the final act portrays the reality she is trying to escape. Many other explications present theories of dreams, reality, deaths, and parallels, all catalogued online on websites like Mulholland-Drive.net. Such detailed analyses of narrative worlds, plots, and characters are part of a trend that I have called "forensic fandom," flourishing around contemporary complex television series, but also common to films, literature, and other media.[4] Lynch himself has seemingly contributed to such forensic criticism, as the film's DVD features no extra content except for an insert listing "David Lynch's 10 Clues to

1. The only other examples of TV pilots repurposed into feature films I could find were the 1965 period horror B-movie *Dark Intruder*, which *NBC* deemed too scary for television, and *Cruel Intentions 2*, which originated from the unaired Fox television series *Manchester Prep*, and was refashioned into a direct-to-video prequel to the original *Cruel Intentions*.
2. This essay is by the pseudonymous Film Crit Hulk, who writes in all-caps and refers to himself in the third-person; I have converted the quotation to standard English for readability.
3. See Bordwell, *Making Meaning*.
4. See Mittell, *Complex TV*.

Unlocking This Thriller," highlighting stylistic and narrative features that seem to link the two parallel storyworlds—although fans have also postulated that Lynch might be using ironic misdirection in these clues to further confound viewers.

The other way to answer the question about *Mulholland Drive*'s meaning is to engage in interpretation; looking for the meanings beneath the surface, at the level of symbolism, thematics, or subtextual significance. Unsurprisingly, this has been the main purview of academic analyses, where we can find readings of the film as illustrating Lacan's theories of fantasy, desire, and reality;[5] evoking contemporary technologies of virtual reality;[6] dissolving boundaries between semiotic oppositions;[7] offering a lesbian tragedy as an indictment of homophobia;[8] and critiquing the dream-crushing logic of Hollywood cinema,[9] among many others. It is telling that in all of these interpretive essays, there is nary a mention of the film's televisual origins and unusual split production history. These scholars treat the completed film as a coherent, self-contained text to be exhumed, rather than the product of a unique creative process that might actually help us understand the film's meanings and aesthetic power.

Thus, I want to ask a related, but quite different question: how does *Mulholland Drive* work? By work, I am acknowledging that the film is an aesthetic object with its own unique design, and to understand its narrative and emotional impact, we need to unpack and analyze that design in the context of its production history. This approach stems from a subfield of film studies that David Bordwell has termed "historical poetics," analyzing the formal techniques employed by any text within the contexts of its production and circulation. To understand how *Mulholland Drive* works as a cinematic text, I cannot think of any bit of information more important than the knowledge that most of it was written, produced, and edited for a different medium altogether—and most vitally for my purposes, that it was designed as the first installment of an ongoing, serialized story.[10]

Taking *Mulholland Drive*'s production history into account seems like it should not be controversial, especially since its story is in large part about producing a film, and thus the film calls attention to the mixture of inputs and goals that comprise the production process. Both comprehension and interpretation-based analyses mine the film for obscure details to support their theories, so the film's core setting and plot as a Hollywood behind-the-scenes drama seems like a clear invitation for greater contextual reflection. I think part of the resistance to considering its production history stems from how critics have a contradictory relationship to the concept of a film's intention. Many critics regard a film as surpassing the limits of intentionality, suggesting that the final textual product speaks for itself beyond the creative process that went into making it. At the same time, critics in general place so much faith in the overriding vision of Lynch as auteur that they imagine the film as the unobstructed realization of his creative goals, ignoring the very real obstructions that sidelined the project for over a year and then transformed its medium and form. Instead of focusing on intent, I want to highlight design as the contextualized process by which Lynch and his collaborative team's goals were realized. No matter what Lynch may or may not have intended, we know unambiguously that the story was initially designed as a serialized television program, and then redesigned as a self-contained film. This dramatic shift between media and narrative formats helps explain much of the text's striking emotional power.

One strategy Lynch uses to sustain the project's failed seriality is the inclusion of unresolved loose story threads from the pilot in the film.

Fan sites have documented this design process, including detailed comparisons between the television pilot and completed film versions.[11] The television version begins with the car accident that triggers Rita's (Laura Harring) amnesia, and ends with Betty outfitting Rita in a blond wig. This 90-minute sequence can be found mostly intact within the feature film version with few minor variations in editing, dialogue, pacing, and a couple of different scenes, but by and large they are highly similar. The bulk of the changes for the film version are found in a different opening sequence of a jitterbug contest and enigmatic shot of a bed, and the final forty-five minutes consisting of all-new footage.[12] Although ABC rejected the pilot, there is no

5. See McGowan
6. See Gessler and Hayles
7. See Hudson
8. See Love
9. See Andrews
10. The only other formally centered analysis of the film I have found is in Laass, *Broken Taboos, Subjective Truths*, focusing on the film's technique of unreliable narration. However, Laass dismisses the impact of its television origins, suggesting that the cinematic reshoot and edit could have easily excised irrelevant bits from the pilot, and thus we should not look to its origins for answers.
11. See *Mulholland-Drive.net*
12. There are more subtle changes, including the shot of the bum that ends the pilot and was seemingly repurposed for the final scenes of the film, and a few shots of cars driving that were shot for television and

doubt that the story was designed to continue onward from the wig scene, and all evidence suggests that the ongoing story would proceed in a direction quite different from the film's final act. The mysteries of Rita's identity and her involvement in Diane's death would slowly be revealed, Betty would become more directly involved with Adam and his film, and the threads of mobsters, detectives, and a fright-inducing dumpster-dwelling bum would all become interwoven into the ongoing narrative. These original sequences function exactly as most dramatic television pilots do: setting up scenarios, character relationships, and dramatic conflicts that will continue to develop into sustained serial storytelling, and building up the expectation that the ongoing story will eventually come together and make coherent sense.

Of course, the *Mulholland Drive* pilot is an example of failed seriality as the story never did get a chance to continue, at least as it was originally designed. Television produces many failed serials each year in the form of completed pilots that never air and thus are perpetually halted in a state of the unresolved openness of a single installment, but most failed serials never are viewed outside the industry. *Mulholland Drive*'s failed pilot was seen by many, lodged within a closed film; however, its open-ended design that remains intact at the core of the self-contained film, creates a spirit of seriality that haunts the completed film. Many critics note that the first part of the film is fairly conventional in tone and style, at least for Lynch's typical brand of Hollywood experimentation. As Todd McGowan writes:

> Almost everyone who sees *Mulholland Drive* notes that the first part of the film makes a good deal of sense—at least for a David Lynch movie. . . . While the first part of *Mulholland Drive* is not without strange characters and events . . . the *mise-en-scène* conforms on the whole to the conventions of the typical Hollywood film: scenes are well lit, conversations between characters flow without awkwardness, and even the plainest décor seems to sparkle. The editing also tends to follow classical Hollywood style, sustaining the spectator's sense of spatial and temporal orientation. (67-68)

McGowan uses such stylistic analysis to highlight that the film works to construct fantasy as more realistic than the unconventional reality found in the second part, a reading that certainly seems justified. However, he never mentions that this contrast is traceable directly to the film's design as its more conventionally narrated and styled section originated for television, a much less experimental form (especially in 1998) that demanded more narrative coherence than allowable on film. Given its business model requiring millions of viewers to tune in regularly, commercial television has always embraced convention and imitation over experimentation, often mandating narrative redundancies and explicit exposition to welcome new viewers.[13] Thus, the conventional portion of the film seems to make sense precisely because it was designed to, but not to signify *fantasy* as much as *television*.

Mulholland Drive's power and pleasures as a film derive less from a compelling narrative structure or even its symbolic meaning, but from its piercing moments of emotional affect and its ability to create a deeply unsettling feeling in its viewers. Some of these moments would stand out in either medium—the first Winkies Diner scene (which was shot for television, but edited out in the version submitted to ABC); Betty's remarkable audition; the Club Silencio sequence—but others acquire a strange uncanny impact in the repurposed context of the film. I contend that the contrasting style and tone between the film's two parts works much more on an emotional level than a symbolic or narrative one, and that this affective dimension is created in large part from the lingering sense of thwarted seriality in the made-for-television section. Much of the film's affective power is achieved by keeping viewers off-balance via obstructed expectations, as in Betty's surprisingly sultry audition. Thus, the film as a whole relies on our expecta-

included in the film's final act. Despite these few exceptions, it is fair to say the television pilot is sandwiched between new footage in the film version.

13. See Chapter 1 of Mittell, *Television and American Culture* for an overview of television's conventional development process.

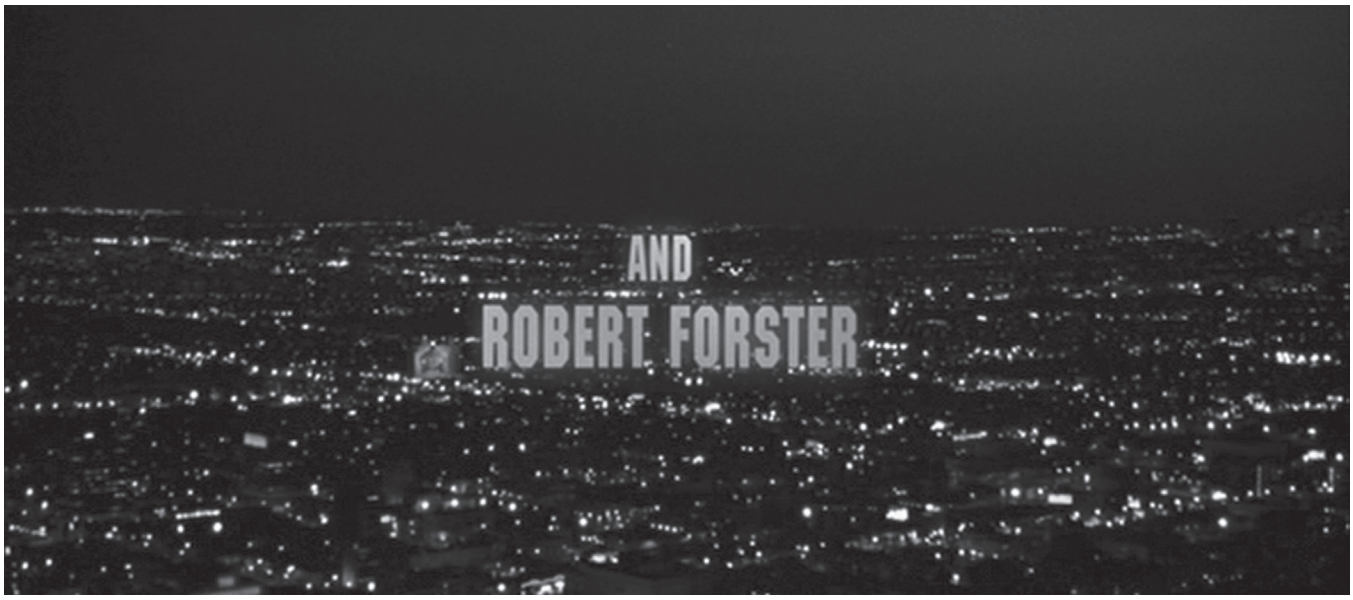
tions that a serial narrative will continue and come together coherently, creating a productive dissonance between what the first part was designed to do and what the second part actually delivers.

One strategy Lynch uses to sustain the project's failed seriality is the inclusion of unresolved loose story threads from the pilot in the film. Characters and plotlines are introduced in the first hour of the film that were clearly designed to continue onward if the television series had been produced, but then are transformed and redefined in the film's conclusion (or ignored altogether) in ways that are counterintuitive to how the pilot had been scripted and shot. For instance, one memorable scene shows Joe (Mark Pellegrino) murdering Ed (Vincent Castellanos) to retrieve his black book, presumably in search of Rita to kill her for the crime syndicate that is involved in producing Adam's (Justin Theroux) film. The scene functions as a dark comedic sequence of an escalating botched murder in the vein of the Coen Brothers or Quentin Tarantino, but also sets Joe up as an ongoing character with a story arc to be continued in subsequent episodes. One popular press article mulls the significance of this dream sequence in establishing ineffectual Joe as a latent desire for the hit man hired by Diane to kill Camilla in the reality sequence, but also as,

> [P]art of the confusing background noise Lynch likes to put into his movies. It is a deeply felt contention of his that not everything makes sense. Less charitably, you can say it's a loose end from the TV series that never got made. (Garrone, Klein and Wyman n. pag.)

However, to dismiss the possibility of the loose end as a less charitable reading misses the power of the film's failed seriality—the reason Joe's (Mark Pellegrino) scene works within the film is because it was not intended to be confusing background noise, but precisely because it was designed to actually make sense. Lynch certainly does include moments of random oddity in most of his films, but *Mulholland Drive*'s unique feature amongst his filmography is that many of its least explicable moments were conceived as part of an ongoing sense-making narrative design. A scene like Joe's botched murder is conventional enough to encourage us to expect a narrative payoff that would connect to the main plotlines, or establish Joe as a three-dimensional character. The film's refusal to weave together such threads in conventional ways helps create its sense of unsettling disorientation.

The casting choices also play against convention and expectation in productive ways. Dan Hedaya is the fifth listed actor in the opening credits, suggesting a significant supporting role in keeping with his recognizable face as a character actor. By 2001, Hedaya had been in over seventy films and television programs, including a prominent recurring part on *Cheers* (1982-1993) and major roles in films like *Blood Simple* (1984), *Clueless* (1995), and *Dick* (1999), playing the titular character of Richard Nixon. Yet, his character of mobster Vincenzo Castigliane appears in only one scene in the film, with just three brief lines. Similarly, Robert Forster plays detective Harry McKnight (although unnamed within the film), a minor character appearing in one scene with three lines totaling less than twenty words. Yet, he is one of only eight actors listed in the opening credits, with his name placed in the final spot as "and Robert Forster," a signal of a major supporting character typically played by a well-known veteran actor. Forster fits that bill, with dozens of film and television roles since the late-1960s, and a Supporting Actor Oscar Nomination for *Jackie Brown*



(1997). While there is a tradition of named actors appearing in brief cameos, the contractual dictates behind actor credits suggests that both Hedaya and Forster were cast to become regulars in the television series despite their brief presence in the pilot.[14] For viewers, the paratextual indicators of recognizable actors and prominent credit placement help establish the expectation that they will recur later in the film with some dramatic significance—Murray Smith has discussed the importance of such character recognition in guiding cinematic comprehension. Nonetheless, contrary to these established expectations, both actors' single appearances remain as unresolved dissonances throughout the rest of the film, with the original design casting an unsettled shadow on the final version, and the specter of failed seriality confounding our normal strategies of narrative expectation and comprehension.

Even though viewers never experienced Mulholland Drive *as a multi-installment serial, I would argue that David Lynch himself did.*

Although watching the final film of *Mulholland Drive* is not a serial experience, I would argue that seriality is crucial to our understanding in two major ways. First is the pilot's original serialized design that remains present yet unfulfilled throughout the film, second is the serial nature of the production process itself. As both Sean O'Sullivan and I, among others, have argued, the essential element of seriality is the temporal gap between installments, both for viewers and creators. Even though viewers never experienced *Mulholland Drive* as a multi-installment serial, I would argue that David Lynch himself did. After finishing the pilot in 1999, Lynch had a gap of over a year before he returned to transform it into a film; he recounts the process after Studio Canal Plus optioned the project:

> It came time for me to really commit to making it into a feature. I had zero idea how I was going to do that, so it was a time of high anxiety. One night, I sat down, the ideas came in, and it was a most beautiful experience. Everything was seen from a different angle. Everything was then restructured, and we did additional shooting. Now, looking back, I see that [the film] always wanted to be this way. It just took this strange beginning to cause it to be what it is. (qtd. in Macaulay n. pag.)

Serial authorship is defined by an ongoing creative engagement with an unfolding text, typically in dialogue with its cultural reception. From Dickens to contemporary television producers, serial creators release works that are unfinished by design, and allow feedback and the passage of time to help shape future installments. Although *Mulholland Drive*'s original pilot was not broadly seen and consumed outside the industry, Lynch's own gap between producing the pilot and redesigning the film enabled his ability to see it from a different angle, thus facilitating this remarkable narrative shift that evidently was not part of the pilot's initial design. It is not hard to imagine that after a year away from the text, Lynch viewed the pilot footage as a distant dream, redesigning the film around that revised perspective. Even though Lynch restructured the story and re-imagined its framework, he left the bulk of the pilot's structure and footage untouched. This follows the norm of serial authorship that future installments add to, rather than remake, previous episodes. Thus we are left with the first installment intact and embedded within its revised conclusion, suggesting an implicit seriality in the narrative construction. The scene where Rita opens the blue box with the blue key may symbolize the shift from Diane's dream to reality, but also represents the shift from serial television to stand-alone cinema. However, at both levels, the shift does not leave behind where it came from, with the new form only explicable in reference to its earlier framework.

Most critics have focused their attention on the finished film as a stand-alone textual object that reveals its own cultural meanings and aesthetic techniques, but just as its story is, in large part, about the making of a film, I contend that the film is also *about* the extra-textual level of its unique production contexts. I feel that the key to unlocking the blue box of *Mulholland Drive* is to attend to how the film became what it is through the key of serial television. The television pilot opened itself up to serial expansion and continuation, and thus much of the film's celebrated uncanniness stems from its lack of continuity and dangling narrative threads—plotlines and characters who were clearly designed to grow more significant in future episodes are left frustratingly unresolved and oddly marginalized in the film version. It is striking that the critical consensus suggests that Lynch's most accomplished achievement in experimental narrative structure was not designed to offer such experiments; counterfactual speculation is a fool's game, but I believe *Mulholland Drive* would not have worked had it been initially designed as a stand-alone film. So much of the film's haunting, dreamlike narrative sensibility stems from

14. I could find no production documentation to suggest precisely what Hedaya or Forster's roles in the ABC series would have been, nor whether the film's cast credits were mandated by the original ABC contracts or revised by Studio Canal Plus. However, their credit prominence contrasts with actors who have larger roles in the finished film, suggesting that their top billing is a remnant from the television production.

its failure to follow conventional closed cinematic storytelling norms in lieu of the differently-conventional markers of serial television, which it then undermines through an ending that both offers and subverts closure. Just as these haunted remnants of seriality that persist help explain the power of its final closed narrative form, *Mulholland Drive*'s cross-media history provides an unusual window into the affective powers and pleasures central to all serial storytelling.

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Patricia de Figueirédo
(trans. Mark Harris)

The Script... and the Original Version

Editors' Foreword

"You have the option to hand in your final paper in any of the following languages: English, French, Italian, or Spanish... Or, for that matter, any language that your T.A.s can understand!"

Each semester, without fail, Dr. Mark Harris would close his first lecture with such a statement that not only intimidated his students, but evoked his own passion for alternate modes of communication.

Mark was a true cinephile, interested in international cinemas and the cultural contexts in which they are created and perceived, so much that when he showed a film in one of his classes, the foreword could easily transform into a separate lecture about the country's history, cultural background, and political situation.

In a sense, he was a cultural civil engineer, always designing and building *bridges* between different cinematic cultures. So, it is not surprising that as one of his many academic interests, he was intrigued by the process of film translation (subtitles and/or dubbing).

In fact, Mark considered subtitling as its own art form and, during lectures, jokingly moaned the times that English subtitles of Chinese films actually made sense, as he believed that grammatical inaccuracies could be viewed as poetry—Mark frequently compared them to the Japanese Haiku.

Mark never hesitated to share his time, energy, and wisdom with his students and colleagues. For example, in response to the request of one of *Cinephile*'s former editors-in-chief, when searching for academic materials on the topic of subtitles and voice-over, Mark provided a handful of his own unpublished articles and translations. "The Script... and the Original Version" is one of those pieces. We are grateful to both Mark for this posthumous contribution and Patricia de Figueirédo for her enthusiastic approval of its publication (originally published in the French journal *Synopsis*).

Mark was a brilliant, chaotic, humble, encyclopedic, uncensored, non-conformist, mad professor who will be remembered for his love of cinema and its role as a cultural mediator.

Mark Harris
(1951-2013)

—Andrea Brooks, Oliver Kroener, and Babak Tabarraee

The Script... and the Original Version

Unlike literary translations, where the translator is not limited by space, the film adaptor is faced with strong technical constraints, regardless of whether they relate to the movement of the mouth during dubbing or the restricted space reserved for subtitles.

Under such circumstances, is it always possible to respect the integrity and originality of the original dialogue, and what sort of concessions need to be made?

Line writers—which is to say, adaptors of French language versions [of foreign language films]—and translators of subtitles deal with one essential aspect of the script: the dialogue. They are considered authors because they receive, over and above their remuneration, authors' rights in regard to movie entries and television broadcasts and work in collaboration with the writers of the film. "I've never been consulted and I don't know what has become of the foreign

version of my films," confides the scriptwriter Colo Tavernier O'Hagan. Amanda Paquier, who has adapted numerous TV movies and television series, including *Atomic Train* (1999), *Joan of Arc* (1999) which was recently broadcast on TF1, or *The Practice* (1997), the series on M6, emphasizes that: "With different line writers, you wind up with different films."

On the technical level, dialogue writers are, above all, held hostage to the movement of the actors mouths and to the length, to the rhythm, of the sentence. "The labials—the ms, bs, ps—are visible when the mouth closes, so one must try to make the French labials match the American, and needless to say to respect the beginnings and endings of sentences," Paquier explains.

For Lori Rault, the technical director at Warner Brothers' who supervises the two versions of each film, including the recent *Space Cowboys* (2000) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000): "One must adapt while remaining faithful to the original, without going as far as in a literary translation. As a text, I can tell you if it's a good translation, but after that we'll have to see it played before we know if it flies." In practice, the dubbing actor must appropriate the text and not infrequently changes things. If, for example, the screen actor is very calm, and if one hears 15 syllables for seven or eight in the original, that changes the performance completely.

Certain languages translate better than others. Despite appearances to the contrary, French and Mandarin go well together, because with these two languages one does not articulate with the mouth as one does in German or American, for example. Of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Lori Rault states: "It's magnificent; one could actually say that the actors were emoting in French."

For subtitles, the maximum French norm allows for two lines with 40 spaces and characters each. But there again, the translators are subject to the rhythms of the sentence and the speed of elocution. Sometimes it is more difficult with certain languages. Catherine Cadou, the translator of numerous Japanese directors, including Akira Kurosawa and Takeshi Kitano, explains the peculiarities of the language: "The rhythm of the sentences is slower in Japanese, and the subject comes at the end, so one cannot follow French logic. For example, in a sentence, a Japanese would say: 'The person who killed my husband is me;' one needs to keep that translation in order to roll with the rhythm of the phrases and the performance of the actor, even though, in French, we would say: 'I am the one who killed my husband.' On other occasions, the character will talk in a staccato fashion, like a submachine gun, as in the film by Kitano, The Summer of Kikujiro. There is was necessary to cut the dialogue."

It is essential that the spectator understand very quickly that he is not missing anything onscreen. "It is necessary to give the best possible idea of what is being said without using too many words, as well as words which condense things," Catherine Cadou notes for both the French version and the subtitled original version, and not only for technical reasons. Vulgarities, notably, do not pass muster in France. "The Americans are spicy, but French distributors often ask us to sweeten things," Amanda Paquier says emphatically. The same tune from Catherine Cadou, albeit for different reasons: "Certain things, too crude or too vulgar, don't work very well when written down."

As for the differences between a dubbed and subtitled version, sometimes they can be minimal. That was the case, for instance, with *Space Cowboys* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.* "It will become more and more common, in the case of DVDs, to have a choice of two versions which rely on the same source," predicts Claude Dupuis, of LVT Laboratories. "Some words sound better to the ear, while others appeal more to the eye," explains Lori Rault. For example, in *Space Cowboys*, a young astronaut is compared to Don Quixote in the French version and to Tintin in the subtitled print.

But, at the same time, the differences can also be great. This is often the case with the rare French versions of Japanese films, which bear little similarity to the original version. "The line writers do not speak Japanese, and they translate from English subtitles which are often inaccurate," Catherine Cadou laments. There's no recognized course of study for translators and line writers, so the technique must be learned on the job. It is necessary to work quickly; translators have at the most two weeks to produce their copy, the line writers perhaps a little more. It is often necessary to research the period in which the film is set. For *Space Cowboys*, line writer Christian Dura and translators Bernard Eisenschitz and Robert Louit consulted two specialists with the European Space Agency.

It is also necessary to know how to adapt oneself to different film genres, even though [subtitlers] inevitably wind up with their own specialties. "I choose my translators and dialogue writers according to the style of the scenario; some are better at reproducing American humour, while others excel at children's films," Lori Rault explains. Still, regardless of whether they're line writers, adaptors or translators, these shadowy men and women bring a personal touch, as well as their own imaginations, to bear in the service of the script.

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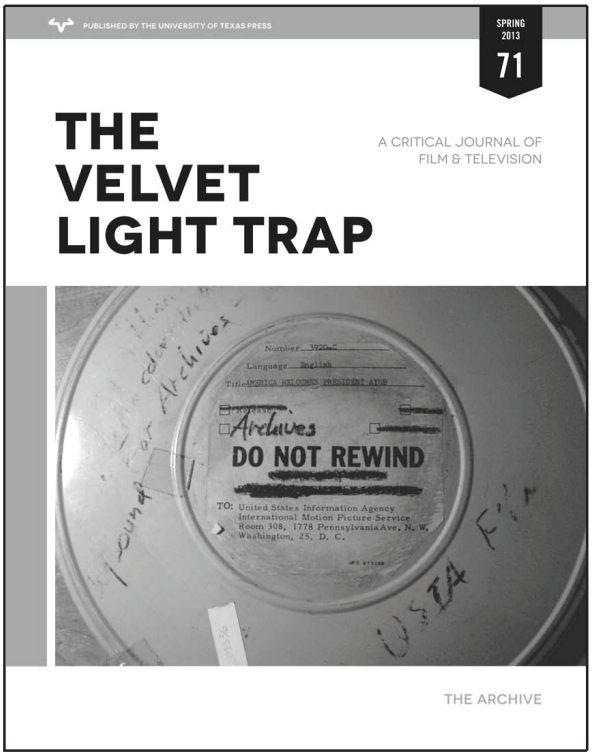

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