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The Depiction of Status Through Nonverbal Behavior in *Mad Men*

Submitted by

Tiffany Candelaria

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Television today offers a much more complex and intelligent variety of shows available to viewers. This is not so much due to the stories these shows tell but the narrative strategies used in the telling (Mittell 30). The technologies and strategies used in television and film have changed and expanded significantly since the dawn of television and our culture is changing along with it; demanding more complexity and depth to stay focused and engaged (Johnson 177). “All around us the world of mass entertainment grows more demanding and sophisticated, and our brains happily gravitate to that newfound complexity” (Johnson 198). Jason Mittell (2006) explains in his study that narrative complexity is sufficiently widespread and it is useful to explore how today’s television has redefined narrative norms in a series of ways that he labels as “complex” (30). He defines narrative complexity as a redefinition of episodic forms under the influence of serial narration along the lines of a shifting of balance from episodic and serial forms. Further, it rejects the need for plot closure within every episode that typifies conventional episodic form and foregrounds ongoing stories across a range of genres (32).

This shift in television complexity is reflected in the growing number of people who began their careers in film now turning to work on television series. They are finding that television offers broader challenges and possibilities for creativity in long-form series, as extended character depth, ongoing plotting, and episodic variations are simply not options within a two-hour film (Mittell 31). Television programs in general are becoming much more narratively complex, and thus, according to Steven Johnson (159) much more engaging and likely to be viewed again by audiences. He designates shows that fit into such a category, such as *The Sopranos* as MRP, Most Repeatable

Programming (161). Such shows cultivate nuance and depth and demand an active and attentive process of comprehension to decode both the complex stories and modes of storytelling offered by such narratives (Johnson 162). This is reflected in the number of online websites, fansites, forums, and blogs discussing and dissecting all of the intricacies and details within a show and its characters. The internet's ubiquity has enabled fans to embrace a "collective intelligence" for information, interpretations, and discussions of complex narratives that invite participatory engagement (Mittell 32). In some cases the shows' creators also join in the discussions and use these forums, as a way to gauge and or further comprehension and enjoyment. This is the case for *Mad Men* as the creators often read, contribute and comment on AMC's official *Mad Men* website.

All of these new outlets for conversation and information as well as technologies like DVDs and DVRs further support narrative complexity and detail because they provide a way for the audience to take it all in, reflect upon it and discuss and attain ideas from others. HBO for example, has built its reputation and subscriber base upon narratively complex shows, such as *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under*, and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. As Johnson says, "Fans of *The Sopranos* who want to dissect every scene for subtle references and hidden meanings have half a dozen avenues available to them" (168). Using the new technologies and outlets, viewers are taking an active role in consuming narratively complex television and helping it thrive within the media industries (Mittell 32).

This increasing complexity in television narratives requires the skills of narrative comprehension and media literacy that most viewers have developed but rarely put to use beyond rudimentary means. "To understand the phenomenon we must use formal

elements found in the narrative to chart its structure and boundaries while incorporating other methods to explore how this narrative mode intersects with dimensions of participatory practices and viewer comprehension” (Mittell 39). My study will do just that, focusing on the television drama *Mad Men* to uncover how staging in the narrative program and the camera presentation of the staging communicates to the audience the power and status of the characters within the show. Specifically, I will chart the formal attributes of the staged nonverbal behavior in Season Three’s fifth episode of the television show *Mad Men* to see how the main character “Don Draper’s”¹ status in his personal life and professional life is depicted. To do so, I will focus on “Draper’s” depicted nonverbal communication that is shown to the audience through the camera’s focus on the characters’ staging.

In Defense of *Mad Men*

The AMC (American Movie Classics) television drama series *Mad Men* was chosen for a number of reasons that include the directorial and creative team behind the series, the numerous award nominations and wins, and its cultural impact. Season three premiered Sunday, 16 August 2009 to a record audience of 2.8 million live viewers (Rose 2009) and, together with encore presentations at 11 p.m. and 1 a.m., garnered a cumulative overall audience of 3.9 million viewers (Weisman 2009). Exactly a week later, the series won two of the sixteen Emmy Awards it was nominated for, in the categories of best dramatic series and best dramatic writing for the season two finale (Stark 2009). The year prior, *Mad Men* also took the award for best dramatic series,

¹ Quotations are used from here on to designate a name that refers to a television character or persona. This convention is adopted from Dana Cloud’s 1996 “Hegemony or Concordance? The Rhetoric of Tokenism in “Oprah” Winfrey’s Rags-to-Riches Biography” p115-37.

making history by becoming the first basic cable show to win an Emmy for outstanding drama series (Cooley 2009).

Bill Keveney writes in August's USA Today, "*Mad Men* has become its own valuable brand, certified by Emmys and Golden Globes." Thus, it is not a big surprise that AMC renewed *Mad Men* for a fourth season only three episodes into the third season (NYDailyNews 2009). Besides gaining credibility from the awards, as Executive Producer and writer Matthew Weiner, formerly of *The Sopranos*, "sensed that *Mad Men* hit a higher level of exposure when it shared the stage with movie stars at the Golden Globes in January," (Keveney 2009) thus also gaining publicity from both those who work in television and those who follow television.

Further, *Mad Men* has gained credibility and exposure in other venues within the television world. Popular, long-running shows have taken notice of *Mad Men* and incorporated the series and characters into their own scripts with parodies on *Saturday Night Live*, which leading actor Hamm hosted, and *The Simpsons*, with Homer subbing for the character "Don Draper" (Keveney 2009). All the attention gives *Mad Men* a chance to further increase its profile and viewership, as well as reach an audience who might otherwise not know about the series.

Mad Men is still far behind other top cable originals that average 4 million to 7 million viewers. *Mad Men* averages 1.5 million viewers, which is a 50 percent increase from Season One, (Keveney 2009). The premiere of the third season had 2.8 million live viewers (Rose 2009) compared to 2.1 million viewers for its second-season premiere (Weisman 2009). "While that's a hefty lift--33% to be exact--from last season's premiere, it remains a Nielsen number that few established original series cable networks would get

excited about” (Rose 2009). Top cable originals such as Time Warner-owned, TNT’s *The Closer* averages 7 million viewers, and General Electric-owned USA’s *Burn Notice* and Time Warner-owned HBO’s *True Blood* average about 6 million and 4 million viewers (Rose 2009).

In defense of *Mad Men*, the series is aired on AMC, which is a network mostly known for classic movies. AMC president and general manager Charlie Collier explains, “For the first 23 years, the network (AMC) has never said to anyone, ‘come back for more of this next week, same time same channel.’ All of what we’ve done, with *Broken Trail* and *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*, has happened in the last two years, whereas some of our competition, it’s taken them five, six, seven years” (Crupi 2008). Increasingly however, “AMC is becoming the buzz-worthy home of critically acclaimed and Emmy-winning shows like *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad* and the upcoming mini-series remake of *The Prisoner*” (Rose 2009). According to estimates by research firm SNL Kagan, AMC will report operating revenue of \$439 million this year, up 19% from three years ago, while cash flow will come in at \$240 million this year, up 14% over the same period” (Rose 2009). As for DVD sales, the season two DVD ranks among the top 10 TV DVD debuts of 2009 (Keveney 2009) and the season three premiere was the most downloaded program on iTunes” (Weisman). However, Collier says he is “not particularly concerned with ratings, because in a sense, the nature of the show almost precludes reaching a huge audience” (Crupi 2008).

While *Mad Men* may not attract the same quantity of viewers that other top cable originals have, it does attract quality viewers. As Collier says, “It’s really intelligent, no one gets whacked, nothing blows up and we’re never going to have a ‘Very Special’

episode. So it's not exactly a formula for mass appeal" (Crupi 2008). The audience it does appeal to is the most upscale audience on cable TV, drawing the highest percentage (49%) of viewers 25 to 54 who make \$100,000-plus annually (Rose 2009). This also makes the series particularly appealing to advertisers like BMW who signed on as the sole sponsor for season three's debut episode with limited interruption, and Clorox signed on to season three with specially made commercials that use the same visual graphics as *Mad Men* and theme tie-ins that air only with the series (Keveney 2009). SNL Kagan estimates the Cablevision (CVC - news - people)-owned AMC took in about \$208 million in advertising revenue last year, up one-third from 2006, before *Mad Men* debuted (Rose 2009). As the show garners support from viewers, award guilds, and advertisers, *Mad Men's* popularity and presence in American culture at large will begin to expand.

Already, *Mad Men* has had a significant impact in a handful of areas more upscale in nature, which is no surprise considering its audience. "The story of the turmoil behind the work and family lives at a New York ad agency is extending its influence over fashion, design and even libations, with leading man Don Draper (Jon Hamm) raising the status of the Old Fashioned" (Keveney 2009). Fashion designer Michael Kors, for example, says on his website that his 2008 collection was partly inspired by the series" (Keveney 2009). In addition to fashion, *Mad Men's* "Don Draper" is also responsible for sparking a revival in sales of Frank O'Hara's poetry. After a recent episode showed a brief clip of "Draper" reading Meditations in an Emergency, a book of poems published in 1957, sales of the book skyrocketed. Eric Price, associate publisher at Grove Press, would not reveal exact numbers but said that sales for the O'Hara book increased more than 218% compared with this time last year (Mazzocchi 2008).

The series has also impressed corporate companies as evident in a number of promotional tie-ins. These include one with Clorox for the Season 2 DVD and another for Season 3 featuring cardboard *Mad Men* characters at more than 400 Banana Republic stores with the theme 'Mad About Style!' (Keveney 2009). Another big promotional tactic was AMC's premiere of season three on Times Square's big screen" (Keveney 2009). *Mad Men* is beginning to penetrate into our culture at shopping stores, on the runway, and even making an appearance at one of our nation's cultural epicenters.

The series is even making its way into many homes, and not just those of the upper class. People of all social standings can relate to the show and the main character Don Draper. Although his co-workers note he seems to have it all, both at work and at home, he is a man who comes from nothing and works for his success. "It's a story about the American Dream" (Keveney 2009). "Viewers are also entranced by the office competition of Pete and Ken for head of accounts, by Peggy's development into a liberated woman of the 1960s and by Sal's confrontations of his homosexuality" (Stark 2009). On its most basic level, it is a show about American, upper-middle class life, and dealing with the stress and drama of balancing family and work, something most of us can relate to on some level. For example, in the two weeks before season three aired, more than 500,000 people created their own *Mad Men* likenesses using an online avatar program (Keveney 2009). The magazine *Travel + Leisure* recently ran a twelve-page article in response to the surge of tourism in New York City that *Mad Men* has inspired (2009). The article chronicles "the bars, hotels, and shops that the characters in *Mad Men* have (or would have) enjoyed" so that viewer's can "live out your 1960s fantasies and recreate the show" (Savino 2009).

The show has even gained popularity in other parts of the world, with fans approaching *Mad Men*'s John Slattery, who plays Roger Sterling, during recent trips to Australia, Ireland and Italy (Keveney 2009). It is evident now in its third year, *Mad Men* has established a name within the consciousness of many Americans and will continue to expand its influence. AMC president Collier said, "We always saw the potential for *Mad Men*, and believed in and supported the series. It's been extremely gratifying to see the show develop into such a pop-cultural phenomenon with such a passionate fan base" (*NYDailyNews* 2009).

Nonverbal Behavior and Status

To determine *Mad Men*'s "Don Draper's" status within the context of his depicted personal life and professional life, I will track four nonverbal communicative components that are widely considered as solid indicators of status and how these components are presented on camera. Each component offers clues to the audience as to "Draper's" character, depicted as either of high-status or low-status based on previous pertinent studies and consistent evidence that people view dominance and status as related to nonverbal behavior (Mast and Hall 147). However, much less evidence demonstrates nonverbal cues are actually indicative of high or low status (Mast and Hall 147). In the case of a scripted narrative however, the rhetors rely on the nonverbal indicators generally regarded as indicative of status roles, as a wealth of research investigates what perceivers use as indicators of status in others (Mast and Hall 147). The chosen camera angles and camera focus in *Mad Men* work to depict interactions between characters in a certain way as intended by the rhetors to communicate a given message. Since the

characters' nonverbal behaviors are planned or created, intentional status cues are staged and presented on camera in a way that depicts the intended status to viewers.

Nonverbal behavior was first studied scientifically in Charles Darwin's 1872 book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Since then, it has become a prominent area of investigation as it provides information about people's moods, thoughts, feelings or what they really mean by what they say (Miller, et. al 149). Further, nonverbal communication plays a vital role in regulating interactions and helps define relationships, such as signaling power (Miller, et. al 150). Argyle (1970) argued that whereas speaking is typically used for communicating information about events external to the speakers, non-verbal communication is used to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships (228). He concluded in 1988 that five primary functions of nonverbal bodily behavior in human communication exist: to express emotions, to express interpersonal attitudes, to accompany speech in managing the cues of interaction between speakers and listener, self-presentation of one's personality and as rituals/greetings (Argyle 5).

Four nonverbal components were selected as most essential in determining the portrayal of "Don Draper's" character as high-status or low-status in relations to others. This study will track and analyze the four nonverbal components of gazing behavior, body posture, touch and distance as staged and filmed in the narrative drama *Mad Men*. The first nonverbal staging component is gazing behavior, defined as "the direction and amount of a person's eye contact" (Miller, Perlman & Brehm 152). Gazing is one of the nonverbal cues that help define a relationship and can communicate dominance (Miller, et al. 152). In ordinary interactions, people usually look at their conversational partners more when they are listening than when they are speaking. However, powerful, high-

status people tend to stray from these norms, looking more while speaking and less when listening than the average person (Brown, Dovidio, Ellyson 1992). Researchers summarize these patterns in a visual dominance ratio (VDR) that is defined as the percentage of gaze while speaking divided by the percentage of gaze while listening. Gazing is tracked here according to amount of eye contact, gaze, gaze frequency, gaze duration, and maintains eye contact (Hall, Coats, Smith LeBeau 903). After a variety of studies (Thayer, 1969; Zimmerman, 1977, Exline, 1972, Exline et al., 1975, Brown et al., 1990; Dovidio, Ellyson, et al., 1988) researchers concluded that high-status is communicated by looking more while speaking and looking less while listening (i.e., high visual dominance behavior) (Agunis 460).

The second focus tracks body posture as it can be used to determine a participant's degree of attention or involvement, the difference in status between communicators, and the level of fondness a person has for the other communicator (Knapp & Hall, 2007, p. 9). This study will focus on how it communicates status and track posture as either open and asymmetrical or closed and symmetrical. The first is often indicative of high-status people and is characterized by taking up space and having the two halves of the body assume different positions (Miller et al. 153). Examples include: legs open, leg extension, arm wrap (reversed), body position open/closed, arms away from body, and, arms clasped behind head with elbows out (Hall, Coats, Smith LeBeau 903). The latter generally indicates a person of lower-status and is characterized by a closed, compact, symmetrical posture, making oneself look smaller (Miller et al. 153). Goffman (1961) noted that in the United States, people of high status tend to sit in relaxed positions, putting their feet on the table or slumping in their seats, while people of

lower status sit more formally and straight in their chairs (Agunis 460). Thus, I investigate whether “Don’s” depicted body posture nonverbally communicates his power and status within the show.

The third component is tracking touch, or physical contact between “Don” and those he interacts with. For this study, touch is viewed as the physical contact, the nature of the contact and the duration and repetitiveness. According to Major and Heslin, touch clearly conveys closeness and affection, but can also be an implicit signal of dominance that establishes one’s place in a status hierarchy (152). “When two people differ in status, touch tends to be a one-way street; high-status people are more likely to touch those of lower status than vice versa” (Miller et al. 153). Haptics is the study of touching as nonverbal communication and can include handshakes, holding hands, kissing (cheek, lips, hand), back-slapping, high fives, a pat on the shoulder, and brushing an arm (Knapp & Hall, 2007, p.9). The meaning conveyed from touch is highly dependent upon the context of the situation, the relationship between communicators, and the manner of touch (Knapp & Hall, 2007, p.10). Such factors are taken into consideration when documenting “Don’s” touching of others.

The final component is the distance between “Don” and those he interacts with in his personal and professional life. This is formally known as proxemics and was first developed by Edward T. Hall during the 1950s and 60s. Hall’s studies were inspired by earlier studies of how animals demonstrate “territoriality” and the term is still used in the study of proxemics to explain human behavior regarding personal space (Knapp & Hall, 8). There are four established zones of distance or space: intimate (zero to about a foot-and-a-half), personal (1 ½ to 4 feet away), social (4 to 12 feet), and public (beyond 12

feet) (Miller et al. 154). The different zones are characteristic of the type of situation and relationship that exists between the people involved, with the farther the distance the less personal the interaction (Miller et al. 154). Tracking “Don’s” distance or proximity to others in his interactions as shown by the camera focus/angles will offer insight into “Don’s” status in relation to his wife, children, those he works with, and so forth.

Currently, no other in-depth studies exist on the show *Mad Men* or specifically track how a television character’s depicted nonverbal behavior and the camera presentation of such behavior communicates the status of the character to the audience. Mittell (2006) points out that analyses of conventional television narration are surprisingly limited, with classic work by Horace Newcomb, Robert Allen, Sarah Kozlotf, John Ellis, and Jane Feuer representing the bulk of the field (30). No research to date has investigated the relationship between specific nonverbal behaviors and specific perceptions of power bases (Agunis 459). For example, a study by Burgoon (1991) ascertained that touch influences attributions regarding whether individual “A was more powerful than B” (p. 242), but no dimensions were specified for the multidimensional construct of power. Another limitation is previous investigators of nonverbal behaviors and power did not clearly define power, but rather have generally used power interchangeably with related constructs such as dominance and status (Agunis 459). For the purposes of this study, high-status generally includes situationally defined power, dominant or assertive personality, confidence, education, occupational prestige, or combinations of these, and impressions of such (Hall, Coats, Smith LeBeau 899). Specifically, it is viewed in this study as “Draper’s” portrayed control or influence over

another character or situation, or possessing privileged access to restricted resources as defined in Mast and Hall's 2004 study on judging status.

During the past two decades a noticeable increase in studies of nonverbal behavior as a means of establishing and communicating power relationships occurred (Ellyson & Dovidio 23). Such studies are important because nonverbal behaviors are pervasive in organizational and other social settings such as deception, impression formation, attraction, social influence, and emotional expression (Agunis 457). Previous studies focused on the simultaneous effects of three specific nonverbal behaviors-facial expression, visual behavior, and body posture- as they correspond to three of the five major categories (facial expressions, eye and visual behavior, kinesics, paralanguage, and proxemics) typically used to classify nonverbal behavior (Ellyson & Dovidio 21). Mast and Hall's 2004 study looked at whether people can assess others' status at better than chance level and aimed to shed light on the mechanisms involved in accuracy of judging status. Beforehand, research had rarely looked at whether we are accurate in assessing hierarchical relationships and status in others, and how we form such impressions (Mast and Hall 146). This is important to look at because our relationships in the workplace and in society at large are characterized by such hierarchies of status (Mast and Hall 146).

The ability to judge status accurately can bring about distinct advantages in our real-life interactions as well as those we have as audience members viewing fictional characters in a television narrative. In regard to television narratives, a show's rhetors provide all cues to clue the audience in to the relational roles of each character. These cues include actions, dialogue, staging, camera movement, costumes, props, settings, and so on. Each one plays a significant role in setting the scene and cluing the audience into

the characters and situations involved in a television show. Thus, understanding the cues in place as well as how they are utilized increases the audience's understanding of the narrative and its world, allowing them to create meaning and more fully engage in the show. Further, a narrative based study of status is important because perceptions of a person's power are antecedents of important outcomes such as managerial effectiveness and upward mobility (Agunis 456). Further, it is an important dimension on which almost every social interaction can be characterized (Mast and Hall 147).

Nonverbal communication constantly occurs in real-life and thus in the depiction of real life found on television (Caffrey 165). This allowed for a narrowed scope of study that requires viewing only one episode to see how staging and camera focus depict the nonverbal components at work in "Don's" interactions. This study will focus on the fifth episode of Season Three as it focuses primarily on "Don's" character and presents him in many different settings and social and emotional contexts. This is crucial because "dominance and power are relative to one's social partner and are not absolute" (Dunbar and Abra 4). The variety of settings and contexts in this episode provide an array of interactions that encapsulate many episodes in one and shows "Don" in different situations and positions of status.

Episode five, "The Fog" presents "Don" in the office dealing with complaints about company expenses and productivity, a woman employee asking for equal pay, and a direct confession from a co-worker about how "Don" seems to have everything in life. In his personal life, Episode five presents "Don" and his wife at a meeting with their daughter's teacher, at home with his family, at the hospital as his wife goes into labor, and in the hospital waiting room making friends with a fellow expecting father. This

episode, more than any other in Season Three, presents “Don’s” character in many different situations where the audience can see “Don’s” depicted status in relation to the different people and situations that confront his character. Further, this episode specifically highlights his position of power (or lack thereof) within his personal life as a father and in his professional life as Art Director for the fictive advertising giant Sterling Cooper.

Episode 5: The Fog

This is a case study examining how four nonverbal cues illustrated through the staging of “Don Draper” work as indicators of his high or low status in relation to those with whom he interacts. The study focuses on episode five, “The Fog,” and was closely examined as noted in the Appendix, according to act and scene. For my study, the scene was determined by a change in characters and the act was determined by a change of location/change from “Don’s” personal life to professional life and vice versa. I use this structure because there were only two commercial breaks in the original airing of this episode, and there were no commercial breaks in the iTunes version of the episode I used as my artifact in this study. Additionally, this structure made more sense in regard to the specific focus of nonverbal communication I analyze in this study. Breaking up the acts by change in location or realm of “Don’s” life and the scenes by change in characters, allowed for a more detailed and thus more thorough documentation of “Don’s” nonverbal communication in his various interactions.

In addition to the act, scene, and characters present, the four categories of nonverbal cues were documented in relation to “Don’s” staging in each scene. Only scenes with “Don Draper” present were documented in the Appendix and each category

relates specifically to “Don’s” actions and nonverbal behavior, as the study focuses primarily on his staging and how it reflects his status within the show. The rows highlighted in purple indicate the scene relates/takes place in “Don’s” personal realm of life and the rows highlighted in blue indicate the scene relates/takes place in “Don’s” professional or work related life. The bolded action/cues in the Appendix indicate high status both according to the presented research as well as within the specific context of the scene and series. The underlined action/cues in the Appendix indicate low status both according to the presented research as well as within the specific context of the scene and series. Finally, the remainder of the documented action/cues in the Appendix that appear in plain text indicate neither high or low status.

The results of this study are outlined in the remainder of the paper as well as overall trends and discoveries. However, first I will present a brief walkthrough of the analysis/documentation process used with an example of Act 1. The episode begins with leading man “Don Draper,” his wife “Betty Draper,” and their daughter “Sally’s” schoolteacher, “Susan Farrell” meeting in a classroom to discuss “Sally’s” change in behavior. The characters attribute this to the recent death of “Sally’s” “Grandpa Gene” who had moved in with the “Draper’s” not long before and spent a considerable amount of time with “Sally.” As the scene opens, each character moves across the room to take a seat, “Don” seated in a desk in the first row, a pregnant “Betty” is offered “Miss Farrell’s” chair and she slides it over to about two feet from “Don” and “Miss Farrell” leans against her desk. The three characters are all in the personal range of distance, with “Miss Farrell” edging on the social range at about four feet away. As “Miss Farrell” speaks, “Don’s” gaze is focused on her, and when “Betty” speaks, “Don’s” attention is

directed towards “Betty.” However, when “Betty” and “Miss Farrell” speak to each other, “Don’s” focus is predominately directed towards neither or he looks down. When “Don” speaks, his gaze is directed towards his subjects.

Then, at 2:45 minutes into the episode, “Don’s” demeanor changes as “Miss Farrell” asks if “Sally” went to the funeral and “Don” responds, “Children don’t belong in graveyards.” At this point “Don” unfolds his arms, touches his forehead, sits back in his chair, and spreads his legs, switching from closed posture to open posture. This shift indicates “Don” asserting his status and power over how he should raise his children. He is nonverbally communicating to “Miss Farrell” that she is below him in status concerning his children and that she needs to respect his and “Betty’s” decisions on how to raise them, not assert her own. “Miss Farrell’s” behavior shows she understands this and picks up on her status position as she literally steps back, touches her forehead while gazing down and says, “Right, of course not.”

“Betty” then leaves the room and “Don” and “Miss Farrell” finish discussing “Sally” in act 1, scene 2. “Don” remains in the same open posture, but his gaze is now directed down, both when speaking and listening. However, he holds a strong, silent gaze for about two seconds with “Miss Farrell” after he asserts that he too has experienced loss like “Sally” and “Miss Farrell” have. Scene three begins as “Betty” reenters the room and both “Don” and “Miss Farrell” walk over to her and wrap up the meeting in a personal distance, with “Don” standing right next to “Betty.” “Don’s” gaze is not focused on either subjects, but rather down or away except for when he briefly looks at “Betty” as he gently touches her elbow to lead her out.

Based on “Don’s” nonverbal behavior in Act 1 scene 1, his depicted status is slightly higher than neutral as documented in the Appendix. For the most part, his staging alternates between one of high and low status, but his gazing style and posture are slightly more indicative of higher status. His gazing style is slightly more on the high status end because he maintains eye contact while speaking, but also while listening. Halfway through scene 1, “Don’s” posture opens up as he unfolds his arms, sits back in his chair and opens his legs. In this scene “Don” takes the initial position sitting in the desk and “Betty” and “Miss Farrell” position themselves in relation to him. “Miss Farrell” positions herself against the edge of her desk at a social distance and “Betty” scoots close to “Don” in a personal distance. The staging reveals that “Miss Farrell” maintains a more social, professional distance to “Don” whereas “Betty” feels comfortable with a closer, more personal distance. In scene 2 “Miss Farrell” and “Don” retain the same distance even with “Betty” out of the room and “Don” retains his open posture. The shift here is in “Don’s” gazing style as he directs his eye contact away for the majority of their talk, both while speaking and listening. Scene 3 shows “Don” in a more closed posture as he is now standing, and again assumes a closer distance with “Betty” than with “Miss Farrell.” Lastly, “Don” touches “Betty’s” arm as they leave the room, which can indicate higher status as “Don” is directing and literally moving the situation and characters.

Act 2 takes place at the fictive Sterling Cooper Ad Agency where “Don” works as Art Director. Here, “Don’s” nonverbal communication through staging (See Appendix) predominately depicts him as a high status character. Even when interacting with “Lane Price,” someone who is technically in a position of higher power in the company as the

partial owner, “Don’s” gazing style is very direct when speaking and indirect when listening as he busies himself with other things showing his lack of attention. Further, “Don” maintains a relaxed posture and initiates the personal distance with “Price.” These are all nonverbal cues indicative of a person of higher status as discussed in the section “Nonverbal Behavior and Status.”

In act 3 “Betty Draper” goes into labor, so she and “Don” go to the hospital. Again, “Don’s” staging reflects a position of power and status, with direct gaze when speaking, his somewhat slouched posture, and his assisting “Betty” into the wheelchair (see Appendix). However, based on other cues such as narration, plot action and pre-established relationships between characters, “Don’s” nonverbal cues are more indicative of care and concern than of power and high status. Thus, though these cues seem to indicate high status, they are not bolded in the Appendix because taken in context, they mainly reflect the situation and “Don’s” attentiveness and care for “Betty” as she is about to have their third child.

The remainder of act 3 charted in the Appendix takes place in the hospital’s waiting room and involves “Don” and “Dennis Hobar,” a man waiting as his wife gives birth to their first child. These scenes are unique in that they show “Don” in a new context, where he is interacting with someone whom he does not already have some type of pre-established relationship with. The men have never met and know nothing about each other, thus their status roles are taking shape before our eyes. “Don” is outside his usual norms in the workplace at Sterling Cooper or at home with his wife and kids, and he is independent of anyone he knows, so “Don” is, in a sense, free to portray whatever type of person he wants. This interaction has been assigned the purple, personal shading

in the Appendix because “Don” is in a personal context where he is not dealing with work matters or representing the company of Sterling Cooper.

In these initial scenes of the men’s interactions, they are seated on different sides of the room and “Dennis” strikes up a conversation as “Don” reads the newspaper. Throughout the interaction, “Don” gives “Dennis” only half his attention as he continues to read the paper and his posture is very relaxed and open. The distance is social, but in the next scene “Dennis” has moved to a seat next to “Don,” but separated by a little magazine table. The men are talking about their personal lives and the camera shows a wide angle shot of the men’s staging, revealing both of them in a very relaxed, open posture and back and forth gazing style. Overall, based on the nonverbal cues, the men seem to be on equal grounds of status, and since the viewer was not shown who initiated “Dennis’” move to the closer seat, we do not know who initiated the personal distance. This would have been some indication of who assumed the higher status or at least who took initiative in the interaction, but since it is not shown the Appendix does not attribute high or low status to the cue. During the interaction “Dennis” does most of the talking and “Don” listens half engaged as indicated by his back and forth gaze and his very open, relaxed posture.

In the next act, “Don” and “Dennis” are at the cigarette machine. There is a medium shot where we see they are staged at a personal distance, which both men initiated, but “Don” is the one who bought the cigarettes and then offers one to “Dennis” and then lights it for him. Further illustrating “Don’s” high status in the scene is his gazing style, which is very direct when speaking, his open posture, and he initiates touch

when he pats “Dennis” on the back. Based on the staging, it begins to look as if “Don” has taken the position of slightly higher status.

In the next scene however, the status roles are not as clear as “Dennis” makes some high status moves through his nonverbal staging. As noted in act 4, scene 3 of the Appendix, “Dennis” initiates all of the distance proxemics as “Don” remains seated in the waiting room, and moves from social, to personal, to intimate with “Don.” These distance moves made by “Dennis” are indicative of his power and status as he controls the interaction. Additionally, “Dennis” goes so far as to bend down to an intimate distance with “Don,” touch his face, and directs his gaze right at “Don” as he speaks. “Don” attempts to maintain his own status by gazing directly back at “Dennis.” However, it is clear “Don” is flustered by the directness and proximity that “Dennis” has taken as his posture indicates and gaze is more of a look of surprise as his eyebrows raise. This is confirmed in “Don’s” lack of direct eye contact when speaking to “Dennis” after this brief intimate moment and his closed, compact posture revealed as the rhetors zoom out to frame a medium shot, further reflecting the change in distance between the men. Also, as “Dennis” continues to speak to “Don,” now at the personal level, “Dennis” is very direct in his gaze, and “Don” attentively gazes directly back while listening. These scenes show a definite status shift as reflected in the nonverbal staging of the men as “Dennis” has taken command of the situation and of “Don’s” attention and respect.

In act 5 “Don” enters “Betty’s” hospital room to see her and the new baby for the first time. The rhetors offer wide, medium, and close up camera shots as the distance changes between the characters. The staging reveals “Don” assuming a mostly high status position as he moves from a social to an intimate distance with “Betty.” Further, his

directed gaze while speaking, open posture, and initiation of touch reinforce his portrayed confidence in the interaction.

Act 6 has “Don” returning to the office in a brief scene between he and his secretary. All the cues illustrate “Don’s” status as high in relation to his secretary as he enters the office in a very confident, poised posture, initiates a personal distance with her, then speaks to her very directly, while busying himself with his own matters while she speaks.

Act 8 revolves around “Don’s” personal life and he and his two children are shown waving up to “Betty” and the baby who are looking out their hospital room window. The whole scene is less than a minute of screen time and consists of two long shots, one tilted up revealing “Betty” and the baby smiling from the window and one tilted down showing “Don” and the children waving. From the shot we see “Don’s” staging, as documented in the Appendix, depicting high status in relation to his children. The next scene takes place in the “Draper’s” kitchen late at night. Again, the nonverbal staging between “Don” and his daughter “Sally” depicts “Don” in a position of higher status in that he does not feel the need to give his full attention to “Sally,” he can speak to her self-assuredly, he feels comfortable as revealed by his relaxed posture, and he is comfortable assuming an intimate distance with her as they sit to eat.

Act 9 has “Don” back at the office where he is talking with “Peggy,” one of the creatives at Sterling Cooper who works under “Don.” In this scene the two characters discuss somewhat personal matters, such as “Peggy’s” hope for a pay raise and her confession of jealousy over “Don’s” seemingly perfect life. When discussing “Peggy’s” pay raise, “Don” is assertive and direct with open posture and maintains a professional,

social distance, all indicative of his higher status. Then, when “Peggy” begins her confession and they start to talk about his personal life, “Don” becomes uncomfortable and his gaze style becomes more indirect and his posture tightens up. He is clearly uncomfortable as his nonverbal staging reveals, and thus presents him in a position of lower status compared to “Peggy” during this portion of their interaction.

The final act involves “Don” and “Betty” arriving home with the new baby. In the first scene there is no dialogue, so based on posture, touch and distance “Don” assumes his typical position of status in relation to “Betty.” He is attentive in posture and confident and personal in his distance and touch. The second scene has the entire “Draper” family together, as well as a neighbor woman who had been watching the children. Again, “Don’s” nonverbal cues reveal his position of high status in every category documented in the Appendix.

Overall trends documented in the Appendix show “Don’s” nonverbal staging when at home and with his family as comfortable, confident and holding a sense of control, at least on equal terms with “Betty.” When interacting with “Betty,” “Don’s” posture is a bit more formal and closed perhaps because they are intended to appear as equal in status. Further, “Don’s” gazing style reflects that of equal status when speaking with “Betty” as he is both direct when speaking and when listening to her. “Don’s” nonverbal cues in relation to “Betty” indicate high status when looked at alone or in the Appendix, but when looked at in the context of the scene, episode and series as a whole, this status is actually more of a freedom to feel comfortable and act as he pleases and a reflection of his confidence when interacting with his wife and children.

At the workplace, “Don’s” high status cues are more along the lines of power, control and dominance as further supported by dialogue, plot and other nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and hand gestures, rather than confidence, equality and comfort. In the office “Don’s” posture is generally upright and symmetrical, but is documented as open because it reflects professional norms and illustrates his dignified position in the company rather than as a depiction of insecurity, rigidity or tenseness in character. Other staging cues supporting “Don’s” high status in regard to control is that his gazing style is always direct when speaking and less direct when listening and that he is always shown as the one who initiates distance.

In “Don’s” dealings with outside parties not directly affiliated with home or work, such as “Miss Farrell” or “Dennis Hobar,” “Don’s” status is not as clear as his nonverbal staging reveals. During these interactions, “Don’s” staging fluctuates between moments of nonverbal high status and low status behavior as noted in the Appendix by the mixture of bolded and underlined action cues.

The Appendix also shows the trend that “Don’s” typically direct gaze when speaking changes to a gazing style directed down or away when confronted with a personal question he is answering. Examples of such nonverbal behavior are apparent in act 1, scene 2 with “Miss Farrell,” act 3, scene 6 with “Dennis” and act 5, scene 8 with “Peggy.” His gaze style, along with a few other subtle cues not of focus in this study, show that “Don” is not as confident and open when speaking about personal matters, especially those that are not positive such as his loss of a loved one or how he does not play catch with his son.

These discoveries work alongside previous nonverbal and verbal researchers and further investigate four nonverbal behavioral cues related to a person's status. This study specifically tracked four nonverbal cues within the staging of a primary fictional character to see how these cues operate within a dramatic television narrative and work to communicate a character's status to the viewers. Status, as well as its display and perception, is a multi-faceted construct that is demonstrated in various ways and thus should be analyzed using a variety of verbal and nonverbal methods. Further, as previously acknowledged, only limited evidence suggests nonverbal cues are actually indicative of high or low status in real life situations (Mast and Hall 147).

Future studies can use my methods and findings as a launching point to further investigate if and how nonverbal behaviors communicate status. It may be useful to focus on other nonverbal and verbal cues and studies focused on television narratives can also consider technical elements like setting, lighting, editing, costumes, props, etc. to determine how characters' status' are depicted and communicated to viewers. As television narratives continue to grown in complexity, the studies and analyses of such narratives must also grow in complexity to provide us with a better understanding of the components at work. The cues observed and documented in this study are just one additional layer of meaning embedded within the richly complex narrative that is *Mad Men*.

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