Introduction

What Is Cinematic TV?

> You can only think of something if you think of something else.
> —Jean-Luc Godard, *In Praise of Love* (2001)

> The memory of a text is its intertextuality.
> —Renate Lachmann, *Memory and Literature*

A certain tendency of contemporary television criticism is its elevation of serial TV as "cinematic." As an adjective, cinema functions as a designation of quality, as a shorthand for praising novelistic storytelling or stylized composition or majestic sets. *Queen Sugar* (OWN, 2016–present), for instance, is regarded as cinematic for its lush cinematography. Based on Natalie Baszile's 2014 novel of the same name, Ava DuVernay's drama traces the impact of inheriting an 800-acre farm in the Louisiana countryside. Though there are plenty of traditional setups, what makes the show cinematic is how the camera ends up "lingering on skin in a moment of tenderness or showcasing the rural beauty of St. Josephine in a wide shot."[1] *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011–19) is applauded for its cinematography too, though what makes it "the most cinematic TV show ever made" is the epic scale of its production. This medieval fantasy of nine warring noble families operates on a very large budget, with later seasons splurging almost $10 million per episode. Such extravagance yields a show that is "as close TV has ever come to replicating the cinematic grandeur of a large-scale war movie."[2] On the opposite end, *Twin Peaks: The Return* (Showtime, 2017) is admired for not replicating any popular movie conventions. And yet David Lynch's eighteen-hour exercise in narrative elasticity is seen as being so cinematic that it premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, and it tops *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s list of the ten best films of the decade. These brief examples illustrate that, though much ink has been spilled on calling TV cinematic, there is no agreement on what makes

Cinematic TV. Rashna Wadia Richards, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2021.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190071257.003.0001

a televisual text cinematic. Adjectivizing cinema remains a nebulous, often hyperbolic enterprise.

Aided by *Vulture* editor Chris Wade, Matt Zoller Seitz attempts a more robust delineation of the cinematic. Seitz chides his fellow critics for throwing around the term too cavalierly, for confusing it with spectacle or ambition or expense. In order to define the cinematic more explicitly, he turns to Hollywood classics like John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975). What made movies like these especially cinematic, he claims, is that their shots were not set up to convey information effortlessly; rather, "they had purpose, they had beauty, they had a soul." That cinematic soul persists for him in TV shows like *The Knick* (Cinemax, 2014–15) or *Fargo* (FX, 2014–present), whose frames explicitly illustrate the showrunner's intent and vision. This kind of television, Seitz argues, is "never coldly functional. It's always exciting, witty, playful, . . . cinematic." His is primarily a distinction between texts that push the plot inexorably forward and those that take their time to figure out what or whom a scene is about—that is, a distinction between the pragmatic, a style he calls "housekeeping," and the visionary, which he regards as a matter of "formal ingenuity" and "insight."[3] Without disputing Seitz's argument, it is easy to see that this is not a precise or satisfactory definition either. What we have here is an implicit connection between cinematic TV and quality TV, a connection we will explore shortly.

There is a hint in Seitz's piece, however, of an alternative way of getting at the cinematic. While discussing Steven Soderberg's direction of *The Knick*, Seitz draws attention to his use of the long take by showing it next to a scene from Orson Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). Once we see these shots side by side, their association opens up a whole new way of thinking about the film's startling appearance in the TV show—as well as of thinking about the intermedial relationship between cinematic TV and cinema itself. Because *The Knick* is hardly alone in calling up a sense of cinematic déjà vu. Shows that are labeled cinematic summon moments—sometimes explicitly, at other times inadvertently—from film history. What makes TV cinematic, this book contends, is its appropriations of cinema. That is, TV reminds us of cinema because it borrows from its media rival, a practice especially prevalent in contemporary serial dramas. When we see *The Knick* borrowing from Welles, or *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999–2007) tipping its hat to the gangster genre, or *Bates Motel* (A&E, 2013–17) paying homage to Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), we are not just witnessing a linear movement from source

to simulation, old to new, cinema to television. Nor is this a matter of cinematic influence in the traditional sense. The early years of the twenty-first century may well be defined by its backward gazing. Simon Reynolds aligns this time with retromania, because popular culture seems "dominated by the 're-' prefix: *re*vivals, *re*issues, *re*makes, and *re*-enactments."[4] But that does not mean that TV shows merely repackage films for the smaller screen. Rather, when serial dramas go to the movies, they reveal an archival impulse, which we will explore after sketching a brief history of the relationship between the two media.

Cinema and Television

In January 2020, Panasonic launched the HZ2000, a custom-built Professional Edition 4K OLED panel TV set that runs on the company's most advanced processor. The press release boasts about image optimization by Stefan Sonnenfeld, Hollywood's leading digital colorist, and about upward-firing speakers, capable of delivering Dolby Atmos. More than that, the HZ2000's Filmmaker Mode respects the frame rate, aspect ratio, and contrast of feature films, and it eliminates motion smoothing or the soap opera effect, thereby garnering the approval of "a who's who of Hollywood directors." Its Dolby Vision IQ reads the metadata of what is being watched and then smartly optimizes picture quality based on its external sensor's reading of ambient light. All of these innovations are motivated by the desire to make television resemble, in terms of quality and not just in scale, the cinematic experience. It is not surprising, then, that Panasonic calls their product the "most cinematic TV ever."[5]

It's not exactly unexpected that the most technologically advanced television assumes an audience that is most likely to use their TV sets to watch films or film-like programs at home—that is to say, an audience most likely to employ television for cinematic purposes. The easy or uncomplicated story of how TV became cinematic goes something like this. As households with TV sets multiplied in the 1950s, television's original distinguishing feature was its liveness. "The miracle of television," as NBC news director Gary Simpson put it, "is actually Man's ability to see at a distance while the event is happening."[6] Among its earliest successes, at the height of the Cold War, included live coverage of atomic bomb blasts, hearings in Congress, and the confrontation between Joseph R. McCarthy and Edward R. Murrow. Even

when television pulled away in the opposite direction, toward fictional programming that was more likely to be supported by sponsors, television appeared to remain distinct from cinema. Early television dramas, comedies, and anthology series focused mainly on the episodic form, making them appear less complex than cinema. Likewise, television's smaller size, its emphasis on dialogue, and its visual barrenness and seeming lack of depth made it appear more trivial. By the 1960s and '70s, it was being derided as a vast wasteland or simply as the boob tube, often on television itself. However, by the 1980s and '90s, shows such as *L.A. Law* (NBC, 1986–94) and *NYPD Blue* (ABC, 1993–2005) offered a different kind of storytelling; multiple narrative threads and deep characterizations allowed them to develop a story arc over the course of the series. Shortly thereafter, paid cable channels like HBO introduced an alternative model of programming than that of the traditional networks. They focused on producing shorter, thirteen-week seasons of TV shows that were arguably different in theme and style and marketed to niche audiences. These were primarily dramatic shows in serial, not episodic, form. Many of its widely acclaimed creators, like Aaron Sorkin, Alan Ball, and David Lynch, came from the film industry, bringing along a longer and denser aesthetic to television. Their popularity, along with some pragmatic business calculations, gave rise to a new product in American television. And voilà, something that became labeled (among other things) cinematic TV was born.

But what are the implications of assuming that television advances when it approximates the features of cinema, or of defining one medium with the characteristics of another? D. N. Rodowick has long argued that the "cinematic" remains the "predominant cultural and aesthetic model for engaging the vision and imagination of viewers."[7] His point of entry in this debate is that in the last two decades, most film production has switched to high-resolution digital video, and even movies without computer-generated imagery have been using digital image processing. The medium's decoupling from celluloid has been regarded by some as the death of cinema. However, Rodowick contends that though the materiality of cinema may have weakened or even disappeared, the cinematic persists. What this persistence implies is that "the most popular forms of digital media long to recreate and intensify cinematic effects of framing, editing, dynamic point of view."[8] Whereas Rodowick emphasizes how newer media are guided by cinematic templates and metaphors, that reliance can be noted in serial dramas as well.

For contemporary television too wears what Rodowick calls "a cinematic look."[9]

The assumption that television would follow in cinema's footsteps is older than television itself. While the term was coined by Russian scientist Constantin Perskyi in a paper presented at the 1900 International World Fair, and while the first live transmission of images in Paris dates back to 1909, television as a cultural concept began developing in the 1920s. There was something of an international race to come up with the technological capacity for televisual demonstrations. Televisors were the earliest TV sets; they relied on mechanical scanning devices, invented by Scottish engineer John Logie Baird. Tiny in size and hazy in clarity, televisors were often found on display in movie theater vestibules. They became as much of a sensation as Eadweard Muybridge's photographic sequences, when those were projected via a zoopraxiscope during his lecture tours in the 1880s. By 1930, Ernst Alexanderson exhibited his television projector on a larger screen at RKO's Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady, New York. Around the same time, Baird's large-screen receiver was unveiled at the London Coliseum, and it later traveled to the Olympic Cinema in Paris and the Kvarn Cinema in Stockholm. Many other companies joined the pursuit of what came to be known as "cinema television," under the assumption that "good cinema television might encourage people to purchase domestic sets when they became available."[10] Television, in other words, at this nascent stage was seen as a product of cinema. Writing in the new journal *Television* in 1930, Alfred S. Reeve warned against this prevalent expectation that television, coming chronologically after cinema, should want to replicate it as much as possible. He was disappointed in the narrowing vision of contemporary inventors, who "merely visualise [*sic*] television progress in the form of bigger screens, or as a competitor of the 'movies,' or the home cinema."[11] But Reeve's was a minority opinion. Throughout the 1930s, television was seen as an extension of cinema. Paul Young's astute analysis of Ray Cozine's *The Musical Doctor* (1932) demonstrates how media fantasy films of the decade encouraged this notion of seeing television "as a subset of film."[12] In Cozine's short, Dr. Vallee (Rudy Vallee) runs a musical hospital, where patients are treated with live performances of music. Near the end, Dr. Vallee sings into a microphone, and the song is broadcast to the patients via a televisor, which "portrays 'television' viewing as so similar to film spectatorship."[13] Especially before television's home invasion, the

fledgling medium was neither a threat to nor a rival of cinema. Until the 1940s, it seemed more like an associate.

As home broadcasting became an option, however, critics began to distinguish between cinema and television. For as five- to twelve-inch TV sets became available for purchase, and as local stations began transmitting live or previously recorded events, the battle for media identity intensified. Writing about cinema as an inherently collective medium, French critic Alexandre Arnoux bemoaned the loss of "the art of the crowd, of the mass, of unanimity, of group assembly" with the arrival of television.[14] The spectatorial separation necessitated by television, Arnoux contended, implied that it could not be considered an art. Rudolf Arnheim too privileged cinema over television, arguing that "television is a relative of motorcar and airplane."[15] Though it "makes us know the world better and in particular gives us a feeling for the multiplicity of what happens simultaneously in different places," he claimed, television "is a mere instrument of transmission, which does not offer new means for the artistic interpretation of reality—as radio and film did."[16] For Arnheim, who was still trying to defend cinema as an art, television became the weaker cousin. Though it may have been a technological advancement, for Arnheim, television was regarded as aesthetically inferior.

Not only that, but as the number of television stations in cities and television sets in homes increased exponentially, some defined the young medium as a malevolent force. In 1946, around 7,000 sets were sold in the United States; that number jumped to 5 million by 1950. A critic like Dwight MacDonald was no admirer of popular cinema either, but he was particularly incensed by television's ability to debase or trivialize high art. As a representative of mass culture, television for MacDonald "break[s] down the old barriers of class, tradition, taste, and . . . thus destroys all values, since value judgments imply discrimination."[17] At the same time, Theodor W. Adorno critiqued television from an ideological perspective. In one of his many scathing pieces, he argued that "the majority of television shows today aim at producing or at least reproducing the very smugness, intellectual passivity, and gullibility that seem to fit in with totalitarian creeds even if the explicit surface message of the shows may be antitotalitarian."[18] There was so much anti-television animus among cultural critics that Gilbert Seldes could unironically declare, "next to the H bomb, no force on earth is as dangerous as television."[19] Though sometimes hyperbolic, this decade's popular criticism foreshadows the generally disapproving posture of early academics toward television.

For as television scholarship comes into its own, TV scholars themselves are uncertain about their medium. Early TV studies were influenced by communication studies and the social sciences, and analyses focused primarily on the social impact of television on consumers. But when this reception studies model is supplanted by literary and film scholars who emphasize textual analysis, television is still seen as less than vital. As John Hartley puts it, unlike other media forms, such as literature, photography, and cinema, whose scholars defend and even love their objects of study, early television scholars were those "who could catalogue most extensively the supposed evils associated with television."[20] Even those who take television seriously end up discussing its differences from cinema as though they are shortcomings. Consider, for instance, how John Ellis describes television as ambient technology. Like others of his generation, Ellis argues that television is mostly an aural medium, in that its viewers don't stay glued to the TV screen; rather, they watch distractedly because television elicits "a lower degree of sustained concentration from its viewers" than cinema.[21] In his foundational guide to television studies, Jeremy G. Butler begins his preface by asking: "Should we take television seriously?"[22] The question is rhetorical, and Butler deftly demonstrates the multiple ways in which students can analyze how TV shows make meaning. Still, the fact that he begins with this question underscores his acknowledgment of the continuing suspicion about the complexity of the medium. As though responding to Butler's question, Jon Nelson Wagner and Tracy Biga MacLean claim that "we may find it difficult to study television seriously" because "it doesn't possess many of the characteristics traditionally associated with serious art."[23]

By the turn of the century, however, television evolves from being seen as insubstantial to a genuine art form. Though praise for a few distinctive shows can be traced back to the 1980s, the era of satellite channels and then streaming platforms, narrowcasting, and media convergence has had a consequential impact on how television is theorized.[24] In a bar in Staffordshire, Peter Krämer is supposedly the first to publicly declare that "American fictional television is now better than the movies."[25] He challenges his audience, Jancovich and Lyons report, to name any film from the previous decade and a half that would compare with television shows. Though Krämer's proclamation may have sounded hyperbolic, in 1996, Robert J. Thompson affirms television's superiority at the start of what he calls its second golden age.[26] Thompson elaborates on "quality TV," a term already in use since the 1970s, to think about what is new about contemporary television. "Quality TV,"

he argues, "is best defined by what it is not. It is not 'regular' TV," because it is "better, more sophisticated, and more artistic than the usual network fare."[27] Quality, according to Thompson, is identified with something more refined than ordinary TV, which of course continues to exist alongside it. That is to say, regular TV endures; quality TV improves upon but does not supplant it. Many scholars have since explored how some aspects of TV have become, to cite HBO's slogan from 1996 to 2009, "not TV." Kristin Thompson, for instance, suggests that certain TV shows may be called "art television."[28] Drawing on David Bordwell's "five major traits . . . typical of the art-cinema mode: a loosening of causality, a greater emphasis on psychological or anecdotal realism, violations of classical clarity of space and time, explicit authorial comment, and ambiguity," Thompson demonstrates why TV shows like Lynch's *Twin Peaks* are elevated above regular television.[29] Whereas Thompson focuses on thematic concerns, Robin Nelson shows how improved digital technologies have "produced a higher resolution, more stable image and surround sound for television."[30] These digital enhancements, Nelson argues, have led to "improved imagery [which] has fostered an aesthetic dimension in television that approximates the visual aesthetics of cinema."[31] As these arguments make clear, television's cultural status is made loftier by associating cinema with aesthetic prestige, then aligning television with it.

In the last decade, however, this reliance on the cinematic has become contentious in television studies. As mentioned earlier, it is noteworthy that although television's cultural status has been elevated, not all shows are regarded as quality TV. Prestige is reserved for a small segment of TV, usually the serial drama or dramedy. Given the narrowness of its scope, we need to be cautious about its application for television analysis. As Elana Levine and Michael Z. Newman point out, "TV becomes respectable through the elevation of one concept of the medium at the expense of the other."[32] News programs or sporting events or game shows are not known to be cinematic. Because the term "cinematic" is "used to describe that which is assumed to be *extra*ordinary, relative to what is perceived to be the norms for the vast majority of television," Brett Mills calls the term into question.[33] Moreover, the cinematic depends upon a prescriptive construction of cinema itself, an aesthetic where a vibrant visual style goes hand in hand with novelistic density, elongated character arcs, and detours and disconnections that arise out of multiple plotlines. Drawing on Noël Carroll's deconstruction of "medium-essentialism," Deborah L. Jaramillo critiques this facile tendency to align one

medium with another and assign "an omnipotent and entrenched essence" to both.[34] That is why scholars have recently begun moving away from an intermedial approach. Jason Mittell offers a superb alternative by theorizing "complex TV" as a way to "develop a vocabulary for television narrative on its own medium terms."[35] Instead of showing how dramatic television adopts cinematic complexity, he demonstrates how televisual seriality is quite different from cinema, as it depends on "an interplay between the demands of episodic and serial storytelling, often oscillating between long-term arcs and stand-alone episodes."[36] What Mittell and others object to is reading the development of quality TV as a linear move from cinematic source to elevated imitation. It is troubling to see television as derivative, so what if we shifted the underlying assumption of this debate? What if there were a methodology for exploring the relationship between cinema and television in a way that circumvents notions of influence or direct imitation?

This is where *Cinematic TV* comes in. In order to examine this intermedial relationship, I draw on the framework of intertextuality, which, broadly speaking, refuses to interpret a text as a self-contained unit by foregrounding the relationality between texts. To put it in the terms articulated by Godard's protagonist Edgar (Bruno Putzulu) from *In Praise of Love*, as cited in the first epigraph, intertextuality enables us to think about one text by thinking about another text. In that way, it allows us to explore unforeseen connections between texts and therefore revise our understanding of issues of influence, allusion, or referentiality. In the next section, I will offer a fuller evaluation of the notion of intertextuality, but here is a brief sketch to help develop the larger concerns of this project. Julia Kristeva is credited with originating the term, at a time when French literary theory was undergoing a transformation—specifically from structuralism to poststructuralism and more broadly from a belief in objectivity and methodological stability to an emphasis on indeterminacy and play. Kristeva transforms Mikhail Bakhtin's insistence on textual dialogism into intertextuality by arguing that a text is not only in dialogue with other texts, but it is compiled out of earlier texts. For Roland Barthes too, every text is constructed in this way, "woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?) antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony."[37] In a classic poststructuralist move, Barthes uses this vast stereophony to undermine the traditional notion of the author; every text becomes radically plural, where meaning is never exhausted but always deferred. Since then, theorists have connected intertextuality to a range of ideas

that deal with associations among texts, including allusion, pastiche, parody, adaptation, and remediation. For some, intertextuality undercuts any notion of an autonomous text by liberating its disruptive components. For others, it becomes a symptom of postmodern recycling, where "everything is juxtaposable to everything else because nothing matters."[38]

Film and media scholars have often employed intertextuality as a methodology for analyzing adaptations, genre films, remakes, or sequels. Indeed, as Robert Stam puts it, it has now become commonplace to note the shift from "text to intertext."[39] Audiovisual media are seen as operating within a larger field of cultural discourse, revealing "an infinitely permutating intertext, which is seen through evershifting grids of interpretation."[40] Intertextuality has been used to study a range of texts, such as the continuing impact of Alfred Hitchcock on films, filmmakers, and film studies itself; the representation of historical events in European cinema; the use of parody as social commentary in *The Simpsons* (FOX, 1989–present); and the relationship between serials and adaptation studies via an analysis of shows that rely on existing narratives, like *Penny Dreadful* (Showtime, 2014–16) and *Fargo*.[41] *Cinematic TV* builds on this body of analytical work by focusing on the intermedial relationship between cinema and television. Twenty-first-century serial dramas are an especially fertile territory for this approach, as they carry innumerable allusions to and appropriations of primarily American cinema. Some of these are deliberate while others appear inadvertently. This is not a study of remakes or spinoffs or reboots, which have a more causal connection between origin and outcome. Serial dramas imitate a much wider array of films. Some honor or deride their cinematic sources; others offer homage or resistance not only to specific films but also to the idea of cinema in general. Instead of the standard narrative about television imitating cinema's aesthetic status, *Cinematic TV* investigates how serial dramas absorb and revise (mainly) American cinema.

"The same thing appears in countless places"

Writing frustratedly about the state of literary studies after American academia embraced Continental theory, George Steiner noted that "a mandarin madness of secondary discourse infects thought and sensibility."[42] He attacked theoretically informed analyses, which do not constitute original research; they are only "statements of personal intuition, of personal taste,"

he posited, that add up to "nothing more than a grey morass."[43] Steiner critiqued contemporary critical thought for being unoriginal and subjective. In the late 1980s, he was especially disapproving of intertextuality, asking: "Are all theories of hermeneutics and 'intertextuality'—a characteristic piece of current jargon which signals the obvious truth that, in Western literature, most serious writing incorporates, cites, denies, refers to previous writing—a waste product?"[44] This reprimand could be dismissed as the ramblings of an old-fashioned scholar. After all, he is not the first to label theory jargon and dismiss it as unoriginal. But if we are to use intertextuality as a methodology, it is crucial to describe exactly what it does and, more importantly, *what it adds to critical discourse*. As Graham Allen rightly asks, "Does intertextuality provide us with a form of knowledge, or does it destroy what was previously considered to be knowledge?"[45] This section takes up Allen's prompt as a starting point for outlining intertextuality's broad parameters, guided by the following questions: Is intertextuality a fundamental condition of the multimedia universe, or of postmodernism, or even of modernity at large? Or is it a critical methodology for the analysis of relations between texts? Is intertextuality a function of all textuality? Is it something deployed in the process of writing or filmmaking? Or is it discovered while reading or viewing? Does it help us interpret texts, or does it ultimately resist all interpretations? Given the term's Latinate prefix, what exactly happens between texts when we put them next to each other?

In a provocative essay connecting George Stevens's *Giant* (1956) and Catherine Breillat's *A Real Young Girl* (1976/2000), Claudine Le Pallec Marand asks: "What is the link between the story of large self-made or inherited fortunes, of emotional fulfillment and social recognition (with friends, family, at work) and a film that stands out for its close-ups of female genitals and even more so for its surprising editing that generates ambiguity about the nature of the story?"[46] After all, *Giant* and *A Real Young Girl* couldn't be more different: one is an epic American Western made during the studio era, the other a transgressive French experiment so controversial that it was released in theaters twenty-five years after it was produced. Marand carefully observes thematic parallels in the two films' themes of sexual wanting. If "*Giant* features a sexual initiation by a woman, a virgin man's sex drive and another man's sexual frustration, that is to say three anthropological stages of desire: sex drive, frustration and initiation," then these are "all combined by Catherine Breillat in the character of Alice."[47] Marand also traces some uncanny audiovisual connections, as in moments when young Alice (Charlotte

Alexandra) fantasizes about the sawmill worker Jim (Hiram Keller), who functions as an echo of James Dean's Jett Rink. Ultimately, Marand's analysis reveals how sexual desire, which remains offscreen in *Giant*, is reversed and made visible in *A Real Young Girl*. This unlikely connection is not a case of allusion, as that would be far more explicit than the links discovered here. It is also not a case of influence, since it doesn't appear that Breillat is involved in the kind of backward glancing that that term implies. Seeing no overt linkages, Marand says that Breillat's film serves as "some partial recollection" of Stevens's film.[48] In other words, Marand's is an intertextual reading that George Steiner might have dismissed for being too informed by "personal intuition." But what if these intuitions and recollections are taken seriously? Can they function as generative mechanisms for doing criticism?

In order to respond to these questions, we need to take a closer look at how the concept of intertextuality has evolved. In general, intertextuality is said to have originated in the late 1960s. Amid a highly charged political atmosphere that rejected all forms of authority, intertextuality dismantles the independence of texts and the authority of author-creators. On the ground level, this was a time of anti-establishment fervor, which led to massive demonstrations spreading from France to other parts of Europe, North America, and beyond. In academia, this resulted in two significant developments: the destabilizing of selfhood and the undermining of meaning. As Adolphe Haberer points out, following the deconstruction of a stable, knowable world, "meaning could no longer be viewed as a finished product, it was now caught in a process of production."[49] Similarly, following a rejection of individual agency, "all the imaginary representations of a solid, identifiable self, or ego, in control of language and capable of expressing himself, were denounced and replaced by the notion of a subject intermittently produced by his *parole*—literally spoken by language."[50] Against this backdrop, Kristeva argues that authors don't write or create *ex nihilo*; every text is "a semiotic practice in which the synthesized patterns of several utterances can be heard."[51] In place of a coherent, unified text, then, Kristeva gives us "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another."[52] Of course, Kristeva doesn't create intertextuality *ex nihilo* either. The concept is rooted in Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's assertion that language is not just a naming system and that meaning is not inherent in any act of speech; meaning is constructed in differential terms and by associative means. Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin pushes beyond Saussure to suggest that every

communication or utterance is in a dialogue with previous utterances and elicits future responses, and therefore interpretation remains open-ended or incomplete. One can see how Kristeva borrows from Bakhtin, who had argued that every human utterance "is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents."[53] In place of Bakhtin's emphasis on human communication in varied social situations, Kristeva focuses on textuality. She argues that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another."[54] Because of these absorptions and transformations, "poetic language is read as at least double," a notion she uses to critique all forms of authoritative readings and unproblematic articulations of truth.[55]

Roland Barthes is even more polemical in thinking about intertextuality. Instead of a work that has a fixed meaning derived from its author, he posits a text that is plural and open-ended. Its plurality depends, according to Barthes, on "the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric)."[56] This textile metaphor suggests interconnectedness among texts as opposed to hierarchy or linearity. Intertextuality "is not to be confused with [finding] some origin of the text: to try to find the 'sources,' the 'influences' of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas."[57] In this way, Barthes announces the death of the author and the demise of any original literary work. Pushing his weaving metaphor further, Barthes then transforms the reader into "someone at a loose end."[58] The reader is not someone trying to decode a message handed down by the creator of the text. Instead, following Derrida, Barthes suggests that the reader follows the play of signifiers, which always lead to other signifiers, in an infinite interplay with no beginning or end.

When first introduced, these ideas about intertextuality "were viewed as both dangerously subversive and absurdly nonsensical by many."[59] Barthes, after all, seemed to be marking a radical break in literary history. For until the eighteenth century, when the Romantics imagined into being an author as an inspired individual creating original works of art, an author was understood as an imitator. Aristotle had praised *mimesis* or the imitation of nature as a model for beauty and truth among artists. Dionysius of Halicarnassus had revised this notion to emphasize the rhetorical practice of imitating other authors. For centuries, *imitatio* was highly valued in an author who could emulate, adapt, and enrich a canonical source text. Especially in the

neo-classical era, artists drew inspiration from the classical texts of ancient Greece or Rome. "Masterful borrowing was," as Marko Juvan puts it, "until the eighteenth century acknowledged as the normal path to artistry."[60] The Romantics inverted that history, making a case for originality and therefore praising those authors who didn't borrow from anywhere. But borrowing didn't really disappear from literature. So *influence* appeared as a new concept to explain the relations between an author and the literary canon. "Coming from a celestial metaphor, it denoted energy that flows from higher, more powerful agencies (the stars, gods, muses, and saints) into the spirituality of mortals and changes their behavior or ways of expressing themselves," thus justifying instances of artistic borrowings.[61] In fact, influence became a way of locating literary genius, for "influence is represented as an external energy that enters the author's mind and, without the discernible procedures that were key for imitatio, leads him or her to write differently."[62] Intertextuality undoes this version of literary history. By deconstructing the author's psyche and arguing that subjectivity is itself structured linguistically, intertextuality rejects the causal logic between earlier sources and later texts inherent in imitation and influence, as well as in their cousin concepts of reference, allusion, and quotation. In their place, intertextualists like Kristeva and Barthes offer a mosaic of citations whose origins can never be deciphered and whose meanings are always deferred.

But if the central insight of intertextuality is that origins are impossible to locate because all texts are citations of earlier texts, then we must confess that intertextuality itself cannot be posited as original and that ideas about textual interconnectedness too have always been around. Many scholars have noted that the late sixties' rejection of authorial intent is anticipated by New Criticism, particularly in W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's notion of "the intentional fallacy," while others have argued that intertextuality ought to be linked back to Modernists, who were already "challenging any notion of identity, linguistic cohesiveness, diachronicity, or personal authorship."[63] Consider this sentiment from T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," for instance: "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together."[64] This formulation sees the poet's mind as a receptacle and the text arising thereof as a tissue of quotations rather than an original creation, an idea in line with intertextuality. Scarlett Baron goes farther back, into the nineteenth century, and she skillfully demonstrates why Charles Darwin,

Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud ought to be considered proto-intertextualists because of their paradigm-changing arguments in the fields of science, philosophy, and psychoanalysis.[65] For Baron, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Freud instigate major shifts in thinking about creation and conceptions of the self, and their texts anticipate what twentieth-century philosophers explicitly explore.

If some scholars try to rethink where intertextuality comes from, others try to link it to competing ideas. Susan Stanford Friedman, for instance, argues that intertextuality is not so diametrically opposed to influence as initially thought. Instead, its roots can be found in the notion of influence, and by denying that link, Barthes ends up "in the place of the son who would displace the father by refusing to recognize the father's influence—the influence of influence on the generation of intertextuality."[66] That is because critics working on tracing influence have always analyzed the "dialogic" process of how a successor adapts, revises, and assimilates earlier texts—a process not so different, Friedman argues, from intertextual reading.[67] Here, we can hear reverberations of Harold Bloom, who suggests that "criticism is the art of knowing the hidden roads that go from poem to poem."[68] In *A Map of Misreading*, he sounds even more like an intertextualist when he defines influence as implying "that there are *no* texts, but only relationships *between* texts."[69] Though Bloom, given his humanist or author-centric approach, is not traditionally considered a proponent of intertextuality, especially one who is rooted in poststructuralism, we can see how his work also questions the stark differences between influence and intertextuality. A similar move is made by a lot of classical and biblical scholars, who argue for a reconsideration of the relationship between mimesis and intertextuality. As Daniel J. Estes suggests, "The modern approach of intertextuality was anticipated by the model of mimesis in the literature of Classical Greece, Second Temple Judaism, and early Christianity."[70] In a way, these critics have turned the logic of intertextuality on itself, by arguing for its connectedness with concepts that had seemed antithetical to it.

Still others have tried to tame its plural energies by offering a more limited definition of intertextuality. Gérard Genette rethinks intertextuality within his broader theory of transtextuality, which is a structuralist approach to poetics. Though his larger definition of transtextuality, "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts," sounds like intertextuality, Genette is concerned with making the concept more manageable.[71] Therefore, he limits intertextuality to a reading of quotations,

allusions, and plagiarism—something that can be used as a systematic method for literary analysis. Michael Riffaterre also draws on a structuralist approach to rein in the perceived excesses of intertextuality, restricting it to what he calls syllepses, gaps, and ungrammaticalities; these instances are "immediately perceptible to readers, who need no more, to respond to the text, than the senses nature gave them."[72] That is to say, the reader decodes the text's intertext and ends up with the correct interpretation, something that Riffaterre has been chided for by many, for assuming that every reader taps into the same series of connections or that there is such a thing as an accurate tracing of connections.

By contrast, as we might expect, postmodernists have sought to broaden intertextuality. Given its distrust of grand narratives and its investment in moral relativism, pluralism, and self-referentiality, it makes sense that postmodernism would be closely aligned with intertextuality. As Umberto Eco suggests, postmodern art "quote[s] by using (sometimes under various stylistic guises) *quotation marks* so that the reader pays no attention to the content of the citation but instead to the way in which the excerpt from the first text is introduced into the fabric of a second one."[73] The form, rather than the content, of the intertext becomes significant here. This is a point that is emphasized but also condemned by Fredric Jameson, who suggests that these quotations have no real critical value; they are merely forms of blank pastiche. Jameson regrets that "the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture."[74] What bothers Jameson is precisely what is celebrated by champions of postmodernism. Charles Jenks, for instance, thinks that postmodern mixing widens the possibilities for intertextuality. "Its best works," Jencks argues, "are characteristically double-coded and ironic, making a feature of the wide choice, conflict and discontinuity of traditions, because this heterogeneity most clearly captures our pluralism."[75] Jencks's use of "double-coded" texts echoes Kristeva's notion of poetic language being at least double. But there is also the tendency, in postmodern versions, to allow every form of textual interconnectedness to be lumped together under the umbrella term of intertextuality. As Ihab Hassan puts it, postmodernism has in a sense created "the intertextuality of all life," where "a patina of thought, of signifiers, of 'connections,' now lies on everything the mind touches."[76] More recently, critics have argued that we are, in a sense, living out the characteristics of intertextuality in the digital media universe. On the web, everything connects

hypertextually, and there are no centers or points of origin. Without any nostalgic regret, Marcel O'Gorman argues that "somewhere in the early 1990s, the major tenets of deconstruction (death of the Author, intertextuality, etc.) were displaced into technology, that is, hypertext."[77] Others build on this idea, suggesting that in our multimedia universe, intermediality may be the more appropriate term, because it enables us to trace relations between texts across different media. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin demonstrate how newer media remediate older forms, as they come into being out of and then define themselves as a superior version of earlier media. This is especially pervasive in new media, where "digital photorealism defines reality as perfected photography, and virtual reality defines it as first-person point-of-view cinema."[78] Remediation, then, is another term for thinking about how intertextuality works across media.

From this lengthy overview of intertextuality, it is clear that there is no consensus over the term's origins, over its definitions, or even over whether it is a historical or theoretical concept. Without simplifying its elaborate strands—or worse, reaching an uncomplicated definition—what we need now is a way to use this network of competing ideas with a long history as a critical methodology. I start with Mikhail Iampolski's suggestion that intertexts resemble hieroglyphic quotations that are deeply buried, not easily identifiable, and often involuntary.[79] These intertexts disrupt the linearity of the text as well as any chronological movement from source to imitation by "plac[ing] a number of texts and significations one on top of the other."[80] For Iampolski, working with "an intertextual hieroglyph resembles the interpretation of dreams in Freud," in that the hieroglyph "is also the product of condensations, shifts, and displacements."[81] The quotation of or link to another text is not direct, but scattered or disguised. Adolphe Haberer elaborates on this notion. Like Iampolski, he insists that "one should very clearly distinguish the intertextual effect from the type of scholarly research which aims at elucidating all sources, tracing all allusions, finding all references."[82] That kind of scholarly research fixes meanings, whereas what Haberer wants is an unmooring of definitive interpretation. In true Barthesian fashion, the viewer follows a play of signifiers rather than decoding explicit references. This approach offers a way out of what Adrian Martin calls "a simple one-to-one exegesis," where "filmmaker identifies and appropriates source, critic/teacher spells out the ramifications of this reworking."[83] Alain Bergala too moves away from explicit quotations and toward an associative thinking that he calls reminiscence, which is a way of "pointing out the traces of a film that is at once

everywhere and nowhere."[84] These traces do not appear overtly; they can be stirred up suddenly and unexpectedly.

If the reader intuits a connection to memory here, that is not coincidental, as I want to amplify the association between intertextuality and memory. Among the few theorists to flesh out this connection, Renate Lachmann suggests provocatively that "the memory of a text is its intertextuality."[85] Her aphoristic argument puts intertextuality in conversation with memory theory in order to investigate literary texts as though they were mnemonic apparatuses guided by the procedures of *ars memoriae*. For Lachmann, literary texts make space for the work of remembering while existing as memorial architectures. This conceptualization of literary mnemonics upends the Platonic criticism that writing is antithetical to remembering. Plato famously declared that writing would result in forgetfulness, that it would hinder the process of *anamnesis*. Who, after all, would take care to remember if ideas and narratives are forever inscribed? Per Lachmann's poststructuralist argument, literature becomes the carrier of cultural memory rather than its destroyer. But this too is not a novel notion. Greek and Latin epics recorded, in order to remember, tales of great battles and heroic men. Immersed in the Scholastic tradition, Medieval tales relied on memory to construct a collective identity and relay textual authenticity. During the Renaissance, writers recalled the ancient literary tradition explicitly, granting a kind of historical memory to works that were otherwise fictional. Even the Romantics, who assailed tradition per se, relied on memory's ability to inform personal and cultural identity. And Modernists demonstrated how a single memory can invoke vast historical networks as well as how calling up the past also transforms it. So, literature has always surpassed the notion of a storage and retrieval mechanism. What poststructuralist thought foregrounds is the disruption of linearity and of causal logic. As Kate Mitchell puts it, by dislocating the temporal logic of textuality, "memory resists identifying a singular origin but mimics instead a series of fragments and repetitions."[86] This is where the work of memory parallels intertextuality, because it recalls, transforms, and contests earlier texts. "Literature inscribes itself in a memory space made up of texts," Lachmann argues, "and it sketches out a memory space into which earlier texts are gradually absorbed and transformed."[87] She sees writing as a matter of traversing mnemonic spaces. What would reading and interpretation look like? Peter Matussek notes that intertextual memory's "underlying principle is the awakening of an association—a hint at *something which is absent*—in the mesh of . . . texts."[88] That which is absent is not lost or forgotten. Working

with that which is absent and therefore unsuspectingly haunts the text is the task of intertextuality as a methodology.

In order to untangle the memorial links that are awakened by such associations, we need to turn to the work of remembering. In her groundbreaking essay on cultural memory, Aleida Assmann argues that in order to understand how remembering works, "we must start with forgetting."[89] Forgetting isn't simply a matter of erasing something from one's mind; rather, forgetting enables remembering by "mak[ing] place for new information, new challenges, and new ideas to face the present and future."[90] But not all acts of forgetting are the same. Active forgetting, especially at the cultural level, involves destroying or burying or intentionally obliterating, whereas passive forgetting includes "losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind," which "is lost but not materially destroyed," and it "may be discovered by accident at a later time in attics and other obscure depots, or eventually be dug up again by more systematic archaeological search."[91] When it is dug up, that object or idea joins the realm of the remembered. But not all acts of remembering are the same, either. The difference between active and passive memory, Assmann argues, is analogous to the different rooms of a museum, which "presents its prestigious objects to the viewers in representative shows which are arranged to catch attention and make a lasting impression," whereas its "storerooms [are] stuffed with other paintings and objects in peripheral spaces such as cellars or attics."[92] Active memory, in other words, is deliberately preserved; passive memory exists in the margins or shadows, waiting to be activated.

This enables Assmann to arrive at the primary distinction she's trying to draw between the canon and the archive. Canonization, which has its roots in religious history, implies a process by which some texts are deemed sacred. Though the secular canon is not as rigid and unchanging, it still is the primary and official transmitter of cultural memory. The archive, on the other hand, does not carry such significance, for "the knowledge that is stored in the archive is inert."[93] Its knowledge is not actively interpreted or transmitted. Though the archive is initially set up by agencies of power, whether that is the church, the state, or the law, over time it becomes a bureaucratic space that loses its political potency and thereby becomes "a space that is located on the border between forgetting and remembering; its materials are preserved in a state of latency, in a space of intermediary storage."[94] Of course, like passive memory, this state of dormancy can end, for archival materials can be unearthed by researchers or historians. But

canonical memories, Assmann argues, are similar to what cultural historian Jakob Burckhardt calls messages, which are intended for and directed toward future generations, whereas archival memories are like traces that do not have direct addressees. Therefore, they are less predictable, enabling capricious combinations that can "open to new contexts and lend themselves to new interpretations."[95] Carolyn Steedman makes a similar point about an archive, which is not just a place for housing texts or artifacts or data. While discussing Jacques Derrida's work on the connection between the archive and Freudian psychoanalysis, Steedman suggests that an archive is where "this stuff, reordered, remade, then emerges—some would say like a memory—when someone needs to find it, or just simply needs it, for new and current purposes."[96] That is to say, an archive is as much a process as it is a place. As Derrida himself puts it, "Archivization produces as much as it records."[97] Archiving implies critically combining or rewriting fragments or pieces found in the archives or collections to produce something new.

Interestingly, Hal Foster observes this kind of an archival impulse among contemporary avant-garde artists.[98] Instead of trying to create something entirely original, Foster argues that artists like Sam Durant, Tacita Dean, and Gordon Douglas are invested in archival practice. Going against the view of an archival artist as a traditional historian, Foster emphasizes how early twenty-first-century artists sample and combine "sources [that] are familiar, drawn from the archives of mass culture, to ensure a legibility that can then be disturbed or *detourné*" as well as those that are "obscure, retrieved in a gesture of alternative knowledge or countermemory."[99] What do they do with these earlier artworks, whether familiar or obscure, after they're excavated from the archives? For Foster, such archival samples are transformed through combination and analysis. What makes them compelling is that "they call out for human interpretation, not machinic reprocessing."[100] These artists are not merely assembling or cataloging the samples they unearth, because the archival impulse is not deployed for preservational purposes. Human interpretation makes the archival impulse productive, for it seeks "to turn 'excavation sites' into 'construction sites.' "[101] Indeed, what transforms archival discoveries into construction sites is the artists' desire to make unanticipated discoveries or produce new theses about art, memory, and history. That is how archival art parallels the memorial work of intertextuality. Recall here is about recontextualizing archival findings by putting sightings in conversation with each other. As with Assmann's conception of archivization, this

process of remembering is generative, creating something new that bears so many traces of the old.

Before bringing this framework to bear on television studies, we can pause and look at the role of memory in television. For decades, TV seemed to be antithetical to remembering. Indeed, memory is precisely what Fredric Jameson finds lacking in television. One of his sharpest criticisms of television is that "memory seems to play no role in television, commercial or otherwise . . .: nothing here haunts the mind or leaves its afterimages in the manner of the great moments of film (which do not necessarily happen, of course, in the 'great' films)."[102] The distinction that Jameson is making here is the larger one he makes between modernism and postmodernism. For him, the latter has lost a sense of history and an understanding of the past, forcing us to live in the perpetual present. Though he is broadly critical of popular cinema as well, Jameson specifically aligns television with this view of postmodernism, arguing that TV, unlike classical cinema, is incapable of using memory critically. Similarly, Richard Dienst argues that, given its reliance on flow, television produces an impression of being permanently in the present. That is why its "reception drains perception of its resistant holding powers of distance and memory."[103] More broadly, television has been chided for playing a key role in what is regarded as a crisis of memory. As Susannah Radstone puts, "In the late twentieth century, that [memory] crisis is inflected . . . by the experiences of immediacy, instantaneity and simultaneity."[104] On the one hand, due to its perceived ephemerality or transience, television has been accused of promoting a culture of amnesia, of living in the here and now with no reflection on the past. On the other hand, television has been faulted for being immersed in nostalgia, of looking back too much and too insincerely.

It is precisely these critical arguments that many recent scholars refute in relation to serial television. Robert J. Thompson expressly cites memory among the characteristics of quality TV, though what he means here is series memory. Thompson notes that, until recently, "prime time's collective memory was erased every seven days."[105] But quality TV, he points out, has a memory because it is referential; it returns to moments from previous episodes and seasons to develop a longer narrative arc. Amy Holdsworth pushes this argument further by adroitly analyzing haunting moments from contemporary serial television. She explores, for instance, the six-minute long ending of *Six Feet Under* (HBO, 2001–05), where Claire Fisher (Lauren Ambrose) leaves the family home in Los Angeles to become a photographer, driving away into a future that spans almost eight decades and covers births,

celebrations, and deaths. Even as she ventures into the future, however, she is haunted by the past, literally in the form of her dead brother Nate (Peter Krause), whom she sees jogging in her sideview mirror. Moreover, this moment cycles back to the show's very first episode, where the family patriarch, Nathaniel Fisher (Richard Jenkins), dies in a car crash. Holdsworth uses it to demonstrate how contemporary serial television engages in "self-conscious play with ideas of haunting, the resonance of 'afterimages' and the forms, functions, and pleasures of repetition."[106] Memory, despite what Jameson and others have argued, is central here.

But Holdsworth emphasizes a televisual text's intratextual memory, whereas I would argue that there is another kind of memory that is even more intriguing and critically promising. Claire's drive away from Los Angeles, of course, evokes Marion Crane's (Janet Leigh) driving, albeit in the opposite direction, from Phoenix to Fairvale, California, in Hitchcock's *Psycho*. Clair, like Marion, is in search of something better than her current circumstances. Marion's trip is cut short when she gets off the highway and loses her life at the Bates Motel. Claire too, in a sense, is driving toward her death, even if it will not occur immediately. Thinking about Claire by recalling Marion highlights how her drive toward death, though it seems to have forward momentum, is as regressive as Marion's. Of course, *Psycho* is not alluded to overtly in *Six Feet Under*. And yet it enables us to interpret the show's ending—especially Claire's future—more pessimistically than the narrative itself allows. Angelo Restivo has recently offered a striking reading while analyzing *Psycho*'s unexpected appearance in another serial drama—*Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008–13). He first notices the film's presence when, late in the final season, Walter White (Bryan Cranston) is sitting in an office, and his young partner Todd (Jesse Plemons) observes him from behind, slouched in a chair ("Gliding All Over," 5.8). The shot strikingly reminds Restivo of when Lila Crane (Vera Miles), Marion's sister, finds the "mother's" corpse in the cellar while looking for her dead sister. This cinematic association continues throughout the episode: when Walt studies a fly on his hand, when he takes a shower, and so on. Restivo skillfully interprets *Breaking Bad*'s evocations of Hitchcock's film, noting that "once the specter of *Psycho* begins to assert itself in the mise-en-scène, it cannot let go until all its associations play themselves out—failure of masculinity, failure of the nuclear family, failure of crime, failure of the American Dream."[107] That is to say, once we start looking, the ghost of *Psycho* is everywhere. Restivo's book then moves in a different direction, focusing on how contemporary serial television is invested in neoliberalism

and biopolitics. But his extraordinary insight, that "the series seems to be so steeped in the history of cinematic forms that its images often acquire a haunted quality," can be expanded to examine contemporary serial television as a whole.[108] For serial television opens up a space for exploring the ways in which American cinema reappears poignantly on the not-so-small screen.

Cinematic TV argues that serial dramas function archivally in relation to American cinema. Some of these archival borrowings are of familiar sources that are estranged. Others excavate obscure hypotexts, as though bringing them back from the dead.[109] Still others blend cinematic hypotexts by placing them layer upon layer, so that one or another can peek through. These hypotexts work differently from those that fall under the umbrella of influence. There is plenty of evidence of cinematic influence in serial dramas, of course—as when Jesse Pinkman (Aaron Paul) points a gun at his former mentor, Walt White, in *Breaking Bad*, recreating an identical moment between Mr. White (Harvey Keitel) and Mr. Pink (Steve Buscemi) in Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992); or when Park Four in *Westworld* (HBO, 2016–present) appears as an unconcealed nod to MedievalWorld in Richard T. Heffron's *Futureworld* (1976). The former scene makes its debt to Tarantino explicit, acknowledged by showrunner Vince Gilligan himself, whereas the latter functions as an Easter egg for devoted fans of the show and the film. There are tons of accounts of barely veiled references in serial television, meticulously compiled by enthusiasts eager to notice them as though they were hidden gems. Indeed, those who associate contemporary serial television with quality cite such references as evidence of that appraisal. Referentiality indicates a kind of self-awareness and reflexivity that distinguish contemporary series from ordinary TV. Such cataloging relies heavily on authorial intent or explicitness, and it offers limited analytical potential beyond proving the circular argument that that series is in fact influenced by cinema. This book is more interested in the direct and indirect, planned and spontaneous *eruptions* of cinematic flashes in serial dramas. I consider a range of referential moments and practices, not always intended by the showrunners, that show how deeply serial television is saturated with cinematic echoes and reverberations. These resonances have an intense potency that breaks through the linear propulsion of their narratives, urging us to linger over and unpack the texts that they are recalling. These eruptions function the way an image or an idea triggers a memory, and the framework of intertextuality enables us to analyze how serial television enacts a productive remembering (and

forgetting) of cinema. If there is anything new about contemporary serial television, *Cinematic TV* ultimately argues, it is in this archival relationship with cinema. For cinematic moments, motifs, and contours hover around the televisual frame, constantly breaking through. How serial dramas handle such cinematic hauntings is the story that this book tells.

Cinematic TV explores these archival negotiations using multiple modes of intertextuality to examine the intermedial relationship between film and television in the era of seriality. Each chapter pivots on a particular modality: homagic, evocative, generic, and parodic. Through historical and theoretical rereadings, these modalities are transformed into analytical categories, which are then employed for detailed case studies of key serial dramas. Chapter 1 begins with homage, which is in many ways the most discernible way that serial dramas interact with cinema. Homage has historically been thought of as a gesture of unconditional love; in cinema, it is meant to visualize one auteur's affection for another. But this chapter turns to more recent treatments of homage, which tend to balance admiration with critique. Chapter 1 examines *Stranger Things* (Netflix, 2016–present) closely as an act of homage to the eighties. Unlike the nostalgia-driven interpretations of homage, however, here I read it as an act of critical reflection. What this implies is that the series devours its cinematic love objects, thus demonstrating how televisual homage might manifest itself as a desire to embody and replace cinema. Chapter 2 could be regarded as inhabiting the opposite side of that same coin, as it focuses on implicit references that seem to flash up suddenly, instead of the more explicit citations of homage. References are usually seen as synonymous with invocations, which entail the active summoning of sources, whereas this chapter relies on evocative references, which seem more random or unmotivated and often non-canonical. Using *Mad Men*'s (AMC, 2007–15) myriad evocations—ones that exceed the usual references to Billy Wilder's *The Apartment* (1960) or Jacques Demy's *Model Shop* (1969)—this chapter demonstrates how a series engages with cinema to talk about a particular era. It concludes with this paradox: the more authored a series, the wider its set of unintended intertextual connections might be. Chapter 3 moves in a slightly different direction, as it focuses not on specific moments but on appropriations of broader thematic conventions. It begins with genre and its troubled relationship with intertextuality. Due to its common association with the formulaic, genre might appear to contradict the multifaceted energies of intertextuality. This chapter, however, carefully teases out an alternative understanding of genre as overlap. It analyzes

Damages (FX, 2007–10; Audience Network, 2011–12) as a legal drama that overlaps with the puzzle film and the maternal melodrama. These overlaps, Chapter 3 concludes, also allow us to reflect on the looseness of genres and their unexpected kinship with intertextuality. Chapter 4 seems like an ostensible contradiction of all that has come before it, as it zooms in on parody. In common parlance, parody is regarded narrowly as a sendup or a spoof. But Chapter 4 repurposes the concept as a displacement paradigm, rethinking parody as a deceptive double that furtively displaces the authority of the original. Analysis of *Dear White People* (Netflix, 2017–present) demonstrates how parody works to depose the cultural authority and assumed whiteness of mainstream American as well as European art cinema. Taken together, these chapters argue that serial dramas reproduce and rework, undermine and idolize, and, in some cases, compete with and outdo American cinema. What is cinematic about serial television, I argue, is this persistent, haunting push toward and pull away from cinema.

In late 2013, while critics and scholars are busy legitimating television, Andy Greenwald pronounces the death of the second golden age of TV. In a widely circulated *Grantland* piece, Greenwald argues that we have now entered the "Zombie Age" of television, which "is marked by a persistent, undeniable decay" and "a disheartening pattern of pandering, copying, and outright cannibalism."[110] His claims rest on the notion that serial television in the first decade of the twenty-first century takes after seventies American cinema. That period, commonly known as the Hollywood Renaissance or the American New Wave, empowered a generation of young, independent-minded filmmakers to redefine the studio system, emphasizing auteurism and shunning classical norms as well as commercial success. But the studios reasserted control, the story goes, and a decade of aesthetic experimentation capitulated to blockbusters and profit-driven filmmaking. For Greenwald, serial dramas represent a similar wave that comes crashing down when network executives choose to invest in bankable properties, like *The Walking Dead*'s (AMC, 2010–present) spinoff, *Fear the Walking Dead* (AMC, 2015–present). When the first so-called golden age of TV ended in the late 1950s, it was because broadcast networks opted for the least objectionable programming, which led to dull entertainment but guaranteed steadfast weekly audiences. Now a second golden age seems to be coming to an end because of oversaturation. That is, quantity has come at the price of quality. What we are

left with are ideas that "are regurgitated and feasted on again."[111] This argument about televisual decay is contingent upon a stark distinction between originality and derivation. What makes serial drama valuable is its supposed newness, which also ostensibly makes television cinematic for a while. Soon after, television goes back to being repetitive and uninspired—and, well, televisual.

This critique itself is hardly original. Critics have long bemoaned the "'aesthetic bankruptcy' of television," which generates mass desire "to see the same thing over and over again."[112] But newness and sameness are never truly distinguishable, are they? Waves themselves arise out of earlier waves—including the American New Wave, cited by Greenwald as an example of cinematic originality, itself borrowed heavily from the European New Waves and the international avant-garde. And yet no wave or film or TV show is ever truly the same. As Amanda Ann Klein and R. Barton Palmer note, "The 'same thing' the viewer sees time and time again is always different from 'the same things' that precede and follow it."[113] More than that, the distinction between newness and sameness continues to be disingenuously mapped onto cinema and television. As Rodowick contends, calling cinema aesthetically superior is at best "a marketing ploy" devised by the film industry in the face of intense competition from television.[114] Aesthetic differentiation between overlapping media is ineffective from an analytical point of view as well. Now is the time for a decoupling of cinema and quality. What this book ultimately offers is a critical reorientation of *the cinematic* and its diverse repetitions or appropriations in serial television.