

Uses and Gratifications within AMC's *Mad Men*

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Intro:

In today's society, we are consumers of all sorts of media- whether that be by reading books, watching a TV show or a movie, or even exploring social media sites. Media has become a part of our everyday lives, in both social and professional respects. The ways viewers use media to gratify desires has shown to be telling of an audience (even down to the individual viewer) and influence the way we live our lives. So, without a doubt, media platforms serve a purpose in the world, but we seldom question why and how we consume particular pieces of entertainment media, despite their relevance and importance in our lives.

Theory Explanation: (U&G)

Elihu Katz's theory of 'Uses and Gratifications' is generally defined as 'the practice of people using the media to their own advantage'. In other words, the viewers and consumers of media are actively picking what they view and choosing how to view it, despite other theories that describe media viewers as passive beings with no control over what they are exposed to.

In Media Studies 101, a Creative Commons Textbook, U&G is explained as a behavior and display of power rather than a controlled happening within media studies. Which then implies that viewers make decisions and responses in order to find what best suits their personal needs and interests. This developing concept began to evolve as Herta Herzog started looking at the emotional needs of a viewer in 1944. Herzog's research on emotional desires was eventually extended in 2010 by Branston and Stafford-- who identified cognitive factors, affective factors,

tension release, personal gratification, and social reasons all as motivational influencers that impact what a media consumer may or may not seek out.

With these emotional influencers in mind, one can imagine that viewers are not solely “injected” specific material (as explained in the Hypodermic Needle Theory) and only consume what they are given. Rather, viewers are able to make choices to view or not view something based on the factors that Branston and Stafford outlined for us. Consumers of media not only have the ability to pick and choose what to watch, but they also have the ability to go out and find what it is that fulfills what they desire. With platforms like Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, Twitch, YouTube, and so on, the people have a wider range of access to all sorts of entertainment media. This unprecedented access gives viewers the choice. Maybe, at one point in time, the Hypodermic Needle Theory was more accurate because there were not a lot of options when it came to entertainment. However, now with seemingly unlimited access to media entertainment, the audience doesn’t need to necessarily pay attention to one thing or the other-- leaving the consumers to choose what they consume. This wide variety of media to consume that the internet provides for us led to the development of the ideas of “demassification” and “asynchronicity” (as described in the “Cross-Cultural Communication” journal in 2015 [Volume 11 no. 9, pages 71-78]).

Demassification described the idea that with a range of choices to pick from, viewers suddenly found themselves with more control over every aspect of their media viewing experience. The “Cross-Cultural Communication” journal uses the example of a physical newspaper versus the online version of the paper in order to exemplify this term. They say that with a physical newspaper, you have to pay for the entire product, and this is whether or not you want to read every article inside. Meanwhile with an electronic version, the viewer can

individually select specific pieces that they want to read and pay for those. This changes media and the theory of U&G entirely, as there are no long mass prints of text based media for people to digest. Instead, the viewer has all the power and is able to hand select whatever they desire to read. Today, a more relevant example of demassification would be Netflix, who is able to produce, buy, and distribute niche TV shows and films online via their streaming website and allow their subscribers to pick and choose everything they consume.

Now, the other term the journal discusses in relation to U&G is “asynchronicity”, which describes the idea that media audiences are no longer ‘forced’ to consume something all at the same time as one another. This practice was mainly a part of the time in television where a show would premiere on a certain channel, on a certain day, at a certain time. However, now with streaming services and video on demand, the viewer can pick and choose the time, date, and play that they want to watch a show. This plays into U&G in the sense that this on demand servicing allows the viewer to watch something that gratifies them when they are in any sort of emotional state. If they want to feel happy, rewarded, successful, and so on at a time where they themselves are upset, then they have access to whatever TV show or movie they want to satisfy their emotional state.

Sub-Theory Explanation: (Media Migration)

Media Migration is a relatively new concept that is being looked at by various different scholars, all of whom define the idea differently. In relation to this particular essay, the focus will be on the ways in which media consumers move across different platforms in order to further fulfill personal desires beyond what the primary media source can do. For example, one could indulge in binge watching a TV show, but it doesn’t fulfill them entirely so they move on

to the internet to find even more content in relation to the show. They may read a review, watch a YouTube video about it, read a blog, follow the actors/actresses on social media, and so on.

U&G Studies

Several studies have found a connection between entertainment media and the viewership's personal desires, despite the fact that the world of media (technology, platforms, audiences) is always changing to mold our current societal landscape.

For example, a study by Dyson College of Arts and Science and Pace University in 2018- testing was done to figure out why people consume live blog articles. Using the theory at hand, researchers tried to establish whether the pieces of digital journalism were being read for entertainment, as a time killer, as a way to seek out information, etc. Its intention was to understand why young news readers tend to read digital pieces of journalism rather than the conventional printed copies. The experimenters clarified that they were trying to understand “what people do with media” rather than what media does to the people consuming it. They used a self-survey test to determine what motivated their respondents (553 college students) to consume blog articles. This test was inspired by early Uses and Gratifications studies that found that soap opera radio listeners tended to feel an emotional release while also seeking advice and were “wishful thinkers”. From this basis, the new live blog assessment testing was not only to test the motivational factors of these consumers, but to also test this existing research data from previous media studies.

Through the data that was collected and ran through various statistical tests, it was found that there are many factors that can play a role in why people (at least for the college students

that were tested) choose to read certain articles/blogs. The top three motivational factors came out to be 'immediacy', 'convenience', and 'information seeking'. Testing also showed a significant difference between male and female consumption of live blogs articles (females were more likely to read them). Lastly, it was found that there was no difference in blog consumption based on education level. As is the point with these types of research studies-- many variables were identified and found to be significant/not significant. The results are a baseline for other journalists and news companies to better understand their audience and also proving that there are underlying factors when it comes to media dissipation.

Another new study that took a look at viewership motivation behind watching live streams on Twitch (listed in "Computers in Human Behavior" and conducted by Hilvert-Bruce, Neil, Sjoblom, and Hamari) found some significant underlying factors that influence media habits. Twitch is a website/mobile app that allows users to live stream themselves doing almost anything (mostly used for gaming) and is blowing up in terms of popularity. What makes the platform unique is the fact that viewers can directly interact with the broadcaster in real time via a chat room, playing live soundboard effects, and using "points" to redeem challenges/tasks for the person they are watching. Through a self-report survey with 2,227 respondents, the researchers were able to find that there is a significant relationship between social interaction, sense of community, meeting new people, entertainment, information seeking, external support and (at least one of the following) emotional connectedness, watching, subscribing or donating to a channel.

Media Migration

In a study conducted by Shade, Kornfield, and Oliver in regards to U & G theory with a direct focus on Media Migration, research showed evidence that migration between media platforms can indicate enjoyment of a certain program. Not only that, but migration may also be a behavior that derives from the user's need to fulfill personal desires by consuming the media they enjoy.

It has also been theorized that quite a few cognitive behaviors can explain why certain media consumers choose how to watch something. Elaboration, parasocial interaction, identification, narrative engagement, and fandom are all tied to the idea of Uses and Gratifications theory in the sense that audiences involve themselves in these actions and thus immerse themselves even more into the program's content. Shade, Kornfield, and Oliver further explain this connection in their study on media migration (through the lens of U & G theory) within entertainment television. They use the concept of identification as an example by discussing a viewer's tendency to not see themselves as a member of the audience, but instead imagines that they are passively participating in whatever is going on within the media. Behaviors like this are rather unique and could be potential explanations as to why we immerse ourselves in media to such a serious extent. It was also theorized that these tendencies can be used as predictive factors in regards to their media usage, meaning what they consume and why they choose that particular piece. Shade, Kornfield, and Olivier even suggest that they immerse themselves into the media so much that they use the platform as a way to escape from their own reality.

Now, with an overview of how digital media can impact a viewer's behavior and the ways in which they interact with other social media platforms, we can now connect the information to a specific example in media. Through the lenses of elaboration, parasocial interaction/identification, and narrative engagements, we can understand how a drama series like AMC's *Mad Men* can be so addictive and gratifying for a viewer to watch.

Media Analysis: *Mad Men*

In July of 2007, AMC decided to do something different. For the first time in company history, they released their very own original television series called *Mad Men* (2007-2015). The show brought the 1960's advertisement business back to life in old-school New York City, while also touching on several key historical events and social issues. With the use of complex and interesting characters, *Mad Men* became an instant hit among TV critics and viewers. Over the course of 7 seasons, the show received a 94% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and an 8.6 out of 10 on IMDb (two of the most trusted media review platforms). The hit drama series also was nominated for 383 TV and Writing awards, while taking home 137 wins. So, without question, this series was extremely successful and popular amongst viewers-- but what made it that way?

What makes *Mad Men* such a popular and relatable program is large in part due to their inter-character relationships throughout the show's storyline. *Mad Men*, like many other programs, creates a very realistic environment that embraces New York City culture in the 1960's and allows the viewers to immerse themselves into the show. Whether you follow the love interests of Don Draper (Jon Hamm), or the close friendship between Joan Holloway (Christina Hendricks) and Roger Sterling (John Slattery)-- there are so many dynamics to follow and get invested in, which is why so many fans watch the show in the first place. Each character

lives a unique lifestyle, but for the most part they are all involved in mystical romances, live lives of luxury, or build success from the ground up-- all of which are extremely rewarding and gratifying experiences for us outsiders to watch.

Elaboration:

In communication studies, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) describes the ways in which different consumers of a message can make judgements about and be persuaded by said message. When you put the ELM into the context of media studies, it is used in order to understand how a viewer's behavior and attitude can be influenced by the media that they consume-- with the example here being how the plot and controversies within the *Mad Men* world can impact how a viewer feels about the addressed social issues. ELM and U&G both intersect at the point of understanding the viewer's subconscious reasoning when viewing television shows (in this context anyway). U&G theory tells us what viewers look for and how they satisfy their own desires, while ELM tells us how the viewer interprets and interacts with the messages communicated within the program. Combined, we can use both ideas to formulate some reasoning as to how the viewer fully digests and understands the material they choose to pay attention to.

As the show is set in the 60's and eventually the early 70's, there are many differences in the social "pecking order" due to the show's decision to address the tropes and themes that the time period itself faced. Women and people of color were seen as inferior, while the rich white men reigned as the "superiors". Homosexuality and other sexual preferences are fireable offenses and career killers. Drinking at work is allowed and even encouraged. The point is, these times

were different, and the show does a great job immersing the audience into the time period. With this in mind, how can a media scholar use the ELM to understand what fans of *Mad Men* are getting from the show?

At the time of the show's reign on television, (mid 2000's) LGBTQ rights movements were extremely prevalent in global social justice news and politics, which made a major side character's sexual preference an extremely topical plot point. Sal Romano (Bryan Batt) was introduced to us very early on in the show, and without the direct knowledge of his homosexuality (which is officially exposed to Don Draper and us the audience in season 3, episode 9's 'Wee Small Hours'), it could very possibly slither right under your nose-- despite obvious references and attempts to hint at him being a gay man. This is intentionally done in order to guide the audience through what it's like to hide your homosexuality as a man in the 1960's (as it is seen as 'unprofessional' and 'inappropriate' at the time). Upon discovering Sal's homosexual preferences, Draper kept things quiet for as long as possible until a big client finds out and they request Sal's removal as art director from Sterling Cooper Advertising (ironically enough, it was to hide that CEO's own homosexual preferences). Now, with the way it was presented in the show, we are meant to (both as humans and as viewers) feel empathetic for Sal. He was a humorous, bright, and lively character that was very good at his job. He had just been promoted at work and was feeling more content with his life after a struggle with the fact that he wasn't "allowed" to be himself without jeopardizing his career. Then, out of nowhere, a big time executive of a client company aggressively comes on to him and ruins his entire livelihood. This is supposed to hurt us and make us feel for Mr. Romano, who is an original character from the pilot episode. By presenting the situation the way he did, producer and writer of the show, Matthew Weiner allows for the audience to elaborate that the treatment of the LGBTQ

community was extremely unfair. People had to stay closeted and ignore their temptations in order to “fit in” with the rest of society, especially the men. As an audience, we are encouraged to now be in support of gay (and all LGBTQ) rights and want to make the community feel equal, safe, and secure. In comparison to most other political or social topics brought up within the show, this is one of the bigger stands the Mad Men producers took throughout the duration of the series, which in turn had an influence on how the viewers felt about how gay men were treated in the 1960’s.

From the very first episode, we are exposed to unfaithful husbands and their wide array of affairs they have on their wives. A bunch of wealthy, successful men living in a world where they can get any woman they desire, whether they are already taken or not. It doesn’t matter if the show takes place in the 60’s, because the viewers of the modern age take in this way of life and may very well see it as influential due to the show’s tendency to glorify the men partaking in these acts of adultery. Don, Roger, Peter, and all the others we see cheating on their wives all end up successful partners of their multi-million dollar company at the end of it all, while those who were faithful are never rewarded and sometimes even ended up without jobs (ex: Paul Kinsey).

What this says about the show is that mischievous and adulterous behavior will lead to success (particularly among men), and those who fantasize of cheating on their partner can use this show to gratify their thoughts. This is especially the case for those who wish to not actually act on the fantasies, however a data breach in 2015 on the adultery dating website Ashley Madison shows that some people may have taken things to the next level.

Privacy leaks are never something to celebrate, but if there were any place that might actually deserve it, a website designed to encourage cheating on your spouse might be an acceptable option. Even though cheating was more common and accepted (at least by the men) in

the 1960's as we see in *Mad Men*, times are different now and there is a much more negative stigma around the concept. Regardless, AMC's advertising agency drama hit seems to have had a potential massive influence on the behavior of scandalous men. The Ashley Madison data leak showed that a staggering 37 million users used the site, where they essentially used the platform to "privately" cheat on their partner. Of that high total, men accounted for around 85% of the profiles on the website with a total of 9.6 million various credit card transactions (note: women did not have to pay for a majority of services on the site, so it is safe to predict that these were almost entirely made by men).

Although there is no direct tie between Ashley Madison and *Mad Men*, the timeline and behavior displayed in the show definitely seem to add up. As of 2015, *Mad Men* was still running and had a massive following. Don Draper, at this point in the timeline, had been intimate with 17 women and was only married to 2 of them (aside from his original wife Betty, all of the other 16 were his mistresses). Other characters had love affairs throughout the show, but the focus on Don and his life as an adman and scandalous lover make his actions particularly important and influential to the audience. The fact that we have specific data that indicates an increase in adulterous behavior that lines up with the sex crazed lifestyle of Don Draper is in accordance to our ties into the Elaboration Likelihood Model. Based on the ELM, it is expected for audience members to take what they see on screen and let it influence their own behaviors, which is a possible explanation for the adultery that was exposed through Ashley Madison.

Another behavior that is reintroduced to the working class through *Mad Men* is the practice of drinking on the job. Personally, I thought this was something that companies had deemed 'unprofessional' or 'inappropriate' and had long banned in their workplace. However, an article from ABC News taught me that many businesses still allow alcohol (sometimes they even

provide it) in their workplace. Funny enough, numerous advertising agencies still drink at work, which seems to take influence from our favorite characters in the AMC version of *Madison Avenue*. The ABC News article took a look at the benefits company owners believe alcohol consumption at work can provide, and even mentions the show as a pop-culture influence on these habits. In the news piece, a spokesperson for the J Walter Thompson advertising firm talked about the company's in-house bar that they believe "incentivizes and ethuses employees" with a relaxing work environment. Being that this article was released in 2012, which was right in the middle of *Mad Men's* television run, it's tough to ignore the reflection of opinion and behavior between our real world and the show.

Strangely enough, an NPR article was published explaining that bars have seen an increase in fancy cocktail drink orders, especially Don Draper's favorite drink-- an Old Fashioned. The article goes over all the *Mad Men* inspired cocktail guides, drink pairings, and drinking games and how the show has revived a sophisticated drinking culture in American bars. This in itself is anecdotal evidence of a direct influence from show to viewer, which helps us understand that the other examples made above could hold more truth to them than originally imagined.

With these examples in mind, we can understand that television certainly may have a huge impact on the thoughts, opinions, and actions of the viewer. Although there are no studies done to make an undeniable connection between *Mad Men* and the resurgence of fancy cocktails, drinking at work, and a peaked interest in adulterous fantasy, we can certainly see that there is a slight correlation based on what the ELM tells us about the mindset of viewers consuming any sort of media.

Narrative Engagement Leading to Parasocial Interaction//Identification:

When we watch TV and are fully engaged in the content, we can sometimes feel the sensation of narrative engagement, which is described by Oxford Bibliographies as “being pulled into the world of a story and temporarily losing awareness of ourselves and our real-world surroundings”. This feeling of complete immersion can be enjoyable and help us escape reality for the time being, while also serving as a medium for consumers to feel things that they normally wouldn’t be able to in the real world. The idea of narrative engagement suggests that viewers of digital media can rely on the content they watch to gratify certain desires and needs. Whether it be to experience social interactions, live a fantasy relationship, or feel the thrills and excitements of being a successful businessman (like in *Mad Men*), television can be an extremely powerful influence on our lives. If shows can capture our attention for long enough to engage and immerse us in their created world, then we become prone to parasocial relationships and identification with characters in this made-up environment.

As social creatures, human beings seek acceptance and want to develop relationships with others. Typically, a relationship requires two-way communication and interaction in order to reach a bonding point. However, entertainment media sources have allowed for a special sort of one-way relationship, called a parasocial interaction, to create bonds between viewers and a content creator-- the difference being that the viewers feel a connection to the character on screen and the character doesn’t necessarily feel it back.

In relationship to television, viewers commonly developed a form of parasocial relationship with the show’s characters that they tune in for. An article by PBS states that the

viewers “found comfort in the regularity of relationships-- which occurred in the form of weekly TV shows...(and) when their favorite TV shows were cancelled, they felt as though they had lost a relationship”. In other words, people get extremely attached to TV shows and the characters portrayed in them, sometimes even to the extent where fans feel sad and lost at the end of it all.

For example Rob Sheffield, a renowned pop culture journalist/editor for *Rolling Stone*, reflected upon the series finale in 2015 with his “Coke and Sympathy” piece-- where he reacted with sadness and disappointment. To be specific, Sheffield says that “The finale sucked... Series finales always suck”, but then goes on to talk about all the good he saw in the episode itself. He talks about how the episode is emotional, clever, and how it does a great job ending many alternate storylines (like Joan and Peggy’s relationship). He also discusses where the show peaked and what he thought it did well, but there wasn’t much to support his claim that it was a bad episode. He even shows signs of his development of a parasocial relationship with main character Don Draper, where he says “I’ll be sitting in front of my TV on Sunday nights like Don Draper sitting at that desert bus stop,” which is in reference to a scene in the last episode, as well as a reference to his own sadness about his favorite show ending. The essay offered some interesting analysis of the series, but was more like an angry breakup text message than it was a critical reflection on the quality of the series finale episode. If a popular TV critic for a big time magazine is vulnerable to TV immersion and the development of parasocial relationships with fantasy characters, then I would argue that it’s more than feasible to believe that the average viewer is just as susceptible, if not more.

The development of one-way relationships that a viewer may build while watching a TV series indicates that they allow themselves to treat fictional relationships as if they are their own, which signifies their immersion within the show’s environment. If this idea is correct, then that

means TV shows can tell us how to think, feel, and set up expectations for the real world. We begin to blur the lines between reality and fantasy which, for obvious reasons, is concerning.

Another way to think of the ways in which digital media watchers immerse themselves into the content they watch is to think of the idea of identification, which describes the ways in which a viewer may subconsciously connect with a fictional character and feel or act similarly to the character in their real life.

Within the parameters of audience identification with a story's characters-- people who watched *Mad Men* certainly had the opportunity to relate to just about every character in the show. It is theorized that when an audience member feels a connection with a character from a TV show, they imagine themselves in the show as that character. They feel what the character feels, think the same way, and potentially behave and communicate with others similarly. At a certain point, the viewer disconnects with their own reality and instead takes the place of their favorite character. With this in mind, it's not hard to see the connection between Uses and Gratifications and viewing a TV show. If we find a show we enjoy, continue watching that show, and eventually identify with one of the characters, then we could be using that medium as a way to live a sort of alternate life. We would potentially use this feeling to explore different opportunities and experiences that the character would probably be feeling in order to gratify our own desires. For example, a viewer that wants what Don has may imagine themselves as Don driving around in his 65' Cadillac Coupe DeVille just to feel as rich, successful, and important as Mr. Draper is in his respective 'reality'.

In *Mad Men*, there are a series of unique characters played by very relatable actors/actresses (at the time of filming none of the cast were very well known at all, which made

the connection even stronger). Let's (again) take Don Draper, the main character of the show, for example.

Weiner, uses the series pilot to set up viewers to love the charming Mr. Draper. From the very first shot of the first episode, we can see that Don is an extremely passionate man who cares deeply about his work. We first meet him at a bar after normal work hours, where he is trying to think of a pitch to sell to Lucky Strike Tobacco. He works tirelessly to find a solution to his "writer's block" but seemingly can't hit it on the nose. This dilemma he faces throughout most of the first episode immediately makes him relatable. This is simply because we all have rough times figuring something out for school or for our careers, and selling to a big tobacco business was a huge deal to our infamous adman. Around the three quarter mark of the episode, Don faces his dreaded pitch meeting after working all night and into the morning without having a single idea. When the executives for Lucky Strike come in and start talking business, Don draws a blank and we think all hope is lost-- until he comes through with an idea that, he says afterwards, he "got out of thin air" and he wins over Roger Sterling (Don's boss and head of the firm).

An article on PBS Nova describes the notion that popular trends on media platforms usually have to do with the viewer finding satisfaction in sharing an enjoyable experience with the creator. For example, unboxing videos on YouTube have extremely high amounts of view counts, which is theorized to be in relation to the viewer feeling as if they are receiving and opening a gift right alongside the person they're watching on the screen. So, what this "magic out of thin air" pitch scene in the opening episode of *Mad Men* does is give the satisfaction of nailing a presentation and reaping all the rewards and glory to Don *and* the viewer. We sit there and go through the same roller coaster of emotions that he does, and we are then rewarded with feeling successful and accomplished as Draper does. The beauty of what Matthew Weiner does

is the fact that he is able to establish a relatable, likeable character while also immersing the audience into the world by using this scene to satisfy their potential need for feeling important and successful-- all in the pilot episode too. Once the viewer is hooked and gets to feel gratified along with the happiness of other characters within the show, they are going to be hungry for more.

The pilot episode also shows off Don's personality and how it differs from his coworkers. Pete Cambell (Vincent Kartheiser), Ken Cosgrove (Aaron Staton), and Paul Kinsey (Michael Gladis) are all the young, up and coming admen with their eyes set on their female co-workers. They inappropriately harass the new girl (Peggy Olson [Elisabeth Moss]) in the elevator and make crude comments about sex, gender, and race all throughout the first episode-- while Don does the opposite. In the opening scene, Don stands up for an African-American waiter, goes on to defend Peggy from Pete when he verbally harasses her in the office, and even takes a female client that he previously argued with in a meeting to dinner to apologize-- what a gentleman right? Just about everything we see Don do in the first episode is honorable, human, and heroic-- he even has a Purple Heart medal that he tucks away into his desk. What's not to like about him?

Well, as you find out at the end of the episode Don is unfaithful. We come all this way just to find out that the woman he slept with in the beginning of the episode was not his partner, but his mistress (note that he also proposed that they should get married), and that Don never went home to his cozy suburban house with his wife and two children so he could work and have a secret affair. As an audience, we are supposed to be shocked and unsure of what to think. Everything else in the episode made us love the guy, but then we got hit right in the face with the realization that our protagonist is not actually perfect. Here, we are faced with a choice as the viewers. We can either hate Don (and the show for that matter) and dismiss everything we felt,

or we could come back for more-- no matter how what we saw makes us feel. The decision, without context or the experience of actually watching the show, feels easy right? We would *never* want to support an adulterous, rich, selfish character. Yet, when we watch the pilot of *Mad Men* and immerse ourselves in the narrative and develop parasocial relationships with characters like Draper, our opinion can be altered significantly. At this point in the episode, we already feel an attachment due to the subplot that we follow with Don's Lucky Strike pitch, and this inclines us to look past all his wrong-doings and side with him because of the thrills and excitement we feel when we watch him do good things. Even though he has affairs as early as episode one, he is impulsive, he gambles illegally, he struggles with alcoholism, and even lives an actual double life (SPOILER: we eventually find out his real name is Dick Whitman and he was an "abandoner" in the army). Despite all this, the typical viewer still sticks with Don and the show all throughout the series. No, not every single viewer watches and feels this way, but when we consider the success of the show and the popularity of Don Draper in the drama television world- - it is safe to say that numerous viewers did indeed stick with it.

Conclusion:

With the awareness of all the opportunity *Mad Men* gives you to gratify a psychological, emotional, or physical need, it becomes quite obvious the grasp that a show like this could have on any given viewer. In no way does the show force anybody to do anything, but as human beings we are susceptible to finding alternative ways to cope with emotions and to satisfy an urge. Entertainment media, especially contexts where the environment is posed to appear and sound real, can serve as a major source of gratification. Not only do we get to experience satisfaction and happiness through *Mad Men*, but we are also being influenced ELM would say

that we are learning about very conservative, traditional values (that were based on the mindset of people in the 1960's) that mostly don't hold up or fit into today's world. These findings and ideas, to me, are very concerning and problematic, but are a part of our entertainment media popular culture. At this point, I'm not sure that there are alternatives (other than not watching TV or any sort of media) due to the extreme concentration of influential material that circulates daily. Maybe if we, as individual viewers, were able to understand the gravity of our behavior, then we could become a more intelligent audience as a collective.

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