

Chapter Six

Mad Hatters:
The Bad Dads of AMC

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Whether we are donning a power tie or dressing down, looking sharp or looking the part, when we wear clothes, and even when we don't, we are communicating. Call it a fashion statement or non-verbal communication, largely we consciously craft a persona, a public image whereby our clothes do the talking. Often, these sartorial selections are laden with messages and shaped by context; sign and signified become malleable by design. Clothing's intent, representation and reception are not always easily decoded.¹

Except when it's old hat.

In the 1951 short story, "Clothes Make the Man," Richard Matheson writes:

"They used to come to him," he recalled, "all of them. There he'd sit in his office with his hat on his head, his shiny shoes on the desk. Charlie! they'd scream, give us an idea. He'd turn his hat once around (called it his thinking cap) and say Boys! cut it this way. And out of his lips would pour the damnedest ideas you ever heard. What a man!"²

Charlie's authority, cleverness and intelligence are embodied in his hat—"thinking cap." As the story (one of many such allegories sharing the same title) unfolds, Charlie loses his identity via his fixation on his attire. He is defined by his outerwear. In particular, he is defined by his hat—absent which he becomes inert—as it fully informs his inner self.

Charlie is all stylish sizzle and, as it turns out, no substance. Readers likely are not surprised to learn Charlie is an advertising man. While he sells ideas and

ideals to people, his biggest commodity is his dressed up, über-charming self. His hat allows him to be cloaked in bravado and without it, or without the notion of it, he is not himself. Wrote Matheson: “‘Things got bad after that,’ he went on. ‘Without a hat, Charlie couldn’t think. Without shoes, he couldn’t walk. Without gloves he couldn’t move his fingers.’”³

Nearly sixty years removed from the fabulist fantasies of Matheson, TV viewers met a modern-day interpretation of Charlie. His name is Don Draper and he is the protagonist of cable television’s critically acclaimed AMC channel program, *Mad Men*. He is an ad man, practicing his craft in New York of the 1960s. And, as with Matheson’s creation, Draper’s distinctive identity marker is his headwear; it speaks to his authority, to his confidence, to his manhood, his essence. But, absent the haberdashery—away from the workplace and his cohort and colleagues—his persona is altered. He is home and he is dad—a hatless head of household and a changed man.

Mad Men is joined on AMC by two other critical and popular successes—*Breaking Bad* and *The Walking Dead*. These shows also feature fathers as lead characters, Walter White and Rick Grimes, respectively, whose psychic apparatus⁴ and public presentations are shaped by what they rest atop their heads. Grimes wears a traditional lawman’s hat (he is/was a sheriff) and White sports a black porkpie. And, as with Charlie and Don Draper, they too have altered presences when in the face of absence (the hat). It is part and parcel of their makeup, their uniform to the world.

As this chapter will demonstrate, for this TV trio the power of the hat is so all encompassing, that no room exists for negotiation of its meaning. The power of the hat is transformative (clothes make the man) and that is beyond question—it is the authority of the male. This generally flies in the face of pop culture and sociological analysis of fashion, as well as semiotics, that suggest fashion—and its meanings—comes and goes (the fashion cycle) or that the production of meaning evolves from an ever-evolving culture. As Fred Davis writes in *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, there is high social variability in the signifier-signified relationship: “In the symbolic realm of dress and appearance, however, ‘meanings’ in a certain sense tend to be simultaneously more ambiguous and more differentiated than in other expressive realms. . . . Meanings are more ambiguous in that it is hard to get people to interpret the same clothing symbols in the same way; in semiotic terminology, the clothing signs signifier-signified is quite unstable.”⁵ And, while these theories are well reasoned and valid works by significant scholars, they don’t neatly adequately address the AMC trio’s dress.

For instance, Malcolm Barnard in *Fashion as Communication* scoffs at the notion that meaning of an item of apparel can be internal, “this is not a very sophisticated position to argue,”⁶ or external, “there are numerous problems.”⁷ The characters in these TV dramas would likely sneer, convincingly, at such suggestion. For them, the hat sends an absolute message—authority—and the audience unequivocally knows that message: respect this authority. They likely

would offer a similar askance glare at influential media critic John Fiske's notion that the meanings of pop culture items, including fashion, are open.⁸

The ideas of Roland Barthes, as put forth in *Rhetoric of the Image* and *Myth Today*,⁹ which ascribe denotative and connotative properties to objects and representations of objects, might rate a slight tip of the hat from Don, Walt and Rick. A clothing item might vary in its form, but as far as what *their* hats connote, there's little room for negotiation. Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding philosophy, especially the cultural theorist's inclusion of the hegemonic code (preferred meaning), likely would hold similar appeal for this group.¹⁰ These men are in charge and they'd prefer it stay that way. When they're not in charge—hatless—things (can and often do) go awry.

From a communications examined viewpoint, the metamorphosis that occurs when Don, Walt and Rick are behatted is best lensed through the eyes of the social semiotician Theo Van Leeuwen. In *Introducing Social Semiotics*,¹¹ he points to an inventory of rules governing semiotic regimes (“the ways in which the uses of semiotic resources are governed in specific contexts”).¹² Van Leeuwen poses a few key questions by which those regimes are defined. They include: “How is control exercised and by whom? How is it justified? Whenever there are rules, the question ‘why?’ can arise ‘Why must we do this?’ Or: ‘Why must we do this in this way?’ . . . What happens when people do not follow the rule? What sanctions are attached to deviance?”¹³

Van Leeuwen, while still allowing for negotiated meanings, identifies categories or regimes of semiotic systems, which include, notably, personal authority. Personal authority is exercised by people in positions of power who see no need to justify their actions. “If we were to ask them why—‘Why does this rule exist?’ ‘Why must I do this?’—the answer would be, ‘Because I say so.’ It is the rule of the ‘dictate’ and hence the dictator.”¹⁴

Van Leeuwen establishes two semiotic regimes that act as corollary to personal authority: expertise and role models. In these systems, the rhetorical query, “Why do we have to do it this way?” would likely be met with the response, “Because XXX said so.” In this case, XXX is an influential person or a person with expertise. For the purposes of this chapter, personal authority, expertise and role model are embodied by the hat wearers, Don, Walter and Rick. Or, as Neil Steinberg writes in *Hatless Jack*, “No matter what society you examine, in any era, anywhere in the world, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the guy with the biggest, most expensive hat is boss.”¹⁵

The aforementioned AMC programs (*Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, *The Walking Dead*) unfold in different eras, yet the headwear's intent—contrary to ephemeral traditional fashion dictates—remains constant, inviolable. *Mad Men*, which wrapped its fifth season in summer of 2012, began airing in 2007; its first season was set in 1960. Viewers met the dapper Don Draper, the creative head of Sterling Cooper, a Madison Avenue ad agency. With chiseled, movie star looks, he is crafty, confident, cocky and every bit a ladies' man. His business uniform almost always includes a short-brimmed fedora, and while he is quite polished at hat etiquette and well mannered with regard to general public

decencies, his fidelity away from work is far less refined. Though married, he will fall into bed at the drop of a hat, and often does. And, as viewers discover early on, there is mystery surrounding Don's true identity, things he'd rather keep under his hat.

Walter White is the lead character in *Breaking Bad*, which unfolds in contemporary time—all visual and verbal cues suggest the action unfolds in present day—in the desert Southwest: Albuquerque, New Mexico, to be precise. The series, which debuted in January 2008, introduces viewers to Walter, a high school chemistry teacher who, in the first episode, receives a diagnosis of advanced lung cancer. As a desperate ploy to pay medical bills and leave his family a nest egg for financial stability, the teacher, employing his knowledge of chemical properties, begins to manufacture methamphetamine. It's complicated. As Walter's health and personal world spin wildly out of control, he reshapes, or builds, a separate identity as a drug dealer. In this world, he is the highly successful Heisenberg. Heisenberg's signature item of apparel is a black porkpie hat. When the mild-mannered Walter cloaks himself in the business uniform of Heisenberg, he is cold, calculating and capable of heinous acts.

The Walking Dead character Rick Grimes is a sheriff in a Georgia community, sometime in the near future. Time in this AMC drama, which debuted on Halloween in 2010, is a little difficult to pinpoint as the action takes place in a post-apocalyptic America inhabited by zombies. Rick is the leader of a group of survivors united by a singular focus to simply stay alive; the zombies are incessantly attacking, incessantly hungry and incessantly growing in numbers. Though he doesn't physically appear threatening—or overpowering—Rick is nonetheless accorded deference and respect because of the ubiquitous presence of his sheriff's hat. It gives him body, substance, command, authority.

There are others who wear head coverings in *The Walking Dead* but Rick is the only one to wear a proper hat. A definition might clarify this point; hats have brims that extend all the way around and generally have shaped crowns. Symbolically, this can be read as offering full protection or shelter to the wearer and serves as a signifier of authority, expertise, status. Two other characters, Glenn and Shane (Rick's nemesis), wear baseball caps. Glenn, and his cap, can be interpreted as youthful (he even wears it brim forward like a Pee Wee league baseballer), while Shane, Rick's former partner on the sheriff's force, sports an ominous ball cap, suggesting fracture from the group—it's emblazoned with a police logo. And Dale, the survivors' sage figure, sports a floppy, bucket hat; like Dale, it is well worn.

From the outset, Rick's hat is central to his essence. A Stetson Roper, its rich brown felt is set off by gold campaign cords and the seven-point star forming the King County Sheriff's badge. In the program's debut episode Rick wakes up in a hospital bed clad only in a clinical gown, recovering from gunshot injuries viewers learn he suffered in a shootout.¹⁶ He is thoroughly disoriented and dazed. What he finds—a new world order that includes zombies—further his sense of dislocation. In short order, he escapes the hospital, is “greeted” by a young survivor with a shovel smack to the face who, once he regains

consciousness, fills him in on what he's missed during his indeterminate period of convalescence. Rick's first order of business is to retrieve weapons and supplies from the sheriff's office—and his hat.

Considering the plight of humankind to which Rick has awoken, he fares quite well; fighting zombies, making plans, beginning his quest to reunite with his wife (Lori) and son (Carl). And, he soon does all of these things. But then, he loses the hat.

In a moment of questionable judgment that involves a strong likelihood of the loss of his stature in the survivor's community and, more importantly, jeopardizes lives, Rick decides to go back to the site of his loss—Atlanta—ostensibly to retrieve a cache of weapons. Really, this is a quest for something more. In Season one's fourth episode, "Vatos," survivor Glenn says to Rick, "Admit it, you only came back to Atlanta for the hat." "Don't tell anybody," Rick responds.¹⁷

Reunited with his Stetson Roper, Rick is restored, rejuvenated, and so is (the new) law and order. There is a moral authority, an imperative, to protect and serve when the hat is donned. There is, in a word, power, and Rick swells with it. He is a benevolent protector, justified in his decisions in this new world of good and evil, of black and white. In his son Carl's eyes, he is a hero, near mythic.

The Rick character personifies Van Leeuwen's semiotic regimes of role model. The survivors are followers, almost childlike, albeit, at times, sassy, questioning children. They do things at Rick's behest because he appears thoughtful, concerned and considerate, or parent-like. His responses appear reasoned, rational. Though his approach seems democratic, he has followers because what he says goes. His word and integrity are absolute, though the pesky Shane tries to dilute his authority. There are repercussions when his decisions are questioned or not followed. By profession, he is a lawman, after all, and has agency to carry out justice.

He is the hegemonic male, as explained by Rebecca Feasey in *Masculinity and Popular Television*: "The hegemonic male is said to be a strong, successful, capable and authoritative man who derives his reputation from the workplace and his self esteem from the public sphere. . . . This model of masculinity is said to be the ideal image of the male against which all men are judged, tested and qualified."¹⁸

Rick, in fact, rarely leaves his role as a lawman, wearing his workplace identity—not on his sleeve, but on his head—and behaving accordingly. So, when his Stetson is removed, one might reasonably expect a transformation. Such expectations are realized in the program's second season, which debuted on AMC in October 2011.

As the season's story arc progresses, Carl suffers an accidental gunshot wound and his injuries are extensive. The band of survivors alights on a quaint farmhouse refuge where Carl is tended to. He gradually gains his strength, and halfway through the season's fourth episode, "Cherokee Rose,"¹⁹ the boy awakens (a mirroring of his father's stirring in the series' debut episode).

In a tender father-son moment, Rick places his sheriff's hat on Carl.

Carl: Hey, I'm like you now. We've both been shot. Isn't that weird?

Rick: Yeah, I think your mother would rather hear we got the same eyes. So let's keep that between us. Since you're in the club now, you get to wear the hat. Didn't you know? We'll pad the rim tomorrow so it sits better.

Carl: Won't you miss it?

Rick: Maybe you'll let me borrow it from time to time.

As Carl drifts to sleep, Rick places his sheriff badges in a drawer. One he has removed from his hat, the other from his shirt. The camera lingers on the image of the twin stars, a dull gleam in the wardrobe drawer. And, like the stars of Gemini, Rick's persona is twinned.

By season's end, the authoritative lawman and what remains of his group are on the run. He has become untethered, lawless, without moral anchor or hat. Shane is dead by his hand: "I wanted him dead. I killed him," he tells his wife, Lori.²⁰ (When Lori and Shane thought Rick dead, they formed a survival pact and had an affair. She is now pregnant and the child may or may not be Shane's.) Absent of his father's attentions, Carl wanders recklessly from dangerous moment to treacherous encounters. In the same episode, any pretense Rick has accorded his group of equality is laid bare. "If you're staying, this isn't a democracy anymore," he says. It's half desperation—he is afraid the group is irreparably splintered following their dramatic and violent exit from the farmhouse—and full, unhinged threat. Though he loudly asserts his authority, it no longer seems apparent nor is visible.

Breaking Bad's Walter White is also a different person with a hat. The mildly geeky but affable high school teacher and devoted family man is a sympathetic figure, one viewers can root for. Not so when he transforms into his alter ego, Heisenberg, with the porkpie hat perched atop his head. This bit of dress-up escapism—though taken far too far—is initially understandable. Walt has terminal cancer; his wife, Skyler, is in the late stages of pregnancy; his son, Walt Jr., has cerebral palsy; and Walt is a vastly overqualified (he was part of a Nobel-nominated research team) middle-aged man who is making less than \$50,000 a year. It's depressing business but, when he becomes Heisenberg, he is all business—drug business.

Heisenberg is, from the outset, Walt's antithesis: a violent man, devoid of emotion, who issues ultimatums. The alter ego's initial, explosive appearance, in which he blows apart a drug den, comes in Season one, episode six, "Crazy Handful of Nothing."²¹ His signature hat is not present when he introduces himself to Tuco, the regional drug runner he wishes to impress. However, his visage is radically redefined. He is gaunt and, for the first time, completely bald, the after-effects of his chemotherapy treatments. Following the explosion, Walt/Heisenberg returns to his vehicle, his obscenely ugly Pontiac Aztek,²² and grunts animal-like; his body vibrates orgasmically—he (Heisenberg) has won this face-off and done something Walt could never imagine.

At a followup meeting in the subsequent episode, “A No-Rough-Stuff-Type Deal,”²³ the black porkpie debuts. Walt/Heisenberg deftly puts it on, fingering it and spinning it like a showman before resting it atop his crown. His sidekick and literal partner in crime, Jesse, shoots him a look before slipping into a knit, watchman’s cap and dark glasses. (As with *The Walking Dead*, there are other characters in this drama who wear head coverings—the hipster chullo is ubiquitous—but **no one** wears a hat like Heisenberg.)

Heisenberg’s product, a particularly potent, blue-hued strain of the drug methamphetamine, becomes increasingly popular. And, too, Walt comes increasingly to revel in the persona of Heisenberg. As the drama has unfolded over the course of four seasons (the fifth began in the summer of 2012), Walt has slowly edged closer to embracing a full-time Heisenberg persona. In earlier appearances, Heisenberg seems almost bemused by his growing reputation and concomitant respect; it’s an identity he’s playing around with.

By the time a Heisenberg *narcorrído* (a Mexican folk ballad tribute to drug smugglers) is written—complete with a flashy music video featuring a Heisenberg lookalike²⁴—Walt has full buy-in for this character he has created. And though he keeps the identity secret from his family, it is for them, he continually tells himself, that Heisenberg exists; he must provide for his family, family is everything. And nothing is off limits, including murder. People die at the hands of Heisenberg and at his behest. But Walt’s insistent default refrain is “Everything I do, I do for family.” Walt’s convictions align with Van Leeuwen’s further description of the semiotic regime of personal authority: “It may well be that the powerful person operates on the basis of principles rather than on the basis of whims, but those whose actions are being regulated have no way of knowing this,” he writes.²⁵

In Season five’s debut episode, “Live Free or Die,” there is an aural and visual echo of Van Leeuwen’s written account of the sort of response someone so fully invested in their personal authority typically gives to one who questions that authority. When Mike, a menacing amalgamation of assassin-grandfather-mob guy-cop asks Walt/Heisenberg how he can be sure an intricate ploy he has implemented to cover up a crime has worked, the chilling response is, “Because I say so.” In an ensuing scene, his weaselly lawyer is trying to abandon his client: “We’re done when I say we’re done,” Walt/Heisenberg coldly tells him, his face inches from the counselor.²⁶ In both cases, Walt/Heisenberg receives no comment, no resistance.

The transformation from Walt to Heisenberg is symbolically completed when Walt ceases to hide the alter ego. He’s become cocky and quite possibly, because of his inflated ego, careless. Or, in this schema of semiotic regime, he simply doesn’t care—he is beyond question. In “Fifty-One” (a reference to Walt’s birthday and chronologically one year removed from his cancer diagnosis), Walt and his son are at a mechanic’s shop, retrieving the aforementioned Aztek, which has undergone some extensive repairs.²⁷

When Walt opens the door to the Aztek, Heisenberg’s dark porkpie is resting on the passenger seat. The camera—from Walt’s vantage—lovingly

caresses the hat, pulling back from it in a sensuous, slow motion glide, moving from soft focus object to something Walt sees clearly. In rapid succession, he sells the non-stylish, but extraordinarily reliable, Aztek to the mechanic for \$50. “Dad, are you crazy?” Walt Jr. asks. By way of answer, his father virtually anoints himself with the hat, admiring his be-hatted visage in the rear view mirror. He replaces the Aztek with a sleek, black sedan for himself and a red sports coupe for Walt Jr. Father and son park the new rides in the driveway and, grinning maniacally at one another, rev their engines. Walt’s impulse control, and seemingly the last vestiges of his former self, has evaporated. He is not crazy; he is Heisenberg.

Mad Men’s Don Draper also takes on a new identity—that of Don Draper. The devilishly handsome Madison Avenue advertising executive was once just another grunt in an Army helmet in the Korean War; he was Dick Whitman, a bit of a nervous Nellie with no small amount of psychological baggage. When the opportunity arose—Dick accidentally started an explosive fire—he switched identities with his commanding officer, Lieutenant Donald Draper, who was killed, his body burned beyond recognition in the blaze.

From the series’ first episode, “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,”²⁸ Don uses the hat, typically a somber, gray fedora, to cloak himself in his businessman’s identity. Rarely is he seen in the workplace and its environs (the endless smoke-and-martini business meals) without it and seldom is he seen in any recreation or family setting with it. There is, at this time, proper hat etiquette,²⁹ and Don follows these rules and the “Guy Code” with rigor. When the rules change or are violated, or the setting/context differs, the usually cool Don becomes out of sorts; psychologically, he becomes the damaged Dick Whitman: his mother was a prostitute who died during his childbirth, and his father was a dour and violent drunk.

Don’s workplace charm, calculatedly detached demeanor, and hat are checked at the door when he returns from the hulabaloo of Manhattan to his Westchester County home. In an oft-repeated scene—so common it is as mundane as the lived experience—Don arrives home from work to find his children, Sally and Bobby, eating dinner while his wife, Betty, smokes and drinks hers. Don removes his hat and with it his cool objectivity; a chink in the armor is revealed, and confidence and competence, as father, as husband, are compromised.

In one of many revealing scenes that unfold at the informal dining room table, Bobby is playing with a toy robot during meal time.³⁰ In so doing, he spills a drink on his sister. “Don, do something!” Betty yells. In turn, Don picks up the robot and smashes it violently against the wall. “Is that what you wanted?” he jabs at Betty. As they take their dispute upstairs to their bedroom, it becomes violent; Betty strikes at Don and he pushes back.

In another tense homefront interaction,³¹ Don looks on as Bobby and Gene, Betty’s infirm father, open a box of war “trophies” Gene took during combat in WW I. One of these items is similar to a Prussian helmet and Bobby tries it on. Don, who as Dick Whitman wore an Army bucket, quickly tells his son to

remove the hat. “War is bad, Bobby.” “Maybe, but it makes a man of you,” his father-in-law, Gene, responds. Don tries to discourage Gene, who is egging on the encounter. Then to Bobby he says, “There was a man in that hat. Bobby, it’s a dead man’s hat. Take it off!” Don is well familiar with wearing another’s hat and it *has* made a man of him. That truth hits uncomfortably close.

Home is not the manageable space of the advertising agency. This is not the place where Don compiles neatly billable hours. These are not employees he can willfully dismiss nor abstract ideas he can corral. He is not girded in his businessman’s uniform nor his assumed identity, and solutions are neither neat nor simple. People, especially little people, question his authority and raise questions in him he can’t answer; questions that bring him back to Dick Whitman. “Did your daddy get mad?” asks Bobby. “We have to get you a new daddy,” he concludes to a dumbstruck Don.³² In another, Sally says to her father, “Tell me about the day I was born.”³³ In these instances, the usually fearless and flawless Don—the idea man—is without gravity.

At work there is someone—and usually that someone is attractive and of the opposite sex—to assist in such matters. That someone organizes your day, screens or shields you from distraction. That someone fetches ice for cold drinks, orders meals in, services every manner of need. That someone takes your hat, gives it a delicate primp and hangs it up for you.

At the agency, Don is the golden child who, in the eyes of his peers, has it all. He is to be envied and emulated and, as such, he neatly fits Van Leeuwen’s semiotic systems of expertise and role model. Not only is Don admired for his performance at work, he’s well respected for his performance in bed. He’s experienced and rewarded in both areas. For all the tumult in his personal life—the life without the hat—he is a principled man and that also accords him admiration and respect. Men buy him drinks; women grant him sexual favors.

When Don tries to bring the hat—and his personal authority and professionalism—to his home, he cannot bridge the gulf. In one telling scene,³⁴ fedora perched atop head, he sits alone in his apartment (he is now separated from Betty) at a typewriter trying to construct a break-up letter. There’s a germ of an idea here for him to develop and deliver, just like an ad campaign. But, he can’t. “Dear Allison,” the letter begins. “I wanted you to know I’m very sorry. Right now my life.” And there it ends; he is at a loss for words. He pulls the paper from the typewriter, crumples it and tosses off the fedora. The sense of dislocation—work at home, home at work—finds him neither here, nor there.

For Don, Walt and Rick, the hat is a shaping force, a tightly held marker of self identity visually presented to others. So closely are their identities aligned with the message of their respective hats, it governs their lives, successes and failures. If their identity is in any way fluid, it is only in the sense that they differentiate between work (hat on) and home (hat off, generally)—or try to.

Each of these men is successful in their respective professions, and to one degree or another they build things. Rick is building a new world (though it appears it won’t be a democratic one); Walt/Heisenberg is building a drug empire; Don is building and rebuilding a top-notch advertising agency. Building

relationships and a home life is another matter entirely. The absolute authority and identity offered by the hat, which accords warmth, security and protection to the center of thought, ideas and intelligence, afford no such shelter in matters governed by the heart.

On that front, the three men appear to have lost their moorings, (if not their souls or minds), their spouses and their offspring. Don has shared custody of his children and, for his lifestyle, they are more bother than blessing. Offering the kids food, money and TV viewing are Don's parental go tos. Walt has slipped so far into his Heisenberg persona that he is now watching the hyper-violent *Scarface* and reciting dialogue with his teen son and infant daughter.³⁵ He shares much more of a nurturing father-son bond with Jesse, his crime cohort. In one episode,³⁶ Walt tearfully and lovingly calls his son (Walt Jr.) Jesse. Rick, in giving Carl his hat, ceded parental authority and with his disregard for personal safety, he places Carl, his wife and his unborn child in the likely position of life without a father/husband.

And which—the heart or the hat—will win out? Or perhaps ‘Who will win out?’ is a better question. Writes the sociologist-come-cultural theorist Richard Sennett at the conclusion of his essay, “Street and Office: Two Sources of Identity,” “my argument therefore comes down to this: you can do without authority in your sense of place, you cannot do without it in your sense of work.”³⁷

Most of us would likely take exception to this assertion. Don, Walt and Rick would likely agree. But they should know, at the close of Matheson's “Clothes Make the Man,” Charlie lost the girl and everything else: “They tell me Charlie is getting weaker. Still in the hospital. Sits there on his bed with his grey hat sagging over his ears mumbling to himself. Can't talk, even with his hat on.”³⁸

Notes

1. As Malcom Barnard notes in *Fashion as Communication*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 32, in discussing Saussurean structuralism “it will hardly be surprising if different readers from different cultural backgrounds produce different meanings or readings of texts. Nor will those different readings be seen as evidence of communicative failure; they are only to be expected on the semiotic model.”

2. Richard Matheson, “Clothes Make the Man,” *Worlds Beyond* 1, no. 3 (February 1951): 84.

3. Matheson, “Clothes,” 86.

4. Sigmund Freud, in *The Ego and the Id*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1927), held that psychological makeup is a construct of relational parts called the id, ego and super ego. Additionally, in *Dream Psychology* (New York: MacMillan, 1900), Freud contends the hat is a stand-in for male genitals.

5. Fred Davis, *Fashionm Culture and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 8-9.

6. Barnard, *Fashion as Communication*, 79.
7. Barnard, *Fashion as Communication*, 80.
8. Fiske advances his ideas of open, or polysemic, readings in a number of publications, including *Television Culture* (London: Methuen, 1987) and *Reading the Popular*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011).
9. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Noonday Press, 1977) 32; Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), 109.
10. Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage and Open University, 1997), 166-67.
11. Theo Van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics* (London and New York; Routledge, 2005).
12. Van Leeuwen, *Introducing*, 285.
13. Van Leeuwen, *Introducing*, 53.
14. Van Leeuwen, *Introducing*, 53.
15. Neil Steinberg, *Hatless Jack: The President, the Fedora, and the History of an American Style* (New York: Plume, 2004), XVI.
16. *The Walking Dead*, "Days Gone By," directed by Frank Darabont, first broadcast October 31, 2010 by AMC.
17. *The Walking Dead*, "Vatos," directed by Johan Renck, first broadcast November 21, 2010 by AMC.
18. Rebecca Feasey, *Masculinity and Popular Television* (Great Britain; Edinburgh Press, 2008), 2-3.
19. *The Walking Dead*, "Cherokee Rose," directed by Bill Gierhart, first broadcast November 6, 2011 by AMC.
20. *The Walking Dead*, "Beside the Dying Fire," directed by Ernest Dickerson, first broadcast March 18, 2012 by AMC.
21. *Breaking Bad*, "Crazy Handful of Nothing," directed by Bronwen Hughes, first broadcast March 2, 2008 by AMC.
22. In 2007, *Time* magazine named the Aztek one of the worst cars of all time; the following year the *Daily Telegraph* dubbed it number one in a poll of the "100 Ugliest Cars of All Time."
23. *Breaking Bad*, "A No-Rough-Stuff-Type Deal," directed by Tim Hunter, first broadcast March 9, 2008 by AMC.
24. *Breaking Bad*, "Negro y Azul," directed by Félix Enríquez Alcalá, first broadcast April 19, 2009 by AMC.
25. Van Leeuwen, *Introducing*, 54.
26. *Breaking Bad*, "Live Free or Die," directed by Michael Slovis, first broadcast July 15, 2012 by AMC.
27. *Breaking Bad*, "Fifty-One," directed by Rian Johnson, first broadcast August 5, 2012 by AMC.
28. *Mad Men*, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," directed by Alan Taylor, first broadcast July 19, 2007 by AMC.
29. *Mad Men*, "For Those Who Think Young," directed by Tim Hunter, first broadcast July 27, 2008 by AMC. In Season two's debut episode, two brash young men in overcoats and hats share an elevator with Don. They are carrying on a vulgar conversation about a particular sexual exploit, and an older woman joins them, entering the lift on another floor. As the conversation continues, and the woman becomes visibly uncomfortable, Don boils over. "Take your hat off!" he grittily commands the men.

When they don't, Don forcefully removes one of their hats and shoves it in the gape-faced man's hands.

30. *Mad Men*, "Three Sundays," directed by Tim Hunter, first broadcast August 17, 2008 by AMC.

31. *Mad Men*, "The Arrangements," directed by Michael Uppendahl, first broadcast September 6, 2009 by AMC.

32. *Mad Men*, "Three Sundays."

33. *Mad Men*, "Out of Town," directed by Phil Abraham, first broadcast August 16, 2009 by AMC.

34. *Mad Men*, "The Rejected," directed by John Slattery, first broadcast August 15, 2010.

35. *Breaking Bad*, "Fifty-One."

36. *Breaking Bad*, "Salud," directed by Michelle MacLaren, first broadcast September 18, 2011 by AMC.

37. Richard Sennett, "Street and Office: Two Sources of Identity," in *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*, ed. Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 175-190.

38. Matheson, "Clothes," 87.