GAPS AND RECAPS

Exploring the Binge-Published Television Serial

ESTHER VAN EDE

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis aims to gain a better understanding of the binge-published serial and its apparent objective to fulfill the needs of binge-watchers to watch gapless television serials. Looking at how the relationship between gaps and recaps in serial television has evolved alongside new technologies, publication methods, and viewer practices provides insights into how the serial form and serial narrative of the binge-published serial are not as pioneering as they appear. A literature review, accompanied by textual examples, illustrates that the broadcasted television serial subjects viewers to temporal gaps within episodes in the form of commercial breaks, gaps between episodes, and gaps between seasons. These gaps influence the serial form, serial narrative, and the serial's use of recaps to achieve maximum viewer retention. Technological developments provide viewers with agency over the gaps, meaning that they become capable of deconstructing the serial form to some extent by skipping gaps between episodes. This brought about the binge-watcher, to whom the binge-published serial seems to cater. However, textual analysis of the binge-published serial *Orange Is the New Black* shows that, while its serial installment shifted from that of an episode to that of a gapless season, the binge-published season is segmented into episodes by the use of non-temporal gaps. The binge-published serial's use of gaps still mimics the established broadcasted serial form and narrative in order to cater to a non-binge-watcher, but its use of recaps instead caters primarily to the binge-watcher, and only secondary to the non-binge-watcher. While seemingly redefining the ontology of the serial form, the gap between the broadcasted serial and the binge-published serial is only striking in its use of recaps.

Keywords: binge-publishing, binge-watching, gaps, narrative, Netflix, recaps, serial, television, viewers

Introduction

When the third season of Netflix' original series *Orange Is the New Black* (2013-present) was released, I binge-watched the entire thirteen episode season in just a couple of days. The Oxford English Dictionary defines binge-watching as follows: "to watch multiple episodes of a television program … in rapid succession, typically by means of DVDs or digital streaming" ("Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2013").[1] Netflix offers a Subscription Video On Demand (SVOD) digital streaming service that gives viewers the option to watch television programs whenever and wherever they would like, thereby facilitating the option to binge-watch. Several studies have revealed that more than half of Netflix subscribers and nearly all viewers with a TiVo Digital Video Recorder (DVR) have binge-watched television shows, indicating that binge-watching has become common practice amongst television viewers.[2]

Explaining how exactly binge-watching has become common practice is central to understanding the developments of serial narrative television. This thesis therefore

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[1] "Multiple episodes" often refers to three or more episodes.

[2] A study by DVR company TiVo Inc. amongst users that are part of their Advisors Panel shows that 92% of these users have binge-watched at least once and that 40% had binge-watched in the

[2] A study by DVR company TiVo Inc. amongst users that are part of their Advisors Panel shows that 92% of these users have binge-watched at least once and that 40% had binge-watched in the week prior to the study (Badagliacco). Another survey, conducted by Harris Interactive, reveals that 61% of American Netflix subscribers that stream television shows at least once a week, binge-watch these television shows at least every few weeks ("Netflix Declares Binge Watching Is the New Normal"). Binge-watching is especially popular amongst so-called millennials: the generation born approximately between the early 1980s and the late 1990s. In a study called "Can't Stop, Won't Stop: Binge-Viewing Is Our New Favorite Addiction" Miner & Co. Studio found that 61% of binge-watchers is made up of millennials (Ciaramella and Biscuiti). Another study by Verizon shows that 80% of millennials binge-watch and that 39% of them binge-watch frequently (Verizon Digital Media 40). Additionally a survey by Deloitte shows that 83% of millennials binge-watch and that 36% of them does that at least once a week (Deloitte 11).

explores how this new viewer practice evolved alongside new technologies, and the new release strategies these technologies brought about. As Amanda Lotz describes in her book *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, new technologies and viewer practices influence the production and distribution of television serials (11–15). Binge-watching—what the following quote describes as multi-episodic viewing—inspired a new release strategy for serial narrative television. Ted Sarandos, who is the chief content officer at Netflix, states:

> Our viewing data shows that the majority of streamers would actually prefer to have a whole season of a show available to watch at their own pace. Netflix has pioneered audience choice in programming and has helped free consumers from the limitations of linear television. Our own original series are created for multi-episodic viewing, lining up the content with new norms of viewer control for the first time. ("Netflix Declares Binge Watching Is the New Normal")

This new release strategy was first used when Netflix released all eight episodes of the first season of the show *Lilyhammer* (2012-present) on February 6th 2012.[3] Netflix, soon followed by Amazon and Hulu, released several programs in the same fashion, indicating that this strategy has established itself as a significant new publication model.[4] It seems that we have entered a new experimental phase of television like Judith Keilbach and Markus Stauff describe (80). While adopted by multiple platforms, there is not yet a consensus on what to call this new phenomenon.

There have been multiple ways of referring to this new release strategy in the popular press and on several blogs. It has been described as "the Netflix model" (D. Smith; Welch), "binge-releasing" (Hayes; The Deadline Team; Ygelesias), and "publishing all episodes at once" (Berk; Zacks Equity Research). The latter of which could also be understood as binge-publishing. In academia there have been very limited mentions of this phenomenon. It has been described by Michael Graves as "all-at-once" and by Lisa Glebatis Perks as "Netflix's all-in-one releases of television seasons" (Graves 224; Perks

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[3] Simultaneously *Lilyhammer* was also broadcasted on Norwegian television. Netflix was not available in Norway at the time and would not be available there until the fall of 2012. While other original web serials have been published online, for example YouTube's *Blue* (2012-present), Netflix' *Lilyhammer* was the first serial that was published in this manner.

[4] See appendix 1 for a list of serials that have been published this way by Netflix, Amazon, and Hulu.

31). There is thus a lack of unifying terminology regarding this new phenomenon. Considering its specificity of publishing all episodes of an entire season at once, which is similar to publishing a season of a serial via a DVD box set as Derek Kompare describes, I use the term binge-publishing for this new release strategy (335).[5] This coincides with Jason Mittell's declaration that the "television industry [is] migrating toward a publishing model over the broadcast paradigm" ("TiVoing Childhood" 51). In line with Henry Jenkins et al. I use the term binge-publication "as a placeholder" and "something we can shape a conversation around" to better understand this new publication practice (3).[6] I define binge-publishing as simultaneously releasing all episodes of a season of a television serial without commercial breaks via a video on demand streaming service. Additionally, all episodes have to premiere and thus be previously unpublished.

Because of this specific publication method, binge-published serials have fewer temporal gaps than regular serials. Gaps are key when looking at the interplay between viewer practices, publication methods, and serial narrative. Since, as this thesis will show, removing gaps with the use of new technologies strongly influences all three. By gaps I mean industry-enforced temporal interruptions in the viewing experience. The most important type of gap divides the serial into different installments, which, in the case of the television serial, are episodes. Longer gaps between episodes indicate a division into seasons. Additionally, there can be commercial breaks within the episodes. There are thus three different levels of gaps used in different forms of serial television: gaps within episodes, gaps between episodes, and gaps between seasons. All three types of gaps segment the serial and therefore have strong influences on both viewing practices and narrative conventions of the serial.

When these gaps can be removed, this means that viewing practices, narrative conventions, and even publication methods can change. The binge-published serial is a perfect example of one of these new publication methods, since it omits two of the temporal gaps: the commercial break within episodes and the gap between episodes. This means that binge-published serials are gapless for their binge-published

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[5] Within academic discourse on regular weekly broadcasted television serials there has been some consensus on calling the episodes of the serials "publications" (Jacobs 257; O'Sullivan, "Old, New, Borrowed, Blue" 116; Mackey 53). Additionally, the word binge-publishing has been used online sporadically regarding literature when for example referring to publishing book series with way shorter gaps in between publications than usual (Hellman; Bosman). Regarding books, the term binge-releasing has also been mentioned (Armstrong).

[6] Jenkins et al. adopt this strategy with regards to "spreadable media."

installment, which is a season. Netflix' viewers do not get to see commercials, because Netflix is based on a subscription model and not reliant on advertising revenues. Therefore, Netflix' binge-published serials do not need to include commercial breaks. Additionally, because all episodes are published at once, binge-publishing takes away an important part of serial television: the gaps between the publications of episodes. Binge-publication thus complicates the notion of the television serial form, because the binge-published serial is no longer segmented into episodes by temporal gaps between these episodes.

To determine what this lack of gaps in binge-publication has brought about for its serial form, its serial narrative, and its viewers, it is vital to list what kinds of gaps other methods of television publication make use of. Network television serials include all three gaps, while subscription channels such as HBO have been commercial free since their inception. Serials published on both of these types of channels have gaps between episodes that are usually a week long. There is another type of serial that falls under the rubric of the broadcasted television serial. Instead of, or in addition to, this type of serial is published with commercial breaks on the channel's website. Though inspired by binge-publishing, this type of serial does not fit the definition because it makes use of commercial breaks. Therefore I label this kind of serial web-published.[7] Each different model thus makes a different kind of use of gaps (see table 1). All gaps can vary in length, but what is essential is that they are all temporal in nature.

	Within episodes	Between episodes	Between seasons
Broadcast/Network	✕	✕	✕
Subscription/Cable		✕	✕
Web-published	✕		✕

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[7] Web-publishing is used by broadcast networks like Lifetime and NBC. After the first episode of *UnREAL* (2015-present) aired on June 1, 2015, Lifetime made the first four episodes of this show available online, even before episodes 2-4 had aired on the channel, and then also continued their weekly broadcast schedule (Variety Staff). Additionally, NBC did something similar when it released the rest of the season of *Aquarius* (2015-present) online merely two hours after the pilot episode aired. In an interview with Cynthia Littleton, NBC Entertainment chairman Bob Greenblatt said about this way of web-publishing: "We are fully aware how audiences want to consume multiple episodes of new television series faster and at their own discretion, and we're excited to offer our viewers this same experience" (Littleton).

Binge-published			×

Table 1. Gaps in different kinds of serial television

The use of gaps indicates the possibilities of gapless viewing, which in turn could mean different kind of narratives aimed at different kinds of viewers. Therefore the gaps can strongly affect the serial narrative as well. Because of the time that passes during a gap, viewers could end up forgetting certain narrative elements. To help viewers remember these story elements, recaps are used to bridge these temporal gaps. The Oxford English Dictionary defines recapitulation as "the action or an act of recapitulating (something); a brief restatement or repetition; a summing up; a summary" ("Recapitulation, n.1"). Recaps entail the diegetic or paratextual reiteration of previous parts of the serial narrative. They are any visual or auditory repetition of anything that has happened previously on the specific television serial.[8] The different types of recaps will be explained later.[9]

I use diegetic and paratextual recaps to explain how gaps strongly influence the use of recaps in serial television. Consequently, this will show how a lack of gaps, brought about by new publication methods and viewer practices, has the power to change the use of recaps. Thereby altering the serials' narrative to adhere to changes in the television industry. Understanding the ways recaps function thus will grant insight into new television publication methods and viewer practices.

The Evolution of Gaps and Recaps

Television is a medium in transition and binge-publication is one of its latest worldwide phenomena. The main goal of this thesis is to determine how the complex relationship between gaps and recaps in serial television has evolved alongside new technologies, publication methods, and viewer practices. Looking at gaps and recaps in the television

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[8] Recaps are not just used in television fiction, but also on the news. There have been some studies on viewer retention and recaps regarding news programs (Bernard and Coldevin; Son, Reese, and Davie).

[9] There is one type of recap that is omitted from this research, because it links to audience participation and fan culture instead of narrative practices. These are recaps that are made by viewers and are often posted online either in written form or in the form of videos. These audience recaps need a place in research of larger proportion on gaps and recaps down the line, but are beyond the scope of this thesis.

serial provides insight into how the serial form and serial narrative of the binge-published serial are shaped by its use of gaps and recaps.

To investigate the binge-publishing phenomenon I discuss gaps and recaps in US television by means of reviewing literature and by means of textual analysis of both weekly published serials and one binge-published serial: *Orange Is the New Black*. This serial is a prime candidate for analysis because it is one of Netflix' first and most popular binge-published serials (Ha). Additionally, since it has three seasons, there are two temporal gaps to analyze. The use of *Orange Is the New Black* as a case study can help to understand important ideas about this new method of binge-publication, and the changing television industry, that go beyond this specific example.

To be able to explore the consequences of binge-publication it is first necessary to establish the relationships between gaps and recaps in serial television. The first chapter therefore focuses on the history of the gap related to the serial form and the serial narrative of broadcasted television serials. The different kinds of gaps facilitate three distinct narrative conventions in the television serial: cliffhangers, ellipses, and recaps. Recaps exist in different kinds of paratextual and diegetic forms. This chapter discusses and exemplifies more in detail what a recap is exactly, why there are recaps in the broadcasted serial—to cater to different types of viewers—and what types of recapping there are. This is done in order to illustrate how the gaps and recaps are connected to one another, indicating that if one changes the other will most likely change as well.

This change in gaps and recaps is described in the second chapter. Because of new viewer practices and new publication methods made possible by technological developments, the serial and its gaps and recaps need to be reevaluated. This chapter discusses how the relationships between the gaps, the recaps, and the serial changed alongside the developments of new convenience technologies. These new technologies made it possible for publishers to publish the serials without gaps and also made it possible for viewers to skip the gaps. This option of gapless publication interferes with the original serial form and serial narrative of the television serial. The opportunity of watching the serial without gaps by means of convenience technologies gave rise to a new type of viewer that requires a different use of recaps: the binge-watcher.

The third chapter explores how the binge-published serial *Orange Is the New Black* at first seems to cater specifically to this binge-watcher by its lack of gaps. By only having a temporal gap between the publications of seasons, the binge-published serial questions the understood conventions of the television serial. However, this chapter argues that the binge-published serial still utilizes these conventions by looking at the

use of, what I label, non-temporal gaps. By examining the placements of these non-temporal gaps, and their relation to both the serial form and the serial narrative, this chapter aims to provide an explanation for their use. Since these gaps are non-temporal, there is no need for recaps to abridge them. Investigating the use of recaps in combination with the temporal gaps, the non-temporal gaps, and the temporality of the viewing experience—binge-watching evidently takes time—provides insight into the binge-published serial's intended viewers. Despite its promotion as such, Netflix' binge-published serial might in fact have not been made specifically for the binge-watcher. Even though binge-watching has become such a common practice that serials are now binge-published, viewers and screenwriters can actually still not completely escape gaps and recaps.

1. Previously on Gaps and Recaps

To be able to investigate how new technologies and publication practices influenced gaps and recaps in the television serial, it is essential to first inspect their old established meanings. What are the norms of the television serial and its recaps when the original publication of the serial included commercial breaks, gaps between episodes, and gaps between seasons? Based upon previous research and textual examples, this chapter creates a classification of the different kinds of gaps and recaps used in serial television fiction. Investigating how gaps are used to segment the serial form and the serial narrative provides a clear connection between the gaps, the serial form, the serial narrative, and two narrative elements closely tied to the gaps: cliffhangers and ellipses.

Gaps in the television serial can be abridged with the use of recaps. By establishing the types of gaps and recaps, this chapter provides a framework for indicating the relationship between gaps, recaps, and the television serial. This framework is reassessed in the next chapter when confronted with new technological developments that can remove the gaps. Additionally, it provides a proper vantage point for examining the lack of gaps in the binge-published serial, because recaps might be altered when the gaps are removed completely from the original publication.

1.1 Gaps and the Television Serial

Different publication methods make use of different types of gaps. Serial narratives are altered to benefit from these gaps. Furthermore, viewer practices are dependent on the types of gaps that are used in the television serial. To fully determine the consequences that the removal of gaps can bring about, it is thus first required to understand what the gaps can provide for the serial, its narrative, and its viewers.

Serial television can include three distinct gaps: gaps within episodes, gaps between episodes, and gaps between seasons. These three types of temporal interruptions are all "institutionally imposed gaps in the text," meaning that television producers and

distributors decide when to interrupt the serial (R. C. Allen 17). This means that viewers—or readers with regards to serial literature—do not have agency over them, as Robert C. Allen explains:

> A serial narrative is not merely a narrative that has been segmented, but one whose segmentation produces an interruption in the reading … or viewing process. Furthermore, *that interruption is controlled by the producer or distributor of the narrative, not by the reader [or viewer]*. In other words, the producer of the narrative determines not only how and when the narration of the story stops and starts, but also how and when the reader's [or viewer's] engagement with the text stops and starts." (1 *emphasis added*)

These gaps are created by means of television scheduling. Usually each week at a predetermined time the viewers have access to a new episode of the television serial text. The temporal gap between installments can have different durations depending on the television schedule as well. Often a significantly longer gap between two subsequent episodes delineates the segmentation of the television serial into seasons.

Additionally, commercial breaks can be scheduled within episodes, thereby segmenting the serial episode itself. This segmentation thus takes place on three different levels instated by gaps between seasons, gaps between episodes, and gaps within episodes. Dealing with these three gaps in more detail will show how all gaps influence viewer practices and narrative elements like cliffhangers and ellipses. Removing gaps will have consequences for all.

Gaps Between Installments

The first type of gap I wish to explain is the gap between episodes, because this gap is the most fundamental gap regarding serial television. This section serves to determine that gaps between installments are ontologically tied to the serial form and its narrative, which will give insight into the consequences for the serial form and its narrative when this type of gap is omitted.

For the television serial to be considered a serial form it has to be divided into installments that have a temporal space between them, or as Rob Allen clearly states: "disruption is endemic to serialization" (33). The gap between installments is therefore ontological to the serial form, because it is, as Sean O'Sullivan describes, "the space between publication of installments that differentiates serial fiction from every other art form" ("Old, New, Borrowed, Blue" 116). In the case of serial television, the installments

are episodes. The television serial is thus a serial, because of the temporal spaces between its episodes. Roger Hagedorn describes that "episodicity is the crucial trait which distinguishes the serial … from the 'classic' narrative text—that is, the single-unit realistic narrative, including the novel in book form, the feature film, the radio play, and so on" (28). Having these temporal spaces between episodes automatically means that television serials, as opposed to films, are not made up of a single narrative unit. Since "unlike narrative cinema, segmentation is already a property of the text" as Jane Feuer states (15). Since gaps between episodes are an intrinsic part to the television serial's form it is evident that they have influenced the serial's narrative.

The delicate part here is that there is a subdivision of the television serial *form* that has to do with its narrative *structure*. Within the serial television form there are two types of narrative structures: the series narrative and the serial narrative. The series narrative reuses the same characters and settings, but has episodic closure, as Sarah Kozloff explains (69). A serial narrative also reuses the same characters and setting but additionally is a long-form open-ended narrative (Kozloff 69). The serial narrative adapts to the weekly gaps. Mittell explains that the constraints of the weekly schedule "have helped lead to a specific set of storytelling conventions … that distinguish television as a narrative medium" ("Previously On" 79). Because the long-form serial narrative is part of the serial form, this means that it is segmented into installments consisting of episodes. The serial narrative thereby consists of the old and new, as O'Sullivan explains:

> The serial, by its nature, exists at the crossroads of the old and the new. Unlike the stand-alone novel, or a feature film, which presents itself to us in total, the serial offers constantly the promise of the new—the new installment next week or next month, often bringing with it a new plotline or character that will change everything. Given its leisurely unfolding, however, the serial also draws us into the past, as old characters appear and disappear … or old episodes of a program burrow into our memory, creating a history commensurate with our lifespan, unlike the merely posited past and present of a text we can consume in a few hours or days. ("Old, New, Borrowed, Blue" 117)

What he means is that because of the deferred closure of the narrative, the serial narrative always has space for a next installment. The story world encompasses the same characters and the same settings, always referring to something old, but because a serial envisions a next episode, there is always the newness of each new installment. The story is therefore divided into segments of episodes, but the narrative is long-form.

The new is in the foreshadowing: the promise of next week's episode. For the scope of this thesis, I will focus solely on the serial narrative, because both its form and its narrative are segmented by gaps. While the series narrative is only segmented by gaps in its form. Since the serial narrative is segmented in both its form and its narrative, this means that both are affected by the technological changes that made it possible to remove the gaps.

The second gap between installments is the gap between seasons. With regard to the television serial, there is a significant distinction to be made concerning the gaps between episodes and the gaps between seasons. This distinction has to do with the duration of the two different types of gaps. Gaps between episodes are usually a week long, but there are also gaps between episodes that can last multiple weeks (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 16; O'Sullivan, "Broken on Purpose" 67). These slightly longer gaps usually take place during for example winter breaks and are often called hiatuses. While gaps between episodes can last up to several weeks, gaps between seasons—also called hiatuses—are generally a couple of months long due to organization of television in the United States. What is key here is that even though the season might be seen as one segment, it is still sub-segmented into episodes that have temporal gaps between them. Clearly, the gaps between publications of installments segment the television serial's season into episodes.

What the gaps between installments enforce, whether they are gaps between episodes or between seasons, is the way that viewers watch the serial in the broadcast schedule. Viewers have to be tied to their television screens to be able to view the serial, if they do not have the means to record the episodes. When viewers watch the serial's episodes in the broadcast schedule, this means that they also see the commercials that are broadcasted within these episodes. Serial episodes can therefore be segmented because of the use of commercial breaks.

Commercial Break

The gaps in serial television are not just found *between* installments, but can also exist *within* installments. The third type of gap is the commercial break. This is a temporal gap that is filled with commercial advertisements. While television programs were first often sponsored, this very quickly changed to a model in which time slots within the program were sold to advertisers (Meyers 72–73). Public broadcasting originally did not include commercial breaks, since it was publically funded. Recently the lines between public broadcasting and the lack of advertising have changed though, meaning

that there can be commercial breaks during episodes that are broadcasted on public television networks (Poniewozik).

As mentioned in the introduction, subscription channels like HBO do not have commercial breaks within their episodes, because they do not depend on advertisements for their income. Instead, viewers subscribe on a monthly basis. Scheduling the episodes with gaps in between them thus generates an income, because loyal viewers will want to watch the next installment each week and these viewers will therefore keep their subscriptions. In turn, this viewer loyalty provides revenue for broadcast channels due to the inclusion of commercials within the episodes of their serials. Several media scholars have underlined that the serial narrative adapts to, and even takes advantage of, these gaps created for commercial purposes (Auslander 22; Kozloff 69; Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 25; Sodano 29). The implementation of the three different gaps brings about two distinct narrative elements that can be directly tied to these gaps: cliffhangers and ellipses.

Cliffhanger and Ellipsis

Cliffhangers and ellipses are strongly connected to the three temporal gaps. The ellipses and cliffhangers discussed here show how these elements, that arose from the industry enforced gaps, influence the serials' narrative. When gaps are removed, these initial narrative functions will be lost too.

Cliffhangers are narrative devices that are used right before a gap. As this sections shows, these cliffhangers take place on the three levels corresponding to the three different kinds of gaps. To retain the viewers' attention, serials use suspense with the use of in-episode cliffhangers right before commercial breaks (Ellis, "Interstitials" 65; Kozloff 69; Mittell, "Serial Boxes"). The cliffhangers right before commercial breaks are also there so that the viewers do not choose to switch to another channel during these commercial breaks (Hahn 11). This is something that of course would take away from the commercial networks' income, since these networks sell advertising slots based on viewer ratings. An example of a cliffhanger right before a commercial break is found in *Grey's Anatomy*'s "Testing 1-2-3" (3.24). In this episode all the surgical interns have to take a big exam. Right before the commercial break, one of the interns stares to the front and puts her pencil down without having filled in any of the questions on the exam sheet. What will happen? Viewers find out after the break.

As established, some serials do include commercial breaks, like the ones that are aired on the subscription channel HBO. Since these channels do not offer commercial breaks, their serials do not have to include cliffhangers within episodes, as Todd Sodano

describes (29). These serials without commercial breaks, however, still have gaps between the installments of episodes, since they are in a weekly broadcast schedule.

The second use of cliffhangers is right before the gap between episodes. The television serial is always aiming for another installment, therefore narrative closure is deferred. Generally this means that "each episode ends with some degree of narrative indeterminancy [*sic*]: a plot question that will not be answered until the next episode" (R. C. Allen 17). These cliffhangers are a suspenseful device to keep the viewers interested. In the case of the commercial break, this can be a minor cliffhanger such as the *Grey's Anatomy* example above illustrated.

However, on the episode level, these cliffhangers need to have a stronger sense of narrative indeterminacy to keep viewers interested enough to make them watch the next episode that is scheduled for the next week. When again looking at the *Grey's Anatomy* episode "Testing 1-2-3" (3.24) it becomes clear that at the end of the episode there are multiple cliffhangers: a pregnant woman collapses in a bar; the character Miranda is not able to talk to her young son on the phone because of her demanding work as a doctor; a new patient that survived a snowstorm, but has an axe in his head, is being wheeled into the ER; and the chief of surgery's wife collapsed on the bathroom floor. In the gap between episodes, viewers thus have significantly more suspended story elements than in the commercial gap within episodes.

The third cliffhanger takes place at the end of a season. Cliffhangers at the end of a season often entail indeterminate story elements that can lead to more severe consequences than the ones at the end of an episode, because there is a larger gap between seasons than between episodes. For example, in the second season finale of *Grey's Anatomy* "Losing my Religion" (2.27) Denny Duquette, a cardio patient, passes away after he seemed to be in the clear after a recent heart transplant. This heart transplant only happened because Izzie, a surgical intern that fell in love with Denny, worsened his condition by altering his medical treatment so that he could get higher on the transplant list. Viewers do not find out what the repercussions of her actions are until the next season.

Additionally, the second cliffhanger at the end of this episode includes a love triangle between intern Meredith, brain surgeon Derek, and vet Finn. The whole show revolves around the relationship between Derek and Meredith, so this is a major cliffhanger. Derek is married to someone else, but Derek and Meredith get together in the season finale. What does this mean for their relationships? Will Derek leave his wife and will Meredith leave Finn? These are questions that viewers can ponder over during the entire summer hiatus; the gap between seasons. What these examples have shown is

that cliffhangers are used right before the gaps and are therefore inextricably linked to the gaps. Cliffhangers are used to get the viewer to come back to the next segment of the episode, the next episode, or the next season.

While the cliffhangers take place right before the gaps, these gaps can also be used as a temporal ellipsis in the story world. A temporal ellipsis is a narrative device that is used to omit a certain part of the narrative. Television scholars have described how ellipses can be used in all three gaps: commercial breaks, between episodes, and between seasons. Both John Ellis and Sarah Kozloff explain that commercial breaks are often used as a temporal ellipsis ("Interstitials" 65; 69). Similarly, this use of a gap as an ellipsis is also seen with the gaps between episodes and seasons. Depending on the duration of the gap, this ellipsis can be longer. Several serials, for example, line up the episodes of their seasons with the duration of a school year, each season premiere matching with the protagonist's return to school. For example, during the summer hiatus between the third and fourth season of *Gilmore Girls* (2000-2007) Lorelai and Rory take a trip to Europe. When they return, Rory's school starts again. A hiatus can also be used for larger time jumps. For example *One Tree Hill* (2003-2012) used the gap between its fourth and fifth season as a four-year ellipsis. Similarly *Desperate Housewives* (2004-2012) used a five-year time jump between its fourth and fifth season. However, not always does the gap have to be an ellipsis, for example the second season of *Grey's Anatomy* starts right where season one ended. All gaps do not have to be used as narrative ellipses, but they are often used as such. Ellipses that take place during a temporal gap therefore can mark a temporal jump within the narrative world.

There is thus a connection between gaps and narrative conventions like cliffhangers and ellipses. Cliffhangers are placed right before a temporal gap, as a means to make viewers want to wait during the gaps until the next segment is offered to them, and ellipses can take place during these gaps. Since there is a temporal gap in the real world, this makes it easy for viewers to accept a temporal ellipsis in the story world. Both of these elements depend largely on the three temporal gaps: gaps within episodes, gaps between episodes, and gaps between seasons.

Gaps and Segments

What is clear is that the serial is thus segmented into different parts by the different gaps: seasons, episodes, and segments between commercial breaks. The serial narrative is very much dependent on this segmentation. Showing how even segments smaller than the ones demarcated by commercial gaps influence the serial narrative, explains how the larger segments do so as well.

The segment between commercial breaks can be sub-segmented even further. Ellis describes how television texts are divided in segments, which are "small sequential unities of images and sounds whose maximum duration seems to be about five minutes" (Ellis, *Visible Fictions* 112). He also describes, "this segmentalization is TV's own creation, and is not traceable directly to the effects of 'spot' advertisements being scattered at various moments through the TV fiction" (Ellis, *Visible Fictions* 121). Indicating that these segments are smaller than the segments between commercial breaks. Michael Z. Newman explains how segments of the television serial are used to create the narrative on the level of scenes or "beats", episodes, or "greater than one episodes" (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 17). O'Sullivan also mentions how these beats in the television serial function as a rhythm and a convention and narrative purpose (O'Sullivan, "Broken on Purpose" 63). The serial narrative thus needs segmentation to be able to let its narrative function well. While these smaller segments provide insight into the narrative of the television serial, I use the term segment to refer to a part of the narrative that is clearly delineated by two temporal gaps. Since I described three types of gaps, this evidently means that I will make use of three types of segments: seasons, episodes, and segments between two commercial breaks.

This segmentation is not just important for the serial narrative. Additionally, segmentation is key when it comes to being able to digest long-term television narratives. Watching with gaps is good for understanding the story. Robert C. Allen says, with regards to commercial gaps, that "the nature and extent of those gaps are as important to the reading process as the textual "material" they interrupt" (17). Not only the commercial gaps, but also the gaps between episodes and seasons can be useful for the viewers' understanding of the story. Mittell declares that the gaps of serialized distribution can not only "enable viewer speculation and contemplation, they can also help temper the level of emotional engagement" ("Serial Boxes"). By this he means that temporal gaps give the viewers time to digest the story on an emotional level. In the regular weekly serial, viewers are given time to let the suspenseful plot work.

Segmentation into episodes is thus endemic to the television serial form, serial narrative, and the viewers' understanding of the latter. Segmentation is brought about by the use of gaps that can be preceded by cliffhangers and used as temporal ellipsis. While the gaps maintain an important function in serial television, they bring about one downside in the viewing experience. The temporality of the gaps can lead to viewers forgetting certain storylines or characters, which is where recaps come to play an important part.

1.2 Types of Recaps

Recaps are essential because they are narrative devices that can bridge all three temporal gaps. Presenting an overview of the types of recaps provides an insight into their intended viewers. In turn, this allows an interrogation of the intended viewers of gapless publications, as will be discussed later. Serials have industry-enforced gaps because of television scheduling. These gaps influence the ways in which screenwriters of serial narratives make use of recaps. Because serial narratives have open-ended and long-form narrative with gaps within and between their episodes, recaps are instated to connect the new storylines to the old storylines in the television serial. Recaps are repetitions of previous narrative elements. Mittell explains:

> Over the course of an episode, television narratives embed minor redundancies that remind viewers of key story information, ranging from establishing visuals locating a scene's setting to subtle repetition of characters' names and relationships. The entire process of narration in a television series needs to constantly reinforce story information and remind viewers of what they need to know to comprehend the next event. ("Previously On" 82)

Recaps are essential, because they keep the viewers interested in the story. Hopefully leading to loyal regular viewers, which, in turn, leads to more profit on the networks' end. As this section shows though, recaps in serial narrative television have to accommodate new or sporadic viewers, in addition to regular viewers. To indicate all of these viewers I additionally use the term broadcast viewers.

The use of recaps "originates in a commercial function of making the narrative easily comprehended even by viewers who watch sporadically" (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 19). When it comes to weekly scheduled television, according to Mittell, the viewer is "rarely dedicated enough to consistently watch every episode in sequence" which mean that "producers are encouraged to develop strategies to … catch up erratic viewers" with the use of recaps ("Previously On" 80). Because a significant amount of viewers might have missed one or more episodes, since they are dependent on the broadcast schedule, recaps help the sporadic viewer to better understand the story. In this case the recaps fill in information that the viewer has never seen before. Kristin Thompson states that "television programs spend a fair amount of time recapping previous action … for the people who might happen to tune in at any moment" (37). This makes it easier for viewers to come in and watch a show mid-season (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 17; Mittell, "Previously On" 80). This results in recaps being used as a way

to lure in sporadic viewers that might have missed several episodes with the commercial goal of turning them into regular viewers.

However, screenwriters do not just need to write for the sporadic viewer, they also need to cater to viewers that religiously watch every single episode of the serial in order to maintain these viewers' loyalty. This is the function of recaps in which the gaps, and most importantly the gaps between installments, play an important role. While some regular viewers might still know certain story elements, it is very well possible that during the gaps the regular viewers may forget story elements or minor characters. This depends on the individual viewers memory retention, the amount of information the viewers' memories have to retain, and the time that has elapsed between segments or installments. Even the regular viewers' memory has to be constantly triggered "because of the large quantity of data about the story world that forms the background of any new developments" in the television serial (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 18).

Additionally, "the ability to process new diegetic knowledge depends on remembering what one has already learned from the text's previous installments, and situating new information in relation to the known" (Perks 74). Since many viewers are likely to forget diegetic knowledge from previous installments, because they watched these installments a week or longer ago, recaps help them understand the new diegetic elements. The regular viewers are thus being reminded of relevant information by recaps that fill in their lack of the narrative knowledge created by the gaps. According to Newman recaps contain "old information, expository material that regular viewers already well know" ("From Beats to Arcs" 18). Therefore recaps cannot be so redundant that they would bore the regular viewer, because this might lead to them not enjoying the show anymore and not continue to watch future installments.

On the other hand, even if they are redundant to regular viewers, this does not mean that the regular viewers do not enjoy them. Recaps can actually facilitate a more enjoyable viewing experience as Newman explains:

> Even regular viewers to be gratified by being reminded constantly of who the characters are, what they do, why they do it, and what is at stake in their story. Our interest and engagement can be increased when the narrative makes its most important elements clear and relevant, artfully underlining what we should pay most attention to and care most about. Redundancy functions not only to make stories comprehensible but, more importantly, to make stories more interesting and to deepen our experience by appealing to our emotions. ("From Beats to Arcs" 19–20)

Concluding, recaps provide information-hubs, or entry points for new or sporadic viewers, resulting in potential new loyal weekly viewers. Recaps are also used to help regular viewers fill up certain story elements they might have forgotten during the gaps and can even function as enjoyable moments despite their possible redundancy for regular viewers. Explaining the types of recaps used in the serial can therefore indicate the types of preferred viewers to which the serial caters. To explain the different kinds of recaps, I will make a distinction between paratextual recaps and diegetic recaps.

Paratextual Recaps

Providing an overview of the kinds of paratextual recaps and their functions gives insight into the types of viewers they are aimed at, which are both sporadic as well as regular viewers. Gérard Genette created the term paratexts to discuss texts that surround and prolong the main text (261). While Genette discussed paratexts of literature, Jonathan Gray adopted the term to explain paratexts surrounding television and film in his book *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. There are different kinds of paratextual recaps: the "previously on" segment, the opening credits, and the recap episode. The line between the text and its paratext can be blurry sometimes, because with regards to the television episode, the previously on segment and the opening credits are part of the broadcasted episode.

Right before the start of a new episode of a television serial there is often a previously on segment. This segment consists of a short montage of clips from previous episodes, often accompanied by a voice-over that says: "previously on [insert name of show here]." Derek Johnson states that previously on segments are "innovatively condensing expansive narratives into bite-sized 'snacks' that reorder old scenes within new sequences, relationships, and meanings" (Johnson). As Johnson clarifies, previously on recaps are not just a summary of previous narrative events bound to the new episodes they precede, but they are also "shaping episodes to come" (Johnson). Gray explains that previously on recaps are "offering frames through which we can interpret the text at hand, and subtly or radically inflecting our reading accordingly" (43). By providing an initial orientation, they foreshadow what is about to come in the next episode. They show viewers what to focus on while watching the episode and thus create a way to help the viewers connect the old and the new narrative elements. By steering the viewers into the direction of what they should focus on in the coming episode, a context is crafted that can help them better understand the meaning of the story according to Gray (72). Ellis describes that the previously on segment is both used for regular viewers as "they prefigure the week's plot developments and featured

characters" and for new viewers as "they provide an initial orientation" (Ellis, "Interstitials" 61–62).

For example in the previously on segment of the *Gilmore Girls* episode "Let Me Hear Your Balalaikas Ringing Out" (6.08) the character Jess and his relationship with Rory are recapped. While Jess has not appeared on an episode for over an entire season, the previously on segment indicates that this character will play a part in the coming episode. Therefore it is necessary for both the regular viewer and the sporadic or new viewer to recap his relationship to main character Rory. For the regular viewer it has been over a year since they last saw the character—if they have not seen the show on DVD as will be elaborated on in the next chapter. The new viewers need an indication of who this person is when they see him appear during the episode. Additionally, this previously on segment states how Rory dropped out of Yale and this caused a rift between her and her mother Lorelai. While the regular viewer most likely remembers these story elements, the new viewer would not know them and therefore a previously on recap is essential to the new viewers' understanding. As this example illustrates, the previously on segment shows both the regular and the new viewers what to look for in the coming episode. Additionally, the previously on segment abridges the temporal gap by reminding regular viewers of previous narrative events. The previously on segment is thus a recap element that bridges the temporal gap as well as establishes a preferred reading of the coming episode. Since this kind of recap distinctly bridges the gap between episodes, it is significant to understand new gapless publication methods.

Ellis labels these previously on segments as being part of the program, but not part of the new text: "a kind of metadata, bringing previous episodes back from the past into fleeting recall" ("Interstitials" 61). The previously on segment is thus a "separate text" from the main program (Sodano 39). Because the previously on is also a text on its own, Gray labels them "in media res paratexts" (43). There is thus a fine line between the paratexuality and the textuality of the previously on segment. As the following chapter will show, there are obviously consequences when either viewers or modes of publication remove this in media res paratext.

Another in media res paratext, the opening credits sequence, is described by Gray as "an entryway function for new audiences, introducing them to the characters, genre, themes, relationships, and general subject matter" (73). These in media res paratexts are not often thought of as a recap. However, they can in fact be labeled as such in certain circumstances. The opening credits sequence sometimes uses shots of previous episodes and thereby it can function as a recap by for example reiterating relationships between characters. While the opening credits sequence does not provide very specific

information regarding previous events or characters' names, it can introduce characters and their relationships. When an opening credits sequence does the latter, it functions as a proper recap for both the sporadic viewers as well as for the regular viewers. For example the opening credits sequence to *Gilmore Girls* clearly introduces the main characters by using shots from previous episodes. The seventh season of *Gilmore Girls* opening credits includes shots from the very first episode, re-establishing the relationships between Lorelai, her daughter Rory, and her parents at the start of every episode. These are story elements that regular viewers are expected to know and thereby the opening credits, when used in this specific way, can function as a recap mostly for sporadic and new viewers.

A more important function of the opening credits sequence is that it suggests that the episode "is not a totally self-contained identity" but instead is part of a serial, according to Ellis ("Interstitials" 61). The opening credits sequence therefore relates each individual episode to being part of the serial. This means that the opening credits are also capable of bridging a temporal gap and the opening credit sequences can thus connect the old and the new just like a recap.

The last type of paratextual recap is the recap episode. A recap episode is a type of clip show: an episode made up completely out of pre-existing shots and scenes edited in a new way. These recap episodes can be dedicated to recapping part of a season, an entire season, or even multiple seasons. Acting as a cliff notes version of the television serial, TV Tropes describes the recap episode as "an episode that sums up a season or storyline by showing clips of significant events" ("Recap Episode"). An example of this kind of recap episode is *Once Upon a Time*'s episode "Magic is Coming" (2.00). Broadcasted right before the season premiere of season two, it gives viewers a recap of first season by using scenes and shots from the entire first season. The first two minutes of the recap episode reestablish the most important characters in the narrative world. Shots of the characters are accompanied by one non-reused element, namely a voice-over that accompanies the clips to clarify them:

> VOICE-OVER: Once upon a time, every storybook character you've ever known lived in an enchanted world where magic was a way of life, but in this land magic always comes with a price. An evil queen blinded by vengeance unleashed a powerful curse and banished every storybook character to a place where all their lives and memories were stolen. This place is our world and every soul is trapped in the town of Storybrooke, Maine where the evil queen makes all the rules. And only one person can break the spell.

The rest of this recap episode continues to summarize the main events of the first season in such a way that one does not necessarily have to have seen every episode of said season. Recap episodes are thus "often used to help new viewers get acquainted with the storyline" ("Recap Episode").[10] By placing the episode right before the start of the new season, a recap episode abridges the large gap between seasons. It can therefore be seen as a very long previously on segment ("Recap Episode"). The recap episode's placement thereby also makes it very useful for regular viewers, since it most likely has been several months since they have seen an episode.

These recap episodes do not necessarily have to be placed only right before a season premiere. One example of a different placement is *Grey's Anatomy*'s "Straight to the Heart" (2.12) broadcasted in between episode twelve and thirteen of the second season. The gap that needed to be bridged here was not a gap between seasons, but a winter break that lasted a couple of weeks. Instead of recapping just the second season so far, it recaps the first season as well, starting from the beginning.

Because they make use of previous shots that are just edited in a different way, these types of clip shows are rather cheap to produce. While the episodes can function as a long previously on aired right before a new episode, they can also be broadcasted in the original timeslot, thereby functioning as an additional episode. Because they are episodes themselves, this makes the distinction between paratextual recaps and diegetic recaps even more complex. Because of this blurriness between paratextual and the text of the serial, removing these paratextual recaps could have severe consequences for the text itself. Regardless of their label, these types of recaps clearly function to cater towards both sporadic as well as regular viewers.

Diegetic Recaps
Not only does the television serial make use of paratextual recaps, but there are also recaps within the diegetic world of the serial. Diegetic recaps have some of the same functions as paratextual recaps, namely they function to bridge temporal gaps for regular viewers and serve as entry-points for new or sporadic viewers. As multiple television scholars have noted, diegetic recaps can be utilized both auditory with the use of dialogues between characters in which they explicitly state character names or refer

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[10] Clearly, not all opening credits can serve as a recap. For example the opening credits of *Lost* just entail the word LOST in white letters on a black background, thereby in no way indicating characters and their relationships.

to things that happened in the past, or visual with the reiteration of props or locations (Bourdaa 36; Kozloff 70; Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 18; Mittell, "Previously On" 82).

Recapping is done with auditory recaps like the use of dialogues to reiterate characters' names and previous events. Thompson discusses how in-episode dialogue recaps should not seem too fake (68). Thus these recaps need to blend in with the rest of the dialogue. An example from the episode "I'd Leave My Happy Home for You" (6.20) of *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-present) is used to illustrate this type of recapping.

BONNIE:	So are we gonna talk about it?
ELENA:	What?
BONNIE:	Seriously? You're gonna make <u>your best friend</u> have to pry it out of you. I know about <u>the cure</u>, <u>Elena</u>.
ELENA:	You do? How is it even possible?
BONNIE:	<u>Damon</u> called me last night, and he told me everything, including <u>his insane plan to take it with you</u>.
ELENA:	<u>Damon</u> called you?
BONNIE:	He needed someone to talk to after <u>you left the conversation without telling him what you were thinking</u>.
ELENA:	That's not exactly how it happened.
BONNIE:	And I quote: "She stared at me like I was an alien and then basically teleported out of the room."
ELENA:	<u>Damon Salvatore stands in front of you and tells you that he wants to become a human again</u>. Wouldn't you freak out? I just I needed some time to process. I mean, <u>twenty-four hours ago, I didn't even think it was possible to become a human again</u>.
BONNIE:	But you wanna be a human again.
ELENA:	Yeah. Well, I did. Honestly, <u>it's all just very complicated right now</u>.

In this excerpt, two main characters, Bonnie and Elena, hold a short conversation in which they recap important events that happened on previous episodes of the show. The underlined parts can be seen as the excessive recap elements. While it makes sense that the character Bonnie would like to know what is going on in her best friend Elena's life, she does not need to clearly emphasize both her name and the fact that she is her best friend, since these things should be a given by the sixth season.

Additionally, both of them mention the character Damon, even including his last name Salvatore, which can be seen as very excessive. With regard to auditory recaps like these, Newman lists two specific kinds: "the perpetual naming of characters" and "role reiteration" ("From Beats to Arcs" 18). Both of which are clearly used in this example.

This conversation also recaps that there is a cure, which can make them human again, and that this makes Elena's life very complicated. While this scene does not mention that it is a cure from vampirism, this must be clear to viewers, since the whole serial is about vampires. Recaps like these thus appear to mostly cater to the new viewer since the regular viewer might consider information like the constant reiteration of names and relationships somewhat excessive.

To make them appear less redundant, recaps like these are often structured "as a series of revelations from one character to the next" (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 19). By repeating the story elements in conversations, like the one exemplified above, diegetic recaps appear to be a more necessary part of the plot instead of excessive repetition. Embedding the recap in a revealing conversation is therefore considered to be less disturbing to regular viewers, since they can see characters' reactions to narrative elements.

Not all recaps are as distinct as auditory recaps. Less explicit are visual recaps. These recaps function more as subtle devices to help regular viewers connect the new diegetic information to their old diegetic knowledge. Mittell says: "As television is both an audio and visual medium, *visual cues* like objects, setting, or shot composition can serve the function to activate long-term memories" ("Previously On" 85). Visual cues are thus also a form of recapping. For example, in *How I Met Your Mother* (2005-2014) the blue French horn was re-used as a symbol of the relationship between the characters Ted and Robin. Besides the visual cue being an object, it can also be a location. For example, when characters in *Grey's Anatomy* end up in the elevator together, this often indicates that something exciting and romantic might happen between them. Regular viewers' long-term memories are thus activated by the location. Mittell adds "typically, visual cues are more subtle than dialog, functioning less to catch-up viewers who might have missed an episode than integrating more directly into a naturalistic style of moving image storytelling" ("Previously On" 85). The visual recaps are therefore probably more aimed towards the regular viewers than to the new or sporadic viewers.

A recap form that combines both the auditory and the visual is the repetition of previous shots within episodes. This is different from the previously on segment or the recap episodes, because while those are paratextual recaps, the repetition of previous shots *within* episodes makes them diegetic. This form of in-episode recapping is used for example when, before a character dies, there is a montage sequence of highlights from that character's life. This is a type of recap that for example happened on the *Grey's Anatomy* episode "How to Save a Life" (11.21) right before the beloved character Derek Shepherd passes away. Similarly when characters are faced with the possibility of dying,

like the character Peyton Sawyer on *One Tree Hill*, this kind of montage is also used. This happens in the episode "With Tired Eyes, Tired Minds, Tired Souls we Slept" (3.16). While Peyton thinks of her relationship with her on-again off-again boyfriend Lucas, a series of shots of the development of their relationship illustrates her thoughts.

Besides just using multiple shots or scenes from previous episodes, there can also be episodes that are for the most part made up out of repetition of previous shots. These kinds of episodes are described as being a type of clip show as well, because they introduce a new diegetic episode that is "constructed around excerpts from previous episodes" (Leggott 30). Different from the recap episode, which is also a clip show, these kinds of episodes integrate the clips into a new diegetic episode. The recap episode only repeats previous shots without the addition of new scenes or shots. Similar to the recap episode, the kinds of episodes can be seen as filler episodes. These clip shows "save on money by simply having the characters sitting around reminiscing and having those memories appear on the screen as the clips" (Brock 42). Usually these shots happen in a character's internal flashback. For example, several episodes of *Friends* (1994-2004) use these kinds of internal flashbacks to recap entire storylines. For instance the episode "The One with the Invitation" (4.21) summarizes the main events regarding Ross and Rachel's relationship through internal memory of characters. While the initial function of these kinds of clip shows might be to be a filler episode, they also do in fact provide recaps for both the regular and the new or sporadic viewers.

What this paragraph has shown is that even though some recaps cater to sporadic viewers, all recaps cater to regular viewers. Regular viewers are viewers that watch the serial in the weekly broadcast, which means they watch the serial with gaps between episodes. This means that all recaps are used to bridge these temporal gaps between installments. In turn, this is vastly significant when looking at the use of recaps when it became possible to for viewers to skip the gaps, because the function of recaps as gap abridgements then disappears.

Chapter 1. Recap

This first chapter discussed the different kinds of gaps and recaps. Gaps between installments of episodes are essential to the serial form making the gap ontologically tied to serial television. This is relevant for the connections between publication methods and gaps, since this definition of seriality will change with the advent of new publication possibilities.

There are three different types of temporal gaps: within episodes, between episodes, and between seasons. The frequency and length of gaps depends on the

broadcast channel and therefore commercial breaks within installments are not always present. All gaps can distinctly affect the narrative. Not only is the serial narrative segmented per definition, but there are also two narrative elements strongly linked to the gaps. Cliffhangers are placed right before the gaps, and the gaps are often used as temporal ellipsis.

Recaps are used to bridge the gaps for regular viewers, since the temporality of these gaps might have made them forget story elements. What this chapter showed, however, is that recaps do not only have to cater to regular viewers that might have forgotten story element because the gaps are temporal, but that recaps also cater to new and sporadic viewers by introducing them to main story elements. Recaps additionally are used to emphasize a preferred way of looking at the serial story world by focusing on specific story elements more than on others. Because it is now clear what the functions of the different kinds of recaps are and to which types of viewers they cater, it is possible to explore what happens to the recaps and their intended viewers when gaps are omitted.

Television technologies, publication methods, and viewing practices have undergone significant changes. In the next chapter, I will therefore discuss the multiple ways in which the viewers can skip the gaps and also the ways in which the gap is intentionally deleted with different publication methods that make use of new technologies. Removing the gap influences the narrative elements so closely linked to gap. Alongside these developments, a new type of viewer emerges: the binge-watcher or gapless viewer and this might affect the need for recaps.

2. Removing the Gap

LUKE: (Picks up a VHS tape) 21 Jump Street, season one? You do not need this.

LORELAI: I need my Jump Street.

LUKE: So buy the DVDs. It'll save you a ton of space.

LORELAI: No. The DVDs won't have the commercials on them. The original commercials, which is half the fun.

While the character Lorelai on the *Gilmore Girls* episode "Always a Godmother, Never a God" (6.04) describes how watching a show on VHS tape with the original commercials is fun, a lot of viewers prefer to skip commercials, says Jason Jacobs (259). One way to actively avoid having to watch these commercials is by recording the serial episode and watching it later at a more convenient time: a practice known as timeshifting.[11] Not just the commercial break can be skipped with new technologies. Additionally, new technologies give viewers the option to watch multiple episodes without gaps and thus binge-watch. By watching episodes back-to-back, viewers are therefore also not experiencing the weekly gaps between episodes or even the gaps between seasons. What happens to the television serial form, its narrative, its gaps, and its recaps when viewers are given the option to watch a serial without gaps by means of new technologies?

     This chapter describes how technologies, viewer practices, and narrative all shape new conventions regarding gaps and recaps by providing an historical overview of convenience technologies and their publication methods that made it possible to skip or alter the different kinds of gaps. It explains how the Video Cassette Recorder (VCR), Digital Video Recorder (DVR), Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), and Video On Demand (VOD)

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[11] Actually the remote control gave viewers the first opportunity to 'escape' the commercial breaks by switching the channel (Uricchio 168). However, when the remote control was just introduced, viewers still had to wait for the commercials to be over before they could return to their program, thereby making the viewers subordinate to the temporality of the gap.

influenced viewer practices, like timeshifting and binge-watching, and narrative elements like cliffhangers, ellipses, and, most importantly, recaps. By reflecting on how both viewers and screenwriters previously dealt with the use of gaps and the use and placement of recaps, this chapter illustrates how previous practices paved the way to binge-publication.

2.1 Gap-Removal Technologies and Practices

New technologies advanced the viewers' ease to watch television serials without gaps. Not all technologies make it equally simple to skip the different types of gaps. This historical overview of convenience technologies shows that watching without gaps can take place in two ways: fast-forwarding or skipping the commercial gaps, and skipping the gaps between installments. Binge-watching, binge-viewing, or media marathoning recognizably developed alongside the emergence of convenience technologies. In turn, since binge-publication caters to these binge-viewers by offering a gapless season, this overview shows how its essence is rooted in earlier technologies.

Watching without gaps does not necessarily mean binge-watching, since when viewers watch a singular episode without commercial breaks, they are not binge-watching serial television. The ability to skip commercial gaps, however, does contribute to gapless viewing. When viewers decide to skip the gaps between installments and watch multiple episodes in rapid succession they are binge-watching (see figure 1). This differs from watching the serial in the weekly broadcast schedule, since there are no temporal gaps between episodes anymore (see figure 2). One viewer practice, facilitated by technologies, that paved the way for binge-watching is timeshifting.
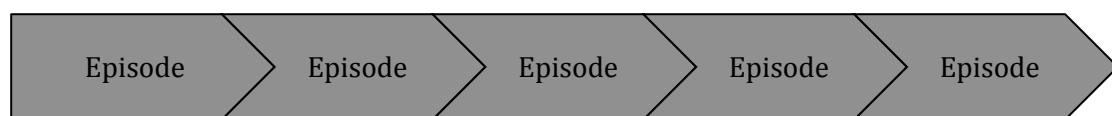

Figure 1. Binge-watching the television serial

Figure 2. Watching the television serial in the broadcast schedule

Timeshifting with VCR and DVR

The first gap-removal technology made it possible to skip the commercial gap. In the 1990s it became common practice to record programs with the use of a VCR or DVR. The possibility to record the broadcast facilitated the viewer practice of timeshifting. Timeshifting is the possibility to watch a show at the viewers' own convenient time by recording it and then watching it at a later moment. Kompare states that timeshifting is "recording programs for later playback" and "only a postponement of [the] broadcast" (340). Timeshifting thereby gives viewers the opportunity to "fast-forward through commercials" (Kozloff 69). While not completely removed, the temporal gap within the serial episode can be reduced to the time it takes the viewers to fast-forward through the commercials.

Timeshifting already existed in the era of the VCR, but it is a practice that has become way more common with the introduction of TiVo and other DVRs. The difference between the VCR and the newer DVR is that with the use of the DVR timeshifting is "promoted as the obvious and routinized ways to interact with the medium" of television as opposed to a more marginal practice of watching serial television in the broadcast schedule, according to Jacobs (259). Research conducted in 2015 by Hub Entertainment Research shows that timeshifting has become prevalent, since polled viewers timeshift 53% of the television they watch (HUB Research). Viewers are thus less dependent on the television schedule and its industry enforced gaps.

Since viewers can schedule their own viewing time, timeshifting evidently influenced the ways viewers watch television. O'Sullivan says that television scheduling "has been drastically eroded by the technology of the digital video recorder (DVR), which allows viewers to control what they watch, and to become, in effect, bricoleur programmers" ("Broken on Purpose" 67). Therefore the viewers are less reliant on the broadcast schedule and instead program their own television schedule by means of bricolage: they create their own viewing schedule out of pre-existing segments. Mittell states that "for children of the DVR era, the whole idea of watching programming based on a particular time or channel seems arbitrary or artificial" ("TiVoing Childhood" 51). Gapless viewing outside of the broadcast schedule became a valid option for viewers.

The most important gap the VCR and DVR could alter is the commercial gap. Since the commercial gap is filled with commercial advertisements, the VCR and DVR transformed "the idea of interruption as a feature of the medium" of television into "one of textual pollution that can be removed, rather than an aspect of the medium that has to be endured, tolerated, or (in some cases) enjoyed," says Jacobs (259). As the

introduction to this chapter showed, this enjoyment may exist with some—albeit fictional in the *Gilmore Girls* example—viewers. But it is clear that the commercials themselves are not part of the serials' text. Ellis says that the commercials are seen as an "annoyance or an interruption to be avoided" by a lot of television viewers ("Interstitials" 60). The introduction of timeshifting made it possible to watch the serial without these commercial and, as Jacobs says, this means "to purify the connective tissue of the schedule, to remove the adverts, promotional material, and other pollution that gets in the way of the 'pure' text" (257). While this wish for a pure text is already honored on subscription channels like HBO, the possibility to purify the serial episode by removing commercials indicates a progression towards gapless viewing.

Timeshifting does not just make it possible to fast forward the commercials. Additionally, by means of timeshifting, viewers can skip the gaps between episodes. Viewers are therefore also creating their own viewing rhythm by timeshifting: they can watch either one or multiple episodes (Simons 181). Perks states that "media marathoning has its roots in content delivery innovation of the 1980s, the VCR" (xv). One of the first to mention the practice of binge-watching—but not yet calling it that—in television studies was Henry Jenkins in 1992:

> My wife and I watched the final season of *Blake's 7* in less than a week, sometimes viewing as many as three or four episodes in a row; our fascination with the unfolding plot could be satisfied through our control over the tapes in a way that it could not be through weekly broadcasts. (Jenkins 73)

This means that timeshifting technologies lead the way to binge-watching, while viewers are still dependent on the television schedule. The possibility to binge-watch became a lot easier with the introduction of the DVD box set.

DVD

DVD technology transformed the publication possibilities of the television serial. By aiming at a different viewer market, of which timeshifters are a part, the DVD tries to please these viewers. This way of publishing television started in 2000 with *The X-Files* (1993-2002) (Kompare 335). The publication of the television serial on a DVD box set made it possible to more easily skip the gaps within and between installments. Lotz explains that viewers often turn to DVDs to be able to watch a serial without commercials (73). Although it appears similar to timeshifting, the main difference is that this is not a recording of the original broadcast that includes the commercials. Meaning

that watching a DVD is not timeshifting in its original definition. DVDs make it easier to watch without commercial breaks than with the use of the VCR and the DVR. This is because, with the use of the latter two, viewers still have to actively fast-forward the commercials if they wish to purify the text of the serial.

Not only do viewers wish for a pure text without commercials, additionally they want a pure text "that is distinctively not part of the television" broadcast, as Mareike Jenner mentions ("Is This TVIV?" 10). So besides the fact that viewers would like to remove the commercials and with that the commercial break, additionally, viewers appreciate they can remove "the tedium of week-long waits between plot developments" by viewing serials on DVD, says Lotz (73). When a television serial is published as a DVD box set, this thus gives the viewers the possibility to consume it at their own convenience. Because the serial is removed from the broadcast and published on DVD, it becomes an object on its own, as Matt Hills describes (45). An opinion he shares with Kompare, who claims that television shifted from a broadcast model to a publishing model with the coming of the DVD box set (338). In this publication the gaps between episodes are removed, catering to the binge-viewer. The DVD greatly amplified the ease of binge-watching, since viewers are not reliant on a broadcast schedule like they were with the use of VCRs and DVRs, because all episodes are already bundled together.[12]

VOD

While with a DVD box set the viewers can own a physical copy of the serial, VOD does not allow for such a thing. With VOD, instead of paying for a physical commodity, the viewers pay for a service (like Netflix), for a single episode (like iTunes), pay-per-view (in a hotel), or sometimes it is free (on an airplane). Just like the DVD, VOD also often gives the viewer the possibility to watch without gaps, because all temporal gaps can be

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[12] Binge-watching, or marathon viewing, was, and still is, in fact also possible in the broadcast with so-called marathons on television. Often channels will broadcast multiple episodes of a serial back to back, which enables binge-watching. However, these broadcasts still have commercial gaps and do not give the viewer any agency as when to pause and create their own gaps unless they have a DVR. One example would be the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) marathon on Pivot that took place (in the days leading up to) Halloween 2014. Even the website of the channel called the Halloween broadcast a "12-hour binge" indicating how much the term is embedded in the present discourse surrounding television serials (Pivot). For more on marathons hosted on television see for example Perks (xx).

deleted from the serial. VOD is another way of publication brought about by new technological developments. In this case, technological developments that are often used for VOD are streaming and downloading. William Uricchio says that thanks to "the television medium's own shift from broadcasting to a variety of alternate carriers (cable, satellite, and video-on-demand systems), content has been loosened from any particular distribution form, thereby giving the Internet access to once-exclusive televisual domains" (Uricchio 175). The television serial is one television program that is distributed on multiple platforms. This possibility to distribute the serial via VOD makes it possible to publish the serial without gaps, but this is not always the case.

While Michael Strangelove explains that viewers often turn to VOD to watch without commercials, they are not always removed in VOD (126). For example, when viewers miss an episode of *The Vampire Diaries* in its original broadcast schedule, but would still like to watch it, the viewers can go to CWTV.com to watch it online. This is something that P. David Marshall labels "catch-up television" and that I would list under web-publication, as described in the introduction to this thesis (44). The catch with this catch-up television, however, is that the episodes that are posted on this website *do* have commercial breaks. Ellis states that these streams have "a few more of the attributes of a broadcast" (*TV FAQ* 222). This then makes this latter kind of VOD more similar to timeshifting, since the commercial gap is still part of the viewing experience.[13] Since viewers are not able to fast-forward these commercials, they are forced to watch the episode with commercial gaps. Thereby this type of VOD works against gapless viewing.

However, commercial-free VOD does facilitate gapless viewing. Additionally binge-watching is made effortless if all episodes of a serial are made available via VOD. While with the DVR and the DVD binge-wachting was more of an option, with VOD it has become the norm. Perks says that "advances in content delivery technologies have clearly enabled rapidly evolving relationships between reader and text" and that "media marathoning is one notable pattern in these evolving reader/text interactions" (185). New technologies thus catered more and more towards the binge-watchers that want to watch multiple episodes of the serial outside of the broadcast schedule.

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[13] Yet these commercials are not the same as the ones in the original broadcast. Because they are online commercials, they are often tailored to the individual viewer with the use of algorithms.

Binge-Watching

By looking at the evolution of different technologies, it has become evident that they gradually made it easier to skip all three gaps. It is now possible to watch without gaps between episodes and thus binge-watch. Regardless of which technology viewers use, temporal control is one of the main reasons viewers binge-watch, according to Jenner, because viewers want "autonomy in scheduling when they want to watch" a serial ("Is This TVIV?" 10). Instead of abiding by the rules of the television broadcast, the viewers can create their own rhythm by, in the case of binge-watching, watching multiple episodes consecutively. Perks labels this practice of viewers that "alter their daily schedule to accommodate the marathon" as "schedule shifting" (22). The possibility to binge-watch thus gives the viewers temporal control over the television text (Mittell, "Serial Boxes"; Newman, "TV Binge"). Jenner says that "the proliferation of DVD box sets in the last decade certainly supports the assumption that viewers ... prefer to watch the series as it suits their own schedules rather than that of a TV broadcaster" ("A Semi-Original Netflix Series"). Some viewers even purposely wait until the DVD release to binge-watch the entire season (Lotz 73). Binge-watching therefore makes viewers more aware of the installments of seasons as narrative units (Newman, "TV Binge"; Newman and Levine 141). Viewers can even go one step further and wait for the complete series to finish before picking it up (Perks xxix). If the viewers wait long enough for the serial to be completely finished and published as a complete series box set, it is possible to watch every episode of a show without *any* temporal gaps. It seems more likely though that viewers will just watch a couple of episodes, but they now have the agency to decide that themselves.

The gaps that *can* be there during binge-viewing are interruptions that happen because the viewer pauses a serial themselves or because they are interrupted "from beyond the digital system" (Jacobs 256). This means that the kinds of temporal gaps that happen when viewers watch the serials outside of the broadcast are purely viewer made. For example when viewers have to go to the bathroom, eat, or sleep. The viewers now have agency over the gaps, meaning that all gaps are viewer induced. This leads to viewers having the option to choose to follow the pre-determined gaps by pausing the serial at a moment where an original temporal gap used to be, or to choose themselves when they want to create a gap. Mittell describes this regarding the gap between episodes: "While a boxed viewer can recreate this gap by self-pacing a series, the normal model of consuming a bound serial is to move forward as time permits, not as dictated by a forced schedule" ("Serial Boxes"). These viewer-induced gaps therefore can be extremely arbitrary, meaning that they have no influence on the use of cliffhangers or

temporal ellipses. Binge-watching thus liberates viewers from having to stick to any kind of pre-determined gaps at all, but instead they can pause whenever they want. They are in control of their own scheduling.

However, binge-watching can also indicate a loss of control. Agency over the gaps grants viewers the freedom to binge-watch. But are their desires of temporal control actually met? While it may seem like the viewers are given temporal control, the option of binge-watching can also have negative consequences for the viewers. It is interesting that binge-watching is seen as giving viewers temporal control, since the word 'binge' in binge-eating or binge-drinking indicates a loss of control. There are therefore also reasons to see binge-watching as a very negative viewer practice. While "people want control over their media consumption … for some, binge-viewing signals a *loss* of control" according to Chris Rethore (MarketCast). This loss signifies the lack of viewers' abilities to create their own temporal gaps by pressing pause. Without the top-down gaps, viewers have access to entire seasons, which might lead them to indulge on episode after episodes in a not so healthy fashion.

An example of this loss of control is illustrated in the sketch comedy show *Portlandia* (2011-present). In the episode "One Moore Episode" the characters Doug (Fred Armisen) and Claire (Carrie Brownstein) have to attend a birthday party. However, Doug just got the first season of *Battlestar Galactica* on DVD. After some discussion about whether or not to attend the party a bit later, they decide to watch one episode. After watching it, both of them think the show is really good so they choose to watch one more and then decide to cancel on the birthday party so that they can watch another episode. They wanted to watch one more episode, but then all of a sudden it is eight hours later. Because they love the show so much, they do not go to work and continue watching the show. This goes on and the next day they are still on the couch tied to their television screen surrounded by empty takeout containers and used wineglasses. They have not showered in a couple of days, they lost sleep, Claire lost her job, they are ignoring the phone calls they receive, and they even got their power service shut off for a while because they did not pay the bills. They are totally immersed in binge-watching and Claire gets super excited about the next episode. But then they realized that they watched it all, resulting in Claire screaming in disbelief.

While this *Portlandia* sketch obviously paints an exaggerated picture of the consequences of binge-watching, it is actually not that surreal as one might think. As Perks' research shows, binge-watchers are prone to lose sleep, eat poorly, ignore family, or put off work while they binge-watch (24–27). Binge-watchers can thus skip the gaps while in some cases simultaneously skipping important parts of their daily lives. This

indicates a loss of control. It must be noted that not a lot of research has been done yet about the consequences of binge-watching, so the idea that viewers can lose control up to the point where they neglect daily life is a preliminary statement.

Whether or not viewers deliberately choose to binge-watch because they have temporal control or binge-watch because they are unable to stop, it is unmistakably a new viewer practice that leaves them in a narrative world for prolonged periods of time. Multiple media scholars have stated that binge-watching leads to a more immersive viewing experience (Mittell, "Serial Boxes"; Mittell, *Television and American Culture* 425; Newman, "TV Binge"; Perks xxiv; Simons 186). This immersion in a story world for extended periods of time gives binge-watchers "stronger diegetic memories" (Perks xi). This means that, because binge-watchers spend extended periods of time in a narrative world, their memories about this narrative world are easier retained than while watching the episodes with industry-enforced gaps.

While immersion might give binge-watchers enhanced diegetic memories, it can also prevent them from understanding the diegetic world. In line with how watching with gaps is key to understanding narrative, as described in the previous chapter, in an interview with Chris Smith, psychiatry scholar Greg Dillon states that he believes that binge-watching does not let the viewers have the possibility to let the story sink in completely and does not give them the opportunity to appreciate and look forward to the next part of the story (C. Smith). Perks also talks about this when she says that binge-watching leaves open "less time for critical analysis" and is "less reflexive" (Perks 71). If the gaps are skipped, this then does not leave the viewer enough time to emotionally digest the story.

The viewing experience changed with convenience technologies and its new publication methods. New technologies facilitated a new viewer practice, namely that of gapless viewing. As a conclusion of this historical overview, the agency of the implementation of temporal gaps thus shifted from the television industry to the viewers. Whether viewers are capable or not to actually enforce this agency over the gaps is up to the individual viewer. Watching without gaps became so popular that it eventually inspired binge-publication. With an understanding of how interrelations between technology and viewers gave rise to binge-watching, the next step is to investigate how the possibility of removing the gaps affected the serial form and serial narrative.

2.2 Gapless Serial?

It is clear that a new kind of viewer, the binge-viewer, emerged from the intricate interplay between new technologies and their users. The previous section explained how technologies and gapless viewing evolved towards viewers having agency over the gaps and thereby being handed the temporal control over their own television scheduling. By explaining this new possibility to watch without gaps, this section shows how the serial form, the serial narrative, and its use and meaning of cliffhangers and ellipses has changed.

Deconstructing the Serial Form

As stated in the previous chapter, the gap between installments is ontological to the serial form. The possibility of removing this gap thus has severe consequences for the serial form. According to Sodano, the new convenience technologies of the twenty-first century have immensely complicated the notion of the weekly gap between episodes in serial television (33). Not only the new technologies, but also the new viewer practice of binge-watching made it possible to skip the gap between installments. Consequently, the possibility to remove this gap questions the ontology of the serial form.

Since there are no longer gaps between installments, technically viewers are therefore "using [convenience technologies] to de-construct the notion of seriality itself" as Mélanie Bourdaa describes (40). The television serial that is broadcasted on a weekly schedule has temporal gaps between episodes and is therefore not "a text we can consume in a few hours or days" as O'Sullivan explains ("Old, New, Borrowed, Blue" 117). It only becomes a text like that after it has been broadcasted and viewers watch the serial by means of convenience technologies. To binge-watch a serial via convenience technologies is most definitely consuming a text in a few hours or days and therefore in no way a serial in the literal sense according to his definition. To build on Bourdaa's and O'Sullivan's ideas, I would therefore like to say that, because serials can be published without gaps between installments, which makes them available for binge-watching, the meaning of the term serial seems to have shifted. With the publication of the serial on a DVD box set, the serial installment changes from consisting of episodes to consisting of seasons. This can even go a step further when all seasons of a serial are released in one big box set. If the latter is the case, there is no seriality at all anymore, just one publication.

However, the episodes of the television serial are initially published in the broadcast schedule before they are torn from it, stripped of their gaps, and offered to the

viewers in a DVD box set. Meaning the serial was a serial in the traditional sense before it was published and lost its seriality. Because it was once part of a broadcast schedule, the serial is still very much segmented into episodes. This can be clearly seen in the following example of the DVD menu of the third season of *Lost* (see figure 3). By offering a "season play" and an episode selection, the viewers are offered the option to either watch the entire season or individual episodes. While published as one installment, the season is thus still segmented into its initial publication form of episodes.

While removing the gaps can change the serial form to having installments consisting of seasons instead of installments consisting of episodes, its segmentation into episodes is still clear. Even though the publication of DVD box sets opts to deconstruct the serial form, the fact that the episodes premiered in the weekly broadcast schedule indicates that this serial form was there initially. Therefore, the possibility to re-publish a serial without gaps on a DVD box set does not change the definition of the television serial completely. The gaps between episodes still exist on the DVD publication, but they lost their temporality in the re-publication of the serial. This distinct difference between temporal gaps and non-temporal gaps helps to understand the binge-published serial, which I will return to in the following chapter.

Figure 3. Lost *season 3 DVD menu*

Additionally, since the serial has the same segmentation as in the broadcast, its commercial breaks can also linger on its DVD publication. Episodes are often divided into chapter selections that allow the viewer to view the segments of the episode that were originally the segments in between the commercial gaps. Within episodes, DVDs

still fade to black at the places where commercials used to be when the episodes were originally broadcasted. The gaps thus are clearly visible on the DVD publication, because DVDs are re-publications of the original broadcast publications of the serial that in fact included these gaps. While the serial form did not change its essence, the possibility to skip these gaps did influence the serial narrative.

Gapless Serial Narrative?

By explaining new narrative structures, this section argues that the possibility to publish and watch season installments gives way to creating serial narratives that can be more complex and can have longer story-arcs. This, in turn, is important when looking at the use of recaps, since increased complexity seems to call for increased recaps.

Since binge-watching has become a popular way of viewing television, "television storytellers need to create programs that remain compelling whether viewed in weekly broadcast installments or binged boxes" (Mittell, "Serial Boxes"). The new publication methods and viewer practices these new convenience technologies brought about have enabled more advanced narrative techniques according to several media scholars (Newman and Levine 138; O'Sullivan, "Broken on Purpose" 69; Sodano 30). One of these narrative developments is an increase in narrative complexity. When viewers have the option to pause, rewind, and re-watch the serials, this facilitates the possibility for screenwriters to include more complex storylines (Mittell, "Serial Boxes"). Mittell describes narrative complexity by stating that the narrative plotlines interweave with each other in a complex manner (Mittell, "Narrative Complexity" 33–34).

One element of narrative complexity is that the serial narrative can progress towards a narrative unit of a season, instead of having to include strong episodic closure. The season can be seen as "novelistic" and it has a unified and coherent narrative (Newman and Levine 141). Television serial narratives are already open-ended and long-form, but according to Perks, narratives increase in complexity, because "digital technologies facilitate easier, user-centered access to media texts" (185). This can be connected to the new publication method of the DVD box set, in which the season is published as a unified whole. As Todd VanDerWerff describes "former media scholar… Scott [Eric Kaufman]'s suggestion to me is that binge-watching fundamentally changes the basic unit of cinematic storytelling from the episode (30 to 60 minutes) or film (90 to 180 minutes) to the season, which can run well into the hundreds of minutes" and that this in turn means that "storytellers aren't just adjusting to this; they're increasingly catering to it, telling longer and longer stories" (VanDerWerff). Binge-watching enables viewers to better understand the complex storylines and nuances in

long-form serial narratives (Gillan 83; Graves 228; Mittell, "Serial Boxes"). Narrative developments are thus connected to new technologies, but they are also connected to new viewer practices.

More complex narratives arose from close interplay between gapless viewers and gapless technologies. Additionally, having the option to skip the gap in the viewing process, might lead to different implementations of the narrative elements that are so tightly linked to the gap: the cliffhangers and ellipses.

Cliffhanger and Ellipsis

Since the function of cliffhangers and ellipses depends largely on the gaps, the possibility of watching without gaps seems to take away their initial function. Looking at the way cliffhangers and ellipsis work for binge-watchers gives insights into how removing gaps influences the use of these cliffhangers and ellipses.

Binge-watching seems to pose problems for the power of cliffhangers. When deleting the temporal gap between episodes, the delayed gratification model these gaps bring about is also removed. By removing this delayed gratification, the cliffhanger loses its power to maintain suspense, as Gillan explains (85). Bourdaa's research found that binge-watching in fact deletes the cliffhangers' power to maintain suspense (41). Additionally, in Raj Devasagayam's study on binge-watching, in his very small focus group (n=30) it was said that cliffhangers were not a reason to continue binge-watching (42). This indicates that cliffhangers might not serve any particular suspenseful function for the binge-viewer, since the delayed gratification model does not function anymore when gaps are removed.

However, I argue that cliffhangers do still very much retain their original function during binge-watching. For this, not only the temporality of the gap, but also the temporality of viewing needs to be taken into account. Instead of looking at the temporal gaps as places in which the delayed gratification takes place, the temporality of the serial itself can keep the cliffhangers and their delayed gratification intact. Since, complex narratives not necessarily resolve the cliffhangers immediately after the cliffhanger, but there can be multiple scenes from other storylines in between. According to both Mittell and Perks, suspense is one of the main reasons for viewers to binge-watch ("Serial Boxes"; Perks 64). Cliffhangers are the epitome of suspense. Therefore, the cliffhangers can still function as a catalyst for binge-viewers to watch more of the serial. Seeing how the use of cliffhangers still maintains its original function during binge-watching indicates that their inclusion into serial narratives works for both the weekly viewer and the binge-viewer. Therefore, this element that is so strongly

tied to the gaps, has been able to distance itself from the temporal gap to some extent. Its purpose of creating a 'gap' between problem and solution is still maintained, meaning cliffhangers have not lost its function for binge-watchers.

Temporal ellipses between episodes, on the other hand, do not have the same effect at all when viewers binge-watch as when they watch a serial on a weekly schedule. Since, as Grant McCracken describes, most serials are "built to play at weekly intervals," when viewers binge-watch these serial, they "compress the arc of the narrative until it becomes one great blur" (McCracken). If the narrative makes use of an ellipsis that is approximately the duration of the gap, watching it on a binge can make it feel like the story is compressed or rushed. For example a natural development of characters falling in love, moving in together, and getting married functions well when the serial is watched on a weekly broadcast schedule, but can seem overwhelmingly fast for the binge-viewer.

The interplay between binge-watching and convenience technologies brought about new writing strategies for serial narratives aimed at functioning better for the binge-watcher instead of the weekly viewer. The ultimate example of this is the serial *24* (2001-2014) that excluded the use of ellipses in temporal gaps between its episodes and thereby catered its narrative to the binge-watcher. Simultaneously it still functioned in the broadcast schedule as well, since the commercial gaps were used as temporal ellipsis. Because each episode of the show is supposed to represent one hour of one day, and the initial publication of episodes was in the broadcast schedule, the temporality of the commercial gaps is included in the story. Binge-watching without these commercial gaps thus, consequently, does not add up to twenty-four hours of television.

While viewers can watch the serial via convenience technologies, the original publication of the serial is still in the broadcast schedule. The possibility of binge-watching influenced the function of cliffhangers and ellipses. Cliffhangers seem to have distanced their function from the gaps, but ellipses need the temporal gaps to function more appropriately. These narrative techniques need to function in both the regular broadcast as well as on a different publication like the DVD box set, but their prime focus is to function well in the broadcast premiere. Not only these narrative elements are influenced by the possibility of gapless viewing. Additionally, the possibility of binge-watching affects the use of recaps in the serial.

2.3 New Recap Strategies

In my goal to chart the configurations of new technologies and narrative developments, the binge-watcher has taken a prominent place. Additionally, serial narratives developed towards being able to have more complex narratives, because of the possibility to watch them by means of convenience technologies. By looking at the use of recaps in these complex narrative serials, this section determines how serial television has taken into consideration the binge-viewer in addition to the viewer that watches in the broadcast schedule.

One of the main functions of recaps is to bridge the temporal gaps for weekly viewers. When viewers have the option to skip these gaps by means of binge-watching, this function of recaps disappears. Binge-watchers have "stronger diegetic memories," as Perks describes, because they do not have to work hard to remember what happened on the serial weeks or months ago, since they have seen it very recently (xi). Binge-watchers therefore do not need recaps the same way as sporadic or regular weekly viewers, because they have not experienced these gaps.

On the other hand, since new technologies brought about more complex narratives, the weekly viewers require more distinct recaps to help them untangle the complexity of the serial narrative. According to Dawson, for viewers to understand and enjoy the complex serials they are required to watch every episode (43). However, in practice this is not always the case since, even though technology gives them the opportunity, not all viewers want to, or have time to, watch every episode of a complex television serial. With the development of more complex narrative shows, recaps thus still need to be included in order to manage the viewers' memory (Mittell, "Previously On" 81). Therefore recaps in the narrative complex serial still need to keep the broadcast viewers, which consist of regular or sporadic viewers, in mind.

These are two complete opposites: binge-viewers appear to need fewer recaps and broadcast viewers seem to need more recaps because of the increasing complexity in the serial narrative. Recaps "cannot be so redundant as to bore or annoy … DVD viewers who might be watching an entire season in a marathon binge" (Mittell, "Previously On" 82). To cater to both the sporadic, regular viewer, and binge-viewer, the recaps need to maintain a balance between being deemed necessary and seen as redundant. Showing how screenwriters deal with recaps to cater to both viewers provides insight as to how the possibility of gapless viewing influences the use and function of recaps. In turn, this emphasizes how ways of viewing, technologies, and narrative are all connected.

Distinguishing the diegetic and the paratextual recaps is essential because it shows how the different viewers are addressed in different ways.

Diegetic Recaps

Diegetic recaps are used within the story world of the serial. Their main functions are to give introductory information to sporadic or new viewers that start watching mid-episode, and to bridge temporal gaps between episodes for regular viewers. Binge-watching eliminates both of these functions. The first function of diegetic recaps is lost, since binge-watchers can now be "expected to watch every episode of a series from the beginning" (Newman and Levine 130).

Furthermore, since there are no temporal gaps to bridge when viewers binge-watch a serial via convenience technologies, the function of the diegetic recap as bridging temporal gaps loses its use for the binge-watcher. Meaning that technically there do not have to be any diegetic recaps in the age of convenience technologies, since those technologies give all viewers the option to re-watch episodes to understand the narrative information they might not have understood the first time around or might have forgotten. Mittell explains how complex "serials like *Lost* or *Battlestar Galactica* exhibit a distinct lack of redundancy and internal reminders making the ability to selectively rewatch on demand essential to many of today's narratively complex series" and "viewers can reference a work from their shelves to fill-in gaps or refresh their memories of past events or moments" ("Serial Boxes"). There appears to be less need for diegetic recaps, because viewers now have easy access to re-watch a serial by means of convenience technologies.

However, since the original publication of the serial is still in the weekly broadcast, recaps still need to cater the broadcast viewers as well. One option to create balance between recaps for the binge-watchers and the broadcast watchers is by shifting the primary use of recaps from diegetic towards paratextual.

Paratextual Recaps

Similar to diegetic recaps, paratextual recaps provide abridgments of gaps for weekly viewers and information-hubs for new or sporadic viewers. Paratextual recaps are important for the broadcast viewers, because complex narratives can be too complex to understand without some aid of paratextual recaps. For example, the previously on segments are evidently useful for the regular viewers as a mnemonic device to bridge the temporal gaps.

Additionally, they function for new viewers as well. Gillan describes about the complex serial *Lost* how the "producers had to offer longer and longer 'previously on Lost' recaps" for new viewers to make any sense of the next episode (142).[14] Because there is no time to include a very extensive previously on segment in front of every episode in the broadcast schedule, a new form of paratextual recapping emerged.

In addition to the previously on recap segment, technological changes and publication methods also gave way to new paratextual recaps. Television has established itself outside of the television broadcast schedule, indicating that television serials are capable of transgressing the borders of the medium. The digital short emerged online as a new form of paratextual recap.

As Max Dawson describes, digital shorts are "fast-cut web videos" that last a couple of minutes, recap the serial, and are posted online by the networks (38). Especially complex narrative serials benefit from these digital shorts, because of "the intricacy of their multithreaded narratives and the scope of sweeping season—and medium—spanning story arcs" (Dawson 38–39). They serve the same functions as other paratextual recaps, which are to bridge gaps for weekly viewers, to provide information for new or sporadic viewers, and to instate a preferred reading for all viewers (Dawson 40–47). While they are similar to recap episodes, they are shorter in length, which makes them more akin to previously on segments. However, their placement is different from the previously on segments. Instead of appearing in front of the episodes in the broadcast schedule, digital shorts appear online afterwards in the gaps between installments, as Dawson explains (42). This makes them distinctly not in media res paratexts like the previously on segment, but instead these digital shorts should be seen as what Genette describes as epitexts: paratexts that are temporally disconnected from the main text (Dawson 42; Genette 262).

Like the diegetic recaps, the paratextual recaps do not need to function as abridgements of temporal gaps for binge-watchers, because binge-watchers watch without these gaps. The paratextual recaps differs from the diegetic recaps, because

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[14] While I explicitly stated I am only discussing serial narratives, here I wish to make a preliminary note on series narratives. The complexity of serial narratives would have been too difficult to remember without excessive recapping, therefore, it makes sense that the dominant narrative structure of the time pre-convenience technologies was a series narrative. Episodic series narratives are not long-form and therefore do not need much recapping. This development from series narratives to serial narratives happened gradually, alongside the availability of convenience technologies that made it possible to skip the gaps.

binge-watchers can easily skip them while they binge-watch. Additionally, while not very common, the previously on segment is in some cases removed from the DVD publication of the television serial. Because paratextual recaps, like commercials, can be removed to purify the text of the serial, viewers can be more immersed in the story world.

While binge-watchers often skip the in media res paratexts like the previously on segment, they also miss out on other paratextual recaps simply because they did not experience the gaps in the broadcast schedule. Sodano states that "one of the major elements that both fills and represents the gaps is the paratext" (35). He continues to argue that "binging removes viewers from these paratext[s] … in the gaps between" episodes (Sodano 32). Because the serials are watched outside of the temporal context of the broadcast schedule, the viewers are not able to experience these paratextual materials the same way as viewers who watch a serial during the broadcast schedule (Brooker; Mittell, "Serial Boxes"; Newman, "TV Binge"; Sodano 32).[15] Since recap episodes are placed in these gaps between installments, binge-watchers miss out on them. These recap "clip shows were more appreciated by viewers in the days before reruns, syndication, and videotapes/DVDs provided an alternative way for them to revisit the old moments of their shows" ("Clip Show"). Binge-watchers also miss out on the new digital shorts, since these are also placed in the gaps. This means that binge-watchers either remove paratextual recaps themselves, or they cannot watch the paratextual recaps in the original gaps, since binge-watchers do not experience these original temporal gaps. This does not appear to be an issue, because binge-watchers do not need paratextual recaps to bridge the temporality of the gaps.

However, even though binge-watchers do not need the paratextual recaps' function of bridging weekly gaps, removing these paratextual recaps also makes the binge-watchers lose out on their other functions. Paratextual recaps, like the previously on, also function as viewer guides of what to focus on in the next episode. As Johnson states, when paratextual recaps are excised, they change episodes (Johnson). In media res paratexts like the previously on segment, as Gray describes, "build themselves into the text, becoming inseparable from it" (Gray 43). When viewers do not watch these paratexts, they additionally take away the recaps' function as guide to the next installment, which could leave them with a lack of knowledge about the serial (Sodano

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[15] While here I am talking about the paratextual recaps, these scholars mean all paratextual materials, also including those made by fans.

35). This means that, despite their enhanced diegetic memory, removing the paratextual recaps could have consequences for the binge-viewers' understanding of the complex narrative of the serial.

Paratextual recaps thus at first appear to be the perfect type of recaps for both the broadcast viewers as well as the binge-viewers. Broadcast viewers watch them in the broadcast, or with the new digital short in the gap between episodes, to bridge temporal gaps or to provide initial information. Binge-watchers can simply skip over these paratextual recaps in order to get a purer text, because they do not need their function of abridging temporal gaps. By removing the paratextual recaps, binge-watchers additionally remove the paratextual recaps' function of guiding viewers through the coming episodes, which can leave binge-viewers with a lack of knowledge about the narrative. Despite this latter statement, the fact that serial screenwriters adhere to gapless viewing is evident, because of the shift of creating recaps that are more paratextual than diegetic in nature. Viewer practice and technological developments of gapless viewing thus influence the use of recaps.

Chapter 2. Recap

By showing how new convenience technologies made it possible to skip gaps, this chapter analyzed how a different way of approaching the television serial form and the television serial narrative have emerged. Viewers are able to skip the commercial gaps by timeshifting with the use of VCR and DVR. Television serials are also published via gapless DVDs or VOD. Binge-watching is possible, because these convenience technologies make it an option for the viewer to watch a serial without temporal gaps between the episodes. This means that the possibility of gapless viewing, and the publication of gapless seasons, seems to have changed the meaning of the serial form towards a serial with installments consisting of seasons instead of installments consisting of episodes.

However, before they were published in a season installment, these serials were once part of a broadcast schedule. Therefore, their original serial form is still segmented into episodes. Meaning that, even though technologies made new publication methods possible, the television serial form in essence did not change. What did change is that the possibility of removing gaps gave way to a new type of viewer: the binge-viewer that watches without gaps.

The combination of technologies and gapless viewing made it possible for serial narratives to become more complex. Complex narratives require a lot of recapping for the weekly viewers, but binge-watchers need fewer recaps because of their stronger

diegetic memories and the fact that they watch without temporal gaps. Placing recaps in detachable paratextual forms, like the digital short, seems to have solved this dilemma, because binge-watchers can easily watch the serial without these paratextual recaps. Showing how the recaps' function of gap abridgement can be removed from the binge-watching experience, provides insight into how the binge-published serial can make use of its recaps in a serial that has fewer temporal gaps because of its original publication method. Which, in turn, provides insight the types of viewers these recaps cater to.

3. Gaps and Recaps in the Binge-Published Serial

Television viewers, technology, and narrative all evolved up to a point where there now is a binge-published serial that seems to be specifically catered to the binge-viewer. By looking at both the binge-published serial's form and narrative, this chapter aims to determine where gaps take place in order to better understand how this new publication method treats the television serial. At first it appears as if binge-publication, the temporal gap between seasons, and Netflix' Post-Play technology that facilitates binge-watching, all work together to create an installment consisting of a season. By doing so, the television serial form appears to have ontologically shifted its meaning from having installments consisting of episodes to having installment consisting of seasons.

However, by means of a textual analysis of *Orange Is the New Black*, this chapter continues to argue that this shift has still not taken place completely. *Orange Is the New Black* is a Netflix serial made by Jenji Kohan and is based on the memoir *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* (2010) written by Piper Kerman. The story is about a young bisexual woman named Piper Chapman (Taylor Schilling) who is sentenced to fifteen months in prison because she smuggled drug money for her lesbian lover Alex Vause (Laura Prepon) when she was in her early twenties. She has to trade her upper middle class lifestyle and her fiancé Larry Bloom (Jason Biggs) in New York City for a life behind bars where all kinds of interesting people surround her, including her ex-girlfriend Alex.

The serial was first offered to both HBO and Showtime, which are subscription channels that both publish episodes on a weekly broadcast schedule. However, both passed it on and Netflix picked it up (Kohen). This indicates that perhaps some of the first season might not have been written for binge-publication initially. The second and third season, however, were without a doubt intended to be binge-published. Three seasons of the show have already been published and the serial has been renewed for a fourth season (Sprangler, "Netflix Renews").

By looking at the serial narrative, its use of cliffhangers and ellipses, and Netflix' interface, this chapter shows that the season of the binge-published serial is still segmented into episodes with the use of non-temporal gaps. Looking at how both paratextual and diegetic recaps are used to deal with the temporal and non-temporal gaps determines the binge-published serial's preferred viewer. In turn, this analysis shows that with the use of non-temporal gaps in the binge-published serial, the ideal binge-viewer is actually overshadowed by the non-binge-viewer.

3.1 The Seriality of the Binge-Published Serial

As explained in the introduction to this thesis, binge-publishing is simultaneously releasing all episodes of a season of a television serial without commercial breaks via a video on demand streaming service. Binge-published serials do not have temporal gaps between and within episodes and the only temporal gap is the gap between seasons. Its original publication therefore is made up of installments consisting of seasons instead of installments consisting of episodes. Since the television serial form ontologically is made up of episodes that have temporal gaps between them, the meaning of the serial form evidently appears to shift when these gaps between episodes are removed by binge-publication. This shift towards an installment consisting of a season is amplified by Netflix' Post-Play technology.

Netflix' Technology and the Season
Netflix tries to cater to the binge-viewer by binge-publishing the entire season of a serial as one installment. This cohesiveness of the season as one installment is amplified by Netflix's opt-out Post-Play technology. With this technology Netflix seems to facilitate that all the episodes of a season can be viewed without distributor-enforced gaps. Post-Play makes the next episode play automatically after fifteen seconds (see figure 4). While fifteen seconds are technically temporal, these fifteen seconds do not actually form a temporal gap *between* episodes, since the end credits are still rolling while the viewers are 'waiting.' When the Post-Play screen is shown, viewers have to actively press pause when they do not want to see the next episode. Netflix' content delivery service caters to binge-watching, or as Perks explains: "Netflix's interface … follows marathon logic, attempting to coax readers into further episode viewing" with the Post-Play function (Perks xxv). By allowing the viewers to automatically watch multiple episodes, this Post-Play technology seems to underline the season as one installment. This is especially the case, because Post-Play does not take place at the end of a season,

which again emphasizes that the only gap is the one between seasons (see figure 5). This means that not only the binge-publication of the entire season, but also the Post-Play technology emphasizes the nature of the season as one serial installment.
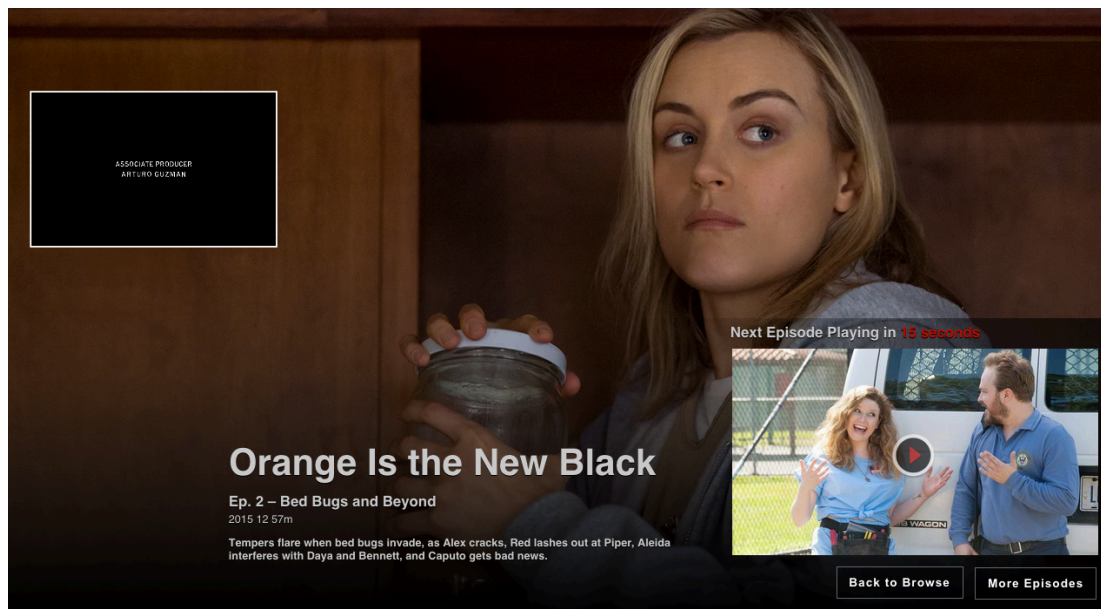

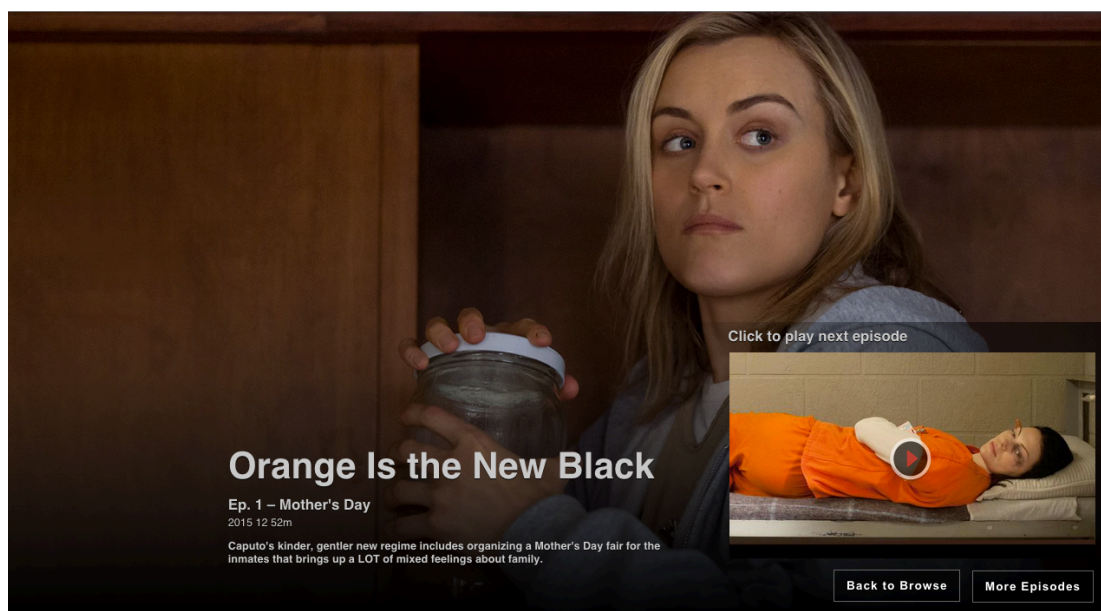*Figure 4.* Orange Is the New Black *Post-Play*

Figure 5. No Post-Play at the end of a season

Understanding the season as one installment is amplified by a second function of the Post-Play technology as well, namely the fact that it skips previously on segments and opening credits. Which are both elements that can be seen as being paratexts that

stand in the way of a pure text. When the Post-Play function was introduced, Netflix did not skip the previously on segments and the opening credits of all the serials in the Netflix database (Netflix). However, at the moment of writing, Netflix's Post-Play function does skip both of these. Skipping the previously on segment can have a similar effect as with the removal of the previously on segment on the DVD box set, as described in the previous chapter. Viewers can miss out on the guidance the previously on segment provides them in order to be able to understand the coming episode. Even though *Orange Is the New Black* does not make use of previously on segments, describing this new function of Post-Play technology of skipping previously on segments and opening credits sequences is relevant. This is because this technology also skips the opening credits, which *Orange Is the New Black* does have.

According to Gray "opening credits help to transport us … out of 'real life' and into the life of the program" (75). This transportation is not necessary when one is already in the life of the program. Showing the opening credits again would only interrupt the binge-watching experience. Because the opening credits can be seen as an interruption, it makes sense that Netflix decided to remove them, because this will lead to more immersion for the binge-viewer. The previously on segments and opening credits sequences do not disappear, since rewinding the episodes can still access them. Therefore it is less of a loss than when they are completely deleted from the publication. While watching *Orange Is the New Black* on a binge, the opening credits are thus only shown the first time they appear, thereby deconstructing this episodic marker.

The fact that Netflix' Post-Play technology automatically plays the next episode, and thereby skips the previously on and the opening credits, underlines that the binge-published season must be seen as one installment that can be binge-watched. Netflix' Post-Play technology, binge-publication, and binge-watching thereby have *seemingly* ontologically changed the meaning of the television serial. Does this imply that the narrative of *Orange Is the New Black* has morphed into one gapless narrative unit that is made purely to be binge-watched?

3.2 Gaps in the Binge-Published Serial *Orange Is the New Black*

Even though, as the previous section showed, binge-published serials appear to have changed the serial installment from that of an episode to that of a season, its serial narrative and Netflix' interface clearly indicate a segmentation into episodes. Looking at this segmentation can help to understand the binge-published serial and its relation to

the previously established definition of the television serial that makes use of installments consisting of episodes.

Instead of having temporal gaps between installments of episodes, the gaps between binge-published episodes are what I describe as non-temporal gaps. Taking the same place in the narrative as the temporal gaps, non-temporal gaps clearly delineate the segments of the serial form. Non-temporal gaps are gaps that appear in the same positions as the temporal gaps, but they are evidently not temporal in nature. Described in the previous chapter as a remnant of the original broadcast publication that lingers on the DVD box set, the non-temporal gap here is not left over from a real temporal gap. Instead, non-temporal gaps mimic the temporality of the temporal gap between episodes. Looking at the serial's use of cliffhangers, ellipses, episodic closure, and editing determines the placement of these non-temporal gaps. Additionally, Netflix' interface amplifies the use of non-temporal gaps.

Examining the placement of these non-temporal gaps determines how the serial form of the binge-published serial, that is made up of installments consisting of seasons, is not as clear-cut as it first appears. In turn, these non-temporal gaps have a different need for recaps, since they are not temporal like in the weekly-published serial. By looking at the use of non-temporal gaps, this section observes how the binge-published serial does not only cater to the binge-watcher, but instead embeds the non-binge-watcher in both its narrative in addition to Netflix' technology and interface.

Segmentation into Episodes by use of Cliffhanger and Ellipsis

I have used the cliffhanger and ellipsis as narrative devices that clearly demarcate the gap. While at first these narrative elements were used in relation to the temporal gap, here I use them in relation to the non-temporal gap. By looking at the use and placement of cliffhangers and ellipses, this section determines where these non-temporal gaps are situated.

While there are no weekly temporal gaps, there are distinct cliffhangers at the end of every episode of *Orange Is the New Black*. The cliffhangers thus take place right before the non-temporal gap between episodes. For example, the episode "I Wasn't Ready" (1.01) ends with Piper finding out Alex is in the same prison as she is. In episodes to follow she has to deal with this. Or the episode "Thirsty Bird" (3.01) ends with Piper finding out that Alex told the truth in court about the people they knew in the drug cartel while she herself lied. In later episodes the consequences of this cliffhanger are shown: Alex is released, while Piper is still held up in prison.

Every episode of *Orange Is the New Black* ends with a cliffhanger thereby suspending a story element. Even though there are no gaps of temporal nature, the cliffhangers are very distinct at the end of each episode. Then the screen fades to orange (see figure 6)—orange literally is the new black here—and the credits roll. The cliffhangers strongly suggest that there is a gap between episodes, but there are no temporal gaps, therefore it is a non-temporal gap.
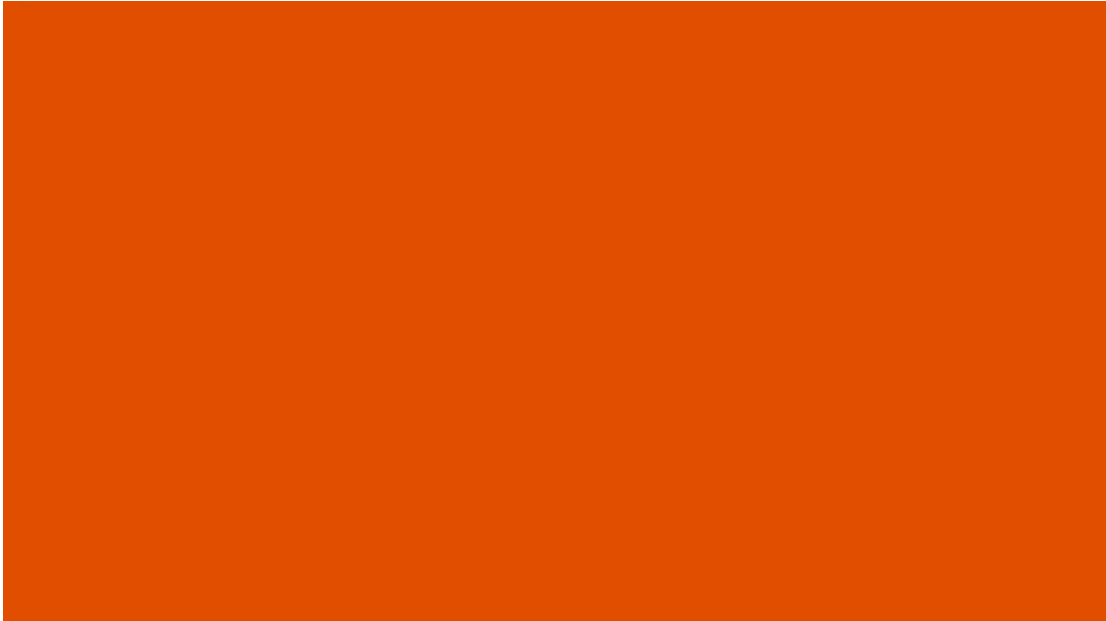

Figure 6. Fade to orange instead of black right after the cliffhanger at the end of each episode

The function of the cliffhanger is to keep suspense by delaying gratification through open-ended story lines. While the suspension with cliffhangers in the binge-published serial do not have to last long—viewers have to option to watch the following episode instantly—their use can be seen as a suspenseful plot element when looking at the temporality of binge-watching itself. As stated in the previous chapter, the cliffhanger does not just delineate the gaps, but is also used as a catalyst to make viewers watch more. The inclusion of cliffhangers specifically dividing the season into episodes seems unnecessary with the binge-published serial, since its installment is a complete season. This means cliffhangers could potentially be placed anywhere in the story.

However, the cliffhangers' placement very distinctly segments the season into episodes. Since this segmentation into episodes is so strongly found in the use of cliffhangers, it can be assumed that, in addition to the binge-watcher, another type of viewer needs to be taken into account when discussing the binge-published serial. This other viewer is the non-binge-watcher. In this sense *Orange Is the New Black* thus caters

to the possibility of watching the serial with gaps, since it is already pre-segmented into episodes.

Not only do these cliffhangers clearly delineate the end of episodes by taking place in front of non-temporal gaps, but additionally, and logically, they also take place right before the temporal gap between seasons. The cliffhangers at the end of the seasons are more intense than the rest of the episodes. The season one finale "Can't Fix Crazy" (1.13) has two major cliffhangers: Piper and Larry break up and the feud between Piper and Pennsatucky escalates into a big fight between the two of them. The last episode of the second season "We Have Manners. We're Polite." (2.13) ends with the characters Rosa and Vee both escaping prison individually at around the same time. Rosa then kills Vee by hitting her with the van she escaped in. Season three's final episode "Trust no Bitch" (3.13) ends with a plethora of cliffhangers: the character Stella is being framed by Piper, because Stella stole money from Piper, Alex is frightened she will be killed when she comes face to face with a hitman she knows who poses as a prison guard, Dayanara's new baby ends up in the hands of the police after they violently arrest Caesar who was taking care of her baby, and there are new bunk beds installed in the prison waiting for the arrival of busloads of new inmates. These cliffhangers are intense, since they have to keep viewers in suspense for an entire year, which is the only temporal gap in the binge-published serial. The use of cliffhangers thus marks the temporal as well as the non-temporal gaps. Cliffhangers function similarly in front of the non-temporal gaps as well as in front of the temporal gaps, namely as a suspenseful device to make viewers continue to watch.

As mentioned, the temporal gap can make a temporal ellipsis in the story possible. The temporal gaps between seasons do make use of larger temporal ellipses. Between the first and the second season Piper spends a month in solitary as she states herself in the episode "Thirsty Bird" (2.01). Between the second and the third season, the temporality is not as clearly mentioned, but it is also roughly a few weeks. By creating longer temporal ellipsis between seasons, the seasons are clearly segmented.

Additionally, the sub-segmentation into episodes can also be found in the use of ellipses. While the non-temporal gaps between episodes are not necessarily used for temporal ellipses, the episodes themselves do suggest a similar progression of weekly episodes, by roughly using one episode to cover each week Piper is in prison. This is very clear in the first season, because the episodes' topics would actually line up perfectly with a fall broadcast schedule: there is a special Thanksgiving episode and a special Christmas episode and everything is spaced out in such a way that it would fit if the season started in the fall. A reason for this could be that, as mentioned, *Orange Is the*

New Black was first offered to HBO, so the first season was maybe written with a different publication method in mind. However, each episode from both the second and the third season also marks about one week in prison for Piper. As stated in the previous chapter, binge-watching can actually make a weekly story feel compressed. The reason for holding on to this weekly progression again indicates the segmentation into episodes that can function in the weekly broadcast.

It is thus clear that, even though *Orange Is the New Black* is binge-published without gaps between episodes, it still is segmented into episodes. While binge-published shows do not have temporal gaps between episodes, they do have non-temporal gaps between episodes. These non-temporal gaps are in some ways treated like temporal gaps, because they make use of cliffhangers and ellipses in a similar fashion as weekly-published serials. Looking at the sub-segmentation of the episodes by means of non-temporal gaps provides insight into where the segmentation stops. In turn, underlining that the episode is the smallest segment of the binge-published serial that is demarcated by gaps.

Episode Segments without Commercial Breaks

It has now been established that the binge-published serial is still very much segmented into episodes and therefore it is still grounded in the previously established television serial form. This is again amplified by the both the narrative closure and the editing on an episodic level. The segmentation therefore stops with the episode as one segment, since the episodes are not sub-segmented by non-temporal gaps within episodes.

Since Netflix is based on a subscription model instead of an advertising model, there is no need to include commercials within episodes of *Orange Is the New Black*. According to Sodano the lack of commercial gaps has consequences for the narrative because there is no need to create in-episodic cliffhangers (29). The lack of in-episodic cliffhangers indicates a lack of non-temporal gaps within episodes. Showing how the editing of episodes does not allow for non-temporal gaps to appear within episodes implies they only take place at the end of episodes.

Orange Is the New Black does not have commercial breaks, but neither does it facilitate distinct narrative spaces within episodes where commercial breaks could occur. As described, a practice seen on a lot of DVD box sets of serials that were once in the weekly broadcast is that within episodes the screen fades to black at a moment where a commercial break used to be. Since *Orange Is the New Black* does not make, and never has made, use of commercial breaks, the screen does not fade to black (or orange)

at instances where a commercial break could potentially be. Meaning that there are no non-temporal gaps within episodes.

Instead, the episodes are edited in such a way that adjoining scenes are connected through their visuals or their dialogue by means of hooks as David Bordwell describes (Bordwell). This way of editing leaves no place for non-temporal gaps. For example, the episode "Lesbian Request Denied" (1.03), that focuses on transgender Sophia, combines a shot of her pre-transformation and post-transformation staring at herself in the mirror. It is edited in such a way that the character bows her head down in the flashback to rinse her face, and then brings it back up in the prison (see figure 7 and 8). The shots are hooked together.

Figure 7. Sophia shot one

Figure 8. Sophia shot two

Visual and dialogue are combined for example in the Dayanara-centric episode "The Chickening" (1.05). The character Dayanara flushes a note through the toilet in prison and in the next scene, which is a flashback scene, her sister says to her: "Dayanara! I unclogged the toilet. There was a Barbie in it." The audio of the last shot of the first scene runs over slightly into the first shot of the next scene. The seamless editing with the use of hooks does not give very distinct non-temporal gaps within the episodes, in turn presenting the episode as one narrative unit.

The narrative of *Orange Is the New Black* holds a very strong episodicity, by using almost every individual episode to focus on one of the inmates' back-story, sometimes combined with Piper's or Alex's back-story. *Orange Is the New Black* has a large ensemble cast and uses flashbacks to illustrate these characters' stories. These flashbacks contain a storyline that is wrapped up in a single episode. Oftentimes this flashback story explains what the character did to land themselves in prison. For example the episode "Imaginary Enemies" (1.04) explains how Claudette, Piper's roommate, ended up in prison. In this episode, several flashbacks make clear that Claudette was a maid when she was young and later became the head of the cleaning company. It appears as if she is in prison for harboring illegal fugitives as maids, but at the end of the episodes it is revealed that she murdered a man who abused one of her maids. This storyline completely wraps up in this episode. In this sense the binge-published serial is very much like the weekly serial: leaving "causal chains dangling, but seldom at the expense of sacrificing resolution and coherence, seldom in a way that promotes textual instability or radical, modernist aperture" (Newman, "From Beats to Arcs" 20). There is thus a balance between narrative deferment and episodic closure, but episodic closure is still very much present. Binge-publication therefore did not turn the serial narrative into a thirteen-hour movie.

Segmentation in Netflix' Interface

Not just the binge-published serial's editing and narrative, but also Netflix' interface enforces these non-temporal gaps that clearly delineate the episodes. By showing the episode titles and short description, this interface very much resembles the interface of a DVD box set (see figure 9).
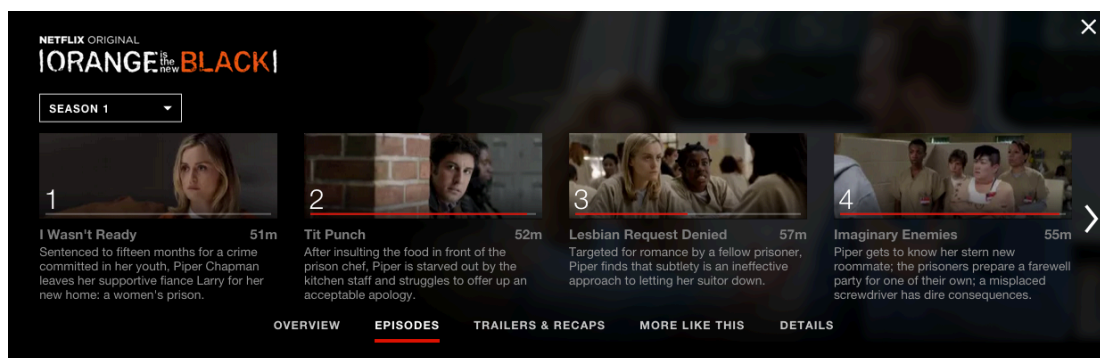
Figure 9. Orange Is the New Black *episodes*

While its publication method and Netflix' Post-Play technology facilitate the season of the binge-published serial as being one installment, the season is still clearly segmented into episodes. This is apparent, because of the placement of non-temporal gaps between episodes. This means, while it is a new way of publishing serial narrative television, binge-publication has actually still not changed the installment of the serial from an episode to a season completely. Therefore, I identify a degree of continuity with older serial television models. The binge-published serial is not as innovative as it first appeared. It seems counterintuitive for Netflix to binge-publish a serial in a season installment that is intended to be binge-watched, but then to segment it into episodes. Taking the commercial function of television into consideration explains this segmentation.

Reasons for Segmentation into Episodes

Despite this apparent, initial, shift from episodes as installments to seasons as installments by means of binge-publication, the segmentation of the binge-published serial into episodes remains. This can be explained by looking at how the binge-published serial not only caters to binge-watchers but also to another type of viewer, namely the non-binge-watcher.

It first appeared as if the binge-published serial is the icing on the cake for the binge-watcher. Perks even describes that we have moved into a "media marathoning paradigm" (186). When a serial is binge-published this implies that the viewers will watch the whole season "in one go," according to Jenner ("A Semi-Original Netflix Series"). While this is implied and, as described, often observed, the previous chapter concluded binge-watchers have the agency to schedule their own temporal gaps. This thus means that not all viewers binge-watch the binge-published serial. Sönke Hahn agrees that just having the option to binge-watch does not guarantee that all viewers

actually do this (20). In fact, while Netflix pioneered binge-publication to cater to the binge-watcher, binge-watching might actually harm the company's income. Meaning, Netflix would benefit more from non-binge-watchers.

The reason for this has to do with Netflix' subscription model. Netflix subscribers pay a monthly fee and can cancel their subscription anytime they would like. Since binge-watching gives viewers the option to watch a season of the binge-published serial in one month, week, or even day, some viewers might opt for that. This means that these types of viewers only pay for one month—or not even pay at all, since Netflix offers a free trial month to new subscribers. Consequently, when viewers do not binge-watch the binge-published serial because they pace the episodes over multiple months, Netflix profits more. Even though plenty of viewers will not do so, the segmentation into episodes by means of non-temporal gaps at least facilitates the possibility for viewers to "recreate this gap by self-pacing a series" ("Serial Boxes").

Not only does Netflix promote non-binge-watching by offering the season in segments of episodes. Additionally, Netflix is actively trying to turn binge-watchers into non-binge-watchers by including a counterintuitive function in its Post-Play technology. This element of Post-Play technology does the opposite of what the Post-Play technology aims to do, which is facilitating gapless viewing, because it interrupts the binge-watchers viewing experience and thereby creates another type of temporal gap. A gap that, to be clear, has no direct influence on the serial form or narrative. When viewers watch more than two episodes, they have to confirm that they still wish to stream the episode that just started playing (see figure 10). Thereby Netflix thus interrupts the viewers at a random point during the first minutes of an episode.
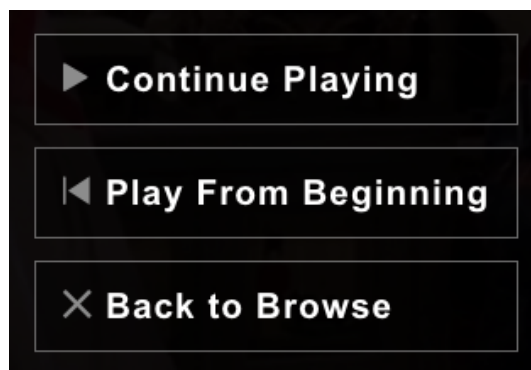

Figure 10. Netflix' Post-Play interruption screen

While not used with *Orange Is the New Black* at this moment, another evident solution to turn binge-watchers into non-bingers is to publish the episodes in a different

manner. While binge-publishing has become an often used strategy, Netflix has also opted to publish another one of its original productions, the cartoon *Turbo Fast* (2013-present), in what they call a "staggered release" of five episode "pods" (Sprangler, "Netflix Breaks From Binge-Viewing Strategy"). About this, Netflix's chief communications officer Jonathan Friedland says: "Historically we have said that original series will be released in ways that best support the story—so if it suits the show, (it's) always possible we could release in a different way" (Sprangler, "Netflix Breaks From Binge-Viewing Strategy"). Hence, it might be possible that in the future Netflix decides to publish the episodes of *Orange Is the New Black*, or any other binge-published serial, in pods or even on a weekly schedule again in order to make viewers subscribe for longer periods of time. The segmentation of the season into episodes facilitates an easier shift into these potential different publication methods.

Not only does segmentation facilitate possible various publication strategies with future seasons of *Orange Is the New Black*, but this segmentation into episodes also proves viable to more easily re-publish the serial via different platforms like television networks. Seasons of *Orange Is the New Black* have appeared on television, through means of different publication strategies, in Australia, India, and New Zealand. Australia's Showcase channel went for a rigorous approach with the third season of *Orange Is the New Black* by trying to mimic the binge-publication on Netflix, as described on its website:

> All 14 episodes of *Orange is the New Black* Season 3 will air back-to-back straight through to the end of the final episode [on June 12th]. Each new episode will air ad break-fee and will also be available on demand for internet connected iQ boxes straight after it airs on showcase via Foxtel's Anytime service. Season three will start again at 9.00am on Saturday, June 13, followed by a weekly instalment of season three episodes beginning in their regular timeslot on Sunday, April 14 at 7.30pm EST. ("Showcase Orange Is the New Black")

In India, the channel Colors Infinity opted for a publication by broadcasting three episodes in a row on the same night each week ("Colors Infinity Orange Is The New Black"). More interestingly, New Zealand's channel NZTV decided on a weekly broadcast ("TVNZ Orange Is the New Black"). Its episodic division makes *Orange Is the New Black* perfectly suited for weekly broadcasting. To facilitate this last methods of re-publication, segmentation into episodes is key. The Post-Play interruption that aims to turn binge-watchers into non-binge-watchers and the segmentation of the season installment into episodes can both be seen as a strategic move to generate more profit. While Netflix thus

at first appears to cater to the wishes of the binge-watcher by pioneering binge-publication, this publication method is not as revolutionary for the conventions of the television serial form since its installment is still divided into episodes like the weekly broadcasted serial.

The order of publication, however, differs from that of the broadcasted serial. While broadcasted television serials premiere in weekly installments and are then re-published in installments consisting of season on for example DVD box sets, the binge-published serial works the other way around. The binge-published serial premieres in its binge-publication and is then made available for re-publication in a broadcast schedule. This shift in order of publication is significant when looking at the implementation of recaps in the binge-published serial, because it can also indicate a shift in the primary use of recaps for both the binge-watcher as well as the non-binge-watcher.

3.3 Recaps in the Binge-Published Serial *Orange Is the New Black*

Netflix' binge-published serials at first appear to cater specifically to binge-watchers by only including a temporal gap between installments of seasons. However, the season installment is segmented into episodes by the use of non-temporal gaps. The fact that these gaps are non-temporal questions the use of recaps. Though, when viewers do not binge-watch the binge-published serial on Netflix' platform, or when they watch a re-publication of the binge-published serial in the broadcast, they do experience temporal gaps. This indicates that these non-binge-watchers need recaps to bridge these gaps in similar fashion like they did with regards to the weekly broadcasted serial. Comparable to the regular weekly broadcasted serial, the binge-published serial thus seems to have to include recaps for both binge-watchers as well as non-binge-watchers.

Besides the temporal gaps and the non-temporal gaps, the temporality of binge-watching itself needs to be taken into account when discussing the use of recaps. Ken Auletta interviewed Cindy Holland, Netflix's vice-president of original content, who said that "there was no need to recap previous episodes" because it was "akin to making a 13-hour-movie" (Auletta).[16] Yet, since an entire season of *Orange Is the New Black* is thirteen episodes long, this adds up to enough hours that can make viewers forget

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[16] While Holland refers to another binge-published serial in this interview, this statement is also applicable to *Orange Is the New Black*, because it shares the facts that it was binge-published and is thirteen episodes long.

certain story elements they viewed several hours ago. While not a temporal gap, this is a temporality that recaps are able to bridge. Taking into account the temporality of binge-watching in addition to the (lack of) gaps, this section exemplifies the different uses of both paratextual and diegetic recaps in *Orange Is the New Black* and which type of viewers the recaps cater to.

Gaps and Paratextual Recaps

As stated, binge-watchers often miss out on paratextual recaps of weekly broadcasted serials, because they watch these serials without gaps and purify them of the paratextual material that interrupts their viewing experience. Explaining how the binge-published serial makes use of, or does not make use of, paratextual recaps helps to understand the use of gaps in the binge-published serial as either temporal or non-temporal.

The omission of recap elements is just as important as its use, since omitting paratextual recaps indicates there is no temporal gap to bridge, nor a non-temporal gap that is treated as a temporal gap. While the opening credits sequence of *Orange Is the New Black* does not function as a recap, it is significant to discuss, because of its paratextual value. When viewers are binge-watching, these opening credits are removed by Netflix' Post-Play technology. Non-binge-watching, however, keeps the opening credits intact. This underlines that this paratextual element and the Post-Play technology cater to both the binge-watcher and the non-binge-watcher.

The only paratextual recap that *Orange Is the New Black* makes use of is a hybrid of the previously on segment and the digital short. It is a hybrid form because it takes the form of an online digital short like Dawson describes, but instead of being placed within gaps between installments, their placement is right before the season installment, making them take the form of an extended previously on (see figure 11) (42).

When viewers watch previously published seasons of *Orange Is the New Black*, they do not automatically see this season recap. Similar to the Post-Play technology that skips the previously on segments before episodes of other serials on Netflix, this previously on in front of the season is also skipped. Binge-viewers are still able to access it under a different sub-header on Netflix' interface (see figure 12). This gives binge-viewers that watch multiple seasons the possibility to look for it, but not actively makes them watch it by turning them into epitexts. Which, as described, are paratexts that are temporally disconnected from the main text.

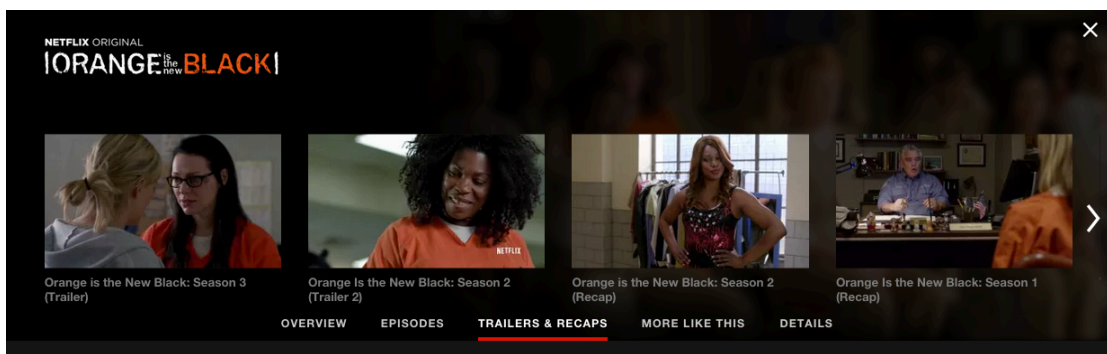*Figure 11. Previously on* Orange Is the New Black

Figure 12. Recaps

Previously on segments are not used in front of individual episodes of *Orange Is the New Black*. Gaps between episodes are non-temporal so there is no reason to bridge them with the use of previously on segments. Since the ideal binge-viewers view all episodes of an entire season back-to-back without enforcing their own temporal gaps, the function of the previously on segment as mnemonic device loses its importance. Additionally, as stated in the previous chapter, the previously on paratext in front of episodes can be considered as an interruption to the binge-watching experience. The fact that *Orange Is the New Black* does not make use of a previously on segment in front of episodes clearly emphasizes the gaps between episodes as being non-temporal and therefore they are not treated the same way as the temporal gap between seasons.

The paratextual recaps thus cater to the binge-watcher, because they are only placed after a temporal gap before the start of a new season and not after a non-temporal gap. Diegetic recaps are also used to bridge the temporal gap between seasons.

Gaps Between Seasons and Diegetic Recaps

Diegetic recaps are used to restate characters' names or summarizing diegetic events that happened previously. Explaining the use and placement of diegetic recaps accentuates the ways that recaps are used for specific viewers. In turn, this shows if and how diegetic recaps are linked to the (lack of) gaps of binge-viewing and binge-publishing.

Because *Orange Is the New Black* has a large ensemble cast, making its narrative rather complex, it can be difficult for viewers to keep track of who is who exactly. Therefore several episodes of *Orange Is the New Black* summarize the multitude of characters, by means of including recap-type episodes at the start of new seasons to bridge the temporal gap between seasons. These episodes are not clip shows, but instead are focused on re-establishing the characters by means of themes or interviews.

To bridge the gap between the first and the second season, the episode "Looks Blue, Tastes Red" (2.02) contains many inmates being interviewed for a mock job fair. This makes them state their names and additionally provides some information about themselves. In a similar fashion, to bridge the gap between the second and the third season, the episode "Mother's Day" (3.01) reintroduces the characters by focusing on a theme. This episode features flashbacks from five characters. Additionally, there are references to the theme of mothers and children regarding seven other characters. The characters are re-established though means of this theme after a yearlong gap between the publications of seasons.

One additional device to bridge the temporal gap between seasons is one instance in which shots from a previous episode are re-used in another episode. The episode "Hugs Can Be Deceiving" (2.03) makes use of the exact same shots of a scene from the last episode of the first season, "Can't Fix Crazy" (1.13), in order to extend this scene with the use of new shots. Since viewers could have forgotten this specific scene, including previous shots in the new episode functions as a recap. The bridging of the temporal gap caters to the binge-watcher, because the ideal binge-watcher watched it on, or close to, the publication date, therefore experiencing this temporal gap between seasons. Additionally, what needs to be taken into account when looking at the use of recaps is the temporality of binge-watching itself, since, as stated, this indicates how recaps cater specifically to binge-watchers.

Diegetic Recaps for Binge-Watchers

Even though there are no temporal gaps within the season of the binge-published serial, the temporality of the binge-watcher needs to be taken into account when discussing recaps. Investigating how recaps function to bridge the temporal experience of binge-watching shows how the inclusion of diegetic recaps, in addition to the use of paratextual recaps, is specifically catered to the binge-watcher.

Since binge-watchers have "stronger diegetic memories," the temporality of binge-watching is considered with the use of visual cues in *Orange Is the New Black* (Perks xi). Binge-watchers are rewarded for binge-watching with the inclusion of these visual cues. For example, in the episode "Imaginary Enemies" (1.04) Piper accidentally steals a screwdriver by leaving it in her jacket pocket. At the end of this episode, the character Boo makes use of this screwdriver. In the season finale "Can't Fix Crazy" (1.13), Boo hands Piper this screwdriver and she uses it to fight Pennsatucky. Then, in the third season in the episode "We Can Be Heroes" (3.11) Piper is rummaging through the prison to find a phone. Meanwhile she finds all sorts of other items. These items are later in "Trust No Bitch" (3.13) found in Stella's bunk. Piper put them there, along with the screwdriver, to frame Stella, because Stella stole Pipers' money. This example of a continuous use of the same object can be rewarding for the binge-watcher because it activates their diegetic memory.

Although binge-watchers have enhanced diegetic memories, they still are prone to forget certain storylines or characters, because time passes while they binge-watch. Binge-watching provides viewers with an overload of information in a short amount of time which, as stated, can make viewers have problems to digest the story, since there are no gaps that the viewers can use to digest the diegetic information. Viewers cannot be expected to remember every diegetic element. Additionally, they cannot be expected to view all previous episodes when they forgot a certain story element. Hence, the diegetic recaps still have a very important function in memory retention for binge-watchers. The temporality of binge-watching itself therefore also needs to be included when looking at the diegetic use of recaps.

Even though there are no temporal gaps created when viewers watch all episodes of a serial back-to-back completely, there are 'gaps' between different storylines in the complex narrative. The stories are too complex to remember completely. This indicates that binge-watchers need diegetic recaps while they watch the serial. They need these recaps not to bridge the temporality of gaps, but to bridge the temporality of binge-watching. As textual examples show, the use of diegetic recaps in *Orange Is the New Black* very much facilitates this.

A distinct use of recaps to cater to the temporal experience of binge-watching is the inclusion of the previously discussed recap-type episodes near the end of seasons. The ideal binge-watcher has been watching for multiple hours, making the placement of these episodes ideal recap moments. For example, in the episode "Tall Men With Feelings" (1.11) Larry gives a radio interview about his relationship with Piper now that she is in prison. What stands out about this episode it that Larry's radio interview is used similar to a voice over that recaps the characters. Larry talks about several of the people that Piper is in prison with and while he does this, those characters are shown. For example he says: "There is the Russian woman who runs the kitchen, totally terrifying, but she takes so much pride in feeding everyone." This quote is accompanied by an image of Red, the Russian woman in prison, to make clear that this is the person who Larry is referring to. This mimics the use of a voice-over to recap characters in the recap episodes, as discussed in the previous chapter. While not taking the same form as a recap episode, it does appear to be similar.

Both in the second and the third season, the season finale is used in a similar fashion to re-establish *Orange Is the New Black*'s characters. In the episode "We Have Manners. We're Polite." (2.13) the inmates are heard by the police, because they want to find out who attacked one of the inmates. Additionally, in "Trust No Bitch" (3.13) there are flashbacks from seven different characters all surrounding the theme of religion. Again, re-establishing the serial's multitude of characters. By using the interview technique or giving the episode a theme, these episodes re-introduce multiple characters and their personalities. While these episodes, that include elaborate reiterations of the characters, are useful as a recap for non-binge-watchers a well, its placements seem to be specifically aimed at the binge-watcher. This is because the binge-watchers might have forgotten all the different characters after binge-watching the show for the past ten to twelve hours.

These recap-like episodes are placed near the beginning or the end of a season. Both placements can be explained by means of temporality, either the temporal gap between seasons or the temporality of binge-watching. While not necessarily recapping in the traditional sense, these kinds of recap-type episodes do summarize the characters in the large ensemble cast. It appears the target audience of the binge-viewer is found embedded in the use of recaps. Looking at recaps that appear to cater to non-binge-watchers can verify if recaps cater mostly to binge-watchers or not.

Diegetic Recaps for Non-Binge-Watchers?

Recaps cannot be so redundant as to bore binge-viewers. However, when watching *Orange Is the New Black* on a binge, it seems at first as if some recaps are aimed more to non-binge-watchers than to binge-watchers.

Several main storylines are recapped more often than others by means of dialogue. In the first season it is stated multiple times why Piper is in prison and how she and Alex were lesbian lovers. In the second season the facts that Piper's grandmother is sick and that Dayanara is pregnant are reiterated often. The third season also makes use of diegetic recaps for Dayanara's pregnancy. Additionally, multiple episodes from all seasons repeat that Sophia is transgender. While these recap moments might not stand out to the non-binge-watcher, they do while binge-watching all three seasons within a few weeks. Whether or not they are excessive can be rather subjective and depends on the viewer's memory retention. These recaps, therefore, can function as internal reminders for both binge-watchers as well as non-binge-watchers.

One specific example of dialogue used to recap a specific character can be found in the episode "Ching Chong Chang" (3.06) that focuses on the character Chang. At the beginning of this episode, another inmate introduces Chang to the new incoming inmates by saying: "This here is Chang. Chang, she works in the commissary, she don't talk much." By emphasizing her name and adding a short summary of her character, this functions as a reminder for viewers to recall what they already know about this character and her storyline. While this again might be seen as being a recap that is more aimed towards the non-binger, its not necessarily redundant for the binge-watcher, since Chang thus far has been a rather minor character on the show compared to some other characters.

One example of a dialogue in which both characters and events are recapped, is from the episode "Tall Men With Feelings" (1.11). A conversation between Piper and Alex summarizes several events that happened within the episode and in previous episodes in addition to role reiterations between several characters:

PIPER:	What do you think about <u>that thing that Big Boo said last night</u>? About <u>Tricia</u>'s karma?
ALEX:	I think that <u>we were all drunk and bullshitting</u>.
PIPER:	What if it's not bullshit? I don't think that <u>Pennsatucky</u> deserves to be <u>in Psych</u>.
ALEX:	Look, you're just hung over and feeling emo, all right? She's exactly where she belongs. We basically performed a public service.
PIPER:	It's pretty horrible, <u>Alex</u>.

ALEX:	You thought it was hilarious.
PIPER:	That was before <u>I talked to Suzanne</u> about what psych was like.
ALEX:	Who's <u>Suzanne</u>?
PIPER:	<u>Crazy Eyes</u>.
ALEX:	Are you <u>cheating on me and Larry with Crazy Eyes</u>? Cause there is not room for the four of us.
PIPER:	Shut up. This is not funny. <u>She said</u> that Psych is even worse than the SHU. And I can't even begin I can't. You know, <u>you really shouldn't have started this</u> whole gas lighting thing.
ALEX:	Whoa, what is with the blaming? <u>You sent her into that bathroom</u>. Do not project your conscience onto me. Especially before I'm barely awake.
PIPER:	You know, you're absolutely right. You're absolutely right. I am gonna go to <u>Caputo</u>'s office and I'm gonna tell him that <u>it was my fault</u> and that he should let her out.
ALEX:	Okay, I get your point, <u>Pipes</u>. I get it. You think that it was wrong. Cool.
PIPER:	I am so tired of running away from my shit, <u>Alex</u>. <u>You said it yesterday</u>. I compartmentalize everything to make myself feel better. I mean, <u>I'm having an affair with you</u>. And <u>we did not play a prank on Pennsatucky, we were mean</u>. I cannot let her stay in Psych. I can't.
ALEX:	Okay, I would like to stress that I think this is truly fucking stupid. <u>It was me that started this whole thing</u>.
PIPER:	Then I'll take this one for the both of us.

The underlined parts show the reiteration of names and events that happened in the past and that the viewers actually saw in previous scenes. Similar to the previous examples, this recap appears to be aimed at non-binge-watchers. Though, there is an intricate line between it being redundant for binge-watchers or not. This conversation between Piper and Alex not only recaps information, but additionally it shows all viewers the relationship between these two characters. Meaning, instead, this dialogue can function as a moment of enjoyment for all viewers as Newman describes ("From Beats to Arcs" 19–20).

To compare, paratextual recaps cater to the ideal binge-watcher that watches the season installment on the day it was published, because paratextual recaps only abridge the temporal gaps between seasons. Diegetic recaps also function mainly for the binge-watcher, but additionally have value for the non-binge-watchers as well. This means

that *Orange Is the New Black* is also made understandable for non-binge-watchers that, for example, watch the serial in its re-publication on broadcast television with gaps between episodes.

The fact that all recaps mostly cater to the binge-watcher can be explained by its order of publication. Seasons of serials that are re-published on DVD box sets once had their episodes be part of a weekly broadcast schedule. Therefore, while broadcasted serials' screenwriters had to make sure to cater to the binge-watcher regarding the use of recaps, their initial focus had to be the broadcast viewer, since the primary publication of the serial was in the broadcast schedule. Because the binge-published serial reverses this order of publication, the screenwriters' prime intended viewer is also reversed. The binge-published serials' recaps are aimed firstly at the binge-watcher and secondary at the non-binge-watcher. While the use of non-temporal gaps and the segmentation of the binge-published season into episodes are thus not aimed at binge-watchers, the use of recaps in the binge-published serial is.

Chapter 3. Recap

Viewer practices, technological developments, and narrative structures all seemed to work hand in hand to facilitate a new form of television: a binge-published serial with recaps catered to the ideal gapless binge-viewer.

However, as this chapter showed, while at first the binge-published serial might have appeared to alter the serial installment from an episode to a season, non-temporal gaps clearly segment the binge-published serial into episodes. The inclusion of non-temporal gaps at the end of episodes is clearly marked by the use of cliffhangers, episodic narratives that focus on one characters' backstory, editing on an episodic level, Netflix' interface, and the inclusion of opening credits. This means that, even though binge-publication questioned the ontology of the television serial by not offering temporal gaps between episodes, the inclusion of non-temporal gaps reverses this effect to some extent.

The inclusion of non-temporal gaps has a distinct reason, namely to facilitate the option of non-binge-watching. The non-bingers of the binge-published serial are either viewers that watch the serial in its re-publication on broadcast television in for example New Zealand, or Netflix subscribers that chose to watch the binge-published serial with viewer-induced gaps. While Netflix' Post-Play technology at first seems to facilitate binge-watching the binge-published serial, the inclusion of the interruption after watching more than two episodes consecutively even tries to turn bingers into non-

bingers. The idea of segmentation of the season installment into episodes and the idea of turning bingers into non-bingers both function to create more revenue.

Contradictory to this idea, the use of both paratextual and diegetic recaps are more catered towards the binge-watcher than towards the non-binge watcher. The temporal gaps between seasons are bridged by the use of paratextual previously on recap segments. There are no previously on segments before each individual episode, thereby this paratextual recap does treat the season as one installment. Diegetic recapping to bridge the temporal gap between seasons takes place in recap-type episodes at the beginning of the new seasons. Additionally, recaps are used not only to bridge the temporality of the gap between seasons, but also to bridge the temporality of binge-watching itself, since watching the entire season on a binge will take multiple hours. By placing these recap-type episodes near the end of the seasons, the binge-watcher is reminded again who all the characters are after a long binge.

While the serial form of the binge-published serial *Orange Is the New Black* is segmented into episodes for non-bingers, its use and placement of both paratextual as well as diegetic recaps is more aimed at binge-watchers than at non-binge watchers. The shift towards a serial catered specifically to binge-watchers by means of binge-publication is therefore only found in its use of recaps.

Conclusion: Recapping Gaps and Recaps

This thesis aimed to gain a better understanding of the binge-published serial and its apparent objective to fulfill the needs of binge-watchers to watch without gaps. Exploring gaps and recaps previously used in television serials' form and narrative provided insight into its use in the new binge-published serial.

There are three kinds of gaps in television serials: within episodes, between episodes, and between seasons. Gaps between episodes clearly delineate them as installments of the television serial and thereby this type of gap is ontological to the television serial form. All three gaps segment the serial narrative. Because of the long-form narrative of the television serial, cliffhangers are often placed in front of gaps and the gaps themselves can be used as temporal ellipses as textual examples of weekly-published serials illustrated. Because the gaps are temporal in nature, they need to be abridged to help the viewers make sense of the serial's long-form narrative. Both paratextual and diegetic recaps are necessary to facilitate the bridging of the temporal gaps for viewers that watch the serial in the broadcast schedule. Another function of the recap is to provide an initial point of orientation for new or sporadic viewers that also watch the serial in the broadcast schedule. Removing the gap by means of new technologies and viewer practices indicated a shift in the use of gaps and recaps in the television serial.

Technological advancements made it possible for viewers to skip the commercial gaps and the gaps between episodes and seasons with timeshifting technologies like the VCR and DVR and later by means of watching the serial on DVD or through VOD. The possibility of binge-watching evolved alongside these new technologies and the new publication methods these technologies brought about. The possibility to skip the gaps and watch a serial via convenience technologies brought about consequences for the serial form, its narrative complexity, and, in turn, for its recaps. Because gaps between episodes can be deleted by means of convenience technologies, the ontology of the television serial form was questioned. When published on DVD, the serial installment changed from consisting of an episode to consisting of a season.

However, since the serial premiered in the weekly broadcast, its original serial form remains. Its serial narrative, however, has the option to increase in complexity because viewers became able to re-watch, pause, and binge-watch by means of convenience technologies. These serials, and their use of recaps, have to function both in the broadcast schedule for broadcast viewers as well as via convenience technologies for binge-viewers. As narratives become more complex, broadcast viewers have a need for more elaborate recaps. Yet, because binge-watchers do not need the recaps to function as an abridgement of gaps, the recaps are often made paratextual, like the digital short, so that this makes them easy to skip while binge-watching the serial. The changing use of recaps seems to take the binge-watchers' wishes of a pure and gapless text into account.

Gapless publications and gapless viewing, brought about by new convenience technologies, culminated into the binge-published serial. This thesis introduced the term binge-published serial for a new type of serial of which all the episodes of a season are published at once. It seems as if the binge-published serial is made specifically for the binge-watcher, since it is presented as a gapless entity. Publishing all episodes of a season at once complicates the notion of the television serial form. While similar to the possibility of publishing an entire season on a DVD box set, binge-published episodes did not premiere in the weekly broadcast. Therefore, the ontology of the television serial seems to have shifted its meaning, since the serial season installment is no longer segmented into episodes by temporal gaps between episodes.

However, while the binge-published serial form might have shifted towards a season installment, its serial narrative is still segmented into episodes, thereby mimicking the installments of episodes of the broadcasted serial. As a textual analysis of *Orange Is the New Black* showed, non-temporal gaps, demarcated by the use of cliffhangers and ellipses, still segment the installments consisting of seasons into episodes. The narrative of the binge-published serial additionally retains very strong episodic segmentation by focusing almost every episode on one character. While binge-publication is an innovative publication method, the binge-published serial still functions very similar to broadcasted serials in its use of gaps to segment episodes.

One distinct reason for this segmentation is to make the serial better distributable through other platforms, like the regular television broadcast. This segmentation thus makes the binge-published serial more watchable for non-binge-watchers. The ultimate goal here lies with the fact that creating non-bingers leads to more profit. Netflix has more revenue if viewers do not binge-watch and is therefore actively interrupting viewers by means of its Post-Play technology. This Post-Play technology appears to

facilitate binge-watching by automatically playing the next episode and skipping over the opening credits, but when viewers watch more than two episodes, Post-Play abruptly interrupts them trying turning binge-watchers into non-binge-watchers.

Since Netflix also seems to want to cater to a non-binge-watcher in addition to the binge-watcher, this indicates different uses of recaps. While *Orange Is the New Black* makes use of diegetic recaps for both binge-watchers as well as non-binge-watchers, the distinct placement of both paratextual and diegetic recaps makes them more focused on binge-watchers. The paratextual recaps bridge the temporal gap between seasons by making use of extended previously on segments at the starts of new seasons. Which, in combination with the omission of previously on segments in front of episodes, translates into seeing the season as one installment that needs to be binge-watched. Additionally, the temporality of binge-watching itself is taken into account in the use of diegetic recaps by including these diegetic recaps near the end of seasons after the binge-watcher has just watched about ten to twelve hours of *Orange Is the New Black*.

What must be noted is that this study of *Orange Is the New Black* should be interpreted as an example case. It is just one of all binge-published serials that are available, meaning that conclusions from this case study alone cannot be generalized into statements about the serial form, serial narrative, and the use of gaps and recaps in all binge-published serials. Additionally, this research aimed to outline types of viewers, without including audience research. To further test the validity of my division between types of viewers, audience research amongst viewers of binge-published serials would be highly useful in understanding its use of gaps and recaps.

Ultimately, the use of gaps and recaps in the binge-published serial is both similar to and different from the use of gaps and recaps in weekly broadcasted serials. Contrary to the fact that Netflix markets it as being a mostly gapless serial that is perfect for binge-watching, the binge-published serial still makes use of gaps, albeit non-temporal gaps. Choosing to premiere the serial by means of binge-publication might be revolutionary, but its segmentation into episodes by means of non-temporal gaps still mimics the broadcasted television serial in order to make the binge-published serial better distributable to non-binge-watchers.

This means that the recaps in the binge-published serial have to cater to both binge-watchers and non-binge-watchers. Where the binge-published serial differs from the broadcasted serial is in the fact that the binge-published serial's use of recaps indicates that its prime viewer is the binge-watcher as opposed to the broadcast viewer. This means that the screenwriters of the binge-published serial keep in mind the temporality of binge-watching regarding their implementation of diegetic recaps. While the binge-

published serial is thus portrayed as a new television phenomenon, its innovation is simply found in the fact that its initial publication method facilitated a shift to focusing more on binge-watchers than on non-binge-watchers in its use of recaps. In its use of segmentation into episodes, the binge-published serial caters mainly to the non-binge-watcher, though perhaps this segmentation is key for binge-watchers as well. Since binge-watching means to "to watch multiple episodes of a television program … in rapid succession" ("Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2013") and since Netflix' "original series are created for multi-episodic viewing" ("Netflix Declares Binge Watching Is the New Normal") another reason for segmenting the season of the binge-published serial becomes evident: if the binge-published serial would not have been segmented into episodes, but instead would be one long installment, it would not be possible to binge-watch it.

Appendix 1: List of Binge-Published Television Serials

Netflix

Bloodline. Dir. Todd A. Kessler, Glenn Kessler, and Daniel Zelman. KZK Productions and
      Sony Pictures Television, 2015.

Daredevil. Prod. Steven S. DeKnight and Drew Goddard. Goddard Textiles, ABC Studios,
      and Marvel Television, 2015.

Hemlock Grove. Writ. Brian McGreevy and Lee Shipman. Prod. Charles H. Eglee and Eli
      Roth. Gaumont International Television, ShineBox SMC, and United Bongo Drum,
      Inc., 2013.

House of Cards. Writ. Beau Willimon. Prod. David Fincher and Kevin Spacey. Media
      Rights Capital, Trigger Street Productions, Wade/Thomas Productions, and Knight
      Takes King Productions, 2013.

Marco Polo. Writ. John Fusco. Dir. Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg. Prod. John
      Fusco and Daniel Minahan. The Weinstein Company TV, Electus, 2014.

Narcos. Writ. Chris Brancato. Dir. José Padhila. Gaumont International Television, 2015.

Orange Is the New Black. Writ. Jenji Kohan. Prod. Jenji Kohan and Neri Kyle
      Tennenbaum. Lionsgate Television and Tilted Productions, 2013.

Sense8. Writ. The Wachowskis and J. Michael Straczynski. Anarchos Productions, Javelin
      Productions, Studio JMS, Georgeville Television, Unpronounceable Productions,
      2015.

Amazon

Alpha House. Writ. Garry Trudeau. Dir. Bob Balaban and Adam Bernstein. Amazon
      Studios, 2013.*

Bosch. Writ. Michael Connelly and Eric Overmyer. Dir. Jim McKay. Amazon Studios,
      2014.*

Hand of God. Writ. Ben Watkins. Dir. Marc Forster. Universal Television and Alcon
      Television Group, 2015.

Mozart in the Jungle. Writ. Roman Coppola, Jason Schwartzman. Prod. Roman Coppola,
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** the first season was not binge-published

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GAPS AND RECAPS aims to gain a better understanding of the binge-published serial and its apparent objective to fulfill the needs of binge-watchers to watch gapless television serials. Looking at how the relationship between gaps and recaps in serial television has evolved alongside new technologies, publication methods, and viewer practices provides insights into how the serial form and serial narrative of the binge-published serial are not as pioneering as they appear. A literature review, accompanied by textual examples, illustrates that the broadcasted television serial subjects viewers to temporal gaps within episodes in the form of commercial breaks, gaps between episodes, and gaps between seasons. These gaps influence the serial form, serial narrative, and the serial's use of recaps to achieve maximum viewer retention. Technological developments provide viewers with agency over the gaps, meaning that they become capable of deconstructing the serial form to some extent by skipping gaps between episodes. This brought about the binge-watcher, to whom the binge-published serial seems to cater. However, textual analysis of the binge-published serial *Orange Is the New Black* shows that, while its serial installment shifted from that of an episode to that of a gapless season, the binge-published season is segmented into episodes by the use of non-temporal gaps. The binge-published serial's use of gaps still mimics the established broadcasted serial form and narrative in order to cater to a non-binge-watcher, but its use of recaps instead caters primarily to the binge-watcher, and only secondary to the non-binge-watcher. While seemingly redefining the ontology of the serial form, the gap between the broadcasted serial and the binge-published serial is only striking in its use of recaps.

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