

Analyzing *Homeland*: Introduction

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In the summer of 2014, Showtime's hit espionage thriller *Homeland* (2011–) was just beginning to promote its fourth season, in which star CIA agent Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes) leaves behind her newborn child to return to vital fieldwork that will protect the titular American homeland. The show's central romantic entanglement between Mathison and returned prisoner-of-war, terrorist sleeper agent, politician-hero Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis) has concluded, Brody having sacrificed his life to redeem Mathison's love and his reputation as an American patriot at the end of the third season. In the trailers for this fourth season, Mathison insists she has no choice but to forgo motherhood and follow her assignment abroad. Despite her sister's claim that Carrie has engineered her mission to require her to leave her child behind, Mathison sees her public role as absolutely vital to national security and always prioritizes it over family life.

We explain these plot points in detail because they highlight many of the narrative, representational, and cultural elements that make *Homeland* a show worthy of an entire single-series In Focus. Upon its debut in 2011, *Homeland* quickly moved to a position of cultural prominence, becoming the kind of program that anchors middle-class taste formations and cultural literacies while earning numerous accolades and drawing record-setting audiences for the cable network. More significantly for our purposes, and as the following essays indicate, *Homeland* is a dense, polysemic text that provides rich grist for readings in relation to class, gender, and genre. Notably, the series has been analyzed as both a straightforward articulation of and a subversive critique of US foreign policy and the national security mind-set after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. For some, it progressively interrogates

the role of women in governmental and political regimes; for others, it works to hold in place conservative repressions regarding homeland security profiteering. The essays here reflect this complexity. Lindsay Steenberg and Yvonne Tasker set *Homeland* in the context of other American crime series, arguing that it articulates tropes of an unstable or unwell female investigator with those of the post-9/11 surveillance and security state. James Castonguay argues that the program's "quality television" status supports its function as propaganda for the Obama administration's foreign and domestic surveillance operations. Alex Bevan uses feminist geography to argue that Carrie Mathison's mental illness functions as a stand-in for the unrepresentable and unpalatable features of a twenty-first-century warfare and geopolitics that are deeply mediated, waged from a distance, and fought between the United States and nonstate actors. Finally, Stephen Shapiro argues that *Homeland* speaks directly to the uncertain positioning of the middle class that was accentuated by the financial crisis that began in 2008.

Underpinning all of these collected essays is a concern with the gender and class discourses of "quality television." It is our task here to set *Homeland* in relation to the female-centered network and basic-cable programs in the United States that have seemed to proliferate around and grow from the series' ratings success. As a dimension of this, we also investigate Mathison's emotionalism as expressed through Claire Danes's Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning performance and the popular parodies thereof, which we understand as part of a reaction formation to the series' female centrality.

Definitions of "quality television" and their significance to the industry, fans, and scholars have been debated for decades.¹ Recent articulations of this debate have often focused on the subscription-cable service HBO, its role as creator of high-budget, high-gloss, highbrow series like *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), *The Wire* (2002–2008), and *True Detective* (2014–), and the basic-cable series that borrowed their emphasis on style and complicated, male-centered narratives from these predecessors.² AMC's *Mad Men* (2007–2015) and *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013) and FX's *Sons of Anarchy* (2008–) and *Justified* (2010–2015) are just a few programs that have received critical attention for following HBO's example. Praise for this cycle of "quality" television often starts by positively comparing these series and others like them to higher-status cultural forms, calling their aesthetics "cinematic" and their complexity "novelistic," taking them out of the historically feminized (and feminist) discourses of television studies. Emily Nussbaum, pointing out the gendered generic hierarchies implicit in the way that a series like *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998–2004) is reflexively excluded from this "quality" canon, notes, "*The Sopranos* deserves the hype. Yet there's something screwy about the

1 See, e.g., Charlotte Brunson, "Problems with Quality," *Screen* 31, no. 1 (1990): 67–90; Jane Feuer, Paul Kerr, and Tise Vahimagi, eds., *MTM: Quality Television* (London: BFI, 1984); Mark Jancovich and James Lyons, *Quality Popular Television: Cult TV, the Industry, and Fans* (London: BFI, 2003); Diane Negra, "Quality Postfeminism? Sex and the Single Girl on HBO," *Genders* 39 (2004): http://genders.org/g39/g39_negra.html.

2 See, e.g., Gary Edgerton and Jeffrey P. Jones, eds., *The Essential HBO Reader* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009); Mark Leverette, Brian L. Ott, and Cara Louise Buckley, eds., *It's Not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

way that the show and its cable-drama blood brothers have come to dominate the conversation, elbowing other forms of greatness out of the frame.”³

In notable counterpoint to the centrality of masculinity in so much of the televisual fare that goes under the “quality” banner, recent television seasons have seen a proliferation of sharply drawn, sometimes idiosyncratic female leads in network sitcoms like *The Mindy Project*’s Mindy Lahiri (Mindy Kaling; Fox, 2012–), *Parks and Recreation*’s Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler; NBC, 2009–2015), and *30 Rock*’s Liz Lemon (Tina Fey; NBC, 2006–2013). The question of what female-centered television looks like in the period of *Homeland*’s success is a complex one, with evidence of exciting new prospects and possibilities (even while the depressing spectacle of Sofia Vergara on a turntable at the 2014 Emmys is evidence that there has hardly been wholesale industry transformation).

But where these masculine-centered shows have proliferated and received ample scholarly attention, less heed has been paid to *Homeland*’s female-centered influence and the spread of premium-cable production values not just to basic cable but also to US broadcast networks and to international formats and coproductions.⁴ The troubled men at the center of those narratives are often understood to be acting out a “crisis” in masculinity that is sometimes construed as having been brought about by financial calamity and/or achievement by women and people of color. In contrast, the women at the center of shows like *Homeland* and those it has influenced appear to be vehicles for working through more public shifts in the relationships among government, politics, and private family life. In both instances, attributions of “quality” status often reinforce middle-class taste cultures and elevate certain types of television—often television that requires expensive subscriptions and/or intense time commitments—to high-culture status and relegate more accessible, more watched types of programming to the category of “trash,” traditionally associated with the medium at large. *Homeland* participates in this formation and reinforcement of middle-class taste cultures, but its central female character has been influential on basic cable (less expensive, sometimes even free to air without a cable subscription) and broadcast (free to air) network programming in the United States as well.

We see *Homeland*’s influence in network dramas like *Scandal* (ABC 2012–), *The Blacklist* (NBC, 2013–), and *The Good Wife* (CBS 2009–), and the limited series *Hostages* (NBC, 2014) and *The Honourable Woman* (BBC and Sundance, 2014), which feature women as consummate problem solvers, not in the domestic spaces in which advertisers and sitcoms have consistently placed them but in the public arenas of politics and national security. This move from the domestic and comedic to the public and overtly

3 Emily Nussbaum, “Difficult Women: How *Sex and the City* Lost Its Good Name,” *New Yorker*, July 29, 2013, 64.

4 Accounts of cable and premium channels’ masculine-centered shows include Amanda D. Lotz, *Cable Guys: Television and Masculinities in the 21st Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); and Brett Martin, *Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution from “The Sopranos” and “The Wire” to “Mad Men” and “Breaking Bad”* (New York: Penguin, 2013). The single series most subject to academic attention is *The Wire*. Scholarly treatment of it ranges from David Bzdak, Joanna Crosby, and Seth Vannatta, eds., “*The Wire*” and *Philosophy: This America, Man* (Chicago: Open Court, 2013); to Liam Kennedy and Stephen Shapiro, eds., “*The Wire*”: *Race, Class, and Genre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); C. W. Marshall and Tiffany Potter, eds., “*The Wire*”: *Urban Decay and American Television* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2009); and Linda Williams, *On “The Wire”* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

“serious” and political is part of what allows for the popular understanding of *Homeland* and its ilk as “quality” while *Sex and the City* and its offspring (despite their use of workplace settings) are not. Even with this move to the realm of national security, however, women’s specifically sexed, reproductive bodies function in these narratives in ways that male bodies in espionage thrillers cannot. Women’s bodies, as Alex Bevan argues here in relation to *Homeland*, work as a physical representation of the conflicts among aggressive US foreign policy, extensive domestic surveillance operations, and the rhetoric of civil liberties. In addition to their bodies being threatened with violence or overtaken by child bearing, these women also enact these conflicts in their own movements between the domestic and public spheres. Where Carrie Mathison conflates sex and work in her illicit romance with Brody, as Steenberg and Tasker maintain here, the FBI agent heroine of *The Blacklist*, for example, comes to realize that home life is just an extension of work life. She learns this lesson when she discovers that her husband, who has frequently criticized her lack of commitment to their adopting a child together, is in fact a criminal agent hired to monitor her both via their personal interactions and with video and audio surveillance of their home that closely mirrors Carrie Mathison’s surveillance of Brody’s home (discussed by Shapiro in his essay here). In the same vein, the surgeon-heroine of *Hostages* faces this conflation of work, public life, and national security with emotional and domestic life when she and her family are kidnapped in their own home, subject to release only when she agrees to murder the president while he is on her operating table. Olivia Pope, the proverbial white hat on *Scandal*, solves every possible political crisis (almost all of which involve sexual dalliances or the inappropriate mixing of the personal-sexual and professional) except her own, when she finds she simply can’t quit her torrid love affair with the US president. *The Honourable Woman* offers the closest analogue to *Homeland*, with main character Nessa Stein (Maggie Gyllenhaal) attempting to sublimate her rape at the hands of Palestinian kidnappers and her motherhood of the resulting child for the good of her corporation’s endeavors to foster peace between Israel and Palestine. For all of these women, and for Mathison on *Homeland*, the inability to extricate their personal, emotional, and sexual lives from national security seems to reflect a post-9/11 security state that insists that extensive domestic surveillance is necessary to protect the homeland.

It is no accident that women, and in particular mothers, are the characters who carry these story lines about government and security into the most private aspects of their personal and family lives. “Family values” television now includes and even prioritizes the (white, upper-middle-class) national family over the individual nuclear family. The overarching thematic across these series is the notion that the financialized and securitized mind-sets that now govern public life color all private relationships as well. Individuals and families can’t hold themselves apart from the violence of the state and the violence of the market. This is TV well suited to address the economic and social conditions of the recession, TV that speaks to a culture of post-Edward Snowden revelations of domestic and international spying by the National Security Agency, and one still dealing with the detention and mistreatment of prisoners in Guantánamo Bay and remote-controlled drone attacks on US and foreign citizens abroad. As the wide array of interpretations of *Homeland* indicate, whether this phenomenon is a

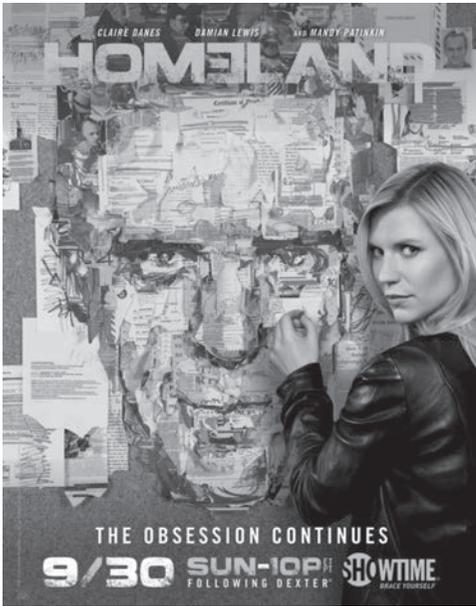


Figure 1. Carrie Mathison's depiction as intense and obsessive at once reverses and sustains normative gender polarities (Teakwood Lane Productions).

Danish-Swedish original version of *The Bridge* (*Bron/Broen*; SVT1 and DR1, 2011–), as well as in the US version (FX, 2013–), and later in the very short-lived *Black Box* (NBC, 2014). In both *Homeland* and *The Bridge* the female main character's mental illness (in the US version of *The Bridge*, detective Sonya Cross, played by Diane Kruger, has an unnamed autism-spectrum disorder) stands in the way of romantic and familial relationships and helps her maintain focus on her job. In this sense, the series arguably participates in the contemporary habit of rewriting disability as specialness, which has given rise to representations linking the social limitations of autism-spectrum disorder to investigative brilliance, though more usually for a male character (as in the BBC's *Sherlock* [2010–] and CBS's *Elementary* [2012–]). For *Homeland*'s Mathison, her illness manifests in obsessive attention to detail, inappropriate sexual relationships, and frequent hysterical outbursts and crying. Danes's performance, which prominently features her ability to crumple her face and quiver her lip in intense distress, foregrounds this emotionalism with extremely wide-open eyes and gestures like raking her hand through messy hair that express frustration with her inability to fully protect the US homeland.

Danes's performance has won her prestigious awards, but it has also been the subject of several parody sketches that have spread virally across the Internet. *Saturday Night Live* (NBC, 1975–) parodied *Homeland* most famously in a skit featuring Anne Hathaway hyperbolically rendering Danes's emotional performance. In Hathaway's parody, Mathison defends her positions not with logic and evidence, but by repeatedly shouting “No!” while exhibiting the character's signature crumpled face and messy hair. Her stoic and skeptical male superiors—using vocal tones one might employ

critique or positive reinforcement of the movement of government surveillance and security apparatus into private and domestic spaces is a question largely of perspective. Nonetheless, these thematic questions seem open for conversation largely because of the program's status as “quality” television.

Perhaps to contain the significance of Carrie Mathison's role in national security, another dimension of her character is her mental illness and extreme emotionalism. Mathison is bipolar, and as Steenberg and Tasker point out, her prowess as an intelligence officer is often represented as contingent on her illness, her “special” brain. Such figuring of a female law enforcer as particularly successful because she is mentally ill also appeared in the

with an angry, insistent toddler—essentially put her in “time-out,” cajoling her into exiting the conversation in favor of manically pinning pictures on a corkboard and connecting them with string. In keeping with the infantilization of Mathison’s emotional responses, the other widely distributed *Homeland* parody came from *Sesame Street* (PBS, 1969–). In “Homelamb,” Mathison and the rest of the CIA are sheep puppets searching for the Big Bad Wolf. Their biggest asset in this investigation is Baarody, who, sheep Mathison deduces, is actually a wolf in sheep’s clothing. *Sesame Street*, a show for young children (and their parents), continues the emphasis on excessive emotion with Mathison bleating breathlessly, shaking her long blonde hair, quivering with suppressed feelings throughout, and giving in to her mindless interest in Baarody’s handsome features despite knowing that he is in fact the dangerous criminal Big Bad Wolf.

These parodies bring us back to gendered debates about “quality” television dramas. While *Homeland*’s influence and acclaim put it in the “quality” category, its parodies emphasize the feminized elements of melodrama that link the show to “low” genres like soap opera and even to the broadcast dramas mentioned earlier, which still assume television’s traditionally more feminine address. *Homeland* is, moreover, a consummate example of melodramatic political discourse in the sense that Elizabeth R. Anker has advanced the term in her far-reaching book *Orgies of Feeling*. Anker’s depiction of post-9/11 melodrama describes *Homeland*’s ideological problematic well: “In legitimating violent and intrusive governing and corporate powers as a moral imperative for the practice of sovereign freedom, melodrama entrenches the disempowerment it is employed to overcome, and it abrogates the freedoms it promises to engender.”⁵ Indeed *Homeland*’s ongoing, doomed effort to mobilize state resources to alleviate vulnerability even requires it to stage (in the finale of season 2) a fuller culmination of 9/11’s terrorist attack on the Pentagon, with greater loss of life, when a car bomb explodes at the CIA headquarters at Langley.

For us and for the contributors here, *Homeland*’s significance lies in its skillful rendering of affective and ideological economies apposite to ongoing debates about the securitization of American life. The series’ emphatic female centrality rebuts the still-presumptive masculinity of quality crime TV, inspiring successors across the (narrowing?) network and cable divide. While popular parodies have sometimes trivialized and hyperemotionalized *Homeland*, negotiating the gendered anxieties that arise from its success, more significant to us is the series’ break with the more masculine address that seems to go along with trends to compare TV favorably to cinema. *Homeland* is ultimately a trenchant political melodrama that does not seek to and never can quell the anxieties of the present moment with which it so forcefully engages. *

5 Elizabeth R. Anker, *Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 19.

“Pledge Allegiance”: Gendered Surveillance, Crime Television, and *Homeland*

by LINDSAY STEENBERG and YVONNE TASKER

Although there are numerous intertexts for the series, here we situate *Homeland* (Showtime, 2011–) in the generic context of American crime television. *Homeland* draws on and develops two of this genre’s most highly visible tropes: constant vigilance regarding national borders (for which the phrase “homeland security” comes to serve as cultural shorthand) and the vital yet precariously placed female investigator. In the immediate context of post-9/11 crime television (in programs such as *24* [Fox, 2001–2010] and *24: Live Another Day* [Fox, 2014]) the overarching message was that good people (i.e., trustworthy figures of authority) are watching. Thus, the surveillance of civil society was effectively legitimized as both responsibly managed and absolutely necessary. Moreover, the good people who both watch and respond are themselves suffering—whether conflicted over their actions and/or damaged through a personal history of violence and loss. These watchers’ honorable trauma serves to assure audiences that surveillance is not undertaken lightly. Agents of homeland security suffer on behalf of average citizens, those who seemingly do not have the psychological or physical fortitude to bear the responsibility of surveillance.

Premiering ten years after the events of 2001, *Homeland* develops these themes in new directions, moving beyond the Manichean opposition of right and wrong that characterized earlier representations. *Homeland* atypically dramatizes watchers who fail in their task and thus lack the absolute authority of earlier action-based intelligence thrillers. In a show that foregrounds multiple themes and resonances of fidelity, these failures take into account (and play with) the crime genre’s established history of featuring damaged investigators who are doubted but ultimately triumph. (Fidelity here refers both to personal and professional loyalties within the fictional world and to the actual failures of intelligence agencies to which *Homeland* alludes).

A second key feature of American crime television, one that has been seamlessly absorbed by intelligence-focused programs like *Homeland*, is the centrality of a female investigator who is herself damaged

and overinvested in her work.¹ Once again, *Homeland* acknowledges and develops this familiar construction of a professional woman whose personal trauma underpins her role as truth seeker and law enforcer. Particularly notable, we suggest, is the rich relationship explored in the show between these tropes of the female investigator and of legitimized surveillance.

The title *Homeland* of course refers to an America focused on the threat of terrorist activity at home as much as abroad and to the concessions in civil liberties that political violence is widely felt to require. From its initial broadcast, *Homeland* intervenes in a representational landscape in which the moral legitimacy of (political) violence is debated with intensity and regularity. Crime television has proved a fruitful site in which to rehearse ethical concerns over the extent of state surveillance, concerns of expediency over law, and the rights of suspected terrorists.

Unfolding in the aftermath of violence, crime television narrates processes of investigation and understanding, on the one hand, and pursuit and narrative resolution (if not always justice), on the other. The two are bound together, with the investigators seeking to understand a crime (scene), identify those responsible (and their motivations), and prevent further violence. The balance of investigation and pursuit in a crime show is one factor that determines its tone: Is it primarily a battle of wits, a chase, or a puzzle? Is the crime a pretext to explore the relationships within a work team (*Bones* [Fox, 2005–], *Numb3rs* [CBS, 2005–2010]), a character study (*Dexter* [Showtime, 2006–2013], *Elementary* [CBS, 2012–]), or a vehicle to elaborate concerns over contemporary politics (*The Wire* [HBO, 2002–2008], *24* [Fox, 2001–2010])? The narrative complexity deployed in *Homeland* is not novel in this larger generic context. Indeed, the plot twists of *24*, with its themes of loyalty and legitimacy, demonstrate the established character of these elements. Television narratives of homeland security in many ways require the shifts in allegiance, suspenseful revelations, and plot twists that the medium is particularly able to deliver.

As they have developed, the conventions of homeland security—at least on network television—have come to rely on particular models of heroism, as well as themes of terrorism, trauma, and violence. All of these elements are present in *Homeland*: Brody's status as damaged veteran, the traumatic explosion that provides the climax to season 2, Carrie's investment in her work, and Brody's conflicted commitment to home and homeland.

The interest of *Homeland* lies in part in its ability to renew and refresh what had become well-established conventions for representing the dangers of terrorism to Americans and the particular character—driven, intense, creative—of those who investigate and seek to prevent such violence. If narrative complexity (even at times incoherence) is a feature of many homeland security narratives, the psychological

1 For further studies of the female investigator, see Linda Mizejewski, "Dressed to Kill: Postfeminist Noir," *Cinema Journal* 44, no. 2 (2005): 121–127; Lindsay Steenberg, *Forensic Science in Contemporary American Popular Culture: Gender, Crime, Science* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Linda Mizejewski, *Hardboiled and High Heeled: The Woman Detective in Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004); Yvonne Tasker, *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1998); Deborah Jermyn, *Prime Suspect* (London: BFI, 2010).

complexity evident in *Homeland*—not only Carrie’s obsession with Brody but also the suggestion of an emotional and/or sexual tension between her and mentor Saul (Mandy Patinkin)—stretches the formulas it reproduces. In a way different from but related to the swearing and sexually explicit content so characteristic of “quality television,” the psychological complexity marks the Showtime series as “adult” (both challenging and titillating) drama. Thus viewers understand relatively early that Carrie is right to be suspicious of Brody, but the show withholds diegetic recognition; indeed, her interest in and pursuit of Brody, which merges personal obsession and professional responsibility, begin to undermine her status as trustworthy cop protagonist.

Like other crime programs, *Homeland* centralizes surveillance as its key information-gathering tool, yet surveillance here does not yield knowledge, or rather, the knowledge it yields is partial. There are both literal and metaphorical blind spots in the CIA’s surveillance apparatus. An example of the former is the Brodys’ garage—the space where Brody goes to pray in secret and hides his Qur’an and his gun. The garage, traditionally a space for masculine retreat, is pivotal in revealing to the audience that Brody’s national loyalties may have shifted with his religion. Themes of disguise and passing are explored with regularity in crime television shows concerned with political violence, encapsulated in the figure of an individual who passes as patriotic. Brody calls on the trope of the sleeper, a white American convert to Islam who is himself prepared to die in order to avenge Issa’s (Rohan Chand) death and America’s misdeeds abroad.² Venerated by the media and nation and encouraged to seek political office, Brody is readily able to penetrate the inner circles of US political power.

The literal blind spot of Brody’s garage points to the metaphorical blind spots of surveillance that lie in Brody’s motivation and his past. Because the show offers no reliable place or person, Brody’s motivations, and the extent to which they are informed by his captivity, are hidden from all who watch him—on-screen and off. The more we, and Carrie, watch and become involved with Brody, the less certain we are as to the limits of his trauma and the possibility that what has been repressed (his military experiences, his love of Abu Nazir and Issa, his faith, his injuries) will violently return. In a conversation with his wife, Brody insists that not even he knows the extent of his trauma: “There was nothing anyone could have done. Even me. Because I tried too, to deal with everything that happened but that was beyond *me*. I was fucked the moment I left for Iraq. We all were.” Thus, Brody himself cannot penetrate the blind spots in his own motivations or predict his own capacity for eruptive violence.

Michel Foucault has famously argued that “our society is one not of the spectacle, but of surveillance.”³ But it is a long-standing feature of crime television and cinema that surveillance provides a visual language for presenting violent spectacle, from *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954) to reality crime programming. In the third episode of the series, Carrie expresses frustration with the blind spots in the Brody surveillance footage: “I have three weeks left and we’re sitting around watching this . . . whatever

2 Yvonne Tasker, “Television Crime Drama and Homeland Security: From *Law & Order* to ‘Terror TV,’” *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 4 (2012): 44–65.

3 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 217.

this is . . . this reality show.” This moment expresses both the feminizing of surveillance and the acknowledgment of surveillance as voyeurism; after all, the Brody footage reveals no useful intelligence data, only spectacles of dysfunctional sexuality and enactments of deep trauma.

Homeland's surveillance spectacles are both high and low tech—coupling well-worn crime techniques, such as the stakeout or going undercover, with the hypermodern multiscreen aesthetic inspired by video games and other crime shows, such as the *CSI* (CBS, 2000–) franchise. This allows the series to exploit both the authenticity associated with older models of detection and the sophistication and (transnational) mobility of newer information technologies. Surveillance-based visuals are all filtered through the bodies and emotions of the CIA watchers, who themselves are core to the series' spectacle. If crime television typically seeks to reassure audiences that good people are watching, *Homeland*'s spectacles question the morality as well as the efficacy of the watchers. Here the show reinforces the centrality of Carrie Mathison as the linchpin of the series' spectacles, morality, and expertise.

Homeland couples its refinement of thematics of homeland security with an equally ambiguous development of another televisual trope, the postfeminist female investigator. Like the female investigators who predate her (from Dana Scully to Temperance Brennan), Carrie Mathison is brilliant, dedicated, and deeply troubled. She is also characterized by a post-*CSI* fascination with, and generic dependence on, investigative expertise: “As with [Dana] Scully and [Clarice] Starling, this scientific expertise goes against traditional views of women as intuitive and emotive rather than logical and deductive. Simultaneously, however, the expertise of the female investigator incorporates more traditionally feminine forms of knowledge, such as intuition, to form a hybrid forensic intuition.”⁴ Perhaps even more than earlier female investigators, Carrie embodies a hybrid investigative expertise. She couples her proficiency as a CIA intelligence analyst with emotionally based interpretations of information (e.g., she knows that Brody has seen through her charade to get close to him because she sees it in his eyes). What marks Carrie as different from Scully, Brennan, or even a character like *CSI*'s Catherine Willows is her repeated performance of overwhelming emotion. Unlike the stoic and implacable women of crime television, Carrie frequently cries, swears, and becomes angry.

Mental Illness. Carrie's characterization as both acknowledged expert and perpetually at the brink of breakdown acknowledges and simultaneously complicates the female investigator's typical (even clichéd) coupling of professional toughness and emotional vulnerability. The most significant of these variations lies in Carrie's depiction as mentally ill. Established conventions see the female expert unable to maintain a healthy work-life balance because she is intensely dedicated to her job—calling into question the emotional stability of professional women more widely. Carrie's situation is, of course, different. Her bipolar disorder is not a generalized feature of post-feminist culture (like the discourse of work-life balance) but a specific condition: one that informs her actions and contributes to her persona. Initially, the program uses

4 Steenberg, *Forensic Science*, 63.

Carrie's illness to question her reliability—to her family, her profession, and even to herself, as she explains to Saul in the opening of the show's second season: "It fucked me up, Saul. Being wrong about Brody. It really fucked me up because I have never been so sure and so wrong. . . . [T]he way I am now, I wouldn't trust me either." The combination of being certain and then "proven" wrong is what drives Carrie to seek electroshock therapy, as the closing sequence of season 1 dramatizes. In a compelling exercise in restricted narration, the audience knows the truth: Carrie is not wrong. Thus, the device of using mental illness to question her reliability is ultimately revealed to be false.

In many ways the program frames Carrie's abilities as an analyst as contingent on her mental illness. In this fashion it taps into the crime genre trope of the tortured investigative genius, the questionable emotional intelligence of literary detective Sherlock Holmes being a primary example. Her obsession with Brody thus becomes a symptom of her mental ill health and a sign of her professional expertise and/or intuitive understanding. In several instances she exploits her own trauma and illness to forge a connection with Brody over their shared status as veterans and victims (at the veteran support group in the first season and again to turn him in season 2). As is characteristic of the conflicted nature of Carrie's character and the complexity of the series as a whole, sexual and emotional involvement with Brody is presented as both a job well done and a failure of duty.

It is certainly problematic to frame mental illness as a professional asset. Yet it does reveal larger patterns within *Homeland*—re-presenting familiar post-9/11 crime television conventions in such a way as to draw attention to them, and in this case recalibrating the pathological dedication to work that defined so many earlier female investigators.

Carrie's characterization hybridizes the troubled female investigator with the moral ambiguity and irreverent toughness of the hard-boiled *noir* hero. Like the hard-boiled hero, hard-drinking jazz aficionado Carrie must move through multiple social sites—from the back alleys of Beirut to the back rooms of political corruption. Infinitely quotable author Raymond Chandler describes the seasoned hero as the "the best man in his world."⁵ Carrie Mathison is likewise the outsider (even from *inside* the CIA) who stands against all others to pursue threats to America.

This hard-boiled aspect of her professional persona is a strong feature of her character's setup in the first few episodes of the series and frames, from the outset, her relationship with her primary terror suspect, Sergeant Nicholas Brody. That relationship is presented as paranoid and erotically charged, in keeping with the traditional pairing between hard-boiled hero and femme fatale. Brody is thus introduced as a kind of *homme fatal*—dangerous, alluring, and mysterious. Like Carrie and her *noir* antecedents, Brody is a damaged veteran attempting to reintegrate. But where the *noir* hero struggled to place himself within a peaceful society, Brody layers this with shifting allegiances to Abu Nazir's (Navid Negahban) cause, with his affection for Nazir's lost son Issa tempering loyalties to his own family. *Homeland*, as we have

5 Raymond Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder," in *The Second Chandler Omnibus* (London: Book Club Associates, 1979), 14.

established, transforms this archetypal partnership, rendering opaque or unreadable the emotional loyalties behind the central performances. Carrie's feelings are always on display, just as Brody's are always seen simmering just below the surface. Neither character's motivation is certain, whether to other characters or to the audience.

As elsewhere in crime television, Carrie and other female characters in *Homeland* conflate sex and work. This conflation, often in the service of the nation, recalls the enduring Mata Hari archetype of espionage stories. Sex as a patriotic duty is a device associated specifically with female spies and investigators, one drawn on in Carrie's pursuit of a sexual relationship with Brody and echoed in the first-season subplot involving CIA asset Lynne Reed (Brianna Brown), paid girlfriend to Prince Farid Bin Abbud (Amir Arison). Reed uses her position as sexual partner to obtain information for Carrie and is killed in the process. A woman who has placed herself at risk to serve her country, Reed comes to operate as a cautionary figure for Carrie, who is racked with guilt over her inability to protect an asset. The weaponization of sex in the service of country is thus both lucrative and dangerous in *Homeland*.

Despite her sexualized fascination with Brody, Carrie remains unswerving in her willingness to risk everything to do her job—and that job is founded on an intense patriotism, a commitment to protect the homeland of the program's title. Publicity posters for the show include a tagline that questions or demands "Pledge Allegiance." It is not surprising, then, that the show's thematics and characters circulate around one structuring concept: fidelity. While this is the preoccupation of many crime shows, particularly those with homeland and terror themes (e.g., *24*, *Person of Interest* [CBS, 2011–]), *Homeland* depends on singularly intense concerns over fidelity—to one's spouse, employer, mentor, family, and country—teasing out the questionable fidelity of surveillance footage with its blind spots and lacunae.

Fidelity in *Homeland* is seemingly impossible. A few, of many, examples include Jessica Brody's (Morena Baccarin) affair with Major Mike Faber (Diego Klattenhoff), Carrie's complex relationship with Brody, Brody's commitment to Abu Nazir, and CIA Counterterrorism Director David Estes's (David Harewood) alliance with Vice President Walden (Jamey Sheridan). Carrie's relationship to Saul seems to be the only space in which consistent fidelity might be sustained. This type of mentoring relationship is the foundation of many crime stories, many of which feature an older man inducting a younger woman into the procedures of criminal investigation. Yet



Figure 1. This promotional image, with its prescriptive tagline "Pledge Allegiance," highlights the centrality of fidelity to the show (Teakwood Lane Productions).

unlike other paternal role models of the genre, Saul Berenson is in many ways as broken as Carrie; a prime example of this is the disintegration of his marriage. *Homeland* also transgresses the conventions of the trusting paternal relationship, with Carrie exploiting her sexual appeal to ensure that Saul authorizes her initial surveillance of the Brody family. Thus, from the outset, the quasi-incestuous Saul-Carrie relationship resists being read as unshakable or fundamentally trusting.

Fidelity is foregrounded not only because of the narrative complexity of the show and its serial formatting, borrowed from television genres like the soap opera, but also because it is at the heart of how the show sells itself as unique—based as it is on faithful, authentic performances of complex emotional and psychological states such as Carrie's illness, Brody's trauma, and Saul's outrage.

Homeland's popular reception frequently implies a symbolic dichotomy between the Bush administration's *24* and Obama's *Homeland*.⁶ This juxtaposition, one that values the complexity of *Homeland's* narrative and the force of its performances, also acknowledges the profound changes in crime television since 9/11. *Homeland*, however, as we have argued, revivifies and reinterprets many long-established aspects of the crime genre, including the effective yet vulnerable female investigator and a complex form of narration that obscures motive and delays resolution. While *Homeland* atypically acknowledges a political landscape in which the use of surveillance technology, for example, is widely questioned, it works within (rather than against) the broader context of crime and espionage drama. After all, such generic retrofitting—looking backward to move forward—is a firmly established aspect of popular culture. In its blending of familiar and unexpected narrative and thematic elements, *Homeland* draws on and also troubles the conventions of American crime television, particularly in its post-9/11 form. *

6 Leslie Goffe, "The Homeland Phenomenon," *Middle East Magazine* 440 (2013): 54–56.

Fictions of Terror: Complexity, Complicity and Insecurity in *Homeland*

by JAMES CASTONGUAY

At the 2012 Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, I seemed to be almost alone in my negative criticisms of *Homeland*'s (Showtime, 2011–) first season. Although the critical enthusiasm for the program from many of my colleagues was a welcome corrective to the relative absence of sustained scholarly discussions of entertainment television and ongoing US wars, I was surprised by what I saw as an emphasis on the putatively positive and progressive aspects of the program at the expense of *Homeland*'s more regressive ideologies and repressive politics.¹ To be sure, *Homeland* intensifies the “many meanings, or polysemy, that television [already] offers” through its complex narrative and complicated characters to produce a level of enigmatic ambiguity that provides ample interpretive space for the overwhelming laudatory critical reception it has received.² Yet these positive evaluations require a highly selective critical reading that problematically ignores or downplays the more salient and dominant meanings produced by the series. In what follows I elaborate on some of these meanings to argue that *Homeland* successfully exploits post-9/11 insecurities, psychological trauma, and narrative complexity to produce “quality” television propaganda for the Obama administration’s “overseas contingency operations” and its unprecedented domestic surveillance on the home front under the umbrella of an \$80 billion US security state.³

1 For two notable exceptions to this scholarly neglect, see Stacey Takacs, *Terrorism TV: Popular Entertainment in Post-9/11 America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012); Yvonne Tasker, “Television Crime Drama and Homeland Security: From *Law & Order* to ‘Terror TV,’” *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 4 (2012): 44–65.

2 Jeremy Butler, *Television: Critical Methods and Applications*, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge), 7.

3 See Scott Wilson and Al Kamen, “‘Global War on Terror’ Is Given New Name,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402818.html>. As Timothy Melley sums it up, “[T]he US National Security State . . . consumes 42 percent of world military spending [through] 16 intelligence agencies[,] . . . 29 other federal agencies, 1,200 government bureaus, and 2,000 private companies, all operating in 10,000 locations within the United States and many more abroad.” Timothy Melley, “Covert Spectacles and the Contradictions of the Democratic Security State,” *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 6, no. 1 (2014): 63. See also Dana Priest and William Arkin, *Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State* (Hachette Digital, 2011).

There is no question that *Homeland* stands out in important ways from other examples of “terror TV” for, among other reasons, “its central premise that the trauma of war does not disappear,” for “calling attention to the covert and largely unreported drone wars,” and for its representation of the “psychic turmoil and bipolar extremes that have characterized . . . America’s collective response to the [2001] terrorist attacks.”⁴ I would argue, however, that *Homeland* is a complicit validation of these post-9/11 insecurities that in turn contributes to the public acceptance of arguments in favor of increasing homeland security at the expense of individual rights. In addition, agent Carrie Mathison’s gender, bipolar disorder, unorthodox counterterrorism methods (including illegal wiretapping and “sleeping with the enemy”), fierce independence, and “nearly pathological . . . devot[ion] to her job . . . [all] challenge the conventions of the male-oriented espionage thriller.”⁵ It is significant in this context, however, that Mathison’s obsessive work is being done for the CIA, which makes her character another example of television’s broader recruitment of fictional women to support the war on terror or to assist in covert operations at home in programs like *The Unit* (CBS, 2006–2009), *Army Wives* (Lifetime, 2007–2013), and *Covert Affairs* (USA, 2010–).

Similar to the Cold War logic of deterrence through arms escalation, according to *Homeland*, covert operations are necessary to prevent terrorist attacks while also having the inescapable consequence of creating more terrorist enemies. This is one of the many contradictions of the current US “democratic security state” that leads to increased support of military operations abroad and increased surveillance and counterterrorism operations at home.⁶ *Homeland* thus represents what we might call, following Richard Hofstadter’s classic Cold War thesis, a paranoid style in American television in which “the imitation of the enemy [is the] . . . fundamental paradox.”⁷ As Susan Buck-Morss notes in *Thinking Past Terror*, the result is that “terror produces terror . . . [as] we [are] subjected to the common paranoid vision of violence and counter-violence, and prohibited from engaging each other in a common public sphere.”⁸ *Homeland*’s paranoid style is biologically wired into Mathison, whose highly emotional and manic episodes provide her with a “superpower disorder” (as Danes and *Homeland*’s producers describe it) through which she is able to gather, interpret, and intuit intelligence in

4 Patrice Petro, “Globalization and the Humanities: Cosmopolitanism, Cities, Security” (paper presented at the Amsterdam Centre for Globalization Studies at the University of Amsterdam, May 24, 2012), 14. Writing shortly after the conclusion of season 1, Petro already expressed significant reservations about *Homeland* for “not offer[ing] an especially critical examination of . . . citizenship in our post-9/11 world,” and in light of Carrie’s “desperate effort to gain the normalcy . . . of marriage, family, and children, which are the only factors that motivate actors in this drama to turn against their allies, governments, and ideological ideals.” *Ibid.*, 17; Matt Delmont, “Introduction: Visual Culture and the War on Terror,” *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013): 158; Gary R. Edgerton and Katherine C. Edgerton, “Pathologizing Post-9/11 America in *Homeland*: Private Paranoia, Public Psychosis,” *Critical Studies in Television* 7, no. 1 (2012): 92.

5 Petro, “Globalization,” 14.

6 Melley, “Covert Spectacles,” 63.

7 Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 32, quoted in Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (New York: Verso, 2003), 27.

8 Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, 28.

ways that her rational male superiors cannot.⁹ When combined with her willingness to become emotionally connected to “assets” and terrorist suspects, Mathison becomes a uniquely effective and affective weapon in the “war against terror,” as the paranoid bipolar CIA agent off her antipsychotic medication is the one person who is able to see the post-9/11 world objectively enough to find the terrorists in our midst.¹⁰

Descriptions in the popular media of the president binge-watching *Homeland* (reportedly his favorite program)—including, I assume, an episode portraying the US drone strike ordered by Vice President Walden (Jamey Sheridan) that kills Abu Nazir’s (Navid Negahban) young son, Issa (Rohan Chand)—become more sinister in the context of the Obama administration’s actual global war on terror, which *Wired* has summed up, following CIA director Michael Hayden, as being “the same as Bush’s, only with more killing.”¹¹ As Obama explained to *Rolling Stone*, “[T]here’s a lot of overdramatization [in *Homeland*] of how our national security apparatus works . . . but it’s a terrific psychological study, and that’s what I enjoy about it.”¹² Reports of White House weekly “kill lists” and the confirmed deaths of thousands of civilians and hundreds of children as a result of Obama’s escalated drone warfare program might explain why Obama privileges *Homeland*’s representation of the psychology of terrorism over US security operations and policies.¹³ Although *Homeland* does suggest that US policy and actions are partly to blame for the terrorists’ reprisals, and the series explores in detail the personal psychological toll of US politics and aggression, it does so to reinforce the need for increased homeland security and the use of force in counterterrorism operations. Just as *Homeland* producers Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon’s previous series *24* (Fox 2001–2010; *24: Live Another Day*, Fox, 2014) was effective PR for the Bush administration’s “enhanced interrogation techniques” and even served as an actual model for interrogation for the US military, *Homeland* functions as a “quality” propaganda arm for the Obama administration’s continued waging of “dirty wars” around the globe, including the CIA-led assassination of US citizens.¹⁴

9 Vanessa Thorpe, “*Homeland*: Destructive, Dynamic, Distinctive—Carrie and Brody Are Back on Screen,” *Guardian*, October 6, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/oct/06/carrie-brody-back-homeland>.

10 In addition to the well-known parody of emotionalism discussed by the editors in their introduction here, Danes’s over-the-top affect has also led to the creation of a Tumblr page, “The Claire Danes Cry Face Project,” *Tumblr*, October 2012–April 2014, <http://clairedanescryface.tumblr.com>.

11 David Kravets, “Former CIA Chief: Obama’s War on Terror Same as Bush’s, but with More Killing,” *Wired*, September 10, 2012, <http://www.wired.com/2012/09/bush-obama-war-on-terror>. See also Jack Serle, “More than 2,400 Dead as Obama’s Drone Campaign Marks Five Years,” *Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, January 23, 2014, <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2014/01/23/more-than-2400-dead-as-obamas-drone-campaign-marks-five-years>.

12 Jann S. Wenner, “Ready for the Fight: *Rolling Stone* Interview with Barack Obama,” *Rolling Stone*, April 25, 2012, <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/ready-for-the-fight-rolling-stone-interview-with-barack-obama-20120425>.

13 Jo Becker and Scott Shane, “Secret ‘Kill List’ Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will,” *New York Times*, May 29, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html>. See also Mark Mazetti, “Use of Drones for Killings Risks a War without End, Panel Concludes in Report,” *New York Times*, June 26, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/26/world/use-of-drones-for-killings-risks-a-war-without-end-panel-concludes-in-report.html>.

14 See Glenn Greenwald, “Confirmed: Obama Authorizes Assassination of US Citizen,” *Salon*, April 7, 2010, http://www.salon.com/2010/04/07/assassinations_2/; Nasser al-Awlaki, “The Drone That Killed My Grandson,” *New York Times*, July 18, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/18/opinion/the-drone-that-killed-my-grandson.html>; and *Dirty Wars* (Rick Rowley, 2013).

In addition to being endorsed by the commander in chief, *Homeland* works in close collaboration with an actual CIA liaison, running story lines by the agency “to help with . . . verisimilitude,” and has military families and former special ops members on its production team, including in executive producer roles.¹⁵ Maureen Dowd has reported in the *New York Times* that Claire Danes “was welcomed with open arms at the real [CIA]” and that CIA director John Brennan “even ushered his fictional counterpart, Mandy Patinkin, into his office [where they] talked about keeping America’s relentless extremist enemies at bay.” Dowd quotes Danes’s claim that “there must be some urge to have their victories on positive display even in a fictional context,” and concludes that “the agency prefers PR about sometimes haywire yet dedicated fictional characters to fumbling real ones,” adding that “Carrie and Saul . . . actually boost the agency’s brand.”¹⁶ This positive branding effort for the CIA resonates with *Homeland*’s promotional campaign demanding that fans “pledge allegiance” to the program and reflects a post-9/11 nationalism that extends beyond “support the troops” rhetoric to include the government agents who are spying on the home front to keep us safe from terrorism.

Although the *New Yorker*, *Mother Jones*, and the *New York Times* lauded *Homeland* for providing the “antidote to [Fox’s] *24*” that finally “exorcis[ed] the ghosts” of Jack Bauer from our collective memories (despite being produced by the same creative team), Showtime shares *Homeland*’s profits with Fox 21 Productions and was singled out in financial reports as a major source of increased revenue for Rupert Murdoch’s Twenty-First Century Fox.¹⁷ In addition, *Homeland*’s success no doubt played a role in the much-delayed rebirth of Bauer in Howard Gordon’s *24: Live Another Day* (Fox, 2014–), which has been updated for the WikiLeaks era by transforming Bauer’s trusted colleague, Chloe O’Brian, into a “more radical, [Edward] Snowden-type” enemy of the United States.¹⁸ In addition, although both *24* and *Homeland* frame their representations of Arabs and Muslims in the already-limited context of the espionage thriller and terrorism, *24* offered a significantly broader range of Muslim and Arab characters than *Homeland*, which problematically extends the familiar racial and national profile of the Muslim terrorist from a dark-skinned, Middle Eastern Muslim male to include white and African American Marines and white American

15 Gavin Edwards, “*Homeland*’s CIA Connection,” *Men’s Journal*, October 1, 2013, <http://www.mensjournal.com/magazine/homelands-cia-connection-20121022>.

16 Maureen Dowd, “My So-Called C.I.A. Life,” *New York Times*, September 14, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/opinion/sunday/dowd-my-so-called-cia-life.html>.

17 Emily Nussbaum, “‘Homeland’: The Antidote for ‘24,’” *New Yorker*, November 29, 2011, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2011/11/homeland-the-antidote-for-24.html>; See also Hamed Aleaziz, “Interrogating the Creators of ‘Homeland,’” *Mother Jones*, November 4, 2011, <http://www.motherjones.com/media/2011/10/homeland-season-2-claire-danes-howard-gordon-alex-gansa>; Willa Paskin, “The Creators of ‘Homeland’ Exorcise the Ghost of ‘24,’” *New York Times*, September 26, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/magazine/the-creators-of-homeland-exorcise-the-ghost-of-24.html>; “Twenty-First Century Fox Reports Second Quarter Total Revenue of \$8.16 Billion,” *Business Wire*, February 6, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1494781782?accountid=28645>.

18 Jen Trolio, “*24: Live Another Day*: Yvonne Strahovski Joins the Cast to Hunt Jack, Chloe’s an Edward Snowden Type, and More,” *TV.com*, January 13, 2013, <http://www.tv.com/shows/24/community/post/24-live-another-day-yvonne-strahovski-joins-the-cast-to-hunt-jack-chloes-an-edward-snowden-type-and-more--138963472768>.

women.¹⁹ Indeed, although not all of the Muslims in *Homeland* are terrorists, all of the terrorists are Muslims, including Sergeant Brody, whose Islamic “turn” is represented as a prerequisite to becoming a terrorist.²⁰ While Islam may provide Brody with therapeutic comfort, he is a Stockholm-syndrome convert coerced into his Islamic faith and its concomitant terrorist politics. *Homeland* thus exploits the viewer’s initial surprise associated with seeing a white US Marine worshipping Allah in his garage by anticipating and refuting the stereotypical assumption that Brody’s faith is evidence that he is a terrorist. Of course, we later learn that Brody is in fact a terrorist who assassinates the vice president and murders three other people (and were it not for a malfunctioning suicide bomb vest, he would have killed many more). Similar to the way homeland security is integrated into the broader genre of the procedural crime narratives discussed by Tasker, *Homeland* asks viewers to examine their prejudices only to reconfirm those stereotypical assumptions later, which Tasker has described as Showtime’s “‘quality TV’ version” of the tropes present in procedural crime drama franchises like *CSI* (CBS, 2000–) and *Law & Order* (NBC, 1990–).²¹ As Jason Mittell has also shown, following Stuart Hall’s theory of articulation, the meaning of Brody’s video testimonial takes a similar trajectory through *Homeland*’s complex narrative structure: “Brody first articulates a terrorist bombing to American patriotism, then *Homeland* rearticulates the video to anti-terrorist pursuits and eventually to condemn terrorism and frame Brody as wrongly-accused, solidifying the dominant notion that terrorists are Arab foreigners, not white Marines.”²² Like the earlier “reveal” that Brody is a devout Muslim, *Homeland* adds layers of narrative and psychological complexity but ultimately ends up in the same representational place. *Homeland* may open up possibilities for alternative and even subversive meanings in a US context of reception, but it closes them down by rearticulating, reinforcing, and ultimately amplifying the familiar representation of the militant Muslim terrorist.

If we move beyond the important but methodologically limited consideration of stereotypes and distortions to include the context of reception, one might also suggest, following Hall’s influential encoding-decoding model, that these dominant notions are negotiated and resisted by *Homeland*’s audience, yet there is also evidence to suggest that these dominant meanings are communicated effectively and reinforced for a

19 See Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

20 Laila Al-Arian named *Homeland* “TV’s most Islamophobic show . . . [for] warn[ing] that Muslims are a hidden danger to fellow Americans,” and the Lebanese tourism minister was reportedly “so upset about the portrayal of Beirut that he [was] considering a lawsuit.” See Laila Al-Arian, “TV’s Most Islamophobic Show,” *Salon*, December 15, 2013, http://www.salon.com/2012/12/15/tvs_most_islamophobic_show; Bassem Mroue and Elizabeth A. Kennedy, “‘Homeland’: Lebanon Considering Legal Action against Showtime Series,” *Huffington Post*, October 18, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/19/homeland-lebanon-lawsuit_n_1986086.html.

21 Michael Kackman, interview with Yvonne Tasker, *Aca-Media*, “Episode 2,” podcast audio, February 28, 2013, <http://www.aca-media.org/episode2>.

22 Jason Mittell, “Ends,” in *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, prepublication edition (MediaCommons Press, 2012–2013), <http://mcpres.media-commons.org/complextelevision/ends/>.

significant portion of the US audience.²³ During *Homeland*'s first season, for instance, Peter King, conservative chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security, who in 2004 told Sean Hannity that the “[Muslim] enemy is living amongst us” and was a vocal opponent of the “Ground Zero mosque,” received media attention for organizing what he described as “a series of hearings dealing with the critical issue of radicalization in the American Muslim community.”²⁴ The results of a national poll released shortly before *Homeland*'s premiere also found that 47 percent of Americans believed the values of Islam are at odds with American values, and Muslims were the only religious group to receive an overall unfavorable rating. Given that 60 percent of respondents claimed to not know any Arab Americans or Muslims, *Homeland*'s representations become especially important, since versions of the “real” or “truth” about these groups and individuals are not grounded in viewers' actual experiences.²⁵ To be sure, *Homeland* opens up the theoretical possibility for subversive meanings through its brief explicit criticisms of US politics and policies, yet these meanings are outweighed by these contexts of reception and *Homeland*'s representation of the ubiquitous Muslim enemy.

The comparisons made by news outlets between *Homeland* and the actual release in May 2014 of US Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl—including a CNN segment titled “‘Brody’ vs. Bergdahl”—bolstered the program's cultural legitimacy and the plausibility of its main premise, which, as John Carlos Rowe notes, adds a *Manchurian Candidate*-like “twist” to a traditional captivity narrative in order to “play . . . upon the broad paranoia within the general population of the US, [and trade] on the panoptical presence of ‘Homeland Security’ in Americans' daily lives.”²⁶ The beginning of the post-Brody season 4 would seem to offer renewed possibilities for subversive political meanings, as Mathison quickly earns the nickname “drone queen” for the assassinations she has supervised as the CIA's Kabul station chief. Peter Quinn (Rupert Friend), the psychologically traumatized black ops agent, expresses his disgust for Carrie's callous blaming of “collateral damage” on the victims for associating with people on the CIA's “kill list,” and the introduction of Aayan Ibrahim (Suraj Sharma), the sole survivor of Mathison's “botched attack” on a wedding party, establishes a Middle Eastern Muslim character who appears to be uninterested in jihad. It remains to be seen if *Homeland* is simply introducing these moral ambiguities and political realities to offer

23 See Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Stuart Hall, “Encoding/Decoding,” in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (New York: Routledge, 1992), 128–138.

24 “NY Congressman Calls US Mosque Leaders ‘An Enemy amongst Us,’” Council on American-Islamic Relations, February 11, 2004, <http://cair.com/action-alerts/268-ny-congressman-calls-u-s-mosque-leaders-an-enemy-amongst-us.html>; Committee on Homeland Security House of Representatives and Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs United States Senate, *Compilation of Hearings on Islamist Radicalization—Volume I*, 112th Congress, 1st sess., December 7, 2011 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), 2.

25 “What It Means to Be American: Attitudes towards Increasing Diversity in America Ten Years after 9/11,” *Public Religion Research Institute*, September 6, 2011, <http://publicreligion.org/research/2011/09/what-it-means-to-be-american>.

26 Gideon Raff, who produced the Israeli series *Hatufim [Prisoners of War]* (Keshet, 2010–) on which *Homeland* is based, also appeared on CNN as an expert commentator after Bergdahl's release; John Carlos Rowe, “American Orientalism after Said,” *Popular Culture in the Middle East and North Africa: A Postcolonial Outlook* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 183–196.

counterarguments and justifications in favor of US policies and the CIA's actions. Facilitated by a culture of fear and a context of reception that includes ubiquitous media coverage of the "ISIS threat to America," *Homeland's* previous seasons suggest that its potentially progressive polysemy can be effectively contained, controlled, and rearticulated through a complex narrative structure that may continue to do its ideological work on behalf of the Obama administration's aggressive counterterrorism policies abroad and repressive security policies at home. *

The National Body, Women, and Mental Health in *Homeland*

by ALEX BEVAN

The academic literature on postfeminism, pathology, and quality television observes the traditional commitment of quality television to stigmatizing the single professional woman, and at first glance, *Homeland* (HBO, 2011–) adheres to this convention.¹ This essay, however, explores the symbolic position of the single working woman in *Homeland* within larger discourses on national security, surveillance, and the relationship of the individual with the state. Drawing on work in feminist geography that analyzes women's symbolic operation in the war on terror, I argue that the mental and bodily health of Carrie Mathison become battlegrounds for the series' overarching questions about state surveillance and citizenship. Gender in *Homeland* is less concerned with the personal being political than it is with personhood and "geopoliticality," that is, the relationships between personal privacy and domestic security, and between a US-branded feminism and American imperialism. Carrie's mind and body territorialize geopolitical struggles that elude representability because of their very lack of national, spatial, and material boundaries. The post-9/11, "post"–Iraq War climate is characterized by a crisis of national representability: drone wars violate the integrity of national borders; war is declared on individuals rather than nations; perceived threats from the "outside" (terrorist attacks like 9/11) merge with those that come from within (the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, the escalation of mass shootings in the United States), including violence that defies physicality and territory, like cyberterrorism. Carrie's mind and body humanize and literalize the war on terror;

1 Diane Negra, "Quality Postfeminism?: Sex and the Single Girl on HBO," *Genders* 39 (2004), http://www.genders.org/g39/g39_negra.html.

where traditional notions of territory and warfare are in crisis. Through institutions and decisions that govern her mind and body, the series manages and workshops larger national discourses on security. Carrie embodies the intersections of geopolitical struggles, gender, and American discourses around national identity, thereby redirecting scholarly attention toward television geographies of gender and feminism.

Carrie is a talented CIA operative with bipolar disorder. Her pathology is, however, a double-edged sword. At times, it undercuts her legitimacy when she must convince the agency of an imminent terrorist attack, and yet it also inspires her professional breakthroughs. Carrie's sanity is scrutinized in season 1 when the series' portrayal of her manic episode discredits her theory that the decorated US war hero, Brody, is secretly a terrorist. Only in that season's finale is it revealed that Carrie was, in fact, right and that her disorder did not dull her logic but enabled the case's breakthrough. In season 3, Carrie uses her bipolar disorder as a smoke screen in courting a high-priority Iranian informant; her boss, Saul, pretends to fire and institutionalize her as a security risk, and Carrie then acts as bait, appearing to be a disgruntled and possibly treasonous ex-operative. The true intention of this play comes to light only episodes later, at a stage when it appears that the CIA has institutionalized Carrie against her will.² At this point in the series, Carrie's mental illness, as the repeated focus of agency surveillance and censure, becomes repurposed as an effective gambit in reconnaissance missions.

Because Carrie's mental and physical health are under constant scrutiny, they are implicated in her struggles to assert power and authority in her workplace and her sex life. She offers Saul sex in return for his turning a blind eye to her illicit surveillance of the Brody household.³ When Saul shuts down her operation after rejecting her, Carrie continues her surveillance of Brody by pursuing him sexually. Carrie also has multiple sexual encounters with strangers in the series.⁴ *Homeland* repeatedly frames Carrie's promiscuity as pathological because her one-night stands narratively coincide with periods of psychological distress. Her method of pursuing men (she frequents bars wearing a fake engagement ring to ward off those interested in a relationship) and her failure to remember exactly who she slept with are also colored as deviant. Consistent with hackneyed associations among women, espionage, and trading sex for national secrets (à la Mata Hari), Carrie uses her body as currency for asserting control both at work and in her sex life. The symbolic value of Carrie's body culminates at the end of the third season with her discovery that she is pregnant with Brody's child and her decision to keep the baby and raise it as a single mother despite her reservations about balancing work with home life.⁵

Carrie's mental health and her reproductive and sexual body manifest the lines between selfhood and state power in key American ideological debates. The friction between self and state is apparent when she is hospitalized twice for manic episodes. During these institutionalizations, her body is literally placed under state control and surveillance, which poignantly contrasts with how the series begins when Carrie is

2 "Yoga Play," *Homeland* 3.05 (October 20, 2013).

3 "Pilot," *Homeland* 1.01 (October 2, 2011).

4 "Pilot"; "Tin Man Is Down," *Homeland* 3.01 (September 29, 2013).

5 "The Star," *Homeland* 3.12 (December 15, 2013).

in the position of surveilling Brody after she illegally bugs his family home. Carrie is in the position, then, either of analyzing terrorist threats or of being analyzed by US intelligence, military, and medical institutions. In this way, her pathological body materializes the binary between surveyors and the surveilled that the series constructs. However, the lines between watching and being watched become less clear once the audience learns that Carrie is complicit in being surveilled when the agency uses her mental illness as bait in the play for Iran. The uncertainty the narrative constructs around Carrie's mental stability and the blurred lines between the subject and object of state surveillance parallel the mixed sentiment and confusing messages that characterize the popular discourse on state surveillance during the American war on terror. The intensification of drone warfare in the Obama administration, the retrospective scrutiny of the Patriot Act, and the 2013 Edward Snowden leaks (which revealed that Homeland Security tracks the Internet activity and phone calls of private citizens) are all part of the growing public discourse on government surveillance and rights to personal privacy in a security state. Indeed, public knowledge about the security state raises significant questions about what exactly constitutes surveillance in a digital era, post-9/11 America, and to what extent submitting to surveillance is a fair compromise for possibly deterring a terrorist attack. News media continually report on the conflicting interests between individual rights to privacy and government responsibilities for national security. The tension between what some see as pernicious surveillance and others view as necessary vigilance also coincides with mixed public sentiment about government ownership of private information and corporate access to this potential wealth of marketing data. The public concern around how the security state safeguards and/or impinges on personal freedom is reflected in news headlines like "We Kill People Based on Metadata," "Orwell's Nightmare: The NSA and Google," and "That Lamp Is Spying on You."⁶

The tenebrousness of twenty-first-century security and privacy rights makes the symbolic legibility of bodies and territory all the more important. Alexander Murphy argues that physical territory remains important to political ideology:

The role of the territorial state has changed in recent decades in the wake of: the communications revolution; the explosion of transnational social, political, and economic formations; accelerated mobility across international boundaries. . . . Yet in the rush to document and assess the networks, flows, and relational spaces that are part of this shift, it is important not to overlook the continuing hold of modernist territorial ideas on the geographical imagination.⁷

6 "We kill people based on metadata" is an infamous quote by General Michael Hayden, former director of the CIA and NSA. Michael Hayden (GA), Debate with Dr. David Cole, "The Price of Privacy: Re-Evaluating the NSA, a Debate," Johns Hopkins University Foreign Affairs Symposium, Baltimore, MD, April 1, 2014; John W. Whitehead, "Orwell's Nightmare: The NSA and Google—Big Brother Meets Big Business," *Huffington Post*, May 13, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-w-whitehead/orwells-nightmare-the-nsa_b_5310171.html; Johnny Duggan, "That Lamp Is Spying on You, and So Is Basically Everything Else," *Ryot: News + Action*, <http://www.ryot.org/lamp-spying-pretty-much-everything-else/653945>.

7 Alexander B. Murphy, "Territory's Continuing Allure," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103, no. 5 (2013): 1212.

I would add that *media negotiations* of these “flows” and “relational spaces” reconstruct the sense of territory *and bodies* under surveillance to address topics like networks and security, which tend to elude representability. This is particularly true of digital-era warfare and surveillance, which defy spatial representability because they cannot be reduced to one event in a single time and place. The Pakistan drone attacks in season 3 of *Homeland* represent the Langley-based control center, action on the ground, and satellite images that mediate the two spaces and time zones. Thus, drone intelligence, which is rooted in abstract satellite images, must be narratively and visually translated by the series into images of violence on the ground and emotional response in the control room. *Homeland* applies a similar narrative and visual protocol of spatial fragmentation and permutation to representing surveillance more generally. Part of the difficulty of contemporary debates about drone warfare and surveillance is that they are difficult to perceive, bear witness to, or even conceive of. They rely on elusiveness, invisibility, and the porousness of national borders, where “the enemy” may be diffused across several countries and a string of bank accounts and e-mail addresses. The “hunt” for terrorists in *Homeland* often relies on the anticlimactic and monotonous tracking of e-mail, cell-phone activity, and international transfers of large sums of money. Depictions of graphic violence are therefore relatively rare in the series, as its “chase scenes” are primarily digital. Hence, the war on terror and consequences of government surveillance are made reassuringly visible (and violent) in the form of Carrie’s hospitalization and treatment. The interaction between Carrie’s pathology and the state imbues the elusive terms of twenty-first-century warfare and geopolitical power with representability and symbolic territorialization. The gendered reproductive and sexual currencies of Carrie’s body are burdened with this symbolic work. Similarly, popular Western discourses on war in the Middle East and the security state mobilize women’s bodies to address the unrepresentability of twenty-first-century warfare.

In addition to the spatial and geographic dislocatedness of the war on terror, there is also a temporal and cognitive ambiguity. Brian Massumi observes the affective (il)logic of preemptive attacks by the United States on potential terrorist threats, pointing out the “would-have/could-have” reasoning behind the American invasion of Iraq, which George W. Bush later justified with the claim that *had* Saddam Hussein had access to “weapons of mass destruction,” then he *could* have posed a viable threat.⁸ This same reasoning permeates the temporal affect of the war on terror and its definitions of security: “The security that preemption is explicitly meant to produce is predicated on its tacitly producing what it is meant to avoid: preemptive security is predicated on a production of insecurity to which it itself contributes.”⁹ In other words, “threat has no actual referent” in this paradigm.¹⁰ The affective politics of the war on terror extend to *Homeland* and its spatiotemporal disjunctions that appear in the state’s governance of Carrie’s mind and body. Carrie is institutionalized based on her

8 Brian Massumi, “The Future Birth of the Affective Fact,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 55.

9 *Ibid.*, 58–59.

10 *Ibid.*, 59.

suspicions of Brody, which her employers presume to be pathological. The agency and viewer discover she is right about Brody after she has already been committed. Carrie is institutionalized again in season 3 because of the threat she poses as a security liability to the CIA. Later on in that season, the series reveals this manic episode to be part of an agency operation. *Homeland's* narrative logic is rooted in the same retrospective affect used for justifying preemptive attacks on terrorist targets. The circular logic and time-bending, Wonderland irrationalism of the war on terror are reflected in the agency's preemptive measures to quiet Carrie before she has even spoken, and this logic is played out upon her "disordered" body. The viewer is roped into this retrospective logic when the series reveals *after* her institutionalizations that the security liability she posed was unfounded. In the same way that the Cheshire Cat reasons that Alice is mad *because* she is in Wonderland, and living in a perpetual state of insecurity is a product of the security state, Carrie is institutionalized for mental illness because of the information she *could* release if she goes mad. The series' ongoing management of Carrie Mathison's pathology and the government's control over her body are also meta-interrogations of the logical fissures marking the temporality of national security.

Feminist geography provides a broader discursive context for the ways that the series uses Carrie's health to corporealize and rationalize the war on terror. Work of this kind challenges understandings of security as protection or as a fortification of inside-outside boundaries and seeks to "link together the feminist concerns with the body with the critical geopolitical global vision. This reconfigures the geopoliticians' concern with abstracted, state-based notions of security into a form that is embodied in the material figure of the civilian body."¹¹ Feminist geographers respond to previous geographic paradigms that focus on metadiscourses on surveillance and security by focusing on the immediate effects of these exercises in state power on the female body. As Lise Siger and Joni Nelson state, "Feminist geography, anchored in the body, moves across scale, linking the personal and quotidian to urban cultural landscapes, deforestation, ethno-nationalist struggles, and global political economies."¹² In the introduction to their anthology *W Stands for Women*, Michael L. Ferguson and Lori Jo Marso connect the George W. Bush administration's co-optation of feminist rhetoric to its consolidation of a patriarchal security state, which claims to have women's best interests at heart. Thus, in popular discourses on US national security, private citizenship, and the war on terror, feminist rhetoric functions to literalize and justify US imperialism in the Middle East.¹³ The Western liberation of Muslim women and Western feminism as a civilizer of the Muslim "Other" have been significant arbiters in the United States' Orientalist rationales for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sunaina Maira and Sherene Razack suggest that the war on terror's political rhetoric mobilizes the concerns of Western feminism to justify its interventions in the Middle East. By associating Islam with the abuse of women's rights in that region, US propaganda

11 Joanne Sharp, "Geography and Gender: Finding Feminist Political Geographies," *Progress in Human Geography* 31, no. 3 (2007): 383.

12 Lise Nelson and Joni Seager, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Feminist Geography*, ed. Lise Nelson and Joni Seager (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 2.

13 Michael L. Ferguson and Lori Jo Marso, eds., *W Stands for Women: How the George W. Bush Presidency Shaped a New Politics of Gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

returns to an age-old Orientalist tactic that pathologizes Islam and constructs it as something that needs “curing” or Western “enlightenment.”¹⁴ In *Homeland*, this more broadly gendered, Orientalist rhetoric for the war on terror is present in Carrie’s intermediation between sources of information and the agency. Many of Carrie’s sources of information are Arab, and in the series “the Muslim woman’s body is constituted as simply a marker of a community’s place in modernity.”¹⁵ Carrie’s solicitation of information from “oppressed” female informants in return for their “liberation” in the form of American citizenship, along with her staunch independence and confidence in her work, advertise the progressivist influence of Western feminism (or American presence) in the Middle East. In this way, corporeal symbolism and its mediation of US discourses on surveillance applies to other women in *Homeland* as well as Carrie. In season 1, Carrie approaches Lynne (Brianna Brown), an old recruit who spies for the CIA while working as the primary escort of a Saudi prince and terrorist affiliate. Lynne copies the contents of the prince’s phone, and this ultimately costs her her life.¹⁶ The agency is as responsible for her murder as the prince’s henchmen because it refuses to provide Lynne with adequate protection, and its cavalier assessment of the risks involved in her actions is rooted in explicitly voiced gender- and class-based factors. In this instance the agency ignores Carrie’s advice and refuses to assign government protection to Lynne, implying that her occupation as a sex worker does not make her important enough to warrant the allocation of agency resources. Another female recruit and wife of a known terrorist also places her life in danger while providing the agency with the crucial information necessary to track down Nazir (Navid Negahban), the series’ main villain.¹⁷ Women, particularly in their sexual relationships with men, repeatedly mediate between terrorists and agency operations. Women supply information and comply with surveillance by both the agency and their terrorist partners. While Brody remains officially un surveilled by the agency, women’s bodies are frequently traded by institutions of power in return for valuable information. In this context, Carrie’s body becomes a site for competing domestic and international interests that model national attitudes about the relationship between individual rights and state security.

Links between corporeality, pathology, women, and the relationship of the individual to the state are apparent in depictions of the single, professional women in contemporary “quality television” more generally. In *The Fall* (BBC, 2013–), Stella (Gillian Anderson) is the lead detective investigating a serial killer in Belfast. Her one-night stand comes under scrutiny in the police department when her (married) lover is murdered the night of the affair. Stella is pathologized when her sexual encounter, in which she is the clearly the aggressor, is disturbingly intercut with the serial murderer’s contemporaneous attack on a female victim. She defends her right to privacy about

14 Sherene Razack, “Geopolitics, Culture Clash and Gender after September 11,” *Social Justice* 32, no. 102 (2005): 11–31; Sunaina Maira, “‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and US Orientalisms,” *Feminist Studies* 35, no. 3 (2009): 631–656.

15 Razack, “Geopolitics,” 12.

16 “Grace,” *Homeland* 1.02 (October 9, 2011).

17 “The Smile,” *Homeland* 2.01 (September 30, 2012).

her sex life, while the patriarchal institutions of Belfast law enforcement make her adulterous promiscuity the object of more scrutiny than the murder itself. In *Dexter* (Showtime, 2006–2013), Debra Morgan (Jennifer Carpenter) is the sister of a serial killer and also a police detective. Throughout the series she struggles between the demands of her profession, which would mean turning her brother in, and her loyalty to family, which would mean compromising her career and sense of morality. Debra's promiscuity and alcoholism are the primary outlets for this ongoing internal struggle. Last, in *House of Cards* (Netflix, 2013–), Claire (Robin Wright) reveals that she is a rape victim during an interview following her husband's appointment to the vice presidency. However, the series never explicitly states whether this is an authentic moment in front of the camera or a calculated move to win voter sympathy. Claire, Stella, and Debra are pathologized for their sexuality, as straight women who enjoy anonymous and, in Claire's case, group sex. In these series, female sexuality and mental health (insofar as popular discourse stigmatizes rape victims and sexually active women) are tied to a character's motivational opacity, which extends to the legal and political institutions operating around (and against) her. The internal struggles the female characters suffer revolve around their negotiating institutional patriarchy and the rights of the individual, where mental health and socially unsanctioned female sexualities offer opportunities for rebellion.

Since *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS, 1970–1977), “quality television” has maintained a tradition of challenging gender boundaries, especially through female-centered television programs. Post-9/11 “quality television” has continued in this vein, as well as addressing and problematizing contemporary anxieties about the costs of national security to Western individualism. The female body and mental health in millennial “quality television” vehicularize contemporary anxieties around definitions of citizenship in the war on terror. Such representational trends linking pathology, gender, and national security call for a more geopolitically sensitive framework for studying gender on television. In this sense, gender should not be treated as an isolated category of self-identity but as a nexus point for geopolitical discourses. Rather than thinking of gender in *Homeland* as performance or lived experience, we might think of it as diagramming the integrities and ruptures in geopolitical selfhood and statehood. *

Homeland's Crisis of Middle-Class Transformation

by STEPHEN SHAPIRO

Homeland's first season has few economic, let alone specifically capitalist, elements within its frame. There are only a few money transfers and a fleeting third-party reference to the bad finances of Nicholas Brody's family in his absence. Character motivation is overwhelmingly presented as driven by personal feelings about status and identity. Yet *Homeland's* handling of its spy and conspiracy genre both represents and helps constitute its ideal audience's realization and response to its own collective class emergency. This essay investigates the way *Homeland* uses a complex temporality to grapple with some essential contemporary questions: How does the American middle class in crisis engage with television to think about its mutable position within capitalist history? If a US bourgeoisie, loosely outlined as the target audience for subscription "quality" television, is experiencing a crisis of social reproduction, in which it can decreasingly afford the middle-class status markers of housing, education, and health care, what are the cultural forms it uses to respond to vanishing prosperity?

Economists Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy see the twentieth century and onward as consisting of alternating capitalist crises wherein the professional-managerial, broadly middle classes align either with the upper class of haute capitalists against the working classes or the other way round. They suggest that we are in the midst of an ongoing realignment of class alliances wherein the (Western) middle classes might be in the process of shifting their allegiance away from the high capitalist class in favor of solidarity with those below.¹ During profitability crises such as those that occurred in the 1890s and 1970s, Duménil and Lévy suggest, the middle class forms a rightward alliance with elites. The rise of neoliberalism from the 1970s, wherein profit is restored by unraveling New Deal social welfare programs, manifests this kind of shift rightward. Yet only so much value can be mined from this sort of reappropriation, and the middle class eventually find themselves the new targets for expropriation by haute capital as the costs of essential aspects of middle-class status rise beyond even their means. Consequently, a crisis of financial hegemony emerges as

1 Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

the middle classes lose confidence in their leadership by elites and look for a leftward alliance with the working class, such as we've seen recently with Occupy and related movements. Such a transfer of allegiances requires the kind of cultural narrative and temporal perspective (more on that later) that *Homeland* provides.

Georg Lukács has argued that during periods of middle-class society's fragmentation, "a not inconsiderable portion of the bourgeoisie becomes 'educated' to the dehumanization of bourgeois society" and seeks out cultural works that emphasize themes of "disappointment and disillusionment," often preferring "catastrophe" tales that depend on the "adventures of shadowy characters" and their stratagems of detection, conspiracy, and surveillance.² His suggestion that doom-laden cultural forms are ways of thinking through crisis is a useful rejoinder to Mark Fisher's claim that apocalyptic or terror tales proliferate now because it is easier to imagine the end of the world than an alternative to capitalism.³ Moreover, tales of nervy suspense, like *Homeland*'s, are not merely symptomatic of crisis, but are also the means through which its audiences formulate a tactical response to crisis as they gain knowledge both about the singular *events* of financial catastrophe (like the 2008 housing market crash) and about the repeating systemic features of long-wave accumulation cycles (like the overproduction of commodities, including credit ones) in which crises continually occur.

One exciting feature of contemporary "quality" televisual narrative has been its efforts to take up Ernst Bloch's suggestion that history is a "polyrhythmic and multi-spatial entity," and thus think about simultaneous and nested valences of time, about the periodizable moment *and* long duration periodicity.⁴ The move to an investigation of periodicity is associated with the current wave of complex serial or long-form drama, the consumption of which is itself a marker of sophisticated middle-class taste. As bourgeois audiences hone their skills in recognizing the longer units of time implicit in the multicpisode or season arc, they begin to understand a season within a long-running show as both periodizing, marking the beginning or end to a narrative arc, and involving periodicity, when one dramatic conflict recalls past relationships, themes, or plot developments.

Homeland's title sequence highlights the importance of television as a whole for locating the singular or exceptional moment against a pattern of longer duration. Carrie Mathison's complaint that she "missed something once before," that is, the telltale signs of the planning of September 11, 2001, and wants to make "sure we don't get hit again," is balanced against a sequence of continual terror-warning transmissions that are shaping her paraconscious ecology from the 1980s onward. The image of child Carrie's head framed by the television set has her pigtailed askew like radial antennae as if to suggest a cyborg fusion of her cerebral cortex and the broadcast signal. Did Carrie really *miss* something (as in forgetting to watch a single

2 Georg Lukács, "Narrate or Describe," in *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Arthur D. Kahn (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1970), 145, 124.

3 Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Ropley, UK: Zero Books, 2009).

4 Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, trans. Neville Plaice and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 62.



Figure 1. Young Carrie's mind transmissions in *Homeland's* title sequence (Teakwood Lane Productions).

episode) or was her consciousness systematically wired by her dedicated viewing to feel this way from an early age?

Carrie's paradox is that she uses the opportunity of uncertainty as a means not only of ascertaining the right *periodization* of events, which she catalogs on a classic color-coded police investigation board with photographs and connecting strings on the wall of her apartment, but also their recurring *periodicity*. Conventional historiography highlights the need to periodize time and segment it, usually linearly (e.g., the Industrial Revolution, modernism, post-1945, the petroleum age), by choosing factors that differentiate one phase from another and fix certain cultural formations as defining each stage's exceptionality. Periodicity is the less developed approach, since it not only tends to handle longer periods of time but also insists on the comparison of analogous points within these long phases by considering time in terms of spiraling cycles.⁵

Homeland's title sequence thus contrasts Carrie's desire for periodization (the "end" of terror moments) against a longer unit of time. That unit, extending from Reagan to Obama, may itself be framed as the "shock doctrine" time of rising neoliberal governmentality, but *Homeland* repeatedly suggests that analogous features recur throughout American history.⁶ The Muslim fabricator (Nasser Faris) of Brody's suicide vest has learned his tailoring skills in Gettysburg, where he makes Civil War replica costumes for those reenacting a prior clash of civilizations, and Brody chants

5 Karl Marx, *Capital I* (New York: Vintage, 1977), 786; Karl Marx, *Capital III* (London: Penguin, 1981), 418. Historical accounts of systemic crises appear with Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World*, trans. Siân Reynolds (London: Collins, 1984); Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994). See also Charles Kindleberger, *Manias, Panics, and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises* (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Carmen M. Reinhart and Kenneth S. Rogoff, *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

6 Naomi Klein, *Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador, 2007).

the marine chorus commemorating repeated American military interventions abroad over centuries.

One of Carrie's defining character traits is her mental illness, and her bipolar events represent (among other things) an attempt to think about simultaneous registers of history and to situate events as variations on a structuring theme (a truism about the kind of jazz that scores the title sequence in which we see Carrie practicing her Louis Armstrong cornet). This kind of cultural analysis is discouraged by her CIA superiors, and it receives something like the Hasidic warning that any approach to the divine's real name must end only in madness. Carrie's problem, though, is not that she wants to gaze directly into the eye of terror, or even survey the nightmare of history, but that her apprehension of manifold temporality challenges prevailing models of cultural influence, lineage, and adaptation. The value of cutting through time is that it provides a compass for one moment's actors to follow the direction of those in similar moments in the past, even if these were so long ago that they are barely remembered today.

Homeland's achievement is not only that it broaches this question of multiple temporalities but also that it draws its viewers into the perception of multiple time valences while also situating us within the play of social movement by having Carrie perform our own behavior in ways that create a *mise en abyme* in which we recognize *Homeland's* characters mirroring one another and us as well. Whatever the mundane tasks of her day job, which viewers never see, Carrie's "real" work life begins at home. After having set up a surveillance network of cameras at Brody's home, she dedicates herself to watching nonstop what she calls a "reality show," often ending up horizontally slumped on her sofa as she watches Brody horizontally slumped on his sofa watching television.

But we viewers are next in this sequence, likewise slumped as we watch her watch Brody watch television. This looping effect is different from what is referred to as metareflection, the cultural product's awareness of and commentary on the medium or tradition of its own production. The consumer of a metareflexive cultural product receives a sort of ironic stage whisper, but in this kind of recursion, our practices become indistinguishable from those of the characters. *Homeland's* immersion of the viewer by mirroring her or his own actions is something different from what previous critical models have described, as it models the process of social recomposition by bringing viewers into approximation with a heterogeneous group of characters in their own process of realignment.⁷



Figure 2. Adult home viewing: The audience, Carrie, Brody loop (Teakwood Lane Productions).

⁷ This process of realignment can also be seen in another narrative feature of the crisis of the middle class in transformation: the rising prominence of adolescent actors. When *Homeland* focalizes through Nicholas Brody's

When Carrie watches Brody, we usually see this through shots of her neck and face lit by the screen's glow, often with headphone wires snaking along her body and her torso covered by the back of the screen.



Figure 3. Carrie's viewing is like Brody's suicide vest (Teakwood Lane Productions).

The significance of these shots appears when Brody first puts on the suicide vest made for him at the Gettysburg tailor shop. He speaks about how its wired detonation will slice off the wearer's (his) head and leave it intact while the body is obliterated. Brody's message is not for the tailor, who doubtless already knows this fact. Instead, it draws a new grouping together, since the frame and apparatus of Carrie's surveillance of Brody has already rehearsed this same kind of disembodiment, as if Brody's terror had already been enacted in advance by Carrie's, and our, television habits. By having this comparison occur at Gettysburg, as a set scene of historical recall, *Homeland* suggests that changing group alignments recur in analogous moments of cyclical long-wave history.

These formal moves, which concatenate the viewer with the unlikely pair of Brody and Carrie, capture the substantive narrative differences between *Homeland* and Gideon Raff's Israeli predecessor show, *Hatufim* (also known as *Prisoners of War* [Keshet 2009–2012]). Both shows have similar plot elements, but the latter has a different project and lacks the visual techniques described here. *Hatufim* concerns two returned Israeli prisoners who spend season 1 helping each other with the difficulty of posttraumatic reintegration. Consequently, *Hatufim* belongs to the new genre that depicts the existential anxiety of the Israeli Defense Forces soldier (*Waltz with Bashir* [Ari Folman, 2003], *Beaufort* [Joseph Cedar, 2007], *Lebanon* [Samuel Moaz, 2009]) to

teenage daughter Dana (Morgan Saylor), as it did to a considerable extent in season 2, it crystallizes the collective self-doubt of its target audience about their ability to secure the intergenerational transfer of the American dream to their children. While contemporary adolescents might no longer be able to realize their parents' aspirations, this failure stands as a possible escape and solution to the problem. It is Dana, not Carrie, who finally stops Brody's act of terror. *Homeland* thus guardedly suggests that the next generation might be freed from the mesh of our historical doom.

avoid any structural critique of the military's enforcement of ethnic inequality in the Israeli state's domestic and foreign policy. If *Hatufim* was unusual for spending nearly all of its first season focused on the soldiers' emotional state after their liberation, *Homeland* quickly moves back into the familiar ground of geopolitical suspense. The reason for this difference might be partially explained by Joshua Clover's proposal that contemporary cinema's filming of "existential panic" in the new gothic and apocalyptic genres has to be understood as exploring "systemic breakdown and assembly."⁸ Whereas *Hatufim* is committed to reiterating the stability of the Israeli state, *Homeland* highlights US institutional fragility. Clover sees the theoretical object of tales of moral breakdown as conveyed through metareflection. He suggests that "films that are explicitly about film must be understood in the first instance as meditations on the situation of the real global empire to which cinema belongs—*metacinematic* now means *about US hegemony*," so that "as a consequence, Hollywood's cinematic form is now compelled to be a study of imperial form."⁹

Yet Clover's insight does not push far enough to grasp the class relations that magnetize contemporary cultural productions. If cinema and television are concerned about their institutional stability, it is not clear that American viewers see the source of their social fragility as resulting from American military crimes in distant lands, or even the fading hegemony of America within an increasingly China-dominated capitalist world system. The viewer's ultimate concern is not geopolitics but the way geopolitics mediate concerns about domestic class status and security. To paraphrase Clover, metacinematic and metatelevisual products should be interpreted as the domestic middle class examining its own existential crisis. More concretely, the kind of viewer immersion within a circle of mirroring among characters that we see in *Homeland* produces a form that better conveys the middle classes' sense that they need to learn how to rethink history's multiple temporalities as a guide to helping realign class allegiances to arrest or cushion their status deflation.¹⁰

Recent cable television drama has helped enact this realignment of class alliances with shows focusing on "allegiance ambivalence" in which bourgeois-located characters slip from initial doubt about the organization of dominant civil society to enacting a belligerent refusal of its predicates. Beyond *Homeland*, shows like *Sons of Anarchy* (FX, 2008–2014) and *The Americans* (FX, 2013–) register deep dissatisfaction with the status quo. Brody's and Carrie's attraction for viewers lies ultimately less in their concluding positions than in their willingness to perform the act of shifting allegiances and alliances for their viewers to consider repeating, much like the aforementioned emulative scenes of diegetic television viewing.

Carrie might easily be construed to be indicative of neoliberal, antibureaucratic, entrepreneurial individualism and its association with game theory, the use of mathematic models to predict social behavior. Game theory holds that human

8 Joshua Clover, "Remarks on Method," *Film Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2010): 7–9.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Robert B. Reich, *Beyond Outrage: What Has Gone Wrong with Our Economy and Our Democracy, and How to Fix It* (New York: Vintage, 2012); Timothy Noah, *The Great Divergence: America's Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do about It* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012); Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

interaction can be calculated in terms of variations of strategic choices in a world where betrayal is constant. (The prisoner's dilemma, a well-known game theory exercise about when to abandon cooperation in favor of self-interest, could be used as a titling theme for Brody's predicament as well).¹¹ Yet more is gained from reading *Homeland* as modeling a larger middle-class alliance shift from the elites to the working class. It is perhaps not insignificant that in nearly all the scenes of establishment figures, represented mainly by political party elites and CIA brass, these individuals are considered morally corrupt and beyond redemption. Meanwhile, the lower-middle-class figures who come from a culture of selfless Catholic service, like Brody and his marine friend Mike Faber (Diego Klattenhoff), rise in attraction. Carrie's mésalliance with Brody is not simply because he is her prey but also because he is not the kind of guy she normally goes home with. Much as Occupy Wall Street tested out a new collective formed by middle-class university graduates and labor unions, the relationship between analyst Carrie and the enlisted man-cum-noncommissioned officer Brody presents a model of different class alignments for a bourgeoisie in desperate search of new direction. *

11 Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown* (London: Verso, 2013).

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