University of Cape Town

Sustaining Threat Narratives about Muslims and Arabs in Germany in The Post 9/11 Era: An Analysis of Showtime's Homeland

By

Khadija Abass

ABSKHA002

A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the Award of the degree of Master of Social Science in Sociology

Faculty of Humanities
University of Cape Town
2022

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

University of Cape Town

Declaration

I, Khadija Abass, hereby declare that all of the work presented in this Master's thesis is my own work. Each important contribution to, as well as quotation in, this thesis collected from the research or work of others has been attributed, cited and referenced. This thesis has not previously been submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree. I permit the University of Cape Town to reproduce for research either the whole or any part of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature, Signed by candidate Date, 22 September 2022

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ……

ABSTRACT ……

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION……1

Background……1

Research Problem & Stakes……2

Research Purpose & Objectives ……3

Thesis Statement ……4

Thesis Outline ……5

Conceptual Lenses ……6

Homeland ……6

Europe & its Others ……6

Dark Americana ……8

Methodology …… 10

A Comprehensive Approach to Reception Studies …… 10

Sample Strategy …… 13

Ethical Considerations …… 14

CHAPTER 2: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS …… 15

Story World …… 15

Surroundings …… 15

Characterising Agents …… 17

Plot Structure …… 26

Narration …… 31

CHAPTER 3: RECEPTION ANALYSIS …… 40

Legitimising US Violence & The Sub-Narratives of Dark Americana …… 40

Reimagining US Nationalism …… 41

From Moral Panic to Moral Ambiguity ……44

Heroism versus Extremism ……48

The Feminist Turn in Hollywood ……55

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION ……60

Significant Findings ……60

Qualitative Analysis 60

Reception analysis 62

Concluding Remarks 64

REFERENCES 67

APPENDIX A: SOCIOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS 73

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO SUB-NARRATIVES ONE AND TWO 74

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO SUB-NARRATIVES THREE AND FOUR 75

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my immense gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ruchi Chaturvedi, who generously shared her time and guided me throughout my research process. Her passion for knowledge production fuelled my interest and her constant support and encouragement motivated me even through periods of difficulty. Thank you so much.

My thesis would not have been possible without the active engagement of my research participants. I would like to thank them for the time they took out of their own studies to enrich my research and wish them success for their future endeavours.

Moving to Germany from South Africa in the midst of a pandemic was challenging but the friends I have made here have become family. In particular, I would like to thank Dana, Merriem and Eilyn for the love and support they constantly gave me.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge my family. I consider my father, Shreef, a fountain of wisdom whom I look up to and admire. He instilled in me a love for acquiring knowledge and without his encouragement, I would not have been able to undertake this thesis. My mother, Shamilah, is my rock. She is the light that guides me, protects me, and reminds me of who I am in moments when I feel lost. I am because she is.

To my brothers, Yaseen and Nur. You are the constants in my life. Nur has always been my go-to person, whom when I've needed anything has always been ready to help me. Yaseen is my motivator, my kindred spirit and my number one fan. He is my reminder never to lose myself in the shadow of expectations and no one could be as proud of me as he is simply by being true to myself. I am so immensely grateful knowing that no matter what life throws at me, you would both do anything to keep me safe and happy.

To my family, I dedicate this thesis to you.

Abstract

Twenty years after 9/11 and Islamophobia is still on the rise as evidenced by the increased securitisation of Muslims in the form of immigration laws, anti-terror legislation, and restrictions on religious freedoms. My hypothesis is that televisual texts play a major role in the cultural production of knowledge and that threat narratives about Muslims are particularly sustained through texts belonging to the Dark Americana genre which foregrounds emotional complexity, security challenges, and moral ambivalence regarding the state's use of violence and surveillance. Reception analysis requires insight into the televisual text, the sociocultural characteristics of the viewer, and the socio-political context of the time. Consequently, my research balances theoretical reflections on *Homeland*'s ability to sustain threat narratives, according to Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film* (2008), with an empirical study on the show's reception by university students in Germany.

My qualitative analysis paid special attention to the textual features of the show and interrogated how meaning arises from cinematic techniques. It found that close-up shots are particularly effective for constructing emotion in audiences and produces sympathy and relatability, potentially serving to justify characters' questionable behaviour in the eyes of the audience. I synthesised three methodologies for my reception analysis. I used online surveys to obtain data about participants' sociocultural characteristics and the Minutia Reception Method to measure participants' moment-by-moment engagement with the text. The 'Grounded Theory Coding Approach' and follow-up emails then allowed me to systematically create categories based on repeated themes prevalent in the data sample. As a result, I have added four new sub-narratives to the Dark Americana genre, including the Reimagination of US Nationalism, the use of Moral Panic to create Moral Ambiguity around state violence, an 'us versus them' dichotomy that ensures that the west's violence is considered Heroism while the violence of the 'other' is considered Extremism, and imperial feminism which disguises western violence. While the Dark Americana genre, a concept developed by David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, supposedly questions state violence, my analysis of *Homeland* season one found that it reinforces justifications for state violence and sustains threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs in the post 9/11 era through the distinct sub-narratives which I have introduced.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

September 2021 marked twenty years since the 9/11 attacks and the onset of an international 'war on terror' that motivated US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The post 9/11 era is represented by radical insecurity and a shift in perceptions about security threats coming from 'the outside' towards 'security threats from within'. Regarding preventative detention in the post 9/11 era, David Cole noted that it was no surprise that "thousands of people who posed no danger were nonetheless rounded up [based] on their perceived racial, ethnic, religious, or political identities" (cited in Lokaneeta, 2011: 23). The Institute of Race Relations[1] has found that anti-terror legislation is primarily weaponised against Muslims, and that surveillance of Muslims, banning of Islamic organisations, and limitations on religious freedoms all serve to externalise Muslims from European and North American societies (Cesari, 2012: 431-433).

The globalisation of insecurity was evidenced by an Allensbach Institute poll in October 2001 which found that 58% of German citizens considered the attack on the US as an attack on all NATO member states. In fact, European states have arrested twenty times the amount of terrorist suspects as the US. In Germany, these arrests have gone hand in hand with practices such as bans on religious groups that supposedly threaten democratic values, mosque searches, hijab bans, and unrestricted police access to all types of communication, transport, and financial records.

Islam as an internal and external threat to European states has resulted in a paradox in the way Muslims and Arabs are treated within. The aging population in Germany means that the state requires the immigrant labour force – mostly from Muslim majority countries – and while it seeks to integrate Muslims economically, its anti-terrorism legislations and security

[1] Also referred to as "IRR", the institute's research focuses primarily on racism in Britain, and in Europe more generally. See: https://irr.org.uk/about/ [Accessed: 7 September 2022].

concerns manifest in the securitisation of Muslims and the restriction of Islam from public spaces (Ibid: 437).

Cesari highlights that for securitisation to be a success, the problem – being Islam – must be presented as an existential threat that challenges the very survival of the political community. Representation of the existential threat must resonate with a large 'audience' so that the political community can respond to this threat unified (Ibid: 433). The securitising actors include state officials, politicians, popular culture, and the media – the latter of which I find of particular interest and will be analysing the show *Homeland*. Referring to the show's success, one of *Homeland*'s directors, Alex Gansa, points to the correspondence between *Homeland*'s plot and the very real security issues that the US faces such as the threat of terrorism and the moral ambiguity regarding the use of drone strikes (ABC News, 2013 May 26).

Research Problem & Stakes

The problem that needs to be addressed is how the narrative of Muslims and Arabs as threats to society are sustained. My hypothesis is that film and TV, especially those within the Dark Americana genre of the post 9/11 period, play a major role in the cultural production of knowledge, particularly regarding the "securitisation of Muslims and Arabs" - a phrase drawn from scholar Jocelyn Cesari's work on the *Securitisation of Islam in Europe* (2012). She notes that Islam must be presented as an existential threat to legitimise "exceptional measures outside the rule of law" (Cesari, 2012: 433). Her work is unique for the attention it pays to the construction of threat narratives through discourse and media, and points to the importance of analysing televisual texts as a medium for popular culture.

The power of cinematic texts lies in its ability to create understandings about events, identities, and relationships, and to influence perceptions about political culture and political socialisation. As Dodds puts it, "cinema becomes a space where common-sense ideas about global politics and history are produced and where stories about what is acceptable behaviour from states and individuals are naturalised and legitimated" (2008: 1621). Film theorist, David

Bordwell, explains that cinematic texts[2] are made up of cues that instruct the viewer about how to appropriate what is presented on screen (2008: 27). It is this awareness about the mechanisms that guide the audience's comprehension of a story, as well as the purpose of the text according to its creators, that will contribute towards understandings of how sociocultural patterns are promulgated in film and television. Given the impact of such texts, empirical research into its ability to build perceptions, particularly regarding threat narratives, could influence the design of future films and determine public policies such as rules on censorship and industry regulation.

Research Purpose & Objectives

Since reception analysis proves difficult to carry out, researchers have focused on theory instead (Reinhard and Olson, 2016). According to film scholar, Janet Staiger, this has resulted in an understudied relationship between politics and cultural texts, and how they interweave and mutually affect each other (1992: 8-9). This is a gap in the research that I will fill by supplementing a qualitative analysis of Showtime's *Homeland* based on Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film*, and grounded by Dark Americana as a genre and conceptual lens, with an empirical study on its reception by university students in Germany. The research interrogates *Homeland's* ability to build threat narratives in its first season and aims to expose the link between politics and culture to understand the sociocultural context that enables anti-Islam discourse and the securitisation of Muslims in Germany in the contemporary era. Since I have been based in Germany for my master's – which is a partnered degree between the University of Cape Town and The Albert-Ludwigs Universität in Freiburg, Germany – access to research participants studying in Germany as well as an interest in the role of Europe, NATO, and Germany in the war on terror made it a practical and intellectually productive location for my study.

[2] Bordwell's work (2008) focuses on an analysis of cinema or what he calls 'cinematic texts'. As film scholar and author, Angelo Restivo notes in *Breaking Bad and Cinematic Television*: "in the past two decades, some new relationship between cinema and television has been forged, enough to give traction to the phrase 'cinematic television'…[suggesting] a new continuity between contemporary television aesthetics and the canon of cinema" (2019: 2). Due to this evolving relationship that blurs the line between cinema and television, it is suitable to apply Bordwell's dimensions of analysis to televisual texts such as *Homeland*. Going forward, the thesis will refer to televisual texts rather than cinematic texts.

Thesis statement

The *Homeland* television show conforms to the Dark Americana genre which is characterised by themes such as surveillance, terrorism, and dark moral ambivalence. Although televisual texts of the genre purportedly question state violence, analysis of *Homeland* finds that this questioning is nullified by a reinforcement of the state's use of violence. This justification plays out through the reimagination of US nationalism, moral ambiguity around the state's use of violence based on fear of the 'other', an 'us versus them' dichotomy between the west and Islam, and imperial feminism. I derive these new sub-narratives of the Dark Americana genre through a reception analysis of the first three episodes of season one carried out alongside a qualitative analysis of the entire first season of the show. Given that the dissertation only addresses season one of the show, the results delineate how *Homeland*'s first season sustains threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs in the post 9/11 era and therefore findings may not apply to the same degree for all seasons.

The thesis will answer the following research question and sub-questions:

How did the TV series Homeland[3], which ran from October 2011 to April 2020 on networks around the world, contribute towards narratives about Muslims and Arabs as a security threat? How has the series been interpreted by university students in Germany and impacted discourse about the securitisation of Muslims and Arabs?

a. What are the features that characterise the Dark Americana genre? In what ways does the TV series *Homeland* reproduce the genre?

b. How does Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film* help to analyse *Homeland* for its contribution to building threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs?

[3] The analysis focuses on Season 1 of Homeland therefore findings may not apply in the same way to all seasons.

c. What are the theoretical frameworks of othering and securitisation that underpin the Dark Americana genre?

d. How do university students in Germany interpret *Homeland* within the context of insecurity and Islamophobia?

Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into four chapters, the first of which includes the introduction, methodology, and the conceptual lenses that enable an appropriate reading of the research. The conceptual lenses section describes the origins of the concept of 'homeland', characterises Dark Americana as a televisual genre, and describes the orientalist discourses from which the genre emerged, and which is associated with Cesari's work on the "Securitisation of Islam in Europe".

The second chapter is a qualitative analysis of the first season of *Homeland* according to David Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film*, which pays special attention to narration, plot structure and the story world (2008). It interrogates how meaning arises from textual elements that include sound, character expression, and editing, among other techniques (Reinhard and Olson, 2016).

The third chapter introduces sub-narratives to the Dark Americana genre which emerged after coding participants' responses from the reception analysis. Based on how participants interpreted select episodes of the show, this chapter elaborates on the themes of US Nationalism, Moral Panic and Moral Ambiguity, Heroism versus Extremism, and Imperial Feminism to uncover how threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs are sustained through the *Homeland* TV show and the Dark Americana genre more generally.

The concluding chapter addresses the significant findings of the qualitative and reception analyses before making concluding remarks regarding the interaction of the televisual text, the sociocultural characteristics of the audience, and the socio-cultural context.

Conceptual Lenses

Homeland

Bounded by the ideas of *American Exceptionalism* and *Manifest Destiny* since the 1900s, the US was declared the land of opportunity that was richer for its diversity of cultures, races, traditions, and religions (Crossman, 2021). The US as a 'melting pot of cultures' has since been replaced in everyday lexicon however, with the notion of the 'homeland'. According to the Oxford Dictionary, homeland as a concept took on a nationalistic perspective in the 19th century in several parts of the world with its association to "a native land" for people belonging to a "particular national, cultural or racial origin" thus emphasising common ancestry and racial homogeneity (Kaplan, 2003: 86). While aspirations for a 'homeland' were weaponised by the Zionist appeal for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, it is only after the horrific events of 9/11 that the US picked up the term to encapsulate what nationhood would mean for the US in the 21st century (Ibid: 85). In recent times the term became prominent in public discourse when it was used in a speech by George W. Bush on the 20th of September, just days after 9/11, painting a threatening picture of the outside world (Ibid: 85). US nationhood hence came to be defined by a fear of the foreign and its identity became intertwined with its security concerns. 'Radical insecurity' has subsequently become a fundamental characteristic of US nationhood where the home is perceived as a warzone that is constantly at risk of attack, and where security of the homeland requires the government to protect it from threats at home and abroad through surveillance and policing measures (Ibid: 90).

The West and the Rest/Europe and its Others

According to Stuart Hall, the 'West' emerged as a concept when Europe encountered the rest of the world (1992: 188). Its identity became perceived as its difference where the West, as a paradigm of thinking, came to incorporate the ideas, myths, and perceptions of what it meant to be 'western', including modernity, secularism, and industrialisation (Ibid: 46-47). Since this conception produced attitudes towards regions based on whether they were 'western' or

'non-western' makes it a functional ideology (Hall, 1992: 186). It propagates a binary classification of societies and condenses multiple characteristics into singular composite pictures within a system of representation to characterise the two groups. It acts as a model of comparison where the West is taken as the norm against which the 'non-West' is measured. And finally, it serves as a criterion for evaluation whereby the more western a society is, the more desirable it is (Ibid: 186).

This 'us versus them' dichotomy forms the basis of what Edward Said calls Orientalism, that is, a framework for the epistemological distinction between the Orient, to describe the Middle East, and the Occident, to describe the west. These geopolitical regions have been positioned in art, literature, political and popular discourse as antithetical to one another where the Orient is considered backward, primitive, irrational, and inherently immoral, while the Occident is considered modern, progressive, and virtuous (Said, 1979: 38-40). Orientalism is a discursive configuration of power through western imaginations of the Orient – where the Middle East in its authenticity and heterogeneity is never relevant. It perpetuates the domination of the Occident over the Orient by producing the region politically, ideologically, and sociologically through the western gaze, and by offering an ideological justification for occupation of their lands, and for control of the populace, resources, and internal affairs of the region (Ibid: 36).

According to the Orientalist, Samuel Huntington, conflict between west and east is not due to Islamic extremism but the very nature of Islam which is the "…ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage [and] our secular present…" (1996: 212-213). Following 9/11, politicians and the media emphasised the cause of terrorism as the terrorists' religion rather than their extremist political ideologies, thereby reinforcing orientalist discourses. The moral panic that ensued was based on Islam as a bogeyman, an object of fear. Talal Asad demonstrates that the fear surrounding violence by terrorists does not translate to fear for the same violence carried out by western governments under the banner of legitimate warfare (Kumaraea, 2018: 4). Kumaraea quotes Asad, who states that "it is not cruelty that matters in the distinction between terrorists and armies at war, still less the threat each poses to entire ways of life, but their civilization status. What is really at stake is not a clash of civilization... but the fight of civilization against the uncivilized" (Ibid).

Dark Americana

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Hollywood underwent a significant shift in its cinematic narratives. The prevalent themes of violence and tragedy that characterized 1990s cinema were abruptly replaced by a wave of feel-good films[4], as the nation sought solace and comfort in the face of this unprecedented tragedy. However, this cinematic landscape began to evolve around 2005 when filmmakers started grappling with the profound impact of 9/11 (Jones & Smith, 2015: 2). The period marked the emergence of what would later be recognised as the Dark Americana genre, a concept developed by scholars D. M. Jones and M. L. R. Smith.

The Dark Americana genre represents a cinematic movement that grew out of the uncertainty and complexities of the post-9/11 world. Filmmakers within this genre responded to the shifting global dynamics by delving into a range of intricate themes. Some chose to dissect the intricacies of the 9/11 event itself or to explore conflicts set in Middle Eastern settings. Other directors, like those of *Homeland*, delved into the complexities of intelligence gathering, surveillance, terrorism, and the myriad security challenges that emerged in the wake of 9/11 (Ibid: 2).

One distinctive feature of Dark Americana is its exploration of moral grey zones and emotional complexities. Unlike Classic Americana[5], which traditionally accentuated the ideals of heroism and virtuosity, Dark Americana recognises a world where moral ambiguity prevails, and characters are portrayed as deeply flawed. Political life is often depicted in a state of dysfunction, and moral dilemmas are presented to challenge conventional notions of right and wrong (Ibid: 3).

This genre is characterized by interconnected storylines and the development of complex characters who navigate dark moral ambivalence. It provides a critical lens through which to

[4] According to film historian, Wheeler Winston Dixon, silence about the threat and trauma of violence was the only "patriotically supportive [cinematic] response" to the attack (cited in Jones and Smith, 2015: 2).
[5] World War II films often formed part of the Classic Americana genre for their uncomplicated portrayals of "just war" (Ibid: 6).

view Western engagement with the post-9/11 era, as proposed by Jones and Smith, although whether the genre is entirely critical of Western actions remains a subject of debate (Ibid: 5).

A recurring theme in Dark Americana is the idea that even the protagonists sometimes find themselves compelled to "work on the dark side" for the greater good of society. This thematic exploration raises thought-provoking questions about the political impact of such representations, specifically regarding moral ambiguity and the justification of violence for perceived greater goods (Ibid: 2).

Furthermore, the genre contemplates the implications of this new era of insecurity, and its representation on screen, for the reimagining of secular, modern, liberal, and Western values. In a rapidly evolving global landscape, where security concerns dominate the narrative, Dark Americana serves as a reflection of the uncertainties and moral dilemmas that permeate contemporary society (Ibid).

While the genre became more evident in the post-9/11 era, it cannot be solely attributed to this tragic event. Its emergence coincided with the information age and the proliferation of social media. In this age of information, governments found it increasingly challenging to conceal questionable and immoral actions. Consequently, filmmakers saw the need for a new genre that could expose governmental actions while maintaining the complex moral fabric of reality. This genre became a platform for scrutinizing the actions of governments, revealing both their dark deeds and the enduring aspiration to remain the 'good guy'.

A common thread running through Dark Americana narratives is the presence of a lone protagonist, often a person of conscience, who relies on their inner resolve to confront evil in a hostile environment that continually tests their moral boundaries (Ibid: 7). This character archetype explores the Machiavellian concept of the "lesser evil," as these characters grapple with the necessity of compromising their values for the greater good (Ibid: 14). Despite its critique of corruption within government institutions and bureaucratic obstacles to progress, Dark Americana remains deeply rooted in the ethos of American patriotism (Ibid: 11). Filmmakers within this genre often criticize the political establishment while simultaneously

celebrating core American values, which are frequently personified by the protagonists in these films and TV shows.

In summary, the Dark Americana genre, born out of the post-9/11 era and evolving alongside the information age, offers a complex and critical perspective on contemporary society. It delves into the moral ambiguity and intricacies of the new global landscape, where protagonists are forced to confront their own inner demons as they navigate a world where the boundaries between good and evil are increasingly blurred. This genre serves as both a critique of governmental actions and a celebration of enduring American values, encapsulating the challenges and contradictions of a rapidly changing world.

Despite its complexity and what I see as immense value having been added to understandings of post 9/11 film and television, the concept of Dark Americana has not been picked up much since its conceptualisation by David Martin Jones and M. L. R. Smith in 2015. I believe this to be an oversight in the realm of film studies and therefore, throughout this thesis, I will be drawing on and relating my analysis of *Homeland* to the work of these authors and the sources they engage with. I believe my own analysis of *Homeland* will help to further develop the genre as will be evident through the sub-narratives of Dark Americana that I will introduce.

Methodology

A Comprehensive Approach to Reception Studies

Reception studies, also known as reader-response theory, looks at the history of the interaction between a spectator and a televisual text (Staiger, 1992: 8-9). It aims to explain how interpretations are produced which requires an understanding of overall reception. This must account for the interaction among the particularities of the text, the spectator's sociocultural characteristics, as well as the socio-political milieu of the time.

To understand how threat narratives are built up about Muslims and Arabs in the post 9/11 era in Germany - particularly regarding the role of television such as Showtime's *Homeland* - my research is broken up into two parts. The first part includes a qualitative analysis of *Homeland* season one (episodes 1 to 13) based on Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film*. I find Bordwell particularly useful because he recognises the psychologically persuasive nature of film which he says, creates "pseudo-experiences", while simultaneously outlining a practical method for analysing televisual texts (2008: 27). He takes a holistic approach to understanding films and looks at its overall form by addressing narration, plot structure and the story world. This is carried out within an epistemological foundation of cognitive psychology that is essential to understand the role of stereotyping and inferences – which themselves will be analysed for how they fit into Jones and Smith's concept of Dark Americana.

The story world encompasses the agents, circumstances, and surroundings within the text. Bordwell highlights that how we are introduced to characters sets the 'conceptual ground rules' for how the spectator is to view the character throughout the text. He places emphasis on stereotyping, since it is the "shared stock of stereotyped[6] knowledge" that enables spectators to create the story world (Ibid: 32). Therefore, televisual texts rely on perceptual capacities and "taken-for-granted premises" to infer meaning such as whether a character is a friend or an enemy, a relative or a stranger, a protagonist, or an antagonist (Ibid: 28). His second dimension is the plot structure which refers to the arrangement of the different parts of the narrative (Ibid: 18). Its shape is determined by the interactions of the agents where the breaks represent the major changes in their circumstances. Moreover, the agent who gives the plot its distinctive 'arc' is likely to be the protagonist. Finally, the third dimension is narration. It is the flow of information about the story world that presents the point of view of the protagonists (Ibid: 7). It includes the cinematic techniques[7] that shape the spectator's experience (Ibid: 11). Such techniques include music to set a mood or increase tension, camera movements to draw the spectator in, flashbacks to grant insight into the affective

[6] These stereotypes are often ones of 'othering' and clarify why The West and the Rest discourse and Orientalism are conceptual lenses through which to read the televisual text, *Homeland*.

[7] The word 'cinematic' is used in relation to the wide range of creative and technical tools that are used to convey storytelling, atmosphere, and emotions on screen, whether in films or television. These techniques together form "the art of visual storytelling" (Heiderich, 2012: 3).

histories of characters, hues to allude to regions in the world, and close-up shots to create intimacy with a character's thoughts and emotions, among other techniques.

The second part of my thesis draws on reception analysis where I synthesise three methodological modes. Firstly, I utilised an online survey that was emailed to the participants before their viewing of the show. Questions posed related to demographic data such as race, nationality, age, ethnic background, gender, and occupation, as well as their TV-viewing behaviour. Secondly, I used the Minutia Reception Method which measured spectator engagement on a moment-by-moment basis for the first three episodes of season one. This allowed me to gain insight into how spectators make sense of televisual texts; what they respond to; and how their sense-making relates to overall impressions (Ibid: 211). The intentional gaps in texts represent information that the spectator must supply – based on her perspective – to make sense of the text therefore the Minutia Method provides valuable insight into how reactions relate to the spectator's interpretative baggage. I used the 'Grounded Theory Coding Approach' – developed in 1967 by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss - to systematically create categories based on repeated words and themes prevalent in the data collection sample (Ibid: 218). It avoids presumptive researcher-determined categories and more reliably represents the spectators' interaction with the text. By using Dark Americana as a conceptual lens through which to situate *Homeland*, my coding of the data established the major themes that shone through in the show for the participants and enabled the development of further sub-narratives within the Dark Americana genre. These include *The Reimagination of US Nationalism, Moral Panic and Moral Ambiguity, Heroism versus Extremism, and Imperial Feminism*. Lastly, I used post-viewing follow-up emails to get a sense of the moments of lasting impact for spectators and to allow for elaboration on statements so as not to make presumptions about their meaning. By synthesising these three methodologies and combining it with a textual analysis of *Homeland* season one, I have aimed to curtail the abstract nature of reception studies research and have developed a comprehensive approach to reception analysis that ensures an understanding of overall reception by providing insight into the televisual text, the sociocultural characteristics of the spectator as well as the viewing situation and socio-political context of the time.

Sample Strategy

The sampling of my participants was purposive since I focused on university students in Germany to overcome the issues of a language barrier since most students speak English. I also practiced snowball sampling that is based on referrals to decrease the 'barrier to entry' regarding accessing research subjects. The outcome of this sampling was initially ten participants however, three of them did not complete the Minutia responses. These seven participants watched the first three episodes of season one and recorded their moment-by-moment reactions to aid the reception analysis which I carried out alongside my own qualitative analysis of season one.

The following is the socio-cultural characteristics of the seven participants, as self-represented:

A. Participant One is a twenty-two-year-old, German/Japanese/Kurdish, female law student, with German and Japanese nationality. She was completely entangled in the show, and consistently showed strong emotive responses while remaining critical of the show.
B. Participant Two is a twenty-seven-year-old, Latin European, male law student, with German and Mexican nationality. He was completely entangled in the show, but his emotive responses were weak to moderate, and he showed little critique.
C. Participant Three is a twenty-six-year-old, white, male medicine student, with German nationality. He was completely entangled in the show, had weak to moderate emotive responses, and showed no critique.
D. Participant Six is a twenty-two-year-old, white, male English literature student, with UK and Czech nationality. He was entangled in the show, responded strongly and emotively, but also showed signs of detachment while expressing no critique.
E. Participant Eight is a twenty-three-year-old, mixed race, female law student, with German nationality. She was completely entangled in the show, showed strong emotive responses, and expressed little to no critique.

F. Participant Nine is a twenty-five-year-old, black, female politics and sociology student, with Colombian nationality. She was completely detached from the show and showed high levels of critique.
G. Participant Ten is a twenty-three-year-old, white, female law student, with German nationality. She was completely entangled in the show, responded strongly and emotively, and showed little to no critique.

Ethical Considerations

Regarding the reception analysis, a few issues needed to be thought through carefully. Firstly, I needed to ensure that spectators were not idealised in the sense that demographic data should not be used as the basis for creating an ideal-type spectator who was assumed to be representative of an entire social, historical, or political category. Secondly, I had to avoid homogenising spectators by remaining cognisant that multiple variables intersect to construct complex self-identities for each spectator. Making a priori assumptions about spectators' imaginary identities and their interpretative strategies, would lead to hasty generalisations and would result in my research falling into a confirmation bias, that is, a tendency to interpret data in ways that support the researcher's initial beliefs while ignoring information that is contrary to it. Additionally, while I categorise participants' emotional responses according to weak, moderate, and strong emotional responses, this is done hesitantly since such categorisation, without caution, may pacify participants' voices. Moreover, since representations of violence can make for heavy viewing, participants were made aware of the content of the show prior to viewing and could opt out at any time. Finally, regarding COVID-19, all research was done remotely to avoid any risk of spreading the virus.

Chapter 2: Qualitative Analysis

Homeland's ability to build threat narratives is first assessed according to theoretical reflections based on Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film*. I begin by analysing the storyworld for its surroundings which serve as important backdrops for the action that ensues. I will then utilise Bordwell's 'schematic prototype for personhood' to hierarchise characters and describe them according to their physical attributes, social roles, self-impelled actions, and their thoughts, beliefs, desires, and affective histories. Furthermore, I will assess the plot according to Kristin Thompson's three-act four-part plot structure which Bordwell references and which makes it easier to observe the main themes that the creators intend to bring forth (Bordwell, 2008: 21-22). Finally, the chapter turns to the role of emotion in drawing in audiences and interrogates how meaning arises from textual elements such as music, character expression, setting, dialogue, and the humanising of certain characters as opposed to others. Utilising Bordwell's framework ensures a holistic assessment of the show's textual features while recognising that meaning making by audiences is unique based on their respective schemas.

Story World

Surroundings

The storyworld, which is made up of the agents, circumstances, and surroundings in televisual texts, is vibrantly exposited in *Homeland*. The opening scene establishes Iraq as an important backdrop. The streets are loud and busy; they come across as chaotic which is contributed to by montage shots; the sky has a yellow tinge as though desert sand is whipping through the air; and the adhaan (Islamic call to prayer in Arabic) is heard playing in the background. When the scene cuts to a prison (Ep. 1, 00:25) where two guards are seen tightening a rope to hang prisoners, Arabic writing is seen on the wall behind them. The adhaan continues playing in the background, as though on a loop, and increases in volume as the scene's violent action reaches a crescendo (Ep. 1, 01:37). The second episode again features a desert with sandy skies and yellow hues to represent Iraq and shows Nicholas Brody, a marine who was captured by al-Qaeda, at gunpoint by two guards while digging a grave for a fellow marine,

Tom Walker, who had also been captured by al-Qaeda (Ep. 2, 02:55). This representation of Iraq fits into the mould of the Middle East according to Dark Americana, where the region is seen as a "distant land replete with uncertainty and alienated Arab 'others' that contrast with the calm domesticity of the home front" (Jones & Smith, 2015: 10).

When Washington is established as the next important backdrop (Ep. 1, 03:17), soft pink skies, alongside tranquil music, create a calm environment as the sun rises. This setting is juxtaposed against the protagonist's (Carrie Mathison) home where her walls are covered in images of brown men with Arabic names. As the camera zooms in on their faces, the music becomes eerier (Ep. 1, 03:41). This serves as an introduction to her goals and allows for continuity when there is a shift to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) briefing room where the United States' hitlist of insurgents is detailed.

Before Nick Brody is flown back to the US after being rescued in Iraq, he is first taken to Germany (Ep. 1, 08:49). Here, Brody's long hair and beard are shaven off at a barber shop and the way he looks completely changes. He calls his wife, Jessica, who is overcome with emotion when she realises that her husband is still alive (Ep. 1, 10:21). This is the only action that takes place in Germany which begs the question: 'what was the purpose of representing Germany during this episode?' Looked at in isolation, this scene alludes to a transatlantic alliance[8] against terrorism which foreshadows the much larger role that Germany plays in season five[9] of *Homeland*.

As a backdrop, there are multiple emotional elements linked to the airport. Stress and anxiety are represented by Brody throwing up on the plane (Ep. 1, 15:07), and since aeroplanes also connect people to those they love that are far away, love and connection are represented by the embrace between Brody and his wife at the airport (Ep. 1, 17:22). This emotion is juxtaposed in the following scene when Brody meets the Vice President (VP). The VP plans to

[8] This alliance will be looked at in more detail in the reception analysis under *Heroism versus Extremism*

[9] Though my thesis focuses on season one of Homeland, season five is worth mentioning for the role that Germany plays in setting the scene for the action that takes place. Season five's plot includes Mathison's goal to prevent a terrorist attack on Berlin and speaks to subplots such as the European migrant crisis and the North Atlantic alliance in the war on terror. See https://www.bustle.com/p/this-homeland-season-5-recap-will-help-make-sense-of-season-6-31720 [Accessed: 5 September 2022].

use Brody as a political instrument to gain popularity, but Brody is aware of the VP's involvement in the drone strike that killed Abu Nazir's son Isa, whom Brody cared for despite having been held captive by the boy's father and al-Qaeda leader. The deception by government officials and the emotional complexity around Brody caring for the son of his captor are essential features of the Dark Americana genre (Jones & Smith, 2015: 3). Further, Brody's anger, represented by his tense body language and twitching of his eye, foreshadows his motivation for future actions and subliminally connects feelings of anger and resentment with the airport, a coherent connection given the events of 9/11 (Ep.1, 18:47).

Another important location is Brody's home. The viewer's introduction to the home occurs while Brody's son is playing a violent videogame and is shooting at targets in the game while a mosque features in the background (Ep. 1, 11:17). Simultaneously, the rebellious teen daughter is smoking weed in her bedroom with a young man. While outside her room, everything looks calm, the inside of her room is messy and filled with smoke. This might represent the picture-perfect public image of the family versus the distress the family is really experiencing. Nearing the end of the first episode (Ep. 1, 46:20), the Brody's host a barbecue. Guests stand around Brody at the grill, enamoured with him and his seemingly perfect relationship with his wife who is cleaning up in the kitchen. The family's openness is contrasted by Brody's use of their garage as a secret space for him to pray (Ep. 2, 47:36). The garage, situated at the back of the house, is dark, grey and gives the feeling of it being cold and isolated from the family. It is not used by anyone besides Brody and is important for the way in which it sets the scene for the secretive nature of his new faith, its implications for the action that will unfold, and its shock factor as evidenced in the reception analysis.

Characterising Agents

According to Bordwell, agents are characterised by a "schematic prototype for personhood" which includes their physical attributes, social roles, character traits, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and emotions (focalisation) that the audience is privy to, and their self-impelled actions (2008: 30). In a similar way that inferences are important to fill out surroundings, inferences such as stereotypes are also used to fill out characters. Agents are fleshed out according to a hierarchy of characters whereby spectators intuit how important an agent is

to the overall development of action according to how many elements of the prototype have been activated and whether the character creates a causal impetus for action (Ibid: 31). The character at the top of this hierarchy is generally the protagonist whom the story largely revolves around; whom the audience sympathises with most; and whose value system the audience is assumed to align with (Ibid: 6).

Carrie Mathison

Carrie Mathison, a CIA operative, is the first character the audience is introduced to. She frantically races down the streets in Iraq to a prison where her informant, Ebrahim - who worked for the al-Qaeda leader, Abu Nazir, who is planning an attack on US soil - is about to be hanged (Ep. 1, 01:00). Like Maya, the protagonist of Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012) who joins the CIA after 9/11 and states that "to protect the homeland, you go to get Bin Laden", Mathison's heroic motive is to protect the homeland by pursuing Abu Nazir (Jones & Smith, 2015: 13). Typical of the Dark Americana genre, Maya and Mathison are "lone female operative[s] bucking the bureaucratic, male-dominated intelligence system" to protect the US from terrorism (Ibid: 13).

Bordwell notes that first impressions are used to "establish conceptual ground rules which [are] strengthened by belief perseverance and confirmation bias" (2008: 32). Two of Mathison's seniors at the CIA (Berenson and Director Estes) question Mathison's mental state and discuss her obsessive behaviour (Ep. 1, 39:15). Her tense body language, rapid movements, and a close-up shot of her prescription pills, seem to confirm this. Her unhealthy state of mind is also related to her neglect of her physical health; since she is seldom shown to be eating a decent meal and barely has any food in her house (Ep. 2, 28:09). Her obsessive behaviour, however, makes her acutely attuned to detail. She notices things that her colleagues do not and is willing to risk her own safety, and that of others, to protect the US from terrorist threats. When Lynn Reed – Mathison's informant on a Saudi prince with potential links to Abu Nazir – is worried about her safety, Mathison lies about there being a team protecting her 24/7 (Ep. 2, 40:40). When Reed is told by the prince's advisor that she is to 'entertain' an important businessman, she calls Mathison in fear to make sure that her 'protection' would be following her and Mathison ensures her that they would. Though

Mathison rushes to the scene, her lie was fatal since Lynn had already been shot and killed (Ep. 3, 34:07).

Another example of the risks Mathison takes is when she illegally plants surveillance in Sergeant Nicholas Brody's home once he returns from Iraq. When her mentor, Berenson, discovers what she has done and threatens to turn her in, she breaks down in tears and tries to seduce him (Ep. 1, 44:30). Surveillance is posited as a trade-off among various factors such as invasiveness, effectiveness, grounds for suspicion, and the potential for ameliorating risks (Marx, 2015: 739). Mathison's behaviour highlights not only the moral ambiguity of surveillance but also calls into question 'following the law'. Her 'flexible' approach to following rules showcases the dysfunctional nature of political life and criticises bureaucratic structures, all of which depicts the grey area morality that characterises the post 9/11 era on-screen (Jones & Smith, 2015: 1).

Mathison has the most coverage in the show which largely focuses the audience's attention on her actions. Consequently, major changes in her fortunes represent the chapters in the storyline and give the drama its "distinctive arc" (Bordwell, 2008: 7). All the elements of her schematic prototype for personhood have been robustly activated. Physically, she is a blonde, blue-eyed, white woman who, in the opening scene of the show, stands in stark contrast to her environment of primarily Arab men in Iraq. Her social role as a CIA operative is clearly defined as well as her roles as a sister, daughter, and friend - although to a lesser extent to emphasise her 'marriage' to her work. Her personality traits include being intelligent, impulsive, chaotic, emotional, obsessively driven and detail-oriented, and sacrificial – of herself and others in pursuit of saving the US from a terrorist attack. This, along with access to her thoughts, emotions, and mental states (such as her guilt and anger about Reed's death) through her actions, body language and facial expressions, as well as the stereotypes of women being more emotional and less rational and the stereotypes of those battling with mental illnesses as being 'crazy but brilliant' all contribute towards filling out her character. Furthermore, her character's goal to protect the US from a terrorist attack becomes clear within minutes of the show's opening and gives shape to the way in which the action unfolds (Ibid: 34-35). This characterisation places her at the top of the hierarchy of characters and makes her the protagonist whose value system the audience is expected to align with.

Sergeant Nicholas Brody

Camcorder footage by the US military shows a raid of an al-Qaeda safehouse in Iraq where Nicholas Brody is found (Ep. 1, 05:20). Brody is a US marine corps sergeant who had been held as a POW by al-Qaeda for eight years. In the first extreme close-up of Brody, he stares at himself in the mirror after his rescue; dishevelled, with long hair and a thick red beard. Immediately he undergoes a physical change in appearance once he is taken to Germany. He clenches his jaw while his hair is cut and his beard is shaven off (Ep. 1, 08:50). His downcast facial expression invokes a few questions – What is upsetting him? Does he feel anxious about returning home to his family after being gone for so long? Did his beard represent something important to him? Does he feel scared or uncomfortable having someone come so close to him after having been tortured for so many years?

Close ups of Brody's hand movements are utilised throughout the season to create suspense about his intentions and give insight into his mental state and levels of anxiety. Close ups of his facial expressions provide further access into his mental state and induce sympathy for him from the viewer (Ep. 1, 15:20). This sympathy increases when Brody and his wife Jessica, embrace and break down in tears after they are reunited at the airport on his return (Ep. 1, 17:22). The initial impression of Brody is that he is a patriot, and a loving husband and father who is suffering with trauma from his captivity. This trauma is front and centre in his relationship with his wife. When Jessica pulls a label off his pants, he reacts as though someone is trying to hurt him. There is a constant sense of fear surrounding him and when they have sex, it is animalistic. Jessica cries afterwards as the experience was fearful for her. Moreover, when Brody is left alone at home, he gets flashbacks to his solitary confinement and becomes agitated by the noise of the press outside such that he curls himself up into a protective position in the corner of his bedroom (Ep. 2, 08:46).

News channels broadcast Brody's rescue as "the return of a hero". His social role changes from being a marine corps sergeant, to a prisoner of war, and finally to a hero and symbol of hope and nationalist pride (Ep. 1, 15:50). When questioned about his captivity, Brody's character goals seem murky. He tells Mathison that he has never met Abu Nazir however, a flashback shows brutal imagery of him hung up naked, dropped to the floor with his body

covered in blood, and then sipping on water 'caringly' given to him by Abu Nazir (Ep. 1, 35:35). His capacity for deceit is shown when he tells Tom Walker's wife that he was not present when Walker – a marine captured with Brody by al-Qaeda – was supposedly killed (Ep. 1, 41:20). Another flashback shows that Brody had beaten Walker to death upon Abu Nazir's instruction and that when Brody began sobbing, Abu Nazir caressed Brody in his arms. The triangulation of intimacy, love, and violence that defined his relationship with Abu Nazir is a complex enmeshment of emotions, once more underscoring how the show aligns with the Dark Americana genre (Jones & Smith, 2015: 3).

Since returning from Iraq, Brody has undergone what Bordwell refers to as an "epistemic change" (2008: 35). The change in his values becomes evident when he tells his friend, Mike Faber, that he is not going to be a "poster boy for their bullshit war"[10] (Ep. 2, 36:21). Moreover, he wakes up the following morning at 4:14am and goes to the garage, convincing Mathison – who is surveying him - that the evidence she needs to prove that he is a terrorist is there (Ep. 2, 46:10). He says "Allahu Akbar" and prays in Arabic in his garage, having converted to Islam (Ep. 2, 47:56). His conversion to Islam is used as a stereotype to call his motives into question. He is a completely different man from the one who left for Iraq eight years ago, but his secrets and deception are juxtaposed against his attempts at being a good husband and father. Brody and his wife, Jessica, share fond memories of their relationship when they were teenagers, seemingly rebuilding a strained relationship (Ep. 3, 11:00). The following morning, he cooks breakfast for his family and when he and his daughter, Dana, go for a walk together he tells her that the only thing that kept him alive for the last eight years were the memories of his wife and children (Ep. 3, 37:27).

Like Mathison, all elements of the schematic prototype for personhood have been activated in the case of Brody. He is a complex character who loves his family but is deeply traumatised by his captivity and switches between being open and loving to being cold and dismissive. His son, Chris, seeks his approval but is afraid of him, while his daughter, Dana, senses her father's internal struggle. The love, honesty and care he pours into his relationship with his daughter

[10] The notion of "just" but "dirty wars" are represented in films of the Dark Americana genre such as *American Sniper* and *Green Zone* (Jones & Smith, 2015: 9).

humanises Brody and so too does the deceit he feels when he realises his wife had been sleeping with his friend, Faber, sparking a personal rivalry. His social roles as a husband, father and friend are clearly defined. Moreover, his social role as a marine is front and centre to his identity when we meet him but access to his thoughts, memories and emotions invoke questions regarding his character goals and his allegiance to the US —a factor which influences the protagonist's actions and therefore contributes to shaping the way the drama unfolds. The amount of screen coverage he receives, his impact on the overall development of action, the audience's access to his innermost thoughts and emotions, the complexity of his character, and his character development in terms of the physical and epistemic changes he undergoes, place Brody high in the hierarchy of characters.

Saul Berenson & David Estes

Saul Berenson and David Estes work most closely with Mathison at the CIA. Berenson is a CIA veteran and Mathison's mentor and friend. The audience is introduced to Berenson outside the CIA building when Mathison shares that her informant, Ebrahim, told her that "an American prisoner of war has been turned" (Ep.1, 06:56). Berenson is calm, level-headed, and rational. He cautions Mathison to work slower, more carefully and more methodically (Ep. 2, 29:06) and ensures her that "we're all fighting the same enemy here" (Ep. 1, 08:42). The 'enemy' that Berenson refers to introduces an 'us versus them' and Orientalist narrative that generalises and territorialises evil. That they are "all fighting" against this enemy together, highlights characteristics such as solidarity, bravery, sacrifice, and the type of "patriotic commitment" that often guides televisual texts of the Dark Americana genre (Jones & Smith, 2015: 11). These characteristics underscore the concept of heroism and invite the audience to become part of the fight for good (Cherry, 2020).

That Berenson is referred to as a CIA veteran reinforces his heroic character since the mission of the CIA is "protecting our country" (CIA, 2022). Moreover, given that Mathison is mistrusting of everyone at the CIA says a lot about Berenson's character that she trusts him. The deep respect she has for him is shared by all of those who work with him. He has insight into the dark innerworkings of the CIA, the government, and their bureaucratic structures. This, combined with his knowledge about many people in positions of power, gives him

substantial influence in Washington. For example, to obtain a FISA warrant that will allow Mathison to legally survey Brody, Berenson approaches Federal Judge Turner calling on a favour the judge owes him due to a secret he has kept about the Judge's past (Ep. 2, 10:42)

Access to Berenson's emotions such as the betrayal he felt when Mathison broke his trust as well as insight into his personal relationships like his marital problems humanise him and create sympathy for him (Ep. 3, 17:40). His level-headed behaviour and the respect he has earned in the CIA elevates Berenson as perhaps the most "rational" character in the show. He is cautious and respects the rule of law but justifies bending those rules when he believes it is necessary. Though blackmailing Judge Turner to obtain the FISA warrant is objectively wrong, the trust that has been placed in him by the other agents translates off-screen to a nuanced reading of his actions and "grey-area morality" to justify surveillance measures (Jones & Smith, 2015: 4).

Like Berenson, Estes is presented as rational, confident, and put-together. In the opening scene when Mathison is frantically driving to the Iraqi prison, Estes remains calm while on the phone with her (Ep. 1, 01:00). When reporting to the CIA analysts about Brody's rescue, he smugly states that the US Blackhawks "hit the target with over eight thousand rounds" (Ep. 1, 05:05). This suggests that Estes is not averse to the excessive use of force, justifying the US's use of violence. Neither is he averse to spying on his own people, particularly Mathison, who he believes to be holding back information about Abu Nazir (Ep. 4, 24:10). His suspicious behaviour is explained later in the season when the viewer is made aware that Abu Nazir's son, Isa, was killed by a US drone strike on his school (Ep. 10, 39:02); that VP Walden, who was the CIA director at the time, had given the go-ahead; and that Estes had supported the decision which resulted in eighty-two children being killed (Ep. 12, 35:20). Estes' character foregrounds the Dark Americana theme of political distrust in the way that bureaucracy is represented. When Berenson finds out about the drone attack and questions Estes about it, Estes says that "we're about projecting American power now" and unashamedly states that Berenson would never expose the fact that they "killed eighty-two kids on purpose" because it would endanger CIA operatives (Ep. 13, 24:40). Berenson is caught in a moral dilemma because although he believes those who caused the loss of innocent life need to be held accountable, such accountability could result in further loss of life.

Estes, Berenson and Mathison have extremely different character traits and values, and their goals are not always aligned. They are however, on the 'same side' and are all high on the hierarchy of characters. This hierarchy is visually represented during CIA briefings when the three of them are the only individuals standing while everyone else is sitting (Ep. 4, 08:12). Moreover, low angle shots add to their stature and status. According to the schematic prototype for personhood, the elements have been activated to varying degrees for Berenson and Estes. While Berenson's social role as a CIA analyst has been clearly defined along with his personal relationship with his wife, Estes' social role is limited to his role as the CIA deputy director and viewers do not get access to his personal relationships. Moreover, access to Berenson's thoughts and emotions create sympathy for him while little access is given to Estes' innermost beliefs and desires, ensuring more distance between Estes and the audience and less alignment with his value system. Therefore, while both characters are important, Berenson is higher on the hierarchy of characters.

Lynn Reed

The audience is introduced to Reed during a scene that takes place in a hotel room in a high-rise building. The room is filled with modelesque women whom she is interviewing for a position as the girlfriend of a Saudi Prince, Prince Farid (Ep. 2, 14:15). Her mannerism during the interviews is brusque, from the questions about their sexual preferences to inappropriately touching one of the women. The initial impression of Reed is that she is tough and confident within the social role as an employee of Prince Farid. This impression quickly changes since it becomes clear that Reed is spying on the prince for the CIA to uncover his potential involvement in terror activities in the US.

When she shows Mathison cell phone footage of the prince meeting Abu Nazir, Reed expresses that she is terrified for her life (Ep. 2, 25:30). Later, Mathison gives Reed a device that when plugged into the prince's phone will extract and copy the data (Ep. 2, 40:09). Reed's fear is tangible from her facial expressions and body language, but Mathison tries to assuage it by ensuring her that there would be "a team protecting [her] 24/7" (Ep. 2, 40:40). The risk that Reed is taking creates suspense which surges when she finds the opportunity to place

the spyware on the prince's phone after he leaves the bedroom to speak to someone (Ep. 3, 04:09). She manages to retrieve one hundred percent of the phone's data just as he returns to the bedroom and is shocked when he asks, "what are you doing?!" (Ep. 3, 04:21). She stares at him with bated breath, fearing that she had been caught but lets out a sigh of relief when he places a diamond necklace around her neck, connecting the idea of wealth and excess to the oriental prince (Ep. 3, 05:01). When she hands over the data to Mathison she questions whether the prince could be involved in terror activities since he is "a nice guy with a few sexual quirks" (Ep. 3, 14:23). This could be an attempt to 'familiarise the other' but Mathison is adamant that he is involved.

Although it turns out that the prince was not involved in the terrorist plot, Reed is shot and killed at the command of the prince's senior advisor – forcing the spectator to re-evaluate the perception of the violent Arab regarding the prince, only to reinforce it through his advisor (Ep. 3, 33:32). Like Mathison, Reed felt it was her duty to protect her country from terrorists and ultimately sacrifices her life for her country. These female characters take on the most direct risk in the initial episodes of the show thus emphasising the bravery of women in the fight against terrorism. Reed's character is filled out through these character traits, her physical attributes, her social role as a spy for the CIA, and access to her thoughts and emotions. Though she places moderately on the hierarchy of characters, she nonetheless undergoes substantial character development which is an essential part of building dramatic tension in the Dark Americana genre (Jones & Smith, 2015: 3).

Dana Brody

Dana Brody is introduced as a stereotypical rebellious teen who is smoking marijuana with a boy in her bedroom (Ep. 1, 11:40). Her rebellious nature is reinforced when she tries to sneak into her room past her curfew. When her mother, Jessica, expresses that Dana's rebellious behaviour is cause for concern (Ep. 3, 11:00), Brody goes to his daughter's room to talk to her and for the first time Dana is heard laughing – a sound that had become foreign for Jessica (Ep. 3, 12:10). Dana's short-fuse and rebellious nature are the audience's first impressions of Dana, but these are not so much character traits as responses to what she felt was her mother's betrayal of her father. The impression we come away with is that Dana is simply a

child trying to keep her family together and her loving and caring nature is exposed in her relationship with her father. When Brody and Dana take a walk in the forest, Brody opens up to his daughter more honestly than he opens up to anyone else. He shares his pain with his daughter and tells her that he has returned home to a completely different reality which he is struggling to make sense of (Ep. 3, 37:49). There is a degree of trust and honesty in this father/daughter relationship that surpasses most of the other interpersonal relationships in the show, serving to humanise Brody and create sympathy for him. Although Dana does not initially seem important regarding the hierarchy of characters, upon reflection, her power lies in her ability to influence the actions of her father - such as when she talks him down from carrying out a suicide bombing in the final episode of the season – thereby impacting the overall development of action in the show.

An analysis of the storyworld has revealed themes such as emotional complexity of characters, deceit and betrayal, terrorism, the trauma of war, and moral ambivalence about violence and the use of surveillance. These are defining characteristics of the Dark Americana genre, according to Jones and Smith (2015). I've also found however, that feminism and seduction come up as important themes in *Homeland*, and that once Brody is revealed as a terrorist, a 'need' for state violence is reinforced. These elements could further develop and enrich the genre by delving deeper into how threat narratives about Muslims, Arabs, and the regions they inhabit are sustained.

Plot Structure

According to Kristin Thompson, there are four parts in a film which are defined by the "formulation, redefinition, and achievement of goals set by the protagonist" (cited in Bordwell, 2008: 21-22). The first part is the Setup section where conflict is established, and the protagonist's goals are outlined. It teasingly hints at who or what might be important in the storyline that follows and creates expectations about future events to engage the audience's curiosity (Ibid: 25). This is followed by a section for Complicating Action whereby a set of new circumstances causes the protagonist's goals to be recast or cancelled and therefore acts as a counter-setup. The Development section takes place at roughly the midpoint of the televisual text wherein some forward movement in the achievement of the

protagonist's goals takes place. It is largely defined by delaying manoeuvres like chases, fights, subplots, interconnected storylines, and character revelations like characters' deeper motivations and backstories, and ends with the achievement of the protagonist's goals being flung into crisis (Ibid: 22-25). The final section is the Climax wherein the protagonist either achieves or does not achieve her goals. Thereafter, a stable situation is usually established and is referred to as the Epilogue (Ibid: 22). This three-act four-part structure has characterised films since the 1920s and is a model that is easily found in contemporary cinema (Ibid: 25). The focus on the protagonist's goals also makes it easier to uncover plotlines and analyse plot structures.

In the first episode of season one, Mathison is at a prison in Iraq and is trying to obtain information about an imminent terrorist attack on US soil from a man named Ebrahim who is about to be executed and works for Abu Nazir, the US's number one target on its terrorist hitlist (Ep. 1, 02:45). Her operation was unauthorised but her goal to protect her homeland from a terrorist attack overrides any need she may feel to follow the proper protocols. This shines a light on the hindrance of bureaucracy and her American patriotism which are both features of the Dark Americana genre (Jones & Smith, 2015: 11).

The first six minutes of the first episode may be seen as part one of Thompson's three-act four-part structure and outlines the protagonist's primary goal while setting up the action that will guide the plot. The show inserts with writing that ten months have passed since Mathison's operation in Iraq and uses camcorder footage of a raid in Iraq to show that Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody was rescued from al-Qaeda (Ep. 1, 05:20). Unlike her colleagues who are celebrating Brody's rescue, and the media that represents his rescue as the 'return of a hero', Mathison is suspicious of him due to Ebrahim's intel that an American POW had been turned. This intel and Brody's rescue have complicated the action and as a result, Mathison's goal has been recast to obtain proof of Brody's true affiliations and to expose him as an al-Qaeda terrorist. This represents, I suggest, the second part of the plot structure. In the following Development section, there is a forward movement towards Mathison accomplishing her goal but multiple delays, character revelations and subplots put the achievement of her goals into crisis.

A major sub-plotline involves Brody's relationships with his family. While his family had not given up hope that he could be alive, his wife, Jessica, had started a relationship with his best friend, Mike Faber (Ep. 1, 10:08). Moreover, Brody's son, Christopher barely remembers his father while his daughter, Dana, has grown into a rebellious teen who has a tempestuous relationship with her mother. Another major sub-plotline is Mathison's bi-polar disorder, which is revealed as a defining characteristic that underscores her obsessive behaviour, attention to detail, and level of perception (Ep. 1, 04:12), common traits of protagonists belonging to the Dark Americana genre (Jones & Smith, 2015: 11).

When Mathison illegally places surveillance in Brody's home it shows a pattern of her purposive neglect of protocol and acts as a character revelation (Ep.1, 14:10). The placement of surveillance also represents a forward movement in the achievement of her goal to obtain evidence that Brody is working for Abu Nazir. Another forward movement is when Mathison is afforded the opportunity to interrogate Brody however, when Berenson discovers that she is illegally surveying Brody's home and threatens to turn her in, this represents a delay (Ep. 1, 44:20). While at a bar, Mathison recognises a similarity between the finger movements of the jazz musicians and the finger movements that she had noticed Brody making when he has been on the news (Ep. 1, 50:15). She takes this as proof that Brody is sending signals to Abu Nazir. Furthermore, the following scene in which Brody is jogging through Washington DC and then stops to look up at the Capitol buildings as the music becomes eerier, along with a flashback showing Brody supposedly killing Tom Walker, all seem to be a mini climax in the achievement of Mathison's goal and represent the fourth part of Thompson's four-part plot structure.

At the end of the first episode, there is suspicion around Brody having turned however, in the first four minutes of the second episode, entitled "Grace", he is shown digging a grave in the desert in Iraq for Walker's body while being held at gunpoint by an al-Qaeda soldier. As this takes place, Brody patriotically sings "…and to keep our honour clean, we are proud to bear the title of United States marine" (Ep. 2, 03:53). The patriotism Brody shows in this scene causes one to re-examine the possibility of him turning to 'the other side'. The back and forth in suspicion of Brody that creates suspense, the revelation of character traits, and insight into his backstory all add to the development section of the plot structure. While the first episode

outlined the protagonist's goals and set up the action, the second episode delves straight into the continued development of the plot. The development section incorporates a sub-plotline about the trauma of war, showcasing its impact on Brody such as the nightmares and flashbacks he experiences, the sweating and agitation, his crying, and the need to curl himself into a ball in the corner of the bedroom when he is alone (Ep. 2, 04:24). This creates sympathy for him even with the possibility that he has turned, thus making him a morally ambiguous character.

Another sub-plotline in the episode is corruption such as when Berenson blackmails Judge Turner to obtain a FISA warrant for surveillance of Brody's home (Ep. 2, 10:42), calling forth questions regarding the secrets of people in power, political distrust, and the way in which rules of exception are invoked to make extra-legal measures legal. Further sub-plotlines include the role of the media such as the desire by government officials to utilise Brody as a symbol of "victory in the war on terror" (Ep. 2, 18:50), and feminism. Regarding the latter, Mathison is represented as sacrificing her mental health, safety, and personal relationships for her country, and her informant, Lynn Reed, risks her life and ultimately dies 'for her country' in pursuit of obtaining evidence of al-Qaeda terrorist links in the US. The feminism sub-plotline is encompassed by the idea of being "Brave Girls" (Ep. 2, 42:48).

A major character revelation of Brody that occurs in this episode is pre-empted by a conversation that he has with his friend, Mike Faber. When Faber tries to convince Brody to do press for the military, Brody states that he wants nothing to do with fighting "*their* fucking war" (Ep. 2, 36:21). Later it is revealed that Brody has converted to Islam when he prays in Arabic in his garage (Ep. 2, 47:59). Furthermore, forward movements toward the achievement of Mathison's goal to expose Brody as a terrorist include Reed's surveillance of Prince Farid and the footage she takes of the prince with Abu Nazir. These developments build up a dramatic arc and when Brody decides to address the press, Mathison excitedly calls Berenson and tells him that Brody is doing exactly what he said a terrorist would do, that is, "playing the hero card" (Ep. 2, 49:30). This scene represents a mini climax since, for Mathison, it provides a level of proof that Brody is a terrorist thereby contributing towards the achievement of her goal.

The third episode also jumps straight into the development of the plot. Mathison's goal to expose Brody has remained consistent and there are no new circumstances that complicate the action to the extent that her goal need be recast. Like in the first episode, a major sub-plotline of the development section relates to Brody's family relationships, particularly between Brody and Dana who - with trust, love, honesty, and vulnerability - open up to each other about their struggles and fears, thereby revealing their strong father-daughter bond (Ep. 3, 37:27). The other major sub-plotline relates to surveillance and the progress that Reed is making in obtaining further information about al-Qaeda links in Washington however, the achievement of this goal is flung into crisis when she is murdered (Ep. 3, 34:07). According to Bordwell, the end of the development section is usually represented by the darkest moment in the televisual text (2008). This is also the point at which a climax is reached and the protagonist either achieves or does not achieve her goals. Mathison confesses to Berenson the guilt she feels surrounding Reed's death and Berenson refocuses her attention to the task at hand (Ep. 3, 44:17). They realise that, since the necklace gifted to Reed by the prince was stolen when she was killed, the jewellery is being used as a source of funding. Since they have obtained no further proof of terrorist links in Washington however, the protagonist has not achieved her goal in this miniclimax, which sets up the action for the following episodes.

Thompson's focus on the formulation, reconfiguration, and achievement of the protagonist's goals enables a clearer path to analyse the plot structure of televisual texts and ensures that by identifying the goal, one can see how the drama builds and unfolds. The 'goals focus' makes it easier to reveal the themes which the creators want to portray such as surveillance, corruption and deceit, family relationships, interconnected storylines, Mathison's mental health, and her disregard for protocols based on perceived necessity. These themes are representative of the Dark Americana genre and operate through various techniques, such as forward movements and delays which construct emotion by building anticipation, deepening audience engagement, and cuing suspense. *Homeland* compels its spectators to re-evaluate the stereotypes that generate the suspicion (such as Brody's conversion to Islam) only to reinforce these suspicions with new information (such as the revelation that he is working for al-Qaeda).

Narration

In her work on *Media Audiences*, Kristyn Gorton says that television studies allow us to address "the larger social and cultural constructs that surround us" therefore it becomes important to understand how television shows draw in their audiences and what causes them to become emotionally invested (2009: 2-4). Since emotional engagement relies on making sense of a story to understand audience's emotional responses to narratives, attention must be paid to comprehension (Bordwell, 2008: 10). In his *Poetics of Cinema*, David Bordwell notes that to achieve a holistic understanding of the overall form of a film, the story world, plot structure, and narration must all be accounted for. The latter is the flow of information about the story that guides the audience's comprehension thereof (Ibid: 14). It is not simply a message that is transmitted to the audience but rather a representation of the story world through various cinematic techniques that grant the audience access to the story. Filmmakers use these techniques to specify context and to shape the audience's construction of the story world (Ibid). It requires the audience to elaborate on the show's representations and 'fill in the gaps' using his or her schema.

Narratives often rely on these gaps to mislead the audience and to shape the curiosity that draws them into engagement with the story (Ibid: 18). The schema that Bordwell refers to are essential for comprehension and highlights the fact that a narrative may have different impacts on different viewers. Furthermore, while film scholars such as Mary Anne Doane and Christian Metz hold that comprehension and emotional engagement by audiences are mutually exclusive and posit that critical evaluation of a televisual text requires emotional distance between the text and the audience, Gorton asserts that emotion can enrich understandings and support rational decision making since viewers have enough agency to be critical of a text while still experiencing emotional investment in the story and its characters (Gorton, 2009: 38-39).

Emotional intensification is what draws audiences in, and it is the desire to "feel something" that motivates audiences to watch a show therefore, a televisual text's ability to 'move' its audience is critical for its success (Ibid: 89). As Henry Jenkins put it in his investigations of the *Emotional Impact of Popular Culture*, "popular culture, at its best, makes us think by making

us feel." (Ibid: 39). An important concept to consider here is *affective contagion* which relates to the 'catchiness' of emotions and the way in which affect is transmitted from one body to another (Ibid: 60). The power of emotions calls forth a negotiation of its use in the public sphere and the development of a "cultural politics of emotion" (Ibid: 61). The cultural theorist Sara Ahmed, in her work on *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, notes that "fear involves relationships of proximity, which are crucial to establishing 'apartness' of white bodies" (cited in Gorton, 2009: 61). This 'fear of the other' is traded on by governments and the media to differentiate between western violence and the violence of the other. Dark Americana seems to operate in this way, creating moral ambiguity around the former while creating moral panic around the latter.

Understanding how the representation of characters' emotions affects viewers should not be overlooked. Critical work on television studies must bridge the gap between the theoretical dimensions of emotion, an analysis of the emotional engagement by audiences, and an assessment of the cinematic techniques that filmmakers use to construct emotion. In doing so, critical work on television studies can move beyond conceptualising emotion as just a feeling and move towards understanding the textual and emotive elements that enable its construction and interpretation. An important concept to consider when discussing emotion is, what Lisa Holdsworth describes as, 'journey' and 'jeopardy' moments (Ibid: 153). These moments build anticipation and guide the audience as to the stakes of the protagonist.

In the previous section on plot structure, 'forward movements' and 'delays' were described for the way in which they contributed towards shaping the dramatic arc of the episode. Journey and jeopardy moments are akin to forward movements and delays. In Dark Americana texts, it is often "a hostile environment that morally challenges the character and drives the plot" that cues suspense and deepens the audience's emotional engagement (Jones and Smith, 2015: 7). Other tools at the disposal of filmmakers, which will be looked at more closely in this chapter, include dialogue, music, silence, characterisation, editing, camera positions, and lighting, among other techniques (Ibid: 76-82).

The opening scene of the first episode of *Homeland* makes use of montage shots. Through editing and compressing multiple images, the montage communicates a large amount of

information in a short time span (Deguzman, 2020). Within ten seconds, the shot includes imagery of buildings, a mosque, a man wearing a keffiyeh, children huddled together, a vegetable stand, and men in fezzes (Ep. 1, 00:10). The montage elevates the intensity of the scene and typical to the Dark Americana genre, it places the protagonist "in naturalistic Middle East settings" (Jones and Smith, 2015: 2). The tight editing, combined with the scene that follows in which the protagonist, Mathison, is wildly driving through the streets of Baghdad, constructs tension and a sense of chaos (Ep. 1, 00:17). A few minutes later another montage sequence is utilised to provide an exposition of Mathison's home (Ep. 1, 03:24). The images include her kitchen, clothes strewn on her bedroom floor, and a framed picture of a jazz musician. The latter hints at her love for jazz music which is confirmed later when she lays on her bed after a disagreement with Berenson, listening to jazz (Ep. 1, 45:15). More importantly, it foreshadows a scene at the end of the episode in which Mathison is on a date at a jazz bar and notices the similarity between the musician playing his instrument and the 'hand signals' she believes Brody to be making to Abu Nazir on television (Ep. 1, 50:15). The montage continues with an image of Mathison's home office, followed by images of Arab men pinned to the wall, a picture of men in military uniforms wearing Arab and Bedouin headdresses while sitting in an Islamic prayer position with a gun placed in front of them, and finally, an image of Abu Nazir at the top of the hierarchy. This montage sequence provides the backdrop for establishing Mathison's character goals and creates suspense for the action yet to come.

Camera shots also create tension through cross-cutting and flashbacks. In episode 2, when an al-Qaeda soldier presses the trigger of the gun held to Brody's head, the loud bang coincides with an emotional explosion for Mathison who, after the camera crosscuts to her, wakes up startled and immediately turns to look at her surveillance cameras. Within seconds, the camera crosscuts again to Brody who wakes up from his nightmarish flashback, sweating and crying (Ep. 2, 04:24). In a later scene, Brody punches a photographer who refuses to get off his property (Ep. 2, 22:00). The camera crosscuts to Mathison's reaction after she witnesses the assault on the surveillance cameras, and then crosscuts to Brody's son, Chris's reaction. It crosscuts back to Mathison who repeats "Fuck!" in response to not being able to see Brody on the cameras and then crosscuts to Brody's home where Jessica yells "Shit!" when she notices that the stove had been left on (Ep. 2, 22:45). The crosscutting technique shows the

audience multiple events across various locations (Lannom, 2021). The rapidity of the crosscutting technique in these scenes, supported by loud noises like the bang of the gun or the expletives used by Jessica and Mathison, ramp up the intensity of the action that is unfolding. The 'jump' of the camera from one location to the next is a subtle way to unsettle the audience and build up tension, showing that "tight editing" is an effective tool for constructing tension (Gorton, 2009: 117).

According to Jeff Smith, one of the most effective cinematic techniques for its ability to construct emotions is music whereby "the matching of musical and narrative affect… intensifies the emotional qualities of the cinematic signifier…" (Ibid: 81). While music can be used to heighten the sense of loss or anxiety that the character is facing, filmmakers also utilise "non-speaking moments" to build tension (Ibid: 92). When the audience cannot hear the dialogue of characters or obtain aural cues about their surroundings it can increase anticipation for emotional release and heighten the audience's experience of the emotion (Ibid: 118). After Reed is killed, Mathison arrives to CIA headquarters. Sombre music sets the mood for the scene as she walks solemnly towards the lift where CIA deputy-director Estes is waiting (Ep. 3, 38:48). Estes speaks slowly and quietly, imitating the tone of the music but Mathison remains silent. In contrast to her regular hyped up and erratic mode of presenting herself in speech and body language, Mathison's silence highlights the impact that Reed's murder has had on her and is therefore more effective at constructing the feeling of loss.

The way that music and narrative combine to intensify emotions is also apparent in a scene where Brody visits a hardware store (Ep. 2, 30:55). He takes his time looking at various supplies and Max Piotrowski, who is tailing Brody, tells Mathison that he's looked at "nails, screws, wiring and power tools". While Brody's actions –in isolation - are not suspicious, the meaning behind it is built on by various narrative elements. It is Piotrowski's dialogue and Brody's coldly determined body language, encompassed by suspenseful music that makes Brody's behaviour seem sinister. Narrative is essentially what we make of it, and we make sense of it according to our unique evaluations that are influenced by emotions. The audience perceives narrative representations based on cinematic techniques like eerie music, and then substantiates it with his or her own schemas (Bordwell, 2008: 9). This does not necessarily mean that everyone's understanding of a narrative is different because certain conclusions

are more *likely* than others. Filmmakers are hyper-aware that narratives trade on a stock of shared real-world knowledge therefore, when critically analysing televisual texts, we should ask 'what shared knowledge is the filmmaker trading on?' and 'what emotions are they trying to construct to ensure a certain way of *seeing* the text?'

The first sound the audience is exposed to in *Homeland* is that of the adhaan, the Islamic call to prayer (Ep. 1, 00:05). The adhaan plays from the opening of the scene, while Mathison drives through the streets of Baghdad, throughout her phone call with Estes, up until she gets to the prison (Ep. 1, 01:37). Though not music, the adhaan is recited in a melodic tone and those who are not accustomed to hearing it might consider it to be singing. As Mathison approaches the prison, the adhaan increases in volume as though increasing in crescendo, thereby heightening anticipation for what is about to unfold at the prison. In a similar way that music is used to increase anxiety or loss and to heighten the emotional quality of a scene, the adhaan has been used to signify a climax of some sort. Moreover, the way that the adhaan has been stretched could mean filmmakers want to emphasise it for the meaning it creates about the surroundings, such as Islam being a defining characteristic of Iraqi society. Another narrative technique that *Homeland* directors have utilised to signal that the surroundings are outside the US is lighting.

A subtle yellow filter is evident throughout the opening scene of episode one that takes place in Baghdad and is used again in the opening scene of episode two which also takes place in Iraq. The sepia tone makes the air look dusty, dirty, and hot and while some film scholars say that the 'yellow filter' is used to create tension, others say that it is used to construct a "third world" aesthetic (Ullmann, 2020). According to film studies scholar Vincent Fan, when a "director decides to use a yellow filter…they indeed intend to create a space that would make their intended viewers… associate it with poverty, 'pre-modernity', lawlessness" (Ibid). The jaundiced look of Baghdad stands in contrast to the type of lighting that is used when the US is depicted. In an establishing shot of Washington, a soft pink hue saturates the sky as the sun rises (Ep. 1, 03:17). When a long shot of Washington is presented again, the same soft pink hue is evident as the Capitol building stands tall in the background (Ep. 2, 39:30). While a pink hue denotes innocence, empathy and beauty, and is notable during certain long shots of Washington, scenes that take place inside the Central Intelligence Agency seem to have a

bluish grey colour scheme (Davies, 2020). A tracking shot of Mathison and Berenson as they walk up the stairs at the CIA discussing potential surveillance of Brody shows light grey walls, blueish grey railings, white ceilings and blue windowpanes (Ep. 2, 28:30). Scenes taking place inside the CIA are suffused with cool blue tones which, according to colour theory in cinema, often represents modern, progressive and thriving societies (Ullmann, 2020). Lighting as a cinematic technique, particularly the way in which different hues are utilised, trades on a perception of different types of societies which may act to reinforce "implicit biases [and] … false dichotomies such as 'us' and 'them'" (Heydt, 2020). Whether *Homeland* directors have purposefully tried to reinforce a Western/Eastern dichotomy is not being debated in this section however, given that colour is imbued with meaning, what is being considered is how they have traded on these meanings to guide the audience's comprehension of the narrative and to construct an emotional reaction to the depiction of different societies.

The audience's access to the story world and their comprehension thereof is guided by narration which is the representation of the story world via a mixed bag of cinematic techniques. The variety of techniques used helps to create a more complex and nuanced reading of the show – an essential feature of Dark Americana - and impacts how emotionally engaged the audience becomes. While this section has thus far looked at *Homeland*'s use of lighting, colour, music, silence, dialogue, montage shots and cross-cutting, all of which contribute towards the construction of meaning and emotion, it will now turn to the cinematic techniques that are most impactful on character engagement.

Related to character engagement is empathy, which is essential to create a connection between the audience and a character (Gorton, 2009: 93). Empathy is the ability to understand other people's experiences and to 'feel' what they are feeling (Cherry, 2020). The construction of empathy in televisual texts allows the audience to understand the character, to associate meaning with their actions, and to intuit the significance of the character to the story (Gorton, 2009:93). Continuing from Sara Ahmed's theory of affective contagion, Carl Platinga states that "catching" emotions from someone relates to our reading of their facial cues (Ibid: 81). It should come as no surprise then that filmmakers write their scripts on the premise that what will emotionally affect characters will emotionally affect the audience (Ibid: 148). According to "any good director, the most effective way to engage the viewer is

through close-up shot" (Ibid: 151). By shortening the camera distance between the character and the frame, the facial expressions and gaze of the character are emphasised, communicating the character's mental state and emotions.(Reinhard and Olson, 2016: 193). Close-up shots, as a 'focalisation' technique, induce character engagement by ensuring audience proximity to character's thoughts, feelings, and desires, and elicit empathy from the audience.

When Estes shares the news with his CIA operatives that Sergeant Brody was rescued from al-Qaeda, a medium close-up shot points to Mathison who questions the circumstances around his rescue (Ep. 1, 06:15). The medium shot is close enough to show her facial expressions and body language but provides enough space in the frame around her to contrast her reaction with those of her colleagues who are elated, proud and clapping in response to the news. Close-up shots of her face show her constantly frowning which, when read with her fidgety body language, highlight her suspicion of Brody, and her fear about what will unfold. Her suspicion engages the audience and arouses suspense. Suspense - which has been constructed through medium close-up and close-up shots of Mathison to paint a picture of her mental state, thoughts and emotions – is also induced via the amount of information about the narrative that the audience has access to.

After meeting with Reed who has footage of Prince Farid with Abu Nazir, Mathison calls Berenson and tells him that the new evidence she has obtained "is a gamechanger" but that she does not "want to talk on an open line" (Ep. 2, 26:28). Using cross-cutting and choosing whether to show both sides of a telephone conversation or not is a narrative decision which can create mystery and suspense due to the amount of information revealed. In certain instances, showing one side of a phone call - such as when Jessica answers the home phone and the person on the other side is neither shown nor speaks (Ep. 1, 27:25) – creates more suspense but in this case, close-ups of Berenson's face show his reaction to Mathison's news. His intrigue and their fast-paced dialogue builds anticipation and results in a forward movement in the achievement of Mathison's goal to prevent a terrorist attack on US soil.

Additionally, when Brody is left alone at home for the first time since his rescue when Jessica and the kids leave for school, he watches the swarm of journalists outside his home and close-

ups show the adverse effect their presence has on him (Ep. 2, 06:50). His eyes are transfixed on them, his pupils are dilated, and his mouth twitches. When he goes to the bedroom and closes the door another close-up highlights his overwhelming feelings of agitation and anxiety at the shrill sound of the phone ringing (Ep. 2, 08:22). He faces the wall, slides down to the floor and curls himself into a ball with his arms braced in front him as though in a protective position. In these moments the audience is alone with Brody. The close-ups bring a measure of closeness to him, inducing empathy and providing intimate access into his mental state. Moreover, combining close-up shots with flashbacks to his solitary confinement in Iraq serve to provide a deeper understanding of his trauma since knowing a character's "affective history deepens levels of emotional engagement" from the audience (Gorton, 2009: 150). This aligns with the purpose of the show's creators who stated that "if we can get the audience to sympathise with someone who might be a terrorist then we've succeeded" (Showtime, 2011 October 4). Success for the creators is the ability to humanise Brody, to challenge the notion of what a villain or hero is, and to make the audience "want to know more" (Gorton, 2009: 148). This is precisely the type of moral ambiguity that underscores the Dark Americana genre and which is constructed through the use of various cinematic techniques.

A flashback transports the audience to Brody's imprisonment where Brody speaks towards the door in desperation, saying "Hello, please answer" (Ep. 2, 45:00). He is surprised to find that the door has been left unlocked for him and as he walks through the building in Iraq, close-up shots highlight a cautious demeanour and a nervous facial expression. He opens a door that leads outside and the bright and yellow morning light shines on his face when he hears men chanting "Allahu Akbar" repeatedly. He watches the men praying in awe, his feet glued to the ground despite it being an opportunity for escape. The flashback is superimposed with close-up shots of Brody in the present moment to outline his 'transformation' and make sense of his current mental state. Brody opens his garage door slightly, allowing a yellowish morning light to filter through. He opens the packet of "supplies" he got at the hardware store when he was being tailed by Max Piotrowski and takes out a prayer mat, as though the weapon they were worried about turned out to be his new religion. He stands on his prayer mat, facing the yellowish light and says "Allahu Akbar" (Ep. 2, 47:56).

The hue of lighting, the praying, and the superimposition of the past and the present through flashbacks and close-ups create continuity between Brody's role as a terrorist in the show, his captivity in Iraq, and his new Islamic faith. It details his affective history and the development of his character to expose "the deep psychological influences" behind his conversion (Showtime, 2011 November 29). Furthermore, montage shots to provide context and construct tension and chaos, cross-cutting and flashbacks to unsettle the audience and provide insight into characters' affective histories, the use of music or a lack of sound to build anticipation and intensify emotions, and lighting/hues to paint stereotypical depictions of regions, work together in *Homeland* to spawn an 'us versus them' dichotomy between the West and the 'other' while simultaneously generating fear in relation to the latter. Most effective for constructing emotion is focalisation as a cinematic technique where close-up shots provide spectators with access to characters' thoughts, emotions, and desires. It forges audience engagement with characters by producing intimacy and relatability and operates on the premise that "what emotionally affects the character will emotionally affect the audience" (Gorton, 2009: 148). Based on this idea of emotional contagion, Lynn Reed's fear of being so close to "the most dangerous terrorists in the world" (Ep. 2, 25:48) – solely depicted as Muslim and Arab men – is one example of *Homeland*'s dangerous depictions that serves to build and sustain threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs.

Chapter 3: Reception Analysis

Legitimising US Violence & The Sub-Narratives of Dark Americana

Reception studies scholarship has thus far focused on qualitative/textual analysis, based on which researchers have inferred conclusions about audience interpretations. Meaning making, however, is a marriage between the televisual text, the subject positions of the spectator, and the interaction between the two within a given sociocultural context. Chapter one elucidated the Dark Americana genre as a concept by Jones and Smith and clarified the theoretical frameworks of othering and securitisation that underpin the genre. Chapter two's in-depth qualitative analysis of the first season of *Homeland* relied on Bordwell's *Three Dimensions of Film* to analyse the season, confirming the show's ascription to the Dark Americana genre as well as how various cinematic techniques are utilised to build suspense and narratives of threat around Muslims and Arabs. Chapter three focuses on how spectators bring the meaning of the text to light based on how they interact with it.

Seven participants filled out Minutia responses for the first three episodes of the first season of *Homeland*, where they recorded their moment-by-moment thoughts and the strength of their emotional responses (with 1 being the lowest and 7 the highest) while they watched. This allowed for an assessment of whether participants were entangled in the show – where evidence includes being absorbed into the storyworld and engrossed by what will unfold and showing concern for characters and investment in their lives through strong emotional responses. Alternatively, detachment is evidenced by a disengagement with the text to critically assess its production. The Minutia responses also enabled inroads into understanding how participants' sociocultural characteristics, as gathered from pre-viewing questionnaires, may influence their readings of the show[11]. These responses, once coded, helped to develop the categories which form the basis of this chapter, that is, the sub-narratives of Dark Americana.

[11] Refer to Appendix A for an overview of the participants' sociocultural characteristics as well as their entanglement with or detachment from the show.

Reimagining US Nationalism

Chapter one showed that US nationalism before the events of 9/11 was defined by ideals such as *American Exceptionalism* and *Manifest Destiny* which worked together to politicise religious narratives and advance imperialistic self-interests. When Bush introduced into public discourse the concept of homeland immediately following 9/11, I believe this sparked a reimagination of US nationalism in the post 9/11 era. Its emphasis on common ancestry and the idea of the home bounded by the homogenous family, separated from the external other, intertwines the nation's identity with its security concerns. Given increased mobility of people and ideas, through faster modes of transportation, the internet, and social media respectively, boundaries have become more fluid, dynamic and contested. The enemy without, is simultaneously the enemy within resulting in a constant state of *Radical Insecurity* within national boundaries.

The backdrop of a looming threat necessitates constant vigilance and an obligation on the part of all US citizens to protect their homeland from terrorism at home and abroad (Kumaraea, 2018: 6). Protecting the homeland, in turn, requires heroism where the hero overcomes adversity through courage. Here, adversity is the threat of violence by the 'other' and courage is the willingness of ordinary citizens to take up their role to protect their borders and "defend their homeland" (Ibid: 4). The homeland is like the home of an extended family of citizens and the hero will do anything to protect his/her home. Operating on the idea of the home and the family, this framework brings nationalism into the home and into the heart. It fosters a sense of loyalty to one's country in the same way that one would be loyal to her family. In the US, deep devotion to one's country and its ideals - patriotism - is based on heroism and the belief that all true Americans are heroes.

I posit that American exceptionalism, manifest destiny, and the notion of the homeland - based on radical insecurity and the need for heroism – as the newest element incorporated into the American nationalist ideological complex in the post 9/11 era, collectively construct the 'threat' of violence and legitimise the use of violence to defend the American nation. The ideological complex is constructed through the emphatic promotion of American cultural

ideals via national propaganda campaigns and the media, particularly television (Rania, 2020: 37). This underscores the importance of analysing media texts, particularly popular ones like Showtime's *Homeland*, for the way in which they reinforce this nationalist ideological complex. Such an analysis requires an assessment of the process of meaning making by spectators who bring the meaning of the text to light depending on how they interact with the text.

From the first episode of *Homeland*, Mathison's unauthorised operation in Iraq showcases her heroic goals to protect the homeland from a terrorist attack by any means necessary, including disregarding CIA protocols. Her disregard for the rules is framed as determination, bravery, and strength since it is in defence of American political idealism. The ends justifying the means is supposedly validated by American exceptionalism. Reflecting on Mathison's illegal surveillance of Brody, Participant Ten recognises that Mathison does not respect authority and wonders whether Mathison "went behind her bosses here to prove her theory about Brody switching sides"[12]. Like Participant Ten, Participant Eight is a female law student but unlike the former, she expresses concern regarding the legality of the surveillance and expresses relief once "they are legal". Participant Six, a male student of English literature is also critical of Mathison's disregard for protocol and notes that she "can't have her surveillance package … [when] she has no evidence". Participant Two, a male law student is also critical of the way the CIA bends the rules particularly for its "blackmailing [of] people".

Participant Eight's entanglement in the show is also evidenced from her interaction with the theme of radical insecurity. She notes an emotional response of 6 when Lynn Reed downloads data from the Saudi Prince's phone, expressing that she was "nervous … he would see it". She also expresses worry with a 'maximum' emotional response of 7 when Reed is in danger (Ep. 3, 27:49). Participant Two felt that the show "suck[s] you into the plot" by creating the belief that the CIA had "double agents for Abu Nazir" and noted that the producers "want you to [not] trust anybody". This was reiterated by Participant One, another female law student, who stated that the producers "tried to make people more suspicious" but when "America finds

[12] Refer to Appendix B for an overview of the participants' notable responses to the themes incorporated within the sub-narrative of the *Reimagination of US Nationalism*

one of their own… they directly declare him as a hero." While these participants were all entangled in the show through their reactions to the theme of radical insecurity, Participant One was critical of how it was used to declare someone a hero. Participant Nine, a female master's student of politics and sociology, was the most critical and is the only participant who was completely detached from the show. Regarding radical insecurity, she references a politician's statement that "terrorists are still out there after blood. We need Brody in the public eye to remind America this is far from over" and she states that Brody "is used as a push for continuing [US] invasion."

She goes on to critique the theme of heroism with a strong emotive response of 7, asking "Is bombing a foreign country, reinforcing war, and killing thousands of civilians what it means to be a hero?" and posits that "the series tries to establish… an excuse for the invasion of Middle Eastern countries … [making clear] the idealisation [the] United States has with its military." Participant Eight also critiques the show's heroism, though with a weaker emotive response of 4, and is "angry because the [CIA] seem[s] to feel so heroic which… seems unreasonable." Participant Six and Ten however, seemingly read the show's heroism as it was intended by the producers. The former calls Brody a "war hero" following Brody's rescue and the latter is sympathetic to Mathison's behaviour stating that she has "sympathy with her situation … [since Mathison] doesn't want to miss anything this time".

Regarding the participants' interaction with the themes of American exceptionalism, radical insecurity, and heroism, while participants Ten, Eight and Two are law students only two of the three showed concerns for legality. Participant Six, a literature student, was also concerned about following protocols therefore having a legal background is not necessarily a factor for having concerns for legality. Female participants, Ten, Eight and One, responded emotively and were completely entangled in the show while female Participant Nine also noted strong emotive responses but was completely detached and male participants Two and Six noted weaker emotive responses and signs of detachment, respectively. Furthermore, the three participants of colour, participants One, Nine, and Eight, were the only ones to specifically critique the show's representation of US heroism.

From Moral Panic to Moral Ambiguity

Terrorism represents a threat to the sovereignty of the state since it challenges the state's ability to protect its citizens and its borders. The war on terror has vastly exaggerated this threat and has resulted in moral panic where society is overcome by fear that an evil entity threatens its values, interests, and safety. June Edmunds notes that this disproportionate fear has translated into a "generalised Islam anxiety" (2012: 77). Despite an established set of norms and laws that emphasised rational diplomatic measures for change underpinned by Enlightenment ideals, as opposed to using authoritative measures, the mass fear with which the war on terror infected society, has invited justifications for the use of violence on the part of the US and its allies to combat the threat of terrorism. Moral panic has led to moral ambiguity on the question of violence, and the paradox that is liberal democracies' use of the law to justify violence, must be unravelled.

Though violence is often "a means through which law acts", the relationship between violence and the law is consistently denied (Lokaneeta, 2011: 11). Despite the state's monopoly on the use of force, the legitimacy of the law in liberal democracies is supposedly no longer based on military strength but on the autonomous rule of law and consent of the governed (Ibid: 12). State punishment from painful measures to painless ones in modern times is credited to Enlightenment ideals of respect for human rights and human dignity that were birthed from the French Revolution in 1789. If this were the case however, how could the revival of violence and torture in these 'enlightened' European states be explained? Lokaneeta conveys that the decline of the use of violence by European states was more related to the introduction of disciplinary institutions like prisons and new technology for retrieving physical evidence, both of which made coercion less 'necessary' (Ibid: 8).

The idea that democracies are 'non-violent' due to moral considerations is a "fairy tale [which] allows for the association of torture with different stages of society" (Ibid). In a similar way that modernisation theory posits that the political systems of Western societies are more socio-politically advanced than those considered 'traditional' from other regions of the world, liberal theorists posit that due to the Enlightenment, Western societies are morally more

advanced as well, making human rights "the new standard replacing civilisation as the criterion for dividing and judging the world" (Hussain, 2003: 142). Lokaneeta refers to H. L. A. Hart's work on sovereignty who notes that the violence of the gunman is distinguished from the violence of the officer based not on the act itself but on the authority which the latter has and the former does not (Lokaneeta, 2011: 11-13). Thus, it is normative language that decides what violence is legal and what violence is illegal; what is moral and what is immoral.

While law's violence is projected as humane, rational, and controlled and is legitimised based on legal interpretation, the violence of the 'other' is juxtaposed as "inhuman", forbidden, and criminal (Ibid). In this way, torture in relation to the west is merely a subject of its history and presently can only be associated with primitive non-Western societies (Ibid: 8). This is how torture plays out in *Homeland*: as violence enacted only by the Arab 'other'. In response to Brody and Tom Walker being tortured by al-Qaeda, Participant Ten expressed shock - with a strong emotive response of 7 – at "how cruel people can be"[13]. Participant One responded emotively, with a strength of 6, to Brody's torture and was "disgusted" by "what people can do to harm other humans". These responses suggest that the violence carried out is real for the participants and clarifies their entanglement in the show. Participants One and Two noted that Brody's torture created sympathy for him, with the former questioning whether he hurt his wife in his sleep due to trauma while simultaneously expressing compassion for him with a moderate emotive response of 5. Participants Ten, Three, and Eight also expressed compassion for Brody with the latter showing consistently strong emotive responses to the theme of trauma throughout her minutia responses. Interestingly, the only two participants that did not express sympathy for Brody's torture and trauma were Participants Nine and Six, who were completely detached and showed signs of detachment, respectively.

Torture and violence are frequently seen as impermissible for modern liberal democracies due to its incongruency with liberal principles of human dignity. They are disavowed as a central policy instrument of the state, lest they delegitimise its 'civilising' role (Ibid: 8). Western states limit the association between their use of violence and the law through

[13] Refer to Appendix B for an overview of the participants' notable responses to the themes incorporated within the sub-narrative of *Moral Panic and Moral Ambiguity*

constantly negotiating the relationship between the two according to a doctrine of necessity which frames the state's use of violence during emergency situations as being outside its 'routine' so as not to stain its democratic legitimacy. Hussain emphasises however, that these "are neither temporary nor categorically distinct from a larger set of state practices" (Ibid: 69-70). The threat of terrorism and the introduction of a "new paradigm" of hyper-legalisation in the post 9/11 period, allowed states to derogate from human rights treaties such as the Geneva Conventions which guarantees the right to a fair trial and which prohibits torture (Edmunds, 2012: 77). Torture has been used as a characteristic to differentiate "civilised" liberal democracies from non-democratic regimes and yet the former have found "legal loopholes" to maintain their legitimacy while engaging in these violent practices (Lokaneeta, 2011: 70). As Edmunds aptly put it: "the west regards 'human rights' in the same way as it regards 'the bomb'—something that western nations can handle responsibly, while other nations misuse it…" (2012: 82).

Thomas Crocker asserts that this doctrine represents a trade-off between a constitutional culture that respects liberty and human rights and an "easy resort to torture" to confront security challenges during emergencies. The war on terror has been represented as such an emergency which according to George W. Bush, "requires a new thinking in the law of war" (Ibid: 25). According to Judge Alberto Gonzalez – whom Bush appointed as the US Attorney General in 2005 - the post 9/11 "paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions." Richard Posner - who served as a US federal judge until 2017 and who remains the most-cited legal scholar on record – also espoused his views on the matter, stating that constitutional limitations against "brutal interrogation" were drawn up for law enforcement purposes but should not apply when the interrogation is for intelligence-gathering that will "ward off a great evil" (Ibid: 23-25). That some of society's most powerful individuals propagated the renegotiation of the relationship between law and violence to the extent that the Geneva conventions were disregarded, and that torture became justifiable, is what these same individuals would call a "state of exception" (Ibid).

That Brody's torture overwhelmingly produced sympathy from the *Homeland* spectators, and humanised him through internal focalisation, served to justify his actions later and represents

a broader theme of the 'other' as the cause of all violence. As Participant Ten put it, sympathy for characters helps one "understand the reasoning behind their actions", and regarding surveillance, she stated that she could see "how sometimes for the police it does help in their investigations to listen to phone calls [and] follow certain people … to prevent crimes". Participant Two however, noted that "as a Law student, who learns to question every bit of governmental actions as possibly illegal … everything democratic elected governments do should be ethical". Participant Six, who is an English Literature student, did not make any normative pronouncements on extra-judicial measures like surveillance and securitisation but conveyed that his moment of lasting impact from the show was the "debate regarding how much investigation is reasonable into returning soldiers who may be terrorists". These responses may support the notion that necessity creates moral ambiguity around securitisation measures and state violence.

Egregious violence and abuses by US personnel against prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq – as seen in pictures released in 2004 - later also confirmed these practices at Guantanamo Bay (Lokaneeta, 2011: 71). When classified official US memos were leaked it confirmed that the physical, sexual, and psychological torture witnessed did not represent a rare absence of the law to prevent violence, but rather an authorisation *for* violence (Ibid). The most 'damning' memo was the Bybee/Yoo memo that was authorised in August 2002 (Ibid: 72). It justified unprecedented increases in executive power after 9/11, narrowly-defined torture so that brutal interrogation methods authorised at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo could not be considered as such, and defended any challenges to these methods in the courts via its authorisation by the president (Ibid: 76). The US thus came to resemble authoritarian regimes albeit with a democratic veneer. Furthermore, that the memo, as a "liberal ideology of torture", was leaked alongside tangible evidence of torture at Abu Ghraib drew a link between policymakers and the perpetrators of violence (Ibid: 77-79).

Since violence by liberal democracies must be represented as "humane" and necessary in contrast to the barbaric violence of authoritarian regimes and non-state actors, the memo was withdrawn by the state to salvage its legitimacy as a liberal democracy and to maintain its distinction from the "brutal other" (Hussain, 2003: 136). This points to another element for consideration, that is, the role of race. The need for the west to distinguish itself from the

'brutal other' is essential to its identity where at its core, is the belief in its own exceptionalism and manifest destiny. Regarding US exceptionalism, it has been reimagined in the post 9/11 era to incorporate heroism. According to Participant Nine, the concept of the "hero" has been used in the *Homeland* TV show to give Americans the moral high ground to establish "a political position, almost as an excuse for the invasion of Middle Eastern countries". Regarding the US's belief in its manifest destiny, she emphasises the "idealisation [the] United States has with its military" which "is almost pictured as its dogma". Subsequently – as the only completely detached participant - she drives home the point that the representation of manifest destiny in the show is evidenced by CIA deputy-director Estes who states in the show's opening scene that "we don't dictate law to the Iraqis anymore". She stresses the existence of a "clear power relation" between the countries and the desire on the part of the US to enact its civilising mission in Iraq. The US's nationalist ideological complex, founded on American exceptionalism, manifest destiny, and heroism – underscored by radical insecurity because of the violent other – has led to moral ambiguity on the question of violence and the instrumentalization of the law to legitimise it.

Heroism versus Extremism

The US's claim that its own violence is humane while the violence of the 'other' is inhumane relates to its belief in American exceptionalism and a deeply rooted civilisationary discourse. This framework is what Edward Said refers to as *Orientalism*, where the classification of violence as being legitimate, according to whether the perpetrator is 'civilised' or 'uncivilised', infiltrates the imagination through popular culture such as television shows like *Homeland*. Orientalists' homogenising view of Islam is represented by the conflation of Arabs and Muslims in the show, despite Arabs making up but a small percentage of Muslims globally. The show also conflates countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon which are culturally and politically unique but are shown as representing one homogenous culture, that of the Orient. As CIA veteran, Berenson says: "we're all fighting the *same* enemy here" (Ep. 1, 08:42). The belief in Arabs and Muslims (used interchangeably to reflect the homogenisation in the show) as the enemy trades on the oriental stereotype of the 'violence of the other' such that

all Muslims are connected to the theme of terrorism. Those that enact violence against westerners do so out of hatred against the west but also for their enjoyment. As President Walden exclaims in season two, "they yell 'death to America' no matter what we do!" (Kumaraea, 2018: 4).

In the first episode's opening scene, three Arab guards violently remove Carrie Mathison from an Iraqi prison (Ep. 1, 03:05). Thereafter, the audience gets access to Mathison's home where her wall is covered in images of Middle Eastern men as insurgents. Participant Nine noted in her minutia responses that there was "a clear attempt to picture them as dangerous"[14]. Furthermore, when Muslim men are not enacting violence, they are sexualising and objectifying women. In her undercover CIA role as working for the Saudi prince, Lynn Reed interviews women for the role of the prince's girlfriend where the women are expected to be both modest and 'sexually open'. Participant Nine asserts that there is a "negative depiction of … women being objectified by Middle eastern men". In response to Reed's comment that "they stone women like me to death if we get caught doing anything we're not supposed to" (Ep. 2, 25:10), Participant Nine responded strongly to what she said was violence being "used as a trait that defines Middle Eastern culture".

When Reed is killed, the prince is immediately suspected of her murder despite no evidence against him. When he turns out to be innocent, the show urges the audience to re-examine the prejudices and stereotypes which were cause for his suspicion in the first place. It does so only to re-enforce the representations of the 'other' in connection to violence and sexism when it is revealed shortly after that the prince's closest advisor is responsible for the murder. Participant Ten expresses sympathy for the prince regarding the unfair suspicion of his involvement in Reed's death however, she then states that she began to doubt the relationship between the two. This reflects not so much a rejection of the dominant reading of the show and its representation of the 'violent other' but a negotiation thereof.

[14] Refer to Appendix C for an overview of the participants' notable responses to the themes incorporated within the sub-narrative of *Heroism versus Extremism*

The link between religion and extremism is also tightly knit in *Homeland*. When Brody is held captive by al-Qaeda, he comes across the terrorists repeatedly praying: "Allahu Akbar" (Ep. 2, 47:10). And when the prince meets Abu Nazir, the only audio heard is "Assalaamu alaykum" (Ep 2, 25:30). While Arabic spoken by the white characters in the show is translated, Arabic spoken by Muslim characters, such as *Allahu Akbar*, which means 'God is great' and *Assalaamu alaykum* which means 'may peace be upon you' are not translated. This creates suspicion around the use of the Arabic language and connects it to violence. Participant One noticed that when Brody harms his wife in his sleep, he "mumbles something in Arabic". Moreover, when Brody prays in his garage, hidden away from his family, this is further cause for suspicion. According to Participant Six in a follow-up email, Brody praying was "a red herring…making us believe he was a terrorist". Participant Eight similarly used the 'representations of the other' that the show was trading on to fill in the 'gaps' and expressed that "…there is a suspicion concerning Brody switching sides. Him being Muslim 'like the enemy', would definitely consolidate this suspicion."

Participant One however, was highly critical of what she called *Homeland*'s "dangerous representation." She noted that "society will connect people that simply pray because of their religion with terrorists" and would have "understood the praying…if they would have shown more of praying people that are also threatened by terrorists" but "middle eastern people are only shown as the criminal bad guys." Participant Nine had a strong emotive response of 7 in response to Brody praying and saw it as a "failed attempt to familiarise the 'other'" since the show still forged a "connection between Islam and terrorism." To a degree, almost all of the participants were aware of the stereotypes being traded on by the show's directors but while Participants Six and Eight – a white male literature student and a mixed-race female law student, respectively - were aware of the stereotypes being traded on by the producers and used them to make sense of the show, Participants One and Nine – a female law student with middle eastern origins and a black Latina female sociology student, respectively – were expressly critical, with the strongest emotive responses in their minutia responses to what they considered dangerous representations.

Another important point to consider is the way in which threats to the lives of Muslims are overlooked. When the CIA kills over eighty Arab children (including Abu Nazir's son, Isa) with

a drone strike, it is considered more of a public relations disaster than a humanitarian one. This is similarly the case when the CIA kills several Muslim worshippers at a Washington DC mosque during a raid (Kumaraea, 2018: 6). Participants One and Ten both expressed shock with weak emotive responses of 3 in response to the opening scene where over a hundred Iraqi civilians are killed and where, according to Participant One, Mathison "seems to not really care about the civilians losing their [lives]". Therefore, although violence is undesirable for civilised nations, it is framed as "an unavoidable necessity in the face of violence from the Arab world" and is easier to enact when Muslim bodies are disposable (Ibid).

That violence, such as hitting "the target with over 8000 rounds" (Ep. 1, 05:05), extreme sacrifices, even of one's life, and a disregard for rules, are considered heroic when in defence of American political idealism but is considered extremism when enacted by Muslims requires interrogation. Despite Brody's allegiance to Abu Nazir and his plans to assassinate the president, he is humanised through his relationship with his daughter, Dana. Due to Participant Six's strong emotive response to interpersonal relationships in his minutia responses, he was asked in follow-up questions which relationships he connected most with. He responded that he "felt most connected to the Brody family relationships" since he was "a teacher and [his] own family was going through a rough time when [he] watched the show." This highlights the importance of sociocultural characteristics and subject positions for understanding spectators' reading of televisual texts and could serve as evidence for the impact of film as espoused by film scholars such as Katalin Balint and Andras Balint Kovacs who assert that closeness to a character implies relatability (Reinhard and Olson, 2016: 187).

Explanations are given for Brody's behaviour, such as him being a "Stockholm-syndrome" convert or a "troubled man who is put in a difficult position … neither heartless nor an inherently cruel individual; he is an American corrupted by the heartless and cruel Arabs" (Castonguay 2015, Kumaraea 2018). This was picked up on by Participant One who pronounced that when "America finds one of their own [men], they don't question him, they directly declare him as a hero." Participant Nine too noted that ordinary US citizens would be considered heroes if they could be "used as instruments for war or investigation" and highlighted that the "discourse of a hero" was portrayed through various characters in the show including Brody, Mathison, and Reed. Their responses reaffirm the argument made in

the first part of this chapter regarding the reimagination of US nationalism in the post 9/11 era whereby one is patriotic if he/she serves the homeland as a hero.

On the other hand, when the CIA uncovers a couple's terrorist motives, they immediately kill the Arab husband, Faisal but when they track down the wife, Aileen - a white woman from the US - Berenson buys her lunch and personally drives her back to the CIA where he suggests that had she not "fallen in love with a boy", she would not have been radicalised (Kumaraea, 2018: 7). Like Brody, she is humanised, and her behaviour is excused and justified, unlike the Arab and Muslim characters in the show. Participant Nine responded strongly to white characters being given excuses for their violent behaviour. When Mathison references Brody, stating that "No one said becoming a terrorist was easy, Saul", Participant Nine expressed "disgust." She professed that the producers tried to show that "Brody is really struggling with 'becoming a terrorist' as it is not in his nature… as he is [American], white, and likely Christian." The representation of Muslims as extremists and westerners as heroes is part of a complex power dynamic between east and west that is constructed through western imaginations of the Orient as barbaric, uncivilised, and in need of western salvation. Participant Nine seems acutely aware of these Orientalist discourses and contends that while heroism in the west is a positive trait that includes "giving their life for their country…when it comes from an Eastern standpoint, it is not seen as heroic but rather as extremist."

The circularity of knowledge is that it is simultaneously produced and productive, where the media sits crucially at the intersection of both. Gerbner's seminal work on "cultivation theory" (1976) posits that certain beliefs become naturalised through repeated exposure to those frameworks (Kumaraea, 2018: 2). When Jack Shaheen investigated Muslim/Arab representation in over 900 films, he found that negative depictions of Muslims as being brutal, fanatical, and uncivilised were pervasive in the media (Ibid). Another study by USC Annenberg of 200 of the most popular films between 2017 and 2019 found that despite Muslims making up 24% of the global population, Muslim representation was missing from 90.5% of films and out of 8965 speaking roles, only 1.6% were Muslim (USC Annenberg, 2021). While Powell found that post 9/11 representations of Muslims framed them as a homogenous terrorist cell fighting against "Christian America", Halse found that a new Muslim stereotype had been introduced, that of the "radicalised Muslim in disguise" (Kumaraea, 2018: 3). Libyan American

journalist, Noor Tagouri, recalls the 'insidious Muslim' stereotype being used in a newspaper headline after 9/11 which read: "Is your Muslim neighbour a terrorist?" (Tagouri, 2022, 38:00).

Televisual texts' ability to forge connections between radical insecurity, moral panic, and the legitimisation of securitisation measures is not imagined. In fact, its ability to build perceptions is most profound in relation to themes of threat, surveillance, and security (Pautz and Warnement, 2013). These themes, which define *Homeland*, also permeate other shows in the Dark Americana genre such as 24[15]. US military official General Finnegan stated to 24's producers that his cadets were referencing "the show as evidence of the success of torture" (Lokaneeta, 2011: 111). Based on their minutia responses, it is not surprising that all the participants were entangled in *Homeland* – except for Participant Nine who was completely detached – and worked with the text to create meaning by 'filling in the gaps'. For Participant Eight it was the "personal conflicts" and the fact that there is "very little black and white in the show" and thus the show's representation of moral grey zones that made it realistic. Participant Two highlighted the show's suspense as a factor for entanglement, stating that it "sucks you in…that you start turning around while walking in case someone is following you". Therefore, when televisual texts trade on dangerous representations and spectators are aware of the stereotypes needed to fill in the gaps but do not reject its use, they are either willingly accepting or negotiating the stereotypes' use. In either case, they are normalising such discourses and perpetuating the use of the imagination to build narratives of threat. Oscar-winning actor, Riz Ahmed, drives home the point that repeated exposure to Orientalist frameworks has very real consequences and states that "The representation of Muslims on screen directly feeds the policies that get enacted, the people that get killed, the countries that get invaded."

In her work on *Transactions after 9/11*, Louise Amoore illuminates that security in the post 9/11 period deploys imagination to speculate on threats (Amoore and de Goede, 2007: 179). As a result, security decisions are based not on certain knowledge but on doubt, fear, and

[15] Lokaneeta analyses 24's representation of these themes, particularly its justification of torture. Like Homeland, 24 addresses the "paranoia" and "threats to national security" that pervade the post 9/11 era (24's producer, Joel Surnow cited in Lokaneeta, 2011: 109).

anxiety (Ibid). When Bush stated in a speech following 9/11 that "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists…" this saw the introduction of a Transatlantic counter-terrorism alliance for states who viewed Islam as a threat to Westphalian sovereignty, and Europe's political and secular norms (Acharya 2007, Cesari 2012). Although the US seemingly leads the counter-terrorism alliance, twenty times more people have been arrested on suspicion of terrorism in EU states than in the US (Cesari, 2012: 430). Most aggressive is perhaps Germany's policies that permit bans on religious organisations such that many mosques have been searched and banned with little justification. Further laws have expanded police power to give them unfettered access to financial, transportation, and electronic records, paving the way for the development of data mining techniques to "identify the quiet radicals" (Ibid: 432).

The sense of radical insecurity perpetuated by the 'insidious Muslim' stereotype, of which Brody is an example, creates moral ambiguity around the use of surveillance. Amoore's position that securitisation relies on the imagination is supported by Participant Ten's remarks that while Mathison's surveillance of Brody "feels wrong", she has "sympathy [for Mathison] since she *might* be right about Brody." Additionally, while Participant Six stated that Mathison should not have a surveillance package without supplying evidence, he also expressed relief when the surveillance "bugs" in Brody's home were not discovered. Both responses show moral ambivalence regarding the use of surveillance. Moreover, despite a Chicago Council survey finding that France and Germany are considered the US's most important allies for their shared values and interests, the participants did not seem much aware of this (Kafura, 2021). Participant Ten stated that "the war in Iraq is a lot more present in the USA, than it is in Germany" and in response to Brody hiding his Islamic faith from his family, she stated that in the US, "Islamophobia is a huge topic". Participant One also emphasised that "Americans stigmatise a lot of Muslim[s] into a comparison with terrorists." From the minutia responses and the follow-up emails there is acknowledgement of immoral behaviour on the part of the US, with some expressing justificatory sentiments. More consistent however, is a shared belief among the participants that Germany is simply a witness to the US's Islamophobia and immoral behaviour.

According to Nader, that surveillance and securitisation measures in the post 9/11 period follow a "preventative mindset" based on a speculative imagination of who represents a

threat, is reminiscent of the 17th century Salem witch trials (2017: 26). The Orientalist trope of violent, barbaric Muslims serves to homogenise and invisibilise Muslims, while painting them as a threat to western civilisation. It creates a justificatory discourse that differentiates between the violence committed by heroes such as Mathison and Jack Bauer (of 24) and that committed by the 'other'. Furthermore, it justifies the derogation of human rights as well as surveillance and securitisation measures which overwhelmingly target Muslims. Through imaginative "scenario planning, disaster rehearsal, (and) stress testing" television series such as *Homeland* draw the viewers into the discourse and work of pre-emption (Ibid). That such measures are based on the speculative imagination points to the important role that televisual texts have played in producing perceptions. Each 'turn' that Hollywood has taken has created a new set of experiences and paradigms of apprehension and comprehension for audiences. The 'feminist turn' is crucial amongst them and surfaced strongly in *Homeland* and in my research participants' responses.

The Feminist Turn in Hollywood

In the 1960s, a "transparent relationship" was declared between *feminism*, as an ideology and movement, and *women*, as a category for solidarity based on a shared global experience of patriarchal subordination (Brunsdon, 1993: 312). The direct correlation between the two homogenises the oppression of women based on the concerns of white women while politically excluding the concerns of 'non-western' women. Western feminism neither interrogates nor acknowledges Global North/Global South relationships of colonialism and imperialism, and ignores how western women as the so-called "inferior sex within the 'superior race'" have benefited from such power dynamics (Kinsella, 2020: 154). Therefore, when western feminists advocate for better representation in the film industry, they have often highlighted the successes of "exceptional women filmmakers" like Kathryn Bigelow (Hennefeld, 2018: 198). This is despite her films – such as *Zero Dark Thirty* and *The Hurt Locker* – relying on Orientalist tropes like the 'violent other' and perpetuating the disposability of Muslim/Arab lives as well as the subordination of non-western women, as evidenced by the

absence of agency given to Iraqi women in the latter film, which depicts them as either "wailing" or "hysterical" (Yadav, 2010).

Cinema's ability to naturalise perceptions through repeated exposure to certain ideas emphasises its impact on public opinion and the importance of proper representation. Moreover, that "popular culture makes us think by making us feel" highlights the interconnectedness between rationality and emotion as well as the negotiated role of emotion in the public sphere (Gorton, 2009: 34). Sara Ahmed calls this the 'cultural politics of emotion', a major tool of which is fear to establish either proximity or distance between a subject and 'the other' (Ibid: 61-62). The distance of the 'other' means the public must rely on their imaginations, which – when based on dangerous representations in the media and popular culture – induce moral panic (Ibid). Though the goals of western feminism are not homogenous, a "hegemonic white women's movement" that centres the west as its "primary referent in theory" ventriloquizes the voices of women of colour and appropriates their struggles and experiences (Mohanty, 1984: 333-334).

According to Coulthard, feminism has tried to subvert patriarchal domination in two ways. Either it ethically identifies with victims of violence, perpetuating portraits of passivity and victimisation, or it disruptively identifies with the perpetrators of violence, thereby celebrating violence when enacted by female power (2007: 153). Third wave feminism has seen a move away from cinematic representation of women as passive victims of violence which has been replaced by the "presence of violent women in genres usually associated with male characters and audiences" (Ibid: 154). 'Postvictim' films that feature violent heroines are highly marketable in popular culture as seen from the success of films like *Kill Bill* and *Zero Dark Thirty* as well as TV shows like *Homeland* (Ibid).

The representations of sexism and feminism were picked up on by the participants. Participant One notes that "stereotypes are involved" such as a woman having "the psychological disease, not a man" and asserts that *Homeland*'s creators want to show that

"people underestimate women"[16]. Participant Eight notes that it "takes more effort from [women] to earn respect" since even when Reed risks her life for her country, she is "degradingly call[ed]… a hooker". She points to Mathison's "need to prove herself" and emotively celebrates Mathison's bravery. Participant Nine recognises Mathison's representation as a "strong and tireless" woman who must "prove herself in this male-managed world" while "trying to save her country almost on her own" but has a negative emotive response to the show's attempt "to give the series a touch of a feminist liberal approach".

Moreover, while violence spotlights shifts in gender representation and questions the "binary divisions between masculine and feminine action", connecting violence and feminism creates an ideological structure for female violence as a "guise of liberatory or subversive fantasies" (Ibid:155-158). Coulthard references *Kill Bill* and declares that female violence is represented through a framework of idealised whiteness, femininity, purity, heterosexuality, victimhood, and "sexual availability" (Ibid: 158). Mathison's attempted seduction of her co-worker, Berenson, to prevent him from turning her in to the police after she illegally surveyed Brody's home, exemplifies the sexual availability Coulthard refers to, and was reacted to with disgust by Participant Three (a white, male, medicine student). Another type of gender-based coercion which Lokaneeta references, is euphemised as "futility" to emphasise the hopeless situation of prisoners facing interrogation (2011: 119). Participant Nine references the first episode when Mathison tells an Iraqi prisoner about to be hanged that "I was wrong to believe you. You said you were an important man". She notes that "power relations" and "white saviourism" are evident since Mathison can only help him, "if she can get something" in return. The situation of the 'other' is therefore futile unless they can serve as a tool for the US.

Hegemonic western feminism has produced a homogenous 'third world woman' to operationalise her oppression and justifies utilising postvictim feminine violence against the 'third world man'. Based on gender, women are a singular group facing the same oppression

[16] Refer to Appendix C for an overview of the participants' notable responses to the themes incorporated within the sub-narrative of *The Feminist Turn in Hollywood*

however, while third world women are considered uneducated, traditional, and victimised, western women are self-represented as modern, educated, and sexually-liberated (Mohanty, 1984: 337). This "Third World Difference" is considered a primary reason for the oppression faced by women in the 'third world' and reasserts the need for western feminism (read: cultural imperialism) (Ibid: 335). According to Patricia Jeffreys, the socioeconomic subordination of Muslim women is related to Islamic ideology for its justification for purdah (Ibid: 342). Additionally, Fran Hosken equates purdah to rape and domestic violence. She asserts that purdah is only ever worn as a result of women being sexually controlled and is a violation of human rights (Ibid: 347). This view is often held by politicians as well, such as German parliamentarian Silvana Koch-Mechrin who stated in 2010 that the burqa is a "mobile prison" and a "massive attack on the rights of women" (Edmunds, 2012: 75).

The "Eurocentric hierarchizing frame of comparison" that western feminists use to judge the religious, family, economic, legal, and political structures of other societies implies that while the oppressed (western) woman is oppressed solely due to gender difference, the 'oppressed third world woman' is oppressed based on gender and third world difference (Kinsella 2020, Mohanty 1984). That third world women are depicted as passive victims of their societies who require "protection from her own kind", has been used as justification for violence (Kinsella, 2020: 155). Of the reasons given for the ground invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the US cited its responsibility to protect human rights, particularly the rights of women, from abusive societies - a motivation underscored by a paternalistic attitude of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Ibid). According to Participant Nine, dialogue such as Reed's comment that "they stone women like me to death if we get caught doing anything that we're not supposed to" is used to concretise violence "as a trait that defines Middle Eastern culture" where women are "objectified by Middle Eastern men". The Orientalist trope of the sexist, violent Arab, combined with the representation of Americans as heroes, helps to establish what she calls "an excuse for the invasion of Middle Eastern countries". Moreover, the US's lies about Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction as further justification for their invasion elucidate that the war on terror is less about preserving a peaceful international order, and more about exercising power and vengeance. The vengeance frame in film ensures that violence is contained within a rational framework where the avenger is "the ethical

centre of the universe" therefore, even when violence is excessive, it is justifiable "and those killed are either guilty parties or willing fighters" (Coulthard, 2007: 163-164).

The US draws on heroism, American exceptionalism, and its self-represented identity as the ethical centre of the global political system, as well as the oriental 'other' being necessarily guilty. It justifies its violence as being necessary in the face of evil, so just like the avengers in films, it claims "the symbolic weight of the victim even while exercising acts of violence" (Ibid). Like US violence, female violence in film is represented as a state of exception, made necessary by circumstance which serves to maintain the ideal of "pure and non-violent white femininity" (Ibid: 165-167). Mathison's desire to take revenge on the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks is a theme that underpins *Homeland* where the vengeance frame is substantiated by the female protagonist "appropriating images of power and progress and enlisting them" in acts of violence to "provide imagistic and ideological support for the system they appear to subvert… Seen in this way, the violent woman of contemporary popular action cinema does not upset but endorses the status quo (Coulthard, 2007: 172-173).

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Significant Findings

Qualitative Analysis

My objective is to uncover how the *Homeland* TV show sustains threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs in the post 9/11 context. Due to David Bordwell's holistic approach to analysis of visual texts and his recognition that spectators have unique subject positions that inform their respective comprehension of televisual texts, I utilised his *Three Dimensions of Film* to assess the show's story world, plot structure, and narration. This allowed me to evaluate whether *Homeland* fits into the Dark Americana genre and to expose the mechanics behind the cultural production of knowledge by looking at how meaning arises from textual elements.

By analysing the story world's surroundings, I found that more than just setting the scene for the action that takes place, 'taken-for-granted' premises about the setting were projected onto the people and action that took place there. For example, a yellow filter to signify illness, chaos and pre-modernity is used to represent Iraq while calm music alongside soft pink hues that denote peace, innocence and beauty is used to represent Washington DC. Additionally, cool, grey/blue hues that signify modernity and progressiveness is used to represent CIA headquarters. The hue of lighting employed by the show's creators is a textual element that is saturated with meaning which is then imposed on the people in those locations. I determined that while the Dark Americana framework supposedly avoids black and white representations of people and places, *Homeland* trades on such stereotypes through cinematic techniques such as hues to create dichotomous representations of regions which underscore an 'us versus them' mentality.

Moreover, I applied Bordwell's 'schematic prototype for personhood' to assess the story world's agents and situate them within a hierarchy of characters. Mathison's bipolar disorder and obsession with her mission, and Brody's trauma from his captivity signal emotional

complexity. Jessica Brody's affair, Saul Berenson's marital problems, and Brody's relationship with his daughter, Dana, are subplots and interconnected storylines which humanise the characters and depict them as flawed but relatable. Access to David Estes' affective history delineates his nefarious relationship with VP Walden, signals a dysfunctional political landscape, and infers political distrust. And Berenson's blackmailing of Judge Turner to obtain a FISA warrant for surveillance showcases moral ambivalence about following the law. These are just some of the elements in *Homeland* which I recognised as being characteristic of the Dark Americana genre that purports to blur the lines between good and evil and reveal the moral grey zone that is reality. However, Berenson's dialogue such as when he states that "we're all fighting the same enemy here" again perpetuates an 'us versus them' dichotomy. It creates distance between the two and builds a narrative of fear about the 'other'. This black and white representation is contrary to what Jones and Smith (2015) say defines the Dark Americana genre that is meant to represent politics and morality in a nuanced and complicated manner.

To analyse *Homeland*'s plot, I drew on Kristin Thompson's three-act four-part structure. Its 'goals-focus' enabled me to clarify the main themes of each episode. I found that the first episode focused attention on Brody's family dynamics and interpersonal relationships. It also shone a light on Mathison's mental health struggles with the intention, I argue, to foreground the show's representation of emotional complexity and 'flawed' characters. The Dark Americana themes continued in episodes two and three with the former addressing the trauma of war, political distrust, and rules of exception while the latter focused attention on intelligence gathering, surveillance, and Brody's relationship with his daughter. These themes, which induce a sense of radical insecurity, are typical of the genre however, through close analysis I recognised a new theme permeating the screen, that of feminism which I believe is symbolised by Mathison gifting her niece a book entitled "Brave Girls".

Finally, when analysing *Homeland*'s narration, I uncovered the cinematic techniques that were employed by the show's creators to guide the audience's comprehension and construct their emotional engagement with characters. I noticed that tight editing and the compression of multiple images into montage sequences enabled a speedy contextualisation of settings and constructed atmospheres of chaos and tension. The mobilisation of crosscutting to

simultaneously demonstrate various locations was utilised with a similar intention to create tension and unsettle the audience. Moreover, eerie music or non-speaking moments are aural textual elements which the creators use for impact or to instil fear. For instance, in the opening of the show the Adhaan is extended over the entire chaotic scene. I argue that in a similar way that the yellow filter projects perceptions of backwardness onto Iraq, the creators intertwine the chaos of the opening scene with the sound of the Adhaan and the Arabic language. Additionally, I show in chapter two how the focalisation technique of close-up shots is perhaps the most effective at establishing intimacy between the audience and the characters and inducing empathy from the audience.

Reception Analysis

I believe that effectively analysing televisual texts as a medium of popular culture requires an empirical study on the audience's comprehension and appropriation of what is presented on screen. Since my objective is to understand how threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs are sustained in the post 9/11 period, I aimed to make sense of audience interpretations of *Homeland* by considering how their sociocultural characteristics may influence their reading of the show and the themes they pick up on. I interrogated the interaction between the subject positions of the spectators – data which I retrieved from online surveys – and the televisual text by analysing the participants' moment-by-moment reactions based on their minutia responses. Through this analysis, which I supplemented with follow-up emails, I was able to identify the themes that were most important for each participant. I was also able to discern what drew strong emotive responses from participants and how they responded to *Homeland*'s portrayal of radical insecurity, surveillance and security measures, heroism, and feminism.

I found that *US nationalism*, which incorporates the sentiments of heroism, was the theme most profoundly represented in *Homeland* since all the participants picked up on it in their minutia responses – either accepting, negotiating, or critiquing the show's portrayal thereof. This was followed equally by the theme of *Moral Ambiguity* surrounding the use of violence and surveillance and the theme of *Heroism versus Extremism* which incorporates Orientalist discourses. Participants Two, Three, Six, Nine, and Ten responded to the former while

participants One, Six, Eight, Nine, and Ten responded to the latter with varying emotive responses. Most subtle was *Homeland*'s representation of the theme of feminism, as evidenced by the fact that only participants One, Eight, and Nine spoke to it in their minutia responses.

I believe it might be notable that the only participants to address the topic of feminism were participants One, Eight, and Nine, all of whom are female. They are also the only participants of colour and were the only ones to critique the show's portrayal of heroism, with participants One and Nine carrying this critique against the show's orientalist stereotypes and its mobilisation of radical security. While participants Two and Eight, who are both law students, showed concern for the legality of surveillance when none of the other participants did, suggests their field of study may have influenced this reading. Participant Ten however, who is also a law student, expressed morally ambivalent sentiments regarding the state's use of surveillance. This highlights the fact that spectators' interpretative frameworks are an interaction among various subject positions and that a single characteristic cannot be used to presume a spectator's opinions on a given issue.

Moreover, regarding the entanglement or detachment of participants in relation to the show, while scholars like Mary Anne Doane (1991) and Christian Metz (1975) state that critical evaluation of a televisual text requires emotional distance (detachment), Kristyn Gorton (2009) notes that people have enough agency to emotionally engage with a text (entanglement) while expressing critique. The results of the reception analysis are more complex than either of these schools of thought suggest. Participant Nine, who was completely detached, showed very high levels of critique – which may serve to support Metz' and Doane's position. Participant One however, was completely entangled but also showed high levels of critique – although less than participant Nine – so this may serve to support Gorton's position. Participant Six, who evidenced signs of both entanglement and detachment, showed low levels of critique, which cannot be said to support either position. Given that the remaining participants (Two, Three, Eight and Ten) were all completely entangled and showed low levels of critique, leans towards Metz' and Doane's position.

My analysis interestingly found that the female participants consistently responded strongly and emotively to the show while the male participants responded moderately and weakly. I also noticed that the only participants who showed detachment are also the only participants who did not express sympathy with Brody's trauma and torture. That entanglement in a show corresponds to emotional engagement by the audience with the characters seems to produce a correlation between entanglement and sympathy. Furthermore, since sympathy for a character makes them more relatable, and relatability results in spectators trying to understand characters' reasoning behind their actions – I hesitantly posit, based on these results, that a spectator's entanglement in a show may make him or her less critical of the actions of the characters and may potentially contribute towards justifying these actions in the eyes of the audience.

Concluding remarks

The themes that characterise the Dark Americana genre - including surveillance, terrorism, intelligence gathering, security challenges, deceit and betrayal, dysfunctional political systems, subplots and interconnected storylines, and dark moral ambivalence – are all evident in *Homeland* as I have shown via my qualitative analysis according to Bordwell's holistic approach to analysing televisual texts.

Through the reception analysis I revealed four new sub-narratives to be included in the genre that sustain threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs. The first is *The Reimagination of US Nationalism* based on the concept of the homeland. Although Dark Americana literature (Jones and Smith, 2015) posits that clearly defined heroes are not characteristic of the genre, the reconceptualization of US nationalism to include the notion of the homeland - underscored by radical insecurity - necessitates that those belonging to the homeland are heroes for defending their national boundaries against the threat of violence by the 'other'. This was the most profoundly portrayed theme in *Homeland* since all the participants spoke to the concepts of nationalism, heroism, or radical insecurity. Noteworthy however, is that only the participants of colour – participants One, Eight, and Nine – critiqued the show's representation of Brody and the CIA as 'obvious' heroes.

From Moral Panic to Moral Ambiguity is what I call the second category to highlight that the post 9/11 nationalist ideological complex trades on mass hysteria to justify "the state of exception" (Agamben cited in Lokaneeta 2011). Though the existing literature speaks to moral ambiguity, it fails to address what makes something that is clearly wrong – like war - morally ambiguous. I posit that emotion, particularly fear about a threat to Western society – being Islam - portrayed through the media and televisual texts, invites justification for immoral behaviour on the part of the state. This is supported by the participant responses where Participants Ten and Six noted morally ambivalent sentiments regarding the illegal surveillance of Brody's home.

My analysis also nullified the declaration by Jones and Smith that "the idea of bringing freedom and modernisation to barbarians is largely abandoned" (2015: 17). The show is rife with Orientalist stereotypes such that participants One, Six, Eight, Nine and Ten all recognised the creators' intention to encourage the audience to assume Brody was a terrorist due to his Islamic faith. The exposition of the show's surroundings - where a yellow filter is used to project illness, chaos, and backwardness onto Iraq, Arabs, and Muslims, while the West is imbued with ideals of beauty, innocence, and empathy (using pink hues to represent Washington), as well as modernity and progressiveness (using cool blue tones to represent the CIA) - juxtaposes the two 'civilisations' against each other to create an 'us versus them' dichotomy. I refer to this sub-narrative as *Heroism versus Extremism.*

The final sub-narrative that I have revealed through my coding of the participants' minutia responses relates to *The Feminist Turn in Hollywood*. Dark Americana literature has thus far not paid attention to the role of feminism, particularly how portrayals of violent heroines - like Maya from *Zero Dark Thirty*, the Bride in *Kill Bill* or Mathison in *Homeland* – have become popular in televisual texts. Though female participants - One, Eight, and Nine – spoke to the representation of feminism in *Homeland*, participant Nine criticised the show's neoliberal feminist lens. I posit that imperial feminism is part and parcel of the Dark Americana genre for the way in which popularity – through *The Feminist Turn in Hollywood* - conceals immorality such as war and invasions.

A word must also be said for the role of emotion and how cinematic techniques are used to construct them. While various cinematic techniques have been outlined in my analysis – including music, surroundings, editing, and character expressions, among others - I argue that focalisation through close-up shots is the most effective for creating intimacy between the character and the audience. It grants the latter access to the former's innermost thoughts and feelings, thereby producing sympathy, relatability, emotional contagion, and sometimes even justifications for the characters' questionable behaviour. The significance of relatability is evidenced by the critique of US heroism that was carried out solely by participants of colour, as well as responses to the theme of feminism solely by females. Where the former likely points to participants' lived experiences of racial/ethnic oppression perpetuated by European imperialism which operates on civilisationary discourses such as manifest destiny, the latter likely points to the lived experiences by the female participants of gendered oppression. Finally, by combining a qualitative analysis of *Homeland* with a reception analysis that remained cognisant of the sociocultural characteristics of spectators I have sought to understand *Homeland* as an example of the Dark Americana genre – one that questions but also sustains and reproduces threat narratives about Muslims and Arabs in the post 9/11 era through the characteristics that Jones and Smith outlined (2015) but also through the four sub-narratives of Dark Americana that my research has added to the literature.

Reference List

ABC News. (2013). “This Week Sunday Spotlight: Inside Homeland” [Video]. YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1UBabLtEQA [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Acharya, Amitav. (2007). “State Sovereignty After 9/11: Disorganised Hypocrisy.” *Political Studies Association Vol. 55*: 274-296.

Amoore, Louise, and Marieke de Goede. (2007). “Transactions after 9/11: the banal face of the preemptive strike.” Durham and Amsterdam: Department of Geography, University of Durham and Department of European Studies, University of Amsterdam, 25 October 2007.

Bordwell, David. (2008). “Three Dimensions of Film Narrative.” In *Poetics of Cinema*, 1-56. Routledge.

Brunsdon, Charlotte. (1993). “Identity in Feminist Television Criticism .” In *Media, Culture and Society Vol.15*: 309-320.

Castonguay, James. (2015). “Fictions of Terror: Complexity, Complicity and Insecurity in "Homeland".” In *Cinema Journal Vol. 54, No. 4*: 139-145.

Central Intelligence Agency. (2022). “Our Legacy” in Central Intelligence Agency. Available online: https://www.cia.gov/ [Accessed: 8 May 2022].

Cesari, Jocelyne. (2012). “Securitization of Islam in Europe.” In *Die Welt des Islam (52)*, 2012: 430-449.

Cherry, Kendra. (2020). *"The Characteristics of a Hero."* In *VeryWellMind.* 14 May 2020. https://www.verywellmind.com/characteristics-of-heroism-2795943 [Accessed May 8, 2022].

Cherry, Kendra. (2020). “What is Empathy?” in *Very Well Mind*. Available online: https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-empathy-2795562 [Accessed: 9 June 2022].

Crossman, Ashley. (2021). “What is the ‘American Melting Pot’?”. In Thought Co. Available online: https://www.thoughtco.com/melting-pot-definition-3026408 [Accessed: 21 June 2022].

Davies, Harry. (2020). “What Does Each Colour Mean in Cinema?” in *Domestika*. Available online: https://www.domestika.org/en/blog/2810-what-does-each-color-mean-in-cinema [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Deguzman, Kyle. (2020). “What is a Montage? Definition, Examples & 6 Ways to Use Them.” In *Studio Binder*. Available online: https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-a-montage-definition/ [Accessed: 6 June 2022].

Del Rosario, Alexandra. (2020). “Homeland Director Lesli Linka Glatter on The Spy Series’ Final Season – Contenders TV.” In *Deadline*. Available online: https://deadline.com/2020/08/homeland-lesli-linka-glatter-emmy-interview-showtime-contenders-tv-watch-1203011633/ [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Dodds, Klaus. (2008). “Hollywood and the Popular Geopolitics of the War on Terror.” In *Third World Quarterly Vol. 29, No. 8*: 1621-1637.

Edmunds, June. (2012). “The ‘new’ barbarians: governmentality, securitization and Islam in Western Europe.” *Contemporary Islam, 6 (1)*: 67-84.

Gorton, Kristyn. (2009). “Media Audiences: Television, Meaning and Emotion.” Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hall, Stuart A. (1992). “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.” In Formations of Modernity, edited by Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben, pp.275-320. Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University.

Heiderich, Timothy. (2012). “Cinematography Techniques: The Different Types of Shots in Film” in *Videomaker*. Available online: https://oma.on.ca/en/contestpages/resources/free-report-cinematography.pdf [Accessed: 9 August 2023].

Heydt, Maureen. (2020). “Yellow Filter and Representations of the Global South” in *Medium*. Available online: https://medium.com/@mdheydt1/yellow-filter-and-representations-of-the- global-south-b7d3e725a1f5 [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.” Pp.209-218. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hussain, Nasser. (2003). “The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law.” The University of Michigan Press.

Jones, David Martin, and M.L.R. Smith. (2015). “The Rise of Dark Americana: Depicting the “War on Terror" On-Screen.” In *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*: 1-21.

Kafura, Craig. (2021). *The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.* October 13. Accessed July 2022. https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/commentary-and-analysis/blogs/americans-their-allies-partners-and-rivals.

Kaplan, Amy. (2003). “Homeland Insecurities: Some Reflections on Language and Space.” *Radical History Review, Issue 85*: 82.93.

Kinsella, Helen M. (2020). “Feminism.” In: Baylis, John/Smith, Steve/Owens, Patricia (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 8th edition, p. 145-159.

Kumaraea, Gemma. (2018). “Homeland and Orientalism: An Examination of Arab Muslim Identity and US Nationalism.” *Muraj: Minnesota Undergraduate Research and Academic Journal Volume 1 • Issue 1*: 1-9.

Lannom, SC. (2021). “What is Cross Cutting and Parallel Editing in Film?” ” in *Studio Binder*. Available online: https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/cross-cutting-parallel-editing-definition/ [Accessed: 6 June 2022].

Lokaneeta, Jinee. (2011). “Transnational Torture: Law, Violence, and State Power in the United States and India.” New York and London: New York University Press.

Marx, Gary T. (2015). “Surveillance Studies.” In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, Second Edition*: 733-741.

Mohanty, Chandra, T. (1984). “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses.” In boundary 2 , Spring - Autumn, 1984, Vol. 12/13, Vol. 12, no. 3 - Vol. 13, no. 1, On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism (Spring - Autumn, 1984), pp. 333-358. Duke University Press

Nader, Laura. (2017). “Anthropology of law, fear, and the War on Terror.” In *Anthropology Today Vol.33 No. 1*: 26-28.

Pautz, Michelle C., and Megan K. Warnement. (2013). “Government on the Silver Screen: Contemporary American Cinema's Depiction of Bureaucrats, Police Officers, and Soldiers.” In *PS: Political Science and Politics Vol. 46, No. 3*: 569-579.

Rania, Siad. (2020). “American Heroism and the Construction of a Culture: Dimensions and Challenges.” Oum El Bouaghi: Larbi Ben M’hidi University, September 2020.

Reinhard CarrieLynn D and Christopher J Olson. (2016). Making Sense of Cinema : Empirical Studies into Film Spectators and Spectatorship. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Restivo, Angelo. (2019). *Breaking Bad and Cinematic Television*. New York, USA: Duke University Press. Available online: https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478003441 [Accessed: 7 August 2023].

Said, Edward. (1979). "Introduction." In *Orientalism*, pp.1-28. New York: Vintage Books.

Staiger, Janet. *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*. Princeton University Press, 1992. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv131bwdc.

Showtime. (2011, October 4). "Homeland: Alex Gansa & Howard Gordon on The Pilot, Season 1 Episode 1" [Video]. YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4kSJl4ut1k [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Showtime. (2011, November 29). "Homeland: Alex Gansa & Howard Gordon on Brody's Conversion, Season 1 Episode 9" [Video]. YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly0Mre2j_No [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Tagouri, Noor. (2022). *3P's: Politics, Pop Culture, Public Opinion.* Podcast.

USC Annenberg. (2021). *USC Annenberg, School for Communication and Journalism.* https://annenberg.usc.edu/news/research-and-impact/new-study-annenberg-inclusion-initiative-reveals-erasure-and-demeaning.

Ullmann, Jeremy. (2020). "YELLOW FILTER: A CINEMATIC TECHNIQUE OR PUSHING STEREOTYPES?" in *Media Diversity Institute*. Available online: https://www.media-diversity.org/yellow-filter-a-cinematic-technique-or-pushing-stereotypes/ [Accessed: 8 June 2022].

Yadav, Vikash. (2010). *The Duck of Minerva.* February 13. Accessed 2022. https://www.duckofminerva.com/2010/02/hurt-locker-and-racism.html.

APPENDIX A: SOCIOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

	Participant **One**	Participant **Two**	Participant **Three**	Participant **Six**	Participant **Eight**	Participant **Nine**	Participant **Ten**
Entangled or Detached	E	E	E	E + D	E	D	E
Emotional Response	Strong	Weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong
Level of Critique	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Very High	Low
Race (Self-declared)	German Japanese Kurdish	Latin European	White	White British	Mixed race	Black	White
Nationality	German Japanese	German Mexican	German	UK Czech	German	Colombian	German
Age	22	27	26	22	23	25	23
Gender (Self-declared)	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Career/ Field of Study	Law	Law	Medicine	English Literature	Law	Sociology & Politics	Law
TV enjoyment (1-10)	7	7	7	10	6	9	7
TV time	3-4 hours weekly	3-4 hours weekly	1 hour daily	3-4 hours weekly	1 hour daily	1-2 hours weekly	3-4 hours weekly
Favourite genre	Action comedies, documentaries & trash TV	Sci-Fi	Crime	Comedy, detective	Comedy, melancholic comedy	Psychological thrillers	Romance, documentaries
News source	TV	Online/ apps	Online/ apps	Online/ apps	Social media	Social media	Online/ apps
Importance of discussing politics with friends/family (1-10)	5	8	7	N/A	5	7	9

APPENDIX B: NOTABLE PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO SUB-NARRATIVES ONE AND TWO

	Participant **One**	Participant **Two**	Participant **Three**	Participant **Six**	Participant **Eight**	Participant **Nine**	Participant **Ten**
THEME 1. **Legality of surveillance**		Concern for legality		Ambiguity around need to follow protocols	Concern for legality		Ambiguity regarding legality
Radical insecurity	Sense of constant suspicion.	Sucked in by the show. Does not trust anybody			Nervous for characters	Insecurity motivates invasion of other countries	
Heroism	Criticises use of insecurity to declare Brody a hero			Refers to Brody as a "war hero"	Criticises the CIA feeling heroic	Idealisation of the military supports war	Sympathy with Mathison
Trauma	Sympathy for Brody	Sympathy for Brody	Sympathy for Brody	No mention of sympathy	Sympathy for Brody	No mention of sympathy	Sympathy for Brody
THEME 2. **Sympathy for Brody's torture**	Disgusted by cruelty	Compassion for Brody's torture	Compassion for Brody's torture		Compassion for Brody's torture		Shocked by cruelty
Moral ambiguity about surveillance	Criticises the use of fear to motivate for violence	Everything governments do should be ethical		Moral ambiguity about investigating soldiers returning from war for terrorism			Sympathy for characters helps to understand their reasoning for actions
Manifest destiny						'Protecting human rights' translates into a civilising mission	

APPENDIX C: NOTABLE PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO SUB-NARRATIVES THREE AND FOUR

	Participant **One**	Participant **Two**	Participant **Three**	Participant **Six**	Participant **Eight**	Participant **Nine**	Participant **Ten**
THEME 3. **Oriental violence & sexism**	Only Middle Eastern people are depicted as dangerous					Middle eastern men are depicted as dangerous and misogynistic	Reconsiders initial sympathy about wrongful interrogation of Saudi prince
Islam as a religion of extremism	Linking Islamic prayers to terrorism is dangerous			Brody praying is a "red herring"	Being Muslim will consolidate the suspicion that Brody is a terrorist	Criticises the link between Islam and terrorism	
Disposability of Muslim lives	Shocked by Iraqi deaths and that "Mathison doesn't care"						Shocked by Iraqis killed
Heroism versus extremism	Criticises Brody immediately being declared a hero					Criticises white characters being humanised and excused for their behaviour	
THEME 4. **Response to sexism**	The show combats sexism				Mathison must prove herself. Reed is degradingly called a "hooker"	Women are showed as being objectified by Middle Eastern men	
Feminism					Happy about female bonding and proud of female bravery	Criticises the liberal feminist lens that disguises Western violence	