

The Deceptions of Powerful Female Roles: A Feminist Critique of *Homeland*

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The Deceptions of Powerful Female Roles

An understanding of gender comes from learned experiences, and in today's technologically advanced society, an individual's perception of femininity or masculinity can be derived from portrayals of "male" or "female" roles in mass media. Many scholars who study the gender role construction of women in mass media fear the consequences of the "ideal woman," who is usually depicted as a hyper-sexualized, domestic, and obedient creature (Charlebois). It was not so long ago that females on television screens were almost solely portrayed as submissive housewives who took care of the home and the children. Feminists of this era did not appreciate the way in which women were being represented and treated as unequal to men. After years and years of struggle for equality, many argue that times have finally changed for the better, which is reflected in mass media today. This age-old stereotype of women embedded in a patriarchal society has definitely been challenged.

With the influx of strong female roles onscreen throughout the past few decades, many people believe that our society is taking progressive action toward male and female equality. Women on television with lead roles as doctors, lawyers, detectives, and CEO's allows for the public to view women in a novel light that would have been unthinkable just fifty years earlier. Women are, now more than ever, taking on lead roles with traditionally masculine professions, and diverging from their former restrictions. With all of this "progress" happening over the past fifty years or so, we must ask ourselves, is this too good to be true? Are these strong female roles played on-screen actually promoting equality or are they just patriarchy in disguise?

This textual analysis will examine the hit new primetime television series called *Homeland*, which stars a female CIA agent named Carrie Mathison. Although the concept of a female playing the role of a powerful CIA agent may seem as if it goes against the norms of gender stereotyping, often times these female characters are actually constructed in a way that ultimately supports hegemonic, patriarchal values. While she may not be seen wearing extremely sexualized clothing or constantly be filmed in the kitchen, Carrie's character still falls prey to the patriarchal agenda in other ways. She serves as one example of a strong and successful female character whose personal life is portrayed in a negative manner that undermines her credibility and success, which ultimately supports patriarchy. Examining these misleading female roles is important because characters that may seem to challenge gender stereotypes and appeal to gender equality still reinforce hegemonic values. These media portrayals are also important to examine because reinforcing these cultural norms could potentially have a destructive effect on females and males, in which exposure to these portrayals can affect their actions, beliefs, and place in society.

Literature Review

Many critics and researchers have provided a unique platform of research from which to build regarding female representation in mass media. This includes many studies that analyze the portrayal of women on prime-time television. It wasn't until the late 1960's and early 1970's that the portrayal of occupational roles of women on television became a main focus of academic research rather than an afterthought (Vande Berg & Streckfuss 195). The main concerns of female portrayals in mass media during this time were women's visibility, role diversity, and equality. Contemporary studies examining women in prime-time television similarly concern

themselves with organizational roles within the work world. These types of studies collectively and consistently find that women on prime-time television have a much more narrow range in roles, which primarily consist of domestic roles such as wives or caretakers. When comparing these women to men, men are more frequently portrayed as employed and possessing higher status occupations (Vande Berg & Streckfuss 195).

For example, while analyzing 116 prime-time television programs airing on the top three major U.S. commercial networks (CBS, NBC, and ABC), Vande Berg and Streckfuss found some significant differences between the industries where male and female characters work. Twice as many male characters worked in public administration industries (law enforcement, courts, national security) and men completely outnumbered women in the industries of transportation, communication, and manufacturing. Females were seen much more frequently in household roles and as students and when compared to males. They were also seen performing much more client-customer interactions than males (Vande Berg & Streckfuss 195). This study also found, in terms of hierarchical position, that male characters were more likely to possess roles of higher status in an organization. The roles and hierarchical positions present for women on prime-time television are very narrow which can influence viewer perceptions of female capabilities and upward mobility in the workplace.

Gluscock, while studying the differences of gender roles on prime-time television, similarly found that women on prime-time television are still underrepresented to the degree that only 30% of all characters are female, however, evidence shows that the proportion of female characters is rising (Gluscock 665). He also came to the conclusion that males exhibit behavior that includes giving orders, making plans, and physical aggression, while women rank higher in

verbal aggression and affection. Glascock reported that while both men and women frequently played the role of a police officer, women were also portrayed in a traditional, domestic light while men contained prestigious professional roles, which agrees with Vande Berg and Streckfuss's findings (Glascock 665).

Another interesting aspect that Glascock's study revealed is that viewers were more likely to know the marital status of females over males. This finding illuminates the importance that is placed on a woman's personal life in mass media. According to Diana Damean, when portraying a woman "the media follows three coordinates: the image (if she subscribes to the ideal of beauty), the private life (if she has a partner, if she has children), the career (how talented she is in her work)" (Damean 93). Damean discusses how the focus in most contemporary television is on the woman's personal life (whether she is married or beautiful) which can manipulate a society's values and attitudes toward alternative models for femininity. With any other type of emancipated model of femininity the media offers, such as a successful business woman who is portrayed as independent, rational, and successful, the stress is moved onto her personal life. If a successful business woman's personal life does not fit the norm of an ideal female (not married, divorced, no children, not ideally beautiful, etc.), according to Damean, she will be rejected (Deamean 93). By focusing on the personal qualities of a successful female character, her professional achievements are therefore undermined.

Margaret Mead, the author of the book *Male and Female*, also discusses the focus on the personal lives of women on television. Mead states that although today most occupations are readily accessible to women, this accessibility also comes along with a fight against a contradictory society (Mead 286). This contradictory society consists of women gaining high

salaries or administrative powers over people, which is how men usually display their power (Mead 286). Mead also claims that this differing society is also a society that “appears to throw its doors wide open to women, but translates her every step towards success as having been damaging-- to her own chances of marriage, and to the men whom she passes on the road” (Mead 287). By portraying successful females as self-destructive and damaging, our society may begin to internalize this notion that women should not engage in opportunities to become independent and successful, which can have lasting effects on a female’s ability to succeed professionally.

Another example of how the personal aspects of successful women are emphasized on television is present in the award-winning series called *Mad Men*. While analyzing this series through a feminist lens, Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster illuminate the differences between successful men and women in their article *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Ad World: A Feminist Critique Of Mad Men*. This show takes place in the 1960’s and follows the lives of the people who work for a very successful advertising agency in New York City. The employees of the agency (both male and female) are depicted as trying to escape from their stereotypical roles in a patriarchal society, however, they actually end up reinforcing their traditional roles in society (Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster 13). Although they all work for a prestigious advertising agency, both the men and women are portrayed as having very different goals within the company. For the males in this show, success is money, while for females, their goal is to take care of men (Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster 14). These female goals become very clear when one of the main protagonists, Peggy, starts her first day of work at the agency and is taking advice from one of the superior female employees, Joan. All of Joan’s advice is centered around appearances

and making the “right moves” (Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster 14). By making the “right moves” Joan is alluding to finding a husband and not having to work anymore. In this case, women are not working to advance their careers, they are working to “meet men, get married, have children and return to the private sphere” (Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster 15). These types of goals that television assigns to women are what turn the focus on their personal life and undermines their professional credibility. Although they are masked by the facade of successful women, these goals ultimately support patriarchy. The negative implications that arise from female portrayals on television can have a lasting effect on society and may cripple females (and male’s perception of females) professionally and mentally.

Description of the Artifact

Homeland is an intense Showtime drama produced by Fox 21 and written by Howard Gordon, Alex Gansa and Gideon Raff. This series stars Carrie Mathison, who is a driven CIA officer played by Claire Danes. *Homeland* also stars Nicholas Brody, a rugged, heroic, yet broken, United States Marine Sergeant, played by Damien Lewis. The new series is very popular, evidenced by its 2.8 million viewers during the first season finale (*Showtime: Homeland*). After two short seasons, this series has received notable awards including the 2012 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series, the 2011 and 2012 Golden Globe Awards for Best Television Series - Drama, and the Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actress and Lead Actor in a Drama series for Claire Danes and Damian Lewis (*Showtime: Homeland*).

This series begins on site in Iraq where Agent Carrie Mathison compulsively conducts an unauthorized operation alone in which she enters an Iraqi prison to gain information from her

imprisoned informant. Although she barely escapes from the prison, she is able to talk with her informant who warns her that an American prisoner of war has been turned by Al-Qaeda and plans to launch an attack on American soil. Despite the fact that Carrie's operation in Iraq resulted in the discovery of imperative information, the extreme danger and unwarranted nature of her operation resulted in probation. This led to Carrie's reassignment in which she unwillingly transferred to the CIA's Counterterrorism Center in Langley, Virginia. After adapting to her reassignment, Carrie and her new unit receive intelligence that a U.S. Marine Sergeant, Nicholas Brody, has been rescued after being held captive and tortured by terrorists for eight years. Upon return, Sgt. Brody is portrayed as a war hero and American icon to the public. In light of her recent insight from her imprisoned informant, Carrie becomes suspicious of Sgt. Brody, yet no one at the CIA will even entertain the idea that he could possibly be the turned captive that is planning an attack. Sgt. Brody tries to adjust back to his life with his wife and two kids, who were shocked to discover that he was alive after eight long years. As expected, this adjustment was extremely difficult and created tension within the Brody family. Although Carrie lacks support from the CIA, she remains suspicious of Sgt. Brody and works independently to get the evidence she needs to prove he is the turned P.O.W. and prevent another attack on American soil. Carrie takes matters into her own hands and violates ethical boundaries by installing surveillance cameras and hidden microphones in Sgt. Brody's home. This type of behavior is typical of Carrie who will go to extreme measures to protect her country. Although her personal life suffers tremendously due to the demands of her prestigious career, Carrie has devoted her life to her job and is a committed CIA agent. As she continues to watch Sgt. Brody, she doesn't come across any substantial proof so she begins to follow him and strategically plan

surprise run-ins in order to investigate further. The flirtatious and suggestive manner in which she conducts these encounters eventually leads to a sexual relationship behind the backs' of Sgt. Brody's wife and the CIA. In every encounter they share, Carrie meticulously schemes information out of him to further her own agenda.

Two of the creators of *Homeland*, Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa, worked together on another notable drama called *24*, a drama that contains similar plot lines to *Homeland*. These talented writers created a successful new drama by utilizing their experiences from writing *24* and focusing on the acts of terrorism that greatly affected the American people. According to a *New York Times* article titled "The Creators of *Homeland* Exorcise the Ghost of *24*," the reason *Homeland* was a success in the first season was because of the "artful way in which the show plucked from real-time history, a trick that the show's creators, Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa, honed while working together on *24* (Paskin)." Gordon discusses and compares *24* and *Homeland* in this article and states,

The idea that 24 hours of story can actually happen, with a beginning, middle and end, in 24 hours, is fundamentally a fantasy. [Creating "Homeland"] Alex and I had the benefit, in a way, of being in the world 10 years later, after Guantánamo, after Abu Ghraib, after two wars in various states of winding down, and the consequences of those wars were being understood. Carrie lives in a world where torture is no longer tolerated. And she lives in a world where everything doesn't happen in 24 hours (Paskin).

Homeland premiered in October of 2011, about three weeks after the ten-year anniversary of the attacks on 9/11. The ten-year anniversary marks a very emotional time for those Americans who experienced this tragedy firsthand, so it is not a coincidence that this series was launched around this time. In addition to this, the current “War on Terror” the target audience has also experienced firsthand, provides a unique and sympathetic situational context for this show as well. In a series like *Homeland*, which contains various sensitive issues concerning the well-being of America, it is important to scrutinize the gender construction of such a powerful female character because it may actually go against gender equality. Although the progressive movement of feminists has exploded since the early 1900’s and women, now more than ever, embody powerful roles (in real life and on television), the underlying implications of these portrayals in the media can be very limiting for females and must be examined through a feminist perspective.

Carrie takes her job very seriously and most definitely embodies a powerful female role. This role may seem to endorse gender equality on the surface but ultimately serves as a front to promote a patriarchal agenda. This strong female facade can be very deceptive to the audience because it diverts their attention away from the professional accomplishments of Carrie. In order to achieve this diversion Carrie’s personal weaknesses are exposed throughout the series which diminishes her credibility and ultimately advances male hegemony. In this textual analysis I will argue that *Homeland* presents one example in which traditionally masculine roles played by females can imply equality while simultaneously reinforcing hegemonic masculine supremacy, which can create harmful effects in society. By using a feminist critique I will analyze the series *Homeland* and illuminate the patriarchal values entrenched in the characters.

Method

Although there is not a concrete common definition of feminism due to its dynamic nature, feminists generally share a set of basic principles (Foss and Griffin 4). Foss and Griffin argue in their article *Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal For Invitational Rhetoric*, that these basic principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination serve as a starting place for a new rhetoric and explicitly challenge the positive value placed on patriarchal domination of others (Foss Griffin 4). The crucial principle of equality and the goal of developing relationships of equality is one of the biggest concerns of feminism. The ability to see others as equals and not as an opportunity for domination is what feminists strive for. Although feminism rejects the principals of patriarchy and its oppressive nature, it is by no means pursuing matriarchal values or the dominance of females in society. This common misconception must be addressed because the goal of feminism is equality and the act of dominance or oppression, whether it comes from males or females, is unacceptable in the eyes of feminists.

Imminent value is also one the most important principles of feminist beliefs. This principle illuminates the importance of every individual and their unique value in society. The concept of dominance is also rejected in this principle because when people contain imminent value, they are not a subject to be judged or compared to others. Ranking individuals within a hierarchy or valuing one person over another, due to external factors, is not a determination of worth according to this principle of feminism. Individual worth or imminent value is something that resides in every individual's uniqueness and therefore cannot be ranked.

The third principle, self-determination, is a huge aspect of a feminist paradigm that is rooted in a mutual respect for others. Foss and Griffin state that "self -determination allows

individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives” (Foss and Griffin 4). This allows for complete autonomy for individuals and fosters the ability to control every aspect and decision in their life. This is also a very important principle of feminism which empowers individuals to become experts of their own life. By embodying the principle of self-determination, feminists believe that individuals will use this sense of empowerment to live their life the way they want. These three important assumptions of feminism allow for a better understanding of what it means to be a feminist and provide the background knowledge needed to conduct a feminist critique. Now that I have adopted Foss and Griffin’s basic principles of feminism, I will continue on with my critique from a feminist stand point.

First I will analyze the construction of gender in the artifact to abide by the procedures of a feminist critique. I will look at exactly how the character is being portrayed in terms of what it means to be a male or a female. In doing so I will examine what roles are being portrayed and the demeanor in which the characters execute these roles. In Sue-Ellen Case’s book, *Performing Feminism: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, she writes that “the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts” (Case 272). She writes that our neutral body obtains a gender based on exposure of repeated performances, emphasizing that it is not predetermined at birth. Case clarifies her suggestion by stating that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and strengthened over time (Case 274). Based off this research, it is also important to ask yourself how the artifact invites the audience to view the gender construction. The second step of this criticism is to evaluate this construction of gender in terms of patriarchy. In order to do so, you must look at the relationship that the gender construction has toward patriarchy and ask yourself whether it

supports patriarchal notions, resists them, or does both simultaneously. I will do this by breaking down Carrie's character in the series and analyzing all aspects of it (image, personal life, and career) in terms of patriarchy. I plan to argue that although the progressive movement of feminists has exploded since the early 1900's and women, now more than ever, embody powerful roles, the underlying implications of these portrayals in the media can be very limiting for females and fall prey to a patriarchal agenda. By comparing gender roles in terms of patriarchy I hope to understand how male hegemonic agendas become hidden within powerful female roles such as Carrie's. I expect that these agendas will be revealed in *Homeland* by criticizing Carrie's personal life and use of sexuality to gain power. I will now critique a few specific scenes from the first two seasons of the series *Homeland* from a feminist stand point and evaluate the gender roles portrayed.

Analysis

In this series, a scene between Carrie and Sgt. Brody reveals a gender portrayal that falls into the arms of patriarchy. After weeks of seeing each other, a connection builds between the two characters and Carrie starts to form unexpected feelings for Sgt. Brody. During a private weekend get-away at Carrie's family cabin, Carrie, as a result of spying on him, makes Sgt. Brody's tea the exact, peculiar way he likes it. Sgt. Brody notices this and becomes suspicious because he never disclosed to her how he prepares his tea. In this scene Sgt. Brody becomes suspicious that Carrie may be spying on him and inquires about her knowledge of the tea preparation in a heated discussion on the cabin porch:

BRODY. Are you watching me?

CARRIE. I don't know what you mean?

BRODY. I mean did you spy on me? You are a spy right?

CARRIE. Brody.

BRODY. That's why we ran into each other at the support group isn't it? Why you slipped me your number in case I ever need to ask anything?

CARRIE. No you're wrong Brody.

BRODY. Yeah, don't fucking lie to me Carrie.

CARRIE. It was my job. It is my job.

BRODY. Oh so you're still spying.

CARRIE. I'm working. I'm always working.

BRODY. On what suspicion?

CARRIE. (heavy breathing)

BRODY. Tell me god damn it!

CARRIE. (she runs for the door of the cabin)

BRODY. You looking for this? (he holds up a gun)

CARRIE. Abu Nazir's bomb maker told me that an American prisoner of war had been turned and is coming home to carry out an attack.

BRODY. And you believe this?

CARRIE. He told me minutes before he was executed.

BRODY. So?

CARRIE. So, he was my prisoner. I interrogated him for months. He was cooperating at the end. There was no reason for him to lie.

BRODY. And you think I'm that P.O.W.?

CARRIE. There's no one else it could be.

BRODY. You're telling me the fucking CIA thinks I'm working for Al-Qaeda?

CARRIE. I think you're working for Al-Qaeda.

BRODY. (He storms off).

Sexuality

This high-intensity scene illuminates Carrie's mistake of blurring the lines of professional and personal relationships to get ahead. She strategically uses her sexuality to reel in Sgt. Brody and make him fall into her trap. Since no one at the C. I. A. will support her beliefs, she uses the only power she has in order to get what she wants. Although, on the surface, Carrie's role in this series may seem as if it goes against dominant feminine identities, underneath the glamour of this strong powerful woman lies the stereotypical female gender role we encounter in almost all forms of media. In the scene described above, Carrie is exposed for using her sexuality to manipulate Sgt. Brody for information. Although it may seem empowering to use sexuality as a weapon gain control over men, women are actually just reinforcing hegemonic masculine supremacy, and therefore, stripping themselves of power overall. By using sexuality as a tool, women are giving into a male-constructed ideal of women as a sexual object and, therefore, are playing by the rules of masculine supremacy. Although the male may seem vulnerable in this situation, the implications that women are sex objects is exactly what makes women in these situations fall prey to patriarchy. This age-old gender stereotype, utilized frequently in media, of sexually appealing women getting what they want with their looks and sexuality, not only creates a false sense of empowerment, but it also creates a harmful gender script for women.

Needing a Man

At the end of the second season Carrie has proof that Sgt. Brody is, in fact, the turned prisoner of war her asset warned her about in Iraq and knows that he plans to carry out an attack. Prior to Sgt. Brody's terrorist attempt, he records a video of himself apologizing to his family and explaining his reasoning for attaching a suicidal bomb to himself and detonating it in the White House. When executing the attack, bomb strapped to his body was faulty so the plan fell through and he leaves the White House with discretion. However, the suicide video he made prior to his attempt holds the truth, and Carrie gets ahold of it. Sgt. Brody convinces Carrie that after that whole experience of attempting suicide, his life was put into perspective and he never plans to impose any acts of terrorism on the U.S. again. Carrie knows that the C.I.A. is looking for him and her love for Sgt. Brody overrides her patriotic duties as she helps him escape the country.

This illuminates Carrie's weakness by showing that her love for Sgt. Brody trumps all other ethical obligations. This love affair exemplifies the norm that a woman always needs a man to be happy and should be willing to do anything to keep them in their life, no matter what the sacrifice is. Carrie goes against everything she believes in and everything she has dedicated her life to in order to save a terrorist whom with she falls in love, because for Carrie, life is not meaningful without him. Before Sgt. Brody, she was portrayed as driven woman and her purpose in life was her career and to serve her country. Carrie's independence and drive, for which she was previously admired, is undermined and stripped of its meaning when she makes Sgt. Brody her purpose. These gender scripts, when repeatedly ingested by society, can make women believe that they will not be happy if they are independent or without a man. This

patriarchal script can encourage women to not pursue a career and can affect their ability to be happy with themselves.

Personal Life

The theme of misery and loneliness among women playing dominant masculine roles on television is very prevalent in mass media. In Diana Damean's article, *Media and Gender: Constructing Feminine Identities in a Postmodern Culture*, she writes about the construction of femininity in a patriarchal society in which "mass culture products celebrate the values of the traditional family" (Damean 92). Damean states that the traditional family "appears as a hierarchy having the man at the top and the wife and children - as subordinates" (Damean 92). She then defines an alternative model in regards to feminine roles in which she says, "In the public space, these women appear as professionally successful, rational, ambitious, talented and hardworking. They are endowed with the so called 'masculine' features" (Damean 92). When discussing the consequences of embodying an alternative model of femininity she states that "each time a woman appears as independent, rational, or successful, the stress is moved on her personal life (she has no partner, no children or is not attractive) so as to undermine her professional achievements" (Damean 93). The patriarchal value being pushed here is that "the cost of being 'different' is too high and women are not willing to give up their femininity (beauty and motherhood) in exchange for liberation" (Damean 93). In this series, Carrie, who is being portrayed as the "alternative" model of femininity as a CIA agent, has deep rooted problems with her personal life which are consistent with Damean's claim. Her success in her career is undermined and sabotaged by her internal problems, feelings of loneliness, and desperation for a partner. Stg. Brody becomes the hero when he fills Carrie's emotional void and saves her from

her “lack of feminism.” Siobhan Smith’s article discussing the portrayals of women on primetime television also carries out this theme stating that women on prime time television with the “most prestigious jobs were unmarried; married female characters held traditionally female jobs. Unfortunately, the continuous portrayal of stereotypical gender role might send viewers a message that ‘if they do not want to be a part of the traditional women’s work, then they cannot be married’” (Smith 17). With repeated exposure to messages like these, woman may begin to internalize them which may greatly affect their life personally and professionally.

Discussion

Although Carrie’s role as a powerful C.I.A. agent resists the notions of patriarchy on the surface, through her use of sexuality to gain power and many other aspects revealed throughout the series, a male hegemony still prevails. The fancy job title and conservative suit she wore did not succeed in masking the patriarchal agenda being advanced through Carrie’s character. By focusing on her lack of a partner, children, and happiness, this show supports Damean’s assertion that women with masculine roles on television are sabotaged through problems in their personal lives (Damean 93). By constantly portraying successful, intelligent women as lonely and unhappy, the media creates a direct correlation between the two. In doing so, they are not supporting alternative models of femininity which can reflect negatively in society. Throughout the series Carrie’s character also supports Mead’s assertion regarding contradictory societies. She states that these contradictory societies throw their doors open for women to take opportunities with high salaries, however, they translate every step toward success as “damaging” (Mead 287). These steps, Mead explains, are “damaging” to her chances of marriage, and to the men whom she passes on the road (Mead 287). Carrie’s character definitely

lives in a contradictory society where she has a high paying salary and well respected job in which she has administrative power over people. The possibilities seem endless for Carrie until it comes to the flaws in her personal life. Her commitment to her job makes Carrie unable to meet any men outside of work and therefore her chances of marriage are compromised. Carrie's success can also seem damaging to men because she has more financial means and superiority than most men, which is not traditional. If the media were to support gender equality, all of Carrie's accomplishments would be portrayed in a positive light and not undermined by her personal life. Although Carrie's role goes against Vande Berg and Streckfuss's findings that men are much more likely to possess roles of higher status than women, her character ultimately supports patriarchy through her personal life shortcomings.

Mass media portrayals of characters on television can be very deceiving. They can make you think you are engaging in something positive, such as powerful women on television, when in reality, you are simultaneously supporting male hegemony. This notion is apparent in Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster's article regarding the series *Mad Men* in which both the male and female employees of the advertising agency are depicted as wanting to stray from their stereotypical roles in a patriarchal dominated society. These characters, however, all end up reinforcing traditional roles in a patriarchal society (Ferrucci, Shoenberger, and Shauster 13). Similarly, Carrie seems as if she is straying from the norms of a patriarchal society with her impressive and powerful job, however, she also ends up supporting patriarchy throughout. On the surface, Carrie's goals may imply that she wishes to achieve as much as she can professionally. All of that seems to change drastically when Sgt. Brody comes into the picture, as evidenced by her aid in his escape from the country. Carrie's goals in life seem to shift to

finding companionship and happiness, however, she is portrayed as incapable of achieving these things with her demanding career. She is also portrayed as incapable of achieving these things without a man which implies that a successful woman cannot have an important job and have happiness and a partner at the same time. These limitations placed on Carrie because of her success ultimately support a patriarchal agenda throughout the series.

The profound and latent impact that media has had on our society already has changed the world immensely. The way in which we subconsciously absorb messages of mass media without thinking has changed the way think and act. This process is called the cultivation effect (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli 10). Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli argue that repeated exposure to media messages cultivate our common worldview, roles, and values. They also argue that heavy television watchers actually perceive the world of television as their own without cognition (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli 10). This assertion exemplifies why the gender scripts available for women that support patriarchy can be dangerous to our society. Because humans absorb messages of mass media subconsciously, we are not aware that we are taking on these world views, beliefs and values as our own. A world dominated by masculine supremacy creates a difficult environment for females prosper professionally and can greatly affect the way men view females as well. With the repetition of these messages, men and women will think of females as less capable than males at a subconscious level. These men and women will not even know where those subconscious beliefs come from because the cultivation effect does not occur at the conscious level. In conclusion, this type of indoctrination of stereotypical gender roles is very dangerous in terms of gender equality in our society. Although females have covered a huge amount of ground through feminist movements, with dominant male hegemonic

control latently imbedded in mass media, females will have extreme difficulty fully escaping from masculine domination.

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