Terrorists, Heroes and Homeland
How race and gender are negotiated to create meaning in terrorism TV

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his/her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This research is an anti-racist, feminist challenge to the representation of terrorism and counter-terrorism which aims to disrupt the creation of insecurity stories that have led to an increase in anti-Muslim racisms, reified traditional gender roles and enabled particular ‘counter-terrorist’ violences. This thesis builds on the growing work that takes the role of popular culture seriously in Security Studies. It draws on a new set of data that includes a systematic analysis of the television show *Homeland* and focus groups with *Homeland* viewers in Britain. It shows how gendered and racialised terrorism stories in *Homeland* shape our understanding of what terrorism is. This thesis traces the connections between identities and texts, representation and understanding, politics and culture. This thesis explores how this terrorism story rearticulates gendered and racialised logics of counter-terrorism, but it also pays critical attention to where these discourses are exceeded or resisted to draw out the deconstructive potential within these new characterisations and stories. This thesis is concerned with how audiences make meaning for security as they consume popular culture. It brings in approaches from Television Studies to Security Studies in order to theorise the process of meaning creation for audiences of television. This synthesis enables an original contribution to the way terrorism on television is studied and understood.
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CIA Central Intelligence Agency

CTS Critical Terrorism Studies

USA United States

UK United Kingdom

PTSD Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
Chapter 1
The Opening Credits

What have television programmes got to do with terrorism? Common sense tells us that terrorism is about life and death, the bombs, beheadings and bodies that are the extreme expression of political violence, whilst television is what we do for fun, what we switch on in order to switch off from the complications of politics and everyday life. Yet, over a decade after 9/11 we are still tuning in to Homeland (Showtime 2011) in our millions, a terrorism drama where we follow the CIA as they attempt to thwart an imminent attack on American soil.

This research is an anti-racist, feminist challenge to the representation of terrorism that aims to disrupt the creation of insecurity stories that have led to an increase in anti-Muslim racisms, reified traditional gender roles and enabled particular ‘counter-terrorist’ violences. This thesis builds on the growing work that takes the role of popular culture seriously in Security Studies (Grayson et al., 2009; Shepherd, 2013) and work that explores the relationship between security and identity (Neumann, 1999; Campbell, 1998; Weldes, 1999). It draws on a new set of data that includes a systematic analysis of the television show Homeland and focus groups with Homeland viewers in England. It shows how gendered and racialised terrorism stories in Homeland shape our understanding of what terrorism is. Homeland is not only a timely account of American counter-terrorism. It does not simply relay the facts of a reality of violence ‘out there’ but is constitutive of that reality, framing and shaping this violence in a way that allows us to recognise it as terrorism. This thesis traces the connections between identities and texts, representation and understanding, policy, politics and culture.

Who our heroes and enemies are tells us about the wider cultural and political context from which they emerge, and they are therefore intertwined with constructions of threat, in/security and defence. Gender and race were mobilized in War on Terror discourses to create support for counter-terrorism by re-using tropes of female victims, free western women, dangerous brown men and hyper-masculine heroes. Yet, there is something different at work in the characters of Carrie as the female hero/anti-hero and Brody as the American Marine/terror suspect in Homeland and their international exploits over the course of the first three seasons of the show. These complex characters’ personal trajectories make sense of terrorism and counter-terrorism for their audience, presenting new faces for counter-terrorism and the terrorist threat. This thesis explores how these characters rearticulate gendered and racialised logics of counter-terrorism, but it also pays critical attention to where these discourses are exceeded or resisted to draw out the deconstructive potential within these new characterisations.
This thesis puts forward a synthesis of the work from the disparate disciplines of Security Studies and Cultural Studies in order to trace the link between popular culture and security. It is concerned with how audiences make meaning for security as they consume popular culture. Although Security Studies has begun in recent decades to recognise the importance of language, narrative and culture, it suffers from two lacunae: the first is audiences and the reception of texts about security; and the second is the everyday practices of consumption in relation to popular cultural texts. These gaps occur because of a limited engagement with the theoretical, methodological and substantive insights offered by other disciplines that have been grappling with the role of popular culture in the formation of identities and world views for much longer. This thesis brings in approaches from Television Studies to Security Studies in order to theorise the process of meaning creation for audiences of television. This synthesis enables an original contribution to the conceptualisation and methodology of the study of terrorism on television.

_Homeland_ first aired in the United States on 2nd October 2011 and in the UK on Channel 4 on 19th February 2012. It is a story about counter-terrorism and it is a story about race and gender. This thesis considers how race and gender are negotiated to create meaning in terrorism TV. It traces the connections between the personal and the political, between terrorism and television, between security and identity. It takes a new approach by exploring how gender, race and terrorism interact. It explores how counter-terrorism acquires meaning and how this reuses and recreates particular versions of race and gender. It is about terrorism on television, as entertainment, but also as one of the stories that constitute knowledge about terrorism, and so the realities of terrorism.

This thesis makes an original contribution to Critical Security Studies on three grounds. First, it offers a close reading of _Homeland_, and puts forward a creative deconstruction of current counter-terrorism discourses. It offers a critique of the gendered and racialised discourses of terrorism. Second, it adds to this reading with data collected in focus groups with viewers of the show to explore how security stories take effect to look at audience reception. Third, it offers a new methodology to Security Studies that considers the relationship between the audience and the text as they work through the anxieties of race, gender and insecurity. Another important contribution is the attention the thesis pays to whiteness. It traces the articulation of whiteness that is inherent to terrorism stories. It engages in the nuance of terrorism discourse to consider how these stories can work to reproduce and to challenge the logics that are necessary to legitimate violence in the name of counter-terrorism. By adding in data from focus groups it shows how people negotiate the meaning of terrorism in diverse ways.
Homeland is not the only story about terrorism, it is one of many, but it is used in this project to demonstrate how a narrativised account of terrorism works, what the relationship is to meaning, identity and the lived experience of in/security. It is a way to access the wider discourse and debates around terrorism, in/security, anti-Muslim racism, whiteness, and gender. In the words of Lynch and Ryder (2012: 255) “terrorism is a social and political phenomenon, an academic subject, a tragic personal experience, a pejorative label and a significant issue for the media.” I add to this, that terrorism is a story that acts to secure ideas of race and gender. As Eric Herring (2008: 127) argues, “terrorism is a delegitimising label”. This project considers not only how it serves to delegitimise particular acts of violence, but also how it delegitimises particular raced and gendered identities, but also how it in turn legitimises other counter-terrorism violence and identities.

It is twelve years since the attacks on the World Trade Centre. President Bush and Prime Minister Blair have been replaced by President Obama and Prime Minister Cameron. Osama Bin Laden is dead. Troops have been withdrawn from Iraq and Afghanistan, and both countries have held democratic elections, but both are still unstable (Diamond, 2007; Paris and Sisk, 2009; Suhrke, 2007). The official rhetoric has perceptibly changed from the Biblical all-American heroes and cowboys of Bush to the more nuanced “Overseas Contingency Operations” of Obama. Nevertheless, over one thousand American service men and women have died in combat since Obama took office (2015). Thousands of Iraqis and Afghans have been killed as a result of allied violences in their countries (AntiWar Coalition, 2012). Guantanamo Bay is still open. There has been a prolonged increase in anti-Muslim racism and violence in both the UK and the USA (Abbas, 2005; Dienne, 2006). The language of terrorism still pervades political rhetoric and, crucially, we are still tuning in to a terrorism drama in our millions. This thesis explores the ways a War on Terror discourse can be seen to be articulated through the American television show Homeland. It asks how this discourse is read and interpreted by the shows British audience. I am interested in what has changed in discourses of terrorism in the past twelve years, and where we are now, inspired by Jasbir Puar (2007: xi), and the invitation to perform a “deeper exploration of the connections among sexuality, race, gender, nation, class, and ethnicity in relation to the tactics, strategies, and logistics of war machines.”

Homeland is a twelve part TV series that follows CIA agent Carrie Mathison (Claire Daines) as she attempts to thwart a terrorist attack on America. This hinges on her uncovering whether American Marine Nicholas Brody (Damien Lewis) was ‘turned’ to terrorism during eight years captivity in Iraq. The show’s tagline is “it hits home” and it is exactly this sentiment that underpins this research, which asks how terrorism hits home as we tune it to watch the exploits of Carrie and Brody. Hugely popular, Homeland has been syndicated globally. In the USA 6.5
million viewers tuned in each week (Dodge, 2013), and 4 million viewers watched the finale of season one in the UK (BBC, 2012). It is terrorism as entertainment, and in the words of my research participants:

Anne: That is really weird; we are being entertained by terrorism?
David: Yeah, yeah, we are sick creatures!

This project asks what is happening as we watch and enjoy this terrorism drama.

Research Questions

This thesis aims to answer four interrelated research questions. How are counter-terrorism, gender and race represented in Homeland and how are they mutually constituted? Does Homeland rearticulate, repeat, rework or resist the legitimacy of counter-terrorism and the War on terror discourses that proceed it? What raced and gendered identities are produced for the audience of Homeland, and what does they enable? How do British audience members negotiate the meanings that are presented around terrorism, gender and race in Homeland? These questions are answered through a detailed deconstructive reading of the first three seasons of the television show and a nuanced analysis of focus groups held with viewers of the show, supported by two focus groups with Muslims who did not watch Homeland to discuss their views on the show.

Just as the opening credits introduce the show, they are used here to introduce this research, to give a first glance at the themes, plots and characters that will populate these pages and to demonstrate how deeply imbricated Homeland is in its current historical moment, to show the blurred boundary of ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’, and to introduce the chapters of this thesis.

Telling Terrorism Tales: Insecurity and Popular Culture

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Figure 1: taken from Opening Credits of Homeland, copyright Showtime 2011

Academics, pundits and industry insiders alike were quick to announce that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 would usher in a new era for film and television, which eschewed the glorification of
violence.\(^1\) Given that witnesses of the plane crashes and subsequent collapse of the World Trade Centre towers described the scenes as being ‘like something from a film’ (Panorama, 2002), it was posited the blockbusting apocalypse fantasies of exploding American cities and outlandish terrorist attacks would lose their appeal. There was an immediate scramble to postpone the release of some films that were violent or dealt with terrorism, notably *Collateral Damage* which was scheduled to be released in October 2001, because of its treatment of terrorism.\(^2\) Whilst Islamic terrorism had proved a popular plot device in Hollywood action films from the 1980s it was predicted that audiences\(^3\) would no longer find them so entertaining. Films that included images of the World Trade Centre as part of the Manhattan skyline were re-cut and controversially re-edited to remove images of the towers, family films were rushed into production and fantasy films dominated releases and film charts (Dixon, 2004; Prince, 2009).

However, the pronouncements of the end of an era were premature and there has since been a return to action films, and terrorism plots in Hollywood.\(^4\) Despite the initial hesitance to make films that dealt with themes of Islamic terrorism there are now films that are in direct conversation with the War on Terror. There are films that cover 9/11 directly such *World Trade Centre* (Stone, 2006), which follows the true story of Port Authority officers McLoughlin and Jimeno on 9/11 and *United 93* (Greengrass, 2006) a film that dramatises the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 which was hijacked on 9/11. There have been films based on the Iraq war, for example, *Redacted* (De Palma, 2007) *In the Valley Of Elah* (Ray 2007), *Hurt Locker* (Bigelow, 2008), *Stop Loss* (Peirce 2008) and the Afghanistan War, for example, *Lion for Lambs* (Redford, 2007), *Restrepo* (Junger 2010) *Taxi to the Dark Side* (Gibney, 2007). These films have not shied away from controversial topics from torture, to the rape of civilians by US soldiers, to the harrowing effect of tours of duty on military personnel.

The impact of the 9/11 attacks on popular culture has not only been felt in the plot lines of war and action films; it has had a wider impact on genres, from an upsurge in horror (such as *Saw* [Wan, 2004]and *Hostel* [Roth]), and fantasy films, such as *Iron Man* (Favreau 2008), to a return to spy action films, such as *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Greengrass 2007), and *Rendition* (Hood 2007),


\(^2\) Other films that were delayed include *Bad Company* (2002) which was delayed by 7 months because it involves a terrorist plot in New York, and *View from the Top* (2003) was delayed because it follows a flight attendant on several aircraft.

\(^3\) In particular American audiences.

\(^4\) This has ranged from a revival of the Die Hard Franchise with *Live Free or Die Hard* (Wiseman, 2007) to *Body of Lies* (Scott, 2008) which covers the hunt for a terrorist cleric who leads a group bombing Europe.
and a recasting of the war in historical or allegorical terms, such as War on the Worlds (Spielberg 2005) and Troy (Peterson 2004) (Prince, 2009; Dittmer, 2005; Faludi, 2007).

Television has played a key role in the representation of terrorism. There was blanket news coverage that followed 9/11 with its associated speculation and investigation, which built its own melodramatic narratives of the attacks (Takacs, 2012). This was built upon by more in depth investigations and documentaries, for example, the documentary 9/11 (Hanlon, Naudet and Naudet, 2002), released on the first anniversary of the attacks and the National Geographic mini-series Inside 9/11 (2005) which investigates the build-up and aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. There were also documentaries that followed the lives of serving soldiers in the Afghanistan war, such as Ross Kemp in Afghanistan (2008) and Our War (2011-12).

Terrorism was also fictionalised. The attacks of 9/11 lead to ‘special episodes’ across television genres, such as the episode “Isaac and Ishmael” in The West Wing (1998-2006). Terrorism was addressed much more directly in counter-terrorism dramas such as Alias (2001-2006), The Grid (2004) and Sleeper Cell (2005-2006). The most popular terrorism drama was Fox’s 24 (2001-2014), which follows the exploits of counter-terrorism operative Jack Bauer. The first series was commissioned before 9/11 and it ran for eight series with a mini-series being aired in the summer of 2014. This show was positioned as being in direct conversation with the War on Terror. Indeed Joel Surnow, the co-creator and executive producer of 24, said it was “ripped out of the Zeitgeist of what people’s fears are — their paranoia that we’re going to be attacked,” and that “America wants the War on Terror fought by Jack Bauer. He’s a patriot” (Meyer, 2007: unpaginated).

Homeland follows in the footsteps of these dramas. It is the first show to explicitly represent the War on Terror, 9/11, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Produced by Fox 21 and aired in the USA on Showtime and in the UK on Channel 4. Homeland is based on the Israeli show Hatufim.5 Homeland is a television drama that focuses on terrorism and the counter-terrorism activities of the CIA. Television represents terrorism to us, and in doing so it does not simply relay the facts of a reality of violence ‘out there’ but is constitutive of that reality, framing and shaping this violence in a way that allows us to recognise it as terrorism or counter-terrorism. Through watching television people come to understand what terrorism is, and television a key site where terrorism comes to affect their everyday lives. Television is one place where terrorism becomes meaningful.

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5 The English title is Prisoners of War
In *Homeland* the ‘realities’ of terrorism are deliberately invoked. Set against the title music we hear successive US presidents make pronouncements about terrorism. President Ronald Reagan talks about the downing of Pan Am flight 103 in Lockerbie and the attack on the USS Cole. This immediately sets *Homeland* within an ongoing story of terrorism and establishes the American outlook and experience as central. There are images of the World Trade Centres collapsing on 9/11 as we hear the following exchange between Carrie and Saul:

Carrie: Fuck! I missed something once before, I won’t ... I can’t let that happen again.

Saul: It was ten years ago.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 are the frame and they are shown to be a source of great anxiety in this story. Carrie’s actions, and indeed the show, are about making up for, getting over, or working through the ongoing trauma of 9/11; it may well be over ten years ago. This is a post 9/11 television drama. Claire Danes who plays Carrie has said in an interview:

The first time I realised I was patriotic was after September 11th ... One of my friends wanted to have a debate about it, and when she was pressing me to take an intellectual position I just kind of barked: 'My house is on fire!' That's how it felt; it just felt personal and visceral. (Hoby, 2012: unpaginated)

The tension and drama in *Homeland* replays not only the images of terror, but it recaptures the “personal and visceral” nature of the attack.

The term ‘post-9/11’ is deeply problematic because it re-emphasizes the centrality of the American experience, prioritising the deaths of the victims of these attacks over the victims of the innumerable acts of political violence that have proceeded and succeeded it (START, 2011). Setting up 9/11 as an epochal watershed diminishes the links between this attack and previous (often violent) interactions between the United States and Middle Eastern countries. The idea of post 9/11 is part of the narrative that establishes American innocence (Jackson et al., 2011). However, I argue that the label rings true for *Homeland* because it is telling a deliberately and explicitly post 9/11 story, and this study asks questions about its part in the ongoing cultural response to the attacks, and how it acts as a means by which the attacks are kept present in the cultural imagination.

**Watching Television: Audiences and Terrorism**
Figure 2: taken from Opening Credits of Homeland, copyright Showtime 2011.

Figure 2 shows a young girl watching television. It hints at the symbiotic relationship between television and terrorism. The consumption of televised images of terror is key to this research because it considers the iterative process of meaning creation that takes place between the text and the audience. It is in the space between the show and its audience that meaning is made, shown here figuratively as the distance between the television and the child. This project shows how different readers read texts differently, which is perhaps an obvious conclusion to draw, but one that is too often overlooked in accounts of texts that ignore the process by which they come to influence the way we think about our world. This space between the show and the viewer lets in a glimmer of hope to the deconstruction of dominant discourses because it recognises the potential for agential readings to be radically disruptive.

Chapters two and three, lay out the theoretical framework for the thesis. Chapter two, ‘Terrorism on Television’, argues that the analytic focus of Security Studies should shift from the study of coherent figures and practices (such as states, war and the military) to understand the interactions of security practices and the everyday through narrative. It suggests that adding theory and substantive work from Cultural and Television Studies can address weaknesses in the Security Studies account of terrorism on television. It uses narrative identity theory to conceptualise how security interacts with subjectivity through popular culture building on work from International Relations and Critical Security Studies. It brings in work on television drama to strengthen analysis of television to take into account its form as well as its content. Finally, it turns to audience studies to add in a research method which takes into account how meaning is made for a text when audience members interact with it.

Chapter three, ‘Race, gender and terrorism’, provides the theoretical framework for race, gender and their interaction that frames the subsequent analysis. It goes on to consider how gender and race have been implicated in the stories of terrorism after 9/11, adding an understanding of race and gender into the narrative approach outlined in the previous chapter. It argues that security acts as the level of subjectivity and identity made and remade through
interactions with gender and race, and explores work that has linked gender, race and terrorism to show how the concepts of ‘the terrorist’, ‘the victim’ and ‘the hero’ come to populate the stories of terrorism. It considers how these gendered and raced characters provide meaning to terrorism discourse and simultaneously acts as (re)articulations of gender and race themselves. The chapter concludes by articulating the theoretical framework for this project in more detail and positions the thesis within a trajectory of previous feminist and critical race work. I theorise this relationship using Puar’s (2007) concept of terrorist assemblages. In chapter four, the resulting methodology is articulated in detail. This chapter lays out how the discourse analysis was performed, how the focus groups were recruited and conducted as well as how ethical concerns were mitigated.

This analysis asks how a British audience interprets an American television show. This is significant because the British context, culture, discourses and experience of terrorism and counter-terrorism are not the same as, though they are deeply influenced by, those of America. This is important because it allows me to further emphasise the importance of the context of consumption. Readings of popular culture often talk of the meanings, discourses and messages of a text, without making it clear where the text was produced, or where the text was consumed. American popular culture receives considerable academic attention, but I want to access what is distinctly American about this show, in the tropes, and discourses that it relies upon, whilst also recognising, that in the modern television landscape no television show stays within its national boundaries, and indeed its very success often relies upon its transnational appeal. I ask how this American discourse is read in Britain.

**War on Terror: Fact and Fiction**

![This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons](image-url)

Figure 3: taken from Opening Credits of *Homeland*, copyright Showtime 2011.

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[6] The image is unclear in the credits, and is overlaid with the sound of helicopter blades, connoting military action.
As well as being ‘post 9/11’ *Homeland* came after both the Iraq and the Afghanistan wars. We see glimpses of these wars in shots of guns, helicopters, and bombed-out buildings in the opening credits. The War on Terror is invoked, but this is done in a political climate where the ‘gung-ho’ War on Terror stance of the neo-conservative Bush administration has been replaced by a more muted ‘Overseas Contingency Operation’. Indeed, the next frames show the modern office environment overlaid with the CIA insignia. This is a story of the CIA and their role in counter-terrorism operations. This thesis considers how *Homeland* represents the CIA and how far it repeats War on Terror discourses. It asks where and when it supports counter-terror practices and where and when it critiques them.

A former CIA military analyst Tara Maller has said of *Homeland*:

> I know a lot of people in the national security and intelligence community are fans … The fact there is a huge following probably shows there is a kernel of truth to it … at a time of significant debate over national security and intelligence issues in terms of public opinion the moral quandaries of the characters reflect the ambiguities of national security policy. (Swain, 2013: unpaginated)

It is not only the CIA who are watching *Homeland*. President Obama has said: “While Michelle and the two girls go play tennis on Saturday afternoons, I go in the Oval Office, pretend I’m going to work, and then I switch on *Homeland*” (Carter, 2012a: unpaginated). This shows how closely interrelated popular culture and politics are at a tangible as well as a discursive level. Here is a show that represents the CIA and American foreign policy, that the US President watches, even whilst his own television addresses are part of the montage in the opening credits.

Figure 4 taken from Opening Credits of *Homeland*, copyright Showtime 2011.\(^7\)

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\(^7\) The image is inverted in the opening credits.
Chapter five, *Telling it like it is? Representation and intertextuality in Homeland*, considers how audience members negotiate the fact and fiction boundary (or more importantly, the lack thereof) in *Homeland*. *Homeland* deliberately disturbs the familiar tropes and stereotypes of terrorism stories and television drama, including a female CIA lead, a white Marine as terrorist, a Muslim CIA analyst, and an American Vice President culpable in the bombing of a school. This chapter begins to unpack how ‘critical’ *Homeland* is of traditional war on terror logic. It introduces the concept of ‘double discursive moves’ used throughout the thesis to draw attention to the way that seemingly critical representations can in fact be ways to rearticulate the typical logics of violence, race or gender. This thesis examines what versions of gender, race and counter-terrorism emerge from this story. This chapter explores how *Homeland* produces and references reality and, more importantly, what this enables in this story of counter-terrorism. This is an exploration of the idea of intertextuality.

**Anxiety, Emotions and Resolution: Narrative Accounts**

(Figure 5, taken from Opening Credits of *Homeland*, copyright Showtime 2011)

The maze in the opening credits situates the show as a drama, invoking the idea of a puzzle to be solved. It hints that this is a complex story, with many twists, turns, and dead ends. This maze symbolises the complexity and confusion that surrounds counter-terrorism more generally after the scandals of Abu Ghraib, extra-ordinary rendition, enhanced interrogation techniques and the mixed successes of military campaigns. Importantly, a maze has a centre; it can be completed. And that way we are introduced to the idea of resolution. This is what a narrativized version of terrorism offers, the opportunity to reach a conclusion, to find a way out of the maze.

Chapter six considers how the narrative structure of *Homeland* recaptures a moral legibility which has been lost in the ravages of the War on Terror. This is about confronting the fear, shame, anxiety as well as the pride, resolution and hope that are central to terrorism stories, and to the maintenance of counter-terrorism. This chapter analyses *Homeland* as a melodrama, not simply to apply a generic classification, but to consider how narratives of resolution can work
to stabilise meaning for counter-terrorism, race and gender, whilst also recognising how emotional excess offers up the potential to rework meaning around counter-terrorism, race and gender.

**Heroes, Soldiers and the CIA: Characters in *Homeland***

![Image removed for copyright reasons]

Figure 6: taken from Opening Credits of *Homeland*, copyright Showtime 2011

The lead characters tell us a great deal about current, American conceptions of gender, terrorism and race, simultaneously reusing and challenging tropes of the masculine hero, the female victim, the objectivity of counter-terrorism, the virtues of the CIA and the righteousness of America. This image plays with the hero identity.

The central argument of chapter seven is that the anxieties surrounding terrorism are translated onto these individual characters. Through our relationship to them we, as an audience, confront challenges posed to us by the War on Terror and our complicity, and in/security, within it. This chapter shows how Carrie stands in for the CIA and for the bipolar reaction to terrorism that followed 9/11, whilst Brody, as the scarred soldier and terror suspect, manages simultaneously to represent the wounded military, the damaged body politic as well as its greatest enemy and threat. They are not the more familiar characters of action drama or War on Terror discourse, but are broken, vulnerable, dislikeable, complex and unstable. This chapter also shows that by adding the audience in, and by allowing a more nuanced reading of the text, we can see there are spaces for resistance to dominant conceptions of terrorism, even within our popular television heroes.

**Islam and Islamic Terrorism: ‘The ‘Other’***

![Image removed for copyright reasons]
This image hints at the centrality of Islam in the plot of *Homeland*, which speaks to the wider discourses of Islamic terrorism. *Homeland* is saturated with the racialisation of Muslims and so plays a large part in the discourse and practice of anti-Muslim racisms (Bhattacharya, 2008; Thobani, 2007; Abbas, 2005; Dienne, 2006; Alsultany, 2012. In dominant terrorism discourse, race functions to establish the terrorist as other, and at the same time the spectre of terrorism is used to effectively racialise Muslims (Abbas, 2005; Bhattacharyya, 2008). In this image we see ‘the Muslim Woman’, anonymous, lacking geographical or temporal specificity, standing in for all Muslims. She is wearing the burqa, so often used in Western media as visual shorthand for Islamic extremism (Riley, 2013). This image links to the strategic use of an idea of the ‘oppressed Muslim woman’ by the Bush administration to justify military intervention in Afghanistan (Shepherd, 2006).

Chapter eight argues that *Homeland* is neither exclusively ‘Islamophobic’, nor does it manage to completely rework the racialisation of ‘Islamic terrorism’. The othering and racialisation of Muslims operates as a failure of empathy, which enables the violences that are performed against many Muslim communities both in the UK and abroad to go unchallenged. This chapter explores the representation of Islam in *Homeland*, paying specific attention to how racialised discourses are connected to terrorism, as well as how they intersect with gender. *Homeland* is a story about Islamic terrorism, it represents Islam, Muslims and the Middle East, and it is a racialised and racialising story of security. This chapter challenges straightforward criticism that dismiss all representation of Islamic terrorism as Islamophobic, but instead presents an investigation of how these discourses are reified, but also reworked and resisted, by those who watch this show.

**Identity: Stories About ‘Us’**

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 8: one, taken from Opening Credits of *Homeland*, copyright Showtime 2011.
The opening image of the credits is this shot of a young girl asleep. The credits are about the ongoing story of terrorism, but the developments of the terrorism story are mapped against Carrie’s life as she is growing up. This shows how she has grown up in a time when terrorism has dominated the insecurity landscape of America. *Homeland* is a story about Carrie and her personal journey through this terrorism landscape, but importantly, I argue it is also a story about ‘us’ and our own place in the stories of terrorism. This builds on a rich body of work from Security Studies that considers the relationship between in/security and identity (Campbell, 1997; Neumann, 1999; Weldes et al, 1999).

What is more, whilst work on race in terrorism discourses often focuses upon the racialisation of Muslims that has been (re)produced through the othering of the Islamic terrorist, it is also crucial to examine how these stories form racialised national identities for ‘us’. This includes an investigation of the workings of whiteness. It is about how seeing ourselves as victims of terrorism establishes national boundaries of belonging. Chapter nine, *Securing Whiteness: the Context and Consumption of Homeland*, focuses on the audience. This is about who is being addressed, assumed, interpellated and performed in the text, through the experience of watching the show, and in the shared process of negotiating meaning. The central argument in this chapter is that *Homeland* establishes a liberal white/cosmopolitan identity that is inextricably linked to terrorism stories. The argument is twofold; first, that there is a masculine white subject position within the text, and second that consumption, enjoyment and debate of terrorism stories is productive of a particular cosmopolitan identity which contains strands of liberal whiteness. It shows how terrorism stories create the subject and the object of terrorism. Therefore, it directly interrogates the relationship between security and identity. The chapter asks how critique can operate as a white privilege, considered against the backdrop of radicalisation discourses and practices in the UK. This leads to wider reflections on how whiteness and privilege operate in, and through, terrorism discourses.

The conclusion brings together the findings from the analysis chapters to show how meaning is produced for race, gender and counter-terrorism in *Homeland* and to show how British audience members negotiated those meanings. It lays out how the complex story of terrorism that is told in *Homeland* both undermines the accepted gendered and raced logics of terrorism, but at the same time re-enforces these same logics. It stresses that this story of terrorists, heroes and *Homeland* is productive of security politics, of racial identities and gendered behaviour. *Homeland* helps to create the reality of counter-terrorism for the public providing content and structure to terrorism discourses. This conclusion draws out how this account has wider significance for the understanding of terrorism on television, security and popular culture, and the role of gender and race in security discourses.
Conclusion

This thesis offers a close reading of *Homeland*. In doing so it makes an intervention into the study of world politics and popular culture. It provides fresh insights into ‘post 9/11 popular culture’, whilst also considering what that means, and how that term evolves. It considers the way gender and race are being used to retell the terrorism story. It argues that *Homeland* shows how racialised and gendered discourses of terror are surprisingly resilient, and the new ways that gender and race are being deployed to justify counter-terrorist violence. What is more, it provides a new approach to understanding the representation of terror on TV that includes audience studies and therefore considers meaning in the interaction between text and audience. This contribution has wider ramifications for the way that popular culture and world politics are studied going forward, and this thesis aims to strengthen the exciting work in this developing field of research.
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Chapter 2
Terrorism and Television

At 9pm each week I sat down in my living room to watch as Carrie Mathison attempted to stop another terrorist attack on the USA. My heart rate quickened when danger closed in. I sat on the edge of my seat as terrorists were chased through American streets. I even cried when my favourite characters died. This is how I ‘experience’ terrorism, sat on my sofa, remote in my hand, heart in my mouth. I am not alone; 2.4million people in America (Kondology, 2013) and 1.7 million people in the UK (Plunkett, 2013) watched Brody’s last gasps in the finale of season three. Terrorism stories are televised, visual, emotional and popular.

This thesis offers a detailed and original discourse analysis of the gendered and raced discourse of the first three seasons of Homeland as well as an analysis of the audience reception through focus groups. This is done to contribute to the understanding of the ways that popular culture contributes to the constitution of the War on Terror. This chapter makes the link between terrorism and television. It defends the need to consider in/security discourses circulating in popular culture and explore the contribution that this can make to our understanding of security. Security issues, such as terrorism, are not simply realities that are represented on television, but realities that are made through television (Klein 1989; Der Derian and Shapiro, 1989; Weldes, 1999; Jackson 2005). This rests on a post-modern ontology that recognises that language (and images) don’t represent a reality out there, but that they are constitutive of that reality (Howarth, 2000: 248). The central tenet in this chapter is that television is a crucial site where meaning is produced for terrorism.

This chapter builds on the discourse analytic literature in International Relations and Security Studies to argue for the inclusion of audience reception which has hitherto been largely ignored outside of Cultural and Media Studies. It provides a literature review of work on discourse analysis in International Relations, of work on popular culture and world politics and work that has examined the discursive construction of terrorism and counter-terrorism. By doing so it locates this thesis within this work, it establishes the theoretical framework for the project and it reiterates the reason to take television as a sight/cite/site of politics.

The narrative approach that I outline here takes advantage of the increasing theoretical diversity in the social sciences and in International Relations. I argue that although Security Studies has begun in recent decades to recognise the importance of language, narrative and culture, it suffers from two lacunae. The first is audiences and the reception of texts about security, and the second is the everyday practices of consumption in relation to popular cultural texts. These
gaps occur because of a limited engagement with the theoretical, methodological and substantive insights offered by other disciplines which have been grappling with the role of popular culture in the formation of identities and world views for much longer. This chapter puts forward a synthesis of the work from the disparate disciplines of Security Studies and Cultural Studies in order to trace the link between popular culture and security. It brings approaches from Television Studies to Security Studies in order to theorise the process of meaning creation for audiences of television. This synthesis enables an original contribution to the study of terrorism on television. It lays the groundwork for the investigation of the process of meaning making in the interaction between context, television shows and audiences.

This work is post-structural and it draws on narrative theory to bridge understandings of security, identity and popular culture to show how stories matter. This is a political and deconstructive gesture. By recasting terrorism as a story that we are told, as opposed to an objective type of violence, we can use tools from Cultural Studies to understand and challenge the processes by which these stories are told, understood and embodied to reflect and reinforce (gendered and raced) power. Analytical attention is therefore redirected to the narrative accounts of terrorism. This equips us to tell different stories about terrorism and in/securities and to offer productive critical interventions into security policy and practice. Whilst there has been work that has concentrated on the representation of terrorism on television, this project takes a new approach by considering not only the messages contained within the text, but by focusing on one case study (of Homeland) it seeks to draw out the process of meaning making. This involves using techniques of discourse analysis form Critical Security Studies, and methods that relate to audience reception from Television Studies. The interdisciplinary strategy that is used in this chapter is a positive move because it means that a narrative approach is not a niche account within Security Studies, but is part of an academic movement that spans Film Studies, Critical Race Work, Gender Studies, Post-colonial Studies, and Sociology amongst others, an emerging sub(inter)discipline (Rowley and Weldes, 2015; Dittmer, 2010). This interdisciplinarity makes the critiques of War on Terror discourses wider, deeper and more effective as it deploys a range of analytical strategies from Television Studies and Critical Security Studies to deconstruct counter-terrorism.

The chapter begins with an exploration of the study of popular culture and world politics, and the wider discursive analytical work from within International Relations. In doing so it provides the theoretical framework for this thesis. This section considers narrative theory, intertextuality, and discourse to argue that the study of popular culture has a lot to contribute to Security Studies. It then looks at specific work that links discourse, identity and foreign policy in America. It reviews the work of Critical Terrorism Studies. It then analyses popular culture and the War
on Terror, to show how popular culture played an important role in the creation of the conditions of possibility for counter-terrorism. In doing so, this section gives an overview of the work that has emerged on terrorism and popular culture. The chapter turns to consider what is missing from these accounts, first looking at other emergent approaches from within International Relations including accounts of the role of emotions and the everyday in security as well as additional work on identities. I argue that these approaches have not yet been adequately brought together, despite their obvious synergies, to contribute to an understanding of popular culture and world politics. This leaves a hypodermic model of meaning transmission in popular culture and world politics, which assumes that the meanings in texts are simply absorbed by their audiences (Morley, 2006). I then put forward insights from Cultural Studies and Television Studies to supplement the work on terrorism and television, which includes the idea of television as a space to work through cultural anxieties, and most importantly audience studies. This builds to a new approach to popular culture and world politics that takes into account the context and practices of consumption and that reinserts people into the discussion of culture and security. The chapter ends with an overview of this narrative approach to terrorism.

The television has brought terrorism into our homes both through the news and television shows. The television represents terrorism to us, and in doing so it does not simply relay the facts of a reality of violence ‘out there’ but is constitutive of that reality, framing and shaping this violence in a way that allows us to recognise it as terrorism or counter-terrorism. It is through watching television that people come to understand what terrorism is, and is a key site where it comes to affect their everyday lives. It is one place where terrorism becomes meaningful.

**Discourse, Popular Culture and World Politics**

Jason Dittmer (2010) argues that work on popular culture and security can be considered as a niche pursuit with Security Studies, but that it is better conceived of as an interdisciplinary network of scholars from Security Studies, International Relations, Critical Geopolitics, Cultural Studies, Film Studies, American Studies, and Contemporary History amongst others. Christina Rowley and Jutta Weldes (2015) classify it as a sub(inter)discipline which perhaps best captures its disciplinary status. This section considers the emergence of this collective of scholars and it provides a theoretical background upon which this work relies.

Security Studies is simply defined by Alan Collins (2007: 2) as being “to do with threats to survival” and its traditional terrain has been the protection of the nation state from aggression, usually in the form of armed conflict, via military or strategic measures, realpolitik, rational actor models,
and power-centric cost-benefit analysis (Löfflmann, 2013). Reconfigured after the cold war, the types of threats that are covered have expanded to include things such as pandemics, climate change and poverty, whilst the state’s role as referent object for security has also been challenged. Critical approaches have proliferated, from human security, which puts the security of people at the heart of the subject, to the Copenhagen school, which has brought to light the process of securitisation and points to the discursive construction of particular events as security threats (Wæver, 1995).

Amongst this critical work is what has been referred to as ‘the affective turn’, ‘the narrative turn’ or the ‘third debate’ in Security Studies (Der Derain and Shapiro, 1989; Campbell, 1998; Collins, 2007). This movement refers to a broad body of work which shares the rejection of positivist epistemology, and expands this criticism to recognise the constructed nature of the objects and practices of security and Security Studies. Much of this work is post-structuralist, and at its core lays the recognition that key objects of Security Studies such as the state or national identity are themselves created through the practices of security and Security Studies (Campbell, 1998; Weldes, 1999). Where other critical approaches to Security Studies have aimed to broaden the focus of security, by considering new and different types of threat, or to deepen security, by considering different referents of security than just the state, narrative approaches seek to open Security Studies to challenge the very way that security is conceptualized (Wibben, 2011).

In the late 1980s scholars in International Relations began to turn to post-modernism and post-structuralism to unpack international relations as a subject, and to challenge the subjects of International Relations (Der Derain and Shapiro, 1989: xviii). This used the theories from political and philosophical thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, and Boudrillard to perform discourses analysis of the texts of International Relations (Klein 1989; Campbell, 1998; Weldes 1996; 1999; Doty 1996; Neumann 1999).

Scholars aimed to deconstruct discourses in international relations and security, to ‘make strange’ accepted knowledge and to challenge the ‘common sense’ of International Relations theory and practice and crucially the power that it both wields and creates (Der Derian and Shapiro 1989; Weldes et al 1999). In James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro’s (1989) edited collection International/Intertextual Relations they explain how Derrida’s work on deconstruction can be used to identify how meaning is always relational and the binaries on which meaning relies in international relations are hierarchical, power laden and ultimately

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8 Identifying a single starting point of any academic shift is itself difficult, and all scholarship builds on work that exists both within and outside of their own discipline, so please accept this as an approximate starting point.
contestable. They show how Barthes’ work on textuality opens up an understanding of the intertextual relationship between texts whereby meaning always relies on pre-existing cultural knowledges that are repeated and rearticulated in each utterance which can be applied to international relations. They also explain how a Foucauldian understanding of subjectivity, whereby ‘the self’ is not pre-discursive, but rather is itself created in discourse, can be applied both to the state and the subjects produced through international relations discourse. Der Derain (1989: 5) argues this theoretical understanding “might better enable us to understand ourselves and others through the difference that make up everyday life in civil society and yet serve to justify homicide every day in the international society.”

The theoretical approaches that Der Derain and Shapiro identify are central to the deconstruction of Homeland in this thesis and therefore they require a more detailed examination. First, I need to unpack concept of discourse. Weldes (2006: 177) gives a useful definition of discourse as:

\[
\text{[s]ets of rules for ordering and relating discursive elements (subjects, objects, their characteristics, happenings, narratives and so on) in such a way that some meanings rather than others are constituted. The ‘real’ is mediated to us through discourse, some versions of the real then gain more credence than others, they become common sense, this process of becoming meaningful is laden with power.}
\]

Discourse functions to “determine the terms of intelligibility whereby a political reality can be known and acted upon” so that our critical attention turns to “examine how meanings are produced and attached to various social subjects and objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions that create certain possibilities and exclude others” (Doty, 1996: 6). The stories that we are told constitute the reality we know.

Second, there is the notion of intertextuality which is key to understanding how particular conceptions of security and politics become taken for granted. Intertextuality is about the network of textual relations that frame meaning. Van Veeren (2009: 364) provides a thorough conceptualisation of intertextuality, in which she argues that intertextuality:

\[
\text{can occur in at least three ways: through an established and long-standing relationship between text producers; through explicit references from one set of texts to another; and thirdly, through the common narratives or tropes that are central to the constitution of meaning in the texts. Through these various levels of intertextuality, the interrelated representations produced by these texts interact to constitute a frame of meaning which, if repeated often enough, can come to be identified as ‘common sense’.}
\]
This points to the relational and cultural construction of meaning for security. Every text is made up of, and meaning is filtered through, its references to other texts. Barthes (1971: ) explains how intertextuality means that “a text is... a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations.” Therefore, the meaning of any one text always depends upon how it is read in relation to other texts that have come before it (Rowley, 2010).

Third, I need to explain the concept of securitised identity. The discourse analytic approach to International Relation aims to take “account of cultural processes through which insecurities of states and communities- and the identities of the subjects through which insecurities have meaning- are produced, reproduced, and transformed” (Weldes et al, 1999: 2). There is a recognition that security threats are constructed discursively, and these threats create an identity for that which is threatened (Campbell, 1998; Wibben, 2011). This happens through difference, through the opposition to the enemy and also through the narration of peoples and places, where the stories that are told contribute to the understanding of the world and our place within it (Dittmer, 2010; Neumann, 1999). What is distinct about stories of in/security is that these boundaries are established through the use of fear. As Campbell (1998: 73) argues in his seminal book, Writing Security, “a notion of what we are is intrinsic to an understanding of what we fear”, so the conditions of fear and insecurity are essential to the establishment of a state’s identity. The use of fear and threat, inherent to security stories, invigorates the boundaries of us and them, as ‘they’ become a threat to our way of life/ lives.

Croft (2006: 1) explains how security discourses:

construct those who are our allies and those who are our enemies. When not in flux, they settle who “we” are, and who “they” are; what “we” stand for, and what “they” mean to “us”. They construct the space for “our” legitimate activity, and the space for the behaviour we will (and will not) tolerate from “them”.

Rowley and Welds (2012) argue security stories establish an ‘us versus them’ binary that uses dichotomies of outside/outside, good/bad, civilised/barbaric, to establish the self/other boundary. In the words of Croft (2012:15), “securitisation is about shaping relations between identities in and confrontational ways. That is security shapes the identity of the secure and the securitiser.”

Narrative is also important to this understanding of the constructed nature of security. Narrative approaches recognise that “[w]e glean ideas about the world and our place in it from the stories we are told; we repeat these ideas and ideals in the stories that we tell” (Shepherd, 2013: 345).
Security narratives articulate subjectivities and thus identities for their audiences. In the words of Rowley and Weldes (2012: 524): “identity and in/security are mutually constituted social relations.” In 2011 Annick Wibben outlined a narrative approach as a continuation of feminist approaches to security, she argues that:

\[
\text{the framing of events in a particular narrative always has implications for action because it includes and excludes options and actors, whilst also limiting what can be thought or said, thus imposing silences. (Wibben, 2011: 3).}
\]

So that:

\[
\text{the choice to privilege one perspective over another is never innocent or obvious but always intensely political. What is more, the insistence on a singular narrative is itself a form of violence. (Wibben, 2011: 2).}
\]

Particular collective identities are narrativised in security stories. This formation rests upon a Foucauldian understanding of identity whereby there is no stable universal subject, but the subject is “dependent on the prior existence of discursive subject positions; that is, empty spaces or functions in discourse from which to comprehend the world. Living persons are required to ‘take up’ subject positions in discourse, in order to make sense of the world” (Barker, 2003: 13). Therefore a text creates a ‘subject position’ for its audience. There is no fixed identity, but rather people’s identities are made and remade through this process of subjectification.

It is important to stress the difference here between a narrative approach and a discursive approach (though the two are interrelated). As Felix Ciută (2007) urges us to recognise, there is something distinctive to narrative that is too easily lost in accounts that blur an idea of story, discourse and narrative. He builds on Hayden White’s concept of narrative to argue that:

\[
\text{The intrinsic attributes of narrative –which is distilled in its particular structure, casts all action in a sequential, linear and intentional mould- generate a picture of the complex relationship between doing and being, identity and action, knowledge and practice. Narrative carries meaning which is always geared for action, and also produces meaning. (Ciută, 2007: 192).}
\]

Narrative offers a coherent plot for otherwise chaotic events, in doing so it produces both meaning and identity. It imposes a “formal coherence on a virtual chaos of events” (White, as quoted in Ciută, 2007: 194). Homeland, as a serialised drama, offers a narrative, it has plot, coherence, resolution, linearity and key actors.
This critical post-structural turn in Security Studies considerably changed the discipline’s focus. Instead of taking issues, threats, and international politicking as given and asking questions about what to do in this framework, it moves to asking how these issues, threats, and states can to be perceived as such. It therefore opens up critical potential to reimagine them. Doty (1993) explains how this enables us to ask “how possible” questions about international relations and security. This is not a denial of the deaths, conflicts and fear that are experienced, but a disruption of the process by which these come to be called security threats, acts of war and terrorism. In the words of Dixon (2004: 23) it is about asking “how the images we consume on a daily basis inform our understandings of both the world and the social political conditions that govern it.” It problematized and deconstructed central issues in security studies such as the state (Campbell, 1998), national interests (Weldes, 1999), race and ‘otherness’ (Doty, 1996; Neumann, 1999) the non-Western world (Lutz and Collins, 1993). Within the Der Derain and Shapiro (1989) book, Alfred Fortin’s (1989: 203) chapter on the language of “anti-terrorism” is an early intervention into exactly the discourse that this thesis seeks to examine has he deconstructed for figure of the terrorist other, whilst paying attention to how “the readers is always a potential victim.”

Once security is seen as a narrative we can challenge representations, and so challenge what is taken for granted. Interpreting discourses, and texts, is a political act, which is not on the periphery of security, but a challenge to the power that is created and exercised through representation of security. This thesis is explicitly building on this work and it uses the theoretical frames that underpin it, namely the recognition that “insecurities, rather than being natural facts are social and cultural productions” (Weldes et al, 1999: 10). In particular I am investigating one place that terrorism is produced as a security threat, and importantly how counter-terrorism is produced as a legitimate response. It recognises the intertextual nature of popular culture and world politics, to consider how Homeland is intervening in the ‘war on terror’ discourse. It reuses the understanding of securitised identities, to consider how the identities of terrorists, counter-terrorist and victim are constructed and it aims to deconstruct and ‘make strange’ the ‘common sense’ of counter-terrorism. How this deconstruction of Homeland is operationalised is discussed in the methodology, in chapter four.

This thesis also builds on three, more niche, areas of research that have followed on from, and which are integral to, the ‘cultural turn’; discourse analytic approaches to American foreign policy and state identity, critical terrorism studies, and popular culture and world politics.
Discourse, Ideology and American Foreign Policy

There is a broad body of work that links discourse, ideology and US foreign policy. This thesis builds on research that has explored the relationship between discourse and US foreign policy as it investigates how Homeland creates a particular image of American counter-terrorism. Campbell’s (1998) early contribution to the discourse analytic field, as introduced in the proceeding section, explicitly dealt with how danger and difference play a role in the constitution of the United States’ self-identity. He explains how danger is identified, objectified and externalized, and so ultimately securitized in foreign policy, and how this then constitutes, produces and maintains American identity and foreign policy. He also identifies the peculiarities of American state identity as they relate to the formation of the United States.

Drinnon’s 1997 book Facing West explicitly traces the formation of American statehood. He argues that American expansionism is based on racial hierarchies and racisms, repression, a mistrust of revolution and the idea of ‘civilisation’. He draws links between the original national project and the foreign policy. Hunt (1987: 17) also focuses on the “link between American nationalism and ongoing American foreign policy” more explicitly tracing what he calls the ‘ideologies’ that are central to domestic values and self-identity. He too identifies the role that racisms play as well as a self-identity that is founded on an idea of exceptionality, greatness and freedom and cultural superiority. Hunt (1987: 174) argues that this leads to a self-image on the international stage where America seeks to “protect and guide” as opposed to other countries which might seek to “exploit and repress”. Weldes (1999: 42) reiterates the way that America’s vision of itself as exceptional and uniquely free, as the “model, but also the patron of freedom” was constituted by and constitutive of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

This self-identity is remade and reshaped in the framing of, and response to, ongoing events in world politics. What is more, the self-identity is not only shaped by official discourse, but it is itself intertextual, relying on and retelling American history, present in American foreign policy, but also articulated in American popular culture.

Scholars have examined the articulation of American self-identity and foreign policy in popular culture. There are considerable bodies of work that consider the ways that popular culture re-articulates and image of American identity, considering the role of the Western film (Wright, 1977; Cottam, 1997; Coyne, 1998; McVeigh, 2007), the Vietnam War film (Dittmar and Michaud, 1990; Scheter and Semeiks, 1990; Jeffords, 1988; Kinney 2000), comics (Dittmer, 2005; Dittmer; 2010; Wanzo, 2009) or video games (Robinson, 2015; Huntemann and Payne, 2009). Key texts on this topic include Joanne Sharp’s (1992) analysis of Readers Digest in which she considers how it produced an image of America that fuelled the cold war by contributing to the idea of
essential differences between the east (Russia) and the West (America). An image where America defends freedom and democracy, and which in turn legitimises interventions in other countries. John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewitt (2002: 6) considered how the image of the superhero recreates the American monomyth, which they define as “[a] community in a harmonious paradise is threatened by evil; normal institutions fail to contend with this threat; a selfless superhero emerges to renounce temptations and carry out the redemptive task; aided by fate, his decisive victory restores the community to its paradisiacal condition; the superhero then recedes into obscurity.” A myth, that is product/ive of American exceptionalism and which results in American interventions abroad, which are done to ‘save’ the world. A documentary by Chris Cottam (1997), charts how Western films articulate an image of the Western front that is crucial to American self-identity. In an edited collection by Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud (1990) various scholars look at how films about the Vietnam War film, such as Rambo, re-tell the story of the conflict in ways that re-newed American superiority after the defeat.

This literature shows how American identity and foreign policy are mutually constitutive. It also draws attention to the ongoing relationship between discourse and American ideologies, discourses, texts and a self-image that fuel international relations. This is important for the subsequent analysis of Homeland, because it allows me to consider how particular American modes of storytelling are at work to reproduce this particular (intertextual) American identity whilst linking this to American foreign/security policy and practice.

Critical Terrorism Studies

There is an emergent body of work that applies the narrative approach to terrorism, which makes up a part of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) (Jackson, 2007b). Although the label terrorism was first used following the French Revolution (Laqueur, 1977: 149), Terrorism Studies emerged as a sub-discipline of Security Studies in the 1970s. Notable early contributions were Wilkinson’s (1974) Political Terrorism and Laqueur’s (1977) A History of Terrorism. The field was reinvigorated after the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001.\(^9\) Jackson et al. (2011) estimate that there was a 300% increase in peer reviewed articles on terrorism in 2001 and Silke (2009) estimated that in 2005 there was a book about terrorism printed every 6 hours and that 90% of terrorism research has been published after 9/11.

CTS first emerged in the 1980s to criticise the study of terrorism, and to challenge the USA’s military actions in South America (Chomsky, 1988; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Stohl and Lopez, 1984). It re-emerged after 9/11 in reply to the increased study and practice of terrorism and

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\(^9\) Referred to hereafter as 9/11
counter-terrorism. In the broadest sense CTS is driven by a recognition that “terrorism is a
delegitimizing label” (Herring, 2008: 198) so that when it is applied to a particular action both
the violence and perpetrator is delegitimised, and often depoliticised. Furthermore, a ‘terrorist’
threat enables particular ‘counter-terrorism’ responses. Therefore, the label cannot be applied
objectively, but power is wielded and established through applying this label. Now, CTS is a more
established discipline. In 2011 the first text book *Terrorism: a Critical Introduction* (Jackson et al.,
2011) was published. Terrorism Studies is both part of this reaction to 9/11 whilst trying to study
it. Accounts of terrorism and counter-terrorism, even critical accounts, contribute to this
explosion of knowledge about terrorism\(^\text{10}\) and its dominance in our political, cultural and
academic landscape.

As the politics of labelling has been further explored, CTS has moved from trying to fix the term
terrorism in a stable definition to a more flexible approach. Jackson et al. (2011: 215) advocate
a “description” rather than a definition of terrorism which “involves highlighting key
characteristics or regularities that separate these acts from others” but that recognises that “it
is a label whose meaning always contains the possibility for change.” In the words of Jenkins
(1980: 1) “if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to an opponent, then it has
indirectly persuaded the other to adopt its moral viewpoint.” This ‘linguistic’ turn in terrorism
studies enables us to ask questions about how terrorism and counter-terrorism violences are
made possible (Doty, 1993). In recognition that "facts do not carry with them automatic political
responses; they need to be located inside a discourse and used to have a particular effect on
policy and reproductions of identity" (Hansen, 2006: 32). The dichotomies of meaning, the
power of securitisation, and the processes of othering that have been recognised in Security
Studies are now being applied to terrorism. The othering of the terrorists rely upon dichotomies
of good/bad, legitimate/ illegitimate, rational/fanatical amongst others.

CTS has begun to deconstruct these binaries and therefore undo the discursive logics that mean
counter-terrorist violence is legitimate. Scholars within Security Studies, Critical Terrorism
Studies and popular geopolitics have considered the representation of terrorism. Michael Stohl
(2008: 5) put forward “ten myths” of terrorism that he argues can all be deconstructed:

- Political terrorism is exclusively the activity of non-governmental actors.
- All terrorists are madmen.
- All terrorists are criminals.
- One person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter.

\(^{10}\) My own research is also part of this trend. Given that it is a funded PhD it also speaks to the increased
availability of funding for understanding terrorism.
All insurgent violence is political terrorism. The purpose of terrorism is the production of chaos. Governments always oppose non-governmental terrorism. Political terrorism is exclusively a problem relating to internal political conditions. The source of contemporary political terrorism may be found in the evil of one or two major actors. Political terrorism is a strategy of futility.

Richard Jackson has been a key figure working on this from within CTS. In his 2005 book *Writing the War on Terrorism* Jackson examines how the language of political elites, repeated in the media, established and normalised the War on Terror as a military response to 9/11. He identified narratives of America as an innocent victim, threatened by an unreasonable and irrational evil, which justify the War on Terror as not only a reasonable but a necessary response. Paul T. McCartney (2004) has considered how American self-identity and nationalism were explicitly reused and remade in the response to 9/11 by the Bush administration. He argues that due to America’s self-image as exceptionally free enabled Bush to frame the attacks as an attack on freedom. He argues that this image of American exceptionalism underpins the Manichean streak that allows American policy to be constructed in terms of good versus evil. Many other scholars have also analysed how the Bush administration created legitimacy for the war on terror (Croft, 2005; Hunt and Rygiel, 2006; Holland, 2013). These analysis include those who have deconstructed the war on terror through visual representations of authority (Shepherd, 2008), through uses of temporality and claims over the past present and future of terrorism and counter-terrorism (Jarvis, 2009), through the use of space of security and insecurity (Ingram and Dodds, 2009), and of course, through popular culture, as I discuss in the next section.

**Popular Culture and the War on Terror**

A growing area of scholarly enquiry that sprang from, and indeed was always central to, the ‘narrative turn’ in International Relations and Security Studies, is the relationship between popular culture and world politics. Investigations of popular culture and world politics can take various forms (Rowley and Weldes 2015). There is work that considers popular culture as a commodity and so examines the political economy and flow of popular culture. There is work that examines the use of popular culture by the state this might be in terms of propaganda or the military industrial complex (Loffman, 2015). Alternatively some work uses popular culture as a pedagogical tool, or as a way of making world politics more accessible (Weber, 2014).

The final approach, which more directly builds on the discourse analytic work of the cultural turn investigates how popular culture is constitutive of world politics. This work pays attention to the
inter textualities between so called ‘fictional accounts’ and the ‘realities’ of world politics. Popular culture is a place where the ‘common sense’ of International Relations are made. As Rowley (2010: 309) argues “popular culture representations often look similar to, resonate with, or otherwise share structural congruities with supposedly factual [accounts]”. Kyle Grayson et al (2009) argue that the relationship between popular culture and politics is best conceived of as a continuum. This conceptualisation is useful because instead of drawing a line of cause and effect it instead directs researchers to recognise how popular culture and deeply implicated in one another. There is a growing body of literature that has examined various cultural forms. No longer popular culture be treated as pure escapism, but rather it deeply political nature as a site where the representation and construction of world politics and identities has to be acknowledged: whether this is the articulation of a particular ideal of international masculinities in adverts (Hooper, 2001), the articulation of American national identity in our superhero comics (Dittmer, 2005), the myths of American exceptionalism in video games (Robinson, 2015), the articulation of gendered violence in the latest HBO series (Shepherd, 2013) or the use of popular cultural imagery by politicians (Carver, 2010).

Within this field there has been work that has examined the role of popular culture in the constitution of the ‘war on terror’. Security scholars have analysed films during the War on Terror, such as Klaus Dodd’s (2008) Hollywood and the Popular Geopolitics of the War on Terror. Brecher et al. (2010) published Discourses and Practices of Terrorism, in which Hugh Ortega Breton (2010: 78) analysed the representation of terrorism on television. This account shows how terrorism enables identity anxieties to be turned into a substantive fear of the other (in this case radicalised Muslims). He traces this through documentary representations of terrorism, and by analysing the British drama series Spooks.

There has been considerable work on the effect of 9/11 and the War on Terror from Cultural Studies. Two wide ranging accounts are the Prince (2009) book Firestorm: American film in the age of terrorism and the edited collection Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the “War on Terror” from Froula and Randell (2010) which covers cultural artefacts from music, to zombie films. There has also been work on horror movies (Briefel and Miller, 2011), literature (Keniston and Quinn Follansbee, 2010) and videogames (Schwartz, 2006).
The television programme 24 (2001-2010) received a lot of academic attention. Van Veeren (2009) gives a critical account of 24, where she argues that it reproduces the new-conservative discourse on the War on Terror, supporting violent retribution, extraordinary measures and superior forces to win a battle between two distinct sides. Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2009) considered how despite the generally conservative/Republican War on Terror biases that 24 was thought to contain it is invoked to support different political opinions by looking at how it used

**Box 2.1 Terrorism and popular culture as intertextual**

These are some key examples of intertextuality:

- The television show 24 came under a lot of criticisms for its depiction of torture as an effective tool in counter-terrorism. This led to a compliant from General Patrick Fingan, who taught at West Point Military Academy show said that the depiction of torture was having a detrimental effect on the new recruits (Buncombe, 2007).


- Bush invoked the famous Western phrase “Wanted Dead or Alive” in the hunt for Bin Laden. There was often a self-conscious referencing of film from the Bush administration. Including the famous invocation of Top Gun when Bush wore flight uniform, and the “Mission Accomplished banner he stood in front of for his address after the invasion of Iraq.

- United States-led coalition, the U.S. military developed a set of playing cards to help troops identify the most-wanted members of President Saddam Hussein’s government. The cards were officially named the “personality identification playing cards”. They were also a commercial success.

- America’s Army was released in 2002, a video game developed and released by the US Army as a recruitment tool. In promotional material claims it claims to:

  reflects the current day Army by working directly with U.S. Army Soldier Subject Matter Experts who are involved in every step of design, development and testing and are used in the motion capture studio to ensure all movements are authentically Army. Showcases the values, units, equipment, technologies, and careers that make the Army the world’s premier land force.

In the 2006 the Real Heroes programme was released which incorporated the stories of nine soldiers decorated for their service in either Iraq of Afghanistan.

These intertextualities range from more trivial relationships to considerably deeper connections that show how ‘fictional’ and ‘factual accounts’ of the War on Terror are mutually constitutive.
in comment pieces in the press. This touches on the “complex ways in which people negotiate and reconcile their political identity and media preferences when they are in tension with one another” (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2009: 367) Expanding on this theme Christian Erickson (2008: 357) argues that 24 (and Spooks) cannot be simply read but rather are “windows on to the deeply ambiguous and treacherous bio-political micro-politics of the various wars on terror” and “can be viewed as complex worlds which are rife with potential for interpretive ruptures and engagements showing what is ambiguous and possibly subversive in these works”. This account of 24 opens up space to see the negotiations of meaning about terrorism happening between the television show and viewer. The most comprehensive account of terrorism television comes from Stacy Takacs (2012) in her book of that name. The book presents the coverage of terrorism on television thematically to investigate where texts support Bush administration era War on Terror discourses and where they challenge or interrupt them. 

Homeland as a more recent series has yet to receive the same level of academic attention as 24. The first notable article was written by Marysia Zalewski (2013: 133) in which she uses Homeland to theorise emotion in Security Studies. In this short article she considers how Carrie’s bipolar disorder not only show us something about the fear of the unknown in security, but something about the “terrifying disintegration of borders” as Carrie’s emotionality bleeds across spaces and audiences. This gives a first glimpse into how intellectually productive a consideration of Homeland can be. As part of a co-authored article on Terror, Trauma and television 10 Years on (McCabe et al., 2012) Gary Edgerton and Katherine Edgerton write Pathologizing Post-9/11 America in Homeland: Private Paranoia, Public Psychosis in which they argue that Homeland captures the bipolarity of American psyche after 9/11 and powerfully argue that:

Mathison and Brody together enact the confusion, loss of confidence and psychological challenges now confronting the United States … External threats might distract America from inner demons, but Homeland asserts once and for all that the country’s damaged post-9/11 psyche is the real sleeper agent, wreaking havoc at home and abroad (McCabe et al., 2012: 92).

Again, while this is only a short article it demonstrates how well Homeland captures something of what is it to be ‘post 9/11’.

It also hints at the centrality of understanding how emotion works in popular culture. Crawford (2000) and Mercer (1996) led a call to take emotion seriously in International Relations. This is not about inserting emotions, but rather paying critical attention to how emotion lies behind (re)action in security. This ties in to a wider move towards the study of emotions more generally and a concerted effort to bring the body back into post-structural accounts. It therefore relates
to a broad movement from cultural studies, and within the social sciences as a whole, to study ‘affect’ and to re/turn to the material and the embodied in International Relations, a movement which has been termed as “post-deconstruction” (Hemmings 2005; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015). Ahmed (2004, 119) argues in “affective economics” that it is important to research how “emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments” and she goes on to apply this to the role of emotion in relation to the figure of the international terrorist. Affect theory has been specifically applied to consider the solicitation of subjects in the post 9/11 US public sphere through the media (Pease 2009; Grusin 2010; Melley 2012). Without rehearsing the debate over the potential, diverse and contested, contribution affect theory can make to Security Studies in full, I continue to use emotion in this thesis as a way to understand how Homeland makes sense of counter-terrorism, gender and race. I do this because I am interested in the manifestation or interpretation of the text through emotion.

There are considerable methodological challenges involved in trying to study emotion give it is internal and ephemeral nature. It is for this reason that Bleiker and Hutchinson (2008b, 118) argue that representation is one of the key ways that emotions can be examined, they stress: “[t]he importance of examining processes of representation, such as visual depictions of emotions and the manner in which they shape political response and dynamics.” They argue that images both capture and provoke emotional reaction so that “representation is the process by which internal emotions become collective and political” (Bleiker and Hutchinson 2014, 506). There has been work that has considered emotion, security and representations (Ross 2006; Fierke 2013).

What is key in these analyses of terrorism television is the recognition of the intertextuality of fact and fiction, whereby the representation of terrorism is not just entertainment, but constitutive of meaning for terrorism as insecurity. Furthermore, it is clear how terrorism has become a popular theme in film and television and how this plays a role in the articulation of terrorism discourses.

**Missing From These Accounts: the Television and Its Audience**

So far this chapter has shown how there is a rich body of work that has examined the relationship between security, popular culture and identity, and more specifically literatures that have looked at the construction of terrorism and counter-terrorism in popular culture. This thesis builds directly on this literature to perform a discourse analysis of the first three seasons of *Homeland*. It also uses the theoretical framework that has been laid out and applied in the
discourse analytic tradition of International Relations, namely, an attention to intertextuality, to the discursive construction of insecurities and securitised identities.

However, this thesis also makes an intervention into this literature to address a weakness in the literature to date. Security Studies lacks a theorisation of the process of meaning making from television. It has acknowledged that security is created through representations, but the mechanisms are absent from most accounts. Whilst it has put forward television as a site of meaning production it has not developed an account of the relationship between television, audience and the ‘real’ world of security. It does not place the representation of security into its wider cultural context. Accounts of security and popular culture in Security Studies focus on the messages within the text, but they have not asked how these texts are interpreted differently by people depending upon their cultural setting. There is a ‘hypodermic’ model of television lingering in Security Studies, where the text is privileged as a stable site of meaning that assumes the audience simply absorb the meaning from the text (Morely, 2006).

An early exception to the neglect of the audience is Catherine Lutz and Jane Collin’s 1993 book *Reading National Geographic* which supplemented their analysis of representations of the ‘Third world’ in *National Geographic* with interviews in which they presented “actual or potential” readers with photographs to consider what messages they read from them (Lutz and Collins, 1993: 14). There is scholarly work that is beginning to engage with audiences which is being led by scholars in Popular Geopolitics. Dittmer (2010: 42) argues that the focus on discourse left the study of geopolitics and security “disembodied- literally devoid of people.” One account that considers audience reactions is Brereton and Culltoy’s (2012) article on the reception of *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *24*. They look at IMDb reviews and conclude that “the question of textual effect is greatly complicated by the desires and motivations of individuals” and whilst this may seem an obvious point it is often missed from discussions of terrorism discourse (Brereton and Culloty, 2012: 495). A second account comes from Dittmer and Dodds (2008: 437), who are concerned with “the making of geopolitical meaning by audiences as they consume popular culture.” An approach that Dodds (2008) implemented to look at how audiences engage with and contest meaning in films using the film *Rendition* (Hood 2007).

I also argue that turning to Television Studies can also supplement the discourse analysis by adding to the analytic techniques that can be employed in deconstruction. Due to their academic training, and the history of the discipline, scholars of popular culture and world politics can be too wedded to the linguistic. Television studies are more attune to the non-linguistic, to the specificities of the television format, as well as the production and filmic techniques of television.
It can also draw out the specific role and function of television and so supplement my analysis of *Homeland* with a more total view of the techniques of storytelling within the show.

Grayson et al. (2009) put forward a nine point research agenda for the ongoing study of Popular Culture in International Relations. In this they argue more attention needs to be paid to the interpretation of texts, and they suggest that the study of popular culture in IR would be improved by including work from Cultural Studies. This thesis aims to pursue and operationalise these elements of this research agenda. I echo the arguments of Dittimer and Dodds to call for a turn to the work of Cultural Studies and Television Studies and specifically to audience studies. The next section puts forward insights from Television Studies to supplement the work from Security Studies.

**Television Studies**

This section explores work from Cultural Studies and Television Studies in order to theorise the relationship between terrorism, popular culture and identity. It puts forward audience studies as a way to investigate the negotiation of meaning between the text and audience and so embeds television within its context and within people’s lives. It argues that investigations of the audience also enable us to understand television shows within their context. It argues that television studies draw our attention to the distinct role television plays in people’s lives and so in the dissemination of security discourse.

Television Studies, a subfield of Cultural Studies engages with television as a format, and there are various modes of investigation that take place under the label. There is work that examines television as a technology, the political economy of television, the textuality and content of television and that engages with television’s audiences (Miller, 2010). Butler (2012: 18) argues that an understanding of how television makes meaning relies upon three “axioms”:

1. Television texts (programmes, commercials, entire blocks of television time) create meaning
2. Not all meanings are produced equally. Textual devices emphasize some meanings over others, and thus offer a hierarchy of meaning to the TV viewer. Television’s polysemy is structured, by the dominant cultural order, into discourses (systems of belief).
3. The experience of television viewing brings the discourses of the viewer into contact with discourses of the text.

This understanding of television underpins this research
Television Studies: Understanding the Medium.

In 2013 91% of people in Britain had a television in their living room and the average Brit watched 4 hours of television every day (Ofcom, 2013). Television is one medium that brings terrorism into our homes. Television not only represents the world out there, but it imbues it with an intimacy and liveness which shapes the relationship that people have with television (Ellis, 2000).

The first addition that Television Studies can offer to Critical Security Studies accounts of discourse is an understanding of the medium. Within television studies it is established practice to look beyond the linguistic, that is the script of the television show under analysis and to consider the audio-visual that is so important to television programmes (Miller, 2010). This means taking into account features such as the type of editing used, the music that is in each scene, the choice of locations to shoot in. An attention to television analysis can help to address an over-reliance on the linguistic, which can occur in a discourse or narrative analysis. In Shepherd’s (2013) account of Gender Violence and Popular culture, she sets out a methodology that looks at the linguistic and the non-linguistic elements of narrative that can account for the television medium. I argue that an attention to television studies can help to do this methodologically, as I explain in chapter four.

As argued in the section above, building on Ciuta’s (2007) intervention, understanding how Homeland works as a narrative is important to understanding how it produces both meaning and subject positions/identity. I add to this that is important to also understand the particular way that Homeland as a serialised television drama imparts its narrative. To understand the role of television John Ellis (2000) considers how television makes audiences ‘witnesses’ and also provides opportunity to ‘work through’ what we see. The idea of television as ‘witness’ recognises that audiences see the world through their television given its ubiquitous presence. Ellis (2000: 1) argues this creates “powerless knowledge and complicity with what we see”, it gives us knowledge of the event, in the intimate setting of our home, but as a witness, not as an actor. In terms of terrorism this means that we watched in our millions as the planes hit the World Trade Centre, we saw the bloodied survivors of 7/7 leaving the tube stations, what is more we have seen soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, the civilian casualties and the returning coffins of soldiers killed in action. There are also considerable elements of the War on Terror that are not seen, or not represented; extraordinary rendition, drone strikes and Afghani and Iraqi civilian casualties. It is a particular War on Terror that we witness, but terrorism is experienced by many as a televised event, as something ‘out there’ brought into their homes. Takacs (2012: 29) puts forward this view of television in terms of the War on Terror, arguing that
representations of terrorism on television “has constituted viewers as active witnesses of history, responsible for making sense of what they see and what they can’t or won’t see.”

Ellis (2000) goes on to argue that a necessary consequence of television’s role as witness is that it also ‘works through’ the issues it represents. In his words; “[t]elevision can be seen as a vast mechanism for processing the material of the witnessed world into a more narrativised, explained form.” Narrative provides meanings, characters and identities to help the witnessed world make sense. What is more, narrative forms tend towards closure, promising resolution. In that way television works through issues because it gives them meaning, form and function, and promises closure. Inherent to this model is an understanding of the emotional response that is generated by, and inherent to television.

The idea of television genre is also important to analysis of narrative and television, as it directs attention to particular modes, conventions and techniques of storytelling that are used (Miller 2010; Osgerby and Hough Yates, 2001; Thornham and Purvis, 2005). However, at the same time, the popular genres are becoming increasingly difficult to classify with any precision, as competition, and technological innovations mean that ‘post-modern television’ has increased the flow and exchange between genres. However, my analysis of Homeland needs to pay attention to genre as “cultural producers and consumers both tend to operate with notions of identifiable generic forms- textual typologies associated with particular narrative formulae, symbolic codes and technical conventions.” (Osgerby and Gough Yates, 2001: 2). Homeland can be viewed as a television drama or an action drama, it also owes a legacy to crime dramas, to spy and espionage literatures, whilst it also employs storytelling techniques from melodrama.

Sue Thornham and Tony Purvis (2005) explore the idea of working through and narrative theory in relation to television drama. They recognise television as a “primary generator and the most everyday source of narratives” (Thornham and Purvis, 2005: 30). Television dramas are serialised stories that are not simply entertainment, but a place where meanings are produced, and also contested, so that they are a site of cultural struggle. Thornham and Purvis (2005: x) argue that “[t]he narratives of television drama ... contest, mediate and frame our social and individual identities.” In doing this they also emphasize how television dramas rely upon and recreate wider cultural identities and cultural meanings i.e. intertextually. They focus on television drama as a key site to explore changing realities and experiences. In their own words:

Popular television drama is a way of dealing with contemporary social anxieties, but in a way which displaces the actual issues and contradictions inherent in the contemporary situation onto narratives that can be resolved. (Thornham and Purvis, 2005: 2)
Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates (2001) use a different classification of “action TV” to explore the role of the action series, shows such as The Avengers, Starsky and Hutch and Charlie’s Angels. In an edited collection on “Action TV” Osgerby and Hough Yates (2005: 3) argue that the action drama “is not only constituent in wider patterns of social, economic and political change, but which provides audiences with an avenue through which to articulate meaningful cultural responses to these patterns of change.”

I argue that the category of melodrama is also useful to the analysis of Homeland. Homeland is melodramatic in the conventional understanding of the genre, with all of its excesses, affairs; punch ups, and, hysterical outbursts. The idea of melodrama has been expanded beyond particular types of culture to be considered as a type of storytelling that “most often typifies popular American narrative in literature, stage, film, and television when it seeks to engage with moral questions” (Williams, 2001: 16). Melodrama is not being treated here in the traditional sense, as a closed genre, but rather as a form of storytelling that occurs across genres, invoking emotion, excess and dichotomies of good and evil to create a story of morality.

By firmly embedding my analysis within television studies I can recognise the importance of form as well as content in meaning (re)creation. This means that my analysis can consider how the intertextual layers that are contained within an understanding of genre help to build to create meaning for Homeland. It can also allow me to understand how particular storytelling techniques are employed to make sense of terrorism in Homeland. They conceptualise drama as a site where cultural, social and political struggles takes place.

There is an important caveat that alters the role of television drama, as Takacs (2005) argues, where television, with few channels, used to be able to present one clear version of national identity, or one narrative of a political or security event, it is now more diffuse and there are many competing narratives. There are now innumerable television channels, television is available through online services, illegally downloaded, on cheap DVDs and in boxsets. In his work on the representation of terrorism and the War on Terror in film and television, Stephen Prince (2013) recognises this and argues that people choose to watch versions of the War on

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11 It has been argued that it is no longer appropriate to analyse film or television in terms of genre because these rigid categories not only fail to describe modern television, but they also imply a structuralism that limits analysis of television Mittell, J. 2001. A cultural approach to television genre theory. Cinema Journal. 40(3), pp.3-24. Postmodern television is a label often applied to television output that self-consciously plays with the conventions of television and so demonstrates reflexivity, which seems to describe Homeland. It is thought to undermine the usefulness of genre in television analysis. However, taking genre as a way of communicating meaning that is based on the interaction of text and audience goes beyond the idea of a rigidly applied classification system, to enable particular analytical approaches.
Terror that suit their pre-existing opinions. Therefore, rather than television putting forward one truth it now “[smothers] it in explanation from almost every angle” (Takacs, 2012: 7). This also means that the television format has had to adapt as the commercial imperatives of television mean that television programmes have to compete. The term ‘quality drama’ has emerged to describe television shows like Homeland. These are shows, usually produced in America, which deliberately blend the ‘popular’ and the ‘serious’. They have high production values, draw big audiences and are commercially affective as they target affluent audiences (Brower, 1992; Thornham and Purvis, 2005). ‘Quality television’ has emerged as a reaction to the fragmentation of television across innumerable satellite and digital channels and as a response to the resultant intensified competition within television (Dunleavy, 2009). They are written to appeal to a ‘high value’ audience; wealthy, middle class, educated and young, whose disposable incomes makes them appealing to advertiser (Dunleavy, 2009). This audience is highly media literate, and demands complex representations. Furthermore, the complex plot lines help contribute to the commercial success as they demand loyalty from their viewers. Key to modern television shows profitability is their ability to be syndicated internationally and therefore they no longer have to appeal to one geographically bounded audience, but rather aim for niche, but high value, audience internationally.

These shows have had to react to the increasing interactivity of television that has accompanied the rise of the internet and social networking. Dunleavy (2009: 10) argues that as well as big budgets they share characteristics of “invention and (re)invention…and delight in making reflexive references to established texts in popular culture.” They are identifiable by their unique use of television conventions, a cultural or aesthetic edginess, investments in realism and a tendency to cover controversial topics using challenging treatments that allow for greater narrative complexity.

Recognising Homeland’s place in this group of shows helps us to understand its treatment of terrorism. It is important to consider Homeland within its wider production context and to recognise television as a commercialised set of images. It demands that we take into account the form, as well as the content, of the story of terrorism being told. It recognises that the complexity of the show is part of a wider trend in television that is similarly controversial and edgy. It prompts wider questions about the generic positioning of Homeland and the effects that this has on how the terrorism story is told, as well as questions about who this story is being told to.
Audience Studies

A crucial contribution to understanding how terrorism is made meaningful through television comes from audience studies which put forward ways to explore how the meaning of terrorism is made through the interaction between show and viewer. Audience studies initially entailed measurements of the audience en mass, and this work involves large scale studies about the demographics and habits of audience viewership inspired largely by advertising demand for this information in order to target advertising (and hence programming) most effectively (Miller, 2010).

However, audience studies also emerged as a challenge to the cultural interpretation of television that explored the messages, meaning and ideologies contained in broadcast (Miller, 2010; Morley, 2006). This branch of audience studies sought to move away from the simple model of television as an all-powerful distributor of dominant meanings that assumed the audience were passive and undiscriminating and homogenous (Osgerby and Hough-Yates, 2010). This branch of Audience studies was inspired by the encoding and decoding model of Stuart Hall.

In the words of (Hall, 1981: 171), “[b]efore this message has an ‘effect’ (however defined), satisfy a ‘need’, or be put to ‘use’ it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which ‘have an effect’, influence, entertain, or persuade.” Although this branch of reception studies has become established within Cultural Studies, this work has not yet been integrated with Security Studies, though it has much to offer in the understanding of how security becomes meaningful, discourses of terrorism become dominant, and in/security discourses relate to people’s lives. In his book Popular Culture, Geopolitics and Identity, Dittmer (2010) makes a strong case for the inclusions of audience studies to understand the role of popular culture in world politics.

According to Hall’s (1981) model the meaning of a text is formed through both the encoding of the text in its production and the decoding practices of readers. The text cannot fully control its final meaning because different people will read it differently, drawing on their own various cultural, social and personal situations. In this way context is brought back into an understanding of television. What is more, it opens up potential space for resistance in the interaction between text and viewer. Hall theorised this in terms of codes, whereby readers can read in line with the text which Hall called a hegemonic position, they can take a negotiated code, where they have some opposition to the preferred meaning, or they can take an oppositional reading where they read against the text. This is the model of the active audience, who do not simply passively absorb television. There is still a preferred reading in Hall’s model, the meanings that can be read may be multiple but they are not infinite, nor are they entirely free from the power of the text. Therefore, the interplay of agency and structure is recognised.
This prompted a range of audience studies in the 1980s and early 1990s (Katz and Liebes, 1990; Morley, 1980; Ang, 1985; Brunsdon, 1981). John Fiske (1989) added to Hall’s model with an idea of ‘popular pleasures’ which he argues are the social pleasures involved in decoding a text. This pleasure only results when a text is useful and audiences are engaged in it. Put more simply, it is enjoyable to ‘get’ and to critique a text. Fiske showed how when a text becomes popular the producer of the text loses control over its meaning. He stresses the potential for activity and agency on the part of the audience, to identify the space for potential resistance to the intended meaning of a text.

Stanley Fish (1979) added to audience studies with an idea of interpretive communities. Again this is premised on the ideas that there is not correct reading of a text, but multiple readings. The word ‘interpretive’ points to the active and shifting nature of the readings, and the word ‘communities’ highlights the shared interpretive strategies amongst people with similar positionalities. These communities might be based on gender, race or class in the wider sense, or might be down to shared professions, political views or educational background, what is important to stress is that these communities are recognised as learnt rather than natural groups. This approach provides: the explanation for both the stability of interpretations amongst different readers (they belong to the same community) and for the regularity with which a single reader will employ different strategies and thus make different texts (he belongs to different communities) (Fish, 1979: 484).

A further insight that interaction with television’s audience brings is an understanding of the production and consumption context. Lembo (2000) argues television watching needs to be understood as an activity in people’s lives. He writes that “the complexities of sociality” are missing from post-structural accounts that dominate Cultural Studies. Therefore it is important that a study of television takes into account the context of consumption. This also relates to work from Cultural Studies that considers how consumption of particular texts is itself part of the production of particular identities. As Beverley Skeggs (2004) argues, cultural consumption is central to the display of the self. This builds on Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) seminal text *Distinction*, in which he considers the power, or in his own terms “symbolic violences”, that are inherent in the minute distinctions and expressions of taste. Born from this was his idea of cultural capital, as assumed knowledge that confers power and status. The majority of work that has focused upon the expression of cultural capital has focused upon the machinations of taste and processes of consumption in relation to class. Yet, their approach is important to understanding the way that cultural consumption is part of the reflexive accumulation of the self, whereby through the relationship to texts and to culture certain audiences can perform their identity, whilst recognising that these cultural resources are only available to some
audience members. Therefore, exclusion is central to this process as the ‘others’ in the discourse are both excluded from the discourse, but at the same time necessary to act as the visible boundaries of the particular self in creation. In Skeggs’ (2004: 20) words, this is about how: “claiming selfhood can be seen as performative of class, as self-hood brings into effect entitlements not only denied to others, but reliant on others being made available both as a resource and as a constitutive limit.”

In the analysis of the audience this calls me to ask questions about who is consuming Homeland, and how the audience I spoke to consumed Homeland.

This attention to the audience also needs to bear in mind that interaction with television has itself developed since the emergence of audience studies in the 1980s. As Amanda Lotz (2007) argues, the way that television is broadcast has changed, and therefore so too has the way that the audience interacts with it. Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst (1998) chart the uses, debates and tensions within Audience studies that have followed the encoding/decoding model of Hall. They argue that work on encoding/decoding is actually about how far audience members are incorporated into dominant ideology and how far they are resistant to it. They argue that this paradigm has itself being superseded, due to the internal conceptual changes, but also because of the changing nature of audiences themselves. Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998: 36) put forward the “spectacle/performance paradigm” to account for these changes. This model is built on the foundations of Hall’s model, but it recognises that in a modern setting audience interactions with texts are more complicated than a simple model of the audience encapsulates. They see the audience as socially constructed, they recognise that texts are now part of larger diffuse mediascapes, and rather than asking simple question so of ideological incorporation and resistance they are more interested in identity formation and the role of television in everyday life. Their insights are useful for my analysis because they bring together my concern with the meaning of Homeland, the position of Homeland within a wider discourse of terrorism, the performative nature of being a fan of Homeland, and the negotiation of media that engages emotion (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 178).

Terrorism on Television

This chapter has set out the work from International Relations and Security Studies that this project is building upon. It has introduced the concepts of discourse analysis, intertextuality, narrative and identity that have been used within Critical Security Studies, Critical Terrorism Studies and the cultural turn in International Relations. This thesis will redeploy this analysis to perform a deconstructive analysis of Homeland. I build on and updates existing work on the role
of popular culture in war on terror discourses by analysing a contemporary text and using this to ask how the discourses of the War on Terror are continuing to adapt.

However, I also identified weaknesses in the accounts of popular culture and world politics to date, and particularly in the investigations of popular culture and the war on terror. Namely, a lack of engagement with television as a medium and more importantly a neglect of the audience. I put forward insights from television studies to address these weaknesses. I showed how television studies calls us to pay attention to the genre, mode and technical aspects of storytelling on television. I also put forward audience studies as a way to engage with the interaction between the text and its viewer.

In this project I aim to bring these disciplines together. To perform a deconstructive analysis of Homeland that is informed by Critical Security Studies and by Television Studies and crucially an investigation of the reception of the television show amongst a British audience. This synthesis equips the research with a methodology that takes into account the form and content of television, reinserts the discussion of insecurity and popular culture into its wider cultural setting and reinvigorates reception studies as a place of politics. Adding insights from Cultural Studies, such as the work on audience studies can enable a better understanding of security when it is being explored in relation to culture. Bringing these insights to bear ensures that this study engages with the interaction between terrorism on television and its viewers, and fundamentally, security and subjectivity.

What this means for terrorism television is that television is a place of witnessing and working through social anxieties related to terrorism and the War on Terror. This working through is done in the negotiation of meaning between the television show and its audience. Television puts the (already witnessed) experiences and discourses of a complex world of terrorism into narrative form, telling a story of in/security. In doing so it creates particular versions of counter-terrorism and it does this through (and whilst) creating subjectivities for the television viewer that positions them in relation to terrorism. What is more, this enables cultural anxieties surrounding race and gender to be projected onto discourses of insecurity that have identifiable threats and enemies.

The synthesis of Television and Security Studies that informs my approach enables a new set of research questions to emerge that seek to consider these links, and to begin to theorise how security operates at the level of the everyday and the level of subjectivity. Questions such as; how do audiences reproduce or resist security discourses? What do people draw on to make sense of security? Do audiences read with texts or do they subvert them? If so, how and what does this mean for agency and resistance? How does security interact with subjectivities?
do people read security discourses differently? How does security work through cultural anxieties?

The research is focused on Homeland and this close focus enables me to draw out the processes of meaning negotiation at work. This doesn’t give a definitive account of the meanings for terrorism contained in this show, but rather allows me to unpack how this show interacts with security discourse and terrorism discourse more widely, how it reinforces meaning, but also any potential moments of resistance and re-articulation. It is about unpacking the processes at work through the creation of subject positions in the text. It asks how this meaning is negotiated by people that watch the show. It is about the moments of intertextuality. It is about how emotion is used to retell a terrorism story and it draws attention to the context and mode of consumption. In a recent blog post Dittmer (2015) argues that popular culture should not be studied as a thing, but instead as something that ‘is done’, he argues that “popular culture is about doings, about lively interactions between people, pop culture artefacts and the wider world of politics.” It is these interactions that are at the heart of this thesis.

Attempts to understand this link between security, popular culture and identity are growing in a range of diverse academic locations. Therefore this project could be considered to be at the margins of any of these or rather as a contribution to a growing interdisciplinary movement to theorise security as culture. This means bringing together research approaches from Security Studies, Sociology, Television Studies, Audience Studies, Gender scholarship and Critical Race Studies As Security Studies goes on to look critically at everyday practices and popular culture, it can be strengthened by continuing to be interdisciplinary. This makes the boundaries of Security Studies itself insecure, and yet in doing so can sharpen the critical edge of the work, to equip scholars to question, disturb and undermine dominant narratives of security and so traditional concepts and to rework them in potentially more positive ways.

The subsequent chapter adds another level of analysis into this understanding of terrorism discourses by incorporating a critical attention to the role of gender and race in terrorism discourse. Chapter four then goes on to show how this theoretical framework is operationalised methodologically, to show how I performed a discourse analysis, how I used focus groups to investigate audience negotiations with the text and how I remained aware of the ethical challenges that this research involves.

Ultimately, this combines to a discourse analysis of the first three seasons of Homeland as well as a study of the audience reception of the show. This is done to strengthen the understanding of how popular culture, security and identity interrelate, to show how there is a space to resist
and rework what is taken for granted. It is a deeply political challenge to show how stories of terrorism, race and gender matter.
Chapter 3
Gender, Race and Terrorism

This chapter explores the interaction of gender, race and terrorism. It considers how race and gender operate in terrorism discourse. In the previous chapter, I suggested that the analytic focus of Security Studies should shift from the study of coherent figures and practices (such as states, war and the military) to understanding the interactions of security practices and the everyday through popular culture. This chapter adds an understanding of race and gender into the discourse analytic approach outlined in the previous chapter. It puts forwards Puar’s (2007) concept of terrorist assemblages to theorise these interactions. It explores work that has linked gender, race and terrorism to show how the concepts of ‘the terrorist’, ‘the victim’ and ‘the hero’ have come to populate stories of terrorism. It considers how these gendered and raced characters provide meaning for terrorism discourse and simultaneously act as (re)articulations of gender and race themselves. It lays out a theoretical framework for this project in more detail and it positions this project within a trajectory of feminist and critical race work that has come before it. This work is heavily indebted to Puar (2007: xxiv), who argues that, “discourses of counter-terrorism are intrinsically gendered, raced and sexualised and that they illuminate the production of imbricated normative patriot and terrorist corporealities that cohere against and through each other.”

Narrative identity is at the centre of the theorisation of race and gender in this thesis. This project is not just an attempt to investigate how race and gender interact in terrorism discourse. It is an explicitly political/normative project which aims to destabilize gender binaries and deconstruct race, in order to combat racisms and restrictive gender norms that are invigorated by terrorism discourse. This deconstruction enables a critical engagement with terrorism, to ask ‘how possible’ questions of securitising discourses that enable particular expressions of power and violence.

This chapter explains how gender, race and assemblages are being used in this project. The chapter is split into three sections, the first section theorises gender as a discursive construction. It then reviews accounts that have shown how gender constructions have contributed to War on Terror discourses whilst discourses of terrorist insecurity have reified gender roles. The second section theorises race as a discursive construction. I consider theories of Orientalism and Islamophobia often used to analyse the relationship between race and terrorism. These frames are rejected and a framework of polyracisms and the explicitly anti-racist standpoint of this project is put forward. In particular this section makes a case for recognising the workings of
whiteness in terrorism discourse. In the third and final section these are brought together to consider terrorist assemblages. I review intersectional theory and defend my choice to adopt terrorist assemblages as an approach. The chapter ends with a summary of the raced and gendered stereotyped characters of the War on Terror that demonstrates understandings of the interactions of gender and race and terrorism in dominant War on Terror discourse.

**Gender**

This section outlines how terrorism discourses interact with gender. It begins with an exploration of how gender operates, it turns to Feminist Security Studies to theorise the interaction of gender and security and ends with a consideration of the role gender has played in terrorism discourses thus far.

**Theorising Gender**

I take the same narrative approach to gender as I take to security. This is well articulated by Sylvester (2002: 4) who argues “men and women are the stories that are told about ‘men and ‘women’.” This builds on the work of post-structural scholars to recognise that gender is a discursive creation. In the words of Butler (2007: 7), “[g]ender is ... the discursive/cultural means by which ‘sexed nature’ or a ‘natural sex’ is produced and established as pre-discursive.” Masculinity and femininity are not binaries fixed in nature, but are spaces on a fluid and ever changing gender hierarchy. An investigation of gender is not simply about sexed bodies, but interrogates the ongoing re-articulation of gender that creates these sexed bodies and therefore the range of possible actions for men and women.

What is more, gender is a discursive tool; it is not only produced, but it is productive of meaning. In the words of Cohn (1993: 233), “[w]hen I am talking about a ‘gender discourse’ I am not talking about a system of meanings, of ways of thinking, images and words that first shape how we experience, understand and represent ourselves, but that also do more than that; they shape other aspects of our life and culture.” There is no ontological starting point that is pre-discursive or non-gendered. Meaning is organised along the (albeit false and insecure) binaries of gender; strong/weak, hard/soft, rational/irrational, public/private, and so forth. This articulates the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Gender is “a noun, a verb, a logic that is product/productive of” other discourses (Shepherd, 2010: 5). Applying a gender lens offers deconstructive potential because if gender is shown to be contestable rather than natural, so too are those concepts that rely upon it to invoke ideas of natural difference.

As well as being a gender analysis this thesis is also a feminist account. Whilst feminism is a deeply contested term, and indeed better understood as a plural and heterogeneous movement,
I use it here to refer to the fact that this project is a political attempt to explore and ultimately undermine gender binaries and their as they are reused and recreated in terrorism discourse (Steans, 2006). This is particularly relevant for a show that has received criticism and praise for its depiction of gender.\textsuperscript{12} My analysis then also needs to engage in the debate that surrounds ‘post feminism’, and particularly ‘post feminism’ in popular culture (Robbie, 2004; Coppock, Hayden and Richter, 1995; Tasker and Negra, 2007). Post-feminism as a term is sometime used to mean feminism that critiques the ‘second-wave’ feminism of the 1970s, it is sometimes invoked to describe an idea that we are now beyond gender equality (either because it has been achieved, or because it is no longer a goal of feminist enquiry), and finally it is also used to describe an “active process through which the gains of feminism are undermined” (Robbie, 2004: 255). I am therefore concerned with the representation of gender and also the representation of feminism itself in \textit{Homeland}.

\textbf{Gender and International Relations}

This deconstructive potential of gender has been applied by Gender and International Relations\textsuperscript{13} and Feminist Security scholars. Gender and International Relations does not treat gender as a variable that can simply be added to the study of world politics, but rather notices the gendered foundations of international relations theory, policy and practice. Through the gender lens it is made apparent that the foundations of International Relations are not gender neutral (Steans, 2006).

Not only is International Relations gendered male in the sense that it is done by men, it has “masculinist underpinnings” (Tickner, 1992: 132). The concept of ‘universal man’ that lies at the centre of International Relations theory is ‘public man’ of enlightenment political thought; liberal, rational and independent (Carver, 1996). He does not reflect the lived experience of people in the international as interdependent, emotional and networked. This created parsimonious theory that in particular excludes women. Simultaneously, International Relations underpins particular conceptions of masculinity (Hooper, 2001), for example, military masculinities of combat rely on ideas of strength, rationality, comradery, and uniformity. Women are excluded physically (they are not allowed in front line service) and they are excluded discursively, (rejecting feminine qualities, such as sympathy or softness, is essential in the process of making the modern soldier). Thus military activity physically, socially and metaphorically shapes the male body (Hooper, 2001: 82).

\textsuperscript{12} In the media Carrie has been described as a “feminist hero” (Romano, 2103) and as an example of “fake feminism” (Dockterman, 2013).

\textsuperscript{13} I capitalise International Relations when referring to the academic discipline, and I do not capitalise international relations when I am referring to the practices of world power and politics.
These gender constructions underpin key ideas in International Relations (Steans, 2006). The state is constructed as a masculine entity. The state is the product (and productive) of public man (Hooper, 2001). The state is coded as masculine as it exerts a masculine power over its subjects, particularly in the wielding of legitimate violence. The logic of masculine protection carries to the level of modern security state which is expected to protect its subjects with paternal care (Young, 2003). The state institutionalises of gender identities by codifying and legalising particular ways of being. It is not simply a symbolically masculine entity, but a locus of patriarchal power (MacKinnon, 1998). Whilst in reality the effect of the state permeates every level of its citizen’s lives, the resilient dichotomy of public and private constructs the home as separate space. War is the ultimate expression of masculine power for the state (Hooper, 2001; Tickner, 1992; Higate and Hopton, 2004). Elshtain (1987) considers how the depiction of men as ‘just warriors’ and women as ‘beautiful souls’ naturalises their roles in warfare. These constructions in warfare strengthen the gendered roles in society more generally. Higate and Hopton (2004: 432) argue that “militarism is the major means by which the value and beliefs are associated with ideologies of hegemonic masculinity are eroticized and institutionalised.”

In contrast to this, women are constructed as “mothers, monsters, whores” in international relations (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007). Their activity is excluded from what counts as global politics, yet their bodies are invoked as the ‘motherland’, as ‘virgin territory’ or as the innocent victim onto which masculinist logics of protection are played out (McClintock, 1995; Young, 2003). This construction also renders men as always potentially violent versus women’s naturally innocent status.

Moreover, the threat/promise of war is used to support the constant need for a military state and to protect the ‘national interest’ (Weldes, 1999). War no longer describes a spatially or temporally bounded event, but rather a constant source of insecurity that bleeds into everyday life (Enloe, 2000a). The corollary to this is the association of women with peace. This is problematic because it can further contribute to the disappearance of the violences that women experience (Steans, 2006). What is more this feminisation of peace can be used to police military masculinities. For example, Cohn (1987) noted that reflections on the morality of nuclear strategy were dismissed as ‘girly.’

Once these constructions were identified by Gender and International Relations scholars, it was immediately deconstructed as the international was shown to happen in the ‘mundane’. For example the interaction of gender and international relations were identified, in the practices of advertising, the sex workers at military bases, and the interaction between a Californian woman and her Mexican nanny (Enloe, 2000b). International relations are not the gender
neutral ground of world politics. They rely upon and recreate gender identities. The feminist study of international relations and security involves undermining the constructions that are the expression of masculine power and shifting attention to the marginalised and ignored aspects of day to day activity that make up the complexities of the international (Detraz, 2012).

**Gender and Terrorism**

Gender is also central in terrorism discourse and many of the same gendered constructions as have been identified in Gender and International Relations literature can be applied to terrorism discourse. An orthodox understanding of terrorism rests on ideas of the state’s monopoly of legitimate violence (Blakeley, 2007), the inherently gendered division between innocent and military targets (Kinsella, 2011) and the recourse to logics of masculine protection (Shepherd, 2006).

Accounts of gender and terrorism often begin with an analysis of the female terrorist (Bloom 2005; Sjoberg 2009). This is telling because it reveals that ‘the terrorist’ is usually assumed to be a male/masculine figure. Feminist Security Studies scholars have problematized the representation of ‘female terrorists’ in academia and the media (Nacos, 2005; Bloom, 2012; Detraz, 2012; Sjoberg, 2009). They have shown that accounts that focus upon female terrorists often depict female terrorists as “exception to the rule of peaceful women” (Detraz, 2012: 111). That ‘female’ terrorists are separated out shows how they are thought to be essentially different from the mainstream discourses around terrorism (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007: 9). What is more, they are typically depicted as responding for personal reasons such as grief (for example the depiction of the black widow suicide-bombers) or because they are under the influence of men (Bloom, 2012). These depictions rob the women involved of political agency (Bloom, 2012; Brunner, 2007; Sjoberg, 2009; Detraz, 2012). There is also a focus in the media and academia on what female terrorists look like above and beyond the usual treatment of male terrorists (Friedman, 2008; Nacos, 2005).

However, a gendered account of terrorism is not just about the role of women in terrorism. Indeed this approach can actually serve to reify the association that it is only women that have gender (Carver, 1996). A gendered approach needs to take into account how the discourses of gender help terrorism to make sense, and how stories of terrorism rearticulate particular versions of gender. Feminist scholars have applied a gender lens to the War on Terror to show how gender has been key in creating meaning for terrorism and support for counter-terrorism whilst simultaneously securing meaning for gender (Brittain, 2006; Hunt and Rygiel, 2006; Lee-Koo, 2007; Shepherd, 2006). Scholars have considered how Bush used a rhetoric of women’s rights to garner support for the invasion of Afghanistan to protect the rights of Afghani women.
(Shepherd, 2006; Hunt and Rygiel, 2006) through a narrative that places a female victim (Afghani women) in need of protection from powerful (American) men. At the same time this serves to gender Afghani men and terrorists as failed men, who cannot keep their own women safe (Shepherd, 2006).

Two cases have been analysed in detail because they reveal a lot about the gendered logics of the War on Terror. The first is the case of prisoner abuse in Abu Ghraib. The pictures of abuse were shocking in their depravity, but what occupied media attention was the women soldiers involved in the abuse and in particular Lyndie England. Gender scholars have argued that the shock at women’s role in the abuses shows that the construction of women as naturally more peaceful still exists in a way that misses that military masculinities and masculinist practices can be performed by men and women (Enloe, 2004; Kaufman-Osborn, 2005; Eisenstein, 2004). What is more, they have drawn out how these abuses relied upon (and were in part a product of) military masculinities, as the abuses were about the sexual humiliation of the prisoners, through putting them into female positions of sexual submission, nudity and using menstrual blood (Enloe, 2004; Kaufman-Osborn, 2005; Eisenstein, 2004).

The second case is the rescue of Private Jessica Lynch, the story of this soldier’s rescue was told in a way that fitted with a traditional story of the heroic rescue of a damsel in distress. Although Jessica Lynch was a serving soldier in the US army, she was instrumentally used to represent the female victim who can be heroically rescued by virtuous American soldiers from the hands of her barbaric/depraved captors. It was telling that the dramatic rescue narrative (Lynch who had been stabbed shot, and potentially raped, was rescued in the dead of night by an elite band of soldiers) did not fit with later accounts of a staged rescue of a soldier who was being treated in an Iraqi hospital. Gender scholars drew out how the story relies upon and recreates particular gendered identities of hero, victim and villain, and showed how Lynch came to be used as a plot device in the official War on Terror story (Pin-Fat and Stern, 2005; Takacs, 2005). The critiques of the Jessica Lynch and the Lyndie England cases are concerned with deconstructing the gendered stories that are told. Whilst these cases are very telling, there is a need to both add to and update this account of the role of gender and the War on Terror.

One area where there have been accounts that have tackled how gender and terrorism are related in research on how gender and terrorism are represented in popular culture. In her book Media representations of gender and torture post-9/11 Gronnvoll (2010) traces the link between the coverage of torture on the news and how popular culture has responded to these events. She argues that a Western cultural longing for a saviour is partially fulfilled through fictional programming portrayals of masculine warriors who engage in torture and remain heroic. The
Terrorists themselves are represented alternately as failed men, unable to protect ‘their women’, irrationally and emotionally (coded feminine) wielding violence, and simultaneously as hyper-masculinised men, too violent, sexually aggressive, hairy and barbaric (Bhattacharya, 2008). Gender is used to enable an othering of the figure of the terrorist as essentially/naturally different from ‘us’. This in turn produces the western counterpart as correctly gendered; the counter-terrorist operative correctly wields violence, rationally and efficiently in defence of women and children. He is powerful, but not barbaric, seeking justice rather than revenge; he is sexy and vigorous in his uniform, but he does not rape.

Carroll (2011) looks at discourse in popular culture, from films to literature, to consider the depiction of the heroic masculinity that emerged after 9/11. He argues that this (re)articulation sought to answer an (imagined) ‘crisis of masculinity’ in America. Faludi (2007) considers how gender stereotypes were rearticulated after 9/11 to present a new, white, hero figure of the firefighter. She considers how this discourse also created the ideal female citizen, who supports the war by buying American; she makes home, keeps safe and provides the counter-point to the oppressed Afghani women.

Terrorism discourse has been shown to be deeply gendered, with masculinities and femininities playing a role in the othering of the terrorist and so used to support the case for the war. Building on the work of Feminist Security Studies this project seeks to examine the mutual constitution of gender and terrorism. This project will update these accounts to examine the changing representation of terrorism more than ten years after 9/11. More importantly, this project will complicate these accounts in three ways. It will consider the interaction of race, gender and terrorism, it will consider potential space for resistance and third it will ask how these discourses take effect, to examine the processes by which terrorism stories come to affect our conceptions of gender (and vice versa) through an engagement with the audience.

**Race**

One aim of this chapter is to investigate how the racialisation of the terrorism discourse works to create meaning for terrorism and counter-terrorism activities. A concern about race and terrorism in contemporary Britain will necessarily encounter the racialisation of Muslims as ‘Islamic terrorism’ dominates contemporary Anglo-American terrorism discourses. Similarly, it should engage with the (re)articulation of whiteness in contrast to the Muslim terrorist ‘other’. A concern with race offers deconstructive potential to the security of ‘us versus them’ and acts as a challenge to the process by which insecurities are reused to rearticulate race. This project aims to explore how narratives of terrorism relate to systems of racial power, and simultaneously to consider how narratives of race establish meaning in terrorism discourses.
**Theorising Race**

The narrative identity approach is applied to race, recognising race as a discursive creation, created in the stories that are told about race. As Law (2010) argues, race is a way of making sense of the world. Put emphatically by Dyer (1997: 71), “[r]acial imagery is central to the organisation of the modern world.” It is a complex, ever changing way of ‘naturalising’ differences between groups of people. Race is best understood as a process of racialisation, whereby a group of people come to be viewed as a race. Racisms relate to hierarchies, prejudices and discrimination that evolve from these racial categories and support practices of power and domination (Law, 2010).

This project is situated within the field of anti-racist scholarship and a framework of polyracisms (Law, 2010). It builds on the work of scholars of Orientalism. Said (1979), often considered the founder of Orientalism, used the term to describe three things; first, an academic field, second, a way of dividing the world into a binary of Orient and Occident and the associated inventions of ‘The East’ and ‘The West’, and third, to capture the power relations inherent in this dualism. In his own words he described it as a way of, “dealing with [the Orient] by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it, in short Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1979: 3).\textsuperscript{14}

Said’s (1979) work is often suggested to be the foundation of post/colonial discourse analysis (Lockman, 2004: 149). It is useful for this study because it shows how ‘The East’ and ‘The West’ have come into being as binaries. Orientalism was first used by Said to trace how ‘The East’ had been represented in Europe as an essential other, and so it can furnish my study with an understanding of the historicity of the racialisation of Muslim people/s. Another key point of Orientalism is that the identity of ‘the West’ was established by the invocation of this othered East. In the words of Yegenoglu (1998: 6), Orientalism enables “the cultural representation of the West itself by way of detour through the other.” As Sardar (1999: 13) argues, “[t]he Orient of Orientalism is a constructed artefact through which the West explains, expounds, objectifies and demonstrates its own contemporary concerns.” Furthermore, a key argument in Orientalism is the connection between these representations and the imperial project. A theory of neo-Orientalism (Tuastad, 2003) has been developed to focus upon how terrorism discourse

represents a new phase in Orientalism, whereby Islam is portrayed not as submissive, but as aggressive.

However, this thesis does not use a framework of Orientalism because whilst it is a useful way of conceptualising the archive of representations that current articulations draw from, it is an inadequate way of capturing the full complexity of racisms. Orientalism (along with other theories of racism that place colonialism as the central locus of racism) actually repeats an ethnocentrism that places Western histories and experiences as the central scheme around which to organise our understanding of the world (Law, 2014). Orientalism has been accused of giving too monolithic an account of Orientalist/colonial discourses that disguises the multiple (inconsistent and incompatible) voices within them. The ‘one theory fits all’ approach means that local and specific re-articulations of racist imagery are underexplored. Fred Halliday (2003: 193) argues that “[w]hile historical legacies play a role … these cannot explain the incidence of anti-Muslim racism today. Like all cultural residues and themes, it is their revival, reformulation and redeployment in contemporary contexts that has to be explained.”

Halliday (2003) points out how accounts of Orientalism run the danger of essentialising racial difference by overstating the longevity of racisms, which reproduces an idea of essentially different cultures. Therefore, Orientalism is not entirely flawed, but it cannot be the only frame with which racialised discourses of ‘the other’ are examined because it prioritises the colonial experience and does not give enough space for a more complex account of the processes of racialisation.

This thesis is aligned to accounts of Islamophobia where this has been used as a way to challenge the racist practices and discourses that Muslims face. The concept of Islamophobia has been used to name the growing racisms that are directed towards Islam as a faith and Muslim people.15 However, I argue Orientalism is an inadequate frame to tackle the racialisation of Muslims and the racist practices that it results in because the structure of the word and concept is limiting. This is because it focuses on the notion of Islam and therefore fails to capture the plethora of racist sentiments which vary across time and space (Richardson, 2012). I use the concept of anti-Muslim racisms within a polyracisms frame (Law, 2014) which enables an exploration of the dynamics of racisms in the terrorism discourses. It is a conceptual framework that is not premised on reducing the complexity of racisms and invocations of race to a general

15 For example: Islamophobia Watch is a not for profit project that highlights islamophobic reporting in the West; November was dubbed “Islamophobia Awareness Month” by a collection of community groups and charities in Great Britain; There are many community groups, faith organisations and anti-racism charities that use the term Islamophobia, such as Women Against Islamophobia and racism, Fight Against Islamophobia and Racism, Interfaith against Islamophobia.
theory which results in an incomplete account. Terrorism discourses can be seen as one of the multiple dynamics that are at work in the racialisation of Muslims. The term racism is left in here politically, to stress the ongoing presence of racism that needs to be acknowledge as such in order to be tackled. It enables me to focus on the hostility that is directed towards Muslim (and non-Muslim) people allows me to emphasize the racist abuse and harassment that they experience.

The establishment of whiteness is the necessary corollary to the racialisation of Muslims. The study of whiteness calls us to recognise the creation and deployment of whiteness in terms of race. Dyer (2003), a key figure in whiteness studies, warns that failing to do so can serve to re-establish a white norm that leaves racial privilege unchallenged. This leads to a project of “making whiteness strange”, which examines the practices by which whiteness comes to be an unmarked racial category and the power secured and wielded through its invisibility. The research is centred on a discursive understanding of whiteness, where it is not a natural or stable category, but rather a discursive creation that is form and function of racialised power.

Gabriel (1998: 5) puts forward five uses of whiteness: white pride politics, which is about the “conscious pursuit and celebration of whiteness”; normative whiteness which may not be explicitly racist, but which contains implicitly racialist values, aesthetics and forms of inclusion and exclusion; ontological whiteness which is about the privileges that are “bestowed on those commonly assumed to be ‘white’”; progressive whiteness which “condemns white pride and normative versions of whiteness yet, in which ‘whites’ continue to dominate both ideologically and organisationally”; and finally subaltern whiteness which addresses minority whiteness. These frame my analysis of whiteness in this thesis because they enable an understanding of both the explicit and subtle ways that whiteness can be expressed in terrorism discourse.

Finally, this work also needs to engage with theories of the post-racial. The term post-racial can be understood in two ways. As proposed by Gilroy (2002) it is space that is free from racial categories. The second use of post-racial, usually associated with the work of Goldberg (2014), is that the post-racial discourse actually operates to obscure the centrality of the ongoing process of racialisation. This thesis is actively concerned with challenging ongoing racisms, and I see the suggestion that we are in anyway post-racial (and post-racism) as patently inaccurate

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16 Gilroy puts forward an imagining of the post-racial in his 2002 work Against race: imagining political culture beyond the colour line. Cambridge: Harvard.

when examining the racialisation and racist treatment faced by Muslims. Therefore, I employ Goldberg’s concept of the post-racial to consider how race is depicted in *Homeland*.

**Terrorism and Race**

The racialisation of the terrorism threat has been related to an upsurge of anti-Muslim racisms. In 2006 the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Race produced a report on *The Situation of Muslims and Arab People in Various Parts of the World* which concludes that:

> [i]n most areas of the world there has been a serious upsurge in manifestations and expressions of discrimination against Muslim and Arab peoples and acts of violence against their places of worship and culture. The central theme of these manifestations is their hostility towards Islam- the religion itself and its believers. (Diene 2006: 2)

While it is inaccurate to present 9/11 as some kind of racist watershed, before which there was no anti-Muslim racism because there is a long history of racism. It is important to explore the links between racism and terrorism because it can help us to challenge ongoing racism. It is also important to recognise the re-articulation of whiteness at work in the rejection of this racialised other as terrorist. Scholars working within race scholarship have identified how race has been invoked to give meaning to terror discourse, across different spheres, in ways that have pitted the brown Islamic terrorist against the white counter-terrorist hero. The way that terrorism is racialised across these spheres are broken down below.

**Terrorism studies**

Said’s original challenge was to the practices of Orientalism as an academic field. This challenge is ongoing and Jackson (2007a) argues that orthodox terrorism studies are Orientalist, particularly in their depiction of the ‘Islamic terrorist’. He discusses how research has made violence seem like an inherent part of Islam, presents Islam as anti-modern or anti-democracy, and presents terrorism as the biggest threat to the West.

One work that has played a huge role in the creation of the ‘Islamic Terrorist’ is Samuel P. Huntington’s *Clash of civilizations* (1993) in which he argued that future conflicts were likely to spring from the antipathy of the two major world cultures: Western liberal democracy and Islam. Huntington’s (1993) work has come under considerable criticism for its racist conclusions (Halliday, 2003; Jackson, 2007a). Yet the conclusions of this book continue to circulate in academia. Indeed Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin (2011) argue that the current Muslim stereotypes should be understood as “post-Huntington”. Said argues that policy experts in America are stepping in to fill the space left by Orientalist scholars (Said and Hitchens, 2001).
The Media

Amir Saeed (2007: 444) argues that Muslims are “represented as the ‘alien within’ British culture.” George Kassimeris and Leonie Jackson (2012: 179) more specifically argue that in British discourse about Muslims in the 2000s there were “[t]wo dominant discourses, the discourse of community cohesion and the discourse of counterterrorism [that] problematized Muslims.” These investigations identify an ‘us versus them’ logic pervasive in the depiction of Muslims in the news which relies upon the idea of the Muslim terrorist. Said (1997) argued in Covering Islam that Islam is represented in the media as a homogenous and threatening entity, “defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds” (Said 1997: 155).

Work on the representation of Muslims in the UK media has built on this early study. John Richardson (2004) found that reporting on Muslims in UK broadsheet newspapers generally built upon a concept of division and rejection, so that British Muslims are presented as outsiders who threaten domestic space. Elizabeth Poole (2002) adds to this with her focus on news coverage in 1997-1998. Again she finds the binary split of self/other dominates media coverage of Muslims. She notices the limited themes that Muslims are reported on that equate Muslims with immigration, religion, crime and terrorism. Poole (2002) finds that racisms are not explicit, but use more opaque strategies to show Muslims have flawed characteristics. Importantly, she identifies that Muslims are not given space in mainstream media to represent themselves.

In their edited collection Poole and Richardson (2006) add to these accounts. Poole (2006: 95) expands the consideration to news coverage in 2003-4 and finds that following 9/11 “coverage converged dramatically around three major topics: terrorism, counter-terrorism and discrimination against Muslims.” Richardson (2006) looked at the 1997-8 data set to consider how far Muslims were given the opportunity to speak. He found that Muslim people, they are “only thought to be an authority source when it comes to their religion” (Richardson 2006: 107). There has been increased attention to Islam and Muslims over the last decade, but this has not resulted in a reduction in prejudice or an improvement in news coverage. Katy Sian, Ian Law and S. Sayyid (2012) found evidence of the persistence of an ‘us and them’ logic in their study of three national newspapers between October and December 2011. They conclude “that negative/Islamophobic and defamatory coverage of Muslims/Islam are hegemonic” (2012: 14).

Popular Culture

Michael Omi (1989: 114) argues “popular culture has been an important realm within which racial ideologies have been created, reproduced and sustained”. An often quoted text on the representation of Muslims in popular culture is Jack Shaheen’s (2001) Reel Bad Arabs in which
he ambitiously attempts to consider the representation of Muslims in Hollywood’s output since 1886, covering 120 films. He finds a long history of stereotyping and othering of Muslims within these films. He stresses the homogenization of Arabs and Muslims (as well as the blurring of the two). He argues that Arabs/Muslims are portrayed as billionaires, bombers and belly-dancers. He notes how Arabs are often portrayed as villains and that the terrorist is a key stereotype: “[l]ooking for a villain? Toss in an Arab terrorist – we all know what they look like from watching movies and TV” (2001: 30). The book uses an Orientalist approach which I argue limits some of its conclusions as it loses specificities of production context and blurs ideas of Arabs, Muslims, Islam and the Middle East in much the same way as the texts it criticises. However, it does provide a compelling account of the longevity of problematic representations of Muslims in Western film.

Shaheen updated his earlier book in 2008 with Guilty: Hollywood’s verdict on Arabs after 9/11 in which he argues that the same stereotypes are still prevalent in Hollywood, and that post-9/11 films legitimize the view of Arabs as villainous sheikhs, or murderous terrorists. Peter Morey has been a key figure in this area. In his (2010) article Terrorvision he considers how terrorism dramas work to recreate racialised ideas of nation and outsider. He unpacks how the terrorist threat is ‘Muslimized” in 24 (2001-08). He notes how American values are established through the othering of this Muslim threat. In Framing Muslims Morey and Yaqin (2011: 2) consider the portrayal of Muslims in news media, political cartoons, documentaries and film. They argue that “[t]he bearded Muslim fanatic, the oppressed veiled woman, the duplicitous terrorist who lives among ‘us’ all the better to bring about our destruction: all these stereotypes have emerged with renewed force since 9/11.”

These accounts have shown how the terrorism discourse is racialized in terrorism studies, the media and popular culture. The terrorist other relies upon and reuses older ideas of a barbaric ‘East’. The counter-terrorist figure is created as the valiant western crusading hero. There is a racialised logic of us and them which homogenises Muslims into one people that is inherently different and divisible from ‘the West’.

**Resistance to Racist Representations**

The accounts above show the racist representations involved in the depiction of Muslim terrorists. However, it is important to also recognise the potential for resistance to this racialising and racist discourse, to show the potential for change. The potential for resistance to racist representations within popular culture has been considered by other researchers. NinaSeja (2011) considers how comedy in popular culture can potentially disrupt the hegemonic
discourses of the Islamic terrorist. She focuses on the 2008 film *Harry and Kumar escape from Guantanamo* to argue that despite criticisms that this film received (from Amnesty International amongst others) for the trivialisation of Guantanamo Bay detainees, it actually brings into view victims that are usually absent from terrorism discourses. She argues (2011: 234) that “the film encourages a reading of the production of victims by way of a paranoid public and *Homeland Security*”. Halse (2015) returns to 24, but he focuses on instances where Muslims are depicted in counter-stereotypical ways. Focusing on the depiction of two Muslim characters he argues that 24’s representation of Muslims is perhaps more complex than often thought. Although ultimately he concludes that any counter-stereotypical depiction always relies upon a white norm, thus 24’s attempt to be less racist ultimately fails. Morey (2010) argues that despite widespread criticism of the MI5 drama series *Spook*’s depiction of Muslims, most notably from the British Muslim Council, a key episode in which a Muslim MI5 agent infiltrates a terrorist group and ultimately saves the day can serve to undermine some Muslim stereotypes. Morey (2010) argues that even though the character ultimately has to die to prove his commitment to Britain (which is always in doubt due to his religion), a critical reflective space is opened up in the drama.

Morey and Yaqin (2011: 175) argue there are two types of post 9/11 thriller, those which repeat stereotypes, and those which “begin by deploying the usual set of stereotypes only to unsettle them and even use them to reflect back to the viewer some of the more unthinking prejudices and smug attitudes the West has been encouraged to indulge in as civilizations supposedly clash.” This resistance does not only come from texts that are deliberately critical of the racialised discourses of terrorism, such as *Breaking the Silence* (Pilger, 2003) or *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Moore, 2004) but they are also contained within texts that might at first glance seem to reproduce dominant discourses of terrorism and race, such as 24 and importantly *Homeland*.

Scholars have shown using various frames (racisms, orientalism and Islamophobia) that race and terrorism discourses are mutually constitutive. Work that has analysed academia, the media and popular culture has shown how there is evidence of the othering of ‘The Muslim’ that pits a homogenised idea of Islam as evil against an innocent West. These depictions have helped to justify military and counter-terrorist practices in the name of insecurity. They have racialised Muslims in the UK and contributed to the increase in anti-Muslim racisms. What is interesting is the later work that has looked for potential moments of resistance to this discourse.

This project builds on this work to consider how race is still being used in terrorism discourses, however, it adds to these accounts by asking how this process takes place. By examining the process it considers moments for resistance, agency and change to occur. This project was done
to contribute to anti-racisms scholarship that seeks to deconstruct the discourses of racialisation, and related racist practice which is inexorably linked to practices of domination at home and abroad.

**Race and Gender**

This thesis aims to investigate the mutual constitution of gender, race and terrorism. In this section I review intersectional approaches that combine race and gender analysis. I turn to ideas of the complex and relational nature of identity that is better captured in an idea of assemblage. I lay out how these can help to theorise gender and race, before reviewing the existing work on gender, race and terrorism.

**Theorising Race and Gender**

Intersectionality emerged in the 1980s as a response to criticisms from black standpoint feminists of the middle class white bias of feminist theory and activism. Its original aim was to recognise the multiple oppressions facing black women that are not simply additive. In the words of Crenshaw (1989: 139), who first coined the term intersectionality, it is about “the multidimensionality of marginalized subjects”. Hill Collins (2000) dubbed this a “matrix of domination” and McCall (2005) talks of the “complex inequalities” faced by multiply marginalized groups. Considerable progress has been made under the auspices of intersectionality and it has gone a long way to remedy some of the exclusionary practices of gender scholarship and to explore the effects of multiple and co-constituting locus of power and oppression.

However, I argue that ‘intersectionality’ does not adequately account for the complexity and fluidity of identities (Gressgård, 2008; Choo and Ferree, 2010; Nash, 2008). It is too indebted to its foundations in standpoint theory to be compatible with a post-structuralist conception of narrative identities that this thesis is built upon. Therefore, I put forward a theory of assemblages taken from the work of Puar (2007), who builds on the work of Deleuze and Guattari. The Puar account of assemblage is particularly useful because it was formulated in relation to terrorism. This speaks to Puar’s rejection of the idea of a fixed and knowable identity, an idea she argues still relies upon a singular subject, and which presumes there are distinct characteristics that make up identities which can be separated out. In her own words:

[a]s opposed to an intersectional model of identity which presumes that components - race, class, gender, sexualities, nation, age, religion- are separable analytics and can thus be disassembled, an assemblage is more alert to interwoven faces that merge and
dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency. (Puar, 2007: 212)

This reworking of intersectionality is promising because it takes into account the complexity, fluidity and mutual constitution of the different and innumerable aspects of identities and subjectivities.

Puar (2007) builds on Deleuze and Guattarri’s concept of assemblage. There is not space to fully explore the Deleuzean-Guattarian assemblage here. Deleuze has a notoriously complex writing style, which can make this concept difficult to pin down. Levi Bryant (2009: unpaginated) succinctly describes assemblages, he explains:

Assemblages are composed of heterogeneous elements or objects that enter into relations with one another. These objects are not all of the same type. Thus you have physical objects, happenings, events, and so on, but you also have signs, utterances, and so on. While there are assemblages that are composed entirely of bodies, there are no assemblages composed entirely of signs and utterances.

Assemblage and new materialism has been put to use across various disciplines including human geography (Dewsbury, 2011), theology (Justaert, 2012), pedagogy (Carlin and Wallin, 2014), sociology (De Landa, 2006), alongside its original disciplinary location in philosophy and politics. It has generated considerable academic debate and a diversity of interpretations (Coole and Frost, 2010). The concept of assemblage is a useful way to think through the idea of intersectionality and the complex, relational, interplay of bodies, identities, events and discourses at work in the figure of the terrorist.

The move to assemblages speaks to a wider debate about the ability of post-structuralism to capture materiality. Assemblage theory emerges from the work do Deleuze and Guattari who are typically described as being new-materialist scholars (Fox and Alldred, 2014). New-materialism is an approach which seeks to de-prioritise human agency and reemphasise the co-constitution of the work in the interaction of animate and inanimate objects (Fox and Alldred, 2014). This is often put forward as a challenge to, or departure, from post-structuralism. This is a theoretically rich and stimulating debate which I cannot do full justice to here. However, I want to emphasize that my adoption of assemblage theory does not signify a rejection of post-structuralism. Instead I argue in line with Tom Lundborg and Nick Vaughan-Williams (2015) that attention to emotion, complexity and interactivity can be contained within a post-structural theoretical framework. Which they dub ‘radical intertextuality’. I stay with the term assemblage here to specifically locate my work in relation to Puar’s.
Central to this research project is the underlying understanding that race, gender and terrorism interact. My rejection of Intersectionality does not undermine this claim, instead I turn to assemblage theory to ensure that I pay attention to the specific articulations of race and gender in counter-terrorism discourse and to the creation of gendered and raced hierarchies and so investigate masculinities and whiteness.

**Race, Gender and Terrorism**

A central concern of this thesis is the mutual constitution of race, gender and terrorism. Accounts of terrorism, gender and race often focus on Muslim women in terms of the intersectional oppressions that they face. There is an intersection of race and gender in Muslim women’s (multiple and diverse) experiences, put clearly by Contractor (2012: 15): “the Muslimah’s dual challenge of being both a woman and a Muslim”. She has become the site/sight for anti-Muslim racisms. The veil has become the sign for much more than religious expression, and it is criticized, promoted, eroticized, romanticized, banned and enforced (Joppke, 2013; Mernissi, 1987; Shepherd, 2006) in a climate of insecurity. There are millions of Muslim women, but the homogenized, faceless, voiceless veiled ‘Muslim Woman’ is a discursive construction. In the word of Zayzafoon (2005 2): “the ‘Muslim woman’ is a semiotic subject.” As Zayzafoon (2005) goes on to point out, there are many who speak on behalf of Muslim women, but there are fewer spaces where their voices, in their diversity, can be heard. Muslim woman are living at the intersection of gender and race in the ‘post 9/11’ context and discourses of terrorism.

In the UK and USA ‘the Muslim Woman’ is a recognizable figure. There is a stereotype version of her available in the news, on TV, in political speeches, in cartoons. As outlined by Halimah Abdullah (2006: 217), “for the Western media consumer, she is the dusky skinned beauty with the exotic polysyllabic name that is in desperate need of salvation. She is always Middle Eastern. She always speaks Arabic. She is eternally repressed.” Mohja Kahf (1999: 1) describes the stereotype more succinctly: “the Muslim woman is being victimised.” The diversity of Muslim women’s lived experiences in different countries, in different communities, practicing and believing in Islam in multiple and complex ways, is disappeared.

We see her image being produced and used in particular ways in terrorist discourses. As I argued in the previous section on gender and terrorism, the image of the Muslim woman as victim was explicitly mobilized by the Bush administration to create support for the invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan (Hunt and Rygiel, 2006; Shepherd, 2006; Steans, 2008). Jasmin Zine (2006) provides a robust account of the representation of Muslim Women as agency-less victims as part of an Islamophobic discourse that served to legitimate the War on Terror. Although all of the Muslim community are suspect when Islamic terrorism is represented as a threat to ‘our way of life’,
due to the fact that many Muslim women wear headscarves, hijab or burqa, they are read as Muslims easily and therefore become targets of anti-Muslim racism. Simultaneously, in the face of the increased victimization, the traditional and pious Muslim woman has gained increasing significance in nationalist debates, or as a statement of Islamic identity in diasporas (Moghadam, 1994; Ramadan, 2005; Timmerman, 2000). She is a discursive creation at the centre of political debates of in/security, fought over in the War on Terror, yet at the margins as a person, overshadowed and indeed obscured by the figurative ‘Muslim Woman’.

There is a danger that emphasizing Muslim women as the locus of intersectionality can reify an idea of the Muslim woman as the site of race and gender and so reify her status as ‘other’, whilst leaving the workings of race and gender in wider terrorism discourse unchallenged. Hunt and Rygiel (2006) edited a powerful collection of essays, Engendering the War on Terror, which explores intersections of gender, race and class in the representations of the War on Terror. Brittain (2006: 76) explores how white femininity is represented in media coverage of the invasion in Iraq and argues that “white femininity is mobilized to reinforce official stances and manufacture public consent for US military aggression”. In Gargi Bhattacharya’s (2008: 4) Dangerous Brown Men she argues, “[t]he War on Terror is not only a set of military and tactical security measures, it also entails a cultural project that seeks to remake the terrain of belonging, legality and otherness... The central contention of this work is that this cultural project operated by the deployment of ideas of security and race.” This book makes a powerful criticism of Western imperial violence and shows that the War on Terror relies upon the ideas of race and gender (as well as class, and sexuality). Her focus is the sexualised racisms that she sees as central to the representations of the War on Terror.

In this work, Bhattacharyya (2008) makes clear how ideas of sexuality, race and gender are used to other the terrorist and at the same time rearticulate the idea of Western superiority and entitlement, ultimately legitimizing the War on Terror. Bhattacharyya (2008: 18) makes the argument that was made by other feminists, that the Bush administration employed a “tactical deployment of the language and style of feminism”. She notes how women’s bodies became “central iconography of the War on Terror”, as has been argued by feminist Muslim writers (Husain, 2006; Contractor, 2012; Zine, 2006). She links the depiction of Islamic Muslim terrorism to immigration policy and anti-Muslim racisms. She shows how the War on Terror is not only played out in Iraq and Afghanistan, but has a profound effect on our culture and our lives in the UK and USA. Finally, she focuses on the sexuality in torture, arguing that the use of sexualized abuse and representation of the terrorist as sexually depraved actually speaks to Western sexual anxieties. In this wide ranging account, Bhattacharyya (2008) details how the War on Terror has relied upon and recreated particular racialised, sexualized and gendered narratives. She has shown not
only that an anti-racist feminist account is possible, but that paying attention to these intersections enables a powerful critique of political violences.

Bhattacharyya (2008: 142) argues that the audience is implicated in global violences and racisms of the War on Terrors. She sees little scope for agency:

I do not think that stating our refusal to cooperate or to recognize the legitimacy of such actions extracts us from the suffocating disciplinary network of this new machinery of government. Some elements of the position of global audience come into play even as the protest is articulated, which is not to say that protest is futile or ineffective, but to argue that the War on Terror has, in fact, altered the dynamic and framework of political life and, for many parts of the world, has shifted the relation between state and citizen in important ways.

This thesis investigates the effect of terrorism culturally, but it will add to this account through an investigation of how the messages of terrorism are read and (potentially) resisted by audiences. Bhattacharyya (2008) does not ask how these transmissions happen, and as such assumes too linear a mechanism, leaving depressingly little room for agency or resistance.

Puar (2007) employs the concept of terrorist assemblages in her own book in which she considers how terrorism discourses create racialised and sexualised images of the terrorist other, and she shows how the ideal citizen is a product of terrorism discourse. In particular, she explores the relationship between sexualised and securitised terrorism discourses and homonationalism. Puar (2007) argues there is a stereotyped terrorist, whose identity relies upon his failed gender, perverse sexuality, and othered race. In her own words (Puar, 2007: 38), “the emasculated terrorist is not merely an ‘other’, but a barometer of ab/normality involved in disciplinary apparatus.” She then points out how this image of the failed, perverse terrorist other is used to establish the ideal patriot – white and heterosexual. Yet, she notes how lesbians and gays have been given a route to being allowed ‘in’ to the nation, by mimicking the hetero ideal, loyalty to the state, and nationalism. She labels this ‘homonationalism’. Importantly this interrogation of identities stays located within the climate of securitization – or in Puar’s (2007: xiv) own terminology, the biopolitics of life and death:

I seek to exhume the convivial relation between queerness and militarism, securitization, war, terrorism, surveillance technologies, empire, torture, nationalism, globalization, fundamentalism, secularism, incarceration, detention, deportation, and neoliberalism: the tactics, strategies, and logistics of our contemporary war machines.
It is this recognition of the relationships between the representations of terrorists and patriots, the effects this has on managing ideas of gender, race and sexuality, with the wider practices of security which I hope to build on in my own research.

This research project, like hers, sets out to “undo the naturalized sexual scripts of terror that become taken-for-granted knowledge formations” (Puar, 2007: xv). It too uses a mixed methods approach, and aim to show how popular television is not just entertainment, but a key place where audiences negotiate their understandings of terrorism, gender and race.

**Conclusion**

This project investigates the interaction of race, gender and terrorism to deconstruct the discourses that legitimise state violences, invigorate anti-Muslim racisms and support patriarchy. This chapter has seen how terrorism (re)uses ideas of race and gender to makes sense, whilst gender and race are (re)articulated in terrorism discourses. This creates a securitised version of race and gender, a way of being white, non-Muslim, Muslim, female or male that is articulated through terrorism and insecurity.

Work on race, gender and terrorism has shown us how gendered and racialised characters animate terrorism discourse. To summaries these accounts the character that have been identified within (dominant) War on Terror stories are presented below:

The terrorist: A racialised and gendered other, this character is the location of all that ‘we’ are not. He commits barbaric (hyper-masculine) violence and/or irrational and emotional (feminine) acts. This barbarism is linked to his essentially Muslim/Arab character, dark and dangerous. He is intent on destroying us/The West with no respect for women or children. He rapes and oppress his own women. Where we meet a female terrorist she is the anomaly to this male violence, either manipulated by evil men to commit her act, or driven by mindless grief to revenge her dead husband/son. She is the product of an oppressive culture. The terrorist is inspired by Islam, a singular and violent doctrine that preaches world domination, the subjugation of women and the destruction of the West through jihadi violence. It is exotic and unknowable. The terrorist cause is religious fundamentalism. They operate as part of shadowy global networks.

The victim: There are the innocent victims of terror, but more usefully rhetorically are the wives and children of the deceased, scared in her own home, but enjoying the freedoms offered to her by an apparently equal western society; shopping, caring and voting. There is the Muslim women, oppressed in Islamic states, veiled on ‘our own’
streets. They are silent but grateful for the care and attention of their western saviours. The victims of western violence are regrettable/unavoidable/few.

The heroes: These are the soldiers that defend our country in inhospitable places. They are the counter-terror operatives who use justifiable violence to protect the women of Iraq/Afghanistan/American against the depravity of the Muslim terrorist. They are selfless educated strong and intelligent, their superior technology and military capability renders them efficient advanced and just. Their violence is regrettable but necessary as the only barrier between us and radical Islam.

These characterisations, bluntly summarised here, show us how gender and race are central to terrorism discourses. They have been deconstructed by feminist and anti-racist scholars, but they have had an effect on the way that we live our lives; they have bounded ideas of what is possible in the fight against political violences. We have watched them on the news, in films and on television. These characters animated particular racist, nationalist and patriarchal discourse and they rearticulated logics of gender and race. However, these characters are not all there is to terrorism discourse. They are the characters of the Bush era War on Terror discourse, and I ask how far we have moved on from them politically and culturally.

This chapter built on the critical narrative approach to security to show how narratives of gender and race are present in stories of terrorism. It puts forward a theoretical framework of race and gender as narrative constructions that are inherently multiple, incomplete and unstable. This is based on a theory of narrative identity. It used Puar’s (2007) conceptualisation of terrorist assemblages to recognise that raced and gendered subjectivities are complex and relational. They are made through interactions between people, discourse, histories, and context. They therefore cannot be reduced to fit within a general theory, be that Orientalism or Intersectionality, but rather must be examined in their particular (and partial) expressions in specific times and places.

It has demonstrated through a review of feminist and critical race scholarship that terrorism stories use gender and race to make sense, but that they rearticulate particular versions of gender and race. Therefore the terrorist other is both a repository for race and gender angst, whilst acting as a tool by which the boundaries of race and gender are policed. It stresses the interrelated nature of race and gender; it aims to bring together work from race and gender scholars. In particular, it seeks to build on the work of Bhattacharyya (2008) who has considered race and gender in terrorism discourses.
This thesis intervenes in this scholarship by asking not only what these stories say, but how viewers interpret them and how they come to affect what they think about gender, race and terrorism, and their own gendered and raced subjectivities. This is done to ask how stories of terrorism come to have an effect. In this project this is done at the micro-level by using *Homeland* as an example to consider how viewers negotiate meaning for terrorism, gender and race as they interact with, rather than blindly consume the show. This is done across race and gender so that privilege and oppression are investigated. This research recognises how race and gender interconnect and are interrelated whilst being aware of the fact that it is not possible to disconnect or separate these out fully from age, sexuality, class and a myriad of other elements that come together in messy subjectivities. This means the analysis will have to be responsive to the interconnections uncovered. However, at the same time it must maintain a focus on questions of race, gender and nation and must admit the exclusions as they are made.

This thesis shows how race, gender and terrorism interact and how they are reproduced in the interaction between the text and its viewers. This project brings gender, race and terrorism together as relating parts of a more complex whole. It draws together the work of scholars from a range of different disciplines. It is about the mutual constitution of race and gender and terrorism in particular national political, social and cultural contexts. How these interactions take place is a central question in my research. It is anti-racist and post-structural account of terrorism inspired by the words of Mohanty (2006: 9) that “it is anti-racist, anti-imperialist multiply gendered feminist praxis that can provide ground for dismantling empire.” I do this research as an anti-racist, feminist challenge to the representations of terrorism in order to challenge the creation of insecurity that has led to an increase in anti-Muslim racisms, reified traditional gender roles and enabled particular ‘counter-terrorist’ violences.
The first chapter of the thesis located the television show *Homeland* within the current context of terrorism and counter-terrorism and gave an idea of how it captures, contributes to, and works through issues of culture and security in the post 9/11 frame. Chapter two, on terrorism on television, argued that television is one of the main ways that meaning is produced for terrorism. It laid out the importance of considering how stories of terrorism are negotiated by the people that view them. It outlined the narrative approach to security that underpins this project. The third chapter on race, gender and terrorism, built on this narrative approach and explored how gender, race and terrorism are mutually constitutive. It put forward Puar’s conception of terrorist assemblages to theorise the partial, complex and relational nature of the interaction of race, terrorism and gender. It located this work within the feminist and anti-racist work on terrorism that precedes it.

These chapters provided the theoretical and substantive background to this project and built a case for how this thesis contributes methodologically and substantively to work on race, gender and terrorism, and intervenes in Security Studies. In particular, they stressed the need to supplement considerations of representation with audience interpretations of texts in order to recognise the unpredictable nature of meaning making.

This study is a ‘how possible’ investigation of terrorism (Doty, 1993). It is a consideration of how social meanings of terrorism circulate and what they include, exclude, support and undermine. It is an investigation in to how meaning is created for terrorism reusing discourses of race and gender, and how meanings for race and gender are shaped by current discourses of terrorism. This is done in recognition that these discourses are mutually constitutive of one another (Yegenoglu, 1998; Bhattacharyya, 2008).

As outlined in previous chapters, this project pays attention to the content, reception and context of the text. This approach follows what Hagen and Wasko (2000) dubbed ‘the cultural tradition’ of reception analysis which builds on the encoding and decoding work of Hall (1981). This is based on understanding that meaning is produced at the point where text and reader ‘meet’ and is not just a property of the text itself (Calvert et al., 2007). Therefore I designed a methodology that takes a more holistic account of the communication process by examining the text and audience reactions to it. The research was undertaken in two parts. The first was a discourse analysis of *Homeland* which explored the representation of gender, race, and terrorism in this popular and current text as well as the subject positions made available in the
text and what they render possible. The second part was designed to expand upon this reading to consider how audience members interact with, and negotiate, meaning in the text, to consider what discourses they draw on, and how their own understandings and subjectivities are shaped. I examined Homeland to consider how gendered and raced subjectivities are created in popular culture, but I turned to audiences to consider how these can be adopted or resisted, and how they interact with wider political contexts. This enabled an exploration of the text which does not assume a mechanistic flow of meanings, but which does not imply an infinite play of meaning that ignores the text’s own power. These two methods did not happen in isolation of one another and findings from each informed the research approach with the other. This not only means that the research was responsive to text and audience, but it helps to emphasize the contribution of the participants.

Split into sections on ‘the text’, ‘the audience’, ‘the researcher (me)’ and ‘the context’ this chapter outlines how the methods were used, and adapted, to best answer the research questions. It justifies the choice of Homeland as a text, explains how the research was conducted and analysed and how I did this in a way that was compatible with my anti-racist and feminist politics. It provides a methodology to operationalise the theoretical framework set out in the previous chapters. Whilst this thesis aims to make a contribution to the understanding of terrorism, as argued in chapter two, it turns to Cultural Studies, and in particular to Television Studies, to furnish the investigation with a robust methodology.

In the Introductory chapter I introduced the four central research questions of this project: How are counter-terrorism, gender and race represented in Homeland and how are they mutually constituted? Does Homeland rearticulate, repeat, rework or resist the dominant logics of counter-terrorism from War on Terror discourses that proceed it? What raced and gendered identities are produced for the audience of Homeland, and what do they enable? I want to break these questions down here.

The first research question “how are counter-terrorism, gender and race represented in Homeland and how are they mutually constituted?” involves asking how masculinity and femininity are both represented in this terrorism story and how they are used to stabilise meaning for counter-terrorism. This question also includes race, and in the thesis this is answered with particular attention to the racialisation of Muslims and the workings of whiteness in this terrorism story. Answering this question involves analysing the characters in the show, as well as the gendered and raced dichotomies that are invoked in the plot. The second question “does Homeland rearticulate, repeat, rework or resist the dominant logics of counter-terrorism from War on Terror discourses that proceed it?” asks how counter-terrorism is represented in
the story and how the CIA (as the main counter-terror agent in *Homeland*) is represented. I am interested in whether *Homeland* is supportive of critical of counter-terrorism practices. I am interested in how it tells a story of counter-terrorism; the narrative, discursive and televsual practices that are used to ‘make sense’ of counter-terrorism. The question “what raced and gendered identity is produced for the audience of *Homeland*, and what does this enable?” aims to interrogate the subject position that is created for the audience, considering how stories of counter-terrorism tells the audience about the terrorist other and also about ‘their’ own identity as victims of terrorism and wielders of counter-terror violence. Again I do this with a particular attention to race and gender and again by interrogating whiteness. The final question “how do British audience members negotiate the meanings that are presented around terrorism, gender and race?” seeks to explore the way that a British audience interacts with the show, it aims to consider how this American television show is received by a British audience, it asks whether they accept the meanings as presented or whether, when and how they might resist or rework them. This chapter outlines the methodological tools that are employed to answer these questions.

**The Text**

*Homeland* has been chosen as a text because it is a timely representation of terrorism and counter-terrorism in popular culture and so acts as a snapshot of the current cultural moment of counter-terrorism in America. I decided to use one text in order to be able to pay close attention to the processes of meaning creation and negotiation. This was not done to provide a definitive account of terrorism discourse; instead the show is taken as a nexus point where popular culture, political rhetoric and cultural discourses of terrorism and people’s everyday lives meet. Therefore, *Homeland* is a way to access the American representation of the post-9/11 moment, and the representation of terrorism, and to stimulate discussions amongst a British audience about how those representations resonate in the UK.

*Homeland* is the latest instalment of ‘counter-terrorism TV’. It is a popular show, 2.78 million viewers in the UK and 1.78 million viewers in the USA tuned in for the finale of season one (Plunkett, 2013; BBC, 2012), it is estimated that *Homeland* drew and average audience of 4.4 million (Carter, 2012b) with viewing figures likely to be much higher once syndication, box sets and downloads are incorporated. It is a twelve part TV series that follows CIA agent Carrie Matheson as she attempts to thwart a terrorist attack on America. This hinges on her uncovering whether an American Marine (Nicholas Brody) was ‘turned’ to terrorism during eight years captivity in Iraq. Co-created by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon it has been lauded as the ‘thinking man’s terrorism drama’. Rather than the gun toting, strong, violent, American hero,
this drama asks questions about the morality of torture, racial profiling of terrorists, the gender of heroes, and the innocence of America. *Homeland* is a timely attempt to work through the aftermath of 9/11 and the two related wars. Set and aired, more than ten years after 9/11 the need for vengeance has dissipated, and the violent and terrible consequences of Iraq and Afghanistan have taken their toll on the British and American psyches.\(^{18}\)

It is taken as an example of the dominant discourse because it is US-produced, and globally syndicated. It was widely reviewed in the mainstream press. It was watched by political elites in the UK and USA and President Obama said that it was his favourite show (Dinan, 2014). Furthermore, it won many industry awards including three Golden Globes, six Emmy awards, and two critic’s choice awards. Edgerton and Edgerton (2012: 90) argue that “*Homeland* has emerged as the most compelling and incisive television or film narrative ever to address 9/11 and its aftermath.” It was chosen because it is deliberately intervening in the discourse of terrorism. The co-creator of *Homeland* Gansa said in an interview in 2012 that “the goal [of *Homeland*] is to pose the question and have the conversation take place among the audience” (VanDerWerff, 2012: unpaginated).

**Analysis of the Text**

This project is based on a post-structuralist ontology and epistemology that does not argue that language represents a reality out there, but recognises that language is constitutive of reality (Howarth, 2000). This project is an explicitly normative attempt to challenge the gendered and racialised discourses of terrorism that enable racisms, oppressive gender practices and counter-terror violence that cohere against and through one another. Therefore, it is an analysis aimed at disrupting the discourse within *Homeland*.

Chapter two and three reviewed literature on race, gender and terrorism in popular culture to provide a literature review to locate the thesis within the field and to make the theoretical approach clear. Without rehearsing these arguments again, it is important to draw out the methodological implications of this approach. In particular, it builds on the narrative turn in Security Studies that focuses on the relationship between security and popular culture. In particular Derridean discourse analysis, intertextuality, and an understanding of securitised identities and narrative identity. Chapter two also argued the case for supplementing this burgeoning work on popular culture and security with theoretical and methodological insights from Television Studies. This theoretical approach demands an analytical frame that pays

\(^{18}\) Where examples are given in the analysis they are referenced by episode name, series and episode number. A full filmography of each episode is included in the appendixes.
attention to the narratives within the show and the techniques that are used in television production to tell the story. This means that there are a range of analytical frameworks employed over the course of the thesis that are used to deconstruct *Homeland*.

Therefore, I chose to perform a discourse analysis of *Homeland* following on from the discourse analytic work of International Relations, which in turn builds on the work of Derrida and Foucault. It is important to note that deconstruction in a Derridean sense is not a process that can be applied, but rather it is an inherent instability always already contained within the text itself. In Derrida’s (1978: 82) words:

> [t]he incision of deconstruction, which is not a voluntary decision or an absolute beginning, does not take place just anywhere, or in an absolute elsewhere. An incision... can be made only according to lines of forces and forces of rupture that are localisable in the discourse to be deconstructed.

A discourse analysis is concerned with how meaning is made. As the Derrida quote above implies, it is not a particular methodology, yet it is still a theoretical position that needs to be operationalised in order to perform a deconstruction of the text. Czarniawska (2004) suggests seven analytic strategies that can be used in deconstruction, these are:

1. Dismantling a dichotomy, exposing it as a false distinction
2. Examining silences - what is not said
3. Attending to disruptions and complexities, places where a text fails to make sense
4. Focusing on the element that is most alien or peculiar
5. Interpreting metaphor as a rich source of multiple meanings
6. Analysing double entendre
7. Separating group specific and more general sources of bias by ‘reading’ the text without its main elements

These strategies are all implemented in my analysis of *Homeland*.

My research aims to interrogate how gender is reused and recreated in *Homeland*, both productive of and produced by a story of insecurity. Therefore, in this discourse analysis I paid particular attention to the use of gendered and racialized binaries. This allowed me to uncover the versions of gender and race that are being recreated whilst also empowering the deconstruction.

Based on the International Relations literature I also drew on the idea of Intertextuality (Der Derian and Shapiro, 1989; Weldes, 2003; Grayson, Davis and Philpott, 2009). Methodologically
this meant that I paid attention to the way that *Homeland* re-presents political events such as 9/11 and counter-terrorist actors such as the CIA. In my analysis I pay attention to the invocation of the ‘real’ world and interrogated what this claim to realism does for the understanding of counter-terrorism. I also paid attention to Homeland’s use of pre-existing tropes, the significant or recurrent themes from American culture that are present in *Homeland*, to show how it relies upon and reframes already existing cultural ideas and figurations. Building on the work of security studies I also paid attention to the creation of the self/other identities within the text, to interrogate how *Homeland* creates a subject position for its audience, and how this relates to the notion of the American security state/apparatus.

As argued in chapter two, I supplemented this Critical Security Studies approach to popular culture with insights from Television Studies to ensure that it looks beyond the linguistic elements of the show, and also takes into account the conventions and techniques of storytelling that are distinct to television. Methodologically, this means that the discourse analysis also took into account “basic building blocks that the makers of television use to communicate with their audience”, which includes the characters, the dialogue, the cinematography, the choice and styling of the locations and spaces that the drama uses (the mise en scene), editing decisions, the sounds and music that are included (Thornham and Purvis, 2005; Miller, 2002).

At the same time, my analysis asked how these combine into narratives, and plots with emotional resonance, to consider how the text puts forward particular meanings around terrorism, gender and race. This reading of the emotional aspects of the text is informed by the work of Bleiker and Hutchinson (2008a). A key lens of analysis used to analyse the dramatization of emotions was melodrama which enabled me to explore how *Homeland* worked through emotional anxieties (Williams, 1998). An attention to genre allows me to consider how *Homeland* tells this terrorism story.

Seasons one to three (a total of 36 episodes) were analysed. The initial analysis considered general themes and main characters which went on to inform the questions and prompts for the focus groups. These themes were initially informed by the literature on race, gender and terrorism and so broad labels (such as whiteness, Islam, ‘The East’, femininities, masculinities, counter-terror) were applied to scenes, characters, and dialogue. The questions and prompts for the focus groups were a way of ensuring that each of these areas would be covered in the focus group (for example my initial questions were on participant’s relationships to the main characters Carrie and Brody, I then more explicitly asked them to reflect on their gender). Particular scenes that encapsulated these themes were also pulled out, and I used these to
prompt discussion on specific areas where necessary, (for example the scene in which Saul makes racist remarks to Fara a Muslim CIA officer was used to prompt discussion on the representations of Muslim in the show). After the focus groups were held the shows were analysed in more detail. This analysis was guided by initial reflections on the focus group data. In that way I ensured that each part of the research process was done in conversation with the data from the other part. I performed a close reading of the text. At this point I more fully employed the seven strategies of discourse analysis listed above.

This analysis was geared to consider both the explicit and implicit invocations of race and gender specifically. While this methodology is not put forward as objective, it was methodical to ensure that the analysis was complete and robust. What is more, I argue that it is important to recognise the need, and space for creativity in qualitative research, rather than to judge it against scientific or positivist benchmarks (Patton, 2002; Haraway, 1997).

Practically, the data was collected into a spreadsheet where each episode was broken down, key scenes and interactions were identified, and these instances were labelled by character and any relevant theme. I did not work to a predefined list of themes at this point, but rather used short hand descriptors that would enable me to read this data quickly, and to spot commonalities or repetitions. This built to a large data file with each episode broken down by themes, characters, and scenes.

The analysis of the text includes some insights about the processes of production that came from research into the writing and making of Homeland. This research drew on interviews with the staff of Homeland (both those in front of and behind the camera) and in particular from the book Homeland Revealed Hurwitz (2014) which is a companion book to the series that looks at the production process and includes interviews with creators, cast and crew members. This is not a key feature of the analysis in the thesis but is used to supplement the textual analysis.

The Audience

As stressed in the proceeding chapters, this project is an attempt to understand the process of meaning making in the interaction between the show and its viewers. This fits with the discourse analysis of the text because, as post-structural theory suggests, the text always contains multiple meanings and so investigations into the audience can show which of these multiple meanings are taken on by readers (Calvert et al., 2007). The inclusion of audience studies into Security Studies accounts of popular culture is a key intervention of this thesis.

As Dittmer (2010) notes, there are both theoretical and practical problems involved in audience studies. Theoretically, it is important to consider whether it is possible to talk of ‘the audience’
as if it is a static entity. More practically, audience members have to be identified. This project is concerned with the negotiations of audience members with the text; it explores the meanings that are produced and the processes of meaning making. Therefore, I did not attempt to capture any definitive idea of ‘the Homeland audience’, but rather I was concerned with how particular British audience members negotiate the show’s meaning. This approach informed the choice to conduct the research via focus groups.

Focus groups enabled me to understand and describe the interpretations of the text. This research technique was employed to study how audiences use gender and race to make sense of Homeland, and how this contributes to their understanding of terrorism. Focus groups have been a popular method within media studies (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996). The method has been used in many of the seminal early works of audience research such as Morley’s (1980) study of Nationwide, and Katz and Liebes’ (1990) study of the cross-cultural readings of Dallas. Some researchers of television audiences have used ethnographic methods (Skeggs et al., 2008; Modleski, 1979; Lembo, 2000) (where they sit with participants as they watch the show), which has given interesting insights into the act of television viewing. However, this was not suitable for my research questions were are focused on the negotiated meaning taken from the show. The choice of focus groups was informed by my understanding of what an audience is. The audience is not an “aggregate of atomized opinions or attitudes, but [is made up of] individuals located in certain social groups who construct meaningful social action, partly through the discursive interpretation of texts” (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996: 85). The focus groups were designed to capture the processes by which meaning is socially constituted in interaction with texts and other people. It is for this reason that I chose to use focus groups (rather than interviews for example) because I want to examine the “co-constitution of meaning between people” (Wilkinson, 1998: 111).

The initial investigation of audiences within Security Studies and Popular Geopolitics, such as the work of Dodds (2006) on James Bond and an article by Brereton and Culloty (2012) on the Bourne Ultimatum have used comments made on internet forums (predominantly Imdb) to consider audience views. However, this methodology would not have worked here. First, because I wanted to talk specifically to British audiences and you cannot control for this in pre-existing online forums. Second, because, it could not give the depth of data that I needed to answer my research questions. Third, because the nature of communication and interaction online is different to offline interactions. Whilst I considered conducting some of these groups online (in particular ones with people from other countries such as the USA to compare and contrast to my UK results) I decided that this method would not be appropriate for this study because it makes discussion between participants too difficult. The discussions that are
generated in focus groups enable me to examine the meanings that people read and they negotiate whilst allowing me the opportunity to study diversity and difference between individuals and within and between groups (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996; Morgan, 1998; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015).

Before I discuss the design of the focus groups, I need to reflect on the British audience that I was recruiting from. Homeland has been syndicated globally, though written and produced in America is has proved successful internationally. Homeland aired at 9pm on a Sunday night on Channel four, a terrestrial channel that is available throughout the UK. Channel 4 is a not for profit, independent television station that makes revenue through advertising, it has a traditionally younger viewership than other terrestrial British channels (BBC1, BBC2 and ITV) (Channel 4, 2014). The episodes were temporarily available on Channel 4’s ‘on demand’ internet service. Homeland was consistently within Channel 4’s top ten most viewed programmes (BARB, 2016).

The design of the focus group involved choices about the size, composition, style and number of groups that I needed to hold to generate interesting discussion and useful data (Morgan, 1998; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Knodel, 1993; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). I made an original research plan for the focus groups, but I found that I had to adapt and be responsive to the data and the respondents during the fieldwork process (Wax, 1971; O'Brien, 2005). Whilst this was daunting and challenging during the research process maintaining a research diary, being flexible and paying critical attention to these difficulties allowed me to draw valuable insights into the consumption of terrorism television terrorism from these setbacks.

Jennifer Morgan (1998) argues that between five and seven groups is usually adequate to capture enough data for a rich analysis; however, there is really no ‘correct’ number of groups. My original plan was to run six groups with Homeland viewers, and to ensure that two of these groups were held with Muslim participants. This number was chosen because it would produce enough data to be able to explore a range of perspective on the television show, whilst remaining within a manageable boundary to perform a detailed analysis of each (Morgan, 1998). However, after recruitment difficulties I changed the research design, and instead I held 5 focus groups with audience members, supplemented by two smaller conversations held with Muslim non-viewers. In this section I will specifically cover the methods relating to the viewer groups, and move on to discuss how I designed supplementary groups to meet the issues I encountered in the next section.

They are now all available on the subscription service Netflix, though this was not the case when the research was conducted.
The composition of a focus group will greatly influence the data produced within them (Knodel, 1993; Morgan, 1998; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Wilkinson, 1998; Lunt and Livingstone, 1996). A homogenous group of people are likely to find it easier to interact given their shared background or interests, whilst a more diverse group may result in a less comfortable exchange, but provide better opportunity to analyse the dynamics of disagreement (Krueger and Casey, 2015; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). In terms of composition the most important feature for the participants was that they were regular viewers of Homeland for three reasons: first, to ensure participants had an interest in the topic and gain from the research process (fitting with my feminist ethics); second, because they were regular viewers they were likely to have some opinion on terrorism and counter-terrorism to offer; and third, because I was interested in how audiences of Homeland interact with it, so I needed committed viewers rather than people watching a single episode in controlled conditions. This meant that there was a predetermined level of homogeneity within the group, as they shared an interest in Homeland.

It is important to note that this audience is not necessary reflective of the changes in the way that television is consumed. As argued by Lotz (2007) and Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), with internet television services, catch up TV, a rise in fan fiction, a proliferation of channels, and more diffuse audiences, viewing practices have changed and often do not confirm to the older models of television viewing. In this regard, my participants are atypical of the modern television audience, they did watch this show as it aired, tuning in each week for the latest instalment. This flags a potential avenue for future research, to look at how Homeland is understood by people who are not watching it contemporaneously.

There were demographic factors to take into account in the composition of the groups. I did not aim to create any particular homogeneity in the group and was prepared to have a range of demographic categories in each group. For this reason I aimed to have a mix of men and women in each group, and I tried to recruit from a range of areas that had different levels of deprivation and affluence. The only control that I planned to implement on the diversity of the group was to separate out the non-Muslim and the Muslim participants. This was done on two grounds. First, I felt that this would generate more open discussion on issues of race and representation in groups that were separated on religious grounds. Second, I felt that there was potential for the discussions to be uncomfortable for participants, and that this level of potential discomfort would be outside of my personal parameters for ethical conduct of research. I held one group exclusively with journalists; originally this was designed to enable a deeper consideration of the relationship between television, its audience and the media, although this is not developed within this thesis in recognition of time and word limits, this group did generate some useful insights.
However, despite attempting to include a range of participants, the focus group participants were all relatively homogenous in that they were university educated, with professional jobs and were between the ages of 20-50, predominantly in their late twenties and early thirties. This reflects the target audience of ‘high quality drama’, Channel Four, and so the target audience of the show. It is obviously influenced by the self-selecting nature of recruitment as this group are most likely to have the motivation and free time to take part in academic research. The appendix lists these groups and their participants. I did manage to recruit a mix of genders (there were 10 women and 14 men). Overall, these respondents were adequate to understand the diversity of opinion between viewers of the show, and it proved particularly interesting to investigate the different negotiation of meaning between groups. I deliberately recruited for one group of non-Muslims who did not identify as white. These participants were a mix of racial identities. I did this in order to be able to better draw out the workings of whiteness in the other groups by comparison.

A further choice was around how the focus groups would be conducted. Focus groups can be structured, can involve responding to particular stimuli (a text, video clip, or prompt) or be less structured in style (Knodel, 1993; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Morgan, 1998; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). I decided that a semi structured group would best enable me to capture the negotiation of meaning that was central to my research questions (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). The focus groups were semi-structured in order to prompt free discussion where participants were able talk about Homeland, and to bring in any other references that were relevant. A more rigid structure would enable the results between groups to be more easily compared, although this was not of central importance to my research. I aimed to examine how people made sense of the terrorism story in Homeland and a question schedule would predetermine what I could find in this process.

Semi-structured focus groups enabled me to consider how people relate to the characters, how far they read with the text, or against the text, what other cultural references they draw upon, how they relate this to their own lives and experiences. It was therefore important that as a researcher I led but did not dominate discussions (Hesse-Biber 2007: 134). The focus groups with the viewers of Homeland followed plans, and I had a list of general questions to address in each group, however, space was given for different topics and discussions to emerge as participants wanted (Knodel, 1993). This meant that it was possible to consider the focus groups as a whole, but at each group had its own individual character. Participants were encouraged to engage in discussion amongst themselves. For this to be successful I tried to establish a relaxed atmosphere and this was done by providing pizza, sharing food immediately created a more relaxed dynamic (Krueger and Casey, 2015). I outlined some ground rules at the beginning of
each session about being considerate to other participants. The composition of the group helped enormously in the creation of an easy discussion, because they not only had the shared experience of watching *Homeland*, the relative homogeneity of the group enabled a free flowing discussion (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015).

Choosing the number of participants in each focus group is important to the process (Morgan, 1998). I aimed to have six participants in each group because this figure would allow for enough participants to generate discussion whilst still being a manageable number to direct in the room and to transcribe and analyse afterwards (Krueger and Casey, 2015). A smaller number can mean it is difficult to generate discussion whilst a larger number can make it too difficult to control the conversations (Morgan, 1998). In fact, they ranged between four and seven participants due to both last minute drop outs and instances where all participants, and sometimes ‘reserve’ participants were all able to attend.

I ran a pilot focus group in 2011 which I used to refine the research process as well as my own skills as a focus group lead. This group was run with 6 self-selecting participants and was transcribed and analysed by themes in parallel to a textual analysis. This proved the efficacy of the chosen research design in answering my research questions.

Morgan (1998) suggests that focus groups can be run until the point that the data has reached ‘theoretical saturation’ when the full range of what I was hoping to observe has been met. Whilst I would not argue that I had seen the full range of possible reactions to *Homeland* from audience members, I collected enough data for themes to repeat and to make observations about the different ways *Homeland* is read and negotiated. Whilst the non-white focus group was held to make possible considerably different readings of *Homeland* from the all-white groups, the remarkable similarity of responses meant I did not need to continue to investigate the differences of this dynamic. Nevertheless the data proved rich, even within the scopes of the time and financial constraints of the project.

**Recruitment**

The population studied was the British *Homeland* audience. The sampling method was theoretical sampling, which is a sampling method where the members are chosen to help illuminate and extend the understanding of processes and relationships. They are not a group that are intended to be representative of any wider population (Mason, 2002). Here the relationship that is being investigated is the one between *Homeland* and its audience. The members of the focus groups were not chosen in order to be representative of the British population as a whole or even the *Homeland* audience as a fixed entity; instead participants were chosen to demonstrate a range of possible viewing positions.
The timing of the recruitment had an impact on the type of *Homeland* viewer that I recruited and this in turn has implications for the type of interaction that these viewers had with the show. I began recruitment half way through the airing of season 3 and so ran my groups during the airing, or immediately after it was aired. This means that the participants I recruited had all watched the show at the time that it was broadcast (as opposed to watching it in a box set months after it was initially aired). This means that I spoke to a much more traditional television audience, one who tuned in weekly to a television station to watch the latest instalment. In fact, given the change in viewing practices, this audience is perhaps now atypical of the way that television dramas are consumed (Lotz, 2007).

In total 24 participants were recruited. There were three general groups that had a range of participants, two of which were held in Leeds and three were held in London. There was a split of groups held in London and Leeds. This was an attempt to mitigate the regional bias that might have emerged from using only one UK city. In an extension of this project it would be interesting to hold groups across a more diverse set of locations across the UK.

Recruitment was done both online and offline via invitations to a *Homeland* discussion group. I put posters up in prominent public areas near to where I held the focus groups (coffee shops, common rooms, libraries, shops). Online message boards and social networking sites were used including Facebook, Twitter, and MeetUp. In some cases there was a snowball effect as some participants had heard about the call from other participants. As discussed, the respondents were homogenous, though this was not a particular aim of the sampling technique. The sample was adequate to answer the research questions.

**Supplementary Groups**

In the initial planning for this project I intended to hold groups with Muslims that watched the show to consider the negotiation of terrorism stories with those who identify as Muslim. I wanted to do this because I was uncomfortable with the idea of contributing to a research tradition where ‘the Muslim’ was treated as research object. However, I found it very difficult to recruit Muslim viewers of *Homeland* via the general recruitment channels that I was using. I then engaged in purposeful recruitment to attract Muslim viewers of *Homeland*, using faith and community groups, as well as charities that focused specifically on the representation of Muslims in the media (Mason, 2002). I used personal social networks. This was all undertaken to no avail. The findings of the informal conversations held during this recruitment phase (recorded in my research diaries) was that many British Muslims actively chose not to watch the show because of the way they anticipated it would represent Islam. This caused me to reflect back on question of who makes up the *Homeland* audience.
In order to explore this issue I held two separate groups with Muslim non viewers of Homeland, in which we watched clips of the show and talked about issues raised as well as media choices. These groups were recruited from a call for Muslim participants to talk about issues of the representation of Muslims in terrorism television, particularly Homeland. None of these participants had previously viewed Homeland. Although still semi-structured these discussions were led by the clips from the show. Due to the length of clips the groups were held as pairs, so there could still be a dialogue, but in order to give participants enough time to speak. There were two groups in total with four participants, three men and one woman. It would have been beneficial to hold a larger number of groups, but time precluded this.

It is important to stress that these groups were not held to access ‘the British Muslim’ perspective on Homeland, but rather to complicate the picture from the discussions with non-Muslim viewers. I wanted to ensure that my research did not marginalise the voices of Muslims when investigating ideas of the racialisation of terrorism discourse. This was well expressed by one of my participants Nabiha when she explained why she took part in my research:

I thought it would be a way for a Muslim person to actually say my opinions about terrorism, and what I think of it and how it effects Muslims in this country because it is not nice to be wearing a hijab, to go around being called a terrorist, or people saying have you got a bomb under your scarf and you do get that, and you might not hear about it every day but stuff like that affects us, it affects us a lot and it is becoming more and more difficult to show yourself as a Muslim.

I wanted to ensure that there was space to recognise this perspective on terrorism discourse. This is done to fit with the anti-racist aims of this project. This is reflected upon in greater detail in chapter nine.

**Analysis of the Focus Groups**

The focus groups were all recorded and then transcribed. Each focus group was analysed in turn. I attempted to perform an interpretive and reflexive reading of the data, as recommended by Mason (2002), whereby I identified the significance and theoretical and substantive implications of the data whilst also attempting locate myself within it. I coded, following the process outlined by John Knodel (1993), so began by coding the data into topics, which were later broken down in to subtopics (whilst ensuring these categories related to the research questions). I then developed a more detailed set of codes in order to consider those elements of the data not

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20 These groups caused me to reflect upon what conversations I have access to in this method, who these representations are for and who they resonate with, and the communities of whiteness that are performed and created in fandom- I will explore this in detail in chapter nine.
captured by the overall coding system and to develop a more detailed analysis of specific topics. Richards (2005) suggests that these stages are separated into topic labelling, then category codes and finally analytical codes. Following this three step process enabled me to make comparisons within and between focus groups. I applied codes to entire ‘meaning units’ from the groups, in order not to fragment the data too much (Bazeley, 2013). This coding was all done manually, because this was the best way to account for the nuances, and complexities in the text. Furthermore, I wanted to notice the silences, and inconsistencies in this data in keeping with my post-structural approach, something which a computer data analysis package would have been unable to account for.

However, one key difference in the mapping process to the formal plan laid out by Knodel (1993) was that it was done in interaction with the television show. The initial themes that were identified were used to look more deeply at the television episodes. Scenes that came up a lot in discussion received my particular attention. Therefore, the discourse analysis was led by the participants’ contributions. The results of the close reading of Homeland enabled me to add the more detailed analytical codes. The focus group contributions were then matched to the textual analysis. This was a mixed methods approach where the data collection and analysis were interactive and iterative. A different set of codes was applied to the supplementary groups. The data from these groups was combined with field notes on my own research experiences. This mixed method is reflected in all the analysis chapters in this thesis which attempt to draw out both messages within the texts, and meanings negotiated by viewers (or put in the language of television studies the ‘encoded and decoded’ meanings).

Me, the Researcher

A crucial part of this research is my role within it. Throughout this research I write in the first person, this is a deliberate and political act to ensure that I am present in an explicit way in this project. This is done to emphasize that this research (indeed all research) is always first and foremost undertaken by someone for some reason (Hyland, 2001). There is a partiality to the research, as argued by Haraway (1988) this involves both the particular focus of the project, as well as my own politics which are both central to the research, but which do not undermine its conclusions. The decisions of inclusion and exclusion within this work are my own, the conclusions that I draw are my own, though many of the insights about Homeland come directly from my participants. This recognition of the situatedness of this research is important because it locates the claims made in the argument and so both makes the conclusions more specific but also much stronger (Simpson, 2002).
I adhered to ethical guidelines as outlined by the British Sociological Society and Leeds University. This included explaining the research to the focus group members, collecting consent forms, and ensuring discreet handling of the research data, and ensuring anonymity for participants by using pseudonyms. I aimed to go beyond this “procedural ethics” to a “practical ethics” whereby I ensured my research accounts for the interests of the participants, the wider community, and is done in a way that is compatible with my feminist politics (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). I followed a feminist ethics which Koehn (1998) argues has six features: that the self is relational; duty to care; the publicness of the private; the importance and value of difference; emphasis on imaginative discourse; making a difference by changing the world. In my research, this meant making the focus groups and resulting analysis participant led, being forthcoming about my own research aims, completing a field diary to help me to work through issues I encountered in the research process, and ensuring that I fairly represent the views of participants. This project’s aims are anti-racism, feminist and anti-imperialist.

Focus groups have particular ethical dilemmas. These include participants feeling uncomfortable, either because they say more than they wanted to or because they are not able to talk, or disagreements within the group causing distress (Morgan, 1998; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Wilkinson, 1998). These dangers are particularly acute in my case where talking about terrorism can be upsetting. To mitigate these risks I set up ground rules to ensure respect and trust between participants (Wilkinson, 1998). Participants were free to leave the process at any point. Participants were given the opportunity to review the data and to change any part that they felt uncomfortable with before completion.

My work represents the views of the participants. Therefore, I strive to be reflexive, which requires self-awareness and a recognition of the practice of knowledge production during the production process. As Pillow (2010: 176) explains, the goal is “to produce research that questions its own interpretations and is reflexive about its own knowledge production.” Reflexivity is not simply about reflecting on the self (or indeed problematizing that notion of subjectivity), but also about reflecting upon how I engage with others. This work is motivated by an interest in the agential experience of engaging with popular culture and the desire to move away from a position where the audience are treated as cultural dupes, whilst the researcher places themselves above, or beyond the effects of the text. Therefore, I want to recognise that my own reactions are researchable, and to recognise that I too am subject to, and involved in, the meaning negotiations that the participants perform.
Reflections on the Research Process

During the research I kept a field diary to help me to work thorough issues that I encountered during the research process. One key issue that I faced was encountering my own white and academic privileges. I attended an event held by Just West Yorkshire Extratination: the question of citizenship in the war on terror at this event there were discussions about the difficulty of protesting counter-terrorism and anti-Muslim racisms in a political culture of criminalised ideologies and a discourse of ‘radicalisation’. During the event, many researchers and students in attendance spoke about their own experiences of being under suspicion, or even under arrest, for criticising counter-terror policy and policing practice. Yet, in this culture I am not under suspicion, though I joke about the nature of my internet search history, I do not experience any real threat of arrest. My critique does not render me threatening to the UK and it does not jeopardise my citizen status in metaphorical or practical ways. This caused me to reflect upon the systems of racialised and classed privileges that I bring to this research. Related to this is the intellectual and personal discomfort induced by the study of whiteness. This research is about destabilising racial privilege and identities and this includes my own raced identity. This personal experience deeply influenced the direction of the analysis of the process of racialisation. These reflections form the basis of the analysis in chapter nine.

It is important that I reflect upon my own relationship to terrorism. I have not experienced terrorist violence; I have not had any personal experience of the deaths that result from counter-terrorist violences either for military personal or the civilians that their actions often impact. I have not been subject to racist abuse on the grounds of my (actual or perceived) religious status. In that way I am probably typical of much of the middle class, white, British population. Yet, terrorism as a threat, discourse, plot line and security issue has been present in my life. I have born witness to terrorist violence, the resulting War on Terror and the changes in domestic policy and practice on my television. Political violence and terrorist discourse are part of the background of my day to day. Violence is made to be mundane (inevitable, constant, bureaucratic, distanced) but at the same time exceptional. This presence and absence of terrorism in my life is strange, and this project is about recognising it as such. This research is in part about me working through my own complicity in the violences that are undertaken in my name as a citizen of the UK.

It is worth reflecting on my relationship to show. I was a fan and watched the show before I decided it would form the basis of the research project, although I already had an academic interest in the topic. I therefore do not consider myself as being markedly different to the participants in the research, and strive to make my own viewing practices part of the researchable material.
The Context

*Homeland*, based on an Israeli show, produced in America, and watched internationally, is an example of the globalised nature of stories about terrorism. This thesis investigates how the gendered and Islamophobic logics of the *War on Terror* have travelled across time and space to ask how they are rearticulated, redeployed but also resisted by *Homeland* audiences in the UK.

In chapter three I discussed how the theoretical frames of assemblages and ‘radical intertextuality’ informs this project. These approaches provide a way to theorise the interactions that these narratives have within complex relational systems of race, gender, identity, violence and terrorism, put simply the effects of discourse. Methodologically this means that the textual analysis was supplemented not only by work with the audience members but also an investigation into how *Homeland* was received, into the events that it references, and their representations in the media, and that the analysis was always done in terms of the context of the production, and reception of the show.

*Homeland* reveals much about its production context, in terms of what issues, messages, images it contains. Produced in America this is speaking specifically to an American context of counter-terrorism. The focus groups reveal things about the context of consumption, which is done within a British setting. In a globalised world these two contexts are of course heavily interrelated, made more transferable because the USA and the UK responded to terrorism in similar ways, with a tightening of legislation and increased security measures domestically, combined with military interventions in Afghanistan and Iran, that were justified (at least partly) in the context of global terrorism. Whilst the ‘special relationship’ between the countries has resulted in cooperation and convergence in international security policy. What is more, in the framing of global terrorism, Islamic terrorism is often depicted as a threat to ‘The West’, so that the UK and the USA, whilst not interchangeable are certainly ‘on the same side’. Further similarity in counter-terrorism discourse comes from the interaction of popular cultures, American produced films, television shows and documentaries are very popular within the UK.

However, there are of course considerable local, cultural, social, historical and political differences between the two countries. Though very much a part of the War on Terror, the British experience and version of counter-terrorism are vastly different the America, the British ‘self-image’ is different to that of the USA. In this study I will remain critically aware of these differences, and bring them out to consider how an American War on Terror discourse travels and is received by a British audience.
It is not possible for me to give a full account of the ‘context’ of terrorism, and I am very aware that claiming what the key events of terrorism are or creating a timeline is a political act which actually reifies the idea of what is ‘relevant’ to acts of terror and counter-terrorism, and of course is the result of particular acts and behaviours being successfully labelled as terrorism or counter-terrorism. Yet I provide a timeline of events that is based on intertextual references that were brought out in the show and in the focus groups. The context that I provide here is not only intertextual but also international. These are pulled into a timeline in the text box on the following page, which gives a quick introduction to each event to help the reader follow the subsequent analysis. It is a very partial timeline, that not only gives only a very limited picture of all the violences and responses that could be listed in terrorism and counter-terrorism practices, it is also partial in the sense that it is a very political framing of what terrorism and counter-terrorism is. The politics of this historical framing is explored in chapter four.

There are other practices that are central to counter-terrorism that were referenced by both the show and by participants such as extraordinary renditions and enhanced interrogation techniques which cannot be given specific date markers in a timeline because they did not happen on specific days, but instead were ongoing practices. Furthermore, the times and places of their use have been deliberately hidden by the US and UK governments (Blakeley and Raphael, 2011).
Box 4.1 A partial timeline of terrorism, counter-terrorism and the War on Terror

- 20/7/2000 The 2000 Terrorism Act received Royal Ascent in the UK. The act reforms and extends previous counter-terrorism legislation, and puts it largely on a permanent basis.
- 11/9/2001 Al Qaeda hijack passenger planes and crash into the Pentagon, World Trade Centre and one plane crashes outside of Washington, killing 2,996 people (including the 19 hijackers) (START, 2011).
- 26/10/2001 The US PATRIOT Act is signed by President Bush Jnr to enhance domestic laws around counter-terrorism.
- 7/11/2001 Initial combat operations begin in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (Salazar Torreon, 2015).
- 14/12/2001 The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act was passed into law. This act enabled the government to indefinitely detain foreign nationals deemed to threaten national security without charging them or bringing them to trial.
- 19/04/2003 Allied forces invaded Iraq as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (Salazar Torreon, 2015).
- 28/4/2004 Images were released by the press showing the abuse of prisoners by US military personal in Abu Ghraib jail in Iraq.
- 11/4/2005 The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 came into force, in response to a ruling that detention powers of the 2000 Terrorism Act were unlawful. The Act allows the Home Secretary to impose control orders on people suspected of involvement in terrorism.
- 7/7/2005 Al Qaeda attacks on the London Transport System which included suicide bombs detonated on a bus and two tube trains.
- 13/4/2006 In response to the 7/7 bombings the Terrorism Act 2006 is passed into law.
- 1/9/2010 Operation New Dawn begins in Iraq, to transition power to Iraqi military and police.
- 22/5/2013 Fusilier Lee Rigby is killed near the Royal Artillery Barrack in Woolwich by two men who said they killed a soldier to avenge the killing of Muslims by the British armed forces.
- 6/2013 Snowden leaks information on the practices of the National Security Association that reveal that they have run surveillance on US and International citizens.
- 15/4/2013 A bomb is detonated at the Boston marathon by the Tsarnaev brothers from Chechnya who claimed it was inspired by their Islamist beliefs and retaliation for the US’s actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere.
- 2/5/2011 Osama Bin Laden was killed by Navy Seals in a house in Pakistan.
- 31/5/2013 Bowe Bergdahl who had been held captive by the Taliban since 2009 was released to the USA in exchange for five Taliban members being held at Guantanamo Bay.
- 1/1/2015 Operation Freedom’s Sentinel began in Afghanistan (United States Department of Defense, 2014).
Reading the thesis

The following chapters are not split between the discourse analysis and the analysis of focus group data. Instead I bring together my analysis of each to uncover particular themes, techniques and instances to consider the creation and negotiation of meaning. Similarly, I have tried to perform a deconstruction that considers gender and race and their mutual constitution. Throughout the chapters I use text boxes to highlight particular tropes or moments of intertextuality with other political stories and events. This is done to highlight these events to show analytically and visually the layering of meaning in Homeland.

Conclusion

The methodology applied in this project draws on Security Studies and Television Studies to analyse the relationship between security, identity and popular culture. It provides a close reading of the text supplemented by focus groups with British viewers of the show. This thesis aims to recognise the way that the audience’s relationships to gendered and raced narratives are negotiated, not simply absorbed. This matters because it means that a reading of gendered stories has to recognise that these are stories about people that are watched by real people, in real places and this makes a much messier, but a much more interesting engagement in how race, gender and terrorism become meaningful.
Chapter 5
Telling It like It Is? Representation and Intertextuality in *Homeland*

*Homeland* deliberately disturbs the familiar tropes and stereotypes of terrorism stories and television drama with a female CIA lead, a white Marine as terrorist, Muslim CIA analysts, and an American Vice President culpable in the bombing of a school. This thesis examines what versions of gender, race, and terrorism emerge from this story. I argue that this story of terrorists, heroes and *Homelands* is productive of security politics, racial identities and gendered behaviour. It contributes to the reality of terrorism for its viewing public by providing content and structure to terrorism discourses.

This analysis considers both meaning within *Homeland* and the process of meaning making by British audience members. It does this to begin to explore how counter-terrorism, race and gender are represented in *Homeland* and to consider what effect the realistic setting has on the meaning that is produced. It draws out how *Homeland* both supports existing relations of power, but how at the same time it contains the potential to undermine these relations. The research is about the cultural production of power, the struggle over meaning, and the construction of the political realities of terrorism, gender and race. *Homeland* is a vehicle for exposing assumptions and one place where the content and structure of dominant terrorism discourses are forged. A key finding from the focus group data as a whole is that participants read the text in different and differing ways, and the meaning is negotiated through these (ongoing) interactions.

*Homeland* works through terrorism, race and gender. As a narrative *Homeland* offers structure and closure to the story of terrorism that is not present in ‘real world’ violences. It presents this story in a very realistic framework. Where film and TV scholars have argued that film and television initially shied away from directly confronting terrorism and the War on Terror, we see *Homeland* directly address the ongoing security situation. This chapter argues that this direct address allows *Homeland* to be a site where meaning is made for terrorism.

It makes the racialisation of world politics seem natural and it rearticulates the boundaries of gendered behaviour. Retelling terrorism stories from a Western (American) perspective, *Homeland* is a story that reinvigorates the need for counter-terrorism operations. It accepts and reifies some of the inclusions and exclusions at the heart of security theory, policy and practice at the outset. However, just because it is easy to read patriarchal, racist or imperial scripts within *Homeland*, does not mean that they are all that is present in the show, or that they are successfully transmitted to audiences. *Homeland* explicitly intervenes in the discourses
surrounding terrorism, gender and race and in doing so it opens space to be critical of the
dominant narratives. There are moments when Homeland is critical of War on Terror stories, of
racialised stereotyping and of gendered boundaries. Nevertheless, it often leaves the larger
assumptions about the threat of terrorism, the need for counter-terrorism, the gendering of
violence, and the racialised othering of terrorists intact. It is not a linear story, but there are
movements back and forth between these two positions, it is not a case of either or, but rather
of tension and negotiation.

This thesis does not seek to resolve these tensions, but rather, to contribute to the ongoing
effort to understand how dominant security narratives as well as their contestation emerge from
popular culture. The data collected in the focus groups show that audience members accept
these narratives, but that they also resist them, sometimes accepting the show’s premises, and
other times reading actively. This not only varies between people, but the same individuals
adopt different reading positions at different times. This finds a space for context and agency to
be reinserted to an understanding of the cultural production of world politics.

This chapter focuses on the ‘real world’ that is referenced and thus created in the Homeland
story. It lays the ground for the subsequent analytical chapters and gives an initial overview of
the Homeland world. Homeland is invested in telling a ‘realistic’ story of terrorism. It references
‘real world’ events such as the Iraq War, 9/11 and the death of Bin Laden; it is set in America,
and is supposed to be in ‘real’ time. It re-enforces this realism by portraying complicated
characters and relationships. These intertextualities are not accidental but maintained in order
to emphasize the relevance of Homeland and to keep the complexities of race, terror and gender
embedded with the cultural context of the moment in America. More than this, it reproduces
the very reality that it purports to describe.

As argued by Elspeth Van Veeren (2009:367) “[t]he frequency with which popular cultural texts
draw on ‘reality’ to suggest plausibility is an interesting part of the (re)production of discourses
of security.”

This chapter considers how Homeland produces and references reality, and more importantly
what this enables in this story of terrorism. It considers how audiences negotiated the fact and
fiction boundary (or more importantly the lack thereof) in Homeland.

This chapter introduces some concepts that will be key in the subsequent analytical chapters. It
explores intertextuality and the relationship between Homeland and wider terrorism discourses.
It introduces the role of the audience in making meaning, the potential for them to misread or
actively read the meanings encoded in the text. It introduces the concept of ‘discursive double
moves’ to interrogate how seemingly critical representations can actually mask more familiar War on Terror logics. This new conceptual framework provides a way to interrogate current representations of terrorism that allows engagement with nuance and multiplicity and tensions in the story.

The subsequent analytical chapters are divided to cover security, race and gender, whilst at the same time remaining alert to the constant interactions and mutual constitution of the three that is central to this understanding of terrorism. Overall this analysis is about the construction of a particular version of the War on Terror; it tells a story of our past and articulates the ‘reality’ of our present.

**Intertextuality**

Intertextuality is key to the interaction of popular culture and security. As argued in chapter two, intertextuality is about the way that all texts are made up of references to other texts, so that meaning is always made in terms of the wider discourses that the text relates to (Der Derian and Shapiro, 1998; Weldes, 1999; Grayson et al., 2009). No terrorism text exists in isolation, but always draws from, and is part of, wider terrorism discourses (Jackson, 2005). Deploying the concept of ‘radical intertextuality’ I show how popular culture and the real world operate on a continuum. For *Homeland* the way intertextuality operates is particularly interesting because *Homeland* is a fictional story set in the ‘real world’. This is not a technique that is distinct to *Homeland*, but it is a particularly interesting example of the workings of intertextuality. Indeed as Van Veeren (2009: 365) argues “[t]he fiction/reality boundary... is misleading: “fictional” shows draw on elements of “reality” (realities), rearranging them so that their plausibility is accepted to a greater or lesser degree.”
The way that *Homeland* places the story within the ‘real’ world more easily allows transference of meaning between the two. The wider discourses of terrorism are brought in to make sense of terrorism in *Homeland*. At the same time *Homeland* is drawn upon to make sense of the real world. These intertextualities happen in very clear ways (see text box 5.1), but they are also about how meaning is always made contextually and relationally. As the Van Veeren quote implies, it is not just that *Homeland* can simply reflect a knowable ‘real world’ but it represents the ‘real world’ according to its own narrative setting. It is, as all texts are, a partial, positioned and thus deeply political representation that acts to create the ‘real world’ rather than simply reflect it.

**Realistic stories**

*Homeland* is set in Washington DC. It follows a soldier returned after kidnap from the Iraq War and the workings of the CIA as they attempt to foil an Al Qaeda led attack. It uses actual locations, and agencies, and it sets itself firmly within the contemporary security and foreign policy climate. The mis-en-scene attempts to create realism, with a lot of outdoor shots filmed on location, such as repeated shots where the White House is visible in the

### Box 5.1 Intertextual examples

The intertextuality of *Homeland* and the ‘real world’ of terrorism are rich and complex. The examples below give an initial picture of the interrelated world of popular culture and world politics expressed in *Homeland*.

- Obama has famously said *Homeland* is one of his favourite shows (Dinan, 2014). In fact, Bromell, consulting producer on the show has boasted that not only is Obama watching it “but the Secretary of State- his wife- the Secretary of Defence, the head of the CIA, they all watch it and talk about it Monday mornings” (Jenkins, 2016: 9).

- When prisoner of war Bowe Berghdahl was released in 2014 the likeness to the Brody story was picked up on. Fox News ran a segment on the similarities between Berghdahl and Brody. There was suspicion about whether Bowe had been ‘turned’ because of the unusual circumstances of his capture, the fact that he now speaks Arabic and the anti-war sentiment expressed by his family.

- Valerie Plame, an ex CIA officer whose identity was leaked to newspapers by the CIA and who wrote *Fair Game: My Life as a Spy and My Betrayal by the White House* has been described as the ‘real life’ Carrie Mathison in the press. (Oliver, 2013; Marsh, 2013).

- When Damien Lewis attended a White House dinner the *Homeland* team presented Obama with a box set as a gift. Lewis signed this “from one Muslim to another” (DailyMail, 2012)

This thesis will continue to call out these moments of intertextuality to understand the slippage of fact/fiction, and in fact the false notion of that very division.
There is continuity editing, which follows a linear timeline. There is the inclusion of ‘mundane’ tasks where characters cook, shop, change clothes, shower, and go to the bathroom. This type of action is not usually presented in dramas (for example we never see Bauer of 24 make himself a sandwich), thus its inclusion suggests this is an attempt to show a ‘real life’ story of terrorism. The show makes explicit reference to 9/11, to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and to Bin Laden. Nicholas Brody is in the Marine Corps, with the correct uniform, insignia and motto. The countries in which the drama takes place include Syria, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan. The terrorists in Homeland are said to be members of Al Qaeda. Whilst the characters in the governments are not based on any American politicians, it is noticeable that the President is never referred to by name, or shown during Homeland, which enables the audience to believe that Obama is at the helm. Homeland presents itself as an insight into the realities of counter-terrorism, albeit via a fictional plot. Indeed Damian Lewis, the actor who plays the protagonist Brody, told the British newspaper Metro (2012: unpaginated) that Homeland is so popular because it is “grounded in a political reality.”

This realistic setting is established before the story is told. As Fiske and Hartley (1978: 162) argue, “[r]ealism seems to demand of us that before we can be entertained…we must first concede that the mode in which the fictional story is presented is not constructed, but is merely the natural representation of the way things are.” This is about the “presuppositions” that are made in the Homeland story. These are the implicit assumptions about the world or background belief whose truth is taken for granted in discourse (Doty, 1993). The audience must accept the world that is created in Homeland, which means that they must recognise it as their world.

Van Veeren (2009) has argued that this interplay of reality/fiction in terrorism drama creates a hyper-reality. In her article on 24 she tracks how fiction and reality are mutually constitutive of one another through their intertextualities. I argue the term hyper-real is misleading, because it implies a new, or third space, whereas what is politically interesting is not how reality and fiction combine to create something new, but how they are constitutive of one another. It therefore becomes important to consider what version of the ‘real world’ Homeland is creating.

The World According to Homeland

The ‘Homeland world’ represents some fundamental presuppositions about terrorism and counter-terrorism that have to be accepted before an audience can meaningfully engage with the story. In this section I consider what basic precepts the Homeland story relies upon. In order

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21 Although the makers have admitted that little of the drama was shot in Washington DC because of the difficulty in gaining permits to film in the city
for these to resonate with the audience they must reuse existing tropes about terrorism. They simultaneously draw from and rearticulate a very particular image of terrorism. I identify the main presuppositions below.

**Post 9/11**

First, this is a ‘post 9/11’ world and the entire drama is framed by 9/11. The opening credits of each episode include scenes of the collapse of the World Trade Centres and we hear:

Carrie: I missed something once before. I won’t, I can’t let that happen again.

Saul: It was ten years ago. Everyone missed something that day. *(Pilot S1 E1)*

This introduction means that 9/11 is always placed front and centre. The show explicitly addresses the attacks of 9/11 and sets up a context where they are central to the landscape of terrorism and counter-terrorism. The intertextual reference of the World Trade Centre’s collapse is a much used image in Western iconography.

The very term post 9/11 is itself indicative of a particular world view. It highlights the American experience of violence as the moment that a new epoch was ushered in, thereby negating the connections of the attack to ongoing international relations. This drama repeats and solidifies the idea of this era as being ‘post 9/11’ by framing the narrative explicitly in this way. These are privileged as the important moments of international relations and so create a world view that is framed by these attacks.

**Terrorism is a Particular Type of Violence**

Before we learn anything about who the terrorists are in *Homeland*, what they are doing, or why they might do it, there must at the outset be an understanding that terrorism is a particular type of violence. The show does not provide a clear definition of terrorism. It simply deploys the descriptor to particular (real world) events from the past and particular narrative constructions within the show. The examples that are highlighted in the opening credits (which include 9/11, Lockerbie, the attack on the USS Cole) establish what violences count as terrorism. Whilst the plot of *Homeland* goes on to disturb many of the tropes of terrorism, including what motivates terrorism and who can be a terrorist, this foundational move shows how *Homeland* starts from an orthodox view of terrorism as violent actions of non-state groups against a state. A terrorist suspect is anyone who is involved in these plots. In the show they often refer to particular individuals as ‘terrorists’ which establishes that this is an identity category.
**Counter-Terrorism is a Particular Type of Response**

This presence of terrorism as a security threat simultaneously establishes a need for counter-terrorism. Furthermore, it presupposes what counter-terrorism in America entails. The presupposition is that counter-terrorism involves thwarting potential attacks against America from non-state actors, and it is about intervening in the governments that are related to such activities. It repeats the idea that counter-terrorism is not about challenging the political circumstances that result in these political violences, but simply thwarting the success of particular plots. This is about the de-politicisation of terrorism (and counter-terrorism), where it becomes a particular form of violence taken out of any particular geopolitical or historical context. Although, again this is something that we see challenged during the course of the show, in particular in the third series, it is the opening premise on which the story relies.

**Terrorism Makes America Insecure**

In *Homeland* terrorism is a type of violence that is presented as an ongoing threat. The pathos and drama of the show is underpinned by the idea that there is an imminent terrorist attack. In order for this to be accepted as a realistic drama the very first assumption that must be met is that terrorism presents an ongoing and real threat to the USA. The sound bites in the background are splices of famous Presidential addresses about terrorism, with snippets of reporters talking about specific terror attacks against the US. These are:

- President Reagan: Air and naval forces of the United States launched a series of strikes against terrorist facilities ...
- Reporter: Pan Am Flight 103 crashed into the town of Lockerbie.
- Reagan: He has sanctioned acts of terror in Africa, Europe and the Middle East.
- President George H.W. Bush: This will not stand, this aggression against, uh, Kuwait.
- Reagan: This relentless pursuit of terror.
- George H.W. Bush: We will make no distinction ...
- Reporter: The USS Cole was attacked while refueling in the port of Aden.

The choice of what to include means that these events become the frame through which the world is presented. Here we see that the events that ‘matter’ (along with 9/11 as discussed above) are acts of violence performed against the USA.

From the outset *Homeland* reproduces terrorism as an in/security issue. What is more, it is the only threat that is introduced in the narrative. There is no mention of any other form of
insecurity. Therefore, Homeland reproduces a discourse that suggests terrorism is the most pressing security issue.

**The CIA Play a Key Role in Counter-Terrorism**

In this depiction counter-terrorism is security practice for the CIA. Commentators (Zalaznick, 2012) have pointed out that the way that the CIA in Homeland carry out lengthy operations on American soil is entirely outside of the legal remit of the CIA. Yet in Homeland this is shown as standard practice for combatting global terrorism. Homeland goes to great lengths to create a ‘realistic’ depiction of the CIA in the way that it uses locations and props. They reference Langley and the Bush Centre for Intelligence. The outdoor and interior shots are very carefully set up to look as similar to a government building as possible. Whilst the technological abilities of the department are impressive, Homeland does not repeat the ‘techno porn’ that is familiar to terrorism dramas (such as the Bourne series) or to television dramas (such as Crime Scene Investigation). Indeed Kretchmer (the production designer for Homeland) says that they deliberately used older computers and screens to add a realism to the interior shots (as quoted in Hurwitz, 2014: 39). What is more, counter-terrorism is the only function that we see the CIA perform. In that way the drama establishes that counter-terrorism is what the CIA do.

**Terrorism is Islamic Fundamentalism**

Terrorism in Homeland is perpetrated by Al Qaeda. This group has to be accepted and recognised as a terrorist organisation. It means that they have to be seen as presenting a realistic threat to America. As the only terrorist group in the frame they are established as the most threatening terrorist group. The countries that are visited in relation to the activities of Al Qaeda are Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Lebanon. This links these countries to terrorism. This already begins to set up the conflict as America versus ‘the East’.

Overall, the founding premise of Homeland is that America is (or could ‘realistically’ be) under threat from an attack that would originate in Islam and/or the Middle East. An attack on the USA is necessarily terrorism. These threats are thwarted by the CIA as they work to uncover particular individuals and plots. This is the world stage that the drama plays upon. It is the deployment of the familiar tropes, plots and places of counter-terrorism. As I explored in chapters two and three this image of counter-terror is familiar from War on Terror discourse created in academia (Jackson, 2009), news media (Norris et al., 2003; Miller and Mills, 2009) and popular culture (Boggs and Pollard, 2008; Prince, 2009). Indeed the CIA’s webpage entitled “the CIA and the War on Terror” has at the top the following quote from the Director of the CIA, John O. Brennan:
Today we mark twelve years since the terrible attacks that shook our Homeland on September 11, 2001 - a tragedy that had a profound impact on our Agency, the Nation, and the world. While much work still needs to be done on the counterterrorism front, CIA officers should be proud of the many, many contributions they have made since 2001. Indeed, the CIA now works more closely than ever with its domestic and foreign partners to thwart the plans of al-Qa’ida and other terrorist groups. And we will always hold dear the memory of those lost to terrorism on that day and in the years since.

We see how closely this image of terrorism is matched by the ‘scene set’ by Homeland.

The central theoretical point here is that presenting ‘realism’ does not mean that Homeland simply reflects the real world of security, but contributes to a particular image of what that real world is like. It is one way that the ‘reality’ of terrorism as in/security is established. This thesis interrogates how these assumptions are reinforced in the narratives and characters in the Homeland story, although I also draw out ways they are subverted by both plot and audience. However, it is important to note how limited/ing Homeland is by this partial view of the ‘real world of terrorism’ from the outset.

**Realism and the Audience**

The idea of how ‘realistic’ Homeland was proved to be a central theme in every focus group. In order for the show to seem realistic to viewers it must match their idea of what the world is like, therefore they must share, or accept, the central assumptions outlined above. At the same time it is reinforcing and constituting their view of the world. As Lembo (2000: 168) found in his research on viewing practices, “people who watch television routinely make judgements regarding the plausibility of the programming” and these judgements are based on how well the show resonates with them, which is a way of “establishing connections between that world and their own as a way of making that discourse meaningful.”

The intertextuality produced through realism was explicitly picked up on by participants who said:

Tessa: The first season there was an element that you thought something like that could be happening in America at exactly the same time.

And

Tom: To me it was quite true to the main things, like the drones, the bombs, the Americans sending these drones over, and that is what Abu Nazir’s son was killed in one of those things, and that is what led Brody to do what he [did] ... So I thought there were
a lot of parallels to real life, for me anyway ... I think it was quite true to things that do happen.

For both of these participants *Homeland* was realistic. *Homeland* depicts a familiar world to the audience members and at the same time it works to re-articulate a particular version of the real world. The participants in this discussion did not have direct experiences of CIA or counter-terror practices so the ‘real world’ they are matching *Homeland* to is itself just a familiar story of counter-terror. This shows how *Homeland* is part of the ‘continuum’ of popular culture and the real world (Grayson et al., 2009).

Generally the more realistic *Homeland* was, the ‘better’ it was deemed to be by my participants. The first series was generally said to be the ‘best’ because it was the most realistic. However, participants argued that *Homeland* was sometimes unrealistic. The scenes and plots that were highlighted as being unrealistic included: the idea that Carrie would be able to work in the CIA with an undisclosed mental health problem; that Brody could recover from a heroin addiction to regain fitness in two weeks; and that Brody would be able to successfully assassinate the head of the Iranian Secret Service and be able to leave the scene. This was criticised as being ‘too Hollywood.’ In these scenes participants thought *Homeland* had sacrificed nuance in order to tell the most entertaining story. This was articulated by Rachel who said: “it is too polished, too neat, it doesn’t happen like that.”

These criticisms of how realistic *Homeland* was do not seem to challenge the presuppositions about the real world, but instead they challenge particular storylines within this world. Interestingly, realism was important to the viewers I spoke with even though they hastened to add that they knew it was a fiction. For example:

Malik: [Season three] was so farfetched at points, um, I know it is a drama and we are meant to suspend our disbelief at some points, but I think that the thing about *Homeland* through the others, and maybe I am sounding really naive here, is that you could kind of believe that it was CIA-ish, spy-ish, especially that scene where he walks out of the embassy or whatever. It was just so Hollywood.

It is useful here to invoke Gledhill’s (1997) idea of generic and cultural verisimilitude. She argues that there are these two types of realism against which viewers evaluate television. First, there is cultural verisimilitude, which is when things which are deemed realistic in comparison to the ‘real world’ (such as the reference to the Iraq war, 9/11 and President Obama). Second, there is generic verisimilitude, which are things the viewer accepts as part of the genre (such as the fact that the main characters are always the key players in plot developments). There was cultural
literacy amongst the group and they understood this division between what made ‘good television’ versus what would be the ‘most realistic’ depiction. Claire says:

It is realistic for the mainstream though, in that they do risk things, and it doesn’t all go their way, that would be the most action packed gripping TV show, it sort of made an effort.

The accuracy of the representations seemed to play a part in their enjoyment of the show. Despite this understanding, and similar statements, that ‘this is only entertainment’ from participants, the level of ‘realism’ was valued by participants. Reading the show as realistic, or critiquing moments where the realism fails, shows how Homeland was thought to be realistic by participants. They then accept some of the representation as a natural representation of the way things are.

The Active Audience: Resisting the Homeland World

There were instances where audiences more actively questioned the ‘real world’ within Homeland. This happened in the most obvious way where participants recognised that it is a very particular setting for the story. This was articulated by Giles who said:

They are naming real countries and real places and so they are trying to give this idea of realism but then portraying it in certain ways.

Giles not only notices the production of realism, but he recognised the politics inherent in a claim to realism.

Phil, a journalist who works for a non-western news outlet, was particularly critical of the world view that he saw presented in Homeland:

The argument that they don’t look at in too much detail I think is the reverse of the War on Terror, which is the war without borders, which is basically what every extremist Islamic terrorist believes in. Which is when George Bush came out a couple of days after 9/11 and said ‘wherever you are we will hunt you down and we will bring you to justice’, it is a borderless war.

All of the unquestioned assumptions that build up the background to Homeland’s story (as a post 9/11 where there is American counter-terror versus foreign terrorism in a War on Terror) are noticed as a particular framing by Phil because he sees that this is just one sided version of the counter-terrorism story. He has a different world view of terrorism and counter-terrorism,
therefore he does not accept *Homeland* as realistic, but sees it as a particular take on terrorism. This is an example of him rejecting the presuppositions of *Homeland*. He continued:

> But I am talking about the ideology behind it, the whole point of blowing somewhere up in America, [that] in Western eyes is thought of as a terror act, there is no actual explanation of that. We are talking about the War on Terror, so in theory you should talk about the reverse of that which is the borderless war.

He notices the Western viewpoint inherent in *Homeland*. He is aware of the way that the world view frames the very categories of violence. This is an example of how even the very precepts of this story can be negotiated, rather than simply accepted by viewers.

**Misreading Realism**

In addition to active resistance to the ‘reality’ that is put forward in *Homeland*, there are moments where the ‘real world’ represented in *Homeland* did not resonate with the British audience members that participated. A good example of the failure of *Homeland* to always ‘translate’ to audiences comes from the themes of Judaism that are represented through the character Saul in *Homeland*. Michael Cuesta, a member of the *Homeland* production team, said of Saul “we started with the durable trope of the righteous insider/outsider even to the point of making Saul Jewish, literally one of the few Jews within the agency” (as quoted in Hurwitz, 2014: 21). To the writers Saul’s Jewishness is central to creating a wider identity for the character. In interviews with co-creator Gansa he has reiterated this saying that they encouraged the actor Mandy Paitikin who plays Saul to grow a beard to emphasize this Jewish identity (VanDerWerff, 2012).

In American commentary on *Homeland* Saul’s Jewishness has been picked up on as significant. Within the show there were several instances where Saul’s Jewishness was made prominent. For example, when he interrogates terrorist suspect Aileen he explains how his Jewish identity made him feel excluded as a child growing up in a Christian community (*The Weekend* S1E7). This is reiterated in a scene where he performs the Kaddish over the body of a terrorist (*Blindspot* S1E5) and finally where he stopped leaving Lebanon and the guard remarks “you are Jewish” to which Saul replies “I am American” (*State Of Independence* S2E3). Again this plot lines serve to build on Saul’s Jewish identity.

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22 Given that *Homeland* is based on an Israeli television show there could be a very rich analysis of the way that Israeli politics is captured and represented in the show.
This is one of the ways that politics around Israel is invoked in *Homeland*. Israel is very significant to American foreign policy. There are moments when this is played upon in the show. Saul is being spied on by a Mossad agent, and Mossad later cooperate with Carrie in Iran. This has been read as significant by some viewers in the US. For example in Massad’s (2013: unpaginated) commentary on *Homeland* he argues, “the racialist structure of the show is reflective of American and Israeli fantasies of anti-Muslim American multiculturalism.” Yet, in focus groups when I asked participants to reflect on Saul’s Jewishness this was often met with comments such as:

Tessa: I really didn’t’ think that, I didn’t’ pick it out.

Kate: I didn’t even notice it.

Tom: Saul is a very Jewish name, but I just didn’t... to be honest it hardly does register, perhaps if I thought about it, but I didn’t.

Participants had often not noticed or placed any significance on Saul’s Jewishness. Where the Arab/Israelis division has proved significant for many American reviews of the show it did not feature in my discussions. Where there was reflection it did not follow this theme and Barnaby in fact remarked:

It kind of puts him at neutral because he is not, this kind of Christian avenging crusading American, but he is not Muslim, but he is just in the middle, his religion is not an issue.

These readings come from a British political context where Judaism does not have the same identity connotations or foreign policy connotations as it holds in the USA. For that reason invocations of Judaism are either seen as neutral or unremarkable.

This evidences how active readings (read either as ‘failures’ of the text, or as moments of agency for viewers) are related to the position of participants. To return to the idea of inter-textuality, participants’ interpretation will depend on their own intertextual references. Therefore, people will read the text differently, but there will be potential similarities amongst those with shared cultural backgrounds who will have similar inter-textual references. As argued by Weldes (2003: 15) “the language of inter-text subtly implies that different texts are produced in different space/time/cultures.” I would add to this is that texts are also consumed in different space/time/cultures. This highlights the ‘cultural geographies of reading’ at work in the consumption of texts. There is a shared British culture for participants at work in this example.
It is Not Black and White: Realism, Tensions and Discursive Double Moves

One way that Homeland creates an idea of realism is by rejecting tropes or stereotypical representations to tell a more nuanced story. This more complicated story makes a claim to better reflect the complexity of the ‘real world setting’. This section moves on from just considering the presuppositions in Homeland to look at how the mode of storytelling interacts with realism. Homeland could not retell a straightforward story of the American avenger there has been considerable criticisms from academics and activists over the practices of counter-terror as well as high profile scandals around the conduct of the security forces, from prisoner abuse, to collateral damage. In order to be relevant, realistic and intertextual Homeland needs to respond to the ongoing events and the political climate that surrounds counter-terrorism. There are tensions at work in the claim to realism that are indicative of the overall tension within the show, which is at once mainstream and critical. On the one hand, this added complexity disrupts War on Terror discourses. Yet, it also strengthens Homeland’s claim to accuracy. As discussed earlier, this claim to be accurate obscured the partial/political nature of the story that it is telling. Most cynically, it can be argued that it is only by seeming to engage in the critical accounts of terrorism that Homeland is able to rearticulate War on Terror logics.

Homeland often challenges the dominant representations of counter-terrorism, confronts the stereotypes of terrorism, and reworks the typical narratives of American goodies versus their foreign enemies. These are important moments that can allow the audience to disturb the logics of counter-terrorism. However, I argue that it is important to consider the limits of these gestures, and to recognise moments where even seemingly critical representations can actually retell a more traditional story, or in fact support the need for ongoing racialised and gendered practices of counter-terrorism. I call these moments “discursive double moves” to capture the way seemingly critical interventions can be used to mask and in fact even support the logics of counter-terrorism, the practices of racialisation and hierarchies of gender.

Homeland is replete with these discursive double moves, which we see in action in articulations of post-9/11, and post-feminism. This section outlines how they work through the representation of the ‘reality’ of terrorism. I want to highlight how these moves work in each chapter to introduce a level of nuance to my analysis of the Homeland narrative, which is too often simplified when people seek to condemn or praise representation without paying enough attention to the tensions within them.

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23 For example, see Jackson (2005), Holland (2012), Hunt and Rygjel (2006), Chomsky and Ashcar (2015), Jarvis (2009)
24 For example, in media commentary in which Homeland has been dubbed America’s ‘most Islamophobic show’ (Al Arain, 2012).
This thesis engages with how the show disturbs old tropes and stereotypes of terrorism and how successful these disruptions are at challenging the familiar logics of counter-terrorism. The show tells a more nuanced story with a female lead that rejects more traditional narratives of male heroes. Her role as an anti-hero, who is flawed, often reckless and mentally ill is a movement away from the all-American heroes typical in action drama. The show makes another departure from typical terrorism stories by having a white American marine as the main terrorist suspect, which diverges from the stereotyped image of the terrorist. What is more, *Homeland* provides (some of) the terrorists with understandable motives, and shows the American government and military acting in morally reprehensible ways. The central example is that it is a US drone strike that bombs a school, killing 82 people including a child whom Brody is teaching named Issa, which ‘turns him’ to terrorism. The characters all live complicated lives and do unlikable things. Whilst these characters and plot lines are all examined in more detail in subsequent chapters, here I am interested in how this introduction of nuance interacts with the claim to realism. The disruptions to the familiar War on Terror tropes can be seen as a positive reworking of old stereotypes. However, these disruptions can also be read as a discursive double move because by telling a more complicated picture *Homeland* gains more credence. Therefore, a more critical and complicated story helps *Homeland* to reassert its claim to ‘tell it like it is’. This makes the slippage between seeing *Homeland* as a story or as a reflection of ‘real events’ possible. *Homeland* is not just read as a fiction but is constitutive of the reality of terrorism, it is a resource that viewers draw on when they think about the ‘real world’. It is not enough to claim that any movement away from the troped, stereotypical or hegemonic discourse is necessarily a successful critique of counter-terrorism. Instead, it is important to consider what these criticisms enable. To ask what they can open up and how they are adopted by viewers. If these moves fail to undermine some of the presuppositions that I laid out in this chapter, then their critical potential is blunted.

**Audience Reflections on the Complex Story**

In focus groups the added complexity within the *Homeland* story helped to establish a sense of realism for participants. Sarah articulates this clearly:

> I don’t think it has changed the way that I view things, I mean the way that they portray ... the way things aren’t black or white [that] is the way I thought things were to start with, to me, you know, there are good and bad in every culture and every country.
Sarah argues that this depiction of the uncertain moral terrain of counter-terror does not change, but rather matches her pre-existing ideas of counter-terrorism. In order to be relevant to this audience *Homeland* had to give a more nuanced account of terrorism. As Barnaby says “[y]eah, my personal view is just a bit fatigued by the whole thing and *Homeland* is almost a natural consequence of that. This rejection of a straightforward story made the story ‘more realistic’ for audience members. For example:

Vish: I think that the first series, especially that episode [Blindspot] was really well balanced. It wasn’t this is bad this is good, it was this is happening; this is how the realities of these things can conspire and what happens.

Therefore, the added complexity bolsters the claims to realism that *Homeland* makes. The more complex story was thought to better match the real world of counter-terrorism. This enables the machinations of realism to work through the story. This feeds into the process that is explored above whereby claims to realism help to mask the politics inherent in any presentation of a ‘real story.’

It is important to bear in mind how this can be seen to act as a discursive double move, where the seemingly more progressive treatment of terrorism does not necessarily challenge the fundamental logics of the ‘real world’ that I outlined earlier. This thesis needs to consider how the more critical and challenging moments are bounded by, and fit into, the ‘real world’ of terrorism that *Homeland* operates within.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the *Homeland* world and argued that *Homeland* aims to tell a realistic story. The central argument is that this intertextuality between the *Homeland* world and the ‘real world’ is not just about mimetic accuracy, but in fact lays the foundation for the transference of meaning between the *Homeland* world and the viewer’s understanding of the ‘real world’ which helps Homeland to create meaning for counter-terrorism. Indeed it shows how false the distinction between the real and the fictional are. It is not that this slippage only occurs via realism, intertextuality is a central feature to all text and discourse, but realism shows an obvious and particular interaction between popular culture and terrorism. This chapter has explored how claims to realism in popular culture function.

The way that *Homeland* makes a claim to ‘tell it like it is’ through the use of real places, added mundane detail and referring to contemporary history in fact helps to establish what ‘it’ is like. By seeming to tell a real story *Homeland* sets itself up to give an insight into the real working of
counter-terrorism. It enables Homeland to contribute to the ‘common sense’ of terrorism. It puts forward the background assumptions that are necessary for this story to make sense.

This chapter has put forward the concept of discursive double moves to theorise how even moments in the show that seem counter-hegemonic can serve to mask and even reinforce dominant discourses and stereotypes rather than undo them. This occurs when Homeland purports to give a more nuanced and critical account of terrorism, and so more effectively make claims to be simply ‘telling it like it is’. This is not a closed system whereby all critical moves are necessarily co-opted, but recognising the presence of this tactic allows me to be alert to the nuanced and multi-layered nature of security discourses. I use this analytical lens in subsequent chapters to analyse the tensions between critical and conservative narratives in Homeland. This frame helps me to explore how Homeland can support and contest the legitimacy of counter-terrorism.

This chapter introduced data from the focus groups. It shows that ‘realism’ was a central concern to all participants. However, it is also showed how the process of meaning making can fail in two ways, when the audience members misread the text, or when they actively read the text. The example of misreading occurred when the British participants fail to read significance into the articulations of Jewishness in the character Saul and at other moments in the narrative which are part of the creation of a particular US outlook on international relations. The active readings, not obvious from Giles and Phil, occurred when the participants rejected the Homeland world and occasionally actually questioned the expression and partiality of realism. This gives a first example of how including findings from audience studies can contribute to an understating of meaning making as a process. The audience cannot be read as cultural dupes who unthinkingly accept and reproduce meaning from the text. Furthermore, it shows how the context of consumption affects the way a text is read, here the British relationship to Judaism. These themes, of the active audience, the context of consumption, and the negation of meaning, are central themes throughout this thesis.

The deliberate invocation of the real allows Homeland to contribute to viewers’ understanding of the reality of terrorism and counter-terrorism. It is pursued to enable Homeland to seem relevant and contemporary for the audience. Yet this is not the whole picture, Homeland is not just accurate, it is not a dry documentary. It is thrilling, moving, tense and dramatic. The next chapter turns to consider this emotional aspect of the Homeland story. The next chapter considers how the realistic setting is infused with the emotional and melodramatic narrative to create meaning for terrorism. The thesis aims to build on this understanding of the realism in Homeland. It attempts to draw on the moments of intertextuality and their function. It asks if
this is recognisably ‘our world’ that is made insecure by terrorism: what does Homeland suggest are the range of possible reactions to it? How does it frame how ‘we’ are supposed to feel? And how does this come to affect what it is possible to do in the name of counter-terrorism?
Chapter 6

Working through Terrorism: Melodrama, Emotion and Cultural Anxieties in Homeland

2996 people were killed in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (START, 2011). 4425 U.S. soldiers were killed in the Iraq war and 2355 U.S. soldiers killed in Afghanistan (United States Department of Defense, 2015), whilst 179 British soldiers were killed in Iraq (Great Britain Ministry of Defence, 2009) and 353 British soldiers were killed in Afghanistan (Great Britain Ministry of Defence, 2014). According to the website Iraq Body Count (2015) there has been between 13 907 and 154 875 civilian deaths in Iraq, with over 200 000 deaths in total following the American invasion in 2003. These deaths are not the only impact that the War on Terror has had on the social, historical and cultural landscape. There has been a considerable increase in anti-terror legislation including the Patriot Act in the USA and the Terrorism Act in the UK, both of which have increased the powers of domestic law enforcers to pursue and arrest terror suspects. American counter-terrorism has involved ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ that have included waterboarding, beatings and rectal feeding. We have seen glimpses of more extreme forms of torture that have taken place at military prisons in Iraq. Counter-terrorism has involved ‘extraordinary rendition’ with at least 119 prisoners transferred to foreign governments for interrogation and detention, outside of the legal process (Blakeley and Raphael, 2011). Counter-terror has seen a considerable growth in the surveillance tactics of the National Security Agency of America on both American citizens and foreign nationals. There have been controversial cases of extradition of terror suspects. As well as the prisoners held in the yet to be closed down Guantanamo bay there are many terror suspects in solitary confinement in the US Supermax prison system (Johnson and Pincus, 2009).

This snapshot of the violences and impacts of counter-terrorism is not comprehensive. However, it demonstrates some of the traumatic impact of the violences of terrorism and counter-terrorism. It highlights how anxieties around terrorism and counter-terrorism result from traumas of the terrorist attacks and the violences that were performed under the banner of counter-terrorism as part of the War on Terror. In Western discourse this era is often defined

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25 The initial act was actually passed in 2000 prior to 9/11, although it has since been revised to strengthen the government’s power to arrest and detain suspects.

26 The extent of this surveillance was famously revealed in the ‘WikiLeaks scandal, to read more on the leaked documents read the book by the man who leaked the documents Klein, M. 2009. *Wiring up the big brother machine ... and fighting it.* BookSurge Publishing. To read more on the scandal see Landau, S. 2013. Making sense from Snowden: What’s significant in the NSA surveillance revelations. *Security and Privacy.* 13(4), pp.54-63.

as ‘post 9/11’, which encapsulates the idea that we live after the event, but also, that we are in an age that finds itself framed by that event - so deep was its symbolic power on Western consciousness (Borradori, 2004).²⁸

This chapter analyses how Homeland tells a story of counter-terrorism and how the narrative structure of Homeland provides coherence and resolution that to make sense of counter-terrorism. It considers how emotion works in this story of counter-terrorism to explore how the narrative structure of Homeland recaptures a moral legibility which has been lost in the ravages of the War on Terror. This is about confronting the fear, shame, anxiety as well as the pride, resolution and hope that are central to terrorism stories. Homeland is a terrorism drama, with the action, timing, suspense and violence that is common to this genre. Chapter five explored how Homeland’s pursuit of ‘realism’ allows it to articulate a version of political reality.

This chapter analyses Homeland as a melodrama, not to simply apply a generic classification, but to consider how Homeland “works through” anxieties and instabilities inherent to race, gender and terrorism. It is answering one central research questions; how counter-terrorism is represented in Homeland. It does this by paying particular attention to the narrative form of this representation. It also engages with British audience member’s negotiations with the meaning of the show, another central research question of the thesis, by considering how they respond to this story.

The chapter begins by considering the ongoing invocation of fear and insecurity animated in a story where terrorism “hits home”. It moves on to look at shame and blame, considering how Homeland attributes responsibility to bad politicians. It then considers guilt and grief as confronted through the invocation of innocence in the Homeland story. It ends with a consideration of how the melodramatic narrative arc enables acceptance and resolution for ongoing counter-terror violence. This is supplemented by data from the focus groups which considers how the participants negotiate these emotional positions. It asks who they are prepared to blame for the extremities of the War on Terror and how this frames their view of counter-terror practices. Again this demonstrates how an active audience does not simply adopt the messages, or emotions embedded within the text, but they negotiate them and the meanings they produce.

²⁸ Rather than try to diagnose what it is to be post 9/11 this analysis of Homeland will be a way to explore one articulation of counter-terrorism.
**Homeland as a Melodrama**

In chapter two I suggested that, following on from Television Studies, an understanding of genre is helpful to the analysis because it draws attention to the way that the story is told. In this chapter I engage with how *Homeland* tells a melodramatic story of counter-terrorism. Linda Williams (1998) identified five features of melodrama:

- Melodrama begins and ends in a place of innocence.
- Melodrama focuses on victims and heroes and their return to virtue.
- Melodrama’s recognition of virtue involves dialectic of pathos and action – a give and take of ‘too late’ and ‘in the nick of time’.
- Melodrama borrows from realism but realism serves the melodrama of pathos and action.
- Melodrama presents characters that embody primary psychic roles… [of] good and evil.

These five features are each present in *Homeland*, with its innocent American victims and home/lands. Brody and Carrie’s search for virtue underpins the plot. The ongoing pathos and action is made urgent through the invocation of the imminent terrorist threat. It is the ‘edge of your seat’ drama that underpins the emotional excesses of the narrative. The idea of being against the clock provides urgency to the pathos and action at work. It is the threat of terrorism that underpins the black and white of good and evil that guides the morality of the show. Melodrama can be linked to the realism in *Homeland* as discussed in chapter five, because realism helps to generate an emotional response, to draw us into the drama and to enable the shift from ‘this could happen’ abstractions to the idea that ‘it might happen to us’. Reading *Homeland* as a melodrama enables this analysis to take into account the play of good and evil, the use (and reworking of) the home space, the play of innocence, the emotional responses that it provokes in the audience, and the presence of pathos and action. It brings into stark relief how (and when) *Homeland* searches for moral legitimacy, and so whether it is adding support to war on terror logics and counter-terrorism practices, or critiquing them.

This approach to melodrama takes us beyond an understanding of a melodrama as soap opera, applied only to “women’s weepies”, but instead sees its “a peculiarly democratic and American
form that seeks dramatic revelation of moral and emotional truths through a dialectic of pathos and action” (Williams, 1998: 42). This ties this mode of storytelling to the American self-identity as somehow exceptionally moral and value led society (McCartney, 2004; Drinnon, 1997; Hunt, 1987). Melodrama is the mode of “revealing moral good in a world where virtue has become hard to read” (Williams, 2001: 19). This is argued by theorist Mulvey (1987; 4) who says that “melodrama can be seen as having an ideological function in working certain contradictions through to the surface and presenting them in aesthetic form.” Therefore, this thesis applies melodrama to understand how Homeland is working through the insecurities that have been produced (and that are productive of) terrorism and counter-terrorism. These insecurities do not only relate to terrorism, but also to the problematic practices of counter-terrorism that do not fit with the self-image of innocent victim such as surveillance, torture, rendition, drones strikes and assassination that are part of the counter-terrorism arsenal in the War on Terror.

Underlying the invocation of a moral code that is reasserted in melodrama are the villain and victim and avenger. In terrorism dramas these are recoded into terrorist, victim and counter-terrorist/soldier and the characters embody these roles. These identities are gendered and raced. Terrorism stories rely upon these identities to animate and reinforce ‘terrorist’ as an identity category, so that the confusing terrain of security is simplified back into a morality tale of goodie versus baddie. Whilst at the same time, the gender hierarchy is rearticulated as necessary in insecure times, and the racialisation of the terrorist Muslim other gains credence. Therefore, we see how Homeland is implicated in the interaction between race, gender and terrorism. It also points to particular American tropes of the home, redemption, and culpably politicians. It is a mode of storytelling that is expressed in Manichean terms, again, a much criticised feature of American foreign policy (Campbell, 1997; Neumann, 1999; McCartney, 2004). Melodrama is a sight/site of race and gender work. Mulvey (1987: 74) argues that as well as being gendered melodrama “acts as a safety valve for ideologies that are founded on sex.” Williams (2001) argues that melodrama makes sense of race by using racialised victims and villains to give American racisms validity. Race and gender are invoked to support the morality tale, but at the same time they are rearticulated in this process.

Goodies and Baddies, the Search for Moral Legitimacy in the War on Terror

This section considers how the American security services are depicted in moral terms. I argue that despite introducing the moral ‘grey areas’ of security practice such as extraordinary rendition, collateral damage, surveillance and drones, read through a melodramatic lens

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30 Although both of these theorists work within psycho-analytic frameworks, this understanding does not need to be linked back to a sub-conscious
*Homeland* actually works through feelings of guilt and confusion for the audience. One way it does this is to rearticulate the innocence of the American *Homeland*, a second way is to attribute blame to politicians and a third way is to show that extreme security measures are not only justified, but that they usually work.

**It Hits Home: Fear and Insecurity**

The transference of wider insecurity narratives on to the family home is a key feature of melodrama. The idea of home is important in *Homeland*. There is a deliberate elision of ideas of the innocent home space and the innocent American *Homeland* which is quite obvious in the show’s title and the tagline “it hits home”. The threat of a domestic terrorist is moved into a typical American family home. It actively calls the audience to understand the dynamics of the family in terms of the threat to the nation, and to understand the threat to the nation in terms of gendered family dynamics. This blurring is not a feature specific to *Homeland*, but as argued by Meeuf (2006: 9), “the U.S. family has often acted as the representative of the nation and threats to the nation carry the most symbolic weight when dramatized as concomitant threats to the family.”

Analysis of the use of home in melodrama by Williams (2001) has shown how “one of the key ways of constructing moral power is the icon of the good home. This icon helps to establish the ‘space of innocence’ of its virtuous victims.” As Dodds (2015) argues, the repeated use of the home means that the War on Terror is given an ‘everyday quality’ as it is moved into familiar/familial settings.

This section considers how the home functions in *Homeland*. The use of the home and family as representative of the *Homeland* and nation is done most obviously in the case of the Brody home. The Brody home is shown to have been fractured by the Iraq war as the father figure has been absent, and to be under threat from the terrorist imposter. This home space is not simply innocent, but has been contaminated by War.

**Box 6:1 The home/front/land trope**

This use of the home ties into a wider American trope where the home is a metaphor for the homeland, which links back to the role of the frontier/ the home front in American identity (Drinnon, 1997). Familiar in popular culture this trope is used repeatedly in Westerns (Cottam 2011). It uses the myth of the frontier, of American progress being found through violence, tied to a domestication of civilisation of the barbaric (Slotkin, 1973)

The term Homeland security is a relatively new term which emerged after 9/11 (Kaplan, 2003) but it is reusing this more familiar trope. Ann Kaplan (2003: 90) argues, “the word puts into play a history of multiple meanings, connotations, and associations” which both recreates an idea of a stable family/nation whilst also creating an idea of a foreign threat lurking out there.
on Terror violences. As the show plays out in the third season the Brody home is actually shattered and broken by Brody’s actions, although they gain a replacement father figure, in the shape of Marine Mike Phillips, the daughter ultimately moves out and they reject the Brody name. Seen as an allegory for post War on Terror America, this does not lead to safe narrative closure, whereby the family are restored and reunited, but rather they are reshaped to deal with the ongoing trauma of terrorism. This home space is gendered, and even though it is dysfunctional in many ways (including affairs, broken relationships and lies) it is still a heteronormative nuclear family. The innocent home space (and the terrorist threat to it) is the ground on which the drama plays.

During the course of the show we encounter many other character’s home spaces including those belonging to the Mathison family, Mike Phillips, Tom Walker, Aileen and Faisal, Abu Nazir, Saul, Quinn, Fara, and Walden. In fact, there are very few character’s whose homes we do not enter. Whilst the scenes in each family home are incidental to the plot, they communicate wider issues about home/land securities. Carrie’s sister’s home is depicted as a place of comfort and play, and Carrie explicitly positions this as the thing she is attempting to protect. If the home is read as the American nation, this recuperates the US as an innocent space that has been damaged by the War on Terror, and is importantly still under threat from it. This is articulated in *Blindspot* (S2E5) in which Carrie explicitly promises to protect her niece (Ruby) from terrorism:

Ruby: Are you worried about the bad guys? We’ll protect you.

Carrie: No, that’s my job.

This conjures a more familiar narrative of the innocent American home as symbol for an innocent America.

The home of the terrorist leader Nazir is also shown. This is a comfortable, family place. This representation of the terrorist home has an interesting intertextuality with the change in discourse about Osama Bin Laden’s home, from the underground lair in the Pakistani mountains, to his discovery in a comfortable compound where he lived with his family. It is a subtly gendered space; we do not meet any women in any of the scenes that are based here, which makes it a masculine space which subtly implies a story of gendered segregation that is often associated with a depiction of Islam as misogynist.

Any homes that we enter that are to do with politics or politicians, including the homes of Vice President Walden, political aide Elizabeth Gainer, and party donor Rex, are all large and lavish homes that are atypical of the average American family home. This establishes an idea of
politicians as different, or removed from, the typical American experience, a theme that is analysed more in the next section of this chapter.

We see inside many of the CIA officer’s homes. Saul’s home, like Brody’s is shown to be fractured by the War on Terror, as he and his wife hover on the brink of separation. Yet, unlike the Brody home that is disturbed by the war itself, the disturbance is caused by Saul’s role in counter-terrorism. This shows that counter-terrorism too has an impact on the home/land, and requires considerable sacrifice. Quinn’s home is bare, clinical, and austere, there are no personal affects, he sleeps in a sleeping bag, and looks ready to leave at any minute. Here again there are hints at the incompatibility of home life with counter-terrorist work. The other CIA officer’s home that we enter is Fara’s, reading her home setting as a proxy for her relationship with the Homeland we see split between her Iranian heritage and family and her status as an American citizen depicted in the conversations between her father, who is unhappy about her role in the CIA, and who she chides to “speak English”. This nationally divided home helps to reiterate her fraught relationship with the American home/land.

We also encounter the home in Carrie’s flat which is shown to be austere mostly decorated in blues and greys. She lives alone, there are no pets. It is impersonally decorated, there are no family photos, hand stitched quilts or flowers here. The most personal item is a jazz poster in the living room, although this is dwarfed by a cork board which she uses for work. We never see her go through any domestic duties, cooking, cleaning or entertaining here, though we do watch her drink white wine on her return from work. We are repeatedly told that she is not a good home maker with numerous references to her poorly stocked kitchen. One reading of this depiction it that it emphasises the personal sacrifice that is part of counter-terrorism.31

Although we encounter Carrie’s home and her wider family (sister, father, and nieces) at points in the show, most of her familial dynamics and personal relationships happen in her workspace. For example, Saul is the paternal figure who she goes to for comfort, approval and advice. Her relationship with Brody happens in a blurred space between home and work. Quinn occupies a fraternal position, there to both provoke and protect Carrie. What is more, the victims of the terror attack are not typical innocents of a family home; they are Carrie’s colleagues at Langley. This in part falls into a melodramatic trope where the emotional excesses of Carrie, her passions and obsessions, prevent her from taking her ‘proper place’ in the domestic order (Rowe, 1997). The narrative continues to use melodramatic invocations of home by positioning Carrie’s workplace as a home space and so reusing a familiar set of familial relationships.

31 The gendered implications of this depiction are explored in chapter seven.
There is a deconstructive gesture in this positioning because rather than moving the drama in its entirety into a safe, innocent and contained family space, it complicates this move by making the protected ‘home’ an altogether less straightforwardly innocent civilian space. It undermines the public/private division that underpins International Relations theory (Tickner, 1992; Steans, 2006) and instead shows the blurred nature of the domestic and professional space.

Another moment where the wider narrative of in/security is transferred onto a home space is in *The Weekend* (S1E7) in which Carrie and Brody go to her cabin. Here they perform domestic tasks and routines. They make dinner together, Carrie goes shopping, makes Brody his breakfast. Yet, the whole time there is an undercurrent of lies and deception. This is played out on personal grounds, on the uncertainty and awkwardness that is typical to any fledgling romance. This transfers the counter-terrorist work into a (artificial) domestic space, which imbues it with intimacy and emotional intensity.

The movement of the terrorism story onto the home obeys melodramatic logic because it allows the wider issues of terrorism, counter-terrorism and insecurity to be played out by individuals in small scale decisions. Furthermore, it re-plays a myth/ideology recurrent in wider American security discourses of the idea of the international threat, as a threat to the home (Meeuf, 2006; Dodds, 2015). This creates a feeling of in/security by articulating this nebulous emotion directly onto a familiar (and personal) space. However, it also allows these abstract feelings to be writ large upon homes, and in particular onto the Brody family. This captures, in a tangible way, the spectre of terrorism as a threat to the ‘American way of life’. What is more, this is a show that people are likely to watch in their own living rooms, in their own homes, so articulating the terrorist threat as a threat to their private space makes it more present and real. It is made personal.

**Audience Negotiations: Emotions and the Home**

In the focus groups it was very clear that the participants are emotionally invested in the show. In one sense this was evident in the enthusiasm with which they discussed the show, the way they were animated in their defence of some characters or their critique of others, this was expressed non-verbally. They would need to have some emotional investment in the story and its plot lines to consider tuning in to the programme for three seasons. In many instances they articulate their relationship in terms of emotions, as put very plainly by Jane: “I was just a bit intrigued by my emotions towards it.” Who went on to say: “I didn’t know what I was supposed to feel... when you haven’t got a baddy and a goody on the whole.”
Here Jane talks about her emotional reactions to the show. When Jane says that she wasn’t sure how she was ‘supposed to feel’ we see how the more nuanced story directly confronts participants’ emotional reactions to terrorism plots.

Participants were emotionally invested in the story and the characters. This was apparent in participants’ responses. Across all focus groups participants talk about being made to feel sad, angry, frustrated, shocked and sympathetic towards characters. There were also times when the spoke explicitly about their emotional reaction, for example:

Tom: I am very similar to that [intrigued by emotions] I think, and yeah I enjoyed it, and the relationships between the characters.

Laura: [Carrie was] the character that I felt emotionally attached to

Kate also talks about how the pleasure comes from watching the characters ‘evolve’, and her emotional reactions to those characters. The participants were aware of how the show plays with viewer’s relationships to the characters and emotions.

The participants seemed to read Homeland as a melodrama, and Rachel even went so far as to say “I watch it more as a soap.” The next chapter considers the participants relationship to Carrie and Brody in more detail, but we see here how the show elicits emotional reactions, and how this emotional response is central to participants’ engagement with the terrorism story.

In the discussions I did not ask participants about the representation of homes explicitly, but they picked up on the representations of family life. Tessa remarked that she was interested in how the show used “insights into terrorist families to see what that’s like [and how] they really, really drew that out and tried to get people really emotionally involved.”

This quote captures the role of emotions in the show as well as how the transference onto the family and onto individual characters animates this emotional story. There were a lot of discussions about the Brody family, the family dynamic, and the suffering that they have gone through. For example when Seth says “I felt sorry for his family, they just seemed to have very little understanding, it was just quite shocking.” And when Malik, who is talking about why he watched the show, says “[I am] someone who quite believed in the hole dynamic, especially in the first couple of seasons, the whole dynamic of the family.”

They found the Brody family interesting, and often come to understand other character’s actions through the relationship to the family.
These excerpts from the discussion have shown how the audience engage in the show and with the characters in emotional ways, aided by the use of home spaces and family relationships.

**Bad Americans: Shame and Blame**

This section argues that a lot of blame is attributed to politicians in *Homeland*. It argues that this happens in two ways. First, the extremes of the War on Terror are blamed on the neocon/hawkish actions a few bad men, whilst later in the series the ongoing atrocities are linked to the political manoeuvring of the political elite. This is about establishing legitimacy for counter-terrorism in the wake of revelations about the use of torture, rendition, drone strikes and assassinations that were used in the War on Terror. Related to this is a desire to apportion blame where the counter-terror policies went wrong.

*Homeland* works to apportion blame to America and it confronts the related shame. The feeling of shame is made visible in particular through the drone strike. Dauphinee (2007) argues that the need to access the pain of others is often fulfilled through representations of suffering bodies, or explosions and their aftermath. Bleiker and Hutchinson (2008b) argue that the depiction of suffering is the visual representation of emotion. In *Homeland* we see this in its most blatant form in the scene after the drone strike as Brody wanders through the bomb site, seeing injured children, desperate parents, smouldering rubble, and bloodied corpses. The fact that Nazir and Brody immediately make this act a matter of American shame, and place blame squarely on Vice President Walden, completes the emotional picture, telling the audience how and where to apply their emotions.

After the prisoner abuses of Abu Ghraib, the Bush administration did not immediately recognise the problematic practices of the US Army but famously attributed the actions to “a few bad apples” (United States Department of Defense, 2004). This individualised the abuses and allowed the political and military cultures that produced these abuses to go unchallenged. These abuses were presented as an exception to the rule rather than as a product of masculinised militarism at the core of the US Army (Kaufman-Osborn, 2005). I argue that this justification is at work in the narrative of counter-terror in *Homeland*. In the first two seasons the hawkish behaviour all comes from one character; Vice President Walden. This ranges from

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**Box 6: 2 The trope of the bad politician**

The idea that politicians are to blame for what went wrong is also a standard trope of political and media discourse after the Vietnam War, which suggested that the war was fought “with one hand tied behind our backs” by the government. A version of the Vietnam War that was (re)created in popular culture, for example when Rambo asks “are they going to let us win this time?” (Cumings, 1994: 103; Schecter and Semeiks, 1991; Michaud and Dittmar, 1990: Kimball, 1988; Jeffords, 1988)
his enthusiasm to bomb Iranian nuclear sites, to the decision to bomb a terrorist compound despite its proximity to a school. His status as an unlikeable character is underlined by his sexist comments, the fact that his son does not like him, and his callousness following the shooting of one of his female staff. He is shown to be bad on gendered terrain, as a bad father and a misogynist. The fact that Walden and Estes redact information surrounding the drone attack emphasizes the idea that they acted alone and that this was atypical of (and unacceptable within) CIA and military behaviours. This representation of the use of drones tells a story that helps to make sense of the (mis)use of drones in counter-terrorism. This means that when Walden is killed by Brody in season two (Broken Hearts S2E10) there is a sense that he deserves this ending. This death contains some of the guilt of the War on Terror. It implies the neoconservatives of the War on Terror, who are to blame for the collateral damage, are now dead and gone.

However, the culpability of politicians does not end there. In later seasons the ongoing problems with counter-terrorism are blamed on politicians in a more all-encompassing way. In the third season the politicians are not all hawkish neoconservatives; instead, they are shown to be politically motivated and short sighted and so they are responsible for repeatedly thwarting the plans of the CIA. This includes Lockhart putting pressure on Saul to assassinate those involved in the attack on Langley which results in the death of a young boy (S3 E1 Tin Man is Down). There is political pressure on Saul to arrest Javadi, rather than to follow his longer term, and ultimately successful, plan to use Javadi as an agent in Iran. The Senate committee hearings that investigate how the Langley attack happened are shown to be inconvenient to the CIA. When the mission to get Brody into Iran seems to be going wrong it is Higgins, the Chief of Staff, who suggests the US bomb their own team of soldiers to mitigate any political or diplomatic risk. In all of these instances, these men are shown to pursue political rather than security gains. Their image is that of self-serving career politicians, rather than the military and neoconservative image of Walden, and in contrast to the intelligent and tactical CIA operatives. These characters are roundly dislikeable. Lockhart is shown to be smug and self-satisfied. He usurps Saul (a well-liked character) from his job as head of the CIA. He engages in old fashioned, boys club activities, such as the ‘duck shoot’. 

**Box 6.3 Walden, Cheney and the pace maker**

The way Walden is murdered, by having his pace maker hacked has interesting and direct intertextualities because former Vice President Dick Cheney has admitted that there was a security concern that his pace maker was a security risk. Indeed there is some argument that Walden is based on Cheney, given that they are both Vice President and there is some physical resemblance.
The story told here is that it is political wrangling and short sightedness that limits the capacity of CIA led counter-terrorism. Politics jeopardises effective counter-terrorism operations, a standard US media trope, which emerged in the Vietnam War, (Kimball, 1988; Schecter and Semieks, 1991) redeployed here. Rather than the counter-terror operation being responsible for their failure or extremes of violence the blame always falls to the politicians. What is more, these bad decisions made by these men are shown to be part of the political system of the USA, but they are not shown to be part of the practice of counter-terrorism. They leave the logics of counter-terrorism intact and unquestioned. Although it appears to acknowledge the mistakes and violences of counter-terror these are put at the door a few (admittedly powerful) men.

**Audience Negotiations: Blaming Politicians**

The previous section argued that the vilification of the politicians in *Homeland* allowed blame to be attributed to a few bad politicians in the drama. This was a theme that was picked up on by participants. There was a general feeling of dislike towards the politicians within the drama. For example:

Vish: In the third series when the politician is involved, the one with the glasses, he was a dick head.

This extended to the point where for Jane and Vish (who were in separate groups) this justified Brody’s murder of Vice President Walden:

Vish: I hated him, I absolutely hated the Vice President, when he died I thought it was poetic justice. Yeah and again it was since that episode of the flashbacks when they clearly ordered the drones and he is there lying through his teeth, you know on TV, it was like yeah, you kind of want [Brody] to go through with [the attack].

Jane: I hated the vice president, he was so nasty and horrible; it was alright to kill him.

This shows that they place the blame on these bad individuals, and that the narrative succeeds in individualising the war crimes of the War on Terror to a few bad men.

Participants also picked up on, and agreed with, the depiction of politicians in seasons two and three as being self-serving. The suggestion of politicians being untrustworthy or unlikeable resonated with the audience members in the research, as demonstrated in an exchange in one focus group:

Ben: All of the politicians in *Homeland* are arseholes as well, like there isn’t one that isn’t, which maybe is?
Tessa: The truth? [Laughs]

The decoded meaning here is that politicians were to blame for the War on Terror (and deserve to suffer for it). Participants were not called to recognise themselves in these politicians but instead reject them. This allows participants to distance themselves from these bad men, and in doing so it articulates a very particular version of the War on Terror as something that was done by politicians. This meaning resonates with these British audience members even though it is a particularly American trope.

James picks up on this narrative in Homeland very clearly:

I think it is a vindication of intelligence services. I think it basically says the War on Terror was solely dreamt up in the political results driven sphere and that every single politician who tries to get involved in enacting change through intelligence means is a failure, a fraud, and got the wrong end of the stick. And in fact intelligence is about the long game, the really, really long game, and the big picture. And that if intelligence agencies are left to do whatever the hell they want, but over a really long periods of time then good is enacted, but if they are made to constantly ... react and have public results then the short term gains always backfire.

He identifies how Homeland uses the figure of the politicians to tell this particular story of counter-terrorism. However, what is different about his account to the earlier examples of participants’ views on politicians is that he identifies this as a narrative “they” are telling. This is a moment of active reading, even though he does not explicitly say he takes a different message from the text, he notices how this message is encoded in the text.

Innocent Americans: Guilt and Grief

Jackson et al. (2011) argue that the creation of American innocence was a key feature of the narrative in the news and popular culture after 9/11. Constructing America as innocent victim of this attack means ignoring the history of American interactions with and interventions in the Middle East to remove any idea of American culpability. This discursive gesture leaves American violence unexamined and removes the attacks from their political and historical context. Considering how innocence in invoked in Homeland enables an exploration of how American innocence functions in terrorism discourse ‘after’ the violences of the War on Terror. Innocence functions in two ways, first, it delimits the potential for grief because it is the innocent that we can mourn and grieve for as they are the innocent victims of violence who did not deserve to die. The reverse of this is that there are those who are not innocent, who do deserve to die. Second, to be innocent, it is to be free from guilt because if you can claim innocence you are not
responsible for the events or actions that have led to your victimhood. The attribution of innocence is about value; who deserves violent retribution, and who is able to wield it.

As I have argued in the section above, America is not represented as being uncomplicatedly innocent in *Homeland*. Indeed, it directly examines how the actions of the War on Terror, such as drone strikes, can actually render America insecure by motivating further terrorist activities. *Homeland* plays with the idea of a lost innocence. This is shown through an idea of longing which is present in different ways in the story. It is shown through Jess and Brody’s nostalgia for the past. There are flashbacks to the times that they were young, in love and happy, all before Brody was deployed to the Iraq war. Jess even cuts her hair because Brody always used to like it when she had short hair, as a physical attempt to recapture the past writ on her body.

Yet, there are times that innocence is invoked to help the drama to make sense, to show who is the victim in the War on Terror, and in doing so, to rearticulate American or Western superiority. In *Homeland* there is still an articulation of an idea of an innocent America. It is the innocent children of the Brody family that are the symbolic innocents of America. It is with them that the story begins, and it is through Dana that her father is saved in season one. For Carrie the home also functions as the space of innocence. Her nieces act as the thing that she is trying to protect.

The innocent child is a key motif in *Homeland*. They function as the victim of terrorism, and overzealous counter-terrorism. It is the death of Issa (in a drone attack), a young boy, that ‘converts’ Brody to terrorism.\(^{32}\) The death of the other civilians in drone strikes, or warfare in Iraq (where Brody was a soldier) are not significant to the plot. In the third season (*Still Positive*) when the Iranian official/terrorist Majid Javadi goes to murder his wife, it is the screaming (and now effectively orphaned) child that is shown to be the victim. Furthermore, when CIA agent Quinn goes on a night raid to assassinate suspected terrorists and accidentally kills a child in the house, he is very disturbed (*Tin Man is Down* S3E1). Children are repeatedly used to demarcate the limits of legitimate violence.

This innocence is gendered and raced. Kinsella (2011) argues that the division between combatant and civilian is a political and gendered distinction. In *Homeland* we repeatedly see women as innocent victims, notably Jessica Brody, the murdered escort Lynne Reed in season one, the murdered wife of Javadi in season three. These women are unwittingly involved in terrorism. This victim status of women has been critiqued because it can equate women with

\(^{32}\) I have put converts in quote marks because I find the idea of terrorism conversion problematic.

\(^{33}\) This blurring is itself problematic interesting and will be discussed in more details in the section “representing the East”
children, and obscure their own political agency (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007; Kinsella, 2011). The trajectory of Dana reuses ideas of female innocence, she ‘loses her innocence’ as she faces up to Brody’s guilt, and this is dramatically underlined by the loss of her virginity in the show.

Innocence is also raced in Homeland. We encounter white innocent victims repeatedly, and their innocent victim status is underlined by their whiteness. The death of the CIA agents in the main terrorist event of the whole series, the explosion at the funeral at Langley does not need to be underlined with the death of children (although we know that at least one teenager was killed in the explosion), the tragedy of the death of these Americans is given and their victimhood is assumed. Of course these victims do not lie so simply on the side of non-combatant, but their deaths are still mourned as heroic (The Star S3E12). This repeats the gesture made after 9/11 where American innocence is articulated in a way that disappears American culpability in the violences of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

However, when there is an innocent Muslim victim they have to be a child. Even when there is an innocent woman victim her innocent status is underscored by a white appearance. For example, Javadi’s wife is played by a blonde and pale Iranian woman. There is one innocent Muslim adult that is shown to die, and that is the Imam who notifies the police of Brody’s whereabouts, and is then shot by terrorists, alongside his wife. However, all the other Muslim characters that we see die are in some way actively involved in terrorism (e.g. Raquim Faisal, Mansour Al Zhani, Abu Nazir)

This is a more nuanced representation of innocence in Homeland which shows that there can be innocent victims of both terrorism and counter-terrorism. Children are used to articulate this innocence, and this is the boundary of legitimate violence. There is still an association of an innocent Homeland shown through the innocent families of America. This innocence is gendered and raced, as we know that it is the white characters that we should mourn. This racialised version of innocence matters because it draws boundaries around whose lives matter. This racialisation of victimhood is explored in more detail in chapter eight.

**Audience Negotiations: Guilt and Grief**

Participants in the focus group did read some characters as innocent victims of terrorism and counter-terrorism. They often articulated this in terms of who they felt sympathy for. For example:

Seth: I felt sorry for his family, they just seemed to have very little understanding. It was just quite shocking.
Laura: I think you have a lot more sympathy for his wife that you perhaps would have done if it was the other way round.

However, there was one interesting exchange where the delimited nature of this grief was noticed by participants:

James: I think the human cost in the entire series in underplayed. We are supposed to care about the human cost of Brody, that is supposed to be a huge blow to everyone who watches it, that he is brown bread\(^{34}\) by the end of it, but actually hundreds of CIA agents are dead, there is an entire wars worth of Brody’s comrades are dead.

Phil: [And] the village where Abu Nazir’s kids were.

James: A village has been raised to the ground, but the best thing that has come out of it is that we have a guy in Iran and they have stopped developing nuclear weapons.

In this exchange, Phil and James have noticed that the narrative only allows room to grieve for particular victims of violence.

Furthermore, rather than reading American innocence in *Homeland*, the participants were much more prepared to see America as a whole as problematic. The extremes of the War on Terror are associated with the Americans. This is articulated by Jane and Sarah, who read *Homeland* as a critique of American behaviours:

Jane: I came out; well I am against the Americans particularly politically, but … I thought they came out of it really badly, just the way they functioned I thought they were despicable.

Sarah: Well I would interpret or suspect, I don’t know, that it was a difficult series for Americans to watch, being quite left wing, British, yeah I sort of come from the same sort of position about American Imperialism.

Here ‘the Americans’ serve as a different type of ‘other’ in the terrorism discourse. This is a reading of *Homeland* that is specific to the British context of consumption. Viewers are still using *Homeland* as a way to work through issues of morality, but they are able to attribute the extremes of the War on Terror to American actions. The War on Terror is often described in the media as “US led”, and indeed one criticism of the UK’s initial involvement was that Blair/the UK

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\(^{34}\) This is cockney rhyming slang for dead.
is Bush’s/America’s poodle (Assinder, 2003). This also fits with a particular British (and European) anti-Americanism, that views America as extreme, brash, and “uncouth” (Markovits, 2007).

**Counter-Terrorism as a Necessary Evil: Acceptance and Resolution**

There are moments when *Homeland* depicts the CIA engaging in some of the more controversial practices of counter-terrorism, including ‘enhanced interrogation’, imprisonment without trial and illegal surveillance. In these instances the practices are explained by always being successful, or at least justified, for example, Carrie (at first illegally) sets up surveillance of the Brody household and whilst this does not generate any results, we later learn that it was justified because Brody is involved in a terrorist plot. In a scene where Carrie and Saul interrogate a Saudi diplomat, and use his sexuality as well as threats of deportation, he does agree to cooperate to try to track down terror suspect Walker (*Representative Brody S2E10*). We see Aileen, arrested on terror charges, in a very distressed mental state after solitary confinement. Yet, before she kills herself she gives up actionable intelligence and identifies Tom Walker (*The Weekend S2E7*). The extraordinary rendition of Afsal Hamid Brody’s guard during his capacity is followed by the use of enhanced interrogation techniques including sleep deprivation, loud music and limited access to food and water. Again, this produces useable intelligence (*Blindspot S2E5*). In the case where they use drones to kill those involved with a terrorist bombing they successfully kill all of the seven targets (*Tin Man in Down S3E1*).

*Homeland* shows that the main characters struggle with the decisions to carry out the more extreme examples of counter-terrorist practice. Whilst this shows these actions to be morally fraught, I argue this can act as a discursive double move that can legitimise their use. Carrie is shown to be uncomfortable when her surveillance shows Brody and his wife having sex (*Clean Skin S1E10*). In a key scene we see Saul read the Kaddish over the body of Afsal Hamid (*Blindspot S2E5*). Quinn is shown to be deeply disturbed after he accidently shoots dead a young boy and threatens to quit the CIA (*Uh...Oh...Ah S3E3*). However, these struggles do not necessarily undermine these practices, but rather they humanise the agents that carry them out. They become good people making hard decisions at difficult times. To compare this to the much criticised depiction of torture in *24* (Gronnvoll, 2010), where Bauer unflinching tortures suspects, master of his own actions, *Homeland* shows the difficulty of making these decisions. Yet we are still left with CIA agents who will do whatever it takes to secure America, just this time they do not make these decisions lightly. This is a story of the CIA and counter-terrorism where it is a hard job, but somebody has got to do it.

The character of Saul lives this acceptance of violence in the show. In the first season, Saul is shown to be a thoughtful, kind and culturally sensitive individual. He is the more careful voice
that challenges the use of violence and puts forward more thoughtful strategies. He is kind to the terror suspect Aileen, performs the Kaddish over a dead terrorists’ body, and is shocked by Carrie’s illegal surveillance operation. He exposes Estes’ role in the drone strike, and is shocked by the redacted information about the event. Yet, as Saul rises in seniority in the CIA and the situation becomes more politically charged, he (still reluctantly) leads more violent campaigns, such as the assassination of all those figures that are associated with the Langley bombing. He masterminds the assassination of Danesh Akbari, he puts Brody through a brutal drug withdrawal programme, and he helps to cover up the murders committed by Javadi. Therefore, Saul seems to become increasingly prepared to commit violent acts and to use the more extreme measures from the counter-terror arsenal in order to achieve his goals as he realises that there is no other way.

However, *Homeland* shows the opposite trajectory for the character of Quinn. Quinn is initially introduced as a professional assassin, working in a secret branch of the CIA. He is deployed to assassinate problem figures. Initially he is tasked to kill Brody. He refuses to do this instead threatening to kill Estes himself. He then becomes increasingly unhappy in his role and disenchanted in the whole counter-terror project. In season three in a conversation with Carrie he says:

**Quinn:** It also made me realise how done I am, with this, with the CIA. I just don’t believe in it anymore.

**Carrie:** Believe what?

**Quinn:** That anything justifies the damage we do. (S3E6 Gerinition)

In this exchange, Quinn no longer thinks that the violences of counter-terrorism are justified, even where they are successful. This contradicts the wider message within *Homeland* that counter-terrorism often involves decisions that are regrettable but necessary. It is a moment where it is critical of counter-terrorism.

I argue that *Homeland* shows that counter-terrorism is necessary to keep ‘us’ safe, and, although they are regrettable, even some of the more extreme measures are necessary. Fundamentally, these measures, whether they are surveillance, enhanced interrogation, drone strikes or blackmail, seem to work. Yet, this is not presented entirely consistently and I have shown how the character of Quinn can be seen to present a challenge to this account, as he debates the human cost. Counter-terrorism violences are shown to be morally dubious, but nevertheless necessary. This can be conceptualised as a discursive double move, where allowing the
characters to struggle with the decisions seems to create a critical space, but in fact only humanises the perpetrators. These actions are still shown to be effective and necessary.

_Homeland_ faces up to the idea of guilt over the extreme actions and violences that have formed part of counter-terrorism operations as part of the War on Terror. Yet even whilst it seems to disturb the black and whites of good and bad, it actually reasserts them (in melodramatic fashion) to produce a story of counter-terrorism that manages to leave the CIA on the right side. _Homeland_ could not simply retell a story with bad guys versus good guys if it is attempting to be relevant and responsive to its context. The straight story of violent revenge has lost its popular appeal; it has not survived the controversies of ten years of military violence. Instead _Homeland_ recognises some of the wrongs done in the name of counter-terror, but it either attributes the extremes to unlikeable politicians, or it shows that these violences whilst regrettable are necessary to keep America safe.

**Audience negotiations: The CIA Making the Best of a Bad Situation or the Real Bad Guys of Terrorism?**

The readings of the CIA’s behaviours were varied across participants. Some participants picked up on the idea that the security services were doing the best they could in difficult circumstances. Kate talks about this at length:

> I think it showed failings. I think it was very good at showing how complicated the whole situation is and how it is not clean cut, and how there are wrongs on both sides, and in order to try and come [to] ... the ideal outcome, everyone has to do something that they wouldn’t be proud of, that they wouldn’t want held up for doing, but that is why they have got to fit with their morals.

Kate articulates how the complexity of the situation helps to justify the practices the CIA undertakes. She recognises the lapses in ‘good’ behaviour (something they wouldn’t be proud of) as part of a larger story and still sees this in moral terms. This speaks to the idea of _Homeland_ as a melodrama seeking moral legitimacy. She goes on to talk about how the characters struggle with the actions that they have to take, using the example of Quinn.

> Doesn’t Quinn have a massive problem? Quinn has issues with what he is made to do in pursuit of this ideal dream, of this end goal. I think it just shows how complex the layers are, and how there isn’t really any clear way to go.

Again here she says there is “no clear way to go” and for her the complexity of the situation means that there can no longer be a rigid idea of good or bad behaviour, but instead, there are
actions which are necessary in a complicated situation. It shows how *Homeland* establishes a new moral legitimacy counter-terrorism for Kate, even if that legibility is “it’s complicated”.

Tessa takes a similar perspective:

I think it is massively pro security services, in terms of justifying the times that security services do something that might make people in the street uncomfortable or unhappy ... There is times when you watch *Homeland* and you think why they didn’t just kill that person, then it would have been fine, and it makes that ok. It made kind of restricting liberties [OK] because in the show you become a bit detached to it a ... You think it is for the greater good and so it is ok. In that regard I think it was pro and then it didn’t hide anything, that’s, most of the shows tend to hide the negative side of the security services and paint them as they are really really good [whereas *Homeland* shows]... a little bad stuff that we have to do, that is like you in your everyday life, that is justified.

Again for Tessa the difficult situation that the CIA find themselves in justifies their behaviour. She assesses their actions in terms of “the greater good”. She applies this idea to the times that the CIA kills people and to the restriction of civil liberties that results from counter-terrorism. What is particularly interesting is that she hints at identification with ‘having to make difficult decisions’ when she says “it is like you in your everyday life”. It demonstrates how it is only by appearing to engage in the moral complexity that this narrative can work.

On the other hand, some participants rejected the narrative that the CIA were doing their best in a bad situation, and instead took a more negative reading of the CIA’s actions. One example is from Giles; he focused on the drone strikes and read these (inter-textually) as referencing the use of drones to bomb compounds which he sees “actually an act of assassination which I think many people believe it is illegal.”

As a consequence, for him seeing these actions replicated on *Homeland* means that “no, I don’t think the CIA come out of it particularly well.“

Barnaby also takes a more critical stance on the actions of the CIA and he argues that:

You definitely get a sense of how American force creates the people [it fights]. That [they] create Brody, that [their counter-terror violences] turn Brody against the US and how it is just a vicious circle.

Here, rather than seeing counter-terrorism as a winnable fight to stop an attack (the narrative story of terrorism that the drama relies upon), instead he sees it as vicious circle of violence.
This shows that there was potential to take a more critical perspective from *Homeland* whereby instead of seeing the CIA as vindicated in the plot they are seen to come out very badly. There was not only a range of views on this in the focus groups, but there were interesting moments where participants tried to negotiate this tension between them. This takes place in a conversation between Malik, James and Phil:

Malik: Well, they don’t win do they?

James: Well, they do win

Malik: Do they? How? They bombed Langley

James: Disarmament.

Phil: They got that Iranian guy in government.

This interaction is picked up again by James and Malik

James: A village has been raised to the ground, but the best thing that has come out if is it that we have a guy in Iran and they are going to stop developing nuclear weapons.

Malik: Well in that regard then it is a complete admonishment on the War on Terror, because there is no point in doing it.

In this interaction, the idea that counter-terrorism is necessary for the greater good is at stake, particularly for Malik who identifies the failings of the CIA rather than its successes. James and Malik question whether any of this is worth the promise of disarmament in Iran. This begins to unpack the very logic of security practices. They are questioning whether the deaths and sacrifices that are made in order to achieve some future vision of ‘security’ are ever worth it.

An exchange between Seth and Ben shows how two different audience members can take away different perspectives on CIA violence:

Seth: But it still tried to justify it, but in a different way. It is impossible to know if it is an accurate portrayal but in generally portrayed them in a good light and it is kind of like, we are trying to do our best given resource, information and the political discourse itself.

Ben: I think it kind of portrayed a certain team within the security services doing that but as a sort of overarching function I don’t think that you can say it came out bathed in glory. Most of the atrocities that you see committed in *Homeland* are committed by the Americans, or decided upon by Americans, I think it isn’t supportive of anyone.
Seth seems to take on the potential resolution within the *Homeland* narrative, where the CIA are doing their best, the politicians are at fault and it is a very hard situation, whereas Ben takes a more critical stance when he argues that America as coming across as the baddie in *Homeland*.

It is when the audience members go outside of the expected emotional reactions they resist the dominant message with the show. For example, when they notice, or mourn the death of those in the villages in Pakistan, they become less comfortable with an idea that it was all for a ‘greater good’. This section has showed that even though I have identified a quite nuanced defence of CIA violences within terrorism these are not uncomplicatedly absorbed by audience members, but are negotiated by the audience.

**Conclusions**

Melodrama is the way that US popular culture addresses challenges to its own conception of itself as morally righteous, and *Homeland* follows this pattern (Meeuf 2006). This chapter has shown how *Homeland* represents counter-terrorism. It has argued that in the narratives of *Homeland* the American home space has been radically disturbed by the Wars on terror and continues to be under threat. The extremities of the War on Terror are attributed to some bad politicians. It shows that although some of the practices of counter-terrorism are difficult and troubling to perform they are usually justified in this intractable battle where America is always under threat.

Despite this pessimistic reading of the drama, I found some ways that these narratives were resisted or reworked by the participants in the focus groups. Although I argue that *Homeland* answers (in often conservative ways) the questions that it seems to raise, there remain fissures within the narratives where tensions can be exploited by agental audiences. This leaves space for the reworking of common sense stories of counter-terror. I found that while some participants followed the narrative of ongoing terror threats, there were times when participants read against the dominant logics of counter-terrorism. Whilst the plot of the bad politician seemed to have resonance amongst the audience, some participants took a more critical reading of counter-terrorism practices as a whole, such as Ben who argues that the Americans committed more ‘atrocities’ than the ‘terrorist’ in *Homeland*.

Yet even then, there is a distancing at work in the othering of Americans that is particular to the British audience that participants were drawn from which proved a different channel of working through. Participants were more able to see the ‘evil’ of the American perspective, but I argue that this plays into a wider discourse in the UK that is critical of US foreign policy. This is potentially progressive because it shows the possibility of critique of this dominant player in
foreign policy. Yet at the same time it could be seen to acts as a barrier to a critical reflection of the counter-terrorism practices of British security services and military. This shows how it is important to consider cross cultural readings of *Homeland* and the British context on consumption.

Throughout the thesis the melodramatic features of *Homeland* are brought out to consider how these plot devices underpin *Homeland* as a place where cultural anxieties are worked through. This chapter focused on how *Homeland* uses ideas of home, innocence, good and evil to confront the anxieties of the post 9/11 moment and to work though terrorism in an explicitly moral and emotional framework. Chapter seven considers how in typical melodramatic style, the wider anxieties are translated on to the main characters of Carrie and Brody who come to stand in for America, the CIA and the post Iraq military. Chapter eight analyses the depiction of Islam more carefully to consider how dramatizing racial hierarchies in a melodramatic way helps to makes sense of race. Whilst Chapter nine turns to consider how *Homeland* creates particular subject positions and identities for its audience.

*Homeland* does represent departure from a straight forward story of American hero versus foreign villain. As a melodrama *Homeland* fulfils its role as a place where gender, race and terrorism are worked through. However, it has shown that this working through cannot be complete and once the audience is added back in, we can see spaces for resistance to terrorism discourses, even within this mainstream story.
Chapter 7
Brody and Carrie in Homeland

Who our heroes are tells us about the wider cultural and political context from which they emerge and they are therefore intertwined with constructions of threat, in/security and defence (Wright, 1977). Gender and race were mobilized in War on Terror discourses to create support for counter-terrorism by using tropes of female victims, free western women, dangerous brown men and hyper-masculine heroes (Shepherd, 2006; Hunt and Rygiel, 2006; Youngs, 2006; Bhattacharyya, 2008). Yet, there is something different at work in the characters of Carrie as the female hero/anti-hero and Brody as the American Marine and terror suspect in Homeland. These complex characters’ personal trajectories make sense of terrorism and counter-terrorism for their audience. They present new faces for counter-terrorism and the terrorist threat. This chapter explores how these characters rearticulate gendered and racialised logics of counter-terrorism, but it also pays critical attention to where these discourses are exceeded or resisted to draw out the deconstructive potential within these new characterisations.

Melodrama still presents a useful frame to read these Homeland characters through, to consider how it offers the opportunity to work through anxieties surrounding terrorism, gender and race. Landy (1991: 14) argues that:

Melodramatic narratives are driven by the experience of one crisis after another, crises involving familial ties, separation and loss, misunderstandings of one’s place, person and propriety. Seduction, betrayal, extortion, murder, suicide, revenge, incurable illness, obsession and compulsion.

This describes the narrative plot arcs that both Brody and Carrie go through over the course of the first three seasons of Homeland. This chapter considers how the melodramatic plot arc of redemption animates the Brody and Carrie story. This is analytically fruitful when we consider how these characters can be read as embodiments of post 9/11 anxieties (Edgerton and Edgerton, 2012). Intertextuality remains central because this chapter considers how these characters represent, reuse and also disturb existing tropes, for example that of the superhero, or the trope of redemption. Finally, recognition of the active audience remains crucial as this chapter considers the relationship between the characters and their audience.

This chapter focuses on the two lead characters in seasons one to three of Homeland, Brody and Carrie. Each character is examined in turn. This chapter also considers the relationships viewers had with these characters via data collected in focus groups.
Carrie

This section focuses on Carrie, one of the main characters in *Homeland* played by actor Claire Danes. She is the drama’s lead CIA counter-terrorist agent, but as a female analyst with mental health problems she is not the typical gun toting hero of action drama. Danes’ portrayal has won critical acclaim as well as an Emmy, Golden Globe, Critics Choice and Screen Actors Guild Awards. Carrie is career driven, obsessive and aggressive; she embarks on a fraught relationship with the main suspect on the show, Brody; she acts erratically and emotionally; she is captured, shot and tortured over the course of three seasons, ending the third series heavily pregnant and newly promoted. The character is complex and ambivalent and this section examines the tensions at work in Carrie, to consider Carrie as a re-articulation of counter-terrorism, gender and race. It begins with an analysis of the television show and moves on to consider the relationships focus group participants had with Carrie.

The character of Carrie taps into a wider security discourse about female analysts in the CIA. Women have become increasingly present in the CIA over the past twenty years. In 1992 less than 10% of senior management were women and less than 10% of those in clandestine roles were women. By 2013 this had increased to over one third of senior staff being women, and over 40% of clandestine positions being staffed by women (CIA, 2013a). Alec Station, the unit charged with finding Osama Bin Laden, was at one point staffed entirely by women, and was always majority women. Michael Hayden, who headed the unit, has said “if I could have put a sign on the door [after 9/11] that said ‘no men need apply’ I would have done it” (Windress, 2013: unpaginated). The focus on women’s role in the CIA is not simply about the sexed bodies in the CIA, but how their gender is seen as a factor in their professional ability and how it genders the security discourse. John Brennan, Director of the CIA, has said “in addition to innate intelligence and capability and credibility that women bring to the workforce, I think they have the capacity to see the world through – and I think that this is very important – eyes of a woman” (Windress, 2013: unpaginated). More explicitly when Nada Bakos, who headed the team that killed Al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was asked why her team was “three quarters women”, she intimated that there is a particularly female approach to security, saying that amongst women in the CIA after 9/11 there was a sense of “you’re not going to do that to me again” and she argues that women are “aggressive in the protection of our children” so that “we see risks differently, longer term” (Windress, 2013: unpaginated). Rollie Flynn, former executive
director of counter-terrorism, has said that “the real strengths of these women is their intense dedication and incredible attention to detail” and that “there was a handful who formed a human database on Al Qaeda and I recall they were all women ... They knew everything. Their knowledge was encyclopaedic, they would brief the director and they had all the answers” (Windress, 2013: unpaginated). This new emerging character of the War on Terror (and its aftermath) is a determined, clever, detail-orientated, white, female analyst, obsessive in her pursuit of terrorists and the facts. This new character is embodied (and created) by Carrie.

This image of the dedicated, professional, and obsessive woman is becoming increasingly prominent in popular culture and there is a wider rise of this female lead, on our television screens.\(^{35}\) Jennifer Metcalfe, a CIA analyst famously inspired the character Maya in Kathryn Bigelow’s (2012) Zero Dark Thirty. This character doggedly pursued Osama Bin Laden, going over reports and interrogation footage in painstaking detail, taking part in interrogations and demonstrating considerable determination. This section builds on the work of feminist scholars who have disputed the feminist credentials of Maya as a ‘strong female character’ and have argued that Maya “serves as a neoliberal populist feminist character who is deployed to create the allusion (sic) of gendered equality within the CIA, while erasing or obfuscating the structural barriers that are still in play” (Hasian, 2013: 323).

That she represents “the same story of empire with a (white) female twist” (Eisenstein, 2013). Marouf Hasian (2013: 342) ends his article by arguing that “as America begins to contemplate other military or CIA incursions in places such as Yemen, Mali, Somalia, and so on, do not be surprised to find that Maya becomes the prototype for many other populist, postfeminist protagonists.” Carrie too fits this new role as ‘trailblazer’ and the descriptions of the female analysts from within the CIA chime with this characterisation. Carrie pursues her theory of Brody

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\(^{35}\) We have seen an increasing place for women as leads in television shows such as Juliana Marguilles in The Good Wife (2009-present), Olivia Pope in Scandal (2012-present), and Birgette Nyborg in Borgen (2010-2013), and those that more closely follow the model of the detail orientated CIA analyst, such as Sarah Linden in The Killing (2011-2014), and Saga Noren in The Bridge (2011-2013).
as a terrorist, and the link to Abu Nazir in a determined, driven and ruthless way; she is the ‘human database’ on Brody and Nazir. She feels wronged by 9/11 and sacrifices a great deal to the CIA. There is also an articulation of whiteness at work in this female CIA agent that plays a part in the character of Carrie.

Susan Jeffords (1994) has argued that the bodies of action heroes come to stand in for the American body politics. These fictional heroes act as embodiments of the nation. Reading Carrie as a representation of the American nation. Her dedicated, but confused attempts to fight terror are representative of American counter-terror. McCabe et al. (2012: 89) argue that she embodies, “a lot of the psychological demons that still haunt many Americans more than 10 years after the terrorist hijacking of 11 September 2001.”

This section considers what this melodramatic transference of national anxieties onto the psychology of one bipolar CIA agent says about the nation and the CIA. It seeks to ask what this new character says about and uses gender; security and race.

**Gender: Trailblazer, Anti-Hero, and Unruly Woman**

The opening scenes of the *Pilot* episode of *Homeland* (S1E1) introduce Carrie driving through the streets of Baghdad, wearing a scarf loosely over her hair, arguing aggressively with the Deputy Director of the CIA, before going against his orders to talk to a terrorist on death row. Next, we are transported back to Washington where we see Carrie enter her blue, austere, flat. She changes to get ready, brusquely, with a brush of her teeth and a wipe of her crotch before she arrives late to a CIA briefing. These scenes quickly communicate her character, aggressive, professional and work focused. She does not come across as feminine, yet her feminine body is present as we see her in her black negligée when she changes. The representation of gender is not only done through sexed bodies, but also the use of masculinity and femininity to create meaning for the characters within the wider story of terrorism.

Within the character of Carrie there are tensions between her femininity and masculinity. She takes on the traditionally masculine role of lead CIA agent, and the usually male lead role in the TV show. However, this is done as a mentally unstable and flawed female anti-hero. Carrie takes on traditionally masculine characteristics by being aggressive, career driven and ruthless. She is shown to be sexual, and is implied to have had, is having, or has tried to have sex with most of the lead men (she has a relationship with Brody, has had an affair with David Estes, and at one point hits on her mentor Saul Berenson). She picks men up for casual sex in two episodes (S1E2 *Grace* and S3E5 *Yoga Play*). In addition to this, she is shown with various masculine signifiers, for example, she typically wears dark trouser suits. What is important to stress is that Carrie is shown to be very good at her job, Saul praises her brilliance, she speaks fluent Arabic, she is
right about her suspicion of Brody, she successfully locates Abu Nazir, and she is ultimately promoted.

Carrie’s masculinity is emphasized in comparison to other women in the show. The first contrast is made to her sister who is a married mother of two daughters, whose job as a doctor underlines her caring nature. As opposed to Carrie’s cold flat, Maggie’s picturesque home is light and bright with homemade quilts and children’s drawings. Carrie contrasts with Jessica Brody, Nicholas Brody’s wife, a mother of two, whose job is shown to be secondary to her family. In the Pilot (S2E2) she explains that she is not at work whilst accommodating Brody after his return, and in series three when she does return to work she stresses that this is done for her family (S3E1 TinMan is Down). Although Jessica is shown to be having an affair, this is a loving and committed relationship born out of Brody’s absence. Where Carrie has sacrificed a family for her career, Jessica is shown to sacrifice career for family.

Yet Carrie also embodies traditional female characteristics. Most notably, she is very emotional, and this is dramatically underpinned by her bipolar disorder. This invokes stereotypes of the hysterical women, and indeed Carrie is prone to crying, dramatic outbursts and fits of mania which see her undergoing electro-shock therapy and being sectioned (Shields 2010; Landy, 1991). Whilst she is the lead, she is shown to be emotionally vulnerable, an image of female fragility familiar from popular culture. Although her intelligence is clear she also acts on instinct, which links to an idea of female intuition. She has casual sex, but her relationship with Brody develops into love and she becomes the lovelorn woman pregnant with Brody’s baby.

Overall Carrie cannot simply be reduced to a feminine or a masculine character. The representation reuses gendered stereotypes, but they are changed and reworked. Although she is a

**Box 7.2 The trope of the hysterical woman**

This trope, which sees woman falling prey to fits of hysteria in which they cry, scream, fit and faint rearticulates the idea of women as less stable and more emotional than men. It is a common trope across film and television genres, at its height in eighteenth century fiction, we still see her in horror films, soap operas and action films. Crying inelegantly in a corner, panicking, in need of a shake or a slap so that she will ‘snap out of it’ (TVTropes.org, 2015). It is linked to the inherently gender notion of hysteria, a condition that is inherently female (the word coming from ‘hystera’ the Greek for womb). It is a particular feature of melodrama, as a way to capture emotional excess (Nowell-Smith, 1977). This relates back to the Freudian diagnosis of hysteria as the bodily manifestation of a repressed idea or emotion. In the words of Peter Brooks (1995: xi)” The hysterical body is of course typically, from Hippocrates through Freud, a woman’s body, and indeed a victimized woman’s body, on which desire has inscribed an impossible history”. Carrie embodies (and disturbs) this trope.
'mad' woman she is usually right, her obsessive and unstable nature actually serves to make her better at her job. However, the tensions between her masculine role and feminine ‘nature’ do suggest an incompatibility. Her success in her professional career comes at the expense of her personal life, this is a familiar trope for our action heroes, but this is arguably more shocking for Carrie because she is a woman (Kord and Krimmer, 2011). Indeed at the end of series three she is about to give up her baby in order to pursue her career. Yet, her masculine professional success keeps being interrupted by her weak female body, including her emotional breakdowns (she is fired from the agency after a manic episode), her irrational actions (she is shot whilst trying to prove Brody’s innocence) and her pregnancy, which she rejects. She fails to perform either gender correctly; she is at once too masculine to be a mother/wife, destined to “always be alone” (S1E7 Achilles’ Heel), yet always having to overcome her female body to succeed in the CIA. Arguably, despite the reworking of gender norms in this female lead, we are left with Carrie as a bad example of womanhood.

She is a ‘post-feminist’ character. She is a professional woman, who is shown to be as good, if not better, than male colleagues. She has sex for pleasure. She wins promotions, and is respected. She is independent and confident. Yet she is also deeply flawed and holds a critique of feminism, as an example of the madness that ensues when women try to ‘have it all’ and of the drama that ensues from their attempts to have casual sex. Post-feminism suggests a time that is ‘after’ feminism, as tough the goals of gender equality are met, however post-feminism is also a tool by which feminism in undermined. McRobbie (2004: 11) argues we need to pay attention to the workings of post-feminism in popular culture as they are “undoing feminism, while simultaneously appearing to be engaging in a well informed and even well intentioned response to feminism”. We see how the post-feminist representation of Carrie functions as a discursive double move, seeming to present a feminist character, whilst undermining feminism.

Incurable disease and ‘hysteria’ are both typical features in melodrama (Landy, 1991; Brooks, 1976; Nowell-Smith, 1977). In Carrie’s bipolar disorder we encounter both of these traditional scripts. This becomes an outlet for emotional excess that is part of the melodramatic mode of storytelling in Homeland. Carrie’s most extreme emotional outbursts are often attributed to manic or depressive episodes of her condition’ for example, when she has a manic episode collating information on Nazir and is then fired (S1E11 The Vest), in season 2 where she attempts suicide (S2E3 State of Independence), to her public outbursts at Saul which eventually sees her sectioned (S3 E2 Uh ... Oh ... Ah). The presentation of this excess is often depicted as being beyond language, and is a physical or visceral depiction of pain, suffering and anguish. This is itself captured in the title of the episode “Uh... Oh ... Ah”. In fact, ‘Carrie’s cry face’ has become a popular internet meme, garnering a Tumblr account of its own (Hulett, 2014).
The depiction of her mental health is gendered as indeed mental health and emotions are themselves always inherently gendered (Chesler, 1972). The typical site of hysteria in melodrama is the woman, and often the mother (Nowell-Smith, 1977). This links back to the deeper gendering of the very concept of ‘hysteria’. It undermines her ability as a CIA agent. Bipolar disorder is used to establish Carrie as unstable and as someone who cannot be trusted with state secrets. If we consider how the domestic space is transfigured onto Carrie’s workplace (as argued in chapter six), we see how her bipolar disorder renders her out of place at work. When Carrie is fired, this represents her expulsion from the home/land. She is a figure held back by her (natural) female fragility.

However, hysteria can be read as the outcome of repression, the moment that emotion exceeds the normal parameters of behaviour as hysteria represents the loss of emotional control (Lutz, 1996) Therefore, contained within Carrie’s bipolar disorder is a critique of the exclusion of emotion from security/counter-terrorism. The failure of the rational, disciplined counter-terror agent can be seen as a criticism of this mode rather than simply as a critique of femininity. Mental illness, as a site of melodramatic excess, addresses the emotional aspects of counter-terrorism. Combined with the recognition that Homeland is transcribing wider social anxieties onto individual character narratives, this addresses the emotional excess produced by 9/11 and counter-terrorism practices. These emotions can be worked through in the character of Carrie, as she actively pursues counter-terrorism, and continually struggles to gain mastery over her own emotions and medical condition. Yet, returning to the gendered nature of mental health itself makes her breakdowns an issue of female fragility.

Looking at Carrie as excess opens up a potentially more critical reading of the character as the ‘unruly woman’. This explicitly focuses on the ‘over the top’ nature of Carrie’s character that comes through her melodramatic performance. Rowe (1997: 75) argues that the unruly woman “carries a strongly ambivalent charge”. The unruly woman is a figure of excess, who goes beyond traditional gendered boundaries, typically applied to women in comedy (Rowe, 1997; Davis, 1975; Mizejewski, 2007). The unruly woman is marked out by her behaviours and in her appearance and deportment, acting out, talking loudly, swearing, and taking up too much space. Carrie in her masculine behaviour occupies this position, she moves and behaves in ways that are not ‘ladylike’, she swears a lot, is shown to be hard to be around. Her excess also comes from her hysteria, creating the idea that she is too much.

Historian Natalie Davis (1975) describes the unruly woman as ‘woman on top’, and again Carrie exemplifies this with her aggression and competitiveness. The idea of Carrie as ‘out of control’ is repeated in Homeland. She frequently disobeys orders (from men). For example, she
continues surveillance on Brody without permission (S1E2 Grace), deliberately meets him at a support group (S1E4 Semper), and helps Brody after the Langley bombing (S2E12 The Choice). Her unruly behaviour is about breaking taboos, from small gestures such as the crotch wipe in the opening scenes, to the bigger taboo of rejecting her child in the closing scenes of series three.

Rowe (1997) argues that unruliness is most potent and transgressive when sexually aggressive. Carrie’s sexual power and desire is clear in all three seasons. The unruly woman is disruptive, she is a pollutant, impure and dangerous (Rowe, 2007; Arthurs, 1999; Russo, 1995). Carrie’s femininity and sexuality can be read in this way, she clearly makes both her immediate mentor Saul and her boss David Estes uncomfortable, and she is volatile and unpredictable. She is also out of place in the family home, because she is too masculine, for example, in season two she struggles to live a ‘normal life’, as a teacher which she cannot reconcile with her professional ambition.

This status as unruly woman is deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, unruly women offer potential for the disruption of gender norms, and subversion of gender boundaries as they act outside the usual parameters of feminine behaviour (Davis, 1975; Rowe, 2007; Russo, 1995). Tensions between masculinity and femininity can be recast as moments of undoing or disobedience. She goes beyond the usual boundaries of typical female behaviour and therefore those boundaries are made visible. She shows that a female body or feminine behaviour is not biologically assured. The figure of the unruly woman is useful in considering the tension in Carrie’s performance because it casts her as transgressive rather than as failing. Yet on the other hand, her position as out of place arguably re-establishes a masculine norm, as she functions as its feminine other. How these tensions are resolved depends upon how audience members interact with the character.

**Security: Post-Feminism, Unruly Woman and a Female Hero**

Carrie is not the typical mother/whore of security (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007), but a far more complicated fragile hero. What is more, she is not the male hero who usually features in the logic of masculine protection (Young, 2003). This section considers how the (gendered and raced) character of Carrie creates and reuses security and terrorism discourses. Carrie is the counter-terrorism agent hero; she thwarts terrorist attacks, locates terrorist villains. Yet she is a very different action hero from the traditional gun-slinging, terrorist-killing, muscular hero of terrorism discourses that circulated immediately post 9/11 (Faludi, 2007). Her action is detail orientated, determined and ruthless, but not violent. Carrie does not hit anybody or fire a gun at any point in the three seasons. As already discussed this resonates with a wider discourses
emanating from the CIA about the brilliant, dogged, female CIA analysis. This section asks what this new female character means for the story of counter-terrorism.

Military masculinities are reproduced through action heroes (Jeffords, 1994). The CIA is often depicted as feminine and bureaucratic, as the institutional embodiment of the rules and regulations that limit military masculinity. This is tied to the American cowboy trope, in which the rogue hero has to go beyond the law to win the day (Cottam 2011). In this light, a female CIA agent makes sense as a contrast to military masculinity. However, Homeland is not a story of a feminized bureaucracy staffed by women, but rather it is recognition of the value of feminine action. It is shown that a detail focused, bookish, single minded agent with stamina can win the day, and Carrie is a better analyst than her male CIA counterparts. She is the only one who suspects Brody’s guilt and then later recognises his innocence, driven by her obsession with him. Her erratic and emotionally charged behaviour is shown to be beneficial to the uncovering of terrorist plots, for example, Carrie insists on looking for Nazir in a warehouse based on her gut feeling, when the rest of her team want to stop, and he is found there. Whilst her emotional and fragile version of improvisation is a new version of an action hero, it actually reuses the trope of the cowboy often present in representations of military masculinities. Carrie operates outside the lines, ignoring instructions from her boss, putting herself in danger, and is thwarted by bureaucratic and political wrangling. However, she does all of this whilst presenting a feminised version of action, which is about detail, intelligence and intuition. This reworks the gendered hierarchies that have privileged displays of masculine violence.

However, it is not necessarily a feminist reworking of military masculinities. Again we see the workings of post feminism in this depiction. Carrie presents an idea of gender equality within the CIA. Whilst doing her job and completing her mission Carrie’s gender is shown to be irrelevant. Neither colleagues nor terrorist enemies remark upon or notice Carrie as a woman (or later as a pregnant woman). She is shown to have risen in the CIA based on her merit (although admittedly with a little help from her older male mentor, Saul). Whilst there is feminist potential here because it shows how women are capable professionals, it contains a problematic erasure of gender, and so negates the boundaries that women can face in the workplace, and particularly in securitised settings. At no point is there a threat of sexual violence, from colleagues or her captors when kidnapped. Although she is thwarted by senior figures in the CIA, this is based on internal politics and bureaucracy and is not related to her gender.

This post-feminist presentation of the CIA serves to imply that women have an equal footing to men in the CIA. It belies the gendered nature of risk and security in which rape is used as a weapon of war, sexism is rife in both the armed services, and the duties and roles of security
actors are formally and informally divide along gender lines (Enloe, 2000a; Enloe, 1993). Particularly relevant is the well documented sexist history of the CIA itself, made clear in declassified reports released within From Typist to Trailblazer (CIA, 2013b). In doing so Homeland redeems the misogynist past of the CIA by completely ignoring it. Eisenstein (2013: unpaginated), in a feminist review of the film Zero Dark Thirty, argues that the film is attempt to “detract from the heinous aspects of the terror war by making it look gender neutral” pointing in particular to the many cases of rape and sexual assault of soldiers by other soldiers. These gestures are at work in the character of Carrie.

The post-feminist CIA is not just presented as gender neutral but as feminised. The initial representation of the security services following 9/11 focused on a hyper-masculine cowboy (Faludi, 2007), with proclamations of ‘wanted dead or alive’ and Jack Bauer. Now we have Carrie, Maya and women of the CIA. Eisenstein (2013: unpaginated) says Zero Dark Thirty was an attempt to “cleanse the wars of/on terror with the face of a blonde female.” I argue this new face of counter-terrorism distances the CIA from this now out-of-date image of masculine warrior. She is not a soldier of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, she is not a shoot first think later neoconservative, and she is human and fragile. Where previous counter-terrorism discourses were led by violence, vengeance and strength, this version is led by intelligence and determination. Carrie is the counter-terrorist agent exemplar for this new story, a crazy genius, who thwarts terrorism through surveillance, deduction, and the occasional drone strike. The gendering of security through Carrie helps to strengthen this story.

Also central to Carrie’s narrative is redemption. Carrie is trying to return to virtue. She is explicitly damaged by 9/11. In the opening credits we hear this conversation:

Carrie: I missed something once before. I won’t, I can't let that happen again.

Saul: It was ten years ago. Everyone missed something that day.

Carrie: Everyone's not me.

In the beginning of the first series it is made apparent that after a mistake Carrie is considered to be out of favour in the agency. Her redemption is about making up for her failure, which is transposed onto the wider failing of the intelligence service for not predicting or preventing 9/11. Carrie stands for the battered psyche of a nation still grappling with the question ‘how did this happen?’ A nation, as scholars have argued that has positioned itself as exceptional, good, altruistic and value laden (McCartney, 2004; Drinnon, 1997; Hunt, 1987). Her redemption then is a chance to redo 9/11, but for the intelligence community to get it right this time. This
redemption motif is itself a trope of American popular culture, and particularly war films (McCartney, 2004; Dittmar and Michaud, 1990).

Carrie has to suffer to reach redemption. The link between her saving of America and saving her own career/sanity underlies the dramatic tension of the show. Carrie suffers emotionally through the love and loss of Brody, and through her mental illness. She has repeated traumatic breakdowns. She undergoes electric shock therapy; in the second series she is captured by Abu Nazir; and in the third series she goes through a full mental breakdown and is sectioned to finally win her place back in the agency’s circle of trust. Her mental and emotional anguish throughout is often shown to impinge her ability to do her job, and yet, following the melodramatic format, this suffering is essential for her to be redeemed (Williams, 1998). She regains her job, is proven right, and is promoted to ‘station chief’ fulfilling her ambitions. Within this narrative the intelligence community embodied by Carrie, is redeemed, and ready to be redeployed.36

She presents a post-feminist and a feminized version of the CIA and of counter-terrorism. Carrie and the CIA/intelligence community she stands for are redeemed through the melodramatic logic of Homeland from the ‘failure’ of 9/11. At the same time, presenting a female lead in Homeland is part of a new discourse of the female analyst, giving a post-feminist articulation of the CIA, and a feminised version of their activities. It presents a story of counter-terrorism as a battle of wits, a long and relentless campaign led by fragile but capable women, who are simply trying their best in difficult circumstances. We have a new broken hero for the post 9/11 moment.

Race, White Female Heroes and Imperial Feminism

Discourses of terrorism have racialised Muslims and they have been used to rearticulate whiteness (Thobani, 2007). The character of Carrie represents and reuses whiteness. Inextricably linked with this is Carrie’s status as an American CIA operative. Her whiteness is tied to her image as a representation of Western power. Indeed this blurring of white/Western has a longer history (Yegenoglu, 1998; Thobani, 2007; McClintock, 1995) used to construct racial categories which are in turn used to rearticulate state identity (Hunt, 1987; Drinnon, 1997; Neumann, 1999). Racial hierarchies are used in the creation of insider/outsider, us/them. The use of white women as a marker of civilisation is itself a trope from American culture (Yegenoglu, 1998; McClintock, 1995). This racialisation is reused and remade in the stories of terrorism, which pit western heroes against Muslim enemies (Bhattacharya, 1998). And the image of the white woman has been used instrumentally in the War on Terror discourse, to signify a contrast

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36 Indeed, the fourth series takes Carrie and inserts her into a new counter-terrorist operation, in a new country with new suspects, enemies and allies.
between ‘our’ freedoms and civility in contrast to ‘their’ barbarity and oppression of women (Thobani, 2007; Shepherd, 2006). The racialisation of Muslim communities has received much political attention, not least because of the life and death consequences of these practices, but the racialisation of whiteness that is implicit in this process also needs attention. For that reason it is important that I examine the workings of whiteness in this new characterisation.

Her whiteness is key to her identity, inscribed upon her body and enacted in her behaviours. In the first instance, Carrie’s whiteness is secured by her appearance, white, petite and blonde. Her American accent, and her wider family of all American, blonde women and children underpin this. Carrie’s blonde hair works as an interesting signifier for whiteness in *Homeland*. Blonde when in America she either covers her hair (in the first season in Iraq) or dyes it brown (in season two in Iran) when in the Middle East. This marks her whiteness, and it implies that it is something that would be difficult or potentially risky for her in these places. This establishes a geographical boundary for whiteness, as well as a link between her body and her white identity, thus rearticulating the idea of and essential whiteness. Carrie’s whiteness is not only secured by the white body, but also by her performances of whiteness in her actions. Here we see how progressive whiteness, defined by Gabriel (1998: 5) as whiteness that “condemns white pride and normative versions of whiteness yet, in which ‘whites’ continue to dominate both ideologically and organisationally” is at work in the character of Carrie. She is shown to be rational, intelligent and powerful. Her race is an unspoken feature of these character traits and the way she inhabits them. This is tied to Carrie’s position as employee of the CIA, as a fair, dedicated and powerful intellectual with the power of institutions on her side, and the ability to command (if not actually perform) righteous violence. It is this performance of power with its link to violence that is both established and used through a racialised lens in terrorism stories.

Frankenberg (1993: 14) identifies three ways that whiteness shapes the experiences of white women; as “a position of structural advantage”, as “a standpoint from which to look at oneself, others and society” and as a “set of cultural practices”. Carrie enjoys the structural advantages that allow her to travel freely, be part of and covered by, American security and for the most part to have her race as an unmarked norm. She takes part in a set of cultural practices of whiteness that mean she can live in the suburbs, work for the government, listen to jazz, drink French wines and speak fluent Arabic; interacting with (or appropriating) other racialised cultural forms in ways that bolsters her own progressive white cosmopolitanism. This progressive whiteness is not about white pride, or indeed normative whiteness and in fact denies it, but we see how it allows whites to “continue to dominate both ideologically and organisationally” (Gabriel, 1998).
Importantly, we see terrorism filtered through this standpoint. Her obsession is about the spectre of a brown Muslim terrorist and the threat that he poses her to way of life. Thobani (2007) asks the question:

> How is it that the incarceration, torture, and murder of Muslim men on the slightest suspicion of harbouring animosity towards the forces that occupy their societies do not interrupt the paranoid imaginings of the white feminist who envisions herself and her society as threatened by commensurable violence at the hands of these men?

Carrie seems to embody this particular image of the “white feminist”. Carrie’s obsessions are racialised and racialising. In her determination to keep America safe from the latest terrorist attack she allows little space for reflection on America’s complicity in these violence in the Middle East. Despite the disruptions of America’s innocence in the show, Carrie still justifies her actions as being on the right side. This is demonstrated in her conversation with Nazir where in response to his accusations of American viole...
Audience Responses to Carrie

Carrie’s ambiguous character is crucial because it re-orientates *Homeland* as an attempt to ‘work through’ the difficulties of gender, race and terrorism. Carrie embodies these tensions, painfully attempting to reach a resolution. She can be read as emblematic of a post-feminist CIA, a face of imperial feminism and the unruly woman. For that reason it is important to consider the relationship between audience members and this character.

The ambiguity about Carrie’s gender performance was present in the focus groups; she was at times seen as masculine. Kate says of Carrie “I think she is a bit of a guy, she is a teenage boy.” Kate’s quote was said in relation to Carrie’s reckless behaviour, particularly the way she has sex to fulfil a need. This is interesting because even though it highlights Carrie’s masculinity; she is still positioned as being an immature (or unsuccessful) version of manhood. Whilst at other times her behaviour is coded in more feminine ways, such as when Sarah says “she is a really vulnerable person, you know, even when she is mentally stable.” Where her vulnerability and weakness are highlighted.

Contained within this ambiguity were readings of Carrie as a bad example of womanhood, and alternatively as an unruly woman. Indeed, often one participant would see her in both lights, or even have both potentialities combined within one statement. For example, Barnaby says:

> I think Carrie is basically a bloke, and she only seems to use her femininity as a weapon. So she uses it to get stuff, to exploit people, but then she flat out rejects it; she doesn’t want a baby; she doesn’t want kids; she doesn’t want a relationship really. She just wants to almost have a man’s career, that sounds really bad, but in the, you know typical man’s career in the intelligence agency. She doesn’t want any of these attachments.

On one level Barnaby is rearticulating gendered boundaries whereby in order to perform this role Carrie has to be “a man” and deny her femininity completely. This quote highlights a wider point about what Barnaby sees as being incompatible with a “man’s career”, seemingly babies and relationships, which he argues that Carrie gives up to emulate men. Yet, contained within this statement, is an inherent decoupling of femininity from a feminine body. Her desires are masculine, not feminine.

There seemed to be two main stances towards Carrie. In one she is seen as frustrating and annoying, and is not liked. For example:
Seth: She kind of got more annoying as time went on, I would say like, at first you can kind of relate to her issues…but towards the end it was just like come on, a slight bit of common sense, she is just being completely ridiculous.

For these viewers Carrie’s excess does not seem to hold any critical potential because she is being “ridiculous” or “over the top”, which just produces frustration towards her behaviour. They were often annoyed with the very idea that someone this unstable would ever by employed within the CIA. For example:

Kate: She pissed me off from the word go. I mean I thought she was brilliantly acted, but she was just such a liability. I just don’t think they would have kept her on. I mean she was constantly, every single time that she could have gone against her orders she did, and she did it in a really stupid way and it just made me go, ‘oh for god’s sake’ you know [I want to ask] ‘why are you part of the organization?’ I found her really, I don’t know, she doesn’t take responsibility for anything, and everything that happened, you know she would fall back on this illness thing, but there [were] errors of judgment. Sometimes she was right, which was you know, well done her, but the way she went about it was not right. I just wanted her to just take her pills and get on with life normally.

This frustration itself arguably plays out on gender grounds, because it results from times when she is seen as being irrational or unprofessional, which seems to rearticulate the boundaries of appropriate professional behaviour. Kate just wants Carrie to “get on with life normally” and so to fit back into those frames that she otherwise exceeds. Her irrational and disobedient behaviours, that are seen to stem from her bipolar disorder, put her outside the limits of acceptable behaviour for a rational CIA agent. Risky, extreme or reckless behaviours are not tolerated when they are performed by Carrie. Yet in traditional action scripts it is precisely these behaviours that make male protagonist particularly effective heroes or agents. This is picked up on by Laura who argues:

Yeah I think you, the whole kind of renegade agent thing is over done for men but …where if you see a male character like that they are always in control, and being rebellious, but they get shit done, and that they might have a breakdown, but it isn’t really a breakdown because they will just drink some whisky and then carry on. Whereas she listens to crazy jazz music and has a panic attack, and often ends up out of power.

For example Jack Bauer in 24, or Bryan Mills in the Taken franchise.
Therefore, the level of risk or deviance that is expected from a protagonist seems to vary by gender. Men can lose some emotional control whilst maintaining their professionalism, whilst for Carrie her professionalism is jeopardised by her emotional behaviour.

The other stance taken by participants was more favourable towards Carrie, and this generally centres on the idea that she is good at her job. This is articulated by Vish:

> I was definitely a Carrie fan because she was always right ... [so] to that extent I had a lot of sympathy towards her, a lot of people I know find her very irritating, but it was annoying and she was over the top, but I thought because she was so good at her job, [so] I was a really big fan.

To Vish the extremes of her behaviour are forgivable because she is a good agent. It seems that Carrie is redeemed through her success. Ben agrees when he says “instinctively I found myself siding with her and forgiving her sort of rash decisions, or whatever that she does, because she is right.”

First, this evidences how work is central to Carrie’s narrative and interpretation. The fact that participants see Carrie’s behaviours as being justified by her success creates a perspective whereby the CIA is itself redeemed, and their more extreme action justified if they prove to work. This is the perspective that enables the most extreme behaviours of counter-terrorism, on the grounds that it works (Jackson et al., 2011). Attitudes towards Carrie seemed to hinge on ideas about acceptable behaviour from a CIA agent, in terms of their level of emotionality. What is absent from this consideration of Carrie is an assessment of her character in terms of the violences or ruthless decisions that she makes as part of her role as CIA agent. Whether she was liked did not seem to depend upon the fact that she takes part in enhanced interrogation techniques, is at least partially responsible for the death of one of her assets, for the murder of a little boy, for the illegal surveillance of an American family. Indeed the phrase that “she was right” seems to cover these transgressions and the extremes of her manic behaviours for many of the participants. This fits with literature on the way that the extremes of the war on terror were introduced and later justified by both the UK and the USA governments (Jackson et al., 2011; Brittain, 2006; Fouskas and Gökay, 2005)

There was a discussion between participants where the two perspectives on Carrie are explicitly discussed:

> Greg: [S]he is meant to be an agent but she has clearly not got a fucking clue.

> Siobhan: She does have a clue.
Dom: I think she is obviously incompetent at her job.

Siobhan: I think she is really fucking good at her job, she takes risks.

This demonstrates that there are different interpretations of Carrie. These interpretations are judgements of the way that Carrie behaves, whether or not she is “clueless” and “incompetent” or good at her job. Again, this discussion is based on assumptions about what behaviours are expected from CIA agents. The difference between participants can be attributed, in part, to what they think is acceptable for counter-terrorism agents in the CIA, or indeed what behaviours are acceptable at work more generally.

Participants picked upon the way that Carrie humanises counter-terror operations. An example is when Tom said “I think it is something about how vulnerable she was as a person, as a character, it shows a really human side to her.” As argued in the previous section this ‘humanisation’ can reassert counter-terrorism as a moral activity because it shows how it is done by real people. Yet one conversation about Carrie as ‘human’ seemed instead to pick up on how Carrie’s emotional excess can deconstruct the boundaries of security:

Dom: Well, I think that she is obviously really competent when she is out in the field, because she is really focused on the mission objective and things like that, but I think the moment she stops focusing on that and her focus goes elsewhere she is completely ruled by her emotions and her anxieties which I think then proves her to be mildly incompetent

Siobhan: Human?

James: Well I don’t know, is she allowed to be human?

This discussion is explicitly about whether detachment is a desirable trait in counter-terrorism. For James this humanity, her emotions and anxieties put Carrie outside the model of CIA agent, whereas for Siobhan they simply prove she is human. In this discussion Siobhan seems to be an acknowledgement that no CIA agent (who are all human) would be able to master their emotions.

Many of the more positive comments made towards Carrie were made by Siobhan. She was the only female participant in the focus group of journalists. She brings her own experience of being a woman working in a male dominated industry to bear on her interpretation of Carrie. This shows how the readings of the text are themselves informed by pre-existing subjectivities.
Race was not explicitly discussed in the focus group (although it appears that Carrie is always measures against a masculine standard of behaviour that involves acting rationally, powerfully and professionally as an autonomous individual. Her failings are related back to her gender, her irrationality and mental illness read as markers of femininity. The lack of comments indicates how her whiteness was unremarkable to the members of the focus group. This was true of the all-white groups that I held, but it was also true in the group that included people with a mix of racial heritages. This ‘unremarkable’ nature of Carrie’s whiteness speaks to a white norm of action heroes, embedded within a society where whiteness is the norm (Dyer, 1997). Although Carrie has strayed from the stereotype of the action hero in gendered terms, she still embodies the whiteness typical in Hollywood action heroes. This is a product of the way whiteness works as an unmarked category.38

**Carrie as a Complex Character**

Valerie Plame Wilson, ex CIA and author of *Fair Game: my life as a spy, my betrayal by the White House* (*Plame Wilson, 2007*), who has been described in the media as the ‘real life Carrie Matheson’ says of Carrie that she:

> Does not suffer from the common female need to please trait and in fact insists she is usually right. She is impulsive in a job that rewards patience, and lies to the few people who can tolerate her...You root for her because these very despicable qualities make her unusually good at her mission (Marsh, 2013: unpaginated).

This quote captures the complexity of Carrie who is at once hero and victim, talented and unlikeable, vulnerable but strong. She represents a new type of female action hero who wins her mission through surveillance, patience and duplicity rather than violence and action; a hero who is being produced elsewhere in popular culture (for example in *Zero Dark Thirty*) and in the official discourses of the CIA. I have argued that this counter-terrorism hero tells us a lot about the current security climate and discourses, whilst adding to a new story of race, gender and terrorism that is both post 9/11 and post Iraq. It is part of a wider rebranding of counter-terrorism from the gung-ho Bush era to more covert counterinsurgency operations of Obama.

The post-feminist version of the CIA presented through Carrie is shown to be an equal, meticulous, human organisation fighting terrorism at huge personal cost. It is an agency that is shown to be capable of making mistakes, but that is obsessive in its relentless pursuit of

38 It also reflects the line of questioning in the semi-structured focus groups because although I prompted the focus groups to reflect upon gender, or Brody’s whiteness I did not prompt them on this topic, a shortcoming in the research process.
terrorism. *Homeland* depicts the CIA as flawed through this flawed lead character. It is an articulation of a very particular CIA, humanised through our vulnerable leading lady. Carrie is gendered and raced and her white female body is used to articulate this version of the liberal, human, flawed CIA.

At the same time, Carrie is a story of counter-terrorism that articulates particular versions of gender and race. One question that is often asked of media that has a ‘strong female character’ is whether it is feminist. This is not assured by the female lead. I argue that Carrie as unruly woman means that this question is left in the hands of the audience. Carrie is a jumble of masculine and feminine traits; a femme fatale, a heroine, a hysterical woman, a star crossed lover, reworked as an effective agent and a ruthless spy. Gender is central currency in the creation of Carrie’s identity. There is a basic feminism in representing a woman so good at her job, but at the same time, her female body is still shown as a site of excess and danger. An active woman is a positive move for a story about terrorism. The presentation of Carrie as agential, skilful and active moves away from security discourses where women, if present at all, occupy the limited roles of victim, mother or whore. Her agency comes in part from her whiteness and American citizenship, which give her marked and unmarked privileges, from technological advantages, to the ability to move freely between countries.

Is Carrie a cynical deployment of female agency? Or is she a version of womanhood that is still in the service of typical security discourses? Eisenstein (2013) argues that the violence at the heart of counter-terrorism is so against feminist principles that the professional status of women is irrelevant, and in fact just a mask to help justify these practices. However, I argue that there is not such a clear answer here. Carrie is a new character in this War on Terror discourse, at once capable of rebuilding the logics of counter-terrorism and the racial implication of these divisions of legitimate and illegitimate violence, but at the same time capable of deconstructing these logics, and the rigid gendered boundaries that it rests upon.

Through Carrie we learn that neither our heroes nor our wars are straightforward anymore. Carrie is a trailblazing woman of the CIA, a damaged representation of a post Iraq America, a post-feminist female lead retelling stories of security, gender and race. As an ambiguous post-feminist character she shows both the potential of women in the workplace, with her stamina, attention to detail and drive, but at the same time she shows how this professional success can only come at the expense of personal fulfilment and her soft body (and mind) are always threatening to let her down.
In the show Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody is found after being held hostage for eight years in Iraq. He was captured with fellow Marine Tom Walker, when on tour. He then returns to his wife and two children in Washington. In part, this show follows his difficult reintegration into society. However, the drama comes from the fact that, Carrie, a CIA agent, becomes suspicious that he has been ‘turned’ to terrorism during his captivity. After playing with this ambiguity we learn that Brody has converted to Islam and has been recruited as a terrorist during his time in captivity. What follows is a complicated play on his allegiance by the CIA and his Al Qaeda operatives, which sees him murder the Vice President of America, tortured by the CIA and Al Qaeda, and conduct a relationship with Carrie. He is then framed for a large scale terror attack on Langley and becomes a fugitive before cooperating with the CIA in an assassination attempt on the head of the Iranian security service, which ultimately sees him hang. Played by British Actor Damien Lewis, this character embarks on a complicated plot arc which constantly questions his allegiance to America versus his sympathies with terrorist mentor Abu Nazir.

This section shows how Brody’s complicated story captures, and works through in melodramatic form, anxieties around the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, returning soldiers, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, home-grown terrorists, Islam, and the moral legitimacy of counter-terrorist and terrorist violences. These anxieties are at times translated into the domestic space, and articulated onto an American family. They are also played out in the emotional life of Brody himself. To return to Landy’s (1991) summation of melodramatic narratives provided earlier, we see how Brody’s story lurches from crisis to crisis, encompassing confusion about where he belongs; taking in seduction, murder, revenge, and betrayal along the way.

**Box 7:3 “Brody versus Bergdahl”**

On 31st May Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl was released in exchange for five Taliban commanders that were being held in Guantanamo Bay after being held for five years by the Taliban. There has been controversy over this release, heightened by suggestions from Bergdahl’s former unit that he deserted the US Army and stirred by the fact that his father Robert Bergdahl spoke in Arabic to his son when making a welcome home speech in the presence of President Obama, and that he has expressed anti-war sentiments. The similarity of this story to the story of Brody in Homeland has not been missed by audiences, critics and news castors. Indeed CNN ran a feature in June entitled “Brody versus Bergdahl”, the Daily mail published an article following Bergdahl’s release “The Homeland Prisoner of War” (Graham, 2013).

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39 Throughout the show Nicholas Brody is referred to as Brody by the other characters (Jessica Brody, Carrie Mathison, Mike Faber, and Abu Nazir). I will follow this convention from the show.
Susan Faludi (2007) has argued that, although 9/11 was an attack on a building, it was interpreted as a symbolic attack upon the idea of an indestructible, powerful, Western masculinity. She argues that this led to a resurgence of hegemonic masculinity in American popular culture from the creation of the Hero Firefighter to Bauer and Bourne. Whilst Brody is a Marine Sergeant, he is not the action hero of terrorist dramas that proceeded Homeland. He moves though identities of prisoner of war, war hero, terrorist suspect, terrorist, CIA double agent, murderer and assassin. As he moves through these different positions he challenges conceptions of gender, race and terrorism. This section considers the representations of masculinities, whiteness, soldiering and terrorism that are at play in the different moments of Brody’s narrative. It considers how this works as a narrative arc of redemption, and how this melodramatic presentation of a character journey can offer narrative closure to the tensions Brody confronts. It also draws out how in moments of melodramatic excess we can see a critique of military masculinities, terrorist othering and the War on Terror.

**Broken Soldier: PTSD, Military Masculinities and the War on Terror**

Jeffords (1994) has argued that the bodies of action heroes come to stand in for the American body politics. In her work she explores how the hard bodies of action heroes in the films of the 1980s promoted the United States as a hard, assertive, masculine state ready to face (and if necessary fight) their Soviet challengers. Yet, in the bruised and scarred body of Brody we immediately encounter a very different type of masculine body. He is wounded from his time in captivity in Iraq. He is shown to be deeply traumatised by these eight years, exhibiting behaviours that are akin to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), for example, he chooses to sleep on the floor rather than in bed, has intense flashbacks and violent nightmares and is shown crying, curled up in the corner of his bedroom. This depiction directly confronts the problems that soldiers returning from war face. His physical scars serve as markers of the high loss of life, and level of injuries amongst military personnel. His mental anguish relates to the complex circumstances that were faced by the military, and the difficulty of processing these wounds. His guilt over the death of his colleague Tom Walker captures some of the trauma over the deaths of these soldiers felt by a wider American and British publics.

PTSD is one of the signature injuries of the Iraq War. Despite considerable difficulties in collecting reliable data on the prevalence of PTSD, the majority of studies have found that between 10.3% and 17% of British soldiers returning from Iraq suffer from the condition (Sundin et al., 2010). The US Department of Veteran Affairs (2014) places the percentage of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffering from PTSD in a similar range of between 10-18%. The presence of PTSD poses a challenge to military masculinities because it undermines the construction of the rational, efficient, well trained soldier who can overcome his emotions (Whitworth, 2008).
Furthermore, it embodies criticisms of the practices of war itself conjuring the horrors of war often kept separate from the clinical representation of military campaigns. The depiction of Brody acknowledges the physical (scarred body), mental (his PTSD symptoms) and personal (his difficult reintegration into family life) traumas of the War on Terror. He contains challenge to traditional depictions of security, and a critique of the military masculinities on which they rely.

However, as argued by Howell (2011), the recognition of PTSD is not necessarily a critical intervention into militarism because of the overwhelming tendency to medicalise the condition in terms of the individual psychologies of the soldier as opposed to the traumatic experience of war. The melodramatic gesture of translating the trauma of the War onto one individual limits the critical potential as it is individualised. Furthermore, the traumas that Brody suffers result from his time in captivity and his torture at the hands of an Al Qaeda group, as opposed to the actions that he, or his unit, took part in during his military tour and, startlingly, none of Brody’s flashbacks relate to his own actions in Iraq. In that way, he is marked as an exception to the typical returning soldier.

There is a tension in the presentation of Brody as a broken soldier. He represents the traumas that the allied forces encountered in relation to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. His suffering undermines the idea of a stoic military masculinity and a clean war, and yet, the majority of his wounds were inflicted by ‘the enemy’. Therefore, his physical scars speak to their barbarity. Scenes that show or describe his torture (which include being hooked up to electricity, beaten, and urinated on) serve to other the enemy. His wounds are evidence of their barbarism, rather than the barbarity of war itself.

What is potentially more unusual in Homeland is the way that it depicts the effects that these traumas have on the family. Reading Brody as representative of the military, and the family as representative of the nation we see how this narrative can be read as telling a story about the effect of the Iraq War on the American home/land. The failure of Brody to reintegrate into the family plays out on gendered grounds because it is marked by his in/ability to fulfil his role as husband and father. In Brody’s own words; “I need the last eight years of my life back, where I get to take care of my wife and kids, where I don’t get asked to go there and fight their fucking war” (S1 E2 Grace).

His relationship with his wife Jess is very damaged. This is communicated in two awkward sex scenes, the first scene, where a tender reunion is expected they have rough and impersonal sex (S1 E1 Pilot). In the second scene, Brody chooses to masturbate whilst looking at her, they do not touch, and she is visibly upset by this encounter, signifying the physical and emotional distance between the pair (S1 E2 Clean Skin). This is a representation of failing masculinity, put
bluntly by Jessica: "you can't even fuck your wife" (S1 E4 Semper 1). He has been absent as a father, and his children are strangers to him, particularly Chris, who was a baby when Brody was deployed to Iraq. This is exemplified in the scene where Brody is reunited with his family, in which Chris puts out his hand and says “pleased to meet you” (S1E1 Pilot).

Reading Brody as the physical embodiment of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and the family home as the American Homeland, this narrative is about how the trauma of these military campaigns cannot be coped with within the familial structure, and thus by the nation. Typically, where families are depicted in action drama they usually serve to represent the private space that is protected by the public action of the masculine figure (Schneider, 1999). Yet Homeland offers a critical story whereby the trauma of the war is writ large on the Brody family. This ruptures the public/private divide (whereby the home and family are distinct from the battlefield) which underpins the notion of the bounded nature of warfare (Tickner, 1992; Steans, 2006). There is an acknowledgment within the show’s premise of the ongoing and unbounded nature of warfare through the examination of the role played by the military family. It blurs military campaigns with domestic spaces and in doing so undermines the illusion of the rational individual soldier (Higate and Hopton, 2004).

The representation of Brody as a broken soldier is also raced. Whilst the discussion of the representation of Islam, particularly in relation to Islamic terrorism, is reserved for chapter eight, here I examine the invocation of whiteness in the image of the broken soldier. First, in order for Brody to be able to represent the idea of the broken soldier, he must have been capable of demonstrating all the norms of military masculinities made possible by the fact that he is a white male. Furthermore, there are significant implications for gender and race from the representation of PTSD. As argued by Whitworth (2008), female soldiers are more likely to suffer PTSD based on sexual harassment and treatment in military situations as opposed to as a consequence of the stresses of combat, whilst soldiers of colour often suffer PTSD from the realisation of racisms manifested when they are more likely to be given more dangerous tasks and to be put at risk. Therefore, the figure of Brody as a broken soldier plays out assumptions about masculinity and race that remain unchallenged. This is an example of how normative whiteness is at work in the representation of military experiences, because although it is not explicitly racist, it relies upon an assumed white norm of soldiering.

**White Terrorist: Fathering, Masculinities and Violence**

The second identity Brody inhabits is the white terrorist. The implications of the representation of Islam and Islamic terrorism are examined in much more depth in chapter eight. Here I consider how Brody occupies the identity of white American terrorist. Whether or not Brody is
a terrorist forms the central question for season one of the show. However, the enigma is not explored through a consideration of his politics, but through a consideration of how well he performs his masculinity, and in particular, how well he performs his role as husband and father. The troubling of his masculinity that fits with the broken soldier identity is recast; his failure to be a proper American father/husband/soldier can be translated onto his new terrorist identity. Hence, rather than troubling the idea of hegemonic masculinity and military masculinities (Higate and Hopton, 2004; Hooper, 2001) Homeland actually repeats a more familiar gesture of associating the terrorist identity with failed masculinity (Bhattacharyya, 2008; Hunt and Rygiel, 2006).

Yet, it is not enough to say that as a terrorist Brody simply inhabits a feminised identity because the justification that he gives for terrorism (that he is taking the revenge for the death of a young boy he taught and loved in an American drone strike), reuses more familiar tropes of masculine protection (Young, 2003). The wronged father figure enacting retaliatory violence is a more familiar position from action television and film. There is some return to a more masculine and admirable character for Brody when this motivation is introduced. The way this is disturbed is by making the innocent child not Brody’s own son, but the son of his enemy, and by making his killer the Vice President of the United States. Brody’s violence is recast in terms of his role as masculine protector and soldier. Indeed this is how he articulates it in his suicide tape: “[t]his is about justice for 82 children, whose deaths were never acknowledged and whose murder is a stain on the soul of this nation” (S1 E12 Marine One).

This logic relies upon the invocation of innocence, which is a familiar melodramatic plot device. It is the fact that the victims of the drone strike are children that secures their innocence, and makes sense of a violent reaction. This disturbs the logics of violence and counter-terrorism, where terrorism is always an illegitimate violence whereas counter-terrorism is always a legitimate violence, because it shows how not all counter-terrorist violence is justified whilst all terrorist violence is not the act of irrational and evil men. What is more, it articulates this expression of terrorist violence as an identifiable act of masculine protection.

At the same time, there is a potentially less progressive reading of Brody’s terrorist identity. Arguably, it is only by having the choice to commit violence made by a white, American marine that allows it to be read as potentially justifiable. It is his whiteness that allows him to occupy

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40 For example, the first series of 24 (2001-2010) where Bauer’s family are kidnapped, to Collateral Damage (Wiseman 2002) where Gordon Brewer goes to track down the terrorists who killed his son and wife.

41 This relates to an idea of racism operating as a failure of empathy, a theme that is discussed in much more detail in chapter eight.
the position of humanised terrorist. Read in this way, this an attempt to make us better understand how an American could be converted through an appropriation and misapplication of American values. This does not in fact serve to call into question whether terrorism might itself be a politically justified response to a not-so-innocent America.

Another less progressive strand contained within Brody’s identity as terrorist is the rearticulation of the terrorist threat. Whilst there is something progressive about the depiction of a white terrorist in an age of racial profiling, this narrative arc teaches us that anyone could be a terrorist, which ties in to wider discourses about the home-grown terrorist. The spectre of the home-grown terrorist haunts terrorism discourse. This links to older American narrative from the Cold War of “the enemy within”, in which everyone becomes a potential suspect (Robin, 2001). This can lead to a justification of increased restrictions on civil liberties within the homeland.

**Congressman and Double Agent: Politics and Lies**

At this point, the character falls into a more familiar character type, the double agent. After the CIA have realised Brody was part of a planned attack, they manage to persuade him to act as a double agent. Meanwhile Al Qaeda has encouraged him to accept the offers to become a Congressman, and he is duly elected. As Congressman he lives up to the ideals of masculinity; he is popular, well liked, respected and powerful. He is let into the inner circle of political power, attending lavish parties and security briefings. Brody has many of the markers that enable him to enter this elite, as a white, male, married veteran. On the other hand, he is still loyal to his terrorist mentor, Abu Nazir. Throughout, he is deeply conflicted by the lies that this role means that he continues to tell his family. Indeed, this is his main resistance to continued involvement with the CIA or Al Qaeda. This struggle is not played out on ideological grounds, but on personal and emotional grounds, that include his relationship to his family, to Carrie and to Abu Nazir.

Contained within this plot is a critique of American politics. There is a juxtaposition of the Brody family, portrayed as a normal American family, against the political classes who are depicted as a wealthy and immoral elite. This links back into a trope whereby congress are depicted as “the meddlers” in spy dramas and action films, so that congress is typically the barrier to efficient intelligence work (Taylor, 2009), which is in turn part of a wider trope in American culture familiar from discourse of the Vietnam war (Dittmar and Michaud, 1990). Scenes with politicians all take place in wealthy and impressive surroundings, from Elizabeth Gainer’s house (S1E7 Achilles Heel), to the fundraising pool party (S2E2 The Clearing), the dinner funded by a private

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42 Discussed in more depth in chapter seven
military company (S2E2 *Beirut is Back*). There are times when the Brody family is shown to be out of place, for example when Dana speaks out in assembly at her new private school which is met with shock from fellow pupils, or alternatively when Brody goes to swim at a fundraising party (S2E7 *The Clearing*) and following the attention his scarred body draws he chooses not to. Chris Brody often remarks on the lavishness of his surroundings, for example when he rides in the front of the limousine that takes them to a fundraiser (S2E7 *The Clearing*), or when he is impressed that there is television in every room in the CIA safe house (S2E10 *Broken Hearts*). The plot line that develops this critique most clearly is the storyline that follows Dana Brody and Finn Walden’s (the Vice President’s son) part in a hit and run. The Walden family cover up this crime for reasons of political expediency. This stresses the distance between politics and the ‘normal’ American.

*From Fugitive to Addict to Hero: Suffering and Redemption*

After the bomb at Langley, Brody becomes America’s most wanted, but with the help of Carrie he goes on the run. He is exiled from his country and rejected by his family. This rejection from the family unit is made official when Dana changes her surname. This represents Brody’s complete expulsion from the home/land. What follows involves Brody suffering in physical, mental and emotional ways. We first meet Brody in the third season unconscious suffering from a gunshot wound in the back of a pickup truck. We then watch several incarnations of suffering until he is eventually brought back into the US military and redeployed on a mission that can help him to redeem his previous transgressions.

This is a story of Brody’s considerable suffering in order to reach redemption, a feature of melodramatic story telling (Williams, 1998), and a way that the narrative account of terrorism offers closure (Ellis, 2000). Brody’s suffering is often beyond the limits of language and is shown through gesture, music, and iconography. This melodramatic presentation of his suffering helps to generate emotional intensity (Landy, 1991). When we meet Brody he is unconscious, eyes rolling, convulsing in the back of a truck until he is operated on in a poorly lit basement. In the next scene he wakes up screaming, gasping and making animal-like cries of pain (S3E3 *Tower of David*). The depiction is graphic, the acting is very physical, the flickering lights of the operation scene add to the emotive effect, whilst there plays faint background music of long held, off key chords. Brody’s suffering is not finished here; later in the series he is locked in solitary confinement in a concrete room with no light and provided only with heroin, found by Saul, who has to cover his face from the smell. The suffering continues when the CIA force Brody to

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43 This exchange clearly interacts with class, but I do not draw this out here because it is beyond the scope of this work, but there could be a much more detailed account of the workings of class in terrorism stories.
withdraw from heroin, and give him a drug “ibergain” that is supposed to speed the withdrawal process. This sees Brody crying, groaning, vomiting, soiling himself, and convulsing. Not only is there physical pain, and he suffers “violent mind bending hallucinations” and, in one particularly arresting scene, Brody breaks up a chair and stabs his arm repeatedly and ferociously with a jagged piece of wood in a frenzied suicide attempt (S3E6 One Last Thing). The depictions of suffering are melodramatic, extreme and excessive, calling on every sense to show how complete Brody’s suffering is.

There is a more subtle element of his identity at stake in the depiction of his suffering. His ontological whiteness (his state of ‘being white’) is threatened by his new Muslim and terrorist identity. He is used and abused at the hands of the CIA in this narrative arc in a way that we are more used to seeing black or brown men being treated in terrorism stories. He is put under surveillance, he is arrested, and he is stabbed in the hand. He is ultimately expelled from the nation and loses the ability to travel freely or to make his own decisions. He moves to the position of subaltern whiteness, a Muslim convert, and a convict.

What follows is Brody’s opportunity for redemption. He is given the chance to take part in a mission to assassinate the head of the Iranian Security forces. The first visual depiction of the transformation is physical; he is redeemed through training with the army, and he goes from fainting in his first run, to weeks later keeping up with his fellow soldiers. After the troubling of military masculinities that was presented in the first series here we see a redemptive role for military training, through homosocial bonding, exercise and military training, Brody regains the physical and mental capacity to undertake his mission.

The redemption narrative is not straightforward, and he does not simply complete the mission and therefore regain his place in the home/land. He completes the mission but is then hanged by his captors. Yet, this death is not tragic, but truly redemptive. This is a narrative arc that is familiar to melodrama, as Landy (1991) argues melodramatic narratives tell of the disciplining of the unruly or excessive subjects back into the social or domestic order, when their differences cannot be reconciled they are redeemed through isolation or death.
This redemptive death returns us to militarism. As argued by Monnet (2014: 352), “the natural alliance between melodrama and militarism [is] based on a shared intolerance for the notion of death as meaningless or in vain”. Brody’s death is meaningful because it allows him to return to virtue. He dies for his country, which is the version of a true soldier’s death that is essential to the construction of military heroism. However, this redemptive death is incomplete. Although he has returned to virtue he never manages to return to the family. We do not see the Brody family again after his death. In the last interaction that he has with Dana she does not accept him back into her life, but says that she does not want to see him again.

This section has considered how the complex character of Brody contains a range of different identities that present multiple meanings and messages for gender, race and terrorism. What is more, it has argued that there are ambiguities and tensions within the different identities that Brody adopts. It has argued that Brody’s story overall follows a narrative of redemption, where his suffering is necessary to return him to virtue. In this light the story goes from broken soldier, to terrorist, to double agent and suspect all the way back to successful (albeit dead) soldier. Although tempting to read a clean and singular narrative, such an approach would ignore the unresolved tensions at play in the Brody character. The next section considers how audience’s interacted with Brody using data from the focus groups.

Audience Responses to Brody

The attitudes towards Brody varied between participants. There was a general feeling that Brody was a damaged character. This was often articulated on gendered grounds:

Henry: You could argue that Brody is quite vulnerable, he is quite a feminine character in that he is vulnerable, he is fucked up, he is seen kind of rocking catatonically... he is not a macho character.

Box 7:4 The “regeneration through violence” trope

In 1973 Richard Slotkin wrote about the trope “regeneration through violence” that is related to the mythology of the American frontier. A myth that has been reused in American popular culture from the 1800s to the Vietnam war, and which we see redeployed here (Scheter and Semeiks, 1991). In Sklotkin’s (1973: 308) words in this myth the hero “embarks on a quest that takes him, figuratively, or literally, back in time into a primitive world and downwards into his own consciousness, until the basic or primitive core of his psyche is revealed.” For Brody, this is an assassination quest, that sees him return to the army, and fundamentally to revert to his good, but violent psyche.
Malik: He struggles with the whole macho stereotype.

Phil: He is a broken man.

Noticing how he is ‘rocking catatonically’ and how this moves him away from the stereotype of the macho character, picks up on the deconstructive potential of the image of the broken soldier. The quote from Malik shows this in particular, where he has realised that there is a stereotype which Brody is expected, but failing, to perform. This shows how the often unquestioned norms of masculine behaviour are made explicit through Brody’s failings and struggles.

There was recognition by the participants of how his position, as white, male American soldier, made his journey into terrorism more interesting. This was often praised as being a more complex, or interesting, character development. As argued by James: “he’s got that scale to go from macho man to broken man.” Ben takes this critique the furthest:

I think he is quite ... interesting, I don’t know, as a sort of character study of a soldier and fundamentally what their role is. I think he is quite an interesting character, especially the way that ...he so easily switched from being on one side to another... It does blur those lines.

In this quote Ben argues that the way Brody moves from American soldier to terrorist blurs the distinction between the two violent identities. This undermines the boundary of legitimate and illegitimate violence on which the distinction between terrorist and counter-terrorist violence relies.

The image of the broken man resulted in sympathy from most participants, for example Giles said “[s]o I guess I kind of felt a bit sorry for him.” What is interesting about the discussion of Brody, in comparison to those about Carrie, is that there is not the same level of frustration exhibited towards him. This is true of both his behaviours and his emotionally lead mistakes and fragilities. There were far more utterances of sympathy for, and even identification with, Brody. In part this demonstrates how he manages to occupy the position of victim in the narrative. Where Carrie’s emotional breakdowns often made participants like her less, his garner sympathy. There is not an echo of the call made for Carrie to “just get on with life normally”, despite the fact that it is Brody’s bad decisions that are at the heart of the terror threat. This suggests a different level of tolerance for emotional breakdown between female and male characters, whereby her breakdown is considered irritating, but his is more sympathetically read.

For many participants this sympathy extended enough to forgive Brody, or to sympathise with his actions. For example Kate says “oh I was fully on his side the whole time because I just kept
going back to the fact that he had eight years of being tortured and being manipulated.” This symbolises a huge departure from the usual narrative depiction of terrorists as essentially different, and unjustified. Interestingly this even extended to instances where participants said that they “sided with” Brody, and even hoped that he could fulfil his terrorist intentions. For example:

Tessa: Yeah I was with him in the first series, and I hate to say this...but after that episode [where we see Walden deny the airstrikes] I kind of wanted him to go through with it [the terrorist attack], and stick with [it because] he had a reason and I think he was almost justified, and then when he didn’t I kind of lost all sympathy for him.

Vish: You kind of want [Brody] to go through with it [the attack].

This position shows how Homeland contains an effective critique of American actions in the War on Terror because some viewers see a justification for terrorist violence. This is considerably more radical a stance than one might expect an American prime time television show to elicit.

On the other hand, this representation of terrorism, and indeed the participant’s identification or understanding of it, does not actually elucidate the causes or justification for terrorism within a wider political and economic context. It contains a critique of American action, but it does not put this into a wider context of the political situation in any specific countries. James notices this and argues that in Homeland “you are looking at the surface; terrorism is some kind of personal grudge rather than an ideological struggle.” The justification is based on their relationship with Brody and his individualised suffering. This arguably undermines the potential transference of the sympathy for him onto terrorist violences or terrorism more widely. In particular, there are some workings of whiteness within this relationship to Brody, despite his ‘turn’ to terrorism; he is still like ‘us’. 44

What is more, Dave picked up on how Brody rearticulates the terrorist threat:

I think that someone who, this marine who is supposed to be the most patriotic, the most American, the most ‘I am flying the flag’, that he can be brainwashed he can be converted by this man, he can be sent back to America, it sort of just, suggests that anyone, it could happen to anyone. [It suggests] the idea that terrorism, that global terrorism, is this handful of men who just have these puppets that they are sending to

44 There were also many interesting discussions between the participants about Brody’s religion, but these are analysed in chapter eight, where I consider the representation of Islam in more detail.
America to attack you, and it is never ending, and unless we take out these key men it is never going to stop.

This shows how Brody does not only offer a more humanized and understandable image of the terrorist, he becomes a symbol of the allure and sophistication of terror networks, which can use any individual to carry out their deadly missions.

**Brody as a Complex Character**

This character contains both supportive and critical representations of military masculinity. In the broken soldier we saw a recognition of the ongoing harm and burden of soldiering, as well as a reference to the PTSD epidemic that the US and UK militaries face. Yet, in the redemption story we see how Brody can regain his masculinity through military training. His mixed identities confront the logic of masculine protection. He fails to protect his family, indeed he is the biggest threat to the home/land. Yet, we find that his commitment to violence against America is born from a drive to revenge the death of a child, and to ‘protect America from itself’.

Brody’s whiteness operates as an unspoken privilege, even during moments of his story where he doesn’t seem to occupy a particularly privileged position. It allows him to be the right kind of returning soldier, one that the press would be excited about and that would not return under any suspicion. It allows him to suffer from the right kind of PTSD, one where it is his suffering at the hands of the enemy that have shaken his masculine physical and emotional toughness, but not far enough for him to have forgotten his paternalism, love of the marines, or ability to wield physical violence. It allows him to be the right kind of political candidate, one that the public like and elect, and one that can become a running mate in a presidential campaign. It arguably even allows him to become the right kind of terrorist, one that the audience could (almost) identify with. Finally, it allows him to become the right kind of victim, and finally martyr, a character whose death we, as an audience, mourn.

There is both an investigation of the motivations for terrorist actions that considers American responsibility and a renewal of the terrorist threat within Brody’s conversion narrative. Brody’s initial attack seems understandable in light of his personal story of loss and grief, which goes beyond a story of the clash of civilisations narratives of terrorist violence. Yet at the same time, he still presented a clear and present danger to America and American citizens, arguably all the more frightening because he seems to be ‘one of us’. What is more, there are potentially critical strands in the presentation of a white terrorist (which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter). Brody is a character that is saturated in often unmarked racial privileges, even if those privileges are only to experience the ‘right’ kind of torture, PTSD and death.
Conclusions: Ambivalent Characters

These characters tell us a great deal about the current conceptions of gender, of terrorism and race. They simultaneously reuse and challenge tropes of the masculine hero, the female victim, the objectivity of counter-terrorism, the virtues of the CIA and the righteousness of America.

The central argument of this chapter is that wider narratives of terrorism are transferred onto these individual characters. Through our relationship to them we, as an audience confront challenges posed to us by the War on Terror and our complicity, and in/security within it. This chapter has shown how Carrie stands in for the CIA and for the bipolar reaction to terrorism that followed 9/11. Whilst Brody, as the scarred soldier and terror suspect, manages to simultaneously represent the wounded military, the damaged body politic as well as its greatest enemy and threat. They are not the more familiar characters of action drama of War on Terror discourse, but are broken, vulnerable, dislikeable, complex and unstable.

This chapter has attempted to capture the complexities that are inherent within these characters. It has argued that these characters are not good or bad, they both repeat the logics of counter-terrorism that enable ongoing violences, they rely upon stereotyped versions of gendered behaviour and they rearticulate in more subtle ways a white privilege that enables imperial violence. Yet they also disrupt these logics by occupying complicated characters and spaces. For example, they undo the logic of public and private spaces; as Carrie’s workplace is where her most familial relationships take place, for Brody we see the impact of the War on Terror through the impact it has on his family home. This not only reworks these typically gendered boundaries, but in doing so it undermines logics that traditional security policy, practice and scholarship has relied upon. This chapter has shown that there is a critical edge to their melodramatic performances, because within the moments of excess they go beyond the boundaries that dichotomous logics rely upon, most pertinently they do this in their moments of excessive emotion, usually excluded from security discourse. Their melodramatic stories of redemption offer some closure, but their melodramatic excesses resist the boundaries of gender and security.

This chapter has shown that these characters are ambiguous. They are read differently by different participants in the focus group. There was a division in focus groups between those who felt that Carrie’s behaviour was too over the top and reckless, which reifies the gendered and securitised logics that her character exceeds. Whilst there were members of the focus group who felt that her abilities, in particular her ability to be right, justified Carrie’s behaviours. For Brody, there were some participants whose feelings of sympathy toward the character extended so far as to make them audience sympathetic to his terrorist violences. This is a radical disruption
of counter-terrorist logics that rely upon terrorism as an illegitimate violence. Adding these insights from focus groups shows how the meaning from the text is not simply absorbed by viewers, but negotiated, showing the critical potential that the audience are capable of exploiting.

This chapter has considered how whiteness has been at work, in very subtle ways in these characters, operating as the unmarked privilege. It has argued that Carrie represents a ‘progressive whiteness’ that continues imperialisms. Whilst Brody’s whiteness gives him unrecognised privileges (even within his tragic story) on to which we can read the greater marks of racial privilege that are shored up via counter-terrorist discourses and violences. The next chapter goes on to consider in more detail how Homeland represents and racialises Islam, particularly in terms of Islamic terrorism.

These characters embody versions of gender, race and terrorism that are intricately interwoven in ‘post 9/11’ terrorism and counter-terrorism discourses. This analysis has allowed me to unpack how these discourses are being reused and rearticulated to see how gender, race and terrorism continue to rely on one another to make sense of political violences. Again this chapter has shown that by adding the audience in, and by allowing a more nuanced reading of the text we can see there are spaces for resistance to dominant conceptions of terrorism, even within our popular television heroes.
Chapter 8

Representing ‘the Other’: Islamic terrorism, Muslims and the Middle East in Homeland

Despite meeting critical acclaim, Homeland has been criticised in some areas of the media for its depiction of Islam and Muslims. Joseph Massad (2013: unpaginated), Middle Eastern Studies professor at Columbia University, argued it “demonizes Arabs and prepares Americans to bomb Iran” whilst Al Jazeera producer Laila Al-Arain (2012: unpaginated) dubbed it “TV’s most Islamophobic show”. On the Washington Post website Laura Durkay (2014: unpaginated) argues that “[s]ince its first episode, Homeland which returns Sunday, has churned out Islamophobic stereotypes as if its writers were getting paid by the cliché.”

As discussed in chapter three, the othering of the Islamic terrorist has been intertwined with the racialisation of Muslims, and so plays a large part in the discourse and practice of anti-Muslim racisms. The othering and racialisation of Muslims enables the violences that are performed against many Muslim communities both in the UK and abroad to go unchallenged (Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2008; Sian et al., 2012). This chapter explores the representation of Islam in Homeland, paying specific attention to how it is connected to terrorism, as well how it intersects with gender.

This chapter is about how Homeland deploys ideas about security and race, but also how these are linked. It unpacks how Homeland is representing Muslims and Islam in a terrorism story. This chapter is not just about identifying ‘good Muslims’ and ‘bad Muslims’, but rather it considers these characters within wider gendered and raced narratives of terrorism. As Alsultany (2012:15) argues, the good/bad Muslim duality actually reinforces a racist logic whereby “all Muslims are assumed to be bad until they perform and prove their allegiance to the US nation”. Therefore, this analysis considers the terrorist characters, the Muslim CIA agents and the use of other ‘Muslim’ people and places in the plot.

The first section considers the image of the terrorist in Homeland. It argues that Homeland relies upon the image of the Islamic terrorist, but that it also subverts this image by introducing characters who do not fit the ‘dangerous brown men’ stereotype familiar from dominant terrorism discourses. The second section considers the Muslim characters that work in the CIA. It argues that these characters offer the opportunity to undo some of the stereotypes of Muslims that circulate in popular culture and terrorism discourse. It ends with a consideration of the way that Homeland uses and represents Middle Eastern countries. It argues that there is a Eurocentric and racist viewpoint at work in Homeland via the way that Middle Eastern countries are presented as homogenous. At each point I also include data from the focus groups. This
shows how audiences negotiate the representation of Islam. I try to draw out moments where they resist processes of the racialisation of terrorism, and the stereotypical representation of Muslim people and places. This chapter also draws upon the conversations that I held with Muslim participants to get an insight into how the representation of Islam can be read by Muslims. I take comments from these conversations about the inaccuracy of the representations to consider how Islam is signified in *Homeland* and the politics that is contained within these representative gestures.

The concepts of melodrama, intertextuality and the active audience that I have used thus far remain central in this chapter. Melodrama reminds us how the racialisation of victims, heroes and villains helps to work through anxieties around race, terrorism and gender. This chapter explores how the terrorist is raced, and how the terrorist figure works to establish racialised boundaries, whilst simultaneously rearticulating a post-racial and ‘equal’ image of the West. Intertextuality is crucial because the stories of terrorist figures and Middle Eastern countries draw upon the contemporary debates and events that populate security strategy. An analysis of the active audience enables me to consider how audience members negotiate their understanding of Islam via this story of terrorism.

This chapter is titled *Islamic terrorism, Muslims and the Middle East in Homeland*. This requires some explanation because I want to stress that these three terms are not interchangeable. I recognise that they are each vast, heterogeneous, complex and multifaceted. However, they are grouped because of the way that they are linked in *Homeland*, and because it is these links that this project seeks to explore.

As argued by Evelyn Alsultany (2012), the more complex image of the terrorist identity is not new to *Homeland*. Yet, rather than ignore the complications, as many scholars and critics have done before, or on the other hand to embrace them as comprehensive evidence of a more multicultural and equalitarian drive within American popular culture and security practice, she calls on us to view them as part of a post-racial racism that reinforces racist logics and practices. In her own words: “now the other is portrayed sympathetically in order to project the United States as an enlightened country that has entered a post racial era.” (Alsultany 2012: 16).

The image of post-racial America that this creates has three effects. First, it allows viewers to position themselves (and she argues, America) as benevolent, and multi-cultural. This prevents engagement with the ongoing racist practices of the War on Terror. Second, it produces further justification of ongoing counter-terrorist violences by failing to deeply challenge the association of terrorism and Islam. Finally, it produces the necessary emotional responses (fear, outrage) to
perpetuate the call for violence and finally to assure ‘us’ that ‘good’ America has a hard but necessary job to do.

Alsultany (2012: 16) puts forward a concept of simplified complex representations which draws attention to how seemingly sensitive representations can work to reinforce racial strategies. She identifies seven strategies that are deployed to “give the impression that the representations they are producing are complex” when in fact that actually “promote logics that legitimise racist policies and practices, such as torturing Arabs and Muslims”. They purport to give a more complex representation whilst in fact they stay within racialised stereotypes.

This chapter builds on this to consider racialised double discursive double moves, which I think appear in the following guises:

- Introducing the ‘good’ Muslim, who proves himself or herself by putting country before faith.
- Inserting the white terrorists, who were ‘turned’ via contact with the Middle East.
- Presenting an image of the ‘post-racial’ to rearticulate racialised logics.
- Humanizing the terrorist, whilst othering terrorist violence.
- Defending Islam as peaceful, whilst situating it in entirely violent contexts.

This chapter is cognoscente to discursive double moves, to understand how discourses of race continue to reassert themselves. Key to these racialised double discursive moves is the concept of the post racial. As discussed in chapter three, the post-racial discourse actually operates to obscure the centrality of the ongoing process of racialisation. This chapter continues to consider discursive double moves as a representative strategy in Homeland. Yet, it also seeks to break out of this seemingly closed system to consider moments where the audience can still find ways to exceed or resist this post-racial logic. The central conclusion in this chapter is twofold: Homeland does do some work to disturb the dichotomies of ‘us versus them’ that have animated terrorism discourse and which have associated Islam with violence, through the reworking of the stereotypes of the terrorist and the Muslim, but these disturbances remain within the framework of Islamic terrorism that reifies a Eurocentric view of the world and leaves the racialised threat of the Other in place for its viewers.

Terrorists in Homeland: Not Just Dangerous Brown Men?

There are several terrorist characters in Homeland. Brody is the lead terrorist character in the first three seasons, and the show is centred on the pursuit of his terrorist commander Abu Nazir. Nazir is said to a key member of Al Qaeda. Both men are shown to be Muslim. They are assisted by other terrorist characters including Tom Walker, a marine captured at the same time as Brody, Aileen Morgan, an American woman, Roya Hammad, a political correspondent, Mansour Al-
Zahani, a Saudi diplomat, and are funded by Mahjeed Jivadi, member of the Iranian Secret Service.

This section considers each of these characters in turn. It argues that *Homeland* moves away from the traditional stereotype of the Muslim extremist in many of these depictions, and that it is significant that three of the five terrorist characters are American nationals. However, it also considers moments in which *Homeland* rearticulates more familiar narratives of the clash of civilisations. It considers how the emphasis on the sophistication of these terrorists links into the new terrorism thesis. It also argues that the Americans as terrorists rearticulates the threat of the home-grown terrorist.

**Brody**

The previous chapter considered Brody’s depiction as a white terrorist. Here I consider how he performs and represents his identity as a Muslim convert and terrorist in order to consider what this says about Islam and Islamic terrorism. At first, we see the terrorist trope disturbed: here is an American Marine as the terror suspect. Yet, on the other hand, the story that an American Marine converts to Islam and then becomes part of a terrorist plot against America, maintains the association between Islam and terrorism.

**The Muslim Convert**

We first find out that Brody has converted to Islam during his captivity in S2ES *Grace*. In a scene that is interspersed with flashbacks to his time in captivity, we see Brody go into his garage to pray. He is shown performing ritual washing (wudhu) before using a prayer mat and praying in Arabic. By revealing that he has converted to Islam before revealing whether he is part of a terrorist plot, this episode highlights the fraught relationship between depictions of Islam and Islamic terrorism. It both serves to make the audience more suspicious of Brody, but it also seems to open up critical space to reflect upon this gesture.

Importantly, Brody’s motivation for violence is not Islamic extremism but, as discussed in chapter six, it is revenge for a boy killed in an American drone strike. He does not articulate his planned suicide attack in religious terms. In fact, Brody repeatedly emphasizes the peace that Islam has brought him. He explains his conversion to Carrie saying “when you live in despair for eight years you might turn to religion too, and the King James Bible was not around.” (*The Weekend* S1E7).

Islam is shown to offer him peace and comfort, and the scenes where he prays are often moments of quiet and stillness in otherwise frantic episodes. This emphasizes Islam as a peaceful, rather than violent, religion.
However, Nazir does use Brody’s faith to keep him on the mission. Notably when Nazir is trying to persuade Brody to complete his mission he says to him "is the peace you found in Islam a false peace?" Whilst this too emphasises the peace Islam brings Brody it shows how his religion plays a part in the relationship with his terrorist mentor. What is more, Brody is often shown praying just before he commits violent acts. Part of the emotional preparation he makes before his intended suicide bomb, along with saying goodbye to his family, is to pray. He is shown praying before he crosses the border into Iran on an assassination mission. Whilst it could be argued that it makes sense for him to use prayer to gain the resolve he needs to carry on his life, the moments in which he calls on Islam seem to provide him with the resolve to commit violences. We do not see him struggle with the incompatibility of the teachings of Islam with his extra-marital affair, excessive drinking, lying to his family and children, or committing murder. Therefore, whilst the show does not depict a violent or extremist Islam, it does not fully disassociate Islam and violence and does not suggest that Brody’s faith is in any way incompatible with his role as terrorist, even if it is not causal.

How the show depicts Brody’s religion needs consideration. The main signifier used to depict him as Muslim is prayer. We are only shown him praying on six occasions although Carrie hints that he goes to the garage “so early in the morning, so late at night” which suggests that he prays regularly. This gives quite a one-dimensional perspective of the religion, the shorthand portrayal of Islam particularly notable when compared to the painstaking attention to detail and pursuit of realism afforded to other aspects of the show (for example the care taken to use the right IT equipment in Langley, as detailed in Hurwitz [2014])

Home-Grown Terrorist

Brody, as an American terrorist, taps into a story that has been prominent in terrorism discourses. The figure of the home-grown terrorist looms large in insecurity discourse. Brody functions to literally bring terrorism home. He enables the transference of international insecurity to the domestic home space. What is more, suggesting that anyone could be a terrorist justifies more comprehensive domestic anti-terror policies, in the show, as in the real world.

Brody’s decision to undertake terrorism is referred to in the show as him being ‘turned’ to terrorism. There are occasional instances where it is suggested that he has been ‘brainwashed’. Both of these terms are heavily loaded. The idea of being ‘turned’ to terrorism implies that it is
an act that is performed on somebody by an external force; it immediately robs the subject of agency because this is something that happens to them. It has connotations of radicalisation. The narrative in *Homeland* is that through torture, and then a limited rehabilitation, Nazir managed to persuade Brody to be a terrorist, but that this was helped enormously by the trauma and grief that Brody suffered when Issa died. As discussed in chapter six, Brody’s suffering is central to his story. In combination, this story of him being ‘turned’ reverts to stereotypes of the terrorist as a damaged or misguided individual who is manipulated by a more radical leader.

This story creates considerable insecurity because it means that there are endless potential terrorists. It highlights that terrorists are made from vulnerable people. This story necessitates strict measures to prevent these individuals from being seduced by radical individuals.

**Abu Nazir**

Abu Nazir is the lead terrorist in the first two seasons of *Homeland* plot. Of the terrorists that are portrayed, he most readily fits the stereotyped image of the terrorist; he is Middle Eastern, brown and bearded, he is a ‘fanatical’ Muslim and has a history of instigating terrorist attacks against civilians internationally. However, he portrays an updated stereotype of the terrorist organizer; he is not the impoverished, desperate, poorly-educated suicide bomber, but rather, the rich, intelligent, networked terrorist leader, puppeteer of grand and elaborate terrorist plots. In the course of the show we see him use skype and mobile phones, and we see him use his connections with a Saudi diplomat and the Iranian Secret Service. There are repeated references made to how clever he is and how elaborate his plots are. This version of the threatening terrorist fits more readily into the “new terrorism” thesis, where the terror threat and terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda are seen as more sophisticated, international,

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**Box 8:1 Bin Laden and Nazir**

The similarities between Abu Nazir and Osama Bin Laden are made obvious in the show, from the CIA’s relentless pursuit, down to his family home/terrorist compound in Pakistan. Bin Laden had been found and killed in May 2011, prior to the show’s release and so was current at the time of writing the first series. The scene that most closely references Bin Laden is Nazir’s sea burial. This scene shows a US Navy respectful of Muslim funeral customs. This we can read as an insight into what these burials are ‘really like’. It acts as an opportunity to work through our emotions towards this death and what is more, it establishes the magnanimous nature of America, which treats their enemies kindly in death, invoking long established chivalrous codes that are key to military masculinities.

If this similarity is pursued another lesson learnt is the death of the key Al Qaeda enemy Bin Laden/Nazir is by no means the end of the battle. Indeed we are just as insecure now as we were when he was alive. As the most deadly attack happens after Nazir is killed.
networked and (consequently) more deadly than terrorist violences and terror groups pre-9/11 (Kegley, 2003; Laqueur, 1999).

Yet, the writers of Homeland do attempt to present a more complicated and three-dimensional characterisation of this terrorist figure. He is shown to offer moments of kindness to Brody, who he lets live in his house and tutor his son and Brody clearly loves him. He is a husband and father. Indeed, actor Navid Nehaban, who plays Nazir, says he seeks to portray that: “he’s a husband, he’s a teacher, and he might even have been a politician. He’s someone who wanted to better his country, and now he is in a situation that he has to react to, and is doing what he sees needs to be done.” (Quoted in Hurwitz, 2014: 63). We see his son killed by an American drone strike (along with 81 other Pakistani children) and this is taken as his motivation for his subsequent plot.

This softening of the terrorist image sits against the terrible acts of violence that Nazir is said to have been responsible for in the show. Indeed in Q and A (S2E5), Carrie emphasizes Nazir’s brutality to Brody:

Carrie: Well, Nazir is [a monster]. His pattern is to target innocent civilians and inflict mass casualties. Kenya 98, a busy market place, Madrid 2004, a packed commuter train, a department store in Amsterdam. He doesn’t go after soldiers and high ranking murderers like Walden. He kills wives and children. Danas and Chrises and Jessicas.

Whilst we see his kindness to Brody, we know that this is part of a process to ‘turn Brody to terrorism’. He may wash his wounds, but it is under Nazir’s command that those wounds were inflicted.

Although he is a father, there are subtle references that he is a bad father, for example, in the scene where his son Issa knocks over some glasses with a football, he seems afraid of Nazir. Brody stands up for him in this instance and it is actually his interactions with Issa that are given all of the tenderness and warmth of a family relationship.

I argue that the most problematic element of the depiction of Nazir as terrorist is that his terrorism is completely devoid of any political or national context. It is explained entirely on the grounds of religious fundamentalism, with his key goal to “exterminate” the West. This is articulated in the conversation that he has with Carrie:

Abu Nazir: [W]ith your designer brands and your organic foods, beach houses and sports clubs. Do you really have the perseverance, the tenacity, the faith? Because we do. You can bomb us, starve us, occupy our holy places but we will never lose our faith. We carry
god in our hearts, our souls, to die is to join him. It may take a century, two centuries, three centuries, but we will exterminate you.

This articulates the battle on the ‘clash of civilisations’ grounds, whereby fundamentalist Islam presents an existential threat motivated by the desire to end ‘Western’ ways, with the goal to kill us all. What is more, it is not made clear in the show where Nazir is from and so what has motivated his terrorism prior to the death of Issa. He is shown to live in Pakistan, to travel to Beirut and to have connections to the Iranian government. It is unnecessary to furnish him with a detailed backstory, as if this is a luxury that only the white terrorists need. This is a very particular depiction of Islamic terror as an irrational and unending threat to the West.

_Aileen and Faisal_

Aileen and Faisal are involved in the Nazir and Brody terrorism plot. As a white, blonde, educated and rich American woman, she does not fit the traditional terrorist stereotype of a dangerous brown man. Her religion is actually never made apparent in the show (in one scene she is seen to share red wine with Saul, although she is in a relationship with Raquim, who is Muslim). The fact that she is not a typical terrorist is made explicit in the show. It is her boyfriend, Saudi engineering professor Raquim Faisal who is initially under suspicion. CIA Director Estes is shown to be shocked that Aileen is white:

_Saul:_ she is Caucasian, mid 20s, blonde hair, blue-green eyes, depending on who you talk to

_Estes:_ Caucasian?

This challenge to the stereotype relies upon the stereotype being present in the audience’s mind, but there is a definite disruption of the typical racialised othering the terrorist suspect. Aileen is clever, considered, and in love with her husband. With her blonde hair, she does not look unlike Carrie. The revelation that this white woman is the terrorist comes only two episodes after they follow Raquim. This is significant because Raquim is pursued on the basis of racial profiling (an activity that Saul defends as “actual profiling”). At first this seems to undermine racial profiling (Aileen as a white woman would not fall under the CIA’s surveillance), and yet because Faisal is involved in a terror plot their profiling was justified.

She is humanized in the depiction. Whilst Saul deliberately builds a rapport with her in the road trip as an interrogation technique, when we see him interact with her in prison, it is clear that he feels sorry for her and that he likes her. Her humanity is underlined by her apology: “I’m sorry I have become this person” (S2E7 _The Clearing_). Rather than being portrayed as evil, she comes across as confused or misdirected. Whilst _Homeland_ questions how her whiteness enabled her
to escape suspicion earlier in the show, there is less critical space around how her whiteness enables her to illicit the sympathy, and indeed trust, of Saul later in the series.

Furthermore, the critical edge of this challenge to the terrorist stereotype is blunted by the thin justification that Aileen gives for her terrorist intentions. It is attributed to the fact that Aileen has had connections with the Middle East. She was motivated to radicalism by the extreme inequality she claims to have experienced when living in Saudi Arabia, but in particular because she was sent to boarding school after dating “one of the local brown boys.” When they are researching her, we hear that she was in the Peace Corps in Jordan, and has travelled to Egypt and Lebanon. Yet, there is no discussion of what affect her experiences in Jordan had on her. Again, this is a story of terrorism that is, in melodramatic fashion, moved away from being about any kind of political struggle, but transposed on to the teenage angst of an interrupted love affair. Indeed this is underlined by a statement made by Saul:

I don’t know what happened to you Aileen. I don’t know how you went from being one more angry teenage girl to joining the fucking jihadists. And if your issues are truly geopolitical, then I can’t help you. I think you would up here because you fell in love with a boy. And he’s gone now. (S1E7 The Weekend).

Therefore her terrorism is explained though her relationship with Faisal, all in personal terms of love. In fact, she does go on to cooperate with Saul, which suggests that her issues are not “truly geopolitical”.

As with all the terrorists in Homeland, terrorism does not end well for Aileen or Raquim, who both die. Raquim is killed by other terrorists, and Aileen kills herself after a lengthy time in solitary confinement. This shows the efficacy of the CIA who track and arrest these terrorists. Indeed, Saul successfully interrogates Aileen to give details about Tom Walker. However, it holds a critique of counter-terrorist practices because it gives a glimpse into the strain of solitary confinement. Aileen is shown to be under considerable stress, she takes great joy from simply being allowed to look out of the window and Saul seems upset by her condition. Her suicide underlines how desperate and depressing her situation is. In previous terrorism television dramas (such as Spooks and 24) we rarely re-encounter terrorists suspects after their arrest and incarceration.

Roya Hammad

Roya is Brody’s handler in season two of Homeland. She is a journalist with a British accent, beautiful and sophisticated. She is high up in the American establishment with access to Congressmen and the White House. As a woman she undermines the “dangerous brown men”
terrorist stereotype. Neither does she fulfil the “black widow” stereotype of the female terrorist. Roya is Oxford educated and she does not wear a hijab; instead, she wears fashionable Western clothes and enjoys an independent and well-paid career as a political correspondent. She is not an irrational figure motivated by revenge, turning to terrorism to avenge the death of a husband, or because she has been manipulated by a (more powerful) man. Indeed, this trope is explicitly rejected in a powerful scene between Roya and Carrie:

Roya: Have you ever had someone who takes over your life? Pulls you in and gets you to do things that aren’t really you, and you know are wrong, but you can’t help yourself? Have you ever had someone like that?

Carrie: Yes.

Roya: Well I’ve never been that stupid, you idiot whore. You think you understand me? You think you know what my family has suffered? You think this is a fucking game? You think that Nazir is afraid of you? You think that I am afraid of you? [At which point Roya digs her nails into Carrie’s wounds on her wrists and starts to shout in Arabic]. (S2E11 In Memoriam).

In this interaction we see that Roya is a more complicated and determined terrorist than Carrie has given her credit for. Her terrorism cannot be explained by an infatuation with her terrorist leader Nazir. She is not the oppressed brown women of the usual War on Terror scripts. Indeed this exchange inverts the power dynamic of the free Western white woman and the oppressed brown terrorist figure, to show that it is Carrie who is the weak, manipulated woman.

The explanation that we get for Roya’s terrorism is hinted at in this exchange, the “suffering of her family.” She tells Brody that she knows Nazir because “our families have been close since 1947. They were refugees from Palestine together.” Whilst this is scant, it gives her justification for terrorism some a political and national context. We do not see her fulfilling any of the clichés of the depiction of Muslim women. Her religion is not a key feature of her identity, and we are left to presume that she is Muslim, though this is not made explicit. She is not shown praying, or quoting Islamic scripture.

However, this does not mean that she is an entirely positive reworking of the terrorist identity. Her violent outburst during the interrogation with Carrie makes her seem frightening and aggressive. Her beauty has some links to an alternative image of the Eastern woman, as exotic and alluring. It can be argued that instead of rejecting the image of the frightening terrorist other, she simply extends its reach, showing us that even seemingly modern and ‘moderate’ Muslims are potentially threatening. Her presence in the White House shows how well ‘they’ have
infiltrated ‘our’ society. This again repeats the ‘new terrorism’ thesis of the sophisticated, networked and therefore increasingly deadly version of ‘modern terrorism.’ Roya is also caught and arrested by the CIA, which reasserts the superiority of American intelligence services.

**Mansour Al-Zahani**

This character features only briefly in *Homeland*. But his interrogation is a particularly interesting scene that manages to challenge and reinforce an image of Islam, and in this case Saudi Arabia, as oppressive.

As Carrie prepares for the interrogation, she runs through Al Zahani’s family with her fiend/colleague Virgil:

   Virgil: Wives?

   Carrie: Three: Zahra, Hala and Yasmee. He met Zahra when they were both 15. An arranged marriage, of course...

   Virgil: How can someone be 15 and married? What could a 15 year old possibly know about the intricacies of a relationship, about taking care of a family?

The fact that he has multiple wives, and his first was an arranged marriage at 15, tells a gendered story of Muslim/ Saudi cultures. Indeed Virgil’s astonishment that they were just 15 when they married underlines this.

When Carrie is talking to Zahani, she says: “You’re obviously not a zealot. You don’t believe in radical Islam. You love the West.” On the one hand this shows that not all terrorists are motivated by religion (though of course Zahani is still a Muslim terrorist). Yet, on the other hand, Carrie says “you don’t’ believe in radical Islam”, *therefore* “you love the West”, as if one is to assure the other.

The twist in this scene is that the CIA’s attempt to blackmail Al-Zahani, with the information that he attends saunas to have gay sex, fails. The assumption is that as a Saudi Muslim man, who is married, this revelation would ruin him. This is based in part on the assumption of the oppressive and homophobic nature of Saudi society. Indeed, Al Zahani replies:

   Go ahead. Tell everyone you want. Tell them all. I don’t care. I suck cock, and I love it. Yummy, yummy, yummy, yummy. My wives already know. They don’t care. They love me. So fuck it huh? And fuck you. Put me on CNN, I’ll admit to everything.

The interrogation is more successful when Carrie threatens to deport his daughter:
Carrie: We would deport her [Janine] and we would make sure that she was not welcome in England or Germany or France, or even all-forgiving Scandinavia. We would make sure that she had no choice but to go back to Saudi Arabia and get fat and wear a burqa for the rest of her miserable life.

He relents at this, which implies that having ‘American freedoms’ withdrawn from his daughter would be terrible and he therefore confirms Carrie’s bleak picture of what life is like for women in Saudi Arabia.

Tom Walker

Tom Walker features more as a plot device than as a developed character. As an African American marine he too does not fit the traditional image of the terrorist suspect. It is not made clear whether he has converted to Islam (although he does meet his handler, the Saudi diplomat Al-Zahani, in a mosque). Walker’s story is infused with the idea of Islamic terrorism. Brody admits that he was surprised to find that Walker was working for Nazir. Walker’s only explanation is: “[w]e both got to the same place Nick. Only I go there a lot quicker.”

Whilst Homeland gives a deep account of the troubled emotional state of Brody as he is turned to terrorism, how Walker was converted is never covered. The one way that he reveals any personal conflict over his role in the plot is when he calls his home to hear the voice of his son and wife on the answerphone. Yet, he does not act on this, he does not try to make any other contact, and he ultimately chooses his terrorist mission over any reconciliation with them. An idea that was put forward by one of my participants, Tessa, who is black, was that Tom Walker’s blackness makes him a more readily disposable character. Whilst we need a convincing story to believe Brody’s transition from soldier to terrorist, this is not necessary for Walker.

His race is not a feature of the Homeland narrative. Whilst this is positive in some ways, because it resists using any of the tropes or stereotypes of black men that are used in television, it is another example of a double discursive move because it erases the racist treatment that black soldiers face both in the military and on their return to the US.

There is a tension in the way that Walker performs his violence. He shoots dead a hunter in the woods whom he thinks might have recognised him, he hides in the car of an old woman, whom he then ties up in her own home, and he carefully shoots dead two people in the terrorist attack. On the one hand, this could be said to fit the image of the evil terrorist. Yet, I argue that it is linked to Walker’s skill as a sniper in the US army, which explains why he is so good at this type of violence. In one way, this establishes how good the US military is at producing soldiers and underlines the capabilities of the Marines. However, the fact that both of the captured soldiers
were converted to terrorism could represent a critique of the military. As it implies that these soldiers are particularly easily converted, raising questions about how soldiers are easily manipulated to perform violence on command.

**Majid Javadi**

Javadi enters the *Homeland* plot when money paid for the Langley bombings is traced back to his account. He is a senior Iranian intelligence officer. He is an unremittingly evil character. Importantly, Javadi serves to link the terrorist activities of Nazir, who is part of Al Qaeda, to the Iranian government. This plotline makes a starkly political point that links the activities of Al Qaeda to the Iranian government. I will consider the representation of Iran (and American relations to it) in more detail in the final section of this chapter, but for now I consider how Javadi is represented.

Javadi is intelligent and sophisticated, but ultimately evil. He operates as the black mirror to Saul, who is the brilliant and principled CIA officer. Where Saul uses his talents for good, Javadi uses his for evil, and for personal gain. In one way, this comparison holds some critical potential, because we see how Javadi and Saul are cut from the same cloth. Indeed, we are repeatedly told that Javadi and Saul used to be friends when Saul operated in Tehran. Yet, we see that Javadi has betrayed Saul, which led to the death of three informants. Saul describes him as “an animal”. His evil is confirmed when he murders his ex-wife in a brutal attack at her home. This reuses the logics of the ‘dangerous brown men’ formulation of terrorism discourses. He explains the murder to Saul:

Javadi: She was my wife, she was unfaithful.

Saul: Ex-wife, it was 35 years ago.

Javadi: In the eyes of God we were still married. I should have stoned her to death, but you didn’t give me enough time. (*S3E7 The Red Wheelbarrow*).

This barbaric violence against women uses the trope of barbaric Middle Eastern men (Bhattacharyya, 2008). The reference to stoning ties it into ‘their’ wider barbarity towards women (Brittain, 2006). There is a child in the scene (a boy who watches the murders take place, and is then left in the room on his own), which emphasises the innocence of the victims and thus, the depravity of Javadi.

**Terrorist Henchmen**

No television drama is complete without the disposable ‘henchmen’ who serve the usual plot devices of wordlessly carrying out the bad guy’s wishes, or quickly dying at the hands of our
heroes. They are present in *Homeland*. There are those characters who we meet and who have names; Lalif Bin Walid, the Saudi Prince’s staff member who helps launder money for the plot; Hamid Brody’s guard during captivity, the maker of the suicide vest that Brody wears (who he goes on to kill). These men more readily fit the dangerous brown men moniker. They are all Middle Eastern, they are all terrorists, and they all end up dead. Their characters and their deaths are in many ways incidental to the wider story.

There are those terrorist workers who are not named, but seem to be ever present and well equipped. This includes all of the other men who torture and guard Brody when he is in captivity, the men who kidnap Brody and take him to the diplomat’s house, the men who storm the tailors in Gettysburg (killing several CIA officers), Roya’s two accomplices, the men who are with Abu Nazir when he is in the United States, and the men who get the explosives to Langley and put them in Brody’s car. Whilst these men perform a dramatic function in the show to keep the plot moving, their presence is important for two reasons. First, it is here we see the stereotype of the Islamic terrorist unreconstructed. They are all brown men, who are deployed to commit violences. Their presence illustrates how familiar we are with the dangerous brown man figure, that his presence in a terrorist plot needs no explanation and can be easily accepted and deployed by the writers. Second, these men give the impression of an effective, well-staffed terrorist network operating globally and within the United States. Therefore, they serve to rearticulate the terrorist threat, showing the size and skill of the ever present terrorist enemy.

**Terrorists in *Homeland***

These terrorist characters are not all the dangerous brown men of War on Terror discourses. They open up space between Islam and terrorism. They form a much more complicated picture of the terrorist. They show that terrorism is not always motivated by Islamism. They show that the terrorist is not always the brown, foreign, barbaric other. However, they lack national or political context for their violences. Their justifications are either explained through personal stories (Brody and Aileen), through vague Islamism (Nazir) or unexplained (Walker, Roya). Nazir and Javadi still fit the stereotypical image in many ways; their seeming sophistication covers a fundamental brutality. The ‘terrorist henchmen’ are a more casual affirmation of the terrorist imagery and the story of the global terrorist network that has underpinned much Western rhetoric and policy. The terrorist threat is kept ever present. These characters show that terrorism does not pay. Although Nazir masterminds some successful terrorist plots, he is killed. All the terrorists in *Homeland* end up either in American custody or dead. This re-emphasizes the efficacy of the CIA, and ultimately it shows who is winning the war. I now turn to consider how the British audience interacted with this complex image of the terrorist figure.
The Audience: Watching Terrorists

The audience offer a potentially more positive outlook on the depiction of terrorists than is offered from reading the show in isolation. In the first instance they argue that the show allowed room for them to understand or sympathise with terrorists. This is articulated clearly by Dave “[y]eah I think it is a big change, it is a big swing, and it does put in your head, you know, these guys, the fact that his kid died and stuff, you can understand their hate, you can’t justify their actions, but you can understand their hate.” This goes to show how the audience take up the critical potential that is offered in the show. What is particularly pertinent is that Dave makes this comment in relation to Abu Nazir. This opinion is articulated in different groups as well, for example by Rachel:

I think with Abu Nazir, you saw a lot of his character. You saw a lot of the processes of brainwashing Brody. You saw his kindness, you saw that he had a child. You saw that he wanted him to be educated. You saw that he was another person there was more to him than just a terrorist.

And by Claire:

I think it has changed how I feel because it is the only fictional representation I have seen where the terrorists have been real people, real characters with who have done things other than give the order to blow people up. And the storyline of Abu Nazir and losing his son, and him being upset about that, that is not something that…you generally see.

In these statements we see Rachel and Claire both sympathise with Nazir. There were no comments that stressed the barbarity of Nazir. This provides some of the most compelling evidence for rejecting the idea that Homeland can be simply explained as an Islamophobic or anti-Muslim show because we see here how the audience felt that the terrorist stereotype was disturbed even when talking about the character that I argue fits the traditional terrorist identity most closely. Although Alsultany (2012) argues that sympathy is delimited in terrorism stories so that it cannot be expressed towards the terrorist figure, here we see how the audience can exceed those boundaries.

Dave was the participant who expressed this view on the sympathetic depiction of terrorism most clearly. In a very personal admission, Dave says:
I wasn’t planning on bringing this up, but my cousin died in a terrorist attack, so when I came in, not necessarily came in to watching this because it was many years ago, but it is a strange feeling to have, to be understanding someone’s hate.

This shows how powerful the messages communicated in this story can be, and how it enables audience members to work through and encounter their opinions and emotions about terrorism ‘in reality.’ The potential for Homeland to demystify the terrorist other means that it disrupts the logics of counter-terrorist violence that rely upon an enemy as other.

Another quote that demonstrates a critical interpretation of counter-terrorism came from Rachel in a discussion of Aileen:

Yeah, [Aileen] had been radicalised, because she couldn’t just be a normal American and think that actually this is wrong... [she] couldn’t just come to that decision on [her] own, [she] ha[d] to be radicalised, because [she had] to have some connection with the Middle East.

In this quote Rachel was criticising how often the show made links between terrorism and the Middle East. Rachel admitted that she was against much of America’s foreign policy and she was disappointed not to see the potential for an anti-American character that is not associated with ‘the East.’ This shows how even the more subtle invocations of the East versus West divide can be rejected by audience members.

There was an exchange in one focus group over Brody as a terrorist that illustrates how his character rearticulates the idea of terrorists as failed individuals. At the same time, the opposition to this narrative expressed by Emma shows how this depiction is never complete. The exchange began thus:

Laura: And what makes me think that terrorism is an ongoing threat is because you, a lot of the motivations come from, not directly religion, but people who are disassociated with society and that they find that and you can engage with it without having being preached to, which is obviously why so many men are lost.

This quote shows how Laura considers that terrorists are often “people who are disassociated with society” as opposed to stressing the idea that it is born of Islamism. Yet, this makes her feel less, not more, secure. Barnaby picks up on this:

There are crazy people out there who have had something terrible happen to them and they feel like inflicting the same craziness on to society and if you happen to get in the way, poor you, that is just me ... makes you think how ridiculous it is and how sad it is
that these people can end up in a situation where the only source of information that they are getting is someone painting the world in black and white to them and saying go and kill yourself.

Again the narrative here is that it is vulnerable individuals who are manipulated into terrorism. This fits with the idea of Brody being ‘turned’ or ‘brainwashed’. Yet Emma intervenes in this discussion to say:

Yeah, it is very easy to start saying that you know it is isolated people go mad, men that are disassociated from society and forget that actually the shades have fallen on our eyes about Britain and America’s actions in the world in the last 50 years and what they have done.

We see here how different narratives of terrorism resonate differently between members of the focus group. Emma, against the mood of the group, and, as I have argued, the meaning encoded within the show, still stresses the political motivations for violence. She goes on to say:

[we should consider] some of the real political and economic reasons that people are claiming to do these things. I mean terrorists come in a lot of different stripes, I mean there is going to be people who just want to create violence, there is going to be people who actually believe in ideological things that aren’t based on fundamental Islam but are based on political beliefs that do hold some water.

This is an important excerpt, because once again it shows how differently these discourses are negotiated by different people. It shows how these meanings are negotiated amongst the focus groups themselves. After Emma’s intervention Barnaby says: “That is very true.” What is more, this quote shows how audience members can resist meaning presented within the text.

The Audience: Islam and Terrorism

There were discussions in all of the groups about the representation of Islam on the show. The opinions expressed can be categorized into three main groups. Some stressed how Homeland depicted Islam and particularly Brody’s conversion sensitively. These same people often felt that Homeland worked to disassociate Islam from terrorism. Some took the opposing view and argued instead that Homeland too easily relied upon the tropes of Islamic terrorism. A minority argued that the representation was simply ‘realistic.’

Some thought that the depiction of Islam was sensitive. For example:
Henry: It is probably one of the most detailed versions on TV, this guy washing his hands, putting his prayer mat out.

And:

Sarah: I think the actual depiction of praying, in mosques and stuff were perfectly sensitive from my experience, I have had a little bit of exposure to that, obviously I am no expert but it seemed pretty factual.

Sarah praised the depiction of Islam. Again she goes back to a reliance on realism here, but is praising the level of detail that Homeland gives to the representation of Islam. Jane picks up on this when she says:

That was a consistent thing, the religion. A continuous, from what I remember, the other stuff almost, the way he actually got his mat out and did it very peacefully, it was very loving in a way as opposed to all the rest. I thought the way all the rest of the story went round, but it was punctuated with those moments I thought and I actually believed in those moments, when I didn’t believe in lots of the other moments.

She focuses on the way Homeland depicts the solace that Brody finds in Islam. This leads her to think that Homeland does not link Brody’s religion to terrorism:

Jane: I sort of believed that he was Muslim because he was a Muslim, because he wanted to be one, rather than tied up with making it look like it was terrorism sort of thing. I thought it was more to do with his strong reaction to the drone business.

On the other hand there were participants (across focus groups) who were more critical of the show’s depiction of Islam. For example:

Siobhan: [Islam] is totally associated with terrorism

Giles argues:

The show implied it was part of the process of making him a radical...of course he must be a Muslim now because they have convinced him to do extreme acts of terrorism, which I thought was a little bit well, sort of distasteful... They kind of suggested that, oh yeah, they converted him to Islam and then they have made him into this extremist... I just thought it was, you know, kind of racist I guess towards Islam, that you know you are going to convert him to do these horrible things against the US then you must have converted him.
For Giles, even though Brody’s terrorist violence is not motivated by Islam, the fact that he has been converted reproduces a linkage between terrorism and Islam. It could be argued that Giles has spotted the workings of the simplified complex representation. Dave also takes this view:

That they revealed it was like, oh he is a Muslim he must be a terrorist, but then he was, so wasn’t like so good, I thought they were using it to say, oh he has converted to Muslim because he has found that it has helped him, and he has come back and he is not a terrorist, but the fact that he was then planning to blow himself up...showing it quite negatively.

In a conversation in a different focus group, Seth, Tessa and Vish discuss the same issues:

Vish: Yeah that is what I mean, they could have explored the religion further and had you know, Abu Nazir teaching him about the religion and the good aspects of it which is not immediately clear actually to Americans. There is the portrayal that all Islam is evil.

Seth: Also he prayed and that was it, it is a really small part of the religion.

Tessa: It would have been a lot more powerful if he had remained a white Christian guy, who had gone to do that, yes, working with Nazir, but I think that would have made a much bigger statement.

They do not think that the show gives a particularly nuanced account of Islam. Tessa seemed to agree with statements from Giles and Dave in different groups when they suggest that a potential for a reworking of the stereotypes of Islam is squandered when Brody turns out to be both Muslim and a terrorist.

Henry argues more vehemently that it has to be Islamic terrorism to make it relevant to the current security context:

Henry: Yeah but I don’t think you can call it a national terrorist ‘whodunit’ programme now that doesn’t use Islam, it would be weird if you sort of used Mormons.

He argues this again:

But did anybody watch it with Islam in mind? Apart from when the programme makers make it an issue, like when he was revealed to be praying, but most of the time it is not actually an issue.

However this is challenged by the wider group:

Phil: Would a lot of Muslims watch it like that though?
Malik: Yeah but then you are not seeing it through a prism of being attacked for your religious belief, and those who do feel defensive about that would probably find it very offensive.

Here, Henry argues that it is simply realistic that *Homeland* would focus upon Islamic terrorism, and for that reason he does not think that Islam was relevant. The challenge from Phil and Malik raises the point that it might only seem irrelevant because he is not Muslim. We see how his pre-existing views frame how he watches this show. However, the ability to separate out the War on Terror from the treatment and racialisation of Islam is a privilege that is more easily afforded to someone who has not experienced anti-Muslim racisms (Choudary, 2011). There was evidence in several focus groups of the negotiation of meaning around Islamic terrorism in the show. For example in this exchange:

Siobhan: You can read it that way or you can read it that Abu Nazir used Islam to kind of groom him to be a terrorist, and if I was Muslim, I could easily see it that way as well.

Henry: Hang on, they never use, I think they are quite careful, because I haven’t watched the, Abu Nazir never quotes the Qur’an.

Siobhan: He does, he does, he is like, this is your calling, and when he meets Abu Nazir’s wife.

Greg: Is Islam not the transporter though, rather than the message?

In this exchange, they seem to come to a fourth perspective where they consider how *Homeland* maintains a more subtle link between terrorism and Islam by making Islam part of Brody’s conversion, even if it is not his main motivation for terrorist violence.

In another exchange between Dom and Phil they negotiate the representation, but they come to a more positive conclusion about the depiction of Islam:

Dom: Well on that point I think Brody was originally very loyal to Abu Nazir, and he was also a Muslim, but then at one point he stopped being loyal to Abu Nazir, but he retained Islam, so the two things diverge at that point. So it is worth asking why was Islam introduced in the first point and then later on. I think maintaining the first part was part of Abu Nazir’s trying to suck him in and get him brainwashed, but then later on he leaves Abu Nazir but keeps going with Islam.

Phil: So isn’t that a reason then for our esteemed colleague to look at it in a different way, that is not an attack on Islam, but an attack on terrorism, is the thing that he turns
his back on, whereas religion is the religion, as it should be seen, is a faith, it is something that gets him through life and he realises that and it is almost like telling the world that Islam is not the same as jihad.

In these quotes we see how Dom and Phil find space for a decoupling of Islam and terrorism in *Homeland*.

What is interesting about these exchanges is how the participants, who were not Muslim, often attempted to consider how the representation of Islam might affect a Muslim viewer. In one sense this means that they recognise their own partial position as a viewer, and they make an attempt to consider how this is not the universal position for an audience member. Yet, at the same time the invocation of a sort of identity politics (the ‘Muslim perspective’) can mean that these viewers actually delimit their own discussions. This is because they could see the issue of the representation of Islam as something that is relevant to Muslims, rather than recognising how they are implicated in racist discourses of terror.

**Asking Muslims about the Representation of Islam**

As detailed in the methodology, after being unable to recruit Muslim viewers of *Homeland*, I held conversations with some Muslims to talk about its representation of Islam, as well as to consider why I was finding it hard to recruit *Homeland* viewers who were Muslim. This was done for practical and political reasons. Practically, it helped me, as a non-Muslim researcher, to address some of the blind spots and weaknesses in my own analysis and to explore in a more formal setting some of the conversations I had during recruitment. Politically, I did not want this thesis to only consider the views of non-Muslims and therefore contribute to the silencing of Muslim voices.

This section brings in findings from these conversations. A crucial insight that these groups added was that whilst many participants from the audience focus groups commented on the level of sensitivity that was afforded to Brody’s faith, particularly the praying scenes, when I showed this scene to the Muslim participants they all agreed that it was a very inaccurate representation.

This was raised by Ibrahim:

> It came to the period where he was reading his prayer, or as we know Salah, everything about it was very, very, very, very, wrong.

I then raised this in the subsequent group:
Louise: What is interesting from the last focus group I held with Muslims, that when I showed this clip they had a lot to say about how it was a really inaccurate version of praying?

Nabiha: Yeah it is, extremely.

Aafi: Yeah it is.

This undermines the idea that *Homeland* had worked to get the detailed presentation right. Ibrahim argues:

I am talking about the whole attitude to it. If you are talking about a typical Muslim all you have to do is, it isn’t very hard, you just stand next to them, the motions, the principles of it are very simple, so if you are getting those wrong what sort of research are you doing in the first place?

It prompts a wider consideration of the way that Islam is represented. The inaccuracies were defended by Bilal:

Bilal: You know saying that, I hear what you are saying and I agree to like a Muslim viewer, whenever Muslims are portrayed on the TV... it is very interesting to see how accurately they do portray Muslims, not just in terms of the meta narratives, you know what I mean, about terrorists, or fundamentalists or whatever, but just the intricacies of how they pick things up, so one of the things is the method in which he is praying right, and actually if you were to look back on all the other programmes that Muslims have been portrayed in Britain and on British TV, they have actually done their research more than the others have because at least he got some of the Arabic correct.

Television shows use synecdoche (where part of something refers to the whole) as a way of making short hand references. Televisions shows, restricted by format, cannot show every aspect of the plot in total detail. This is particularly true in drama shows, where the quick pace of the narrative adds to the entertainment. Therefore, it could be argued that showing praying as a symbol for Islam, or failing to show the full intricacies of the prayer sequence need to be understood in the context of the format. And it can be argued that *Homeland* deserves praised for the effort that has been made in the praying scene for Brody to be correct (Brody speaks in correct and well pronounced Arabic). However, there are questions to be asked about what aspects of the plot are treated with great care and precision, and which aspects are represented through synecdoche and which are given a greater level of accuracy. Or indeed, what is made to stand in for what (why is praying the signifier for Islam?).
We discussed the depiction of Brody’s conversion.

Bilal: so you are telling me that someone who wants to become Muslim is so deceptive that they will take however long it takes to fix a garage door in order to cover the fact that they are worshipping God. You wouldn’t hear a Christian lying, even in a drama, doing some complex way of hiding their tracks in order to go to church on a Sunday, or say a Jew going to synagogue, or like that, so it is almost like you are associating particular characteristic traits naturally to Muslims right? ... If you want to become a Muslim, then you automatically be adopting this particular world view of whatever, it will change your characteristics and you will then deceive people in order to hide what you really feel is like worth protecting.

This is a more negative perspective on the representation of his conversion that the non-Muslim participants took. Bilal considers how there is a more subtle link between Brody’s religions practice and deception. He argues that other religions are not depicted in the same way. Ibrahim picked up on the explanation for Brody’s conversion. He argues:

So Islam is introduced and he accepts it because of some severe psychological horrifying experience that has happened to him, that has made him an oddball in society, and now we don’t know what he is going to do, that is how a lot of Muslims feel that they are portrayed.

He considers how Brody’s position as outsider is associated with and reinforced by his conversion. These participants were more alert to the negative association that could be read from these scenes.

Whilst these participants had not watched the show in full, I showed them both clips from the show as well as quotes from earlier focus groups, to prompt them to consider both negative depiction, but also the more positive readings available. The participants did not condemn Homeland as being an exclusively negative representation. As demonstrated by this exchange:

Aafi: Then you have this TV show that is showing the other side of it, good; I don’t think I have seen this nuance before, normally it is very simplistic.

Nabiha: Yeah if you saw the first episode it would say oh ok the guy has turned to Muslim they are all going to try and grab him now, and then you see that bit and it divides your opinion you know, they are trying to show it in a better light.

Aafi: But it is interesting that they are showing a white marine, he isn’t spouting anything he is actually quite calm quite rational he is not saying death to the West or burning a
flag or anything, he just wants justice as he sees it, or revenge against those he perceives as guilty as in the policy makers.

They felt that the depiction of Brody’s motivation as revenge, opposed to Islamic extremism, the show did open up space for a more positive perspective. As Aafi comments, it provides a more nuanced account.

Including this perspective from Muslim participants strengthens my analysis. In part it stops this from being a discussion about the representation of Muslims that is devoid of Muslim voices. It also addresses weaknesses that come from my own positionality, as a non-Muslim researcher, which could undermine an analysis of the representations of Islam.

**Conclusions on the Terrorists in Homeland**

The image of the terrorist in *Homeland* does not simply repeat the ‘dangerous brown men’ image that was identified in earlier terrorism discourses. The terrorism is not simply Islamic extremism that unthinkingly reifies the new barbarism thesis, but rather it is a terrorism done by white Americans to avenge American violences. *Homeland* calls upon, and plays with, the terrorist stereotype, in a way that opens up a critical space between terrorism and Islam, for example by having the white American wife (Aileen) as the terrorists, as opposed to her Middle Eastern Muslim husband (Faisal). Terrorism is not simply racialised, as three of the main terrorists are in fact American nationals, two are white and one is black. We meet a white American Muslim, which subverts the racialisation of terrorism as the religion of ‘the other’.

The more diverse image of the terrorist is political because it subverts racial profiling that can depict terrorists as ‘dangerous brown men’. Yet, it could be read as a discursive double move. Particularly if we see how the association between Islam, the Middle East and terrorism is left intact throughout: all the terrorist characters have spent time in the Middle East and are either explicitly or tacitly coded as Muslim. Showing a more humanized view of the terrorist seems to counter the ‘othering’ of the terrorist subject because we see them in their family settings, and we explore their motivation for violence. Yet it is the white terrorists’ motivations that get the most screen time; this seems to reinforce the idea that they are the anomaly, whilst the Middle Eastern terrorists need less explanation. This reinforces the idea that there is something essentially Middle Eastern about terrorist violence. Furthermore, despite the added complication, we are left with a plot that is led by an Al Qaeda operative who articulates his motivation in terms of a clash of civilisations and extremist Islam. Again, if this is read as a discursive double move, it is possible to argue that by considering the motivations for terrorism
*Homeland* seems to expand our understanding of terrorist, whilst it actually leaves the idea of a fanatical Islam that ‘hates our freedoms’ intact.

But I do not want to underplay the critical potential that lies within the subversive gestures and characterisations. The investigation of Brody’s motivations does make a link between American violence and terrorist violence. The sympathy expressed by the audience for both Brody and Nazir is an example of the audience sympathising with a ‘bad’ Muslim character and it goes beyond the bounded level of sympathy usually afforded to terrorist subjects (Alsultany, 2012). In the case of Brody it could be argued that this is perhaps because he is American, but in case of Nazir there is a level of understanding afforded to the archetypal terrorist figure that disrupts the ‘othering’ of the terrorist.

**Muslims in the CIA: Confronting Stereotypes**

*Homeland* did not only show Muslims as terrorists. Two of the CIA staff were Muslim: Danny Galvez who was a small part in seasons one and two, and Fara Sherazi, who was a character in season three. This section considers the representation of these two characters and in particular it draws out how they subvert the Islam/ Western binary.

In Danny and Fara, we arguably encounter the familiar trope of the ‘good Muslim’ whose patriotism trumps their religion. This is exemplified when Fara counters her father’s displeasure about her job at the CIA with the statement “I am an American”. Indeed, Fara proved herself by putting her patriotism above the wishes and safety of her family in Iran when she uses them to help a CIA mission. Danny makes the ‘ultimate sacrifice’ by being shot and then blown up in the line of duty for his country. This can be seen as a discursive double move which actually serves to reinforce the good/bad Muslim dichotomy and that maintains the logic that Muslims are ‘either with us or against us’. Yet, there is more at work in these characters than can be simply dismissed by this argument and they need to be examined in more detail.

**Danny Galvez**

In *Crossfire* S1E9 we find out Danny Galvez is Muslim when he is with Carrie investigating the shooting of two Muslims in a mosque:

Imam: Another government official here to tell us if we weren’t all guilty, one way or another, none of this would have happened right?

Danny: I’m a Muslim.

Imam: Then you of all people should be particularly ashamed of this bloodshed.
In this conversation, Galvez introduces the fact that his is Muslim to show that this is not a case of the CIA versus Muslims. The fact that Galvez is Muslim complicates the linkage between Islam and Islamic terrorism. Danny has a Lebanese father and a Guatemalan mother but he is coded as American, he speaks with an American accent, and he is a valued member of his team.

For the rest of the season, there is no mention of Galvez’s faith. It is not made to be the main element of his identity, it is not shown to affect his work, and it is not even used in a strategic way by the CIA. In many ways it is this silence around his identity as a Muslim is most subversive, because it does not suggest that his identity as a Muslim would be in conflict with his job or his American identity.

Galvez’s religion is next made meaningful when Carrie is trying to find Nazir and she begins to suspect that someone has helped him to escape. Her suspicions immediately turn to Galvez. He has left the area because his stitches from an old gunshot wound have re-opened.

Quinn: The leaks? Does it all make sense?
Carrie: Well, he is a Muslim. (S2E11 In Memoriam)

When she stops him, and manhandles him out of the car, she realises that her suspicions were wrong, and that she has in fact made his injuries far worse. This scene highlights Carrie’s prejudice, and it highlights the problem with this racist logic. It can be read to show the way that Muslims have to live in a climate of suspicion over their activities. Although we see little of Danny’s reaction to this experience, and in only a few episodes’ time he dies as the victim of a terrorist attack, it shows how being Muslim is considered enough of a reason to explain why he might be a ‘mole’ in the CIA and a terrorist conspirator. It calls on the audience to sympathise with the treatment of Muslims after 9/11. This can undermine the image of the CIA as a post-racial space in the Gilroy (2002) sense, as a space that is free from racial categories and thus racist practices.

**Fara Sherazi**

Fara is a female CIA officer who joins the cast in the third season of *Homeland*. She is Muslim, she wears a headscarf and she is of Iranian descent. She is a competent agent, who helps to move the terrorist investigation forward. She undermines the stereotype of the Muslim woman as victim. As with Galvez, she disturbs the racialised logic of the Muslim ‘Other’, and as an employee of the CIA she does this in an explicitly securitised setting. The critical potential that is both contained and expressed within this character is huge and she marks a real difference in the stories that we hear about terrorism and about Muslim women respectively. What is particularly powerful is that her religion or nationality is not shown to be a hindrance to her
ability to do her job. Yet, this departure is not total because she is a character in a larger story about Islamic terrorism and American counter-terrorism that relies upon (in ways that have been explored) racialised and gendered discourses in circulation.

Fara is introduced as she drives to the Bush Centre for Intelligence. As a new character we know nothing about her and this scene is shot without any dialogue or explanation until she scans into the CIA with her staff pass. Her headscarf shows that she is Muslim straightaway. The headscarf has been a heavily loaded signifier in terrorism debates, mobilised in anti-Muslim racisms (Riley, 2013). This scene seems to tempt the audience to think that Fara is a terrorist through showing her approaching the CIA building wearing a headscarf, relying upon the racist associations of Muslims and terrorism as well as headscarves and fanatical Islam (Aziz, 2014). The scene invites a subtle reflection upon dominant discourses around Muslim women and the headscarf, which link the wearing of the headscarf with extreme Muslim views, oppression, and ultimately a dangerous other (Riley, 2013; Abdullah, 2006; Timmerman, 2000). This is followed by an altogether less subtle scene when Saul comes in to hear what Fara’s progress has been on her work and, when she tells him she cannot find anything useful he replies:

You know what else, while we are talking about an event that left 200 Americans dead on the ground, and what you're doing about it which is apparently nothing, forgive me. You wearing that thing on your head it is one big fuck you to the people who would have been your co-workers if they had not perished in a blast which happened right out there. So if you need to wear it, if you really need to wear it, which is your right, you better be the best analyst we've ever seen.

The attitude that Saul articulates here sets up a binary of Islam versus the CIA. It is shocking in its tone and aggression, particularly given that up until this point Saul has been a kind character who has shown respect to terrorism suspects. It is an articulation of a deeply anti-Muslim attitude that equates Fara’s decision to wear a headscarf with support for terrorism. It implies that because she is Muslim she has to do more to prove that she is a capable, and loyal, citizen.

At first, it seems impossible to read anything but anti-Muslim racism from this scene. Yet, I argue that there is potential to take a more positive reading of this outburst, because it portrays the racist abuse that Muslim women face. It undermines the idea that the CIA a fair or equal employer. When this logic is articulated in such stark terms, it is identifiable, but also repellent, and therefore it calls on the audience to reject this attitude.

However, a counter argument here is that because this mistreatment is shown to take place within a securitized setting and is instigated by the main characters of Carrie and Saul, it actually
offers potential critique of the way that Fara’s ‘good Muslims’ (Pool and Richardson, 2006) status is always under suspicion. Furthermore, this racism is placed within an American institution so it can undermine an image of the post-racial CIA. The fact that this racist view is expressed by Saul, who has thus far been the bastion of multicultural understanding, emphasizes this point.

There is still more at work in this expression of anti-Muslim racisms. That it is Saul who expresses this view, a character who is well liked, makes the audience more inclined to understand or justify his views. If we look at Saul’s progress in the narrative from the very considered, non-violent and racially sensitive figure we meet in the first season, to the beleaguered, drone-strike ordering racist that we meet in the third series, there is the potential to read this as a negative depiction of how too long in this security atmosphere can affect your very humanity. More problematically we can see it chiming with a perspective that Alsultany (2012) identifies whereby this racism becomes understandable ‘in the circumstances’ and can be presented as justifiable, but short lived; it is the ‘state of exception’. This can reinstate, rather than challenge, anti-Muslim racisms as a discursive double move.

As the only other female CIA agent in the show, Fara works in contrast to Carrie. Fara is more emotionally stable than Carrie, although she does struggle to return to work after they choose not to arrest Javadi. She is capable at work and she makes the connection between the Langley bomb and Javadi. Yet, Fara is shown to have ties to her family that Carrie does not have. She lives with her father, she has to conceal from him that she works at the CIA. The fact that Fara has to explain her decision to her father means that she does not occupy the same position of the free white woman that Carrie manages to occupy. Furthermore, it shows how her decision will impact her wider family, which further emphasizes that she is constrained by family responsibility.

She is the counterpoint to Javadi as the only other Iranian character. As another Iranian character she stops Javadi from being representative of all Iranians. Her agency is particularly notable given how prominent the image of the veiled Iranian woman in in American representation of Iran (Roushanzamir, 2004). Yet, at the same time Fara has left Iran to pursue her career and to have the freedom to do so. This rearticulates Iran as an oppressive country.

Fara is a departure from the dominant narratives of Muslim women that have been argued to circulate in Western popular culture (Abdullah, 2006; Kahf, 1999). She is intelligent, agental, competent and committed. This is a dramatic rearticulation of the Muslim woman. It serves to undo the logic inherent to the racialisation of Islam that is facilitated though the terrorist logics. What is more, it goes some way to undermine the image of the Muslim woman as victim and so it disturbs the image of America/the West/the CIA as the liberator of these women. Yet, perhaps
because Fara is American, it actually retells the story of how well America treats its women. It implies the freedoms that she is granted in the US would not be available to her in Iran. Therefore, the CIA can be argued in this light to maintain its identity as the saver of brown women, because here she is saved through her employment.

The Post-Racial CIA?

This section explores how the CIA is represented as a multiracial environment that is free from racism, but in fact rearticulates racialised hierarchies. As well as the two Muslim CIA agents Danny and Fara, *Homeland* depicts an ethnically diverse CIA, headed by Estes, who is black, with Saul who is Jewish, and Dar Adal, whose name has roots in Hebrew. Where we meet the US military we also have a picture of diversity. In Brody’s platoon there is Corporal Walker (who is black), Staff Sergeant Calhoun (who is black), Captain Wakefield (who is white), Captain Faber (who is white), Captain Green (who is white) and Private First Class Fernandez (who is Latino45). Carrie is escorted to Lebanon by Major Joy Mendez, played by Cuban American actress Valerie Cruz. When Brody is escorted across the border into Iran he is joined by a troop of Middle Eastern soldiers, who speak fluent Arabic. Whilst this is in part to help them pass as an Al Qaeda cell, it reinforces the multi-racial composition of the US army. This creates an image of the multicultural security/military secret in America which hides the structural barriers in place. This functions to mask the ongoing racist barriers within the CIA and the military, and crucially it distracts from the racism within the discourse and practice of counter-terrorism.

The scenes that showed Danny and Fara being submitted to racist abuse within the CIA can be read in two ways. They can be seen to undermine this post-racial image of the CIA. Alternatively, the fact that only Muslim identities remain problematic in an otherwise multi-cultural organisation can actually reaffirm that it is Muslimness that is problematic. Because of the terror threat Muslims cannot be accepted into post-racial spaces. Massad (2013: unpaginated) dubs this “anti-Muslim multiculturalism” which leaves Muslims outside of the image of ‘post-racial America.’

This section has argued that there are both positive and negative aspects in regards to race articulated by these characters. It is important to combine this with the data from focus groups to consider how the participants negotiate the tensions within these characters and the plots within which they are instrumental.

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45 I want to acknowledge that this descriptor is potentially problematic and is considered offensive by some people. It is used here to quickly describe a character whose ethnic background is not explored in the show.
The Audience on the Muslim Agents

Danny Galvez was not discussed in detail in the focus groups; this is partly a consequence of the fact that he was a minor character who died at the end of the second season. Greg does acknowledge how the presence of the Muslim CIA agents works to disturb the link between Islam and terrorism: “Isn’t that why, what’s his name, the CIA agent, Muslim CIA agent is there? I argue that they throw that in there to unpick that.” Greg notices how these characters are introduced in order to complicate Muslim stereotypes.

Fara was discussed in the focus groups, and I prompted them to talk about the scene where Saul is racist to her. Claire argues that Fara has the potential to give a more positive representation of Iran: “she is a good person, she wants to work for the CIA and help and I think it is another one of these, we simplify what is going on in Iran and we say what is going on in Iran is bad, but then she knows a lot of people in Iran that are good.” Claire identifies how Fara undermines an image of Iran as evil. She articulates this in terms of Fara’s commitment to the CIA. These quotes show how audience members notice how Fara and Danny undo some of the associations between Islam and terrorism. However, they articulate this in ways that fit with the good Muslim discourse. This arguably blunts the critical potential of these characters because they still have to prove their loyalty to the USA.

Beth takes a more critical reading that is offered by the character of Fara. She argues:

> And [the CIA] weren’t prosecuting him [Javadi] for it [the murder of his ex-wife and daughter in law], they basically let him get away with it...maybe [Fara] thought when she got to the CIA she would be able to help in some way, but when she actually go there the behaviour she has seen is the same behaviour she had seen in Iran, so she is like the same thing is happening.

Here Beth likens the CIA’s actions when they let Javadi get away with the murder of his ex-wife to the brutalities that are committed by the Iranian regime. This reading goes beyond the level of criticism that I argue that show implies from Fara’s disapproval of this action, and Beth takes an anti-CIA meaning from this scene. James is more cynical about the deployment of the ‘good Muslim’ character in Homeland. He notices how all the terrorists are still associated with Islam. He also challenges the critical potential of Fara, as he thinks she is shown to be the exception.

In conversations about the scene where Saul is racist towards Fara, there was very little condemnation of the scene, and effort was made by participants to make this fit within the plot, and with Saul’s character. Tessa argues:
He says if you are going to wear it do you bloody job, and she is in tears, and it was just horrendous, but I mean Saul was angry and I think, I don’t know, when things like that happen, when everybody that you know or love for work with or whatever died and you have to be in a position, you think things but you don’t say them because you hold yourself back, and it is the one time where you see Saul who is like, well for most of that season he has lost that restraint a little bit. I think it makes it realistic, I don’t think it justifies it, but it makes it realistic.

Whilst she disagrees with the sentiment that is expressed by Saul, she then explains this behaviour within the security context. Tom considers the scene in a similar way:

Did they show that to show he was so upset about the bombing and so many of his friends had been killed? I am not justifying it myself, but it was over the top. But the fact that he was still hurting so much and all the devastation that was caused and many people that he was very fond of were killed.

This reaction from the audience, where Saul’s racism is understandable given the context, fits into a much more worrying racist logic that is evident in this scene. Whilst on one hand it allows us to see/sympathise with the racist treatment that Muslims encounter in a post-9/11 climate, it also gives the impression that this reaction is understandable in ‘exceptional circumstances’; it is not something that ‘we’ are comfortable with (as a post-racial and fair society/audience) but something that results from the situation of Islamic terrorism.

Giles, on the other hand, found the scene harder to reconcile with the show, and with Saul’s character: “I just thought that scene didn’t make any sense to me whatsoever because I can’t see...why he would react like that to her He was just, I don’t know, from nowhere he had just turned out into this out and out horrible racist.” That Giles cannot reconcile this view with Saul’s situation and rather identifies him as a “horrible racist” shows how the participants identified and could not understand the racism in this scene.

There was general agreement that the views expressed by Saul in this scene were racist or problematic. However, they did not link this to wider depictions of Islam within the show, nor did participants seem to reflect upon how this conversation could be extrapolated out to the wider treatment of Muslim women.

Participants seemed to notice how these characters disturbed the othering of Muslims that is often present in terrorism discourses. This at times combined with their thoughts on the representation of the terrorists in Homeland. James argues that:
Yeah because instead of coming from a point of where, instead of the idea of all Muslims are terrorists and the only opposite idea of not all Muslims are terrorists, here are some Muslims that aren’t terrorist. He actually goes from the point of being categorized as a Muslim terrorist to a guy who is not actually a terrorist who is still a Muslim, so you are going from a point of prejudice to a point of lesser prejudice, rather than actually coming out through the other side of it.

Here he considers how the idea that “not all Muslims are terrorists” combines with the representation of Brody to move to a “point of lesser prejudice”. This recognises how these different representations work together. Following the insights of Alsultany (2012), I have paid attention to how these gestures can be considered to rework, and not necessarily undo, racialising logics of terrorism discourse. As James seems to acknowledge (in the extract above), even when the stereotypes are inverted in Homeland it does not escape them because it is still within the framework of Islamic terrorism. He notes the bounded nature of this critique.

**Other Muslim Characters: The Sheikh, the Silent Wives and Angry Mobs**

There were other Muslim characters in Homeland that played smaller roles in the narrative. What is remarkable about these characters is that they fit much the more familiar stereotypes of Muslims that have been used in popular culture (Shaheen, 2008). In season one, we meet Carrie’s asset Lynne Reed, who works as an escort for Prince Farid Bin Abbud. The rich sheikh with his own harem is a traditional stereotyped Muslim character. We also meet Abu Nazir’s wife. She is notably absent from the Nazir family home when we see Brody interacting with Issa Nazir. Brody is then reunited with her in Iran, where they talk of their shared grief for Nazir. She plays a very small role and says or contributes very little in the show. She is not the only silent wife whom we meet and the idea of the oppressed wife features in two more instances in Homeland. Carrie tries to get information from the Imam on Tom Walker; it is his wife who agrees to meet Carrie in secret to help her. Whilst there is something positive in the way that this character comes forward with information of her own volition, this is shown to be against her husband’s wishes. Another example is one of Carrie’s informants who is spying on her terrorist husband. She exchanges her information in return for safe passage to America and the chance to leave her husband. Again whilst it is arguably progressive that she is willing to help the CIA, because it makes her an active women, capable of agency and of going against her husband’s wishes, it is very clear that she has an oppressive Muslim husband and she needs an American woman to help her leave.

When we encounter a group of Muslims together they are either at a market, invoking Orientalist imagery of the souk, or alternatively an angry mob. This mob is present after the
shooting of two innocent men in a mosque in the pursuit of Walker and we meet them again when Brody is in Iran. At first as they cheer for him, and later they cheer for his execution. This faceless mass, in the market and the mob, relies upon and rearticulates the idea of homogenous and backwards Muslim people, who are not ‘civilised’, rearticulating Orientalist depictions of people form ‘the East’ (Said 1979). The mobs in Iran are anti-America and they are aggressive.

These characters provide the background, and links for the narrative, and whilst each one is on screen for only a brief time, taken together we see the more insidious reappearance of racial prejudices. The harem, the silent wife, the mob are all still central to the cultural repertoire of the writers. There is not separate section here on how the audience interacted with these characters. They proved to be unremarkable in our focus groups. When we discussed moments that realism broke down, none of these characters were referenced. They seemed to go unchallenged by viewers which showed how these characters reproduce the viewers’ cultural repertoire.

The Middle East and “Other” Places in Homeland: a Racist Worldview

This section considers how places and spaces are represented in Homeland. It focuses on the representation of the Middle East. The central argument here is that although there are more complicated characterisations of both terrorists and Muslims within Homeland these are undermined by problematic representations of ‘the Muslim world’ and ‘the East’ that repeats anti-Muslim racisms as well as colonial gestures.

“The East” in Homeland

This section will discuss the representations of Lebanon, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan in Homeland. This section is titled “The East” not because I am trying to group these countries together under this problematic frame but because I want to draw out how these countries operate in Homeland, not as independent nation states with their own national and cultural specificities, but instead as an interchangeable “East” that acts as the exotic other location to America.

First, I want to note that it was not easy to make this list of countries precisely because the specific locations are not always made apparent. Brody is captured in Iraq; we are told he is later moved to Syria, so we can assume that many of his flashback scenes are supposed to take place in one of these two countries. Nazir’s house, which is later destroyed in an American drone strike, is in Pakistan. We are not given any more specific information on these locations. The opening
scenes see Carrie go into a prison, and we are told that this is in Kabul, in Afghanistan. Intelligence from one of Carrie’s assets leads to an assassination attempt on Nazir in Beirut, in Lebanon. It is also mentioned that Roya and Nazir have Palestinian families, whilst Aileen was ‘turned’ to terrorism when she lived in Saudi Arabia with her family.

There is no explanation of why, or how, the connections between these countries are being made. They are all shot with a brown colour spectrum, with vaguely ‘Eastern’ music overlaying the scenes. Scenes in these locations are usually shot outside, with a busy market being a favourite motif in *Homeland*. Interior shots were filmed in North Carolina (Brody’s cell, Abu Nazir’s mountain villa) (Hurtwitz 2014). The scenes that were supposed to be in Afghanistan in the pilot were actually filmed in Israel, whilst Morocco stood in for Lebanon and Iran. Whilst it is a common feature of television production to shoot in different locations to the one depicted on screen, there is something more at work here than can be explained through the budget constraints of television production. For a television show that is concerned with realism, which makes a concerted effort to track the obsessions and intricacies of American counter-terrorism policies and practices, it is particularly telling that they do not need or try to give this level of attention to the representation of other countries. It is a gesture that belies a US/Eurocentric world view.

This returns us to the idea of the borderless war. National borders are not important in *Homeland*; the terrorists all cross them seemingly randomly. The CIA and American military follow them across each of these countries, going wherever they have to track these individuals down. What is more the specificities of each of the countries are absent, as is any specific national politics, or any of the state apparatuses in each of these countries. All of these international activities are justified on the grounds that there is an imminent threat to America. The fact that these countries are treated almost interchangeably means that they function as an undifferentiated ‘East’. This repeats the Orientalist gesture of creating the dichotomy of the East and West, which is rearticulated in terms of terrorism, as these countries all become the other place, from where terrorism originates.

*Iran*

I have separated Iran out from this discussion because much of the third season is set in Iran and it is not lumped together with other Middle Eastern countries in the same way. *Homeland* intervenes in contemporary security discourses about Iran, which enables a transference of the *Homeland* story of Iran to the wider securitized stories of Iran. There are some of the same colonial representative gestures in the depiction of Iran as there are in the depiction of the countries listed above. There are more explicitly political points made through the depiction of
Iran that fit into American foreign policy (Chomsky and Ashcar 2015) and War on Terror logics that blur the activities of terrorist organisations and ‘rogue’ or ‘failed’ states (Hehir 2007).

As argued by William Beeman (2008) both the United States and Iran demonize one another. There is a long and complicated history between the two countries, which I cannot adequately summarise here, but which has in the last century been typified by American interventions into Iran, most notably with the US and British support for the coup to oust Iran’s democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadeq, subsequent American support of the Shah in Iran after the 1979 revolution and their support of Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 President George W. Bush included Iran in his “axis of evil”, which deepened mistrust between the nations. Since the early 2000s Iran’s nuclear strategy has been particularly contentious with the US accusing Iran of a secret nuclear weapons programme, which Iran has denied, and Iran has been subject to trade sanctions (Bahgat, 2008; Perthes, 2010; Barzegar, 2014).

What is important to this analysis is how Iran has been discursively constructed in America, and in turn how this in turn supports the creation of a particular self-identity in America. Beeman (2008) argues that Iran has been constructed as “the mad Mullah”, crazy and untrustworthy, with a lack of separation of church and state which leads to irrational behaviour. Iran is also constructed as being anti-America. Sam Fayazz and Roozbeh Shirazi (2013) argue that Western media asserts a Western superiority by representing Iran as anti-modern, and incapable of political, cultural and economic development. Homeland is then intertextually, re-articulating elements of these pre-existing American constructions of Iran as ‘other’.

Iran is directly linked to Al Qaeda and the terrorist attack on the CIA. The CIA realise that the attack was part funded by Javadi, a member of the Iranian Secret Service. This seamlessly links Iran and terrorism whilst at the same time redirects the focus of the show to the more current political concern with Iran. Indeed Saul explicitly says: “With al-Qaeda seriously degraded the biggest threat is Iran.” This move is problematic on several grounds, not least because the relationship between Iran and Al Qaeda is considerably more fraught than this implies, they are long standing enemies split along the Sunni Shi’ite division. Therefore the same Orientalist gesture seems to be at work in this plot development as was made in the blurring of the Middle Eastern countries elsewhere in the show where Al Qaeda moves unfettered around this region operating out of any (and maybe all) Middle Eastern countries. However, more than this it means that Iran is linked to terrorism, which helps to explain or justify animosity between Iran and America.
The idea that Iran is an enemy to America is emphasized when the former are shown to welcome Brody as a fugitive, despite the fact that he is one of America’s most wanted. Furthermore, we see Brody greeted with enthusiasm by everyone he meets when he first arrives in Iran seeking asylum, lauded as a hero on their media, and congratulated by mobs that are shouting about the downfall of America. Again, this masks the considerably more complex stories of Al Qaeda figures that have lived in Iran.46

The final victory in Homeland comes through manipulating Javadi into a higher role in Iranian politics, thereby improving diplomatic relations between Iran and America. Saul is sitting in a villa when his wife reads the headline:

In a stunning development at the Geneva summit, Iranian diplomats have offered full and unfettered access to the regime's nuclear sites in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

And congratulates him:

Mira: Saul, this is you, you did this.

Saul: Not just me.

Mira: It is unbelievable, it is your whole life, it is your crowning achievement.

This almost directly echoes the negotiations that were taking place at the time between Iran, the United States, Russia, China, Germany, France and Britain, in which there was an agreement that the nuclear programme in Iran would be curbed in return for the lifting of some sanctions in The Joint Plan of Action (2013). This pact, titled the Joint Plan of Action was negotiated and signed in Geneva on the 24th November 2013, the final episode of Homeland first aired in the US on 15th December 2013.47 It was therefore written before this agreement as signed. The implication in Homeland is that the CIA is in some way responsible for this shift in relations. The fact that it mirrors the political situation at the time of viewing means that the division between the fictional and factual is particularly thin. It calls on the audience to see the events from within this plot. It implies that the CIA has a role to play in international relations that goes far beyond the realms of counter-terror.

47 This proved to be particularly portent given recent developments in the relationship between Iran and America, including the lifting of trade sanctions.
Despite this ‘victory’, we are always reminded of the barbarity of the Iranian regime in ways that further establishes it as the enemy. This is evident in Brody’s hanging, after he carries out his secret mission on behalf of the USA, which takes place in a derelict and frightening place. Again we meet the angry mob of Iranians, ready to see him die. It is emphasized when Carrie explains some of the more heinous actions performed by General Danesh Akbari (of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard) whom Brody Kills:

Carrie: He was a bad guy. Worse than bad, he sent kids tens of thousands of them, chained together, into the Iraqi lines to clear minefields.

This is a tactic that the then Iranian President Ali-Akbar Rafsanjani is said to have used in the Iraq-Iran war in 1984. The Iranian regime has been responsible for considerable violence, but what is problematic about this representation of Iran is the monolithic account of Iran and the Iranian people as anti-American. It calls up past war crimes to vilify Iran’s current actions and to justify violence against Iranians. It links the threat of Iran to nuclear weapons, and crucially it links Iran to terrorism.

This creates an image of an anti-American Iran that colludes directly with Al Qaeda to launch terrorist attacks on the United States. It presents a remarkably homogenous view of Iran that stresses the barbarity of the regime. It shows that these issues can only be resolved through violent actions of the CIA as opposed to diplomacy or any more long term approaches. This serves to emphasize the power and skill of the CIA.

The Audience and Representation of ‘the East’

There were moments when the audience members reflected upon the representation of countries in Homeland. Rachel and Giles, who were in the same group, both expressed concern with the way that Iran was represented in the show:

Rachel: I do think that is interesting, the things they cover at the moment, because it is about Iran, and Iran as the enemy, and they want regime change etc., at the same time as politically Iran is being seen to be progressive and I wonder...whether this kind of show might impact or influence the way that some people in the US might think.

Rachel considers how using Iran as the enemy in the show could impact how Iran is viewed, particularly in America. Later in the discussion Giles echoed this concern:

[Homeland is] almost sort of justifying America’s ridiculously aggressive and underhand stance towards Iranians maybe, I don’t know, it just struck me as a bit odd that they would portray that, because you say oh they are trying to mirror things a bit in reality,
and although it is obviously a drama...they are naming real countries and places and so they are trying to give an idea of realism, but then portraying them in certain ways, I just thought, oh, that is trying to warp the viewer’s perception of reality.

Here Giles is more forthright about the problematic depiction of Iran. He also considers how this could influence those that watch the show.

In one focus group, they discussed the representation of places more specifically. This begins with James discussing the representation of Lebanon.

James: Because I hadn’t been to Lebanon at this point, but I went to Lebanon and I am not going to say I expected it...

Malik: To be a bit Homelandy?

James: Ha, yeah to be a bit Homelandy,

Whilst this is said in quite a light hearted way, what happens here is an admission by a participant that the depiction of places in Homeland does directly influence preconceptions of the country. Arguably, because Homeland makes so much effort to be realistic in other ways, viewers assume that the representation of other countries will be realistic.

This conversation led on to a broader discussion about the representation of ‘us versus them’ by participants in that group:

Siobhan: True, but like people know that it is a drama but it does filter through into the way that the wider narrative of them and us, of course it has an impact, of course.

Greg: It plays to existing biases doesn’t it, it isn’t changing the game.

James: It is all ‘elsewhere in the Middle East’ isn’t it, it is all A N Other country in the Middle East.

Siobhan: Yeah, I bet you wouldn’t even know it was Lebanon.

In this exchange, they recognise how the countries in Homeland seem to operate as an indistinguishable ‘Middle East’. This awareness seems to become clearer to them through this discussion, which goes to show how the negotiation of meaning is ongoing after each episode. This reading is critical of the representative practices of Homeland.

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48 As discussed in chapter 5
Conclusions

*Homeland* is neither exclusively ‘Islamophobic’, nor does it manage to completely rework the racialisation of ‘Islamic terrorism’. *Homeland* is a story about Islamic terrorism; it represents Islam, Muslims and the Middle East; and it is a racialised and racializing story of security. This chapter challenges the (perhaps understandable) drive to dismiss all representation of Islamic terrorism as Islamophobic, but instead presents an investigation of how these discourses are reified, but also reworked and resisted by those who watch this show. It has built upon Alsultany’s notion of ‘simplified complex representations’ to consider how racialised discursive double moves work in the representation of Muslims and Islam.

This chapter has argued that *Homeland* has departed from the ‘dangerous brown men’ image of the terrorist, with white, American and female terrorists. Yet my analysis has remained alert to the racialised logics that animate these characters in ways that rearticulate the threat of the home grown terrorist (via Brody), the existential threat of Islamism (via Nazir) and the familiar gendered barbarity of Middle Eastern men (via Javadi). Using data from focus groups it has shown that audience members have complicated and varied relationships to these ‘terrorist’ characters. This chapter considered the times when participants actually identified with, or felt sympathetic towards ‘terrorist’ characters. It has shown how the audience actively negotiates the relationship between Islam and terrorism, often criticising scenes where the two were unproblematically linked.

This chapter has considered how the presence of two Muslim CIA agents, Danny Galvez and Fara Sherazi, disturbed an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy that pits Muslims against America. It argues that there are some particularly progressive elements to these representations because it does not make religion a barrier to how effectively they perform their jobs, yet it does show how they are treated with (unfounded) suspicion by their CIA colleagues which highlight the anti-Muslim racisms encountered by many Muslims at work. The representation of an agental, professional, talented Muslim woman as a CIA agent marks a considerable departure from the typical representation of Muslim women in terrorism discourses, where they are usually silent victims, vengeful widows, or missing entirely (though the show reproduces these representations elsewhere).

Focus group data showed how this, combined with the reworking of the terrorist stereotype, served to undermine the anti-Muslim version of terrorism that has hitherto been familiar. Yet, these characters can be seen as embodiments of the good (which crucially means patriotic) Muslim character which rearticulates the image of the Muslim enemy. Furthermore, it could be argued that by giving them space to reflect upon the racist treatment Muslims encounter, it
creates an opportunity for audience members to reinstate themselves as post-racial and therefore work through the guilt surrounding the racist treatment of Muslims both at home and abroad in the War on Terror.

The final section considered how *Homeland* represents and actually recreates a version of the Muslim world. It is here that I identified a re-emergence of a much more problematic dichotomous world view. There was a tendency within *Homeland* to present vague images of Muslim countries that were not given any national identity or politics, but rather that relied upon clichéd images of the East. This image of the East was linked to terrorism which was shown to cross all national boundaries and politics seemingly at random. Furthermore, the representation of Iran supports dominant discourse around Iran particularly from the USA that positions it as a threat to the USA. This threat was linked to their nuclear programme, but as it is set in a wider story of terrorism, that linked Iran to terrorist attacks on the USA.

Indeed it was often in the ‘background’ of *Homeland*: the locations, the choice of music, the use of terrorist henchmen, or the depiction of Muslims in the smaller roles that revealed a much more clichéd and racist depiction of Islam, Muslims and the Middle East. The audience data I introduced on this theme shows how there are moments where participants are alert to this anti-Muslim gesture, and where they seem to reflect upon how this could influence audience member’s view of the world. But if I link this to the discussion of realism in chapter five, I can see how *Homeland* is considered to be realistic, and this representation of ‘other’ places does not undermine this. Furthermore, when I introduced data from the conversations I had with Muslims about *Homeland*, we see how the treatment of Islam is arguably not as sensitive as participants assumed. This raises questions about what details need to be shown with accuracy to achieve realism, and which can be hinted at via more broad-brush gestures.

Overall, this representation of the Middle East repeats a colonial gesture of homogenization. This raises questions about the viewing position that is being relied upon and recreated for the audience. There seems to be an assumption in the writing that the audience will be Western and non-Muslim. In Chapter nine I will pick up on this to consider in more detail the subject position made available in *Homeland*, as well as considering who *Homeland* is addressing, who it is representing and who is excluded. This leads into a wider discussion about who is being kept safe in counter-terrorism stories and who or what they are being protected from.

The link between terrorism and Islam is unpicked and unpacked in *Homeland*. The dichotomy of Islam versus the West is put under strain by more complicated characterisations of terrorist and heroes. Yet, political Islam is disappeared entirely from this account. Terrorism is still shown to start from, and be at home in, the Middle East. Terrorists might not be all evil, but they are
certainly misguided. The story is animated by a fear of attack, and by a more nebulous fear of the shadowy networks of Islamic terrorism. *Homeland* is saturated with racial anxieties; it articulates both guilt over treatment of Muslim people in the War on Terror and a desire to move away from the binary view of The West versus Islam, yet there is still a US/Eurocentric world view and a fear of the other that lies at its heart. Whilst it pushes on the boundaries of racialising logics of counter-terrorism, it simultaneously remains bounded by them.
Chapter 9
The Homeland Audience: Watching Homeland, Securing Whiteness

This chapter focuses on the viewer of Homeland. It is about who is being addressed, interpellated and assumed by the text, as well as how this identity is performed in the experience of watching and discussing the show. It is about how security texts not only create meaning for the world out there, but contribute to our own construction of self. The analyses of meaning making from the previous chapters are brought together in this chapter to emphasise how terrorism, gender and race interact. This chapter moves on from analysing the racialised other and aims to question the way that ‘we’ too are formed in the interaction with Homeland. This process is about considering how the audience is constructed as such, and how their subjectivities are constructed through the interaction with terrorism discourses present in the Homeland story. In that way, it is an investigation of the idea of narrative identity that is central to this thesis.

The central argument in this chapter is that Homeland establishes a liberal white/cosmopolitan identity that is inextricably linked to terrorism stories. The argument is twofold: first I argue there is a masculine white subject position within the text, and second that consumption, enjoyment and debate of terrorism stories is productive of a particular white/cosmopolitan identity. It directly interrogates the relationship between security and identity. This marks an original contribution to understandings of the racialisation processes inherent to terrorism stories. Terrorism discourses represent and reproduce the terrorist other, but this discourse also produces an image of the national subject (Puar, 2007; Faludi, 2007). Racialisation involves the mutual constitution of the ‘other’ and the self. This chapter focuses on who is the subject in this terrorism story. By focusing specifically on the production of whiteness, this chapter makes an intervention into Critical Security Studies, which so far lacks a sustained investigation of whiteness in security discourse and practice.

It is important to recognise that this process requires me to reflect on my own identity formation, as a viewer of Homeland, but also as a researcher. This is particularly true in the final section of the chapter in which I reflect upon experiences from the research process that caused me to encounter my own identity, and particularly my own whiteness and privilege.
This chapter is concerned with how the narrative works to constitute subjectivity and identity for the viewers that engage with it (Weedon, 2004). Two central claims in audience studies are encountered in this chapter. The first is that there is a difference between the ‘real’ viewer and the reader that is produced by the text. The text creates a subject position for the viewer to occupy, but viewers do not necessarily adopt these positions in a straightforward way. They can resist the process of interpellation. In the words of Morley (1981: 159):

It is a move away from the assumption that every specific reading is already determined by the primary structure of subject positions and to insist that these interpellations are not given and absolute, but rather are conditional and provisional.

Therefore, whilst the first section considers the subject position, it does not present this as closed or total. The second claim is that the audience cannot be understood exclusively in terms of their relationship to the text. As argued by Nice (1978: 24) those who only perform a textual analysis to consider the effects of a television show, “[c]an only do so on the basis of an implicit sociology which, in so far as it ignores the social realities of the differential distribution of cultural competencies and values, is an erroneous sociology, the more insidious for being unrecognised.” Therefore, this chapter doesn’t only focus on the viewing position that is made available in the text, but it also considers the context of viewing and the experience of being in the Homeland audience.

The chapter begins with a consideration of the subject positions made available in the text, and therefore who the text interpellates. Here I argue that through articulating who the viewer is not (via dis-identification) the show creates the viewing position of the ideal white father using

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**Box 9:1 Writing Homeland**

This thesis does not closely examine the writer’s intentions or those writers themselves in any detail. However, some overview of the show’s creators can help to frame the analysis of the audience, because it sheds light on who these writers seem to be writing for. There is a team of writers who work on Homeland. There were eight that worked on season one and two, supplemented with an additional five writers for season three. These writers are all US nationals (except Carys who is British, and ex-military), they are also all white (except Yoshimura who is of Japanese American heritage), and none of them are Muslim. This can arguably help to explain some of the ways that the story was told. Whilst there are repeated attempts to show how they consulted with ex-CIA officers to ensure an accurate representation of counter-terror, the writers have been less forthcoming about how they have worked with Muslims to achieve accurate representations of Islam. The actor Nazanin Bodiadi who plays Fara claims to have consulted Muslims on Screen and Television, and the Muslim Public Affairs Council. Neither of these organisations is credited in the show (Fischer, 2013).
associations of power, knowledge, limited empathy, white norms, and western privilege. This fits with the wider image of Western paternalism central to logics of counter-terrorism and interventionism. It also fits with the American monomyth, as identified by Lawrence and Jewitt (2002) in which America is the saviour of the world. It then considers what identity is being performed in the consumption and discussion of Homeland. It asks how the ability to critique, consider, and debate terrorism in part allows the performance of a particular educated, cultured identity that is an expression of progressive whiteness. It argues that this ability to critically engage with terrorism stories is itself a racialised privilege because of the boundaries of critique that are erected through the radicalisation discourses of terrorism within the UK. It is about recognising how whiteness and national belonging are secured through stories of terrorism.

**Subject Positions in Homeland**

A television show creates particular subject positions which viewers are called upon to inhabit as they watch the drama unfold. This section considers what subject position is made available for viewers of Homeland. The viewers are hailed by this discourse, a process often referred to as interpellation. This section considers how interpellation takes place in Homeland. It is through this process of subjectification that we can understand how Homeland comes to tell a story about who we are (or should be), whilst it tells a story of terrorism. Hall (2004: 4) argues that considering interpellation “invites us to consider the question of how and from where identity comes, to what extent it is understandable, and to what degree it is something that we have any control over.”

This section builds to show how a gendered and racialised subject position is created in Homeland. It argues that through empathy and frustration, and patterns of roving identification (and dis-identification), Homeland creates a subject position that I call the ‘ideal white father’. This analysis brings together the findings from the analysis in previous chapters, but reworks the conclusions I reached about race, gender and terrorism to specifically ask how these narrative strategies work to create a viewing position for audience members.

**Dis-Identification/Identification**

In psychoanalytic film theory the process of subjectification was first explained through a process of identification, whereby viewers are expected to recognise themselves in the main characters, and therefore identify with them and occupy their point of view (Lapsley and

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49 Interpellation is a phrase originally introduced by Althusser in Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” (Althusser, 2006 [1972]). In this text he is applying the term to processes of state governance. However, the term has been taken up in the study of media texts, gender and race.
Mulvey (1975), a feminist film scholar, intervened to argue that the resultant viewing position is masculine because we are invited to see the world through the eyes of the typically male protagonists and to identify with a masculine point of view in order for the film to make sense. Put more bluntly by Van Zoonen (1994: 89), the model is “to be him, looking at her”.

But in *Homeland*, we are faced with imperfect characters, and we have a female protagonist, so the idea that we simply identify with a meal hero is disturbed. Data from the focus groups has shown that participants never fully identify with any one character. Interventions from film theorists within psychoanalysis, and from critiques of psychoanalysis, have attempted to capture the different processes at work in culture given that psychoanalytic accounts of the gaze lack the flexibility to be able to take into account the complexities and nuances that are increasingly present in post-modern texts, television shows and crucially their audience (McGowan 2015; Weedon, 2004; Van Zoonen, 1994; Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998; Lotz, 2007). A key intervention in rethinking the relationship between audiences and television shows came from feminist film theorists work on soap opera and television show aimed specifically at women (Modleski, 1979; Gledhill, 1997; Ang, 1985). In their analysis of soap operas, they found that the viewers did not identify with one protagonist, but rather empathized with a range of characters over the course of their viewing. They found evidence of a ‘female gaze’ whereby the viewer watches on caringly, willing each character to succeed or to be redeemed (Modleski, 1979). This earlier intervention gives inspiration to recognize the more complex relationship that participants can have with the characters, but to recognize that this is productive of subjectivity.

This section focuses on how it is through rejecting particular behaviors, characters and identities that a subject position is created for viewers of *Homeland*. Therefore, rather than focus on a psychoanalytic account of the gaze, I consider how dis-identification also works alongside identification. I use the term dis-identification to capture the process of actively distancing oneself from the characters on screen. This chapter looks at how *Homeland* articulates ‘we’ are through who ‘we’ are not. Identity is always about narratives of difference and belonging (Weedon, 2004), in *Homeland* I argue that the audience is not called to identify with the main characters and reject the enemies, but rather to have a more varied and complex relationship with both the heroes and the villains of the plot.

**We Are Not Safe**

Insecurity is the condition of being that underpins the dramatic tension of the *Homeland* plot. The fact that the audience cannot fully identify with any character feeds this insecurity because it means there is not one safe character in which the audience can invest their hopes. As discussed in chapter seven both Carrie and Brody are shown to be deeply flawed. The fleeting moments of empathy that the participants feel towards characters, as identified in the previous
chapters when they sympathized with Carrie’s plight to get the answers, Brody’s suffering, or the Brody family’s vulnerability, are all moments when the characters were insecure. Therefore, the audience is given the opportunity to identify with the feeling of insecurity that ranges across and between characters. Furthermore, every moment of stability in the plot is undermined, and indeed it is often in the spaces/places that are considered safe that the characters are most at risk: in their houses (the Brody family) in their workplaces (the bomb on the CIA office), in their cars (the kidnapping of the old lady), when out shopping (Brody is kidnapped getting his groceries). No space is free from the reach of in/security.

**We Are Not Carrie and Brody**

Chapter six argued that Carrie and Brody can be read as representations of the paranoid American psyche and the scarred masculine military body after 9/11. To some extent this relies upon identification with these characters. Yet, I argue that, although their plights are certainly emblematic of a familiar way of being and seeing after 9/11, the audience is not called to identify with them in a straight forward way.

Van Zoonen (1994) argues that in the traditional model “the cinematic experience produces feelings of omnipotence through identification with the perfect characters on the screen”. Yet as argued in chapter seven, we do not encounter perfect characters in *Homeland* but the drama is led by the flawed characters of Carrie and Brody. As shown by the data from focus groups, the audience had fraught, and varied, relationships to these characters, which move from frustration to empathy. Therefore identification alone does not seem adequate to explain the relationship with these characters. The participants in the focus group sometimes felt sorry for Brody, and they sometimes did not like him, they were often on Carrie’s side, but they were frequently frustrated by her actions. Both Carrie and Brody act as ‘bad’ examples of their gender. Carrie is a promiscuous and lonely woman, where Brody fails as a father and husband. In these moments the audience are not called to fully identify with perfect characters, but rather to actively distance themselves from these problematic practices and behaviours. Furthermore, within the moments of frustration felt towards the character’s behavior, not only does the audience learn the ‘correct’ way to behave, the audience is afforded the opportunity to establish themselves as already better, smarter or more in control than the characters in *Homeland*. We can empathise with Brody’s sadness over Issa’s death, and understand how this has led him to join Al Qaeda. However, we still know better than to do that ourselves, and instead see him as a weak or damaged character. Similarly, for Carrie, whilst we sympathise with the suffering she experiences as a result of her bipolar disorder, we know better than to make such rash or dangerous decisions. The audience might will Carrie to succeed, but they do not want to be like her. The audience might sympathise with Brody, but they do not identify with him.
We Are Not Terrorists

The audience is not called to identify with the terrorist characters within *Homeland* either. Again, the data for focus groups presented in chapter eight showed how there were moments of empathy for the terrorists, yet the audience does not identify with these characters fully at any point. The terrorist characters are shown to be fundamentally different to us, whether because they are damaged like Brody and Aileen, or because they are evil, like Nazir and Javadi. Although the racialisation of these terrorists is sometimes disturbed in the *Homeland* plot, they remain essentially different from ‘us’ through their association with terrorist violence.

We Are Not Neo-Conservatives

As argued in chapter five, the politicians in *Homeland* are represented as bad, particularly the likes of Walden who is an almost caricatured representation of a hawkish neo-conservative politician. Data from focus groups showed how he was disliked by the audience members. Again, I argue that this dis-identification creates a subject position for the audience, one negatively defined; we are not like these war mongering, American men of the War on Terror.

We Are Not Muslim

The interest in Mira, Danny and Brody’s Muslim faith stems from the unspoken idea that this is different, or unusual. Again we are not called to identify with these characters. In discussions of Fara, whilst many participants said that they liked Fara, they did not identify with her. Whilst it is implied that the Brody family is Christian (when we see them attend church), that Saul is Jewish (when we see him recite the Jewish prayer) and it is mentioned that Dana attends a Quaker school, the most direct and explicit investigations of religion are associated with the Muslim characters. As discussed in chapter eight the treatment of Islam in the show is both careful and nuanced, and flawed and problematic, but it is still constituted as ‘the other’ against a normalised white, non-Muslim identity.

We Are Not Racist

Chapter eight argued that there is a post-racial articulation of security in *Homeland*. The audience is asked to reject the moments of explicit racism within *Homeland*, for example in the scene (discussed in chapter eight) where Saul insults Fara for wearing the headscarf. In doing so *Homeland* allows the audience to distance themselves from racism, but in doing so it masks the way that racial hierarchies operate in much more insidious ways in *Homeland*, and terrorism discourses more widely. This allows audiences to occupy a subject position that is explicitly distanced from ‘racism’ in a very particular representation of what racism looks like.
The audience knows that they are unsafe, there is no hero who can come to their rescue, they know the correct way to perform gender after watching Carrie and Brody do it wrong, they are not Muslim but they can spot and reject explicitly anti-Muslim racism, they do not like and are not like the neo-conservative politicians who led America to war.

*Homeland* creates a subject position for the audience that relies on the audience distancing themselves from the bad decisions and actions of by a range of characters. That is not to say that there are not moments of sympathy, empathy and understanding within this story. There are moments when the audience sympathise with each of the characters, for example in Brody’s suffering, or in Carrie’s grief. There are more likable characters in the show, who the audience are expected to identify with at times, for example the characters of Saul and Quinn. Yet, even these characters are shown to be flawed, or to engage in activities that the audience are called to reject (from Saul’s racist remarks to Quinn’s accidental murder of a young boy). Therefore, we are left with a subject position that involves shifting empathy for, and shifting frustrations towards, the characters and their actions.

**A Liberal White Masculine Subject Position**

In this section, I argue that despite the female lead, a masculine subject position is created in *Homeland*. This is not linked to a masculine body on screen, but instead results from the way the audience are called to occupy a masculine superiority to the characters. As argued above, the audience is not called to identify with any one character, but instead it is called to reject aspects of each character’s behaviour. In these moments of rejection, the audience is allowed to feel superior to the characters. The use of dramatic irony, where the significance of particular actions and events in the plot are understood by the audience but not the characters, in *Homeland* functions to bolster the audience’s superiority, because the audience often knows more than any of the characters within the show. This happens when we see into Brody’s garage to watch him pray, which Carrie’s hidden cameras do not see. It happens when we watch Carrie take her anti-psychotic medication which her colleagues are unaware she takes. This happens when we see the bomb maker prepare the bomb for Brody, or when we watch Tom Walker’s movements just before the terrorist attack. In *Homeland* this creates a logic chain in which the more you see, the more you know. Each time that we are allowed to see more of the action, we immediately know more than the characters.

The association of knowledge and power is made throughout *Homeland*; it underlies the pathos and action. The blurring of the public private boundary extends to the point where there is very little that remains private in *Homeland*. As well as making an ideological point about the need for increased surveillance measures, this gives the audience a position of power in relation to
the characters in the show. They are superior to the characters and they see, and know more than any character in the show. In work on soap operas scholars argued that as opposed to adopting the male gaze, female viewers took on the position of ideal mother, with a roving identification they willed each character to do well. Here, I identify a roving identification, and dis-identification with characters. I argue that this is a paternal subject position.

The audience are not called to identify with the Muslim characters and so are interpellated as non-Muslim. What is more, they are also called to occupy a white subject position. Whiteness remains a central norm in Homeland. As detailed in chapter eight, Homeland shapes the audience’s perspective of the racialised other, but Homeland also operates to reinforce white audience members’ views of themselves. This is done through dis-identification with the racialised other. Whiteness is spoken in Homeland through its interaction with the racialised other. Through being unlike the ‘othered’ and racialised Muslim characters, from terrorists, to silent wives, to sheiks. Whiteness is itself rarely made explicit in the text, yet it remains central within the text. Chidester (2008: 159) argues that this strategy comes from “an urgent need to speak white at the same time defending its historically guaranteed privilege of silence”. Indeed, Dyer (1997) argues that whiteness asserts itself visually, but at the same time it recedes into the background. As argued in the previous chapters whiteness is a constant presence in Homeland. The world view within Homeland is Western and non-Muslim and this is equated with whiteness through Carrie, as white, but also through the way Brody’s conversion to Islam is made exceptional through his white body and American patriotism. The way that the anxieties of counter-terrorism are approached is as the wielders of counter-terror violence, not from the perspective of the victims of its excesses. All of the main characters, whose plots of redemption that we are emotionally invested in, are white (Carrie, Brody, Saul, Quinn). Aileen the terrorist who is given the most sympathetic depiction is white. The victims of terrorism are either white, or they are children.

It is necessary to unpack the categories of whiteness, Western and non-Muslim that are each inscribed in the production of Homeland (and as I argue later, experienced in the consumption of Homeland). There is a blurring of the category of whiteness and non-Muslim as each category is used to re-enforce and thus racialise the other. Even though Homeland disturbs this linkage in places, we still have whiteness as a shorthand for non-Muslim, and brown skin as a vague signifier for Muslim. The subject position that the audience is called to occupy is white, Western, American and non-Muslim, but it is not just that it fits all these categories, but that the categories are blurred. The racialisation of Muslims in Homeland (as argued in chapter eight) is about creating a racialised category, so that ‘Muslimness’ can be read off, and inscribed onto, particular bodies as a visible category so that this body can have particular characteristic
attributed to them. It is the inability to be able to ‘spot’ Brody’s ‘Muslimness’ that makes him threatening.

This representation creates a white, western subject position for the viewer, without ever making that position explicit. Whilst Homeland disturbs the straightforward us versus them binary that pits the West against Muslims, it still invokes this division and reanimates it. It relies upon and reifies the audience as part of the ‘us’ the white, non-Muslim, American/Western civilian as Carrie acts to protect ‘us’ from terrorism. As discussed in chapter six, participants did not reflect upon Carrie’s whiteness, nor did they engage critically with the way that whiteness operated in the construction of terrorist identities in any depth. This speaks to the success and the ubiquity of white subject positions. The participants are so used to being interpellated as the white subject of discourse (as opposed to the racialised object of discourse) that it is unremarkable in a literal sense.

This subject position is created through the idea of being under threat. It is this insecurity which is central to the creation of a common identity. This common identity is, in turn, formed through the explicit articulation of the racialised other of terrorism and the articulation of whiteness.

The Ideal White Father: Hegemonic Masculinity and Security

The subject position that Homeland creates is that of the ideal white father. A position of masculine power; it re-enforces the audience’s knowledge and understanding. Modleski (1979) argues that soap operas create an ‘ideal mother’ position for its viewers, a position that relies on the viewers watching each character and willing them to succeed, but not a stable identification with just one character. I adapt this concept to consider how the masculine position, the changing instances of identification and dis-identification, and the superiority that the audience are afforded in Homeland, identified in the previous section, combine to create an ‘ideal father’ position for the audience. This is a subject position that relies on a roving identification with characters, but also with a boundary of dis-identification which stops us from seeing the plot entirely through the eyes of any one character. Through Carrie and Brody’s failings we learn how not to behave. It is a subject that acts from paternal concern for the characters, as we have seen the participants are willing the characters to improve if not succeed, but it is also one that is prepared to see them suffer. It is a position of multi-cultural cosmopolitanism that still has roots in liberal whiteness, a position that rejects ‘explicit’ racism whilst simultaneously reifying a racialised hierarchy. In some ways, this akin to the character Saul in Homeland; he is a well-educated, considerate character who shows empathy towards Carrie, Brody and many of the terrorist suspects. Yet at the same time, Saul is a representative of the American state, an agent of counter-terrorism and a privileged character.
In an analysis of 24 Morey (2010: 251) argues:

these dramas construct what we would call an ethnonormalized implied viewing position; that is, one who is imagined either as part of, or sympathetic to, a white western consensus, often organized around notions of family and patriarchy seen as under attack from the irrational nihilism of Islamist terrorism.

In *Homeland*, a drama which at first seems to offer a more complicated and nuanced account of Islamic terrorism, we can see how this “ethnonormalized implied viewing position” is still at work.

This subject position closely it echoes one current articulation of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) in security policy and practice. As argued by Hooper (2001), the articulation of hegemonic masculinity that is related to foreign policy and international relations changes overtime. There is a shifting image of the ideal subject of international relations. The subject position of the benevolent, powerful, and empathetic masculine figure that is moulded by the text seems to fit closely with the self-image of American (and indeed Western), self-image of statehood (Hooper, 2001; Tickner, 1992; Steans, 2006; Parpart and Zalewski 2008; Carver, 1996). In particular it fits the self-image of the USA, as the protector of freedoms (Weldes 1999), as *Homeland* rearticulates the Western man who acts, not just in his own interest, but in order to look after/save both his fellow citizens and the victims of terrorism internationally. It fits the self-image identified by Hunt (1987: 174) “protect and guide” as opposed to other countries which might seek to “exploit and repress.” It reuses notions of racial hierarchies in order to do this, again a move that has been crucial to the creation and maintenance of American self-identity (Drinnon, 1997; Neumann, 1999 Lutz and Collins, 1993). In the words of McCartney (2004: 406): “in practice, American nationalism influences U.S. foreign policy by layering attributes on top of basic, self-interested power seeking behaviour while allowing Americans to believe that their good intentions lack a selfish dimension and are, in some objective way, good for others.” The *Homeland* figure of counter-terrorism has the power to wield legitimate violence, though this is done reluctantly. He understands the complexities of terrorism and counterterrorism, and he views himself as being post-racial and post-feminist. This self-image is crucial to the ongoing practice of counter-terrorism violence (Jackson et al, 2001). This story still sets up the Western self-image as the innocent victim, as the righteous wielder of righteous, paternalistic counter-terrorism, as the father figure of international security which makes counter-terrorism violence justifiable. This figure is depressingly familiar from the self-image that animated colonial violences throughout history in the way that it ignores its complicity in global inequalities and defends the need to carry out violences (Hooper, 2001; McClintock, 2005).
Although I have argued that Homeland’s narrative disturbs the good/bad dichotomy that has been common in terrorism stories, it still creates a powerful subject position available for the viewer. In that way, we can see how Homeland functions to work through counter-terrorism, because it rearticulates this subject position, a self-image that ‘we’ as a Western audience can happily adopt. At the same time, the re-articulation of a hegemonic masculinity, even in a story with a female protagonist, means that the feminist potential of this show is always already limited because it feeds into the status quo of patriarchy. The unchallenged norm of whiteness both visualised and realised in the stories of terrorism continue to permit a failure of empathy that racisms rely upon. Fundamentally, though, this is a subjectivity that is forged from insecurity. It is the threat of terrorism that animates this subjectivity and that underlines each articulation of how to behave.

**Not Everyone, All the Time - Still Reading the Active Audience in Subjectivity**

Overall, this analysis presents a depressing picture of how these terrorism stories continue to do the work of justifying counter-terrorist violence. I argue that this subject position can return the viewer to a fixed position of power, and therefore Homeland tries to resolve the cultural anxieties that surround race, gender and terror. This undermines the critical stance that Homeland purports to take, and means that even the times when it confronts the ambiguities and inconsistencies in this tension, it does so in a way that reasserts War on Terror discourse. In this case we seem to be in a cloying atmosphere of white privilege and masculinity in insecurity discourse. Indeed, this reading shows how the continuation of the racialised and gendered hierarchies that are presupposed and protected in counter-terrorism violences are deeply implicated in the telling of terrorism stories.

Yet, if we return to the idea of the active audience, I argue that we cannot simply assume that all the audience are successfully called in to occupy this subject position all of the time. It is not enough to simply say that they are positioned as masculine, white, powerful subjects. The ‘interpellation’ process is not all powerful, and indeed the audience members sometimes failed to take up the preferred position. As Morley (1981: 20) argues, “the struggle in ideology takes place precisely through the articulation/ disarticulation of interpellation.” I argue that it is not only by switching off that audiences can resist the process of interpellation. The interpellation most obviously breaks down when the participants demonstrate a greater level of care for the characters than is built in to the text, or where they identify with characters at unexpected times because in these moments they are exceeding the scripted level of emotional attachment. This happens when Vish hopes Brody would detonate his suicide bomb, or when Jane sympathises with Nazir. It breaks down when Tessa criticises the depiction of Tom Walker and makes links
between this character and the status of black returning solders in the US. In each instance, their resistance to the preferred meaning of the text means they are also resisting this moment of subjectification. There is no space to rehearse all the instances of resistance that have been explored in the previous chapters here, but here are a few examples; this happened where Siobhan defends Carrie’s effectiveness; this happened when Phil recognised the one sided version of the War on Terror that is present in Homeland; it happened when Giles criticises the racist associations of the Middle East and violence; or in the representation of Iran; and it happened when Emma argued that an image of the damaged individual as a terrorist misses the political context of terrorist violence. The image from the text, and the times when the audiences seem to read with the text, are indeed depressing, but it can be reanimated by the inclusion of the moments of resistance that have been highlighted in each chapter thus far.

In each instance of the resistance, they are acting from outside of the narrow subject position that Homeland creates. Were this not true, the discourses of violence would be static. Homeland is telling a different story of counter-terrorism than was circulating in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. It is a response to the political context of its production, but it is also evidence of how discourses continue to adapt through their interaction with culture, and with audiences.

This discussion of subjectivity is important, but the consumption of these texts does not happen in a vacuum, nor does subjectification happen as a single static experience. If we are interested in how security texts interact with identity, it is necessary to look at how, when and where these texts are consumed. The next section of this chapter explores how the practices of consumption that places the viewing experience within a particular context.


Cultural consumption is a social experience. This section considers how there is an identity effect that comes not only from the process of interpellation from the text, but that there is also a creation, and performance of, identity inherent in being a Homeland viewer. This is in part inspired by the work of Lembo (2000: 240), who argues that television studies needs to consider the social process of viewing and the “socially constructed nature of …participation in a television audience.”

It is possible to apply this understanding to unravel the processes of racial privilege in Homeland. This section examines how these processes are at work in Homeland, and draws out how the critique and consumption of Homeland contributes to viewers’ sense of self. I argue that this expression of self is performed along racialised boundaries which exclude Muslim participants
from the outset. In this way it is an expression of ‘cultural capital’. In this context, this is related to the concept of liberal whiteness, whilst at the same time it helps to re-inscribe the racialised divisions upon which this discourse relies. This marks an original contribution to the theorising of the relationship between the construction of race and television. It shows how the consumption of popular cultural texts about security is one way that racial categories are both consumed and performed.

This section pays particular attention to how the participants enjoyed the process of ‘getting it’, that is, of understanding the plot and its political references. It considers how these pleasures are part of the performance and creation of identity and part of an expression of progressive whiteness and cosmopolitanism bound together by their non-Muslim status. The section builds on this to consider how the freedom to resist and debate the meanings of terrorism are product/ive of racialised privileges, because it is a practice that is not available to British Muslims in the same way in the climate of radicalisation in the UK in the climate of suspicion created by counter-terrorism discourses, laws and practices that has (Choudary and Fenwick, 2011; Mythen 2012; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2011; Nickels, Hickman, Thomas and Sylvestri, 2012), see box 9:2. This argument is supported by contrasting my own experiences to those of Aafi, one of my participants, who was arrested under terrorism charges. This leads to a wider consideration of how terrorism discourses take place in limited spaces and places.

**Viewing Practices: Being in the Audience**

Participation in this research was itself part of the process of subjectification. Through agreeing to take part in the research the participants all self-identified as *Homeland* viewers. Therefore this becomes one of the (innumerable) aspects of their own self-identity, in terms of narrative identity, it becomes part of the story that they tell about themselves. Whilst none of the participants were active in online communities, fan literature, or community groups they could
still be argued to demonstrate “performative consumption” (Hill, 2002). Though they do not create a new culture through active reworking of the television show (which is how the term performative consumption is most commonly applied), they did perform their own identity via the active interpretation of this text.

As Homeland viewers, they establish themselves as up to date media consumers, something that they often emphasised when they related Homeland to other current television shows. They demonstrate an interest in television through their willingness to watch three seasons of a terrorism drama. They all used the discussions as an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of ongoing political events and current affairs. They did this by relating the show to news events, by demonstrating their knowledge of geopolitics, by referencing books or news articles that they have read on the subject. The membership of this audience is an opportunity to represent oneself as interested, intelligent and well read.

Although the recruitment poster and emails that most participants responded to asked if they were “a fan of Homeland”, no participants referred to themselves using that term. Many of my participants expressed the idea that they were

9:2 Homeland fan communities online

There are active online communities that centre on the discussion of Homeland. As part of the show’s own online offering there is the fan forum section of its own website www.sho.com/sho/Homeland/socialize. There are also several independently run fan sites and forums (such as www.Homelandfanspage.tumblr.com/, or http://www.reddit.com/r/Homeland). Finally there are also many examples of fan literature available through online publishing platforms (such as hwww.fanfiction.net/tv/Homeland/). In this literature fans of the show often explore alternative endings, delve deeper into the back story of characters. What particularly interests me about these groups is that they evidence the encoding and decoding model in its most extreme form. If Hall (1981) argues that producers cannot fully control the meaning that is decoded from the popular texts here we see how via internet this lack of control writ large as fans literally rewrite the script. This also better fits the interactice model of audience participation identified by Abercrombie and Longhurst (19988) and Lotz (2007).

However, this is a markedly different expression of fandom than for my participants. Although this would make a very interesting area for further study it is outside the scope of this project. This project considers the practices of consumption of the text, but not as an expression of identity through fandom, or creation of a sub-culture, but rather how the show interacts with and is part of the mass consumed, and popular
watching this show in spite of their better judgment, or that they watched it despite its flaws. For example:

Rachel: I found that Brody was really interesting... I only watch it because he is in it, because Damien Lewis is in it because he is really good.

Beth: I sometimes enjoy it more when I am not being critical of it.

Dave: When you watch TV, you know you have to suspend belief of certain things in order to enjoy it; you have to accept that bit might have been ridiculous but you have to accept that for the story that bit had to have happened... Yeah so there are some bits that you, you watch it just enjoy it.

Anne: It is entertainment.

Dave: Yeah as a form of entertainment you just accept the bits that you are critical of.

They go to efforts to point out that they watched it not for its depiction of terrorism, but for different reasons, such as for the characters. They negotiate their relationship to the show, as ‘just entertainment’ something that they switch off their critical faculties to enjoy. This negotiated position to television viewing has been identified in previous studies (Lembo, 2000; Skeggs, Thumin and Wood, 2008).

What is more, they establish themselves as media savvy consumers of culture through the level and type of critique. As discussed in chapter five, this involved the conversations over realism and plausibility. It also came through in moments where they recognised (and rejected) particular television formulae. For example Anne says “I thought when I was watching it like oh my god; we are not going to get a montage!”

The participants recognised the constructed nature of the show, in the role of the writers, or the commercial influence on the depiction.

Dave: Yeah, I guess you can’t really watch them lie in bed for four months and not do anything.

Anne: No it is not really exciting television.

Tessa: [It] felt like Homeland was written to be a single series kind of TV show and then they realised there was a lot of money in it.
When I asked if they felt that they had been influenced by the show, in most cases they were quick to point out that they were not influenced by what they watch on television, though they acknowledge that ‘other’, and, it is implied, less worldly, or less educated individuals might well be. These are typical responses when asked whether they felt that the show had influenced their own perspective.

Anne: I don’t think it has really had any effect on me, I would say that what has had more of an effect on me is reading about all of these NSA revelations in the news and stuff, because it is real.

Ben: I can’t say it made me think differently about terrorism or counter-terrorism, cos it is just a piece of entertainment generally, but what sets it apart is that it is much more nuanced than anything that has come before, that I have seen ... In that sense it probably does raise questions amongst its audience.

Both Anne and Ben deny the idea that it would have had any effect on them because it is fiction. This shows how effectively popular culture is bracketed off from ‘politics’ in the common understanding of culture. In relation to Homeland, it shows how the audience establishes itself as already critical consumers that are not taken in by fictional stories. Although as Ben hypothesises, there are probably other people out there who might be.

In chapter six, I argued that these British viewers distanced themselves from the extremes of the War on Terror by recognising them as American excesses. Again here we see the articulation of British identity, as distinct from American identity. This was put most explicitly by James: “I think we can sit here and talk about that and deconstruct it but you are probably watching that in the Southern United States and you are seeing that [terrorist as] Muslim, that is where you are.” The ‘others’ who are easily taken in by these shows are the American audience. This fits in to wider cultural stereotypes in the UK about Americans being less worldly and more conservative. Therefore, it shows that the consumption of this American show is a place where a British national identity is expressed and maintained.

Although most participants positioned themselves quite explicitly as critical consumers, Claire was an exception to this; she said “I don’t think I am that critical of it, compared to other people, um, in the room.” Here Claire is negotiating her own identity in terms of the interaction she has had during the focus group. In her focus group, there was a strong critical element, led by Rachel, a participant who described herself as political and anti-America. Throughout the focus group Claire and Dave (who were a couple) often argued that they did not think that they watched
shows as critically as other participants, they seemed less invested in the identity of critical media consumer, and more happily identified themselves as consumers of mass media.

This links to the concept of popular pleasures, which Fiske (2010: 47) argued is the “pleasure of making one’s own culture and the offensive pleasure of resisting the structure of domination” because it shows how much the audience members all enjoyed actively negotiating meaning in the show. This recognises the encoding and decoding practice of meaning making, and highlights the need to consider how this process is itself part of the pleasure of consuming popular culture. In *Homeland* this pleasure is central to the show, but that it is also part of the performance and creation of the identity for the viewers. When the participants “get” the show, or were able to offer, a critique of it, they enjoyed this because it confirmed this self-identity as active and intelligent consumers of the media.

The participants are expressing and confirming a particular self-image in their interaction with the show by demonstrating their ability to negotiate their own preferred meanings. There is perhaps a danger to the seductive image of the active audience. As argued throughout this thesis, there are moments when audience members seem to resist the meaning that is being communicated in *Homeland*, but there are also times when they reproduce this image. By considering themselves above, or beyond the passive consumer, participants can fail to recognise some ways that their own attitudes can be shaped by this story.

**Modes of Engagement: the Inclusions and Exclusion of Popular Culture**

The participants’ ability to critique the show and to identify moments when they see the depiction of gender or race as problematic is also a performance of identity. Skeggs (2004: 158), work on reflexive accumulation, where reflexive consumption is seen as a privileged position can help to understand how this is significant, particularly where she considers the expression and performance of cosmopolitanism that is at work in the consumption of culture She argues that “[t]o turn the intellectual gaze into a form of knowledge and competence for one’s own enhancement is precisely how cosmopolitanism as a disposition is generated. This must involve access to the cultures of others, turning them into objects of distanced contemplation for oneself”. In *Homeland* this happens in the moments that participants are critical of the show. On the one hand, it is in these moments that the critical potential is evident for the resistance to dominant discourses of terrorism and counter-terrorism, and their racialised and gendered consequences. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, participants do notice and criticise the racialising processes in the show, the framing of counter-terrorism and terrorism, or the gendered representation of Carrie. Yet, on the other hand, these could be read in terms of the post-feminist and post racial messages within *Homeland*. Read in these terms, they can
be seen to be moments when the participants can establish themselves as liberal, progressive, and anti-racist, yet they do this without acknowledging the ongoing role of normative whiteness and gendered boundaries in the production, meaning and consumption of the show. In Gabriel’s (1998: 5) terms this can be read as an expression of “progressive whiteness” for the white participants. By seeming to recognise and engage in the problems of the depictions of Muslims in terrorism texts, the participants identify racism, but they fail to interrogate their own privilege, or complicity in the wider racializing logics of counter-terrorism.

This can be seen as an expression of progressive whiteness where white privilege is maintained through an apparent rejection of white pride or normative whiteness. However, ‘whiteness’ cannot account for the viewing position of the audience members who did not identify as white. In a group I held which included a black African, Turkish, Indian, and Jewish participant, there was some reflection on the representation of non-white characters within Homeland, such as the representation of Tom Walker and Saul. However, these participants were also interpellated into the positon of the American, Western/non-Muslim victim of terrorism and wielder of counter-terrorism that Homeland assumes. I argue, because in this instance it is the non-Muslim status that grants them access to the national identity. In this instance it is their status as non-Muslim that allows them entry into the position of ‘victim of terrorism’. Again we see how an ethnonormalized viewing position is at work, but this time it it realised rather than simply implied (Morey, 2010).

The non-Muslim participants have the freedom to offer critical perspectives on American violences, representation of Islam and to sympathise with the motivations of terrorism. This privilege is even starker when we consider that this is a process that they enjoy. For many British Muslims, the way that they can interact with terrorism discourse is markedly different. On one hand, as the incidence of racial discrimination, abuse, and indeed violent crime is increasing (Diene 2006; Choudary and Fenwick, 2011; Mythen, 2012), the association between Islam and terrorism is something that they experience in a much more visceral and confronting way. There is the emotional fallout of having to consider and often defend their faith for the constant associations to violent ‘extremism’ that are part of the modern representation of terrorism. This prefigures the type of engagement that is available to Muslims because of the pre-existing racialised discourse of terrorism (Mythen, 2012).

Crucially, this section argues that participation in critical debate is embedded in a set of racial conditions. The consumption of this text happens within a context of the rise of counter-radicalisation discourse and practice in counter-terrorism in the UK. The ability to engage in critical reflection around terrorism is a racialised privilege that is product/productive of the
racialised character of terrorism discourses. This recognises the context of consumption for *Homeland*. Audience members approach from different positions which affects both who can engage with a text, and in what ways they engage with it. This section considers how these modes of engagement tell us about the politics of consumption whilst they recreate the racial logics on which these hierarchies rely.

This was evident in the different ways that the Muslim participants spoke about terrorism discourse compared with the participants of my audience groups, who were all non-Muslim. When I asked Nabiha why she took part in the group she answered:

> For me I thought it would be a way for a Muslim person to actually say my opinions about terrorism, and what I think of it and how it effects Muslims in this country because it is not nice to be wearing a hijab, to go around being called a terrorist, or people saying have you got a bomb under your scarf. And you do get that, and you might not hear about it every day but stuff like that affects us, it affects us a lot and it is becoming more and more difficult to show yourself as a Muslim.

This shows how she feels the discourses of terrorism affect her day to day life. She experiences the effects of the association of Muslims in a very real and personal way. She has experienced anti-Muslim racism that has been articulated in relation to terrorism. Ibrahim said that his experience of racism at school got worse after 9/11. This is very different to the tone and perspective articulated in the groups with the non-Muslims viewers of *Homeland*, who were able to talk about terrorism in a more conceptual and distant way, where their concerns come from the perspective of potential victim of terrorism, rather than as victims of racist abuse. The mode of engagement in terrorism discourse is different dependent upon how people are religiously identified, prior to any engagement with the show.
During the recruitment process, I struggled to engage with any Muslim Homeland viewers. Whilst this experience cannot be taken as evidence that there are no British Muslim viewers of Homeland, and I do not claim that my focus groups with viewers are representative of the Homeland viewing population, there was evidence that people who are Muslim have a different relationship to terrorism stories than non-Muslim participants in focus groups. After initial difficulties in recruiting Muslim viewers, I tried to target Muslim communities directly. This resulted in several conversations where people explained to me that because of their religious or cultural background and identity, they deliberately avoided watching shows that focused on the association of terrorism with Islam or the Middle East. Manthia Diawara (1993) identified the potential for resistant readings of racist (and racializing) texts that can emerge from black spectatorship, exploring how a passive identification can become and active criticism specifically through the discomfort produced by being unable to identify with the white subject position. This would suggest there might be alternative modes of engagement that could be adopted by Muslim viewers. However, I did not recruit any Muslims that frequently watched the show, but
instead decided to engage with why and how they chose not to watch it and how this related to their Muslim identity. I made an attempt to formalise these conversations in focus groups with Muslim participants, who did not watch the show, but were happy to talk about the representation of Islam within it. When I asked why they did not watch the show, the replies included:

Bilal: I thought, do I really want to do that? And get worked up, about something that might just rub me up the wrong way, so I thought, I think I will leave that one.

Ibrahim: I heard about it, and I just thought, not one of these again.

Aafi: I think I vaguely remember hearing about it, but that, perhaps it was more of a stereotypical characterisation of what is represented in the media, so it is not much of a point in watching it sort of thing, and also I was busy with my degree.

Nabiha: Yeah it is just, I think it is because I know, that because they are using all these certain things in the show they would try to make something out of it, make a story line out of it, and I guess if we see the supposed truth on the BBC, it is sort of well, I don’t see the point of watching the show.

These quotes are not representative of a universal British Muslim experience. But they do evidence a different relationship to terrorism stories than the Homeland viewers expressed. Whilst peoples’ relationship to television, and terrorism discourse are likely to vary (think for example how serving military personnel, security professionals, or terrorism victims might mediate their television consumption), when this is taken in relation to the white subject positions that I identify within Homeland it points to a pattern of racialised/ing consumption of terrorism stories. This insight is tentatively made, and further research on the viewing practices of British Muslims in relation to terrorism television would be valuable. However, considered in light of the white subject positions, the scope for criticism of counter-terrorism, and within the wider racialised climate of radicalisation and counter-terror, it starts to become apparent that however nuanced the representation of Islam is within Homeland it is still a representation of Muslims for non-Muslims.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this research to consider the relationship between implementation of counter-terrorism policy and its impact on the racialisation process of Muslim and non-Muslim communities (see box 9.3), it is highly relevant because it speaks to the different ‘cultural capital’ that audience members can bring to their interaction with media texts. There is space for the non-Muslim Homeland viewers to criticise counter-terrorism without fear that this will be seen as the expression of a fundamental or extremist view. They can take part
in the focus groups (and indeed I found this group much easier to recruit) without worrying that this will have any legal repercussion. This is a material expression of white privilege. It is the freedom to have, and therefore control, the debates over counter-terrorism.

This was made real for me in my own experiences during the research process. My own research work has involved considerable engagement with counter-terrorism policy, Islamic politics and the coverage of terrorism events. My research is critical of British and American counter-terrorism policies. Yet, I have conducted this research with very little concern that this activity would put me at risk of the attentions of PREVENT or the CHANNEL programme. This is born of a both an academic privilege, and a racial privilege that means my own research does not generate official suspicion. This privilege was brought into stark relief during the research process when one of my participants in a Muslim focus group told me after the recording that he had himself been arrested on terrorism charges. He was held under house arrest for six months before his charges were dropped. For him, the negotiation of terrorism and counter-terrorism is much more risky and highly charged. The way that he approaches terrorism discourse is then, inevitably, hugely influenced by his first-hand experience of counter-terrorism. This of course is a markedly different experience than my own, and made me reflect upon the freedoms that I have enjoyed over the research period.

The different modes of interaction are circumscribed by the existing racialised discourse, and practice of counter-terrorism. The identity of the audience is performed through the way it engages with the show. They perform their identity as middle class, critical consumers of culture. They (we) were afforded further opportunity to perform this identity in the focus groups. The way that they (we) engage with the show is product and productive of racialised counter-terrorism discourse. This prompts wider questions about how security stories in popular culture are consumed and who is the object, and who is the subject, in these discourses. The ability to critique the show is prescribed along racialised lines. To extend this point it becomes apparent that there is a process of inclusion and exclusion that happens in the way that terrorism discourse circulates, which itself recreates the specific identities of subject (and object) of security discourse.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that *Homeland* is a show that is written for and consumed by a non-Muslim audience. The subject that is secured (in every sense of the word), in this discourse is a Western subject, whilst ‘the other’ that is explored is the racialised Muslim other. The experience of being in the audience reaffirms the identity of the viewer, as well as rearticulating their experience of in/security in terms which are familiar to them. It is another example of the
production of knowledge about the other, as an object of discussion, for the consumption of white audiences, who are still safely established as the subject of the discourse.

This chapter began with a discussion of the subject position that is made available in *Homeland*. This section brought together insights from the analysis thus far to consider how, through rejecting the main character’s behaviour at some points and empathising with them at others, the audience is taught the correct model of gender. The text creates a subject position that I dubbed the ‘ideal white father’ which is a masculine position that (re)creates a progressive whiteness. This argument is important because it shows how the process of subjectification interacts with the terrorism story. The resultant subject position is the articulation of the ideal subject of security discourse and this chapter has argued it acts to reify the need for counter-terrorism. This subject is post-racial, post-feminist, white, fair, and intelligent, but under threat from the racialised other.

The process of interpellation must be understood through the frame of the active audience. The moments where participants read against the text are not only moments where they are negotiating the meaning, but they are also negotiating the process of interpellation, which is not always successful. This might seem like only faint respite, but I argue that it is important to stress the potential that lies in these small cracks or fissures to open up critique within what this thesis has shown to be a developed and sophisticated defence of ongoing counter-terrorist violence. It is tempting to try and tell a coherent story of the work that popular culture does in the re-articulation of security, whiteness, and gender and in doing so flag the symbolic violences performed by the inclusions and exclusions of this discourse. Stories matter, and as Derrida has taught, the potential for deconstruction always lies within the text. Therefore, let us not miss the story of resistance, agency and potential hope that lies in popular culture in the pursuit of a clean narrative.

The second section of the chapter builds to consider the consumption of *Homeland*. It showed how the act of being in the audience and discussing the show reaffirms this multi-cultural progressive whiteness for audiences who seem to engage with the complexities of race, terror and gender whilst they maintain their (our) own privileges. I considered how the ability to critique and debate terrorism is itself a freedom only available to some British citizens. The potential to engage in debates about counter-terrorism is policed along racial grounds. The freedom that the participants have to consider counter-terrorism in a distanced way and to flex their intellectual and liberal perspective is not afforded to those, typically Muslim, people who approach the counter-terrorism discourse from a very different perspective. There are differences between the Muslim or non-Muslim experience of terrorism and counter-terrorism,
and they of course have huge variety, and I do not wish to homogenise or generalise, but the questions raised here go to show how discourses of insecurity work to secure whiteness.

These conclusions mark an important intervention to the typical analysis of terrorism and television on two grounds. First, they call on us to recognise how whiteness is at work in the representation and consumption of terrorism stories. Second, they show how practices of consumption are product of and productive of the racialised divisions that counter-terrorism logics rely upon.

Although this thesis has attempted to show how audience members can resist the gendered and racialised logics that are present in the Homeland story, this chapter shows how these moments of rebellion, although important, cannot be viewed as taking place outside of the wider context of consumption. It draws attention to how limited, and limiting, the debates around counter-terrorism can be. If the ultimate colonial gesture is to create knowledge ‘about’ people and places, in a way that actually serves to create those people as a community, this gesture is very much embedded in terrorism discourse. Even though Homeland works to offer spaces for resistance and reflection on racial stereotypes, we have to see how taking part in the ‘debate around terrorism’ is an activity that is only available to some.
Chapter 10
Conclusion: Security, Identity and Popular Culture

This thesis has made a contribution to the understanding of the relationship between security, identity and popular culture. It has done this in three ways. First, it has provided an in-depth and thick reading of *Homeland*, which has involved a deconstruction of the text and data from focus groups. This has shown how terrorism stories are being told, but importantly also read in a post 9/11 context. This has shown how gender, race and terrorism are mutually constituted. This has involved the production of two new data sets, a detailed coded database on the show, as well as seven transcripts of focus groups. This has shown what meanings are being produced for terrorism as well as how they are produced in the show. It has shown how the audience both repeat and resist the preferred meaning within the text. It has put forward an updated and nuanced account of how the meaning of terrorism is negotiated. Second, this close reading considered the consumption of *Homeland* in a wider context and shown that the way that these stories are consumed and enjoyed are product of and productive of the gendered and racialised divisions that counter-terrorism logics rely upon. Finally, it has made wider methodological contribution to the study of popular culture and world politics by putting forward a narrative approach that includes audiences and the context of consumption. This thesis has shown how including the audience’s reception of a text changes how we understand the meaning that text constructs for security.

The conclusion brings together the findings from the analysis chapters to show how gender, race and terrorism are mutually constituted in *Homeland*. It lays out how the complex story of terrorism that is told in *Homeland* both undermines the accepted gendered and raced logics of terrorism, but at the same time re-enforces these same logics. It stresses that this story of terrorists, heroes and *Homeland* is productive of security politics, of racial identities and gendered behaviour. *Homeland* helps to create the reality of terrorism for the public providing content and structure to terrorism discourses. It argues that meaning is made in the interaction between the text and its viewer. Importantly, this chapter stresses the tensions inherent in this representation of terrorism. It draws out the problematic depictions of Islamic terrorism and resultant counter-terrorism violences. However, this chapter, and the thesis as a whole, also works to highlight the space for resistance and critique of terrorism within *Homeland*. It has given a range of examples of the way what audiences can resist, repeat and reuse meaning contained within the text. This has wide ranging implications for the study of security discourse. It has shown how the text can influence its viewers, but also how the audience can resist the text. This conclusion draws out how this account has wider significance for the understanding
of terrorism on television, security and popular culture, and the role of gender and race in security discourses.

The Contributions Made by this Thesis

This chapter will consider each of the three contributions that this thesis has made in turn. It begins by examining how gender and race are negotiated to create meaning around terrorism. This section is in two parts, dealing with the conclusions drawn from the discourse analysis, and then adding in the results from the focus groups. It shows how the thesis has answered questions about the stories of gender, terrorism, and race. It points out how this reading was made, and ends by showing how this has updated existing literature on terrorism discourse. The second section focuses on how this thesis has shown that the mode and context of consumption are important in the production of gendered and racialised subjectivities. It argues that this account of the context of popular culture is too often absent from Security Studies. Finally, it reiterates how the theory and methods that are outlined in this research can supplement the ongoing work on popular culture and world politics. It argues that this thick account of Homeland has shown how the readings of popular culture change when the audience is added back in. It emphasises the advantages that are brought to the understanding of identity, culture and security when disciplinary boundaries are crossed. It therefore calls those with an interest in popular culture to continue to be interdisciplinary.

I also spend some time discussing the limitations of this study and ways it could be improved, or built upon. Before the chapter ends I consider the ongoing nature of terrorism discourses both in terms of the subsequent seasons of Homeland and the ongoing cultural struggle with terrorism and counter-terrorism. I argue that Homeland is just one part of a never ending story of terrorism, one part of the ongoing use and abuse of the delegitimising label of terrorism. Yet, rather than be disheartened, I argue that this is the motivation to redouble our attempts to challenge these stories and the way that they are told as terrorism and counter-terrorism still claim thousands of lives.

Deconstructing Terrorism Stories

The discourse analysis and focus group data have provided an original and detailed reading of Homeland, uncovering how this terrorism story uses gender and race to work through anxieties specific to the post 9/11 context (whilst creating a ‘post 9/11’ culture). It has shown how purporting to tell a ‘real’ story is a key way that Homeland contributes to the understanding of the reality of terrorism and counter-terrorism. The whole thesis has been replete with examples of the intertextualities of the Homeland story and terrorist and counter-terrorists events and
representations. It has considered how Homeland gives narrative structure to counter-terrorism, to offer resolution and coherence to terrorism, gender and race. It has brought out how gender and race are invoked in the new terrorist characters that populate this, and the wider stories of post 9/11 counter-terror, including:

**The White Female CIA agent**
I have argued that this white female character can be read as emblematic of an attempt to stress a new type of counter-terror, detail orientated, intelligent and focused, a female and feminine version of action that acts to distance ongoing counter-terror work from the macho gung-ho neo-conservative version of terrorism discourse. Furthermore, her whiteness plays its part in the establishment of imperial feminism, where her apparent white freedom fits a post-feminist story of the liberal West. She is part of a story of a post-racial CIA. This is a new way of telling a story about the need for the West (with its equality and freedoms) to rescue the oppressed brown women of the East, a story that has been used to justify the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

However, I find that in her excess, her emotions and her melodramatic hysteria she contains the undoings of the bounded concept of rational security and the narrow frame of appropriate behaviour. She is a woman who the viewers had an ambivalent relationship to; there were those who liked her, and those who were frustrated by her. She was seen as both good at her job, and as a shining example of incompetence. Like and dislike felt towards the character played out along gender grounds. She was both an unlikeable example of failed femininity and a genuinely feminist character demonstrating how good she is at her job. The character of Carrie invited participants to negotiate the boundaries of acceptable behaviour at work and in counter-terrorism.

**The White Muslim Terrorist**
This is a new character to terrorism TV which had previously relied upon the dangerous brown man stereotype. His failed masculinity contains the potential to face up to the ravages of the War on Terror and the challenge that this has posed to traditional concepts of the hard military masculine body. His whiteness is a challenge to the racialisation of the terrorist identity. And yet, his conversion to Islam means that there is still a link made between Islam and terrorism. He rearticulates the threat of the home-grown terrorist. His place in the American family home makes the connection between the home and the *Homeland*. He rearticulates the ongoing threat of terrorism.

I argued Brody can be read as the embodiment of a war ravaged American military. I showed how he is ultimately redeemed, despite his transgressions which allow a comfortable narrative
closure to wars on terror. Both the terrorist monster and the broken soldier represented by Brody are given dramatic ending as he finds peace in death.

Yet, the audiences showed a remarkable ability to identify with this character at certain times, to pity his suffering. Some even said that they wanted him to carry out his original suicide bomb. This pity and empathy goes beyond the usual scope of emotional reaction available in terrorism stories and so work to undo the good guy/ bad terrorist dichotomy.

The Muslim CIA Officers

In Fara Sherazi we meet a much more developed character than is typically afforded the Muslim woman in terrorist stories. She is good at her job and she is likeable. Yet, she articulates a discursive double move, whereby her status as a good person is underwritten by an American patriotism that is still necessary to prove that she is a good citizen (and not a terrorist). This serves to reify the Muslim/ non-Muslim divide. In moments when she is subject to racist abuse, Homeland depicts the difficulties faced by Muslim women. At the same time though, this contains and disappears the wider racisms recreated by narratives of Islamic terrorism. This is because it allows the audience to easily call out this obvious racist behaviour without having to interrogate the wider racialising effects of the story being told in Homeland.

The Islamic Extremist

There is still the dark figure lurking in the shadows of this terrorist story. The more familiar bad guy, inspired by religious fundamentalism and hell bent on the destruction of West. He fits the ‘new terrorism’ thesis, because he is international, intelligent, strategic and well connected, and consequently his violences are all the more deadly and horrifying. And yet, we see his house, meet his children and see him perform acts of kindness and friendship. What is more, participants afforded him a level of sympathy and understanding that seemed to go beyond the way he was represented and allowed them to unpack the way that terrorists are othered in popular culture.

These characters are not the gun toting action heroes or crazed terrorists that animated War on Terror discourses after 9/11. I have argued that these characters are not good or bad. They repeat the logics of counter-terrorism that enable ongoing violences, and they rely upon stereotyped versions of gendered behaviour and they rearticulate in more subtle ways a white privilege that enables imperial violence. Yet, they also disrupt these logics by exceeding the familiar (gendered and raced) dichotomies of terrorism logics.

This thesis has shown how despite offering a more critical and nuanced story of terrorism, it can be argued that Homeland rearticulates dominant (and familiar) War on Terror discourses
including the threat of terrorism and the need for counter-terrorist violences. It has introduced the idea of ‘discursive double moves’ to capture how seemingly more nuanced or critical narratives can actually rearticulate traditional scripts around terrorism, gender and race. It has argued that whilst there is a female lead and a broken soldier, these characters can be seen to rearticulate boundaries of appropriate gendered behaviour, as they act as bad examples. It has shown how the familiar trope of the ‘free white Western women’ versus ‘the oppressed brown women in need of rescuing’ is reproduced through a story of post-feminism. In terms of the racialisation of terror discourses, this thesis has shown how despite the American Marine as Islamic terrorist, and the recognition of American wrongs in the War on Terror, there is still a remarkably dichotomised world view wherein ‘The East’ is a homogenous other of terrorist activities. Furthermore, I have argued that the post-racial is used as a technique to rearticulate Western supremacy and mask the ongoing racist representation and treatment of Muslim subjects.

Overall, Homeland could be argued to be a new version of a very familiar security story, one where the US government enacts paternal violence to protect its (non-Muslim) citizens from the existential threat of Islamic terror. This reading helps us to understand how even after the Abu Ghraib scandal, the failures of the Iraq war, the widespread condemnation of Bush and Blair, there is still a detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, airstrikes in Syria and a presidential candidate who threatens to ban all Muslims from entering the country. It helps to show how in the UK the government can release anti-extremism legislation in which they can claim that they will not show any tolerance towards those who are not tolerant, and there can be a vote in the UK parliament over military intervention in Syria. It helps to understand how these very particular responses to terrorism, are still possible.

Yet, this depressing account of the meanings in Homeland is only part of the story. This thesis has also shown how there are moments within the text itself that undo these dominant scripts even as we root for the CIA to defeat the bad guys. For example, the depiction of the American drone attacks, which are attributed to some bad politicians, contain a wider critique of counter-terrorism as the counter-terrorist violences of American provoke further terrorist attacks. Although I have shown how Carrie, as an unlikeable and unruly woman depicts how professional women cannot have a happy personal life, she always contains, in her excess and her out of place nature, a disruption of gendered boundaries. The depiction of Fara Sherazi, a CIA agent and a likeable character shows that not all brown women are silent victims. This ambiguity, this un-decidability should not be crowded out by the (understandable) urge to call out the failings of the popular representations of terrorism, or by the need to challenge the racist depictions and symbolic violences performed in terror stories. Despite the repeated use of ‘double
discursive moves’ a frame I have used to capture how critical moments are often masks for more traditional (and problematic) depictions, they are not always necessarily entirely co-opted. I argue that the inconsistencies should be highlighted, to show/ sow the critical potential that is held within even popular and dominant retellings of the terrorism story. This is the deconstruction of the text, the Derridean recognition of the inconsistencies and impossibilities always contained within the text which can help us to challenge the status quo that they enable.

The Homeland Audience

What is more, the focus groups have shown, just as cultural theory suggested, the text cannot fully control its meaning. This played out in misreadings, for example, when the significance of Saul’s Jewishness was lost on the British members of the focus groups, who did not read the significance that the writers has intended to convey. There were resistant readings such as Phil’s admonishment that the show is written from the perspective of the ‘War on Terror’ without recognising the alternative framing of the violences as ‘the borderless war’. There was evidence of situated readings, for example, the way that the participants positioned the extremes of the War on Terror as “American” in a way that enabled them to be more critical of the War on Terror violences because they distanced themselves from them through their British identities. In each instance I argue the meaning that viewer’s take from Homeland is mediated through the participants own pre-existing positions.

The focus group data presented evidenced that the meaning of Homeland is negotiated, not simply absorbed. For example, there are those who read a very pro-CIA message in the text, whereas there were those viewers who took a more critical account of counter-terror violences. Their pre-existing positionalities matter. Yet it is important not to overstate this, the Homeland text still contains preferred meanings, it is still a place where particular stories of counter-terrorism are being told. If I am to borrow a methodology from audience studies, I also need to heed its warning and not to lurch too quickly to an account that overstates the freedom of the audience as if what the text is saying does not matter (Morley, 2006).

This marks a substantive contribution to the study of terrorism discourse. It has provided a more up to date, and nuanced reading of terrorism discourse, that has shown how the stereotypes identified in earlier television shows and films continue to be reworked and rearticulated

The Context of Consumption: the Links between Security and Identity

The attention paid to the audience has shown the role of the context and mode of consumption in the way terrorism discourses makes sense. By taking the context of consumption into account I detailed how the practice of watching Homeland impacts on viewer identities. In chapter nine
I showed how there is an opportunity offered by engaging with the show, (and taking part in my focus groups) to perform progressive whiteness. This is about how being part of an audience is itself a way to perform particular identities. I showed how Homeland excludes Muslim viewers from the outset, because in the current context of radicalisation it is not possible for Muslim viewers to engage in show about Islamic terrorism with the same level of intellectual detachment as there is for non-Muslim viewers. This is because these two groups read Homeland having already been positioned as either the ‘victims’ of terrorism or as the ‘perpetrators’ of terrorism. There is an expression, and a performance of a non-Muslim privilege that is remade through watching this show. This is another show that is for non-Muslims, written by non-Muslims, about Muslims.

This has wider implications for the way that we read and study terrorism discourse. It shows that engaging with terrorism discourses is always already limited and limiting. It means that we need to recognise how when we call a text ‘popular’ we are only recognising how it is received in very particular spaces and places. It showed how the consumption of the text interacts with the meaning within the show to recreate national identities and therefore the politics inherent in the patterns of consumption.

**Audience studies, popular culture and Security Studies**

The final contribution that this thesis makes is less closely tied to the story within Homeland, but instead is a methodological contribution to Critical Security Studies. It has addressed weaknesses in the Security Studies account of popular culture by incorporating Television Studies and Audience Studies. It builds on a rich and growing literature that theorises the relationship between popular culture and world politics, however it adds audience studies as a field of inquiry that has been neglected in accounts of the relationship between popular culture and world politics. This methodology has been brought in from Cultural Studies and Television Studies. I identified a linear account of how terrorism discourse makes meaning within critical accounts of representations of terrorism. I argued that whilst this body of work has shown how popular culture retells terrorism stories, and how gender and race interrelate, it fails to consider the process of meaning making in its fullest sense. I put forward a method that added people back in to popular culture and security.

This approach has begun to show how meaning is made in the interaction between the text and its audience. In doing so it has shown how terrorism is negotiated through, and with, gendered and racialised subjectivities. This shows how this story of terrorism, and indeed the wider discourses of terrorism interact with the viewer’s subjectivities.
This methodological contribution can improve the study of popular culture and world politics. This thesis is not the only place that the call for the inclusion of audience studies is being made, but hopefully it has put forward a viable methodology with which to operationalise this call and it has demonstrated the additional insights that such an approach can bring.

**Limitations and Future Research**

This research project has limitations. First, these relate to focus groups. Whilst the number and capacity of groups that were held allowed me to answer the research questions as set, they have also opened up alternative avenues for additional research, and were only a small slice of the interactions that viewers have with *Homeland*. Although I have tried to pay critical attention to the fact that I struggled to recruit Muslim viewers of the show, I still feel that a full focus group with Muslim *Homeland* viewers would provide rich and stimulating data on the negotiation of terrorism stories from a particular interpretive community. However, the necessary additional targeted recruitment was outside of the financial and time parameters of this study. Furthermore, research with people that had watched the show from different countries would enable a cross comparison of the reception processes from different national perspectives. In particular an American focus group would have highlighted the specifically American cultural references and resonances of the show, and might have drawn out references and tropes that were missed by me as British researcher. Focus groups with viewers from other countries that the show aired such as France, South Africa or Canada could allow the research to more closely track the way that these stories travel across national borders. Focus groups with viewers in countries such as Iran, Lebanon or Turkey, which feature as locations in *Homeland* would have enabled the investigation to pursue the interest in how ‘The East’ is represented in *Homeland*, and in particular how this is negotiated by residents of these countries.

Whilst I chose *Homeland* because it was popular and because it directly confronted terrorism tropes, this choice is just one example of a terrorism story. It would be intellectually productive to perform this analysis with other television shows, and different types of cultural produce, such as video games, feature films, novels or toys. This would not only add to the breadth of this research, but it could afford further opportunity to interrogate the notion of the ‘popular’ text and modes of consumption.

I need to acknowledge those aspects of identity that are reproduced in this (and other terrorism stories,) such as class and sexuality that were not addressed in this thesis. There were many times that sexuality was present in *Homeland*, from the heteronormative images of family life, to the depiction of the gay Saudi Diplomat. Class was a central feature of the type of
cosmopolitan, jazz loving, wine drinking, and professional identity inhabited by Carrie, and in the consumption practices available to and enjoyed by myself and my participants. These were outside the scope of this study, but they too have much to say about the interaction of security, culture and identity, in the establishment of insider and outsider statuses and the interaction between people’s every day and terrorism.

**Season Four, Drones, and ISIS, Terrorism Stories: To Be Continued...**

The final scene of season three of *Homeland* offers some closure. We see Carrie hand draw a star for Brody onto the memorial for those who died in service of the CIA. This follows her attendance at a wider memorial event for those killed in the Langley bombing, who are praised as “our heroes...America’s heroes” (S3E12 *In Memoriam*). Yet, the story does not end there, and in 2014 Carrie was back on our screen in season four, and season five is set to air in 2015. It is not over for Carrie, for the CIA, or for the viewing public. But, this is perhaps inevitable as terrorism discourse continues to dominate the news media and pervade our lives.

Terrorism now means the Islamic State, the videos of beheadings from Iraq and Syria. Counter-terrorism means targeted drone strikes and counter-radicalisation. Alongside the work from Security Studies that considers the geopolitics of these events, I argue there needs to be ongoing work that considers how these stories are told, how it is that these acts of violence come under the rubric of terror, and what this enables. There needs to be work that looks at how these stories are represented in popular culture and work that asks questions about how this ever evolving spectre of terrorism continues to draw gendered and racialised boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. The interaction between race, gender and terrorism will happen in season four of *Homeland*, as a new cast of characters, embark on new plots in new countries. It will be happening in the latest blockbuster films, in fashion ads, in sitcoms, in cartoons and comics, video games and pop songs. In fact, it will always be happening; ‘we’ must always be insecure, always terrorised, and we must always be entertained. We will never fix meaning, we will never win the war, and we will never be done with terrorism. Both the series and our cultural struggle with post 9/11 are “to be continued ....”

**Popular Culture, Security and Identity**

This thesis was motivated by a concern with how popular culture interacts with security. In particular it sought to uncover how popular cultural narratives work to create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that means that anti-Muslim racism can perpetuate and state violences can be legitimised. Adding insights from Cultural Studies, such as the work on audience studies, enabled a better understanding of security and culture. Bringing these insights to bear has
enabled this thesis to engage with the interaction between terrorism on television and its viewers, and fundamentally between security and subjectivity. It equips the research with a methodology that takes into account the form and content of television. It reinserts the discussion of insecurity and popular culture into its wider cultural setting. Finally, it reinvigorates reception studies as a place of politics.

As Security Studies goes on to look critically at everyday practices and popular culture it can be strengthened by continuing to be interdisciplinary. This makes the boundaries of Security Studies itself insecure, and yet in doing so can sharpen the critical edge of the work, and equip scholars to question, disturb and undermine dominant narratives of security. This is done with the hope that this allows the Security Studies community to rework an idea of security in more positive ways.

Popular culture is indivisible from politics. These stories matter because they are where power and identity are reproduced. It is terrorism discourse that sets the limits of what is possible in counter-terrorism. These stories are where subjectivities are formed, where emotions interact with international relations, where negotiations over meaning take place. This is beyond the scope of cause and effect chains familiar to positivist Security Studies. Instead, analysis of popular culture aims to challenge the ‘common sense’ of world politics. In the words of Grayson et al. (2009: 158) “[p]ractically, the field ought to be concerned with how perceptions of political possibility in global affairs are substantiated.” In this vain, this thesis has sought to challenge the dominant stories of terrorism that fuel anti-Muslim racism, reify traditional gender roles and enable counter-terrorist violences. It asks that we pay attention to the always evolving invocations of race, terror and gender that are used to co-constitute the boundaries of national belonging. It aims to highlight the fluid and malleable nature of these stories to show how they could be otherwise.

Filmography

Films

300, 2006, Zack Snyder. dir. Burbank: Legendary Pictures
Hostel, 2006, Eli Roth. dir. Los Angeles: Next Entertainment, Raw Nerve
How the West Was Lost, 2011, Chris Cottam, London: BBC and Open Mike Productions.
In The Valley of Elah, 2007, Paul Haggis. dir. Burbank: Summit Entertainment, Universal City and Warner Independent Pictures
Iron Man, 2008, Jon Favreau. dir. Burbank: Marvel Studios
Live Free or Die Hard, 2007, Len Wiseman. dir. Los Angeles: Cheyenne Enterprises, Dune Enterprises and Ingenious Film Partners
Redacted, 2007, Brian De Palma. dir. Toronto: The Film Farm
Restrepo, 2010, Sebastian Junger and Tim Hetherington, New York: Outpost Film Productions
Stop Loss, 2008, Kimberley Peirce. dir. Los Angeles: MTV Films
Taxi to the Dark Side, 2007, Alex Gibney. dir. New York: Jigsaw Picture, Wider Film Projects, and Tall Woods
View From the top, 2003, Bruno Baretton, dir. Santa Monica: Miramax (presents), Brad Grey Pictures and Cohen Productions.

Television Series
24, 2001-2010, Twentieth Century Fox, Los Angeles. Distributed by 20th Century, Los Angeles, and created by Joel Surnow and Robert Cochran.
Borgen, 2010-2013, DR Fiktion, Copenhagen. Distributed by DR TV, Copenhagen and created by Adam Price.
*Scandal*, 2012-present, ABC Studios and ShondaLand, Burbank and Los Angeles. Distributed by Disney -ABC Domestic Television, Burbank and created by Shonda Rhimes.


*The Bridge*, 2011-present, Nimbus Film, Copenhagen. Distributed by ZDF, Mainz and created by Hans Rosenfeldt.

*The Good Wife*, 2009-present, CBS Productions and Scott Free Productions and KingSize Productions and Small Wishes Productions, Studio City and Los Angeles. Distributed by CBS Television Distribution, Studio City and created by Robert King and Michelle King.


**Television Episodes**


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Appendices

Appendix 1. Homeland Episode Filmography

Season one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. in series</th>
<th>No. in season</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Original air date</th>
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Appendix 2. Focus Group Descriptions

Focus Group One

Held: 04/12/2013
Location: Leeds
Participants: Anne (24, Chemistry PhD)
Beth (32, Sociology PhD)
Claire (27, Accountant)
Dave (28, Engineer)
Rachel (48, Occupation not disclosed)

Focus Group Two

Held: 08/01/2014
Location: Leeds
Participants:
Sarah, (45, GP)
Jane (49, Performing Artist)
Giles, (31 Farmer)
Tom (42, IT Consultant)

Focus Group Three (Journalists)

Held: 29/01/2014
Location: London
Participants:
Siobhan, (33, Web Journalist, UK National Outlet)
Phil, (34 Television Journalist, International Media Outlet)
Malik (36 Television News Producer, UK National Outlet)
Henry (46, Television News Producer, UK National Outlet)
Dom (38, Web Journalist, UK National Outlet)
Greg (35, Producer, Journalist PR, Freelance)
James (Journalist, International Outlet)

Focus Group Four

Held 19/02/2014
Location London
Participants:
Barnaby, (28, Political Risk Analyst)
Kate (27, Opera Singer)
Emma (32, Archivist and Librarian)
Laura (29, Marketing Consultant)

**Focus Group Five (participants with a mix of racial heritages)**

Held: 26/03/2014
Location: London
Participants:
Ben, (29, Management Consultant)
Seth, (31, Accounts Manager)
Tessa, (26, Consultant Radiologist)
Vish (30, Lawyer)

**Supplementary Focus Group, Muslim Views One**

Held: 28/5/2014
Location: Leeds
Participants:
Bilal (24, Student)
Ibrahim (32, NHS Worker)

**Supplementary Focus Group, Muslim Views Two**

Held: 04/07/2014
Location: Leeds
Participants:
Aafi (25, Taxi Driver)
Nabiha, (23, Student)
Mary (Mary only stayed for short time at the beginning as it became apparent that she did not fit the selection criteria, data not included in the thesis)