

## Characterization of Carrie Mathison in Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon's *The Homeland* TV Series (Season One)

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### Abstract

Carrie Mathison's powerful role in Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon's *Homeland* TV series has evoked a great literary interest in the genre of Crime Drama. Carrie's 'omnipresent' and 'omniscient' role in the TV series has indeed been instrumental in 'Characterization' in *Homeland* American television series does play a pivotal role in determining the success of the plot? Through the 'Metamorphosis' effect (the change in individual characters), Gansa and Howard the creators of the television series have evidently evoked mixed feelings between various characters and juxtaposed their roles at various instances.

### Introduction

The *Homeland* TV Series released in 2011 has been for nominated for numerous awards and has importantly won five golden globe awards including the best actress for the female lead being awarded to Claire Danes (Carrie Mathison). It is the construction of this great character armed with a powerful narrative voice that has yielded in the success of the series, which is critically important for its vitality among the overall viewership.

According to E.M. Forster (1967) the round characters play an active role in the entire course of the novel or the television series episode. Carrie Mathison's role as a round character takes center stage in the entire season as it is upon her actions the plot is completely constructed. Her dire need to search for the ultimate truth lies upon her ability to constantly search for its essence.

### Carrie's Omnipresence

Carrie's 'omnipresent' undertakes a dramatic role. Carrie in essence is present throughout the course of the series. It is around her presence the other characters' thoughts and actions are centered upon. She constantly travels between Charlotte, USA and Tel Aviv, Israel and quite emphatically blends in their culture. She frequently engages upon the conversation with other principal characters like Saul Berenson and Peter Quinn.

Geographical dislocation does not impede the actions of Carrie Mathison as she is ordered by the CIA directorate to blend in various places out of operational necessity in order to access information. Carrie constantly travels between USA and Israel and makes constant attempt to fit into its order. The principal of Local Analogy unveiled by Linguists plays an immense role at this juncture. Hand gestures of Carrie, the imbibition of local language, attire, cuisine and culture of Israel, which has been constantly been adopted by her. In essence, Carrie soothes and blends herself completely in to the Israeli culture as much as she has been at her hometown.

Although Carrie is been ordered to travel and gain information and not be emotionally driven towards her interrogating prisoners, she finds it hard not be attached with them. She is often positioned in certain inescapable circumstances out of complete necessity by her superiors but is bound by her emotions, which superimposes on it. These emotions are often portrayed as 'love', and 'lust' respectively and submerge her into it as Carrie finds it excruciatingly difficult to differentiate them. But, what make her character powerful and even more interesting are the efforts she garners in order to complete the given task without any shortfalls.

### Carrie's Omniscience

Carrie's Omniscience in essence could be construed upon in light of 'stream of consciousness' technique first unveiled by William James in his work *Principles of Psychology* (1890). According to William James it is:

"the uninterrupted and constant flow of individual's inner thought process" (Literary Terms 2014)

Carrie's inner thought process is vividly captured in the television series. Through the medium of visual media Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon have portrayed Carrie's inner thinking process. Carrie in the course of the first season is subjected to psychological observation. She suffers from Bi-polar disorder and is given Electro shock therapy as she suffers from Short-term memory loss as it is evident from the following extract taken from the script:

"Saul storms into the pre-op area of a hospital. He meets with Carrie, who is being prepped for a type of electro-shock therapy. It comes with numerous risks, including short-term memory loss, but Carrie assures him this is what she wants. He says she was right about Abu Nazir and tells her about the drone attack." (*Homeland* 2011)

The passage above clearly indicates that Carrie's inner thought process during these evaluations yield in

the culmination of the required information as according to the viewers is the single most important scene in Season one. It is through this important piece of observation Carrie is able to solve the mystery of the terrorist who is planning to attack USA.

Concurrently, Jazz music also plays an instrumental role in aiding and soothing Carrie's active aggravated state of mind. Every time Carrie needs to undertake enormous mental tasks she makes constant effort in calming herself down by either listening to music or subjecting herself to morphine intake. In one of her psychological observations Carrie's scene is described thus:

“She mumbles "Don't let me forget that" in the direction of Maggie, but nobody really knows what she said.”

(Homeland 2011)

The passage clearly indicates the act of Carrie not knowing what she originally intended to convey. The other characters are perplexed in inquiring as to identify the principal information, which she has partially conveyed. The creators of the series imbibe a powerful suspense through the character of Carrie Mathison as without her Omniscience the real plot and the process associated with it will cease to exist.

### **Conclusion**

The characterization of Carrie in *Homeland* is unique, original and manifested through ‘omnipresence’ and ‘omniscience’ respectively. Her unique ability of staying focused towards the operations unveiled by her superiors is considered extraordinary. As a round character Carrie's role in the series is imminent for without her constant powerful presence the success of the original plot would by definition cease to exist.

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