A Woman Among Men the Language of Madness and Power on TV – The Case of Carrie Mathison in Homeland

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Abstract

This study analyzes the language used in the TV series *Homeland* that represents a predominantly male working environment, the world of intelligence, when a key female empowered protagonist, Carrie Mathison, becomes disempowered due to her mental illness, bipolarity. After conducting an initial pilot study consisting of one episode from each of the seven seasons, we decided to focus on the ideolect and slang of intelligence circles, deixis and pronominal reference, irony, variations in register, patterns of repetition and doublespeak for this purpose. This paper concludes with a discussion of how each of these analytical tools work toward either strengthening Carrie Mathison's power or indicating her disempowerment in relation to her social context and working environment.

Keywords: Power; Madness; Women Empowerment; Deixis; Pronominal Reference; TV Series.

1. Introduction

This study examines the language used in a TV series that represents a predominantly male working environment, the world of intelligence, when a key female empowered protagonist becomes disempowered due to her mental illness, bipolarity. The main protagonist is Carrie Mathison, a CIA agent, in the series *Homeland*. *Homeland* has achieved high acclaim and was one of the most watched TV shows in the United States [1:54]. Shows like *Homeland* are embedded in hegemonic power structures that maintain the status quo and reinforce dominant societal narratives. These products convey something greater and – by placing them into a historical context – it is possible to unpack what is embedded in the product's signs and representations. The first season of *Homeland* aired on in 2011, placing the show in a post-9/11 context, pitched to an American audience with heightened fears and suspicion of the Middle East and the Islamic faith.

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Furthermore, *Homeland* was based on an Israeli television show, *Prisoners of War*. Its creator, Gideon Raff – also the creator of *Homeland* – now serves as executive producer of the show, along with many other Israelis on the production team. This has led to the politics of the Israel-Arab nations conflict being implicit in the production of *Homeland*, in addition to having been created within the post-September 11 historical context that serves as a discursive phenomenon framing the series. According to Foucault [2] a field of knowledge operates within a certain system of power, at a particular historical moment, providing an individual a framework to understand the world. This is the backdrop for the series debut. In terms of male vs. female protagonists with mental illness, male heroes manage to combine psychiatric issues and romantic success, but for film heroines this is not so [3:61]. Biographical films with male protagonists, such as *Shine* and *A Beautiful Mind*, depict heroic psychological struggles as climaxing in enlightenment, but those about mad women, such as *The Hours*, proffer tragic visions of female personal struggle, often ending in death [3:76]. What is more, findings from a study by Swann and his colleagues [4] suggest that a higher percentage of bipolar participants have self-reported criminal behavior or conviction as compared to participants presenting other forms of mental illness. Whereas this may also be true in TV representations, criminal activity appeared frequently in *Homeland* on the part of protagonist Carrie because of the nature of her profession. Fulfilling her duties within national security while, at the same time, ignoring a superior who disregarded her professional hunches, meant – for Carries – breaking the law. Further, her criminal activity actually concealed another stereotype often associated with bipolar disorder, i.e. professional incompetence [3:73]. Sociologist Joan Busfield's [5:234] has found that men's disruptive behavior due to mental illness is often viewed as the product of agency, i.e. behavior for which they are to be held responsible. In contrast, women's disruptions have often been seen as something outside a woman's control for which agency has been denied. Projected on TV screens and in films alike, mad men are often represented as active heroes struggling against psychiatric adversity, but mad women are more typically represented as the passive victims of their disordered psyches [3:77]. The historical context, the timing and the world of intelligence as setting, added to the fact that the main female protagonist was bipolar all make for a complex set of variables when examining the language of *Homeland*. Below we discuss our corpus (§1.1) and methodology (§1.2). Section 2 introduces the constructs of storytelling and power within the TV serial genre. There follows a description of *Homeland* distinguished as a psychological spy thriller (§3). Section 4 hones in on the language of power in the series and section 5 focuses on the language of madness and disempowerment. We end this paper with a discussion of findings and the study's constraints and limitations (§6) but also with recommendations for future study (§7).

1.1. Corpus

All eighty-four episodes of Homeland, divided into seven seasons with twelve episodes each, were watched. After examining episodes in English, the original language of the series, we screened the oral texts for the most salient pragmatic features for this study by running a pilot study, that we discuss below (§1.2). We used the audiovisual product to choose text samples and only successively did we turn to scripts available online[1] from which to extract relevant text samples. In order to avoid inconsistencies, it was necessary to once again hear all sound tracks prior to inserting text extracts in our tables. Text samples were chosen in terms of quantitative and

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https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/episode_scripts.php?tv-show=homeland

qualitative salience.After carrying out our pilot study and seeing that the recurrence of particular language categories throughout all seasons, we opted to choose our text samples from seasons one and two of the series. Analytical tools selected to examine this corpus are pragmatic and interactional in nature. We include information before and after text samples concerning the context of communication (situationality), interactional dominance, linguistic politeness and impoliteness, direct and indirect speech acts.

1.2. Methodology

After viewing all seasons and all episodes, our impression was that the series was strewn with language that had an emotional, psychological and manipulatory function, full of foul language and dysphemisms. Further analysis showed a preponderance of deontic modal verbs, with simple and complex forms of repetition [6,7,8]. In order to select overarching features, we carried out a pilot study of *Homeland* episodes so as to highlight a series of emerging phenomena in the language. We examined the language of one episode of each season: episode one in season one, episode two in season two, episode three in season three, episode four in season four, episode five in season five, episode six in season six and episode seven in season seven. This made it possible to choose the following language categories to analyze in order to see what they could tell us about how the language in the series expresses power relations, allusions to madness, and ultimately disempowerment in relation to the main protagonist:

- Ideolect and slang of intelligence circles
- Deixis and pronominal reference
- Irony
- Variations in register
- Patterns of repetition
- Doublespeak.

Table 1: Transcript conventions

Convention	Function
Bold text	Signals the portions of text that is discussed
Underlined text	Guides the reader concerning two different phenomena
/	This symbol placed after the speaker's name in the first column indicates overlapping conversational turns
Space between utterances	Indicates a pause greater than two seconds
Punctuation	Suggest prosodic features
"…"	Verbatim repetition of dialogue

Our text samples, presented in tabular format, have two columns: the left column features the speakers' names

and any 'stage' direction, such as background noise, paralinguistic phenomena or the like; the right column includes the text uttered. Table 1 lists our transcript conventions.

2. Storytelling Power and the TV Serial Genre

Storytelling is the art of telling stories as a persuasive communication strategy. Couched in this light, storytelling can be understood to extend to the notion of 'cultural hegemony' and to the underlying theme of this paper, power through language use. Indeed Gramsci [9] tells us that at the basis of power resides the coexistence of both consent and coercion: if consent prevails then hegemony sets in; if coercion prevails then dominance ensues. Hegemony is cultural dominance of one social group/unit/context over another. It is exercised daily through shared beliefs and practices aiming to impose ideas, visions or perspectives that all lead to an intricate mechanism of control [10]. Hegemony is an extrinsic channel of power that is deeply rooted in consent, or better, the ability to buy up – through persuasion – a person's commitment to a political or cultural project [11]. The parallelism here with television is quite fitting, in that Gramsci's notion of hegemony can perfectly be transposed to the logics of this telecommunications medium. Consent is the driving force behind television and, over the last decades, the language of television has undergone substantial change.

In society and culture we have gone from a rationalist and utilitarian paradigm to one focused on the emotional sphere and – if we believe that television mirrors reality – there are reasons to believe that this phenomenon has also made its way to television screens. Differently from past historical periods, our world today is characterized by what García [12] would define as emotional culture. Emotionality permeates all aspects of the human and social domains. Emotions lie at the basis of our self-awareness and our knowledge of the world, since our values and our position in society are gleaned through our emotions. Television has quite masterfully made use of this need for emotionality, making it mainstream, in the TV series genre.

TV series are extremely popular since they are the emblem and reflection of a profoundly human prerogative: all societies aim to reproduce themselves – and their own internal conflicts – within a cultural order, i.e. a semiotic structure of meanings and practices that forms society itself [13:251]. Of course the emotional sphere is also a basis for the creation of important film productions but, in comparison to television, these films are less accessible and often their more opaque subtexts are understood with greater difficulty.

The series as genre is extremely effective because there is the element of the time factor – it is a story 'in instalments' – where our emotions are fragmented over the development of episodes. This mechanism allows TV series producers the time it takes to develop the plot, the psychology and characterization of protagonists but, above all, it offers them the opportunity to create a loyal base of viewers. Differently from movies, there is a continuous renewal of emotivity, since the end of subplots never coincides with the end of an episode. Series always leave their doors open to an array of infinite possibilities for the storyline to proceed, thus also creating a system of emotional 'instalments'.

This generates in viewers expectations, trepidation and attachment to characters that they come to know through the succession of episodes and the development of series seasons.

3. *Homeland* – **Psychological spy thriller**

"Action films seldom offer images of empowered femininity and, in fact, to find substantial treatments of mentally distressed heroines in any comparable genre, one must turn instead to psychological thrillers" (Harper 2009: 86). In *Homeland* CIA agent Carrie Mathison's gender, bipolar disorder, unorthodox counterterrorism methods (illegal wiretapping and 'sleeping with the enemy', literally), alongside her stern independence and 'pathological' devotion to her job, all challenge the conventions of the male-oriented spy thriller [15:140]. There is a paranoid style to *Homeland* that is 'biologically' wired into Mathison, whose highly emotional and manic episodes provide her with a "superpower disorder" (as Carrie herself and *Homeland*'s producers describe it) through which she is able to gather, interpret, and intuit intelligence in ways that her rational male superiors cannot [15:140-1].

Homeland narrates the story of Carrie Mathison, a high ranking CIA Counterterrorism Center agent who is affected by bipolarity. After returning from a Middle East undercover assignment, Carrie gets word from an Iraqi prisoner that a US marine who had been converted and is complicit with Abu Nazir – head of an Al Qaeda underground cell – is plotting the greatest terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11. Carrie's fate intertwines with that of Nicholas Brody, a Navy sergeant who had been missing for the last eight years and then found by the US army during a delicate rescue operation. Once returned home, Brody is celebrated as a national hero but Carrie, remembering the tip she received in Iraq, has reason to believe that Brody is in fact the convert who is complicit with Abu Nazir. Determined to unmask Brody, Carrie turns to the only person she trusts in the CIA, her friend and mentor Saul Berenson. Despite his esteem for her, Saul does not support her theories because he feels they are circumstantial, without proof and he refuses to communicate her ideas to the powers-that-be. In order to give him proof Carrie installs video cameras, microphones and bugs in the sergeant's home. Throughout the first season of the series we see Carrie involved – guided by a maniacal obsession due to her mental illness – in avoiding the threat of a terrorist attack.

True to the American spirit, *Homeland* depicts a nation that – like a Phoenix – arises from the ashes after the attack to the Twin Towers, but also a nation that has a sword of Damocles hanging over its head from the constant threat of new terrorist attacks where instability reigns. Through *Homeland* we see a nation on the alert, which refuses to lower its guard because an imminent attack may loom on the horizon. The 9/11 wound is still fresh since the image of planes flying into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center are still imprinted in the minds of Americans.

Homeland represents a new twist in relation to the spy thriller genre. In all thrillers the main goal is to arouse primordial emotions, suspense and mystery, offering a shot of adrenaline through a sense of vulnerability and a gradual loss of control [16:5], but in *Homeland* there is the added element of the producer cashing in on the sociocultural anxiety in the US after 9/11 [12:192]. The series indeed embodies all aspects of a war on terror, the atmosphere is ominous and insecurity abounds. The element of fear in *Homeland* is evoked by a credible threat, i.e. a potential terrorist attack on US soil. According to Faludi [17:24], one of the many virtues of American TV is being able to reproduce in the spy thriller genre a cross-section of a country's psyche after it underwent national upheaval in 2001 by witnessing its invulnerability crumble, thus creating the psychological spy thriller.

If we follow the characterization of the serial genre offered by Steiner [18], we realize that *Homeland* corresponds perfectly to a TV 'trauma', a genre that includes real events based on collective pain heavily affecting the viewer's emotions rather than their intellect. Suspense is offered by the dense plot of deceit and, through a refined strategy of narrative manipulation, the authors are able to create a climate of constant suspicion [12: 202].

Homeland thus may be considered a way of atoning and processing national grief through the means of television, like a sort of relief valve within which there are several compensation mechanisms, prime amongst all is the obsession of domestic security.

4. The language of power in *Homeland*

We now analyze the language of power and how it is distinguished in the series. This section is divided into five parts: *Homeland*'s ideolect and slang of intelligence circles (§4.1), pronominal reference and deixis (§4.2), irony (§4.3), variations in register (§4.4), patterns of repetition (§4.5).

4.1. Homeland's ideolect and slang of intelligence circles

We start off our analysis by describing what has emerged as '*Homeland*-speak', the language that characterizes the series context, or working environment, and thus that recurs throughout the seven seasons.

In terms of lexis, being a psychological spy thriller, we find a lexical repertoire of espionage and, by extension, lexis from the military and law enforcement domains, which, for all intents and purposes, can be defined as specialized vocabulary or – extending the personal to ingroup members – as a genuine *Homeland* idiolect.

Cabré [in 19:15-6] believes there are two types of specialized vocabulary: one is a common platform, consisting of terms with a wider usage, and the other is a type of specialized vocabulary composed of strictly specialized terms, where it represents specific scientific and technical terminology.

 Lerat [20:20] mentions that "specialized language is a natural language considered as a vector of the specialized knowledge".

Another opinion from descriptive linguists emphasizes that "each specialized language is a simple version of the general language" [21:119], even simply lexical options.

Specialized language is therefore a functional subcode for circumscribed social or professional groups, used for rapid comprehension of implicit meaning and, as such, it presupposes the exercise of power.

Using it means using intentionally opaque language which automatically equates non accession to outgroup members.

The *Homeland* ideolect is almost completely constituted by lexis that identifies intelligence circles, referring to espionage and antiterrorism. Table 2 includes a sampling that recurs throughout the series.

Table 2: The *Homeland* ideolect

Lexis/Expression	Meaning
Asset	An essential human or technical resource for the success of an operation; it could refer to an undercover field agent or an informant with sensitive data
Classified	Used for secret files whose information is only accessible to high-ranking military or Department of Defense officials with clearance
Declassified	Files that have been allowed wider circulation once the classified contents have been processed
Cover	An agent's new identity whose background must correspond to a reason for being in a given geographical area
Exfiltration operation	Underground operation to safeguard an undercover agent whose cover was 'blown' (see Table 2); may apply to a deserter, political refugee or a collaborating witness and their family
Mole	A spy infiltrated in important institutional or private sector offices that acquires sensitive information that they reveal to enemy of adversary organizations
Sleeper	An agent that behaves just like any other civilian, who only acts in the midst of hostile situations
To terminate	Eliminate, execute someone
Black operation/black op	A non-official operation on behalf of the government, government agency or military organization, characterized by not fully complying with international law; for their very nature, these operations can never fully be ascribed to any one agency
Case officer	An agent belonging to a specific intelligence agency in charge of managing other agents, confidential sources and/or operations
Handler	Individual responsible for the management of agents during an operation
Station chief	Agent at the head of an intelligence agency foreign station
Operative	Field agent
To be compromised	When an agent's cover is 'blown' (see Table 2)
To be a go-by person	Being an intermediary

The protagonists in Homeland make extensive use of slang. However, as mentioned, their specialized language is only used by a restricted group of people in order to render the communication opaque to others so as to highlight ingroup membership.

This subcode – if you will – is even more exclusive than specialized language. Indeed expressions are marked for diasphasia because they are only use on some occasions, and marked for diastratia because these distinctive traits have been developed within a group [22:154-168].

Table 3: *Homeland* slang

Lexis/Expression	Meaning
Dead drop	Method used to pass on messages or sensitive information using a secret location; both sender and receiver never meet in person, thus maintaining their cover
Bagman	Agent that pays spies and corrupts or bribes authorities
Blowback	Term used to describe the consequences or undersired side effects deriving from a failed secret operation
Blown	Discovery of an agent's true identity or of undercover activity
Throwaway	Agent considered to be dispensable or who may be sacrificed
Burned	When a case officer or agent is discoverd and they can no longer be used
To be outed	When an agent willingly exposes their identity
To be made	When an agent shadowing a person is discovered

4.2. Pronominal reference and deixis

Power and language is also evinced through a microanalysis of pronouns and deixis in texts. The use and meaning of pronouns in discourse is influenced by the social 'spaces' within which people and groups are positioned or position themselves [23]. Pronouns can be used to indicate or obscure collectivity and individuality [24], to include and exclude the audience, to refer to 'self' or 'others', or as a means of polarization between ingroups and outgroups [25].

Pronominal reference or 'indexical expressions' need be considered within their context in order to understand what intention is being conveyed. In a process of 'pronominal scaling', Chilton [26:58] uses a three-dimensional approach to deictically indicate a person's position in a spatial axis:

The speaker (Self, which may be *I* or a *we*-group) is at *here*. The entities indexed by second-person and third-person pronouns are "situated" along *s*, some nearer to, some more remote from *self*. It is not that we can actually measure the 'distances' from Self; rather, the idea is that people tend to place people and things along a scale of remoteness from the self, using background assumptions and indexical clues. (original emphasis)

The use of pronominal choices could thus determine physical distance or closeness to the speaker, but they can also be used metaphorically and "create alignments between talkers and their topics and their hearers" [27:58]. Looking at first person pronouns 'I' and 'we' is of interest because they indicate who the speaker identifies with: inclusive vs. exclusive 'we' because it has the power to include and exclude the audience; 'us' vs. 'them' because they can separate the 'self' from 'other'. The second person pronoun 'you' could refer specifically to someone or, as a generic pronoun, it can be used in a very general way referring to anyone. Third person pronouns are used as an exclusive strategy for other-presentation where 'they' is used to create an image of 'other', to divide people in groups, sometimes with a negative connotation, and to distance the 'self' from 'others', to completely avoid responsibility by distinguishing an 'us' vs. 'them' separation.

The scene in Table 3 sees Carrie at the home of the Imam suspected to have offered refuge to Tom Walker, a deserter conspiring against the US government. She is interested in getting Walker to collaborate with the FBI and CIA. [2]

Table 4: S01E09, 24.38 - 25.39

Speaker	Talk
Carrie	Imam, I've done my research. **I know** of your work in the community, the woman's refuge you run with Father Rose from St. Agnes' down the street. I have no doubt **you and I want the same thing**.
Imam	Which is **a better world**.
Carrie	And **a better America**.
	If there's another terrorist attack, this country is primed to turn on itself.
	You and I both know **we're** halfway there already.
	But if an attack happens that can be traced back to information that you chose to withhold when you were given the chance the mosque, this community that you worked so hard to build **they'll put a match to it all**. **Our only hope**, and it's a good one, is that **people like us** put **our heads together** and **help each other**. Now I need to find Tom Walker, will **you help me**?

Carrie uses carefully chosen lexis since she knows that the use of direct, forceful language with a man of faith such as the Imam would not work. She begins by showing that she is informed of this work within the community, and then with the phrase "you and I want the same thing" she creates an atmosphere of mutual identification. What they both want is obviously peace. She uses personal deixis and pronouns that – in this case – create the sense of inclusion. Initially Carrie used a first person personal pronoun 'I' to distinguish herself and the fact that she has done something relevant to the situation (finding out about the Imam's work). This is an actual 'declaration of intent' that brings her closer to her interlocutor, she respects his work and has no intention of nullifying it. This concept is strengthened through a series of inclusive pronouns: "you and I both know", "we're halfway there", "our only hope", "people like us", "put our heads together", "help each other", "will you help me".

By way of conversational implicature [28], Carrie recognizes – even if in a veiled fashion – that her country has its faults. In order to urge his collaboration, without antagonizing him, she alludes to the possibility that "they" – and therefore not her – will not hesitate to eliminate the Muslim community if, because of its lack of collaboration, the US should again be attacked.

4.3. Irony

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[2] Text samples are labeled sequentially and indicate where the sample is extracted from. Therefore S01E09, 24.38 - 25.39 means the text is from season one, episode nine, appearing between minutes 24.38 and 25.39 of the episode..

The construct of irony is also tied to implicature. Grice [28] suggests the speakers using irony deliberately flout his maxim of truthfulness, implicating the opposite of what was literally said. Irony is used to avoid declaring intentions or to mitigate communication in relation to intentions. In oral texts irony is often signaled through a strategic use of prosody and it can also be considered a face-saving strategy [29,30], both for the speaker and for the receiver of the utterance, since it is less direct and more linguistically polite. Carrie often uses irony; Tables 4 and 5 illustrate two such examples.

Table 5: S01E09, 24.38 - 25.39

Speaker	Talk
Brody	So, did I pass?
Carrie	The polygraph? Yeah… **with flying colors.**
	(giggles)

In Table 4 Carrie e Brody are alone in his care after Brody had taken a polygraph test. With the idiomatic expression "with flying colors", Carrie employs the decidedly opaque semantic mechanism of irony to conceal the fact that she believed he was able to 'bypass' the polygraph in some way, thus resulting truthful.

In Table 5 Carrie decides to respond to a misogynous comment ("We're running on a hooker?") made by an insubordinate agent, her inferior, in order to put him in his place ("If by running a hooker you mean someone who's out there risking her life while you're sitting around a conference table, then yeah, we are!"). In the scene Carrie and her CIA team are looking for Abu Nazir, one of America's 'most wanted' men, who they feel was organizing a new, large-scale terrorist attack on the US. Nazir had disappeared and the only hope of capturing him was Lynne Reed, an escort that Carrie had been using for some time as asset. Lynne had heard Abu Nazir speak with Prince Farid, with whom she has intimate contact, having infiltrated his harem. Being one of his preferred harem members, Lynne had access to information that might have changed the course of CIA investigations.

Table 6: S01E03, 08.42 - 8.53

Speaker	Talk
Agent	We're running on a hooker?
Carrie	**If by running a hooker you mean someone who's out there risking her life while you're sitting around a conference table, then yeah, we are!**

Certain of an imminent attack, Carrie convinces Lynne to make a copy of Farid's mobile hard drive. She reluctantly accepts, counting on CIA protection. However Estes, second in the CIA chain of command, had not

authorized protection and surveillance, and Lynne lost her life.

4.4. Variations in register

We here subscribe to the definition of register offered by Biber [31],

The description of a register includes three major components: the situational context, the typical linguistic features, and the functional relationships between the first two components […]. The situational context involves description of the circumstances of text production and reception, as well as the relationships among participants. […] The linguistic analysis includes all lexical and grammatical characteristics that are typical of the text variety. Having viewed all episodes of *Homeland*'s seven seasons it was possible to single out recurring shifts in register, e.g. from the specialized language couched in intelligence circles to the use of discourse features that more typically distinguish talk in the field when, for example, Carrie interacts with assets or informants. In Table 6 we see Carrie speaking to a man met while she and Brody were together on a tryst. In the exchange we see Carrie's use of irony (§4.3) and her accommodation to the man's situational context, that of the male White nationalist. The stylistic choices aim to enter his world and show him she sides with his political beliefs. She lowers her register by using the discourse marker 'like'.

Table 7: S01E07, 5.19 - 06.01

Speaker	Talk
Carrie	**What's up, chief?**
Man	You want a ride?
Carrie	I got one
Man	What, Opie,[3] over there?
Carrie	88, huh?
Man	Yeah, it's my jersey number from high school
Carrie	Or code for HH. Eighth letter of the alphabet: *"Heil Hitler"*
Man	You're not just a pretty face, are you?
Carrie	You guys are White Nation, huh? **That's cool**.
Man	It's Aryan pride, baby
Carrie	**So what's the plan? Like, world domination?**
Man	Yeah, that's right
Carrie	**Like, any time soon?**
Man	You wanna hear about it? You can come outside. We got a van
Carrie	**Hell, yeah! I love sucking Nazi dick!**
Man	You know, I don't like people fucking with me
Carrie	Well, who does? Who does like people fucking with them?

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[3] Reference is made here to Sergeant Brody's resemblance to Opie Taylor, the protagonist of TV program *Andy Griffith Show* that aired from 1960 to 1968.

Discourse markers of this kind may be used as crutches or fillers. They very often are related to interactional linguistic politeness, endearing the listener in certain contexts and thus genres, and make for a highly effective expedient, as in the case of Table 5. Carrie uses "like" strategically to adhere more closely to the man's register. As mentioned, there is also use of irony that intends to expose the Nazi doctrine: "so what's the plan? Like, world domination?" and "like, anytime soon", or the vulgar phrase "hell yeah! I love sucking Nazi dick" used to affect the male nationalist's sense of machismo.

4.5. Patterns of repetition

There is no doubt that different forms of repetition have the function of organizing text. Leaning on Michael Hoey's work [32,33,34,6] with regard to his taxonomy of different forms of repetition that make for lexical cohesion and text coherence, we examine: simple/complex repetition, where repeated lexical items may vary grammatically and patterned sequences of recurring lexis. Tables 7 and 8 are presented here together because they are part of a single macro-scene that, for ease of reference, we have decided to divide. The context is Langley, location of the CIA, where Carrie is interrogating Brody in the hope she might obtain information concerning Abu Nazir's plan. The scene is a peak of harbored pathos, both protagonists are at a moment of truth: Brody is overburdened by his lies and guilt for having almost set off a bomb, while Carries is tormented by her conflicting feelings towards him. Since the patterns of repetition referred to are included, and span, both Tables 7 and 8, we discuss them after Table 8 below.

Table 8: S02E05, 23.15 - 25.34

Speaker	Talk
Carrie	You broke my heart, you know. **Was that easy** for you**? Was that fun?** Because of you, **I questioned** my own sanity. **I had myself committed** to a mental institution. **I lost my job**, too. **I lost my place in the world. I lost everything**
Brody	I just told Estes the truth. You were harassing my family
Carrie	The truth? Bullshit. You came this close to blowing him into a million pieces. Did you tell him that?
Brody	I didn't wear a bomb
Carrie	Did you even think about me when you went to Estes? **Tell me you at least felt a pang of regret, a teeny little sliver of guilt**. You said before that I'm obsessed with you. You really think that?
Brody	Yeah, I do
Carrie	**So it's a one-way street? You have no feelings for me? Go ahead. I'm a big girl. I can take it.** Come on, Brody. Look me in the eye and tell me you felt nothing up in that cabin
Brody	I'm sorry I hurt you
Carrie	"Hurt" doesn't quite cover it. So did you? Did you feel anything, huh?
Brody	Oh, for Christ's sake, Carrie, we were playing each other
Carrie	No, I wasn't. Not the whole time, anyway! I remember thinking I was exactly where I belonged
Brody	I know what you're doing and it's not gonna work

Table 9: S02E05, 33.01 - 37-16

Speaker	Talk
Carrie	**You're a good man, Brody. You're a good man** because **you didn't explode the vest you were wearing, right?**
Brody	I wasn't wearing a vest
Carrie	**You decided not to** kill those people. **You decided to** let Walden live. Even Walden. **Dana called you, didn't she?** While you were there in the panic room with Walden. She used my cell. What did she say?
Brody	She asked me to come home, I said I would. And I did
Carrie	She asked you to come home, and you did Why? **Maybe because** you suddenly understood that killing yourself and ruining Dana's life wouldn't bring Issa back. **Maybe because** you knew then how much you loved your own child. **Maybe because** you were just sick of death. **That's the Brody** I'm talking to. **That's the Brody** that knows the difference between warfare and terrorism. **That's the Brody** I met up in that cabin. **That's the Brody** I fell in love with. What is Abu Nazir's plan?
Brody	I don't know
Carrie	**But there is a plan, right?** To attack America?
Brody	Yes
Carrie	Who does know the plan?
Brody	Uh, Roya Hammad, maybe. I'm not sure
Carrie	Roya Hammad? Who gave you the suicide vest?
Brody	A tailor from Gettysburg in Pennsylvania

After two hours of extenuating interrogation that did not lead to the expected results, Carrie strategically adopts an emotional approach, similar to the dynamics between psychologist and patient. The accent is no longer on the attack and potential bombing but rather on their relationship and the consequences on Carrie's family and the nation, attempting to engender an emotional reaction. The dialogue is full of rhetorical devices, with short utterances attributing an air of drama but, at the same time, dynamism. There are also recurring paired, triadic and quaternary patterns in the talk:

- Repetition with pronominal reference: "I questioned my own sanity", "I had myself committed to a mental institution";
- Partial repetition of the referent: "was that easy for you? Was that fun?!, "I lost my job, too. I lost my place in the world. I lost everything", "You decided not to kill those people. You decided to let Walden live";
- Repetition of a structure: "Maybe because you suddenly understood that killing yourself and ruining Dana's life wouldn't bring Issa back. Maybe because you knew then how much you loved your own

child. Maybe because you were just sick of death”;

- Repetition where a structure of presupposition is again proposed that runs counter to the previous line of questioning in Table 8: “That's the Brody I'm talking to. That's the Brody that knows the difference between warfare and terrorism. That's the Brody I met up in that cabin. That's the Brody I fell in love with”.

It should also be pointed out that this is the first occasion in the series when Carrie's 'sanity' (Table 7) is ever mentioned.

Another high point in the interrogation is when Carrie asks Brody if he ever felt anything for her. Carrie's lexical choice is quite telling in that she uses terms usually associated with the semantic field of children, denoting once again her ability to quickly shift register gears when required: “a teeny little sliver of guilt e I'm a big girl. I can take it”.

One, final aspect to highlight here are questions often posed with phatic indicators in a final position, such as “so did you? Did you feel anything, huh?, you're a good man, Brody. You're a good man because you didn't explode the vest you were wearing, right?, but there is a plan, right?”, and question tags such as in “Dana called you, didn't she?”

5. The language of madness and disempowerment: doublespeak

As mentioned previously, Carrie's professional world is mostly a male environment. Here she finds difficulty in having her voice heard. Added to this environment is the unease she contends with – day in and day out – in relation to her mental illness. The series seems to offer a fairly accurate account of her bipolarity, refraining from communicating sensationalism. Carries is depicted as a highly efficient CIA operative, a successive agent, the best in her field, and not as a social misfit. Paradoxically her illness makes her what she is, i.e. the latent obsessive nature of bipolarity makes of her an tireless operative, determined to foil a new terrorist attack. The series also depicts her conflictual rapport with her illness and the prejudice she encounters on the job because of it. Nonetheless, the reasons why Carries was able to successfully operate within the CIA is because she is a high functioning bipolar subject.

The most salient aspect of *Homeland's* language concerning her condition is typically evasive, 'doublespeak', the language of ambiguity [35]. Doublespeak is a type of language used to evade responsibility. It is an expedient used to mislead interlocutors and hide a speaker's intentions. People using doublespeak are highly intelligent and sophisticated in their language choices, aware of the power of language. Doublespeak is heavily used in politics, bureaucracy and the world of business. Strategies typical of doublespeak are the use of euphemisms, slang, and intricate semantic structures.

Despite the fact that the series offers a positive representation of Carrie's condition, she still comes up against the prejudice of others, making for numerous cases where she is subject to their 'power', since she constantly struggles to accept her condition.

In Table 9 a CIA head, David Estes, stops Saul Berenson, a high ranking CIA official, to ask how Carrie is. He is indeed apprehensive about Carrie's obsession with Brody and Nazir, that it might be the ultimate 'tilting at windmills' ("it's always Nazir with her").

Estes is concerned that her behavior may cause another international crisis ("because the last time I heard her like this, she bribed her way into an Iraqi prison and caused an international crisis"). In light of the fact that Carrie is Saul's weak point ("you've got a big blind spot where she's concerned"), Estes wants to know why he believes her conjectures ("you kissed Carrie Mathison into my debrief this morning.

I'm curious if that was her request or yours") and he reminds Saul to be careful since Carrie's and his fates are linked ("what did I tell you when I agreed to give her one more chance?, I said it would end badly. For both of you"). Saul indeed has to follow her every move and monitor her operations ("do the babysitting").

Table 10: S01E01, 38.18 - 39.20

Speaker	Talk
Estes	**You kissed Carrie Mathison** into my debrief this morning. I'm curious if that was her request or yours
Saul	Hers. Frankly, I'm surprised you didn't assign her yourself, since she's the only one in the section who's ever been to Iraq
Estes	It's not her resume I have a problem with, **It's her… temperament**
Saul	What happened?
Estes	She turned a routine follow-up into a cross-examination. Kept trying to connect Brody to Abu Nazir. **It's always Nazir with her**
Saul	I won't deny **she can be a little obsessive on the subject**
Estes	Is there something I should know, Saul?
Saul	Not that I'm aware of
Estes	**Because the last time I heard her like this, she bribed her way into** an Iraqi prison and caused an international crisis
Saul	I appreciate your concern. Carrie has learned her lesson. And we both know how good she is
Estes	**What did I tell you when I agreed to give her one more chance?**
Saul	You said only if I agreed to do **the babysitting**
Estes	**I said it would end badly. For both of you. You've got a big blind spot where she's concerned**. Trust me. I did, too. Now my wife lives in Palm Beach, and I only see my kids twice a year.

A few of Este's opaque lexical choices are as follows:

- "I'm curious if it was her request or yours": here Estes alludes to the fact that Carrie, having a particular influence on Saul, may in some way manipulate him;

- "It's not her resume I have a problem with, it's her… temperament": the term 'temperament' here may be read as a euphemism for bipolarity.

Table 10 illustrates another discoursal posturing in relation to Carrie: appeasement mixed with a slight sense of misogyny and the desire to minimize the damage provoked by her unpredictable behavior.

Table 11: S01E01, 21.35 - 21.37

Speaker	Talk
Virgil	Let's just say that she's a little… **intense…**

Once again Carrie is qualified in an ambiguous manner (Table 10).

This time the adjective "intense" is a form of doublespeak, since its original meaning changes connotation, extending to the domain of madness.

In Table 12 Estes calls Danny, his special agent, aside to update him on the latest developments of a case and – prior to this exchange – he had mentioned the prospect of a possible promotion and transfer to a Middle East base. In this exchange Estes orders Danny to spy on Carrie but he was initially reluctant to do so.

Table 12: S01D04, 24.17 - 24.40

Speaker	Talk
Estes	You want a taste of operations? Find out if she's running something on the side
Danny	Sir, I, I'm not sure I, I am comfortable with…
Estes	Spying?
(silence)	I'm making sure there are no **loose cannons** rolling around my deck because if there are, I need to tie them down.

The language of Estes once again smacks of ambiguity.

This time, however, Estes makes use of intelligence/espionage slang ("loose cannon") with which he designates an agent who doesn't observe the rules, not respecting authority, acting nonprofessionally.

Table 13 illustrates another case of linguistic ambiguity, this time through the use of rhetorical questions. As mentioned, the rapport between Carrie and Saul is the only relationship which remains a constant throughout the

series.

Notwithstanding the profound friendship that ties the two, Saul tends to have a paternalistic attitude in her regard, that undermines his authority.

In this text extract Saul makes use of a rhetorical and cohesive expedient that is typical of power: the repetition of a rhetorical question. Saul does not expect a reply to his question "has it occurred to you (…)?"

Table 13: S01E05, 10.51 - 11.16

Speaker	Talk
Carrie	Don't we have a moral obligation to say something?
Saul	Our obligation is to stop the next attack on America, which you won't be a part of if you keep pursuing this. **Has it occurred to you** that at the very least we'll be able to observe Brody at close Headquarters in a high-stress environment which we can control**?**
Carrie	**Yeah, it's occurred to me, Saul!**
Saul	**Has it occurred to you that** if we do our job and break Afzal Hamid he might just give the whole plot, including Sergeant Brody**?**
Carrie	Well, that's a big if, Saul!

In rhetorical questions the response is implicit in the question itself. The use of this rhetorical expedient has the function of 'coercing' the interlocutor into a position of subordination. His discoursal attitude, however, vexes Carrie who, in return, replies irreverently "yeah, it's occurred to me, Saul!".

6. Discussion, constraints and limitations

This study has analyzed the language used in the TV series *Homeland* that represents a predominantly male working environment, the world of intelligence, when a key female empowered protagonist, Carrie Mathison, becomes disempowered due to her mental illness, bipolarity. After conducting an initial pilot study consisting of one episode from each of the seven seasons, we decided to focus on the slang of intelligence circles and the series ideolect, deixis and pronominal reference, irony, variations in register, patterns of repetition and doublespeak.

We initially introduced the study in terms of our corpus and methodology (§1) and then discussed storytelling and power within the TV serial genre (§2). *Homeland* is distinguished as a psychological spy thriller (§3) and the language of power in the series (§4), as well as the language of madness and disempowerment (§5) were examined.

Our findings point to specific categories of language that characterize the language of power in this TV series as well as categories of language that are more likely to distinguish language used to signal disempowerment. Having studied the specialized language of this series in the form of recurring lexical items typical of intelligence circles, it was also possible to evince how this lexis was strategically used to distinguish the protagonist's mental state and her loss of credibility, and thus power, in her working environment. An example of this is the term "loose cannons" in Table 12 (§5).

Microanalytically investigating pronominal reference and deixis (§4.2) proved to be perhaps the greatest analytical tool of this study, since mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion signal both power(ful) and power(less) positions. Irony (§4.3), as an indirect language strategy involving implicature, was the expedient of choice concerning the language behavior of all those who dealt either directly or indirectly with Carrie Mathison in relation to her mental illness.

Findings brought to light that variations in register (§4.4) were Carrie's strategic choice when both infiltrating contexts that were beyond the purview of her professional capacity and when dealing with contexts where she specifically wanted to extract information.

Patterns of repetition (§4.5) were extensively used as a cohesive strategy throughout the seven seasons of *Homeland*. Through the assessment of repetitive patterns it was possible to understand shifting loyalties, and to comprehend shifts in language strategies in relation to interlocutors, be they under interrogation or be they long-standing friends.

Having dealt boldly with a topic that is usually off-limits in non-fiction, we feel that *Homeland* has nonetheless given us the opportunity of peak into the language of power and madness and begin to understand diastratic phenomena behind language behavior in relation to both.

Because of the limits of our corpus, which comprised the audiovisual files and scripts of only one TV series, we are constrained from making more sweeping claims. Since this study aimed to analyze the issue of gender, mental illness and power, it is highly unlikely to find other TV series that might include these three variables. However, we may circumvent this difficulty by isolating each of these variable and by comparing – for example – TV series whose protagonists deal with mental issues only. Or, in a similar vein, we may opt to examine TV series where female protagonists work in predominately male working environments.

7. Recommendations for future study

Our analysis of doublespeak is the area of this paper that merits further study. The notion of what constitutes 'ambiguity' in language is, in and of itself, ambiguous since, in talk, it is almost inconceivable to pinpoint whether a text receiver understands talk as being ambiguous. Future studies might run a parallel investigation among different specimens of the same genre, in order to see what constitutes ambiguity in different contexts, be they TV series contexts or political contexts. For example, what may prove to be ambiguous language elements in an American context may not seem so in a British one, and vice-versa.

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