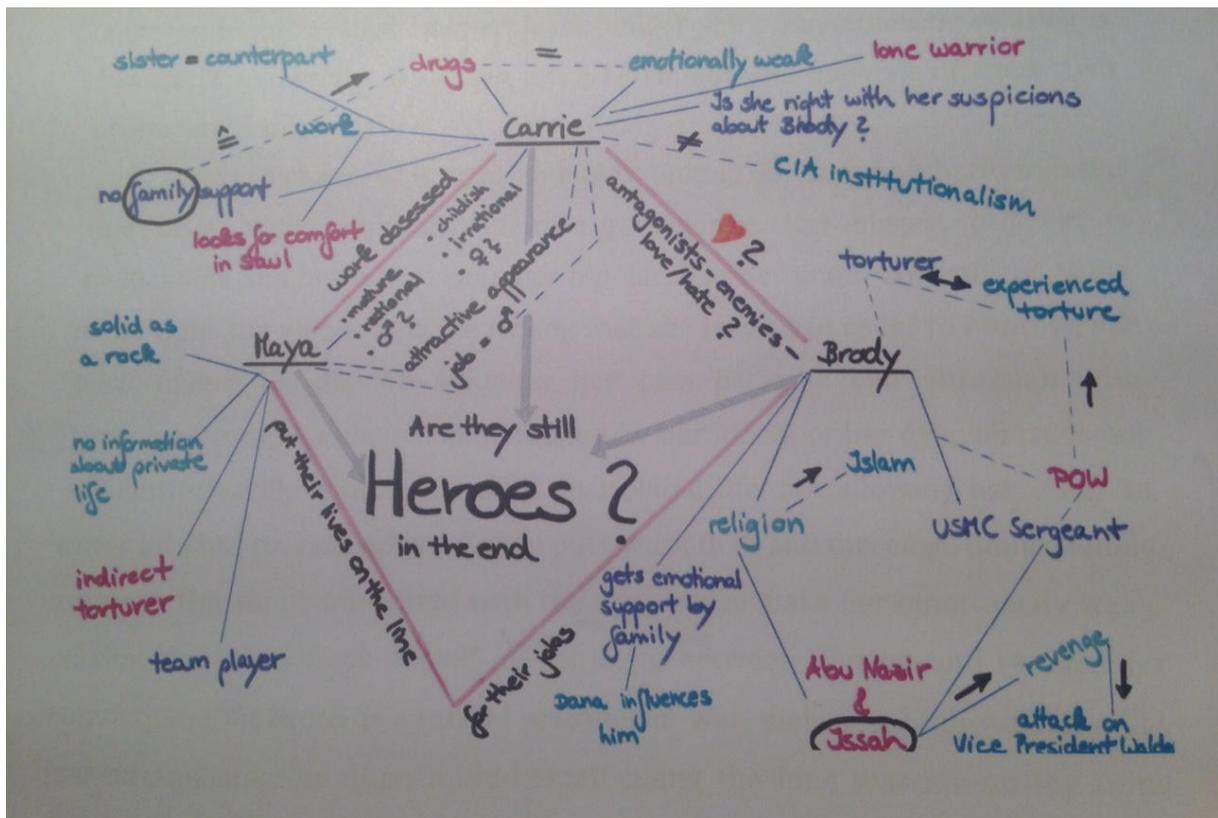


Mood Board



The mind map gives a very personal and subjective impression of the main characters of *Homeland* Carrie and Brody, while putting them into relation to the characters of Maya in *Zero Dark Thirty*. Based in the investigation of different states of exception, the map illustrates the most important facts and character traits of these three characters, which live exceptional lives. The first feature which both women have in common is their obsession with work. Both operate in a field that is usually considered being a male domain: the CIA. While both have an attractive appearance, they seem to have antithetic attitudes about how to reach their goals. Maya is a very rational thinker; her decisions appear to be elaborate and mature. On the flipside, Carrie makes her decisions intuitively, although they often seem irrational and make her look childish. Therefore, we could argue that the character of Maya shows qualities that are usually considered to be male attributes.

The irrational, childish nature of Carrie is often connected to female behavior in patriarchal societies. When looking at their clothing style, the argument is possible the other way round: Maya dressing in a more feminine way than the character of Carrie who sometimes even appears to be 'sexless' in her jeans and T-shirt. Nevertheless,

wearing a headscarf in certain situations always reminds the viewers of these two characters' femininity.

Carrie's character is highly complex, uniting different peculiarities in the role of a highly ambivalent female protagonist. Her biggest problem is medication. She needs to keep her bipolar disorder under control, but at the same time, the viewer gets the feeling that she takes it in order to improve her performance in the job. Whether her own paranoia and obsession with Nicholas Brody is a phenomenon fuelled by her illness or her drug abuse is not straightforwardly visible. She lives an isolated life, not allowing her sister to enter into her private sphere. Carrie puts work first, and therefore denies family support. Her conviction, that Brody is a turned prisoner of war, makes her rebel against CIA institutionalism. She often finds herself being the lone warrior on the front, fighting for the security of the United States of America. The only comfort she can find in the CIA is her colleague Saul, with whom she works together very closely. Surprisingly though, she seems to fall in love with Nicholas Brody, which makes their already tensed relationship even more intense, resulting in a kind of cat-and-mouse-game. Although, she is right with her suspicions about the attack planned by him, her triumph is overshadowed by her own psychic breakdown. But still there is something between the two that is difficult to grasp. Until the end of season one, their personal engagement remains quite unclear: is it love, what they feel for each other?; is it some type of love/hate attraction?; what are they supposed to represent for the series?; are they enemies?/antagonists? The audience remains curious to find out in the following seasons.

The character of Nicholas Brody is similar in its complexity. In comparison to Carrie, he has got a support system which is his family. Coming home after eight years of captivity, he is being welcomed by his family. And although his wife is in a new relationship after his time of captivity, it is his daughter Dana, who cares a lot about him and in the end she even prevents the attack on Vice President Walden to happen. Brody also finds comfort in religion. Having converted to Islam during captivity, the USMC Sergeant prays daily, but hides his new faith from his family in the beginning. Although his belief in the Quran is suspected of being the reason for his attack on Walden, during the course of the series, the viewer has to learn, that the Sergeant is not acting from the background of fundamentalist ideals, but that he intends to take revenge on the US government that has ordered a drone attack, which killed a lot of innocent people. The reason for Brody's personal involvement is the following: he taught his capturer's son

Issah in learning to speak English and has therefore become emotionally attached to him. Abu Nazir, although being his kidnapper, has manipulated Brody into doing him a favor, with the result that Brody is willing to do it because of his own motives, to take vengeance for the death of Issah. At the end of season one, it thus seems as if Brody has been acting out of his own impulses, pushed by the inducement of Abu Nazir.

How his character is going to continue developing on the show can be seen in the following seasons, and those yet to come. Simply the fact that Brody has gone through a very tough time makes him an exceptional character with a strong personality. We should, however, not forget that he has been through torture and was forced into torturing others. These practices leave marks and scars on a person's soul which has an effect on future behavior. Keeping in mind that the decision to be an USMC Sergeant implies risking your life in regions of crisis for the protection of your mother country, Nicholas Brody almost loses it all, but gets the chance to start anew, facing various challenges.

Just like Brody, Maya puts her life on the line for her job. Although seeing her female colleague getting killed in a terrorist attack, she still keeps on searching for bin Laden. Her private life remains in the dark; the audience does not get a lot of information about her life outside the CIA. With regard to Carrie, who refuses to work within the structures of the institution, Maya also acts out of her own convictions, but is not as rebellious as her counterpart in *Homeland*. She is more of the team player and moves within legal regulations of her workplace. Throughout the movie, she appears to be solid as a rock, not letting herself down at any part of their search for bin Laden. Only at the end, when she sits inside the airplane that is supposed to bring her home, she allows herself to show feelings by starting to cry. Given what she has been through, her obsession for the hunt of Osama bin Laden is nothing the 'ordinary' viewer can directly relate to. Furthermore, Maya's engagement in the torturing casts a poor light onto her character. Although she never does it herself, she is a bystander, sometimes even gives the order to torture their captives.

While all of these characters are complex and very interesting personalities, we started to ask ourselves if they can be identified as heroes in their respective genre. Does not every film or series need its hero in one way or another? Maya is probably the character that could be identified as a hero more easily than Carrie or Brody. The character of Maya reaches her goal, and although being it is being achieved by ordering torture, she is the one in charge for bin Laden's elimination in the end. Here, we might

also need to talk about the wrong- or rightness, if that even exists, of those actions that are being carried out in order to come to the conclusion of where bin Laden is hiding, and we could also question the fact that bin Laden is killed and not just captured. But all in all, Maya is the character that is more likely to be regarded as a hero than the other two. Brody is of course being welcomed as a war hero, having survived his time in captivity. But the fact that he is planning an attack on the Vice President is not so much the behavior of a hero in the ordinary sense. Brody could nevertheless be seen as a hero for trying to get revenge for the death of innocent civilians, but at the same time, his plan is not very respectable either. Carrie is probably more of the kind of a tragic hero. Although in the beginning, no one believes her that Brody could have been turned, her suspicions in the end turn out to be true. All her mental effort and confusion turn out to have been worthwhile for finding out the truth about his intentions. Unfortunately however, Carrie's triumph is overshadowed by her psychic constitution that forces her to take further steps in curing her bipolar disorder that has been fuelled by her obsession with finding clues that would have unmasked Brody's true intentions. She is a tragic hero in an institution that demands everything from its employees. To conclude this section, it is therefore important to keep in mind that it is often their jobs that push these three fictional characters into exceptional emotional situations.