

Answer each of the following questions in short-answer form (*each response should be between 250-500 words*). Each question corresponds to a short clip that can be accessed by clicking the links. Read and answer each question carefully, using specific examples from the clip to support your analysis. You are required to use the readings/lecture materials as sources to support your ideas, and you may also use any outside sources that you research.

~ *Question #1* ~

Perform a stylistic analysis of the staging in the opening theme from *Charlie's Angels* (1976-81).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVtVru9KXao>

How do the different elements of staging function in the clip to establish a realistic depiction of the three main protagonists as secret agents?

~ *Question #2* ~

Listen to the first twenty minutes of Orson Welles' *The War of the Worlds* (1938) and discuss the manipulative function of his presenting fictional story elements as non-fiction events.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs0K4ApWl4g>

How does the program seek to convince the listener that it is an actual broadcast, taking place during an actual alien invasion?

~ *Question #3* ~

Consider the trailer for *Luke Cage* (2016-present) and analyze the show as an example of phenomenal television.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytkjQvSk2VA>

How does the story attempt to "enrich or expand cultural dialogue or thinking," and how might its iconography address specific issues taking place in contemporary America?

~ *Question #4* ~

Discuss the opening credit sequence of *Sense8* (2015-present) as a diverse representation of world culture.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cmg2hBXj\\_eI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cmg2hBXj_eI)

How does it showcase the complexities of human identity, and challenge established norms about race, sexuality, gender, and class?

Be sure to cite your references appropriately using any citation method of your choosing (MLA Style, Chicago Style, etc.). If you are unsure about how to properly cite your sources, see the below website:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

**Here are some more tips to consider for writing successfully in this course:**

- ~ Use specific, detailed examples from the film to support your analysis. This is crucial for writing successfully in this class.
- ~ Avoid using too much summary/exposition. Assume the reader (me) has seen the films, and understands them intimately (because I have, and do).
- ~ Dispatch of any review-type language (ex: The film is a blockbuster extravaganza!).
- ~ Do not ask rhetorical questions, and do not raise questions you do not attempt to answer. Also, do not talk about what the film doesn't do, but rather, what the film *does* do. Be critical and express your ideas.
- ~ Use *italics* for all film titles, i.e. *Citizen Kane* not **Citizen Kane** or Citizen Kane.

- ~ Do not qualify your analysis (ex: I think, perhaps, probably, sort of, etc.). Do not be afraid to make statements and support them with examples/analysis.
- ~ If you refer to a character in the film, research their name (as well as directors, writers, etc.).  
www.IMDB.com is a great site for information about the films.
- ~ Don't use quotes as stand-alone analysis, but rather, as support for your own thoughts about the films. I'm interested in *your* perspective, not someone else's.
- ~ Use present tense for film criticism (ex: *Ladybird* is a good example... not, *Ladybird* was a good example...).

I do not accept physical quizzes, so please email all of your assignments to **adam@apwadenius.com**. Please send your quiz in an editable format such as Microsoft word, Open Office, Text Edit, Notepad, or Pages. No .PDF or .WPS files! When saving your quiz, format the file name thusly, or I will not accept it:

Your Name\_Class Title\_Quiz#

**Ex:**

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Email Subject: Your Name\_Class Title\_Quiz#

**Ex:**

Email Subject: AdamWadenius\_CINA10\_Quiz#1

You are responsible for emailing me your quiz by the start of class time on the assigned due date. Upon receipt of your quiz, I will email you back with a quick response to acknowledge its submission. If I don't email you back, assume I have not received your quiz, and re-send it to me. You are not bothering me if I receive your assignment multiple times; it's better to be safe than sorry!

## self-analysis guidelines

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After I have finished grading and providing comments on your quiz, I will send it back to you via email. You are required to provide a self-analysis to receive the score. To perform this task, take some time to reflect on the comments provided on your responses, and perform an honest assessment of your work. Write this out in a paragraph or two, and score yourself on each answer (25 points total for each). Do not correct the assignment, and re-submit it; I'm not asking you to revise your answers, or provide any further drafts. Pay attention to the places where you did well, and take note for future assignments. Discuss any parts where you think you can improve, and consider how you will remedy them for the essay. Complete your self-evaluation by the posted due date on the syllabus, and I will email your score back to you upon receipt.

## essay guidelines

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Answer one of the following questions in a *1000-1250 word essay*. Each question corresponds to one of the films screened in class. Read and answer each question carefully, using specific examples from the film to support your analysis. You are required to use the readings/ lecture materials as sources to support your ideas, and you may also use any outside sources that you research.

~ **Question #1** ~

Analyze the episode of *Westworld* (2016-present) screened in class. How are the framing and camera movement used in creative ways to help convey the narrative information? How might the camerawork function to reinforce certain themes (good vs. evil, life and death, power relations between the characters, etc.)?

~ *Question #2* ~

Analyze the style of continuity editing in the clip from *Dinosaurs* (1991-94) How is the scene cut together to orient the spectator into the television space, and ensure a smooth flow of narrative action?

~ *Question #3* ~

Analyze the clip from *Adam Ruins Everything* (2015-present) as an example of postmodern television. How does the show exemplify the current postmodern cultural climate? Discuss some of the specific examples of postmodernism in the clip to support your answer.

~ *Question #4* ~

Analyze the representation of masculinity and femininity in the Axe "Clean Your Balls" commercial. How do the characters reinforce socially constructed stereotypes of men and women in broadcasting?

Be sure to cite your references appropriately using any citation method of your choosing (MLA Style, Chicago Style, etc.). If you are unsure about how to properly cite your sources, see the below website:

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The below essay is an example of an *A* paper turned in by a student. It provides thoughtful, detailed analysis of the film's visual and narrative elements, while using specific examples to support the writer's ideas.

**Discuss the representation of gender in *Breaking Bad* and *Parks and Recreation*. How do these shows subvert patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity? Point to specific characters in each show, and discuss how their behaviors/traits function to challenge the masculine/ feminine stereotypes we typically expect to find on popular network and cable television.**

### Exchanging Matriarchy for Patriarchy

A wife is cooking while her son and husband are sitting at the dining room table exchanging banter back and forth. The husband prepares to head off to his job as a chemistry teacher where he will work until 3 PM and then drive to his second job as a carwash attendant simply so that his wife can remain a homemaker. The concept behind *Breaking Bad*, a television show on "AMC", is groundbreaking because the pilot shows the viewer the typical patriarchal household but then proceeds to smash the stereotype to smithereens by the end of the series. *Parks and Recreation*, produced by "NBC", also breaks this stereotypical mold; however the show rarely ever portrays the typical patriarchal stereotype and when it does, it is a comedic tool. The following paper will discuss in detail how both *Breaking Bad* and *Parks and Recreation* subvert the patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity; ultimately both use genre tools to further propel their respective messages.

The ultimate message of *Breaking Bad* is dramatically conveyed by the longevity of the masculine stereotype in the show; the "harder" a man is in the storyline, the more violently they live and die. *Breaking Bad* tells the story of Walter White, a chemistry teacher turned methamphetamine cooker. In the pilot episode, Walter is portrayed as a dichotomy; he works two jobs to support his growing family and is represented as an ideal father and husband. However, Walter is also shown to be a bit of a coward, conveying trepidation during his birthday party when the conversation turns to the use of guns amongst his brother-in-law's DEA peers. He is shown to be a meek provider and when he realizes the reality of his situation, he begins to do everything in his power to change it. Over the course of the show, Walt changes from a meek provider to a ruthless man unable to provide for his family any longer because of the repercussions of his actions. Ultimately, the viewer is given the message that the more violent the man, the more violently that man will live and die.

Hank Schrader, Walter's brother-in-law, is a perfect example of the "typical" masculine stereotype. As previously mentioned, Hank banter at Walt's birthday party about how they should go to the shooting range

and fire off a few rounds. According to Jackson Kratz, “guns are an important signifier of virility and power and hence are an important part of the way violent masculinity is constructed and then sold to audiences.” (Jackson, 2003, 357) Because Hank carries and uses a gun, it is established from the pilot that Hank is the paradigm of masculinity. In stark contrast, Walter’s weapons of choice range from ricin to explosives, hinting that because he does not fit into the stereotype that he is therefore able to rise above and be more creative. The irony is that ultimately, Hank is shot in the head and buried in the desert and Walt is shot in the chest and bleeds out in a meth lab as the police surround him. The series finale was poetic in that Walt finally achieved his goal of providing for his family and dying “like a man,” so the viewer is happy to see Walt finally at peace and happy despite his death. In order to fully appreciate how the show subverts the patriarchal stereotype, one must also look at the portrayal of femininity to obtain a clear picture of the message.

Walter’s wife, Skyler, is portrayed as a typical housewife in the pilot episode. However, we slowly come to realize as the show progresses that Skyler is the brains behind the organization. Skyler could very easily be considered domineering based on her behavior. In the first season of the show, Skyler is clearly in charge and giving orders to everyone in the household. However, as the story continues, Skyler is forced to fully fill the feminine stereotype in order to protect her children from the “masculine monster” that is Walter White. She slowly loses her power and control as Walter gains it. It is interesting to note the teeter totter effect that occurs as both characters fulfill their stereotypical roles. Walter is seeking control in his uncontrollable world while Skyler has control but is slowly losing it because of Walter’s unpredictable nature. By contrasting these two characters, the creators of the series are clearly stating that fulfilling gender stereotypes is ultimately counterproductive and even dangerous.

Marie Shrader, Hank’s wife and Skyler’s sister, is another supporting female character that bucks the trend of femininity in the show. She works full time and has no children, most likely because she and Hank are unable to have children. Since Marie cannot have children, she fills that void with kleptomania and gossiping. She tries to fit into her gender stereotype by dressing the part and offering to watch Skyler and Hank’s children, however she always seems to fall short and her character is somewhat lost in the shuffle. This is in direct contrast to her husband Hank, who is the paradigm of masculinity. One could argue that Marie loses her identity after Hank is shot in a gunfight and loses his ability to walk, forcing them to pay horrendous physical therapy bills in order for Hank to walk again. It is interesting to note that Marie goes to her sister for financial help, not even considering the validity of the story about where their money came from. Marie has a sense of

entitlement that is purely feminine and this entitlement ends up biting her in the butt near the end of the series when Hank and Marie discover where the money really came from. Again, the character is being punished for fulfilling her gender stereotype. The creators of the show are clearly using dramatic tools to hammer home the message that gender role fulfillment is a baser concept and that in order to succeed in life, one must elevate themselves above it.

This message is also conveyed in the show, *Parks and Recreation*; the creators, however, use comedy as a tool to hammer home their message. While fulfilling the patriarchal notions is not necessarily deadly in the series, it is definitely a negative concept that is teased relentlessly. *Parks and Recreation* is a show about a parks and recreation department in a small suburban city. The department is headed up by a woman; Ms. Leslie Knope. In this show, women are the dominating gender and it can be argued that the creators are portraying a matriarchal hierarchy in a positive and light hearted way. This portrayal is very much needed, especially when one considers the statistics. According to Sifat Azad, "Women outnumber men in this country by 51%, yet only 15% comprise the Senate, 16.6% make up the House of Representatives, a mere 2.4% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women, and only 15.7% of women hold positions on Fortune 500 boards. To top it off, women are earning 81% of what men earn in America." (Azad, 2012) The first step to improving these appalling statistics is to alter the mindset of the populace. Leslie Knope is aware of this fact, and does everything in her power to do just that. In the episode, "Beauty Pageant," Leslie is chosen to be a judge in the town's annual beauty pageant. During the show, Leslie is specifically rooting for the contestant that is intelligent and well rounded because she feels that is a more positive perception of beauty, favoring inner beauty and strength to outer beauty and perfection. Leslie has pictures in her office of strong female role models, arguably to motivate her to improve the statistics for woman kind as a whole. Despite her being a good example of a strong woman, she is ultimately overpowered and outvoted in the episode and the typical "beauty queen" wins.

In the office, there is an intern named April Ludgate who chooses to enter the competition solely to win the money that comes with first place. April intentionally "dumbs" herself down and "glams" herself up to win the vote of the predominantly male judges' circle. April is the antithesis of femininity and when she realizes that there is no cash being awarded, she announces on stage that she is withdrawing from the competition. She is clearly only participating to win the money and because of this is an example of another strong female in the show. April uses many "underhanded" methods to win over judges. She purchases coffee for Leslie to try to bribe a vote and April bats her eyelashes and flirts to get the attention of the male judges. She is intelligently

attempting to win the prize, although she ultimately chooses to forego the prize. The woman who is ultimately chosen as the reigning Miss Indiana Town is the paradigm of the feminine stereotype. She is gorgeous, blonde, and dumb as a rock, however she has the beauty pageant gig down pat and wins over all of the judges but Leslie. Ironically, the show portrays this character as vapid and shallow, a punch line to a joke that the viewer is in on. That joke is that outer beauty may win the day but inner beauty wins the war.

In the same episode, the viewer is shown the stereotypical masculine archetype in the judges' circle. In particular, the character Tom Haverford is portrayed as the typical "horn dog" male that is only at the pageant to get phone numbers from the pretty girls. Tom calls in a favor in order to be able to judge the pageant; it is clear that his hope is that some of the girls may try to sleep with him in order to win the pageant. Despite his best efforts, Tom is unsuccessful and becomes the butt of an inside joke between the creators and the viewer. Tom is so desperate to "get some" that he even throws out pick up lines as he is asking his question in the interview round. This makes him look like an even bigger fool than before and has become a tool to clearly illustrate how patriarchal roles are counterproductive. The "brotherhood" of judges is a satirical prop used by the creators to further drive home how right Leslie is and how wrong the rest of the judges are. Overall, *Parks and Recreation* uses comedy as a tool to subvert patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity and this episode in particular is a perfect example of this.

In conclusion, both *Breaking Bad* and *Parks and Recreation* are clearly subverting the stereotypes created by a patriarchal society and are pushing the viewer to appreciate the potential positives of a matriarchal or even non-gender biased society. While *Breaking Bad* uses dramatic tools such as sex and violence to drive home this message, *Parks and Recreation* more subtly uses comedy to impart the same concept. Both are effective in doing just that, with viewership in the millions for both series'. It is a positive idea that stereotypes and expectations are finally changing in our society and that humans as a whole can move on from archaic concepts of who is better than the other. While we are not perfect by a long shot as a society, we are obviously attempting to reach perfection one show at a time. At the end the housewife lives; without a husband and with her children whom she loves. She picks up the mantle of both father and mother and continues to live day by day.

### References

- Azad, S. (2012, March 10). *Stereotypes of Women's Work Ethic: The Real Reason There Aren't More Women in Positions of Power*. Retrieved October 25, 2013, from <http://www.policymic.com/articles/5289/stereotypes-of-women-s-work-ethic-the-real-reason-there-aren-t-more-women-in-positions-of-power>
- Jackson, K. (2003). Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity. In G. Dines, & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, Race, and Class in Media* (pp. 349-358). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.