

# Desperate housewives

Business



Desperate Housewives are an American television series created by Marc Cherry and produced by ABC studios. The series pilot episode on October 3rd 2004 and been on for eight seasons now. It focuses on a group of suburban housewives and their stories told through the eyes of their deceased neighbor, Mary Alice.

It gets aired on ABC, Channel 4, Channel 5, and Seven Networks. It features a cast of Teri Thatcher (as Susan Meyer), Marcia Cross(as Bree Van De Camp), Eva Longoria (as Gabrielle Solis), Felicity Huffman (Lynette Scavo) and Brenda Strong(as Mary Alice). The series shows the lives of these women as they go through domestic struggles and relationships. Lying and conspiracy is common with all the residents of Wisteria Lane, and it is the deep friendships characterized in this film, that binds housewives together. The cast is predominantly made of women.

The most prevalent themes of the films are gender and culture, thus the reason why I chose to analyze the film and the messages it passes on to the society. The title "Desperate Housewives" is symbolically used to mean that the women cast in the film fit the hegemonic traditional role of a woman staying at home while the husband works to support the family. However, this is not applicable throughout the play as the women's role keep changing. For example, Lynette goes back to work and Tom her husband stays home to watch the kids, Bree Van de Kamp opens her own catering business after years of being a housewife and Susan Myer gets a teaching job to help boost the family income. However, the hegemonic norm does not guarantee that the men will share equally in the house work since the society still expected women to perform their wifely duties after a day's

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work. Desperate housewives, thus, is a film that aims to reinforce and challenge the norms of working women and housewives.

The movie is a series because it portrays an organization of time and events where the film gets aired every day at the same time. The film also demonstrates the growth of characters overtime as the narrative shifts from one story to another. In addition to this, film shows continuity where the resolution of the film is in the future. Finally, the film is a combination of integrated individual stories all integrated into one story. The film has many cliffhangers that create suspense in the audience as well as a series of temporary resolutions that get made within the storyline. The narrative also constantly makes reference to the past occurrences in order to update new viewers.

. Thus the narrative is bound using ideologies, myths and histories that are biased and the ending always seems unstable as it does not contain a final meaning. Hermeneutics combines with ethnographic work to help the viewers understand the hidden message in the film. (MacCabe 2006) There are various journal articles written with reference to this film. One example of such a journal is the ' Journal of media and cultural studies' which featured an article titled, ' Mobilizing post feminism: Young Australian women discuss Sex and the City and Desperate Housewives'. The article aims to reveal the connection between women's' lives and popular culture.

In addition, the article discusses feminism in the film desperate housewives where women get empowered giving them the freedom to have careers, make their own decisions and live independently away from all the

restricting traditions that limit women to being housewives. Moreover, the article discusses post feminism and the role it plays in shaping the media and the audience. (Ballantine, 2011) The show is immensely popular, and it ranked in the top 100 most watched films worldwide. This is because the show helps in the construction of the role of gender in the society. The film impacts women positively as it empowers them to rise against the traditions that limit women at home.

The film further urges women to pursue their careers irrespective of what others may say. For example, Bree Van de Kamp's first husband dismissed her desire to write a cook book as nonsense, however, after his death, she became a key figure in the catering business, and she even wrote volumes of cook books. (MacCabe 2006) Critics claim that the film creates a fantasy for women and the lifestyles of women in the film are just acting. However, what these critics should realize is that the women attained these positions through hard work and sacrifice. For example, Bree Van de Kamp got a fortune from publishing her recipes.

Gabrielle Solis was a model before she got married, and she had to fore go her career to cater for her family. Susan Myer, had to take a job to add to the family income, and Lynette worked tirelessly to provide for the family even when Tom went back to school. All this proves that the women in the film did not just get where they were by luck, rather they had to work hard. In addition, they claim that the film is purely fiction where families are rich and happy. However, although the women in the film are acting, they represent the day to day issues that face women, marriages and life in general.

For example, Susan Myer gets sick and needs a kidney transplant, Bree Van de Kamp goes through two divorces, Lynette and Tom are always fighting and Gabrielle Solis cheats on Carlos. All these are events that occur in society.