

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

In this chapter, the writer tries to answer the questions in problem formulation. The first subchapter discusses the gender stereotypes experienced by Peggy Carter and the second subchapter analyzes Peggy Carter's actions representing Girl Power. The data are taken from *Marvel Agent Carter* season 1 movie.

Below are the important scenes captured that show Peggy Carter's gender stereotype experiences and her actions that represent Girl Power within the movie.

4.1 Peggy Carter's Gender Stereotype Experiences

Wienclaw (2011) states that gender stereotypes happen in society because the stereotypes are biologically determined. Wienclaw also says that researches with regard to American women show that women do not enjoy the same opportunity in attaining high status positions as do American men (p. 135). In *Marvel Agent Carter*, Peggy experiences gender stereotypes in the work place because her colleagues underestimate her ability. The discussions of the scenes and dialogues when Peggy Carter is discriminated in her work as a result of gender stereotypes are presented below.

4.1.1 Peggy is treated as an inferior in her office work

Captain America: the First Avenger is a superhero movie released in 2011. It is a movie where Peggy Carter is first introduced. Peggy is very well known for her capability to lead and fight. Moreover, she is a female leader who leads many men to join in World War II. She is also

famous as an independent woman. In contrast, on *Marvel Agent Carter*, a continuation movie of *Captain America: the First Avenger* Peggy Carter is treated differently. Peggy's experiencing stereotyped treatment is understandable because the setting of this movie is in New York in 1946, after the World War II. 1946 was the time when women were a minority in workplace and were considered as children who were under the power of a man (Wienclaw, 2011, p. 17). So, Peggy who experiences gender stereotype can be considered as common thing.

It is told that after World War II is over, Peggy moves to S.S.R (Strategic Scientific Reserve) in New York. Unfortunately, Peggy's ability to lead people is not acknowledged when she moved to S.S.R (Strategic Scientific Reserve). Instead, Peggy was underestimated because of her sex. She is assigned to do domestic chores who have been long regarded as women's jobs, namely, making coffee, serving snacks and lunch during the office meeting. In other words, her co-workers make her to do the jobs because she is a woman.



<p>Figure 4.1. Peggy eavesdrop the conversation between the staffs (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 2, 14.54)</p>	<p>Figure 4.2. Peggy is not allowed to join in office meeting (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 3, 09.55)</p>
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For Peggy, working as the only female in the patriarchal society is kind of challenging job because nobody supports her. Peggy always tries to make herself heard too. One of the

example is when she joins and gives an opinion in a staff meeting about finding and seizing Howard Stark, a weapon developer. Peggy knows Howard Starks during the World War II and it is shown in Peggy's statement in office meeting, "I knew Howard Starks during the war. His help is invaluable. He may be a great many things, but he is not a traitor." (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 05.36).

Peggy's statement, however, is not welcome by her colleagues. She is met with an underestimated reply from Thompson and Chief Dooley,

Why am I not surprised? I am sure being Captain America's liaison brought you into contact with all sorts of interesting people. But the war is over. Let the professional decide who is worth going after. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 05.43).

In his context of speaking, Chief Dooley seems to use the word "professional" to refer to men, not women. In his statement, Dooley shows that woman is not capable to be 'professional' as a man.

Dooley's statement represents the 1946 society's opinion that men are seen to be more capable and professional in a workplace compared than women. In her male colleagues' point of view, Peggy Carter is known only as a woman who has a crush on Steve Rogers, *Captain America*, not as an agent who has good ability. It is also a stereotype that women only considered as the one who uses their emotion / feeling. The fact that Peggy comes from a rich family and has a high education does not make her respected by her male colleagues. Peggy's experience shows that although 1946's United States was the the time of feminism birth (Shneiderman, 2016), but the society still stereotypes women as somebody that only use their feeling.

4.1.2 Peggy is never acknowledged about her existence



Figure 4.3. Peggy is never acknowledged about her existence (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 3, 16.55)

Figure 4.3 is the continuation of the office meeting scene. After the office meeting was over, Peggy can not accept the treatment she gets from her male colleagues in the office meeting that seems cornering her. Then Peggy goes outside and meets Agent Thompson who says, “Carter, gonna be busy with your friend, Stark. If you don't mind, these surveillance reports need to be filed, and you're really so much better at that kind of thing. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 06.42).” The word “surveillance report” spoken by Thompson refers to the job related to secretarial job. The statement shows that Thompson considers Peggy good in doing secretarial job, a job associated with woman, regardless her position as a secret agent. As a response to Thompson’s statement, Peggy replies back,

What kind of thing is that Agent Thompson? The alphabet? I can teach you. Let’s start with the word beginning with A.” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 06.51).

Peggy’s answer is supposed to be a contention to Thompson’s statement, however Peggy got an unexpected answer that seems to mock her. Thompson’s answer to Peggy’s statement is “Thanks kid” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 06.59). The answer indicates that he treats Peggy like a child and unimportant. Peggy gets angry because of that response, but she

cannot do anything. That incident is common in 1946 in the United States, since women were labelled similar to children and minority in a workplace (Wienclaw, 2011, p. 17). So it is a common thing when Thompson called Peggy as “kid”.

Wienclaw (2011) points out that during 1946 in United States, respect to women were based on her husband’s socioeconomic status. Many women also did not feel valued and listened to both in their school or workplace (Wienclaw, 2011, p. 138). That was the way men and society look at women in the United States. As a single woman with no husband who can support her socioeconomy, Peggy is treated as an inferior being because nobody acknowledged about her existence.

4.1.3 Peggy is imposed to do menial jobs

In her workplace, Peggy is treated like a secretary and complementary although her main job is an agent. Peggy also does menial jobs like serving coffee, tea, and snacks in her everyday life in S.S.R. One of Peggy’s colleagues, Sousa, says that, “they [Peggy’s colleagues] treat you like a secretary.” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 06.29). Peggy’s response makes it clear that “I just wanted and I am grateful. I’m also more than capable of handling whatever these adolescents throw at me. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 06.31).”



Figure 4.4. Peggy doing a menial job (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 1, 14.50)

Peggy's response to Sousa's statement is a proof that doing menial jobs is kind of habitual thing for her. Peggy does not get shocked or upset because it is a common thing. She understands how a patriarchal society works, especially how all men in her workplace treat and think about her. In contrast, Peggy's response also represents her confidence that although she is a woman, she is also capable of doing jobs associated to man.

In the episode 2, Chief Dooley asks her to come and meet his friend, Chief McClemens. In this scene, Peggy gets teased. McClemens speaks in a teasing tone, "I don't know our government had such good taste in secretaries. What's your name darling? (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 2, 16.04)." The word "darling" spoken by Chief McClemens represents a sexist language. Sexist language used by patriarchal society as a ways to control identities and disempowered woman (Knight G. L., 2010, p. 5). Moreover, it is also a word to specify gender.

Beside the sexist language is the word "secretary". This word refers to the job related to woman. It is also a proof that Peggy is never acknowledged as an agent. In order to respond to McClemens's statement, Peggy's says, "Agent" (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 2, 16.08). Peggy's answer represents Peggy's wish to be seen as an agent, her actual job.

The proofs about gender-based divisions above show that society and government overlooked woman's existence in 1940s United States. For example, in the past, women in United States of America were treated differently from men in terms of the rights to vote in election. Moreover, after women get their legal rights in 1920, the perspective like women as "second class citizens" still exists. In the year of 1940 in America, women were still considered as first slaves and reproductive slavery (Freedman, 2002, p. 36) since at that time many women worked as housewife where the children helped their family produce more crops. It was very common in the 1940 that women still served their husband and family by preparing for the food,

taking care of their children and cleaning the house. Therefore, Peggy who does menial things in her workplace can be considered as common thing in 1940's America.

4.1.4 Peggy is treated as weak



Figure 4.5. Peggy is treated as weak (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 5, 04.30)

Wienclaw (2011) points out that the stereotype like “women are weak and need to be protected” and “big boys do not cry” exist in society. As a result, this stereotype affects many people. As portrayed in Figure 4.5, it is a scene when Edwin Jarvis protects Peggy on a raining day. The way Jarvis protects Peggy on raining day can be seen as a representation of man's obligation in society, where man should protect woman because man is considered as physically stronger than woman. The idea that man should protect woman exists in the society because gender plays a central role in society (Freedman, 2002, p. 114).

Peggy also uses her position as woman as an excuse. As explained previously in Figure 4.1, in the office meeting, Peggy asks, “I wonder if I might request a sick day. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 15.24)”. Peggy speaks in a tone and uses it as an excuse to do her undercover work. However, Chief Dooley responds her by saying, “What's the matter? Got a headache?” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, 15.27) in a tone that shows a kind of overtly concern with Peggy as if Peggy is a weak creature who demands attention. The way Chief Dooley treats

Peggy is like the way he treats woman in general, not as an agent or a professional in a workplace.

In response to Chief Dooley's tone of concern, Peggy's answers, "Ladies' thing. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode1, 15.33)." The word "Ladies' thing" spoken by Peggy is an implicit way to say that she wants to take a menstruation leave and she wants to take a rest for that day. The way Peggy says "Ladies' things" also shows Peggy's intention to represent her, a woman, as weak and fragile although in fact she is a strong. She needs to be seen as weak and fragile to be able to do undercover work. The writer sees the possibility that if it is a man who asks for a leave to Chief Dooley, he will be responded differently. The image of woman as a weak creature who needs protection is topped by Chief Dooley's response, "Oh, geez. Yeah, sure, take the day. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 1, 15.35)." Chief Dooley's response represents the way man protects and sees woman, as weak and needs protection.

4.1.5 Peggy is underestimated



Figure 4.6. Peggy is underestimated (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 5, 06.04)

Figure 4.6 is the representation of Peggy gets underestimated by her colleagues. Peggy is getting underestimated by Jarvis statement,

“These men you call your colleagues, they don’t respect you. They don’t even see you. Do you honestly expect they’ll change their minds? (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 05.27).”

Jarvis’s statement is the representation that he never sees Peggy as a real agent. In this case, Jarvis observes and draws a conclusion that Peggy’s existence in her workplace is never seen by her colleagues and that Peggy is controlled by her male colleagues.

In order to respond to Jarvis’s statement, Peggy says “I am a federal agent, Mr. Jarvis.” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 05.18). But, Peggy gets an unexpected answer that seems mocking her. Jarvis says, “finely trained and skilled in the art of fetching coffee. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 05.23).” Jarvis’ statements indicate that the jobs, like serving coffee, snacks and being secretary, suit to Peggy instead of her truly job as real agent.”

Freedman (2002) claims that 1940’s in United States was the time when women were not allowed to get education. This was because the patriarchal system operated in the society. Peggy, who lives in 1940’s and has a chance to get a high education and enters male-dominated work, still gets controlled by her environment, especially in her workplace. Peggy’s experience is understandable since in 1940’s in United States, most women played a role as wife and seen as reproductive commodity (Freedman, 2002, p. 36). Because of that, women are considered as passive and inferior not only at home but also in workplace. Therefore, Jarvis’ opinion and Jarvis’ treatment toward Peggy are common.

4.1.6 Peggy is not allowed to do some jobs related to man



Figure 4.7. Peggy is rejected of office meeting (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 5, 18.25)

Figure 4.8. Peggy's colleagues look down at her (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 5, 18.22)

Figure 4.7 is a scene after Peggy has broken the Russian code into English. After she translates the code and finds that Starks has sold the weapon to Leviathan, a Russian organization, she decides to join the staffs to Belarus, Russia, to find Howard Starks. Because this job is related to man, she is not allowed to join. It is proven by Chief Dooley saying that, “take a team to Belarus. Find Starks, bring him home. Li, Ramirez, gear up! (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 07.34).” He does not even mention Peggy in there although she is the only one who can break the Russian code. In order to respond to Chief Dooley’s statement, Peggy says, “Li, Ramirez, and Carter. There is no more qualified for this mission, Sir. I am going to Russia. I invite you to look at my war record, Sir.” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 07.39).”

Another person who does not want Peggy to join the mission to Russia is Thompson, the leader of this mission. He says, “But we have no idea what we’re getting into over there, okay? I do not need brain. I need brawn”. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 08.21).” The word “brawn” refers to muscle and strength related to man and masculinity. The way Thompson talks

represents the stereotypical idea that although Peggy is smart-being able to break the Russian code into English, she is not needed anymore to finish it in a real mission. It is obvious from Thompson's response that he underestimates Peggy's ability as an agent although she is the only one who can speak, read, and break the code in Russian. Thompson's reason for underestimating Peggy is based on his stereotypical idea of woman as being the second class citizen.

Historically, early 20th century, American culture emphasized that women's role was in the home (Wienclaw, 2011, p. 34) and women were considered as passive too. In the above case, Thomson's framework of idea is that it is better for Peggy to stay at the office rather than go to Russia to fight along with the male agents. At that time it is considered as taboo for woman to join or serve in military because this job is related to gun, bomb and hand fight.

Although facing many obstacles, Peggy still wants to go to Russia because she is really passionate in doing this mission. She also thinks that she is capable of doing this job because she has had an experience of fighting in a war (depicted in film *Captain America: the First Avenger* movie). It is shown in her statement, "I spent three years in the mud of the European theater, The Eastern front, the Western front, and everything in between. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 08.28)." Then it comes with Thompson's reply, "Yeah, surrounded by some of our best men. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 08.32)." Thompson's reply implies that he looks down at Peggy. For him, Peggy could only survive the war because she was protected by men. Thompson does not even bother to look at her war records, achievements and experiences. He directly forbids Peggy to go to Russia because Peggy is a woman.

4.2 Girl Power Actions

According to Zaslow (2009), Girl Power offers a sense that woman can be both masculine and feminine. The word masculine itself is related to man, and on the contrary, the word feminine to woman. Starting from 1920s in America, many women broke traditional gender roles and explored the formerly masculine domains of the workplace (Harnett, 2009, p. 24). Peggy, who lived in the year of 1946, also enters the male-dominated world.

Woman's entering male-dominated world and exercising Girl Power are depicted in *Marvel Agent Carter* which puts Peggy as the main character. Peggy's appearance in *Marvel Agent Carter* is related to Third Wave Feminism that emerged in 1990's, where many women become the icon of popular culture especially the Girl Power (Knight G. L., 2010, p. xx). The discussions of the scenes and dialogues which show Peggy Carter's Girl Power traits are discussed below.

4.2.1 Masculine Trait and Masculine Appearance

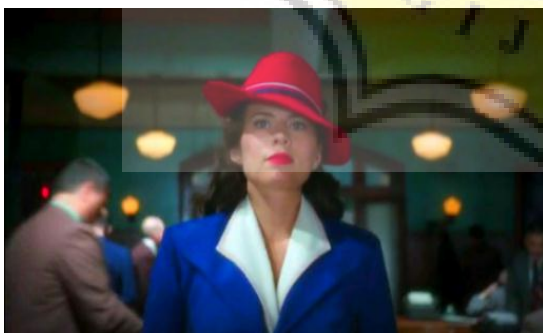


Figure 4.9. Peggy shows her independence and masculinity sides (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 1, 03.36)

Figure 4.10. Peggy walks so confidently entering the office (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 1, 03.33)

Stereotypically, woman and femininity are two things that can not be separated. However, some of Peggy's body poses do not show her femininity. One of the examples can be seen is in Figure 4.9 which shows Peggy Carter's strong eye gaze. It indicates her "masculinity" side. Besides, Peggy's 'masculinity' side also showed by the way she walks as portrayed in Figure 4.10, Peggy walks with lifts her chest high, a body pose which can be considered as a sign of independence.

(Zaslow E. , 2009) points out that independence is stereotypically related to man's characteristics. By showing that she is independent, Peggy can be categorized as "masculine" too. The words "independence" itself related to the idea of Girl Power. Additionally, a strong and straight eye gaze when she walks indicates that Peggy wants to prove that she is an independent woman. Moreover, her eye gaze represents a confidence as well because she stares straight without showing any kind of hesitation.

Interestingly, when Peggy shows a kind of 'masculinity' traits in the way she walks and stares, she is seen to put forward her femininity in her choice of red color for her hat and lipstick and her wearing high heels. The attractiveness of the red color and high heels is in contrast to Peggy's ignorance of the men around her.

Another example of 'masculine trait' is shown in Figure 4.11 below.



Figure 4.11. Peggy changes her clothes in men’s locker room before she goes to Russia (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 5, 11.26)

It shows that Peggy and her colleagues are changing clothes before they go to Russia in one big room which only has one partition. During the scene, Peggy says,

I need to change. The ladies’ room is downstairs in the lobby of the ad agency. I’d much prefer the men’s locker room than have to change into tactical gear up in public room. Pull up your skirts boys. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 10.42).

Peggy enters the man’s changing room and dares to say that men in there have to be careful when she is entering the room. The words “pull up your skirts boys” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 10.53) spoken by Peggy is to represent Peggy’s assertiveness in warning the men. With her confidence, Peggy shows that she is as strong as the men.

4.2.2 Freedom of Choice



Figure 4.12. Peggy wearing red nail polish (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 2, 39.55)



Figure 4.13. Peggy wearing red lipstick and showing her sexuality (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 1, 17.51)

Figure 4. 14. Peggy is showing her masculine side (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 2, 15.33)

Zaslow (2009) states that freedom of choice is one of characteristics of Girl Power. The representation of freedom of choice in Peggy Carter can be seen in several scenes. One of the scenes is when Peggy is doing her undercover work. Basically, Peggy has no free choice to do what she wants to do in her work. As discussed previously in Figure 4.1, Peggy is treated as inferior by her colleagues. However, Peggy fights for her own choice, in this case, her free choice to do the undercover work. In that undercover work she is not appointed by her boss but she voluntarily does the work.

Peggy's freedom of choice can also be seen in the way she looks. Peggy conforms to the 1940's society of how woman should dress and apply make up. Figure 4.12 is a scene when Peggy is seen as putting on red nail polish. The figure definitely shows that Peggy conforms to the trend of woman at that time. A better example can be seen in Figure 4.13 when Peggy does her undercover work. She plays her role as a femme fatale, a seducer. In playing the role, she wears a sexy dress, uses red lipstick and colors her hair into blonde with the purpose of getting man's attention.

She freely chooses to look sensual, in contrast to looking strict and formal, to serve her free choice to do the spy mission. Peggy's choice to appear sensually- although it contrasts with her wanting to be recognized as equal to her male colleagues- is the key to find Howard Stark, the one whom the company (S.S.R) is looking for. She knows that beauty is often manipulated as a means to attract man, so she does that. Her freedom to decide the way she appears is a characteristic of Girl Power.

Figure 4.14 shows Peggy's freedom to express herself. It is a scene when Peggy positions both of her legs on the table so confidently in her office desk. In *Marvel Agent Carter* movie, it can be seen that the office in S.S.R (Strategic Scientific Reserve) is not a private office where a person occupies a one room, but it is one large room. So, Peggy's position can be seen by all the staffs. In short, Peggy exercises her freedom of choice when she positions her legs on the table.

4.2.3 Power



Figure 4.15. Peggy has power over man (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 2, 40.48)

Figure 4.15 is a scene when Peggy is in a cafe. When she sees her friend, who works in the café is sexually harassed by the man who eats at the café too, Peggy gets angry. She threatens the man and dares to show that woman also has a power. In this scene, Peggy says to the man,

...you will die in 90 unless someone comes in to your aid. Now given your behavior, how likely do you think that is to happen? To prevent this not entirely unfortunate event from occurring, I'd suggest you to find a new place to eat. Do we understand each other? (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 1, 40.48).

Peggy dares to say this kind of rude words because she does not want him to demean her friend, who is a woman. She wants equality between man and woman. Different from the explanation and dialogues explained in Figure 4.1 where Peggy chooses to remain silent in her workplace, in this case she dares to speak and express her feeling.

Peggy's actions represent her fights for gender equality in public place. Zaslow (2009) points out that the girl represented in Girl Power believes that they have to be treated as equally as men. Peggy sees that the way the man looks at her friend is something that needs to be changed. So Peggy exercises her power by threatening the man. Peggy's power is a representation of Girl Power.

4.2.4 Bravery



Figure 4.16. Peggy shows bravery to the man who works for Russian organization (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 2, 27.53)

Figure 4.16 shows a scene when Peggy meets a person who works for Leviathan, a Russian organization held by Nazi during her undercover work with Jarvis. When Peggy find the man by herself, she says, “Move, and I shoot!” (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 2, 27.59). Her action indicates bravery. She confidently says the words in a firm tone. Later, she talks loudly to Jarvis, “I told you I don’t need your help. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 2, 28.02).” By saying that, she wants to show that she can handle the matter by herself although it is quite dangerous for her. Moreover she also dares to use a gun. The way she acts represents girl power, that Peggy is a brave woman who believes that she can solve problems. In addition, the way she speaks represents confidence, a characteristic which also belongs to Girl Power.

4.2.5 Sexy for Man Pleasure and for Herself



Figure 4.17. Peggy shows her sexy side (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 5, 12.01)

When Agent Sousa comes to her accidentally, she shows her sexy side as displayed in Figure 4.17 Peggy knows how to look sexy either for man pleasure or for her. In this case, Peggy does both. She draws the attention of Sousa and knows how to be sexy for herself too. Peggy

knows how to look sexy either for man pleasure or for her and she also knows when be powerful and feminine which is the characteristics of Girl Power (Zaslow E. , 2009, p. 3).

Peggy also has control over her body which is considered as the characteristic of Girl Power (Zaslow E. , 2009). In this scene, for the first, Peggy gets a little bit shocked because Sousa comes accidentally. But from her gesture she does not want to show that she is afraid. Moreover she shows her sexy side. She knows how to be a woman without having kind of “fear” feeling. She also is not afraid if men in there mock at her for changing clothes in men’s locker room.

4.2.6 Professional



Figure 4.19. Peggy joins the staffs in Rusia to fight (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 4, 22.22)

Figure 4.18. Peggy joins an office meeting with all staffs (Marvel Agent Carter Season 1, episode 4, 11.40)



“Then listen to me! You’ve got one chance of getting out of here alive, and it’s because of our good grace! You kill our friend, and you will die at our hand instantly! (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 33.51).”

Peggy does it because it is an urgent situation and a decision needs to be made. She also dares to ask the staffs, to obey and do her command. She also endures the challenges in the mission without complaining but showing her strength and power although she is the only woman in the mission. She fights, uses gun, and uses bomb. Peggy also shows her superior ability which can be considered as the characteristic of Girl Power.

Peggy’s order is a representation of strength too. Taft (2004) says that Girl Power contains expression of strength, which in this case is shown by Peggy Carter. Peggy breaks the society’s expectation that woman must be passive, friendly and soft (Knight G. L., 2010, p. 6).

When Peggy finally returns from the mission, she comes back with high achievement. She is able to prove to all staffs in S.S.R that Howard Stark is not a traitor. At the end her achievement is acknowledged by Chief Dooley, the leader in S.S.R, who for the first time, says, “Good work, Carter (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 40.58).” Peggy is also praised by Agent Sousa who says, “I just, staying up late worrying about you guys, you take good. (Marvel Agent Carter season 1, episode 5, 41.20).” All compliments are proofs that Peggy is succeeding in proving that she is capable and really professional in her workplace.