

**'Nothing but the Truth': Genre, Gender and Knowledge in
the US Television Crime Drama 2005-2010**

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Abstract

Over the five year period 2005-2010 the crime drama became one of the most produced genres on American prime-time television and also one of the most routinely ignored academically. This particular cyclical genre influx was notable for the resurgence and reformulating of the amateur sleuth; this time reemerging as the gifted police consultant, a figure capable of insights that the police could not manage. I term these new shows 'consultant procedurals'. Consequently, the genre moved away from dealing with the ills of society and instead focused on the mystery of crime.

Refocusing the genre gave rise to new issues. Questions are raised about how knowledge is gained and who has the right to it. With the individual consultant spearheading criminal investigation, without official standing, the genre is re-inflected with issues around legitimacy and power. The genre also reengages with age-old questions about the role gender plays in the performance of investigation.

With the aim of answering these questions one of the jobs of this thesis is to find a way of analysing genre that accounts for both its larger cyclical, shifting nature and its simultaneously rigid construction of particular conventions. Building on the work of Jason Mittell this thesis sets out to engage with the way genres manage to lay claim to diversity while maintaining an ineffable quality of recognisability.

In order to do this the thesis in the main is a case study of six different shows from across the genre: *Bones*, *Lie to Me*, *The Mentalist*, *Psych*, *Ghost Whisperer* and *Medium*. Through narrative textual analysis of both the shows and their ancillary and para-texts a case is made for additions to Mittell's work. I posit a theory based on a continuum of graduated articulation. This is a way of mapping conventions prevalent in a genre without reducing them to a selection of identical aesthetic or narrative tropes. As part of this the method re-centralises narrative in the understanding of television genre.

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Introduction

The scene is an all too familiar one; a jogger out for his morning run stumbles on something and falls. As he looks down the camera follows his view and finds not a stray branch or some broken paving but a corpse. The US procedural crime drama has become such a staple of the television landscape that even via UK freeview broadcast there are at least four different shows on offer every day. Lunchtime repeats of *the Mentalist* (CBS, 2008-present) are followed by evening showings of one if not more of the *CSI* (CBS, 2000-present) franchise. The same can be said for the original US market where during the years 2005-2010 every network had at least one procedural in their roster. The airing of procedural dramas has become as commonplace as soap operas and quiz shows. We have become so familiar with the tropes and conventions of the procedural that they have become the butt of jokes; from *MadTV* (Fox, 1995-2009) sketches about the nature of cases solved on *Ghost Whisperer* (CBS, 2005-2010)¹ to *Family Guy* (Fox, 1999-present) referencing *Bones*' (Fox, 2005-present) use of bones². Yet despite the genre's ubiquity relatively little has been written about it. There are a handful of works on the *CSI* franchise, but considering the sheer number of texts in the genre this presents little more than a drop in ocean. It is this lack of academic interest in an area so vast and popular that I plan to redress. In doing so this thesis will investigate both the workings of the contemporary crime procedural and as part of this case study present a reworking of current methodologies for the study of television genre.

I will be doing this in a US context despite residing in the UK. Though there are limitations to living outside of the market being studied, the internet offers multiple avenues for the consumption of US media in context. This will be a study of genre that encompasses para and ancillary texts so it is important to do so in the context of the country of origin; since by examining the shows in situ, a sense of how the texts work together and inform one another can be gained. There is most

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJz1tYRhYml> (accessed 10/09/2012)

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi89Zt1Oir0> (accessed 10/09/2012)

certainly space for a study of procedural shows as they are broadcast and consumed in other markets, but that is not the aim of this work. Moreover, while the procedural has made a huge mark on the UK television schedule, America still produces more television; and with this being a study interested in the importance of variety in genre and the need for comparison, a larger market is more suited to the methodology.

The pervasiveness of the crime drama is a fairly recent phenomenon; of course crime dramas have always been part of the television schedule but a decade ago they were purely primetime fodder (apart from syndicated airings of 70s staples like *Columbo*(NBC/ABC, 1968-2003), shows so ubiquitous that their 'crime' elements were rendered benign). In fact a decade ago *CSI* was new and innovative and almost every other crime show either featured uniformed cops on the streets or well-meaning middle class lawyers. *NYPD Blue* (ABC, 1993-2005) and *The Practice* (ABC, 1997-2004) epitomised the kinds of crime programming on offer. With *CSI* came a change, a turn in the cycle of television towards a new (although as this thesis will argue, perhaps renewed is a better word) format for telling the crime story; the consultant procedural.

CSI quickly became one of the most watched shows on US television³ while courtroom dramas like *The Practice* were drawing to a close. At this time NBC was finding success with its *Law & Order* (NBC, 1990-2010) franchise and started to move into consultant procedurals with *Crossing Jordan*(NBC, 2001-2007). Soon CBS was capitalising on *CSI* with *CSI: Miami*(CBS, 2002-2012), *CSI: NY*(CBS, 2004-present) and the addition of both *Without a Trace*(CBS, 2002-2009) and *Numb3rs*(CBS, 2005-2010) to its roster. Each one presented the same story about institutional policing, that it was somehow broken but also that it was capable of fixing the problem itself. It was an institution deserving of the public's continued faith. However, in the period before this, it had been courtrooms and lawyers that had dominated US criminal dramas. The professionals of *The Practice* and *L.A. Law* (NBC, 1986-1994) had worked diligently to fight a corrupt system of law

³ At its height it averaged 28 million viewers (figures gathered from ABC's Medianet)

enforcers. Each week they would create new case law and ensure that the corruption seen in institutional policing did not make it into the judicial system. Cops were willing to beat suspects, frame them in order to close cases, do whatever it takes to make themselves look good. During the nineties it seemed television reflected a society that did not trust the police and saw them as bigoted, misogynist and unfit for the job. When the republicans took office there was a seed change. As conservatism grew in power so television began to change to reflect it. Part of this conservatism was the need for renewed trust in the policing institution. However, the last decade had presented the police in a consistently bad light; enter the consultant. As both an outsider and a designated part of the institution the consultant was able to solve the problem. By employing consultants the police were able to admit they had their failings but also reinstate public trust by hiring experts who could ensure the job of investigation was performed without reproach.

Thus the crime drama became a genre about specialised investigators who worked on the edge of the institution. As such their method was the thing of interest. Consequently, the puzzle of the case became the reason to watch. Harking back to amateur detectives of old, these shows were as much mysteries as they were crime dramas. A televisual re-imagining of what Ina Rae Hark dubbed the “readerly clue puzzle”⁴.

The period studied in this thesis, 2005-2010, saw the most prolific time for the production of these kinds of shows in the US. In this five year period there were twenty different shows on air at one time or another that featured a specialist investigator helping police solve crime. In this saturated market these shows were sold on the unique nature of the protagonist’s investigative practice rather than on the novelty of characters. *Bones* was a show about someone who could learn about a person from nothing but their skeleton, *Lie to Me* (Fox, 2009-2011) presented a character who could tell when you were lying by watching you. The genre became dominated by

⁴Ina Rae Hark, "Impossible Murderers: Agatha Christie and the Community of Readers," in *Theory and Practice of Classic Detective Fiction*, ed. Jerome; Delamater and Ruth Prigozy (London: Greenwood Press, 1997). P111

method. It is this period of intense production and intense desire to set each show apart from the others that I became interested in how all these shows still clung to a set of formulae and conventions so strongly developed as to become clichéd. Clichés many TV viewers now recognise; montages of scientific processes, interrogations where unorthodox questions are the norm, public scenes of confession, investigators dreaming crimes. I became fascinated by trying to understand what crime drama was when it was all these things, because despite their differences there was something that always made them instantly recognisable as such. Supposedly, audiences knew a procedural when they saw one but no one seemed to be interesting in investigating what it was that held them together generically, what this ineffable quality might be. These questions lend themselves well to the dual approach of this thesis; a thesis with aims to both ask specific questions of the consultant procedural but also untangle the complexity of how these conventions work together and inform one another in the process of forming genre.

In recent years genre has fallen out of favour somewhat within television studies. Following the work of Jason Mittell⁵ and a handful of others such as Jane Feuer⁶ and Stephen Neale⁷, works now nearly a decade old, genre has become something assumed. Genres are successful perhaps because of this quality, it has been suggested that audiences respond to the comfortable familiarity; however, in terms of academic work, to rest easy and assume that a genre has been 'dealt with' is remiss. If anything older genres are more likely to be the focus of shifts and changes as producers try to reinvigorate them for an audience that is believed to be becoming increasingly aware. Nevertheless, it seems even when genre itself is brought into question a limited number of exemplar texts have become the default way to examine these issues. This leads to numerous works that hope to define crime television as either *CSI* or *the Wire* (HBO, 2002-2008), or define comedy as either *The Office* (BBC, 2001-2003) or *Friends* (NBC, 1994-2004). However, there is no

⁵Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television : from Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁶Jane Feuer, "Genre Study and Television," in *Channels of discourse, reassembled : television and contemporary criticism*, ed. Robert Clyde Allen (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

⁷Stephen Neale, "Questions of Genre," *Screen* 31, no. 1 (1990).

such thing as an exemplar text, especially when examples are drawn from the relatively small pool of 'quality television'. US networks broadcast over 1500 hours of primetime television every year, yet only a handful of shows are ever studied. Furthermore, as Derrida argued in *Writing and Difference*⁸, there is inherent difference in repetition. According to Derrida each repetition of something the same can never be identical, all repetitions are in some way iterations, the same thing but fundamentally different due to the very nature of repetition. Nicholas Royle explains, "For something to be readable... it must carry with it a capacity to be repeated in principle again and again in all sorts of contexts, at the same time as being in some way singular every time."⁹ This means not only are exemplar texts impossible because every text, no matter how much it may seem representative of all the others, is in fact still just another version, but also there is no way of making absolute statements about a genre. As this thesis will argue, the only way to make sense of genre is to allow for, and build into the method, an understanding of these fundamental differences. The method suggested here makes use of Derrida's notions of iteration, working with the idea that difference is an inherent part of repetition, to the point that at times it is only in mapping the differences that the larger repetition can even be seen. Genres are formed on the basis of iteration, on the premise of sameness; if in sameness there is an inherent difference, then can these differences not be used to make sense of the sameness? Through exploring the slight deviations of a genre with a flexible methodology, the larger picture of uniformity can be understood and therefore a better understanding of the genre's ideology. If television studies wants to maintain its constant push toward being recognised as separate from the study of film there needs to be more work which undertakes the task of finding ways to theories these hundreds of hours and dozens of shows. Television studies has to make space for the larger issues

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and difference* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978 (1981 [printing])).

⁹ Nicholas Royle, *Jacques Derrida*, Routledge critical thinkers (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003). P68

of repetition in its constant strive to understand television that is 'different'. As Derrida puts it "a same that is not the identical"¹⁰

There are of course inherent problems in this method and in all studies of genre. One cannot analyse every single text to look for these patterns of sameness and difference. However, there is a happy medium to be found between suggesting one text can stand in for the whole and attempting analysis so broad as to become useless. Ultimately a chosen corpus of texts must represent the genre, this is unavoidable. However, the way to avoid reductionist statements that generalise too widely and place too much at the feet of one particular text or another is context. By ensuring that both the method of selecting texts and the way the texts themselves are analysed remain contextual then much of this problem can be avoided; in this instance remaining contextual means comparing texts within a genre, but also analysing broadcast data, literature and other genres. If the selected corpus is made up of shows which are popular (have a substantial viewing audience) and create complexity within the genre (by this I mean adds something different to the corpus than shows already chosen) then as a group they can become usefully representative. The purpose here is to find a way of studying television genre that examines both difference and sameness. The only way to do this is a combined macro and micro approach; a search for patterns that must be both wide ranging and work on an episodic level, combining this Derridian notion of inescapable difference with Mittel's theory of textual clusters. As such, each chosen text must work on its own to represent multiple aspects of the genre, but more importantly it must also work as part of the group of selected texts. Genre studies must be greater than the sum of their parts. For example one of the central texts of this thesis, *Bones*, has just started its eighth year on air. During its tenure other shows with similar themes have come and gone and *Bones* has become a staple of genre. However, that does not make it representative; it makes it a necessary text to include but cannot stand in for the whole.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida and Barbara Johnson, *Dissemination* (London: Continuum, 2004). P127

Furthermore, the lack of work on the show is a glaring example of the academy's interest in texts that are supposedly 'good' rather than texts that are popular. As Brett Mills details in the introduction to his special edition of *Critical Studies in Television*¹¹, TV is dominated by shows watched by millions that very few are taking the time to study. If television genre is to be properly theorised then the method employed has to take into account a more varied sample. *Bones* is important but it cannot stand in isolation, it must be part of the group of texts, a group chosen because they are all representative in different ways.

Furthermore, there is the issue of the very quotidian nature of these texts. The fact that the procedural became so ubiquitous during this period renders these shows somewhat 'everyday' or part of "Television's veritable dailiness"¹² as Roger Silverstone puts it. Nearly every night of the week at least one network would air a procedural drama, each one with a similar narrative and inevitable outcome, perhaps then it is of little wonder that these shows received little academic attention as they became part of what Bonner calls 'ordinary television'¹³. Though her definition includes reality and lifestyle shows, I would suggest it could be extended to include formulaic genres like the crime procedural. Her explicit definition is: "The key characteristics of ordinary television were identified as being its mundanity, a style which attempts to reduce the gap between viewer and viewed and the incorporation of ordinary people into the programmes themselves."¹⁴. While the procedural may not feature 'real' ordinary people each episode does revolve around the disruption of ordinary lives and the trauma of ordinary people, it is their ordinariness which makes the trauma that much more tangible. As for mundanity, though these shows are often wildly outlandish, I think a claim could be made that the procedure itself and the predictable trajectory of the narrative are a form of mundanity. As the tropes and clichés of the genre become more entrenched and certain motifs become expected then shows soon become

¹¹Brett Mills, "Editorial," *Critical Studies in Television* 5, no. 1 (2010).

¹² Roger Silverstone, *Television and everyday life* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹³ Frances Bonner, *Ordinary television : analyzing popular TV* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003).

¹⁴ Ibid. p211

ordinary. However, I would argue, just as Bonner does that “the pervasiveness and even the 'everydayness' of ordinary television programmes renders them worthy of investigation.”¹⁵ It is their very ordinariness that makes these shows not only interesting, but a place where unexplored themes and ideologies can be investigated. Kaplan and Ross wrote: “The quotidian is on the one hand the realm of routine, repetition, reiteration - the space/time where constraints and boredom are produced...The Political, like the purloined letter, is hidden in the everyday, exactly where it is most obvious in the contradictions of lived experience, in the most banal and repetitive gestures of everyday life”¹⁶; and the relevancy here is undeniable.

The purpose of this thesis is to try and find a route through the cornucopia of texts and find a method that allows for the close analysis favoured currently in television studies without ignoring the larger picture. Rather than seeing crime drama as a genre that has plateaued, one that has already been theorised, this thesis asks if there are not new things to be understood about the genre. Furthermore, there are still questions about contemporary genre issues that need to be asked. As more and more niche narrowcasting networks are created, ones built around a presumption of genre recognition, scholars need to continue to examine how genre is understood. Television broadcast is more reliant now on genre definition than ever before yet still there is little work being done on it. With this thesis some of those questions will be answered.

With the aim of theorising a genre that is prolific and largely unstudied there was a need to develop previous genre theory. My method for answering these questions both contextually and in a nuanced fashion is a method I call the graduated articulation continuum. With this method genres are understood through the texts' multiple points of conventional cohesion while still accounting for fluctuation in how these conventions are articulated. Genres become spectra, clusters of discursive elements that create points of unity without the need for rigid uniformity.

¹⁵ Ibid. p32

¹⁶ Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross, "Introduction to Everyday Life," *Yale French Studies* 73(1987). P3

For the process of close reading I use gender as my lens as it has always been a central issue within crime drama. In the introduction to the first *Omnibus of Crime* in 1928 Dorothy L. Sayers wrote:

There have . . . been a few women detectives, but on the whole, they have not been very successful. In order to justify their choice of sex, they are obliged to be so irritatingly intuitive as to destroy that quiet enjoyment of the logical which we look for in our detective reading.¹⁷

While she is of course writing about the previous 60 years of crime fiction, issues around gender continue to plague the genre even after its move to television. Crime is a genre about legitimacy and the power to investigate, a power which has been encoded masculine since the genre was invented. Another 60 years later, once the study of the female detective in literature has become a staple of the academy¹⁸, television studies theorists started to become interested in how she had been adapted for television; for example seminal works such as Julie D'Acci's on *Cagney and Lacey* (CBS, 1982).¹⁹ However, by the late nineties very little was being written about her. Just as the genre itself was seen as being exemplified by a small handful of texts, so those same texts were understood to illustrate how gender was being portrayed. However, with these texts being almost entirely masculine in focus, or at best ensemble casts with a small number of feminine characters, any attempt to tackle gender was often reductive. The gender dynamics at play in the genre were ignored by scholars just as often as defining the complexities of the genre itself. To this end my plan with this thesis is to redress the balance, to explore both masculinity and femininity and how they relate to one another.

Race or class could have also been interesting areas of study; nevertheless, it is gender which seems most in need of closer examination. Furthermore, if the purpose of this case study is to

¹⁷Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Omnibus of Crime," in *The Art of the Mystery Story. A collection of critical essays. Edited and with a commentary by H. Haycraft*, ed. Howard Haycraft (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1961).

¹⁸ See for example, Patricia Craig and Mary Cadogan, *The lady investigates : women detectives and spies in fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 1981).

¹⁹Julia D'Acci, "The Case of Cagney and Lacey," in *Boxed in : women and television*, ed. Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer (New York ; London: Pandora Press, 1987).

understand what is happening in the crime drama at this precise moment, a moment within the genre when the individual is taking precedence over society, then gender becomes a fascinating area to explore; especially considering the emphasis on knowledge and how deeply ingrained gender is in the performance of investigation in the crime drama. Questions arise such as, with the consultant taking centre stage how are these individuals gendered? More importantly how is the investigative method upon which each of these texts sells its uniqueness gendered? How does the figuring of gender play into the genre's larger concerns of truth, knowledge and power?

Ultimately the entire method of this thesis is one based on context and comparison. Gender is understood as part of a myriad of other elements that feed into one another as part of the textual cluster. What matters is that through throwing the net wider and finding more points of connection across a variety of texts, rather than drilling down into the intricacies of one, this smaller focus can become a way of understanding more about what is happening across a large genre over a period of time.

This is by no means an exhaustive analysis, and it is not meant to be, rather it is an example of a method which examines television genre as the fluctuating, but equally steadfast entity that it is; a contradiction which will become clearer by the end. By applying Mittell's invaluable methodological contributions to the study of genre and then taking them one step further, the aim of this project is to create a method for television genre study that can withstand the hundreds of hours of television produced each year. Perhaps more importantly it will achieve this without losing the nuance that makes for the variety that contemporary television thrives on. Mittell argued for the importance of context in his discursive approach, I argue that while context is essential the discussion need not only be applied in that way. In my approach the textual narratives themselves become equally discursive spaces. Each one works alongside the others to find different ways to articulate identical ideas and as they feed off each other they build intricate static concepts that only become truly visible when the genre is looked at contextually as a whole.

Mittell's work is an essential starting point but it does not make enough space for how narratives become an irreplaceable site for mapping genres.

In order to do this the thesis performs two tasks at once, argue for the development of genre theory in order to make it more amenable to larger genres and at the same time apply this method to a case study. By doing it this way the workings of the method can be shown and its usefulness made evident. However, while this case study is helpful in explaining how the method works it is by no means the only way this particular method can be applied. This thesis functions as a working example of a method which can be applied across the medium in multiple genres. Each chapter is step in the process of forming a wider understanding of the genre and building a working definition of its conventions and how they function. Together they build toward an understanding of this system of graduated articulation. This is the way in which rigid conventions are articulated to different degrees in different texts. However, the fact that the convention remains steadfast holds these shows together as a coherent genre. These conventions then become part of the system of textual and extra-textual elements that form the discursive clusters that Mittell advocates in his theory of genre.

Chapter One explores contemporary thinking about genre. Using Jason Mittell's work as a starting point it defines a new mode for thinking about long form television genre and introduces the theory of graduated articulation. Much like Mittell suggests it looks at how genre is formed through the interaction of multiple elements, however, unlike Mittell this method still holds onto central narrative components as part of this process. Though extra and paratextual artefacts are essential in understanding how genre is formed and understood, the argument this chapter builds is one that rallies for the equal importance of plot. The kind of story being told in a show is as important as the way it is told, where it is broadcast and what other texts are drawn upon in its advertising material. As such narrative is re-incorporated into the cluster of defining elements. In order to make sense of this I introduce the idea of the continuum. This approach argues that the

clusters around each show which work together to form genre also exist along a line which runs central through the genre, holding it together. In the case of the consultant procedural this line is the persistent search for truth and the centrality of a narrative focused on mystery. However, what this continuum approach also allows for is difference. At one end of the continuum are shows in which science and empiricism are at the forefront, shows helmed by masculine protagonists. At the other end shows with feminine protagonists and an emphasis placed on the supernatural. Rather than positioning these as binaries this chapter argues that a continuum allows for gradation and movement between all these elements. Just as the texts in the genre cluster interact with and inform one another, so the continuum is an intellectual space that is made of grades of articulation. Different shows foreground different elements, but all these elements co-exist within the textual cluster of the consultant procedural. Through looking at how other genre scholars have attempted to understand genre and taking ideas from different theories, this composite idea allows for the study of large and varied genres. From Feuer's²⁰ theory that texts participate in more than genre at once to going back to the work of Derrida²¹, this approach takes into account the specific workings of television, especially its core genres, to find a way to make sense of them that is neither too open ended or too restrictive.

This chapter also details how the six texts under examination in this thesis were chosen. Considering part of the impetus behind this thesis was an argument against the use of exemplar texts, the chosen shows had to be both varied but also useful in terms of the work being done. For example, there was little point in selecting shows that had aired for anything less than three seasons as they would not have enough episodes to allow me to engage in the kind of analysis planned. Every texts included in this thesis had to be both popular in terms of number of viewers and provide balance to other texts already included. Consequently both *Psych* (USA, 2006-present) and *Ghost Whisperer* became part of my corpus. The shows are markedly different from

²⁰Feuer, "Genre Study and Television."

²¹Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," in *On Narrative*, ed. W J T Mitchell (University of Chicago Press, 1981).

one another, but that was essential. They are also not as heavily steeped in the conventions and tropes of the genre as other shows. *Psych* is a comedy, but its use of humour does not detract from how it still engages, in vital ways, with the conventions of the crime drama. Similarly *Ghost Whisperer* is a melodrama; one which many an undergraduate student has tried, at first, to persuade me is not a crime drama at all. In this instance I am using the definition of melodrama put forth by Lynn Joyrich, who describes it as television that “expresses what are primarily ideological and social conflicts in emotional terms”²². Of course, the term melodrama has had a complicated history and was long considered a pejorative until rehabilitated by Brooks²³ et al in the 1970s. In the introduction to his book Brooks wrote of melodrama as, “an expressionistic aesthetic ...imaginative modes in which cultural forms express dominant social and psychological concerns... a dramaturgy of hyperbole, excess, excitement, and "acting out"”²⁴. He then goes on to say that “The melodramatic needed revival because it pointed to—as no other term quite could—a certain complex of obsessions and aesthetic choices central to our modernity.”²⁵ Brooks and his contemporaries such as Thomas Elsaesser²⁶ sought to reinvigorate the term as a way of making sense of certain aesthetic choices in film and literature and their supposed psychoanalytical grounds. Though I do not wish to get involved in matters of the psychoanalytical, the aesthetic and emotional facets of the melodramatic can be seen continuously throughout the psychic crime shows. In other words, unlike the other texts that purposefully sidestep emotion in favour of logic and reason, the melodramatic psychic shows couch everything in emotional terms, as Brooks once again states, “melodramas that matter most to us convince us that the dramaturgy of excess and overstatement corresponds to and evokes confrontations and choices that are of heightened

²² Lynne Joyrich, *Re-viewing reception : television, gender, and postmodern culture* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996). P47

²³ Peter Brooks, *The melodramatic imagination : Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 1976).

²⁴ Ibid. p pviii

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Thomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Drama," in *Home is where the heart is : studies in melodrama and the woman's film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987).

importance, because in them we put our lives-however trivial and constricted-on the line.”²⁷ Each week Melinda or Alison risk their lives for the emotional (although also often physical) wellbeing of others, to the detriment of their own wellbeing, a sacrifice rarely as overt in the other texts as it is in the psychic shows. The psychic shows are undeniably melodramatic, from the hystericised body of the psychic to the symbolic imagery rife within the scenes of haunting. Furthermore, the pejorative nature of the term melodrama still remains to an extent; as this thesis will demonstrate the psychic shows, though in many ways identical to other procedurals, are treated differently in terms of scheduling and advertising, often as if they were not crime shows at all. While other texts of the corpus, *Bones*, *Lie to Me* and *The Mentalist* sit comfortably within the genre, these outlying texts provide the perfect examples for how the continuum method can account for difference while arguing for cohesion. A comedy can still be a conventional crime drama and by incorporating these somewhat controversial texts in this thesis I am able to demonstrate how conventional they are if one is willing to theorise genre as a malleable entity.

Chapter Two begins the work of contextualising current crime dramas within a history of the genre and within a wider context of US television. If genre is to be understood as a cluster system of shifting articulations of elements then this chapter looks at how this system manifests. It argues for a theory of authentication and situation, suggesting that the discourse inherent in the cluster of texts and paratexts performs one or both of these tasks. Authenticating is the process of corroborating through association the validity of the text as part of the genre. Situating, on the other hand, is the process of establishing similarity through juxtaposition. Using this theory a series of paratexts are examined to establish how they assist in the forming of genre boundaries. Starting with antecedent texts from both literature and television before moving onto advertising material and broadcast data, the chapter establishes a broad but precise set of recurrent tropes and conventions which these texts refer to.

²⁷ Brooks, *The melodramatic imagination : Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess*. P. IX

An examination of the history of the genre is important at this point as it helps build an understanding of how genre moves and changes, not following an evolutionary method but a kind of cyclical patchwork of converging influences. Examining where many of the recurrent conventions are drawn from and how they continue to be articulated across different kinds of texts points to their centrality in an understanding of genre. If crime texts are constantly returning to issues of gender then the way in which gender is portrayed must be a focal point for any study of the genre. The chapter then moves into how these same issues which seem as prominent in early literature as they do in contemporary procedurals are also prevalent in advertising material for the shows. The examination of these paratexts, drawing on the work of Jonathan Gray²⁸, also starts the process of looking at the genre in terms of gradients of articulation. Although all the adverts have the same purpose and are advertising shows with almost identical plot trajectories, they do so in different ways. These differences mark the shifts along the continuum but also indicate the reoccurring tropes which define the genre and, despite shifting contexts, appear throughout the genre no matter the 'unique' qualities of the particular show. By examining the multiple points of intersection across the genre and the myriad similarities illustrated in purportedly widely divergent texts and paratexts, chapter Two looks at the bigger picture of the genre before the subsequent chapters begin the task of narrowing the field and exploring how these recurrent themes are articulated in specific texts.

Chapter Three is the first chapter to wholly put the continuum theory into practice through an examination of the investigative methods of the protagonists of all six shows. The chapter is the first to demonstrate how large genres can be defined through a set of conventions that are activated in different ways, or as I term them graduated articulations. In this case chapter Three is an examination of the relationship the genre has to the concepts of intuition and reason and how both exist in tandem throughout the genre despite generally being theorised as standing in binary

²⁸Jonathan Gray, *Show sold separately : promos, spoilers, and other media paratexts* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

opposition to one another. Through looking at the ways in which the process of investigation is told both in terms of narrative and aesthetics the chapter builds a map of the genre, its points of coalescence and its points of diversion and their relationship to one another. Reason and intuition become the first of many ideas that remain static in their depiction yet mobile in how they are utilised. As such, the reasoned investigator is always masculine, somehow detached from the world, invested in empirical process; the intuitive investigator is semi-victim, empathetic and knowledgeable because the crime is as much about them as the original victim. These ideas hold firm no matter which end of the crime drama continuum is being studied, they are steadfast ideas used in differing amounts but never wavering in the way they are expressed. In order to make sense of how this works reason and intuition are looked at in terms of narrative trajectory, aesthetics and the way in which the two concepts are consistently gendered. Through exploring these two ideas in a variety of ways, ideas central to the very forms of learned knowledge that the crime drama hinges on, it becomes easier to see the numerous points at which similarities occur across the continuum. At this stage it becomes evident that there are character tropes that are central to the genre and appear in almost every text. These characters work as both sign and signifier of the genre, working in the foreground and the background to help create the feeling of conformity around which the very notion of genre revolves. Despite major difference in methods of investigation, this chapter teases out these points of conformity, the ways in which these points become essential to each text and how the differences exist only as variations that do not detract from these moments of conformity. *Medium* (NBC/CBS, 2005-2011) may present its clues through psychic dreams but each episode is still a search for a confession built on the accumulation of irrefutable fact in the same way that *Lie to Me* is.

Chapters Four and Five start to deconstruct how these gendered conformist tropes are formed. Firstly, chapter Four examines the issues at stake in the masculine protagonist. As chapter Three already explored the gendered dimensions of the concepts of reason and intuition, this chapter more closely examines the empiricist masculinity so prevalent in the genre. Three recurrent

masculine tropes are identified, the consultant investigator as masculinity without agency, the role of fathers in the building of masculine identity and the role these masculine characters have as parents. Four characters are examined across the chapter, the protagonists of *Lie to Me*, *Psych* and *The Mentalist*, however, the chapter also examines how Brennan in *Bones* works as a female masculine protagonist. The masculinity, and gender, talked about here is not biological, but performed gender, a masculinity of action and presentation ; one ascribed by the way in which the character approaches investigation. Judith Butler would argue²⁹ that both are constructs, that even biological gender is socially constructed. As she puts it, “Gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established.”³⁰ This is quite possibly the case, however, the purpose of the analysis of gender here is not to establish the notion of ‘natural’ sex but to look at the ways in which gender and sex are both depicted in terms of a very restricted set of conventions. As such, each of the tropes looked at in this chapter represents another point of cohesion across the genre; they illustrate how something like the formulation of gender performance can become one of the fixed points in the genre as well as an idea around which the differences across the genre can be mapped. There are multiple points at which masculinity is coded in the same way no matter which text is under discussion- for instance the relationships these characters have with their fathers-yet across the genre as a whole the positioning of particular genders shifts. For example masculine characters are not always protagonists but they are always rationalists.

Chapter Five, in looking at femininity, tackles the issues at stake in a genre still desperate to conflate femininity with victimhood. Through exploring issues of the family, much like in the previous chapter, this chapter seeks to understand the way feminine consultants are understood as both mothers and daughters and the way family is articulated is skewed slightly from the

²⁹ Most notably in her work Judith Butler, *Gender trouble : feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York ; London: Routledge, 1990). But also in ———, *Bodies that matter : on the discursive limits of "sex"* (Routledge, 1993).

³⁰ ———, *Gender trouble : feminism and the subversion of identity*. P10

masculine focused shows. Where they rooted father-son bonding in ideas of pedagogy, the mother-daughter relationship is one couched in biological terms. The feminine protagonist is one who exists in a middle space, concurrently mother and daughter, but rather than the narrative of change evident when this same position is taken by masculine protagonist, this position is one of maintaining the status quo. Feminine investigators are linked to an inescapable fate, their power more of a burden than a route to agency. Consequently, this chapter also examines the ever-present gothic undertones of the psychic shows. It analyses how feminine protagonists' struggle for agency is steeped in gothic imagery and narrative allusions and how their intuitive approach to investigation situates them as perpetual victim-investigators that hark back to the feminine protagonists of gothic literature. This culminates in an understanding of the consultant procedural as an ultimately conservative genre, constantly attempting to reign in the agency of powerful women.

Chapter Six finishes the analysis by examining justice. Considering the narrative trajectory for every consultant procedural is toward resolution for the case being investigated, it would seem safe to assume that justice has an important part in the genre. However, as the chapter details, the idea of justice that prevails in the consultant procedural is one built on signs and assumptions, a perfunctory aside rather than as essential point of conclusion. As a consequence justice becomes synonymous with closure, for both victim and investigator and in place of any sense of punishment or retribution the consultant procedural obsessively focuses on the act of confession. That being the case this chapter seeks to unravel what is so important about the very act of voicing guilt and why it has become so entrenched in the genre that it has become one of its central conventions. Looking at confession from multiple perspectives, from religious and linguistic to judicial, chapter Six explores how confession functions both narratively and aesthetically as a set of defined visual tropes. Perhaps more importantly justice also functions as the most uniform point of cohesion across the genre. Despite differences in investigative practice, tone and imagery, the point of confession is both consistent and constant, taking much the same

form as it has done throughout the history of the genre. From Christie onwards, public, voiced confession has been central to the procedural and still, decades later, it is the narrative moment that pulls the genre together into an undeniably homogenous genre. As this final chapter will explain, justice may not function in the same way as it always has, but the performance of it remains a vital part of the genre, a narrative and visual touchstone.

Together these six chapters present a route through a newly adapted methodology. They present a system for working through large genres and way of performing both close textual analysis and a wider study of the workings of the genre as a whole. They are not an exhaustive analysis of every aspect of the crime drama, but what they do illustrate is a way to explore particularly significant issues without losing sight of context. Each chapter examines a specific area that when added together form an understanding of a genre at a particular historical moment.

Genre, Audience and the Development of the Psychic-Scientist Continuum

The discussion of genre as a means by which to explore television texts is a complex one. The central problem in many studies is the assumption that genre is self-evident, as if the years of film genre studies can simply be applied to television without question. Often it is treated as something that has been 'dealt with' and so genre specific studies avoid dealing with questions about the very formation and understanding of genre itself. The purpose of this thesis is to examine a particular moment within the crime television genre in an attempt to remedy the pervasiveness of this assumption. Using contemporary methods of genre studies put forth by Jason Mittell³¹ it will explore issues of gender and the place of thematics in television genre studies itself. While at the time Mittell's work was seen as an important step in the development of television studies, very little work has followed up on the suggestions he made. This thesis both makes use of Mittell's suggestions for the study of television genre and extends them to incorporate further, television specific, methods for the study of genre.

Crime drama is a prolific genre with a long history. In recent years there has been an upsurge, not only in the production of crime television, but in academic interest in the genre. Perhaps it is a combination of these factors, both its history and its pervasiveness, that has seen many assumptions about the crime genre being made. The last decade crime television has been at its most prolific for some time yet most writing on it has ignored questions of genre. Work on *The Wire* and *CSI* claim these shows to be exemplars of a genre that is then never elucidated upon, suggesting that crime drama is a fixed and stable concept. To this end, this thesis will challenge the assumption that the issue of genre in the crime drama has already been dealt with and

³¹Mittell, *Genre and Television : from Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*.

instead examines crime drama as the varied, complex and profuse genre it was between 2005 and 2010. This thesis asks not only how crime drama functioned as a genre, but what this can teach us about contemporary genre studies as a whole.

In his book *Genre and Television* Mittell sets out a method of study that emphasises the fluid boundaries of genre and the need to concentrate on context as much as, if not more than, text. He claims that genres are not intrinsic to texts themselves but are formed through a discursive cluster that includes multiple paratexts. These clusters can include anything from marketing and scheduling data to the aesthetics of the show. Each one of these modes of textual articulation forms a cluster, their discursive nature borne out of the way in which they influence one another; the whole system existing in a symbiotic relationship. In formulating a method of 'cultural genre analysis' Mittell asks, if this constantly circulating and shifting cluster is what forms genre, then is the centre hollow³²? As a way of understanding the crime drama this thesis works to find a way of dealing with discursive clusters and finding a place in this 'hollow' centre for narrative and thematic concerns; concerns that Mittell suggests are secondary to other textual elements. Ultimately crime drama is a genre inextricably linked to its narrative; the very fact that crime fiction sometimes goes by the nickname whodunnit is testament to this narrative centrality. By investigating how themes and narrative tropes function in much the same way as other elements –such as the history of the genre or industrial concerns - that Mittell activates in the examples throughout his book, this thesis argues for a way of addressing cultural issues through genre without defaulting to old methods of genre study.

That being the case, this chapter begins by exploring different methodologies, presenting the case for the use of Mittell's work; work which built on that of other genre scholars such as Stephen

³²Ibid. p22

Neale³³ and Rick Altman, before further adapting it for television studies. Furthermore, the process of selecting texts for study is outlined with an exploration of how they fit together in a continuum of central narrative themes. This introduces one of the central tenets of my argument, that genres function through a series of continua allowing for conformity and deviation at the same time. Something I call a system of graduated articulation, as fixed conventions are activated in different ways across the genre. Certain tropes remain entrenched in the genre and what changes between shows is the extent to which they foreground them. This presents a concept of genre that revolves around the idea of points of cohesion, collections of shared elements that do not have to be activated in the same way. These function much like Mittell's discursive clusters, historically situated and working in multiple combinations to form an understanding of genre that is both stable in the historical moment but also able to shift over time. However, these continua foreground narrative concerns as a way of articulating and understanding these clusters. Unlike many previous genre studies, this thesis sets out to argue for narrative as an essential component of theorising genre.

Finally in this chapter, the shows that are the focus of this thesis are contextualised within the recent history of the genre, examining how it has developed and changed over the last twenty years. Looking at the precursors for many of the genre conventions that form the points of cohesion around which this theory revolves helps illustrate how entrenched they are in the genre. This section elaborates on the idea that no text can be exemplary by placing these particular shows within a context of long-running tropes that have been part of the genre in different ways for decades.

The transfer of methods of genre study from literature to film and then to television has meant that much of the theory is unsuited to television as a broadcast medium. The problem with this

³³ Specifically, Neale, "Questions of Genre."

mostly unadapted transfer is twofold: first the fundamental question that has been central to genre studies from the very start, what exactly genre is and where it is situated. Secondly, there are questions about how television is received; issues of flow, network identity and viewer practices problematise studies of television to a far greater extent than studies of film. Since this thesis explores the workings of genre through the lens of current gender politics in crime television, it is essential to situate the argument within current genre scholarship. My goal is not to produce a taxonomy of crime television, but to establish a working definition. In simpler terms, this chapter will set out how I have categorised my chosen texts as crime shows, what framework I have used to do this and what other textual elements must be accounted for when defining boundaries through the method of genre.

Most genre studies incorporate an historical overview of theory, in an attempt to determine where current thinking sits in the evolution of genre theory. This is not something I plan to address in detail as others (Feuer³⁴, Mittell³⁵) have done it well in the introduction to their own ideas. Nevertheless, in order to place my analysis within current scholarship, it is essential to give an understanding of recent genre work. After all, an understanding of genre and its methodological place is essential to this thesis, as Feuer suggests it is only through “classifying literature according to some principle of coherence, we can arrive at a greater understanding of the structure and purpose of our object of study.”³⁶ By classifying texts and being reflexive about the method involved in this classification we are able to learn more about the corpus through the process of comparison. However, while I shall not be reworking ground that has been covered numerous times, it is important to acknowledge the shifts in television genre scholarship as television studies worked to define itself as separate from film. In the 1990s television began to be understood as distinct in its own right, rather than simply a descendant of film, and it was

³⁴Feuer, "Genre Study and Television."

³⁵Jason Mittell, "A Cultural Approach to Genre Theory," *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 3 (2001).

³⁶ Feuer, "Genre Study and Television.", p106

suggested that new, more specific ways were needed to explore its texts³⁷. Having developed originally within literary studies, genre categories were broad, arbitrarily defined, made little space for non-narrative formats and their provenance was somewhat debated. Theories covered multiple approaches with a lack of cohesion within the discipline. Genre categorisation came from the creators of the text as a way to sell them to particular audiences; genre was a list of motifs, a particular setting or a particular actor; it was investigated diachronically as a way of mapping shifts over time. As this list suggests categories used for the definition of genre were shifted to suit the needs of the author. Studies of industry could define genre through economic factors, studies of history could look at genre as a set of period defined cycles. Even studies of genre itself were caught up in issues of who defines genre. For example, Feuer describes genre as ‘analyst constructed’³⁸, terms used to differentiate ones chosen texts from others. Essentially genre made the job of exploring texts and their ideological meanings easier as it narrowed the field. Very few theorists made any attempt to combine these ostensibly abstract concepts and look at genre as not just discursive in terms of *who* defines it but discursive in terms of *what* defines it (Neale being one of the notable exceptions³⁹). In discussing Feuer’s theories John Fiske writes:

“Feuer(1987) suggests there are three main strategies for constructing generic categories. The first is the aesthetic, which confines itself to textual characteristics. The second she calls the ritual, which sees genre as a conventional repeated “exchange between industry and audience, an exchange through which a culture speaks to itself.” Generic conventions allow the negotiation of shared cultural concerns and values and locate genres firmly within their social context. The third approach she calls ideological and this is her most problematic one. At one level, this view of genre accounts for the way that genres can be called upon

³⁷ For example see Jeremy G. Butler, *Television : critical methods and applications* (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Pub., 1994).

³⁸ Feuer, "Genre Study and Television."

³⁹ Stephen Neale, *Genre* (London: BFI Publishing, 1996).

to deliver audiences to advertisers, and structure the dominant ideology into their conventions. More productively, however, Feuer suggests that the meanings of programs for viewers are influenced, even manipulated, by the genres they are fitted into.”⁴⁰

While agree that each of these categories has a place in the process of understanding genre, to treat them as separate entities creates as many problems as ignoring the provenance of genre categories. What is more productive is to treat these three categories as discursive in the same way genres themselves are treated. The aesthetic notion of genre stems from the ideological and the ritual and also feeds into them, none of these categories accounts for everything on their own and none of them work in a vacuum. Generic identity is found in the multitude, and so the theory of genre adhered to in this thesis is one which builds off Feuer’s notion of categories, but sees them as a continuous whole.

A Further issue at this time was that these ideas, as with much of genre theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s, worked best with film studies, a forum in which texts, perhaps due to their modes of consumption and the existence of a canon, could be more easily grouped together and those groups more easily separated from one another. However, there is something to be said for Cawalti’s writing on Hollywood formula, and his suggestion that formula is defined as a “conventional system for structuring cultural products”⁴¹. This conception of genre as a way of understanding the formulas of mass produced cultural artefacts can be useful when looking at such prolific television genres as crime dramas. That being said, for the most part film genre theory did not work well with television theory as it ignored the complexity of flow, most famously written about by Raymond Williams.⁴² The existence of flow, this constant stream of texts that connected news with adverts and then with dramas, meant that distinctions between texts became more blurry and as a consequence so do generic boundaries. There was also the

⁴⁰ John Fiske, *Television culture* (London: Methuen, 1987). P109

⁴¹ John Cawalti, *The six-gun mystique*, 2nd Ed. ed. (Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1984). P29

⁴² Raymond Williams, *Television : technology and cultural form* (London: Fontana, 1974).

issue of the evolutionary model of genre history, one that prefaces building toward the 'ultimate' enunciation of the genre before descending into parody. This model suggests that genres have a beginning and an end, that there is some kind of cumulative trajectory followed ultimately by decline. As if genres have a 'true' essence. This is a model I resist, instead working toward a model of genre history that is more erratic, with texts building on the past but not in an ordered manner, something I address in more detail at the end of the chapter.

In an earlier article written by Mittell speaking to the call to end the 'the textualist assumption'⁴³ (as explored by theorists such as Feuer) the suggestion seems to be that it is even more important with regards to television than it was to film. That is to say that genre had typically been seen as a property of texts, something inherent that was used to categorise and define them⁴⁴. In the 2001 essay "A Cultural Approach to Genre Theory"⁴⁵, Mittell sets out a new way to investigate genre when dealing with television studies. Placing the existence of genre outside as well as inside the text, Mittell sets out to define genre as a cluster of extra, inter and paratextual artefacts that work in combination to create the notion of genre, dismissing the idea that any text contains its own innate genre codification. He suggests that "the category itself emerges from the relationship between the elements it groups together and the cultural context in which it operates"⁴⁶, placing the elements that create genre, from scheduling and advertising to critical response, into a cluster which functions in a particular way at a particular historical moment. Thus he gives the example of *Wheel of Fortune*, arguing that the genre of 'game show' is not formed by the existence of this one show, but from the way this show interacts in terms of production, scheduling and textually with other shows deemed 'game shows'. This does not eliminate the use of genre as a categorising tool: rather, it creates a more useful way to establish those categories, allowing for a

⁴³Feuer, "Genre Study and Television.", p4

⁴⁴ For a relatively recent example look to Nick Lacey, *Narrative and genre : key concepts in media studies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

⁴⁵Mittell, *Genre and Television : from Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture.*, p3

⁴⁶Ibid., p6

broader understanding of what helps form them. It attempts to take into account the complexity of television texts and the difficulty one finds when trying to extricate one text from the multitude; whether that be selecting a particular show for further study or a single episode from within a series. If the text is not the sole foundation for categorisation then it no longer bears the brunt of having to be truly 'representative', instead it is just one articulation among many. Moreover, by addressing the numerous paratexts linked to a primary text, it helps make a path through the feedback loop of reference and self-reference that is contemporary television, a medium built on repetition and recycling. More than ever before contemporary television not only builds on but relies on the audience's awareness of previous texts and contexts; shows continually refer to each other, either in text or in paratexts. As such, an awareness of all these factors becomes essential when trying to understand the ways in which shows work together and attempt to differentiate themselves, both through systems of reference and reflexivity. Audiences will be told they will like *Lie to Me* because it is like *Bones*, however it is different from *Bones* because it incorporates elements of *The Mentalist* while making explicit references to *CSI*. Reference is the central means of definition, so only through incorporating all referential material can you get a sense of how these shows operate. This methodology makes room for complex hybridity by allowing a wider range of contributing factors to define genre. Through Mittell's method genre is understood as a system of discursive categories rather than descriptive or proscriptive ones as Robert Stam⁴⁷, for example, tries to establish.

In his *Introduction to Film Theory* Stam sets out a view of genre full of inconsistencies as to what factors are worthy of becoming genre identifiers. In his definition genre categorisation can be anything from budget to a text's narrative location, but these factors are discreet and do not allow for a deeper understanding of the text. In Stam's theorising any category can be used, but they are not used in conjunction. Using Mittell's model on the other hand, negotiation becomes

⁴⁷Robert Stam and Toby Miller, *Film and theory : an anthology* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000). p14

possible as the textual cluster activates multiple identifiers, making what was once rigid now a flexible methodology. Rather than inconsistency, these different categories can all be used at once, none of them arbitrarily presented as more important than another. However, while this does create a complex, rigorous framework around which to build the idea of genre, Mittell is quick to point out that there is still a certain amount of instinctive reasoning that goes into defining a text's genre,

Although genres are constantly in flux and under definitional negotiation, generic terms are still salient enough that most people would agree on a common working definition for any genre. Even if we cannot provide an essential definition of a genre's core identity, we all still know a sitcom when we see one.⁴⁸

There is thus a certain ineffable element to genre definition, one that feeds off the nexus of texts Mittell defines, unarticulated but resonating out of the interplay between all texts. There is a sense that something 'fits', is part of the cacophonous whole. As Andrew Tudor suggests, "Genre notions —except in the case of arbitrary definition—are not critics' classifications made for special purposes; they are sets of cultural conventions. Genre is what we collectively believe it to be."⁴⁹ Part of the work of this thesis is to establish how shows 'fit' using this system of graduated articulation. What is explored is not only what it is we have collectively agreed to believe, but how certain notions are so pervasive that they draw together shows into the same genre that seem somewhat unlikely. This system demonstrates how those texts which complicate this notion of ineffable genre cohesion can be shown to still demonstrate the same generic markers by highlighting the genre conventions they participate in but articulate differently. For example, the rational empiricist 'man of science', found in *Lie to Me's* Lightman, is again found in the psychic show as the reassuring husband who offers his opinion as counterpoint to his wife's psychic

⁴⁸ Mittell, op. cit., p11

⁴⁹ A. Tudor, *Theories of film* ([S.l.]: Secker & Warburg, 1974). P139

visions. However, there is still always the issue of how the corpus of texts is chosen. In writing about Hollywood film Tudor succinctly explores this problem:

“we are caught in a circle that first requires that the films be isolated, for which purpose a criterion is necessary, but the criterion is, in turn, meant to emerge from the empirically established common characteristics of the films. This ‘empiricist dilemma’ has two solutions. One is to classify films according to a priori criteria depending on the critical purpose. This leads back to the earlier position in which the special genre term is redundant. The second is to lean on a common cultural consensus as to what constitutes a western and then go on to analyze it in detail.”⁵⁰

Later on this chapter I will explore my own methodology for text selection, however, it is this issue of genre studies is one that has been discussed for decades and has yet to be truly resolved.

In relation to decisions about the breadth of this study, perhaps one of the more useful ideas to come out of Mittell’s work, in terms of this thesis, is that one text alone cannot be held as representative of a genre: “Instead, we should focus on the breadth of discursive enunciations around any given instance, mapping out as many articulations of genre as possible and situating them within larger cultural contexts and relations of power.”⁵¹If genre is to be a discursive framework then it is the interplay of texts that builds it; no real understanding of a genre can be drawn from reductively focusing too closely on one text and losing context. None of the six shows explored here is taken to be exemplary but instead a single iteration of a set of generic identifiers; as Feuer suggested, too often do critics seek out “ideal types”⁵². For most of the 2000s much of the academic attention given over to crime drama has focused on *CSI*, using the show as a case study for contemporary crime texts. Its position as primary text for the study of the crime genre is

⁵⁰ Ibid. P135

⁵¹ Mittell, op. cit., p9

⁵² Feuer, "Genre Study and Television.", p139

due to many factors, from the show's phenomenal popularity to the new way it approached the use of forensics. *CSI* is different; defined by a strong visual aesthetic that uses CGI, colour, lighting and fast editing, to make it distinctive from the moment it starts. This makes it ripe for study as it feeds perfectly into Caldwell's notion of 'televisuality'⁵³, of something uniquely television. However, such a narrow focus has led to the genre being defined by terms set out by a show whose aesthetic is prominent and markedly different to other shows in the genre. *CSI* has not only had an entire reader dedicated to it, and two monographs⁵⁴ but even in Douglas Snauffer's book *Crime Television*⁵⁵, in a chapter on crime TV in the last decade, *CSI* is given the most coverage and referenced throughout the chapter. Michael Allen's reader⁵⁶ goes as far as to sub-title the *CSI* reader "crime TV under the microscope", suggesting that *CSI* serves as a representative text for the genre. This creates a rather limited view, leading academics to make broad assertions about the look and feel of the crime drama. This is especially dangerous with a show as aesthetically distinct as *CSI*. Therefore, to take it as the archetype for a genre at a particular moment overlooks the diversity of the broad category of crime television. This is especially the case in the first decade of the 21st century when crime programming made up around fifteen per cent of the network schedule. However, no matter the period, there can be no such thing as a representative text when examining genre, as genre studies only make sense through a process of comparison and context. Though *CSI* has influenced many shows created in its wake, there are also numerous crime and even forensic texts that share little or nothing with its stylised approach. While it does provide an insight into the narrowing of the gap between television and cinema aesthetics⁵⁷, work on the cinematography of *CSI* tells us little about the shared ideologies or similar narrative approaches at work in other texts of the genre. Furthermore, while *CSI* may look televisual, this

⁵³ John Thornton Caldwell, *Televisuality: style, crisis, and authority in American television* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

⁵⁴ Derek Kompare, *CSI: Crime Television Under the Microscope* (Chichester ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). and Steven Cohan, *CSI: crime scene investigation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁵⁵ Douglas Snauffer, *Crime television* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006).

⁵⁶ Michael Allen, *Reading CSI: crime TV under the microscope* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

⁵⁷ Much has been made of the emphasis *CSI* has placed on CGI effects that have been suggested as beyond the scope of most television, especially procedurals, often referred to as 'cinematic'.

blinkered approach ignores something that perhaps embodies televisuality more than a distinct aesthetic, repetition. As this thesis will demonstrate, the corpus of texts explored here repeat certain tropes, motifs and even narrative elements in every episode and there is, I would posit, little as televisual as the continual repetition of particular scenes, after all, few film genres share identical scenes across all films. Though Caldwell himself suggests that “Programs battle for identifiable style-markers and distinct looks in order to gain audience share within the competitive broadcast flow”⁵⁸ I would say the televisual is more evident in the places where the shows coalesce, in the points where they share a common thread. Though Caldwell argues that televisuality is about a style that makes television distinct from film I think it can also be found in the generic similarity that is so much more dense in television than it ever is in film. As Caldwell later asserts, “No programming confesses to being commonplace”⁵⁹ yet I would suggest it is its very commonplace-ness that makes it televisual.

This is one of the reasons that pinning genre down to purely textual elements is limited.

Therefore, in conjunction with Mittell’s methodology, I am also using Steve Neale’s work *Genre*⁶⁰ and his ideas about audience expectation as a component of genre. Specifically I make use of the idea of non-cultural verisimilitude, the suggestion that through repetition certain motifs become a substitute for the ‘real’. Following Neale’s ideas then the expected presence of certain motifs must be met in order for the episode to feel authentic; were certain expectations not met it would call the genre of the show into question. Alongside this I am also using a polyvalent approach suggested by Altman;⁶¹ an approach which allows genres to be defined in more than one way at a time. Consequently genre can be industry defined, textually implied and a category imposed by the audience. By combining different aspects from each of these scholars a model can

⁵⁸ Caldwell, *Televisuality : style, crisis, and authority in American television*. P5

⁵⁹ Ibid. p9

⁶⁰ Neale, *Genre*.

⁶¹ Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999).

be made which is rigorous enough to withstand the complex meta-textual nature of contemporary television.

One issue for the crime genre, one of the few genres to have been part of the fictional cannon from very early on, is its extensive history. So pervasive are crime texts that they seem to have almost always existed: the genre's tropes and motifs feeling as if they have already been explored in literature and film. Consequently issues of genre in contemporary crime television have, for the most part, been ignored, its definition seen as static and ground already covered. So much has been written on detective fiction since the inception of the figure in the mid 19th century; work that deconstructs the place and purpose of the, much older, crime text so that over a hundred years later when it reaches television it seems there is little that has not already been investigated. Unfortunately this leaves much unanswered about how the genre currently functions and what is at stake in one of the most pervasive television genres of the last twenty years. This thesis asks some of those unanswered questions and sheds light on how the genre's popularity has led to it being both cohesive and broad. Instead of looking at the crime genre on television as something that has already been explored in other media, the focus can be shifted and the long history of the genre can aid the study of television. Its extensive history can be used to help establish the sets of conventions that define the boundaries of the genre.

Most scholars who look at the crime genre do so as a way of exploring television genre theory in a diachronic manner, using it as a way of exploring historically based methods of genre analysis.⁶²

Very little work has been done on current crime genre programming, its part in the hybridity of all television genres, and its changes in recent years. The resurgence of the genre in the early 21st century saw it both diversify in terms of the kinds of methods used to solve crime, but also consolidate many themes and narrative tropes which became central tenets of the genre for many years. For example, gender, which for a time had been a focus for academics working in the

⁶² Mittell does this well in his exploration of the crime drama in, Mittell, *Genre and Television : from Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*.

area, especially in the 1970s, became stagnant, as the same kinds of representation were repeated until their ubiquity became part of the fabric of the genre. As such the period between 2000 and 2010 is a very specific moment in the history of the genre; it is a time of heightened production of crime shows and thus a period when genre becomes a much larger issue. With more shows competing for viewers there was a need for the producers to both differentiate their show and try to ensure audiences knew that their show would cater for a renewed interest in crime drama. As is often the case in periods of heightened production, texts become heavily inscribed with generic markers as a shorthand way for producers to try and ensure that audiences identify them. While I do not subscribe to the idea that genres evolve, they are cyclical, this period is a particularly prolific one and therefore a time at which change is more likely to occur. Work that does exist on crime shows at this time tends to ignore these factors and instead focuses on aesthetics, using visual style as the defining trait and harking back to an essentialist idea of genre concerned with visual artefacts. There is little acknowledgement of the sheer number of crime shows being aired and the effect they have on one another. While many of the generic traits of these shows are a continuation of that which had gone before, the very fact that there were so many airing at once cannot be ignored. The genre was shifting during this period, doing something different because the field had become competitive. Nevertheless, from Sue Tait's 2006 article, "Autoptic vision and the necrophilic imaginary in CSI"⁶³ to David P. Pierson's 2010 article "Evidential Bodies: The Forensic and Abject Gazes in CSI: Crime Scene Investigation"⁶⁴, and many in between, the focus on the visual alone is unmistakable. There seems to be a gap between early crime television analysis which concentrated on social issues and the

⁶³Sue Tait, "Autoptic vision and the necrophilic imaginary in CSI," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (2006).

⁶⁴David P. Pierson, "Evidential Bodies: The Forensic and Abject Gazes in CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," *Journal of Communication Enquiry* 0, no. 01 (2010).

ways in which the genre was dealing with society's fears about the institution of law, and current work on the visual style of crime investigation⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ For examples of the former there is work on Cagney and Lacey, for example, D'Acci, "The Case of Cagney and Lacey." And James W. Messerschmidt, *Masculinities and crime : critique and reconceptualization of theory* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993)., for examples of the latter see analysis of *Prime Suspect* by Deborah Jermyn, "Women with a Mission: Lynda La Plante, DCI Jane Tennison and the Reconfiguration of TV Crime Drama," *International journal of cultural studies* 6, no. 1 (2003). and Glen Creeber, "Cigarettes and Alcohol: Investigating Gender, Genre, and Gratification in Prime Suspect," *Television and New Media* 2, no. 2 (2001).

What is a Crime Drama?

The working definition of crime drama proposed here is as follows: In any given episode a temporary character will be introduced who is either the victim or perpetrator of a wrongdoing. As the show progresses the main protagonists seek to answer questions about this transgression and reveal the truth of what happened. In conjunction with this there is a preconceived understanding that by the end of the episode the truth will have been discovered as this has long been the tradition of the crime story. This definition is not specific to this point in the history of crime drama but rather an overarching definition that identifies the backbones of the genre, the elements that do not change with fashion. Furthermore, this working definition with its loose idea of wrongdoing means that illegal activity is not a necessary precursor. This definition is, for the most part, focused on narrative, however, this is intentional; the crime drama is a genre intrinsically reliant on particular narrative touchstones. While this thesis will argue that there is a shifting system of elements that define how the genre tells stories and builds characters, a definition of this sort is necessary before any of that in order to create a simple structural framework. By defining the genre in terms of the plot of its episodes a broad understanding of the genre is put in place; these are shows about 'crimes' and they are shows in which crimes are solved. From this starting point, a corpus of texts can be built and from there detailed analysis can become a fruitful endeavour that gets to grips with the myriad ways these texts interact and coalesce alongside their shared narratives. Crime shows are more than this simple definition, and the crime shows that comprise the period detailed in this thesis, consultant procedurals, can be defined by their reliance on specialist knowledge and their treatment of intuitive knowledge as feminine, however, while these definitions work in this particular moment they are not universal. The plot-based definition above is one that works for all crime drama. As with any genre study this can become a somewhat circular argument, defining the boundaries can make the subsequent research a self-fulfilling prophecy; with this in mind another reason for the using a

narrative definition of genre rather than thematic, or any other is that it then leaves space for asking further questions. Rather than be proscriptive about how the crime drama frames this shared narrative, the above definition simply states what it is leaving further work to be done.

While the majority of crime shows focus on solving murders, some look at what I would call social or intimate crimes such as the neglect of a child or the keeping of a secret. Texts of this nature will not include criminal investigation, but rather the policing of moral duties, a sense that a wrong has been committed whether or not it is a legal issue. Schatz⁶⁶ argues that each genre deals with particular socio-cultural problems; crime is not typically an issue in the musical and marriage is not typically a problem in the gangster film. If this is the case, then the socio-cultural problem in the crime drama can be defined as a search for the perpetrator of a crime, social or otherwise, through the process of uncovering obfuscated truths.

Television genres may be more leaky and hybrid than they were when Schatz was writing nearly thirty years ago, but much of the principle still applies. Ultimately, the purpose of the crime drama is a search for truth. However, while this narrative dimension underpins the entire genre, individual texts approach it in different ways. Either as Derrida, though of course not talking about television, claimed⁶⁷, texts can participate in more than one genre at a time, allowing for a show to be both crime and family drama, or television as a medium is home to more fluid and hybrid genres, a stance that Feuer⁶⁸ takes. In this view a text can never be just one thing but instead a crime-melodrama or a gothic crime drama. At first these two stances may not seem very different there is a distinction. Derrida is arguing that parts of a text can do different things, one moment a western, the next sci-fi; Feuer is suggesting that no textual moment is pure, there will always be fluidity to a genre. While this distinction could be seen as a case of semantics, there is a difference

⁶⁶Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood genres : formulas, filmmaking, and the studio system* (Boston, Mass.: McGraw-Hill, 2009).p25

⁶⁷Derrida, "The Law of Genre."

⁶⁸ In her work Feuer calls it horizontal recombination, Feuer, op. cit., p119

between particular scenes activating a particular generic identity and all moments activating more than one genre at once. It is the latter idea I tend to subscribe to. That being the case, I am fully aware that by adhering to the definition 'crime drama' I am engaging only with the primary genre these shows participate in. Though I will be engaging with aspects of my chosen shows which are not actively 'crime', for example the melodrama of the supernatural texts, this is in order to examine how the crime genre navigates and utilises its participation in other genres. No crime show is pure crime show, just as no text is pure, however for ease of understanding I will maintain the singular definition of "crime" for the genre of the six shows at the core of the thesis.

The working definition of crime drama described above relies on two key concepts, the quest for some form of truth - this is a narrative based concept - and the knowledge that this truth will be discovered. This second concept is one that exists outside of the text, residing with the audience and utilised in promotional material. The first concept on the surface seems to work against Mittell's theory, placing genre definition squarely in the narrative and as a component of the text. However, I would argue it is possible to use Mittell's framework while still placing narrative elements at the centre of genre definition, thus creating a composite model. Even Mittell himself does not completely evacuate the text, rather he decentres it. In the case of crime drama I think it is counter-productive to decentralise narrative to the extent that he does, since crime texts are definitively plot driven. In fact, I would suggest it is counterproductive in most cases as serial television, unlike film, is far more dependent upon repeated narrative tropes and continual narrative development; for the most part viewers continue to watch a television series to find out what will happen next. Therefore, for my own genre framework systems of narrative will sit at the centre while ancillary/paratexts such as broadcast information will form a context around the narrative that together create the notion of genre.

The second component of the definition given above brings the audience back into the equation and adds a discursive element. Through the viewing and consuming of ancillary texts (broadcast adverts, print media adverts, scheduling), the audience becomes part of the context of defining genre, going back once again to Neale's ideas about audience expectation. Andrew Tolson, in reference to Neale's work, defines genre as "a category which mediates between industry and audience".⁶⁹ This suggests that the audience plays an active part in the creation of genre through their consumption. As stated earlier, part of the make-up of the genre itself is expectation, the unravelling of a complex story. However, this expectation extends to the consumption of paratexts as well as main texts as promotional discourses centralise plot both as part of viewing pleasure and as a defining element of the genre. This illustrates another way in which narrative becomes the element around which the rest of the textual cluster revolves, the central point which is enunciated throughout each textual iteration of the genre. As such, audience enjoyment of this process of discovery, an element foregrounded in almost all promotional material, is a significant factor in understanding crime drama's popularity. Promotional materials play a key role as week after week, networks produce advertising focusing on the questions at the centre of next week's episode. In each promo the central mystery is established and attempts are made to draw in the audience by assuring them that not only do they know that these questions will be answered but that they can 'play along' and attempt to answer these questions themselves. A promotional advert for *The Mentalist* or *Ghost Whisperer* will establish facts about the case; a dead biker with bullet proof cufflinks⁷⁰ or the ghost of a man who claims his wife killed him.⁷¹ Nevertheless, each week the basic setup is the same: the protagonist will take that week's set of clues and solve the mystery. What complicates the matter here is that promotional adverts for other kinds of shows do much the same thing. Adverts for *Grey's Anatomy* (ABC, 2005) or *Revenge* (ABC, 2011) also set up questions about the main characters, leaving some open ended

⁶⁹Andrew Tolson, *Mediations: text and discourse in media studies* (London: Arnold, 1996). p96

⁷⁰ The Mentalist (2.04) promo accessed 20/11/09 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21ZZPATruPE>

⁷¹ Ghost Whisperer (5.08) promo accessed 20/11/09 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7_sPVRne8g

so that viewers can be left guessing who might be pregnant or getting fired. I will undertake a more detailed study of the promotional material for my chosen texts and consider how they operate in context of the particular shows and networks in the second chapter of this thesis, however, it is important to note at this stage that promotional materials play a part in how genre is constructed. Promotional adverts by their very nature ask questions so that hopefully the audience will tune in to find answers, what is different in the crime show is that the audience has repeatedly been told, through the genre's adherence to narrative traditions, that the questions will be answered that very episode. While narrative strands and promotional strategies may cross genre boundaries, generic expectation differentiates them. *Grey's Anatomy* may draw out its plots for weeks on end, but by the closing credits of *The Mentalist* the killer will have been revealed. This process of setting up the mystery before the episode has even begun starts from the moment the previous episode ends with adverts for the next episode airing over the closing credits. They are prologues, if you will, that extend the narrative beyond the singular text into something that exists in media res. They keep the narrative going and attempt to keep the audience interested during the textual hiatus.

Genre then is both dependent upon narrative elements and audience expectations. However, as Mittell states: "Genres are not neutral categories but are situated within larger systems of power and thus come 'fully loaded' with political implications"⁷² and it is this particular aspect of genre that will shape this thesis. Though here I have set out to create a working definition of what the crime drama is, that is not the primary job of this thesis. The purpose of this project is to both explore how the contemporary crime drama deals with issues of gender and in doing so find new ways of theorising large genres. No attempt is being made to find the 'proper' or definitive idea of what the crime drama is, but rather what it is in this precise moment. As has been established the genre, as with any other, engages with a myriad of different concepts over time, shifting and

⁷²Mittell, op. cit., p19

reconfiguring. Any one definition of the genre will only work in its own historical context when defined using as broad a range of texts as possible. Genre is not something that exists on its own: rather, it is a relative, discursive term.

That being the case an understanding of the interplay of texts contemporary to one another, regardless of genre, is as important as an understanding of a genre's history. Where a show sits in the broadcast week, where it advertises and what texts shows share as their reference points are also what defines and shapes a genre. Without examining a broad enough range of texts, only a limited understanding is available. My aim here is not to create impermeable boundaries for the crime drama therefore, by using a wider sample of texts an understanding can be wrought from the similarities and differences they display. However, in order to achieve this I have had to implement some parameters, as to cover the whole of crime television would be an impossible task.

In looking at all crime dramas that have aired on American television in the past ten years, most noticeable is the prevalence of the consultant as protagonist, a non-police figure who assists in the solving of crime. Focusing on this figure allows an exploration of ideas of gendered authority and knowledge outside of designated institutional settings. The consultant is both an outsider and an approved member of the investigative team; a modern re-interpretation of the figure of the amateur detective, characters such as Miss Marple or Sherlock Holmes. Their existence both outside and inside the institution creates a fascinating binary to investigate. They are both part of a unified team and lone figures whose distinctive methods and stylised characterisation are ripe for study. Using this as a central criterion for the selection of texts, focusing on shows that feature consultant protagonists, texts can then be chosen which are varied enough from one another to be able to confidently produce an overview. The next section will detail how these shows were chosen and the patterns that became evident during this process.

Defining Boundaries: Method and Methodology of Text Selection

In this section I present a brief overview of the shows that this study analyses and explain how they fit into the parameters set out in the previous section. To define a suitable period I collected data concerning the number of scheduled prime-time hours between 1990 and 2010 that were given over to drama by the four main US networks, ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC. Analysis of the data revealed that during this period the sitcom declined sharply while dramas became increasingly popular and began airing earlier in the schedule. In the period 2000-2010 most of these new dramas were crime dramas, supporting the idea that in the second half of the decade the crime drama became a dominating force within the US prime-time schedule; something not seen in the previous fifteen years⁷³.

I decided to concentrate on the latter half of this period as it allowed me to look at a genre during the very height of its success. Once a period was defined, I made the decision to concentrate on consultant based shows rather than institutional ones, as that was the prevailing trend at the time. Of the shows premiered during 2005-2010 all fit into a spectrum that covers three categories: science focused, pseudo-psychic and supernatural. This spectrum facilitates a method for understanding the different ways in which the consultant figure, a manifestation of a generically familiar device, is being used at this moment within the genre. Rather than erecting more arbitrary categories it is a method for exploring the ways in which the cluster of texts and paratexts interact with each other, a map to help understand the different degrees with which different elements co-exist. It facilitates the system of graduated articulation by creating a way to group these different levels of articulation while still exploring them as part of a sliding scale. Each category blends into the next and all three work in conjunction to form the boundaries of the genre. It is not an exhaustive structuring of the genre but a means to unpack how these texts

⁷³ See Appendix 1.2

work together and the points at which they either cleave together or apart. Just as Mittell activates different generic categories in his work on *Dragnet*, these categories assist in analysing how the texts work as cultural objects. I have termed this the scientific-psychic continuum.

From each area of the continuum I then chose the two most popular shows based on US ratings. These were *Bones*, *Lie to Me*, *The Mentalist*, *Psych*, *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer*. Inevitably in every category there were shows I had to ignore; *Pushing Daisies*(ABC, 2007-2009)⁷⁴ is a fascinating example of the supernatural and *Castle*(ABC, 2009-present)⁷⁵ is an interesting take on the pseudo-psychic, but with six shows selected a broad enough range was being covered to achieve a sufficient overview of the genre while still allowing for close textual analysis. These shows were omitted purely because at the time too few episodes had aired to make them useful texts for study. After all, it is only through a method of close reading that subtleties can be found that are not available through other means such as reading episode descriptions. Textual analysis helps in the discovery of patterns, themes and tropes as well as pinpointing moments of diversion from these tropes. Furthermore, through this method the examination of tone, character interaction and dialogue can become part of the process of exploring texts.

It seems pertinent at this point to explain the place of *Psych* within the selection of texts. *Psych* does not air on US broadcast TV but rather on USA a channel that is part of the US basic cable system; that is the collection of channels that is available to any US household with a cable box at no extra charge. Data collected by Nielsen as of 2009 claims that 90% of US households currently have access to cable⁷⁶. Though basic cable channels do not achieve the same viewing figures as the standard four networks, their high rated shows do perform competitively. Furthermore, *Psych* presents not only an interesting counterpoint to the other shows in the corpus but example of the

⁷⁴ Airing for only a season and a half on ABC, the show followed a man who could bring people back from the dead for a minute simply by touching them.

⁷⁵ Another ABC show, this time about a crime writer whose knowledge of how crime works gives him special insight into people and the crimes they commit.

⁷⁶ http://www.tvb.org/media/file/TV_Basics.pdf, p7

way the genre has moved somewhat outside of network programming; the premier of *Psych* is the point at which USA moved into crime programming. The channel is now known for the airing of original procedural dramas such as *Burn Notice*(USA, 2007)and *White Collar*(USA, 2009). It was with *Psych* the cable network found a lucrative way of getting into the original programming market through the popularity of procedurals.

In working towards the identification of this corpus, other interesting factors emerged. Alongside the scientific-psychic continuum were other continuing themes that needed exploration, namely the use of the gothic, comedy and domestic drama. Each of the six shows analysed contained all three elements to a certain degree. Assigning each of the framing narratives/modes a grade of one to six (six meaning it is central to the show) I was able to create a matrix which illustrates how the shows both engage with different combinations of narrative/mode but also how the overarching scientific-psychic continuum helps frame where groupings occur (see Appendix 1.1). *The Mentalist* and *Psych* both operate at the more comedic end but both shows still engage with themes associated with the domestic drama. None of these aspects are mutually exclusive, and some categories operate in a synergistic manner. By and large the more supernatural the show the more it tends to activate domestic narratives; the more a show uses humour the less emphasis it places on science and empirical evidence. All four defining narratives (how a show engages with the scientific-psychic continuum as well as comedy, domestic drama and the gothic) intertwine, converge and create a complex cluster of ideas to unpack. The different ways in which these elements are activated within each text works in conjunction with Mittell's textual cluster approach. As a text such as *Ghost Whisperer* activates gothic narratives, family melodrama and the detective story it is also working within each of these clusters, calling on gothic literature and paranormal reality programming in order to define itself. Through understanding the way in which the central narrative works as a cluster of interacting elements it is then possible to extrapolate that to a wider understanding of the genre, using comparison and context to find the patterns and themes. However, before being able to examine the genre through the lens of

gender politics, as is my eventual aim, the shows must be placed into context. Firstly, they must be placed in context with each other but also with para and ancillary texts and, as I will do later in this chapter, within the context of the history of the genre.

Beginning at the scientific end of the continuum is *Bones*. Starting in 2005 and airing on the Fox network, *Bones* centres around a forensic anthropologist, Temperance Brennan (Emily Deschanel), nicknamed Bones, and her partner FBI special agent Seely Booth (David Boreanaz). With the help of Brennan's team at the fictional Jeffersonian Institute they solve murders. In the first few seasons the team consists of Brennan's PhD student Zac Addy (Eric Milligan), Jack Hodgins (T. J. Thyne), an entomologist fond of conspiracy theories and heir to a fortune, and Angela Montenegro (Michaela Conlin), Brennan's best friend and an artist who specialises in recreating the faces of the victims and computer modelling crime scenes. In later seasons Zac is gone, having become the apprentice of a serial killer, and a new supervisor for the lab has been introduced, Dr Camille Saroyan (Tamara Taylor), who specialises in pre-decomposed tissue and bodies.

Arriving at the height of *CSI*'s popularity and riding on its lab-based coat-tails, *Bones* took the forensic procedural one step further. The producers created crimes, and crime scenes, more gruesome and elaborate than those found in the procedurals that came before it. In some ways they are closest to crime scenes found on a previous Fox show *The X-Files* (Fox, 1993); crimes that verge on the ridiculous with bodies so removed from any semblance of humanity as to become unrecognisable. It is through these outlandish images of corpses that the show begins to engage with comedy, using humour as a device to counterbalance the horror of the crime scenes⁷⁷. Also at this point distinct lines start to be drawn between knowledge and intuition, and between science and humanity.

⁷⁷ Episode 3.9 features a murdered Santa Claus whose body is discovered by two mall elves, for example.

Moving on from *CSI*'s starting point of introducing the body and the crime scene as a readable story waiting to be told, *Bones* brings the scientists and lab technicians to the forefront of the storytelling, and as a consequence the dichotomy at the centre of my thesis is brought to bear. In the pairing of Brennan and Booth the show presents a very literal embodiment of science versus intuition, and the inherent gender conventions bound up in the figuring of these concepts. This is made even more explicit with the role of Angela, a character who brings an extra dimension to the struggle between the two as she represents the team's connection to humanity, literally giving faces to the dead⁷⁸.

However, outside of the philosophical battle lines the show draws between science and innate knowledge are far more basic parameters I have established for choosing particular shows. One of the central tenets for this thesis' exploration of the crime drama is the figure of the consultant, a person chosen for a particular form of knowledge or talent, to assist in crime solving but not a professional crime solver. This is a figure, as stated before, who has both status of an outsider and a legal enforcer with none of the restrictions of the institution. Additionally the consultant is a figure who feeds into culturally dominant ideas about the institution versus the individual as detailed by Fiske:

“The institutional mythology is presented in such a way as to produce a negative response in the audience: the mythology of the institutions is that although they are capable of decision, action, even glamour, they are at last ineffectual. Conversely, the mythology of individuals is presented in such a way as to affirm and confirm the primacy and adequacy

⁷⁸ Dr. Goodman, head of the Jeffersonian, makes this explicit when he tells Angela in episode 1.05 “You are the best of us, Miss Montenegro. You discern humanity in the wreck of a ruined human body. You give victims back their faces, their identities. You remind us all of why we're here in the first place - because we treasure human life.”

of individual actions and relationships even when these may be operating on behalf of institutions.”⁷⁹

The consultant perfectly embodies the idea of the primacy of the individual cleverly folding it into a narrative about the regimented workings of the institution. *Bones* does this very well, delineating the lab at the Jeffersonian as the home of scientific endeavour while any policing is done at the FBI. The distinction between legal law enforcer and consultant is constantly referred to, and could be seen as one of the central issues within the narrative of the show⁸⁰. In terms of the other continua at play in contemporary crime drama, *Bones* functions more on the scales of science and humour than as a domestic or gothic drama, the two most inter-twined categories. However, as the show has progressed it has focused increasingly on the domestic, a trend which could equally be a consequence of being a long running drama rather than a conscious shift in generic tropes.

At the same scientific end of the continuum, and another Fox show, is *Lie to Me*. However, with its emphasis on knowing people rather than knowing science the show both illustrates the multiple points of connection between these categories and an example of genre’s constant activation of binaries-people Vs. science, feeling Vs. knowing-continually these oppositions reframe texts into new combinations within the cluster. Debuting in 2008, *Lie to Me* focuses on the work of The Lightman Group, a team of consultants who have honed skills and technology that allow them not only to read people’s emotions, but more importantly, to detect when a person is lying. The team is led by Cal Lightman (Tim Roth), an arrogant and off-hand man who revels in his ability to decipher the emotions of those around him. The rest of the team comprise of Gillian Foster(Kelli Williams), long-time work partner of Lightman who focuses on voice and psychology rather than Lightman’s focus on facial expressions; Eli Loker(Brendan Hines),

⁷⁹ John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading television*, 2nd ed. / with a foreword by John Hartley. ed. (London: Routledge, 2003). P69

⁸⁰ Throughout the first season Brennan tries to persuade Booth to let her officially carry a gun, something she never achieves.

Lightman's researcher; and new member of the team Ria Torres (Monica Raymund), brought in after Lightman notices her innate gift for reading peoples' facial expressions.

Here we find the knowledge/intuition dichotomy presented once again, this time caught up in the idea of whether knowledge can be taught from scratch or if there must first be talent. *Lie to Me* in some ways problematises the idea that knowledge and intuition are in binary opposition, and within its own narrative landscape is unsure which is more valuable. In early episodes Eli and Torres are at odds due to this very problem; his belief that without training she cannot do the job and her anger at his lack of faith in her natural ability. Furthermore, the use of pseudo-science in the show serves to complicate the matter, blurring the lines between something that can only be felt and something that can be measured. Interestingly it is the female characters who are either interested in the less quantifiable elements of their work (Gillian) or possess untrained but intuitive natural ability (Ria). This aspect will be further explored in my third chapter exploring the place of intuition and reason within crime solving.

The use of pseudo-science places *Lie to Me* in an interesting and important position along the continuum of shows I am studying. While scientific elements are called upon, placing it closer to the *Bones* end of the spectrum, the use of what is essentially "cold reading" also places the show in the same area as the pseudo-psychic shows that I will discuss next. *Lie to Me* is a pivotal text, one that connects the science based shows with the pseudo-psychic by containing elements of both. It places less emphasis on comedy than *Bones* does, but also less emphasis on the domestic. *Lie to Me* is perhaps closest to *CSI* in tone, viewing crime solving as a very serious endeavour. While the show's focus is a consulting firm there is a policing official, Agent Ben Reynolds (Mekhi Phifer), whose presence cements the group as designated consultants. Most episodes of the show revolve around Ben bringing the group a suspect or a witness whose testimony is essential to a case. Over the course of the episode the group will watch videos of the client, speak to them face to face and eventually gain the truth from them by reading their subconscious tells; all of this

supposedly done in a measurable scientific manner, thus creating its own form of empiricist data. In the diegesis of this show humanity can be boiled down to series of facial measurements and pitch changes in the voice.

As a connective text, the showmanship and attention to detail which Lightman is famous for in *Lie to Me* is not far removed from Patrick Jane of *The Mentalist*. Premiering on CBS in 2008, *The Mentalist* tells the story of Patrick Jane (Simon Baker), a man who once made a living as a popular psychic and medium until his wife and child were murdered by Red John, a serial killer angry at Jane's involvement in the investigation into his murders. The unique aspect of this show is that Jane happily admits his psychic powers were nothing but smoke and mirrors and a talent for observation and cold reading. In the context of *The Mentalist* these are talents, not the objective science professed in *Lie to Me*. It is revealed in a season two episode⁸¹ that much of Jane's talent comes from the teachings of his pushy father who used him as a boy in his confidence scams against rich old ladies. Interestingly, for the pseudo-psychics, fathers are often the source of their talent; the teaching of these skills being the sole vehicle for father and son bonding. This heavily gendered aspect of the show will be explored further in chapter Five. Ever the showman Jane uses his skills, gained from years of practice rather than any innate power, in a flamboyant manner, tricking people into believing he can read their minds in order to gain confessions. However, while he firmly believes there is no such thing as psychic ability, he is confronted in an episode in season one by a woman claiming that not only is she a psychic but that she believes that Jane has the gift too, he just will not admit it to himself⁸². Even a member of the law enforcement team he works with, Grace Van Pelt (Amanda Righetti), has trouble believing he does not really possess some kind of supernatural power. Once again the audience is presented with a woman who believes in the power of supernatural/intuitive abilities and a man who denies them in favour of rational talent.

⁸¹*The Mentalist* 2.10 "Throwing Fire"

⁸²*The Mentalist* 1.7 "Seeing Red"

In any given episode the policing team, in this case the fictional California Bureau of Investigation, is given a crime to solve and Jane accompanies them to speak to suspects/witnesses and lend his skills to the investigation. The conflict in the show comes from the position Jane occupies as a consultant who, more often than not, oversteps his boundaries. Jane, while not a cop, is the quintessential maverick investigator from previous incarnations of the crime drama⁸³, doing what is necessary to solve the crime no matter what the legal ramifications might be. The CBI team he works with comprises of Van Pelt, a young agent who believes in the supernatural, Teresa Lisbon (Robin Tunney), head of the team and the one in charge of keeping Jane in check, and finally agents Cho (Tim Kang) and Rigsby (Owain Yeoman), both no nonsense agents who often find Jane the bane of their existence. Unlike the previous shows *The Mentalist* has a lighter tone, much lighter than *Bones*, a comedic element linked to Jane's character and his stage-craft approach to crime solving. It is also the only show to make note of the problems incurred by using Jane's unorthodox methods; making reference to the difficulty they have convicting people Jane has helped catch and almost coming to blows with another member of the department who disagrees with Jane's methods⁸⁴. The show makes no attempts at the gothic or scientific and for a show centred on a man's desire to avenge the murder of his family, makes little space for domestic drama.

Even further along on the comic spectrum is *Psych*. Premiering on The USA Network in 2006 *Psych* follows the lives of two private investigators Shawn (James Roday) and Gus (Dulé Hill). In order to get work Shawn claims to be a psychic detective, however, much like Patrick Jane, this is a cover for his heightened perception and ability to read people. Promoted as more of a comedy drama than a crime show *Psych* differs generically from the other shows explored in this thesis; however its central premise and narrative construction, a crime solved every week by a police consultant,

⁸³ The 70s was a decade especially rife with Maverick cops from *Hawaii Five-0* to *Kojak* and *Starsky & Hutch*

⁸⁴ From early in season two *The Mentalist* introduced Sam Boscoe, a lead agent who disapproved of Jane's methods and in 2.6 "Black Gold and Red Blood" even has him arrested. However, by season's end Boscoe is dead and with him goes the institutional opposition.

still places it firmly within the same genre parameters. Moreover, the wider the sampling of shows, the more thorough an idea of the current issues, themes and tropes of the crime drama can be gleaned. Having established the rather narrow view taken by similar studies in recent years, the inclusion of shows that are more generically complex allows this study to add more to current thinking surrounding the crime drama. While *Psych* may be played for laughs quite often, it still has an important position along the continuum when placed alongside *The Mentalist*, building on the ideas found when exploring the show's ideological framework. The show serves as a further example of how the pseudo-psychic is positioned and allows for exploration of patterns and tropes; for instance, like Jane, Shawn was tutored by his father from a young age and each episode contains a flashback to lessons his father, a cop, taught him⁸⁵. Again we see the idea of talent as something passed from father to son and the importance of some kind of paternal lineage, the ability to pass something on to the next generation. *Psych* though seemingly a complex text generically in fact provides a myriad of points of cohesion with the rest of the genre, reaffirming its place amongst them far more often than it denies it. This show, along with *Ghost Whisper*, becomes one of the most useful texts as it proves the versatility of the continuum method of genre study.

The episodes themselves focus on a crime being brought to Shawn and Gus, often reluctantly, and the pair then having to fake psychic moments in order to pass off Shawn's genuine talent for crime solving. These moments are represented in the text often with a quick zoom or the use of post-production techniques to make the relevant clue or item noticed by Shawn, 'glow'. Through this the audience is given insight into Shawn's chain of thought and how he comes to certain conclusions. His skills, much like Jane's are an odd mixture of talent and taught knowledge, blurring the lines between the supernatural shows I shall be defining next and the scientific shows I referenced earlier. These shows straddle the boundaries by denying the presence of actual

⁸⁵ In episode 4.09 "A Shot in the Dark" Shawn remembers being taught how to escape from the locked boot of a car and track where you have been taken while trapped.

supernatural ability but still claiming there is an element of innate talent that has been honed. Once again there is a female character who believes wholeheartedly in Shawn's abilities, Detective Maggie Lawson (Juliet O'Hara) and a male cop, Carlton Lassiter (Timothy Omundson) who believes Shawn is a charlatan. This positions Shawn and Gus as a unified team, both fighting with and agreeing with sceptical institutional opposition. Though positioning itself away from other procedural dramas, *Psych* still works within the same ideological framework and encompasses many of the same themes.

The psychic shows initially seem the most unlike the rest of the shows in my corpus, however, there are defining traits such as the consultant protagonist, the strict construction of masculine and feminine norms, and the positioning of confession as a form of justice, which suggest connections between the shows. Later chapters will further explore the extent to which these shows conform to the tropes of the genre. First of the psychic shows is *Ghost Whisperer*, which premiered on CBS in 2005, starring Jennifer Love Hewitt as Melinda Gordon an antique shop owner who can see and speak to ghosts. A typical episode will involve a ghost appearing to Melinda so that she can help them, or those they left behind, complete unfinished business they have left on earth. This can include a variety of things from solving a murder to an unspoken declaration of love, allowing the show to bring in numerous elements from many genres while still maintaining its core mystery narrative. At the end of the episode the ghost will walk into the light (this occurs in a very literal way with the spirit seen walking into a bright light and disappearing) and presumably go to heaven. Melinda is joined by her husband Jim (David Conrad), a doctor at the local hospital and, in later seasons, her young son Aiden (Connor Gibbs) who also possesses her 'gift'. She is also assisted at different points across the series by a succession of friends. Many of the episodes are about Melinda trying to reconcile her 'gift' with trying to live a normal life keeping her marriage together and running a business. Her powers are something she has no control over and are often portrayed as a hindrance, a burden passed down to her.

The fact that Melinda has no choice is interesting when comparing the show to ones previously discussed, and is particular to the seemingly female dominated supernatural/psychic shows. Unlike the learned or talented consultants of the science/pseudo-psychic end of the continuum, the female psychic's innate knowledge is inescapable, non-consensual and sometimes unwanted, akin almost to a genetic disorder. This leads to over-arching themes concerning duty, fate and legacies. This is not to suggest that the pseudo-psychics are free from ideas of legacy; they have the weight of their fathers' teachings on their shoulders, and must contend with what it means to become a man and live up to their father's expectations. To this end, issues of parentage and duty will be explored further in later chapters; namely chapter Four which deals with masculinity as it pertains to the crime drama and chapter Five which explores the place of the feminine. However, in terms of the basic structure of the show, the emphasis on the hereditary and inescapable shift the narrative of the psychic crime drama and as a consequence reshape how many of the tropes of the genre function. As will be explored in chapter Three, their inextricable link with the intuitive (and ultimately the feminine) complicates how they perform within the genre but does not deny their place within it.

Ghost Whisperer may differ in narrative structure, but the genre's narrative touchstones remain intact. Rather than opening with the investigators standing at the scene of a crime already committed and with a perpetrator to find, in *Ghost Whisperer* the audience is introduced to the perpetrator from the start, the plot then revolving around Melinda's search for the crime. The show is also filled with gothic undertones and often nightmarish sequences as Melinda interacts with the dead. While she may be delivering souls to 'the light' it is sometimes a horrifying journey that Melinda must participate in, many episodes containing scenes of violence against her as she empathises with the deceased; in order to help them she must feel the pain of their death. However, by the end of each episode she is always back in her loving home with her husband. Unsurprisingly, both *Ghost Whisperer* and *Medium* operate much further along on the gothic and

domestic drama scale, creating an implied connection between the supernatural and the space women take up as familial caretakers within society.

In many ways, *Medium* takes a similar approach. Premiering in 2005, the same year as *Ghost Whisperer*, *Medium* stars Patricia Arquette as Allison Dubois, a character based on a real person. Allison suffers from prophetic and psychic dreams, either allowing her to see events that have yet to occur or giving her insight into traumatic events that have already happened. She lives with her husband Joe (Jake Weber), a scientist, and three daughters who have displayed a similar gift to Allison's; a gift which she in turn inherited from her mother. This fact is only learned a few seasons into the show as Allison's mother had done all she could to suppress her powers. As far as Allison is concerned her gift came from her grandmother, creating a void between her and her mother. This familial tension causes Allison to encourage her daughters and not hide her abilities from them. At home her husband is supportive, helping her decipher her dreams and talking through cases with her. As an engineer his role is often to provide the rational explanations to Allison's more outlandish visions though his scientific background does not stop him believing entirely in Allison's gift. He presents the opposing side of knowledge to the intuition Allison displays, in much the same way as Jim, Melinda's doctor husband does in *Ghost Whisperer*.

Over the course of the show Allison has worked alongside both the Texas Rangers and Phoenix district attorney's office assisting in the solving of crime. Most episodes open with a dream Allison is having subsequently upon waking she will discuss it with her husband and then go into work to try and discover what crime her dream pertained to. Like *Ghost Whisperer* the crime is seen by the audience and the lead character, the usual sequence of events seen in the procedural is inverted and the question becomes not who would commit such a crime but rather what kind of a crime would such a person commit. Furthermore, the show also calls upon similar gothic elements, pairing death and melodramatic romance on a weekly basis. Until the end of the fifth

season *Medium* aired on NBC; however, when the network was not prepared to renew the show it moved to CBS and began airing after *Ghost Whisperer* on Friday nights, creating a weekly slot of shows with very similar ideologies and generic qualities. As CBS, the home network of the *CSI* franchise, is more well known for its crime shows, its programmatic roster helps to solidify the show's more fluid generic identity. So, by association *Medium* becomes more closely identified with other crime shows even if narratively it does something different.

In talking about telefantasy Catherine Johnson has suggested "an approach to genre that attempts to situate these texts within theoretically delineated generic boundaries closes down the possibility for exploring the often complex and contradictory ways in which a number of different genres function within these series."⁸⁶ While to an extent I agree, as already stated I think a useful genre study is one that allows for permeable boundaries, one that is open to change rather than fixated on very specific 'check lists', however, I do not believe that a theoretically delineated generic boundary must necessarily close down possibility. Instead I would argue that a self-reflexive approach such as the one posited here, one predicated on notions of inclusion rather than exclusion and one that looks to understand broad but pervasive generic themes is an approach which does explore the complexity of genre. As this thesis will demonstrate, it is possible to include, as Johnson suggests is necessary, production discourses without making them the sole focus. It will also demonstrate that rather than suggesting, as Johnson does, that what we understand as genres are in fact collections of texts that engage with a range of genres and "a range of generic expectations"⁸⁷, instead what is found in these texts are iterations of identical themes and ideologies. The different genres Johnson points to are actually different ways of articulating the same generic markers. Rather than saying *Ghost Whisperer* is also a family drama, this approach looks at the way that being a consultant procedural has codified the notion of family drama in a particular way that continues to uphold the ideological

⁸⁶ Catherine Johnson, *Telefantasy* (London: BFI Publishing, 2005). P146

⁸⁷ Ibid.

framework of the genre. Furthermore, I am not suggesting that an exploration of production discourse is not useful, the second chapter of this thesis does exactly that, but it should be a platform upon which to build a stronger generic framework. The method outlined here looks predominantly to the text to understand how particular sets of over-arching themes and narrative tropes pull texts together into these frameworks. This is not a declaration of a text's definitive genre, as no text is every simply one thing, but instead an examination of the insights to be gained by exploring, through the lens of a single genre, how texts work cumulatively and in doing so create a unified ideological system.

In all six of these shows, in whichever area of the scientific-psychic continuum they reside or which of the defining narratives they engage with, the prime focus is the need for the expert consultant to help restore equilibrium; the final moment of 'justice' is these shows' driving force. It is this narrative trajectory and adherence to classic ideas of the purpose of crime stories that help to continually shore-up the boundaries of the genre. While the need for 'justice' may be specific to the crime drama, the presence of narrative touchstones which appear in every text of a genre is something that can be applied to all texts. Though sometimes disparate in tone the shows explored here also present a unified discourse on the role that gender plays in terms of agency, family and the acquisition of knowledge. All six play into the same set of stereotypes and entrenched ideologies. These conventions become the points of cohesion which form the basis of the continuum theory. By looking at genre as a collection of consistent conventions articulated to different degrees which can be mapped as a continuum, supposedly dissimilar shows prove themselves to have much in common. Genre then becomes a way of understanding how a set of texts with divergent elements can be understood through their dominant points of cohesion with one another. Though Johnson advocates "comparing a range of historical and international case

studies”⁸⁸ in order to “explore the different ways in which these recurring discourses are articulated within specific contexts.”⁸⁹ My approach is instead to limit the study to a particular period in order to examine how contemporaneous texts work in conjunction to form a generic framework. Through studying six shows that initially seem to have little more in common than a protagonist archetype, a unified conclusion and the label of mystery, the defining trends become all the more apparent.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p147

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Pre-texts and Contexts: Incorporating the Shows into the Established Genre

Canon

In order to better understand how the crime drama is articulated in this moment, an exploration must be made of the current shows' antecedents. If genres are, as Altman suggests characterised by their repetitive and formulaic structures⁹⁰, constantly recycling and re-arranging textual elements in order to create something 'new', then where do the elements in contemporary shows come from? This is not just a question of whether other shows have used similar tropes and themes, but what other genres my corpus of texts has co-opted, synthesised and brought together. Furthermore, what texts from other media have been brought into the amalgamation, contributing ideas from outside television; ideas that still are supposed to resonate with the desired audience? Nothing in television is ever really new, much like the rest of popular culture; the medium survives by taking elements that are already popular and adding to them, splicing them with aspects from other texts creating a perpetual sense of hybridity. Television texts can never be 'pure' and many have argued that in fact no *text* can be pure. Janet Staiger has labelled the striving to find purity in genre studies as merely "sincere attempts to find order among variety".⁹¹ However, this is not a call to abandon the study of genre due to the difficulties of categorisation, Staiger goes on to say that patterns within variety do exist and that

Variations from patterns may occur for making a text fresh or for commentary about the issues raised within the standard pattern, and both aesthetic and ideological functions of variations make no sense without a notion of some pattern or order.⁹²

Her point is more that any genre study must first reconcile itself with the fluidity of its boundaries and the lack of any easy definition. With that in mind the purpose here is to explore where the

⁹⁰ Altman, op. cit.

⁹¹ Janet Staiger, "Hybrid or Inbred: The Purity Hypothesis and Hollywood Genre History," *Film Criticism* 22(1997).

⁹² Ibid,

variety comes from in my chosen texts and where patterns that exist within this cohort can be seen elsewhere in earlier incarnations. This section serves to contextualise, a methodological process that runs throughout this thesis. I have purposefully avoided the word genealogy as I do not subscribe to the idea that genres evolve, moving subtly from one set of tropes to a new variation. Genre change is more experimental, moving in numerous avenues, taking elements and modes from points throughout its history and exploiting the elements that work. Logically following on from this my exploration will take in not only television texts but literary ones as well, looking at popular novels that have either been adapted or heavily influenced tropes seen continuously in crime drama. In order to understand this particular historical moment within the genre, earlier articulations of prevalent tropes must be treated as part of the textual and paratextual cluster that forms the genre.

It is possible to go back as far as Sherlock Holmes in a search for the origins of the (sometimes) suave pseudo-psychic, for it is Conan Doyle who truly popularised the showmanship of reasoned deduction. Or rather what Charles Sanders Peirce has called abductive reasoning, colloquially known as the hunch. Pierce describes abduction as, "nothing but guessing"⁹³, or more formally the process of using knowledge one has already acquired, and facts one personally knows to be true, to draw connections and find new truth. In Holmes we find a character with considerable self-taught skill in the art of observation, a man able to impress those around him with his logical prowess and understanding of the relationship between data and theory. This is not dissimilar from Patrick Jane, and to a lesser extent Shawn, characters who exemplify abduction. Unlike the scientific method found in *Bones* and *Lie to Me*, or the supernatural dreams and visions of *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer*, the pseudo-psychics of *The Mentalist* and *Psych* offer an approach based on experience. Similar to the knowledge afforded by years of education that the scientific investigators utilise, these investigators use personal knowledge and an understanding of people.

⁹³C. S. Pierce, "On the Logic of drawing History from Ancient Documents, Especially from Testimonies," in *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce. / Vol. VII-VIII*, ed. Arthur W. Burks (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958).

Like Holmes they can read the scene around them and conclude the most likely cause. Holmes is often cited as the one of the first science based detectives⁹⁴, using his penchant for chemical experiments and other scientific methods as the reason for this assertion but as scholars such as Nils Clausson have noted, Holmes was instead a showman and an artist who used educated guesses rather than deductive scientific method. For instance in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Clausson describes Holmes as, “using his artistic imagination to create a ‘paralyzing spectacle’ that recreates the Gothic drama of the original crime”.⁹⁵ This is not empirical evidence based crime solving, but reasoned logic and a flair for the art of detection; an equally apt description of the protagonists of both *Psych* and *The Mentalist*.

There are more connections that can be drawn between contemporary crime dramas and Doyle’s work. Holmes often operated against the wishes of the police, solving crimes in parallel to official inquiries. In recent years this has been replaced by the figure of the consultant, an outsider with official status, though one could also look to a show such as *The X-Files* to see many of the ideas pre-figured. In the popular Fox show of the 90s two FBI special agents work on cases that the rest of the FBI is not interested in. In the pilot Dr Dana Scully is sent to spy on Agent Fox ‘spooky’ Mulder who works on cases, dubbed x-files due to their unusual circumstances, from his basement office. While ostensibly these are agents of the institution of the FBI, their outsider status is played on continuously, with Mulder figured as a rogue agent working towards his own agenda. At first Scully is positioned in opposition to Mulder, feeding information to their superiors, but as the show progressed her allegiances shifted and she too worked against the shadowy figure of the government. Much like the consultant figures explored in this thesis, agents Mulder and Scully are both official and unofficial, working with the backing of the institution albeit not by their standards. This allows them not only to solve cases which would have been

⁹⁴ Many an introduction to a collected Sherlock Holmes and essays about him has put forth this claim, one of the more recent being Ian Pears, “Introduction” to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), xiii.

⁹⁵ Nils Clausson, *The Hound of the Baskervilles: Modern Belgian Masters, Paralyzing Spectacles, and the Art of Detection*, *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, vol.52 (2009), p37

impossible within the bureaucratic system of the FBI, but also to comment on its practices, creating an opposition seen again in the contemporary consultant character.

What differs here is the relationship between the consultant and the institution. While Mulder and Scully were pitted against the government culminating in attempts to shut down their work and even physically harm them, the contemporary consultant is a complementary figure. The relationship between the consultant and the institution may be a complex one, a binary consisting of a belief that on one hand the institution works yet on the other there is an apparent need to bring in outside help. Whereas previously the consultant was part of a paranoid anti-institutional movement, the new consultant is there because the institution understands what it needs to function successfully and is willing to bring in outside help; their goals are the same and it is no longer what Michele Malach called “a shadow government working outside the boundaries of legality and acceptability.”⁹⁶ This is not to suggest this is a relationship free of antagonism; rather that while the institution and the consultant’s efforts may differ, their aims coalesce⁹⁷.

Additionally this concept can be found, though in a much less paranoid form, in the work of Agatha Christie or Poe’s Dupin. Their consultants, rather than dealing with corrupt systems of government, dealt with inept police officials unable to solve crimes on their own and angered at the interference of more skilled investigators.

The pre-figuring of conventions of the contemporary procedural in earlier amateur sleuth works does not only occur in relations to the institution. The amateur sleuth, especially female incarnations from Miss Marple through to Jessica Fletcher can also be seen re-invented in the psychic dramas of the contemporary crime genre. Existing outside of the institution and not always welcomed by it, the female amateur sleuth solved crimes because she not only had an aptitude for it but also because it frequently affected her friends and family. For women such as

⁹⁶ Michele Malach, “I Want to Believe...In the FBI”, *Deny all Knowledge, Reading The X-Files*, David Lavery, Angela Hague and Marla Cartwright Ed., (Syracuse University Press, 1996)

⁹⁷ There is one exception, Patrick Jane, whose purpose in joining the CBI initially was to find and kill the man who murdered his family, actions which the institution do not condone, at least not officially.

Miss Marple and Jessica Fletcher, crime was part of their world as their friends, acquaintances and family members perpetually became suspects or victims. Consequently, crime is personal for these women and they have no choice but to help investigate doing so by exploiting incorrect assumptions made by others about their age and gender. Neither Melinda nor Allison of the psychic crime shows are old women linked to the crimes they investigate, but the intrusion of the spirits into their personal lives creates the same impetus, reproducing this personal element to crime and literally bringing it into their homes. For both sets of women crime is inescapable and to leave it unsolved unimaginable. Furthermore, while Melinda and Allison may be much younger than their predecessors, they too use the cover of unassuming femininity to gain access to people's trust and acquire information otherwise unavailable to outsiders. Often having to speak with people related to the crime with no official institutional backing, it is the identity of wife and mother that creates the veneer of trustworthiness which convinces people to speak with them. Appealing to notions of family and home the same way Marple and Fletcher appealed to ideas of frailty and homeliness, Allison and Melinda use misconceptions about their gender to elicit feelings about the safety and security they can provide to the witnesses and victims they hope to help. However, they still find their lack of authority to often be a barrier to discovering the truth.

The female amateur sleuth, no matter how knowledgeable she may be about the crime will still always be amateur. Her status and scope for action are limited, never fully embraced by the law but still used by the institution, yet, like the other consultants I cover she is always operating just outside of the law. However, of all the consultants covered in this thesis Melinda of *Ghost Whisperer* lacks the most in terms of institutional ties other consultants are afforded, working entirely on her own or with a group of other amateurs. The female amateur sleuth has always created an opposition to the male image of institutional policing, and in the contemporary examples of *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* this opposition is solidified further; they not only oppose the institution itself, but the very method of detection on which it is built. Their method is so removed from that of the police as to almost call into question whether parts of their method

are actually detection at all. After all, gaining knowledge psychically involves no other method than being receptive. In the earlier examples the opposition between institution and female amateur was threefold: age, gender and amateur status, in the new examples the wisdom of age is replaced by the supernatural. Skills that were once passed off as 'female intuition', but were in fact deductive talents have been swapped for a supernatural gift linked to femininity and any agency the feminine investigator once had has been removed.

In the mid-1990s the intuitive female consultant detective took the guise of Sam Walker in the NBC show *Profiler* (NBC, 1996), which ran for three seasons beginning in 1996. Walker is a forensic pathologist for the FBI who has the ability to 'see' crimes as they would have happened. While there is the spectre of the learned scientist surrounding this show, Sam's abilities are played as a gift, much like the psychics that would appear on network television five years later. Furthermore, like them her gift is visual and beyond her control. Once she is presented with a crime scene, the visions occur. On screen these are presented in a mode more closely resembling Shawn's 'psychic' vision in *Psych*, as the camera focuses on her eyes before snapshot images and video of the crime taking place appear before her as she walks around the scene. Sam is also troubled by her visions, desperate to escape the life and career they have created for her, a career which led to the death of her husband at the hands of a serial killer she was investigating. Unlike Patrick Jane who instantly opts for the role of the consultant in the hope of achieving revenge, Sam Walker escapes to a cottage in the countryside to pursue art. Living with her daughter and a friend, it is the need to help victims and see justice done that forces her to stop denying her gift. Much like the other psychics, the choice to help is not in fact a choice at all; Sam's family and the importance placed on her dedication to her daughter can be seen reproduced in the psychic dramas and the centrality that family plays in those shows. Family becomes a link to the real world and a reason to help restore social order.

The *X-Files* also has further generic links to many of the shows analysed here, introducing the scientific into the procedural narrative. Via Dana Scully scientific testing becomes a means through which absolute truth can be found. In complex cases involving concepts that work outside of logical reason, findings from Scully's autopsies were able to add the notion of truth to the otherwise unbelievable. As the resident non-believer in the early seasons, her reticence at the possibility of the supernatural was assuaged by her unwavering belief in science. The same can be said for Brennan in *Bones*, who is able to work her way through the illogical behaviour of people by pinning it to the logic of scientific fact. While Scully may not have been the social misfit that Brennan is, her inability to grasp the supernatural performs the same narrative task. Through science aliens and mystical happenings become explainable anomalies that do not derail the scientific belief system. However, *The X-Files* did more than popularise the use of science as a means of making the inexplicable more palatable. Through the show scientific exposition becomes a short hand for explaining how crimes occurred, using a vocabulary of scientific terms that would most likely now be familiar to the television audience through their viewing of crime and medical shows. The sight of Scully in scrubs in the autopsy room using a dissected human body to tell the story of a crime is an image replicated again and again in contemporary crime shows. The use of autopsy was not a new narrative element but one *The X-Files* used in a new way; it gave the intelligent but vulnerable agent Scully an intellectual framework to hide behind as well as a new way of explaining increasingly convoluted plots. While *Bones* has shied away from the conspiracy elements that dogged *The X-Files* in its later seasons, it is built on the appearance of complex and often ridiculous crime scenes on a weekly basis and holds firm the tenet set out by *The X-Files*, that science could not lie or be wrong.

The influence of *The X-Files* reaches further than the use of science in contemporary crime shows, it can also be seen in other aspects of the genre, from the dark comedy seen in *Bones* and *The Mentalist*, to the gothic and mystical themes seen in *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer*. The lighter side of *The X-Files*, an element generally left out of the heavier conspiracy themed episodes is

something the show was often praised for and an element still to be found in the lighter moments of *Bones* or *The Mentalist*. *Bones* frequently makes light of the more horrific crime scenes. For example episode 3.14 “The Wannabe in the Weeds” features amusing asides about the relative attractiveness of the victim as the employees of the Jeffersonian stand around a corpse that has been chopped up by a lawnmower. *The Mentalist* has a similar approach using the offhand manner in which Jane questions suspects to bring the humour. The dark and sadistic is paired with the off-hand and humorous to temper the violent nature of these shows and make murder and torture more palatable. This is not the same as the slapstick found in *Psych* but rather a gallows humour brought about by the uncomfortable topic of mortality. Furthermore, *The X-Files*’ influence can also be seen in the working relationships of many of the investigative couples found in my corpus of texts.

While the psychic shows depend on their married protagonists for any romantic narrative, the other shows interested in exploring those themes often emphasise sexual chemistry between the consultant and their law enforcement partner. In *Bones* Brennan has Booth, in *The Mentalist* Jane is paired with Lisbon; both partnerships revolve around diametrically opposed sensibilities about the world paired with intense sexual chemistry. Much like Mulder and Scully the couple is divided between the rationalist and the believer, one who needs evidence and one who simply knows. For Brennan, Booth is the irrational one, following his gut instinct and willing to make a guess without evidence, something which baffles the analytical scientist. In her world truth can be measured and she finds little room for his guesswork, however much it comes from experience. In *The Mentalist* the roles are swapped but the genders remain; agent Lisbon strives for evidence that will hold up in court while Jane follows his own experiential wisdom to come to conclusions about cases. Both couples use their differing approaches in tandem to solve cases, finding that neither method can work on its own. Like Mulder using Scully’s autopsy results, the evidence needs someone to interpret it. The bickering but loving relationship between Mulder and Scully was often seen as the backbone of the show, and an attempt to replicate this can easily be seen in

the partnerships on *Bones* and *The Mentalist*. *Bones* even makes explicit references to the similarity between Brennan and Booth and Mulder and Scully⁹⁸.

Echoes of *The X-Files* can also be seen in the psychic dramas, as the supernatural becomes the driving narrative force. Before *The X-Files* (and since) very few successful dramas have based their premise around the supernatural, and both *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* owe much to the show for its popularising of supernatural themes. *The X-Files* rarely called upon the gothic as explicitly as both these shows do, but it did create a narrative space in which the supernatural was given the same claims to authenticity as science. The science in *The X-Files* was often there to prove the veracity of the supernatural, as a result legitimising both avenues of investigation. *The X-Files* set up the supernatural as an unavoidable, natural, earthly force existing alongside humanity and available to only a few. Supernatural entities and powers would appear in the lives of unsuspecting people and would not abide by human codes of conduct or be controlled by institutional ideas of law and order. This figuring of other-worldly forces as more powerful than humanity and beyond reasoning existed long before *The X-Files*. However, the show brought it back into popular culture and entwined it with the crime genre, a genre steeped in questions about reason and truth. Having successfully established the supernatural as part of a multi-disciplinary investigative method that allowed it to work alongside science, it is unsurprising that within a decade shows like *Medium* appear in which the science is no longer needed; the supernatural has become a legitimate form of knowledge gathering.

The psychic crime shows, while sharing many generic traits with the other procedurals analysed here, have thematic precursors somewhat removed from the other shows. The pre-television literary antecedents for many of the others shows are detective works such as Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. The link between psychic shows and literature is less straightforward, as literary

⁹⁸ This has so far happened in two episodes. Firstly, in the pilot episode Booth refers to them as being Mulder and Scully when they define the terms of their partnership. Then in episode 5.11 "The X in the File" much of the plot revolves around references to the similarity between the two pairs.

works provide aesthetic and thematic tropes for the shows rather than narrative ones. Most prominent is the connection between psychic crime drama and gothic texts. Since its inception gothic literature has been linked with women and the feminine, from its protagonists, often women caught up in disturbing and supernatural events, to its mainly female readership. Robert Miles⁹⁹ broadly describes the female gothic genre as, “a heroine caught between a pastoral haven and a threatening castle, sometimes in flight from a sinister patriarchal figure, sometimes in search of an absent mother, and often both together.” Gothic literature foregrounds extreme emotion; combining horror and romance it operates in a world where everything is heightened. Dark spaces and ominous weather dominate the gothic landscape, while inside the castles and aged mansions so common in these texts, live monsters, madmen and ghosts. In the gothic, the supernatural is in fact rather natural, taking up space next to twisting architecture and villainous humans. Furthermore, much like the psychic shows whose protagonists must battle their genetic abnormalities, gothic literature is rife with hereditary curses. From these roots, both the themes and the visual patchwork of the psychic shows can be seen. As Helen Wheatley suggests it is “a genre which is suffused with familial dramas and disturbing domestic spaces”¹⁰⁰. In essence, the gothic in this case is thematic and aesthetic, however the term in general has long been contentious; as Fred Botting states in the introduction to his book “The search for *the Gothic*...is a vain critical endeavour”¹⁰¹. That being the case, when referring to the gothic in this thesis what is intended is to evoke the idea of the gothic as a set of tropes rather than one particular all-encompassing definition. The nightmares both Melinda and Allison suffer from could be taken directly from the pages of some of these novels, both women not far removed from gothic protagonists, tormented and scared by the supernatural events around them. The melodrama of the shows also serves as a nod to the gothic, as does the domestic setting and infiltration of the

⁹⁹Robert Miles, “Introduction:Female Gothic Writing”, *Women's Writing, 1747-5848*, 1:2, 1994, pp131 – 142

¹⁰⁰ Helen Wheatley, "Haunted Houses, hidden rooms: women, domesticity and the female Gothic adaptation on television," in *Popular Drama: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Jonathan Bignell (Manchester University Press, 2005). P385

¹⁰¹ Fred Botting, *The gothic* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001).

marital home by the supernatural, all central elements of the gothic text¹⁰². That being said, the contemporary gothic heroine we find in both *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* is far more capable of handling her paranormal existence than her literary ancestors, doing all she can to maintain a 'normal' life. In these shows we find that the gothic has shifted in its new context and is filtered through modern concerns about motherhood, family and work. The supernatural is now battling against the modern family, trying to displace the everyday and the female psychic heroines are figured as exemplary modern women for their ability to contain it.

Interestingly all three shows with female protagonists have links to a very different kind of contemporary literature, all three are based on bestselling books about real women. *Bones* is adapted from the work of Kathy Reichs, a forensic anthropologist who based the Temperance Brennan character on her own life story¹⁰³. Appearing around the same time as the even more successful Kay Scarpetta series by Patricia Cornwell, Reichs' books were mainstays of the bestseller list before they were adapted for television, creating associated if not vocalised, claims on the truth. *Medium's* Allison Dubois is a real woman, and author of numerous books, who worked with the Texas Rangers and still operates as a psychic¹⁰⁴. The inspiration for *Ghost Whisperer* is a combination of real life psychics Mary Ann Winkowski and James Van Praagh, both executive producers on the show¹⁰⁵. It is worth noting that this presents a marked distinction between the shows fronted by female characters and those fronted by men. Only the shows with female protagonists had already proved themselves marketable in the literary arena using (semi)autobiographical work, all the male-fronted shows were new concepts made for television. There is not enough space here to explore this gender imbalance, but it is interesting nonetheless.

¹⁰² The Wheatley piece above gives a very useful account of how gothic literature made use of its female audience and how this was adapted for British television.

¹⁰³ Kathy Reichs has written over ten Temperance Brennan novels over the past decade, often reaching the top of the Times Bestseller List.

¹⁰⁴ Allison DuBois has written three books including 2005's *Don't Kiss Them Goodbye* billed as being written by 'The Woman who inspired the hit NBC television series'.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Ann Winkowski, one of the inspirations behind *Ghost Whisperer* has written three books including non-fiction bestseller "When Ghosts Speak: Understanding the World of Earthbound Spirits

With that in mind it is worth exploring how these shows use their real-life counterparts; *Medium* went as far as to state the existence of the real Allison as a title card at the opening of the first episode. While *Bones* draws on its 'real' beginnings to underpin the authenticity of its science¹⁰⁶, the psychic shows use the 'real' to solidify their claims on true human experience. Furthermore, the psychic shows' invoking of their real life counterparts link the shows not only with these women's books but with their appearances on other forms of television.

Certain forms of 'Tabloid' television, that is television that draws on the salacious, the extraordinary and the melodramatic in its pursuit of real journalistic truth¹⁰⁷, engage frequently with the supernatural, and in recent years there has been a sharp increase in shows about connections with 'the spirit world'. From the UK's *Most Haunted* (Living TV, 2002), a show that airs alongside both *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* on UK channel Living, to US shows such as *Crossing Over with John Edward* (Sci Fi, 1999), the spiritual medium has become big business. It is in the midst of these kinds of literary and televisual offerings that the psychic crime shows appear, placing themselves alongside shows that make truth claims and by association bolstering their own claim to some form of truth; creating a symbiotic relationship with 'true life' books and reality shows, growing out of the cultural environment they create and further feeding it.

Looking at the precedents that lead to the creation of six consultant based crime procedurals in the space of three years it is impossible to ignore the place that *CSI* holds. Premiering in 2000 on CBS and within three years spawning two spin-offs and numerous computer games, books (fiction and non-fiction) and even a supposed detrimental effect on the American justice system¹⁰⁸, the

¹⁰⁶ In a recent episode (5.15) "The Bones on the Blue Line" Brennan is annoyed because people are more interested in the sex scenes in her books, books in which the character based on her is called Dr Kathy Reichs, than the real science she details.

¹⁰⁷ Here I am using Kevin Glynn's definition of tabloid television from <http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=tabloidtelev> (accessed 28/3/10), a more detailed analysis can be found in Kevin Glynn, "Tabloid Television's Transgressive Aesthetic: A Current Affair and the 'Shows that Taste Forgot'," *Wide Angle* 12, no. 2 (1990).

¹⁰⁸ Known as The CSI Effect, for an example of the extensive work on this in law academia see S.A. Cole and R. Dioso-Villa, "Investigating the 'CSI Effect' Effect: Media and Litigation Crisis in Criminal Law," *Stanford Law Review* 61, no. 6 (2009).

CSI franchise are currently some of the biggest crime shows on American television in terms of both ratings and presence outside of the television schedule. As noted earlier it is also the most studied mainly for its visual style and the foregrounding of science as a means to solving crime.

As the popularity of *The X-Files* slowly dwindled towards the end of the 1990s¹⁰⁹, *CSI* took the tropes of the scientific experiment as narrative event and the cold white and steel of the autopsy room, but swapped the aliens, psychics and mutants for the sinners and vice of Las Vegas. For *The X-Files* the spectacle had been deformed humans and hybrid beings, in *CSI* it was the 'normal' human body shown in para-normal ways. The camera of *CSI* ventures into the body, explaining its wounds and violations, in some ways violating it again for the viewing audience. The pleasure, and intrigue, of *CSI* is no holes-barred voyeurism rather than the 'freaks on parade' method of *The X-Files*. *Bones*, perhaps the closest show in tone and approach to both *CSI* and *The X-Files* makes a thematic return to the latter, taking less pleasure in the display of humans' biological frailty and rather focusing on strange and inhuman seeming corpses. When bodies are discovered they are usually at late stages of decomposition, dismembered or otherwise rendered monstrous. The murder victims on display in *Bones* are so divested of their humanity as to be unrecognisable, deconstructed into parts. Consequently post-mortem procedures in *Bones* feel detached in a way they did not on *CSI*. Viewers are not invited into the body; instead they are invited to witness its construction from the outside. The bodies in *Bones* are so inhuman that they begin to resemble the hybrids and aliens of *The X-Files* more than the half-naked strippers of *CSI*.

CSI could also be said to in some way re-invent and in the process revive the procedural, bringing the crime drama to the top of the prime time schedule. The drop in comedy programming from 2000 onwards in favour of drama, discussed earlier in the chapter, could be attributed to the huge popularity of *CSI*. *CSI*'s mode of consultant crime solving, while echoing some of the latent themes of *The X-Files* and *Profiler*, differed in its use of authorised consultancy. These were not agents of

¹⁰⁹ The show went from 17.1 million viewers in its fifth season to 9.1 in its final ninth season (data accessed on 23/2/10 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X_files#Nielsen_Ratings)

the institution who worked within it while simultaneously existing in a space outside of it, they were mostly autonomous. In the world of *CSI*, the institution comes to them. Gone was the paranoid fear of the legal institution and the destruction it brought and instead there was a respect and belief in the work it was capable of. These were consultants wanting to assist rather than members of the institution wishing to escape. The government of the mid-90s kidnapped and impregnated its agents¹¹⁰, allowed their husbands to be murdered¹¹¹ and had no regard for their personal wellbeing. By 2005 it hires psychologists to ensure mental health¹¹² and goes out of its way to employ those best equipped to solve crime, even if it has to go outside of its institutional boundaries. *CSI* was the first of these shows in some time to create a trustworthy law enforcement body with the good of the people as its reason d'être.

So good is the relationship between the institution and the consultant that they conduct interrogations together. *Bones*, *Lie to Me* and *The Mentalist* all allow the consultants to be part of the interview process, despite them having no training for such a task; *CSI* was one of the first shows to popularise this trope. The scientist, while still a consultant, is given equal agency alongside the institutional law enforcers, their consultancy validated by their presence alongside members of the institution in the interview room. However, this does not work in the opposite situation with the law enforcer never allowed authority or designated space within the laboratory. *CSI* also favoured the ensemble rather than the lone coroner or investigator of 70s shows like *Quincy M.E.*(NBC, 1976-1983) and *Columbo*. As a consequence, shows that came after it were pluralist in their approach, emphasising the importance of the team and by extension, the community, in the implementation of an ordered society. The noughties consultants work together, each bringing with them different knowledge and views of the world; only through

¹¹⁰ This was a long-running storyline throughout most of the *X-Files*

¹¹¹ This is in reference to the origin narrative in *Profiler*

¹¹² Dr Gordon Wyatt has appeared as an FBI therapist in three seasons of the show to date. By the third season the character of Dr Lance Sweets has been introduced as a permanent team psychiatrist. At first to work with Brennan and Booth but soon becoming part of the crime solving team.

exploiting all avenues and seeing the world as a place with many meanings can truth be found.

The answer, these shows suggest, can never come from one person's view of the world alone.

This contextualising history of antecedent texts is by no means exhaustive-in the next chapter further exploration will be made of the importance of ancillary and paratextual material to the creation of genre-the purpose here was to explore the pre-existing notions working within the genre before investigating what is at stake during my particular period of study. This section contextualised the shows historically, the work of the next chapter is to contextualise them contemporarily, exploring how other textual artefacts work as part of the cluster that informs the continuum.

Nevertheless, from this patchwork of texts spanning many decades and kinds of media a sufficiently coherent genre emerges, one with shared tropes and a particular set of values. Through the examination of multiple texts both the patterns and the diversity at work in the crime drama can be found and, through the use of a mixed methodology, contextualised. Narrative elements with greatly different origins are brought together under the umbrella of crime drama and then held together as part of a genre at the centre of which is a defining evocation of 'truth'. Differing kinds of knowledge and approaches to investigation pepper the genre, but the expectation that the truth behind a mystery will be uncovered maintains the somewhat fluid boundaries that surround it. This chapter has formed the beginning of an understanding of the continuum, establishing the conventions and tropes that will be explored in more detail in coming chapters. By allowing for this multiplicity a more rigorous study of a genre can be built; across the scientific-psychic continuum repeated echoes from previous texts bind the shows together, creating a sense of shared cultural history. This suggests that both historically and in the contemporary what holds a genre together is its collective reference points coalescing to create a new whole. Through understanding this aspect of television genre it is then possible to move onto more complex issues that surround its construction.

Chapter two

Tune in Next Time: Promotional Material, Network Identity and Establishing Industrial Context

In the previous chapter the model of a Scientific-Psychic continuum was established as a way of both categorising and examining ideas and themes at play within the contemporary crime drama. It presented a way of being simultaneously broad and closely focused on texts and their contexts and it did so by looking at genre as a collection of fixed but constantly rearranging and subtly shifting elements whose discursive relationship form its boundaries. Continuing to use a methodological framework based on that of Jason Mittell and his use of context as an essential component for genre study, this chapter will examine the paratexts that surround the six shows at the centre of the thesis , this creates a strong foundation of further points of cohesion across the genre.

Paratexts function as both further sites of context and spaces where the ubiquity of certain tropes can be explored. In other words, by examining how certain elements are articulated in the paratexts we can see not only repetition but a solidifying of the way in which the genre fits together, made evident by the way these texts are utilised. Examining how a show is advertised or when it is scheduled allows for both the introduction and consolidation of ideas which are then seen across the genre continuum. This chapter seeks to do the work that Mittell calls for, to properly incorporate the multitude of texts which form the cluster into the analysis of genre. Theorists like Jonathan Gray¹¹³ have suggested that genre helps readers understand paratexts (for example he details how TV poster campaigns reference the established genre iconography of

¹¹³ Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and other Media Paratexts*, (New York University Press, 2010)

previous texts to help define their own generic position instead of referencing specifics about the show)¹¹⁴; I posit it also works in reverse. If we only make sense of texts through intertextual connections then the repeated articulation of certain themes in paratexts also helps to form genre. Rather than truly separate entities, these paratexts function instead as other sites of articulation, other points at which connections can be drawn or further illustrated. Moreover, if, as established in the previous chapter, I am to argue for the centrality of narrative themes in theorising television genre, then before that can be done, the texts which form the rest of the cluster must be explored. It is impossible to argue for narrative centrality if the possibility of a truly pluralist approach has not been explored; the role of paratexts must be investigated before moving inward to the texts themselves. Consequently this chapter looks at multiple media forms that have become part of the active articulation of television crime drama, looking at how they interact and feed into the notion of a coherent genre.

The para and ancillary texts covered here fit into three categories. Firstly, source material which consists of the texts which lead to or in some way contribute to the creation of one of the six shows; this ranges from original novels to textual facets of an individual's public persona. These texts function very much as contextualising material in terms of the way the audience might understand the genre across all media. They position the shows in terms of multiplatform, transmedia consumption, analysing the myriad ways audiences find these texts and the myriad ways the shows themselves draw influence from outside of television.

Secondly, scheduling information, which includes network identity and an examination of shows which air alongside the six central shows; exploring how they form part of the contextualising material. This section is very much about the medium of television and looks at how any theory of television genre must incorporate those elements that are specific to the medium. Through analysing the connections networks make between their own shows and shows on rival networks,

¹¹⁴ Gray, *Show sold separately : promos, spoilers, and other media paratexts*. P60

once again patterns of cohesion appear which draw the genre closer together despite the different 'personalities' of particular networks. Whether it is the female focused syndication of the psychic shows or the bundling of *The Mentalist* with previously successful procedurals, scheduling is a useful way of analysing how networks view the genre of their shows.

Finally, the third category is promotional texts, primarily episode and season trailers. This section examines how the networks sell their shows and in doing so further inscribe them with generic markers through the process of condensing that is necessary in trailers. By only highlighting certain aspects of texts over others this demonstrates the elements that the producers see as both central and appealing to audiences. Promotional advertisements work as microcosms of the texts themselves and a perfect illustration of how the continuum approach functions. These trailers focus on both what is atypical about each text but also, due to the need to appeal to an established audience, what is familiar about the show. Advertisements become an essential texts for seeing the push and pull of difference versus convention that is at the heart of the continuum theory of television genre.

It is important to note that this chapter provides an exploration of officially created para and ancillary texts, rather than fan activity. This is in an effort to gain a greater understanding of how the creators and owners of texts produce and use paratexts and how this material contributes to a stronger understanding of genre rather than an understanding of consumption practices. While it is true that consumption has its part to play in the formation of genre, the study of that would involve many other forms of analysis and is somewhat outside of the scope of this work. However, there is definitely a place for a similar project as this that looks at fan production and consumption and how they fit into this model of genre analysis.

Each of these three categories presents texts that serve very different purposes, from semi-autobiographical novels to advertising. However, as part of the contextualising material that helps with the perpetuation of genre they function as both additions to the main text and texts in their

own right. Somewhat adhering to Genette's ideas on the paratext (as he described them "a "vestibule" that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back")¹¹⁵, they surround the main text as separate entities, but are still part of it. As fully functioning parts of the genre they must be analysed as such, however, as this is a project concentrating on genre as a whole they are used to shed further light on an understanding of genre rather than exhaustively analysed. This chapter is about realising Mittel's methodology and using contextualising material as a functioning part of a text's generic codification. In order to do this I posit they perform two different but not mutually exclusive functions: authenticating and situating the central texts around which they operate. By looking at the paratexts through these two functions we can see how they work as part of the cluster, a point in the discursive framework of genre, rather than how they function simply as texts on their own. This approach means the paratexts remain contextualised and are understood in terms of their relation to other texts, a fundamental part of this method of genre analysis.

The function of authenticating is performed through a combination of mode of address and the evocation of ideas of verisimilitude. Authenticating solidifies ideas of truth that are central to the crime drama as a genre (though it should not be dismissed in other genres); not simply the truths being searched for within the narrative, but a regularly called upon connection to real world crime solving. This interest in authenticity has fascinated consumers of crime texts for centuries; talking about literary procedurals from the early twentieth Century onwards, Christopher Pierce Wilson in *Cop Knowledge*¹¹⁶ suggests that, "Readers, in turn [were] reputed to be enthralled by such procedural authenticity." He continues by claiming that in conventional modes of reading procedurals "realism is the organising rationale."¹¹⁷ While none of the shows I am studying are attempting the kind of 'gritty' realism that became popular with 1990s shows such as *NYPD Blue*,

¹¹⁵ Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997). P102

¹¹⁶ Christopher Pierce Wilson, *Cop Knowledge: Police Power and Cultural Narrative in Twentieth Century America*, (University of Chicago Press, 2000), p60

¹¹⁷ *ibid*

there is still an emphasis on the believability of a crime show. Irrespective of the tone a show adopts, its association with the 'real' is an essential facet of the crime drama. Crime as a genre is consistently framed within discussions about realism. John Fiske suggests that, "Realism is not a matter of any fidelity to an empirical reality, but of the discursive conventions by which and for which a sense of reality is constructed"¹¹⁸; in this way there is an unspoken consensus that the crime drama must follow a realist logic, that it must at least seem 'real'. Ultimately, crime shows are unreal in that the intricacy and frequency of murders does not correlate to 'real life' however, their realist 'politique'¹¹⁹, as Davies termed it, allows them to seem real within their own hermetic space.

The wider crime genre encompasses popular strands of reality programming, from shows like *Cops* (Fox, 1989) to the successful real crime literary movement, as such the crime drama must fit into this world through its adherence to convention. Fictional crime shows may be often farfetched, from the unlikely motives for murder to the overly grotesque and improbable corpses, but still they allude to how close they are to reality and how possible depicted events are. The shows within my corpus may not use the explicit 'ripped from the headlines' approach that *Law & Order* is known for but nevertheless many of the ancillary texts surrounding these shows work to authenticate their investigative approach and lay claims to truth outside their fictional worlds.

Situating, as a textual function, can work separately or in conjunction with authenticating and serves to further clarify the generic positioning of the main text. Situating texts use different methods of connection, from juxtaposition to temporal connections, to ensure that the main text is associated with others in the same genre. Crucially, it is the situating function of ancillary texts which further solidifies the place the main text holds along the scientific-psychic continuum. It is through performing this function that ancillary texts work in much the same way as individual episodes and echo the themes, tones and aesthetic approaches set out in the shows they exist

¹¹⁸ Fiske, *Television culture*. P21

¹¹⁹ G Davies, "Teaching about Narrative," *Screen Education* 29(1978/9).

around. Situating texts also works across different media, situating the central show not only within a televisual genre but within wider television categories and as part of larger cultural movements. For example, the novels of Kathy Reichs from which *Bones* takes its inspiration work to first situate *Bones* within a particular fictional tradition through the use of tropes and conventions. At the same time the novels authenticate the show through its association with an author who claims to have used many of the techniques Temperance Brennan uses in her actual work as a forensic anthropologist.

Origins: Source Material as Authenticating and Situating Texts

The source materials for my corpus of shows are varied. *Bones* is an expanded adaptation of a series of (semi-autobiographical) novels, whereas, *Ghost Whisperer* and *Medium* come from both the autobiographical output and consultation of two real life psychics. *Lie to Me* is very lightly based on the work of its scientific adviser Dr Paul Eckman (although very rarely makes mention of this), however, in contrast, *The Mentalist* and *Psych* are both original productions for television.

As stated previously, Reichs' novels work to authenticate and situate *Bones*. The first of the series, *Deja Dead* was published in 1997 and since then there have been fourteen books in the series, alongside this she still maintains her job as a forensic anthropologist in Canada and has published academic papers in related journals. When her books were optioned for television Reichs was brought in as a producer to, as she describes it, "keep the science honest"¹²⁰ and in the fifth season she wrote the episode "The Witch in the Wardrobe"¹²¹. She is a continual authoritative presence in the production of the show, creating and maintaining, through her input in the show's scripting, a sense of scientific truth during increasingly unlikely plots. Much of this comes from her status as a successful author with a proven reputation for fictionalising science. Reichs' name brings with it connotations of knowledgeability and a sense of truthfulness and she is vocal about her consistent input into the writing process of the show, reading every script to check for factual inaccuracies¹²². In one interview she suggests she does not watch other crime procedurals because the lack of scientific accuracy annoys her, insinuating that *Bones* is an authentic narrative¹²³.

¹²⁰ "Kathy Reichs: 20 things you need to know"

<http://web.archive.org/web/20080728010753/http://au.tv.yahoo.com/b/bones/549/kathy-reichs-20-things-you-need-to-know>

¹²¹ The airing of this episode coincided with the release of her most recent Temperance Brennan Novel, allowing dual promotion for both the show and the book.

¹²² <http://www.tvguide.com/news/kathy-reichs-talks-36380.aspx> accessed 23/6/2010

¹²³ Ibid

Reichs' place within the story of the show becomes even more complex when the episodes focus more on Brennan's literary output. Although from the start Brennan has been a fiction author as well as a working anthropologist, much like Reichs, it was not until later in the run of the series that more episodes featured this plot strand. In a move that is far more self-reflexive than the crime procedural usually allows, the character in Brennan's books was named Kathy Reichs. By using her name the show calls upon the author's literary works and in doing so creates a stronger connection to the show's authenticating material. Yet this use of Reichs' name does more than authenticate the show, it also situates it within her extensive body of work. Reichs not only has her name on the show but also in it, it is part of her fictional world. *Bones* consequently benefits from the popularity that forensic crime fiction has seen in the last twenty years and becomes an ancillary text in the growing field of forensic fiction populated not only by Reichs but also those that came before her such as Patricia Cornwell and Sue Grafton. *Bones* becomes a further iteration in the current cultural interest in the forensic. This being the case it is perhaps more beneficial to look at the story's move from literature to television as another part of the forensic cultural moment than to classify it as a straightforward adaptation. After all, the only truly faithful part of the adaptation is the investigative method; the rest of the text instead draws on other procedurals to map its place in the genre.

A central concern of adaptation studies revolves around the idea of the knowing and unknowing audience. As Linda Hutcheon explains, "to experience it as an adaptation, however, as we have seen, we need to recognize it as such and to know its adapted text, thus allowing the latter to oscillate in our memories with what we are experiencing. In the process we inevitably fill in any gaps in the adaptation with information from the adapted text."¹²⁴. This theory places the audience in one of two categories, those who experience the text as an adapted work and those who do not. As *Bones* takes little more from the novels than the names of the main protagonists

¹²⁴ This subject is explored more thoroughly in Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, (Routledge, 2006) p121

and their method that would suggest that all viewers are in the most part unknowing. However, while one can posit that in terms of plot all viewers are unknowing, the same cannot be said in terms of genre and tone. By maintaining investigative method, many other conventions linked with it are also maintained. Therefore, perhaps what is faithfully adapted is the place the show takes along the scientific-psychic continuum, its particular combination of articulated tropes; it is this that the transplanted audience of the books would be able to feel knowing about. In this sense the source material solidifies the generic codification of the show, ensuring that it is placed firmly at the scientific end of the spectrum. Reichs' novels situate *Bones* as a scientific crime text and the use of her name adds authority to this process. This works well with Kamilla Elliott's work on literary adaptation. She suggests four approaches to adaptation theory¹²⁵, literalised, structural, psycho-analytical and cognitive linguistic; the two of which that are of most use to me being the literalised and the structural. The literalised approach refers to the exact analogous transfer from one medium to the other, for example the use of the same characters in *Bones* as in the novels of Kathy Reichs. While this is the most obvious form of adaptation, it ignores, by its very nature, the transfer of tone and genre identity. The structural approach suggests a translation of sorts, the need to find a filmic, or in this case televisual, equivalent of the words on the page. This does allow for the adaptation of mood and tone; it creates a space in which non-tangible elements can be moved across and create something different but with the same effect.

To extend beyond the example of *Bones*, we can turn to *Ghost Whisperer*. In this case the autobiographical work of James Van Praagh can be turned into a show about a woman who helps spirits. While it is not literally analogous it takes the themes and tone of his work, and by applying televisual tropes, creates something new that remains structurally analogous. The source materials for *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* are complicated because they stem from the biographies and other media output of real people rather than using already constructed characters, but the structuralist analogy approach to adaptation addresses these issues.

¹²⁵ Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p185

Medium makes much more of its real life roots than *Ghost Whisperer*-resulting in the additional activation of many ‘realist’ conventions of crime drama-but both have used their real world inspirations to help situate their texts within supernatural themed media. *Medium* opens its pilot episode with the phrase “There really is an Allison” displayed in white writing on a black background¹²⁶. Whether the audience is familiar with the premise of the show or not, it instantly confronts them with notions of authenticity, asserting that anything that follows must be based on some form of truth. The show’s official website works similarly, stating in the first line of the description of the show,

“MEDIUM is a drama inspired by the real-life story of research medium Allison Dubois, an extraordinary young wife and mother who, since childhood, has struggled to make sense of her dreams and visions of dead people.”¹²⁷

In combination with this, videos on Allison Dubois’ official website¹²⁸ state even more explicitly the strong verisimilitude seen in the show. In a video entitled “Medium Vs. Real Life” the real Dubois family is interviewed, at one point Joe claims “[TV Joe and Allison] are very much the real Allison and Joe.” This work to authenticate the show through evoking the characters’ real life counterparts has multiple effects.

Firstly, through calling upon a real world truth that the show is based on, the website utilises similar authenticating techniques as non-supernatural crime shows. Much like the “pulled from the headlines” method the *Law & Order* franchise uses, it sets up the show as a believable crime drama. Consequently, despite its gothic/horror/fantasy aesthetic, this authenticating approach also serves to situate the text within the crime drama alongside other shows which make claims to being a true to life portrayal of the world. Through the appropriation of the real, a central pillar upon which the crime genre

¹²⁶ 1.01 “Pilot”

¹²⁷ <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/medium/about/> accessed 1/6/10

¹²⁸ <http://www.allisondubois.com/index.php/CBS.com-Videos/Medium-Vs.-Real-Life.html> accessed 1/6/10

is built, the show foregrounds its crime element and solidifies its genre categorisation.

While *Medium* participates in multiple genres throughout its narrative, the placing of a claim on reality in its opening seconds states very clearly its defining genre.

However, in using real people, and their real names, rather than new fictional characters, *Medium* also taps into areas outside the crime genre. This approach inextricably links the show with the work of Allison Dubois, specifically her autobiographical and self-help books as well as her touring psychic medium performances. Not only does this bring in a separate fan base, one I shall address in more detail when exploring the importance of scheduling data, it also serves to authenticate the supernatural elements of the show. The show then becomes both an authenticated and situated crime drama but also an authenticated and situated supernatural drama, calling on the same evidence to work in both cases. In terms of the continuum this dual approach strengthens *Medium's* position at the psychic end by firstly ensuring it has a place within the category of crime drama and then validating its claims on the supernatural. As the textual cluster around the show announces multiple avenues for categorisation, only in the moments where the cluster coalesces can any real pronouncements be made. Though the show actively promotes its supernatural elements the sheer number of points of connection with the crime drama means that this does not detract from its overarching genre identity.

Ghost Whisperer functions in much the same way, although not as explicitly. While none of the characters are direct adaptations of real people, two consultants on the show lay claims to being inspirations behind the character of Melinda. James Van Praagh is the most prolific of these consultants, appearing as part of the behind the scenes "Ghost

Whispering” video series on the CBS website¹²⁹. As a psychic Van Praagh has published eight books on his experiences as a psychic medium and worked with CBS (the network which airs *Ghost Whisperer*) on two made for TV movies¹³⁰. By 2005 and the premiere of *Ghost Whisperer* Van Praagh was a well-known name in the world of psychic mediums, and one upon which a new television show could be sold. He was brought onto the show as both an executive producer and consultant (he was the only member of the creative team to get his own page on the original *Ghost Whisperer* website¹³¹), and the language used to discuss his presence in the creative team was not dissimilar to the way Reichs’ presence on *Bones* has been discussed. In an interview he explained his role as, “I read all of the scripts and I give notes to the writers. I let them know what makes sense and what doesn't make sense.”¹³² Authenticity is very much at the centre of Van Praagh’s role within the show. Furthermore, he is not simply a figure in the production of books and movies about psychic mediumship; he has also served as a reporter for the entertainment news show, *Entertainment Tonight*, adding weight to his media persona. In a video blog distributed on both Van Praagh’s own website and the CBS website¹³³ Van Praagh calls himself “spiritual medium of *Ghost Whisperer*” and goes on to talk about an upcoming episode as “our episode”, reinforcing his role as a creator rather than mere consultant. This video, as well as many other similar ones made throughout the run of the show, does more than situate *Ghost Whisperer* within the textual output of a well know psychic medium, it also authenticates. After a clip of the upcoming episode is shown Van Praagh explains the ‘truth’ behind the plot, informing the

¹²⁹

http://www.cbs.com/primetime/ghost_whisperer/video/?pid=BrkyJ5NzZIDNIGTNI_NIJpEV9Rovmdh&vs=Cli ps&play=true access 1/6/10

¹³⁰ *Living With the Dead*. Dir. Stephen Gyllenhaal, HBO, 2002 and *The Dead Will Tell*. Dir. Stephen Kay, HBO, 2004

¹³¹

http://web.archive.org/web/20070204140752/www.cbs.com/primetime/ghost_whisperer/bios/praagh.shtml

¹³² <http://www.ugo.com/ugo/html/article/?id=16728> accessed 2/6/10

¹³³ Now accessible http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bi1cJ1E-ks

audience of the existence of ‘rescue circles’, groups of people he claims work to remind a ghost that it is dead. What is most pertinent about Van Praagh’s role in the making of the show is how essential both he and CBS claim he was to its creation. He is the source material. When asked how he went about creating the show, despite the show’s official creator being listed as John Gray, he explains:

I did a show called *Beyond*, it was a daytime show. I wanted to introduce to people other types of paranormal people who do different types of things. We had a remote viewer on, an animal communicator and one of the ladies we had on was a ghost buster. I had never seen a real life ghost buster. Her name was Mary Ann Winkowski and she was someone who was born with the ability to speak with earthbound spirits. Her grandmother used to bring her to funerals to speak to the dead. So, I introduced her to the people at CBS and they thought it would make a great show and that was sort of the birth of it. The show is based on both of us.¹³⁴

Winkowski, the show’s second psychic consultant, is not as prominent in the press surrounding the show; her name is not mentioned on the website until the fourth season or referred to in many early interviews about the show, however, on her own website she refers to herself as “the real Ghost Whisperer”.¹³⁵ Perhaps the fact that she has not had as big a media presence as Van Praagh explains the lack of reference to her in much of the official CBS output, nevertheless she still serves as an additional authenticating presence. While Van Praagh works to authenticate through his connection with other successful psychic media, Winkowski presents a real world connection between the show and its audience. When she does later appear on the CBS site it is in a section called “Ask Mary Ann”

¹³⁴ http://tvdramas.about.com/od/ghostwhisperer/a/jvanpraaghinter_2.htm

¹³⁵ <http://www.maryannghostbuster.com/>

in which she answers questions about the spirit world sent in by viewers. Her authenticating practice works by linking the show to Winkowski's real work as a 'ghost buster' doing in real life what the character of Melinda does on the show. Between these two consultants *Ghost Whisperer* does much the same in terms of authenticating and situating that *Bones* does in its use of Kathy Reichs.

These all work as paratexts, part of the "meaning making process"¹³⁶, building the text at its most extreme outskirts¹³⁷. Like the more common paratexts covered later in this chapter, the literary antecedents and 'real world' work of those involved in these shows become part of the texts, establish ways of reading them and infer themselves into the wider textuality of the shows. The paratexts form both ways into the texts and moments of textual articulation in media res. To understand the genre of crime drama these paratextual elements are a necessary part of the analytical process; they are further iterations of the process of graduated articulation, continuing the work of placing the texts in a discursive cluster. While simultaneously making claims to authenticity and evoking genre identifiers these source texts start the process of making a place for these shows within the genre, solidifying the places at which they will coalesce with the other shows in the genre and the points at which they will diverge.

¹³⁶ Jonathan Gray, Op Cit, p42

¹³⁷ Ibid, p78

Where, When, Why: Scheduling Data and Generic Formation

Though only recently viewed as useful paratexts for the study of genre, scheduling data and network identity can assist in the process of investigating this system of authenticating and situating. An examination of when shows are scheduled and the other texts that air alongside them can give insight into how producers categorise a text. Scheduling can often be a complex area of study as it changes throughout the run of multi-season series and the reasons behind it too variable for, and outside the scope of, a study of this kind, however, it is too important to ignore the effect it has on concepts of genre from both the audience and production side. As Gregory A. Waller suggests, “Any reading of a television text, however defined, should take into account the specificity of broadcast television...the seemingly paradoxical and dirty mix of the continuous and the discrete.”¹³⁸

The six shows in my corpus air across three networks, CBS, Fox and The USA Network (outside any syndicated airing); although originally *Medium* aired on NBC, a move which is a strong indicator of the generic positioning of the show, as I will explain later. Each of these networks has a defined identity in terms of the kinds of shows they air and which nights and times they dedicate to which genres. For example, Fox airs animated sitcoms on a Sunday night¹³⁹ while CBS airs live action sitcoms on a Monday¹⁴⁰. This kind of scheduling groups together shows that are seen by producers to share generic traits in the hope that fans of the genre will stay with their network for the duration of the evening. Alongside this, certain networks are known for airing certain kinds of shows; Fox is known more for reality shows whereas ABC is more recognised for hour long dramas¹⁴¹. Consequently, viewers most likely

¹³⁸ Gregory A. Waller, “Flow, Genre, and the Television Text” in Gary R. Edgerton, Michael T. Marsden and Jack Nachbar (eds), *In the Eye of the Beholder: Critical Perspectives in Popular Film and Television*, (Bowling Green State University Press, 1997) p60

¹³⁹ For years it has been *The Simpson*, followed by *Family Guy* and then *American Dad*

¹⁴⁰ For example *How I Met Your Mother*, *Rules of Engagement* and *Two and a Half Men*

¹⁴¹ Fox’s most prominent shows are *American Idol* and *Cops*, ABC trades on the legacy of shows such as *Lost* and *Desperate Housewives*.

know that a show airing on Monday night on CBS is most likely to be a half hour live action sitcom than an animated or reality show. Thus, the networks can package shows together and assume that the audience is already aware of the kind of generic offering they are being given and therefore what to expect of a show. As Nancy San Martin explains, “[B]locking remains a common, effective strategy that determines, in large part, how and when certain identities – sexual, racial, normative, non-normative – are featured, obscured, or excluded.”¹⁴² New shows can be scheduled alongside old and given a boost through their shared genre or ideology. This process of lead-ins, scheduling a less popular or new but generically similar show after a well-established show has been part of scheduling practice for decades.

A perfect example of much of this is the move of *Medium* from NBC to CBS. In 2009, after its fifth season, NBC dropped the show after a decline in ratings over the previous year and production arguments over the number of episodes NBC was willing to produce for the sixth season. By the next day CBS, who produced the show, had agreed to air a full 22 episode season on its own network; it scheduled the show between *Ghost Whisperer* and *Numb3rs* on Friday nights. Firstly, the acquisition by CBS is interesting as brand-wise the network is known for its procedural dramas. This first began in the early nineties with a line-up it called “crimetime after primetime” which included shows such as *Forever Knight* (CBS, 1992) and *Silk Stalkings* (CBS/USA, 1991). While this original move into crime programming only lasted two seasons, it established a brand for the network that made its second foray into ‘crimetime’ in 2000 a greater success. Starting with the debut of *CSI* the network moved more heavily into crime programming; by 2005 Tuesdays to Fridays from nine o’clock crime procedurals were scheduled. Saturday nights became known as “Crimetime Saturday”, a night when the network would air a re-run of one of its procedurals followed by the real-life

¹⁴² Nancy San Martin, “‘Must See TV’”, in Mark Jancovich and James Lyons (eds), *Quality Popular Television*, (BFI, 2003), p34

crime show *48 Hours*¹⁴³. It was into this strong generic brand that *Medium* moved; sandwiched between *Ghost Whisperer* a show sharing many of the themes as *Medium* and *Numb3rs*, a crime drama that used maths as its procedural quirk. As with the texts discussed earlier in the chapter, this scheduling situates *Medium* by placing it alongside other already established crime dramas on a network known for airing procedurals. San Martin suggests this kind of scheduling creates “a built-in homo-sensibility to scheduling practices...iterations of sameness produce a kind of representational flattening.”¹⁴⁴ It shores up the fluidity of the crime genre found at the supernatural end of the scientific-psychic continuum, both bolstering the show’s claims on the crime drama category and reiterating the producers’ categorisation of the show as a crime drama.

The Mentalist which also airs on CBS has a stronger claim on its crime categorisation as it is set within a criminal investigation department. However, as a new series in 2008 its place within the “crimetime Saturday” line-up helped to situate the text even more than its premise provided and instantly became a way to inform the audience of the kind of show it was going to be. Placed alongside *CSI* and *NCIS* (CBS, 2003) there could be little doubt that *The Mentalist* was being billed as a crime procedural; what is of most interest here is where these shows fall on the continuum. Both *CSI* and *NCIS* exist at the scientific end of the spectrum, dealing in empirical data as a means of investigation, therefore, by placing *The Mentalist* in the same scheduling space as these shows it authenticates the show and suggests it deals with similar kinds of truth, especially as these shows were kept separate, in terms of scheduling, from the supernatural shows. The idea that *The Mentalist* despite being about a faux-psychic is somehow still an empiricist show, one that still deals in the rational will become more important in chapters Three and Four, but it is interesting to note that the idea is already being posited in the network’s scheduling practices.

¹⁴³ This strand of programming is such a strong part of the network it has its own section on the official CBS site <http://www.cbs.com/crimetime/>

¹⁴⁴ Nancy San Martin, op cit

Fox's brand identity is a little more varied than that of CBS, although it still has a pedigree in terms of some of its nineties programming. Of most interest is the strong link between current Fox hit *Bones* and its hit from fifteen years earlier, *The X-Files*; especially considering, as discussed in the previous chapter, how much *Bones* references, and is compared to, the earlier show. When *Lie to Me* premiered in 2008 *Bones* was its lead-in, establishing the new show as part of Fox's crime strand. Furthermore, much like the positioning of *The Mentalist* alongside empirical fact based shows as CBS did, the scheduling of *Lie to Me* after *Bones* suggests generic similarities and therefore an attempt to place the show at the scientific end of the spectrum. This is reinforced within the show itself as it defines the work that Lightman does as scientific. Once *Lie to Me* was established it moved to Monday nights with *House* (Fox, 2004-2011)¹⁴⁵ as its lead-in and *Bones* moved to Thursdays, a night known for the airing of *CSI* on CBS, although interestingly an hour earlier. This move would suggest the network was trying to attract crime procedural fans over to Fox, on a night they would usually watch CBS, in the hopes of keeping them on the network for the fledgling supernatural investigative drama *Fringe* (Fox, 2008-2012), a show even closer to *The X-Files* in terms of themes and storylines. These scheduling practices say a lot about how networks want viewers to categorise their shows before they have even aired, creating associations that feed into the creation of generic boundaries.

There is also the matter of where these shows are placed once they reach syndication.

Syndication for American television occurs once a show has reached 100 episodes¹⁴⁶. At this point it is eligible to be sold to other American TV stations for repeat airings; the threshold exists to allow stations to strip the shows across five days and still have at least twenty weeks of programming. In 2009 TNT bought the syndication rights for *Bones* and airs the show on weekday evenings between reruns of *Law & Order*. *Medium* was bought by Lifetime, a cable channel aimed

¹⁴⁵ Many have suggested, and I agree, that *House* is generically a procedural drama rather than a hospital drama. For an example see: Chandler Harriss, "Policing Propp: Toward a Textualist Definition of the Procedural Drama," *Journal of Film and Video* 60, no. 1 (2008).

¹⁴⁶ This was the case until 2008 when it was lowered to 88 episodes

at women and ends their broadcast night Monday-Friday. These purchases are very telling about how the industry sees the shows. *Bones* is scheduled amongst other procedural crime dramas, situating squarely in the crime genre, *Medium*, however, airs on a channel alongside ensemble dramas such as *Grey's Anatomy* and *Desperate Housewives*, suggesting that in syndication the show is defined more by the familial drama the show engages with than as a straightforward procedural, illustrating the complexity of its generic definition. Although for the purposes of this project I am concentrating on the ways in which these shows continually conform to the conventions of the crime drama that does not preclude them from actively participating in other genres. Contextualised for another purpose, these texts can be categorised differently; although I would argue not as convincingly.

In addition to the syndicated airings of these shows is the presence of the supernatural shows amongst the broadcast of reality television; both *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* have at times aired alongside reality ghost hunting shows. Evoking the same message as much of the online ancillary texts that surround both shows, this reality output claims to present evidence of real haunting and the work of people like Van Praagh and Dubois. On the Syfy channel *Ghost Whisperer* has been syndicated since 2008, it airs alongside three different versions of the show *Ghost Hunters*(Syfy, 2004-present)(the original show as well as *Ghost Hunters' Academy* (Syfy, 2009) and *Ghost Hunters International*(Syfy, 2008-present)).



Figure 1. Screenshot from syfy.com

Premiering in 2004, and one of the channel's most successful shows¹⁴⁷, *Ghost Hunters* and its subsequent spin-offs are a central part of how the channel sells itself, as the screen shot above illustrates. By 2008 when Syfy bought *Ghost Whisperer* the show was moving onto a network very much focused on reality ghost programming. This scheduling continues the process of authenticating but also situates the text closer to reality television. By authenticating its narrative through association with 'real' footage of people communicating with ghosts it begins to complicate the boundary between reality and fiction, emphasising the show's roots in the work of real people¹⁴⁸. As the situating and authenticating practices work in tandem claims on 'truth' grow stronger and the show solidifies not only its place in the crime genre but also its links to the more science based shows at the other end of the continuum.

These examples illustrate the necessity for a flexible and broad model of genre definition and how useful scheduling can be in understanding how the genre boundaries are policed. The myriad of data surrounding the scheduling of shows can be read in multiple ways and in order to thoroughly

¹⁴⁷ By 2006, Syfy was declaring the show as one of its most successful (<http://www.thefutoncritic.com/news.aspx?id=20061117scifi01>), by 2009 it claimed the show to be the most successful cable show that year (<http://www.thefutoncritic.com/news.aspx?id=20090417scifi01>)

¹⁴⁸ The official Syfy website writes up the show thus: "Inspired in part by the work of famed medium James Van Praagh and of Mary Ann Winkowski, a real-life communicator with earth bound spirits, *Ghost Whisperer* explores the spiritual side of life and death.", <http://www.syfy.com/ghostwhisperer/index.php>

understand it much more time must be dedicated to it. However, the purpose of this brief overview is to establish how the scheduling of a show also contributes to how it is authenticated and situated and how the juxtaposition of shows within and between networks further solidifies their positioning along the continuum. This approach aids in the understanding of genre not as a collection of individual texts but as a blurred continuation of connected texts. It is these connections that create the boundaries of genre, something that is more than the sum of its parts.

Next Week On...: Episode Trailers as Situating Texts

Episode trailers, (called ‘promos’ in the industry) in the most part, work as situating texts; they air at the end of one episode to promote the next and then airing throughout the week. Their initial airing is part of the ‘boundary rituals’ Fiske and Hartley discuss¹⁴⁹, a means of separating texts while maintaining flow. Furthermore they exist as both part of the original text and as what Gerard Genette has called “public epitexts”, texts that circulate somewhat freely “in a virtually limitless physical and social space.”¹⁵⁰ While ostensibly they serve as advertising material to attract audiences, their placement after the closing credits of episodes suggest that rather than being watched by potential new viewers they are more likely to be consumed by an audience of current viewers. Their address is to a knowing and already informed viewership. Nevertheless, promos do present further ways to establish genre identity, using the same themes and tropes as the shows themselves. Despite existing at the ‘opposite end’ of the show from the kinds of trailers usually discussed, they do, as Gray suggests, “reiterate [the producers’] version of the text”¹⁵¹ in media res. They allow the makers of the show to remind the audience of the essence of the show, a 30 second condensed version of its themes and ideas. Using the Scientific-Psychic continuum the promos for all six shows can be analysed in terms of where they fit and how the networks use these defining motifs to promote their shows through situating practices.

At this point it is important to address the issues around studying promos, some of the most ephemeral of television texts. For the most part they air for only a week, and not every night. Additionally, while they hold great importance to fans in the time running up to a new episode (providing them with information about upcoming plot and character developments) they have no life once a new episode has aired. As a consequence of this

¹⁴⁹Fiske and Hartley, *Reading television.*, p169

¹⁵⁰ Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, (New York University Press, 1997), p347

¹⁵¹Gray, *Show sold separately : promos, spoilers, and other media paratexts.*, p72

limited existence they tend not to be archived in any fashion. It is only due to the existence of Youtube that any promos remain publicly available, especially outside the original country of broadcast. Consequently, my research has been limited to promos that have been uploaded by fans and not subsequently removed by networks. Fortunately, I have been able to find a large enough sample group to allow for deeper study however it is the case that older promos for less popular shows were harder to come by; very little is available for the first few seasons of *Medium* whereas almost all *Bones* promos are accessible. This is perhaps one of the reasons very little work has been done on the television promo.

Having been able to find promos from across multiple seasons for all six shows patterns emerge that exist throughout the continuum. These patterns underpin the central genre of crime while other elements of the text help place shows along the continuum, illustrating the graduated articulation that defines the method of this thesis. As Lisa Kernan states, "Trailers are texts *and* contexts."¹⁵²

Firstly the scientific end of the spectrum and the promos for *Lie to Me* and *Bones*. *Lie to Me* promos generally open with a question in voice-over, "Has a vicious cop killer become a new man?"¹⁵³ This is then followed by an assertion that Cal Lightman can answer this question, thus feeding into the investigative method used in the show; as Lightman builds his case around the ways people answer his questions. Always referred to as 'Cal' or 'Lightman', the dialogue in the voice-over suggests the audience is familiar with the show and the characters. Fast editing and clips of no more than a few seconds make up the full 30 seconds of the promo, editing moves between shots of main characters and the one-episode protagonists referred to in the voice-over. The promos often cut between shots of menacing criminals and Lightman being glib or off-hand. In this particular promo after a shot of the

¹⁵² Lisa Kernan, *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers*, (University of Texas Press, 2004), p39

¹⁵³ Promo for 1.5 "Unchained" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Llc961z-RUI&playnext_from=TL&videos=MblvX2tOo8U

'vicious killer' it cuts to Lightman sat opposite him in the prison eating a sandwich and explaining he missed lunch. The promo then moves on to the B storyline and as a transition the word 'truth' in the font used for the show's titles appears on screen.



Figure 2: Screenshot from *Lie to Me* promo

After explaining the plot of this storyline, the possibility of a lying firefighter, a character asks, "So which one of them's lying?" to which Foster replies, "they all are." In the space of 30 seconds the promo has set up the basic concept of the show, a team of people who can detect lies, the issues at stake in this particular episode and the overall tone of the show. By moving between dark shots of a tattooed man in orange prison uniform to Cal making a glib comment the full spectrum of tones utilised in the show is illustrated. Additionally this promo, like many for the first season, references comments made in press reviews to sell the new show. This particular one references comments made in *The San Francisco Chronicle* claiming *Lie to Me* could be "Fox's new *House*", a show which aired alongside *Lie to Me*. The day and time of airing appear on screen at the beginning and end, at the beginning this is referred to in voice-over as "Fox Wednesdays"; suggesting a branding of Wednesday as a night when particular kinds of shows air, in this case *House* (Fox, 2004) and *Lie to Me*. As the promo ends the title card for the show appears on screen, the words 'Lie to Me*' and underneath in subscript '*The truth is written all over our faces'.

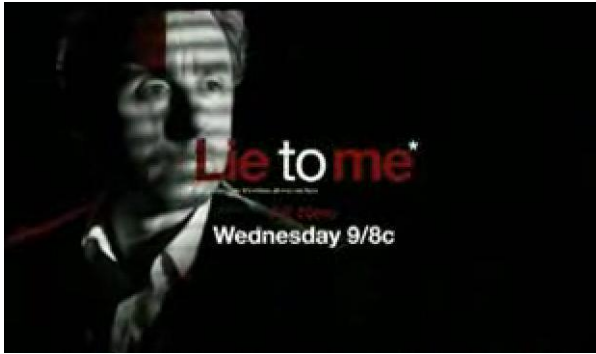


Figure 3: Screenshot from *Lie to Me* Promo

This is then replaced with the Fox logo with an added asterisk.



Figure 4: Screenshot from *Lie to Me* Promo

These promos place *Lie to Me* squarely in the crime genre, situating the text by not only referencing another popular investigative show¹⁵⁴ but also by bringing to the fore crime drama tropes such as vicious murderers and interrogation settings. They also make regular reference to the 'science' the show uses, reinforcing the kind of crime narrative it is promoting.

Bones promos can be placed into two distinct categories, episode promos much like the ones seen for *Lie to Me*, and show promos. This second category is distinct from other shows' promotional advertising and currently unique to *Bones* and *Psych*; in many ways they are reminiscent of the network image campaigns that ran on most networks until very

¹⁵⁴ I use 'investigative' here rather than crime, as *House* is not strictly speaking a crime show, though, as stated before, a case could be made that it activates many of the tropes of the crime genre despite its hospital setting.

recently.¹⁵⁵ The current show promo for *Bones* has the cast at a party dancing around the Jeffersonian while the song “Dead Man’s Party” by Oingo Boingo plays in the background. From the interactions it would suggest we are meant to know that it is the cast rather than the characters being seen in the promo. At times they dance behind an x-ray wall, their skeletons shown dancing to the music as well as dancing with people in skeleton costumes.



Figure 5: Screenshots from *Bones* Promo

The entire promo, running at one minute 30, is light hearted, the cast laughing and joking with one another as they dance. Although *Bones* does utilise a lighter tone, the promo is far lighter than anything produced in the show and while it makes references to the nature of the narrative (skeletons are abundant throughout the promo) it suggests very little about the show’s genre or themes. This implies a very knowing audience, one already aware of exactly the kind of show *Bones* is; consequently this allows for the kind of promos which bypass the situating function of weekly promos. This is perhaps a result of the immense popularity of the show and the knowledge on the part of the producers that any possible viewer probably already knows that *Bones* is a crime show.

The weekly promos for *Bones* function more like those for *Lie to Me*. However, rather than asking a question, the promos for *Bones* set up the mystery of the episode’s corpse, again

¹⁵⁵ Image campaigns would run before and in the early parts of a network’s fall season. Set to music and usually around three minutes long they showed the main actors from all the big shows often in a party setting. Some would have clips from upcoming episodes but this was rare as the purpose of them was to showcase the entire network output rather than the season’s story arcs.

referencing the investigative method at the centre of the show. The narrative of *Bones* promos tend to stick to a strict formula: The promo opens with sombre music and the revelation of episode's murder to be solved.¹⁵⁶ The tone then turns more light hearted, the music changes and clips are shown of Booth, Brennan and the rest of the Jeffersonian team sharing humorous banter. The shift in tone part way through the 30 second promo perfectly situates the text within the continuum, first engaging with the dark, macabre side of the show before making way for the humour it uses to temper the morbid subject matter, much in the same way the show does each episode. For episodes with less humour, for example those that deal with the long running Gormagon¹⁵⁷ storyline or the return of the Gravedigger¹⁵⁸ a slightly different approach is taken; gone is the light music and voice-over, replaced with on screen titles stating what is at stake in the episode. In the promo for 5.21 "The Boy with the Answer", the titles read, "A nemesis returns...A new victim...A new way to destroy Booth and Bones."



Figure 6: Screenshot from *Bones* Promo

¹⁵⁶ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t5lq07L5uo&playnext_from=TL&videos=VYusaOZVoL8

¹⁵⁷ This was a multi-episode, season-long case in which the team tried to find a serial killer who was assembling a skeletal tableau out of the pieces of the people he was killing.

¹⁵⁸ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAb4J_SCzIE&playnext_from=TL&videos=prwbELr1lyE

Only at the end is a voice-over heard giving the date for the episode. It can clearly be seen that while these promos do not attempt to introduce characters they do help set the tone and inform viewers of where the show positions itself in terms of genre.

The promos for *The Mentalist* also signal the humour that runs through the show while additionally mirroring the show's title sequence more than most other promos. Throughout the 30 second spots the blue and yellow colour palette of the show is used, as bands of colour move across the screen in an exact copy of the titles. Furthermore, white boxes are superimposed over the images of bodies and suspects; as these boxes move, a sound like sonar is heard. These boxes represent Jane's heightened observational skills and have connotations of the scientific. While these are not used in the show they are used throughout the promotional material, giving the audience a sense of what it would be like to see as Jane sees. Unlike the tonal shift seen in the *Bones* promos, the promos for *the Mentalist* are mixed tonally from the start. In the promo for the second season finale, "Red Letter"¹⁵⁹, the white box and yellow and blue colouring are used to emphasise words from the voice-over, showing them on screen.



Figure 7: Screenshot from *The Mentalist* Promo

Towards the end of the promo, once the plot of the episode has been set up the music breaks for a moment and Jane speaks a line of dialogue, "I think you manipulated me into

¹⁵⁹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eq8E2Mllvo&feature=related

thinking I manipulated you into coming with me.” This moment of dialogue perfectly exemplifies the kind of character Jane is. For viewers it works to reassure them that Jane continues to behave as he always has despite the issues arising in the episode. The promos depict Jane as a humorous character surrounded by the macabre and duplicitous but untouched by it. The use of white boxes and computerised sound suggest science, or at least the ability to find facts, whereas the dialogue and tone suggest a far less empirical approach. This combination situates the show perfectly between the psychic and the scientific performing many of the same functions the show does.

Psych promos fall into the episode/season categories in the same manner as *Bones*, however, the tonal shift between the two types is not as contrasting; all of the promos for *Psych* tend toward the comical, which reflects the overall tone of the show. Much like the previous promos discussed, little attempt is made to explain the show and an assumption is made that the audience is already aware of the characters and their relationships to one another. Episode promos open with a clip from the upcoming show, usually a joke or funny line¹⁶⁰, the voice-over will then explain the plot of the episode over action laden clips. Music plays in the background, often stopping to draw attention to a funny line from either Shawn or Gus. The emphasis in these promos is the dialogue rather than the plot, highlighting the comedy of the show rather than its crime narrative. At one point in the promo for episode 3.14 “Truer Lies”¹⁶¹ Shawn makes a joke about being on the lam and the sound of a lamb bleating is played in the background. The use of non-diegetic sound highlights the attempts the show makes to remove itself from realist crime drama. While *The Mentalist* is a pseudo-psychic crime show with comedy elements, *Psych* attempts to place itself as a comedy with a pseudo-psychic crime plot. Any reference to its generic categorisation is done through the voice-over which is used to explain the case Shawn must solve, engaging with crime drama

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7564pD3sZU&feature=channel>

¹⁶¹ Ibid

narrative tropes. Each promo ends with Gus and Shawn doing something mundane in front of a brightly coloured background, for example eating dinner, closing with Shawn annoying Gus in some fashion. In the promo referenced above he unscrews the top of the salt shaker before handing it to Gus resulting in Gus covering his food in salt. In another promo Gus is standing in front of police tape which Shawn runs through as if it is the finishing line for a race he is pretending to win¹⁶².



Figure 8: Screenshot from *Psych* Promo

These non-episode, but in character moments extend the playful nature of the promos and feed further into the light hearted tone they create for the show as a whole.

The season promos do even more to reinforce the dominance of the comic over the criminal. For season three USA released a one minute video of Shawn and Gus sat at a piano performing the song “Ebony and Ivory”¹⁶³, for the next season they dressed in 80s clothes, with the rest of the cast making up the band, and performed the Hall & Oates song “Private Eyes”¹⁶⁴. Both performances are tongue in cheek, using the actor’s real (and out of tune) singing voices and the songs play on ideas from the show. In the first instance the bi-racial nature of Shawn and Gus’ partnership, in the second the joke is even more straightforward as it references their work as literal private eyes. I have argued here that these promos

¹⁶² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAqmVdvfztM&feature=related>

¹⁶³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXDmJNJMI44>

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6f-unfDoXI>

suggest a dominant genre in terms of promotion that is not crime drama. This might suggest that the show does not fit within this corpus, however, the purpose of the continuum is to allow for the inclusion of wide ranging shows and build a concept of genre that is malleable and inclusive. Genre thus becomes defined by collections of convergent elements rather than one all-encompassing element of a show. *Psych*, despite foregrounding its comedic side in its promotional material, is still a crime drama because it articulates innumerable crime drama conventions.

Ghost Whisperer and *Medium* have promos that work quite similarly to each other but still have distinctive differences. Unlike the previous shows their promos are much darker, once again in keeping with the tone of the shows they represent. For example *Ghost Whisperer* sets a decidedly gothic tone, using fonts and phrasing that recall the horror genre. In the promo for episode 3.6 'Double'¹⁶⁵ the voice-over describes what is at stake in the episode : While clips play showing breaking glass, a sink filled with blood, hands reaching out to strangle Melinda and photos that feature the haunting spirit, the audience hears, "A picture says a thousand words, but this one says only one, revenge." When the word 'revenge' is spoken it appears on screen using a white gothic font.



Figure 9: Screenshot from *Ghost Whisperer* Promo

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X50AVchMc0A&feature=related>

Unlike the distancing of the crime from the investigators in other shows' promos, these promos place Melinda at the centre of the danger; she is the character in jeopardy. There is a brief scene which introduces the 'client'¹⁶⁶ of the week, but the promo reads more as a story concerned with Melinda's fate than that of her 'client'; very little is made of the plot at all, almost in opposition to the way promos for *Bones* or *Lie to Me* are set up. This correlates with the way the plots of the shows differ, with the 'criminal' rather than the crime being the impetus for investigation. While most crime drama promos end with a question about how the crime is going to be solved, the promos for *Ghost Whisperer* end questioning whether Melinda will survive. In terms of the continuum this exemplifies the focus on the personal nature of crime in the psychic shows and the way it leaks from work-life to home-life. Melinda is not only the investigator of crime, in order to investigate it she must become part of it and the centrality of her peril in the promo perfectly illustrates this.

Medium also places Allison and her family at the centre of most of its promos, encapsulating the family-centric ethos of the show.



Figure 10: Screenshot from *Medium* Promo

The promo for episode 6.17 "There Will Be Blood...Type A"¹⁶⁷ is typical of the approach *Medium* promos take. It starts by introducing the basic premise of the episode, usually

¹⁶⁶ I use the word client to describe the people that both Melinda and Allison work with. Though they are not hired per se, they do often work on behalf of the people connected to the haunting in order to solve it, especially when no legal crime has been committed.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZYHyZXPNI8>

related to Allison or her family, in this case a voice-over reads words that appear over images of the *Medium* logo, "A daughter's first love...is a mother's worst nightmare." This is followed by an image of a body and then cuts to Allison waking from a psychic dream, all within the first ten seconds of the promo. Clips from the episode then follow, further explaining the psychic vision Allison has had about Ariel's new boyfriend killing someone. As with *Ghost Whisperer* the emphasis here is on Allison and how this dream will affect her family relationships. The murder that supposedly takes place is referred to only momentarily and not presented as crucial in advertising the episode. The image of the Rorschach butterfly which is part of the show's title sequence appears numerous times throughout the promo, working much like the use of colour palette in promos for *The Mentalist*. Like a form of branding, this separates the show's promotional material from that of *Ghost Whisperer*, especially important when the two shows air back to back. While both shows foreground the family melodrama at their centre, they also seek to reaffirm the shows' as investigative by retaining the tropes of other crime drama promos. The victim (or criminal) of the week is featured and questions asked in voice-over as to how the crime will be solved. The tone may be vastly different from that of *Lie to Me*, but the basic structure of setting up the weekly crime through questions to be answered exists in the promos for all six shows.

Moving from the scientific to the psychic end of the continuum it can be seen how closely promos contribute to the generic placement of the texts they advertise. In these thirty second spots the shows not only illustrate their tone but also positions in terms of investigative methods, narrative approaches and which themes are central to the show's ideology. *Bones* favours mixing the abject with humour and concentrating on the murder to be solved, *Ghost Whisperer* uses dark imagery to focus on the danger Melinda must face in order to help someone else. These promo texts serve as additional situating texts, condensing the ideas which form the scientific-psychic continuum into their simplest forms and delivering them as a form of reassurance to an audience likely already aware of the

shows they promote. As Kernan suggests, “[Trailers’] discontinuity editing comprise a sort of ‘metamontage,’ the rhetoric trades heavily in boundaries, edges, and the spaces between where meaning happens (or is assumed to happen).”¹⁶⁸ This works both in terms of the plots they reveal and the spaces in genre codification left to be filled by the audience. Clarifying more than engagement with the crime drama genre, promos reaffirm where within the genre the show fits; they distil the essence of the show while simultaneously encouraging viewers to watch the next episode in order to see the next case or ordeal the characters must contend with.

Working in conjunction, the three sets of paratexts discussed here reinforce one another, continually reiterating the shows’ differing generic hybridity and in doing so promoting what is ‘unique’ about the shows. As such, *Bones* becomes another, more humorous, insight into the real life experiences of a science based homicide consultant; while at the other end of the continuum *Medium* takes its audience closer to the experiences of a family dealing with a matriarch’s psychic visions, giving background to a possibly already familiar psychic medium. These examples, and those that sit between them along the continuum, work as a cohesive whole to create both genre boundaries and the variation that exists inside them. As Gray claims each of these “precedes the act of watching but feeds into, conditions, and becomes part of the act.”¹⁶⁹ They construct a baseline of crime drama tropes which hold the genre together and then illustrate the divergences that are layered on top. Collectively they form the cluster of texts which continually articulate the idea of ‘crime drama’ constantly reaffirming one another. The dialogue that exists between these texts through the repetition of shared conventions and their very existence alongside each other, figuratively and literally, illustrate which elements are to become part of the system of graduated articulation. By theorising television genre in this way the work in subsequent chapters on

¹⁶⁸Lisa Kernan, *Coming attractions : reading American movie trailers* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 2004)., p45

¹⁶⁹Gray, *Show sold separately : promos, spoilers, and other media paratexts.*, p38

themes and the centrality of gendered knowledge not only has a sturdy foundation but can feed on these ideas thereby continuing the argument that genre is an interweaving collection of texts and paratexts held together by a set of fluctuating convergent narrative tropes.

Chapter Three

Psychics vs. Scientists: Crime Drama and the Intuition/Reason

Binary

Having established a way to categorise and organise such a large genre as crime drama, this chapter seeks to explore the concept at the very heart of it, knowledge. By examining different ways in which knowledge is theorised and utilised this chapter will elaborate points along the scientific-psychic continuum, exploring the ways in which the crime drama narrativises the process of information gathering. This approach will establish how knowledge and gender become intertwined concepts that shape this narrativising process, the two concepts together informing the structure of the protagonist's investigative method. Additionally, this chapter will tease out how a genre so broad can be examined in a way that illustrates its variety while still demonstrating it to be a cohesive whole. Though investigative methods differ, the consistent way in which gender is understood and performed maintains a sense of a cohesive genre. Looking at crime drama through this dual lens explores how shows within a genre work in two ways at the same time; firstly they consistently use repeated tropes and themes within texts and paratexts to shore up the genre's unity, while simultaneously emphasising elements that are unique to each individual show, creating a sense of variety. These secondary elements function as the unique selling points for the shows-quirks in the system-but are rarely fundamental to their genre classification. This chapter will look at how knowledge functions in both cases, as a central tenet of the very notion of crime drama and as a way of distinguishing the shows from one another. In other words, though forms of knowledge and the consequent modes of investigation may differ, there is a consistent ideology about the place and use of knowledge that runs central through all

the shows; an ideology that defines the consultant procedural and consequently helps illustrate how complex genres function.

In this case knowledge is being examined through the distinction between intuition and reason, a distinction centuries old, and a binary so longstanding it is at the centre of the construction of both concepts. This chapter considers how reason and intuition are figured within the crime drama and how different investigative methods found across the genre manage to both uphold this notion of a fixed binary but also complicate it by utilising both concepts within the same show. Though this notion of a binary opposition between reason and intuition is used throughout the genre as a way to distinguish shows and emphasise their distinctiveness, on closer inspection it becomes evident that crime drama is instead engaging in a constant dialogue between these two concepts. Crime drama then becomes a space in which these opposing methods become part of a complementary system of criminal investigation, in each individual show one side of the binary is emphasised but neither can work on its own. Perhaps a metaphor is useful here. Genre can be seen much like mixing paint; in the vast array of brown paints there are those that are more green and those that are more red, but all would still be considered brown. In crime drama there are those shows that preface reason and those that emphasise their use of intuition, but ultimately they all use a mix of the two. They are all brown, just different shades. It is important to note that this combination of approaches is not another example of a continuum; though intuition and reason exist in a system where both are necessary they are still very much separate entities. Both concepts are utilised by different characters and at different times, they are complimentary but opposing. For example, Angela is often the intuitive counterpoint to Brennan's reasoned scientist, but neither of them move toward the centre of this binary. Furthermore, the change in emphasis across the genre continuum is not simply a matter of aesthetics; the change in emphasis shifts everything from plot construction to tone. An emphasis on reason will affect the way the plot is constructed, the backstory of the protagonist and the kinds of crimes being

solved. Nevertheless, no matter which aspects of a show are more prominent, or in which order the plot is organised, they are all just a different way of mixing the same elements. It is from these building blocks of conventions and tropes that the genre is built.

That being said, the use of knowledge and the way the crime drama plays with the intuition/reason binary is interesting and the backbone of many of the other shifts across the genre. From the philosophical writings of Plato to the psychological work of Carl Jung, many have theorised intuition and reason, and over time theories around these concepts of knowledge have changed. Greek philosophical writing sought to examine the shift from intuition to reason and ally the supposedly opposing concepts on either side of the gender divide. As Genevieve Lloyd writes in *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, "[F]emaleness was symbolically associated with what Reason supposedly left behind – the dark powers of the Earth Goddesses, immersion in unknown forces associated with mysterious female powers."¹⁷⁰ Reason sought to organise the natural world, to move from fertility consciousness to a world ruled by rational gods. As thought moved on this binary persisted. When the Pythagoreans formulated the table of opposites in the sixth century BC¹⁷¹ women were placed on the same side as 'curved', 'dark' and 'bad', they were placed with the formless, the vague. In Plato's work the female was associated with matter, that which must be transcended through reason in order to attain knowledge¹⁷². Much later work sought to place intuition and reason within different parts of the mind. To this extent Jung claimed intuition to be "perception by way of the unconscious, or the perception of an unconscious concept."¹⁷³ Intuition was to know something without understanding how you

¹⁷⁰Genevieve Lloyd, *The man of reason : "male" and "female" in Western philosophy*, 2nd ed. ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).p2

¹⁷¹Charles H. Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans : a brief history* (Indianapolis, Ind. ; Cambridge: Hackett Pub., 2001).p65

¹⁷²Plato, H. D. P. Lee, and T. K. Johansen, *Timaeus and Critias*, New ed. / translated and annotated by Desmond Lee ; translation revised, introduced and further annotated by T.K. Johansen. ed. (London: Penguin, 2008).

¹⁷³Carl Jung, "Psychological Types," in *Personality: Critical concepts in Psychology*, ed. Lawrence A. Pervin (Routledge, 1998).

knew it, it was intangible and immeasurable. Unlike reason, which depended on the senses, on data and processes, intuition simply *was*.

This binary opposition is still meaningful today and feeds into much of the construction of knowledge across the crime drama. Thus the investigators based in science, the ones who use empirical knowledge, are continually demonstrating their process, proving 'how' they know something to the viewer. Episodes of these shows are filled with depicting experiments and attempting to illustrate thought processes. Conversely the psychic investigators have no explanation for the way they come upon their knowledge further than their own experience of it; there is never an explanation as to why or how they have psychic visions. The genre seems at this point to be crudely split in two across this knowledge divide. On one side the scientific, empiricist shows defined by fact and pedagogy, on the other side the shows where investigation is a process of being 'given' knowledge. However, not only does the presence of the pseudo-psychic shows complicate this, but the intricacies of the other shows add additional problems to this model. After all, it does not account for the dual appearance of both intuition and reason in most texts.

However, while the strict model of binary oppositions is complicated across the genre the conventions detailed above about intuition and pedagogy fit rather neatly into what Fiske and Hartley called the bardic function of television. In holding on to sets of conventions around the gathering and owning of knowledge that are centuries old, these shows uphold cultural notions that run much deeper than the crime drama. Fiske and Hartley explain the bardic function of television thus:

1. To articulate the main lines of the established cultural consensus about the nature of reality (and therefore the reality of nature).
2. To implicate the individual members of the culture into its dominant value-systems, by exchanging a status-enhancing message for the endorsement of that message's underlying ideology (as articulated in its mythology).

3. To celebrate, explain, interpret and justify the doings of the culture's individual representatives in the world out-there; using the mythology of individuality to claw back such individuals from any mere eccentricity to a position of socio-centrality.
4. To assure the culture at large of its practical adequacy in the world by affirming and confirming its ideologies/mythologies in active engagement with the practical and potentially unpredictable world.
5. To expose, conversely, any practical inadequacies in the culture's sense of itself which might result from changed conditions in the world out-there, or from pressure within the culture for a reorientation in favour of a new ideological stance.
6. To convince the audience that their status and identity as individuals is guaranteed by the culture as a whole.
7. To transmit by these means a sense of cultural membership (security and involvement).¹⁷⁴

As this list demonstrates the heavy reliance on the mythology of masculine pedagogical authority and the power of the individual to find truth are most certainly bardic. As this chapter will demonstrate, the depiction of knowledge in the consultant procedural functions almost entirely in these terms; re-enforcing dominant cultural ideologies through the very clinical process of criminal procedure. As such the act of knowledge gathering itself becomes this site of transmission, the place in the text that allows the audience to become members through their own guesswork and yet simultaneously attempting to implicate them into a dominant value system that defines the ways in which they are allowed to possess and utilise knowledge.

Though ideas about reason have changed over the course of centuries of thought, the connection between reason and form on one hand, intuition and formlessness on the other, has remained; knowledge is still often thought of within the confines of these categories. In actual fact sometimes intuition is not understood as a form of knowledge at all despite it being used in almost identical ways. Crime narratives become an important site for working through these ideas since the detective as a figure is about the acquisition and use of knowledge and so the duelling concepts of reason and intuition are played out in the method of this acquisition. Evidence of this can be found in early crime fiction, from Holmes' need for empirical experimentation and Dupin's

¹⁷⁴ Fiske and Hartley, *Reading television*. P67

application of logic to human behaviour¹⁷⁵, to Marple's observation of social interaction. Even in these examples there is a sense of the gendering of these concepts as either masculine or feminine. By the period covered in this thesis the concepts of reason and intuition are firmly ensconced in the crime drama and made even more explicit in the narrative of the consultant procedural where method is premise. In the consultant procedural the investigator, the tone of the show, and the way it is positioned are all dictated by the central investigative method, and that method is still defined by these concepts of reason and intuition.

To fully explore how forms of knowledge work in the genre and how these shows manage to both uphold this long standing binary and attempt to work around it, this chapter is structured around an examination of the three kinds of knowledge utilised. Namely, scientific knowledge, that gained through testing, experiential knowledge, that gained through life experience and empathetic knowledge, that which is gained through shared feeling. By looking across the whole continuum through these three lenses it is possible to map out a shift from the use of reason as the primary approach to crime solving, to the use of intuition. Much like the example above there is a noticeable shift from 'masculine' science and its use of rational, empirical evidence to 'feminine' notions of emotion and knowledge gained through intuition. The pivot around which this shift occurs, the pseudo-psychic shows, much like Dupin, present a point in the genre where intuition and reason masquerade as one another. Already we see that the binary becomes blurred in this moment of cross-over, illustrating the dependency that each side has upon the other. This is then complicated by the inextricable use of gender as a way of anchoring and continually attempting to separate these binaries. Note, this is not a discussion of the biological gender of the investigators in question but rather the way in which their investigative methods are presented as having gendered attributes; attributes linked very much to the conceptualisation of reason and intuition held by the Greek philosophers and continued into the present.

¹⁷⁵ An examination of Dupin's investigative method can be found in Dawn B. Sova, *Critical Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, (Facts on File, Inc, 2007), p153

Reason and Intuition as Part of the Continuum

For the purpose of this thesis I define reason as empiricist since to reason is to use a method which is testable, tangible and physical. While the investigators who use reason are exceptionally talented, reason is in principle a method available to anyone, one which can be replicated anywhere. However, there is a unique quality to the method of each consultant investigator which cannot be replicated. It is the justification for their employment. These unique qualities are depicted in varying ways; sometimes through particularly eccentric behaviour as is the case with Patrick Jane (he continually performs small illusions, sleight of hand etc, to gain insight into the minds of his suspects) or the ability to see connections more quickly and more often than the law enforcement officials they work with, Shawn's skills exemplify this particular trait. The consultant who is, as stated previously, a civilian outsider given official status in order to assist in the process of criminal investigation, is capable of discovering truth more efficiently and to a higher standard than those around them. However, their basic methods are not unique; it is their combination of skills and talent that make them indispensable to official law enforcement. Much like Watson was often confused by Holmes, the combinations of methods used by the consultant are usually beyond the understanding and capabilities of law enforcement professionals. That is until it is explained to them; in the same way it is explained to the viewer, through the narrative process of investigation. To this end the scientific consultant takes on a somewhat pedagogical role, teaching the police, and simultaneously those at home, how to follow their higher functioning thought processes. Reasoned investigation is depicted as a series of small steps, each one simple but in combination becomes a complex system, justifying the need for constant explanation through exposition.

At the other end of the continuum are consultants who use intuition and therefore have access to knowledge and understanding which no one else can access. That is, these investigators are privy to knowledge that cannot be accessed through means other than their supernatural abilities,

something presented to them outside of the work of logical reasoning. Psychic powers mean their knowledge is delivered without need for cognitive processes, it is simply known. Therefore, rather than a pedagogical role the psychic investigators become nurturers, talking victims through trauma in order to gain insight rather than performing tests. There is a certainty to their knowledge; insights gained intuitively are treated from the outset as facts. Here we see one of the first great points of difference between the two investigative approaches. Intuitive shows focus on finding evidence which will corroborate the known facts and therefore prove them to others. Reasoned shows are about using the evidence to find the facts at their root. One moves from truth to proof and the other works in the opposite direction.

Moving through the three forms of knowledge—scientific, experiential and empathetic— that will shape this chapter the nuanced nature of the genre’s shift from intuition to reason is brought to light. While the concepts have often been placed in these opposing positions, what is at work in the crime drama is more complex, the ideas in some way working in tandem with a change in emphasis rather than a complete change in outlook. Both concepts of intuition and reason are given space within all six shows to a greater or lesser extent; they are another example of the system of graduated articulation that the continuum method rests upon, each show uses both concepts in the same manner but to greater or lesser degrees. Moreover, there is also a shift in tone as well as a change in investigative approach.

There is also, of course, the ever-present conflation of knowledge and power to contend with; not only does investigative method shift across the continuum but so too does the associated agency, the power that the investigator wields. Foucault argued that “power is employed through a net-like organisation”¹⁷⁶, suggesting it is through being part of the institution and the mechanics of investigative procedure that the consultant gains power. That is, it is not their ability to gain knowledge that provides them with power, but rather the knowledge they gain allows them into

¹⁷⁶ Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/knowledge : selected interviews and other writings, 1972/1977* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980). P98

the network that possesses power, power they can then share. If this is the case then the reason the psychics lack real agency is not only because they are victims in their pursuit of knowledge but also because their methods do not allow them full entry into the investigative systems of power, they are never truly part of the institution. As Foucault further explains in *The History of Sexuality*, "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere."¹⁷⁷ As such, power is distributed through networks and can only be exerted by those who are part of those systems. Psychic investigators gather knowledge through means that cannot be systemised, cannot be taught, and cannot be witnessed; by its very nature it is a solitary method and so the psychic investigator is forever denied real power. Foucault theorised knowledge in much the same way, as dynamic and relational, knowledge only exists when it is being used as part of system, what he called 'knowledge relationships'¹⁷⁸. Thus, Foucault is suggesting that knowledge relationships are power relationships and vice versa. Knowledge is only knowledge once it is passed on, in the instance of these shows once it has been through the process of exposition, told to both other characters and the audience; in the same way that power only exists in networks where the movement of power has been agreed. The idea of knowledge remains the same across the continuum, it is created in the moment where the investigator explains what they have learned, however, the differing methods of gaining the information mean that power relations are not as ubiquitous and the psychic investigators find themselves perpetually powerless.

The first category of knowledge gathering this chapter deals with, reasoned empiricism, encompasses the science based shows, *Bones* and *Lie to Me*. These shows are centrally concerned with the discovery of truth through the processes of testing. The second category is the shows that use experiential knowledge. Interestingly these shows turn on the investigator's masking of reason behind a faked intuition; both *The Mentalist* and *Psych* feature characters that have

¹⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality* (London: Penguin : Viking : Pantheon, 1979). P98

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p94

pretended to have intuitive powers despite their use of reason. While their methods are not obviously scientific, the shows go a long way to demonstrate that these skills are taught, and that their methods of investigation are potentially transferable if people are willing to learn. There is the constant presence science, or at least empiricism, within their method. This is most notable in the use of post-production techniques that highlight the use of evidence; for example *Psych*'s method of drawing attention to Shawn's point of view in order to illuminate his reasoning process. Similarly at the end of an episode of *The Mentalist* Jane will talk to the other CBI agents through his reasoning, explaining which pieces of evidence he put together to discover the guilty party. Despite claims otherwise, these investigators still use rational experience and knowledge to find the truth and spend time testing hypotheses.

The third category is shows concerned with empathetic knowledge, the only ones to truly centre on intuition. The method in these shows is not based on discovering truth through testing but instead involves the investigator being *told* the truth or experiencing it themselves. Through psychic dreams and visions people involved in crimes literally tell these investigators what happened, not through autopsy or forensic analysis but through speech. There is no need for the testing of a hypothesis as this truth is irrefutable. The psychic investigators, and only them, have access to 'unconscious' knowledge. Through their 'witnessing' of the crime via psychic means and the way in which they are also victim to it (this idea will be explored further in chapter Five) they 'feel' the crime as much as see it. Their knowledge is formed from intuition in as much as intuition is the ability to understand something without the need for reasoning. I use intuition to describe this method as its connotations of 'feeling' are important. The intuitive investigator has no verifiable data; rather they have a trust in their own understanding of the world. Their method is intuitive because it does not need to be checked or explained and it cannot be taught so the pedagogical element is never present in these shows; this method is entirely about faith. In many ways this is similar to the way in which Stephen Knight has mapped the early development of

crime fiction¹⁷⁹. Moving from Poe and Doyle to Christie, Knight suggests a movement from the rational and scientific to what he calls a “feminine method”¹⁸⁰ by the time he reaches Christie’s Marple books, ultimately he means the intuitive. The two are conflated, suggesting that any method which does not involve empiricist methodology is ultimately feminine. Furthermore, Knight suggests that the rational is the most important part of the investigator’s method whereas in the contemporary crime drama both the rational and the intuitive appear throughout, neither one more important to the genre than the other.

While I have set up three separate categories as a way to work through the concepts of reason and intuition as they pertain to the crime genre the boundaries between the categories are not impermeable. For ease of organisation I have categorised the shows by the method of the central protagonist, however, in each text there are characters that perform functions reserved for other methods. It is through these characters that the reason/intuition binary is so often complicated, as they offer the space in which the complicit relationship of the two concepts can be explored. While Brennan is very much a scientific investigator, Booth’s methods are sometimes more akin to the experiential investigators; while she performs tests he tries to understand motives. Allison is purely empathetic but is assisted by law enforcement officials who use a combination of scientific and experiential knowledge. This would suggest that while shows are built around a particular form of knowledge, the shows that become successful are those that make a point of giving space to a range. While one kind may be foregrounded, another will still be a constant presence, a balancing force that helps maintain the over-arching tenet of the consultant procedural, that team work is essential.

¹⁷⁹ Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, (Macmillan Press, 1980)

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p129

Scientific Knowledge and the Crime Drama

The predominantly rationalist/scientific shows within my sample, *Bones* and *Lie to Me*, each present a masculine world of investigation in which reason is the most effective way to discover truth. This emphasis is portrayed in a number of ways; the method of investigation, the aesthetics of investigation and the character of the consultant. First and foremost, both shows strongly emphasise the science they utilise. This is evident not only in the shows themselves but in the extra-textual material such as promos and source material as discussed in the previous chapter. These shows foreground their basis in real world science, especially via their advertising material as adverts for these shows focus on the case rather than the characters; they value the oddity of the crimes solved and how sophisticated their scientific abilities must be in order to solve them. While character interaction may become increasingly important narratively as the shows continue¹⁸¹, extra-textual material still places emphasis on the solving of crime and the superiority of the consultant's method. Both Brennan and Lightman are doctors and are referred to as such throughout each episode, constantly recapitulating their personae as that of the scientist, people that value facts, provable and irrefutable; as such, their methods of investigation are based around testing. Every single episode of both shows involve scenes of empirical testing processes, Brennan looks at bones through microscopes, Lightman watches videos of body language. Consequently, each episode begins with a question and through the accumulation of knowledge an answer is found. For example in episode 2.20 of *Bones* "The Glowing Bones in the Old Stone House", finger printing the corpse leads to identifying the victim, talking to her friends reveals she was last seen with a friend who is also missing, finding the friend's car gives the team the crime scene and analysing material there provide a motive for the crime (evidence of an extra-marital affair) and the murder weapon, a ceramic knife. All this knowledge combined leads them to

¹⁸¹ The increased emphasis on the melodrama of interpersonal relationships is more a function of long-running drama than it is a specific trait of the crime drama. As episode numbers run into the hundreds focusing on the developing relationships between characters becomes a way of trying to keep audiences interested.

identify the murderer, the victim's friend who faked her own kidnapping. Each answer provides new questions and new tests to be performed until finally the full story of the crime is understood.

The typical process in *Bones* is the most obviously scientific and reasoned. When a body is found, and the team has examined it in situ, it is taken, often along with whatever it was found in, to the Jeffersonian. This request to have the body moved to a designated scientific location has almost become a catchphrase for the show and generally signals the point at which the opening titles will be shown. Once the team has the evidence at the Jeffersonian it goes through a series of tests. Brennan and any assistant she has employed at the time will study the bones, generally using equipment such as microscopes and x-rays. The role of the assistant is formulaic but necessary, they take on the position of pupil, allowing for the instructional/pedagogical form of exposition the rationalist shows favour. Other members of the team perform different but also essential tasks. After the introduction of Dr. Saroyan in season two, her role has been to take any living tissue and put it through a similar testing process. Dr. Hodgins takes any material living or otherwise from around the body and puts that through a series of machines from gas chromatograph mass spectrometers, to fibre matching software. From the first season there has been a running joke about claiming the title 'King of the Lab', this title being bestowed on which ever scientist manages to discover the most obscure piece of information using the most complicated science. Often in his pursuit of this Hodgins develops his own experiments, experiments which tend to end with a comical explosion¹⁸². These techniques attempt to demystify science while ensuring that the process of scientific endeavour is still central to the show.

The entire narrative of the show is built around this process and the comedy often comes from Booth's inability to understand it. In Booth we find experiential knowledge entering into the

¹⁸² Interestingly this is not dissimilar from the science 'fact' show *Mythbusters*(Discovery Channel, 2003) in its presentation of science as fun as well as educational.

show's method, creating a contrasting but complementary approach to crime solving and exemplifying the co-dependent relationship between reason and intuition. Booth favours the hunch, constantly falling back on his experiences as a federal agent rather than the absolute knowledge of science. Though not entirely intuitive, as it is still a process based on somewhat empiricist methods, it is far less exact than the science performed elsewhere in the text. However, whatever skills Booth has to offer, the science is still more important, it is honest, objective and must be deferred to. When the process goes wrong or is not treated properly then the case goes awry¹⁸³; Booth may not understand it but he does not undermine it. Even in episodes where he disagrees with Brennan on how to solve a case he must ultimately make a space for the science¹⁸⁴. In the investigative world of *Bones* facts must be collected before a case can be considered solved. Booth may have a 'gut instinct' about the perpetrator, but he still needs evidence. His experiential knowledge is essential for understanding the motivations of people but only Brennan with her scientific knowledge can find truth because 'truth' in these shows consists of facts. This is emphasised more in later seasons when the character Caroline Julian, U.S. Attorney's Office prosecutor, starts to appear more regularly. Her presence amplifies the need for robust evidence; she needs something she can take to court.

That being the case there is no place for emotion in the reasoned approach; Brennan cautions against suppositions and assumptions continually, removing the possibility of grey areas in her own work but leaving space for them in Booth's. He is allowed assumptions because he does not deal with the facts of the case. For her, and ultimately for the solidity of the case, things either are or are not and emotion cannot change that. Reasoned scientific investigation is about absolutes

¹⁸³In episode 1.19 "The Man in the Morgue" Brennan wakes on the floor of her bathroom covered in blood. As she and Booth try to investigate what happened she is arrested for a murder that occurred during her blackout. Part of the police evidence is her broken wrist. However, once Brennan sees the X-ray she can prove it was wrongly diagnosed and that her fracture was a defensive wound that would have prevented her from stabbing anyone. Had she not been capable of practicing 'good' science she would have been charged with the murder.

¹⁸⁴In episode 6.6 "The Shallow in the Deep" Booth believes he has identified a victim by their picture. However, Brennan's bone measurements disagree with every aspects of Booth's supposed victim's physiognomy. Eventually it is discovered the victim was in possession of stolen ID and Brennan's work is used to correctly identify the victim.

because they cannot be refuted. Interestingly Angela's position in the show somewhat tempers this approach and adds emotion to what would otherwise be a very cold approach to death through her consistent positioning as empathetic. Angela's role, unlike Booth's contextualises both victim and criminal in the real world, away from the absolutes of science. Her sketching of facial reconstructions from skulls and her investigation into the lives of victims gives them an emotional, not rationalist back story. Many of the aspects that Angela discovers often help Brennan understand why certain facts are as they are. In episode 5.08 "The Foot in the Foreclosure" Angela uses Brennan's bone measurements and other information she has gathered to ascertain that a victim was obese. This explains aspects of the bones that Brennan could not understand, however, ultimately Angela is there to provide a sense of caring. She wants the victim to be known, to be understood. She gives flesh to the bare bones of the facts and the victim's life and in doing so softens the show's empiricist agenda. Her approach is intuitive, she has an understanding of people and can help her put facts together in a contextual human way that Brennan cannot. However, she lacks power meaning this intuition has less effect on the investigation than the scientists do. Her intuitive input is useful but ultimately secondary.

Lie to Me also emphasises its scientific basis. Though not concerned with illustrating chemical and biological tests, it still claims its reading of faces to be a science. Interestingly here emotion is central to the process; it is the very 'data' the team is reading. Yet while it is abundant in the suspects Lightman refrains from showing any of his own. The opening sequence and the narrative played out in adverts for the show place it firmly at the science/reason end of the continuum. In the show's opening titles images of faces appear with descriptions of what their expressions mean. Interestingly often designating emotions to these expressions, suggesting emotion is something that can be quantified and measured. Later in the chapter I will look more closely at how title sequences feed into this separation of reason and intuition, providing further context for how they are positioned across the genre. It is interesting to note that the paratextual elements of *Lie to Me* are more ensconced in a scientific narrative than the show often is. While the title

sequence literally spells out a scientific premise, episodes themselves do not rely on actual data in the same way. This only illustrates how important the paratext is to the construction of genre.

Nevertheless, like *Bones* the adverts for *Lie to Me* emphasise the particular case, the mystery to be solved. Lightman and his team use video evidence in the same way Brennan and hers use fibres and bones. The team looks at multiple videos of their suspects, forensically analysing every eye movement and lip twitch they then compare pieces of evidence to build a hypothesis. At this point, rather than running their evidence through a machine they bring their suspect to the 'lab' in much the same way a body is moved to The Jeffersonian. In a closed environment Lightman's team then test their hypothesis by watching the suspect's reactions. In most episodes the first time they bring in a suspect is to watch them, to get a 'base reading' to understand them before testing how they react to stimuli. The experiments on *Lie to Me* may be based on human interaction but they are experiments nonetheless. Consequently, just as in *Bones*, they must be robust enough to hold up in court. However rather than a brash prosecutor as before, this show uses Lightman's ex-wife as the lawyer who requires concrete scientific proof. Once again there is a very specific gender dynamic at play, one in which the 'masculine' figure of knowledgeable authority is the one for which empirical facts are essential.

It should be noted that this empirical investigative methods draw rather heavily on Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish*¹⁸⁵ and the idea of the disciplined body, the 'docile' body; as Foucault says, "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved."¹⁸⁶ Through the work done on the docile body a disciplined body is formed, one made for the job it performs; it is this that the empirical investigator 'reads'. Only because bodies are changed by the work that they do, moulded by the forces of power imposed upon them, can the body as corpse provide useful information. Were it not for the disciplined body Brennan would never be able to

¹⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish : the birth of the prison*, 2nd Vintage Books ed. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p136

determine a victim's job and Jane would never be able to tell a couple lied about their relationship; the body is only readable because external factors form it, something Foucault calls "a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it."¹⁸⁷ The disciplined body lies at the heart of the empiricist procedural as it turns the mess of the biological body into a machine built to perform a function, one whose purpose can be understood through literal deconstruction.

The notion that the body is a machine honed to perform tasks means that the process of deconstructing it is one equally regimented and exact; as such both shows present their expositional detailing of scientific processes in a pedagogical form. Brennan will explain the importance of a particular bone malformation to one of her colleagues (as explained before, some of them are explicitly positioned as her students within the narrative, perhaps as a way of folding this pedagogical preoccupation into the plot), and consequently the audience, as a form of teaching. Lightman does much the same, often testing his colleagues (and thereby the audience) through quizzing them on particular tics of body language. This becomes a central tenet of the rationalist approach; the methods have to be able to be taught and in this context the audience is perpetually constructed as pupil.

Aesthetically these shows also have a lot in common. Spaces in both shows are split between warm, wooden offices furnished with lush upholstered sofas, surfaces littered with ornaments and stark, solid, metal laboratories. Booth's, Brennan's and Sweets' offices are somewhat homely; they display a sense of comfort and relaxation as well as work. This is the opposite of the lab space with its tools and machinery.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p138



Figure 11: Screenshots from *Bones*

This contrast is seen again in the difference between Lightman's office, the space he uses to speak to family and friends, and The Box, the space for investigating suspects.



Figure 12: Screenshots from *Lie to Me*

On both shows in order to move from the office space to the lab space you must possess a key, the science is available only to those who understand and appreciate it. Perhaps most interesting is the use of screens in these spaces. In both shows much of the scientific work is shown through a screen; *Bones* uses microscopes to show the tiny bone abrasions that change the trajectory of an investigation, as well as the computer screens upon which results of biological analysis are shown. Meanwhile, *Lie to Me* continually presents video footage for comparison as part of the scientific process. As Karen Lury has suggested, these sequences “embody, rather than simply illustrate, knowledge and information. By so doing, television is able to imbue these sequences with a

particular kind of authority.”¹⁸⁸ The ubiquity of screens and the implicit suggestion that the information presented therein is infallible, accurate and inscrutable is a particular facet of television’s representation of knowledge. These video images feed off the aesthetics of television news and present the idea of the video image as inherently factual and inscribe them with a feeling of ‘being there’ therefore insinuating accuracy. Data is equally above reproach, associated with the computer screen and notions of ‘raw’ untampered information. As Lury goes on to say, “These demonstrative images depend upon the audience’s willingness to award them both authority and a fantastic amount of information, so that they act convincingly as evidence rather than as illustration.”¹⁸⁹ Through the use of this kind of imagery, illustration becomes unequivocal basis for arrest and (unseen) conviction.

However, of all the screen spaces on show in the scientific texts the most frequently seen is Angela’s 3D imaging screen.

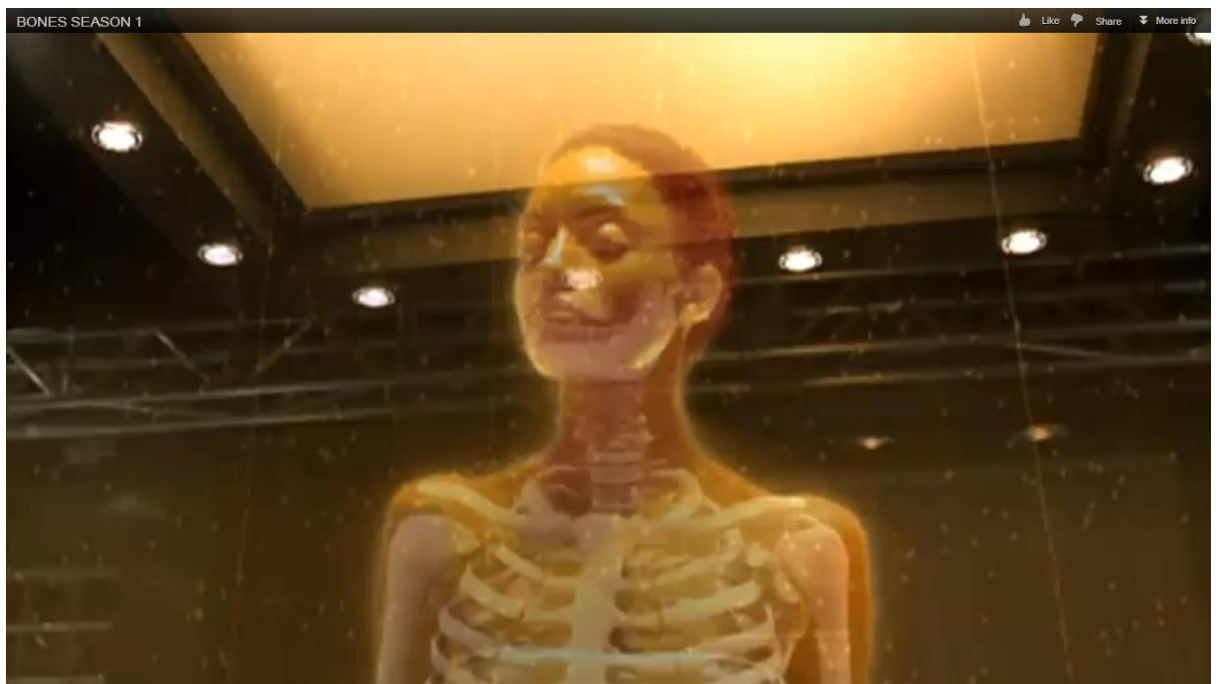


Figure 13: Screenshot from *Bones*

¹⁸⁸ Karen Lury, *Interpreting television* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005). P20

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p48

Though its use has changed over the past six seasons of *Bones*, its centrality to the process has not. At first Angela was able to use it to build 3D recreations of crimes as the investigators imagined them to have occurred. Using data derived from the body and the surrounding area she was able to recreate movements, angles and estimated forces necessary in order to inflict certain wounds. By creating 3D images the investigators were able to walk around the crime, witnessing it at one remove. Furthermore, the screen was also used as part of her work identifying corpses. Through taking skull measurements she was able to create 3D images of the victim's face, humanising the corpse in the process. Here we see one of the ways in which Angela's 'feminine' attributes come to the fore as her methods, linked at times explicitly to art, emphasise an understanding of the corpse as illustrative of a person rather than a puzzle. Angela's approach in wanting to understand the victim as an individual locates her personal investigative method nearer the intuitive end of the spectrum. However, as *Bones* is a rationalist show, her work is always referred to by other scientists in terms of data; only Angela is allowed to talk about the instinctual 'art' of her work. In more recent seasons there is less recreating of crime scenes and the screen is used more for showing the results of research into the victim and video of the victim when they were alive. The screen exists in a space that resembles a compromise between the warm office and clinical lab, much like Angela who herself is caught somewhere between the two worlds. She is both artist and technophile using the cross over between the two as an entry point for scientific work, thus allowing her to be part of the team while still utilising a different method. The screen becomes the way *Bones* represents the victim as human; an essential part of a show which focuses on the most un-human seeming of corpses.. In the clinical world of the rationalist investigation that *Bones* is premised upon, Angela and her screen represent a move toward the intuitive. Through Angela the show creates a purpose for the empirical; facts become essential because they relate to something greater, to the essence of what it is to be human. A truly empiricist show would flounder without the presence of an intuitive investigator to balance it out; there is something dehumanising about reason, something dispassionate. The use of characters

like Booth, Angela and, to some extent, *Lie to Me*'s Torres go some way in alleviating the discomfort of this. Facts are by their very nature not emotional, not swayed by feeling and as a consequence can be hard to feel invested in as an audience. By featuring opposing voices, characters who do not operate at a purely empirical level, the audience is afforded the possibility of moments of empathetic identification with the victim and the case at hand.

Further parallels between *Lie to Me* and *Bones* can be drawn by examining the role in the show performed by Torres. As Lightman's new protégé at the beginning of the series she straddles the line between scientific and intuitive knowledge as Lightman teaches her his techniques and how to properly work within scientific boundaries. She first comes to Lightman's attention because she has natural ability; he spots her while she is working in airport security and very quickly she picks up many of the talents that Lightman attributes to scientific process. However, this initial portrayal of Torres as a gifted natural is complicated when she alludes to reading Lightman's academic work¹⁹⁰. This positions Torres not as an intuitive investigator who possesses an innate ability to read people's faces but instead a self-taught scientist who's natural gift made up for her lack of education. *Lie to Me*, like other shows, is built, and marketed, around a primary investigative method but secondary ones still play an important role. Torres, plays into the importance of having a complimentary sense of the intuitive to work with the overtly empiricist method. However, in this instance, perhaps because of the tentative grasp the show has on scientific method, Torres is also used to bolster the scientific claims of the primary method by pretending to call it into question. While her initial position suggests the science is made up, her subsequent shift in fact does the opposite; she reaffirms the veracity of the science by admitting her use of it. This is very different from *Bones*' characters Booth and Angela who continually demonstrate somewhat non-scientific methods (although Angela's work has become increasingly couched in scientific terms as the show has progressed). Any real non-empirical work in *Lie to Me* is done by FBI agent Reynolds, a character who performs much the same role as Booth.

¹⁹⁰*Lie to Me* 1.3 "A Perfect Score"

The aesthetics of the world outside of the investigative building is also worthy of further exploration. In *Lie to Me* very little is seen of the outside world away from video recordings and interviews. As Lightman's 'crime scene', or at least his equivalent of the crime scene, is the perpetrator's face, there is little need to engage with the outside world. Lightman's view is a microscopic one in which the tiniest of movements reflects the most important facts. The only way in which the outside world matters is to see how people react in it and so for him it is more important that a scene can be viewed again in close detail than in context. The real world does not allow for the intensity/type of scrutiny he requires. Brennan has similar issues in that the real world presents a place in which 'proper' science cannot be done. Within minutes of attending a crime scene she has instructed Booth to have it moved to her lab; this has included the transportation of giant chocolate bars¹⁹¹, whole trees including their root system¹⁹² and the large blocks of ice¹⁹³. For Brennan the real world must be contained and preserved in order to be studied. As Lightman removes himself from the world via video Brennan closes it off and deals with it in finite, controllable segments. Her world is just as minute as Lightman's, where he looks for the quickest blink she looks for the smallest dent, but both are in search of barely noticeable anomalies that speak of much larger issues. For both of them their empirical and rationalist outlook makes the real world too huge to be understood and measured in its raw form-but this is a successful approach-the world can be broken down into its constituent parts, made sense of, and put back together. The rationalist approach is built on abstract, finite data rather than contextualised nuanced human interaction; it is by very definition not the formless conception of intuition. The scientific shows understand place through space¹⁹⁴, they create the scientific model of knowledge space and then enact that which they have learnt in the constructed place of the real. Space is where knowledge is gained, a form of scientific imaginary where the world is made up of interconnecting facts, it is the arena in which the empirical consultant has control of

¹⁹¹*Bones* 6.7 "The Babe in the Bar"

¹⁹²*Bones* 6.9 "The Doctor in the Photo"

¹⁹³*Bones* 4.13 "The Fire in the Ice"

¹⁹⁴ These notions of place and space are the work of Karen Lury, *Interpreting television*.

knowledge. However, the case cannot stay abstract and disconnected from the world in which it occurred. This need to eventually put the crime back into context is another reason why these scientists work with colleagues who use different methods. Therefore, it is the work of the more intuitive (though still science leaning) investigator to give motive to the facts of the crime laid out by the scientist. Once the facts have been suitably reconstructed, and the 'humanity' of the case, for want of a better term, has been returned then the notion of crime and victims returns to the world of place, where arrests are made and interrogations performed. While Brennan or Lightman uncover exactly what happened, it is the work of the rest of the team to discover why. Although this rarely matters to the investigator, it matters for the case and possibly for the viewers. Why the crime took place adds emotional resonance to the bare scientific facts laid out by the consultant investigator.

While aesthetically these two shows are similar, their tones differ slightly. *Lie to Me* consistently undermines its serious approach to the science of reading emotions with the snide and sarcastic comments of Lightman. His brash, unyielding approach to interacting with other people creates an oddly humorous tone for the show which at times undercuts the show's attempt to make the science seem realistic. An interrogation, rather than being probing, becomes an opportunity for Lightman to exhibit his knowledge and berate the suspect. When interacting with superiors in law enforcement he often ignores them, their lack of scientific knowhow rendering them not worthy of his time. Lightman's sarcasm extends to the point of almost parody as cockney plain speak undermines the empirical processes he is attempting to explain; in episode 3.5 "Canary's Song" he tells a character, "I am going to find out what happened down in that mine that makes you so ashamed. I am kind of a pain in the ass that way." Lightman creates levity for the show as he allows a space in which the audience can reflect on the preposterous nature of the method on display.

Brennan has the opposite effect in *Bones*, she maintains a serious, rationalist demeanour while the crimes around her escalate into the ridiculous. The lightness in *Bones* often comes from the crime itself, a dead Santa Claus¹⁹⁵ or as mentioned before a body encased in a giant bar of chocolate. There is a constant interplay between the comedic and the grotesque in the crime scenes of *Bones*. While the world around her maintains a sense of whimsy, and the rest of her colleagues freely revel in its oddity, Brennan takes each case as if they are of equal importance and often fails to notice the absurdity. This then becomes another source of humour, as Brennan's failure to understand the world leads to humorous conversations in which she attempts to understand what she believes to be irrational. Brennan constructs her world around the measurable and when confronted with something she cannot measure, including her own emotions, it confounds her and creates moments of humour. As the show has progressed Brennan's understanding of the world, and her ability to adapt to it, has strengthened but her inability to understand human interaction outside of anthropological constructs still provides much of the humour in the show.

Both shows present rationality as underpinning investigative practice; they take a piecemeal approach to the world that allows them to break it up into transferable fragments that can then be brought into their meticulous, privileged, sharp, shiny worlds and tested again and again until truth is found. Consequently, neither investigator is capable of successful human interaction as it exists outside of the space in which they can examine the minutiae at their own pace. Moreover, they split the world into truth and lies, fact or fiction and for the most part in each of their respective professional contexts they are the only person who sees the world as such a strict binary. There are few shades of grey for either of these investigators, the nuances instead coming from mediating figures such as Angela and Torres.

¹⁹⁵*Bones* 3.9 "The Santa in the Slush"

This dichotomy between the absolute of scientific truth and the need for 'humanising' intermediary characters is a microcosm of the way this genre, and many others, works as a whole. While the search for truth remains a steadfast certainty, a central pillar around which the rest of the show can be built, the work of the investigative team represents the shifting cluster of conventions around it. For these shows the emphasis is placed on the figure of the scientist and their method, with extra-textual advertising material all focusing on the cases rather than the interpersonal stories which form the season long narratives prevalent in most contemporary television¹⁹⁶. However, at different points in the continuum, this emphasis can be shifted, other elements can be foregrounded without losing sight of the central pillar. When intuition becomes important, as explored later in the chapter, the search for truth still remains central. Furthermore, though I have posited that both rational and intuitive approaches are present in every text, the extent to which they are emphasised changes. These elements can be articulated in a multitude of ways in order to create a sense of difference within the genre without actually making drastic changes. At this end of the continuum science is paramount, however, the need for the intermediary characters illustrates the way in which the clusters that form the boundaries of genre work in a discursive manner. There is a constant dialogue between the rational and the irrational that feeds into the shifting emphasis of how a genre is articulated. Less of one and more of another reconfigures how all the elements of text are activated but all the essential elements are still present. This exploration of the specifics of the scientific method in the crime genre has helped identify these essential conventions, conventions which will continue to be found throughout the genre.

¹⁹⁶This in long-form narratives is usefully explored in Jason Mittell, "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television," *The Velvet Light Trap* 58(2006).

Experiential Knowledge and Reason Masked as Intuition

For the investigators who use experiential knowledge as their primary mode, namely the pseudo psychics, there is little but shades of grey. They exist in a world that is built on the rational but played as if irrational, using an investigative approach that could be described as rational intuition. Both Shawn of *Psych* and Jane of *The Mentalist* use a mixture of talent and taught skill to discover the truth behind human behaviour; they investigate through a process of close observation of both human behaviour and physical evidence. Given a crime scene they will perform speedy analysis of both the suspects and their contexts, drawing on their knowledge of the world to come to the most likely (and in both cases always correct) course of events. In Episode 2.15 of *The Mentalist* "Red Herring" a chef at a competition dies, upon arriving at the crime scene Jane tastes the chef's entry and works out the victim was poisoned rather than dying from the head wound the ME originally diagnosed; all because the food had too much salt.

Like Lightman, these investigators read people. However, because they do not claim a measurable and scientific basis to their deductions, as Lightman does, they must feign psychic ability in order to be believed. Shawn continually does this throughout *Psych*, the premise of the show being that they only let him investigate because they believe he truly is psychic. On the other hand, Jane's past career as a faux psychic means he only truly feigns psychic ability when there is a need to fool suspects; their belief in his ability makes them feel as if they have to tell him the truth. This suggests a strong dependency on the idea of the rational/intuitive binary within the institutions of the consultant procedural. There is a reliance on absolutes, so either truth is found through tests or truth is told to you, it cannot be simply understood through an incisive knowledge of people, at least in institutional terms. The purpose of the consultant in these shows is to provide these absolutes, and educated guesswork does not fit into this system. The pseudo-psychic shows present characters who are portrayed as talented readers of people, to the audience, and some other characters, but, for the institution of policing to work, must be passed off as having

supernatural powers. A consultant who does not have access to abstract and absolute facts is problematic.

Intuitive reasoning and using experiential knowledge is the job of the police—a highbrow way of explaining the hunch; consequently a consultant who utilises the same techniques disrupts the purpose of the consultant. Both Shawn and Jane could be police officers but choose not to be¹⁹⁷, this dismissal of the policing profession undermines the authoritative position of the police. This is perhaps one of the reasons *Psych* and *The Mentalist* are the most comedic in tone of the six shows investigated in this thesis. By making light of the problem these investigators' methods create for the hierarchy of authority, the problem is somewhat muted. Jane and Shawn are performing, quite literally, their roles as intuitive investigators in the public arena so that their private investigative practice can be kept hidden and not disrupt the system of policing. They play at psychic so that the public are not aware that they are performing exactly the same tasks as the police, simply better. The crime drama is an extremely conservative genre and as such continually attempts to maintain the image of competent and capable police force, therefore, the job of the consultant cannot be to illustrate the institution's shortcomings. The very presence of the consultant is meant to illustrate that the institution is capable of adapting in order to maintain authority. The crime drama in this period is constantly attempting to reassure the audience that the systems in place for the investigation of crime are infallible. Consequently, the pseudo-psychics continually lean toward to semi-scientific explanation for their skills; though objectively their investigative practice is no different from that of the police it is positioned as not only superior but more complex. For example, once again in *The Mentalist* 2.15, Jane realises that a suspect was having an affair with the victim by analysing the way she worked in the kitchen with her cooking partner; by understanding their relationship he extrapolated her relationship with the deceased. He confronts her at work and she is embarrassed into confessing the affair. At the same time Agent Rigsby has found out the same information, although he has had to do it through

¹⁹⁷ Or in the case of Shawn he is forced to continue to pretend to be psychic in order to avoid prosecution.

looking at bank records. Ultimately they are practicing similar methods but Jane's must be passed off as 'magic' so as not to undermine Rigsby's. While characters such as Booth, Angela and Torres create spaces for intuition and experiential knowledge in the shows in which they appear, the pseudo-psychic continually walks the line between the two through the binary of public performance and private practice.

Tonally *Psych* is the most comedic of the shows¹⁹⁸; much of its action is played for laughs. This extends to the ancillary texts around the show which feed off the unlikely and sometimes fractious relationship between the two protagonists. As discussed in the previous chapter, promos for the show differ greatly from other crime shows highlighting the comic relationship between Shawn and Gus; aesthetically the show is equally playful. Its lighting is bright, moving away from the shadows of crime series found in the early 21st Century. Additionally the frame in *Psych* is filled with primary colours, very different from the muted palette of *Bones* or *Lie to Me*, Shawn wears casual clothing that emphasises his difference from the dour suited police officers. Unlike the scientific shows Shawn does not see the world through screens which help distance him from it; instead he is very physically part of the world, as evidenced by the often slapstick nature of the show. When Shawn sees clues to a case the camera follows his eyes and a post-production technique of making the object Shawn has noticed 'shine' helps the viewer follow his train of thought.

¹⁹⁸ Though not always suitable resources it is worth noting that Wikipedia includes the show in its list of "American Comedy-Drama Television Series" and IMDB's first category listing for the show is "Comedy".

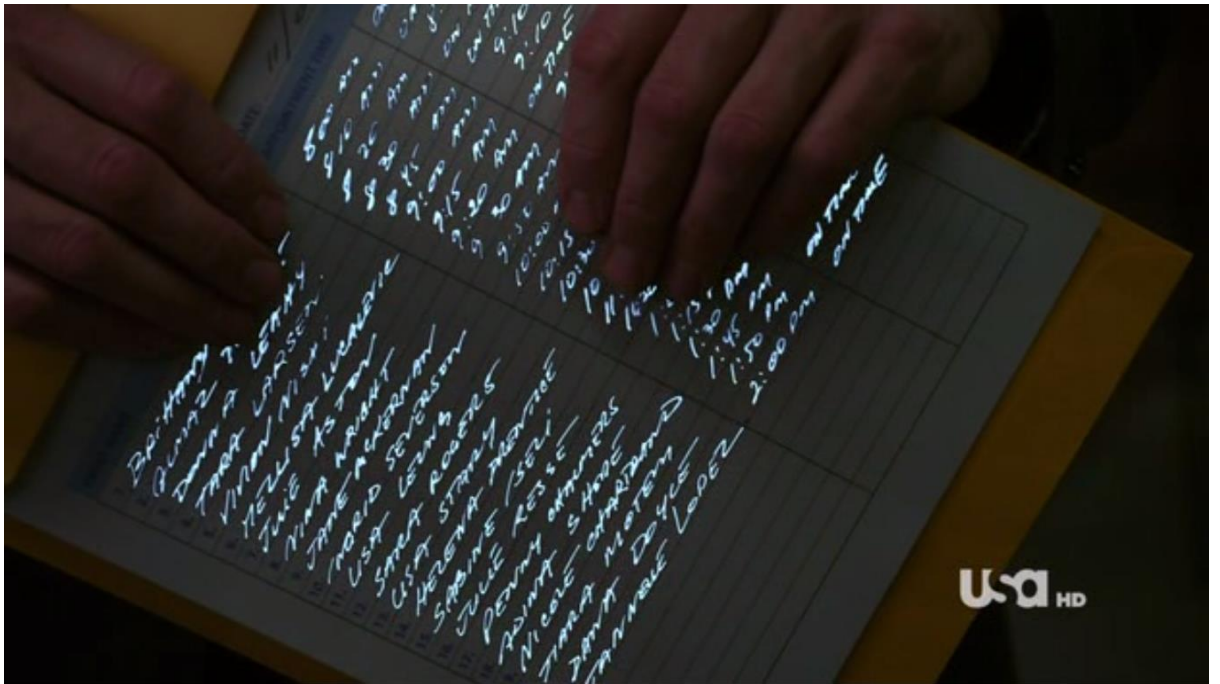


Figure 14: Screenshot from *Psych*

Where the scientist will talk through the logic and results of tests performed, Shawn must maintain the pretence of psychic ability by claiming the spirits are talking to him rather than admit he is making an educated guess. The irrational or intuitive is presented as both comically implausible but also, through the aesthetics of the show, somehow scientific. This is more than a hunch, what Shawn finds is truth, and how his method is depicted visually points to this. By allowing the Shawn's method to be non-diegetically verified in a way that the police are not allowed, his almost identical method is elevated above theirs. Musical cues also play an important role, a way of alerting the audience to the change in tone. While the show may be comedic, the moment Shawn finds a clue is played as serious, a moment in which he is actually performing his job. As irrational as his behaviour is, ultimately it is the idea of the psychic that is being played for laughs, and Shawn's ability to see truth is consistently shored up by the show's aesthetic. The truly intuitive is derided in both these shows as a fanciful impossibility. Instead, what these shows provide is semi-trained science, a natural gift for uncovering evidence and piecing it together; the pseudo-psychics are also pseudo-scientists. In straddling the line between intuition and reason

they fall on the side of reason. This is never more evident than in the scenes where these men encounter others also claiming to be psychics. For example episode 1.7 “Seeing Red” of *The Mentalist* where Jane has a continual battle of wits with psychic Kristina Frye, going out of his way to try and disprove her by explaining the rational methods she could be using.

In addition to the aesthetic of detection the setting of the show further establishes its light tone. *Psych* takes place in a sunny and generally peaceful seeming Santa Barbara, a place of beaches and fairgrounds despite the premise of murder; the police station is warm and inviting, a palette of wood browns and yellows and outside shots often take place in lush green woods or homely residential streets. Shawn and Gus’s place of work is untidy but inviting, with a window that looks out onto the beach. Rarely are there night shots or dark alleys where terrible things happen; murder is a disruption to the light brightness of the show but never truly derails it. Ostensibly *The Mentalist* takes place in the same part of the world, set in and around California, however aesthetically these two worlds differ greatly. *The Mentalist* sits closer to the scientific shows in its aesthetic, opening in much the same way as *Bones*, with the discovery of a body. Here there is still lightness but the dark is also allowed space. There are times when Jane has confronted a suspect in deserted house or a darkened stable in the middle of nowhere¹⁹⁹. This is due to the darker nature of the show’s back story. Jane is man bent on revenge for the murder of his family and while the show has begun to move away from depicting Jane as a desperate vigilante biding his time, that aspect still lurks in the show’s darker moments. In a few episodes of the first season Jane’s home is shown, the same one he shared with his family, now bare apart from a mattress on the floor of his old bedroom with the calling card of his family’s murderer still drawn in blood on the wall. His attire is also not the laid back wardrobe of Shawn; he wears a three piece suit in grey, minus the tie, for the entirety of the show, always aware of the importance of presentation. The anachronistic aloofness of his dress, formal but informal, mirrors his approach to the world as a whole, if Lightman and Brennan are removed from the world through observation and Shawn is

¹⁹⁹ 3.5 “The Red Ponies”

ensconced in it, Jane plays with it; he watches the world and manipulates it from outside. Part Lightman, part Shawn, he cannot simply observe, he has to practise and, as his subjects are living people, his experiments only work when performed in the real world rather than in a controlled environment. As the pseudo-psychics straddle the line of the rational/irrational, they also exist part way between home and work. The scientific shows present a binary of office and lab whereas the pseudo-psychic shows present the world of the home-office. Both Shawn and Jane have offices that double as home spaces, often places where they sleep. While Jane's is a sofa at the CBI and Shawn's is a beach front office, both have a relaxed atmosphere, a communal space where people socialise.



Figure 15: Screenshots from *Psych*

Once again these particular shows present a middle ground, a space that is neither one nor the other.

Shawn and Jane are presented as trained readers of behaviour, educated via experience. Both men were taught by their fathers in the hopes of carrying on the family trade, for Shawn this was policing and for Jane confidence scams. These relationships are not only alluded to but explicitly repeated. There is a sense here of masculine authority, of control borne of uncontested social privilege. Though their methods should seem ludicrous to the policing institutions they are instead lauded, their 'powers' praised. In chapter Four I will examine more closely the role of

fathers and the masculine identity both these men strive for, however, at this stage it is important to differentiate further differences between the methods I have begun to discuss above and how this fits into the continuum.

Like Brennan and Lightman both men have spent much of their lives honing their skills, turning a talent into a craft; yet this does not undermine the fact that there is still a difference between learnt scientific knowledge and practiced experiential knowledge. Experiential knowledge is about applying an understanding of human interaction to abstract facts, for example in looking at the photos on a victim's shelf Jane works out that the victim was orphaned at a young age and extrapolates this further to determine that he was murdered rather than committed suicide.²⁰⁰ Rather than all out empiricism, the pseudo-psychics apply proven knowledge to comparable situations. However, though Shawn and Jane use similar methods the shows present these skills in a very different manner.

Both *Psych* and *The Mentalist* have featured flashbacks of the main male characters as boys being taught how to read people; in fact, the narrative of each episode of *Psych* is built around these flashbacks. Shawn understands the world and how to piece together human behaviour by connecting it to truths he already knows. In this way he and Jane employ very similar methods, their learning was experiential and so their detection techniques must follow the same method. If reason is about compartmentalising and breaking down the world into its constituent, examinable parts and intuition is a formless acceptance of the world, Shawn and Jane perform one while alluding to the other; they couch reason in the language of intuition. Consequently their experiments verge on the theatrical; set pieces created to elicit reactions and prove hypotheses and it is through their understanding of the world that they can extrapolate truth to an exact degree.

²⁰⁰ 3.10 "Jolly Red Elf"

Here is where the tone of *the Mentalist* somewhat lightens. Jane creates elaborate mental traps for the suspects, often playing on their belief that he truly is a psychic and as a result leading to comical moments in which the audience is often made aware that Jane is setting a trap. The show plays an interesting game with its audience here; they have been told that Jane has the ability to see what others do not and that he needs to trap suspects into incriminating themselves, however, generally they are uninformed of exactly how Jane plans to do this. Scenes leading up to confession often leave the audience in the same position as the suspect, unsure of what is happening as the narrative has purposefully obfuscated the facts. This is in contrast to the way the scientific shows position the audience as pupils to be taught. Though both Jane and Shawn eventually explain how they came to their conclusion, it is assumed that the police (and by extension the audience) would never be able to make these logical leaps on their own. On other occasions Jane positions himself as a psychic in order to fool a suspect into confessing, something Shawn does in every episode. Here the audience is allowed in on Jane's ruse along with Lisbon and her team who, for the most part, are under no impression that Jane is anything other than incredibly observant. For the suspect, the fear of the irrational, the unexplainable, is enough to force confession. Much like the need for Shawn to pass himself off as psychic, the belief that Jane could read their mind seems more believable than the idea he could deduce what has happened by simply observing. There is no attempt in the narrative to suggest Jane is actually psychic (though there have been rare moments it has been considered a very slight possibility) rather there is a suggestion that his methods are so highly developed they simply could not be understood by 'normal' people. Instead, like the suspects, we must watch in awe as he dupes them into revealing themselves.

This approach lends itself to event centred narratives, episodes that culminate in the big reveal. While for the scientific shows the discovery of truth is a process with false starts and stages of success, the spectacle lying in the fetishising of scientific processes, the pseudo-psychics often wait until the end before all the pieces come together, with the audience sometimes as much in

the dark as the other characters. Consequently the central protagonist holds more power within the narrative, the story unfolding around their actions. This is not to suggest that the other shows do not place the development of the protagonist at the centre of their diegetic world; rather that for the pseudo-psychic being a compelling character is essential to how they work and so more narrative time is spent on the spectacle that is their method. This is echoed in the promotional texts for both shows, they focus on the battle of wills between the pseudo-psychic and the suspect, how will Jane better this criminal? How will Shawn keep up the pretence of his psychic powers? These shows revolve around the appeal of their investigator and the majority of promos mention them by name. This is not the case in the scientific shows in which the team as a whole is more likely to be referenced and the focus is on the victim and how complex the crime is. Promos for pseudo-psychic shows are not about the crime because the purpose of the crime is to showcase the brilliance of the investigator.

In many ways *The Mentalist* is the perfect bridging text between the ultra rational scientists and the intuitive/empathetic psychics; his persona as a consultant is based on the idea that he sees what others cannot. Though in the plot of the show these abilities are explained as a mixture of learnt behaviour and innate skill, it is played more like magic; Jane understands the world in a way no one else is able to. Shawn's insights are shown to the viewer, they are illuminated for all to see and his logic, like that of the scientist, is constantly explained. Though the audience may not be capable of the methods Shawn applies, through demonstrative visual and narrative tropes, they can understand how his mind works, much like the experiments Brennan performs. Jane does not work this way, often the audience is unaware of how he believes the crime was committed until the killer is revealed. He literally performs and the audience, as well as the police, are uninformed about how he achieved his conclusion until the finale; like a carefully planned magic trick. Jane has access to truth but only he can ever know how, until the very end when he must reveal all to the police in order to let them officiate an arrest. This is not dissimilar to the psychic investigators

who work with a small number of people privy to the truth behind their powers but none of them have the same access to truth.

Both pseudo-psychic shows depict investigators who have form and are in some way formless. Their methods are not that different to that of the scientific investigator, although couched in terms of experience rather than academic learning. However, their external expression of these methods is very much formless, more akin to the empathetic investigators; this mirrors the duality and complicity of reason and intuition referenced at the start of this chapter. Of all the figures in contemporary crime drama these men are the ones that use methods that most closely resemble the 'analytical' knowledge that Poe mapped out in his work. As Valverde states "the analytical mind combines strong logical powers with two other things; a quasi-intuitive sixth sense about human frailties and a computer-like vast storehouse of assorted, non-specialized information."²⁰¹ Shawn and Jane use an innate understanding of people, but through processes that are presented as having been taught to them. They know a vast deal but their real skill is in being able to knit these pockets of knowledge together. They walk the line of the binary between reason and intuition, utilising both. The pseudo-psychics are the only characters who in some way inhabit the complex relationship between reason and intuition in one character and the premise of performing creates a narrative spectacle that this balancing act can be hung upon.

²⁰¹Mariana Valverde, *Law and order : images, meanings, myths*, Critical issues in crime and society (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006). p79

Empathetic Knowledge

The psychic shows, *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer* present a very different approach to criminal investigation, one based on empathetic or intuitive knowledge. I use both these terms but not interchangeably; for the psychic investigator their investigative method is both intuitive *and* empathetic, with the two different approaches activated at different times. The intuitive knowledge is that which is gained through visions, the literal seeing of what has occurred. The empathetic knowledge comes from the occasions where the psychic feels what the victim has felt, gaining knowledge of the crime through their own experience of it. Despite there being two slightly divergent methods used by the psychic investigator, what holds them together is what they are not, and that is empirical; facts are still central to the case, but they are not gained through the methods detailed earlier in this chapter. There is no central system of hypothesis followed by tests, there is simply knowing. Nonetheless, there is still space in these shows for those other forms of knowledge. For example Allison works with the DA's office where institutional forms of both scientific and experiential knowledge are made available to her, Melinda works with different people throughout the series from academics to cops, all of them offering a counterpoint to her psychic abilities.

However, at the centre is still the psychic investigator, an investigator whose talents are not learned or replicable, they are innate and biological. For both women their 'gift' was passed down to them through the maternal line²⁰², this is decidedly different to the patriarchal teachings of the pseudo-psychics. A distinction is being made between the feminine, biological supernatural and the learned trade/skill of empirical investigators; neither Melinda nor Allison seeks out the truth, but rather the truth is thrust upon them, they discover truth because for them it is a biological imperative. For both women this takes the form of a mixture of waking and sleeping visions, visions which tend to be horrific simulacra of their real lives. Against their will these women will

²⁰² The importance of motherhood is something I will be dealing with in chapter Five.

either be transported to the scene of a crime or witness it taking place in front of them. Consequently, there is no sense of 'choice' in their decision to help solve crime; instead it is couched in terms of a moral and personal need to right a wrong they have witnessed. In essence these women are both investigator and, to a lesser extent, victim. Returning to the Jungian idea of intuition²⁰³, that is that intuition is the perception of an unconscious concept, the idea of consciousness becomes important here. Whether these women are asleep or awake, their witnessing of these crimes does not happen in the real world, often seeing something that has already happened, is about to happen or is occurring in another place; they are present without being present. While this is occurring they are not aware of the 'real' world around them due to the trance-like state their visions induce. Often these scenes conclude with the psychic suddenly returning to consciousness to find the person they were with trying to gain their attention. Mentally these women 'go somewhere' but not somewhere tangible, somewhere where solid, physical evidence can be collected. This existence in a non-conscious world is even more explicit during dream visions that tend to be so horrific that the women wake from them disorientated and afraid. These visions are purely unconscious acts and so take place completely within the irrational and the intuitive. With no physical proof of these occurrences, the psychic investigative method places emphasis on the need for faith, to believe in these investigators and to trust that they will bring light to the truth. There is no opportunity for empirical corroboration, furthermore, there is no agency behind these visions, no power to decide when they will or will not occur.

However, this shift in the genre from rational investigative methods to irrational is not that simple. While these women have no agency over when they will witness a crime, they do have a certain amount of power over the spirits that visit them, spirits offering experiential knowledge. As well as psychic visions these women are often visited by the spirits of victims and others involved in the case. These scenes are depicted in the same manner as other dialogue heavy scenes in the genre, shot-reverse shot, medium framed and often without post-production

²⁰³Jung, "Psychological Types."

techniques used to differentiate the living from the dead. These conscious conversations exist in both the mind and the real world; filmed as if 'real' despite, in terms of the diegesis, only happening to the psychic. The lines between different investigative methods become blurry as the psychic investigator physically speaks to these spirits as if they were tangible living people, she interrogates them. At this point the intuitive psychic method morphs into the experiential method of the pseudo-psychics and cops of the scientific shows. Talk becomes a central method of investigation that runs through all the shows, underpinning the genre and as with so many other conventions it is another site of cohesion, articulated to different degrees in different shows. No matter which investigative method the show is built around, characters will always default to interrogation, as it becomes the glue that holds the facts together. However, at the scientific end interrogation serves the purpose of corroborating that the facts were correct, at the psychic end interrogation allows insight into the spirit and makes sense of visions. It is the only tool outside of being a witness or victim-by-proxy that the psychic investigator has.

This presents an interesting duality in which the actual knowledge used to solve the case is often experiential, but can only be accessed through the psychics' ability to use empathetic knowledge. Again, the rational and the intuitive must both be present in order for the successful gaining of knowledge, though the psychics have witnessed the crime through intuitive vision they can only make sense of it through some kind of conversation. For example in many episodes they will witness a crime but not know the identity of the victim or the perpetrator, only the details of how the crime was committed. In *Medium* episode 1.7 "Jump Start" Allison dreams of a woman falling to her death. She goes to work the next morning and asks law enforcement to mount a search for her. They find the body and link her to her boyfriend, the son of a local defence attorney. Further dreams help Allison see more of the girl's suicide, however, only by talking to the boyfriend and his father does the story of a blackmail conspiracy come to light. While these conversations exist in the rational there is still an element of the non-empirical, the irrational to these rational acts. The scientific investigators remove themselves from the world so they may test it. The pseudo-

psychics immerse themselves in the world, utilising experience, so they may gauge people's reactions first hand, their tests are of human interaction. The psychics perform no tests at all; their process is a passive one. By witnessing crimes and finding truth through conversation there is no empirical proof, no evidence of these truths she discovers. Allison can feel that the suspects are not telling her the truth and her vision corroborate that, but during her investigation there is little hard evidence, instead there is an emphasis placed on trust; the institution must, against all rational thought, simply believe what the psychic has to say. While I have argued that this is an easier proposition for the institution than believing in a gifted detective, it still falls into the realms of irrationality. It is about feeling and talking and believing what you have heard, it is a soft, unverifiable approach. Therefore, it is not surprising that this method tends to be found in shows with female protagonists; their only tool is conversation and talking as a form of resolution has long been gendered as feminine²⁰⁴. Rather than taking physical action and attempting swift resolution these women talk through the issues that need to be solved, in some ways making the process of investigation a collaborative and therapeutic endeavour. In contrast to *Psych* or *The Mentalist*, these shows are not centrally about the spectacle, about the narcissistic, ego boost of tricking a suspect into revealing the truth; instead they foreground processes of connecting with another person, being willing to hear them and then equally willing to work on their behalf. The psychic shows are more victim-centric than any of the others; because while the others may focus on aspects of the victim, even going as far as to recreate them, the psychic shows are the only ones to give them life, character, needs and desires.

Aesthetically these shows feed into and draw on a history of female focused gothic and horror imagery, from homes rendered dark by shadows to terrified female protagonists in white flowing nightgowns. The shows suggest it is the very essence of these psychics' biology that has led them to this calling and it is this which also colours the tone of the shows. These shows revolve around

²⁰⁴ This is often discussed in work on soap operas, for example the seminal work of Tania Modleski, *Loving with a vengeance : mass-produced fantasies for women* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982).

the fears these women have for their families but also for the victims who reach out to them. Both shows oscillate between the darkness of murder and lightness of the family home, the juxtaposition of the two helping to assert the melodrama at their heart. As Brooks suggests melodramas “consistently offer a stylish refusal of the dailiness of the everyday”²⁰⁵, in the psychic shows the everyday of the domestic kitchen is disrupted through the stylised presence of spirits, not only literally refusing the everyday but refusing the everyday notion of family and marriage as stable institutions. While the empiricist crime shows offer an insight into the world of crime solving, these shows offer an insight into family life, eschewing the perception of its humdrum dailiness in favour heightened emotion via melodrama. The family home is a place of warmth and love and scenes in both homes tend to be split between kitchens and bedrooms, places of safety and reassurance. However, these family spaces are also the ones that are repeatedly violated by the presence of spirits; from those that wake the women from peaceful sleep to those that literally invade the home²⁰⁶. While most spirits appear within the home but only cause psychic/emotional pain to the protagonist, some manifest physically within the family space and literally break it apart.²⁰⁷ At these times the home becomes a frightening space, colours darken, sounds begin to echo and the familiar becomes entirely unfamiliar, uncanny. Because their method is linked inextricably to their very being, then the solving of crime infiltrates every part of the psychic investigator’s lives. In Chapter Five I will discuss how the female gothic and ideas of family and motherhood feed into these shows; however, to understand the significance of the intuitive some of these ideas must be addressed here.

While I have suggested that the tone of the psychic shows is one which shifts back and forth from the light to the dark, there is an overwhelming sense of the melodramatic throughout the shows as a whole, one that fits perfectly with an assertion Brooks makes, “Within an apparent context of

²⁰⁵ Brooks, *The melodramatic imagination : Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess*. P. IX

²⁰⁶ The invasion of the family home by spirits has long been a trope within the gothic and horror tradition, for an overview see Dale Bailey, *American nightmares : the haunted house formula in American popular fiction* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999).

²⁰⁷ For example episode 1.13 of *Ghost Whisperer* “Friendly Neighborhood Ghost”

"realism" and the ordinary, [melodramas] seemed in fact to be staging a heightened and hyperbolic drama, making reference to pure and polar concepts of darkness and light, salvation and damnation."²⁰⁸ This is similar to the suggestion made by Rodowick that "the melodramatic text is balanced on the edge of two extremes, one of which is inertial (the paralysis of the system, its resistance to change or any form of external development) and the other of which is entropic (where action is expressed only as an irrational and undirected surplus energy)"²⁰⁹. Both psychic shows foreground the everyday, the familial, the institution, yet in each episode this is torn apart by a spirit only to be dutifully restored by the sacrifice of a mother. While the non-psychic shows are in the main about the disruption of other characters' lives, the psychic shows are about the disruption of the protagonist's life, her continual battle between inertia and entropy. This is perhaps because the investigation takes place within the investigator's own homes; their lives and the lives of their families are often put at risk by the spirits that visit them. Unlike the four investigators examined above, there is no distance between these women and the crimes they investigate, they must witness them and, on occasion, live through them. They feel the pain of these violations, the fear of the victims; it may all be vicarious but it is still part of their lives. With this lack of distance, rationality is impossible. They cannot test and experiment they can only experience and through personal experience speak truth. There is a distinct lack of objectivity; crime in the psychic shows becomes subjective. Crimes are solved in these shows because they have, to some extent, happened to the investigator. This shift in focus is what expands the melodrama that is present in all crime dramas. After all, the disruption of the everyday is a central facet of the crime drama, however, it is only in the psychic shows, those shows which make that the core of the narrative, that melodrama becomes an essential element; the rest of this corpus of shows offer very little quite as substantially melodramatic as this. Melodramatic moments are inescapable in all six shows, it is something unavoidable in a genre that deals predominantly in

²⁰⁸ Brooks, *The melodramatic imagination: Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess*. P. XIII

²⁰⁹ David N. Rodowic, "Madness, Authority and Ideology: The Domestic Melodrama of the 1950s," in *Home is where the heart is: studies in melodrama and the woman's film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987). P273

murder, however, the two psychic shows are the ones that lean most heavily toward the melodramatic and in doing so maintain the idea that melodrama stands solely within the purview of the feminine.

While I will say more on this in the next two chapters, it is interesting that this shift from objective to subjective, a move toward the melodramatic, also pivots around a shift in the gendering of the investigative process; the intuitive, formless, feminine method is also the subjective one. Intuition then becomes inextricably linked with victimhood; the only way to gain knowledge without the distancing of empiricism is to have somehow experienced the crime oneself.

The place of the institution also shifts in these shows. While Allison in *Medium* works for the District Attorney's office, Melinda has no such affiliations; her institution, for the most part, is her family and friends. Much like Brennan and Booth or Jane and Lisbon, Melinda often enlists her husband to help solve her cases, and like the other pairings he presents the rational/scientific to her intuitive/empathetic. Jim, or Sam as he becomes in later seasons is a paramedic/doctor, a man of science, his role to bring rationalist thought to Melinda's intuitive realisations. Once again there is this duality of approaches, although as is the case before, one approach (in this case psychic powers) is more heavily weighted than the other. Though Allison has official ties to the institution of justice she too enlists the help of her husband, another man of science, an engineer. As the crimes on these shows ostensibly happen in the home it is no real surprise that the family becomes the institution with the power and desire to solve the case and return itself to equilibrium. Rather than work relationships, it is family relationships which foster the co-dependency of reason and intuition, and so the home becomes both the site of criminal violation and the place where the two sides of successful investigative practice can come together. The presence of both husbands in these shows only strengthens this notion that the crime drama is constructed around a combination of the intuitive and the rational, neither working without the assistance of the other. It is interesting to note that just as the rationalist shows were working to

insist that the institution of policing was still effective, here the institution of marriage is given the same treatment and the conservative bent of the genre remains intact. Later chapters will cover the centrality of the family in these shows in more detail, however, it is useful to note that while the institution changes, the way in which it functions as a balancing force remains much the same across all six shows. Different shows emphasise different elements, but when looking at the genre as a whole it becomes evident these are simply different ways of configuring the same investigative method that runs throughout. Intuition and reason work together creating a method that is based on facts and their societal human contexts; no matter which is the central investigative practise the other is needed to create a full understanding of both the crime and how it happened. Intuition and reason become different aspects of articulating the same basic premise, a search for truth. While these different articulations affect many facets of each show, they do not change the fundamental themes that make these shows crime dramas.

Opening Titles and the Relevance of Tone

Throughout this chapter I have mentioned changes in tone across the continuum. I have argued that different investigative methods are linked with different tones and that the changes are another way of understanding the shifting articulations that form the genre. Thomas S. Kane has written on the way tone can be made evident in writing:

“Writers may be angry about a subject or amused by it or discuss it dispassionately. They may treat readers as intellectual inferiors to be lectured (usually a poor tactic) or as friends with whom they are talking. Themselves they may regard very seriously or with an ironic or an amused detachment (to suggest only three of numerous possibilities). Given all these variables, the possibilities of tone are almost endless.”²¹⁰

Tone suggests the way the material is presented, the feeling it supposedly gives the audience. As such, the same basic premise of discovering the identity of a murderer can be greatly changed by the subsequent shifts in tone implicit in changes in investigative method. Though all these shows present a close to identical narrative purpose, all of the differences in how it is articulated make for vastly different feeling shows. Perhaps the best example through which to explore these tonal shifts is to examine the title sequences of the six shows as these are elements of the text that feature very condensed depictions of the investigative method. Their purpose is to provide the audience with a sense of what is to come and so they present in a concise form both how the shows contend with issues of reason and intuition but also illustrate how tone becomes a part of the shifting emphasis that builds the genre continuum.

Lisa Coulthard writing about current trends in title sequence design claims that opening sequences have a “powerful emotive and tonal paratextuality”²¹¹. Calling on the work of Gerard

²¹⁰Thomas S. Kane, *The new Oxford guide to writing* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

²¹¹Lisa Coulthard, "Familiarity Breeds Desire: Seriality and the Televisual Title Sequence ". <
<http://flowtv.org/2010/07/familiarity-breeds-desire/>>

Genette and his concept of the paratext²¹², Coulthard argues for the title sequence to be considered as an important part of the experience of the text, one in which tone is set and expectation created. These sequences do not necessarily explain the plot or themes of their shows, at times they are purposefully ambiguous, but they do express aesthetic elements which carry through into the shows themselves. Title sequences mirror the approach taken in the main text; they act as tasters. While the scientific shows are more likely to present sequences depicting scientific method, the psychic shows tend more toward enigma in their opening credits.

Bones' title sequence is a montage of footage taken from across the shows' run. It depicts each of the main characters performing tasks typical of their role in the show. For *Bones* the investigative method is at the heart of the show rather than the lives of the characters.



²¹²Gerard Genette, *Paratexts : thresholds of interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).



Figure 16: Screenshots from *Bones* Title Sequence

Brennan is shown examining bones and working in the field, Booth breaks through a door wielding a gun. The sequence is exact and precise, illustrating *Bones* as a show about crime and skeletal remains, it differentiates between the serious scientific characters (Brennan, Hodgins, Saroyan) and the humanising characters (Booth, Angela, Sweets). Yet despite the difference in setting it still keeps them together, bonded by the over-arching green hue that permeates the sequence. The music is electronic and measured²¹³, echoing the sensibility of a show which focuses on the absolutes of science. In many ways the opening titles chronicle the solving of a case, depicting each member of the team performing their duties and ending with Booth and Brennan filing evidence in a bank of filing cabinets and walking away, case closed. The tone set out here us a serious one and one defined by rationalist scientific endeavour.



Figure 17: Screenshot from *Bones* Title Sequence

²¹³ The song is an original composition by the band The Crystal Method

Where *Bones* maps out the course of its investigation in the title sequence, *Lie to Me* is much sparser in its illustration of the show, only depicting the scientific method at its heart. The sequence begins with Lightman peering out into the audience, reading them.



Figure 18: Screenshot from *Lie to Me* Title Sequence

This is followed by images illustrating the way he reads people, as if the audience is now privy to his insight. This also works toward cementing the 'science' of his method.



Figure 19: Screenshots from *Lie to Me* Title Sequence

The only nod to the presence of criminal investigation in the show comes in this one shot towards the end of the sequence of a man in handcuffs.

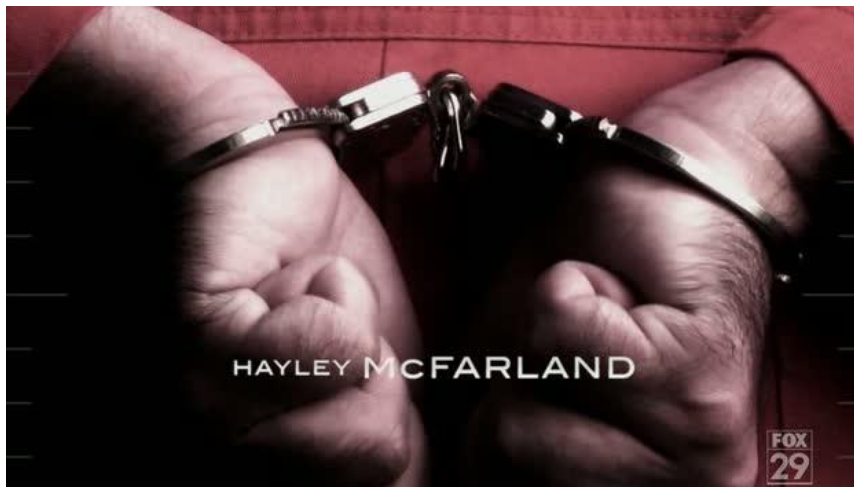


Figure 20: Screenshot from *Lie to Me* Title Sequence

The sequence uses a song rather than instrumental music²¹⁴, the song featuring lyrics about breaking free, perhaps referencing the suspects' inability to break away from the physical tics which betray their lies to Lightman. Like *Bones* the tone of the sequence is serious but unlike *Bones* it tells the audience very little about the show. The inference of diagrams suggests scientific processes and the reading of emotion via physical signs but tells you nothing of the necessity of this science. *Lie to Me's* titles seem desperate to inform the audience that verifiable, data-driven science is at work in the show; it makes much more of the 'science' than the show itself does. Consequently, the sequence goes a long way in setting up the pedagogical and scientific tone that is then reproduced in advertising material if not always in the main text.

When *The Mentalist* debuted it had no titles sequence at all. Instead, a single title card was shown with the definition of the word mentalist written in white on black. In the second season this was replaced with a ten second animated sequence; lines of yellow and blue move across the screen,

²¹⁴ Brand New Day by Ryan Star

for a moment the image of Patrick Jane's eye is shown and then he appears in a medium close-up, followed by his silhouette next the title.

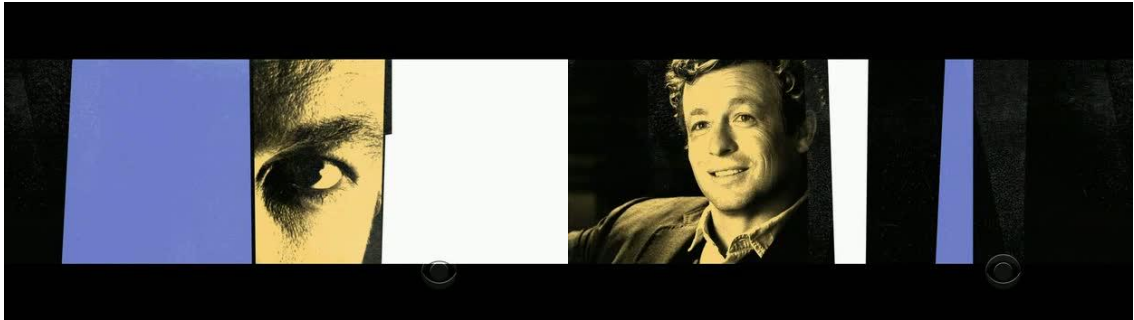


Figure 21: Screenshots from *The Mentalist* Title Sequence

These titles are stylish, and even more ambiguous than those of *Lie to Me*, they present the aesthetic of the show, the element of showmanship that surrounds Patrick Jane. The titles illustrate little of the plot or the narrative, like Jane himself they are sparse but carefully designed. They represent a character who is all about the look, whether that refers to his sartorial choices or his method of detection. The titles give the audience a taste of the position they will be in throughout their watching of the show, that of the often uninformed observer.

Psych has a title sequence much like *Bones*, although played for laughs rather than setting a serious tone. Clips show Shawn and Gus in ridiculous outfits and running across the frame in pursuit of suspects. It plays more like a music video than a title sequence with the images fitting in time to the theme song²¹⁵, a song with the line: “I know, that you know, that I’m not telling the truth.”



Figure 22: Screenshots from *Psych* Title Sequence

Both the images and music set out the themes and the tone, depicting both characters and some of the investigative method. They show Shawn and Gus at work acting, displaying Shawn’s duplicitous method of faked psychic ability. The sequence is playful, like the rest of the texts surrounding the show. Shawn’s investigative practice is often a game, despite the serious nature of the crimes he solves and the sequence foregrounds the humour but does so without undermining the investigative narrative.

²¹⁵ “I know, You Know” by The Friendly Indians

Ghost Whisperer alludes to the method of its investigative practice in its opening titles but ignores the narrative of investigation completely. It features a combination of illustrations of Victorian mediumship and other spiritualist ideas, the images are rife with bees, creatures purportedly connected to the soul and death²¹⁶.



²¹⁶Udo Becker, *The Continuum encyclopedia of symbols* (New York: Continuum, 1994). P38



Figure 23: Screenshots from *Ghost Whisperer* Title Sequence

According to the show's creators the sequence is meant to be a guide to the mythology of the show and the concept of spiritualism²¹⁷. This is perhaps best illustrated by the blindfolded girl, an image that could be taken from any Victorian book on the subject. As the calm but eerie theme music by Mark Snow plays there is a sense of the supernatural, of the other worldly. The titles set up the darker side of the show and underplay the family drama that often sits at the centre of the narrative in favour of illustrating the strange world Melinda inhabits in her mind. Just as the show battles with issues of the public and private, of the forced victimisation of feminised investigation, so the titles not only take place in Melinda's private psychic space but depict images from throughout history of people equally beset by supernatural victimhood. Just as Melinda's intuitive methods are ultimately subjective, so too is the title sequence.

Medium instead plays up the mystery side of the show by using a title sequence very much influenced by the work of Saul Bass. Bass' association with Hitchcock and his famous work on thrillers such as *Anatomy of a Murder* (Otto Preminger, 1959) make an interesting visual and aural

²¹⁷*Ghost Whisperer Season One*, DVD Special Feature, "Ghost Whisperer Mythology"

shorthand to introduce audiences to the show. In addition the music is reminiscent of the same period, Mychael Dana's theme sounding like a toned down version of Bernard Herrmann's music for *Vertigo*. This allusion creates the sense of mystery about to unfold but illustrates nothing of the method, however, there is a focus on eye imagery but that is prevalent throughout the crime series.

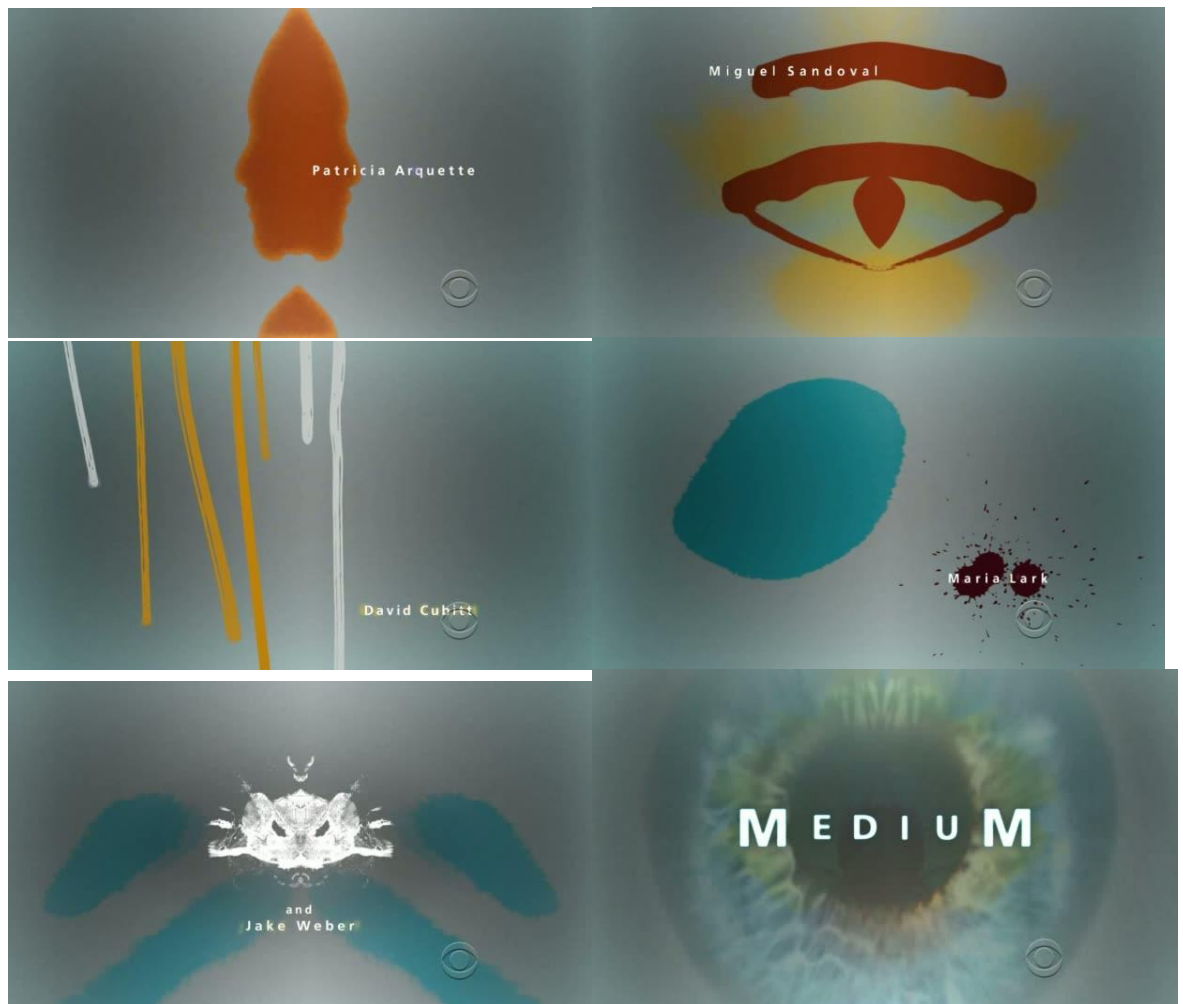


Figure 24: Screenshots from *Medium* Title Sequence

Medium references the mind through its use of Rorschach imagery, but does its best to ignore the supernatural. Instead the sequence, for want of a better word, is 'eerie'; rather than explicitly preparing the audience for the investigative practice it alludes to the aesthetic tone. This

functions as short hand, expressing the sense of danger implicit in Allison's role as psychic investigator.

For all six of these shows the title sequence begins once the mystery has already been established, Brennan will already have examined the crime scene, Allison will already have met the spirit or seen the crime she is going to solve; in many ways the nature of the show has already been ascertained. Instead these sequences serve to introduce the defining quality of their show, the tonal elements that pick them apart. *Bones* is about science, *Ghost Whisperer* is about the spirit world; while each show begins with a murder/crime and an investigator in search of the truth, the title sequence quickly sets out what is different about each of these investigators. These sequences assert which elements are central and which will work as counterbalances, ensconcing the shows within the crime genre. Furthermore, each sequence further inscribes their show with a system of conventions that are dependent on this dialogue between reason and intuition. The reasoned shows will literally show its audience the practice of investigation, the intuitive shows will attempt to give the audience a taste of how the show feels. These sequences work as visual markers that indicate the way each particular show plans to articulate its version of crime and investigation, giving the audience a shorthand illustration of what is to come.

Through examining the ways in which intuition and reason play out across the continuum, working in tandem through different kinds of knowledge, shows with vastly different investigative approaches can be looked at in conjunction. With the notion of 'seeking truth' running through all six shows creating the central line through the continuum, broader concepts can be mapped onto the genre around it. The ebb and flow of the concept of articulation allows fluidity into the understanding of genre but does not undermine its cohesion. Reason is articulated in the same manner across the genre whether it is seen as the driving investigative force or a counterbalance to help shore up intuitive approaches; it is consistently aligned with a sense of distant and abstract fact. The practitioners of reason are equally removed, seeing the world through an

empiricist lens of finites and absolutes. The intuitive practitioners on the other hand are forever at the mercy of their empathy. Their desire to understand people makes them victims, some literally and some simply to their own emotion. However, despite these differences what has proven to be more important is how essential both ideas are to a working institution, no matter what form this institution takes. Furthermore, the centrality of proving truth through some kind of evidence runs throughout the genre. As John Corner writes: "It was *shown* to the viewer and the manner of its showing which was so unquestioningly installed as the dominant view..."²¹⁸ In the heavily visual world of television, truth is shown in every iteration of the consultant procedural, whether through visions or on a computer screen, the physical showing of truth becomes an important part of proving its veracity.

As this chapter has demonstrated, examining the ideas which are central to the very notion of a genre yet being flexible in an understanding of how they are utilised within texts can help map a genre much more usefully than proscriptive checklists of what a genre can or cannot be. While reason and intuition are central to the crime drama, this approach can be extended to other concepts and genres. This allows for broad, overarching themes to be incorporated into the study of genre without having to justify their lack, or presence, in particular examples. To return to the colour metaphor; when shopping for brown paint any one of the colour cards will have a pale creamy tone at the top and darker one at the bottom, there is no denying that these two colours are markedly different, there is also no denying they are both brown. The rational is consistently secondary in *Ghost Whisperer* and while *Bones* makes space for the intuitive it is only as a way to bolster the scientific, but both engage with these issues; though they take opposite stances neither is any less a crime show for it. Much like the very concepts of reason and intuition are bound together and complicate one another, the shows within this thesis do much the same, commenting on the same issues with very different approaches.

²¹⁸ John Corner, *Critical ideas in television studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). P52

Chapter Four

Consultant Procedurals and Masculine Identity

The previous three chapters have developed the idea of the continuum; this method maps out graduated articulations of certain elements, elements which remain structurally consistent but shift in how they are utilised. This then works as part of the discursive genre cluster of texts and paratexts to form the crime drama genre. This method has allowed for an exploration of how a genre can incorporate multiple modes (for example gothic empathetic investigation and empiricist scientific experiments) while still maintaining core elements which hold it together. Consequently, a pattern has emerged through this approach that suggests subtle shifts across the genre as each different show moves focus from the primarily scientific to the supernatural.

This chapter, and the next, will look at issues of gender, an area of interest for scholars of crime fictions for many decades and, as with the conceptualising of reason in the previous chapter, gender is a thematic preoccupation. These texts coalesce in their depiction of gendered roles despite their divergent approaches to investigation; gender archetypes remain rigid throughout the genre no matter the show, they are simply articulated differently. Despite its progressive move on many fronts the crime drama remains stoutly conservative in its depictions of femininity and masculinity. Though gender in the crime drama is one area that has been analysed multiple times, once again it has fallen foul of the desire to instate exemplar texts. From the understated almost femininity of Grissom²¹⁹ to the hyper masculinity of McNulty²²⁰, gender analysis of the crime drama has become as reductionist as much of the other analysis of the genre.

Consequently, certain models of masculinity have been suggested to stand in for how the genre

²¹⁹Mythili Rajiva, "Troping Mr. Johnson: reading the Phallic Mastery and Anxiety of Season One of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*," in *The CSI effect : television, crime, and governance*, ed. Michele Byers and Val Marie Johnson (Lanham ; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009).

²²⁰Alasdair McMillan, "Heroism, institutions, and the police procedural," in *The wire: urban decay and American television*, ed. Tiffany; Potter and C. W. Marshall (Continuum, 2009).

as a whole deals with the concept. However, through my method, looking at the ways masculinity (and in the following chapter, femininity) is explored across multiple texts, instead finds a central point of cohesion, a line running through the genre that helps to establish its boundaries. The continuum concept is still at play, illustrated not in the way certain types of masculinity are portrayed but in their position within the narrative²²¹; every show perpetuates the same idea about what masculinity means and what masculine characters do. These chapters further the argument that these shows still operate within the same genre regardless of how greatly they differ in terms of plot construction or investigative method.

Though this model of gender is relational it is essential to separate out analyses of masculinity and femininity in order to explore how they function as distinct collections of convention. Though in places they inform one another, they are also informed by very different sets of media, consequently, they must be understood in terms of how they function as gendered entities. While the previous chapter focused on the intersection between investigative method and forms of knowledge, an interplay that is not without a gender dimension, this chapter eschews investigative method in favour of examining character conventions, focusing on a study of how concepts of masculinity are at play in the character of the consultant.

As the title of this thesis suggests, it is ultimately a case study of how gender functions as part of the investigative process in the contemporary consultant procedural. Though gender has always been of interest to scholars the foundational effect it has on the genre is still often ignored. The crime drama is a heavily gendered genre, from its overtly masculine beat cops to its underestimated feminine amateur sleuths; it is marketed, broadcast and discussed-both academically and culturally-in gendered terms. However, what is of interest here is not primarily how these texts perform investigation as a gendered endeavour, but how larger cultural

²²¹ For example the scientific shows have a central masculine figure couched in reason and lacking in emotional understanding; in the pseudo-psychic shows those characters tend to be part of the institution whereas the masculinity of the protagonist is one of emotional sympathy tempered by bravado and showmanship.

understandings of gender play out within the genre, in an increasingly evident uniform manner. As this chapter will detail, masculinity, at least successful masculinity, is coded in very specific terms within the genre, terms which reflect ideas in cultural studies but are also very specific to the genre.

Successful masculinity in this case refers to a performance of masculinity which is shown as powerful, useful and given narrative prominence. A successful masculine figure is one who both has control of the narrative and continually steers it toward a positive conclusion. In other words the successful masculine figure is the one able to solve cases. By mapping these conventions of the portrayal of masculinity the usefulness of the continuum approach becomes more apparent. It creates a method for understanding these moments of conformity which, although often subdued within the texts, are central to the 'ineffable' genre cohesion this thesis is exploring. The rigidity of gender conventions across disparate texts becomes so entrenched into the fabric of the genre as to become unnoticeable; this is especially true in shows where the masculine figures are background characters. Though not central to the narrative these figures still participate in masculine tropes which tie them to the genre. That this is rarely discussed is a prime example of the way in which the crime drama has been both extensively written about and recently ignored. Once again, my thesis aims to redress critical imbalance and take a closer look at how gender and its portrayal is still central to the ways in which crime dramas function.

As Judith Halberstam writes in the introduction to *Female Masculinity*,

“Masculinity in this society inevitably conjures up notions of power and legitimacy and privilege; it often symbolically refers to the power of the state and to uneven distributions of wealth. Masculinity seems to extend outward into patriarchy and inward into the family.”²²²

²²²Judith Halberstam, *Female masculinity* (Durham, N.C. ; London: Duke University Press, 1998). P2

With this statement she presents masculinity as something that extends in opposing directions, out into society but perhaps more importantly into the family. At the same time it is bound up in ideas of power and legitimacy that then bleed into these spaces. These are the ideas that form the basis of the conception of masculinity found in crime drama; that masculinity is understood in terms of the privilege of power it is afforded and how that fits into both societal patriarchy and the family.

With this in mind this chapter will be divided into four separate sections, each dealing with different aspects of masculinity in the crime drama. Firstly, it begins with an examination of the position of the male consultant as both a specialist but also a figure who operates outside the institution. This section explores the effects of the consequent lack of official authority on the depiction of masculinity. As skilled professionals but without the power designated by a position of authority within the institution, this section asks if the role these characters play within the justice system is one of controlled rebellion. This section will also look at investigative pairings such as Jane and Lisbon in *The Mentalist*, further examining how gender is part of the process of balance between the rational and the intuitive explored in the previous chapter. The second section will move onto the emphasis placed on patriarchal teaching as part of the backstory of the consultant. While I have already established the place afforded to innate talent in the character of the consultant there is also frequently space made for the father as a childhood mentor. This positioning of the fatherly role as a predominately pedagogical is especially interesting considering that in the shows in which it occurs (namely *The Mentalist*, *Psych* and *Bones*) the characters' mothers are noticeably absent.

The third section will move to the role these characters have with their own families, exploring how their own fatherhood works as impetus for their work. It has become a clichéd backstory, these characters seeking redemption for perceived failings as fathers and therefore as men. Hence, this section will explore what affect is created in positioning them as parents. The final

section of the chapter will look specifically at *Bones* considering Brennan as a masculine female character. While changes to her character have occurred over six seasons the show is still at pains to portray Brennan as an emotionally inept rationalist, traits typically reserved for male characters.

For the most part this chapter examines masculinity as it pertains to consultant figures. However, this is not to say that similar issues are not at work with respect to characters whose institutional affiliation is clear. The complex masculinity of a character like Booth, he is both institutionally powerful yet narratively often powerless, is still worthy of study; as is the way in which Lisbon's authority is frequently contrasted to her femininity. While these characters will not be central to this chapter (in much the same way they are not central to the shows) they function as useful juxtapositions and counterpoints to the ways in which the consultants are portrayed, often mirroring character traits displayed by more prominent but similarly gendered characters in other shows. That there is a consistency to the portrayal of gender (note this is not the same as sex or biological notions of gender) further establishes the coherence of the genre, suggesting there are particular character types that continually appear in these shows, character types which are not defined by gender but rather gendered traits.

Biological notions of gender, though not of central importance to this chapter, cannot go unmentioned upon. Though masculinity and femininity are not defined by cisgendered boundaries there are biologically gendered tropes that do occur. Though Brennan is consistently figured as masculine this is also often framed as a failing on her part. As explored in the last section of the chapter, Angela's job is often to teach Brennan how to be a woman. Furthermore, the connection drawn between women and motherhood cannot be ignored. Throughout all six shows while every female protagonist is (eventually) a mother, only two of the male protagonists have children and only Lightman has a child that features as part of the show. Despite the

concentration in this chapter on non-biological gender, there is still work to be done on role that biological gender does have in the crime drama.

In previous chapters I have touched on tropes and themes of the crime genre before it took a turn toward being focused on consultant protagonists. In the twenty years prior to the consultant era the genre, for the most part, split into two categories, the shows set in police precincts and shows set in law offices (or in the case of *Law & Order*, both). In both instances characters identified as masculine were the most common protagonists across the genre. Cop protagonists in shows such as *NYPD Blue* were gruff and exacting. They were for the most part portrayed in terms of their physicality; their strength and power – both literally and metaphorically – were what defined them. Marc Oullette describes *NYPD Blue*'s Sipowicz as being the definition of R.W. Connell²²³'s idea of hegemonic masculinity, “[Sipowicz] resorts to violence, he resists change and he resents women and minorities”.²²⁴ Furthermore, the approach to crime solving in these precinct shows was about ‘hard graft’; they would work the streets, speak to the right people and solve the case. Justice was served because these men put in the time and exacted their control. It was not because of special training or skills, but because of knowledge gained from experience; these men had control of the streets. They were, for all intents and purposes, the epitome of eighties masculine convention; not simply part of the institution, they were the institution. As Richard Dyer has written, “The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity”²²⁵. Therefore, the power to investigate, to uphold law on behalf of society, was by default seen as masculine, men were the protectors.

However, as Brenton J. Malin details²²⁶, as masculinity moved from being “unmarked” to a topic of social and political discussion in the late 80s/early 90s there were shifts in the depiction of male

²²³R. W. Connell, *Masculinities: Knowledge, Power and Social Change* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1995). P131

²²⁴Marc Oullette, ““It’ll pass”: NYPD: Blue’s Sipowicz and Mundane Masculinity,” *Universitas* 2, no. 2 (2006).

²²⁵ Richard Dyer, *White*, p2 Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997). P2

²²⁶Brenton J. Malin, *American masculinity under Clinton : popular media and the nineties "crisis of masculinity"* (New York ; Oxford: P. Lang, 2005).

cops. It is also worth noting that it was only really at this point that even the possibility of female cops was normalised in the genre. Now outside of the workplace male cops were usually failures; family became a place where they lacked the control and power afforded them by their jobs, they were alcoholics and philanderers, bad fathers and terrible sons. Much like theorists who advocate the idea of a crisis in masculinity at the time²²⁷, within the crime drama the idea of the masculine patriarchy was coming apart and so successful masculinity was becoming defined by workplace success rather than personal success. Arthur Brittan writes: “[What had changed was] not male power as such, but its form, its presentation, its packaging. In other words while it is apparent that styles of masculinity may alter...the substance of male power does not.”²²⁸ Gone was ‘head of the household’ mentality and instead being a good man in these shows was often about sacrificing the personal in order to achieve professional success and as a consequence the betterment of society. Sipowicz continually battled with alcoholism and estrangement from his eldest son, *Law & Order’s* John Munch was four times divorced and incapable of maintaining a relationship. However, both were generally seen as good cops.

Much the same could be said for the lawyer characters in their shows. Men, Elayne Rapping dubbed “Attorney-heroes”²²⁹, who gave up personal lives in favour of long hours spent crafting case law at the expense of spending time with their families. However, while their personal lives tended to be equally miserable their work lives were about creating systems for society to work by rather than the physical ‘clean-up’ that the cops performed. In the legal shows these characters were there to uphold the system society put in place to protect itself, even if it went against the character’s own beliefs. Many an episode of *Law & Order* and other shows of that ilk focus on a lawyer having to do something they feel is morally wrong because it is legally right. For

²²⁷ For further examples see John Beynon, "Masculinities and the Notion of Crisis," in *Masculinities and culture* (Buckingham: Open University, 2001).; Sally Robinson, *Marked men : white masculinity in crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

²²⁸ Arthur Brittan in Stephen Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett, *The masculinities reader* (Oxford: Polity, 2001). P52

²²⁹ Elayne Rapping, *Law and justice as seen on TV* (New York ; London: New York University Press, 2003). P21

example in the episode “Nullifaction”²³⁰ McCoy has to argue the case for jury nullification, the right for a jury to find a defendant not guilty because the law is unjust rather than because the evidence suggests it. Essentially he is arguing for the right to acquit a guilty defendant because the law is wrong, not because he did not commit the crime. The law was more important than the individual, and so once again we see the appearance of the idea that sacrifice is a ‘good’ masculine trait. A good masculine character was one who was willing to sacrifice for the greater good, one who used their power to keep the world safe. However, it is important to note that this power was a given. The assumption was that men – as generally the masculine characters of these shows were male – held inalienable rights and power in the world; control was theirs by default. In a period where Robert Bly’s *Iron John*²³¹ was defining new theories of masculinity, the crime drama remained a conservative, patriarchal genre in which masculine authority was still a central motif. This remains mostly the case even within the period of this study, an authoritative masculine presence is still the default and any move away from this is toward feminine authority results in protagonists rendered victim as often as they are saviour. As the previous chapter argued, masculine characters have domain over knowledge, learning and its inherent agency meanwhile feminine investigators are at the mercy of their psychic powers.

At this point it is useful to look at these ideas in terms of the theory of hegemonic masculinity. It theorises that masculinity as seen by society is made up of a dominant and culturally normative form and then a series of subordinate forms. The normative form being that which is seen in these earlier shows; the strong but emotionally impaired male who uses his strength and privilege to maintain power in the world. However, this theory was criticised by scholars such as R.W. Connell²³² who saw it as a destructive and reductionist approach to the study of masculinity. Connell argued there were multiple forms of masculinity at work at once and that viewing it through the lens of hegemony did not account for the ways in which different masculinities

²³⁰Episode 8.5

²³¹Robert Bly, *Iron John : a book about men* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1990).

²³²R. W Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

worked together. However, I would argue that the crime drama is still a place where hegemonic masculinity holds firm, though, not without criticism. Instances of characters who maintain the concept of hegemonic masculinity are rife throughout the contemporary procedural drama; however, they are tempered by masculine figures who maintain power without the backing of institutional authority. The 'successful' masculine figure in these shows is one who asserts his power through his acts as an individual rather than as part of a larger system. Hegemonic masculinity somewhat makes sense as a way to theorise the traditional 'old boy's club' authority of the police, both literally and symbolically, but the consultant is an outsider. This is obviously complicated by the institution-by-proxy effect of being a consultant, however, the shows continually position these masculine figures as 'not police'. Instead figures of dominant masculine authority are forced into the background, lynchpins of the institution of policing but not central to the practice of modern investigation. They represent the power of legal authority, the patriarchy of control, but they do not have power over knowledge. The contemporary protagonist is one who rejects those forms of masculinity and the genre seeks to create a different idea of what it means to be a successful man. He is now a man who has the ability to find truth. The power and privilege these previous masculine figures possessed was not lost, but rather the way it is exercised and by whom has changed.

Masculinity and Institutions of Authority in Crime Drama

Perhaps the starkest difference between the consultant focused procedurals which have dominated the crime genre of the early 21st Century and the shows that came before, such as *NYPD Blue*, is the function the protagonist plays within the law enforcement institution. In the more recent shows the consultant protagonist has no official power, often working on an ad hoc basis and of their own volition. For all intents and purposes they are self-employed contractors and their position within the justice system is one seemingly devoid of any real agency; they cannot carry a badge or a weapon and do not have the power to arrest. While they may have influence, and even direct an investigation, the ultimate goal, that of securing justice, is one in which they cannot participate. This being the case it is interesting to consider how masculinity is portrayed through these consultant characters and how a lack of official agency is sublimated to allow for certain masculine character traits to still function.

For many of the shows this lack of agency is sublimated into humour, the consultant often joking about their own lack of power within the system. In *The Mentalist* episode 1.4 "Ladies in Red" Jane is mistaken for a fellow agent, he replies "No badge. No gun. They don't even give me dental." By mocking their supposed lack of power they are in fact asserting themselves as powerful. These jokes work because they highlight the discrepancy between those that should possess power (the cop) and those that actually do (the investigator). Jokes are also made at the expense of those who do possess agency, pointing out the inadequacy made apparent by the very need to hire consultants. For example Lightman and Agent Reynolds continually goad each other on *Lie to Me*. In episode 2.17 "Bullet bump" Reynolds tries to tell Lightman to do the job the FBI are paying him for, Lightman retorts that he's hired to find the truth and is "not a glorified cop".

These masculine consultants may not have official power but they are essential to the investigation. These two somewhat opposing factors play out with regular consistency as a power struggle within the relationship between the consultant and the lead investigator they are paired

with. Jane is continually battling Lisbon to be allowed to speak with particular suspects or examine crime scenes and Lightman holds clandestine meetings, bringing people into his office to 'read' them without official permission. While these actions almost always result in a reprimand from those in charge these are usually followed by an admission that the course of action has resulted in the solving of the case. In an episode of *The Mentalist* (1.20 "Red Sauce"), for example, Jane decides he needs to speak with mob boss Battaglia. Lisbon tells him he cannot so he waits until she is distracted with other suspects and goes to see him anyway. His speaking with Battaglia ends up being pivotal to the eventual confession of the victim's wife. While these men cannot officially be given power they still exercise it as if it were theirs. Their power and agency are implicit; woven into the position afforded them by the skills they possess. Their irreplaceability makes them powerful. While these shows are ostensibly about justice, about the solving of crime and the return to a safe equilibrium in which no crime goes unsolved, the central protagonist is not the cop. The consultant, the character afforded power due to their position as protagonist is not the one who can actually assure justice takes place. Consequently, justice becomes a by-product of the work of the consultant. As the sixth chapter will explore, justice is not something the consultant can be involved in, so achieving it becomes a secondary aim of the genre after the primary goal of solving the mystery. Cops may have the designated authority that comes with the possession of a badge, but within the narrative it is the consultant who wields the power; it is the consultant's name in the title of the show and it is their investigative method and ability to find truth around which the story is built.

This is best illustrated through the way plots are resolved within these shows. As stated chapter Six will take a more detailed look at issues of confession and justice in the consultant procedural, however, some elements of this narrative process need to be investigated here. There are three parts to the last act of every episode of each of these shows; part one is the reveal of the criminal and their confession. In *The Mentalist* this is frequently one of Jane's set pieces in which he sets

up the criminal to confess to their crime through some kind of game or elaborate ruse²³³. He has ultimate control in these moments, the police positioned in much the same way as the audience, as passive observer. Together audience and cops watch as the criminal is tricked into revealing themselves. In *Lie to Me* this moment usually takes place in The Box, Lightman using the criminal's own reactions against them to persuade them that there is no longer any use in lying. After all, Lightman can pinpoint each and every one of their falsehoods scientifically. *Psych* tends to favour presenting the criminal with all the facts that have been accumulated throughout the investigation, suggesting they have been gained through psychic means, therefore intimating there is no point in continuing to lie; what point is subterfuge if Shawn can see the real truth? At this point in all three shows the consultant protagonist is at the centre of the action, they are driving the investigation and ultimately divulging the guilty party. The cops function as little more than official witnesses, waiting for the truth to be revealed to them. These scenes are edited in a theatrical manner, often with wide shots that allow the audience to see both the consultant and the gathered officials and suspects so that their reactions can be witnessed. It is reminiscent in some ways of a street performance; the consultant stands at the centre as his trick is revealed to the shock and amazement of those around him. The successful masculine protagonist has no official power but he holds court, the frame and the scene are his. As such, the masculinity on display here is not one of institutional power but personal power. The masculine consultant wields it through the utilisation of unique skill, he is powerful because he can do what others cannot and he does so publicly.

The second part of the last act is the arrest. At this point the cop characters come to the fore as they perform the rituals of arrest, rituals that are both an aesthetic part of the narrative and part of gender scripts. They are essentially masculine in their depiction of both physicality and

²³³ For example in the episode referenced above he has been prank calling Battaglia for much of the episode and referencing the name Mary, the name of the victim's wife. When he finally wants Mary to confess he tells her she can either confess to the CBI or he will allow Battaglia to impart his own form of justice. He then calls Battaglia, who has no idea who this Mary is and waits for him to become irate at Jane for the prank calls. Jane allows Mary to overhear this and out of fear she confesses.

institutional power. This moment is awarded much less screen time than the moment of confession and is played as a formality despite it being the ultimate goal of the investigation. This suggests these shows are not about the arrest but the solving of the puzzle; this physical show of strength and official status is of little interest. Visually the arrest is busy but nevertheless it is not the focus of the scene; sometimes literally, with the camera focussing on the reaction of the consultant. In the majority of episodes the arrest will take place and almost instantly the guilty party is taken off screen leaving the consultant to comment on what has transpired. The arrest is necessary but not interesting or at least not of interest. Moreover, it is often portrayed as a show of brute strength, the suspect being manhandled into handcuffs or forced into a police car. It harks back to older ideas of masculinity, ones based on force rather than knowledge and Institutional power is conflated with underserved privilege. The cop characters have not earned power through honing skills but have it by default due to their position, therefore exercising of that power is not of interest, and is decentralised through its dismissal in the narrative. Through the way the shows are edited and the emphasis placed on the solving of the puzzle this brute strength is constantly undermined by the deference to the consultant and the arrest seems to be framed in opposition to the power that *is* derived from the intellect of the consultant. The consultant becomes the, albeit privileged, spectator, yet his implicit power is still present, he is the reason the arrest took place even if his lack of institutional agency means he cannot take part in this legal process.

The third part is the post arrest wrap-up in which members of the team deconstruct the case and how the consultant solved it. Once again the focus moves back to how the puzzle was solved and not the fate of the suspect; a suspect who will never be seen again because the crime will never be spoken of again. In these coda scenes members of the investigative team congregate to discuss not only how the case was solved, but how the process affected them. At this point justice has still not been served, a court case months in the making. Nevertheless, the consultant's job has been completed allowing for these scenes of closure, something chapter Six will deal with in more

detail. For the cops there is still more official work to be done, the consequences of the arrest still yet to be determined, but these are scenes the consultant procedural is not interested in; the case has been solved therefore the episode is over. For those with unofficial power the job is done and narrative resolution has occurred.

The uniformity of this final act across the shows studied for this thesis (and many outside of it) suggests that, in terms of narrative, power and agency have little to do with official standing in the contemporary procedural; rather these things are gained from the effective use of talents and skills. In fact, in the contemporary procedural being part of the system and having to follow protocol is seen as a hindrance to having actual power. Being a cop limits the possibility to do what must be done in the pursuit of truth, laws and procedures neutralise the cops' power to the point where they are often little more than glorified office workers. As such, Van Pelt of *The Mentalist* does most of her work from behind a computer; the cops of *Lie to Me* are generally kept out of The Box, left to watch the work of case solving being done from monitors. Though this could be coded as both masculine-adhering to the stereotype of the geek-and a position of authority as it suggests omniscient power, that is not how these shows position it. Instead there are connotations of impotence, these characters are unable to perform in the way the consultant is; the cops cannot be a physical part of these processes of investigation. Instead they are relegated to performing institutional acts and the real work is performed by those who are not limited by law. Does this then make these consultants rebels?

There are tropes of the rebel which apply to these masculine consultants. They stand outside of the hegemonic masculinity so often illustrated, to the point of almost parody, by the male cops that round out the casts of these shows; cops such as Lassiter of *Psych* whose performance of 'correct' masculinity is often the butt of jokes or Agent Reynolds in *Lie to Me* whose straight laced approach is more of a hindrance than a sign of societally designated dominance. As Connell and Messerschmidt explain how the concept of hegemonic masculinity developed:

“[It] was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it.”²³⁴

Hegemonic masculinity, though it has had its detractors,²³⁵ is still useful here as it suggests an approach in which masculine identity is not uniform but hierarchical; different types of masculinity can exist but one will be viewed as ‘better’ than the others. The male consultants of the genre do not all have the same approach but there is still a sense of a central idea of what the powerful man should be. There are conventions which occur across all shows which will be further explored in this chapter, one of which is the consistent and stark difference between powerful men and men with power. As Connell and Messerschmidt continue, “Consequently, “masculinity” represents not a certain type of man but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices.”²³⁶In the consultant procedural, the successful ‘masculine’ protagonist is not the physically strong one, or the figure who is literally powerful, but instead the one who has forged power and standing through their use of skill. They have spent time honing their talents and so they are powerful because they are the only ones capable of solving these crimes not because they are physically strong or hold a position of institutional power.

In the contemporary procedural hegemonic masculinity is passé, a sign of what was, and not what currently is; the dominant form of power being one of nonconformity. The powerful men of these shows eschew those modes of masculinity inherent in systems such as the police; instead they

²³⁴R. W Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (2005). P832

²³⁵ For example Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (2001).

²³⁶Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." P841

perform outside of these regimented structures, returning, perhaps nostalgically, to the idea of the self-made man²³⁷. While the most obvious manner in which this is illustrated is the way these men flout authority in favour of working in their own way, there are more subtle cues that work alongside this which illustrate these men as being both alone and in control. For example Jane's style of dress is both ostentatious and buttoned down. His three piece suits suggest a nod to the idea of a masculinity and propriety of a bygone age but in the modern police precinct suggest a flair for the theatrical. He is controlled but different, powerful but somehow other. One of the tools in his investigative kit is to drink tea with female suspects and witnesses. What outwardly seems feminising is Jane's way of beginning to assert power in a relationship, build trust he will eventually use to attain a confession. Lightman and Shawn use language, although very differently, to create the same effect. Lightman is cutting, sharp, witty; he runs rings around those he speaks to, using language suspects do not always understand. He speaks truth when others cannot or will not. While his police colleagues must temper their language and remain proper, Lightman speaks his mind, wielding his power through words. While Lightman undermines with strong words Shawn undermines with humour; he speaks in thinly veiled jests that often only the audience and Gus are able to understand because only they are privy to the truth, and he underwhelms suspects on purpose, playing up to their idea of him as nonthreatening. Once again it is a game of trust much like Jane and his tea.

While the protagonists of these shows assert their masculinity and its associated power through unusual methods, non-protagonist masculine figures achieve a similar affect through different means. The psychic shows, *Ghost Whisperer* and *Medium* introduce masculine characters into their narrative through the presence of the protagonists' husbands. Much like the cop figures of other shows, these men have illusory agency as powerful men in the world, but no agency within the particular investigative narrative of the show. Agency in these shows comes from possessing psychic powers, seeing outside of the physical realm and so being bound to physical reality

²³⁷John George Cawelti, *Apostles of the self-made man* (Chicago U.P, 1965).

renders these men powerless in terms of their ability to help solve the case at the centre of each week's narrative. However, these men are not societally powerless. Both men hold important responsible jobs, Joe is an engineer and Jim a paramedic and then later a doctor; these men have control and power in the world not ruled by visions and premonitions, in the 'real' world they would be seen as important men. Furthermore, they do have a secondary part to play in terms of investigation, both men, as explored in the previous chapter, provide rationalist responses to the events that unfold each week. As sensible men of science they counterbalance their wives and although they will always be secondary in their ability to solve crime that does not cause them to be unnecessary. They possess things which should make them powerful but instead they are rendered secondary to new modes of masculinity; they are not failures, they simply are not as successful.

In addition to this, both psychic shows also present institutional masculine figures in much the same way as the shows detailed above, through the use of cops and academics. *Medium* has consistent secondary institutional figures, District Attorney Devalos (Miguel Sandoval) and detective Scanlon (David Cubitt). *Ghost Whisperer*, because its crimes are not always legal in nature, instead makes use of figures such as Professor Rick Payne (Jay Mohr) and Eli James (Jamie Kennedy). These persistently reoccurring character tropes suggest a need for an authoritative masculine presence throughout the genre. Although shows have moved away from the traditional cop figure as central protagonist his presence still lingers; a counterpoint to help define the consultant as other.

Across the genre the central premise of these shows shift, the continuum allowing for shows to move between science and intuition, however, part of the framework that holds it together, that creates a cohesive genre, is the presence of these masculine figures. They hark back to previous incarnations of the genre while allowing its current mode to flourish. In the same way the paratexts activated knowledge of previous crime texts, these 'traditional' masculine institutional

figures work as part of the generic cluster, sitting on the edges and creating a possible point of recognition for the audience. A particular show may be about ghosts or bone x-rays, but in this conservative genre there is still a strong masculine figure of authority present. These figures are the backbone which helps centre the shows in the crime genre; they are the institution, no matter what position the respective show takes on the importance of the institution. These characters create space for the cogs of the justice system to continue to turn despite the work of crime solving being moved outside of official lines. Non-hegemonic masculinity may be at the heart of these shows, but traditional masculine figures shore up the edges and help define the generic boundaries these shows work within.

Learned Behaviour, Pedagogy and its Role in the Development of the Masculine Consultant

Having established that at the heart of the contemporary procedural is often a masculine consultant who does not conform to previously defined concepts of the masculine crime solver, how is it that these characters become the 'rebellious' figures they are? Incorporating the protagonist's backstory has become a frequent mode of plot development in the crime drama and a way of exploring character motivations. In the case of the masculine protagonist their skill and attitudes are consistently and explicitly presented as the result of paternal teaching. To this end, *Psych* and *The Mentalist* have been the most unequivocal about the role that fathers play in their contextualising narrative²³⁸, *Psych* going as far as to incorporate it into the investigative method of the show. However, these father-son relationships are not presented in a positive light; in fact the like-father-like-son trope implicit in many of these flashback sequences is one the protagonist rails against. These men do not want to become their fathers, and the story of the father-son relationship in these shows is one of battling against the environment one was brought up in and learning to use the skills thrust upon them in ways their fathers did not. These shows suggest that being a successful man is about not being the man your father was.

This is both interesting in terms of the relationship these characters have with authority as explored earlier in the chapter and the contrast they provide to earlier crime shows. In earlier shows cop protagonists were often part of legacies, the sons of cops carrying on the family business as it were; both crime and policing were figured in dynastic terms where. policing and being part of the institution were what they were brought up to do²³⁹. Conversely, the masculine characters of the current crime drama move the opposite way, shunning what came before them.

²³⁸ It also occurs on *Bones* but I'll be looking at how that show conforms to concepts of masculine identity at the end of the chapter.

²³⁹ This convention still appears from time to time, for example the family history of *Rizzoli and Isles'* Detective Jane Rizzoli, the last in a long line of Boston cops.

Just as they move away from the structure and authority of the institution of law enforcement, so they move away from the structured power that their fathers wielded.

In his book *On Men*²⁴⁰ Anthony Clare quotes John Snarey²⁴¹ and his work on 'generative fathers', that being "fathers who contribute to and renew the cycle of the generations through the care they provide as birth fathers (biological generativity), as child-rearing fathers (parental generativity) and as cultural fathers (societal generativity)."²⁴² The idea of generativity is one of moving forward, of contributing to the next generation. In the crime shows biological fathers are represented heavily, they are far more common than mothers; yet, parental and societal generativity is barely visible, for the most part the fathers of investigators have been absentee (*Psych* being the exception to the rule), either literally or emotionally. However, in his writing on generativity Clare goes on to include the work of John Kotre²⁴³ who added a fourth category of generativity, technical generativity. This fourth category encompasses the passing on of skills and knowledge, this is a category heavily called upon in the crime drama. Fathers are portrayed for the most part as purely engaged in technical generativity, their job to pass on their knowledge to their offspring rather than to offer any form of emotional support. However, the shows portray this as a failing, a short-sighted approach to the job of parenting; they suggest a good father should be capable of working in all four categories. As such, the rebellion of the son comes in the form of the eventual denial of the father's teachings.

For Jane this is a journey of turning the illicit skills his con-man father taught him into something that can be used for good. However, this contextualising backstory was not introduced to the audience straight away; in the pilot episode Jane's story is that of a fake psychic who uses his talent for cold reading to con people in to giving him money so he can contact their dead

²⁴⁰Anthony W. Clare, *On men : masculinity in crisis* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000).

²⁴¹John Snarey, *How fathers care for the next generation : a four-decade study* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²⁴²Clare, *On men : masculinity in crisis*. P170

²⁴³John Kotre, *Outliving the self : generativity and the interpretation of lives* (Baltimore ; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

relatives. When he decides to use his skills to help the police find serial killer Red John, Red John warns him off by killing Jane's wife and child. It is at this point the story of the show begins, with Jane continuing to help the police in hopes of eventually helping to capture and then kill Red John as an act of revenge. Perhaps what is of most interest here is that Jane does not have purely selfless motives for helping the police catch Red John; he sees it as a shrewd business move and a way to further his brand and the fact that he may help catch a serial killer is a happy by-product of furthering his own name. Initially Jane was painted as a selfish man changed by tragedy and the impetus for his original career choice was never alluded to. The story of his con man father was not introduced until later in the show²⁴⁴, but nevertheless, presents a useful insight into how the writers see this kind of character being formed.

At first he behaved like his father, following him happily into the family business, conning people into paying him to contact their dead relatives. Only when this results in his own tragedy does Jane change; up until that point he has been immensely successful. In return for his father teaching him so well Jane carries out his duty as a 'good' son and continues in his father's footsteps. This backstory initially seems to imply that successful men learn from their fathers' teachings. However, as established earlier, these shows are attempting to set out a different kind of masculinity, one not formed through the handing down of paternal wisdom but through forging one's own path. While Jane is successful monetarily his past is shown as unfulfilling personally, he is morally bankrupt. Furthermore, Red John cites his reason for killing Jane's family is not simply Jane's involvement in trying to capture him but also retribution for all those he has conned. Only when Jane goes against what his father wanted for him, through helping the police without immoral ulterior motives, does he find a new way to use his skills and achieve some semblance of fulfilment. In this sense the fathers' role is to teach but not to be emulated; a distinction is drawn between learning from the father and being like him. Jane's upbringing and relationship with his father become both the reason for his success and the reason for his

²⁴⁴*The Mentalist* 2.10 "Throwing Fire"

downfall. His father excelled at being technically generative, but because he failed on all other fronts, and therefore failed as a father, he must be denied the paternal hope of seeing his son grow up to be like him.

The same can be said for *Psych*'s Shawn and his relationship with his father. Although Shawn's father was not attempting to turn Shawn into a criminal, he was still a father who failed on most fronts; he is shown as going out of his way to teach Shawn the skills needed to be the perfect cop, often without thought for Shawn's safety. In episode 4.9 "Shawn Takes a Shot in the Dark" Shawn's father wants to teach him how to escape from worst case scenarios so, he ties him up and locks him in the boot of a car. In case of both Shawn and Jane, after the initial period of education there is an attempt to do as the father did which leads to a period of disequilibrium from which the only resolution is to use the father's skills in a new way. By becoming their own men and working on their own terms they are able to turn the problems that arise from emulating their fathers into successful careers.

In *Psych* Shawn's father was a reputable cop, however, in flashbacks we still see him teach Shawn skills which he hopes will allow his son to follow in his footsteps. He trains Shawn how to observe, how to extricate himself from difficult situations and how to gain information from people; he turns his son into an adept observer. Shawn's father assumes that with these skills Shawn will inevitably become a cop but Shawn finds himself unable to continue in the family business. In the first episode Shawn accidentally uses his skills to solve an important clue in an investigation. When the police become suspicious about how Shawn could know such things he claims to be psychic, the only logical excuse he can create for how he came upon information pertinent to the case. In order to avoid prosecution for involvement in the murder he helped solve he must continue with the ruse. Once again, it is a desire to be both socially useful but also a need to not use their skills in the same manner as their father that leads these men to become consultants. Shawn's father is the epitome of the old style of policing, the old masculinity; he is portrayed as a

gruff, no nonsense man who talks of little but policing. Shawn is everything his father is not, he continually dresses casually (unlike other consultants his wardrobe consists of jeans and t-shirts despite the gravity of his work), he works from a beach-front office and uses humour to deflect from taking his life seriously. In actual fact much of the humour of the show comes from the way Shawn interacts with his father, the only parental figure to feature as a regular member of a show's cast. Perhaps because of the comedic nature of the show the interplay between old and new masculinity seen in Shawn's relationship with his father is far more central in *Psych* than in any of the other shows; the conflict can be played for laughs rather than the serious tone it would have to take in a less comedic text. While Shawn understands the importance of the work he is doing he has such faith in his abilities that he does not feel the need to maintain a sombre work environment. He is not the man his father wanted him to be, however, he is a man who uses what his father taught him.

Teaching then becomes central to the formation of these masculine characters' identities; they exist as consultants because they participated in systematic patriarchal pedagogy. Though there are hints at the presence of innate skill, too much is made of the learning process for it not to be important. Also important is that it differs from whatever teaching the cop characters had access to. Their learning is grounded in environmental instruction; they know how to do their jobs because they have been doing it for so long. They know criminals because they have been around so many. It is true they have been trained, but they were trained on the job in order to perform their job. For the consultant their training was personal, was some form of familial bonding; they learned because their fathers wanted them to, they wanted to pass something on to the next generation. While obviously these characters and their fathers are biologically linked there is a sense that what a father can really pass onto his son is a set of skills for making their way in the world. These fathers attempted to teach their sons how to be men. However, what they taught them was how they themselves are men, not how to be men in contemporary society.

Consequently, much like the shift from the dominant hegemonic masculinity to a new form seen

in the crime genre, these masculine consultants have taken the skills passed on from their fathers but utilised them in a different way.

Across the genre these shows present a consistent idea of the role of the father, to be learned from but then dismissed; fathers belong to the old system, not the new one. Like the contemporary crime drama itself the central tenet is new ways of using knowledge, new approaches to old problems. As the genre eschews the institution in favour of the skilled individual and replaces tried and tested police work with science and magic (though often narratively these two concepts are not so far apart) so the lessons of the father must be re-appropriated. Just as the institution is still part of the procedural but not the central part, the father is still an important figure but not one who should be followed blindly.

So far fathers in *The Mentalist* and *Psych* have been addressed, and Brennan's father will be examined in the last part of the chapter, what of the other shows? *Lie to Me* creates an additional tragic element to this backstory, Lightman's mother committed suicide while using a day pass from the mental hospital where she was resident, but little is said of his father. We learn he was a soldier²⁴⁵, and abusive, but not much else, instead, Lightman's mother's suicide is given as the impetus behind Lightman's work and it is his inability to see that his mother would commit suicide makes him want to learn how to read people so that he does not miss something like that in the future. Although he did not learn this skill from his father Lightman still wants to actively ensure that he does not become him. Like the other masculine figures he learns from his father who he does not want to become. The starkest contrast is seen in the psychic shows which shy away from father figures almost entirely.

Motherhood is at the centre of these shows and when I address this topic in Chapter Five I will explore the gender bias at play in these shows' preoccupation with mothers rather than fathers. The psychic shows preface the biological over the pedagogical, so while they feature masculine

²⁴⁵*Lie to Me* 2.14 "React to Contact"

characters, as discussed above, it is masculinity as it pertains to fatherhood and teaching that is denied. The acquiring of knowledge is the fundamental purpose of the crime drama, so it is unsurprising that the shows which favour an empirical process reinforce this by consistently deferring to backstories that also rely on pedagogy. Not only do they attempt to position their audience as students through the constant exposition seemingly inherent in empirical investigative methods, but they mark their protagonists similarly. Empiricism, masculinity and pedagogy then become inseparable bedfellows, a triumvirate of interconnected concepts. Method is both narrative and purpose in the crime drama and this is no more evident than in its depictions of gender. Thus, gender becomes a ripe source for exploring the constant process of differentiation and conformity that this thesis seeks to understand. It is both rigidly inscribed with certain fundamentals but, as rest of this chapter illustrates, utilised in different ways depending on the needs of the show.

Family and Fatherhood

Of the six shows covered in this thesis three of them feature central characters that are fathers, Lightman, Jane and Booth and the two psychic shows feature secondary father characters.

Fatherhood is treated very differently than being a son; as I established earlier, being a son is about learning from the father but ultimately following one's own path. If being a son is the impetus behind these men learning the skills they have, then being a father is the reason they chose the career path they did; being a son entails rebellion whereas being a father is about embracing responsibility. Between the three main shows that deal with fatherhood, *The Mentalist*, *Lie to Me*, and *Bones* each of them deals with a different kind of responsibility that is inherent in fatherhood; moral, ethical and physical respectively.

The concept of moral responsibility plays out in *The Mentalist* through Jane's feelings of guilt over the deaths of his family. While Jane is not literally a father anymore the spectre of his fatherhood hangs over much of the show. His stolen fatherhood and resultant feelings of culpability are the catalyst for his change and the denial of his father's teachings. Jane acts as he does because he finally understands the moral obligation he has and this is a consequence of his role as a father. The tragedy of losing his family has denied him the opportunity to be part of the pedagogical patrilineage, but it has not denied him the right to still act in a way he would have wanted his children to and he still leads by example despite having no progeny to pass his teachings on to. Nevertheless, the Jane seen in present day of *the Mentalist* is a moral man; he has questionable ethics but strong morals²⁴⁶. To that end, he lies continually and bases his method of detection on deceit and subterfuge. He often works outside of the rather malleable limits that are placed on him, solving murders but not always helping create prosecutable cases. However, despite his questionable methods there is no doubt about the reasoning behind them; he fully embraces the idea that the end justifies the means. His are moral actions, actions meant to right wrongs.

²⁴⁶ In this case I am defining morals as an abstract sense of what is right and wrong, they define personal character, whereas ethics are the way in which these beliefs are applied to a social system.

Furthermore, considering the narrative of the modern procedural ends before conviction is ever an issue the distinct lack of prosecution is rather a moot point. This idea will be explored further in chapter Six, suffice it to say that in this iteration of the crime drama legal prosecution is rarely the resolution being sought and so any method which results in the crime being solved is a successful method. Therefore, Jane can be viewed as a moral character despite dubious techniques. This is in contrast to how Jane's father is portrayed as a man without either ethics or morals. This progression from son to father and the eschewing of that which the father believed continues the theme of moving from the old to the new, from figures of dominant hegemonic masculinity to something else. If morals are held in higher regard than ethics, then the system is not as important as knowledge. In other words discovering the truth matters more than the way in which it was discovered. Serving the mystery and ending the personal turmoil of another is what truly matters in these shows.; a definition quite removed from the quandaries of societal ethics found in the 90s crime dramas.

That being said if Jane espouses moral responsibility then interestingly Lightman can be more closely associated with ethical responsibility. The distinction between this and moral responsibility may seem tentative, especially as he is as likely as Jane to step outside the bounds of normal policing and use deceit as a method to find the truth. However, the difference is in how the character views the two concepts. Lightman puts no stock in the idea of morality, his world is one built around how people interact with one another within society rather than any sense of obligation placed upon them from outside. His works centres on predictability of human emotion and reaction. He can read lies and as a consequence places certain expectations on the people around him to be honest and uphold certain social mores. Ultimately, Lightman is an ethical man because he knows that transgressions do not go unnoticed. While he may be particularly adept at reading the signs he also affirms often that everyone is capable of seeing what he sees²⁴⁷. If the

²⁴⁷ In fact the show itself, often at length, attempts to teach the audience how to read people in the way Lightman does.

truth is forever showing in people's body language then maintaining an ethical approach to life becomes as much about being a decent member of society as it does self-preservation. Lightman is not ethical because he chooses to be, he is ethical because he has to be. Here is where it differs from the 90s shows; ethics are not seen as a way for society to uphold order and maintain civil accord, instead, they are a way to ensure one's own personal safety. Lightman believes people should be ethical to avoid unnecessary distress. After all, ethical people do not get caught in lies. As a father, he is consistently seen passing this lesson on to his daughter. Whenever he finds his daughter not upholding her ethical responsibility he is quick to inform her that he is aware of her transgression. In episode 2.2 "Truth or Consequences" Cal reads Emily to find out that she has a fake ID and has been going to bars despite being underage. He is hoping to instill in her the idea that lying is not a productive way to live and her lies will always be discovered. Ethics are not about punishment in the way that morals are, but about creating a functional society through personal preservation. Lightman rarely cares for the reasons behind lies, rather he wants to uncover them and demonstrate their futility. Consequently, he is viewed as a blunt and rude character, one who chooses to always speak the truth. This often leads to uncomfortable conversations between Lightman and his daughter in which she feels he is perhaps too honest with her but for Lightman that is the burden of living an ethical life. Fatherhood in his case is about brutal honesty.

This plays into some of the interesting ideas at the heart of a genre dedicated to the human predilection for lies. In keeping with the idea that the contemporary procedural drama as a genre is one which oscillates around a central core of concepts which run throughout, then the idea that lying is both innate and futile is one of the central pillars. The search for obfuscated truth is a lynchpin for the genre as a whole, and as per the conventions of the genre, every lie will be uncovered. As such, the lessons imparted by fathers on the need to be ethical or moral are not aimed purely at their children but at the audience as a whole. If crime dramas are trying to teach their audience one thing it is that cheaters never prosper and through this contemporary

pedagogy of fatherhood, one distancing itself from previous methods, the masculine fathers of the genre work to teach both their children and the audience. Lightman's stance on ethics serves as a way in which suggestions for proper social conduct can be imparted to viewers. If the lessons of previous fathers are to be ignored it is because the current generation of fathers have taken their place as teachers.

Finally, we come to Booth on *Bones* and the concept of physical responsibility. Though Booth is not the consultant figure in the show he is still very much central to the way in which crimes are solved, even more so than official partners in other shows. Unlike the rest of the shows analysed in this thesis, Booth has equal billing with Brennan and equal screen time; though notably not equal power in terms of knowledge. His fatherhood is also central to his characterisation. From the beginning of the show his son Parker has played an important part in the development of his character. Episodes have even focused around care for his son, one in particular featured Booth's unhappiness at being kept in the lab over Christmas due to a contamination lockdown²⁴⁸. Much of Booth's talk about parenting and fatherhood revolve around his need to protect his son and 'be there' for him. It would be remiss to suggest Booth is not a moral character; in fact many of the discussions Booth and Bones have on the show deal with their differing stances on morals/ethics. Booth is a religious man and believes doing good is a moral imperative, however, he rarely speaks in this way when it comes to fatherhood. He never suggests wanting Parker to grow up to be a good or responsible man, or the pressure he feels as a parent having to instil these ideals in his son. Instead Booth talks of his fears of the kinds of crimes he investigates befalling his son, he worries for Parker's safety. For Booth fatherhood is about ensuring his child stays free from harm. Much of Booth's masculinity is expressed through physical means; he is the one to restrain suspects, wield a gun, and chase people through streets. Booth is consistently figured as 'doing' opposite Brennan's 'thinking', it is therefore not unexpected that his role as father would have similar overtones. Because Booth is not the consultant protagonist and he is instead affiliated

²⁴⁸*Bones* 1.09 "The Man in the Fallout Shelter"

with the institution he is more aligned with the husband figures of the psychic shows, a masculinity of restricted power. While he has power, it is not of the kind favoured in the genre and therefore he is denied the position of teacher. Pedagogical roles are reserved for those who have agency within the narrative and can therefore impart wisdom from a privileged position; Booth, is a figure of the institution, a leftover of the old masculinity. He has equal billing in the show to Brennan but has no agency, it is her show. However, rather than being positioned as a relic he is shown as learning to embrace new masculinity. Throughout the course of the show he has had moments of rebellion from the institution, learning from Brennan how to perform masculinity as part of the new system; she explains to him importance of learned science rather than gut instinct. Though he still maintains his role as intuitive cop he becomes willing to accept the essential part she plays in the process and as such slowly moves away from the machine of the institution. Furthermore, he receives psychological counselling for his issues with anger at the strict rules the institution places on him. He may not be allowed to impart patriarchal wisdom from his position as an institutional figure, but he is still allowed to play a role in the patrilineage. As such, he takes on the traditional patriarchal role of protector, ensuring safety through his power but with no claims on knowledge.

All three men present different aspects of fatherhood and each of those is linked to the way in which they present their own masculinity; being a man and being a father become inextricably linked. These men do much like their own fathers did, present their children their view of the world in the hopes that they will carry it on. However, while these men's fathers are portrayed as flawed and selfish, these men are seen, for the most part, as decent members of society. This suggests that their shift toward co-operation with the establishment and work within the justice system has sufficiently redeemed them. Their acts as fathers are no different from those of their own fathers, instead the content of their teaching has changed. Fatherhood becomes an extension of the lessons learned being a son; consequently, it is subsumed into that triumvirate of masculinity, pedagogy and investigative method. These shows endorse a discursive form of

masculinity, one formed as part of a collaborative process through the combination of these three elements. It is forged through the process of pedagogy and then activated through investigative method, which itself has an inherent pedagogical element that begins the cycle again. These men are powerful, but because they use their learned skills for the betterment of society not because it is an inalienable right. They maintain agency not by being part of the system but by assisting it from outside, coming from a combination of their ability to co-operate and their need to stand alone.

***Bones* and Masculine Female Identity**

For the purpose of this chapter I have separated the case of Brennan and *Bones* from the three other cases of masculine identity I have covered because it is atypical. It is fascinating precisely because the way Brennan's female masculinity is portrayed is often identical to the ways in which male masculinity is portrayed in the genre. Brennan, like the others, suffers from issues surrounding her lack of authority, her relationship with her father and her desire to parent. Of course these issues have a slightly different bent because Brennan is female, but this section of the chapter will look at the consistency of concepts of masculinity throughout the genre, in this instance in spite of the character's gender. This approach does not dismiss the way in which Brennan, especially early in the show's run, is treated as a somewhat failed woman but instead looks at how the aspects that suggest she is somehow less of a woman mirror almost perfectly the ways in which male protagonists are shown to be successful men. Her achievements/strengths are not dismissed within the context of the show, they are a large part of what made the show distinctive and successful, however, they are continually played for laughs and used as examples of how unlike the other women of the show Brennan truly is. She is good at her job and that is precisely why she is bad at being a woman. Interestingly there are very few female protagonists in this genre outside of the female fronted psychic shows²⁴⁹. There is a suggestion being made that leading criminal investigations is somehow a masculine skill, at least for investigations that involve the kind of empirical processes seen outside of the psychic shows. The genre seems to position

²⁴⁹ One could make a case here for *Cold Case*(CBS, 2003-2010), however I would suggest Lilly Rush's investigative method is closer to social work than the science/cold reading that other consultants practise. Each case is played out more as a story that Lilly is revealing, and Lilly the story teller, than an investigative process. Furthermore, Lilly also falls toward the more masculine end of the spectrum in her characterisation.

being rational as a particularly masculine trait, harking back to ideas explored in the last chapter and as suggested by Corner, “television naturalizes dominant perspectives”²⁵⁰.

As I have already established the dynamic between the characters in *Bones* has shifted over the show’s run and character traits explored in this section of this chapter are more prominent in the first few seasons of the show than they are in later ones, but even in later seasons these character traits are eluded to on occasion. It is also important to note that this is not the kind of female masculinity so often talked about in the last decade or so. It is not the physical masculine performance of characters like Ellen Ripley as discussed by Bordo²⁵¹ and others, and it is also not the specific gender of Halberstam’s work²⁵² but an intellectual masculinity and a masculinity of social presentation rather than strength. Brennan is not an obviously recognisable masculine character at first, however, the role she plays within the narrative, the backstory she is given and her interaction with characters who embody mainstream idea of femininity place her firmly as other. She is by no means a ‘butch’ character, but she is not feminine either, instead, she embodies a complex androgyny in which she is visually feminine but intellectually masculine. Although, it should be noted that the masculine protagonists of the other shows are also rarely express their masculinity physically. All three men discussed above (obviously not including Booth) actively avoid physical confrontation, that work is left for the institutional masculine characters who embody the hegemony; the Chos, Rigsbys and Reynolds. In the consultant procedural the masculinity that is championed is perpetually intellectual rather than physical.

Firstly, there is Brennan’s issue with authority. From the first episode Brennan rails against the FBI getting in the way of her scientific process²⁵³; she understands the reason for working with them but still feels that her work is an end unto itself. The simple discovery of unknown facts and new

²⁵⁰ Corner, *Critical ideas in television studies*. P51

²⁵¹ See Bordo’s work in Susan Bordo, *The male body : a new look at men in public and in private* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999). And ———, *Unbearable weight : feminism, Western culture, and the body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

²⁵² Halberstam, *Female masculinity*.

²⁵³ The pilot episode begins with Brennan being annoyed at having to work with the FBI again rather than continue her own work with victims of genocide.

uses for old methods are successful outcomes for Brennan, whether or not a criminal ever gets caught and convicted. She becomes angry when Booth attempts to force her hand and make her make educated guesses before solid facts can be determined. and she will not be forced to make guesses. Brennan sees herself as a pure scientist and as such her priorities are with the fulfilment of rigorous scientific practice, not guesswork. Nevertheless, she has power over the investigation; from the moment the body is discovered it is her domain. It is transported to her scientific lab space to be watched over and dissected by her equipment. It is her eye that directs the gaze of both the investigators and the audience, understanding the case through her pedagogic exposition.

However, there is also a converse side to this part of the Booth/Brennan dynamic. While Brennan is asserting her place as a reasoned and measured scientist she is also preoccupied with being allowed to be part of field work. She wants to accompany Booth when he interrogates people and arrests suspects; his is the masculinity of institutional power rather than her investigative power. Many of the early episodes have jokes revolving around Brennan asking Booth for a gun while they are in the field and Booth listing the reasons why he is not going to arm her. Brennan, much like the men already covered in this chapter, wants to find ways to assert her authority, to make space for herself within the legal institution and be in control of her work. However, unlike other masculine figures because she is, for all intents and purposes, working against her gender she wants to both maintain her place as the only person capable of performing the science needed to solve cases but also become more of an equal in the part of the work in which Booth excels. During the first few seasons when this was more pronounced it was generally used as a source of humour. Brennan would overpower a suspect who was attempting to escape or perform some other feat of physical prowess all the while the editing would frame it as a humorous moment. These scenes were usually followed by Booth admonishing her and suggesting she could have been in danger and he was capable of dealing with these situations on his own. Scenes such as these were ways to illustrate Brennan getting out of hand and moving beyond the boundaries

setup in their working relationship; she moves from intellectual masculinity to physical masculinity and this makes her a threat to Booth's identity. The show positions it as humour so that the difference between the two forms of masculinity can be illustrated and the former mode can be rendered harmless. Brennan is allowed to remain intellectually masculine because it does not detract from Booth's physical masculinity. Episodes which contained moments like these tended to counteract them with scenes between Brennan and Angela where the latter would then take it upon herself to explain that Brennan's actions were not feminine enough and allude to the idea that she was undermining any chances she might have of Booth finding her attractive.

Much of Brennan and Angela's early relationship revolves around this dynamic in which Angela, as the feminine artist, would attempt to teach Brennan how to be a better woman. She would coach Brennan on appropriate language and attire, suggest Brennan stop taking things literally and allow Booth to express himself. Angela is the successful woman against which Brennan is judged; she wears long floaty skirts, makes prominent use of make-up and consistently wears her long hair down. This is in comparison to Brennan's trouser suits, understated make-up and chunky tribal jewellery worn as a testament to her career. Angela calls people "Sweetie" and "Honey"; Brennan refers to almost everyone by their surname. By the end of the sixth season Angela is married and has given birth to a child meanwhile Brennan is still trying to navigate her complex relationship with Booth.

I established earlier in the chapter that one of the central tenets of masculine identity in the genre was the learning from and then eschewing the teachings of the father and it is no different for Brennan. At the beginning it was established that Brennan was adopted but as the show progressed her father was introduced. Much like with other masculine identified characters Brennan's mother is conspicuously absent²⁵⁴. Max Kennan/Matthew Brennan is a career criminal on the run from the FBI. While Brennan did not spend much of her childhood with her parents,

²⁵⁴ It is revealed later on that Brennan's mother Ruth died of head trauma while on the run from the FBI with her husband.

the narrative goes out of its way to suggest character traits shared between the father and daughter. Though Max has killed people even Booth defends him by claiming Max has never killed a man who did not deserve it²⁵⁵. Max is portrayed as a gentle and charming man with a very strict ethical code that allows him to be free of guilt despite violent and criminal actions. As long as Max can justify his behaviour to himself then he feels his actions are right. This is not dissimilar from the way in which Brennan sees the world. Actions are either justifiable or unjustifiable, and the difference between the two does not depend on a sense of moral duty but on irrefutable fact. However, once again she conforms to the stereotype of masculine identity formation and goes against the ways of her father. Though she understands his actions and can follow them logically, she cannot behave as he does. Though he has helped teach her to see the world in a specific way she cannot follow in his footsteps and allow her sense of ethics to take her as far outside of socially acceptable behaviour as her father has gone. Nevertheless, he is the most influential figure in the construction of her ethical framework, especially as her adoptive parents are never seen on the show, despite the years of separation Max is the only parent incorporated into the narrative.

Currently Brennan is not yet a parent, although the sixth season does end with the revelation that she is pregnant with Booth's child. However, earlier in the run of the show Brennan expresses a desire to become a mother and asks Booth if he would be willing to father her child. The driving force for this decision is to have a family in a way that she lacked growing up, a sense that she wants someone to pass on her understanding of the world to. It will be interesting to see if Brennan continues to follow in the path of other masculine characters when her role as mother becomes part of the show's seventh season.

These patterns of masculine characterisation which permeate the genre shore up the dual concepts of reason and intuition explored the previous chapter. The implicit connection made

²⁵⁵*Bones* 2.11 "Judas on a Pole"

between masculinity and pedagogy connects the masculine characters to the idea of reasoned investigative method. The masculine identity proffered by these shows is one steeped in the importance of learning and systems. Despite masculine protagonists' position outside of the institution, their desire to continue to work alongside it and become even more involved in it regardless of whether or not it affords them power is testament to this reliance on systems. They may be lone figures with inimitable investigative skills, but without the institution they would have no place to practice. Not only are their methods based on tried and tested, to a certain extent empirical, techniques, they are techniques passed down along the male line, techniques which eschew emotion in favour of facts. Despite their claims to not be part of the institution, they are, and their position as parents who continue the pedagogical familial line reaffirms this. They work to teach their children and the audience how to see the world as a collection of interwoven systems that can be broken down and understood and they exert their power over knowledge through the process of teaching. Even secondary characters such as the psychic investigators' husbands are defined in empiricist terms and much of their screen time is spent helping their wives understand rationalist ways of theorising their investigations.

The way in which masculine identity plays out in these shows further strengthens the generic framework built in earlier chapters. Just as the genre fluctuates across a continuum that moves from scientific to supernatural, from rational to intuitive, so masculinity can be mapped onto this schema. It becomes another part of the cluster that defines the genre, another consistent element to be articulated at different moments and to different degrees across the continuum. Masculinity becomes not just the opposite of femininity or the default state of the crime drama protagonist, but much like the rest of the genre the concept remains fluid, trapped between two poles but able to exist in varying degrees between them. Masculinity becomes part of the method of investigation, part of the motivation of characters. The tropes and themes which define it remain constant – fathers as teachers, analytical processes – but the ways and extent to which they are deployed is malleable. Once again by looking at masculinity the continuum method

comes into its own allowing the motifs that define the genre to remain central while still making space for differences between shows. Looking at Brennan in terms of her masculinity solidifies the pattern of masculine identity at the centre of the procedural drama. These perpetually reaffirmed tropes help create a focal point for the genre, a space around which other factors can fluctuate while still clinging to the core concepts that affirm it. Crime dramas have always been a space rife with masculine characters exerting their power; while the way in which this is done might have changed the central idea remains. Consistent masculine identities help to define the genre, anchoring it, and, even in the early 21st century, maintain a conservative patriarchal tone for the genre.

Chapter Five

Consultant Procedurals and Feminine Identity

The previous chapter explored the role that masculinity and masculine characters play - in terms of gendered behaviour rather than biological gender - within the crime procedural. This chapter takes a similar approach but instead examines how femininity is portrayed. Unlike masculinity which has a long standing history of analysis within the crime drama genre²⁵⁶, the feminine protagonist is a much newer concept. Though amateur female sleuths are by no means new, the female protagonist in crime television has a far shorter history; much has been made within academia of the importance of *Cagney and Lacey*²⁵⁷ because the female protagonist was such a rare figure. As a consequence, many of the associations that these contemporary feminine protagonists bring with them are from other genres. Elements are drawn from places such as gothic fiction and melodrama, bringing with them assumptions about what femininity means and how it functions within a narrative. With little precedence for female protagonists and the still prominent figure of the masculine investigator to contend with, the feminine investigator is saddled with longstanding tropes about female power and agency. Tropes made even less subtle by the conservative patriarchal bent of the genre. This chapter will be split into two sections each one dealing with two very different but ultimately interconnected themes that explore how femininity is portrayed in the contemporary crime drama. Part one looks at the important role the gothic plays within consultant procedurals featuring feminine protagonists. It examines what this means for the genre and how the continuum approach helps both situate it and explore the

²⁵⁶ For examples see Philippa Gates, *Detecting men : masculinity and the Hollywood detective film* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2006); Teresa Ebert, L., "Detecting the Phallus: Authority, Ideology, and the Production of Patriarchal Agents in Detective Fiction," *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* 5, no. 3 (1992)., Frank Krutnik, *In a lonely street : film noir, genre, masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1991).

²⁵⁷ See D'Acci, "The Case of Cagney and Lacey."

different ways it is articulated. The gothic becomes both a site of traditional feminine characterisation, but also an aesthetic and narrative theme which underpins the genre. Once again the crime drama presents us with a set of ideas that are articulated in different ways across the continuum yet still maintain a sense of cohesion. Though the gothic is activated in multiple ways across the genre it is at its most vivid in the psychic shows where its influence shapes not only the look of these shows but the way in which its feminine protagonists are portrayed.

The second part of the chapter looks at the role motherhood plays in these shows and how biological inheritance takes the place of pedagogy that had been so central to the shows looked at in the previous chapter. Teaching was viewed as an essential part of the empiricist outlook favoured by the 'masculine' shows, when intuition and empathy become the lynchpin of investigation, instead biology moves to the fore. Gone is the agency of teaching, learning and being afforded the right to deny that teaching and in its place is the fate of inheritance. Feminine familial relationships are built on inescapable biological determinism, and as consequence investigative practice is similarly coded. In turn biological determinism shifts into the trope of the victim-protagonist and questions of agency soon arise. Depictions of masculinity had been a space where the genre at least attempted to move toward new ideas, femininity, however, remains entrenched in old ideas about gender and power. If anything the crime dramas with feminine protagonists only serve to illustrate how conservative and mildly misogynist, or at least androcentric, the genre remains. Nonetheless, the overarching argument at the centre of this chapter is that, much like masculinity, femininity once again presents the opportunity to explore another graduated articulation around which the genre cluster revolves. Its strong adherence to age-old conventions about femininity and the effect this has on investigative practice is testament to the complex discursive nature of the textual cluster as well as the usefulness of applying the continuum method to its theorisation.

Feminine Protagonists and the Gothic

Of the shows covered in this thesis only two feature feminine protagonists. Note here, as before, I am talking about feminine protagonists rather than female. This is indicative of the crime genre as a whole, a genre that is still overwhelmingly dominated by masculine central characters. As Linda Mizejewski points out, the detective genre has always been about “the detective’s extraordinary vision”²⁵⁸, an ability to see that has traditionally always been masculine²⁵⁹. Not only do only two shows feature feminine protagonists, but both of these shows utilise similar investigative methods and aesthetic approaches. Both *Medium* and *The Ghost Whisperer* place themselves firmly within the world of the supernatural, far removed from the scientific world of *Bones* and *Lie to Me*. Furthermore, these psychic shows have a very particular investigative narrative, as examined in chapter Three, one predicated by intuition and emotion. This is one of the elements that defines them as feminine, however, what is of interest is the way this is continually aligned with the spiritual/supernatural. These are not simply feminine investigators who use intuition as part of a ‘standard’ procedural setting; their skills are aligned with magic. The pseudo-psychic shows combine intuition with science and in doing so place their investigative practice firmly on the side of reason and masculinity. These shows suggest that a method completely without science-and therefore supposedly a feminine method-must then be magical. Furthermore, while the scientific shows take place in labs and institutional spaces, the psychic shows take place in the home and in a world where the supernatural is common place. This demonstrates there is not only a shift in the way these shows solve crime, but in the world in which crime needs to be solved.

This distinction in plot and setting only serves to further illustrate how using the continuum allows for these kinds of departures while still holding strong the foundations which shore-up the

²⁵⁸Linda Mizejewski, *Hardboiled and high heeled : the woman detective in popular culture* (New York ; London: Routledge, 2004). P110

²⁵⁹ This obsession with male vision of course draws on the criticised yet seminal work, Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975).

boundaries of genre definition. The continuum makes it possible for the psychic shows to take place on the home front rather than in the lab or police precinct, without undermining their place as part of the crime procedural genre. Once again degrees of articulation become the only tenable way to theorise genre. That these shows emphasise the home over official institutional settings does not detract from their place as crime shows, because at the same time other central tenets of the genre are being emphasised in the shows, for example the central motif of a search for truth. To return to the paint metaphor from chapter Three, the psychic shows may be of a greener hue, but they contain enough colours to still be considered brown. Although these shows differ, especially aesthetically, from most of the rest of genre, this chapter's emphasis on those differences does not make the psychic shows less a part of the genre. As the conclusion of the chapter will affirm, the more these differences are explored, the more the conventions and tropes that hold the genre together become evident. These shows may seem nothing like the others, but in fact their approach to crime and to issues of gender suggest the opposite. This chapter seeks to explore how the shift toward the domestic and the emphasis on the feminine is deeply rooted in the ideas of the intuitive mapped out in chapter Three; asking what is it about the intuitive that is so overwhelmingly feminine? This section considers both narrative and aesthetic elements to help unpack how these motifs are used in both shows.

It would be impossible to attempt an understanding of these shows without taking into account the importance the gothic plays in both of them. In her work on gothic television Helen Wheatley defines gothic TV via the presence of the uncanny, "The uncanny can be found in the very structure of Gothic television: it is located in its repetitions and returns, in an aesthetic which combines traditionally realist, familiarising programme making and non-naturalistic, disorienting filming and editing..."²⁶⁰ By her definition the gothic that can be found in these two shows is in their disorienting of the crime text, in their placing of the feminine at the centre and their

²⁶⁰ Helen Wheatley, *Gothic television* (Manchester University Press, 2006). P7

depiction of the supernatural within a 'realist' domain of the procedural. It is their very uncanny nature, not simply their use of spirits, which makes these shows gothic.

Ghost Whisperer is the more obvious of the two shows when it comes to utilising the gothic aesthetic—a combination of the sublime and the grotesque according to Allison Millbank²⁶¹—though that is not to say that *Medium* does not use it, rather to a lesser extent. As the examination of the opening titles in Chapter Three established, from the start of the show *Ghost Whisperer* calls upon gothic traditions repeatedly. The imagery of spiritualists and ghostly apparitions accompanied by sinister music set a very specific tone for the show, one which is not called upon as explicitly in the main episodes but rather remains in the background, colouring and contextualising that which is shown. This being the case the gothic 'feeling' that permeates the show becomes not simply about its particular look but the kinds of stories it tells and the way it positions its protagonist during the course of this telling. Melinda is the perfect gothic heroine, trapped in a terrifying world of supernatural events that she is both victim to and the only person with the power to stop them. In fact the protagonist as perpetual victim is perhaps the biggest difference to be found between the psychic shows and the rest of the genre. Here it is important to differentiate between single episodes of shows where the protagonist is victimised, for example *Bones* when Brennan and Hodges are buried alive²⁶², from the consistent figuring of the protagonist as a victim. While shows such as *Bones* feature characters under threat, gothic crime shows consistently figure the protagonist as necessary victim.

In looking at how the masculine protagonist is figured patterns emerged surrounding ideas of knowledge and control. The masculine protagonist is appropriately trained and unique in their skills to the extent that the solving of a case revolves around their knowledge and input. Whether official agency is bestowed upon them or not they remain the driving force behind the

²⁶¹Alison Millbank, "Bleeding Nuns: A Genealogy of the Female Gothic Grotesque," in *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, ed. Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²⁶²2.9 "Aliens in a Spaceship"

investigation. For the feminine protagonist these concepts of agency and power are more complicated. On one hand, as established in previous chapters, the abilities of the psychic investigator mean they are unique and irreplaceable within the investigative team, however, their methods, based on the more passive intuition rather than reason, mean that power does not necessarily come with investigative rights. Melinda is rarely part of an institutional investigative team; her work is done on her own and without official backing. Most episodes entail Melinda having to persuade members of the public to talk to her because she has no power, no signifiers of agency such as a badge, to force them to speak with her. Instead she must use conversation and empathy to persuade victims and witnesses that she can legitimately provide help. Rather than the mandated investigation of the institution, what she is offering is more therapeutic in nature; she can heal their pain. Frequently she sits down with witnesses in their living rooms and explains not only how she knows of their plight but that she understands it, that she is like them. It is perhaps only through her dual status as both victim and investigator that she is able to achieve anything at all; in many ways it is her victimhood which is the catalyst for her ability to investigate. Allison does not face the same hurdles in her desire to investigate as she works with the District Attorney's office. However, the show still positions her as victim in every episode. This suggests that this victimisation is about more than lack of agency but rather about ways of tempering the fact that the supernatural 'gift' these women possess does afford them some kind of power, even if not any accompanying agency. These women are capable of unique insights and so within the, still hugely conservative, narrative there seems to be a persistent need to keep them under control, to not allow them to act unfettered. This control comes in the form of their involuntary victimhood.

The plot trajectory of the psychic show is also very different from the scientific shows. The psychic investigator is not presented with a crime so complex only her specialist skills are capable of solving it. Instead the plot usually unfolds in one of two ways: either she is presented with a criminal/victim rather than a crime scene and must decipher from the coded things they say to

her what crime has taken place, or she is party to the crime herself. This second approach finds the psychic investigator supernaturally made present at the crime, often psychically taking the place of the victim. In instances where the latter is the start of the investigation it is often the case that she does not know who the victim really is, only what has occurred and certain facts about the perpetrator. In both cases, however, the solving of the crime is that much more personal for the psychic investigator as she has been forced to bear witness to it; she either has felt the pain of the victim or she has spoken with them. The psychic investigator is not allowed the distance afforded other investigators through their knowledge of the crime after the fact. Instead she must exist in the present of the crime, there from its inception. There is a personal connection between her and the crime, one that usually continues throughout the investigation. Not only does she experience elements of the crime first hand but for the remainder of the episode she will be haunted by these elements; either the spirit who contacted her will keep returning or she will relive moments of the crime in persistent psychic visions. Solving the crime becomes not just about justice and ensuring the truth is known but about righting her own victimhood, ending her psychic persecution. Melinda has the tenacity and drive she does because she is doing this as much for herself and her family as she is for the original victim. Allison's investigative method functions in much the same way. Episodes have opened with Allison waking in bed, her arms bloody and covered in scratches from the psychic wounds inflicted on her²⁶³, a literalisation of the way "melodrama distorts the body to its most expressionistic ends"²⁶⁴. She investigates the crime and can persuade witnesses to speak with her because it is her crime as much as theirs. The feminine investigator is one steeped in subjective empathy, only capable of conducting any form of investigation because intuition has allowed her insight.

However, their status as victim-investigator is not just about their ability to solve crimes from a perspective of personal understanding; it is also about how the feminine investigator is being

²⁶³6.6 "Bite Me"

²⁶⁴ Brooks, *The melodramatic imagination : Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess*. P XII

positioned. This narrative theme places women who would otherwise be in a position of power in a simultaneous position of vulnerability. Here we see the parallels with the gothic heroine, for while she is a heroine and in charge of the story (often as narrator) she is still very much at the mercy of the inexplicable goings on around her. The only way these women can exert any form of control in their own lives is to follow through with their investigations into the root crime which has caused their haunting. This reflects Diane Long Hoeveler's point in *Gothic Feminism*²⁶⁵ that the Female Gothic contributes to the development of something she calls "victim feminism".

Benjamin A. Brabon and Stéphanie Genz describe this as the "[representation of] women as victims who, paradoxically, use their victimization as a means of gaining empowerment."²⁶⁶ Their victim status is an intrinsic part of their investigative power, however, I would argue that in the psychic procedural the empowerment they gain is limited.

Not only is this victimisation the catalyst for investigating crimes but it also affects the way in which the crime is investigated. While the scientific investigators keep their distance by using computers, TV screens and recordings to both document and conduct their investigation, the psychic investigators must be constantly mentally present. Reasoned investigative practice is by its very nature objective, psychic practice, on the other hand is subjective. Yet because the audience is made equally subjective through their ability to see exactly what the psychic sees, they can corroborate her version, thus the subjective is confirmed as truth. As part of this subjective process the main mode of investigation is verbal; they speak with the victim, literally. Brennan in *Bones* often suggests she is speaking with the dead but both Melinda and Allison actually do so, on a weekly basis. Their method is not based on the application of abstract knowledge but on listening to the testimony of those involved in the crime. Melinda and Allison are bearers of witness by proxy, not scientists proving a theory. This shift in the method of

²⁶⁵Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic feminism : the professionalization of gender from Charlotte Smith to the Bronte's* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

²⁶⁶Benjamin A. Brabon and Stephanie Genz, *Postfeminist gothic : critical interventions in contemporary culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).p7

detection, and in many ways the lack of detection, changes the plot of these procedural dramas. The markers of the procedural crime show remain, for example the search for the perpetrator of a wrong doing, but the ways they are drawn together and the order in which they appear is altered by this move away from proof and toward belief. Proof only becomes part of the investigation once the crime needs to be taken to an official authority for justice to be served; the psychic investigator has no need for it during their own investigative process.

As stated earlier, often these shows begin their episodes with the crime already being witnessed/experienced by the investigator or with the appearance of a victim informing the investigator of the person who has harmed them. The common narrative then forks again; either the investigator rails against trying to solve the crime, hoping to placate the spirit haunting them through other means, or the investigator is so moved by what they have witnessed/been told that they instantly begin trying to solve the crime. However, in this case the 'solving' of the crime is not always a search for the perpetrator as it would be in all other crime procedurals. These shows are not about proving the extensive and usually infallible knowledge of the consultant investigator therefore there is more scope for re-arranging the narrative progression. Many times Melinda or Allison are made aware of the victim (and sometimes the perpetrator) and spend the episode in search of the crime. In episodes when the crime is known often so is the perpetrator and the job of the investigator becomes finding the evidence that will justify their knowledge of who is guilty. Other shows are a process from one clue to the next; a wound will help find a murder weapon, knowing the weapon will then help find the murderer. In the psychic shows these clues appear out of order leading a far more labyrinthine path from discovery of crime to justice being served. This stems entirely from the emphasis placed on talking rather than empirical testing. The psychic investigator already *knows* the truth so the process of empirical testing at the centre of so many other shows, is unnecessary. The proof sought in the psychic shows is only for the benefit of the justice system. Rather than having to follow one clue to the next, each one elucidating more of the case, the psychic investigator can move in less logical patterns because their evidence comes

from personal experience or spoken testimony. They can ask questions in a way the scientific investigator cannot as their investigation is a continual dialogue. Many scholars have written on the emphasis placed on dialogue over action in genres aimed at women (mostly in work on soap operas; the connections between psychic crime shows and soaps is something I will return to later in the chapter)²⁶⁷ so it is to be expected that within the crime drama, it is the shows which foreground feminine characters that are also those which foreground speaking as a primary mode of investigation. 'Facts' on these shows are not considered as such because they have been proven through rigorous testing but because they are simply known to be; testimony has been made which affirms them as such. The psychic shows are about the ability to believe, a concept almost diametrically opposed to 'facts' found in shows such as *Bones*.

There is also a marked difference in the kinds of crimes investigated in the psychic shows, one that continues to draw on gothic themes. While other shows predominantly investigate murders and the occasional kidnapping, the psychic shows do not have the same restraints. As they have no need for a body and physical evidence, only some form of victim, the crimes solved in the psychic shows are more wide ranging. Due to Allison's connection with the District Attorney's office the crimes in *Medium* tend to be more traditional (in that they are predominantly homicides), however, *Ghost Whisperer's* Melinda often solves cases that would not even be considered crimes in other shows. As the space the characters inhabit and way in which crimes are solved becomes more personal, so the crimes themselves cross over the boundary from public to private. Rather than offenses which break public codes of law many of the crimes solved by Melinda break *private* ethical codes; infidelity and dishonesty are as valid a cause for Melinda as murder. For example the breakdown of familial relations is often the impetus behind a spirit visiting her. In episode 1.6 "Homecoming" Melinda helps the spirit of a boy who died as a result of bee stings he got while he was running away from home after being told he was adopted.

²⁶⁷For example in the 8 formal qualities of soap opera listed in Fiske, *Television culture*. P182, one of the central points is "emphasis on dialogue, problem solving and intimate conversation"

Melinda's task in the episode was to fix the relationship between adoptive son and mother. Much like many gothic novels, the crime is not one of public interest but rather a private indiscretion which has resulted in the destruction of a harmonious household. The job of the gothic heroine is to discover the root of the familial transgression and return the home to a happier state. I call these personal crimes, because while no institutional laws have been broken, the way in which the crime affects the family and the method with which it is investigated is no different. The only real change is in scope.

In capturing a murderer there is a sense that somehow this is not simply in service to the victim but to the wider community; a dangerous person has been removed from society. In discovering a husband is a philanderer there is no suggestion that it somehow leads to the betterment of society. However, this wider scope is rarely discussed in the other shows in which it should have resonance. Aside from the occasional serial killer narrative murder is still considered very much a personal affair across the genre. There is rarely mention of how solving a crime will affect any more than those involved in it. Despite the supposed inherent social good in capturing a criminal, crime is continually positioned as affecting only those directly involved. This is perhaps because the most regular motive in these shows is jealousy rather than innate homicidal tendencies; people resort to violence because of particular circumstances rather than persistent violent inclinations. Nonetheless, murder is still a crime that calls for the intervention of official institutions in a way infidelity does not. So while infidelity would seem like a more personal crime I would argue that in the consultant procedural all crimes are rendered personal. However, there is the sense that murder is more sensational. Much of the first act of most crime procedurals revolves around displaying the corpse and the way in which the act of murder has disrupted its natural appearance. The disequilibrium that the episode must rectify is manifested physically, a literal disruption of the human condition.²⁶⁸The body and the ways in which it has been violated

²⁶⁸*CSI* is perhaps most famous for this with its *CSI: Shot*, the CG images of bullets ripping through internal organs and such.

are central to most procedurals as it is the source of the data they need to solve the crime. Morgue scenes are essential to the majority of crime shows as they allow for both exposition that moves the plot along and the opportunity to display the corpse in an attempt to link the inhuman sight of the murder scene with the details of how the victim's life was led. The corpse is worked over, shot from multiple angles, fetishized²⁶⁹. The body becomes a collection of constituent parts while the 'person' it once was is mentally reconstructed by the investigative team. The crime takes on dual personae that of the physical crime which is sensationalised, conforming to an aesthetic code that the genre has built over time, and the mental aspects of the crime, the idea of getting into the mind of both the victim and the killer.

The psychic shows, on the whole, are afforded none of this as their victim still speaks and on occasion is not even the victim of a violent crime. Corpses are rarer in the psychic shows; the abject gruesomeness of death is oddly absent from these shows obsessed with the dead. This has the dual effect of making these shows seem somehow more intimate and small while at the same time using the supernatural element to create a sense of something much bigger than the melodrama of familial discord. Death is not simply something referenced at the beginning of an episode through disturbing images of bodies but a constant and at times aggressive presence. Additionally the disequilibrium is more likely a mental one, born of guilt or regret. Just as the crime is solved through mental connection with the victim, so the crime itself is more likely to be one of emotion. Where the scientific show will often open with a mutilated body the psychic show frequently holds off on using shock tactics early on. Instead, the moments of visual horror come later into an episode as the investigator becomes further embroiled in the psychological world of the victim and they increase as the investigator's own status as victim becomes more palpable.

²⁶⁹Tait, "Autoptic vision and the necrophilic imaginary in CSI."

Here is the first point at which we see the psychic crime show making far more explicit overtures to the gothic. Elizabeth Fay, in describing the gothic, writes, “[T]he gothic itself does not aspire to either amusement or self-recognition, but rather uses our willing fear to explore the realms of transgression within an apparent or approximate realism.”²⁷⁰ Fay suggests that it is the transgression of something akin to realism that is one of the defining features of the gothic. As the difference in opening scenes illustrates, the crimes of the psychic drama do not open with the fetishized and lurid examination of a corpse, but rather the disturbing of the investigator’s familial routine. While both types feature the ‘everyday’ being violated by the presence of crime, that the psychic shows depict this happening in a recurring home space is important. In the scientific shows the everyday world is violated and so the institution descends, collects the pieces and removes them to an investigative space. In the psychic shows the institution of family is violated and then the crime solved in situ, there is no space between crime scene and investigative scene. Fay’s description also touches on the idea that the thing which is transgressed, that which the crime occurs to, is also part of this ‘realism’. That the psychic investigator is as likely to investigate infidelity as murder plays into these gothic themes. Not only is the home space transgressed but its inherent familial relationships. Though the investigative method is fantastical, that which it investigates is all too probable. This suggests it is the method of detection which directs the kinds of crimes that specific shows deal with. There is a sense that certain kinds of investigator investigate certain kinds of crimes; or at least foreground different aspects of similar crimes. When *Bones* introduces infidelity it is as catalyst for murder not the central focus of the investigation. Brennan has no interest in whether a husband has remained faithful unless it affects how she reads her evidence. Melinda has little interest in evidence but rather hopes to understand what would drive a husband to be unfaithful. Just as her investigative space and methods are personal and familial, so are the crimes she investigates.

²⁷⁰Elizabeth A. Fay, *A feminist introduction to romanticism* (Malden, Mass. ; Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)., p109

In understanding these differences we must also return to the recurring theme of personal danger that the psychic investigator must overcome in order to solve the case. The fear and physical harm that they are subject to each week turns the desire to rectify others' personal crime into more than the solution to a melodramatic problem; it becomes a melodramatic problem unto itself. That the psychic investigators themselves become victims folds them into the melodramatic narrative conceits of murder and betrayal. The word melodrama seems almost too small a word to account for how the crimes these investigators solve threaten their physical wellbeing and family-the very notion that sits at the heart of the melodrama. As stated earlier I am concentrating on Lynn Joyrich's definition of melodrama, however this also goes hand-in-hand with Marcia Landy's definition, "Melodramtic narratives are driven by the experience of one crisis after another, crises involving severed family ties, separation and loss...seduction, betrayal, abandonment, extortion, murder, suicide, revenge, jealousy..."²⁷¹ As both these definitions suggest melodrama is intrinsically about feminised notions of emotional reaction to trauma; while that is seen often in the family and friends of victims in other crime shows, it is only in the psychic shows that the protagonist continually exhibits these emotional reactions. While the crime drama is inherently melodramatic, the difference is in the way it positioned, either relegated to the lives of 'others' or an essential part of the crime solving method, it is this emphasis that makes the psychic shows melodramatic. Furthermore, the crimes of the psychic shows may focus on the breakdown of familial relationships but they manifest in dangerous and physical ways. Emotional trauma, when filtered through the spiritual elements of these shows, translates into violence. Though the spirit at the centre of the episode may not have suffered physical harm, the psychic investigator is always at risk from it, taking on the responsibility for owning the damaged body. After all, the investigator is still alive and so still has the ability to work through and heal the damage. In *Ghost Whisperer* Melinda tends to be victimised by spirits so she can feel as they felt. For example in episode 2.3 "Drowned Lives" the ghost of a drowned girl attempts to drown

²⁷¹ Marcia Landy, *Imitations of life : a reader on film & television melodrama* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991). P104

Melinda in her own bath. Allison in *Medium*, on the other hand, is more likely to take the place of victim psychically. In 4.4 “Do you Hear What I Hear” Allison loses her hearing while investigating the kidnapping of a deaf girl. In episode 7.5 “Talk to the Hand”, her hand is possessed by a woman murdered as part of an organ harvesting operation. Unlike the scientific shows where wounds are never healed but rather atoned for, the wounds on the psychic shows are fixed and physical equilibrium is always restored. The psychic investigator survives the trauma in place of the victim who did not. Here again we see the idea that the psychic investigator’s purpose is often more therapeutic than judicial. These are the most victim-centric of all the shows because they are the only ones that allow the victim themselves to gain closure rather than the closure afforded only grieving friends and family in other shows; not just symbolically, but literally. Both victim and investigator are afforded the ability to somewhat redress the balance. Even if the victim must remain a spirit and the investigator must continue to live in an anticipatory state waiting for the next case to cause them harm. Still victim and investigator are symbiotically linked in a cycle of wounding and healing that the permanently detached investigators in other shows can at best only understand at a sympathetic level.

Melinda and Allison are manifestations of the combination of two differing gothic heroines set out by Elizabeth Fay; the victimised heroine of the “radical critique” works and the passive heroine of the “psychological drama” gothic²⁷². They are both victimised in their own home, subject to torture and violent attacks but they are also the ones to investigate that which threatens them. Michelle Masse suggested gothic heroines could be separated into two categories, the beater and the beaten, the genre using “women’s whole body as a pawn”²⁷³; however, Melinda and Allison take on both these roles. Through being beaten they become the beater, the ones to prevail. Nevertheless, this does not negate the masochistic undertones that run throughout these shows. These women do not want to be beaten, but they willingly accept

²⁷²Fay, *A feminist introduction to romanticism*.p122

²⁷³Michelle A. Masse, *In the name of love : women, masochism, and the Gothic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992)., p108

that it is part of their lives, that the violence they suffer is a necessary part of their work. There is something unsettling about the explicit way in which the shows invested in the feminine are also so heavily invested in portraying female suffering as the only route to agency. When Freud wrote of gothic heroines he described them as “suffering from reminiscences of trauma that have been repressed, trauma for which they may not have been actually present”.²⁷⁴ He suggests an affinity for trauma that these shows maintain, an ever-present connection to victimisation and violence; enshrining the connection between victim and saviour and the idea that these feminine investigators cannot be one without the other. They re-inscribe the ‘victim feminism’ discussed earlier and in doing so continue to produce texts which reinforce conservative outlooks and regress feminist movement. Hoeveler²⁷⁵ has argued that through female gothic novels passive-aggressive behavioural strategies are passed on which repudiate the victim status claimed by second-wave feminism. However, I would suggest that in these texts that route is made unavailable. Although these women do actively work toward resolution for the crime they are embroiled in, it is through perpetual trauma. They may be able to solve the case but even in doing so they only temporarily escape their victim status.

It would be remiss at this point not to mention the work of Judith Butler. As mentioned in the introduction Butler argued that not only was gender performative but so was sex, that it was impossible to understand biological sex without looking at it through the lens of socially constructed gender. As such, she has much to say about the concepts of the ‘feminine’ and the body. In *Gender Trouble* Butler claims that previous theories have suggested that “‘the body’ appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or [it is] the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself. In either case, the body is figured as a mere instrument or medium for which a set of cultural

²⁷⁴David Punter, *A companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999)., p260

²⁷⁵Diane Long Hoeveler, "The Postfeminist Filmic Female Gothic Detective: Reading the Bodily Text in *Candyman*," in *Postfeminist Gothic*, ed. Benjamin A. Brabon and Stéphanie Genz (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). P101

meanings are only externally related.”²⁷⁶ As seen in the psychic dramas, ‘the body’ becomes the site upon which the case is solved, upon which notions of knowledge operate. The psychic investigators perform the concept of ‘the feminine’ through the ‘feminine’ body, it is their position as vulnerable physical entity that sets them apart; femininity is performed as a bodily performance, in some way strengthening Butler’s claims. Through the physical harm they endure as part of their investigative practice these women have gendered meaning ascribed to them. Interestingly, to come back to Brennan and her female masculinity, she too performs her gender through the work of the body; however, her work is done through the performance of bodies not her own and so she is allowed to be more than a physical entity. By deconstructing the body and standing outside of it, Brennan is able to transcend the physical constraints of the feminine psychic investigator and enter the world of masculine rational knowledge. This stands in-line with Beauvoir’s construction of gender that Butler argues against, in that it suggests that “the feminine gender is marked, that the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated, thereby defining women in terms of their sex and extolling men as the bearers of a body-transcendent universal personhood.”²⁷⁷ There is a suggestion that only the feminine investigator, the one confined by the needs, limitations and dangers of owning the body, is somehow other in terms of knowledge because only they are unable to understand the world in abstract terms. In being the body and thereby being subjective the psychic investigator can only ever be the one having meaning ascribed to them and never be the one ascribing meaning; it is here that we find the crux of the difference between feminine and masculine investigators.

²⁷⁶ Butler, *Gender trouble : feminism and the subversion of identity*. P12

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p13

Aesthetics

Aesthetically the two female fronted shows also differ quite heavily from the rest of the genre in their debt to the gothic. The science based shows shift from starkly lit lab spaces to the relative 'normality' of the outside world. Scenes are either clinical or 'real' as though the world of the shows can be split in to two distinct categories, one where crime takes place and the other where it is solved. This removes the solving of crime from the everyday and instead places it in a space where knowledge is infallible and truth easy to identify. The only bridge between the 'real' and the clinical are the offices of the investigator. Brennan and Lightman both fill their semi-private spaces with artefacts of other cultures, warm wood tones filling the frame. It is interesting that in these spaces, supposedly welcoming and personal, there is little of them on show; rather they display the evidence of their learning, the proof that they are knowledgeable. The psychic shows have this same dual approach to the world but the way in which it is split is different. Instead, they move from the warm and homely to the dark, oppressive and violent. Oddly, the non-psychic shows, despite their preoccupation with murder, are rarely violent shows; violence happens before the action of the show takes place. Violence is sometimes alluded to, reconstructed or viewed in flashback but never shown first-hand or in the present. It is forever distanced, at one remove from the investigator. The psychic shows, however, as detailed above, are intense and dangerous in their depiction of crime solving. As the protagonist becomes victim so the space they inhabit within the show becomes a space of danger. While the scientific shows move from the 'real' to a controlled space, the psychic shows move from the 'real' to the dangerous. The 'real' in this case is the predominant setting of both these shows, the home. The home is shown as a warm and inviting place with both women living in relatively spacious houses built of soft looking woods and pastel coloured upholstery. They are different from the offices of Brennan or Lightman, despite the characters spending equal amounts of screen time in them. Rather than spaces that allude to work, they are purported as spaces decidedly *outside* of work. It is this that

makes their perpetual transgression even more upsetting. They share the space with their families, both of them mothers to young children. This fills the home space with child related items, toys litter floors, pictures drawn by children are attached to refrigerators. These homes are depicted as safe spaces.

The most featured rooms in both houses are the kitchen and the protagonists' bedroom. These rooms carry with them inferences about the connection between the feminine and the domestic; each one is ensconced in ideas of providing care that have long been inscribed as feminine²⁷⁸. The kitchen is a communal space; morning and evening conversations take place here as the family discuss their lives with each other. The kitchen is also a chaotic space but in a different way from the psychic domain the investigator experiences. It is a welcome chaos, one of laughter and familial bonding. In the kitchen the life outside of crime solving is paramount. In this space the psychic protagonist is wife and mother rather than crime solver. The kitchen is a space for humour in the narrative.



Figure 25: Screenshot of the Kitchen in *Medium*

The bedroom has a very different role; it is the space where the investigator discusses her work with her husband. The husband here is taking on the role of the 'hero' often seen in gothic fiction.

²⁷⁸ For further work on this see scholars such as Joanne Hollows and her work in Joanne Hollows, *Domestic cultures* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2008).

He combines “Enlightenment reason and Romantic emotion,”²⁷⁹ allowing the husbands to be both the voice of logical, empirical thought and emotional support for their wives. While protagonists in other shows have teams of people they discuss their work with, the psychic investigator most often speaks with her husband, and most of those conversations take place in the bedroom. The bedroom becomes both a haven for the investigator but also the space most likely to be violated; many of their most frightening encounters happen while they are asleep. Still the bedroom is usually shot with low, warm lighting and soft tones. Despite the danger they face there it is also a place where they can seek solace, the place where their confidante is always willing to listen and help them work through the case. If the stock in trade of the psychic investigator is conversation, then it is in the bedroom that they hone their skills, working through with their husbands what they understand about their cases and victims. It is there that they voice their fears and form their opinions.

There is a question here of the split between the public and the private as mentioned earlier in the chapter in relation to the kinds of crimes investigated. While the masculine investigator conducts his investigation in public, under the watchful eye of the institution, much of the work of the psychic investigator is done in private. This idea is reflected in the difference between the personal spaces detailed above. While Brennan and Lightman retire to their publicly owned offices to find respite, the psychic investigators do much of their work in the home. Much like the crime they solve, the methods they use are private ones, to the extent that their investigation often takes place in truly the most private of spaces, the mind. This blurring of public and private has markers of the soap opera. Christine Geraghty has explained that the concerns at the heart of the soap opera, “[are the] commonly perceived split between the public and the personal, between work and leisure, reason and emotion, action and contemplation.”²⁸⁰ The psychic shows are already allied with ideas of emotion over reason, contemplation over action, so it stands to

²⁷⁹Fay, *A feminist introduction to romanticism*. p109

²⁸⁰Christine Geraghty, *Women and soap opera : a study of prime time soaps* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991)., p40

reason that much of its narrative would take place in the personal rather than public sphere. These are crime shows aimed at a female market and as such they draw on narrative modes that have established female interest. They foreground the private and complicate notions of the public in a way the crime drama rarely attempts. The emphasising of the private/public binary 'feminises' the psychic crime show far more than the mere presence of a female protagonist would, after all, *Bones* never attempts to tackle the issue. The psychic dramas bring the crime into the home and in doing so make the home, traditionally a feminine space, a valid space for investigation. Note there is a difference between the home as a space where investigative work is routinely practiced and the home as a space to be investigated for clues as is the case in other crimes dramas. In other shows homes are entered, clues are found and removed to be studied; in the psychic show the home is the constant site of investigation. Though Allison does work for the district attorney, much of her work with them is an afterthought once she has worked through the case at home. The institution is there to provide her with extra information, not a space for her to do her work. After all, most of her work takes place inside a non-physical psychic space, a space more private than any other. The psychic investigator works in a world of emotion, thoughts and talk. The distinct lack of physical evidence found in most cases results in the only possibly route for investigation being verbal and emotional. These methods depend on processes which cannot truly happen in public. When Allison or Melinda *feel* the anguish or anger of the victim this can only happen within their own minds. Furthermore, when they speak to deceased victims via psychic connection this too occurs outside of the realm of the public. Once the crime has been solved and the relevant parties have been informed of the outcome then the private methodology consequently becomes public. What was personal must be shared if justice is to be done. Psychic investigative methods centre on the movement from personal to public, emotion to reason, contemplation to action. Each of these is a move from private investigative practice to public consequences of investigation; the public unmasking of truth. For while investigation can

be a private process its impact must always be public, after all the very reason behind the investigator's work is to (at least symbolically) restore some sense of public safety.

This shift across the continuum of the investigation from the public arena to the private is one of the greatest differences in the crime drama. However, by the very nature of the way the continuum functions, this is not to suggest that only the psychic shows perform investigation as a private process or that those shows never make use of public empirical practices. As I have suggested before the continuum approach looks at genre in terms of degrees, how important certain elements are at different points. In fact, it is in instances such as this that the method of employing a continuum becomes most useful. While the psychic shows may centre on private modes of investigation other shows often incorporate it into their public work. Whether it be moments coded as somewhat unorthodox but necessary (such as using a hunch rather than physical evidence or the coercing of a confession through interrogation rather than through scientific proof), or occasions where the crime is positioned as affecting the investigator on a private level, the other shows along the continuum are not averse to depicting the private sphere and utilising it as part of investigative practice. It is more a question of scale. In actuality the private sphere is quite important to the non-psychic shows as it contextualises their work. For the psychic investigator private space is a space of work, for the scientific investigator it is the space that allows respite from work, a space where transgressions are most dangerous and troubling. In both cases the private sphere is somewhat sacred, however, the ease with which it is violated (and the need for that violation in order to catalyse investigation) shifts as one moves along the continuum. The same can be said for the victimisation of the protagonist. On a weekly basis the psychic investigator is positioned as victim, this happens less frequently for other investigators but it does happen. In fact victimisation of the investigator is the go-to narrative for most sweeps episodes²⁸¹. Brennan has been buried alive, Lightman has gone into a near-collapsing coal mine²⁸²,

²⁸¹ Sweeps Weeks are a tri-annual period in American TV broadcasting when the ratings are documented so the network can determine their charges for advertising space within episodes. The Sweeps periods are

Jane has been held captive by the serial killer who killed his family²⁸³. The private sphere also appears more frequently in investigators' back stories. *Psych* often features Shawn's home life in both the past and present as a way of explaining his methods. While his work life in the present is distinctly public in its execution, the way in which he learned his skills is framed as familial and so must always be tethered to the private sphere, returning to it each episode to gain further advice from his father and hone his skills.

The private or personal is also essential for the non-psychic crime shows as a way of establishing a separation between the victim and the investigator. In most episodes of these shows where the investigator is not being victimised there is a strong sense of 'us and them', with the 'them' being the victims of crime. The victims' space is always part of the private sphere and a space constantly in need of protection as it is always open to transgression and violation. The separation is essential for creating any kind of faith in the institution. If the private sphere is one where deceit, violence and murder are recurring problems then the institution created to solve them must be 'other'. As previously stated this distinction, this separation, is something not afforded the psychic investigator. Consequently, investigators from non-psychic shows become protectors of the private sphere. They are brought in to examine it from the outside, cure its ills and return to the public space; a space in which their actions are for the greater good and they are held accountable for all they do. To this extent part of their work is bringing transgressions which occur in the private sphere into the public sphere so that the perpetrator can be publicly acknowledged and the crime not remain hidden. This of course calls to mind the work of Habermas²⁸⁴. In his theorisation the way the investigation is portrayed in the consultant procedural means it falls into the realm of the public sphere; it is where public opinion is formed and where problems are

February, May and November. In order to charge higher prices many shows air 'special' episodes to draw in higher audience numbers during that period.

²⁸²3.5 "Canary's Song"

²⁸³3.22 "Rhapsody in Red"

²⁸⁴Jurgen Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere : an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

solved. The sphere of public authority, the normal purview of the policing institution is not really invoked. The public sphere in this instance is the place where truth is voiced for all to hear and the guilty are named. The workings of the sphere of public authority are left to the judicial practices that happen after episode's end. As the following chapter on justice will explore, the work of the police is very different from the work of the judicial system. In these shows the work the police do is very much part of the public sphere, perhaps in most part due to the presence of the consultant investigator, someone who is officially unofficial, someone private made public.

In this manner the crime genre is a constant battle between what is public and private, what can remain a secret and what must be told for the good of all. At the end of the continuum where we find the psychic investigator much of the investigation remains private and becomes public only at the end when 'justice' is served. The investigation takes place in private spaces and no official records are made. For shows at the other end of the continuum the entire investigative method is one of 'making public' as the combination of interrogation and scientific testing bring the life of the victim and perpetrator into both the public sphere and the machine of the institution. The degree to which the private is held sacred is an indicator as to which end of the continuum a show resides, however the genre as a whole balances on the idea that public knowledge is the only way to ensure truth and honesty in society. Only through eventually making public-quite literally through the voicing of secrets-can the case be considered solved. The purpose of any investigation is reveal that which has been obfuscated from public knowledge.

Similarly, the gothic also makes an appearance to different degrees across the continuum. Its centrality in the psychic shows is intrinsically linked with the victimisation of the investigator and the prominence of the private sphere; however that does not predicate its absence in other crime procedurals. In fact some gothic elements are still very frequent within some of the non-psychic shows. Both *The Mentalist* and *Bones* draw quite heavily on gothic imagery if not gothic narrative. *The Mentalist* evokes the gothic in its darker moments, both literally and figuratively. As Jane

struggles with his desire to uncover Red John and exact his revenge the show will delve in to darkened rooms accompanied by ominous music. Even in less obvious narrative moments much of Jane's work is carried out in secret corridors and booby-trapped old houses. Some of this perhaps stems from the positioning of Jane as faux-psychic resulting in many of his techniques taking on the look of the psychic medium. This connection to ideas of the spiritual makes it easier for the show to indulge its gothic elements. Hidden rooms and undisclosed fortunes are par for the course in *The Mentalist* and part of Jane's method is to indulge the more theatrical side of uncovering these secrets. Consequently, the gothic is explicitly referenced but not a part of the fabric of the show's investigative practice. The play of investigation that Jane participates in is decidedly gothic in its undertones, but his actual methods are far from it. *Bones* is less forthcoming in its use of the gothic but elements still remain. Rather than the theatricality of *The Mentalist*, *Bones* indulges in the macabre side of the gothic, revelling in the imagery of death. The very idea of the corpse and the possibilities for its display are central to the opening of almost every episode of the show. While most crime procedurals deal with death few delight in the gore and cling to the spectre of it quite as much. The gothic becomes a constant touchstone across the crime drama genre and like other elements its articulation helps position shows in the continuum. While its heavy presence in psychic shows creates the greatest sense of difference between the shows, it is still a matter of shifting clusters of reference points rather than substantive difference. The psychic shows are still very much crime shows.

Motherhood and Biology

The previous chapter dealt with the role fathers play in the lives and methods of the procedural investigator, their position as pedagogical catalysts for the investigator's desire to investigate. However, as we enter into the less scientific shows another interesting shift occurs, one which leaves the father behind and instead focuses on the mother as antecedent to investigative method. Not only is the shift one from the paternal to the maternal it is also a shift from the pedagogical to the biological, further reinforcing the psychic shows' connection between empathetic –and decidedly female- modes of investigation and a lack of autonomy. The psychic investigator must investigate because her 'gifts' are part of her genetic makeup. The biological impetus for both mode of investigation and the very need to become an investigator remove much of the agency that protagonists of other shows flaunt. Jane, Shawn, Brennan and Lightman all help, ultimately, because they choose to. They may have ulterior motives but the choice is still theirs and each of them has at one time or another chosen to no longer do it (though, of course, they always come back). The psychic investigators, those with empathetic and feminine approaches to investigation are not afforded this choice. Moreover, this lack of choice is situated firmly in their womanhood, in their position as daughters and mothers.

Femininity in these shows is ultimately linked with motherhood, the daughter functioning as a biological extension of the mother. As Steph Lawler wrote in her work on mothers and daughters

“Through the notion of an inherited self, the women conceptualized themselves and their daughters as firmly tied within the kin system. The existence of this inherited material within the self suggests a fixity to that self through a tie with the past which *seems* unalterable.”²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵Steph Lawler, *Mothering the self: mothers, daughters, subjects* (London: Routledge, 2000), p59

The inescapability of this 'fixity' is a central tenet of how psychic shows express the mother-daughter relationship and illustrate the centrality that fate and determinism play in their idea of what it means to be feminine. In the previous chapter I examined how sons are seen as taking on their father's teachings while rejecting their father's chosen lifestyle; there is a power in this decision, in the ability to reject, to choose how one uses what is passed on. These women lack that choice as the 'gift' from their mothers is not a set of skills but a biologically determined fate. They cannot pick and choose what they do with their inheritance but instead must do as their mothers did or suffer the consequences. Their lot in life is inescapable but more than that it is a physical part of them from birth; it is somehow a manifestation of their femininity. Furthermore, it suggests that women are forever linked to their mothers, forever part of a maternal chain that cannot be broken; they were daughters and they will be mothers, just as their mothers were. These shows do to the consultant procedural what Adrienne Rich did to the study of feminism, they foreground a matrilineage. In her writing on motherhood²⁸⁶ Rich discusses evidence of previous matriarchal societies but continually links them to ideas of magic and power, here in the psychic crime shows we see this continued. Women are seen as sources of power but a version steeped in nature and magic rather than societal agency. As she states: "Throughout most of the world, there is archaeological evidence of a period when Woman was venerated in several aspects, the primal one being maternal; when Goddess-worship prevailed, and when myths depicted strong and revered female figures"²⁸⁷. The mother was understood as an important but somehow magical figure, her ability to give and sustain life not entirely understood. In the psychic crime drama this correlation between revered woman and magical mother figure continues as the psychic investigator exists purely on those terms. Yet she is magical only because of her role in the constant cycle of mother and child. There is determinism at play here, a sense that femininity and motherhood are somehow one and the same. Masculinity and fatherhood are linked in the other procedurals, but as part of the process of growing up, as a way of defining oneself. Becoming

²⁸⁶Adrienne Rich, *Of woman born : motherhood as experience and institution* ([S.I.]: Virago, 1977).

²⁸⁷Ibid. p93

masculine in those shows is defined as finding one's own way to use what one is taught. The masculine protagonist forges their own path and creates their own space in the world. In the case of femininity and motherhood it is instead about surrendering to the inevitable. In the conservative world of the crime show the magic and mystery of maternal power is instead rendered an albatross around these women's necks. Female, gynocentric power is transformed into something dangerous and inescapable for the possessor. Ultimately these crime shows suggest that masculine characters have a future they can choose, while feminine characters have a future they must follow.

Psychic Investigators as Daughters

If the crime drama positions its feminine investigators as devoid of choice and dictated to by their position in a biological chain, how is the literal relationship between mother and daughter depicted? Neither Allison nor Melinda's mother play a large role in their daughter's lives as portrayed in the present day narrative of the shows. However, both mothers are presented as having had great influence over their daughters as they were growing up. Interestingly, much like the father figure in other crime procedurals, these women act as cautionary tales for their children, examples of what happens when investigative talent is not used properly or ignored. Marilyn Strathern has suggested, "The reproductive model plays off heredity and development through a contrast between the relationships implied in parenting and ancestry and the individuality that must be claimed by and for the child as the outcome of these relationships."²⁸⁸ The model the procedural follows is one in which the masculine protagonist claims his individuality without issue, calling on his ancestry but not dictated by it. However, for the feminine protagonist there is little space for this, and in fact those women who attempt to assert individuality away from their biological inheritance are punished.

Both shows depict psychic ability as passing through the maternal line. There is a slight quirk in the appearance of Melinda's son in later seasons of *Ghost Whisper*, but I will tackle that issue later. Nevertheless, it is through maternal biological lines that psychic power is passed. This creates a dichotomy in the figure of the mother, one of both power and powerlessness. The power comes from their ability to create, their very existence as mother, giver of life. However, they are also incapable of saving their daughters from a fate much like their own; and it is a fate for in the case of both mothers they tried to rally against their 'gift' by either ignoring it or using it

²⁸⁸Marilyn Strathern, *Reproducing the future : essays on anthropology, kinship and the new reproductive technologies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p165

wrongly. In *Ghost Whisperer* Melinda believes her mother, Beth, does not even possess psychic abilities until the mid-season one episode 'Melinda's First Ghost'²⁸⁹. In the episode Melinda discovers that her mother has spent her life trying to deny her powers and in doing so also tried to suppress Melinda's growing abilities. This has led to a strained relationship between the two and a breakdown of the familial bond not only between Melinda and Beth but between Beth and her own mother. The denial of her powers, an essential biological manifestation of her femininity has resulted in the loss of the physical manifestation of her motherhood, the relationship with her daughter. Instead Melinda finds a closer bond with her grandmother, a woman who has embraced her biological fate. For Melinda and her grandmother the 'gift' is something to be proud of, no matter the personal danger that can result from it. For Beth it is a curse, a part of herself she wants to deny despite the consequences of such actions. Beth is punished for this denial; she is symbolically removed from the maternal line and usurped by her own mother. It is from her grandmother that Melinda learns about her 'gift', its importance, and how to use it; only because of the guidance of her grandmother is she able to become the investigator that she is. This is in some ways a skewed echo of the relationship the masculine investigators have with their fathers.

Allison in *Medium* has an almost identical relationship with her mother. She too believes that the psychic 'gift' skipped a generation and has no idea her mother also possesses powers. Again it is left to the grandmother to teach Allison about her psychic abilities and again this leads to a fractured mother-daughter relationship. Moreover, both Allison and Melinda, as children, were told by their mothers that they themselves did not possess any special abilities. Not only did these mothers try to rid themselves of their biological fate by denying it, but they tried to free their daughters from the self-same fate. Both shows are quick to affirm that this is impossible. In order for these women to lead any kind of decent life they have to embrace who they are and what they are capable of. Only in succumbing to their fate and doing what must be done, no matter the

²⁸⁹1.15

personal sacrifice, are they able to have what their mothers failed to have, a healthy relationship with their children.

The difficulties of Melinda's relationship with her mother becomes even more interesting in the third season when Melinda learns that the father she believed to be dead was not her father at all²⁹⁰. Following on from this discovery Melinda spends much of the season trying to find her father, a man she believes may be malevolent. What is of interest here is the lack of paternal influence in Melinda's life and the consequences of its introduction. A man with similar supernatural abilities is constructed as being both powerful and potentially evil. Melinda, using her abilities to nurture while being rendered perpetual victim is constructed in almost opposition to this. She is not dangerous because she is feminine. Just as the masculine investigators lacked maternal figures so the opposite is true of the feminine investigators. In the feminine world of the supernatural masculine figures with their inherent power and agency would be dangerous if they were in possession of psychic ability. Instead Melinda's world is a feminine one; she was brought up by women, works with women, the only consistent men in her life are her husband and Professor Payne introduced in the second season. Her gynocentric life only serves to emphasise how preoccupied *Ghost Whisperer* is with all things feminine. Melinda is a woman who grew up with strong female influences in her life only to become an adult ruled by her own femininity.

The masculine influences that do exist are there as a counterpoint but never a controlling force. The men in *Ghost Whisperer* not only believe wholeheartedly in Melinda's abilities and her need to use them, but they assist her. As explored in the previous chapter, masculine characters that do appear in psychic crime dramas have very specific support roles to fill and rarely do they get to be pro-active in any real capacity. They are safe because they are 'normal'. They are sounding boards and voices of reason, empirical counterpoints but simultaneously willing to participate in the protagonist's method of investigative practice rather than try to make it their own. That is

²⁹⁰3.18 "Pater Familias"

rather than impart their empirical point of view through scientific method, dismissing the empathetic approach central to the psychic shows, they indulge it. The psychic shows still very much foreground feminine investigative practise, however, that practise is essentially one with strictly defined gender roles. Much of the screen time of any masculine character in *Ghost Whisperer* is devoted to long conversations with Melinda, helping her incorporate their insights into her methods. Much the same can be said of the men in *Medium*. Women are the central guiding force of the psychic crime drama and as such the job of male characters is to fit into their world. However, this is not the same as suggesting these feminine characters have agency.

Allison has more interaction with men through her work with the District Attorney; however, this is then counterbalanced by her three daughters. The world of *Medium* is slightly more gender balanced, although the skew toward men as part of the institution while women remain somewhat outside of it is telling. Allison too never knew her father and so her younger years were spent mostly in the presence of women, bar a half-brother who makes occasional appearances on the show. Interestingly he also possesses the gift that has been passed down from their mother, thus making him a somewhat feminised man, at least in the way the show equates psychic power with femininity. The men Allison works with perform much the same function as the men of *Ghost Whisperer*, ranging from little more than a sounding board to facilitating her investigative methods by providing access and information she cannot gain through psychic means. Still, despite the greater presence of an investigative institution in *Medium* there is still an overwhelming reliance on Allison's abilities. It is often suggested that the reason she has succeeded so well in her career at the District Attorney's office is because she utilises her abilities. She only becomes a successful woman, in a world filled with men, because she embraces a side of her femaleness her mother wanted to repress. Much like the success of the masculine investigators, the psychic investigator is successful because she defies her parents, but this is in conjunction with an embracing of her feminine biological fate.

As Wives and Mothers

An additional part of the way the psychic, feminine, investigator defies her mother is by becoming a mother herself and treating her children as she wished her mother had treated her. As Lawler details in her work on mothers and daughters, “The dual processes of ageing and of becoming a mother oneself heightened a ‘recognition’ of the mother ‘in’ the self – even of the mother’s self overwhelming one’s own”²⁹¹. However, rather than seeing their mother in themselves they see their grandmother, the figure who taught them how to be a successful woman. The psychic investigator ensures that her familial bonds stay intact and that part of her success is having a successful family. This is at odds with the masculine protagonists who are not allowed a consistent relationship with their family; they can be fathers but none of them are husbands. Motherhood – more importantly ‘good’ motherhood – becomes a marker for being a ‘good’ woman. No matter that by having children she is leaving them susceptible to the same fate that has befallen her. To the psychic investigator, in opposition to the thinking of her mother, having psychic abilities is a ‘gift’; therefore, the danger and emotional distress they suffer is worthwhile and passing it on to their children becomes something to be proud of rather than deny. Their biological difference has shaped their lives and they see no choice but to embrace it in order to be happy. Both women pass on their gifts to their children, with varying results.

Allison has three daughters. Much could be made of the fact that the psychic show that has the strongest connection with the masculine institution also has the highest number of female characters with psychic abilities; however, the fact that the show is based on an actual woman makes the argument a little muddier. Nevertheless, Allison’s three daughters, Ariel, Bridgette and Marie have, throughout the course of the series, exhibited psychic ability. Ariel, the eldest is most often depicted as having psychic visions, although she is rarely happy about her gift. Episodes that

²⁹¹Lawler, *Mothering the self : mothers, daughters, subjects*. P61

focus on her psychic ability generally portray her as wishing she was 'normal' and seeing the powers she possesses as a burden²⁹². It is Allison's job to get her daughter to embrace the powers she was born with and learn to accept herself. Rather than the way her mother treated her, Allison praises her daughter's abilities and attempts to make her see the positive in them. Bridgette, the middle daughter is completely accepting of her powers, treating them as just one of many genetic traits gained from her mother. Her matter of fact approach to having psychic powers is one of the sources of comedy within what is usually an intensely dramatic show. Youngest daughter Marie is at the age where her powers are only just becoming evident and so the plots that involve her tend to be about Allison explaining to the young child the significance of her dreams and power that she wields. *Medium* presents a world in which a woman's choice to embrace her femininity wields positive results. Power is passed down from mother to daughter, but only through being properly trained by a maternal figure can there be any sense of control. Without that influence the 'gift' these women have becomes either overwhelming or redundant; it can undermine their lives and destroy that which matters to them. However, with the right support and a proper understanding of what their legacy means, they can assert a modicum of control over their innate victimhood. There is no escape from the oppressive nature of the 'gift' these women possess, but by being taught to understand it, to embrace the servitude to the biological fate that awaits them they maintain the ability to have some say in how and when the gift is used. Furthermore, they retain their connection to the maternal line which condemned them to this fate. By submitting to it they at least have other people with which to share the burden.

Ghost Whisperer presents a similar idea, but rather than daughters Melinda has a son, Aiden.

Much of the final season of the show is focused on whether he had psychic powers and therefore what kind of fate would befall him and what role he played in the complex supernatural story arch

²⁹²For example in episode 6.8 "once in a Lifetime" Ariel has visions that suggest her new boyfriend might have been involved in a murder

that played out across the season. Before he is even born she is told by 'the watchers' (supernatural overseers that appear throughout the series) that he will be special and more powerful than her²⁹³. Aiden is an empath (can feel other's feelings) as well as having the ability to see ghosts and other supernatural beings. Unlike Allison, Melinda chooses not to tell her son of his biological heritage as she sees it as dangerous. This, of course, causes problems as Melinda is attempting to derail the natural passing of her 'gift'. Consequently many storylines involve Aiden's life being in danger because of his 'gift' and the role he plays in the supernatural goings on. His purpose in the spiritual battle between good and evil make him more than the psychic investigator Melinda has become. As a male with these powers his job becomes more than the task of helping people 'pass over', rather his job is to maintain the safety of humanity. Or, if improperly trained, be the destruction of it. There is an obvious gender divide here, one that plays on the idea of the importance of sons rather than daughters, of male heirs and their roles within powerful families. Aiden is fated for greater things than Melinda, things deemed 'important' in a way that Melinda's work never was. While Allison's daughters are set for a life much like hers, the future that awaits Aiden is one of great responsibility for the fate of the world.

The feminine consultant investigator is an interesting figure within the contemporary procedural drama. Unlike her masculine counterpart who, as established in the previous chapter, appears at different points across the genre, she only really appears in the psychic shows. A case could be made for Angela in *Bones* as another manifestation of tropes of femininity cultivated in this genre-and her affinity for emotion over reason does speak to this-but her lack of victimisation somewhat undermines this. The feminine investigator is of a different order to the feminine character seen in Angela or *Psych*'s Jules because becoming the protagonist shifts the way the feminine investigator's character is inflected. As part of the team-*The Mentalist*'s Van Pelt for example-she is there to counteract the masculinity of the consultant, to offer up alternatives to their reasoned investigative method. However, ultimately they are powerless, their job is, as

²⁹³4.23 "The Book of Changes"

discussed in chapter Three, to humanise the victims and add emotion to the cases. When the entire investigative process is steeped in emotion and empathy and reason is given the backseat this becomes a powerful position for the feminine investigator. In order for empathy to be the lead investigative method it seems it has to be couched in terms of magic. Women are not more skilled, they are supernatural. Secondary masculine figures only differ from their primary counterparts in that they have very little agency. Secondary feminine investigators are stripped of the 'magic' their primary counterparts are encoded with because there is no agency that needs to be restricted.

Despite many inroads the crime drama is still not the most progressive in terms of gender politics and so we also find a protagonist tempered by perpetual victimhood. The psychic investigator is a victim of her own biology, forced constantly to remedy her own persecution or face the consequence of an unhappy life. Either she is perpetually at the mercy of a subjective investigative cycle or she can live her life as her mother did, alone. To be a successful feminine protagonist is to sacrifice, to take on the pain of victimhood and through empathy find resolution.

These shows illustrate the articulation of empathetic femininity – for example that seen in Angela in *Bones* or Foster in *Lie to Me*-taken to the nth degree. For those characters their feminine approach to investigation is forever subsumed by the power of masculine reason. The psychic shows are not that different from the other shows in the genre; they are simply more extreme version of the same idea. Angela recreates people through art and computer imagery so that their faces, their personalities can be seen, the psychic investigators allow them to truly manifest. Foster uses changes in tone and timbre of voice to tell if a person is lying, the psychic investigators use language to talk to the victim. In the psychic shows the position of protagonist heightens these empathetic approaches and as a reaction her agency is curbed. However, their methods are not greatly removed from one another. By using the continuum to place these shows into a wider spectrum these similarities become more evident. The distinctive psychic shows which somewhat

complicate the genre with their emphasis on magic and evil can be folded back into the genre. When compared with other feminine characters a set of conventions becomes clear. The genre's preoccupation with intuitive feminine empathy positioned alongside rationalist masculine empiricism becomes unavoidable. Despite a myriad of aesthetic differences and twists in the usual narrative trajectory there is a consistency to these gender portrayals that transcend them all. The difference is in fact, as Derrida²⁹⁴ concluded, part of the very notion of repetition; as these specific constructions of gender and its attributes are reiterated, that practice has built into it an innate difference. As discussed early in the thesis, Derrida suggests that in order for a sign to signify, in this case these signs signify what it is to be masculine or feminine, it must be repeatable in a multitude of contexts, only then does it have meaning. These constructions of gender only become overarching, meaningful, constructions of gender because they are reiterated and because in each iteration is variation without losing the core concept. Nicholas Royle explained, "Iterability thus entails both 'repetition' (sameness) and 'alterity' (difference)."²⁹⁵ The continuum method finds a way to understand what could be a contradiction and bring these texts together; ultimately agreeing with Derrida that it is in the difference in repetition that uniformity, and therefore meaning, is found.

²⁹⁴ Derrida and Johnson, *Dissemination*.

²⁹⁵ Royle, *Jacques Derrida*. P68

Chapter 6

The Centrality of Symbolic Justice

Justice would seem like an apt endpoint for a thesis on crime drama, it is after all the culmination of the criminal investigation process. However, justice in the consultant procedural is a muddy and multi-faceted term. Justice in this instance becomes many things at once, a process, an idea, an end point. Justice serves many masters and performs many jobs while at the same time becoming the narrative glue that holds the genre together. This chapter explores the way in which the prevalent interpretation of justice in these consultant procedurals is played out, attaching them not only to other shows within the genre, but, to a long-running heritage of crime fiction. Approaches to justice not only hold the genre together but maintain conventions that have been part of the genre for decades. However, in this period justice shifts from how it has previously been evoked (as some form of social panacea) to becoming a catch-all term for a kind of therapeutic closure which has become the norm for the procedural drama. Justice as the term would generally be understood in the abstract is rarely seen in the consultant procedural, in its place is the consultant's cyclical struggle for personal fulfilment and a complete disavowal of the social implications of crime. As this chapter will illustrate, the consultant procedural is crime drama turned inward.

Justice, even in the abstract, is a complex concept. It suggests a righting of wrongs, the delivery of punishment; its definition, the administration of what is just, is succinct but its connotations wide and varied. At the centre of trying to deconstruct not only what justice means in terms of these shows, but how it is administered are two problems, first what is 'just' in the context of these shows, and secondly for whom is this justice relevant? From the first chapter it has been established that the consultant procedural is not about the inner workings of the institution; the system of law enforcement is a backdrop, not the focus. This being the case justice must be

approached in much the same way. The justice at stake in these shows is not focused on the system of justice, on the administration and inner working of an institution which metes out punishment and oversees its delivery; rather, these shows are about a need to solve crime. They are fascinated with the victim rather than the criminal, consequently, justice also becomes victim-centric and the idea of what is 'just' moves from legally statuted definitions to a personal need to see those who have wronged be named. The system is removed and in its place is the personal. As such, punishment, rehabilitation and regimented processes for dealing with the guilty are rarely mentioned in any of these shows; instead what holds more weight, what is endlessly sought and finally seen as the appropriate culmination of investigation, is the discovery of truth. In the logic of the consultant procedural victims deserve to have their victimisers publicly known; only then can their case be put to rest. What is just is the identifying of the perpetrator. As I will detail later in the chapter, actual legal justice is signified but never shown, rather, confession becomes shorthand for conviction. It is in this emphasis on truth that the real bent toward the personal rather than institutional comes to the fore.

There has always been a 'personal' element to the solving of crime, cops who take the case to heart, but by stepping away from the institution and focusing on the victim rather than the criminal the sense of abstract, social justice is further diminished. The nineties shows like *Law & Order* which grappled with the moral and ethical implications of conviction are long gone. No longer is there a sense of a system set up to ensure punishment, because the acts of the criminal are not what really matters; only that these acts get discovered. Procedure is central to the investigative method at the heart of the consultant procedural, but there is a personal desire for truth which drives them. Consequently, the investigation of crime becomes a therapeutic endeavour, its purpose to instigate 'closure' for those affected by the crime. The very concept of justice shifts and what is 'just' is not punishment, but instead the ability to move on, to exist in a space that is post-trauma, a space where the trauma has been acknowledged and then dealt with.

As has been suggested throughout, the procedural is about knowledge, who has it and how they use it. Knowledge is both the ultimate goal and the means to achieving that goal. It is perhaps a rather obvious point, but each episode of the procedural drama is built around the mystery, for both the protagonists and the viewers. Watching is a process of discovering small parts of the truth along with the investigators until the bigger picture can be understood; the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Lies become the obstacles that must be overcome, attempts by guilty people to derail the investigation; there is nothing worse in the procedural than a liar. Yet lies are the very centre of the narrative in procedurals; they build the story and the characters. Crime procedurals are odd in that they are founded on the very notion of the unreliable narrator; nothing in these shows is to be trusted until the protagonist investigator has deemed it true. Through the many investigative methods illustrated in this thesis, the same purpose resounds, gaining knowledge and finding truth. As these stories progress supposed truths are told, characters claim to be one thing before revealing themselves as another, yet the investigators themselves are reticent to label anything as truth until proven. Each step in the investigation ends with the consultant's proclamation of fact.

However, even these moments of truth are complicated. Although we are told to believe the investigator when they say they have found the murder weapon or they know where a crime took place this is not the end of the journey toward truth. That is only achieved once the guilty party corroborates the investigator's version of events. Despite the emphasis placed on the consultant and their method, ultimately what matters is confession. This is not surprising, considering the emphasis on the personal the only conclusion that would likely feel satisfying for an audience (and continue the emphasis on the personal) is the confession of a liar and the definite discovery of truth and these two are inextricably linked in the final acts of these shows. For the consultant, the only way to be sure one has reached unobscured truth is for the liar who has been obscuring it to

admit their deceit. Oddly, it would seem, these shows suggest that no matter how good the investigator, how much evidence has been accumulated, until the guilty party reveals their subterfuge none of that matters.

This is not only the case for the particular shows examined in this thesis. In the past fifteen years the 'confession conclusion' has become a trope of the genre. In fact, it has become what Corner called an "affective trope"²⁹⁶, "Calling attention to trans-historical and trans-cultural similarities"²⁹⁷. The process of investigation is often played as a game between investigator and criminal, a constant back and forth; the confession is an admission of loss, it is the ultimate closure of the criminal giving in and admitting defeat. In fact, confession is treated as the catalyst for 'closure' for all parties and the only way that those involved can 'move on'. The truth can be known, but it only becomes tangible, becomes factual, once it has been confessed by those who attempt to conceal it. Interestingly, although at times confession is framed as being a watertight means to conviction, the fact that conviction, or even a trial, are never portrayed means there must be something else at play here. One way to understand this need for confession, for unwavering corroboration of the investigator's theory, is that it must instead be about this search for truth. Confession means the game is over, there is no more truth to be uncovered, no more lies to debunked.

What seems central here is the very concept and act of confession. There is no avoiding the connection to be drawn here, both moral and literal with the religious act of confession. Just as those wracked with religious guilt are allowed to seek forgiveness only once their sins are voiced out loud, so is the case with the guilty party in the procedural drama. In writing about the therapeutic nature of religious confession, Sharon Hymer explains, "We like to feel that confession can begin to restore some kind of order to the disruptions in our lives brought about

²⁹⁶ Corner, *Critical ideas in television studies*. P50

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

by sin.”²⁹⁸ However, in the consultant procedural, where victims are paramount, the order being restored is not that of the life of the confessant but the ‘life’ of both the victim and the investigator. Justice and the act of confession somehow become synonymous, as if the act itself were somehow akin to punishment. It suggests the public knowledge of the act, the unleashing of the truth, is a form of justice. Confession becomes part of an unspoken syllogism: All confessants are guilty, all guilty people are convicted, and therefore, all confessants are convicted. Though the second statement is far from true in the real world, in the consultant procedural it is a tenet of the genre. After all, if the guilty are not convicted what is the point in the criminal justice system? The visible lack of conviction in the consultant procedural is something I will return to later. However, this logical equation places a lot of power in words. Therefore, acts of speech, most importantly public and recorded acts of speech, become the most important facet of the investigation. Whether the process has hinged upon scientific fact or psychically gained insight, eventually all cases are resolved by an act of speech. Only on very rare occasions is there no verbal confession at the end of the episode. The satisfying conclusion is one in which the guilty party is forced to take ownership of their misdeed through the work of the investigator.

The idea of the speech act was popularised by J.L. Austin in his posthumous work *How to Do Things with Words*²⁹⁹, the concept then developed by one of his students John R. Searle, though it is still a much debated topic within linguistics today. Searle clarifies a taxonomy of acts which make up a speech act³⁰⁰: the locutionary act, which is the utterance, the illocutionary act, which is the act’s significance as a verbal action, and the not always present, perlocutionary act, which is the act’s effect. The procedural confession, as a speech act, contains the first two elements described, and an oddly muted version of the third. Though the confession does have an effect, it

²⁹⁸Sharon Hymer, *Confessions in psychotherapy* (New York: Gardner Press, 1988), p51

²⁹⁹J. L. Austin, J. O. Urmson, and Marina Sbisa, *How to do things with words*, 2nd ed. / edited by J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa\0300. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

³⁰⁰John R. Searle, "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts," in *Language, mind, and knowledge, Minnesota studies in the philosophy of science*, ed. Keith Gunderson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975).

results in an arrest, the full extent of that effect is never realised; the confession is the real end point. Therefore, as a speech act confession is more invested in the illocutionary act despite the fact that the supposed effect, arrest and conviction, are meant to be the purpose of the narrative. It is a speech act that should have a prominent perlocutionary element, instead, it is afforded little more than a nod to its presumed outcome through logical fallacy. Confession as a speech act leaves a void to be filled extra-diegetically, as the narrative returns to its pre-crime equilibrium. This emphasis on the act of confession shifts the role of the investigator in the final act. Until this point the investigators' job has been to work through the untruths using their particular skillset and brand of knowledge. They find and interpret clues and build the 'story' of the case through their supposed infallible ability to find and decipher truth. However, once they have deduced who the guilty party is their job is no longer to impart their knowledge but instead to become confessor. This last part of the process of investigation is always given over to a dialogue between the consultant and the criminal. By this point their discoveries are only useful because they persuade the criminal to confess, not because their facts are watertight, their knowledge infallible, but because they scare the criminal into speaking the truth. As Peter Brooks explains writing about real world police interrogation tactics,

“Above all, the good interrogator maintains control of the storytelling, so that the suspect is put in the position of denying or affirming-often affirming through denials that lead to entrapment-the unfolding narrative that, one notes, is largely of the interrogator's own making, his 'monologue'”³⁰¹

In the crime drama facts lose their objective, abstract appeal. Facts are not useful or worthy in their own right unless they can elicit confession. Simply knowing is not enough, facts become a means to an end and oddly an end for which they are ultimately unnecessary. If the goal is

³⁰¹Peter Brooks, *Troubling confessions : speaking guilt in law and literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000). P40

confession, then facts are not needed. As there is no follow-up, no way of knowing if the work of the investigator was needed as part of the trial then only what is textually made available can be used to determine the place facts have in these cases. While they make up the bulk of episode narratives, in the midst of the denouement they fall by the wayside. Facts instead become the tent poles that hold up the story the confessor must make the confessant admit to. Facts are the journey but confession is the destination.

In addition there is the investigator's lack of agency within the court system to take into account. The consultant has sway within the policing institution, for many different reasons, but this sway is what keeps them working. Whether it be a proven track record as it is with Jane, a professional insight which makes them invaluable as with Brennan and Lightman, or an actual job somewhere in the institution as it is with Allison, they have reasons that keep them attached to the institution. Alternatively, as is often the case in *Ghost Whisperer* Melinda has no ties to the policing institution but also generally no need for it. However, these consultants have none of this sway with the court system as their skills are not useful or necessary for the court to function. All the shows have episodes in which the consultant is called in to give evidence, but this is little more than a re-structuring of the usual investigative narrative.

The actual work of conviction is something the consultant investigator cannot be involved in. The very nature of the consultant is that of the unofficial investigator, their outsider status is their purpose, as explored in chapter Three; this being the case it is of no surprise that the consultant procedural rarely ventures into the courtroom. While outside of this particular period of production the courtroom has been a continued focal point³⁰² for US Television drama, during this time its absence is glaring. If the speaking of truth is the ultimate goal of the consultant procedural, then the results of that speech, the murky waters of conviction and incarceration are a dangerous place to go. The whole purpose of the advocacy/trial system is that 'truth' is

³⁰² In the nineties the courtroom was a very popular drama setting, with shows such as *LA Law*, *Law & Order*, *Ally McBeal*, *The Practice*, *JAG* and *Judging Amy*

questioned, speech is given new context. Problematising the act of spoken confession would only diminish the work done by the investigator. The relationship between truth and justice in the procedural is one based on the concept of inalienable truth; the facts that the investigator unearths are absolute and cannot be refuted. To have this then placed in an adversarial context, to have these truths questioned undermines the entire process. To this end the episodes that do feature courtrooms often see the investigator having their authority questioned only to then uncover new 'truths' which further prove their initial findings. Across a series of three episodes in the second, fourth and fifth season of *Bones* The Gravedigger is the target of the investigation. In the first episode³⁰³ she kidnaps Brennan and Hodgins but her identity is never uncovered. In her second appearance³⁰⁴ she kidnaps Booth and is eventually caught. In the fifth season³⁰⁵ she is being tried for her offences as well as the kidnapping of a ten year old boy. However, the case for the prosecution begins to falter. In order to add further evidence to the case the Jeffersonian team drop their own kidnapping charges and instead concentrate to adding evidence to the case of the kidnapped boy. The result is both the conviction of The Gravedigger but also the vindication of having their evidence proven to be true. The position taken by this episode, and others like it, is not that the justice system is right in needing to question the case put forward by the police but rather that questioning the work of the investigator is foolish. Ultimately, their truths are believed and the criminal convicted. Nevertheless, to see this happen every week would diminish the power of both the investigator and the act of confession, adding another layer of bureaucracy that has nothing to do with the central tenets of mystery and truth. If the ultimate goal of the procedural is confession and the only route to confession is to uncover a series of irrefutable facts, then questioning those facts questions, and therefore undermines, the entire process.

Ultimately the courtroom is a space of ambiguity and nuance, wordplay and connotations are the stock in trade. Regularly when consultant investigators do appear in court they are threatened

³⁰³ 2.9 "Aliens in a Spaceship"

³⁰⁴ 4.14 "The Hero in the Hold"

³⁰⁵ 5.21 "The Boy With the Answer"

with contempt for not properly adhering to the rituals of the courtroom and instead assuming that speaking the truth is the purpose of a trial. The workings of the courtroom are in opposition to the idea of abstract and definable truth which makes the foundation of the consultant procedural.

Perhaps then justice is the wrong word for what is sought in the contemporary crime procedural; perhaps closure is a better term. After all, with justice comes notions of rehabilitation and punishment, and neither of these things are of interest in these shows. Rarely is a criminal mentioned again unless they re-offend, and only then are they of interest because the crime becomes more personal for the investigator; it becomes somehow a crime against *them* rather than against their victims, their skills have been brought into question. For the most part once a crime is solved the criminal is literally removed. Most episodes finish not with the criminal but with a scene featuring only the consultant and the rest of the investigative team, the crime and by extension the criminal suitably dispatched. This suggests that the role of the policing institution is about the process of solving crime not about the removal of a dangerous person from society. Motive and intention only matter insofar as they help solve the crime, mitigating circumstances or justifications are neither here nor there. The investigative team will sometimes note the reasons why a crime was committed, sometimes even voicing sympathy for those that commit it, but only as an afterthought. For them the criminal is no longer a part of their world and therefore is no longer a danger. In fact, the criminal aspect, the idea that this person is detrimental to the fabric of society and the wellbeing of other people is rarely an issue at all. Criminals are a puzzle to be solved, a problem to be answered; that by doing so society is somehow better off is a happy by-product. Just as in chapter Three when the impetus for many of these investigators working with the police was discussed, the solving of crime is often framed as little more than a way for these people to use their skills. That being the case, anything that happens after the crime is solved is a moot point, an irrelevancy in their eyes as the outcome of criminal proceedings was never in their interests to begin with.

Brennan is a perfect example of this kind of investigation. Though as time has gone on her character has become more aware of the wider implications of her work, her purpose has always been to serve the science and to tell the victim's story. The story of those who perpetrated the crime is of no interest to her as they are people capable of speaking for themselves; she is the voice of those who cannot speak, the teller of truths that only she can find. For Brennan the only reason to continue working is to continue finding truths, to further knowledge, whether someone is punished for wrongdoings as a consequence is of little matter to her. Her *raison d'être* is the facts and little else.

It is this dogged determination to tell the truth, but most importantly the truth of the victim that focuses justice away from being about the punishment of the criminal and protection of society and toward a victim-centric focus. A focus which places more emphasis on personal justice rather than public.

This reiterates ideas from earlier chapters that these shows are not about criminals or the enforcement of law and protection of the public but rather about victims and the relationship the consultant has with them. Although the victims are, for the vast majority of cases, already dead, there is a relationship between the consultant and the victim and much of that is borne out in how these shows deal with justice. With the focus on these two characters and their relationship as a means of solving the case, it is of little surprise that the culmination of the investigation becomes not about justice in the larger sense but about what kind of justice is sought by these two people and how. While confession is the culmination of the investigation episodes end with a coda focused on the consultant. Investigation in terms of knowledge is about gaining confession, investigation as a personal process is about the investigator and their life. The final few moments of every episode explore how the process of investigation has affected the investigator. While supposedly the consultant's very purpose is to ensure that truth of the crime which befell the victim is discovered, eventually the narrative always returns to focus on the consultant

themselves, and how this particular crime, and the solving of it, has affected their lives.

Consequently, this suggests that justice is not only about the victim and some kind of closure for them, but it is also another stage in finding closure for the consultant; each new case getting them closer to rectifying whatever is wrong in their own lives. Each case seems to serve as a step, a small reminder of the larger issue which affects them; as if by solving this case they are somehow solving their own.

As chapters Four and Five detailed, consultants are all the products of complex family relationships, relationships which seem to be constantly worked through with each episode. Consequently, the role of justice and what it actually means shifts once more. It becomes two things at once, a panacea for the grieving family due to the closure of the case being solved and a way for the consultants to somehow absolve themselves and begin to remedy the issues in their own lives. It is at once a necessary end point to allow the bereaved family and the victim, sometimes literally, to move on and a process through which the consultant is forever moving. This removes justice from the abstract concept laid out at the beginning of this chapter. Justice as it is understood in terms of a social idea has no real place in the procedural because none of the markers are there for it to exist in such a way. There is no depiction of its effects, no illustration of how the concept of justice in terms of punishment would be metered out. Rather, justice is removed from this abstract idea and made purely subjective; justice becomes malleable, serving multiple purposes across the continuum but also within the same show. Depending on the needs of the story justice becomes what is necessary for a comfortable conclusion which leaves the protagonist somehow changed but still unable to escape their part in the machine of investigation. At different parts of the continuum this dual use of justice functions slightly differently, but all shows eventually defer to the narrative needs of the protagonist over the victim.

The moment that is given over to the victim, the scenes of confession discussed earlier, is the closest these shows get to the idea of justice being somehow public. These scenes often take place either in the offices of the institution, being recorded in some way for the sake of official records or literally out in the open, the confession taking place in front of those affected by the crime. This is the point in the narrative in which the victim is given closure through the process of the truth being voiced. If the courtroom as a space is too focused on the ambiguity of facts in a narrative where facts need to be infallible, then in some ways this moment stands in for the public declaration of guilt found in the courtroom. Confession becomes the line drawn under the case, the conclusion of all the work the consultant has done. While the episode may end with a personal moment for the investigative team, the actual work of the episode ends at this point. If we are to infer the each episode is to represent the work of the policing establishment to rectify a wrong doing then the ending must encompass the finding of the guilty party. If the system works on the proviso of 'innocent until proven guilty' then this moment must represent the proving of guilt. Much like in the courtroom the facts are laid out before those present in such a way that the criminal seems to have no choice but to confess, just as a jury would have no choice but to find the defendant guilty beyond reasonable doubt. It is here that the confession/conviction syllogism is utilised. These scenes, usually little more than four or five minutes long become a microcosm of court proceedings, allowing the necessary closure for those involved. Conviction becomes an assumption that must be made if the infallibility of the consultant is to remain.

No matter the position the show takes along the continuum, there is something traditional in this mode of narrative progression. The need for confession as a *dénouement* harks back to the very beginnings of crime fiction. The scenes where criminals find they must finally confess to their crimes, and in a public setting, echo Poirot and Miss Marple. Earl Bargainnier, in the opening to his book on Christie, defines the very essence of detective fiction:

“[Detective fiction’s] plot goes through a series of peripeties, beginning with the commission of a crime and ending with that crime’s solution. The simplest plot outline of any detective story is: the murderer kills a victim; many are suspected; the detective investigates, reveals the murderer and absolves the innocent. Though this basic plot allows for seemingly infinite variety, it is always present beneath whatever external covering the author chooses to give it...detective fiction consists of plot as discovery”³⁰⁶

For Bargainnier the crux of the genre is plot and this plot culminates in the reveal of the murderer, not in conviction or incarceration, but in the reveal. Much of this thesis has tackled issues of defining shows despite ever-changing narrative forms and themes, however, in these final minutes the audience is given a moment of classical crime storytelling and every show does it. Perhaps it is here then that the genre finds an absolute place of cohesion. This sequence is not only the focal point of the episode, but the focal point of the genre, the strand that pulls them all together and draws them back into their own generic heritage. Though there are visual conventions present in these scenes-the handcuffing of the criminal for example-these scenes of confession are dialogue heavy; in this way they barely differ from their literary antecedents. Detective stories are about talking, and the denouement is just as dependant on speaking over action, the very act of spoken confession being the purpose of the genre. There is a sense that this is what crime fiction is, what it does; no matter the route taken to get to this point, the moment is inevitable. Consequently the centrality of a narrative moment makes a stronger case for the need to still include narrative as a marker for genre. Though cases have been made³⁰⁷ for moving away from a narrative definition of genre, and indeed a purely narrative approach is reductive, narrative still plays an important part in how genre is both defined and understood; the crime

³⁰⁶Earl F. Bargainnier, *The gentle art of murder : the detective fiction of Agatha Christie* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980). P144

³⁰⁷ The strongest of these is the work of Jason Mittell referenced in the first two chapters of this thesis where he argues that a discursive egalitarian mode which somewhat favours paratextual material is most useful.

drama is as much defined by the confession conclusion as it is by the inclusion of cops or criminals. Space still needs to be made, especially in the study of broad genres, for the inclusion of narrative definition, because for many genres such as this one narrative is fundamental.

That being said the fact that the confession moment is so central to an understanding of the crime drama makes it even more interesting that its conceptual definition and the way it is used has shifted over time.

Look to the work of Elayne Rapping³⁰⁸ and there are arguments made that the purpose of crime drama is to serve as social lesson; especially in early cases like *Dragnet*. The idea of punishment, of institutionalised retribution is essential to how Rapping formulates her idea of crime television, a view corroborated by the popularity of courtroom dramas in the nineties. For her the crime drama has a sociological function and much of that lies in the idea of protection and reassurance that the genre provides through its depiction of justice. Towards the end of her book Rapping does suggest that this is changing, I would go as far as to say that in the consultant procedural in this period any sociological component is entirely absent. Looking back to shows such as *Dragnet* in the 50s or much more recently *Law & Order* there is an attempt to reassure audiences through the emphasis they placed on the work that goes into performing justice. It mattered that these criminals were caught, that the complexities of their crimes were considered and that ultimately they were punished. The process was depicted as a series of almost bureaucratic decisions, a mechanised system of decision making. When complexities made this systematic approach untenable then there were people whose job it was to recalibrate the system and make things fit again; lawyers argued issues of morality and case history. However, in the period of intense production of procedural dramas explored in this thesis these moments that once defined the 'reason' for the crime drama instead become little more than narrative markers. They appear as rote within the shows, as a formality rather than as a defining aspect of the shows' social

³⁰⁸Rapping, *Law and justice as seen on TV*.

function. Although the confession is everything the narrative has been leading to and the only way the plot of investigation can be concluded, the very fact of its necessity makes it hollow. The confession exists because the story needs to be concluded, the emphasis of the moment placed on concept of 'closure' rather than any larger social issue. Justice becomes something to be assumed rather than something to be discussed; it is a given.

The ending of the procedural drama has become an ever-repeating symbol for a syllogism; forever at least one remove from actual judicial process. Confession and justice become interchangeable concepts, the former standing in for the latter. However, as the conventions of the genre have been presented to audiences with increasing frequency, these final steps serve more as a signifier of that which once was rather than as any symbol of justice being served. The moment of confession becoming shorthand for a concept of justice that is no longer part of the genre. Again, we see the importance of Caldwell's idea of televisuality. This shorthand is very televisual, borne out of the very way in which television shows are often watched as part of a repeated pattern. Justice and scenes of confession can only become shorthand, can only be understood as symbolic because of their sameness, their adherence to form; the symbol only works if the signifier remains unchanged, just as Derrida argued in *Dissemination*³⁰⁹. By folding the aesthetic televisual that Caldwell refers to into wholesale narrative repetition across the genre, we find that the consultant procedural is perhaps one of the most televisual genres, despite its roots in literature. As Caughie puts it, "one of the key determinations of television is its repetition...repetition that absorbs difference with astonishing rapidity."³¹⁰ That these scenes, and other modes of confirming truth such as the extensive use of screens, are found across the genre in every episode of every show demonstrate a system of repetition on a scale only found within television, in the way it "pretend[s] to difference and change"³¹¹. At first this may seem to be at

³⁰⁹ Derrida and Johnson, *Dissemination*.

³¹⁰ John Caughie, *Television drama : realism, modernism, and British culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). P130

³¹¹ Caldwell, *Televisuality : style, crisis, and authority in American television*. P19

odds with the Derridian notion of iteration I have championed thus far, however, I believe these two concepts can work in conjunction. Caughie and Caldwell are writing of the idea that new shows often claim to be offering something new when in fact they are adhering to repetitious tropes of an existing genre framework, Derrida however, is suggesting that in these genre frameworks sameness is never exact. Television then is unique in that shows that often make claims on difference are in fact conforming to a set of generic markers which themselves have elements of deviation, the sameness television often attempts to deny is a sameness built on small differences; it is a question of scale. In macro terms these shows are presenting a unified approach to notions of justice and the place of the confession, an unwavering repetition. However, just as Derrida claimed, there are slight deviations on the lead up to these moments and the scenes that follow. This difference between the macro and micro I map through the idea of graduated articulation, formulating a way to make sense of the difference between the two levels. Though the shows have multiple narrative and character elements in common there are differences between the shows, differences that make a genre not a collection of identical texts but a collection of texts that share a cluster of commonalities; this is something I will explore further later in the chapter. Nevertheless, justice, and its signifier confession, becomes an intense point of cohesion for the genre because of the infrequency of deviation from the generic tropes. As the consequences of crime have fallen by the wayside, so any talk of actual justice has become equally moot. Therefore, the moment of confession becomes little more than an acknowledgement of what the genre was once about. This shift towards signifying justice as something which exists outside of the shows renders these moments hollow and perfunctory, their inevitability creating a narrative lull. The story reaches a high point with the discovery of who has committed the crime at the centre of the episode, only for the moment of confession to then seem flat because of its new role as plot device. These shows remedy the flat feeling of this recycled trope by refocusing the final scenes and moving the narrative closure away from ideas of social responsibility and instead focusing them inwards and personalising them. The audience is

supposedly drawn to care more about the wellbeing of the protagonist-investigator than the outcome of the solved case because it is the protagonist's story that still seems to maintain a modicum of authenticity. If the confession is narrative wallpaper then the idea of the protagonist's personal growth is more likely to become the point of emotional connection for the audience.

Justice Across the Continuum

The final scenes of these shows might be their most generically traditional, and one of the factors which confirm their status as crime shows through the repetition of narrative convention, but there are still differences to be found across the continuum. As different investigative methods lead to difference in narrative structure and tone, so they also lead to differences in the kind of closure sought, by victims, families, and consultants. The basic premise detailed above still works across all the shows, but the articulation of it changes. Justice becomes another area where the process of shifting emphasis that has defined this methodology comes to the fore.

At the scientific end of the continuum, where empirical facts are the basis for solving the case, they also become the basis for how closure is sought. The final confrontation of the criminal plays out in a number of ways but they all eventually defer to the facts as a means of getting confession. The emphasis in these scenes is on undermining the lies told by the criminal. As is the case in crime stories since their inception, bar a few cases, the person guilty of the crime is a character known by the audience. The guilty party is never a new character, for no other reason than it would likely make a rather unsatisfying conclusion for the audience. That being the case the job of the empiricist consultant in the confession scenes is to prove to the criminal that they have ways of demonstrating their alibi to be fraudulent. As the character is known to the audience, their alibi will also have been part of the unfolding of the narrative. The consultant must present not only the facts as they have been uncovered but situate them as part of a coherent and watertight version of events with a scientific basis. By this point the hunch is irrelevant, instead the consultant must ensure that they are presenting the criminal with a perfect retelling of events they participated in. Here the consultant and their methods are presented as being as infallible as the facts themselves and the consultant is in many ways little more than a vessel for the facts at this point, a way to deliver them; they become a conduit for truth, a way to

find it. The consultant is the 'face' of the work, the person whose authority means they are capable of explaining to the criminal exactly how watertight their case is and how irrefutable their methods are. These scenes are reliant on the idea that scientific method is beyond reproach and incapable of error; science is exact and cannot lie, this is essential to the empiricist shows. They cannot rely on victim testimony like the psychic shows can or the ability to convince criminals that they have access to the truth as the pseudo-psychics do, instead, science has to be depicted as impartial and perfect. Then, as with all crime narratives, once the criminal has been confronted with the idea that the true story of events is known they see no other choice but to confess. As stated in the Brooks quote earlier in the chapter, the confessor, in this case the consultant, presents a version of the crime which cannot be refuted. Brooks goes on to say, quoting Chief Justice Warren in the case of *Miranda v Arizona*³¹²

"[T]hese interrogation techniques induce the [suspect to confirm 'the preconceived story the police seek to have him describe' and create a situation in which the individual surrenders his freewill and makes statements contrary to his interests..."³¹³

The confession in the consultant procedural becomes more of a confirmation, this technique only justifiable because as an audience we have been taken through the investigative process and constantly been shown we should believe wholeheartedly in the consultant. However, there is no choice for the criminal but to confess to the story they have been told; often doing it as a way of providing justification for their actions or providing context that they feel the police do not understand. They confess because although the facts are correct, the reasons behind them are mistaken or they confess because they want people to understand the motives for their actions, either because they were a mistake or because they are proud of their wrong doing. No matter, since as discussed above, once the confession has taken place all that came before becomes irrelevant, the job has been done.

³¹²*Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966)

³¹³Brooks, *Troubling confessions : speaking guilt in law and literature*. P41

In the transitional shows, those of the faux-psychics, this moment takes a more theatrical bent but functions in much the same way. Although in these cases the emphasis in these scenes is placed more on the investigator than the victim. The drama of discovering the truth revolves around the investigator's ability to tell the story of the crime and 'trick' the criminal into confessing and they present the facts they have gathered in such a way as to convince the criminal that they have complete access to the truth. Lying is fruitless because these men know everything, even things they should have no way of knowing. Once again we believe the consultant because the narrative positions their process as infallible. If they claim a suspect has been faking mental illness because they own a copy of *Moby Dick*³¹⁴, the audience is expected to believe them. However, these tricks of linguistics and suggestion make scenes of confession in the pseudo-psychic text a show of the consultant's power as much as they are about the culmination of an investigation. He has to prove to the suspect that he is as infallible as the text suggests him to be. As detailed in chapter Three this is usually done in an exaggerated, theatrical way to unnerve the suspect and make them feel confession is their only option. While the lead up to the confession is somewhat different, its place within the narrative and purpose it serves does not change. The scenes that take place subsequently are almost interchangeable with those of the scientific shows. Justice remains a way of packaging other kinds of resolution, a misnomer for the personal closure that has become the staple of the procedural crime drama.

The psychic shows, *Medium* and *Ghost Whisperer*, have a different way of articulating this 'closure as justice' approach. Removed from much of the institution because of their methods and the nature of the cases they handle these shows do not just de-emphasise institutional justice in favour of personal 'closure' they conflate this 'closure' with the act of dying. The victims in these shows are present in a very literal sense rather than the figurative presence felt in other shows. The victims of the psychic shows have voices and the ability to affect the world around them, they take up space still; this being the case, when the crime is solved in these shows the victim in

³¹⁴*The Mentalist* 1.9 "Flame Red"

essence re-dies and they cease to exist as a spirit. They are finally laid to rest because the mystery of their demise (or whatever issue has been keeping them from 'passing over') has been solved. *Ghost Whisperer* is more explicit than *Medium* in its depiction of this process, but both shows close out their cases, not with any indication of the conviction of a criminal, but with the promise that the victim is now at peace, taking victim-centricity one step further. This closure occurs in parallel with the investigator's own sense of emotional resolution, continuing the merging of the victim and investigator storylines that happens throughout episodes of these shows. Just as the investigator feels the pain of the victim's crime and must solve it in order to solve their own torment, so the conclusion also serves as 'closure' for the investigator, an end to their subjugation as victim by proxy. Almost all suggestions of public safety or social good are pushed aside to make way for the portrayal of personal fulfilment, the victim has achieved their goal of ending their spirit state and therefore the investigator is also freed. While there are differing degrees of this personalisation, both shows emphasise the importance of the private over the public. Public resolution equals private closure.

Medium attempts to include more of a nod to the supposed public aspects of felony crimes but still skews toward the private. The investigation, the impetus for it and its final conclusion are all moments that take place in private, despite most episodes at least suggesting that a criminal has been arrested and charges brought. This is achieved by positioning the institutional resolution of the episode as a coda rather than culmination of its plot. Though at times Allison is informed about the success of a trial or the arrest of a criminal, the emphasis is still placed on the spirit that has been plaguing her finally leaving. As the spirit is able to find peace so too is Allison, their relief at the discovery of the truth is mutual, and the personalising of crime is further literalised. The spirit moving on is also the point at which Allison is able to move on. Both psychic shows suggest that justice is in fact a shared moment of closure, a point at which both the victim and those who investigate it can feel a sense of accomplishment and the chance to return to 'normal'. Justice then is not about wider issues of public safety and sanctioned retribution but instead about a

point of change. Justice becomes the moment at which those personally involved in a crime can start living a life that no longer revolves around it, it is the point at which equilibrium returns.

However, while the victim is afforded a significant 'life' change as a result of the culmination of the investigation, the protagonist investigator must instead return to a state of waiting, anticipating the next crime/victim that will dominate their life. Justice becomes both a final moment, a point at which change can occur, and a cyclical process of never ending 'closure'.

Interestingly when *Medium* came to an end, the final 'victim' that Allison helped find justice was her own deceased husband, his justice being the knowledge that Allison would be able to carry on without him. In the final moments of the last episode³¹⁵, both 'victim' and investigator experience the same moment of justice, albeit 41 years apart. Just as Joe was able to stop haunting Allison because he knew she could cope without him, so Allison's death at the very end presents their final shared moment, as both can finally 'move on'.

In *Ghost Whisperer* the 'moving on' is literalised in its entirety. The justice in this show is not only personal but shown through an actual process of moving from one state to another. If justice in these shows is being portrayed as a form of closure, as a way for society to continue on in the wake of crime, then the justice moment in *Ghost Whisperer* is the most formulaic and opaque throughout the genre. As each case comes to a close Melinda informs the spirit of the truth behind the reason for their haunting. The spirit is then encouraged to 'move into the light' by Melinda. In this case it is a literal light, the scene involving the sudden appearance of a bright white space in front of the spirit. At the appearance of this the spirit usually smiles, as if whatever they are able to see on the other side is pleasing. This is followed by the spirit saying goodbye to loved ones left behind, with Melinda as intermediary, and then finally moving on to whatever 'life' lies ahead of them. The scenes are always accompanied by hopeful music and are meant to convey the idea that this change is a good one, that this is a happy event. For a show with as a

³¹⁵ 7.22 "Me Without You"

dark a colour palette as *Ghost Whisperer* often has, these moments look stark and ethereal, contrasting strongly with the warm tones of home. They also represent the perfect melodramatic ending to an episode, encapsulating Brooks' notion that "Nothing is spared because nothing is left unsaid; the characters stand on stage and utter the unspeakable, give voice to their deepest feelings, dramatize through their heightened and polarized words and gestures the whole lesson of their relationship"³¹⁶. These final moments are a litany of emotionally overwrought declarations and attempts to finally make peace with emotional wounds. Furthermore, 'Crossing over' in these scenes is more than an end of the storyline for that episode's ghost and it is more than a rebalancing of the equilibrium; these scenes represent a change for the victim-spirit, an irrevocable shift, justice here has made a permanent change to their 'lives' creating permanent closure. In this sense then justice is more than the end of a case and closing of that chapter, it is the irreversible move from a state in which wrong has been done to one in which that wrong no longer exists.

In all these shifting and connected iterations, justice becomes defined as personal achievement and fulfilment. It is the point at which both investigator and victim are freed from the trauma of the crime; it no longer needs to be thought about, investigated or worked through; it becomes something that has happened rather than something that is happening. None of this has any bearing on the rest of society because in the contemporary consultant procedural crime is purely personal. In all procedurals, once the case is closed, the victim and the criminal (in almost all cases) are never seen again. Justice then is the point at which the telling of truth results in the removal of crime from the social consciousness. It is not the righting of the crime or the punishment of the criminal but rather the point at which the crime no longer exists; justice is allowing society to forget about crime.

³¹⁶ Brooks, *The melodramatic imagination : Balzac, Henry James, melodrama, and the mode of excess*. P4

Looking across the continuum of the crime genre in this particular period, it becomes evident that justice as it was previously understood was no longer a central tenet of the genre. As established in previous chapters, the genre is about knowledge, how it is gained and how it is used. As such crime is not a social ill but a puzzle to be solved, consequently justice becomes irrelevant.; the idea that criminal will somehow suffer for their misdeeds becomes a given. As the genre moved away from the depiction of crime as the symptom of society's problems to concentrate on the puzzle of crime solving, so the fate of the criminal became an irrelevancy. The puzzle has been correctly solved, therefore the correct guilty party must have been found. There is no space for error and therefore no doubt that justice will happen; it just will not happen on screen. While different shows attempt different ways to displace or redefine the concept of justice and reframe it as something else, all of them attempt to address it by not addressing it at all. They relegate justice to a symbolic moment and in doing so create a space where it once was. Justice is expected of the crime drama, it is the assumed outcome, so in this negative space left behind the consultant procedurals place personal character development. Through this lack of overt overtures to justice the crime drama is turned inward, making the once public endeavour of keeping society safe into a personal journey to fulfil one's own needs. The investigator protagonist stops becoming the conduit through which justice can be delivered to society at large and instead becomes the recipient of ever-repeating personal 'closure'. The journey of each episode is toward the removal of that which has disrupted the private world of both victim and protagonist. The equilibrium sought is not a world in which wrongdoing is punished, but one of ignorance in which wrongdoing can be denied. If there is no sense of punishment then ultimately there is no consequence to crime. As the criminal takes a backseat in these shows to the plight of the victim, then so too does crime itself. Not only justice, but the notion of crime becomes little more than a catalyst for personal change; there is no sense in these shows of the wider world, of a greater impact than that which is shown. All that matters is the personal, and once any

hindrance to personal happiness has been removed then the world can continue on as normal; for both the victim and the consultant.

Though there are slight shifts across the continuum in how this is depicted, for the most part this is one area where the whole genre is truly cohesive. As discussed earlier, Derrida and his work on repetition comes to mind. "A signifier, like a scientific experiment, is not significant unless it is repeatable; a meaningful message is woven from repeatable marks. An absolutely singular, unprecedented, and unrepeatable mark would be unrecognisable and meaningless."³¹⁷ These scenes can only take the place of the idea of justice because they are repeated so often and so uniformly that they become a signifier. The tropes of the confession, the arrest, the reading of rights become the system of signs that must be in place in order for meaning to occur and it is only in their ubiquitous repetition that the intended meaning has become so well defined. Unlike investigative practice, here gender inflects the way the evidence is presented to the suspect, but it does not change the role of confession or the conspicuous absence of actual justice. Turning to another of Derrida's concepts, justice in these shows becomes the trace Derrida examines, it is the unseen element between the act of confession and the notion of conviction, it exists in the acts that surround it. And though the final act, the incarceration, is never seen, the suggestion of it is always present through the evoking of the repeated signifier of 'justice'; not actual justice but a nod to the idea that it exists and that it will, at some undefined time, be enacted. Accordingly, these shows are not about the seeking of justice per se, they are about ensuring the safety of personal happiness, justice simply becomes a pseudonym for this. However, this space left behind by what the genre once was, a space where the complexity of delivering justice was discussed, still knits it together, drawing outwardly disparate shows into this cluster of texts built around the same narrative model; a model which alludes to the social preoccupation of earlier procedurals, but instead has more in common with the mystery novels of the 1920s.

³¹⁷ Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a nutshell : a conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997). P187

Conclusion

The case study at the centre of this thesis has examined how knowledge is portrayed in the crime drama and the gendered aspect of this portrayal. It has positioned knowledge as the central concept around which the genre revolves and then looked at how different shows utilise it in different ways. Questions have been asked about how gender is interwoven into the very fabric of how this genre narrativises the process of investigation. What has been uncovered is a genre still defined by very particular kinds of gender performance. It is a genre with deep seated ideas about masculinity and femininity and their place in the world. It is also a genre obsessed with its own narrative form; plot takes precedence over characters, as the mystery takes centre stage and justice is relegated to a perfunctory concept.

Many of these issues are ones which have been part of the genre for decades; however, this thesis only concerns itself with a particular cycle. It covers a five year period chosen because of the prolific production occurring at the time. However, as earlier chapters established, the crime drama is a genre decades old and a genre that will continue for decades to come. During the period of study detailed in this project the genre was going through a cycle of what I have termed 'the consultant procedural'. As I write this, two years after the fact, half of these shows are still going (though arguably probably in their last season), however, the rest have since been cancelled. While *Bones*, *Psych* and *The Mentalist* continue to air, *Bones* now in its eighth season, the psychic crime shows have disappeared as have almost every other consultant procedural. Ratings favourites such as *Castle*, a show that premiered too late to make it into this project, will continue as there seems to be investment from both audiences³¹⁸ and networks, however the

³¹⁸ The season five finale of *Castle* attracted over 11 million viewers (<http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2013/05/14/monday-final-ratings-the-voice-2-broke-girls-90210-castle-adjusted-down/182604/>)

past two pilot seasons have seen no new consultant procedurals make it to air. Instead, there is an influx of shows about uniform cops. The list including but not limited to: *Rookie Blue* (ABC, 2010-present), *NCIS:LA* (CBS, 2009-present), *The Bridge* (CBS, 2010), *The Good Guys* (Fox, 2010), *Detroit 1-8-7* (ABC, 2010), *Hawaii Five-0* (CBS, 2010-present), *The Chicago Code* (Fox, 2011) and *Law & Order LA* (NBC, 2010-2011). Eight new shows across four networks and each one of them is about crime solving being done by the policing institution. This does not even include shows from free to air cable such as *The Closer* (TNT, 2005-2012) spin-off *Major Crimes* (TNT, 2012-present), another show focused on the institution. Furthermore, the popularity of *The Good Wife*³¹⁹ (CBS, 2009-present) has seen a return of the courtroom drama. What must not be forgotten is that this genre is, generally, about enjoyment for audiences. Though on the whole this thesis has been rather pessimistic about the crime drama, for the most part, fictional television shows are watched for pleasure, and the shift in genre cycle is indicative of this. The changes in viewing figures³²⁰ would suggest that as audiences tire of a particular formula new ones emerge (or re-emerge), in attempts to keep the audience entertained. Though the shows detailed here have conservative and somewhat problematic gender politics, it should not be assumed that for many these shows are not anything more than diversionary hour of amusing plot twists. Nevertheless, with the cycle of consultant procedurals then surely put to bed what can that tell us about this particular moment in the history of the television crime drama in the United States.

As explored throughout this thesis the consultant figure attempted to reassure audiences that a policing institution previously depicted as failing was working to correct its mistakes. The existence of the consultant was both an admission that the institution did not work and proof that it was still capable of performing its job to a high standard. The consultant was not actually part of the institution and so was free from being tainted by the spectre of incompetence and corruption that had haunted the policing institution in the previous decade of crime shows. As such, the

³¹⁹ The show achieves an average of 9.5 million viewers (data gathered from <http://tvbythenumber.zap2it.com>)

³²⁰ See the Appendix for details of this

consultant could work to rectify the problem and return the institution to its previous position of trust. The 2005-2010 period of consultant procedurals go to great lengths to establish the institution as an infallible system of criminal investigation; not once does a case go unsolved. More importantly, as explored in chapter Six, because shows setup confession as a proxy for conviction, every criminal is convicted. The consultant procedural sidesteps the issues of a corrupt and ill-equipped police force and then uses logical fallacy to create a genre which constantly attempts to reassure its audience that the law enforcement system works.

However, the new cop shows are about teams of uniformed investigators, a family of cops. The new dramas are ensemble dramas in the most part; they are dramas which focus on the work family and the way team-work keeps the system functioning. Many of the new protagonists are once again dynastic cops, the latest in a long history of police officers. They present the idea that faith has been put back in the institution through the rehabilitation of the consultant; consequently, they try to prove that the system could work and so now they are no longer needed. In some ways the story of the shift in the crime procedural is a tale of capitalist success. Through an outside source, a form of investigative management consultant, the ailing police institution has found its footing and can return to business as usual.

If the presence of the consultant suggests a turn toward the conservative in the crime drama then the obvious gender imbalance only serves to compound it. As Linda Mizejewski neatly puts it "The key to investigation fiction has always been knowledge, and the supposedly superior knowledge of the male detective has been part of his gendered entitlement."³²¹ Ultimately, the discourse on gender here is coloured by feminism. Though I have made efforts to ensure that gender is not merely a stand in for the feminine, the genre itself and its approach to gender discourse have meant that a feminist take is somewhat unavoidable. In analysing these shows, and as Fiske

³²¹Mizejewski, *Hardboiled and high heeled : the woman detective in popular culture*. P107

points out "we do not speak our discourse but our discourse speaks us"³²², my own position as a woman has meant I cannot help but see a genre pre-occupied with a fear of female knowledge-power. Though the masculine figures in these shows are burdened with the responsibility of pedagogy, it is a burden of privilege, a privilege the feminine characters are not afforded.

This is explored in chapter Five which suggests that, though female investigators have continued to play a small part in the crime drama genre, there is still a constant semi-misogynist tone to their portrayal. The gaining of knowledge is still ultimately seen as something masculine, feminine protagonists only being allowed access via magic. The construction of femininity in these shows is still viewed as less than; those who use feminine methods are relegated to either a supporting role or to the position of victim-investigator. Feminine methods in this instance are depicted as those that heavily involve talking and empathetic strategies rather than empirical approaches. Empathy and femininity continue to be inextricably linked and continue to be derided in the narrative of the crime drama. Feminine characters are nurturers and mothers, characters interested in passive modes of investigation rather than active empiricist practice. The genre continually portrays these methods as only being used out of necessity (in the case of the psychic investigators) or because other, more useful methods, are already being practiced elsewhere in the show. For example Angela in *Bones* can practice feminine investigative methods because Brennan is already performing more 'rigorous' investigation. Angela is not in a position to drive the investigation so her feminine methods and her power to gain knowledge in this way are not dangerous. As the age old saying goes knowledge is power, and the while same is true in the consultant procedural, knowledge does not equal agency.

Feminine investigators are routinely devoid of agency despite their position as protagonists. Agency, especially agency over knowledge gathering, is still being depicted as a masculine right and the default domain of those who perform masculine skills. Rationality and empiricism are

³²² Fiske, *Television culture*. P14

linked with the masculine and given precedence over the biological talents of the feminine investigators. As the feminine investigator's 'gift' is not one brought about through learning and dedication but one brought about through fate, their abilities are deemed less worthy. Moreover, shows in which these feminine skills are made prominent are also shows which foreground melodrama, often resulting in their association with other 'female' texts rather than other crime texts; they can be found in syndication on female focused networks like Oxygen while other crime shows find themselves on niche crime channels like Alibi. As I suggested earlier this is perhaps to do with the way in which melodrama is still considered somewhat pejoratively, despite attempts to revive it. The relegating of feminine knowledge gathering to the realms of the magical undermines any attempts to attain legitimate power. With the combination of the psychic shows being portrayed as softer, more melodramatic and focused on the emotional, they are often denied a place within the crime genre. However, if this thesis has proven anything it is that these conventions do not only exist in the psychic shows but across the genre as a whole; and while psychic shows are inherently more melodramatic, they are no less crime dramas than any others analysed here. The shift in emphasis most certainly exaggerates the melodrama of crime drama, but ultimately, that is the only difference, an exaggeration of that which other shows sideline. The melodrama seen here, the violating and centralising of the personal and the daily, stands in place of the fetishising of scientific experimentation found in other shows. Nevertheless, industrially the psychic shows are considered different because the 'authentic' crime drama is still seen as one dependant on rationalist investigative approaches, despite the myriad ways this thesis has proven points of cohesion between all the shows in the corpus.

That being the case, it is not only the positioning of feminine methods that indicate the conservative undertones of the genre; the construction of masculine methods and protagonists are just as rigidly conformist. Masculine protagonists are depicted as wayward sons of inadequate fathers, they are men forced into moral or ethical responsibility by their own entry into fatherhood. If feminine women are emotional and passive then masculine men are active

providers. While feminine protagonists are defined by their biological role in family, masculine protagonists use family to better themselves. The genre depends heavily on long-existing cultural constructions of gender that go as far back as the gothic novels of the 18th Century and beyond; constructions that position the irrational feminine figure as perpetual victim while masculine figures deconstruct the world through empiricist practice. Masculine protagonists are allowed choice; trained through pedagogical methods and then practicing equally pedagogical and systemised investigative methods, they have agency over the investigation and the narrative. Meanwhile feminine investigators are positioned as victimised mothers and daughters terrorised in their own homes and then forced to work through the trauma of others in order to be freed from it.

In fact, the consultant procedurals are pre-occupied with a very strict and conservative construction of the masculine/feminine dynamic. They thrive on defining boundaries and binaries despite the ways in which they mix and match other prevalent conventions. Though I have argued continually for a continuum upon which to measure genre, it is constructed of these very rigid concepts. Though the genre is supposedly a liberal space, a post-race, post-sexuality environment where a man is as likely to be killed because he received a promotion than because he was gay; the way in which gender is portrayed soon undermines this assertion. Outwardly the genre is progressive, a meritocratic world where co-operation and family are as important as success; however, on closer inspection these elements are actually used to reinforce a conservative outlook that favours utter belief in government systems and clearly defined gender roles. As Caughie suggests, "Representation is naturalized through an effortless familiarity."³²³ As such the repeated tropes of the gendering of knowledge gathering becomes the way the consultant procedural defines itself; it effects the trajectory of the plot, the aesthetic of individual shows and the kinds of crimes to be solved. However, while ninety percent of any given episode is constructed around this gendered knowledge gathering, in the final scene of confession the genre

³²³ Caughie, *Television drama : realism, modernism, and British culture*. P125

becomes a gender-free space in order to make room for a notion of justice. The evocation of justice and its subsequent lack becomes the point at which the genre is not obsessed with issues of gender, instead it is obsessed with issues of knowledge and what it can do. While the gathering of knowledge has been gendered as has the delivery of it, its effects are universal. Knowledge, the knowing of truth, once unleashed has the same effect across the genre; it removes the criminal from the world. What happens to them is inconsequential, what matters is that they have been removed and no matter how knowledge is gathered it always has the power to do this.

I am not suggesting that every viewer of crime shows has a conservative, misogynist agenda or that any pleasure they gain from watching comes from indulging in these notions, however, as Fiske claims, "Genres are popular when their conventions bear a close relationship to the dominant ideology of the time."³²⁴ Of course making assertions about audiences without doing audience research is a fruitless and pointless endeavour. Nonetheless, I would suggest that while my research has found a genre with deeply ensconced ideas about gender and the ownership of knowledge, the prevailing pleasure of the procedural most likely comes from the age-old excitement of the 'whodunnit'; a narrative concept whose longevity is testament to its popularity. Audiences are not dupes, and it has long been suggested that they do not accept every ideological agenda that crosses their paths, rather they tend to take up what Stuart Hall called a negotiated reading position³²⁵. As Hall defines it, this position "contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule."³²⁶ So, while my findings about the conservative nature of the genre stand, that does not mean that viewers take on these ideas or agree with them. Though for the period this study details these were some of the most popular

³²⁴ Fiske, *Television culture*. p111

³²⁵ Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media and cultural studies : keywords*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

³²⁶ *Ibid.* p172

shows on US television, that does not mean that the US was necessarily a more conservative place at the time or that audiences were definitely responding to those elements. All this study can be certain of is that this genre, during this cycle, presented a very conservative view of gender. Some of this stems from the conservative nature of the crime show in general, some perhaps from prevailing trends in other media such as the literature examined in chapter two. Discovering the root of the conservative ideologies put forth is not the purpose of this thesis, nonetheless, its presence, whether one accepted/enjoyed/noticed by the audience, is undeniable. Furthermore, these conclusions are solely about what was happening at this moment in the crime drama. As the shifts in the genre's focus detailed above suggest, already there are new things happening in the crime drama. This thesis should serve as a methodological approach that allows for further study of the crime drama (and other genres) as it is now and the changes that will occur in the future. As cycles move on and new tropes and themes come to the fore new studies need to be conducted; the relatively short-lived nature of this cycle and its very particular nuances indicate that in terms of genre no one study can ever fully investigate the whole of a genre for all time. Genres are constantly fluctuating and moving, therefore, any one study can only be useful in that particular historical moment, as the Johnson quote referenced earlier in the thesis explains, a genre study can only look to explore how "recurring discourses are articulated within specific contexts"³²⁷. New work must continue to be done in order to understand where the genre is going next and what themes become essential to its future representation of crime and investigation.

³²⁷ Johnson, *Telefantasy*. P147

Genre Theory

“[P]opular genres are usually discussed in terms of key works that are either claimed to be artistic high points, the markers of key shifts within historical development, or are taken to represent key features, periods or tendencies within the genre. Such claims to artistic status or representativeness can obviously be contested in individual cases, but there are also other problems with this continuing focus on generic canons.”³²⁸

This is how Lincoln Geraghty and Mark Jancovich discuss the main problem with genre theory in the introduction to their book in 2008; the same problem Mittell hoped to tackle four years previously³²⁹. It would seem genre scholars are constantly searching for a way to rise above the confines of the text while still discussing it. This thesis has provided a similar attempt. Where Geraghty and Jancovich argue that canon is a flawed concept and Mittell argues for broad cultural circulations of categories rather than internal textual unity, this thesis attempts a synthesis of the two. By ignoring canon in favour of a broader sampling this project has looked at television genre as something inherently varied. However, I have argued that this variety is at times illusory as what holds genres together is a collection of shared conventions. This is not the old theory of aesthetic covenant but a more nuanced approach that accounts for the cultural categories Mittell calls for. These connecting conventions are not a matter of textual similarity but a core of ideas and themes that remain steadfast in all iterations of the text despite being activated in different ways. Through using the contextualising evidence of ancillary and paratexts as Mittell suggests, recurrent themes become increasingly evident.

For example, as chapter Two illustrates, through analysing the promotional material and source texts that form the cluster around a genre the conventions that build the ‘ineffable’ quality of genre identification can be extrapolated; accordingly, this kind of work is done before any textual

³²⁸Lincoln Geraghty and Mark Jancovich, "Introduction," in *The Shifting Definition of Genre: Essays on Labeling Films, Television Shows and Media* (McFarland, 2008).

³²⁹Mittell, *Genre and Television : from Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*.

analysis of the shows in question takes place. The first two chapters of this thesis work to do the kind of analysis that moves past the theories Mittell, Geraghty and Jancovich are rallying against, they seek to understand the genre from somewhat of a distance; only then can the additional work be done, the work to further these ideas and flesh them out into a coherent continuum system.

This continuum functions by mapping the articulation of prominent conventions into a system of gradation. Rather than looking for precise points of similarity across a genre, this system looks for points where the same elements occur but to different degrees. For example, certain character conventions can be used as points of reference whether they are the premise of one text or only featured in the background of another; the fact that they occur in both is what connects them generically. Texts become part of the same genre when they have multiple points of cohesion. In *Television Culture* Fiske suggests that, "A genre seen textually should be defined as a shifting provisional set of characteristics which is modified as each new example is produced. Any one program will bear the main characteristics of its genre, but is likely to include some from others: ascribing it to one genre or another involves deciding which set of characteristics are the most important."³³⁰, however, as the continuum approach suggests this need not be the case. With a more flexible model which has the notion of difference built into it there is no need to 'modify' for new examples as the boundaries of definition are not rigid. Rather than having to readjust the definition of the genre with every slight change, every moment of Derridian iteration, what must instead be decided is where it fits along the continuum, here Fiske's notion of importance does come into play. Instead of 'shifting the goal posts' of genre definition, as it were, the characteristics deemed 'important' start to shape where a text fits within the genre as part of a set of sliding scales; they effect its correlation to others not the definition itself. To this end, the thesis moves on to examining how these shared conventions actually manifest within the genre.

³³⁰ Fiske, *Television culture*. p110

In chapter Three this approach finds a genre still promoting the age old binary of reason and intuition. This is the first point at which supposed diversity is in fact boiled down to a rearranging of the same themes and tropes. The articulation of reason and intuition become both the way texts in the genre attempt to differentiate themselves and a way in which they conform, building contact points across the continuum which bind them together. Similarly chapters Four and Five look to the way the genre reinforces the gender binary to again find these static conventions. Here the psychic shows provide invaluable examples. While initially they seem very different from the other procedurals, the narrative is shaped differently, the policing institution has a very different role, even aesthetically they differ. However, as the continuum method shows, the psychic shows still adhere to the genre conventions; masculinity is still aligned with reason, biology and pedagogy are kept separate and the private home is still viewed as the scene of transgression.

Chapter Six only reinforces the place the psychic shows have in the genre by examining how justice, or the lack thereof, becomes the most important place of cohesion for the whole genre. In fact, the way that justice is routinely ignored in favour of personal closure is perhaps the greatest evidence in favour of the usefulness of the continuum method. Each show has its own approach to eliciting confession but then all treat it as a syllogism for justice as they instantly dispatch with the confessant. This perfectly illustrates how rigid conventions are appropriated in different ways without being compromised. Despite many divergences, the confession conclusion of the consultant procedural is the point at which the same exact trope is enacted across the genre with only slight differences in inflection. Moreover, it also bolsters the claim that narrative is a central part of theorising television genre, something previous scholars have attempted to deny in order to avoid essentialist claims. The very crux of the genre, its most cohesive point is centred on plot development, on narrative conclusion. Additionally, the change in the genre this represents, the move toward wholly symbolic references to justice, suggests this is a significant point in the genre's lifecycle; there is something very specific at work in these shows, an attempt to avoid the

questions of social work and responsibility that the genre once indulged. Therefore, the work this thesis does to redress the lack of academic attention these generic texts have received is even more important.

As the method presented in this thesis suggests, television genres are perhaps more subject to fluctuations than any other medium. The season based broadcast system of US television along with its short production length make it a medium more capable of swift response to changes in audience desires. In conjunction with this the comparatively long life of the television text has to be taken into account. Popular texts easily reach 70-100 hours in running time. This duality of longevity paired with constant change is something that television genre studies must address. With the continuum method I propose both elements of the medium can be accounted for. Fluctuations can be incorporated into a static system, long running conventions can be understood as part of constantly shifting cycles. By embracing the changes in genre and looking at them as a way to help pinpoint the consistencies we can find a way to maintain generic boundaries without succumbing to generalisations that lose sight of textual intricacies. The continuum presents a method for seeing television as both static and fluctuating within the same historical moment without giving precedence to either notion.

There is a question as to whether this is ultimately a work of normativism, something Stam³³¹ suggests is regular pitfall of genre studies. Or as Andrew Tudor puts it the 'empiricist dilemma': "To take a genre such as the 'western', analyse it, and list its principal characteristics, is to beg the question that we must first isolate the body of films which are 'westerns'. But they can only be isolated on the basis of the 'principal characteristics' which can only be discovered from the films themselves after they have been isolated."³³²

³³¹Stam and Miller, *Film and theory : an anthology*. P128

³³² Cited in Christine Gledhill, "Genre," in *The Cinema book*, ed. Pam Cook (London: British Film Institute, 1985). P59

However, firstly I am not claiming that any of these texts belong solely to this genre rather than as a group they have many things in common and that these commonalities associate them with the crime drama. This does not preclude them from participating in other genres; although I would argue that any other genre they do participate in is to a lesser extent than the crime drama. In her work on telefantasy³³³ Johnson argues for the notion of there being multiple genres at work within any given text. While this may be true this approach is not necessarily useful when looking at genre textually in the way I have. Johnson's work is focused very much on production discourses, and though, as this thesis has demonstrated, there is space for that work, I would argue that examination of the textual narrative should be the central focus of genre studies. As such there is a need to set limits, to mark out the boundaries of a genre study. There is a marked difference between of a specific set of tropes and themes within a genre and a study which seeks to define genre boundaries. While this thesis has suggested that some texts which are at times denied their place within the crime drama can in fact be argued as such, that is a by-product rather than the aim. The aim here, once the boundaries had been defined (through a combination of textual and production discourse), was to understand how this particular genre articulated gender, not to argue what is or is not a crime show. The plan for this work was to create a method that made it easier to move beyond issues of definition and allow for greater work in the exploration of genres ideologically.

Consequently, my method of choosing texts was not based purely on those I had decided fitted my criteria. In order to find crime shows I looked at those that had been industry defined as crime, either through advertising that emphasised crime solving, scheduling alongside other crime shows, or were adapted from crime texts in other media. Although genre studies can be a self-fulfilling prophecy the method here has been about looking for repeated occurrences in a text and then extrapolating them to see if other texts deal with similar issues. What resulted was, in fact, far more uniform than even I had expected. This approach also goes further than the family

³³³ Johnson, *Telefantasy*.

resemblance approach criticised by theorists such as John M. Swales³³⁴. Although I have argued that texts have points at which they coalesce, the added flexibility of graduated articulation still avoids the problem of suggesting any text that features, say, a dead body is a crime text. One point of cohesion is not enough, they must be multiple and pervasive, elements around which the narrative is formed. Rather than a method for broadening the boundaries of genre it is one that helps theorise genres that are already broad. Every episode *Ghost Whisperer* is the story of a wrongdoing being righted through investigation; this is the crux of the crime drama. However, the text complicates the genre by doing many things that make it not 'fit'. The method posited here helps find ways to understand how it does fit and make sense of genres that include many texts that problematise easy genre definition. Graduated articulation is not about finding the least likely text and squeezing it into the genre, it is about trying to work around the wide, leaky hybrid texts and genres that make up contemporary television.

This method combines multiple avenues of television studies work to find a way of making categorisation part of the analytical work. Using Caldwell's notion of the televisual, a unique use of the aesthetic and narrative space that is purely 'of television', alongside Caughie's work on the role of repetition in television this thesis strives to find a methodology for the study of genre that is purely for television studies. Caughie states, "it seems more useful to think of crossings and impulses than of already constituted forms and stable conventions"³³⁵ and that is what graduated articulation hopes to do. As he goes on to write, "The question then, is not of assigning a work to a category, but of exploring the various equilibriums and shifting relationships which categorize it, placing it within a spectrum of possibilities of meaning and subjectivity"³³⁶. Graduated articulation is about that spectrum of possibilities, how mapping points of cohesion can assist in making sense of the ideas at work in a set of texts. My methodology builds upon these notions of

³³⁴John M. Swales, *Genre analysis : English in academic and research settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³³⁵ Caughie, *Television drama : realism, modernism, and British culture*. P133

³³⁶ Ibid. P133

categorisation in a medium built on repetition, just as Caughie suggests, “television, in its regularity and availability, seems regulated by repetition and modulated by acceptable difference”³³⁷. This constant balance between repetition and difference, and the ways in which difference can be understood on a spectrum of repetition is at the heart of my work. As I have done a few times throughout this thesis, I call once again to Derrida and his notions of repetition; finding a way to theorise the inherent difference in the inescapable repetition of texts within a genre. Genres, by their definition must be repetitious, and in Derrida’s understanding, must then also not be a series of exact copies-those are impossible-but instead marginally varying iterations. This being the case, and the case studies included here are evidence of that difference, then there needs to be a way to incorporate that difference into an understanding of meaning and ideology. If we are to understand the ideas at the heart of a genre than we must be able to pinpoint, through the differences, the repeated points of ideation that together create meaning. The purpose of my method is to find a way of not only making sense of television’s ceaseless repetition but also finding a way to utilise it as part of an exploration of television’s themes and ideologies. Drawing these ideas into the examination of genre as part of a system of texts moves television studies forward, using a method that is wholly about television and one that encompasses both the macro in its understanding of television as interconnecting clusters of texts, and the micro in its need for textually specific points of reference. In doing so it champions not only the importance of understanding the intricacies of television as a medium but also the need to always be aware of context.

At the end of *Critical Ideas* John Corner asks: “What will be the consequences for the generic and aesthetic organization of programmes?”³³⁸, while I do not think that much will change in terms of industrial notions of genre, no matter how far we move from network television, I do believe that as scholars the way we deal with genre needs to continue to develop. What I hope to add here is

³³⁷ Ibid. p231

³³⁸ Corner, *Critical ideas in television studies*. P125

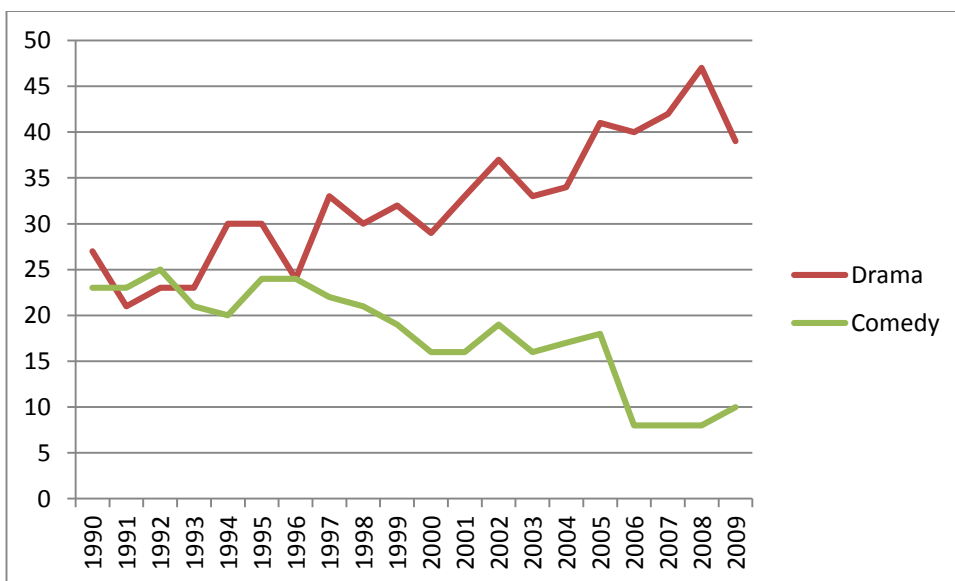
a method that moves toward an attempt to quantify the 'ineffable' qualities of genre through further reaching textual (para, extra and ancillary) analysis. Through a willingness to extend television genre analysis to include more texts and paratexts, without the constant need to perpetually redefine the boundaries of any one particular genre, the discipline can be reinvigorated. Genre can be seen as a place to explore the variety in texts rather than a way of proscriptively boxing them in. I have used this approach to try and analyse how a particular idea was being constructed at a particular moment in particular genre, but the possibilities are endless.

Appendix

	1	2	3	4	5	6
science	Ghost Whisperer Medium		The Mentalist Psych		Lie to Me	Bones
comic	Ghost Whisperer	Medium	Lie to Me	Bones	The Mentalist	Psych
domestic	Lie to Me		Psych Bones The Mentalist			Ghost Whisperer Medium
gothic	Lie to Me Psych	Bones	The Mentalist			Ghost Whisperer Medium

1.1 Matrix of defining narratives.

1.2 Prime-time hours 1990-2010



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Television Shows

Primary

Bones, Hart Hanson, Fox, 2005

Ghost Whisperer, John Gray, CBS, 2005

Lie to Me, Samuel Baum, Fox, 2009

Medium, Glenn Gordon Caron, NBC/CBS, 2005

Psych, Steve Franks, USA, 2006

The Mentalist, Bruno Heller, CBS, 2008

Secondary

Arrested Development, Mitchell Herwitz, Fox, 2003

48 Hours, Susan Zirinsky, CBS, 1988

Ally McBeal, David E. Kelley, Fox, 1997

Beulah, Ronald Reed, ABC, 1950

Burn Notice, Matt Nix, USA, 2007

Cagney and Lacey, Barbara Avedon and Barbara Corday, CBS, 1982

Castle, Andrew W. Marlowe, ABC, 2009

Cold Case, Meredith Steim, CBS, 2003

Columbo, Richard Levinson and William Link, NBC/ABC, 1968

Cops, Michael Barbour and John Langley, Fox, 1989

Crossing Jordan, Tim Kring, NBC, 2001

Crossing Over with John Edward, John Edward, Sci Fi, 1999

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Anthony E. Zuiker, CBS, 2000

CSI: Miami, Anthony E. Zuiker, CBS, 2002

CSI: NY, Anthony E. Zuiker, CBS, 2006

Desperate Housewives, Marc Cherry, ABC, 2004

Dragnet, Jack Webb, NBC, 1951

Family Guy, Seth McFarlane, Fox, 1999

Forever Knight, Barney Cohan and James D. Parriott, CBS, 1992

Fringe, J. J. Abrams and Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci, Fox, 2008

Ghost Hunters Academy, Alan David and Rob Katz, Syfy, 2009

Ghost Hunters International, Alan David and Rob Katz, Syfy, 2008

Ghost Hunters, Alan David and Rob Katz, Syfy, 2004

Grey's Anatomy, Shonda Rhimes, ABC, 2005

Hawaii Five-0, Leonard Freeman, CBS, 1968

House, David Shore, Fox, 2004

Jag, Donald P. Bellisario, NBC/CBS, 1995

Judging Amy, Amy Brenneman and Bill D'Elia and John Tinker, CBS, 1999

Kojak, Abby Man, CBS, 1973

LA Law, Steven Bochco and Terry Louise Fisher, NBC, 1986

Law & Order, Dick Wolf, NBC, 1990

Living With the Dead, Dir. Stephen Gyllenhaal, HBO, 2002

MadTV, Fax Bahr and Adam Small, Fox, 1995

Major Crimes, James Duff, TNT, 2012

Malcolm in the Middle, Linwood Boomer, Fox, 2000

Most Haunted, Karl Beattie and Yvette Fielding, Living TV, 2002

Mythbusters, Peter Ress, Discovery Channel, 2003

NCIS, Donald P. Bellisario and Don McGill, CBS, 2003

Numb3rs, Nicholas Falacci and Cheryl Heuton, CBS, 2005

NYPD Blue, Steven Bochco and David Milch, ABC, 1993

Profiler, Cynthia Saunders, NBC, 1996

Pushing Daisies, Bryan Fuller, ABC, 2007

Quincy M.E., Glen A. Larson and Lou Shaw, NBC, 1976

Revenge, Mike Kelley, ABC, 2011

Rizzoli and Isles, Tess Gerritsen, TNT, 2010

Silk Stalkings, Stephen J. Cannell, CBS/USA, 1991

Starsky and Hutch, Ryan Blinn and William Blinn, ABC, 1975

The Anatomy of Murder, Dir. Otto Preminger, 1959

The Closer, James Duff and Michael M. Robin and Greer Shephard, TNT, 2005

The Cosby Show, Bill Cosby and Michael Leeson and Ed Weinberger, NBC, 1984

The Dead Will Tell. Dir. Stephen Kay, HBO, 2004

The Goldbergs, Gertrude Berg, NBC/CBS, 1929

The Practice, David E. Kelley, ABC, 1997

The Wire, David Simon, HBO, 2002

The X-Files, Chris Carter, Fox, 1993

Vertigo, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1958

White Collar, Jeff Eastin, USA, 2009

Without a Trace, Hank Steinberg, CBS, 2002

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Lie to Me promo for episode 1.5

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<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZYHyZXPNI8>> (accessed 28/2/2011)

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eq8E2Mllvo&feature=related> (accessed 3/7/2011)

Psych promo for episode 3.14

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Clip from *Family Guy* episode

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