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1. Introduction

Too concerned with marriage, too foolishly active and too beautiful to make a believable character: such was the assessment of the female private eye Dorothy Sayers made in her introduction to *Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror*, published in 1928 (15). And indeed, the woman detective of the 2010s does away with high heels, romantic interest and inefficient activity, albeit usually not all at the same time. This thesis explores the hard-boiled woman detective, who, intruding on the male domain of fictional sleuthing, threatens all that is good and true for a genre built on the male hero as Raymond Chandler envisaged him in *The Simple Art of Murder* (1946).

In academic scrutiny of television, male heroes, yet again, rule: recent discussions of quality television predominantly focus on series such as *The Sopranos* (1999-2007), *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), or *The Wire* (2002-2008), all of which feature male protagonists with a criminal mind. So-called 'quality television', a term outlined by Robert J. Thompson in the 1990s, consistently precludes women's genres as Heike Paul (2016) concisely shows. Shows featuring a female lead are also comparatively rarely explored, a deficit which despite the increased focus on gender considerations persists through the debate's recast as 'transgressive television' (Däwes 2015). Also, non-US productions seem to be largely ignored. This thesis endeavors to contribute to the discussion by closing these gaps and investigating the transgressive potential of female lead characters in selected crime drama series.

Focusing on the traditionally masculine, but increasingly female-infiltrated genre of the detective story, this thesis explores a sample of three recent television series featuring a female police detective: The UK produced series *The Fall* (2013-2016), created by Allan Cubitt; *Top of the Lake* (2013-2018), a New Zealand/Australian/US coproduction created by Jane Campion and Gerard Lee, and the Danish/Swedish coproduction *The Bridge* (2011-2018), created by Hans Rosenfeldt. While *The Fall* can be described as the default case in terms of popularity and critical acclaim, *Top of the Lake* presents a prestige production. Its first season was shown in its entirety at Sundance Film Festival, the second season premiered at Cannes Film Festival in May 2017. *The Bridge*, by contrast, is the most popular item in the selection. The series sold to more than 100 countries to date and several remakes were produced. All three productions are recent,

with *The Bridge* first airing in 2011, *The Fall* and *Top of the Lake* following in 2013. Beyond that, all comprise overarching rather than episodic plot structures.

Although the series display features of the police procedural, they were chosen because their protagonists are to some extent modeled on the hard-boiled private detective from literature. This figure, meticulously traced by Lewis D. Moore (2006), appears in two forms which are relevant to my study: the original male hard-boiled detective of the 1930s and his 1980s female incarnation. Chandler's Philip Marlowe character, the prototypical interwar outsider with a cynical take on society and his fists at the ready undergoes substantial changes with the gender switch: 1980s female p.i.s such as Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski come with a social network and often show a vital interest in the feminist cause. Their reluctance to commit to a relationship fits well with their financial independence and their ability to physically fight back matches doing business in a male domain.

Although still thriving on the literary market, versions of the 1980s female hard-boiled detective are practically non-existent in television: the financially and sexually independent female sleuth is problematic to both the codes inherent in the hard-boiled p.i. and police procedural narratives and the gender codes of mainstream television in general. Brought about by the gender switch, challenges to the patriarchal gender order arise in three areas: the gaze, sexuality and violence.

Firstly, the male gaze as outlined by Laura Mulvey (1975) is reversed, because detecting foregrounds looking, as evidenced in the term 'private eye'. The woman detective thus turns from the object of the male gaze to someone who actively looks. Thereby agency is transferred from the male to the female, which is a violation of the principle that the man is the one to re-establish the social order in the hard-boiled narrative.

Secondly, the female hard-boiled detective's independent sexuality counters the romantic notion of the woman waiting for Mr. Right. The character can thus no longer be tamed by a romantic interest and marriage, to speak in feminist terms of power relations. Once again, the active role is transferred to the woman, which threatens the patriarchal power relations pertinent in mainstream television.

Thirdly, and this point, too, is crucial to the transference of power and agency, the gun as a phallic symbol and a sign of power is assigned to the woman detective. The armament moves the character away from the traditionally assigned role of women as damsels-in-distress or straight-out victims in detective stories and likely evens the

score in a physical confrontation. These three challenges to patriarchal genre and gender codes rarely occur without measures to neutralize at least one of them, as Linda Mizejewski (2004) and Carol M. Dole (2001) show in their detailed analyses of the woman detective in popular culture.

In my analysis of the three series I will investigate the female detectives on several levels in order to locate them within the hard-boiled sub-genre and reveal changes and developments. After an analysis of the detective's visual representation I will explore how the threefold threat of reversed gaze, independent sexuality and armament is negotiated in the series. Beyond these points, the detective's feminist agency will be examined as well as the respective series' ideological underpinning and spectatorship allure. To do so, the overall construction of the series will be considered as well as a close reading of selected scenes undertaken. Aspects of camera work will be explored as well as dialogue, character grouping and plot. To this end, I will draw on methods from the fields of literary studies, feminist film theory and film analysis. My approach is thus of an interdisciplinary nature.

With this thesis, I intend to investigate how the challenges the gender switch presents are negotiated in my three chosen television series. I expect the analysis of the three television series to show the following: Firstly, that the woman detectives depicted display more features of the 1930s hardboiled detective than of his female 1980s reincarnation; secondly, that strategies commonly used in mainstream television to neutralize the threat of the female detective to the patriarchal gender order are negotiated on several levels and mostly flouted; and lastly, that feminist agency is largely reigned in through the genre switch to the police procedural, which restricts independent decision-making.

As this thesis centers on non-US productions with an emphasis on European series, it would have been enlightening to include examples from the German speaking countries. The topic of masculinities and family would also constitute a worthy field of investigation since all three series show an interesting propensity of treating the topic of marriage and parenthood in connection with male characters. However, the scope of the thesis as well as the framework of Anglophone studies did not allow for a foray into these fields.

This introduction will be followed by chapters pertaining to genre and feminist film theory, respectively: chapter two will trace features of the hard-boiled and feminist hard-boiled novel as well as the police procedural. Beyond that, an overview of women

detectives on television will be undertaken to contextualize the choice of objects of analysis. In chapter three, the male gaze and its reversal as devised in feminist film theory will be outlined. In chapter four, gaze theory will be developed into a methodological scaffold to analyze the three challenges the gender switch generates. Chapters five to seven will be dedicated to the analysis of the respective series and chapter eight will discuss and summarize the findings and present an outlook to further research.

2.Theory: Genre

2.1. Tracing the Detective

This thesis sets out to trace the hard-boiled detective in three female police detectives featured in television series from the 2010s. This chapter begins with an outline of the literary male private investigator as he was devised in the US in the 1930s. Subsequently, the review follows the figure through three substantial shifts: firstly, the gender switch, which takes place in the 1980s literary recast of the sub-genre; secondly, the switch from literature to visual media, centering on female private detectives on television, who appear and quickly increase in number also in the 1980s; and thirdly, the switch from the private eye series to the police and forensic science procedural, genres surging in in the 1990s. To restrict the scope of the analysis, the discussion focuses on basic character traits of the detective, social and sexual relations and the use of violence.

2.2. The Hard-boiled Novel

The hard-boiled detective novel derived from the dime novel and was significantly developed in US pulp magazine stories, most notably in those appearing in *The Black Mask* magazine from 1926 onwards, as Leroy L. Panek (*Introduction* 145-150) meticulously traces. Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler both published stories in the magazine and are considered the genre's uncontested key writers according to, among many others, Cawelti (141), Scaggs (55-56), Bradford (28) and Panek (*Introduction* 149-151). Other authors too numerous to list here are variously named as the third most important proponents. Hammett's first novel *Red Harvest* was published in 1929, after serialization in *The Black Mask*, and Chandler's *The Big Sleep* came out in 1939. Concerning plots, motifs and the hero's characterization, Panek (*Introduction* 166) and Scaggs (57) attest the hard-boiled sub-genre similarities with the western, a fact I will come back to. Lewis D. Moore discerns three relevant periods of the hard-boiled novel: the Early Period, which he times from 1927 to 1955, the Transitional Period, lasting from 1964 to 1977, and the Modern Period, ranging from 1979 until the early 1990s in his discussion (3). Laying my focus on the hard-boiled detective's establishing features and the gender shift, I will concentrate on the genre's beginnings in the interwar period and its recast with a female detective in the early 1980s rather than tracing the genre's general development throughout.

2.2.1. The Marginal Existence of the Interwar Male P.I.

In contrast to British clue-puzzle detective fiction from the Golden Age, the US-based hard-boiled school relied on action more than on ratiocination and claimed realism in both plot and language (Panek *Introduction* 152-155). The first-person narrative voice of the detective can be described as a signature feature of hard-boiled fiction (Walton and Jones 150). This subjective voice establishes the distinctly male perspective of the early hard-boiled novel and puts the reader into the mind of its hero, the hard-boiled private investigator. L. Moore (2006) describes a multitude of detectives and finds it difficult to pinpoint common features which apply to all of them. I will, therefore, concentrate on features the “chief early hard-boiled detectives” (L. Moore 12) share. These include Mickey Spillane’s Mike Hammer, Ross MacDonald’s Lew Archer and Carroll John Daly’s Race Williams (L. Moore 12). Genre-defining, though, are Hammett’s Sam Spade and Chandler’s Philip Marlowe. Spade first appeared in *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) and four subsequently published short stories; Chandler wrote seven Philip Marlowe novels, the first of which, *The Big Sleep*, was published in 1939. Humphrey Bogart played both detectives in the respective novel’s most famous film adaptations from the 1940s (*The Maltese Falcon* 1941; *The Big Sleep* 1946). His performances conflated these figures into the epitome of the hard-boiled private eye. To characterize the hard-boiled detective, Panek draws a comparison with the soldier and observes that “[a] fair number of writers served in the war” and that “pulp magazines appealed specifically to veterans as readers” (*Introduction* 163-164), which can also be deemed true for the reader of the later emerging hard-boiled novel. The soldier in Panek’s description lacks deep friendships and has lost connection with his folks at home, distrusts authority, is violent out of necessity, and needs heightened sensory sensitivity in order to survive. (*Introduction* 164). Applied to the hard-boiled hero, these features translate to the “outsider’ status of the PI”. (Scaggs 59). He is a “marginal man, a loner” (Cawelti 151) in the surroundings of “a hostile urban environment” (Scaggs 57). Scaggs further describes the detective as “an alienated individual who exists outside or beyond the socio-economic order of family, friends, work, and home” (59). The detective usually has neither a back story nor a partner with whom to share the atrocities of the job (L. Moore 12). He operates in “a world of exploitation and criminality” (Cawelti 141) undermined by “routine police corruption” (Scaggs 58). The degeneration permeating the world around him makes it necessary for the detective to “define his own concept of morality and justice frequently in conflict

with the social authority of the police” (Cawelti 143) Like the western hero, he has to define his own code of conduct and of honor (L. Moore 39). Concerning violence, Panek (*Introduction* 164) attests the detective a reluctance to use it (164) which cannot safely be generalized. Rather, the detective “knows how to handle himself in the midst of violence” (Cawelti 145), which allows for a wide margin in this respect, ranging from Hammett’s and Chandlers’ detectives, who show at least a marginal measure of restraint, to Spillane’s Mike Hammer, whom Scaggs ascribes “pathological blood-lust” (152). To conclude with Panek’s comparison to the soldier’s attentiveness, the hard-boiled detective “possesses heightened “[...] visual perception” (Panek *Introduction* 164). This trait evokes Sherlock Holmes’ magnifying glass and links the hard-boiled detective back to his predecessor, although the later detective’s observations relate to human nature rather than the natural sciences. The detective’s gaze is here mentioned because it constitutes a key thread in this thesis. Significantly missing from Panek’s discussion are women, which implies that in the sub-genre’s Early Period, the hard-boiled novel is an inherently male affair: authors as well as protagonists and intended readers are men.

2.2.2. Transgressive Traits

In summary of the aforementioned features, the hard-boiled detective falls well outside societal norms, and his outsider status can even be described as transgressive: Cawelti, despite describing the hard-boiled detective as “an ordinary man” (145) quotes a paragraph from Chandler’s *The Long Goodbye* (1953), in which protagonist Philip Marlowe cynically dismisses the idea of a presumably boring life with a regular job, wife, children, and “small town” wealth for fear of ending up with a “brain like a sack of Portland cement” (Chandler *Goodbye* 625). Cawelti deduces that “[the hard-boiled detective’s] way of life may look like a failure, but actually it is a form of rebellion, a rejection of the ordinary concepts of success and respectability” (144). Since the detective is also modeled on the western hero (Scaggs 62), his code of honor and propensity for violence serve to re-establish the social order to which he himself does not quite adhere. Therefore, like in the westerner, his transgression becomes a constitutive trait of his heroism which by far outweighs his refusal of a socially acceptable life.

2.2.3. Romance and Sexual Relations

Another trait which links the hard-boiled detective with the “chosen isolation of cowboys” is his “particular aloneness”, as Panek (*Introduction* 166) remarks. When it comes to women, the hard-boiled detective steers clear of real emotional involvement. L. Moore ascertains that “an anti-romantic attitude dominates the early hard-boiled detective novel” and attests the detective “a failure [...] to develop beyond passion and lust” (89-90), which is easily explained with the detective’s disdain of an ordinary life and his cherished independence. He is, however, at once attracted and appalled by female protagonists who are routinely constructed as criminal, self-serving and seductive in this sub-genre. I will first refer to the detective’s sexual relations and then move on to describe basic traits of the *femme fatale* figure.

Interestingly, two completely opposing opinions about the default hard-boiled detective’s sexuality prevail: on the one hand, Swales notes that “[i]n many examples the detective is strangely celibate” (xv), and L. Moore, contradicting his own implication of a sexual aspect in the novels, postulates that “[o]ne probably should accept that if [the topic of sexuality] remains unexplored by the most important writers of a period that it, at least, is unimportant to their conceptions of the hard-boiled detective” (L. Moore 44). Cawelti, on the other hand, writes that “[s]exual attractiveness [...] is one of the key characteristics of the private eye, and there are few stories in which he does not play either seducer or seduced” (153). Considering the two genre-constituting novels, the absence of sexuality Swales and L. Moore postulate appears rather strange. Hammett’s detective Sam Spade, in *The Maltese Falcon*, not only has an affair with his partner’s wife, there is also a pronounced, albeit non-verbal hagggle with said partner over who gets to move on a female client first (Hammett *Falcon* 7-8); Chandler’s Philip Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* is seriously attracted to his client’s married daughter (Chandler *Sleep* 599), feels deeply corrupted by his client’s other daughter’s bold advances and throws her out of his bed (706-709), flirts with a bookstore clerk (608-609) and in the last line of the book thinks of a woman he only saw once (764). While we do not actually see the heroes get down to business, both novels make ample use of sexual tension. To explain the scarcity of actual sexual encounters, the nature of the female protagonist in the hard-boiled novel has to be considered.

2.2.4. The *Femme Fatale*

Cawelti argues that “the intense masculinity of the hard-boiled detective” can be attributed to “sexual and status anxieties focusing on women.” He attests the hard-

boiled narrative an inherent “fear of feminine aggression and domination” (154) and goes on to say that the woman serves not only as an “appropriate sexual consort to the dashing hero; she also poses certain basic challenges to the detective’s physical and psychological security,” and notes that “these challenges [...] lead to the most brutal violence of the story” (154). Cawelti puts the *femme fatale* in a nutshell in his description of ‘sex’ rather than ‘woman’: “It is an object of pleasure, yet it also has a disturbing tendency to become a temptation, a trap, a betrayal” (153). The *femme fatale*, a criminal woman who uses her sexuality to manipulate and deceive the hero, is severely punished for challenging the hero’s moral integrity, but only after she has been taken advantage of sexually, at least on a symbolic level and in a form the reader can also benefit from. Cawelti writes: “The only possible resolution to the insecurity caused by the conflict between the need for women as sexual and social fulfillment and the threat of feminine independence and domination is the simultaneous possession and destruction of the female” (Cawelti 159). He further refers to a scene from Spillane’s *I, The Jury* (1947), in which detective Mike Hammer is taunted by a seductive, yet criminal female psychiatrist with the telling name Manning, whom he shoots once she has taken off all her clothes to seduce him. The gaze at the naked woman, of course, serves scopophilic purposes for the reader. In Freud’s theory, voyeuristic looking is sexually gratifying in itself and signifies possession. Spillane’s scenario provides the reader with “a simultaneous climax” (Cawelti 159) of possession and obliteration. I will further refer to the mechanism of combined gaze and death to achieve patriarchal control of woman in the section pertaining to the female corpse in the chapter three.

Hardly surprising, the grateful recipient of this kind of plot is presumed to be a heterosexual male who can identify with the detective’s idealized “masculinity and courage, his integrity and sense of honor [and] his great sexual attractiveness” (Cawelti 160). Additionally, Cawelti lists features the detective shares with a lower-class reader, which are marginality, reservations concerning the rich and a general post-war sense of “failure and frustration” (160). Consequently, the hard-boiled novel achieves a twofold identification offer grounded in both realism and fantasy: the idealized hero who easily dominates women and re-establishes order in the process is underlaid with a mirroring of the masculine interwar insecurities. The first-person narrative additionally fosters reader-identification, as Cawelti (160) remarks.

To summarize: the hard-boiled detective is modeled on the western hero in his social isolation, professional marginality and emotional independence. He observes his own sense of justice, which is not necessarily lawful and usually defies the authority of the police. He uses violence, sometimes excessively, and both enjoys and punishes women to ascertain his masculinity on the one side, and his superiority in both moral standards and the gender hierarchy on the other side. I will now go on to describe the woman detective as she was developed in the 1980s feminist recast of the hard-boiled genre.

2.3. The Female Hard-boiled P.I. of the 1980s

In Panek's page-long section about the hard-boiled genre's beginnings, its protagonist and intended readership, the word 'boys' is used all of seven times (*Introduction* 145-146). A four-line passage from Chandler's *The Simple Art of Murder* (991-992) describing the hard-boiled hero's character and incessantly quoted in academic work on the genre (for instance Bradford 33, Scaggs 56) features the word 'man' six times. Both examples hammer home the gender of the detective and his intended reader as he is conceived in the interwar period; authors as well as academics dealing with the sub-genre are also male. To top this overwhelming emphasis on all things masculine, Scaggs, in accordance with other scholars, describes the hard-boiled novel as "the most misogynistic of the various sub-genres of crime fiction" (77). A female version of the hard-boiled detective emerged nonetheless, and an impressive unbroken string of novels featuring this variant's groundbreaking representatives prevails to day. Inasmuch as the originals were an all-male club, the 1980s version is all-women when it comes to detectives, authors and intended audiences, and garnered considerable attention from feminist scholars.

In this section, basic features of the female hard-boiled detective as she emerges in 1980s literature will be described and differences to her 1930s male counterpart will be pointed out. Reddy claims that "in the 1980s, 207 new [detective] series by women writers began, with the huge majority featuring female protagonists" (201), while L. Moore only counts "approximately fifteen" hard-boiled female detectives from 1980 to the early 1990s (179). This substantial discrepancy in perception can possibly be taken as indicative of the resistance the female detective faced once she entered the male domain of hard-boiled detecting, and later, that of film and television. It may also be a question of definition. While the overwhelming majority of scholars describes Sue

Grafton's Kinsey Millhone character as a prime example of the new female hard-boiled detective (see for instance Keitel 5, Berglund 147 and Reddy 197), Panek denies the character is really of the hard-boiled kind, because in the course of the series, Millhone "curses less, engages in less violence and even gets a salon haircut once in a while" (Panek *New Writers* 98). His argument seems questionable considering that the original hard-boiled detectives neither distinguished themselves through excessive cursing nor a particular disregard for coiffure. The violence claim is the only one that sticks, and it shows that the woman detective, in contrast to the male sleuth, has no masculinity to defend (Reddy 198). Reddy remarks that the feminist recast of the genre "remap[s] the terrain originally staked out by the hardboiled" (Reddy 197) which goes to say that the genre necessarily underwent changes with the gender switch.

To describe the female detective of the 1980s hard-boiled novel I will draw together the findings of various scholars but also use examples from Sara Paretsky's first V.I. Warshawski novel *Indemnity Only* and Sue Grafton's first Kinsey Millhone novel *A is for Alibi*, both published in 1982. These novels are considered genre-defining for instance by Walton and Jones (4), Mizejewski (12), Berglund (147) and L. Moore (178). Warshawski and Millhone have appeared in multiple installments of the respective series as did Marcia Muller's Sharon McCone character who first appeared in *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (1977). Muller's and Paretsky's series have new books due out in the summer and fall of 2018, respectively, author Sue Grafton died in 2017 only months after *Y Is for Yesterday* was published, leaving only one novel in her alphabet series unwritten. Reddy states that these three series, together with others featuring a hard-boiled female detective and appearing in the 1980s "do indeed borrow many of the conventions of the hardboiled" only to give them a new slant (197). She goes on to show that the same features take on different meanings in a woman (Reddy 197-200). I will refer to several of them in the following sections.

2.3.1. General Disposition and Social Field

The female detective of the 1980s is a long way from her amateur forerunners, the little old nosey lady from the genre's Golden Age and the "innocent young woman [...] courageously explor[ing] Udolpho" Reddy (191) mentions. She is a well-trained licensed private investigator of moderate financial independence (Keitel 2), proficient with both words (Keitel 53) and guns (Scaggs 78), and in this respect, a match to her 1930s predecessor. Paretsky's and Grafton's detectives are surprisingly similar and established a prototype much in the same way Spade and Marlowe did in the earlier

variation. I will summarize the features of both woman detectives as they appear in the respective first novels and elaborate on salient points. Both V.I. Warshawski and Kinsey Millhone are in their early thirties, divorced and single. They are both orphaned and neither has living siblings. Both are comfortable without a steady partner either in life or at work. Those features are shared by many of their peers, as Keitel (55) ascertains. In contrast to the 1930s male sleuth, the detectives are socially well integrated: both Warshawski and Millhone have a network of friends and allies on which they can rely when it comes to emotional as well as professional matters. Both detectives have female friends with nourishing qualities but also answer to older male authority figures: on the one hand, this is an older neighbor who looks out for them as a self-declared father figure and on the other hand, they have a male connection in law enforcement. As L. Moore notes, all these friends “function as replacements for lost or absent families” (180), and both detectives show a strong sense of obligation towards them (Reddy 198). The female detective is thus cast as more socially engaged than her male counterpart, and her solitariness is limited to working and sleeping (mostly) alone.

2.3.2. Working in a Male Domain

The presence of an extended social field cushions the discriminations the detectives face working in the male domain of private sleuthing (Reddy 198), a topic which is, of course, absent from the 1930s p.i. narrative. Warshawski, in *Indemnity only*, is questioned in her professional abilities by witnesses, criminals and members of law enforcement. Unsurprisingly, all those critics are male and base their doubts on the detective’s gender (see for instance Paretsky 29-35). Millhone has to stand up to her cop friend in order to be taken as equal and strike a balanced deal in exchanging information (Grafton A 16-20). Reddy sees a distinctive quality of the 1980s woman detective in “fighting back” against the “generalized obstacle of gender limitations and social attempts to control and contain women” (199). In the end the private investigator has to follow no one’s orders and usually succeeds in being taken seriously by criminals and cops alike.

2.3.3. Feminist Agency and Female Solidarity

Warshawski and Millhone are self-employed because they do not enjoy working “with a leash around [their] neck” (Grafton A 19). Both started out in law enforcement jobs but quit in order to be their own woman, which mirrors the 1930s detective’s problems

with authorities and his strife for independence. Warshawski, who previously worked for the public defender's office, is challenged by a reproachful witness saying: "It doesn't make any difference who is paying your salary" and retorts: "You're wrong. It makes an enormous difference. I'm the only person I take orders from, not a hierarchy of officers, aldermen and commissioners." (Paretsky 180). Closely related to the woman detectives' autonomy in decision-making is their feminist agency and solidarity with other women. Various, they take on female clients as for instance Millhone does in *A is for Alibi*, support and protect women and help capture perpetrators who have committed crimes against women. The woman detective follows her own moral codes (Keitel 60) which with some consistency bends the law in favor of wronged women (Keitel 59). This trait presents a gendered twist of the westerner's code of honor and the 1930s p.i.'s sense of justice, but, other than her predecessors, the woman detective will not make short shrift of a culprit like the hard-boiled detective variously does with the *femme fatale* to prove his heroism and masculinity. The female detective shows no particular desire to possess and obliterate men in the way Spillane's detective does, as described in the previous section.

The topic of female solidarity is an important aspect of the 1980s hard-boiled novel and contributes considerably to the genre's feminist potential. Panek observes that Paretsky's Warshawski does not have a singular best female friend (*New Writers* 77) but fails to see that her female relationships are multiple and changing, creating a supportive social field which goes beyond creating a surrogate family. Margaret Kinsman remarks that in Paretsky's work, female friendships are "rooted in a basic respect for each other" (166) and are determined by a sense of "reciprocity and obligation" (165). She ascertains that these relationships serve to establish the detective's identity "distinct from family relations" and that the detective is "collaborat[ing] in the construction of a sex-group identity which asserts its differences from male experiences in the world" (163). What emerges is a network of changing relationships which oscillate between closeness and space, need and support, but also include professional affiliations and alliances (Kinsman 163-164). This network also creates an image of women "actively engaged in the public sphere" (Kinsman 163) through their professional presence and in spite of patriarchal opposition. Despite the detective's resistance to traditional relationships which is grounded in gendered power structures, the novels construct her as part of a female collective which Kinsman pinpoints as distinctly feminist in its agenda (156-156). This construction differs

significantly from the solitary male hero of the 1930s whose cynicism and misogyny cuts him off emotionally and socially.

2.3.4. Relationships and Sexuality

In the original hard-boiled novel, the representation of the detective's sexual relations, broadly speaking, fulfills two functions: firstly, it ascertains the detective's masculinity (Keitel 56); secondly, his desire makes him vulnerable to the *femme fatale*, who threatens both the legal order and the detective's moral integrity. The challenge she presents is resolved in her possession and obliteration, which re-establishes patriarchal order. The male detective's sexual conduct is thus not only acceptable but even takes on a heroic tinge despite his rejection of marriage and a family.

The female detective of the 1980s does not need to prove her sexual prowess, is vulnerable but not morally compromised through her sexuality, and rejects the traditional role of women as wife and mother. She claims for herself what is taken for perfectly natural in a man, namely that sexual activity, a relationship and a family can be separated as topics and do not form a compulsory trajectory. Keitel notes that in the 1980s novels "sexuality and a relationship are accepted as a part of life – but not taken overly seriously" (55, my translation). Both Washawski and Millhone have flings with men involved in their cases. Warshawski ends up having to defend the man's life (214-226), and the affair ends there. Millhone's partner turns out to be an "*homme fatal*" (Walton and Jones 126) and the searched-for criminal. Although the character mirrors the *femme fatale* of the 1930s novels, the resolve of the conflict is weighed differently, as will be detailed in the subsequent section.

In contrast to the 1930s hard-boiled detective, relationships are considered a threat to the woman detective's independent life style rather than her moral integrity. Despite brief regrets at seeing the affair end, the female hard-boiled detective puts her work before a relationship and cherishes her independence. Millhone distrusts love and says: "Private investigation is my whole life. It is why I get up in the morning and what puts me to bed at night. Most of the time I'm alone, but why not? I'm not unhappy and I'm not discontented" (Grafton A 216-217). Warshawski says of the detective business that "it's not a job that's easy to combine with marriage" and evokes the image of a man "at home stewing because he doesn't know what to do about dinner" when she is out pursuing a case (Paretsky 157). Both detectives thus find their job and marriage mutually exclusive. As Reddy states, "the solitariness of the female detective is not

presented as a badge of honor but as a condition dictated by prevailing gender definitions” (198).

The topic of having children is peripherally touched upon when the life of a family is briefly shared (Grafton *A* 138) or when motherly feelings towards a young woman in a personal crisis arise (Paretsky 138), and both detectives experience a momentary and inconsequential longing for a family and children of their own. These caring qualities are to a degree acted out the field of female friendships.

As has been explained, the woman detective values her financial and moral independence just like her male predecessor. It has to be noted though, that this trait pushes her to the margins of society to a greater extent than it does the male detective, as it comes with a refusal to subscribe to the roles traditionally ascribed to women. Consequently, the female detective relies on her professionalism rather than her womanhood for self-assurance. Keitel notes that “[the detectives’] commitment to the profession is a central aspect of their identity” (55), which presents another link to the 1930s detective. But in contrast to the male sleuth, who has the western hero myth to back up his existence as lone defender of the law, the female detective is constantly asked to justify and defend her choice of profession.

2.3.5. Gun Use

Guns are “a staple of the hardboiled and seldom seriously interrogated”, as Reddy (199) remarks, but she concedes that the topic of violence “undergoes analysis and revision in the feminist series” (198). She continues to say that “[a] man acting violently is behaving within gender boundaries, but a woman behaving violently is not” (198), which may account for some skewed assessments of the woman detective’s use of guns. Scaggs contends of V.I. Washawski and Kinsey Millhone that they are “far from reluctant to fire their guns” (78), an allegation that is quite far from the truth. Scaggs may take as a measure for reluctance a gothic novel’s female amateur sleuth who would shudder at the notion of even touching a gun. Compared to the original hard-boiled genre’s propensity to violent excess, though, the women detectives appear very restrained. They “treat physical violence as an option they sometimes must use, but prefer not to” (Reddy 198). Warshawski purchases a gun only after being severely beaten up in *Indemnity Only* and uses it for the first time in the final showdown to incapacitate an attacker (Paretsky 224). Kinsey Millhone stows her gun away in briefcases and glove compartments throughout *A is for Alibi*, and only uses it in self-defense to shoot and kill her lover-turned-murderer in the very last scene. This ending

of the plot proper plainly reads as “I blew him away” following a row of equally clipped sentences denoting high suspense (Grafton A 253). Walton and Jones find that these words “[evoke] the blunt, pithy ending of Spillane’s *I, the Jury* in which [the protagonist Mike] Hammer remorselessly guns down the femme fatale” (126). Although the sentence seen in isolation may convey a sense of satisfaction, the two endings do not compare in the least since Millhone does not humiliate her assailant sexually before shooting and is haunted by her deed. Her crisis of consciousness even serves to frame the narration and establishes her as a character who is capable of using a gun, but deeply regrets the lethal outcome of her action (Grafton A 7). Both Millhone and Warshawski, though, are proficient shooters and use their weapon when necessary. In summary of this section, between the 1930s and 1980s hard-boiled detective, the gender switch certainly triggers the most substantial deviations from the mold. The female detective is an outsider in society through her refusal to fit into the traditional role of wife and mother; she is an outsider in a male dominated profession; and she is an outsider as a woman, period. Thus, the rebellious existence of the male p.i. is exponentiated by the gender switch. The female hard-boiled detective holds considerable transgressive potential in a genre determined by patriarchal dominance.

2.4. The Police Procedural

Since the three series under scrutiny can roughly be placed in the police procedural sub-genre, this section will outline this variation’s key features as they appear in literature. Scaggs describes the genre as “a type of fiction in which the actual methods and procedures of police work are central to the structure, themes, and action”, and stresses the “move towards realism that is central to the development of the sub-genre” (91). He further names “the importance of *collective* and cooperative agency to the procedural” (87) as a key feature and takes this emphasis on team work to pinpoint the beginnings of the literary genre in the 1950s. Together with Panek (*Post-War* 157), Worthington (147) and other scholars he credits Ed McBain for establishing the sub-genre with his 87th *Precinct* series, beginning with *Cop Hater* in 1956 (Scaggs 88). McBain’s long-running series features a team of detectives rather than a single protagonist and emphasizes police routines as well as forensic work. By incorporating facsimiles of, for instance, a coroner’s or a ballistics report, McBain lends additional realism to his novels (Panek *Post-War* 157). McBain’s series is an exception though insofar that he posits an entire squad of detectives as a composite hero. Despite the

focus on realistically portrayed police work, most other authors center their narration around a single protagonist nonetheless, as Scaggs (90) observes. He attests these characters “similarly marginal positions to the lone PI of hard-boiled fiction” and names, among others, Ian Rankin’s John Rebus character, an “unorthodox, anti-authoritarian, alcoholic divorcee police detective” (90). He observes that the police team around Rebus serves as a “foil for Rebus’ rule-bending and intuitive investigations” (94).

Another important aspect which distinguishes the procedural is narrative perspective. In contrast to both the original hard-boiled novel and its 1980s recast, which are largely restricted to the protagonist’s perspective and frequently narrated in the first person, the police procedural uses third-person narration (Scaggs 93). This may generate an “appearance of objectivity”, as Scaggs (93) declares, but in McBain’s novels, which “allow several plot lines to unfold at the same time” (Scaggs 94) it rather facilitates a dispersal of the singular subject position to alternately mirror the mind and perception of several detectives. Scaggs states that “the variety of individual characters in the team of police officers is significant for the sub-genre as a whole” (94). I emphasize this point because McBain’s multi-perspectival approach provides the structure for television procedurals featuring an ensemble cast as they become common in the 1990s. *NYPD Blue* (1993-2005) can be named as an example.

With the procedural’s emphasis on forensic science, and an interest in the victim as ‘body of evidence’, scenes at the morgue become a convention in police procedural novels from the 1970s on, as Panek (*Post-War* 161) ascertains. This interest in forensics eventually evolved into a generic branch in its own right, the forensic science procedural. This variant features, among other specialists, forensic pathologists, psychological profilers and crime scene analysts as protagonists (Scaggs 101). Patricia Cornwell’s Kay Scarpetta, Kathy Reichs’ Temperance Brennan and Jeffery Deaver’s Lincoln Rhyme novels can be named as examples. All these series started in the 1990s and are ongoing, Reich’s character, albeit somewhat changed, is featured in the long-running television series *Bones* (2005-2017). Cornwell’s forensic pathologist Kay Scarpetta is not a police officer (nor are both the other authors’ protagonists), but consults with various law enforcement agencies, a construction to which I will come back in my discussion of television crime series.

To summarize: the police procedural novel mimics the reality of police work, focuses on the effort of a team rather than a singular detective to solve crimes, and brings forensic science to the fore. The genre is indebted to the hard-boiled novel in that it

often prominently features a hero reminiscent of the hard-boiled detective in his outsider status and adherence to a moral code which sometimes moves the character's actions outside legal boundaries. The sub-genre branched into procedurals focusing on forensic science, whose protagonists consult with law enforcement rather than being police officers themselves. In the following section, the status of women in the sub-genre will be discussed.

2.4.1. Women in the Procedural Novel

Scaggs remarks that McBain's 87th *Precinct* police team is largely "representative of the multicultural nature of the modern American city" but goes on to say that "women in general are poorly represented" (94), an observation which seems to hold true for the early decades of the procedural sub-genre on the whole. Panek traces the first fictional police woman in the US in Dorothy Uhnak's Christie Opara novels, the first of which was published in 1968. He notes that a few more female cops emerged in the ensuing years and attributes their appearance to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 from which time on "police departments had to accept women into their ranks" (*Post-War* 165-166). Priestman, describing the development of the sub-genre in the UK, finds "few fully-empowered British police heroines" in literature despite the success of television series *Prime Suspect* (1991-2007), which prominently featured Helen Mirren as DCI Jane Tennison (187). Reddy, on the other hand, claims that "an astounding number of [literary] series with female protagonists, amateurs and police" followed in the tracks of the first female private investigators from the 1980s (200). Neither scholar, despite naming various authors, can pinpoint a novel or series which could serve as a groundbreaking model for later woman cops. We can thus deduct that despite some attempts to this effect, a woman cop prototype of lasting impact was not developed in literature.

To explain this disruption in the history of female infiltration of the detective genre, the nature of both law enforcement and the detective genre has to be considered. Scaggs attributes the scarcity of literary police women to the "patriarchal ideology often associated with police forces" (94). Panek shows considerable concern for the (not only fictional) male cops who had to deal with the new risks and challenges women on the force posed. He describes that "the trauma of this change [...] became a major theme [in procedural novels]" (*Post-War* 165). Panek's use of the certainly overdrawn term 'trauma' for the emotional effect of female officers on male cops points to the threat of women not only to the male domain of policing, be it real or fictional, but also

to the traditionally all-male hard-boiled genre to which the procedural is still indebted. As Walton and Jones argue, the gender switch turns the assigned gender roles of the detective story on its end and draws into question assumptions made about a predominantly male audience for this genre (221). Sexist bias about the presumed dilettantism of female officers aside, making the detective a woman challenges the premise that police procedurals “function ideologically to reproduce notions of male social authority” (Gamman 8). In other words, the presence of a female cop protagonist disputes the claim that establishing and keeping social order is a job for men only. Despite contesting the male reign in policing, the woman cop still raises less anxiety than the female private investigator, as Walton and Jones argue:

[B]ecause the female cop works on behalf of the law (and, hence, works in the ‘Name of the Father,’ in the Lacanian sense) her agency is also recuperated by the public institution she presents. Consequently, she performs differently from the female PI, who works as a private operative peripheral to (if not actually outside) the law. By and large, the woman PI represents a position more threatening to social norms than the female cop. (221)

To summarize, few women appear in the first decades of the police procedural novel, apparently because they invade a bastion of masculinity. On the other hand, the police woman can be better controlled than the private investigator, since she works within the law enforcement apparatus. Both aspects, the police woman’s threat to the male domain of law enforcement and this same system’s power to control a woman working within it are crucial angle points in chapter three.

Rather than tracing the literary police procedural in the new millennium, I will move on to the female detective as she appears on television. As Priestman (187) already suggests with his mention of *Prime Suspect*, the lead in new developments in the detective genre seems to have been taken over by visual media in the 1990s.

2.5. The Woman Detective on Television

While the 1930s male hard-boiled detective made a seamless transition into film noir and countless television series featuring cynical, abrasive and violent ‘maverick detectives’ (Peacock 2016) can be listed, none of the three genre-defining woman detectives from the feminist hard-boiled era were adapted for television, nor have successful new versions of the female hard-boiled p.i. emerged in this medium. Manina Jones (34) attests this discontinuation to *V.I. Warshawski* (1991), a feature film loosely based on Paretsky’s character. Jones describes the film’s ideological underpinning as a “remarkable example of [...] a conservative ‘backlash’ against precisely the

progressive feminist publishing trend the film was optioned to exploit” and determines that in the film, “[t]he male gaze oversees the figure of the female “private eye”, keeping her under constant, controlling surveillance” (24). She attests this severe limitation of the protagonist’s agency to “anxieties [...] about detection as a figure for women’s agency in general” (Jones 24) and ascribes these fears to a “collision of subject positions” of “the ‘detective’ as subject of the gaze vs ‘woman’ as its visual object” (25). Unsurprisingly, the film had difficulties “attracting a female audience while constructing a normative, eroticized, male-identified spectatorship”, and was consequently a box office failure (Jones 34). No further adaptations of Paretsky’s material have been made since. Sue Grafton, author of the Kinsey Millhone novels, categorically ruled out selling the film rights to her books (Jones 33), presumably because she feared an appropriation of her material similar to what the Warshawski character experienced. The clash between the feminist agency of the hard-boiled woman detective and the patriarchal ideology prevailing in visual media seems irreconcilable and, as Walton and Jones (221) argue, the situation is exacerbated by the self-employed status of the detective.

Still, female television detectives enjoy great popularity. To mitigate the threat the female hard-boiled private investigator presents, three key mechanisms are employed to reign in her transgressive traits: firstly, glamorization, to counter the investigative female gaze with mechanisms of objectification in the way Jones describes it in her discussion of the *V.I. Warshawski* film; secondly, pairing the detective with a male partner to provide a romantic interest and add an inner-diegetic male control agency, and thirdly, casting the detective as an unarmed specialist consultant rather than an officer of the law. I will subsequently name examples across television history since the 1960s to outline these persistent formulas in the televised detective show.

2.5.1. The Glamorized Female Detective

Glamorization apparently was the predominant means of making women in the television detective business more palatable from the 1960s to the 1980s. Early series involving glamorized woman detectives are *Police Woman* (1974-1978), featuring Angie Dickinson as undercover police sergeant Pepper Anderson, and *The Avengers* (1961-1969), with Diana Rigg as leather-clad secret agent Mrs. Emma Peel in the series’ most memorable fourth and fifth seasons. As Gamman (9-10) remarks, both series spectacularized their heroines, putting them in revealing clothes for undercover assignments. *Moonlighting* (1985-1989), a screwball p.i. show, used casting as well as

designer wardrobe for glamour, providing a comeback vehicle for film star Cybill Shepherd (Mizejewski 77). A more realistic image of women working in law enforcement was introduced with the reasonably clothed two-woman team *Cagney and Lacey* (1982-1988) (Gamman 13) and continued to prevail through the 1990s with series such as *Prime Suspect* (1991-2006) and *The X-Files* (1993- 2018), both of which made their detectives tough, suit-wearing cookies with a sharp mind. The female cop of the 2000s is prone to wear tight jeans and a t-shirt and, other than her early precursors, does not give chase in high heels on a regular basis. Thus, the women cops featured in the bulk of recent police procedurals like the popular *CSI* franchise (2000-2016) are only mildly glamorized.

The adventure and spy genre, though, owing a debt to the *Bond girl*, works from a tradition of combining glamour with exceptional physical abilities (Gamman 10). Secret agent Sydney Bristow (Jennifer Garner) from the *Alias* series (2001-2006) can be named as a legitimate successor to Mrs. Peel. The constant threat of sexualized violence, already a major motif in *Police Woman* (Mizejewski 66), is used here to counter the heroine's sexy display of martial arts skills. With Bristow's handler Michael Vaughn (Michael Vartan), *Alias* places a man in the role of both superior and love interest, which brings me to the most pervasive formula of the television detective show, the man/woman team.

2.5.2. The Man/Woman Team Formula

A male partner teamed with the woman detective fulfills several functions. He provides a male perspective on the detective and often qualifies her investigative success; the romantic interest between the male and female partners ascertains the woman detective's heterosexuality (Mizejewski 11) and realizes the romantic formula which invariably ends in a relationship, if not marriage. Gamman remarks that unresolved sexual tension is the underlying theme of many series (10) and indeed, an abundance of series has their lead couple dance around their first kiss, first night and first attempt at marriage for seasons on end, providing for popular cliffhangers, as Konda's (2013) wide selection proves. In both *The Avengers* and *Moonlighting* (1985-1989) the dialogue is heavy with sexual innuendo (Gamman 10, Mizejewski 77) and the partnerships of *Alias*, *Bones* (2005-2017), *The Mentalist* (2008-2015) and *Castle* (2009-2016) all end in marriage.

The Avengers established the formula of making the female partner a proficient detective but the man the one to know more in the end (Gamman 10). This principle is

also exemplified in *The X-Files* (Mizejewski 100), *The Mentalist* and *Castle*: the series' male protagonists have expertise in fields such as extraterrestrial life, mind reading and the rules of crime fiction writing, which makes them the flamboyant, creatively thinking partner to a reasonable female cop. *Bones*' Seeley Booth (David Boreanaz) frequently explains irony and pop culture allusions to his socially awkward partner and has to compensate for her insensitive behavior. The series also exemplifies the last television detective formula in this overview, namely the unarmed consultant.

2.5.3. The Unarmed Forensics Specialist

A variant of the police procedural format, the forensic science procedural, found a way around the routinely armed and usually proficient marks(wo)man cop by featuring forensics specialists as protagonists. *Bones*' forensic anthropologist Temperance 'Bones' Brennan (Emily Deschanel) and *Crossing Jordan*'s (2001-2007) Jordan Cavanaugh (Jill Hennessy) are unarmed because they work in a lab rather than in the field. They consult with rather than directly work in law enforcement which restricts their use of violence to occasional self-defense situations with make-shift weapons such as acids or syringes. Together with profiler Samantha Waters (Ally Walker in *Profiler*, 1996-2000), who is reluctant to use her gun and type-cast as overly sensitive doe-eyed psychic, these women rely on their male colleagues to save them from avenging criminals. Consequently, violence is toned down in these series, emphasizing instead their heroine's scientific expertise and ratiocinations.

2.5.4. Additional Aspects

2.5.4.1. Male Authority

In addition to the controlling strategies described so far, the vast majority of female protagonists working within or associated with law enforcement agencies answer to male superiors who often also function as mentor/father figure; the series *Profiler*, *Crossing Jordan*, *The X-Files* and *Alias* can be named as examples. Female superiors are rare. Since a law enforcement officer is bound to follow orders, these male figures of authority are far more influential than the literary female p.i.'s cop friend or fatherly neighbor. Consequently, the protagonists are much less autonomous in their decision-making than their literary peers and often their agency is heavily contested.

2.5.4.2. Splitting

Rarely, the investigative abilities are divided between two women protagonists. Both *Cagney and Lacey* (1982-1988) and the more recent *Rizzoli and Isles* (2010-2016)

series can be named as examples. Dole terms this technique splitting (89) and names it as a strategy to reduce the threat of a singular female detective. In this context, the forensics team of *Bones* is interesting. While the protagonist Temperance Brennan (Emily Deschanel) is uncontested in her professional expertise, glamorization in the series is diverted from her to both her female superior Camille Saroyan (Tamara Taylor, seasons 2-12), who is notoriously seen cutting up bodies in figure-hugging designer dresses and three-inch heels, and stunning, long-legged forensic artist Angela Montenegro (Michaela Conlin). Both women are of course also experts in their respective fields. Thus, the visual allure as well as the detecting abilities are distributed among three female characters.

2.5.4.3. Combined Strategies

Television detective series featuring women in the 1980s showed all three key strategies named above to diminish the transgressive potential of the female private detective. *Hart to Hart's* Jennifer Hart (1979-1984, Stefanie Powers), *Moonlighting's* Maddie Hayes (1985-1989, Cybill Shepherd) and *Remington Steele's* Laura Holt (1982-1987, Stephanie Zimbalist) wore big hair and risqué evening gowns, had a male partner who provided a romantic interest, and used guns solely on occasion and in self-defense. Only Laura Holt was a licensed private investigator. Of the more recent series listed above, many display not only one, but two of the three features. Dole (2001) lists a wide array of additional strategies to diminish a woman detective's power. Rather than naming all of them, I will refer to the ones which apply in my analysis of the three series.

2.5.4.4. The Success Formula

The most successful and long running recent mystery series tend to feature an ensemble cast rather than a single protagonist or pair, which can be described as splitting. The technique makes several characters attractive for audience identification, and 'eye candy' is usually well distributed between the genders. To date, the successful *CSI* and *NCIS* (2003-) franchises all feature male team leaders except for one: *CSI: Cyber* (2015-2016), the last installment of the franchise, cast Patricia Arquette as head of the cybercrime unit. The show was cancelled after two seasons.

2.6. The Choice

To trace the hard-boiled woman detective on television, as it is my intention for this thesis, I went looking for series which flouted the three predominantly used strategies

to mitigate the woman detective's independence. Looking for protagonists who were unglamorized, had no romantic interest in a work partner and carried a gun, I found my items in a British, a New Zealand, and a Scandinavian production rather than in US-made series. Although these series fare far better than mainstream US productions in depicting a hard-boiled heroine, not all controlling devices are completely absent, as will be discussed. What links the series additionally is their season-spanning narrative arch and their short season format. Apparently, the hard-boiled woman detective cannot be trusted to sustain a series over multiple seasons of 22 episodes each, although this format seems to go slowly out of style anyway, as does the episodic structure of serialized television. The following chapter will turn to Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze which will be further developed to form my methodology in chapter four.

3. Theory: The Gaze

3.1. The Look in Television and Detective Work

This thesis is in a large part grounded on looks, in every sense of the word. To explain this emphasis on everything to do with the visual and the act of seeing, two aspects need to be considered: the medium and the genre under investigation. Although the hard-boiled sub-genre in which I aim to place the three women detectives of my analysis is literary, the objects of my analysis are not; they are characters in television series. Television, being a visual medium, uses the 'looks' of an actor as a means of instantaneous characterization. But more important to this thesis than questions of casting and costume (which will be considered nonetheless) is the way figures look at each other. Looks are immediate, visceral, and thereby convey meaning that goes well beyond dialogue. What's more, looks are submitted to a gendered logic in film and on television. Laura Mulvey provides a starting point for deciphering the way characters look, and how they gaze at each other. Her theories will be summarized and expanded to form a methodology for my analysis.

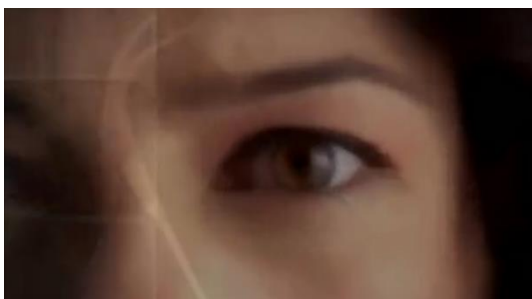


Figure 1 Emphasis on Looking

The other aspect of looking is related to genre. It comes with the fact that detective work is basically a combination of looking and thinking. Both aspects have been foregrounded from the early onset of both the literary genre of the detective story and the actual profession. Images of Sherlock Holmes come with two crucial props which are the magnifying glass as a signifier of close observation and the pipe as an accoutrement of the thinker. In the real world, Pinkerton's, the first detective agency and a model for later police detective divisions, had and still has an eye for an emblem to indicate the enterprise's core concern with surveillance (Fig. 1 above, Pinkerton).

The development of forensic science involved the development of imaging techniques to enable a systematic documentation of physical evidence. Ronald R. Thomas traces these beginnings in his parallel study of

Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science (2000). In television mystery series focusing on forensic science, the gaze is a prominent element in the opening credits (Fig. 1 below, *The Rap Sheet*). Laura Mulvey's work is connected to the detective story in that she uses three of Alfred Hitchcock's films centering around mysteries to develop part of her theory of the male gaze (Mulvey 43-46).

This chapter falls into three parts, all pertaining to Mulvey's theory to some extent. Firstly, Mulvey's gaze theory will be outlined; secondly, analytical tools to identify the fe/male gaze will be distilled from various academic works and thirdly, theoretical background on the topic of the female corpse will be provided, as it will come to play an important role in the analysis.

This thesis constructs the hypothesis that the female detective challenges the patriarchal conventions of both the detective genre and mainstream television production. To investigate this assumption, Laura Mulvey's gaze theory, as outlined in her article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) will be taken as a starting point. I will first summarize her argument and subsequently present main points of critique of her theory.

3.2. The Male Gaze

Mulvey's seminal article has been succinctly summarized on numerous occasions, for instance by Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment in their introduction to *The Female Gaze*:

Mulvey's thesis states that visual pleasure in mainstream Hollywood cinema derives from and reproduces a structure of male looking/female to-be-looked-at-ness (whereby the spectator is invited to identify with a male gaze at an objectified female) which replicates the structure of unequal power relations between men and women. (5)

Mulvey takes two concepts from psychoanalysis as a point of departure for her analysis. Those go back to Freud and Lacan, respectively. First, she refers to Freud's concept of scopophilia, saying: "Freud isolated scopophilia as one of the component instincts of sexuality which exists as drives quite independently of the erotogenic zones. At this point he associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (37). Freud links scopophilia to voyeurism, secretly looking, which according to Mulvey is fostered by the dark space of the cinema's auditorium as a "hermetically sealed world [...] producing a sense of separation and playing to [the audience's] voyeuristic fantasy" (37). Mulvey posits both the male

spectator in the dark cinema and the screen hero as voyeuristic gazers, and the screen heroine as the object of their combined gaze. The second concept Mulvey builds on is Lacan's theory of the mirror stage in a child's ego development. She hypothesizes that the male spectator identifies with the male hero as his idealized mirror screen image (38). She then argues that women's bodies in Hollywood films are objectified by way of glamorization and fragmentation. The Hollywood hero, she argues, advances the action and through his objectifying gaze symbolically possesses the woman. (38, 41-42). In linking Freud's with Lacan's concept, Mulvey concludes that through a process of identification, the male hero's power over both the narrative and the woman is transferred to the male spectator, who then can indulge in a fantasy of omnipotence. Beyond that, the spectator can look at objectified screen women through the screen hero's eyes to satisfy his scopophilic desire, which is both "controlling and curious" (37). Aspects of power and desire are thus the components of the male gaze.

3.2.1. Voyeurism and Fetishism

To explain in how far the male scopophilic look exerts power over the woman, Mulvey once again draws on Freud, who postulates that women connote a permanent threat of castration through their lack of a penis. Mulvey's argument elucidates how this threat is neutralized in Hollywood productions. Two different strategies are applied according to her, namely voyeurism and fetishism. I will refer to voyeurism first, secretly looking for pleasure. Analyzing several of Alfred Hitchcock's films, Mulvey demonstrates that patterns of voyeurism and sadism are used to investigate, de-mystify and thereby, devalue female screen characters. Following Freud, she states that for the voyeur, the "power lies in ascertaining guilt" (42). The male protagonist can, thus, either punish or save the heroine.

Mulvey finds fetishism, the other concept she takes from Freud, to be the underlying strategy in Joseph von Sternberg's films. Fetishistic scopophilia, she writes, "builds up the physical beauty of the object" (43). Sternberg is "turning the represented figure itself into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous" (42). To summarize, while voyeurism exposes the woman to a controlling gaze which threatens punishment, fetishism heightens the woman into a fetish. Both variants, being derived from scopophilia, objectify the target of the look, namely the woman.

3.2.2. Representation of Men and Women

In further summarizing Mulvey, women in Hollywood productions are presented as objects and spectacle. Mulvey pinpoints glamorization and fragmentation as the cinematic strategies to achieve this effect, rendering the representation of the female body iconic, cut-out, flat, and spatially restricted (40). The woman's spectacular presence "freeze[s] the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (40). She is, in Mulvey's words, "isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualized", which constitutes her "to-be-looked-at-ness" (42).

The male protagonist, on the other hand, is visually constructed as "figure in a landscape" (41), a man in a constructed three-dimensional space, which affords him room to act and advance the narrative. He is idealized in order to present to the male spectator a super-ego to identify with (41). Mulvey deducts the following conclusion from this binary construction of gendered representation:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle [...]. (39-40)

I will come back to this conclusion in my discussion of victims as well as in my methodology chapter.

3.2.3. Critique of Mulvey's Theory

Having outlined the main points of Laura Mulvey's gaze theory, I will go on to list salient points of critique her article garnered, which are, firstly, her use of psychoanalysis as a theoretical underpinning; secondly, her assumptions about spectatorship identification, and thirdly, the reduction of her focus on visual concerns. I will discuss these points in turn.

Gamman and Marshment, in 1988, criticize Mulvey's theory saying that "the notion of a 'male gaze' as dominant in all mainstream genres has since [Mulvey's 1975 article] become something of an orthodoxy" and that academics experienced "a sense of unease about the adequacy of psychoanalysis [...] to analyse the complexities and contradictions evident in popular culture" (5). Despite the prevailing critical view on Mulvey's use of Freud's work, scholars expanded her approach by incorporating even more concepts from psychoanalysis such as masochism (for instance Neale 2000,

Rodowick 2000) or took it as a basis for tracing a female gaze and objectified men (for instance S. Moore 1988, Hansen 2000), among other approaches. While the former did not influence this thesis, the latter will be considered in the development of a methodology.

Mulvey's theory is also criticized when it comes to the topic of identification. Her assumption that the images of mainstream Hollywood production only offer figures of identification for a male heterosexual spectator is heavily contested by John Ellis, whose work is variously cited in order to open up new perspectives. Ellis, although he does not directly refer to Laura Mulvey (or any other source, for that matter), implicitly exposes her supposition as overly simplistic. He argues that when watching a film, "the spectator produces a series of identifications with the images and figures within them" (Ellis 41). To describe the complexity of this process, Ellis emphasizes that "narcissistic identification [...] can take place in relation to *any* human figure on the screen [...]" (Ellis 41). He further likens the act of watching a movie to two activities, dreaming and fantasizing, and writes: "In both these activities, [...] the particular individual whose psychic activity is involved does not see him- or herself as a unified individual." (42) He goes on to infer that "[i]dentification is [...] multiple and fractured" (43). Ellis's widening of identificatory possibilities for a spectator challenges Mulvey's postulate of an exclusively male spectator identification with a singular male hero. It does not, though, refute the tacit assumption that classic Hollywood production in a wide range of genres constructs its most alluring identification offers for a male target group. The discrepancy between production intention and audience agency has been the topic of much academic enquiry, especially in queer studies, but it is not the focus of this thesis. In my discussion of identification offers, negotiations between a female subject position and an underlying ideology of a male gaze will be considered and inferences as to target audiences drawn. In other words, the woman protagonist will be investigated for her qualities as both subject and object of the gaze.

The third point of critique is voiced by Lorraine Gamman (1988). She remarks that Mulvey "overlooks the sound track when arguing about the male gaze of classic narrative cinema, and in so doing negates the important semantic implication of women's voices on the screen." (Gamman 21) Consequently, Gamman expands the notion of a female gaze beyond visual representation and concentrates on characterization and dialogue. In my analysis, I will consider both visual representation and sound track, which are the topics of the next section.

3.3. Cinematic Aspects Constituting the Fe/Male Gaze

In order to identify a fe/male gaze and power relations linked to it, it is necessary to define analysis parameters in two areas, namely the visual level and soundtrack. In this section, the visual aspect will be discussed. Mulvey postulates that the gazing male protagonist is idealized while the gazed-at heroine is objectified. I will begin with techniques of objectification and glamorization and follow with idealization.

3.3.1. Objectification

Mulvey identifies the male gaze in the objectification and presentation of woman as spectacle along with an alignment of the male protagonist's gaze with that of a presumably equally male spectator. Thus, to discuss the presence or absence of the male gaze as defined by Mulvey in cinematic terms, two aspects have to be analyzed: on the one hand, the way in which the assumed object of the gaze, be it male or female, is represented, and on the other hand, how the act of looking itself is represented. Mulvey gives only sparse information on how these effects are achieved in terms of camera work and editing. Noting that the objectified women's "appearance [is] coded for strong visual and erotic impact" (40), she connects their visual representation to the erotic spectacle of pin-up and striptease, which seems to imply an abundant display of skin. Furthermore, she mentions fragmentation through the "conventional close-up of legs [...] or a face", which "gives [the image of the woman] flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon" (40). Mulvey summarizes the representation of the film heroine as "isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualized" (42).

A discussion of specific cinematic techniques along the parameters Mulvey sketches out can be found in analyses not of the male, but of the female gaze, and the objectification of men. Neale argues that the male heroes which are on display and posited as spectacle in Leone's westerns lack the erotic coding Mulvey finds in objectified women (Neale 261). For a discussion of what actually constitutes erotic coding, Suzanne Moore's article *Here's looking at You, Kid!* (1988), which discusses eroticized images of men, gives further pointers in her crisp ironic phrase "cut up, close up, and oh! so tastefully lit" (45). This phrase combines fragmentation of the body through a close-cropped camera framing ("cut up") with the detailed images of specific body parts ("close up") and favorable, presumably soft lighting ("and oh! so tastefully lit"). Of course, the body parts on display are erotically charged ones, and consist, in Moore's discussion of male bodies in the iconic Levis 501 advertisement campaign,

predominantly of a sculpted upper body (S. Moore 46). Moore also, unsurprisingly, emphasizes nudeness as an erotic marker (47), and acknowledges the importance given to the eyes. The laundromat clip (The501leviguy) in particular contains an abundant number of exchanged looks, both open and secretive, between protagonist Nick Kamen and the other customers. “The relay of looks between the people sitting in the launderette sets [Kamen] up as object of the gaze – so we too can look”, writes S. Moore, with her “we” presumably consisting of an audience appreciative of the male body (55). Manina Jones’ article *Shot/Reverse Shot* (1999) yields a further and even more enlightening discussion of the, yet again, male gaze in terms of cinematic techniques. The essay undertakes a meticulous analysis of the strategies used to twist Sara Paretsky’s feminist hard-boiled V.I. Warshawski novels into a prime example of backlash rhetoric in its film adaptation (*V.I. Warshawski*, 1991). Jones identifies camera techniques which work to continuously objectify the female protagonist, played by Kathleen Turner, to keep her “under constant, controlling surveillance” by the male gaze (24). Jones describes a fragmentation of Turner’s body in shots framed to show her from her waist down, displaying her legs, or of her feet in high heels (25). She mentions slow and languid camera tilts and pans up and down the actress’s body combined with reaction shots of “a male admirer’s gaze” (25), techniques which match Mulvey’s coding for to-be-looked-at-ness and spectacle.

These combined strategies of objectification, spectacle and reaction shots of a male protagonist will be taken to identify the male gaze in my analysis.

3.3.2. Glamour

The aspect of glamorization of the heroine in Mulvey’s concept of the male gaze comes into play mostly through casting and costuming. Mulvey mentions iconic stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Lauren Bacall, Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich (40), whose respective fame derived to a large part from their looks. Kathleen Turner, with her signature long legs and husky voice and notoriously glamorized in the *V.I. Warshawski* film, was the top-grossing female actress in 1989 (Jones 23). Since casting allows for inferences as to the intended level of glamorization, a short passage in the respective analyses will be dedicated to this topic. Costume choices, unmentioned by Mulvey, but variously referred to for instance by Jones (30-31), Mizejewski (many accounts, for instance 101, 140) and Gamman (20), come into play not only when it comes to questions of spectacularized female bodies, and fetishistic items such as shoes. The aspect also matters because, as Jane Gaines remarks “dress should place a character

quickly and efficiently, identifying her in one symbolic sweep”, a convention in film which dates back to the era of silent movies (Gaines 188) but has lost none of its validity. Costuming frequently contains allusions to stock characters such as the *femme fatale* or hints to earlier incarnations of the woman detective.

3.3.3. Idealization of the Gazer

The male gaze, as described, is contingent on the presence of two aspects, which are the objectification of the woman as the target of the gaze on the one hand, and the idealization of the gazing hero to provide an identification figure for the male spectator on the other hand. Mulvey relates to the second aspect, idealization of the hero, in her discussion of “the relationship between the human form and its surroundings” (38). According to her, “[i]n contrast to woman as icon, the active male figure (the ego ideal of the identification process) demands a three-dimensional space. [...] He is a figure in a landscape.” (41) She further explains that “deep focus”, “camera movements” and “invisible editing” are required to create “a stage of spatial illusion in which [the hero] [...] creates the action” (41). This description would translate to shots which literally leave the character space to move within the frame, namely tracking shots, which follow the character around, medium long shots, which show the entire figure and medium close-ups, which still show gestures and the handling of props. Continuity editing, of course, links all those possibilities together to keep the spectator oriented in the fictional space and to create the impression of fluidity.

Mulvey makes no reference as to the visual traits of an idealized hero although she notes that “the cinema has distinguished itself in the production of ego ideals [...]” (38). She neglects the fact that the male identification figure usually is visually heightened, too, possibly to prevent any confusion with the topic of objectification.

Academic work dealing with the objectified male also straight-out ignores the possibility that the cinematic means of objectification may come quite close to those of idealization. Neale, for instance, emphasizes an absence of erotic aspects in his analysis of spectacularized male bodies (262) but in reference to idealization concerns himself solely with the hero’s omnipotence and mentions gestures and silence (256-257) rather than distinguishing cinematic devices. Discussions of the female gaze and screen heroines concentrate on action and dialogue far more than on visual representation other than noting, again, an *absence* of presenting woman as spectacle (see, for instance, Gamman 11). How, then, can we, in terms of visual representation, identify idealization in a woman? Certainly, a lack of erotic markers can hardly count

as a widespread technique of idealizing a character. It seems safe to presume that a certain glamorization takes place also when it comes to the figure which is intended to invite identification. A frequently applied means to achieve a glamorizing effect, as I mentioned before, is through casting an attractive top star for the role, as evidenced in Hitchcock's films. James Steward (in *Vertigo* and *Rear Window*) and Sean Connery (in *Marnie*) fill the respective roles, the former is 1,91 meters tall, the latter of a certain animalistic sexual allure. Both attributes can be considered codes for imposing masculinity, and both men are handsome, of course.

Thus, for the analysis of the fe/male gaze in its most literal sense, namely the visual aspect, the use of framing and camera movement, the construction of the gazer and his or her possible alignment with the spectator, and aspects of glamorization and idealization such as casting and costuming will be considered. As the subject positions in the series are complicated through the gender switch of the detective and the opposition to her gaze from male characters, negotiations over the gaze and the returned gaze will be taken into focus.

3.4. Aspects of Dialogue and Plot

An overview of discussions of Mulvey's screen theory and related analyses of visual texts shows that the discourse concerning the possibility of a female gaze predominantly revolves around two areas. On the one hand, an objectified and possibly eroticized representation of men on screen is investigated, concentrating on visual evidence (see, for instance, Miriam Hansen (2000) on Rudolph Valentino; Steve Neale (2000) on westerns and a variety of other films, and Suzanne Moore (1988) on Levis 501 advertisements from the 1980s). On the other hand, the discussion is concerned with tracing a female gaze in a metaphorical sense, that is, pinpointing strategies applied by female characters to oppose patriarchal power structures. Those later accounts take into consideration characterization, character constellations, prevailing themes and the way women act and talk back in films and television series. Of the works concerned with the detective genre in film and television, two are of particular relevance to this thesis. Lorraine Gamman's (1988) essay on the police procedural series *Cagney and Lacey* is relevant because the show focuses on the representation of women in law enforcement jobs. Carol M. Dole's *The Gun and the Badge* (2001) presents an analysis of female officers of the law in Hollywood productions and discusses strategies applied in films to weaken the power of a female cop as

protagonist. Those analyses of a female gaze will be further referred to in the subsequent chapter and taken under consideration in my analysis.

3.5. Production

The question of female participation in the production of the respective series will be neglected, as the main research interest lies with the analysis of the actual texts. This aspect is also complicated by the fact that television production, being an effort of a large team, is subjected to a wide variety of influences. Beyond that the participation of women in the production process by no means necessarily indicates a feminist agenda and a progressive outcome as Gamman and Marshment (2) note. The question of a superimposed ideology in regard to the representation of women as well as gendered power relations in the respective series will be discussed, though. The concluding section of this chapter will shed light on the victim.

3.6. The Female Corpse

Mulvey writes: “Woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle” (40). This thesis takes three police procedural series with a female lead as objects of analysis. Erotic spectacle, if the woman detective is not represented as such, is not expressly foregrounded in this sub-genre. Instead, another aspect is spectacularized, namely death, which is represented through the victim. Sarah Dunant attests “[c]rime fiction [...] an intimate relationship with the dead body” (11). She says that not only has “the corpse [...] an active rôle to play after it is lifeless” (13), but that “the dead person stays around on the slab as a main character” (13). In the scope of this thesis, the female victim will come to play an important role; therefore, this section presents theoretical background on the topic of the female corpse.

According to Dunant, “within crime fiction, women have been particularly targeted for mutilation and depersonalization”. She notes a special interest in sex crimes against women (17) and remarks that this abundance of female victims in literature (and visual media, I might add) exceeds the corresponding statistics for real-life crimes by far. Dunant attributes the discrepancy in numbers to the fact that descriptions of gory female deaths titillate the readers because they satisfy their voyeuristic desires. Fictional female victims, by her account, apart from being “two-a-penny”, are often faceless, robbed of their identity by the way they are mutilated, described, depicted, or negated as human beings with a life preceding their murder (17). They are, in other words, treated as objects. Dunant theorizes that, in a counter-move to the rise of

second wave feminism, women became “a target of fictional violence and sadism” (18). There may be a valid point in simply attesting the abundance of female victims to a misogynist backlash. Yet, Edith Bronfen’s study *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (1992) yields a context which seems to feed seamlessly into Mulvey’s gaze theory. Like Mulvey, Bronfen, in her discussion of the female corpse, also draws on Sigmund Freud’s postulate that the female body, as it lacks a penis, signifies castration. She further describes the female corpse as additionally “castrated by death” (97). Thus, the dead female body symbolizes a twofold threat of castration. Turning the dead woman into a fetish in an act of appropriation and preservation reverts this double threat into something reassuring: the corpse becomes a signifier of the penis on the one hand, and on the other hand the process of decay is halted, and thus, death denied (95-97). Taking Richardson’s novel *Clarissa* as a starting point, Bronfen describes how Lovelace plans to steal and embalm Clarissa’s body to “demonstrate his unlimited right to possess her” (95) and turn her into his fetish. Bronfen traces a similar move in the fairy tale *Snow White* and notes that, displayed on a mountain top in an inscribed glass case, “Snow White resembles an art object displayed in a labelled frame” (100). There is an undeniable similarity of this image with that of the murder victim lying on a stainless steel autopsy slab, an identification tag attached to her big toe. Bronfen ascertains that in such a display of a dead female body “the two enigmas of western culture, death and female sexuality, are ‘contained’” by being simultaneously exposed and erased (99). The flip side of the containment lies in the violence done to the female body in this appropriation. Bronfen, again in referring to Richardson’s heroine, writes: “Clarissa implies [in her will] that to be gazed at in a state when she can no longer determine how she is seen nor reciprocate the gaze is in itself a form of rape.” (98) Linking Bronfen’s finding to Mulvey’s theory, we can say that the male gaze at an exposed female corpse constitutes the ultimate, unopposable objectification. Drawing a parallel to Mulvey’s conflation of the male gaze with possession of the living woman, the “controlling and curious” gaze (Mulvey 37) at the ultimately passivized corpse can be connoted with the violent form of sexual relations. It has to be determined in how far such an act of symbolic transgression takes place in my series. In the following chapter I will outline the methodology which organizes my analysis along three main issues, namely the reversed gaze, sexuality and violence.

4. Methodology

In the previous chapters, the figure of the hard-boiled detective in novels from the 1930s, his female recast of the 1980s and the police procedural sub-genre have been described; a light has been cast at how female detectives have been depicted on television, and strategies listed to control her power. Laura Mulvey's screen theory has been outlined and it has been discussed how feminist film critics have re-negotiated the male gaze and devised a female gaze. To lay a basis for the analysis, aspects of camera work, dialogue and plot have been linked to the male gaze and theories pertaining to the female corpse have been summarized. It has been determined that the female detective can be considered a threat to the patriarchal gender order because of her appropriation of the investigative gaze and the power of the law.

4.1. The Three Challenges

Three global strategies, which occur in various combinations have been pinpointed to control this threat in mystery series featuring a female lead investigator. Those are firstly, glamorization and objectification of the female detective; secondly, pairing her with a male partner to control her sexuality and thirdly, the lack of a weapon. The subversion of these strategies results in three challenges to the prevailing patriarchal order in the detective genre and television conventions. All those challenges spring from the gender switch of the detective from male to female. All can be linked, to various degrees, to Mulvey's theory. The first challenge is the female detective's gaze and her appropriation of the power of the law; the second is the detective's sexual independence, and the third is her possession of a gun. In this chapter, a scaffold for the analysis along these challenges will be theorized in detail.

4.2. Mulvey: The Male Gaze in Hitchcock's Films

To describe the two challenges pertaining to the reversed investigative gaze and desire, respectively, I will retrace Mulvey's initial article *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, and predominantly refer to her discussion of the three Hitchcock films *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958) and *Marnie* (1964), but I will also develop her analysis of the three films beyond her discussion. Mulvey, in her article, postulates a grouping of three features in the voyeuristic variation of the male gaze: the hero's power to act and punish is "backed by a certainty of legal right" (44), his relationship with the female protagonist is coded for desire (40), and his gaze is aligned with that of a male spectator (42). A closer look reveals why this packaging works perfectly for the three

films. Hitchcock places several parallel trajectories between the male hero and the heroine, which allows for Mulvey's grouping. Playing into the woman-as-mystery convention of Hollywood films, his heroines all fill a variety of roles. They are the object of the hero's desire and "styled accordingly", as Mulvey (39-40) puts it. But they are also variously cast as both victim and criminal. Let me briefly explicate this assertion in a simplified account of Hitchcock's elaborate plots. Marnie is a kleptomaniac and steals money from her company, which makes her a criminal. Her condition traces back to a childhood trauma linked to abuse, which casts her as a victim. *Rear Window's* protagonist Lisa, when she crosses the yard to investigate a possible crime, becomes "a guilty intruder exposed by a dangerous man threatening her with punishment", to adopt Mulvey's description (44), which puts Lisa's guilt and possible victimization in a nutshell. *Vertigo's* heroine Judy is guilty of aiding in a murder plot and falls victim to the hero's attempts to submit her to his fetishistic desires. She also dies at the end of the film. Hitchcock, thus, manages to cast his heroines as combined objects of desire, criminals and victims, his heroes as lovers, investigators and avengers of wrong-doing. Otherwise put, all power is concentrated in the figure of the hero, who holds the right to gaze, desire, act, punish. In the examples under scrutiny in this thesis, these closely bundled, one-directional trajectories are dispersed as a consequence of two features: genre, and the gender switch of the detective. The police procedural genre focuses on solving crimes, which necessitates a basic role inventory of investigator, victim and criminal. Those roles are usually embodied by different characters, and often not even restricted to one character per function. Thus, the components of the gaze which are conflated in the hero and heroine of Hitchcock's films are separated and multiplied in the procedural. An analysis of the male gaze is consequently complicated and can no longer be reduced to the relationship between two characters.

The second feature, the gender role switch in the detective, also disperses the gaze and makes a differentiation between investigative and desiring gaze necessary. The gaze is not simply stood on its end with power and desire aligned and one-directional, but it meets opposition. The female detective's gaze is subjected to powerful male characters who try to diminish or obliterate her appropriation of the law of the father. Thus, a struggle over the investigative gaze as a signifier of power takes place, which may be aligned with, but can be dissociated from the desiring gaze. Desire may be directed from the female detective at a male character, but also vice versa, in yet again,

a remnant of the male gaze. To untangle the knot of gaze, desire and power, they will be discussed separately.

For the analysis of the female investigative gaze I have devised a triangle, which will be discussed in the subsequent section. Matters of desire will be referred to in the discussion of the second challenge in section 4.4.

4.3. The 1st Challenge: The Reversed Gaze

The male gaze, as conceived by Laura Mulvey, constitutes an instrument to control the threatening female on a visual level by means of objectification. The female detective presents an augmented danger because she appropriates the power of the law and the investigative gaze which comes with it. Various, the woman detective in television series is therefore objectified, but as she is entitled to action, she resists this attempt at her objectification and passivization. But a mystery comprises another opportunity to objectify the female, namely in the figure, or more accurately, the corpse, of the victim. More often than not in mysteries, victims are female. A dead male victim could be described as passivized, and thereby feminized, to stay in Mulvey's line of argument. In the investigative gaze at the victim, we find both of Mulvey's controlling strategies at work, voyeurism and fetishism. Mulvey already tracks the first, voyeurism, in Hitchcock's investigating heroes, and calls it "the perversion of the police" (45). The later, fetishism, transforms the exhibitionistic, living, looked-at woman of Hitchcock's films into an exhibit, a body of evidence, in a police procedural.

4.3.1. Backdoor Gazing: The Victim as Fetish

Other than in Hitchcock's films, where the female victims remain among the living until last or beyond to keep their appeal as an object of the hero's desire, the detective story has always favored murder as the crime which represents the utmost disruption of order. The genre demands that this disruption initiates the investigative process. Consequently, rather than alive, the victim is represented in the form of a dead body, preferably a female one, for the better part of the story. The contemporary police procedural emphasizes forensic science, which brings about showing an abundance of physical evidence, much of it related to the corpse. In this section, voyeurism and fetishism in the gaze at the victim will be discussed.

Although the reversal of the gaze in the female detective changes the gender dynamics of the detective story, the objectified body comes in again through the back door, so to speak. Both Mulvey's strategies of controlling the threat of the woman are at work when

it comes to the victim. The voyeuristic, de-mystifying, invasive gaze combined with the propensity to assign guilt ("She was asking for it!") prevails in looking into the victim's life, whereas her dead body is fetishized. The police procedural genre stages the murder victim, in its lifelessness an object from the onset, in three situations to expose her corpse to the gaze. We first encounter the dead body at the crime scene, where the police find her. Staged for the spectator's benefit, she bears the marks of glamorized violence. Blood, strategically torn clothes, a mangled body, all are used to glamorize violence and death. The second stage is the autopsy table. The victim is now cleaned up, arranged naked to the needs of the pathologist, who is the voyeur looking not only at, but into the body. Glamorization comes with the nakedness and make up to imitate the look of death. In the pathologist's explications of forensic evidence, the body is fetishized in close-up, cut-up camera framings. The third stage completes the iconicized state of the victim-as-fetish. Documentation of forensic findings on the body brings with it both the fragmentation and the visual flatness Mulvey speaks of, provided through the image-within-the-image of photos we see on film. The male gaze, thus, is by no means obliterated, it remains prevalent in the representation of the victim. The dead body thereby becomes a site of negotiation over the fe/male gaze.

To summarize, while the figure of the female detective opposes objectification and glamorization through her right to action, the victim, often female, remains subjugated to a male, fetishizing gaze. Just as voyeurism is a technique of the investigative aspects of detective work, fetishism is a technique used in gathering forensic evidence, which elevates the corpse to a status of utmost fascination and importance.

4.3.2. The Gaze Triangle

To summarize the argument up to this point, it has been established that the woman detective is forced to adopt mechanisms of the male gaze because they are inherent elements of investigative work. The objectified victim has been introduced as an important focal point in the contemporary police procedural, and further, that the male gaze is fractioned into its components of gazing and objectification, power and desire. To conduct an analysis of the objectifying gaze and power relations in the respective series, thus, a gaze triangle is suggested, consisting of the female detective, the victim, and powerful male characters. Of interest in the discussion of this triangle is firstly, how the gaze at the victim is represented and secondly, how the gaze, objectification and power are negotiated between the woman detective and male characters. Additionally,

any superimposed production ideology concerning gender relations constitutes an aspect to be considered. This layout allows for inferences as to a prevailing male gaze, possible feminist agency of opposing it, and a conservative, versus progressive bottom line of the respective series.

4.4. The 2nd Challenge: Independent Sexuality

As has been explained in section 2.5.2., the female detective on television is frequently paired with a male partner, which serves several purposes. Relevant to this section, which is concerned with the detective's sexual relations, is that a male partner provides a romantic interest. The love story often develops over the course of several seasons, which binds the female detective's desire and has a trajectory towards marriage and thus, her integration into the patriarchal order. The pairing also provides a male character with whom a male spectator can be aligned to the effect of the male gaze. Under this partner's gaze, the woman detective can easily be objectified and controlled. The absence of said partner presents a challenge to patriarchal genre conventions, which will further be explicated in this section.

After a brief definition of the term 'independent sexuality' as it will be used in this thesis, the transgressive potential of the sexually assertive woman detective will be outlined, building once again on Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze. The section's concluding passage will clarify which aspects pertaining to the respective protagonist's sexuality will be analyzed in the three series.

The term 'independent sexuality' has been chosen here to denote two aspects: firstly, the female detective's move to initiate sexual relations, and secondly, her refusal to be regulated by a male agency in her conduct of sexual encounters. Here again, a reversed gaze, this time coded not for power, but desire, is the focus of the argument.

4.4.1. Moore: The Gaze in Levis Jeans Commercials

A differentiation between the gaze and action is necessary for my reasoning. In this passage, I will trace the gendered gaze from Mulvey's Hollywood productions analysis to Suzanne Moore's Levis ad assessment (1988) and suggest the possibility of further developments. Mulvey connotes the male gaze with the power to act, predominantly in forwarding the plot, whereas objectification of the woman is linked to her passivity (Mulvey 39). Dependent on the hero's affection, the woman is confined to waiting for his move towards her. Mulvey implies that the male gaze and the action to make advances towards the woman go together, which may hold true for the films she

discusses. I argue that the two, pleasurable gazing and the right to initiate a relationship can, and have been, divided between the genders in later examples. Separating these two functions will prove fruitful when looking at one of the advertisements Suzanne Moore uses in her analysis of the female gaze. In the Levis



Figure 2 The Objectified Gazer

laundromat ad (Fig. 2, The501leviguy), rather than a simple role reversal, a different dynamic appears. The male protagonist of the ad, Nick Kamen, strips down to his shorts and is clearly objectified, as Moore (55) rightly describes. But the glances he receives are not followed by any action on the part of the gazers, nor is there a clear alignment of the spectator with any one of the many onlookers (Two small boys, their mother, an old and a fat man, and two young women). Rather, the action stalls, when the two most likely matches for a sexual encounter, the clearly appreciative giggling young women, turn back to their magazines in embarrassment once Nick Kamen comes their way to sit down. The girls do not dare to stare back openly, their looks are reduced to quick glances. Consequently, as they have not fully appropriated the male gaze, they cannot actively choose to make contact. Objectification has shifted to the male, but the right to action has not switched to the female, as we can deduce from further reading the looks exchanged in the ad. While Nick Kamen

dominates the room with his movements and calmly stares back at whoever looks his way, the gaze at him is fragmented into a multitude of glances, both female and male. The stability of his sustained gaze endows him with the action, he is still the bearer of the male gaze. The advertisement mirrors the gendered conventions of looking in western culture, as S. Moore describes them: “[I]n public situations [...] men stare at women to assert male dominance, while women look away.” (50)

To summarize, in the ad's male protagonist, the object of desire is conflated with the gazer. The women, entitled to glances only, stay locked in a state of passivity. Smartly, the ad leaves ample opportunity for the spectator to jump in with her or his fantasies which may be aligned with the giggling girls and/or Nick Kamen. Contrary to S. Moore's deduction that "The striking thing about contemporary images of men is that at least some of them seem to acknowledge and even embrace a passivity that was once symbolically outlawed" (54), the example of the laundromat ad rather underlines than disproves Mulvey's deduction that "the male cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification" (41). Following both Mulvey's and Moore's reasoning which conflates to-be-looked-at-ness with femaleness and passivity, it is easy to see, why the gaze is not fully stood on its end in the Levis ad. The male can be objectified, but he cannot lose his power of action, coded in the sustained gaze, as this would feminize him. Consequently, a woman who follows her gaze up with some action presents a challenge.

In my analysis, I will take a close look at how the female gaze, the following active overture to a sexual encounter and the reaction to it are negotiated. Furthermore, I will examine how the detective's relationships are carried out, and whether there are any repercussions for the detective which could be interpreted as a punishment for the transgression.

4.5. The 3rd Challenge: Gun Possession

As outlined in section 2.5.3., the third basic limitation for a female detective is the lack of a sidearm, which moves her close to the traditional role of the woman as victim. It also allows for male characters to protect her and maintains the traditional role distribution in the detective genre. The third challenge to genre and gender conventions, thus, is the gun in the hand of the female detective. Contrary to the private investigator, who chooses to carry or not carry a gun, for an officer of the law the question is not a matter of personal choice. The sidearm comes with her credentials, and its use is statutorily regulated, although the fictionality of a television series, of course, allows for some leeway in this respect.

In this section, the threat of the woman with a gun will be discussed together with two possible strategies to counter the presence of the firearm. The concluding part of this section will detail, which aspects will be analyzed in the three series.

4.5.1. Brown: The Gun in Action Movies

In his discussion of gender in action films, Jeffrey A. Brown notes that “the action heroine who exhibits a mastery of guns represents a woman who has usurped a particularly phallic means of power (61)”, Applied to the police procedural, a genre which “function[s] ideologically to reproduce notions of male social authority” (Gamman 8), furnishing a female police officer with “such a heavily coded phallic symbol” (Brown 61) exacerbates her appropriation of the law of the father, which already constitutes a transgression. Consequently, as King and McCaughey note, “[c]op movies have tolerated little violence from women (compared to the damage that their men do) preferring women as lovers and victims for men to protect.” (7) To further mitigate the threat of the armed heroine, Brown names two possible strategies in the representation of the woman, fetishization and masculinization. A fetishized heroine in a police procedural is exemplified, for instance, in Kathryn Bigelow’s *Blue Steel* (1990). The fetishistic accoutrement, which so aptly underlines the protagonist’s erotic appeal, would be the crisp police uniform Jamie Lee Curtis wears with such pride. The implications of a sexualized and fetishized representation of women in combination with guns are clear. Woman is submitted to a male objectifying gaze underlaid with the fantasy of her ‘playing with a piece’, which amounts to a double fetishization of both woman and gun, and thus, neutralization of the threat.

An altogether different conceptualization of the armed woman, as described by Brown, is the muscular, de-feminized female body furnished with an extraordinarily big gun, as for instance embodied (in the most literal sense of the word) by Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2* (1991). Brown discerns a “symbolic phallicization of the actress” by making her a “hardbody heroine” and explains that the woman “is identifiable in the heroic role because of the guns and muscles” (60). Brown discerns an act of female empowerment in the appropriation of both guns and muscles from the male domain. But the toughening-up also, as he notes, allows for inferences as to another pattern behind it, namely that a heroic woman cannot keep her feminine aspects, or she would not constitute a hero at all. She therefore has to be masculinized. It follows that a clearly feminine, but not objectified action heroine with a gun calls for counter strategies to make the character work for a male audience which allegedly abhors powerful women. Dole lists an entire array of those mitigating measures. She names firstly, instable possession of the gun, which she contextualizes as a symbolic castration of the female hero (83); secondly, the coding of gun use as an act of self-defense rather

than aggression (83); thirdly, gun use in the protection of female characters only, because being saved by a woman would emasculate a male character (87), and lastly, amateurish, or at least inexperienced use of the gun (87). It becomes apparent, how thin the ice is for a clearly feminine, but not overly sexualized or fetishized woman with a gun.

In the analysis of the third challenge, the acquisition of the detective's gun and the coding and symbolism of its use will be investigated. Violent acts beyond gun use on the detective's part will also be investigated and assessed.

4.6. Preliminary Note to the Analyses

This chapter developed the concept of the three challenges as a scaffold for the analysis and detailed the aspects which will be investigated. It has to be noted, though, that despite basic criteria which the series under scrutiny have in common, they all display very different dynamics, character groupings, and artistic approaches. It was therefore impossible to find comparable scenes for all aspects in all three series. The analyses, consequently, take slightly varying routes towards answering the research questions, and the sub-chapters vary in length, depending on the yield of the findings. The cornerstones, though, remain the same. After a brief introduction to the series, the visual representation of the detective will be discussed. The remainder of the analysis will follow the three challenges as outlined, with their respective sub-chapters. Due to the limitations of this thesis, only the pilot episode and first season of the respective series can be considered.

In the concluding chapter eight, the series will be contextualized within the hard-boiled genre, but also evaluated for their placement as quality series by analyzing their transgressive potential.

5. Analysis: *The Fall*

5.1. The Series

The television miniseries *The Fall* (2013-2016) spans three seasons of five, six, and six episodes each and was conceived and written by Allan Cubitt, who also directed seasons two and three. It was coproduced by Artists Studio and BBC Northern Ireland, filmed and set in Belfast and stars Gillian Anderson and Jamie Dornan in lead roles. The series first aired on RTÉ1 and BBC2 in 2013 and was subsequently shown in many countries throughout Europe and in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Latin America. It received a 100% approval from review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes for its first and second seasons, the third season received a 71% approval rating. The show was nominated for numerous television awards and won, among others, three BAFTAs and a British screenwriters' award.

The primary plot thread, the serial murder investigation, has a narrative arch spanning all three seasons, and is supplemented with only minor sub-plots. The first two seasons are dedicated to hunting and catching the killer. The third season, with the perpetrator already in police custody, deals with building a case against him. Although the series has features of a police procedural, it is predominantly organized along the opposition between the serial killer Paul Spector (Jamie Dornan) and detective superintendent (DSI) Stella Gibson (Gillian Anderson), who heads the police investigation against him. Contrary to mystery and police procedural conventions, the killer is known to the viewer from the beginning and awarded extensive screen time. Both protagonists, the police officer and the serial killer, are equally faceted and interesting and both are controversial. The analysis will concentrate on the female detective Stella Gibson, who is depicted as a highly professional sharp thinker, emotionally contained, isolated, and conducting the investigation with calm and routine. In the next section, her visual representation will be analyzed for parallels with other woman detectives and traces of objectification and glamorization.

5.2. DSI Stella Gibson

Throughout the series, Gibson mostly wears light-colored silk blouses without a jacket and knee-length, figure-hugging skirts or elegant trousers with stiletto heels (see, for instance S1E1 41:00, Fig. 3). Her outfits hark back to two of her television detective predecessors: Helen Mirren's character DCI Jane Tennison, in the television series



Figure 3 DSI Stella Gibson

Prime Suspect (1991-2006), who was frequently clad in silk blouses complemented with blazers with padded shoulders, and Gillian Anderson's own series character FBI special agent Dana Scully, from *The X-Files* (initial series 1993-2002), who mostly sported pantsuits. Scully's clothes were initially of a lower quality but became increasingly more expensive-looking as the series progressed (Mizejewski 101). There are, however, significant differences between Gibson's and the earlier detectives' clothing: the lack of a jacket, the stunningly high and elegant heels, and the overall high quality and femininity of the outfits. Wearing a complete suit or pantsuit, as her predecessors did, fulfills two purposes: Mainly, the suit creates a visual similarity with the male plain clothes detective's 'uniform' of suit and dress shirt, which makes the female detective 'one of the guys'. But a formal jacket, with its accentuated shoulders, can also be read as a visual fortification against expected atrocities in the male-dominated field of law enforcement. Gibson, in losing the jacket, does away with both and is consequently clearly set off against the other, exclusively male detectives. She also looks more feminine and vulnerable than her precursors. Her expensive-looking outfits put her in a higher income range than her team members and lend her appearance an elegance and fragility both other female characters in *The Fall* and her forerunners lack.

Concerning the impossibly high stiletto heels Gibson sports in the series it has to be noted that actress Gillian Anderson only measures 160 cm and is put in high heels in most of her screen roles. But the fact that the heels are visible in many shots, complementing her shapely silhouette, clearly makes a point. In context of the way Gibson's sexuality is portrayed, the shoes are apparently intended to signal a certain assertiveness in this respect. Other than in her business wardrobe, Gibson is variously shown in a silky dressing gown, which she exclusively wears when alone in her hotel room. Several times we also see her in a sensible black bathing suit and swimming

cap (see, for instance S1E1 31:10). Although her clothes are well-chosen and we occasionally catch glimpses of her legs or a bit of lace bra, her body is never fragmented or glamorized in close-ups, and the notorious reaction shots of a male onlooker are missing.



Figure 4 The Glamorized Face

Her face is a different matter. Carefully made-up and lit, framed by long, wavy blond hair it is abundantly displayed in close-ups, so that a spectator can revel in both her beauty and the intricacy of her facial expressions (Fig. 4). Apart from the obvious scopophilic aspect of these shots, which are

often cross-cut with similar footage of Spector, these lingering close-ups emphasize the process of looking and thinking which is so characteristic in the visual coding of a detective's work, as I have previously pointed out.

In conclusion, while Gibson is not objectified, her figure is glamorized to an extent. This finding would be consistent with the way the male hero, according to Mulvey, is represented to invite a male spectator's identification with him. In a gender-reversed version, Gibson's "glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego" (Mulvey 41), which serves as a stand-in in the spectator's phantasy. In combination with her appropriation of the law of the father, Gibson's character fulfills all criteria of a female version of the Hollywood hero as Mulvey describes him. In the next section, the introductory scenes of the series will be discussed.

5.3. The 1st Challenge: Gaze

5.3.1. Introductory Scene

The pre-credit sequence of the series' pilot episode introduces both protagonists as well as the act of looking as a key topic. The scene will be described in some detail in this section. The pilot opens with a view of a woman in t-shirt and pajama bottoms from behind, cleaning out a tub (Fig. 5). The frame is pared down to a vertical sliver by a

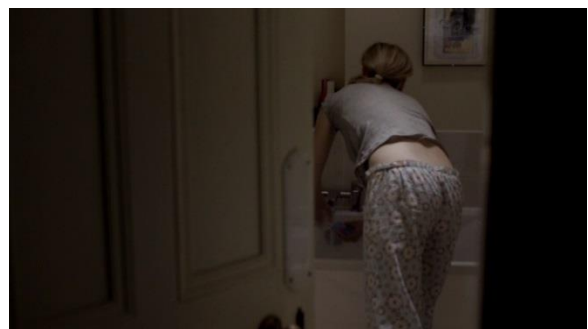


Figure 5 The Voyeur's Gaze

doorframe and an open door, respectively. The camera is moving very slightly, in a motion which could be described as floating. The combination of these three components, a figure shown from behind, the restricted view through an open door, and the hand-held camera, suggests the perspective of a person standing there watching. The technique puts the spectator into a stalker's shoes right away, within the initial seconds. This first impression establishes voyeurism as the key trope around which the series is constructed. In the course of the scene, this apparent point-of-view shot is mixed with semi-close-up and close-up shots of the woman's body, hands and face, allowing for an intimate glimpse into her pre-bed routine while still maintaining the impression of a stalker's perspective. When the woman turns to the washbowl, we see that she wears a bluish cream mask she proceeds to remove with a cloth, looking pensively into the mirror. Only at this point, Gillian Anderson becomes recognizable. The passage ends with her sitting on the bed, looking at files and photos concerning a murder case, which suggests she is a detective (S1E1 00:00). After that, the sequence cuts to a burglar breaking into a house through the back door and walking up stairs. Only when he shines his flashlight on an empty bed and into a dark bathroom do we gather that the house is empty, Gibson is in a different apartment, and thus, not in danger. A mirror scene (in a twofold sense) follows, showing the burglar pulling off the ski mask in front of a mirror, revealing Jamie Dornan's character Paul Spector (S1E1 01:30).

This opening picks up the horror and detective genre's convention of staging a violent death in the pre-credit sequence and misleads us into believing Gibson might be the immediate victim of a stalking. The sequence artfully introduces both the stalking theme, into which the spectator is drawn by the specific use of perspective, framing, camera work and editing, and the detective's investigative gaze, represented by Gibson looking at a murder file. The deceptive beginning draws the spectator into the story and establishes a dangerous and paranoid atmosphere. The sequence also instantly links the two lead characters to each other and creates a stark contrast to how Gibson is depicted from this scene on. Never again throughout the entire series do we see her in a situation of similar private domesticity, nor in similar not-to-be-looked-at clothes. During the first season, Gibson is never actually posited as a victim. As the season progresses, Gibson and Spector become increasingly aware of each other, pass each other at the presidium (S1E5 22:50) and speak on the phone, but Spector does not directly target her. This is significant in the sense that victimization of the

detective as one of the strategies to diminish her power is absent from the series' first season.

The introductory scene posits the gaze as the primary site on which the conflict between detective and criminal is negotiated. In the next section, the gaze triangle unfolding between Gibson, Spector and the various victims will be discussed.

5.3.2. The Gaze Triangle

Introduced from the very beginning, looking is one of the main visual themes of *The Fall*. Be it the opening sequence or the antagonist's telling name, Spector, the topic is a constant in the series. The detective's investigative gaze is juxtaposed with the murderer's invasive gaze, which emphasizes the similarities between them, making the victim the vanishing point of both characters' interest. This construction creates a strong visual connection, making Spector the predominant powerful male against whom Gibson is set. Their power struggle plays out via their mutual gaze at and concern with the victim, which spreads out the principal gaze triangle. Furthermore, Gibson is posited against her antagonist Spector in a binary opposition supported by many paralleling scenes and a distinct visual iconography linked to the respective character. Gibson is identified with light, open spaces and calm, whereas Spector is associated with dark, narrow spaces and nervous agitation. In comparison to Gibson's and Spector's gaze, which puts the victim into focus, all other relationships seem secondary. I will therefore discuss the representation of the victim next.

5.3.3. The Victim

Until this point, the victim has been referred to in the singular, as a narrative function rather than a character. In *The Fall*, there are several victims, two of them already murdered when the story sets in, others targeted and killed in the course of the series. They all fall into Spector's preferred type of young, female, dark-haired professional. Because of their visual similarity, and the similarity of their representation, they virtually merge into indistinguishability for the spectator. Symbolically, they converge into a single, universal victim, and will be treated as such.

The victims are the point of conversion of both protagonist's gaze, DSI Stella Gibson's and Paul Spector's, with the victim's death as a rough temporal demarcation line. Generally speaking, Spector is interested in his victims as long as they are his prey, while Gibson's investigation sets in only after they have been murdered and present to her a case to be solved. As has been established, police work as it is depicted in

police procedurals features both voyeurism and fetishism. Pointedly, *The Fall* focuses on a criminal who makes use of just these mechanisms to satisfy his psychopathological needs. In the series, the preparations, the crime and its aftermath are represented to the same extent as its investigation. An unbroken line of voyeuristic and fetishistic treatment of the victims is established.



Figure 7 The Crime Scene

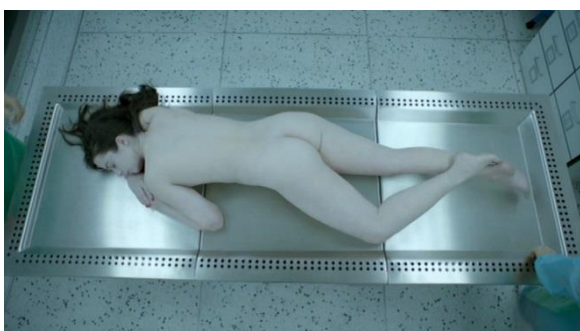


Figure 6 The Morgue



Figure 8 Documentary Imagery

Spector stalks, kills and poses his victims after their death for a sustained experience of sexualized control and to feed his fetishistic desires. The investigative team documents the crime scene and gathers forensic evidence which, of course, includes the body. They also cast an investigative

look at the victim's life. Objectification of the victim, started by Spector, is continued by the police after her death, and the body is fetishized by both parties. *The Fall* parallels the care Spector takes in cleaning up and posing his prey once she is dead with the meticulousness of the forensic work at the crime scene and the pathologist's post mortem examination. The series shows the victim staged in all three situations, the crime scene (Fig. 7), the morgue (Fig. 6), and documentary imagery (Fig. 8), in glamorizing close-up. A long sequence has the team, all clad in eerily matching white crime scene coveralls stand over the dead woman who is lying on the bed, untouched

and still partly uncovered (S1E2 35:00). The sequence ends with a close-up of her face, her eyes already glazed-over (S1E2 37:45). The episode meticulously traces her subsequent transport to the morgue. There, in a notable bird's eye shot, the body is lifted from the gurney to the autopsy table naked, frozen by rigor mortis in the position Spector put her (S1E2 44:51). This moment, albeit short, is one of the most impressive accounts of a corpse's glamorization. A subsequent profile close-up shows her head resting on a block on the slab, a light playing on her eyes (S1E2 45:42). In a further continuation of paralleling Spector's actions with those of the police, we see a pathology aid work the rigor out of the victim's elbow and finger joints (S1E2 45:40). In analogy to Spector snapping photos before he leaves the scene of the crime, Gibson watches crime scene footage showing another victim, who is equally posed on a bed naked (S1E1 24:30). In so uncannily setting the police's work alongside the murderer's, the series seems to make a disquieting statement about the violence and control a victim is submitted to even after her murder, but also makes ample use of the male gaze. Attempts to oppose this institutional gaze, which is so readily adopted by the police procedural, will be the focus of the next section.

5.3.4. Feminist Agency

As for feminist agency and a refusal to buy into the "established guilt of the woman" (Mulvey 44), Gibson makes repeated moves to prevent the victims from being blamed. Her careful negotiation over wording with the police press agent (S1E3 28:00) and opposition to a police officer's remark about the sexual explicitness of a victim's dating site profile (S1E5 12:35) would be two accounts. Feminist agency can also be found when Gibson switches from her detached investigative mode to showing concern and compassion. Such a transformation, manifested solely in her reaction shots, occurs when she watches the crime scene video of an old murder case (S1E1 24:30). On occasion, a symbolic gaze between Gibson and a victim is constructed in a shot/reverse shot of Gibson looking at a woman's head shot, their eyes meeting, in a manner of speaking (for instance S1E1 01:25). A more disturbing example of such an exchanged gaze occurs when Gibson looks into the glazed eyes of the corpse at the crime scene (S1E2 37:45). But the investigative side also sometimes gets the better of her, for instance when she insists a comatose hospitalized victim must be examined for trace evidence at all cost (S1E5 05:30). When she is denied access, pathologist professor Reed Smith (Archie Panjabi), with whom Gibson has been bonding over

time, comes to her aid. In the next section the female network in the series will be discussed.

5.3.5. Women's Support

Although Gibson faces initial disrespect from her male team members, and disagreements over how to handle the case with her superior, assistant chief constable (ACC) Jim Burns continue, a female network emerges over the course of the season. When victim Sarah Kay (Laura Donnelly) is found murdered in episode two, the crime scene is handled predominantly by women. (S1E2 35:00) Gibson, Reed and PC Danielle Ferrington (Niamh McGrady) are all present at the crime scene, and even the transport of the body to the morgue is organized by a woman. This sequence, with its strong female presence, seems to symbolically mark the point at which Gibson takes over the investigation of the newly occurred murder, and turns the tables regarding gender relations. Rather than staying the only female protagonist, as it is common in mainstream productions, a small group of supporting women forms around Gibson. What transpires is an emerging network which can easily be interpreted as women's solidarity, and thus, feminist agency. Ferrington evolves into a capable and discreet assistant and shows loyalty by removing traces of Gibson's sexual activity from her hotel room (S1E2 36:10). Pathologist Smith becomes a worthy partner in the investigation with whom Gibson discusses her findings and shares thoughts beyond the case (S1E2 09:00). Martina, the press agent, goes with Gibson's meticulous discussion of the wording for a press conference to eradicate any trace of subliminal victim blaming (S1E3 28:00). Both Ferrington and office manager Mary McCurdy (Siobhan McSweeney) reprimand men who disrespect Gibson's authority. In conclusion, although Gibson's female support is restricted to the professional context, *The Fall* harks back to the 1980s female hard-boiled detectives, who could equally count on her woman friends. But, just like her 1980s predecessors, Gibson faces resistance from the men's camp.

5.3.6. Gendered Power Struggles

In reference to the axis between men in power and the female detective in the gaze triangle, male resistance to Gibson's investigative authority will be discussed in this section. Sent to Belfast to review the investigation of a still unsolved murder case, Gibson meets opposition by her local superior and former lover of one night, Jim Burns as well as male members of the team. When Gibson arrives at Belfast airport, she is

greeted by a man carrying a sign saying “Gibson” (S1E1 15:20). Calmly, she supplies her rank (“That would be detective superintendent Gibson.”), which is met by an indifferent look. Throughout the first and second episodes, Gibson struggles to receive the respect her rank warrants. Although she is assigned point on a newly occurred murder upon her request (S1E2 31:00), her recommendations are not always followed. When she notifies her superior of a possible connection to a previous murder, Burns consistently blocks this line of inquiry to protect his affiliations with a local politician whose son was suspected in the earlier homicide (S1E2 34:50). By episode three, though, the male colleagues increasingly trust her abilities and support her efforts, with the first major team brief as a turning point (S1E3 15:30). Although a refractory detective is late to the brief, eats constantly, and has not turned off his phone, Gibson will not be irritated by his disrespect and her expertly profiling the murderer gains her the male team’s approval and subsequent support (S1E3 16:00). Resistance to her professional authority on Burns’ part, though, never fully subsides throughout the series. I will come back to this point in my discussion of the second challenge. In summary, initial institutional misogyny in the series is increasingly replaced by a woman’s network.

5.4. The 2nd Challenge: Sexuality

5.4.1. DS James Olson

In the first season of *The Fall* we find the second challenge, female desire and independent sexuality, prevalent in the interaction of Gibson with DS James Olson (Ben Peel). The relationship negotiates a female gaze coded for sexual interest, but also brings power into play. As previously remarked, Gibson’s elegant and impeccable appearance gives the impression of a woman who is well aware of her body and enjoys inhabiting it, but not expressly displaying it for a male gaze. Her signature stiletto heels, on the other hand, albeit elegantly complementing her businesslike yet figure-hugging outfits, can be interpreted as a signal of oblique sexual assertiveness, of a woman who takes what she wants. This is exactly the way Gibson approaches Olson at the end of the pilot episode. Taken back to her hotel from first meetings at the presidium in a patrol car, she sees Olson at the scene of a raid and asks to be introduced. After a short exchange of small talk, Gibson discloses to him, her unwavering gaze set on his face, the name of her hotel and her room number, nothing more. Olson reacts with complete incredulity to her implied invitation and is left standing in the street



Figure 9 Gibson and Olson

passively reclined on the bed, his upper body naked. (S1E2 03:15, Fig. 9). When we later hear the shower running, Gibson is sprawled across the bed, still clothed and in her stilettos, her face expressionless. The fling ends there, Gibson ignores Olson's repeated calls and messages and straight-out rejects him when he ignores a crime scene perimeter to speak to her the following day (S1E2 42:30). The entire encounter reverses gender stereotypes and a conventional role distribution on several levels. Firstly, Gibson is cast as sexually assertive and put in a superior position throughout the encounter, clearly calling the shots. Secondly, as a detective superintendent she outranks detective sergeant Olson by two grades, which constitutes a reversal of the well-known scenario of a male superior coming on to a female subordinate. Thirdly, the gendering of the gaze is reversed. Olson is shown naked to the waist and his well-defined body, passively lying on the bed, is coded for to-be-looked-at-ness rather than



Figure 10 Spector and Sarah Kay

Gibson, who remains dressed throughout. The scene subverts the traditional visual resolution of showing far more skin on the part of the female participant in situations coded for erotic impact. The sequence described is all the more poignant in its statement about sexualized power relations considering it is edited in a tightly interwoven parallel montage with a sex crime. The cross-cut scene shows Spector, with naked upper body like Olson, after

dumbfounded as she calmly walks back to the car without another look (S1E1 52:20). The encounter serves as a minor cliffhanger ending the pilot, and the beginning of episode two has Olson calling on her later the same night. In the ensuing sexual encounter, Gibson has the upper hand, in a quite literal sense. Twice she stops Olson's hands from touching her, calmly putting them back by his side. She undresses him but only perfunctorily unbuttons her own blouse and pulls her slip out from under her skirt before climbing on top of Olson who is

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The sequence described is all the more poignant in its statement about sexualized power relations considering it is edited in a tightly interwoven parallel montage with a sex crime. The cross-cut scene shows Spector, with naked upper body like Olson, after

he has killed Sarah Kay (Fig. 10). We see him carefully bathing and posing the naked corpse of his latest victim in a display of complete omnipotence. Here, a completely traditional role distribution of woman as victim and man as perpetrator is evident, with the woman exposed, passivized and objectified to the utmost. The two scenes play extensively on both visual matches and contrasting images with similar spatial composition. We find matching well-sculpted male bodies and a juxtaposition of Gibson, who is dressed, and Spector's naked victim, both lying across the bed in similar positions. The male gaze and its reversal, complete with their respective power structures, heightened to the extreme of sexual passion and death, could not be put against each other more boldly. The sequence is a prime example of the recurring discomfort the series evokes. On the one hand, we see the woman detective appropriating the gaze and its power, on the other we see female victims exposed and objectified. Woman is at the same time represented as powerful and completely subordinated to the male. As mentioned earlier, a potentially feminist ideology of the series is countered by an extension of the male gaze into imagery coded for sexualized violence.

5.4.1.1. Repercussions

Repercussions for Gibson's sexual assertiveness, though, come quickly. Not only does Olson die in a hail of bullets at the end of the following day (S1E2 50:20), Gibson is also accused of committing adultery by ACC Burns, who questions her professional conduct (S1E3 26:20) and DCI Matt Eastwood (S1E3 50:00), who investigates Olson's assassination. On both accounts, Gibson calmly fends off the allegations by stating that Olson neither wore a wedding band nor thought to mention his marriage to her. Although the allegations have no direct effect on the powers invested in her, she is subjugated to a suspicious male gaze and symbolically assigned guilt, which constitutes a threat of demotion on the symbolic level. But ACC Burns' reaction goes beyond the accusation of a lack of restraint unsuitable for an officer in Gibson's position.

5.4.2. ACC Jim Burns

Already at Gibson's arrival at Belfast, a previous acquaintance between Gibson and Burns is hinted to when they refer to each other by first names. Burns' reaction to the discovery of Gibson's sexual encounter with Olson reveals the nature of his previous involvement with her. In the past, Burns had equally spent a night in Gibson's bed

despite being married. Confronting Gibson in the ladies' restroom, he discloses his readiness to walk away from his marriage for her years ago, after their night together. The scene also reveals Burns is still attracted to her. His fearfully whispered remark: "Do you have any idea of the effect you have on men?" (S1E4 23:05, Fig.11), demonizes Gibson and moves her akin to the *femme fatale*, a woman who to fall for may destroy a man's life. Gibson, though, will have none of it. She stares back at him with her usual calm, her face giving away nothing. Standing her ground, she will not buy into the "established guilt of the woman", as Mulvey (44) formulates it.



Figure 11 Gibson and Burns

To summarize, Gibson's sexual activity elicits titillation, but also confusion, fear and accusations in all three male characters involved (Olson, Burns and Eastwood). She is readily accused of adultery although Olson never disclosed his marital status to her. There are, however, no direct repercussions apart from her being repeatedly questioned about the night of the encounter. As Gibson has by this time proved her professional abilities, she remains SIO (senior investigating officer, effectively a title assigned to the person heading the investigation) of the murder cases.

Gibson's stance on sexual relations is clarified and strengthened in two ways: firstly, she refers to the tradition of *walking marriage*, practiced by Mosuo women, an existing matrilineal culture in which a man, after being invited to spend a night in a woman's bed, returns to his own family in the early hours of the morning (Mosuo Women). First mentioned by victim Sarah Kay in the pilot (S1E1 04:10), Gibson picks up the topic with two women, her assistant DS Danielle Ferrington (S1E4 12:00) and professor Reed Smith, the pathologist.

Beyond that, she speaks about the reversal of traditional gender roles to DCI Eastwood, after seeing his irritation when she boldly states the purpose of Olson's visit to her room as "sexual intercourse". She states that sexual relations with the woman as the active party raise anxiety in men, putting the matter quite bluntly: "Woman fucks

man. Woman: subject, man: object. Not so comfortable for you, is it?" (S1E3 50:00). Her remark leaves Eastwood quite speechless.

In all instances, her conquest, her refusal to pursue the relationship despite Olson's persistence, her cool comebacks to Burn's and Eastwood's accusations of adultery and irresponsible behavior, show a woman sure of herself, a stance well backed by her professional superiority in handling the murder cases.

In conclusion, regarding sexual behavior and relationships, Gibson seems to be modeled on the male hard-boiled hero of the 1930s, who often moves on without further consequences after a sexual conquest, and rarely engages in romantic relationships. A direct reversal of traditional gender roles can be detected here, devoid of the doubts and sacrifices so typical of the 1980s female detectives in literature. Olson's untimely death, though, could be read as punishment for her behavior. Her reactions to his demise are minimal, and discreetly placed, yet they show a measure of concern. At the police presidium, she briefly stops at a display titled "Our Murdered Colleagues" to glance at Olson's newly added photograph (S1E4 04:15). Another account of her dealing with his death will be referred to in the discussion of the third challenge.

5.4.3. Spectatorship

It seems more likely that a female spectatorship, rather than a male audience, will enjoy seeing a reversal of the traditional representation of gender roles in sexual relations, with the woman powerfully pursuing her desire. In a female viewer, the scene of Gibson's and Olson's first encounter may even elicit a smirk, as the role reversal pointedly lays open the gendered double standards applied when it comes to acceptable behavior for persons in power. Beyond that, Olson's shocked reaction to Gibson's initial invitation can very well serve as evidence of male anxiety about possible sexual objectification mentioned by Mulvey (41). Also in alignment with Mulvey's theory we can assume that, in a complete role reversal, a heterosexual female spectator may enjoy scopophilic pleasure in looking at Olson, and identify with the active, powerful Gibson.

5.5. The 3rd Challenge: Guns

The Fall displays a fair amount of physical violence, most of it in connection with Spector, but also to create the dangerous atmosphere of Belfast. Considering the strong guiding axis and opposition between Spector and Gibson, it would seem logical

that violence is largely absent when it comes to Gibson. In addition, she is clearly defined by her sharp mind rather than any special physical abilities which would benefit the chase. Consequently, throughout the entire first season, there are only two instances in which a firearm plays a role in connection to her. In the first of those, Gibson is issued a service weapon by Burns, in the second she turns out to be an expert marks(wo)man. As has been noted earlier, for an officer of the law, possession of a sidearm is not a personal choice. Gibson travels to Belfast unarmed, as her initial assignment to review a stalled investigation would obviously not require major fieldwork. She also underestimates the violent atmosphere of Belfast when she smirks at Burns' armored car (S1E1 16:50). Interestingly, Burns insists Gibson be issued a service weapon not immediately after making her the officer in charge of the newly occurred murder case, which would be logical. He does so only after Olson is killed execution-style in the street. In the same scene Burns urges Gibson to book time at the shooting range, a request she initially meets with impatience, stating she would lack the time (S1E3 02:55). The delay between making her senior investigating officer and the issuing of the weapon after an account of deadly violence against a police officer suggests Burns feels protective towards Gibson. With a similar delay, Gibson trains at the range only after pathologist Reed Smith shows her autopsy x-rays of Olson's body, with three bullets in the head and seven closely together in the center mass of his body (S1E3 48:00). Mirroring the impact pattern, the detective expertly



Figure 12 Gibson at the Shooting Range

puts several holes in the matching bull's eyes of her paper target (Fig. 12). Obviously armed by Burns to give her the means to defend herself, the range scene rather creates the impression Gibson intends to avenge Olson's death or at least enforce the law by pursuing his killer. This interpretation is supported by the visual match between the x-rays and the paper target. The Olson investigation, though, is neither in Gibson's hand nor does she concern herself with it any longer. In view of later developments, the shooting pattern reads as an oblique obituary to the one-time lover.

After the range scene, Gibson wears the sidearm in a shoulder holster under her coat, but after a co-worker has pointedly glanced at it (S1E3 49:30), we do not consistently see her with it, and she never draws, let alone shoots it again throughout the season.

Gibson, thus, is depicted as appropriating a tool coded for male power and able to use it expertly, but never needs to, which is consistent with the finding that female television detectives are more restricted in their use of violence than their male colleagues (King and McCaughey 7).

5.6. Spectatorship Considerations

5.6.1. Spector

The series has drawn critique for being misogynist for the way it addresses and depicts, in some detail, misogynist sex crimes (Cubitt 2013). In his preparation and accomplishment of the first crime we are explicitly shown, the murder of Sarah Kay, Spector is completely in control, which would foster the view that violent fantasies about the domination of women would be invited on the part of the allegedly predominantly male viewer of police procedurals. Arguments to oppose this approach, though, can easily be found in Spector's two botched murders (the later shown in S1E4 55:00) and his characterization as a failing husband throughout. Together with various threats uttered against him by men in his surroundings, these accounts work against an idealization of the character and are set to relativize the omnipotence displayed in his crimes. Still, the amount of screen time his character receives shown stalking and torturing his victims gives rise to the assumption that a viewer of a certain disposition may enjoy the violence against women depicted in the series.

5.6.2. Gibson

In summary of this analysis, Gibson represents a character with which women can identify through her professional accomplishments and good looks. But her sexual behavior and apparent lack of traits traditionally coded as feminine, such as expressive emotionality, may alienate her to a more traditionally inclined spectator. To a male audience, she may well present a threat as an intruder in the male domain of law enforcement, never losing her cool in the face of discrimination in the workplace.

6. Analysis: *Top of the Lake*

The mini-series *Top of the Lake* (2013-2017, further referred to as *Top*) was created and written by Jane Campion, who also co-directed it, and Gerard Lee, and spans two seasons of six episodes each. The series' first season screened at Sundance Film Festival in January 2013 as a day-long event, was subsequently shown at Berlin Film Festival and premiered on television in New Zealand, Australia, and the UK in March 2013. A second season, titled *Top of the Lake: China Girl*, was in turn first screened at Cannes Film Festival in May 2017, premiered on television in various countries starting July 2017 and was subsequently made available on BBC iPlayer and Hulu. The series is a UK/Australian/New Zealand/US coproduction between BBC Two, BBC UKTV and Sundance Channel. The series stars Elisabeth Moss as detective Robin Griffin as well as David Wenham and Peter Mullan in additional lead roles. Its first season garnered a number of awards, among others three AACTA awards, a Critic's Choice Television Award, a Golden Globe and an Emmy.

The series' primary mystery plot spans the entire first season and is underlaid with a love story and several minor plot lines, some of them feeding into the main story line, others designed to amplify major themes. To briefly summarize the plot: Sydney police detective Robin Griffin (Elisabeth Moss) returns to her New Zealand hometown Laketop to visit with her cancer-stricken mother when 12-year-old Tui Mitcham (Jaqueline Joe) is found pregnant in the aftermath of a suicide attempt. The girl subsequently disappears, and Griffin is consulted by child services due to her expertise in dealing with crimes against children. Working under local chief of police Al Parker (David Wenham) to find Tui, she discovers a network of drug-related crime, corruption and organized child abuse, linking Parker to local drug lord Matt Mitcham (Peter Mullan), who is also Tui's father. Realizing she is onto him, Parker removes Griffin from the investigation twice. Consequently, her status oscillates between police detective and private investigator. The mystery plot is intertwined with Griffin's personal history of falling victim to gang rape at her prom night, which was witnessed but could not be prevented by her then sweetheart Johnno Mitcham (Tom Wright), Matt's alienated son. Their renewed romance turns out bumpy due to case related complications but ultimately concludes on a happy note.

6.1. Character Grouping

The plot takes place in a small rural community and is organized around the following character groupings: the police force, an inefficient, misogynous bunch of male officers under the lead of DS Al Parker; a male group around drug lord Matt Mitcham, consisting of him, his two adult sons (the alienated third son being Robin's lover Johnno) and a motorcycle gang; the third, exclusively female group consists of spiritual leader JG (Holly Hunter) and several women living together in a small container settlement named Paradise, and a small fourth group consists of Tui's teenage friends who work in a café for troubled youth which is maintained by Al Parker as a front and recruitment pool for his pedophile scheme. Several other female characters who work for Micham eventually form an additional group. These structures determine the gender relations of the series: women and children are cast as resilient victims, the male groups are holding the power over the town in every respect at the beginning of the series, but their criminal leaders Parker and Micham are defeated in the end. Only few individuals do not belong to either one of these character clusters, the most important of them being Griffin herself, Tui, who is missing for the better part of the story, and Johnno.

In terms of genre, *Top* cannot be easily classified, except for the sweeping label 'mystery series'. The show has little resemblance with a police procedural despite the fact that Griffin is a trained detective who is initially working in a police context to solve a crime. But she operates alone rather than as part of a team and her discoveries are often contingent on serendipitous encounters instead of systematic investigation, both features which are inconsistent with the sub-genre. Beyond that, Griffin's struggles to come to terms with her traumatic past are prominently featured throughout the series. This thread both parallels and counterbalances the investigative plot line around Tui. Griffin is drawn as an impulsive, emotional and emphatic character who faces opposition from many sides and receives little support in her attempt to find justice for herself and Tui. In the next section, her appearance will be analyzed.

6.2. Detective Robin Griffin

Elisabeth Moss was cast for the role of detective Robin Griffin. The actress became known to a wide audience as Peggy Olson in highly acclaimed television series *Mad Men* (2007-2015), where the character makes her way from secretary to copywriter in the 1960s advertising world. In the series, Olson's professional expertise and strife for

recognition in a male-dominated world is foregrounded in opposition to the heavy glamorization of several other female characters. It can be presumed that Moss was cast in *Top* for her renown, the feminist connotations of her screen persona and her acting accomplishments rather than for her looks. Robin Griffin is the most variably dressed of the three detectives under scrutiny in this thesis. Overall, she is a tomboy type, with her clothes allowing for a bandwidth between femininity and androgyny. Her outfits range across a casual register, which emphasizes her shifting status between amateur investigator and professional (Fig. 13).



Figure 13 Detective Robin Griffin

At her mother's house we see her at her most casual, in cut-off jeans and Ugg boots. At the command post, and during investigations authorized by Parker, she wears jeans and a t-shirt, still very casual, but far less revealing. In the early episodes this outfit is complemented with a snug black anorak for outdoor scenes, which later is replaced by a gray coat which is by far her most formal garment. The switch from anorak to coat may serve as protection against prying looks and thereby marks a professionalization. Beyond that, Griffin variously dons tight-fitting black running clothes which faintly recall the outfits of action movie heroines. But as the garb not only displays a feminine silhouette, but also emphasizes her petite stature, it conveys vulnerability rather than the martial arts allusions of the action genre. At her late father's cabin, where she stays and entertains Johnno, we see her at her most glamorous, soft-lit in padded bras and

pink lacey panties. Unsurprisingly, but very consistently, the level to which her clothing reveals her body corresponds to the extent to which she can let her guard down.

To conclude, Griffin's clothes serve to delineate the various roles she plays in the series, which go well beyond a regular television police detective's basic professional and occasional private outfits to include a sportive, a social, and a sensual side of her. To an extent, her small frame and the shifts between a feminine and androgynous appearance evoke the *final girl*, as Carol J. Clover terms and describes the prototypical female slasher movie survivor (35-64). Although Griffin's character lacks some of the traits of this stock figure such as a reluctance to engage in romance (Clover 39), the allusion puts Griffin akin to other woman detectives and actions heroines. Clover (46) identifies the *final girl* in FBI agent Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) from *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and Mizejewski (145) traces the type in police rookie Megan Turner (Jamie Lee Curtis) from *Blue Steel* (1990) and *Alien's* heroine Ellen Ripley (Susan Sarandon, 1979).

In the following section concerning the First Challenge, first the victims and then male antagonists will be discussed.

6.3. The 1st Challenge: Gaze

6.3.1. Young Victims

In regard to victims, *Top* shows a very clear gendering. In the crimes foregrounded in the series, namely the pedophile ring and the sexual abuse of Tui by her father, children and youth constitute the victims. Despite this fact, violence and violent deaths are almost exclusively shown involving male characters. I will first analyze imagery of the young victims and then move on to the men.

Quite remarkably, representations of the abused children come down largely to mediated accounts, that is, implied violent acts, video footage and photos, and is exceptionally brief. I will look at each of these instances in turn. In a genre-typical move to open with the victim, the pre-credit sequence of the pilot episode shows twelve-year-old Tui walking into the wintery lake fully dressed. She is seen by a woman from the passing school bus, rescued and accompanied to school, where her pregnancy is discovered. In this sequence, Tui's pregnant body is not displayed at any moment, we only see her feet behind a curtain while she takes off the wet clothes. A school nurse briskly orders everyone out of the room (S1E1 03:00, Fig. 14) which implies but does not show that the child's body bears traces of a crime committed against her. When



Figure 14 Tui



Tui later points a rifle at her father, he scolds her and takes the rifle, but neither in this scene nor any other do we see him lay a finger on her. Of course, the omission serves to keep the sexual abuse by her father a suspicion until last, although Tui's running away from home counts as a strong pointer toward this possibility.

In the case of another young girl who dies in the aftermath of falling victim to the pedophiles, autopsy photos are briefly laid out and looked at by Griffin. They are neither glamorizing the girl's injuries nor are they taken in excessively fragmenting close-up (S1E4 44:50). Scenes from the pedophile parties are presented as a few grainy snapshots on a searched computer (S1E6 06:00) and through the lens of Griffin's mobile phone camera, in equally poor quality, when she walks in on such a party (S1E7 47:00, Fig. 15). Both examples briefly show inconspicuously fragmented images of



Figure 15 Young Victims

children lying unconsciously on the floor in their children's underwear. The graininess of the footage creates a distancing effect and anonymizes the children depicted. None of these accounts would indicate an invitation to sadistic voyeurism on the spectator's side, to the contrary: the brevity,

seemingly random framing and flat lighting of the glimpsed bodies renders them decidedly unspectacular and seems to indicate a conscious motion to avoid any such notion. In summary, although the crimes investigated consist of sexualized violence against youth, no images to this effect are shown. It seems the series' makers take great care to protect the children from the spectators' gaze.

6.3.2. Male Victims

Violence between and against men, in contrast, occurs numerous and is often directly shown. In the course of the series' first season, one man is shown drowned (S1E1

22:00) one is found hanged (S1E3 18:20), several are shot and attacked (S1E7 30:00, to quote but one), and a young boy falls to his death off a cliff (S1E6 37:00). All these scenes lack aspects of the excessiveness, glamorized brutality or intricacy so often displayed in police procedurals or action movies. Instead, the violent acts are coded as banal or accidental, squalid but deadly attempts at masculine power.

This pronounced difference between the depiction of children and male victims invites two conclusions. On the one hand, the representation of violence and death in *Top* in no way fragments and glamorizes bodies, be they male or female, adult or child. Thus, the motion to counter the woman detective's power with an objectification of female victims on the visual level cannot be traced in *Top*. On the other hand, the direct representation of violence between men seems to locate aggression within patterns of patriarchal power, but also positions men as victims of it. Concerning the gaze triangle, it can be observed that the mechanisms of displaying dead victims which are commonly used in police procedurals are largely absent from *Top*. Although three men are shown dead, the imagery lacks the presence of a sustained investigative gaze we find so often in procedural shows: neither close-ups nor the ever-present forensic terminology to veil the voyeurism are used. There are no autopsy scenes and documentary imagery is, as described before, very limited. In the subsequent section, power relations involving the detective will be investigated.

6.3.3. Negotiation of Power

When it comes to the male gaze and power relations, detective Griffin's primary opponent is her superior, chief of police Al Parker, who will turn out to be the head of the pedophile ring. Beyond that, Parker accepts drugs from Matt Mitcham and covers up the drug lord's numerous crimes in return. This said, it becomes obvious why he would want to hinder Griffin's investigation into Tui's disappearance: the girl is not only the victim of domestic abuse by Micham, but also of Parker's pedophile scheme.

Parker's attempts to keep Griffin under control are numerous and intricately combined. Ranging from manipulative rhetorical tricks over sacking her down to implicit threats of physical and sexual violence, his displays of power become increasingly more direct as her investigation progresses.

6.3.3.1. Rhetorical Tricks

Parker's most persistent strategy consists of veering off topic to bring up matters concerning Griffin's family, her personal history and her love life, but he also flirts with



Figure 16 Griffin and Parker

embarrassed that he would bring the incident up in this context, she shuts up. Seeing that he has successfully ended the discussion of the case, Parker turns to his reflection in the window to comb his hair. When Griffin asks to keep working with Tui, he looks at his phone, assigns her a legwork task and switches to small talk. (S1E1 22:00 - 24:00, Fig. 16)



Figure 17 Parker Flirting

aware of Parker's manipulative tricks but becomes irritated and insecure and makes evasive remarks rather than standing her ground. In their next one-on-one talk, which

her and makes explicit propositions. I will analyze two scenes to illustrate. The first one takes place in Parker's office at the Laketop police command post and constitutes their first discussion of Tui's case. Griffin voices her concern to take the pregnant child back to a house full of potentially abusive men, which Parker blows off with "She can't get any more pregnant!". He then holds out his hand and thanks her to indicate the matter is settled. When she persists, saying: "This is statutory rape!", he cuts in with "And you don't think I know that?", putting her in her place. While he starts packing up his things, he casually asks about Griffin's mother. As Griffin discovers, he does not refer to the mother's illness but to a recent domestic violence call at her mother's house, an event Griffin had not been aware of. Dismayed and

Parker uses his technique of changing the topic to private matters and directing his attention elsewhere when Griffin becomes too insistent several times in the series. The strategy is a meticulous recreation of the perfidious everyday powerplay prevalent in real-life hierarchical contexts. Griffin is well

takes place at the café, Parker starts flirting with Griffin, opening with complimenting her on how she handled herself at a team briefing. He then enquires about her engagement ring and visibly enjoys her discomfort to speak about her private life. After jokingly misunderstanding her phrase “to have a bit of a think” for “to have a bit of a fling”, which puts the possibility of an affair between them on the table, Griffin finally manages to bring the discussion back to the case. (S1E2 22:00, Fig.17) In these and other instances we see Griffin writhing and wriggling in embarrassment under Parker’s sustained gaze, but as the series progresses, she returns his stare with increasing self-confidence. She also variously switches register by referring to him by his rank rather than his first name to put some professional distance between them. Parker, though, becomes more and more brazen in his advances and even proposes to Griffin, to her great discomfort (S1E5 11:20). In conclusion, Parker, who has to cover up his criminal activity, counters Griffin’s investigative gaze with a gaze coded simultaneously for desire and power. This gaze is both voyeuristic and punishing and can thus be interpreted in Mulvey’s sense, as an attempt to neutralize the threat that the woman poses.

As for an alignment with the spectator, it has to be said that the camera does not pick up the gaze in the way Mulvey describes it. Griffin’s body is neither glamorized, nor is it fragmented in the described scenes. Rather, both characters’ faces are variously shown in close-up to emphasize the mutual gaze and reactions to it, which gives the impression of a duel rather than an active/passive role distribution.

6.3.3.2. Physical and Sexual Threats

In two instances, Parker’s actions become downright threatening, both under the perfidious pretext of being in Griffin’s own best interest. At a dinner-for-two at Parker’s house, ostensibly to discuss the case, Parker not only woos Griffin with his cooking and abundant amounts of red wine, but also rubs his knowledge about her prom night rape in her face. Apparently from too much alcohol, Griffin collapses on the floor. The following morning, she wakes up in Parker’s pristine bed alone, wearing only her panties and one of Parker’s crisply ironed dress shirts. Embarrassed and spooked, she finds her clothes in the dryer and Parker already at the office (S1E4 00:30 – 10:20). The question whether she drank too much or was drugged by Parker is never resolved, although date rape drugs are variously mentioned in other contexts. Cleverly, Parker manages to show his power by threatening Griffin’s sexual integrity under the pretext of caring for her after an alcohol excess.

The second instance of a physical threat is much more direct. After Griffin starts building a case against Matt Mitcham for producing and distributing drugs, Parker takes her out on the lake in his yacht, when Mitcham, whom we have seen drown a man in the lake earlier, suddenly appears from below deck. Before any altercations can take place, Griffin is picked up by her boyfriend Johnno in his boat, but the threat to her life is obvious (S1E6 29:00 – 32:00). Parker will later deny the ploy to harm her saying Mitcham wanted an opportunity to reveal himself as her father.

Other instances of the power struggle between Parker and Griffin would include his withholding of resources, the most visible of which is assigning her an empty office which has her camp out on the floor with her laptop and notes. Talking down to her from a standing position underlines their power relations on a visual level (S1E4 10:20). Only much later does he suggest she needs furniture, but we do not see it happen (S1E5 11:10).

As a last resort, Parker takes Griffin off the case twice, the first time after she has physically attacked and injured one of the men who raped her in her youth (S1E4 25:30). On this account, he quickly re-hires her to present her to the press as a consulting specialist for crimes against children. The second time he stands her down because of alleged bias after Mitcham conveniently has claimed Griffin is his daughter, but before his assertion is proved (S1E7 11:30).

To summarize, Parker not only restricts Griffin's investigation, but threatens her sexual integrity and affords Mitcham an opportunity to physically harm her. The male gaze is thus extended way beyond the initially implied sexual 'possession' of the woman into the field of violence, implementing the sadistic punishment associated with voyeurism. In the end, though, both men are incapacitated: Griffin shoots and seriously injures Parker (S1E7 46:00) and Tui kills Mitcham when he attempts to do harm to her newborn baby (S1E7 00:30). In the next section, Griffin's agency will be considered.

6.3.4. Agency and Genre Considerations

The instability of Griffin's status as police detective opens up a field of agency and moves her temporarily into the realm of the private investigator. Finding the official investigation insufficient, she takes matters in her own hands. Both after the police has suspended the search for Tui and when Mitcham organizes a manhunt in pursuit of his daughter to rid himself of incriminating evidence, Griffin continues to look for the girl on her own or aided by Johnno. She even takes on supplementary cases: hired by a mother to speak to a disturbed boy who happens to be Tui's best friend (S1E4 31:40)

and by a wife to look into her husband's suspicious death (S1E5 17:20), she gathers information which advances her primary case.

These investigations, undertaken on her own initiative, show a measure of feminist agency, since she is trying to solve various crimes in the interest of women and children. But her solo runs also make her appear rather unprofessional, even straight-out foolhardy. Various, she ends up in dangerous situations because she follows a suspect alone and unarmed (S1E2 37:30), gets lost in the woods (S1E4 20:00) or walks into a trap (S1E6 29:00). On most of these occasions her boyfriend Johnno comes to her rescue, which makes her appear dependent on male support. Instead of a systematic investigation, she often stumbles on clues through her inquiries into seemingly unrelated matters, but, of course, all crimes are interlinked in the small and close-knit community.

Griffin's limited restraint when it comes to physical aggression underlines her emotional involvement. Twice she attacks a man, throwing a dart at a punter at the pub for making a misogynist remark on one occasion and attacking one of her rapists with a broken bottle on another. While her rash outbreaks move her character close to the 1980s feminist detective, who usually has to work through personal matters as well as solve cases, the serendipitous and informal aspect of her sleuthing puts her akin to the amateur sleuth in the Miss Marple vein. This line of thought will be continued in the analysis of the third challenge.

6.3.5. Women's Support

In regard to a female network, *Top* shows an interesting layout. Despite her work in the interest of women, none of the female characters show particular support for Griffin, she even faces straight-out opposition from them for the better part of the series. The group of women working in Micham's drug laboratory are hostile towards her and only willing to testify against their employer after one of their children, a teenage boy, dies protecting Tui (S1E6 42:50). The women from Paradise only peripherally intersect with the investigation but offer Griffin refuge after she suffers a breakdown in the last episode (S1E7 14:30). Both groups unite in a memorial service for the dead boy (S1E6 40:00), but since the women show sympathy, but no individual friendships ensue, Griffin's outsider status remains intact throughout. It can be established that the women's groups in *Top* only unite in the face of a common enemy, namely the violent male criminals and their followers. Their solidarity can be described as political rather than personal and serves to construct *Top* as a parable of victimized female versus

evil male camps with Griffin caught in the middle. She belongs with, but is not fully accepted into the women's groups until last.

6.4. The 2nd Challenge: Sexuality

At a first glance, Griffin's love life does not seem transgressive. Her involvement with high-school sweetheart Johnno, although built on shaky ground and opposed from various sides, appears to be a rather traditional love story, as will be described in this section.

Griffin comes to Laketop not only to visit with her mother, but to also to think about her long-term engagement. Her reluctance and final refusal to marry her fiancée Steve (S1E4 28:30) could be taken for resistance to a traditional biography, although her indecisiveness is psychologized as a lack of self-esteem tracing back to the trauma of her rape experience. In Laketop, she re-connects with her high school sweetheart and prom date Johnno, to whom she is still attracted. Their relationship is highly ambivalent, as Griffin is unsure of his role in the gang-rape to which she fell victim at her graduation night. Johnno's criminal, drug-related past, both as a user and dealer, presents another point of insecurity, as does the fact that he is Matt Micham's son. Although alienated from his father and brothers, Griffin is unsure of his involvement with Micham's drug operation. Beyond that, Johnno is also Tui's brother and is therefore considered a possible witness and suspect in the girl's abuse and disappearance. All these uncertainties concerning criminal involvement paired with Griffin's attraction to Johnno posit him as an *homme fatal*. Despite her engagement to Steve, Griffin makes a tentative pass at Johnno, inviting him to her house for tea after he has come to her aid in a dangerous situation (S1E2 47:00). He declines, but seeing her at the pub another night, he crowds her in the washroom and goes down on her (S1E3 09:15). Although there is a brief tussle at first, the experience turns out pleasurable for Griffin. After the encounter, both go back to their respective tables. On a later occasion, Johnno takes Robin out on the lake and she flirts with him, but he is hesitant to start an affair. After she asks "Can't we do a bit of the wrong thing before we do the right thing?" (S1E3 31:55), obviously referring to her engagement, they spend a night together, assuring each other they do not want to fall in love. Although they eventually do fall in love, both are initially reluctant to fully commit. After Griffin is stood down from working the case and her fiancé's ultimatum to accept his proposal has run out, Johnno finds the good side in this development, saying: "We can get to know each other", to which Griffin

replies: “No impediments. It’s pretty threatening” (S1E4 28:30), revealing her difficulties with relationships. Throughout their ensuing stormy affair, Griffin manages to settle, one by one, all her doubts about Johnno’s involvement in her rape, Tui’s pregnancy and the drug operation. Despite her initial reservations, Griffin pursues her love against resistance she faces not only from Johnno himself but also from her mother, both trying to keep secrets of the past, and from Parker who is jealous of Johnno. The ultimate challenge to the relationship comes only in the final episode, as will be outlined in the following section.

6.4.1. The Incest Taboo

Griffin’s relationship with Johnno is overshadowed by various doubts concerning his past almost throughout, but the affair becomes outright transgressive only when Matt Micham reveals himself as Griffin’s father (S1E7 03:00), which makes Johnno her brother, and their relationship thus an incestuous one. Griffin’s reaction is bold. After the fact is disclosed to Johnno, she asks him to come to bed with her, intending to break the incest taboo and not let Micham’s power limit her love. The incest is taken off the table again within the same episode (S1E7 35:00), when results of a DNA test disclose that Griffin is in fact Mitcham’s child, but Johnno is not. The plot twist is used to confirm that Griffin will go to great lengths to pursue her passion for Johnno. Her love, thus, becomes a site of resistance against the deeply rooted violence corrupting the community of Laketop. The notion of love surmounting all obstacles is carried even further once Tui has had her baby and is brought to the women’s settlement at Paradise. A traditional family is strongly invoked when we see Griffin with Johnno taking care of Tui and her baby, two adults with two children. The image seems to overlay and obliterate the twisted family relations: Tui and her baby are half-siblings since Micham is both the baby’s father and grandfather. In a move which seems anachronistically conservative for contemporary quality television, the traditional core family is, at least visually, celebrated. Griffin not only wins a partner, but also two children.

To summarize, the representation of Griffin’s sexuality moves along very traditional lines. The first sexual encounter is initiated by Johnno in a move invoking primeval notions of ‘taking’ the woman. Thereafter, an image of romantic, everlasting love against all odds is established to counter the prevailing misogyny and the gendered power relations ingrained in the small community. The short-lived incest threat, despite fitting well into the established fictional world, seems an overly crass means of

depicting Griffin as sexually transgressive. Contrary to co-creator Campion's reputation as a feminist, Griffin's character, generally speaking, does little to upset a conservative audience, and is thereby unlikely to serve as a figure of female identification when it comes to overcoming traditional gender roles. The conflict between job and love will be discussed in the following section.

6.4.2. Conflict Between Job and Love

In 1980s feminist hard-boiled novels, the conflict between committing to a relationship and a job in the detective business is ever-present. In the 2010s, where women in law enforcement are a frequent occurrence on television, the topic has become less prevalent. *Top* nevertheless picks it up.

When Griffin announces her intention to go after Micham, Johnno warns her about probable repercussions, arguing that the town's inhabitants depend on the drug operation economically and will try to resist her investigation to the point of threatening her life. He advises her to walk away from the case, which she refuses to do. Little later, her house is indeed shot at from a distance as she is standing in her kitchen. Hearing about it, Johnno becomes very angry and tops his previous argument by drawing their future together into question: "If you go after [Micham], you won't be able to live here. I can't go to Australia, I've got a conviction", he says (S1E6 01:45), effectively setting her an ultimatum between working the case and building a life together. Later, he accuses her of putting her work above their relationship (S1E6 09:50). Johnno's reasoning harks back to conflicts prevalent in 1980s detective novels: variously, the heroine is torn between a possible relationship and her dangerous line of work. While the 1980s detective usually resolves the question in favor of financial and emotional independence and terminates the relationship, *Top* takes a both conciliatory and far less feminist way out. Johnno, motivated by love and his fear for Griffin's safety, eventually becomes a partner in her investigation, backs her in dangerous situations and joins her search for his sister Tui. This becomes possible only through the blurred lines of Griffin's status as a police/private detective: although she is nominally with the police department for the better part of the series, she pursues both the search for Tui and the investigation against Micham without law enforcement backup. In conclusion, Johnno, after being exonerated from the *home fatal* suspicion, fills the traditional male role as romantic lover and savior, a position the love interest was denied in the 1980s feminist novels. In the second season, though, his innocence is revoked as he both betrays Griffin with another woman and is arrested for growing

marihuana. This development effectively annihilates the happy ending of the first season and moves the series close to a daily soap with its ever-twisting plot threads. Beyond that, both Steve and Johnno force Griffin to make a choice between job and love which her female predecessor of the 1980s would gladly have made on her own in favor of her financial and emotional independence. The conflict also invokes other examples. In *Prime Suspect's* first season, Jane Tennison's boyfriend moves out without further ado once she has moved up in the department's hierarchy which leaves her less time for him and her household duties; in *The Killing* (2007-2012), protagonist Sara Lund's decides for solving a crime and against following her boyfriend and son to a life in Sweden. In all these accounts we find that the actual choice oscillates between the woman and the man, voluntary and forced decisions. But most prominently, the fact that not one, but two men in *Top* put such an ultimatum to a woman in the 2010s underlines the series' outdated depiction of gender relations. Griffin's use of arms and her propensity for violence will be discussed in the next section.

6.5. The 3rd Challenge: Guns

In the discussion of Griffin and her gun, several factors have to be considered: her changing status with the Laketop police, her reluctance to use the weapon, her propensity for impromptu investigation, and her inexperience. I will discuss these points in turn. In the last part of this section, Griffin's propensity for violence will be discussed.

6.5.1. Unstable Possession of a Service Weapon

As mentioned before, carrying a firearm is not a matter of choice for a police detective but comes with the credentials. Confiscation of the service weapon by a superior usually coincides with a dismissal or suspension of the officer. That said, Griffin's inconsistent possession of a handgun is in part explained through Parker's hire-and-fire policy. When Griffin is stood down after attacking a man in a pub, we see her place her service weapon on Parker's table together with her badge (S1E4 27:04), but both are returned to her when Al hires her back shortly after (S1E5 10:10). Dole (83) interprets the unstable possession of the gun as a symbolic castration of the detective. I would not go quite so far, but the demotion certainly constitutes a humiliation for Griffin and a display of power on Parker's part.

But even when on police duty, Griffin does not habitually carry the gun on her body. The first time we see her handle her service revolver at all, she pulls it out of the glove

compartment of her car in its holster and attaches it to her belt before conducting a search at Mitcham's house (S1E3 12:40). The glove compartment as a storage place hints to the detective's general reluctance to use a weapon, a stance which is confirmed on other occasions. Her frequent impromptu investigations additionally contribute to the erratic availability of her gun since Griffin, other than some of her male peers in mainstream police procedurals, does not make it a point to pack heat whenever possible. She also lacks the privately owned backup piece male detectives so readily pull out of ankle holsters (compare, for instance, Seeley Booth from *Bones*, Leroy Jethro Gibbs in *NCIS*). Only on rare occasions do we see Griffin carry her holstered weapon which results in the overall impression that the detective is cast as an unarmed potential victim rather than an able-bodied police officer. Various, she ends up in a dangerous situation without the gun, which brings us to the next point, amateurish handling of firearms.

6.5.2. Amateurish Use of Firearms

Griffin repeatedly stumbles into dangerous situations in her off-duty time, wearing only running gear or a casual home outfit, and naturally, unarmed. Thus, when under threat, she has to improvise, as it is the case in a confrontation with Zanik, a convicted mentally unstable pedophile whom she follows alone on a hunch after a visit to the pub. The incident has Griffin hiding from the gun-wielding agitated Zanik until Johnno comes to her rescue to talk the man down and disarm him (S1E2 43:00). Although Griffin holds a rifle from the arsenal found at Zanik's house in her shaking hands, we do not trust she would shoot it. Her behavior is strictly coded for self-defense and makes her appear unaccustomed to handling a firearm.



Figure 18 Griffin Shoots Parker

Another account of unprofessional gun use would be the final climactic scene, in which Griffin goes to Parker's house, yet again on her own, where a pedophile party is in progress. When Parker tries to grab her, she points the gun at him at close range,

risking to be disarmed with one quick move. To her luck, Parker is drugged out of his wits and in the ensuing grapple for the weapon, she shoots him in the stomach (S1E7 43:30, Fig. 18). Once more, the situation is coded for self-defense rather than a controlled motion to incapacitate a criminal. A third situation, in which Griffin wakes up to sounds in her house and aims her gun straight at Johnno walking in the door (S1E5 26:20) underlines the self-defense connotation in her use of firearms. Her lack of professionalism is also prevalent in her display of aggression, which I will analyze in the next section.

6.5.3. Violent Attacks

On two accounts, Griffin physically attacks men at the pub. When a punter, to top a misogynist banter to taunt Griffin, calls Tui “our thai poontang”, a derogatory term for a prostitute, Griffin shoots a dart into his shoulder, to the delight and cheers of all other men present (S1E2 36:40). Her assault has no further consequences. But when, at another occasion, her once-rapist Sarge comes on to her asking “Have we fucked?”, she attacks and injures him with a broken bottle and once more has to be saved from harm done to her by Johnno (S1E4 23:20). The next day, Parker stands her down.

To summarize, Griffin neither is consistently armed, nor can she handle a weapon in a manner suited for a police officer. Both features are strategies to diminish a woman detective’s power and align Griffin with amateur sleuths rather than licensed private investigators or police detectives. Beyond that, her short fuse and overall lack of emotional stability distance her from the default level-headed television detective following in the tracks of Dana Scully from *The X-Files*. Coding Griffin’s aggression for either self-defense or emotionalized revenge, the series works hard to maintain her vulnerable femininity. This trait sets her off from her 1980s predecessors on the one hand, who usually use violence with measure, and the male 1930s detectives on the other hand, whose vigilantism is usually of devastating efficiency.

6.6. Spectatorship Considerations

In the area of male identification figures, Top has little to offer. All major male characters are either criminals, mentally deranged, wimps or a combination thereof. The only male figures unscathed by the gendered victim-villain premise fill purely functional minor roles. Underneath the imagery of magnificent landscape and impeccable acting, the series seems to offer confirmation for the radically and fatalistically inclined feminist.

Griffin as an identificatory figure can garner sympathy and compassion but she is also a cipher for the inescapability of upbringing. In a large part her difficulties in dealing with the forces against her lie in her politeness and inability to divorce herself from poisonous relationships: her mother is self-serving rather than loving, and Johnno regularly changes his mind about his commitment to their relationship. Griffin largely lacks idealizing traits and appears very vulnerable, which confirms her initially stated status as the *final girl*, who under danger to her life and mental sanity 'kills the monster' in the end.

On the whole, Griffin struggles to escape the male gaze and patriarchal control throughout and prevails with luck and persistence rather than expertise. She remains a solitary fighter for justice since Johnno is an unreliable *homme fatal* figure rather than a partner for the better part of the story. Griffin shares the isolation of the 1930s hard-boiled detective and the conflict between work and love with her 1980s ancestors, although she is granted far less agency in the matter. She also displays the sensitivity, inexpertly conduct and propensity for victimization with the young amateur detective from gothic novels.

Tui, in contrast, the abused but unbroken little girl who resorts to living and giving birth in the wilderness, makes for a strong heroine. She shoots to kill her abusive father without hesitation. Sadly, the girl is of little identificatory allure because of her limited screen time. The character predominantly functions as the *McGuffin* of the story, a plot device which motivates the main characters and sets the action in motion.

The series' message seems to be that the 'war of the sexes' is far from being decided in favor of women and that the gender situation is dire as ever. Given the series' premiere date in 2013 this ideology seems to anticipate the anti-feminist backlash which is still picking up pace as this thesis is written.

7. Analysis: *The Bridge*

7.1. The Series

The television series *The Bridge* (Die Brücke/*Bron/Broen*, 2011-2018) spans three seasons of ten hour-long episodes each and a fourth, encompassing eight episodes. The series was conceived by Hans Rosenfeldt and Charlotte Sieling and written and directed by a team. It was co-produced by public broadcasting companies SVT in Sweden, DR in Denmark and ZDF in Germany and filmed in Denmark and Sweden. The series first aired on the respective countries' public broadcasting channels and subsequently sold to over one hundred countries. The first and second seasons star Sofia Helin and Kim Bodnia in lead roles. For the third and fourth seasons, Bodnia was replaced by Thure Linhardt. In 2014, the series won Golden Nymph awards for Best European Drama Series and Best Actor in a Drama Series for Kim Bodnia's performance. Remakes of the show were produced in a US/Mexican (2013-2014), British/French (2013), and Russian/Estonian (2018-) setting. German television as well as the German language DVD release combined the series into double-length episodes, which I will refer to in this analysis. Thus, five episodes of 120 minutes each will be referred to rather than the original ten 60-minutes sections, which were unavailable to me. Judging from the length of the double episodes, no material seems to have been cut out for German release. In the following section, I will introduce the plot of the first season of *The Bridge* and move on to a profile of detective Saga Norén of the Malmö county police (Sofia Helin). The initial incident is described in some detail as it is variously referred to later in the analysis.

On the Öresund Bridge which connects Denmark and Sweden, a female body is found. Autopsy reveals that it is composed from the parts of two different women, dissected midriff and draped to appear whole at the crime scene. The upper half belongs to a Swedish politician, the lower half is initially unidentified. Since the body is lying across the exact line which demarcates the national border, both countries' authorities are involved in solving the crime, and Swedish investigator Saga Norén has to collaborate with Danish police detective Martin Rohde (Kim Bodnia). In contrast to many other series featuring a male/female team, no sexual tension develops between the two detectives. This initial crime is followed by several more, creating a plot line which spans the entire first season. Beyond that, the astounding number of five secondary narrative threads are introduced in the pilot, all intersecting with the main investigation

at some point. In adherence to the classic whodunit, the identity of the repeatedly striking murderer of the main story line remains in the dark until late in the first season. Apart from its narrative complexity, the series is closely modeled on conventional police procedural television series, with two lead investigators heading a team of police detectives. Contrary to genre conventions, the male protagonist's private life forms a continuous sub-plot in its own right.

7.2. Saga Norén of the Malmö County Police

Saga Norén, the police investigator from Malmö, heads a crime unit consisting of two women and two men. She is in turn supervised by a male superior, Hans Petterson, who is also her mentor. She has next to no social skills, which translates to symptoms of Asperger's disease. Her condition, which is never explicitly associated with the disorder in the series, makes her oblivious to underlying meaning in body language, facial expressions and subtext in verbal utterings. She is near-expressionless in her speech and very straightforward, sometimes even offensive in her directness. Invariably, she introduces herself with her full name and professional affiliation "Saga Norén, Länskrim Malmö" (Saga Norén, Malmö County Police), which shows the high significance her job holds in the construction of her identity (Collins 76), a feature she shares with her hard-boiled literary counterparts. Her deficit in social skills is balanced by her outstanding deductive abilities and encyclopedic knowledge, skills which border on the improbable and are reminiscent rather of Sherlock Holmes than the hard-boiled detectives. Norén is an accepted team leader, her orders are followed without objection and her inability to understand and adhere to social codes is only referred to once by a co-worker in context of what Rohde might think of it. Norén is single and has neither living family nor friends, which is also a hard-boiled feature.

She drives a vintage olive-green Porsche in mint condition, which is her only status object and a nod to a long line of television detectives driving flashy cars. She lives in a messy apartment full of books and almost never eats. The character shows a kinship to the protagonist of the long-running mystery series *Bones*. Forensic anthropologist Tempe Brennan (Emily Deschanel) is equally socially awkward and offensively direct, which, in contrast to *The Bridge*, is often used to comical effect. Brennan, though, is cast as a mild variation of the 'mad scientist' rather than a character with an autism spectrum disorder. Both detectives have a male partner who tries to teach them socially acceptable behavior.

7.2.1. Physique and Costume



Figure 19 Saga Norén, *Länskrim Malmö*

Norén is a slender person with blond hair. Like her female team members, she wears next to no make-up, which is consistent with the realistic and intentionally bland visual concept (Wheeler 2016) of the series. Throughout the entire first season, Norén wears the same, slightly baggy mud-colored leather pants combined with work boots, several layered tops ranging from beige to dark greens and browns, and a khaki-colored coat, a garment which is reminiscent of military apparel (Fig. 19). This outfit gives her a tomboy air despite her longish hair which she wears open and unkempt in obvious disregard for her appearance. We often see her with her belt hanging open at the office and at home, obviously to be more comfortable. The understatement in grooming and clothing Norén displays is a feature she shares with her Danish partner, Martin Rohde, who wears a week's stubble, jeans, and the same shabby woolen sweater and parka throughout the season. This similarity in unglamorous dress links the two detectives and is maybe a statement referring to the wear of long working hours as well as to the salary of members of the police force of both countries. In the next section, aspects of the gaze triangle as they are prevalent in *The Bridge* will be described.

7.3. The 1st Challenge: Gaze

7.3.1. The Male Gaze

In the first half hour of *The Bridge*, we find three scenes featuring a male gazer who watches and assesses the female detective. These scenes introduce men who serve not so much to massively challenge the detective's position as investigator, but represent authorities in their functions as advisor, mentor, and father figure, respectively. Their presence constitutes a strategy to regulate, to some extent, Norén's autonomy and power, and corresponds to male figures of authority as we find them in the 1980s feminist hard-boiled novel as well as recent police procedural series. I will describe the scenes in which the respective men, namely Norén's Danish partner

Martin Rohde, the pathologist who remains unnamed, and Norén's superior Hans Petterson are introduced. All three scenes occur within the first half hour of the pilot episode. The sequences show remarkable similarities in their spatial layout, distribution of activity and camera use. The male gazer remains stationary while Norén moves around, which translates to medium long shots for Norén to capture movement in space and handling of props, and close-ups of the men, which emphasizes gaze and facial expression. This one-directional gaze at and assessment of Norén is foregrounded in all three scenes. Apart from that, camera use is straightforward and conforms to television conventions of continuity editing. Long shots establish both characters' relative position in space and medium close-up shot/reverse shots are used where dialogue is emphasized over action and gaze.

7.3.2. Martin Rohde

The first of the three scenes introduces both Saga Norén and Martin Rohde, to us and to each other. It takes place on the Öresund Bridge, where the first body is found, and opens the series' pilot after the credit sequence. The corpse of the - seemingly whole - woman has already been shown in close-up at the end of the pre-credit sequence.

Martin Rohde is the one to arrive first and already stands over the body when Norén pulls up in her car. Apparently forgetting the corpse at his feet, Rohde stares at Saga with open curiosity. Her main interest, in turn, lies with the body. Ignoring Rohde, she crouches down to look at the woman, then stands and introduces herself with her signature phrase "Saga Norén, Länskrim Malmö" (S1E1 03:20). Recognizing the victim as a Swedish politician, she instantly claims authority over the investigation and starts giving orders to her people. Rohde, yielding without discussion, meets her actions with small smirks and light shakes of his head, indicating wonder and mild irritation. Norén is oblivious to his gaze and unfazed by his mocking remarks, as irony escapes her. The sequence ends when Rohde, inactive at first, goes behind her back to allow an ambulance through the cordoned-off crime scene area, which leaves Saga running alongside the vehicle, trying in vain to stop it (S1E1 07:20).

The gaze triangle is established with Norén's interest in the corpse and the case and Rohde's interest in her. The sequence introduces Norén as an active and meticulous investigator whose focus lies in assessing the dead body and preserving the crime scene, while Rohde is posited as a witness to her activity. Although the scene is composed using a multitude of camera angles and distances, the frequency of reaction

shots of Rohde aligns the spectator with his gaze at Norén rather than hers at him or at the corpse.

Throughout the series, these gaze relations between Rohde and Norén are maintained and expanded. Although Norén becomes increasingly aware of Rohde assessing her, she is in no way disconcerted by his stare, but returns it calmly. While his gaze at her is literal, hers at him develops on a metaphorical level: she soon starts to question the inconsistencies of his actions, especially when it comes to matters pertaining to his marriage and extra-marital love life. Beyond that, she is at first irritated and later intrigued by his loose interpretation of procedural regulations. Seeing that his methods yield fast results in the case, she repeatedly asks about them in order to learn his ways. The mutual gaze between them establishes a balance of power which is sustained throughout the series via two recurring situations: riding a smallish elevator together, which allows for private conversations as well as mutual gazing, and traveling between Malmö and Copenhagen in Norén's car, with her driving, which favors Rohde's gaze and Norén's curious forays into his private life and social behavior.

7.3.3. The Pathologist

The second account of an authoritative male looking at Saga is a scene at the morgue with the pathologist. In this scene it is bit by bit disclosed that the corpse is composed of two different women, whose respective halves lie covered on autopsy tables (S1E1 15:50). The layout mirrors the first scene as in both, Saga looks at victims while men look at her. In this scene, the second axis of the gaze, namely the woman detective's look at the victim, is more prominent.

For the entire duration of the scene, the pathologist remains leaning against his work counter with his arms crossed, watching as Norén examines the victims on the morgue slabs and draws her own conclusions. He offers guidance and comments on her findings, mostly with just a small nod or slightly raised eyebrows while at the same time, he appraises her with an air of both appreciation and amusement. Norén displays a tiny smile (noteworthy because it is a very rare occurrence) when she uncovers the first body and then again before she leaves, which indicates she enjoys making her own discoveries under the pathologist's guidance. In the scene, her abundant knowledge is showcased, but in the end, of course, the pathologist knows more than she does. He thus is a mentor to her, and their relationship seems friendly and relaxed. While Saga clearly values his professional expertise and patience, the pathologist seems intrigued by both her appearance and her knowledge. In contrast to her

relationship with Rohde, there is only one follow-up visit to the morgue (S1E1 1:27:37) which serves to supply additional findings on one of the victims. For the rest of the season, pathology scenes are omitted and there are no further encounters with the pathologist, which is quite unusual for a police procedural. I will come back to this scene in my discussion of victims.

7.3.4. Hans Petterson

Norén's superior, Hans Petterson, is introduced in a scene in the empty squad room at Malmö (S1E1 23:00). As it is the middle of the night, the office is empty save for the two of them. In a series of images framed and dissected by doorframes and inner-office windows, we see Norén roaming the little kitchen and the office while Petterson remains casually leaning in a doorframe, watching her. His gaze at her is almost expressionless without appearing tense or secretive, which is to say that the power relations are underplayed. The scene is very informal, with Petterson in a hoodie and Norén in a T-shirt and her leather pants with the belt open, underlining the flat hierarchy and their familiarity with each other. Despite Norén's half-undone clothes, the scene lacks any hint of sexual allusion and only the case is discussed. When Norén shows some alarm about Rohde coming to Malmö to collaborate with her, Petterson asks: "Do you have a problem with that?", to which Norén answers: "Yes!" only to check herself and deny it, sensing Petterson's expectations. The scene establishes not only Norén's disregard for social conventions concerning wardrobe, but also her difficulties with new people and disruptions of her routines. Petterson is acquainted and comfortable with both, he keeps her focused and advises her. Throughout the series, he guides her with a gentle hand, largely leaves her free reign, but also sometimes sets boundaries when she threatens to go overboard with her investigation.

7.3.5. The Gaze Triangle

All the described situations are characterized by a stillness on the part of the male gazer and activity on the part of Norén, who is squatting down to look at the victim and giving orders on the bridge, touching the corpses at the morgue, and roaming around the small kitchen for a glass of water in the squad room. At this point, I would like to bring the discussion of the hero as a 'figure in a landscape' in Mulvey's work (section 3.3.3.) and my analysis of the laundromat ad in section 4.4.1. back to attention in order to contextualize the negotiation of gaze and action in these three, very similar sequences. The power in these scenes, where a man is static in the space and gazing

at Norén, who is moving around and active, is distributed: while the power to subject the woman to the gaze remains on the side of the male characters, the power of action rests with the gazed-at woman, who is not fragmented, but rather allowed space to move. We can describe her as a 'woman in a landscape', to paraphrase Mulvey, and thereby symbolically entitled to advance the plot. She extends the gaze to the victim in two of the scenes, which constitutes her adopted power as investigator. The spectator is simultaneously aligned with two axes of the gaze triangle: on the one hand, with that of the male characters Rohde, the pathologist, and Petterson, looking at Saga; on the other hand, with Norén's gaze at the victim in the first two of the accounts, namely the bridge scene and the pathology sequence. In the individual scenes, the male gaze combined with Norén's power of action may invite a spectator to identify with the active female character rather than the male gazer.

7.3.6. Power Relations and Voyeurism

Put together, the three scenes show too many overlaps to take for incidental. As screen shots (Fig. 20) show, the close-ups of all three men are identically composed, with the head in the left half of the frame, looking roughly towards the right, and Norén moving around the space. The men can consequently be taken to represent male authority combined into a threefold trajectory in the gaze triangle. Individually, the respective character's gaze and authoritarian influence may not be great, put together they do however constitute a strong axis. Patriarchal power also comes with the resolution of the analyzed scenes, in which the men prevail on a small but perceptible scale: Rohde lets the ambulance through against Norén's orders, the pathologist's knowledge exceeds hers, and Hans exposes her anxiety about an intruder into her sphere.

In all these scenes, Norén is unfazed by the male gaze, but, to an extent, also unaware of the assessment accompanying it. The combined male gaze can be taken for voyeuristic and controlling. Additional power lies in the aspect that the object is largely unaware of being observed, which translates to the initial meaning of the word voyeurism as secretly looking. From the secretive look of the spectator in the darkness of the cinema in Mulvey's interpretation, voyeurism is extended into the diegetic level. This is also the case in Hitchcock's films: All three heroines are subjected to covert surveillance, a fact Mulvey neglects to mention.

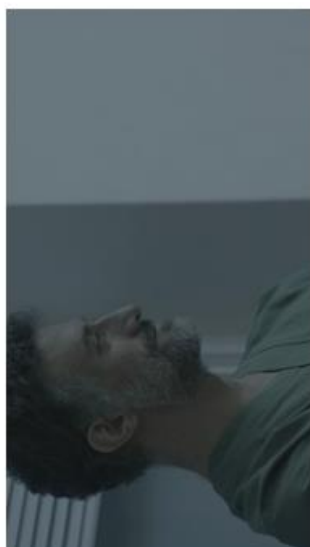
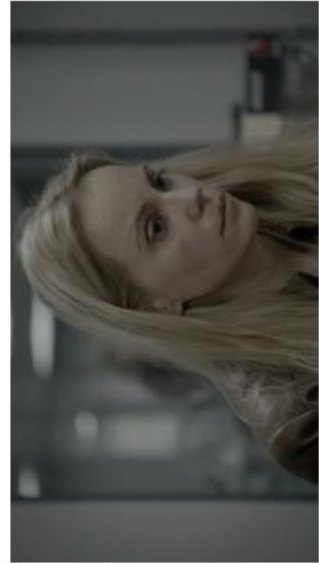
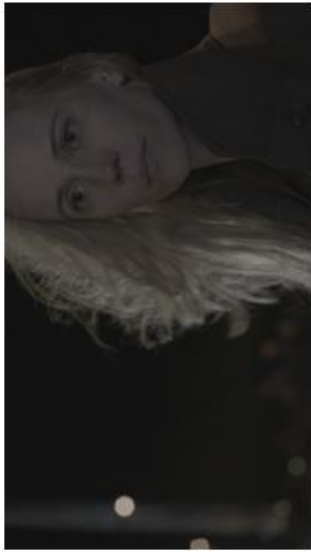


Figure 20 The Combined Male Gaze

To summarize the male axis of the gaze triangle, while Norén's activity and her investigative gaze posit her as the heroine endowed with the power to advance the plot, the threefold voyeuristic male gaze and the outcome of the respective scenes mitigate this power and submit Norén to a comprehensive male authority. In the next section, the remaining axis of the triangle, namely the gaze at victims will be examined.

7.3.7. Representation of Victims

Victims in *The Bridge* are many and divers, as the murderer of the primary plot targets a different marginalized group in every episode to expose social inequalities, and sub-plots also involve dead bodies. I will therefore concentrate on the most prominent accounts of a voyeuristic gaze, which seems to reveal a gendered double standard. Most notably, imagery of the first female victims who were cut in half is variously used to shock with a mix of exquisite dismemberment, nakedness and de-personalization on all three stages, the crime scene, the morgue, and documentary photos.



Figure 21 *The Dismembered Victims*

Perfidiously, those images are presented to us purely as forensic evidence, a method Dunant (16-17) unmask as a thinly veiled motion to play to a spectator's voyeuristic titillation. Found on the Bridge in the pre-credit sequence is the seemingly whole body of a single woman dressed in a business suit (S1E1 01:45). As the team tries to lift her to a gurney, the corpse falls apart at the midriff, which yields not only the establishing shot of Norén as investigator, looking down at the separated parts, but also a close-up

of the cut surface with protruding entrails (S1E1 10:10, Fig. 21 above). The upper part belongs to a Swedish politician and is immediately recognized by Norén. The lower part is that of a Danish prostitute, as it later turns out. In the pathology scene (S1E1 15:50, as previously described) we see Norén uncover the upper body half and examine the head, arms and rump, and we are presented with a glimpse of breast, pale in death. Graciously, the lower part is spared display at this instance. Throughout the rest of the season, though, we are discreetly but repeatedly confronted with two distinct views of those naked, halved victims. Those appear as enlarged slides clipped to a backlit board (S1E1 1:27:37), on Norén's computer screen (S1E1 1:44:30) or as photos in a file (S1E3 38:30, Fig. 21 below). Usually, only one image is used at a time. The first image shows the upper body shot from below, with the dissecting cut and breasts in focus and the face lost in the blurry background. The second picture presents the lower part, also shot from below, foregrounding the shaved genital area as perspectival vanishing point of the legs. Both images are equally disconcerting in their de-personalization and sexualization of the victims also in view of the fact that the murders themselves are not sexually motivated. The sustained re-surfacing of those gruesome photos seems significant as a crime scene photo of the dressed woman on the bridge, or even head shots of the victims would have sufficed to remind us of the initial murders which remain unsolved until late in the series. Also, police procedurals use close-up autopsy images predominantly in relation to *modus operandi*, which plays a role in only one scene involving said shots, namely when Norén discovers a clue on the body (S1E1 1:44:30) but cannot justify the other accounts. In the final episode, the upper half of the prostitute turns up in a freezer, once more de-personalized as she is tightly wrapped in white plastic. Never throughout the series is this victim granted a face.

In contrast to these female victims, two male corpses are shown whole, clothed and identifiable in pans over the body on the crime scene, one of them in a sustained twelve second camera movement (S1E3 17:58; S1E3 02:40). A third man is shown in close-up, lying on his bed fully dressed, a tidy bullet hole in his forehead (S1E4 1:38:40). Although the first two corpses are quite bloody, the male bodies are not subjected to the additional violation of combined nakedness, dismemberment and anonymity. Neither of the male victims shows up in autopsy footage or documentary photos. Together with the fact that still another dead female is presented in only her panties (S1E2 03:00), these pronounced differences mark a double standard when it comes

to the representation of male versus female victims. Cornelia Klecker calls such oblique misogynistic features “drive-by misogyny” and traces it in a number of critically acclaimed television series (184).

In summary, although *The Bridge* shows a very advanced level of gender equality and many strong female characters in its plot, an undercurrent of voyeuristic sadism is discernible when it comes to representing female corpses, which could be read as an extension of the male gaze with a dark twist. Norén completely adopts the investigative gaze, as the pathology scene shows. But she also questions the legal system, as will be discussed in the next section.

7.3.8. Agency

Norén, who is strictly adhering to the law, finds previous investigations faulty in their pronounced misdistribution of resources. When it turns out that the prostitute whose lower half is found had already disappeared 13 months previously, she observes that the initial investigation was conducted sloppily because it was intended to be discontinued from the onset and that “the case was of no interest to anyone” (S1E1 29:45, my translation). Rohde admits to negligence on the Danish side and proceeds to investigate, and the murder is subsequently solved. In another case it turns out that police brutality against a migrant man was swept under the carpet, which again, Norén addresses, questioning society’s honesty in its intention to integrate migrants (S1E3 1:21:50). Norén’s agency is strictly guided by her sense of justice which completely conforms with the letter of the law and claims equality for all. This aspect is foregrounded when a group of school children are taken hostage and a race against time begins, which constitutes the main plot of episode four. While other team members are overcome by their emotions, Norén coolly and rationally stays on the target of saving the children. She achieves her goal with a combination of meticulous observation, logical thinking and keeping her team focused, and no child is harmed.

It can be deduced that Norén’s agency is not limited to the feminist cause but expands to encompass marginalized groups in general. Also, in contrast to her 1980s predecessors, who variously circumvent the law to achieve justice for other women, Norén only strives to attribute the same attention to all victims in accord with the maxim of equality before the law. She puts excessive energy into protecting two possible victims, though. The first is a runaway teenage girl who is a witness and instrumental for finding a murderer. Norén’s interest in her seems purely investigative and has no personal aspect or feminist cause. The other person in jeopardy is August, Rohde’s

son, with whom she has formed an emotional bond. Voluntarily reinforcing the team assigned to his protection, she cannot prevent the abduction of the young man but tries to find him in time despite a gunshot wound to her side. On both accounts, though, her efforts cannot prevent the individuals' death.

7.3.9. Women's Support

Although Norén's team encompasses two women and several of the secondary storylines feature women of various ages and social background in strong roles, none of these are of any special importance to the detective. Adhering to widely spread conventions prevalent in film and to a lesser extent in television productions, the only characters the female protagonist really relates to are men, be they superior, partner or lover. In contrast to the female support the 1980s woman detective in literature experiences, Norén has no close woman friends to make up for her absent family or form a female network. This social isolation moves her closer to her 1930s male counterpart and reveals the underlying conventional design of the series. In the next section the analysis will turn, inevitably, to more men and describe Norén's sexual relations.

7.4. The 2nd Challenge: Sexuality

7.4.1. Anton

Highly rational person that she is, Norén applies the same pragmatism she shows towards her work also when it comes to sexual relations. Desire for her comes down to satisfying a basic need and in doing so she lacks all sense of romance, which makes the scenes relating to the topic quite amusing. During the first season, Norén picks up Anton (Magnus Schmitz) in a bar and has casual sex with him repeatedly. I will describe the sequence leading to their first encounter.

Once the immediate workload of the new case eases, we see Norén at home, walking around her messy apartment while simultaneously snacking and reading a book titled 'Equality before the law' (my translation). Standing in the middle of the room reading, she absent-mindedly sticks her hand inside her pants, and small movements of her arm indicate she masturbates. Looking up from the book, she concentrates for a few seconds until a small smile spreads over her face (S1E1 1:32:25, Fig. 22). The sequence is framed in medium long shots, keeping the camera well at a distance. Visually, the scene is completely devoid of sexual coding, and the combination of the law book and the act of impromptu self-pleasuring is quite comical. In the following



Figure 22 Norén Pleasuring Herself

scene, we see her in a crowded and noisy bar, smiling faintly and making eye contact with a man across the room, who promptly comes over to ask if she will have a drink. She refuses and in disappointment, he turns and starts to walk away. Coming after him, Norén asks why he would leave, to which he finds no words. She directly asks whether he wants to go to her place to sleep with her, his face lightens up, he consents and she pulls him away (S1E1 1:33:00). The scene draws its comical effect from Norén's directness, the minimalistic verbal exchange and Anton's expressive face, which plays out a whole spectrum of emotions ranging from interest, surprise and puzzlement over disappointment to eagerness within barely a minute. The sequence is a good-natured gender reversal of the often unpleasantly direct male come-on women on film are confronted with. On the other hand, an offer extended by a woman without prelude moves her into the realm of questionable morale. The series picks up this notion too. After intercourse, Norén turns away and goes to sleep, once more disappointing Anton. Later the same night, she takes her computer back to bed to look at autopsy images of the gruesomely bisected corpses, which more than appalls Anton. Hearing that she is with the police, he does



Figure 23 Norén Spooks Anton

a double take on her, then leaves, obviously spooked by the contrast between her professional affiliation and moral conduct (S1E1 1:44:23, Fig. 23). Their encounter nevertheless develops into a loose sexual relationship which eventually leads to Anton courting Norén in earnest, to her disconcertment.

Norén's preference for casual sex conforms to a general disregard for her other basic needs and her minimalism in satisfying them. She sleeps little and eats next to nothing, preferring snacks and convenience food out of the microwave oven. This behavior seems to be linked to both her autistic streak and the importance and priority she attributes to her work. Contextualizing her sexual conduct as an autistic symptom can be considered a strategy to mitigate the transgressive potential of her assertiveness in this respect. Akin to Norén, another television character whose one-night-stands are

pathologized would be *Homeland's* Carrie Mathison (2011-, Claire Danes). The character is bipolar and picks up men during her psychotic episodes.

Throughout the series, Norén's sexual behavior seems to be increasingly mainstreamed. At long last she will accept Anton's advances, which points toward her beginning adaptation to social norms and rituals. At the very end of season one, she calls Anton to confirm a dinner invitation. In season two, she has moved in with a man, in season four she begins a relationship with her partner. In the next section, Norén's relations with Rohde's son August will be discussed.

7.4.2. August Rohde

When it transpires that Norén has spent a night with her partner's 18-year-old son August (S1E3 1:41:00), who is positively smitten with her, both Petterson and Rohde question her moral standards until she clarifies that no sexual interaction took place. Norén does not understand their misgivings since August is of age and not involved in an open case; she ends the liaison nonetheless to put Rohde at ease. In a parallel plot development, Rohde does indeed sleep with a suspect (S1E3 25:30), which is far more questionable in regard to both the investigation and his marriage. Although Norén is quite shocked by his double transgression, she does not officially pursue the incident, but thoroughly grills him about his morals in private (S1E4 14:40). The mirroring incidents can possibly be taken for a prevailing double standard which allows male television cops to get away with far more than female ones. Both detectives' transgressions, though, come with severe punishment: Rohde's marriage falls apart when his wife finds out about his betrayal and August is abducted and killed later in the season despite Norén's heroic attempts to find him in time. In the following section, the use of firearms in *The Bridge* will be discussed.

7.5. The 3rd Challenge: Guns

The use of guns in *The Bridge* shows a pronounced imbalance between Saga Norén and her partner. Most of the detecting in the first season is done on Swedish ground, which gives Norén a home advantage and full authority. Rohde, on the other hand, is not allowed to carry a weapon on Swedish soil, which makes him dependent on Norén's protection on various occasions. The series additionally underpins his lack of 'a piece' with a highly ironic double-barreled move concerning his virility: on the one hand, Rohde is cast as a womanizer and has several children with different women, on the other hand he underwent a vasectomy the day before the narration sets in

(E1S1 22:14). The lack of a means of defense combined with the recent surgery makes him highly vulnerable, and an attack and kick in the groin by a suspect promptly lands him back in hospital (S1E2 1:33:10). The combined emasculation on Rohde's side is juxtaposed with a constant visual presence and highly proficient use of her service weapon on Norén's side. Her holster is attached to her belt at almost all times but seems to be empty at the office and when she is shown in her home. The empty holster is interesting in context of police procedural conventions, where law enforcement characters are commonly either seen with a holstered gun or without either gun or holster. Agents usually stow both gun and holster away in desk drawers unless they head out into the field. In *NCIS* for instance, the order "Grab your gear, we've got a body!" invariably sets the investigative team in motion. On the other hand, male characters in office surroundings are sometimes glamorized, not to say fetishized through a combined display of broad shoulders, tight shirt and loaded shoulder holster. Highly virile FBI agent Seeley Booth (David Boreanaz) from television series *Bones* can be named as an example. In Norén's case, the constant presence of the empty holster serves the twofold purpose of highlighting her identification with her job and, of course, reminding us of her armament.



Figure 24 Proficient Gun Use

Norén uses her weapon expertly on various occasions. Faced with a suspect, she steps several paces back to move out of reach of the man, takes a wide stance, draws her weapon and aims it with both hands, all in one swift motion (S1E2 22:55). She also shoots without hesitation, saving Petterson's life (S1E4 1:23:10,) and even wounds Rohde to keep him from shooting the man who committed a string of murders (S1E5 1:47:00, Fig. 24). In conclusion, Norén uses her gun with measure and efficiency, shows no qualms to fire it and is an expert marks(wo)man. *The Bridge* displays none of the strategies which Dole names to diminish the threat of the armed woman. Neither does Norén ever lose her gun, nor is she incompetent, acts purely in self-defense or

only protects women. Both Brown's hardbody heroine and Clover's *final girl* model though seem to apply to Norén, to some extent. Although she is not especially muscled, her leather pants and heavy boots are faintly reminiscent of the original *Alien* series' protagonist Ellen Ripley (1979-1997, Sigourney Weaver), a masculinized heroine with an excessively large gun, whom both Brown (58) and Clover (46) use to underpin their respective arguments. Given both Norén herself and her service weapon are average sized and pronounced muscles are absent from the equation, masculinization is toned down, and the adherence to Brown's model only goes so far. The detective's androgynous outfit, on the other side, together with her unemotional demeanor and ability to keep fighting despite her bullet wound makes her a *final girl*. The additional feature of a pronounced deficit in social skills paired with extraordinary sleuthing abilities, though, cast Norén as new breed altogether.

7.6. Spectatorship Considerations

The Bridge depicts a world in which gender equality is posited as fully established in Scandinavian society. The series displaces the aspect of difference from gender to otherness due to a mental condition. Norén is depicted as exceptional, not only through her condition but also her outstanding abilities. The topic of Norén's autistic continuum disorder is resolved in favor of integration, which translates to moves towards adapting her to the mainstream. Norén is eager to learn about socially acceptable behavior and imitates it in order to fit in. She also wants to find Rohde's approval, to an extent. *The Bridge* has garnered praise for its veracity in depicting a character with Asperger's syndrome from individuals suffering from forms of autism (Wheeler 2016).

A more than capable detective, Norén is socially isolated, sexually assertive and shoots without qualms, all hard-boiled features in the 1930s rather than the 1980s mold. What is missing from the equation, though, are personality traits which link the detective with a spectator unaffected by the disorder, although her "dogged determination" (Collins 76) may garner admiration. Her insensitivity to social codes translates to arrogance, which is not a feature inherent in the hard-boiled detective but harks back to Sherlock Holmes' air of abrasive superiority. To an extent, the Norén – Rohde team mimics the Holmes – Watson relationship. Sherlock Holmes, too, is of interest through his knowledge and deductive skills rather than a winning personality, he garners fascination (Bradford 16) rather than sympathy. Watson on the other hand, by virtue of his normalcy and emphatic humanity, comes closer to the reader's own

psyche. It is through his eyes we see Holmes. Following the analogy, Norén is the vehicle which allows the viewer to keep track of the investigation, while we see her through Rohde's eyes.

Martin Rohde seems to present a far better target for identification than Saga Norén, although he is in no way idealized. The character is furnished with a rich back story and conflicts of everyday family life which seem very relatable to the modern man. Rohde is the male protagonist the spectator can align himself with in adherence to Mulvey's layout of the male gaze. This assessment is corroborated by his sustained gaze at Norén. We can thus find the mechanism of identification of the male gaze combined with features of the Sherlock Holmes story prevalent in *The Bridge*.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis endeavors to place three women detectives from television series within the hard-boiled sub-genre, trace the changes the detective undergoes and determine the transgressive potential of their character layout. This section will summarize my findings and present an outlook to further research.

To condense the changes to the detective figure through the switches in gender, medium and sub-genre once again: The original hard-boiled detective novel of the 1930s was determined to re-consolidate damaged post-war masculinities by recasting the western hero as the lone, cynical gunman in an urban jungle. The *femme fatale*, posing the ultimate threat to social order and the hero's moral integrity, is controlled with a strategy of possession and obliteration, which can be described as a darker variant of the male gaze. Additionally, a strong male figure of identification is offered to the reader. The gender switch of the hard-boiled detective in the 1980s resulted in opposition, if not a reversal of the male gaze, which is signified in the perspective and narrative voice of the female detective. Additional features are a foregrounding of the gender struggle, a furnishing of the detective with a supportive female social field and reduction of violence. The independent sexuality of the male detective is maintained with modifications. The switch to visual media resulted in a heavy regulation of the woman detective through the predominant strategies of glamorization, the presence of a male romantic partner, and the absence of violent means. All these features obliterate significant aspects of the hard-boiled detective. The last switch from private investigator to police procedural gave the detective the gun back and unglamorized her to a degree, but regulated violence and agency through the institutionalized patriarchal structures of law enforcement.

The three series analyzed here were chosen because their protagonists lack the predominant strategies of reducing the power of the female detective on television, which suggests they may be designed after the hard-boiled detective. In the analyses, a gap emerged between detectives Stella Gibson (*The Fall*) and Saga Norén (*The Bridge*) on the one side, who largely adhere to the 1930s hard-boiled formula, and Robin Griffin (*Top*) who shows modified features of both the 1980s detective and characteristics of other detective models altogether. They will thus be discussed separately with a concluding passage about what unifies them nonetheless. I will proceed to discuss the topics of solitariness, sexuality, violence, agency and power

relations as prevalent in the series and contextualize them within the hard-boiled sub-genre.

The 1930s male detective inherited his solitariness predominantly from the western hero. Both are figures at the margins of society but also heroic law enforcers. The 1980s woman detective is solitary in order to maintain her financial and emotional independence. The impossibility of reconciling her job with a permanent relationship and family is discussed and sometimes regretted. Her aloneness is “dictated by prevailing gender definitions” (Reddy 198) and in the end maintained. In contrast, the solitariness of Gibson and Norén is neither contested nor justified in any way. It appears as an utterly personal preference, apparently untouched by gender aspects. This feature asserts the hard-boiled tradition of casting the profession as the chief identity-defining aspect of the detective. A female character whose choice against striving for a permanent relationship remains unexplained is a truly rare occurrence on television. The two detectives are neither depicted as incapable of commitment due to past emotional trauma, nor as unhappy singles, kissing one frog after another, both of which are common strategies to enforce a link to the romance formula in television narratives.

Linked to their aloneness, the two modern detectives’ stance toward sexuality also conforms to the 1930 detectives’, but the conflicts which come with it are of a different nature. For the earlier male detective, the object of desire, namely the *femme fatale*, is a criminal, and sexuality for the detective is consequently controversial and difficult to live out. Gibson and Norén perceive sex to be a basic need and fulfill it in an utterly unromantic manner. In this respect, the detectives are allowed the highest level of transgression against societal norms: sexual activity is completely divorced from considerations of relationship or family, which is an appropriation of the traditionally male treatment of the topic, as is the detectives’ directness in initiating sexual encounters. Both women face accusations and patriarchal attempts at regulating their sexual conduct, but since sexuality, being a personal matter, lies outside the regulations a police officer is subjected to and none of the detectives breaks the law, repercussions are minor. In summary, Norén’s and Gibson’s aloneness and sexual conduct conforms to the 1930s detective and, as it lacks all trace of an interest in fulfilling traditional female roles, can be described as transgressive.

Top treats the topic in a completely different manner. In regard to sexual relations, the series negotiates the link between a woman’s sexuality, permanent partnership and

children, but Griffin is granted less agency than the 1980s detectives: both the men she is involved with set her an ultimatum at some point, forcing her to choose between job and love. Beyond that, Griffin is characterized as traumatized and consequently incapable of feeling worthy of a beneficial relationship. Counter to the hard-boiled sub-genre's resolution, *Top* ends with Griffin and Johnno leaving Laketop as a couple. The romantic formula adopted here constitutes a key component in the construction of women's lives in most literature and television genres from the 20th century and earlier and underpins the strong conservative streak of the series.

The topic of violence shows the same cleft between the European women and the New Zealand detective. In *The Bridge* and *The Fall*, violence, in a perpetuation of the trajectory through the hard-boiled genre's development, is equally proficiently used but further toned down. This can be attributed to a range of factors. First and foremost, the detectives are cast as thinkers and the aspect of investigative procedure is emphasized over action scenes. Like the 1980s novels, the series reserve physical confrontations involving the detective to rare and climactic situations, and in contrast to the 1930s novel, violence is not used to substantiate the protagonist's heroism. Secondly, in the television police procedural genre as it appears in the 2010s, violence is mostly regulated in accordance with the reality of police work. Thirdly, women cops are generally granted less violent behavior than their male counterparts in visual media (King and McCaughey 7). Violence as an aspect to render the detective more transgressive or at least more ambivalent is thus left out. Lastly, all series (including *Top*) were made for national television and follow stricter rules for the representation of violence than productions for private and streaming channels. The topic is however linked to the next aspect, namely agency.

In a development resembling the reduction of violence, Gibson's and Norén's agency is diminished to an almost imperceptible measure. While the 1930s detective's vigilantism is an expression of his code of honor in yet another perpetuation of the western hero blueprint, the 1980s female p.i. prioritized on bringing crimes against women to justice in a feminist agenda which occasionally bent the law. Gibson and Norén, operating under the rules and regulations of the law enforcement apparatus, can only exert feminist agency within narrow margins. Other than the male 'maverick detective', a cynical and abrasive vigilante character who experienced a renewed surge in recent years, as Peacock (2016) shows, the woman detectives are granted little transgression in this area.

In comparison to her European peers, Griffin is both more impulsive and less proficient with a weapon. She falls thereby outside the hard-boiled genre's conventions and perpetuates the heroine's characterization as both victim and amateur which Sayers (15) bemoans in early narratives featuring a female detective. On the other hand, Griffin's temporary independence from the patriarchal control of law enforcement grants her a wider radius of operation, which harks back to the 1980s woman detective. Beyond that, her insistence on her love against all odds could be constructed as rebellious and thus, transgressive.

In the next passage, common features of all three series will be discussed. In the question of power relations, all woman detectives experience a higher amount of patriarchal control than their predecessors. While the 1930s detective sustains punishment from both the police and criminals, these accounts serve to stress his resilience and spur his rage rather than restricting his actions. The 1980s female p.i. is warned and patronized by male figures of authority, but frequently keeps pursuing a case even beyond commission. In both cases, the detectives' professional integrity remains essentially untouched. The modern detectives, while largely unregulated in the private domain, depend on male superiors for the assignment of tasks and resources, and are subjected to a controlling male gaze at all times. Their autonomy in conducting their investigations is thus restricted.

In evaluation of these findings it has to be assumed that the hard-boiled woman detective on television is only possible within a regulating law enforcement framework.

Concerning an underlying feminist, versus patriarchal production ideology, all three series depict a variety of woman's lives which is in this bandwidth and depth unusual for detective and police procedural series. The resulting female voices transcend and expand the focus on the female experience the 1980s novel established. Viewing television production through a feminist lens, the three series may very well be described as extraordinary and laudable in this respect: Cornelia Klecker draws together recent US studies and finds a "persistent underrepresentation of women on television, combined with their overrepresentation in stereotypically feminine roles and functions". Klecker ascertains that this phenomenon, described as "symbolic annihilation", is of cultural significance, since television exerts an influence on how we perceive the world (183). The three series investigated here contribute to making

professional women in a wide range of life designs visible and thereby create an enclave of consistent female presence in the television landscape.

Beyond that, it would seem that European productions allow for more and more complex television roles for women and do not shy away from a singular female protagonist who moves at the margins of gender and genre conventions which are still determined by patriarchal rule. *Top*, on the other hand, a US coproduction, wields a warning finger by exacerbating the criminality of men and victimization of women and by featuring a largely disempowered female lead. It has to be noted, though, that the series consistently refutes a male gaze on the level of production ideology, while *The Fall* actively negotiates the gaze and *The Bridge* reduces its power aspect but displays a streak of 'drive-by misogyny'. In conclusion, all three series can be viewed as a battle between the underlying ideologies governing the masculinist 1930s and feminist 1980s hard-boiled literary forms, the conservative values of the police procedural and the traditionally patriarchal bottom line of television production.

Outlook

Focusing on the female lead of three recent drama series, conceptualizations of male lives were neglected in this thesis, although all series present very worthy items in this respect. Investigating them might reveal concepts of masculinity which differ considerably from those the frequently considered quality television items with a transgressive male lead provide. Finally shifting the focus of discourse away from these series seems appropriate, and Däwes, Ganzer and Poppenhagen, in their volume *Transgressive Television* (2015) already initiate such a move in foregrounding aspects of "politics, power and representation" (Däwes 23). This thesis follows their drift which I consider beneficial as it invites investigating television productions with both a less masculinist bottom line and more diversity in their female characters. Beyond that, an emphasis on "feminist analysis and awareness" (Däwes, Ganzer and Poppenhagen 12), as Klecker's (2015) essay suggests, must be supported, especially in light of the current heavy anti-feminist backlash. Additionally, a widening of the focus to include non-US productions, as Däwes, Ganzer and Poppenhagen (13) propose it seems desirable. Considering both the similarities between the two investigated European productions and their pronounced differences to the US-coproduced series, comparative studies of US, versus European productions may also be of interest.

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10. Abstracts

Abstract

In current long-running mainstream television crime shows, there are no female protagonists closely modeled on the literary hard-boiled detective of the 1930s or his 1980s female incarnation. This thesis hypothesizes that the female p.i. challenges the patriarchal conventions of the detective genre and the gender roles prevalent in television in three domains which are brought about by the gender switch in the detective character.

These three challenges are firstly, the woman detective's appropriation of the male gaze and patriarchal power; secondly, her independent and assertive sexuality, which posits the woman as the active gazer and assigns the man the position of the object of the gaze, and thirdly, the transfer of the gun to a woman, which runs counter to the features traditionally attributed to women as nurturers and bearers of life.

To mitigate these threats to patriarchal conventions, the woman detective on television usually fulfills one, two, or all these requirements: glamorized, objectified body; ongoing romantic interest in co-star; unarmed. The female detectives in my study are modeled closely after the hard-boiled detective and thereby largely flout those requirements.

This thesis investigates how the three challenges are negotiated in the television miniseries *The Fall* (2013-2016), *The Bridge* (2011-2018) and *Top of the Lake* (2013-2017), which strategies are adopted to regulate the woman detective's power, which ideological underpinnings can be traced and which inferences concerning spectatorship can be drawn. The study is theorized within the fields of literary theory and feminist film theory. Laura Mulvey's gaze theory is broken down into its components to develop a methodological scaffold for the analysis. In an interdisciplinary approach, gaze theory and film analysis are combined to investigate visual representation, camera work and dialogue.

The analysis shows that the women detectives in the series show features of the original hard-boiled detective while distinctive aspects of the 1980s feminist version are missing. Despite their considerable transgressive potential the three detectives are submitted to patriarchal control within the generic framing of the police procedural. It can be concluded that the hard-boiled female private investigator, consistently present and thriving on the literary market, is still an impossibility on television.

Zusammenfassung

In rezenten Krimiserien im Fernsehen des anglophonen Raums scheinen keine Protagonistinnen zu existieren, die den literarischen *hard-boiled* Detektiv zum Vorbild haben. Diese Arbeit geht davon aus, dass diese Figur durch ihr weibliches Geschlecht sowohl die patriarchalen Konventionen des Detektivgenres als auch die Geschlechterrollen des Mainstream-Fernsehens in drei Bereichen herausfordert: erstens eignet sich die Detektivin den männlichen Blick und die patriarchale Macht an; zweitens positioniert ihre unabhängige und initiative Sexualität sie in der aktiven Rolle der Blickenden auf den Mann, der dadurch zum Objekt des Blickes wird, und drittens steht die Bewaffnung der Detektivin den fruchtbaren und nährenden Qualitäten der traditionellen Frauenrolle entgegen. Um diese Bedrohung der patriarchalen Konventionen zu kontrollieren, werden im Fernsehen vor allem drei Verfahren angewendet: die Detektivin wird visuell erhöht und ihr Körper als Objekt und Fetisch in Szene gesetzt; ihr sexuelles Interesse wird bleibend an einen männlichen Co-Star gebunden; sie ist forensische Beraterin und keine Polizistin und daher unbewaffnet. Die Protagonistinnen, die diese Studie untersucht, sind am *hard-boiled* Detektiv orientiert und weisen keinen dieser abschwächenden Aspekte auf.

Diese Arbeit untersucht, wie die drei Herausforderungen der patriarchalen Geschlechterordnung in den Mini-Serien *The Fall* (2013-2016), *The Bridge* (2011-2018) und *Top of the Lake* (2013-2017) verhandelt werden, welche Strategien angewendet werden um die Wirkmacht der Detektivin einzuschränken, welche ideologischen Unterströmungen in den Serien vorhanden sind und welche Schlussfolgerungen hinsichtlich einer möglichen Zuseherschaft gezogen werden können.

Die Studie ist in einen theoretischen Hintergrund zum Genre Detektivliteratur und feministische Filmtheorie eingebettet. Laura Mulveys Thesengebäude des männlichen Blicks wird in seine Komponenten zerlegt um ein methodisches Gerüst für die Analyse zu schaffen. In einem interdisziplinären Ansatz werden *Gaze Theory* und Filmanalyse kombiniert, um die visuelle Darstellung der Figuren, Kameraarbeit und Dialog in ausgewählten Szenen zu untersuchen.

Die Analyse zeigt, dass die Detektivinnen eher dem Modell des *hard-boiled* Detektivs der 30er Jahre entsprechen, während wesentliche Eigenschaften der feministischen Variante, die in den 80er Jahren entstanden ist, fehlen. Trotz ihres transgressiven Potenzials sind die Detektivinnen patriarchaler Kontrolle unterworfen, die durch den Rahmen der Polizeiserie ermöglicht wird. Zusammenfassend kann festgestellt werden, dass die Detektivin der *hard-boiled school*, die seit den 80er Jahren einen Fixpunkt von bleibender Popularität in der literarischen Landschaft darstellt, im Fernsehen noch immer ein Ding der Unmöglichkeit ist.