

Trauma and Consolation in the Contemporary Crime Fiction Series

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation New York

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Pro gradu -tutkielmassani tutkin lohdun löytymistä traumaattisen kerronnan välityksellä. Keskityn erityisesti salapoliisikirjallisuuteen tai tarkemmin televisiosarjaan *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation New York, The Final Season* (2012). Tarkoitukseni on tutkia lohtua salapoliisikirjallisuudelle tyypillisten piirteiden kautta ja salapoliisikirjallisuuden lajityyppiä traumateorian näkökulmasta.

Tutkielmassani tutkin televisiosarja *CSI NY The Final Season*in juonta yksityiskohtaisesti ja tarkastelen, tavoitteleeko tyyllilaji lohtua ja viimeiseksi sitä, saavuttaako *CSI*-sarja lohtua katsojalle ja mitkä keinot toimivat tyyllilajin lupaamaa lohtua vastaan. Pohdin myös sitä, tavoittaako salapoliisikirjallisuuden tyyllilaji koskaan lupaamaansa päätöstä.

Tutkimuksessani pohdin myös sitä, mitkä piirteet sarjassa viittaavat traumateorian antamaan pohjaan. Argumentoin sen puolesta, että salapoliisikirjallisuuden ja traumaattisen kerronnan kerrontatyyli muistuttavat toisiaan. Sarjan toistuvat rikokset ja niiden motiivit sekä tutkinnassa paljastuvat totuudet paljastavat jo itsessään traumatisoituneen kulttuurin ja yhteiskunnan. Tutkin salapoliisiromaanien lajityyppiä maailmanlaajuisena ilmiönä, joka heijastaa nyky-yhteiskuntaa.

Avainsanat: rikostelevisiosarjat, rikoskirjallisuus, uhriutumisen, lohdutus, trauma, yhteiskunta, CSI

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1. Introduction

In this thesis, I will investigate whether consolation can be achieved in the contemporary crime fiction series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation New York, The Final Season* (2012.) I am arguing against the assumed belief that contemporary crime fiction stresses consolation through how everything is rationally explained and how criminals are almost always brought to justice. *CSI NY* follows this typical attribute of the genre of crime fiction and thus is ultimately seen to serve its public with a promise of consolation and resolution. This thesis will show that this assumed consolation is sometimes achieved by using techniques which reflect those of the traumatic aesthetic. It is this paradoxical coming together of consolation in trauma that has paved the way for my interest in this research.

I took on a similar challenge in my Bachelor's thesis *Resolving Insecurities and Offering Reassurance through Agatha Christie's Classic Detective Fiction Novel Peril at End House* during the spring of 2011 in which I investigated the lack of proposed consolation in Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot mystery *Peril at End House*. Over the course of my research, I came across two very strong statements about crime fiction.

First, country-house murders, such as those written by Agatha Christie during the Golden Age period, often represent a microcosm of the world at hand. It is due to this belief that I chose to enlarge my investigation to the *CSI NY* series, since New York City is a representative of modern metropolitan culture.

The second statement was that the final conclusion of detective stories should offer reassurance and consolation to the reader. In my thesis, I stated that the repetitive reading of detective novels during the Golden Age period and today is due to a search for closure by accumulating partial resolutions in the hope of gaining a final one. The post-war society of the

Golden Age needed to reopen the wounds, which had previously surfaced due to the social changes of the time. (Munt 1998, 141) According to Munt, “Christie’s novels are fraught with social disturbance” (1994, 9) and that the “fiction may work in the end to offer ‘reassurance’ but since her communities always thrive on suspicion their insecurities can never be resolved” (Munt 1994, *ibid.*). Detective fiction can be argued to provide an escape from reality and along with it only a momentary feeling of satisfaction in its solution. Similarly to Munt, I argued against a full resolution by saying that the communities of the Golden Age mysteries fulfill an image of the pastoral when in fact they are actually traumatized. The reader is drawn to this trauma and uses the narrative form as a safe way of experiencing traumatic experience.

It is said that classic detective fiction provides the reader with a feeling of reassurance and security. For example, Hutter argues detective fiction to hold in itself a “reconstructive core” or a “restatement of the past in the language of the present which transforms the shape of a personal or collective history, which provides it with new meaning and coherence.” (1975, 200) According to Hutter, “detective fiction involves the transformation of a fragmented and incomplete set of events into a more ordered and complete understanding” (1975, 191) and that “the resolution of the mystery is never as important as the process itself of connecting and disconnecting, building a more complete account from an incomplete vision or fragment” (1975, 208). The resolution to the story helps the reader or, in the case of *CSI*, viewer to understand what has taken place and Hutter argues for a sought consolation in reconstruction. I argued against this statement in my prior thesis and will continue on to do so in the one at hand by explaining how the *CSI* series, as well as all crime fiction, share a narrative structure similar to the traumatic narrative.

I came to the conclusion that the notion of full reassurance is undermined and taken for granted also by many other critics, such as Snell (2010), Bargainner (1980), Scaggs (2005) and Knight (2004). Scaggs states most of crime fiction to have a purpose to “restore order after it has been disrupted by crime,” (2005, 47) whereas Snell states that the murders could be taken as symbols to show all else that is wrong with village life, but does not go on to elaborate what this wrong is. (Snell 2010) Thus, detective fiction of Christie can be argued to provide an escape from the chaos of reality and it momentarily evokes a feeling of satisfaction with its all-revealing solution. However, the accumulation of solutions to gain reassurance ultimately fails. Blindly accepting the white and blackness of good and evil may augment a feeling of reassurance or security through detective fiction, but fundamentally Christie’s portrayal of her characters plays against the notion of full closure.

I have found that this argument of proposed consolation is a factor in contemporary crime fiction, especially in the way it is presented. The crimes are vividly shown on television, murders happen everywhere, and most importantly, the country-house murders of Christie have escalated to a whole new level: it is not a small group of people and a genius detective anymore, it might be the whole metropolitan of New York City and, in some cases, the world. This escalation has paved the way for new subgenres, such as the police procedural, the subgenre which *CSI NY* belongs to.

CSI NY, The Final Season provides the viewer with a new mystery in each episode, as well as multiple side-plots starring the main characters. *CSI NY* is the shortest of the *CSI* series with only 9 seasons and the second *CSI* to be cancelled. *The Final Season* was first aired on CBS in 2013. Unlike some of the *CSI NY* seasons, *The Final Season* does not have a grand mystery that plays throughout the season but rather all are solved over the course of one or two episodes.

Rather, the season focuses on the personal lives of the main characters, especially those of Mac Taylor and Christine. A number of the CSI team members find resolution and consolation for their own past dilemmas or disturbances (see 3.3.) as well as develop strengthening relationships between each other (see 3.1.) or are shown to find inner peace by giving back to the community and by consoling strangers (see 3.3.). The season climaxes in Mac's monologue about life and the good things that come out of it. As the genre of crime fiction often promises, the series ends on a positive, peaceful note and forgets momentarily that the city of NYC never sleeps.

Main characteristics of the genre are crimes that disrupt the social order and the detectives' ability to deduct and capture the criminal, the repetitive nature of the genre, and the final climax or the closure, in which all questions are ultimately answered. This ideal of proposed closure is already present in the pilot episode of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* when Catherine Willows states: "We crime scene analysts solve. We restore peace of mind, and when you're a victim, that's everything" (Scaggs 2005, 47). Scaggs describes this as being a 21st-century interpretation of the aims of contemporary crime fiction (ibid.).

Lee Horsley defines the genre of detective fiction to be "haunted by all it purports to contain... apparent narrative closure often co-exists with the representation of crime as irresolvable and omnipresent in modern society." (2010, 29) Similarly to Munt, Horsley argues for lack of ultimate closure due to the presence of crime in society. I am arguing that crime and especially the argued omnipresence of it reflect a society that is traumatized.

In the West, great cultural traumas include the Great Wars, the Vietnam War and the Holocaust and 9/11. Trauma can also be inflicted by nature and these types of trauma are referred to as disasters. The causes of personal trauma are violent personal physical or psychological attacks, childhood trauma or adulthood rape and/or sexual assault. In the human

mind, psychological trauma is “an affliction of the powerless.” (Herman 1997, 33) A traumatic event is one that overwhelms the psychic defenses and normal processes of registering memories. (Luckhurst 2008, 4)

Crime fiction and the understanding of trauma have always reflected contemporary issues and political movements. They address the anxieties of the time they are written in. I am arguing these anxieties to be the issues what are felt as traumatic by the society. *CSI NY* belongs to the genre of police procedural and so the series often solves crimes dealing with gang violence, and ethnic, cultural, and ability differences as well as other big city issues.

Similarly as detective fiction, trauma narratives follow contemporary issues such as hysteria, then shell shock and the issue of sexual and domestic violence: “our contemporary understanding of psychological trauma is built upon a synthesis of these three separate lines of investigation.” (Herman 1997, 9) Traumatic narratives are accepted as traumatic whereas crime fiction is believed to console, even though the two types of narrative share similar narrative techniques and both are argued to address contemporary issues and modern societies.

Previously, I claimed that certain critics take the proposed closure of crime fiction for granted. Evans argues in his 1994 article, that only “little disagreement is evident in the description of the formal strategies of detective fiction or in their identification of a characteristic reception structured by these strategies” (1994, 159). Evans claims the aim of crime fiction to be consolatory and “the appeal of detective fiction [to reside] in the specific kind of pleasure it affords the receiver” (1994, 159). Gill Plain states that the society needs issues that disturb “identity, system, order” and these issues “undermine the three Cs: certainty, complacency and closure.” (2008, 14) According to Plain, crime fiction used to guarantee all three terms. (2008, 14) Plain’s argument shows that the assumed consolation and closure are not wrongly argued for,

but rather, at least in my mind, outdated. Plain supports her claim by explaining how socially relevant contemporary crime fiction is:

As consumers of criminal fictions we are contaminated by association, but this association is ironically healthy. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, contamination has a surprisingly wide remit, its definitions ranging from ‘the action of making impure or polluting’ to ‘the quality of spreading from one to another; easily communicable’. Perhaps the most optimistic, however, is ‘the blending of forms of similar meaning or use in order to produce a form of a new type’. ... to contaminate is to communicate, and crime fiction communicates the deepest fears and anxieties that underpin our society. In articulating these fears, the genre goes at least some way towards confronting them: which perhaps accounts for the increasing social and literary significance of the form. The genre, it seems, is infectious, but like infectious laughter, it could be good for your health. (Plain 2008, 14)

Readers of crime fiction or the viewers of television series are not passive but rather bystanders who are forced to take sides, especially if the trauma is conflicted by humans. (Herman 1997, 7)

(Note the types of trauma described on page 7) I am arguing that the portrayal of trauma takes the objectivity out of viewing a television series episode and translates the moment into a subjective one by augmenting a need to relate and comprehend. And this argues against an aim of consolation crime fiction is said to seek.

In this thesis, I will first examine how the genre of detective fiction has developed in the past decades to what it is today. Without doubt, it is a most celebrated genre and even an addicting one, for the public has consumed crime narratives for decades. Crime fiction, as it could be defined today, rose to a peak in between the Great Wars. I will shortly touch on the history of crime fiction from the Golden Age era to the actions of the police procedural. Television series such as the *CSI* can also be described as a forensic pathologist procedural due to the methods used by the *CSI*. However, the series “use[s] the procedures and devices of the whodunit...in order to identify the criminal and restore social order.” (Scaggs 2005, 132-133)

Scaggs argues the forensic procedural to be a combination of the two, the Golden Age puzzle

and the police procedural. (ibid.) I myself have found contemporary crime fiction to hold in itself connections of all prior subgenres.

In the light of the historical developments of the genre, in my analysis section, I will analyze *CSI NY*, its characters, plots and the surprise ending in order to establish that the series clearly belongs to the genre of crime fiction. By proving this, I will show how, similarly to the genre it belongs to, the *CSI NY* ultimately can be argued to seek consolation and closure. It is whether or not this consolation and closure are actually reached that this thesis seeks to investigate.

In order to argue against the proposed consolation, I will analyze the series through trauma theory. Trauma theory helps me address the experience of crime fiction. In my second section of theory, I will introduce the basics of trauma theory and offer examples of the traumatic aesthetic. The omnipresence of crime in *CSI NY* suggests a traumatized society and so a traumatic experience of guilty pleasure. In this thesis, I will take the narrative techniques of the traumatic aesthetic and show how they are used in film and television series today as well as argue for the against ultimate satisfaction and closure. I believe that film and television series are able to display trauma and its effects differently and definitely more vividly than photographs or written texts. This again supports my motive to investigate a television series instead of a written narrative.

The *CSI* series began with *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000) and unlike my primary material, *CSI NY*, the original series takes place in Las Vegas and the head of crime lab is Gil Grissom. It has been argued that the character of Grissom has evolved from Sherlock Holmes and in the series “computers and technology in CSI allow for the development of Holmes’ 19th century science of the accumulation and cataloguing of data to an exponential degree, with

national computer databases for fingerprints, DNA, tyre- and shoe-treads, chemicals, ballistics, and more.” (Scaggs 2005, 60-61) In contrast to earlier detective fiction, the crimes are more straightforward and realistic: “the crimes that the CSI team investigate, and their allegiance to the police detective of the police procedural in this respect is a significant one.” (Scaggs 2005, 62) The *CSI* series uses “extreme close-ups and microscopic images, furthermore, echoes the attention to small details that is fundamental to mystery and detective fiction.” (ibid.) Philippa Gates argues that the era of information technology defines the CSI in their “reliance on science and technology to solve a crime... an appeal reflected in the proliferation of criminalists in films like *Kiss the Girls* (1997) and *Untraceable* (2008) and in television series like *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000-) and its spin-offs. No longer is the process of detection a game of chance, brute force, or solving a puzzle; it is, we are led to believe, an exact science.” (Gates 2010, 353) Peter Messent agrees with Gates by stating that “close attention has also been paid to forensics, psychological profiling, and sophisticated scientific and technological support systems (see work of writers like Patricia Cornwell and television series such as *CSI*).” (Messent 2010, 175)

The most vivid difference between *CSI*'s Grissom and the traditional character of Holmes is their drive for action. (Scaggs 2005, 42) Unlike Holmes, Grissom is “uncomfortable in a world of action, and this is clearly suggested by his glasses, his distaste for violent physical activity, and his distinctive pigeon-toed gait” (ibid.). Also, Holmes requires brilliant crimes to solve in order to refrain from being bored, as well as a nemesis. Rather than a past time, it is the job of the CSI to solve and restore peace of mind. Grissom and his team are a paid team of professional crime scene investigators, not police officers: “Crime-scene analysts, and although they carry guns and badges, they do not have the power to make arrests” (Scaggs 2005, 42).

The main detectives of other *CSI* series such as *NY* or *Miami* actually make arrests and on the side of having deductive abilities such characters as Mac Taylor or Horatio Cane always take part in the action at hand. This thesis will closely assess the actions of Mac in *CSI NY* and we shall see that Scaggs' analysis of the *CSI* detective is only valid for *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and not for the whole series. However, the goal and purpose of the detectives are similar; to restore order and provide consolation by solving crime.

Seltzer argues the *CSI* series to be included under an umbrella of true crime: "True crime is crime fact that reads like, or looks like, crime fiction. It is one of the popular genres of our pathological public sphere and an integral part of our contemporary 'wound culture.' True crime maps that vague and shifting region between real and fictional reality where mass belief resides" (Seltzer 2008, 11). The mysteries, methods and relationships of the characters of the *CSI* series reflect the real world in order to form a fiction that is as believable and fact-proven as possible. Issues of the contemporary world are addressed and media takes an important role in representing the society and its trauma. (Seltzer 2008, 13) True crime and the effect of the media in today's information age make a wound culture, a traumatized society that dwells on violations and social disturbances through crime. Seltzer argues true crime to provide a way in which the public can be "all be miserable together" (ibid.) and "if we cannot gather in the face of anything other than crime, violence, terror, trauma, and the wound, we can at least commiserate" (ibid.). I see crime fiction and the *CSI* series to provide a platform on which the public can feel traumatized by watching a television series. The series gives an example of a realistic, even though fictive, society in which Seltzer's *wound culture* is presented through the characters, their relationships and dilemmas.

When analyzing the final episode of *The Final Season*, I wish to ask myself whether *CSI NY* truly answers the questions, whether crime fiction can offer consolation. In order to investigate this, I will first introduce both theoretical frameworks separately. Then, I will analyze the *CSI NY, The Final Season* according to both perspectives and finally discuss the generic conventions found in the series and of the inevitability of the traumatic aesthetic in contemporary crime fiction and its lack of ultimate consolation.

2. Theoretical Frames

I will now introduce the theoretical frameworks chosen for this thesis. First, I will introduce the genre of crime fiction in order to establish that the *CSI* series belongs to the genre of crime fiction. Having proven that the series, as well as other contemporary crime fiction series on television, include clear characteristics of the genre. I am able to argue that *CSI NY* ultimately seeks consolation and closure. The narrative, however, also uses techniques of the traumatic narrative. Thus in my second theory section, I will elaborate what can be considered to be the traumatic aesthetic found in contemporary crime fiction.

2.1. Crime Fiction

In this thesis, I emphasize four specific attributes that are most commonly found in the subgenres of crime fiction. The characteristics form a tradition on which mysteries and how they are solved can be based. Firstly, the detective uses interpretation and common knowledge as key elements in his detection and has a superior and an extraordinary mind. He is also the eccentric and superior detective. (Knight 2004, 56) Secondly, a criminal act, or the possibility of one, disrupts social order and the detective aims at and usually succeeds in restoring it. Thirdly, the plots often discuss contemporary issues and thus highlight the society in which they are set in as a whole. Finally, in reference to the public that consumes crime fiction, pleasure and closure are found: a resolution to the mystery at hand brings pleasure to the reader. Scaggs argues that the stabilization of order includes the notion of social order and often a “romantic solution,” a coming together of lovers. (Scaggs 2005, 47) In this thesis, I am arguing that crime fiction and the *CSI* series attempt at closure, order and stability, which also can be argued to have a consoling attribute, in each episode and especially in the season as a whole.

In this theory section, I will introduce the main phases of detective fiction leading up to the police procedural and the *CSI* series and highlight how the whole genre is based on the notions mentioned above. In my analysis section, I will establish that the *CSI* series includes the characteristics mentioned above and it is through these generic attributes that the series attempts to establish consolation and closure.

The Golden Age

The inter war period of detective fiction is often referred to as the Golden Age, a time in which British middle classes consumed mystery novels. The stories are most commonly set amongst the upper and middle classes and the mysteries solved by an amateur detective rather than the police force. (Rubinstein 2010, 2) Also, Golden Age mysteries take the term *whodunit*, since the stories fundamentally place emphasis on the steps taken to solve the crime. (Scaggs 2005, 35)

Other typical features of the subgenre include small rural communities, and the perpetrator of the crime is usually a character with a rational motive for committing the crime such as inheritance, reputation, rivalry, exclusion and/or issues of family history (Rubinstein 2010, 4); these motives are still valid in contemporary crime fiction as will be seen in my analysis of *CSI NY, The Final Season*.

In the Golden Age era, the social positions of the characters are important to the plot and the characters act according to their social status and norms; in contrast, the murderer breaks the norms and thus causes disturbance in the social circle. (Bargainner 1980, 31) The “country-house murders” limit the number of suspects to the closed group of characters who cannot leave the setting. (Scaggs 2005, 50-52) Any member of the small community can end up as a victim or be revealed as the murderer. It is this disturbance that forms a trauma in the society and I will argue

that, in contrast to the traditional belief the genius detective cannot fully heal the traumatized community.

The highlighted rationality and the demand for unconditional justice characterize the society of inter war Britain. (Rubinstein 2010, 5) Golden Age detective fiction points out the disturbance where it is unlikely to exist and the form seeks for “purification and redemption” during a period when rural and urban life was thought to be in crisis. Only through the detection of murder, the “epitome of crime,” can stability and security be restored. (Snell 2010, 46) Snell suggests that the murders could be taken as symbols that to show what is wrong with the village life, but he does not go on to elaborate what this wrong might be.

According to Scaggs, the *whodunits* should be seen as a kind of game in which the reader participates and is able to take part in the puzzle-solving process along with the detective. (2005, 37) The arrangement of the plot in classical detective fiction calls for a chance of revealment and a “process of discovery.” (Bargainner 1980, 7) The *whodunits* often provide a climax or “final set-piece” for the readers, a scene in which the detective reveals the culprit out of all the possible suspects by using ingenious skills of observation. (Rubinstein 2010, 4)

Bargainner argues that the purpose of the puzzle element is to carve a competition between the detective and the murderer in order to lessen the emphasis on the actual crime and victim. (Bargainner 1980, 7) This is supported by another notable characteristic of the subgenre, the absence of violence and the “bloodless corpses” (Scaggs 2005, 43). Violent acts are not emphasized and critical assessment of the fiction concentrates often on the ‘coziness’ of the country-house murders. Bargainner claims that Christie and other authors of the period “sanitized the ghastliness of murder” (1980, 8) by not presenting the violent reality of the murders. The complexity of the plot and action determines the characters and keeps the readers

compelled rather than digs deep into human character and the actual insight of what is good and what is evil. (Bargainner 1980, 190) It is based on the ‘prettying up’ of the murders and the black and whiteness of the moral action in Christie’s fiction that compels me to question the level of reassurance and security her narratives are able to provide.

In addition to the traditional characteristics mentioned above, Golden Age detective fiction conveys a strong sense of the period. The small communities of the mysteries can be seen as microcosms of Britain and thus the village stands for a troubled postwar nation. (Snell 2010, 49-50) Another point raised by Snell is that the literature could be seen as a symptom of post-WWI social change. (Snell 2010, 34-35) Matthew Beaumont describes the relationship of Christie’s work to be “dialectical” to the “complicated economy of elite and popular culture in the early twentieth century” and the closed settings to contribute to the “dramatizing tensions that are central to the experience of modernity,” in other words, the social change taking place after WWI. (Beaumont 2009, 13-14) Contrary to the country-house murders, I believe that the *CSI* series, as well as other modern crime fiction television programs, attempt to provide the viewer with a more realistic and less cozy view, and the murder scenes vary from closed-room mysteries to worldwide searches for criminals. In the next section, I will introduce American hard-boiled detective fiction and its relevance in the development of the police procedural.

The American Hard-boiled

In the same period as the Golden Age *whodunits*, the amateur detective developed into the American hard-boiled private investigator or, in other words, the *private eye*, who detects for a living. Hard-boiled detective story authors began their careers by publishing short stories in the

pulps. (Scaggs 2005, 78) Unlike the pastoral settings of the Golden Age, the private eyes were set in a threatening urban environment. (Scaggs 2005, 77)

The PIs differ from the deductive Golden Age detectives because usually “the private eye has to break or bend the law himself in order to temporarily establish a foundation for ideal America: equality, justice and liberty.” (Scaggs 2005, 76) The typical attributes of the hard-boiled private eye narratives include the dull, dark weather, drinking, smoking, cars, and the detective’s clothes such as the hat and long overcoat as well as the nonchalant use of weapons. These attributes became well-known attributes of the PI detective. (ibid.)

One of the most interesting and relevant points in detective fiction is greatly highlighted by the subgenre of the hard-boiled - how the genre reflects the time it was written. In the United States of America, the Prohibition of 1919-1933 as well as the Great Depression increased organized crime, bootlegging, prostitution, gambling, political and police corruption. (Scaggs 2005, 80-81) All of these tough and modern crimes are found in the dilemmas faced by the hard-boiled PIs. The genre’s reflection of the time that it was written in is relevant to how contemporary themes such as terrorist acts or the economic state of the world in 2013 are discussed in the *CSI NY* series and how by doing so, they address the possible insecurities of the American public.

Finally, the private eyes often expressed great masculinity (Knight 2004, 139) and references to a world dominated by men. Women are often irrelevant to crime solving, *damsels in distress* or highly sexual female characters that may distract the PI, the *femme fatale*. (Knight 2004, 140) Unlike in the hard-boiled subgenre, contemporary crime fiction’s masculinity has been challenged and the racial and gendered minorities have found agency within the subgenre reflecting the melting pot of the world in the 21st century. (Messent 1997, 12) According to

Messent, the rise of multiculturalism paved the way for the multicultural and especially multiracial elements in crime fiction that were to take place in the 1990s.

The Police Procedural

The police procedural, a subgenre that I will explain next, is a form that places more emphasis on procedure and collective agency as well as accepts the melting pot of America. The police procedural was already announced in the 19th century in novels by Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Emile Gaboriau, but reached its peak in the late 20th century. (Scaggs, 2005, 80-81) The subgenre can be more easily defined as “realistic fiction.” (Bertens 2001 and Messent 1997, 12) In the following, I will closely analyze the realistic elements that were brought to the public by the police procedural and argue that the *CSI* series (including *CSI NY*, *The Final Season*) closely follow these techniques in their narrativsa and representation of 21st-century America.

The subgenre replaced the private-eye model with realistic crime fiction (Scaggs, 2005, 47) by examining how a team of professional policemen as well as women works together. It pays close attention to the actual methods and the protocol of the police force and its action. (Scaggs, 2005, 46, 121) Trust in the police force is publicly implied and is a powerful tool in establishing dominant social order. The discipline and teamwork represented by the police force aim to minimize the social disruption brought on by crime. (Scaggs 2005, 129-130) Knight suggests that the procedural reflects of an audience as well as a group of authors who themselves see the police (or at least some of them) to be trustworthy and thus “credible operatives against crime.” (Knight 2004, 161) The departments shown represent the theoretical safeguards of ideal America.

Secondly, the urban setting, similarly to the hard-boiled subgenre, is often used in the police procedural. (Scaggs 2005, 116) Scaggs notes that “the urban setting is frequently employed in contemporary variations on the procedural on television in *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Third Watch*, and the distinctly postmodern *Boomtown*” (Scaggs, 2005, 46).

Many of the central figures of the police procedural are detectives who can be traced back to the “marginal” characteristics of the PI or the “eccentric” detective. The genius or the leading figure of the team is always a solitary character, respected but not necessarily understood. (Scaggs 2005, 119) Contrary to the previous detectives who would rather work alone, teamwork is established through the individual skills of each character and the different abilities of the characters are significant to the subgenre and its attempt at a realistic portrayal. The highlighting of each team member’s individual ability determines the agency of the team in the procedural. (Scaggs 2005, 125-126)

Multiple plot lines and investigations, as well as the fact that not all the crimes can be solved create realistic effect. Cases that have already gone cold exist and always a few are left on the shelf when the trail of evidence runs cold. Priestman argues that “The contribution to the realistic effect that such multiple plot lines create is significant, allowing for a balance of successes and failures in which not all the crimes investigated are actually solved.” (Priestman 1990, 177) The shift from a single absolute genius detective to a team with members we can relate to gives credibility to the realistic effect, it is more believable that not all cases are solved immediately and that a team of experts, not one specific person, solves and rationally explains the cases.

As for victims, criminal action targets ordinary people, and the plots are often based on personal crisis of an ordinary individual. It is exactly this realistic magnification of the individual

(victim or perpetrator) that makes the procedural “the ideal vehicle for interrogating both the social order and the structures that support it.” (Scaggs 2005, 128-129)

The movement away from the PI takes us to the themes of the individual, the institutional, social corruption and the media as factors in crime solving. Present day crime fighting, similarly to the crime fiction of the past, reflects contemporary social issues. For example, the 1990s possessed an air of political correctness, racism, ethnicity and gender issues. A number of studies have concerned the gender politics of detective fiction, especially about ethnic and female detective writing, since mainstream crime fighting can be argued to be predominantly white male. Bertens argues the activeness of female detectives to be an important new characteristic of the police procedural:

With regard to the police procedural this emancipatory dimension consisted first of all in the simple, but very important, fact that women were shown as serious participants in law enforcement and in the bringing to justice of criminal offenders. But the police procedural was also perfectly equipped to show how one of society ‘s most important institutions resisted such integration because of its masculinist nature. Bringing women into police departments almost invariably made the institution show its true, thoroughly masculinist colors and thereby undermined its supposed neutrality. (Bertens 2001)

The rise of multiculturalism in the 1980s and 1990s gave way to ethnic minorities and so non-white protagonists were “not unfamiliar in American detective fiction.” (Bertens 2001) Philippa Gates agrees: “On television, black, Hispanic, and Asian-American detectives are included in some ensemble cast series, such as CSI and CSI: Miami (2002-)” (Gates 2010, 354)

Indeed, present day crime fighting reflects contemporary social issues: as stated in the previous sections, crime fiction always represents the time it is written in, using dominating social issues that became visible in narrative. (Bertens 2001) Contemporary police procedurals

often address incest, single parent families, the housing conditions of the poor, health problems, pornography, snuff movies as well as the sexual exploitation of youth.

Bertens also notes that such issues often invaded the private lives of the 1990s police procedural detectives and the fact that personal time, time outside of detection, was given to the detective was clearly something new in the genre. (Bertens 2001) *CSI NY, The Final Season* also offers insight into the personal lives of the CSI team. The team members' past troubles, father issues and even their love lives belong to the narrative. The series clearly attempts to provide closure to all questions, not only to the crime at hand, but aim at a fulfillment and happiness in the lives of the main characters as well.

I have found two differing perspectives on how consolation and reassurance may be found in contemporary crime fiction. Priestman argues the procedural to offer a wider sense of reassurance to the public than previous detective fiction, since "even [the] anonymity of the street" does not offer shelter (Priestman 1998, 32). Even if the criminals are *needles in a haystack* or mere bystanders on the streets of New York City, they can be found through forensic evidence or even by psychological profiling by the expert team of *CSI* working on the case. The subgenre of the procedural "more accurately reflects the increasingly complex and organized nature of present day society." (Bertens 2001) The team trusts science and its accuracy and firmly believes that if correct steps are taken and protocol followed the perpetrators are brought to face justice.

On the other hand, Ayers argues for the contemporary crime such as the *CSI* series the detection to take place in real cities and concern real issues and challenges, which each city has to offer. (38) Forensic realism or Seltzer's true crime paves way for mapping of the world as a crime scene through forensic observation and realistic methods. (Seltzer 2008, 14) The

contemporary issues, places and relatable realistic characters make the fiction a lens through which one can look at the world and in comparison to previous fiction, such as the cozy Golden Age, it is “harder for the reader to find comfort or entertainment” in realistic crime fiction. (Ayers 2005, 38)

2.2. Trauma Theory

Trauma in narrative fiction is an internationally recognized theme. Texts in the genre are brought together by a similarity of traumatic aesthetic. I have chosen trauma theory as my other theoretical framework since the concept of trauma developed in the aftermath of the World Wars and similarly to detective fiction, trauma theory continues to shape alongside of modernity. Also, the art of cinema is considered to be an emblem of technology and the modern world, and also trauma is also closely linked with modernity, as well as technological breakthroughs.

The aesthetics of trauma are “marked by interruptions, temporal disorder, refusal of easy readerly identification, disarming play with narrative framing, disjunct movements in style, tense, focalization or discourse, and a resistance to closure that is demonstrated in compulsive telling and retelling.” (Luckhurst 2008, 88-89). The temporality and belatedness of trauma are highlighted in modern trauma theory. Of the mentioned aesthetics, I will, in this thesis, highlight fragmentation, backtracking and the use of flashbacks as well as disruption techniques of the narrative and repetition.

Some critics, such as Luckhurst, argue for traumatic experience to lack existence in a specific given moment, but rather to soak through the unconscious as belated symptoms. (2008, 4) Unlike Luckhurst, Herman states there to exist a moment of trauma, in which the victim is “rendered helpless by overwhelming force.” (Herman 1997, 33) No matter which view one takes, this

helplessness happens and it is clear that the limits of trauma are difficult to establish. (Luckhurst 2008, 29)

Luckhurst stresses the temporality of traumatic memory and claims that a traumatic event can only be truly understood as traumatic after the fact. In other words, it is the symptoms and flashbacks (in the mind of the victim) that define the event as traumatic. Similarly, Jean Laplace refers to this temporality as *afterwardness*, which “foregrounds the odd temporality of an event not understood as traumatic until its return.” Since narratives of trauma cannot be told linearly, the time signature will fracture causality. (Luckhurst 2008, 8-9) Trauma is formed in its aftermath, it is only from the feelings an event arouses we can define it traumatic or not. Also taken from this perspective, the feeling of consolation provided by each happy ending washes away the trauma experienced by the viewer during the single episode.

The study of trauma is argued to be paradoxical: “A traumatic event confounds narrative knowledge, the inherently narrative form of the novel must acknowledge this in different kinds of temporal disruption.” (Luckhurst 2008, 88-89) Theorists believe that trauma can only be a paradox or an *aporia* in narrative, for it narrates what cannot be narrated. It is impossible to express everything in the narrative or written form and for example, Holocaust accounts as well as other traumatic scenarios are always seen as disrupted narratives. (Luckhurst 2008, 80-1) Ultimately, the way trauma can be read is as a candle burning from both ends – in which the narrative form is both condemned impossible and possible at the same time.

Firstly, nonrealistic elements such as fragmentation and disturbance may be used to represent trauma. These are unreal, because they are experienced by the viewer, even when they not possible to witness in real life... “so bearing witness to a fact that one really cannot bear witness

to.” (Luckhurst 2008, 178) Fragmentation presented through unclear scenes or for example, plotlines that do not tread forward logically.

The second way the series plays with time is with the use of the traumatic flashback. According to Luckhurst, flashbacks in film culture already surfaced in the 1910s, and marked the “disruption of linear temporality in 1990s cinema” with backwards plots, loops or disarticulated mosaics, all effects that viewers were only able to cohere retrospectively. (Luckhurst 2008, 178) In the traumatic flashback, characters may often find themselves lost in thought, which triggers an easy passage for temporal change. Time slips back and forth between the narrative present and past. Flashbacks are also often shown in image chains to produce an effect of *disturbia*, usually black and white and unclear, focusing on objects, and not showing the full picture or the intended memory.

In addition to belatedness, repetition can be used as a method to convey trauma in narrative. Repetition in narrative can also be used to resign agency, where it might have been lost due to trauma. Gaining agency aids in the regaining control. The idea being that with each recall or repetition, more and more control may be found. Luckhurst argues “the compulsion to repeat, to dream or relive or relate the traumatic event over and over, is an attempt to bind this energy, to assimilate it, and return the psyche to a state of quiescence once more.” (Luckhurst 2008, 83) I have already stated that crime fiction narratives are displays of repetitive patterns. Each episode begins with a disruption of social order and most likely ends with a restoration and a solved mystery. Each time an episode is watched, trauma is let loose only to be controlled again.

I wish to highlight that traumatic events are actually rare and thus uncommon in our daily lives (Resick 2001, 30) – so why on earth do we want to see them daily? Luckhurst notes that “repetition compulsion has become a cultural shorthand for the consequences of traumatic

events: individuals, collectives and nations risk trapping themselves in cycles of uncomprehending repetition unless the traumatic event is translated from repetition to the healthy analytic process of ‘working through’” (Luckhurst 2008, 9). This suggests that nations that consume traumatic fictions or crime fiction such as the *CSI* series are in fact suffering from traumatic stress and the need for repetition (no matter if fictional) is a coping method and a result of trauma. It is clear that at the face of a disaster we all go through different types of restoration activity, and this may and should take its own time to be fully achieved. (Resick 2001, 118) Traumatized nations trying to cope or understand takes us back to Resick’s *wound culture* and the ability to feel better if we first feel miserable together.

Crime fiction and traumatic effect seem to go hand in hand. For example, Rowland argues that “Gill Plain has written persuasively of Agatha Christie’s corpses resonating with the anxieties generated by those millions of mutilated bodies on World War 1 battlefields (Plain 2001, 29-55). The body in Christie’s inter-war stories is a site upon which the social upheavals resulting from war, as well as the trauma itself, could be registered: Christie’s interwar fiction thus both reveals and attempts to heal ruptures of social organization (Plain 2001, 53)” (2010, 125).

Finally, narrative is often seen as a healing method for the paradox caused by trauma, with narrative we are able to bind the trauma between the covers of a book or into a television episode thus controlling it and keeping the trauma from overwhelming and taking over everything. The paradox forms once again since our contemporary fiction is in itself saturated by trauma: “Trauma has become a paradigm because it has been turned into a repertoire of compelling stories about the enigmas of identity, memory, and selfhood that have saturated the Western life” (Luckhurst 2008, 80).

3. The CSI Team Offering Consolation

CSI NY focuses on a team of forensic scientists and detectives who investigate homicides as well as other crimes in New York City. *CSI NY* is a second CSI series to branch off from the original CBS television series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. *CSI NY* ran on CBS for nine seasons from 2004 to 2013. This thesis analyzes the ninth season of the series, *The Final Season*.

As noted, *CSI NY* belongs to the genre of police procedural. The *CSI NY* team consists of the head of the New York Crime Lab, Mac Taylor, as well as team members, who all bring their own specialties and, more importantly, personas to the series. In section 3.1., I will introduce Mac, the superior detective and show him as a figure that brings consolation and closure. Secondly, I will analyze the aspect of teamwork seen in the series, as well as the other main characters, their dilemmas and meanings to the series and story line of proposed consolation. Then, in section 3.2., I will introduce the mysteries in greater detail by analyzing the motives for crimes as well as the victims and perpetrators. The wide range of perpetrator and a smaller margin of motives suggests that all members of society are capable of violating social norms and as this thesis will show, any member is at risk to become the victim of such violation and trauma. In my final analysis section 3.3., I will discuss the reassurance and consolation portrayed by the series, argue for the presence of traumatic aesthetic as well as analyze episode 917. *Today is Life* and the final resolution it has to offer *CSI NY*.

3.1. The New York Crime Lab

The Genius Detective

The leading detective in *CSI New York, The Final Season* is Mac Taylor, the head of the New York Crime Lab. Mac Taylor's eccentricity lies in his heroic aura in being a protector of the

people and the justice system. He cares deeply for the city of New York and its people and takes his job of protecting them seriously, making him well known as well as respected amongst his co-workers and community.

The detectives of classic crime fiction are held to be the emblems of analytical genius. (Scaggs, 2005, 33) Scaggs refers to the characters of early crime fiction detective with such terms as: reclusiveness, eccentricity, and penetrating analytic ability. Similarly to this thesis, he argues that these characteristics are present in all the detectives (of all subgenres) created within a 100 years following the publication of Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. (2005, 34) A similar eccentric is found in contemporary crime fiction television series, *CSI NY* and in the character of Mac Taylor.

The eccentricity of the detective places emphasis on the detective as an individual and his character as well as the unique methods the detectives are proposed to have. (Scaggs, 2005, 34) These terms presented also apply to many another great detectives, such as Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple and Dupin, who are seen as forerunners of contemporary crime fiction and so of the detectives discussed in this thesis, Mac Taylor and his team of *CSI* (ibid.). It is partly due to their eccentricity or their undeniable skill that makes the detective a leading persona in the search for answers and consolation.

The realistic officers of today's crime fiction are not immune to injury. At first, Mac's genius detective status is shattered, but he regains it over the course of the season. Mac's reclaiming of his superior status is mirrored in his budding relationship with Christine and is also recognized amongst his colleagues. Over the course of *CSI NY, The Final Season* Mac evolves from being hospitalized and wounded to the ultimate hero and all solving, consolation providing head-detective.

At the beginning of the season, Mac is still recovering from the shooting that took place in the final episode of Season 8. In order to establish a time-line, I must state that the shooting took place six months ago and in the first episode of *The Final Season*, Mac has just been released from the hospital. He is on multiple painkillers. (901. Reignited) Mac's trauma of injury and his evolving relationship with Christine are two subplots that run throughout the season. In the first half of the season, he struggles with his aphasia, and finally, in *910. The Real McCoy*, he shows signs of improvement. A few episodes later, Mac flies to Los Angeles to surprise Christine, only to find that she is not responding to his text messages or phone calls. He finds her hotel room ransacked. Christine's disappearance leads Mac and the LA CSI team on a search for a robber, kidnapper and murderer - only to find out that Christine is being held as leverage for diamonds in New York City. (1313. In Vino Veritas)

As a detective Mac uses interpretation and common knowledge as key elements in his detection and has superior and extraordinary mind. The superiority of Mac is already seen in the first episode when, unlike Flack, he believes that Leonard Brooks (the pyromaniac ex-arsonist) is telling the truth when he claims that the fire that killed a fireman is not of his doing. (901. Reignited) Also, Mac treats Leonard with dignity, and in the final scenes Leonard thanks Mac: "Thank you for treating me like a human being." (901. Reignited) Another example of an episode in which Mac's skill of perception is also highlighted is *906. Lady in the Lake*: when notifying a boyfriend of his girlfriend's murder, Mac immediately rules him out as a suspect and believes in his "genuine reaction." (906. Lady in the Lake.) These are examples of how Mac gains the status of the superior detective, respected by his society and peers as well as even by some criminals. Mac's opinion has great weight along his team of CSI and his intuitions are almost always correct and thus lead the investigation on in the right track.

Mac's does hold an atmosphere of reclusiveness if compared to the rest of his team. Even though teamwork plays a great factor in crime solving, the eccentric detective sometimes strides to work alone. Many of the central figures of the police procedural are detectives who can be traced back to the "marginal" characteristics of the PI, the "eccentric" detective. The genius is always a solitary character, respected but not necessarily understood. (Scaggs 2005, 119) This clearly happens with the most painful issues for Mac. Even though the police procedural and the *CSI* series are focused on teamwork, Mac Taylor is often highlighted as the superior and lonesome leader of the team.

The first issue is his memory loss due to injury. In *904. Unspoken* when his doctor states that he is "past the state of temporary aphasia," and it takes Mac three episodes to come clean with Christine and then his team about his troubles. Momentarily his superiority shatters, but this makes Mac more relatable when he finally faces his aphasia in *907. Clue: SI*. Mac's pride is a characteristic that is emphasized as a reason due to which Mac does not let others in easily. This is seen, for example, when Christine says to Mac: "I love you for you pride, but is also a problem." (*906. Clue: SI*). At the end of the episode, Mac confesses his love to Christine. One of the side-plots of the episodes is about Mac's personal life and shows how he almost loses Christine due to his reclusive behavior. However, once he has confided in her, she immediately supports and helps him to begin to recover.

The second and most obvious solo act takes place in *915. Seth and Apep*. Mac's role as superior detective is highlighted in his search for Christine. Even though he is a detective in a police procedural, I am arguing that Mac holds characteristics from all the crime fiction written prior to *CSI NY*. So in addition to the genius markers of classic crime fiction, Mac also reminds the viewer of the hard-boiled PIs, especially when he goes on his rescue mission for kidnapped

Christine, a damsel in distress. When the victim of the kidnapping is a special someone, Mac makes it his mission to save her. He agrees to the kidnapper's request of going alone and does not keep his team updated. Mac takes on a similarity to the hard-boiled detectives and chooses to work alone and with a threat of violence. Only two others know of Mac's plans, D.B. Russell and Don Flack, and they aid him by distracting two U.S. Marshalls, while Mac takes the arrested loan shark to the trade for Christine. Mac also vaguely crosses the line by threatening the criminal, "go get Christine together or I will shoot you dead right now." (915. Seth and Apep) In the scene, he convinces the kidnapper to take him to Christine by playing a game of Russian roulette. Mac's threat questions his moral high ground, which up to this point has always been clear. This questioning brings an esthetic of the contaminated and traumatized detective who may bend the rules in order to accomplish justice.

Only in the final scene of the episode, Mac jokes to Jo that it was "hard to play when gun's empty." (915. Seth and Apep) Up to that point, the viewers are held in the belief that Mac could have by chance shot the kidnapper. (915. Seth and Apep) Even though Mac does not completely follow expected rules when he agrees to some of the criminal's terms, he does not actually go through with the trade and the arrested is returned to the precinct without the U.S. Marshalls noticing he was missing.

Mac's eccentricity and superior detective status is highlighted through his belief in the justice system. He is trusted and leaned upon. Mac is that very much needed emblem of the system and justice. His team of CSI report to him, but he is used to being out in the field and is often seen chasing criminals alongside the NYPD officer Flack. In the genre of the police procedural, trust in the police force is publicly implied in the fiction and thus becomes a power tool in establishing dominant social order. An example of this is seen in *909. Blood Out* when at the end

of the episode Mac Taylor scolds Hicks (a NYPD officer that bent the law by looking actions of a gang member through his fingers in order to catch someone higher up in the gang): “You had the responsibility to uphold the letter of the law, not pick and choose the parts that make your job easier.” Justice is not a choice - it is something proven by the protocols of the system. (909. Blood Out) The officers of law cannot choose what is right but rather they must serve justice as the evidence shows and most importantly, according to the truth.

Mac even offers wisdoms to those that broke the law: “...events in our life that shape us but the choices that define us. You made the wrong choice Leonard.” (902. Where’s the Smoke?) Mac reminds us that crimes are the result of the choices made by the offender and not the fault of the victim. (Miller 2011, 170)

Justice, also, extends to all victims of crime. In *909. Blood Out*, the victim is a gang member, and even when the victim’s criminal background surfaces, Mac states that “we still have a murder to solve.” The moral high ground of Mac and his CSI is often expressed in the series. It is their job to serve and reveal the truth. I will discuss these ideal characteristics of the CSI further in 3.3. However, Mac’s role as the superior detective includes an ideal or heroic air to his character.

Over the course of the season, Mac evolves from being a wounded detective to the role of the caretaker and hero he truly is. Firstly, I would like to recap his rescuing of Christine. The dialogue shows that Christine was sure of Mac’s rescue, there is no other solution than for the head of the NY Crime Lab who happens to be her boyfriend to rescue her.

MAC: You are safe now.

CHRISTINE: I knew you’d come for me.

MAC: Always.

CHRISTINE: I love you.

MAC: I love you too.

It can be suggested that Mac rescues Christine with intensity because they are in a relationship, but I do not believe his determination would be any less powerful for anyone else. Mac often gives promises of consolation to strangers. Such as in the final scene of *908. 9,218 miles* Mac says to Mary: “You have my word, I will,” reassuring her that he will find the boy, who pumped her up with heroin. In episode *914. White Gold*, Mac returns to the pizzeria to have a talk with Ray, the murder victim’s uncle and caretaker: “We found something in Paul’s van... [hands Ray a photograph of him and his murdered nephew, Paul]...he turned into a hardworking, devoted, caring young man, a good man. That’s on you Ray. You never let anyone down.” Once more Mac is thanked for his actions, “Thank you detective, thank you.” (914. *White Gold*) A fourth example of Mac providing security and consolation is in the final episode of the season. Mac brings consolation to the victim’s close ones by letting the victim’s girlfriend know about the victim’s plans to propose to her and apologizes for the fact that a police officer accidentally “killed the wrong man, a good man.” (917. *Today is Life*)

Finally, Mac ends the season with a long monologue about how good things may pop-up when least expected:

As police officers in this big, complicated city, we see so much bad. So many souls filled with hatred and violence. And it’s our job to look for them, chase after them and confront them. Over time, they can become all we see. As with all evil, some good will always come from it. It can bring us together with some of the most dedicated, honorable, kind-hearted people we could ever hope to meet. It can fill hearts with a love so strong that it will endure forever...[pause]...and create unbreakable friendships that will last even in the face of life’s most difficult challenges. [the team laughing together, toasting, the couples and friends showing affection] Sometimes the good comes when we most need it and least expect it. If we are lucky enough to notice it, set our eyes upon it and appreciate it, it can almost make us forget all of the bad. (917. *Today is Life*)

As a character and as a part of his eccentric nature, Mac is a lonely rider until he meets Christine: “I never thought I’d feel like this again.” Even though Mac has in Jo’s words suffered from a “life changing trauma [his injury at the beginning of the season]” (902. Where’s the Smoke?) he still manages to find good in it and his relationship with Christine is based on his trust in her goodness and the fact that she stayed by his hospital bed for six months and helped him through every phase. Mac repeats the words of the girlfriend of Timothy Brown, the victim of *917. Today is Life*: “Today is life. The only life you are sure of. Make the most of today.” Timothy Brown’s girlfriend lost the love of her life but gave Mac the initiative to propose to Christine. Mac shows us a new side of the eccentric detective, a side that consoles himself and finds peace in his own mind.

The CSI Team

The *CSI NY* series and other examples of the subgenre of the police procedural analyze “how a team of professional policemen and women work together.” (Scaggs 2005, 48) Thus, contrary to previous detectives in crime fiction, who would rather work alone, teamwork is important in the *CSI* series. Teamwork can also be seen as a method through which consolation and closure are found. The expert team of CSI works together to solve the crimes, which disrupt the society. Even if Mac sometimes strays away from the team (as mentioned in the previous section), the team is still present in all the crimes at hand and essential in bringing the criminals to justice.

The crime scene investigators are all paid professionals and often take pride in being detectives, and the teams are formed realizing the individual skills of each character. The highlighting of the individual abilities of each team member determine the agency of the team in the procedural. (Scaggs 2005, 125-126) Since each team member is his or her own agent and

seen as equally relevant in the success of the crime lab, I will introduce the team of the New York Crime Lab briefly:

Jo Danville describes herself as “incredibly perceptive.” (905. Misconceptions) As a character Jo is very close to Mac, they joke around and clearly care for each other. Even though Jo is the assistant supervisor for the team, Mac treats her often like an equal. Jo praises her own skills of observation again in 913. Nine Thirteen, this time as “highly suspicious and acutely observant.” She is a detective, a Federal Marshall as well as a former FBI-agent. Alongside of working often with DNA evidence, she excels in psychological probing of her teammates as well as suspects. The fragments of Leonard’s interviews that are presented throughout the episode are actually watched by Jo Danville, as she forms a psychological profile of the arsonist. Her profile is crucial in his arrest. (902. Where’s the Smoke?)

Adam Ross is a laboratory technician and he is also shown to work with modern technology such as tracing and analyzing cellphones or computer files. He appears insecure and nervous, and he is often surprised by Mac and Jo as they walk up behind him when he is at his desk. As we realize in episode 910. *The Real McCoy*, Adam is a victim of child abuse and this is often used to explain his characteristic nervousness around figures of authority.

Lindsay Messer is an extremely observant detective who usually works in trace at the crime lab. While growing up, Lindsay witnessed a shooting at a café in her hometown. She is troubled by this event throughout the series of *CSI NY*, and this is finally brought to closure in 908. *Late Admissions* when she flies out to Montana to watch the shooter’s execution.

Danny Messer, Lindsay’s husband, is a police academy graduate. He has a passionate nature and often follows intuition as opposed to black and white evidence. He and Lindsay have a daughter named Lucy. Like all of Mac’s team, Danny works well in the field as well as the lab.

Sid Hammerback is the lab's chief medical examiner. He is kind-hearted and talkative, and is shown to hold a deep friendship with Jo in *The Final Season*.

Sheldon Hawkes is a former medical examiner as well as surgeon turned detective. He is a positive-minded person and has a talent for seeing the silver lining. In *916. Blood Actually*, Sheldon scolds Danny for being superficial and judgmental. He proves his point by showing Danny a picture of himself from when he was very overweight in order to remind Danny that once we overcome what others may think of us, we can love whoever we wish and that true beauty is on the inside. He is multi-talented and is often seen working on ballistics, crime scene recreation, blood splatter analysis and he is also very athletic.

Donald Flack Jr. is the official NYPD contact for the team. Unlike the other main characters, Flack is not a certified CSI but a homicide detective. He is witty and charismatic and he often accompanies Mac on missions to arrest suspects. In his analysis of *CSI*, Scaggs states that the team members are "crime-scene analysts, and although they carry guns and badges, they do not have the power to make arrests," (ibid.) and that the CSI are often seen as "reasoning and observing machines." (Scaggs 2005, 42) Scaggs' views are correct and so each crime lab needs its police escort, and in the case of *CSI NY* it is Don Flack. The team is associated with their NYPD contact, and Flack is like any other member of the team.

Jamie Lovato is a new character that is transferred to homicide from narcotics in episode *902. Where's the Smoke?* One of the side plots of *The Final Season* is about the budding relationship between Flack and Lovato. She fits in with the team of CSI and is often seen out in the field.

The dynamics of the team and their usual NYPD officers Flack and Lovato are interesting to follow and give a depth to the series, making it whole and realistic. All of the individuals who are mentioned above work together in order to solve crimes. Each one has a special set of

knowledge and skills that they use in and outside the lab. Even though at times someone flourishes in their expertise, none of the crimes are solved alone. Closure and justice are always results of teamwork. Jo Danville brings up the need for teamwork and often acts as the link between Mac and the rest of the team: “No one does anything alone.” (906. *Lady in the Lake*.) This need of working together reaches out to the team’s private lives. Mac, the superior detective, sometimes needs some reminding, and in *906. Lady in the Lake*, the doctor needs to remind Mac that he “cannot go through this alone.” The discipline and teamwork represented by the CSI and their cooperation with the police aim to minimize the social disruption brought on by crime. (Scaggs 2005, 129-130) Knight suggests that the procedural reflects an audience as well as group of authors who themselves see the police (or most of them) to be trustworthy and thus “credible operatives against crime” (Knight 2004, 161).

Finally, the ultimate type of teamwork is the type that reaches across the nation. The *CSI* series understands that crimes cannot be contained only to New York City but that detection must be taken to a larger scale and justice served to the society as a whole. All the CSIs across the USA work together, and multiple state borders and sometimes even international borders are crossed. In *The Final Season*, examples of this can be found in *903. 2,918 miles* when Mac and Jo are taken to San Francisco in order to find Mary Portico, the missing 15-year-old. Also, the crimes of episode *915. Seth and Apep* (Christine’s kidnapping) actually begin with a crossover episode *1313. In vino veritas*, when Mac travels to Las Vegas to surprise Christine, but ends up working with the head of the Las Vegas crime lab, D.B. Russell. D.B. travels with Mac to New York City in order to find Christine and bring closure to the mystery that began in Vegas. Detection is taken to a larger scale and justice is served to the society as a whole.

The Methods

The tradition of the genre places emphasis on the detection needed to solve the crimes. Similar to the cases of Sherlock Holmes, the emphasis is on detection: the actual criminal acts were not perceived as the main interest but rather the acts of detection and possible prevention, as well as the idea of closure. (Luckhurst, 52) In analyzing *CSI NY, The Final Season* I proved my hypothesis that the methods used in crime solving have evolved and, obviously, the settings have grown exponentially, but the fundamental interest in detection and the details about how a crime is solved remain the same even a century after Holmes. Also Ayers, argues for the contemporary crime story to include more than previous fiction. It is understood that “detection is an element but not the entire point.” (Ayers 2005, 36) As mentioned before, character development, relationships as well as the landscape of the plots have grown in importance.

In the series, modern medicine and biology bring on a more advanced technology factor to forensics and the CSI often summarize their views on deduction by slogans. Examples of this are: Mac in 905. Misconceptions: “Follow the evidence” (905. Misconceptions) and Jo saying that “the science doesn’t lie.” (909. Blood Out) Also, when a case develops a complicated turn, as for example when Mac deliberately misleads the team and sets off to rescue Christine by himself, Jo reminds the team that “our job is to follow the science, just like any other case.” (915. Seth and Apep) The evidence is what makes a difference since it leads the CSI to the unbiased truth of what has happened. According to the ideology of the series, the truth will bring closure and consolation to the victims since the truth is what catches the criminal.

The characters of the procedural often embody post-industrial and information-age responses to crime: reassurance is offered through the use and show of developments in science, medicine and technology. (Scaggs 2005, 132) The advancements of time concerning especially medicine

and biology introduced the technology factor to forensic science. The subgenre of the procedural “more accurately reflects the increasingly complex and organized nature of present day society.” (Bertens 2001) The team trusts science and its accuracy and firmly believes that if correct steps were taken and protocol followed the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

Also, Scaggs states that the different *CSI* series are all “a televisual development of the forensic science procedural” (Scaggs 2005, 133) and that the “success depends on both science and the procedures of police investigation” (ibid.). A few examples of methods used in *The Final Season* are fingerprints, age progression software (902. Where’s the Smoke?), handwriting analysis and dust-void measurements (911. Command +P). On top of these the CSI spend a lot of time doing laboratory work as well as ballistics analysis.

Also, even the basic things, such as crime scene photos take on a new meaning when the CSI examine the crowd surrounding the crime scene with the use of facial recognition software. Past criminal records, addresses and other personal information are easily accessed due to a wide modern database as well as the cooperation of databases from different branches of the justice system. (901. Reignited)

Microscopic close-ups of evidence are shown to the viewer and even the tiniest hairs are found and analyzed. (904. Unspoken) In addition to trace, Adam hacks phones, GPS locators, contacts, text messages, pictures (911. Command + P), and the CSI often rely on people’s social network and media for clues. However, the importance of following strict procedures in investigating crime is always stressed, and all evidence must be found, analyzed correctly and followed without shortcuts.

Professional terminology or anagrams such as AWOL, ESU, SFPD, or IBIS are continuously used in the episodes giving the CSI an air of expertise that viewers themselves lack. The series,

however, makes all of the databases and technology available to the viewers. Even the CSI acronym itself indicates that a team of specialized experts is at work. (Seltzer 2008, 24)

Sometimes the methods seem extreme, or at least Mac Taylor's resources seem endless. In *906. Lady in the Lake*, Mac orders a whole lake to be drained in order to search for a weapon. After having drained the lake, the CSI find two weapons and a body of a woman who had apparently been a few days under water. In real life resources are scarce, hinting that the superiority of the crime lab is obviously fiction. (*906. Lady in the Lake*)

The solutions to the mysteries are the results of deduction and the investigative minds of the detectives and, most importantly, are always proven with science. Drag marks suggest movement from the primary crime scene and the crime is almost solved by a formula for a witness' height by measuring the depth of raindrops from a pattern left on a grass from an umbrella. Note be taken that the crime happened a few days ago and I am left wonder how factual this method actually is. (*906. Lady in the Lake*) Seltzer argues that symbolic reconstruction to take place on the autopsy table "in the piece-by-piece reassembly of bodies and acts and the reattachment of both to actors- acts and persons are put back together" (2008, 25). Seltzer stresses that the *CSI* series and other "true-crime stories, like the classic murder novel, begin at the end and proceed to reconstruct both motive and act" (ibid.) and most importantly "rejoins bodies and intentions, torn bodies and interior states, that have come apart" (ibid.).

In addition to deduction and evidence gathering, suspects must come clean about their crime and more than often when the suspects are shown the evidence against them, they cave and tell the truth. Interrogation methods are also used by the CSI for example, in *906. Lady in the Lake*, in which Jo guilts Matthew to turn on his own mother. Matthew confesses in witnessing the murder and once again justice is served. Jo's ability and success in interrogation is another

characteristic of the police procedural. The interrogators of the genre can be black, white, ethnic or female, as can the criminals: “teamwork of police procedure that opens the procedure to racial and ethnic interrogation” (Scaggs 2005, 136). The CSI along with Flack and Lovato are able to use the suspects’ weaknesses against them by choosing the most suitable interrogator for the given crime.

As a viewer, it is consoling to think that the truth can be found due to the evidence that is always left behind no matter how careful the crime. Also, that Mac and his superior team will find it and use the rock-hard evidence to make the suspect confess. The efforts of the team are crucial and “at every turn it is the importance of the collective cooperation of the CSI team that is underlined” (Scaggs 2005, 133). The crimes usually finalize themselves in a confession, the offender is handcuffed and passed of to jail with the words such as “book him.” This “instant morality” or bringing the offender to justice is an attribute practiced in the fiction. (Scaggs 2005, 64) Crime fiction shows no fuss about a trial or how the system works and needs to actually convict the criminal. Contemporary issues, places and relatable realistic characters make the fiction a lens through which one can look at the world and in comparison to previous fiction, like the cozy Golden Age, it is “harder for the reader to find comfort or entertainment” in realistic crime fiction. (Ayers 2005, 38)

3.2. Why, What and to Whom? – The CSI Narrative

Crime fictions often discuss contemporary issues and shed light on the society in which they are set in as a whole. The CSI have top of the line technology at their disposal and use it alongside of traditional ways of deduction and investigation to solve the crimes. In order to understand the world the *CSI NY* series is set in, I believe one must understand the types of criminal activity that

takes place, to whom and, most importantly, why. The series uses repetitive motives, methods and perpetrators with similar backgrounds to represent the criminal acts in its world. Once having analyzed these, I will be able to determine how closure and consolation are present in the finales of the episodes. In collecting these facts from the seventeen episodes of *The Final Season* and the crossover episode to *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (1313. In vino veritas), I wish to analyze the situations presented in each episode of *CSI NY*, *The Final Season* and reflect it through the metropolitan of New York City to the modern world.

The Motives

The *CSI NY* series, like all crime fiction, is based on traditional motives. The crimes that are presented can be classified as more violent (if compared to earlier crime fiction), and often reach whole ring of criminal action and intent, the motives of revenge, jealousy, and money are still at the top of the list. In the following I will show the motives of each criminal act present in *The Final Season*:

- 901. Crazy/Love: However, the murderer had no reason to kill the fireman in question. She just wanted to prove herself to Leonard.
- 902. Revenge: Leonard blames his foster mother for ruining his life and his foster siblings for not stopping her. Revenge is vivid in Leonard's words: "Payback time."
- 903. Money.
- 904. Revenge: The perpetrator attempts to murder a woman who caused him lose his job, but as collateral damage a little girl killed by the gun he dumps. The girl's death is an accident.
- 905. The murderer murders another person to cover up his previous murder. A child molester "accidentally" killed Tommy twenty years ago and would have gotten away with it, but the sole witness comes forward and confronts him.
- 906. Social status or jealousy: A mother tries to bribe her son's girlfriend to leave her son alone. The girlfriend refuses the money so the mother murders the girl. Jealous mother?
- 907. Jealousy. An unstable patient is in love with his psychiatrist and when the psychiatrist does not feel the same way the patient goes on a killing spree. He claims to have wanted to "hurt her like she hurt me by taking away the thing I loved the most." [their time together] The most horrid fact in the episode is how he turns his killings into a game of Clue. (907 Clu: SI)

908. Teacher kills student to cover up his own knowledge of the school's drug scene.
909. Revenge.
910. Revenge. Money.
911. Revenge/Opportunity: The offender wishes to kill his divorce lawyer who had also slept with his ex-wife and he does not mind killing the gun inventor in process: "Opportunity presented itself."
912. Mugging. Money.
913. Revenge. The offender had been put away for two years for a crime (stealing) she had not committed and kills her ex-boyfriend (who had framed her) two weeks after getting out.
914. Money.
915. Money. Christine's restaurant manager kidnaps her and gives her as leverage to loan sharks.
916. Three crimes with different motives: self-defense, jealousy and money.
917. Robbery. Money. Timothy Brown killed accidentally as collateral damage.

The motives of the offenders show a wide range of traumatized personas as well as twisted reasons for committing more trauma. In *906. Lady in the Lake* a mother has tried to bribe her son's girlfriend to leave her son since their socio-economical statuses differ greatly. When the girlfriend refuses the money, the mother improvises and murders her. How can a mother murder a woman on the basis that she is too poor for her son? Ultimately the son does not only lose his girlfriend, but his mother becomes a murderer.

In *908. Late Admissions*, a greedy high school teacher kills his own student to cover up the fact that he is aware and a part of the drug distribution scene at the school. Teachers are supposed to protect their students, not allow drug use, and especially not murder. Also, the high school student is killed in the library while studying, a place that is by traditional values believed to be safe.

Episode *904. Unspoken* has an ex-teacher who desperately seeks revenge for having been wrongfully fired. However, his vendetta ruins many more lives than he himself ever expected or intended. Similarly, in *913. Nine Thirteen*, a young woman seeks revenge on her ex-boyfriend after spending two years wrongfully accused in jail. She is caught by the CSI and taken back to

jail. The criminals seem to lack faith in the justice system – she chose to murder when she could have testified against her ex-boyfriend who had set her up.

Why are the offenders set obsessively on revenge? Instead of moving on in life they choose to ruin the rest of their life by revenging something that someone did to them. In the series, no matter what the reason, justice is always served to the offenders of the given episodes and it is shown that taking the law into your own hands is not correct and thus punishable. In a way, the crimes that are the most easily understood are the ones that hold the traditional motive of money. Crimes of passion such as the ones with jealousy and revenge only accumulate an idea of, for a lack of a better word, unjustified murders. Especially when innocent people who just were the wrong place at the wrong time end up as victims. There is no consolation in the solution, the crimes cannot be undone and the motives are so universal that they can contaminate the mind of anyone who can be described as desperate enough.

The Victims

As for the victims in *CSI NY*, criminal action targets ordinary people, and the plots are often based on personal crisis of an ordinary individual. All of the victims are seen to deserve justice and they treated with great dignity by the CSI as they investigate. It is exactly this realistic magnification of the individual (victim or perpetrator) that makes the procedural “the ideal vehicle for interrogating both the social order and the structures that support it” (Scaggs 2005, 128-129). In the following I have listed all the victims of *The Final Season*:

- 901. Firefighter, 1st responder is killed by tripwire set in a flaming building. Also, another 1st responder is almost killed, but Leonard saves him.
- 902. Leonard’s foster mother, foster brother and the attempted murder of his foster sister.

903. Mary, a shy 15-year old girl, is at first thought to have gone missing. She actually stages her own death in order to get back at her parents. A boy delivering the fake ransom demand is randomly mugged and when he fights back, he is shot. Mary is seen as the victim since her initially voluntary “running away” turns into her involuntary holding at a drug house.
904. After an attempted shooting at an ex-principal, the offender dumps his gun and a little boy accidentally shoots his friend.
905. The former suspect in a missing child case is found dead on the anniversary of his disappearance near where the boy had gone missing twenty years ago.
906. Girlfriend of a rich boy is murdered after having attended a party.
907. The psychiatrist’s other patients, young ballet dancer (bulimic, self-mutilation), a woman with bipolar disorder, 3rd patient, and the psychiatrist’s fiancée’s attempted murder.
908. A student is killed while studying. The victim is a judge’s son, whose friend had just died of an overdose. He was a good kid who was about to uncover a drug trafficking operation in this school.
909. A gang member is tortured and dismembered with a chain saw.
910. Bar co-owner is partially robbed and killed accidentally in the process. The victim had no idea about the stolen money or the counterfeit vodka that is discovered in the investigation. The other co-owner of the bar had stolen the money and his girlfriend ordered the vodka. The “wrong person” is found dead and his friends states, “I didn’t think that after all this time someone would come looking for it.”
911. Young engineer and the second victim is a lawyer that slept with his clients.
912. Off-duty police officer gets shot and is left to die on the street.
913. The victim turns out to be a pick-pocket who had let his innocent girlfriend go to jail for him.
914. The victim is a young boy selling cheese. Stupid criminal thinks the cheese is cocaine.
915. Christine.
916. Three victims on Valentine’s Day, and all are unrelated. 1st vic lonely, 2nd vic planning a surprise dream get-away for his beautiful wife, and the 3rd vic greedy and going through an ugly divorce.
917. Timothy Brown, a college student about to propose to his girlfriend. The offender, who robbed the store in the first place, is also killed by Jo at the end.

Mary, the victim of 903, is special since, alongside of Christine, she is one of the few victims that are found and returned to their loved ones. Jo is another strong character and when she and Mac find Mary, the missing teenager, 2,918 miles away in Los Angeles pumped with heroin at some random druggie house, she has a brief, but consoling conversation with Mary:

MARY: I think I’m lost.

JO: No, sweetie, you have been found. (903. 2,918 miles)

In the scene Mac, also, states how nice it is to “deliver good news from time to time,” being relieved that they found Mary alive (903. 2,918 miles). Mary had made her own mistakes by running away from home and now the detectives have found her and fixed the situation. However, how fixed and well will Mary be? She is a “shy 15-year old” recovering from a heroin addiction. The offenders are often blamed for their choices, but which is Mary, victim or offender if she had been the one who wanted to frame her own death, Oliver had only “given her something for the pain.” (903. 2,918 miles) At the end of the episode Mac provides Mary and the viewer with an air of reassurance and justice, when he says to Mary: “You have my word, I will,” reassuring her that, he will find the boy, Oliver, who pumped her up with heroin.

In the police procedural and examples of realistic crime fiction or true crime the victims are not restricted to a small specific group of people. As we can see with *The Final Season*, “crime happens to ordinary people and the plots are often based on personal crisis of the public.” (Scaggs 2005, 128) The CSI series victimizes anyone and at the same time everyone. This victimization shows a society that is undeniably vulnerable. It can be argued that a notion of full consolation in a simple resolution to one crime is without doubt superficial, especially if traumatizing threats are possible to happen at any given moment

The Perpetrators

The criminals in the series are often regarded as people *gone bad*, for example when Danny asks: “How is it possible that a man that murdered an eight-year old become a perfect citizen?” (905. Misconceptions) In real life as well as in *CSI NY*, offenders seen as inhuman aggressors and since they have have committed the unspeakable. (Miller 2011, 160) The man in Danny’s question is Milner, who had been a user of Angel Dust twenty years ago and who was the sole

suspect in the missing person case of Tommy. As Mac and Flack walk down the neighborhood that Tommy disappeared from, the buildings, stores and the people, flashback viewer to the day of Tommy's disappearance. Even though Tommy's body had never been found, he had been declared legally dead seven years after his disappearance and the parents had buried an empty coffin. (905. Misconceptions) However, no evidence had ever been found against Milner but, nevertheless, the community had been his judge. Even his own parents had died believing him to be a murderer. In fact, the killer had been the nice, but odd baker who had a liking towards little boys. Only Milner knew who had done it, and he had returned to the neighborhood to set things clean, hoping that people would believe him this time around. In his attempt to do the right thing, Milner assaulted by Tommy Lewis' father and then is killed by the same baker who killed Tommy. Once the CSI uncover this, as well as Tommy's body, closure is given to Tommy's parents after twenty years. But it is a sad revelation, since we are all forced to realize that Milner had lived his life wrongly accused of something, and now his son would live without a father.

As in the case of Milner, the CSI dig deep and find factual evidence that uncover the truth. The working backwards aids the CSI and the viewer in uncovering the details and seeing the whole process as well as the background to the crime. The team also relies on the evidence found to understand the offender's individual background and mindset. The cases, motives and offenders differ in each episode. There are times when we may sympathize more and sometimes the offenders can be just seen as greedy, stupid or crazy.

901. Eva Mason. Her craziness is summarized in her statement: "Fire is all I think about." Arson or pyromania is seen as a sickness, a psychological disease, but still as a punishable act.

902. Former inmate, crazy. Leonard refers to his addiction as "psychological poison" and he is unable to control the impulses. Leonard was abused as a child, and is describe to find comfort in fire because he stared at fire while his foster mother hit him.

903. Mary's crush pumps her up with heroin and so turns her running away into a kidnapping. A mugger shoots a boy because he has no wallet to give.

904. Ex-school teacher, who was wrongfully fired by his principle.

- 909. Other gang member.
- 910. Former inmate.
- 911. Former inmate: He described his murders to be those of opportunity: “Then, opportunity represented itself.” A young engineer, Justin, mistakes the criminal for a possible sponsor, and shows his invention (a printable gun) to the wrong man.
- 912. Robber. Probably gang-related since the man caught does not want to reveal who killed the off-duty police officer. The man in custody is tricked into a confession and the CSI find the murderer.
- 913. Ex-Girlfriend who is also a former inmate even if previously wrongly accused.
- 914. A stupid, greedy man and an illegal immigrant.
- 915. Christine’s restaurant manager kidnaps her, but the real threat is from the loan sharks the manager owes money to.
- 916. 1st kill: Self-defense, 2nd kill: jealous wife thinking that the husband was cheating on her, “If I can’t have him, no one can,” 3rd kill: selfless actions of a former police officer to save the wife who the man was about to shoot
- 917. Police officer in pursuit shoots the victim. But Timothy dead because “two men decided to rob a jewelry store.”

The perpetrators of the crimes can be anyone, but often the murderer ends up being someone already marginalized by the justice system. Four perpetrators are clearly stated as former inmates, and at least seven others have had previous problems with the law. Apparently breaking the law has stages and someone can be said to graduate to murder. Those with criminal records are also easily incriminated again and so the criminal system kind of feeds itself. No fresh starts are actually given to the criminals. According to CSI moral values, the suspects caught have chosen the path of a criminal, and now they must face the consequences.

Some exceptions to this are good people who have suffered great personal trauma, which can turn “kind, decent, honest” people into murder suspects. An example of this is in the case of Milner when Tommy Lewis’ father is suspected of murder, even by his own wife. And he indeed had engaged in a fight with Milton only an hour before the murder took place. (905. Misconceptions) Tommy Lewis’ father does not cross the line to murder, but the formerly good teacher of 904. *Unspoken* attempts to, multiple times. Both men are examples of people who feel desperate enough to break the law due to a personal trauma done to them. Even if we sympathize

with some of the perpetrators more than others, the justice system does not show any mercy. Also the members of CSI such Adam, Lindsay, and Mac are used to cast a mirror image contrasting the traumatized criminals by being examples of those who have survived personal trauma. The CSI team members have chosen to aid others in the middle of trauma instead of committing more trauma as acts of revenge. The CSI are examples of what individuals can and should be, even if troubled over the course of their own lives.

In the series, perpetrators are often viewed as the bad and the CSI as the good. However, if objectively viewed, the series is not that black and white as the genre intends for us to understand. Leonard, the pyromaniac-arsonist, was only caught the first time because he ran into one of the buildings he had set on fire to rescue a woman. Prior to *902. Where is the Smoke?* he had not intended to kill nor had he killed anyone. Ironically, he got caught trying to do “what no one would do for me [Leonard].” As a perpetrator he gets some sympathy from having a rough past: his father was killed right after his birthday [his last happy memory as a child] and he had an abusive foster mother, but as the season goes to show, the team of CSI also have abusive and traumatic backgrounds, but it is indeed the choices that made that determined the course of their lives.

As characters, the CSI have a black and white view of the world. In *912. Civilized Lies* Mac and his team trick a man into snitching on criminals who shot an off-duty police officer. The man was too afraid to let them in and would have rather taken the fall for murdering a cop than snitching: “If I snitch, I’m dead... my family is dead, my little girl is dead.” Regardless of his fear, Mac tricks him and catches the killer and states “moments like these, I love this job.” (*912. Civilized Lies*) The scene shows a biased side of Mac, superficially he is shown to demand pure justice, but if a fellow cop is killed he believes it to be alright to trick someone and by doing

so Mac deliberately puts family of the man in custody in possible danger. Mac gives embodies an air of pride in their success and dismisses the threat to the robber's family. This is the only example in *The Final Season*, when Mac's care does not extend to all.

Gang activity is definitely an issue of the community, and *CSI NY* refers to gang activity a number of times. In *909. Blood Out*, Lovato personally knows the murdered gang member from her time undercover. Lovato argues that it is not necessarily by choice but by need that the gangs form in certain areas and that "not all offenders are the same." (909. Blood Out) According to her, the gangs "make young kids feel safe." It is the lack of possibilities the society that may push young people into criminal activity and not necessarily the choices Mac preaches about.

From gang activity the series also takes a step up the social ladder to a well-off neighborhood's high school to show that criminal activity and murder can and do happen at any levels of society. In *908. Late Admissions*, high school students are shown to be sniffing performance-enhancing drugs before SAT tests. (908. Late Admissions) Apparently, the whole school is using dextroamphetamine to study harder. The amphetamine use makes "you focus and study longer to get into the best schools." Criminal activity such as this type of drug use does not hold an intention of hurting anyone, but it is still illegal. The society has formed expectations that push under aged teens to better themselves with drugs, a situation that escalates in murder. (908. Late Admissions)

In the police procedural and true crime fiction, criminals hurt ordinary people and thus the one who hurts can be reduced to monstrous threat: "The device of reducing the killer to something purely evil or animalistic restores an ideal status quo, and is a corresponding validation of the social order that is specifically not responsible for social aberration." (Scaggs

2005, 100) It is often seen as if there is something wrong with the criminal and the police aim to eliminate all the rotten apples of society. This device is very common in the procedural and it emphasizes the dominant ideology of the genre.

3.3. Consolation for a Traumatized Culture

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze whether contemporary crime fiction or more specifically *CSI NY, The Final Season* offers consolation to its viewers. Consolation as a result of crime fiction is argued by a number of critics (See 1. Introduction). Furthermore, the tradition of proposed consolation seems to have begun as an effect of the Golden Age subgenre: “the Golden Age detective fiction may have typically been characterized as providing an escape from the grim realities of everyday.” (Stewart 2011, 17) In this analysis section, I will contemplate on the consolation crime fiction and the *CSI NY* series argues to offer, examine the traumatic aesthetics found in the series, touch on the realistic effect of the series and finally analyze the consolation and closure the final episode, *917. Today is Life*, seems to offer to the viewers of *CSI NY*.

For and Against Consolation

I have found critics such as Plain (2008), Stewart (2011), Luckhurst (2008), Seltzer (2008), and Ayers (2005) who like myself argue against full consolation. Ironically, the biggest argument against it is the same that argues for consolation to be offered: the exponential growth of the settings, methods and a vast variety of victims and criminals. One hand argues the fiction to be consoling even though criminal acts may happen anywhere and to anyone and they are still solved by the team of CSI. The other hand argues for a traumatized society which cannot be healed or consoled, too much trauma is already underneath the resolution and therefore, bringing

the criminal to justice does not make all well. The notion of a traumatized society is also present in Seltzer's contemporary "wound culture" (Seltzer 2008, 11), a way of traumatized thinking he argues to be continuously present in society and in crime fiction series.

Gill Plain argues against consolation and absolute resolution by suggesting crime fiction to be contaminated by the social culture it embodies: "Crime fiction is not just about violation, it also embodies it, boasting a proud history as a 'cultural contaminant'." (2008, 3) As stated before, crime fiction reflects the world it is written in by introducing contemporary issues, but another way of seeing this reflection has a more negative air. Plain suggests that the social values and norms represented by the detectives (as well as the CSI) contaminate the fiction by the traces of the social world they inhabit." (Plain 2008, 5) Plain hints of a fiction contaminated by the social norms it follows, as well as of a fictional society contaminated by the violations that repeatedly take place.

According to Seltzer, the *CSI* series reflects a contemporary wound culture, which brings the viewers of the series together in commiseration. (2008, 13) True crime shows take on a more serious debate, the one of the victims and their overcoming of the trauma inflicted. Unlike previous crime fiction, contemporary mysteries show that actions of the criminal reach much wider than what the perpetrator often realizes. For example, *904. Unspoken* shows a desperate perpetrator who seems to be fighting internally with moral dilemmas. He is a former schoolteacher who seeks revenge at an ex-principal who had initiated his discharge on wrongful presumptions. He attempts to shoot his target at a political rally, hits Lindsay and dumps his gun in a trash bin. Sadly, two children see him throwing something away and the scene ends as small boy accidentally shoots his best friend. In order to cover his tracks, he attempts to kill Lindsay while she is still hospitalized. On the verge of attacking Lindsay he writes: "I'm sorry" on the

window. It is his conscience that results in his arrest due to the fact that Danny is able to lift a fingerprint from the “I’m Sorry.” Luckily, he refuses to hurt Lindsay once he realizes she is a mother and during his interrogation he says: “I would never do anything to hurt a child.” However, the former teacher’s negligence had led to the death of a young girl and on hearing this he caves.

As in the example of the discharged schoolteacher, a hurtful action against someone reaches far beyond the initial victims. The discharge was not a violation of the law even though, in the series, it is shown to have been reasoned with erroneous assumptions. A wrongful action against one may form a *snowball effect* of desperation and harm. It can be argued that crime is often an offense “committed against people, rather than solely a violation of a law” (Miller 2011, 187). Actions of the criminal often range much wider than what is initially attempted. Television crime series rarely focus on the victim or the victimization aftermath, but *The Final Season* of *CSI NY* addresses and seeks to portray how far the crimes can actually reach.

In opposition to Plain and Seltzer, Priestman argues for consolation to be found in contemporary crime fiction. In the theory section, I noted that the police procedural should offer a wider sense of reassurance since “even anonymity of the street offers no shelter.” (Priestman 1998, 32) Even though the criminals are needles in a haystack, mere individual passing by on the streets of NYC, they can be found with the use of deductive reasoning and forensic evidence. In *917. Today is Life* Mac Taylor and Don Flack take Officer Hopkins’ partner out to investigate the streets of a certain neighborhood for the men who robbed the jewelry store. Even the CSI team agrees that finding the suspects hanging out in the street to be “a long shot” (917. Today is Life) but through deductive reasoning the team is able to locate the neighborhood from which the offenders most likely came.

In the episode, the streets do not offer shelter and the deduction prospers. The suspects are found and one of them is arrested and the other shot by Jo as he attempts to shoot the gun he had already used to take a shot at Officer Hopkins. According to his friend, he had insisted that “he would not go back” (917. Today is Life) to jail, leaving him, in his mind, with the only option of dying at the hands of the police and CSI.

Whether this widens the sense of reassurance or works against it can be debated. These two offenders were found, but how many others may there be? According to the man arrested, the gun that was used in the jewelry store robbery was always kept in a certain mailbox. “All the kids in the neighborhood knew it was there” and the gun was available to all. According to the offender, the gun was “just checked out like a library book” and then “returned once whatever you needed it for was over.” (917. Today is Life) As the season ends, that gun in question confiscated, but the episode cannot promise that another gun will not take its place. Jo and Officer Hopkins shoot the offender on a correct basis, even if the in the case of Hopkins he mistakes Timothy Brown for the real offender (see p. 68-72).

These types of mistakes are alarming factors in *The Final Season*. The victims killed are later realized to be the wrong people. (As in *The Real McCoy* and in 917. Today is Life) The *it should've been me's* provide a sad form of consolation since the characters who are left to live must suffer with the trauma, or survivor's guilt, for the rest of their lives. Note be taken that Officer Hopkins (who made the mistake) is part of the NYPD and not of the team of CSI. The CSI are seen as superior and ideal characters to fight and solve crime, as my next example will show.

In the *CSI NY* series the characters are portrayed as sympathetic, loving yet at the same time vulnerable personas. The characters embody goodness in their mission to solve crime as

well as in their treatment of others. So the goodwill of the CSI reaches far outside their job description. Even if faced by personal trauma or as in the following, an incurable disease, the CSI strive towards a greater good and are examples of an ideal. An ideal, that perhaps moves away from the superior detective to a good detective, a human detective who stands for the goodness of society. This is different from the ideal societies of the Golden Age, in *CSI NY* the society can be seen as contaminated or traumatized, but the CSI are able to provide the viewer with hope of an ideal and consolation.

An example of this is, Sid Hammerback, the Crime Lab Coroner who has acquired millions of dollars from a patent he had invented. In *911. Command + P* ten New Yorkers are shown to receive letters with anonymous checks for one million dollars each. The anonymous donor is referred to as the “Guardian Angel.” Even though other NYC millionaires publicly take credit for themselves, Jo investigates the fingerprints left on one of the envelopes, which then lead back to Sid. Sid confides Jo that he has been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma and by anonymously donating the money to those who really needed. At the end of the episode Sid gives a long monologue to explain his reason for doing so to Jo:

These ten cases, they really stuck with me, Jo, I mean, because their losses only got worse; Th-Th-Th-They... they got pink-slipped or hit with back taxes or had to drop out of school. I just wanted to try and repair some of the damage, you know? ‘Cause, I mean, let’s face it. That’s something people in our business rarely get to do. So I decided to hand-deliver those checks because I wanted to personally hand someone hope. Some kind of joy. Of course, we all deserve that, but trust me, Jo, these folks deserve it so much more... And you know what, more than anything else, I wanted to reassure those people that somebody out there still understands there’s always more than one victim in a crime.” (911. Command + P)

Through Sid, the series states what we usually do not think about: that crimes always have more than one victim. Drunk drivers cannot know that their momentary irresponsibility can ruin families, the aftermath of the disappearance brought loss to boy who has not been born yet, and when two men from a bad neighborhood decided to rob the jewelry store, they did not know that it would be Timothy Brown's girlfriend who would suffer most.

I cannot argue that this would take place in real life, but I will argue for the message to be consoling and to pave way for contemplation. It is comforting to realize that someone recognizes this and finds his own peace in helping the victims' families. The series can also make the viewers think about the consequences of their own actions: do we realize how far the things we do reach? This portrayal of the ripple effect is new characteristic for the genre of police procedural, found now *CSI NY*. The primary victim usually not the only person affected. Partners, spouses, children, friends, and even those of the offender pay a price for the crime and even the CSI may take some cases more personally than others. If it were possible to realize all consequences of a chosen action, would to-be criminals go through with all their intentions?

Traumatic Aesthetic

I believe that one reason for the lack of proposed consolation is the traumatic aesthetic present in the series. The *CSI* narrative reflects traumatic narration and is often told through traumatic elements such temporality, fragmentation, disturbance, as well as by repetition and flashbacks. Crime fictions such as the *CSI* series are known to show traumatic repetitions, flashbacks, and inconclusive scenes of suspense or even terror, and the repetitive nature of the series holds an essence of a wound culture that crime and trauma narratives both traditionally offer. The plots often resurface repressed memories as well as bring justice to all victims of brutal crimes. The aesthetics of trauma are "marked by interruptions, temporal disorder, refusal of easy reader [in

the case of television, viewer] identification, disarming play with narrative framing, disjunct movements in style, tense, focalization or discourse, and a resistance to closure that is demonstrated in compulsive telling and retelling.” (Luckhurst 2008, 88-89) I will now show how these aesthetics of trauma are found in *CSI NY*.

The narration of crime fiction is similar to traumatic narration since both types use temporal time-shifting. This time-shifting or what Laplace refers to as *afterwardness* is seen in the episodes often as backtracking when an episode begins with a scene but before it can reveal what is fully happening the time shifts into for example, “72 hours earlier” as in *902. 2, 918 miles*. The whole episode returns to a time before the initial scene and then continues chronologically to reveal the final revelation. The scenes, like the one in *902. 2, 918 miles*, often begin with a hassle or action such as running or a chase. The action hooks the viewer and constructs a wonder about the reason for such disruption of peace. I am not arguing that it is the backtracking narration that makes the episode traumatic but rather what is shown and what effect the sudden backtracking has on the viewer. In *902. 2, 918 miles* the primary chase calms down into a still, murdered body 72 hours earlier. So, in other words, a scene of running, shouting and traffic noises *calms down* to an atrocity, murder. As an effect of backtracking, the viewer easily forgets the hassle, only to remember it again when story catches up with it right before the closure. (902. 2, 180 miles)

According to Luckhurst, this type of backtracking is seen as a traumatic aesthetic. The aesthetic enhances the attraction of the narratives as a result of the belatedness and so “the reader is always belatedly sorting and re-sorting narrative units or ‘motifs’ in to meaningful, sequential stories.” (Luckhurst 2008, 83) In each episode the viewer is presented with what the CSI find as evidence as well as introduced to the possible suspects. In their minds, viewers work together with the detectives to solve the crime. Traumatic narratives are often structured to have

regressive endings (those that conclude and provide an understanding to the narrative). It is argued narratives with regressive endings are the ones viewers often wish to replay in order to catch the important twists of the plot. Similar characteristics are found in the crime fiction genre, the final solutions shape a solution to what has happened. Luckhurst sees this type of narrative as traumatic rather than consolation to be provided to the viewer through understanding. (Luckhurst 2008, 83)

Working backwards to solve a crime is a generic typicality dating back to the stories of Dupin and Holmes. This research suggests that if backtracking is seen as traumatic as Luckhurst argues, the whole genre, not only contemporary crime fiction, may represent a narration of the traumatic. As is argued in 3.1. and 3.2. the generic attributes of crime fiction have remained the similar, it is a place for further study whether the traumatic can be only contained to contemporary fiction.

Secondly, fragmentation is another way used to represent trauma. Fragmentations on television are unreal and thus contained only to fiction because they are vividly shown to the viewer even if not possible to be witnessed so explicitly in real life. Examples of fragmentation and the disturbances caused by it are provided by static 911 calls that may break off, leaving the caller in immediate danger (902. *Where's the Smoke?*), slow motion scenes and blurred vision or fragmented, fast scenes that cannot be fully focused on. Slow motions, such as portrayals of a bullet breaking through glass or even through a human chest, are used to show to the viewer in great detail about what has happened. (904. *Unspoken*)

In addition to the 911 calls, the series uses fragmented conversations spoken over the police radio between dispatch and an officer in pursuit of a suspect. In *917. Today is Life* the radio conversation is static and is broken off momentarily as the two officers chase suspects down

alleys. The atmosphere and the mood are chaotic and the chaos only calms when the scene climaxes in a gunshot. After minutes of unnerving chase and unclear voices and visions, the silence builds suspense when there is no reply from either of the officers as dispatch repeatedly calls out to see if they are OK. (917. *Today is Life*) Immediately the viewer realizes that something is wrong and the quest for answers is begun.

Another example of unclear visions in the series is when Lindsay is hospitalized due to her previously described head injury. The viewer also sees only blurred, unclear visuals of Lindsay's to-be attacker. The use of unclear vision contains the viewer to solely Lindsay's point of view, and we are reminded of her severe physical trauma, a head injury. In contrary to Lindsay who actually believes the man to be Danny, the viewers feel suspense since she is in life-threatening danger. (904. *Unspoken*) The arousal of suspense and nervousness is an attribute of the genre. The feelings can be argued to be disturbing to the psyche and as I will explain next, disturbance is another traumatic aesthetic.

Thirdly, feelings of anxiousness and disturbance are often brought on by sound effects such as sirens, steam hissing, traffic, car honking alongside of distorted views of someone running. (See for example, 903. *2,918 miles* and 910. *The Real McCoy*) Traffic and even sirens are sounds that people living in large cities hear everyday, but in television episodes they are enhanced from being background noises to the foremost sound we pay attention to. Or then a normal activity such as ice-skating can create an eerie effect when the viewer is again given unclear imagery and the sound of metal on ice as in 901. *Reignited*. This sound is heard alongside of unclear visions of a murder being planned.

Another method used to represent trauma in fiction is the use of repetition. The series portrays multiple detailed animations of what has happened and crimes are often shown by the

CSI through crime scene reconstruction, (904. Unspoken) The lab constructs stimulations in order to figure out what happened, but to figure out what happened each crime has to be relived again step by step in order to acquire answers. In short, an episode may repeat a certain scene over and over again, or unravel a scene bit by bit by repeatedly taking the plot back to it. Episode 902. *Where's is the Smoke?* shows repetitive scenes of Leonard, the pyromaniac-arsonist, staring into burning fire. The effect of the repeating obsessive staring is unnerving to the viewer, and we are unaware of the reason. Later the viewer realizes that the scenes date back to Leonard's childhood, as his foster mother used to beat him in front of the fireplace and Leonard used to fire as something to take his mind of his pain. This childhood memory is classified as a motive for Leonard's violations.

Repetition is not contained to a single episode, as is the case in Leonard's fire, but also seen in the plot lines and characters. Offenders are often former inmates or at least have prior criminal records, guns are shown as weapons of choice and thirdly, the most common motive is listed as revenge.

On a larger scale, repetition is a generic attribute in serial crime fiction. Each episode shows with a crime or even multiple attacks on social norms, the plot wraps around research and detection and to a certain point answers are given. *The Final Season* does not leave a case unsolved and repetitively Mac is seen as the consoler of strangers, and he seeks to give the victims and their close ones closure after having experienced trauma. The morals of the CSI always back up the justice system and attempt to show that is not flawed but rather flourishes with those officials with good, solid intentions.

The fifth traumatic aesthetic shown through playing with temporality is the traumatic flashback. The first flashback of the season is Mac's memory of his shooting and his time at

hospital, or what he can remember. Simple, affectionate hand-holding with Christine takes him back to painful memories of her helping him learn to walk again and holding him up at the hospital. (901. Reignited) Mac cannot remember the actual accident, but he wants to know what happened, he wants to remember in order to understand what has happened to him. Mac continues to have flashbacks of his shooting and he hears gunshots and imagines seeing a pool of blood. (904. Unspoken)

Another episode full of traumatic flashback is *908. Late Admissions*, in which Lindsay travels to her childhood home in Montana, to witness an execution. The man on death row had shot and killed her childhood friends sixteen years ago and Lindsay herself had witnessed the shooting and lived through it by hiding in the bathroom of the café. (908. Late Admissions) The episode is touching and brings out facts about Lindsay's life that the viewer did not necessarily know before. The case of Lindsay shows a type of provided closure after sixteen years. Lindsay faces the criminal prior to his executions and asks "How much money did you get out of the cash register that day?" (908. Late Admissions) wishing to know how much her friends' lives were worth. The shooter replies: "What is it what you want? Absolution?" with a smear on his face. (908. Late Admissions) However, the criminal has a different attitude as the execution begins, and his final words are an apology: "I'm sorry for what I have done." (908. Late Admissions) Apologizing and showing remorse is a respectful step, and the viewer is left to believe that Lindsay received her closure.

Flashbacks are also used to recall Jo Danville's personal trauma. Jo's past trauma is revealed to the viewer when a man shows up and introduces himself to have her sister's heart. Jo's thoughts flash the viewer back to a phone call from her mother, in which she hears of her sister's accident: A drunk driver had killed her sister. She had been an organ donor and so immediately

her heart had been transplanted to a person in need. The recipient found Jo with the wish of getting to know his donor a little better. In his search for answers, the heart-transplant recipient ends up giving Jo some closure by letting her hear her sister's heart beating. (913. Nine Thirteen) Jo: "May I?" Heart recipient: "Of course." Jo leans her ear close to his chest and states with an air of acceptance and closure: "It is strong." Jo's sister's death does not define Jo in her daily life, but hearing her sister's heart beat brings consolation and a possibility of finally saying goodbye.

A third team member to relive trauma through flashbacks is Adam. As a side plot of *910. The Real McCoy*, Adam claims to volunteer at a nursing home on his days off, even though he is actually visiting his father who has Alzheimer's. Adam's father abused Adam when he was a child. As a victim of domestic abusive Adam remembers everything, even when his attacker has forgotten the abuse, and in this case the whole existence of his son. The disease has gone so far that his father does not even remember Adam anymore, and is in the belief that he his talking to his brother, Adam's uncle. (910. The Real McCoy) In the episode, Adam confronts his father about their past: "I relive it everyday, you kicked the crap out of me, tell me you remember." (910. The Real McCoy) During their conversation Adam realizes that his father was "just another case of history repeating itself." His father had abused him in the same way as he had abused Adam. The episode addresses the contemporary issue of domestic abuse and how it may live on from one generation to the next. If trauma is never addressed and understood in, it also ceases to stop. Adam's conversation shows the two ways of dealing with trauma, his father suppressed it and reflected his pain onwards, whereas Adam attempts to work his traumatic past out. Mac realizes Adam's dilemma and summarizes the situation with: "You want

acknowledgement or an apology, but with his tilting memory, you can't have that." (910. The Real McCoy)

When Mac seeks his own memories, Lindsay needs a reason and Jo wishes for a chance to say goodbye, Adam seeks recognition from his abuser. Each CSI team member opens his or her wounds in an attempt to come to terms with a past traumatic event. These are the moments that reassign agency to the characters, a question that had once taken over their lives is answered and understanding is the result. Luckhurst argues that "the compulsion to repeat, to dream or relive or relate the traumatic event over and over, is an attempt to bind this energy, to assimilate it, and return the psyche to a state of quiescence once more." (Luckhurst 2008, 83) The idea of this need for repetition is that with each recall or repetition, more and more control may be found.

In the introduction of this thesis, I briefly touched upon the feelings of the viewer and the consolation crime fiction is argued to convey. I cannot argue this trauma to be felt by all viewers, but in my opinion, contemporary crime fiction can be viewed as a platform on which we can contemplate our own traumas and perhaps find consolation for the troubles in our own lives. The motivation to watch episode after episode of crime fiction relates to the fact that "we love to consume other people's troubles and embarrassments, and this makes sense because hearing about others people's troubles makes us feel better about our own." (Miller 2011, 3) Luckhurst refers to this as the "repetition compulsion" and similarly to Plain (2008, 14), he argues to process of working through to be healthy: "individuals, collectives and nations risk trapping themselves in cycles of uncomprehending repetition unless the traumatic event is translated from repetition to the healthy analytic process of 'working through'." (Luckhurst 2008, 9) This suggests that nations that consume traumatic fictions or crime fiction such as the *CSI* series are in fact suffering from traumatic stress and the need for repetition (no matter if fictive) is a coping

method and a result of trauma. It is clear that at the face of a disaster we all go through different types of restoration activity attempting to comprehend, which may and should take its own time to be fully achieved. (Resick 2001, 118) Independent of whether the stressor is cultural or personal, each individual takes one's own time to heal and process the trauma. The *CSI* series' crimes and narrations take the consumer on multiple tours of repetition, the wound healing and then re-opening with each new episode.

Fiction, narrated by trauma can be ultimately questioned through its inability to be truly represented in film or realized in life. Take the examples of unclear, fragmented vision, the music played or the disturbing enhanced sound effects of skates on ice or sirens blaring, the viewer is not truly traumatized but the mood of the episode enhances a traumatized feeling.

The viewer is able to feel traumatized as a result of the traumatic aesthetic, sound effects and disruptive fragmentation thus the viewer must already know what trauma feels like. Past traumas of the viewers are relived through television series and crime fiction, such as *CSI NY*. It is impossible to express everything in the narrative or written form and for example, Holocaust accounts as well as other traumatic scenarios are always seen as disrupted narratives. (Luckhurst 2008, 80-81) This impossibility of the narrated is often seen in *CSI NY, The Final Season* for the viewer is given gruesome details and accounts of the crime, knowledge that at the time should be impossible to know since the mystery has not been solved.

Realistic Crime Fiction

Another attribute that gives reason to doubt the proposed consolation is the attempted realistic portrayal of the genre. Realistic portrayal is a significant characteristic of the police procedural subgenre. (Scaggs 2005, 125-126), Realistic effect augments the viewer in being able to relate

themselves to the characters and the series, but it also forms a realistic ideal of society. The ideal being that in *CSI NY* criminal activity takes place and the CSI work to restore and console and at the same time are examples of good, modern citizens whose personal lives have also reached a point of inner peace.

Realistic effect of the *CSI NY* series is created by group dynamics of the CSI, their unique personas and working together. Also, the multiple plot lines and investigations create realistic effect as well as the fact that not all crimes can be immediately solved. Tensions between characters are shown and provide realism to the narrative, as well add depth to the characters. (Scaggs 2005, 125-126) Contemporary fiction emphasizes “a particular setting or region and that reflect unique aspects of America’s varied and vast geography” (Ayers 2005, 37). Such as in the *CSI* series the detection takes place in real cities (Las Vegas, Miami, New York) and concerns real issues and challenges which each city has to offer. Plots of the crime fiction, such as *CSI NY*, include “terrorism, domestic or international conspiracies, distrust of government” (Ayers 2005, 36).

One of the ongoing side plots of *The Final Season* is the budding romantic relationship between Flack and the new homicide detective Lovato. Lovato is introduced in the second episode of the season, 902. *Where’s the Smoke?*, when she is transferred to homicide from narcotics after her cover has been blown. However, Flack is not the only whose love life is followed in *CSI NY*. In fact, personal issues are another character of the subgenre. Bertens notes that such issues often invaded the private lives of the 1990s police procedural detectives and the fact that personal time, time outside of detection was given to the detective was clearly something new in the genre. (Bertens 2001) In 913. *Nine Thirteen*, Lindsay discovers that she is

pregnant and in the final scene of the episode she confides Danny only to notice that her observant colleagues have already realized her pregnancy.

The second realistic effect of the police procedural is the tensions shown between the characters. An example of tension is shown between Mac and Jo. As often happens in real life, injury affects the relationships between people. Jo Danville is the first to question his superior status when she realizes that Mac has not recovered fully from the accident, and tension surfaces when she confronts him: "I'm used to you leading from the front." Mac does not take the judgment well and dismisses her but later, once he realizes he had been rude and out of line, he apologizes.

The third realistic effect is the acceptance of failure or at least temporary failure. Priestman argues that "the contribution to the realistic effect that such multiple plot lines create is significant, allowing for a balance of successes and failures in which not all the crimes investigated are actually solved" (Priestman 1990, 177). Cases that have already "gone cold" exist and always a few are left on the shelf when the trail of evidence runs cold. *The Final Season* provides the viewer with the cold case of Tommy Lewis. His assumed murder is reopened in *905. Misconceptions* when the main suspect of his disappearance is found murdered in the same neighborhood. The neighborhood in the episode is portrayed as very tight, almost still grieving for the lost boy: "The parents promised themselves they would never move, in case he comes looking for them." Mac tells the story of Tommy's disappearance to Flack as they stroll down the neighborhood where he disappeared twenty years ago. Mac himself had been assigned to the case back in the day, but as the episode moves forward the viewer is shown how far the police had been from the truth twenty years ago. However, the realistic effect of the cold

cases is shattered since *The Final Season* provides an answer and a culprit to all the mysteries at hand even if there may be some in the previous seasons that may have been left unsolved.

The realistic effect is brought to the police procedural with the usage of multiple plots lines such as the ones described above. However, Scaggs argues that it to be “ironic that multiple plot lines also form the foundation of the increasingly common procedural device of employing converging plot lines as a means of reaching narrative closure” (Scaggs 2005, 125). The realistic effect is lost when all find closure at a similar time, towards the end of the narrative. Similarly, even if the characters are placed in realistic relationships and discourses such as tensions are shown between them, it must be realized that they are still fiction and must hold within them unrealistic characteristics.

A criminal act, or the possibility of one, disrupts social order and in doing so automatically opens the way for trauma. The role of the detective and his team is to restore social order and bring the offender to justice. Pleasure and closure are elements that have been argued to be found by the viewers of crime fiction when a resolution is offered to the mystery at hand. As a viewer, we are able to work backwards from the crime towards a solution along with an expert team of CSI. We gain knowledge simultaneously with the CSI and are able to form our own opinions about the suspects questioned. At times, the viewer is given a glimpse of the crime and temporarily we may have more knowledge about the offender and their methods or reasons than the CSI. The crimes the CSI investigate are often straightforward and realistic (Scaggs 2005, 62), which gives us a possibility of relating to the victims, their close ones and sometimes even to the feelings of the perpetrator.

Trauma is present modern day culture, whether it is personal or an issue of the community. As the CSI struggle with their personal problems, Adam finds acceptance in his new

girlfriend's words: "We all come with baggage." (910. *The Real McCoy*) In Adam's case of domestic abuse the trauma is intensified with his father's Alzheimer's. Often offenders do not realize the full aftermath of the trauma they have caused. The lives of the victims, especially those who survive, and their close ones are changed forever.

The Final Episode "917. Today is Life"

In this section I will analyze the closing episode of *The Final Season* and also aim to show that all attacks against an individual or a culture violate order and the personal lives of the people as well as their close ones. *The Final Season* of *CSI NY* shows a final closure or a happy ending but I am arguing that wound culture still remains underneath the supposed consolation. The *CSI* series and other television crime series are unlike the previous types of crime fiction this thesis has discussed since they show an element of traumatic effect. This effect causes viewers to relate their own personal agendas to the episodes and the struggles of the victims, and find consolation when the CSI solve the crime and restore social order.

New York City as a setting cannot be described as ultimately calm or peaceful, but in any case the crimes of *CSI NY* disturb the social order of the city even more. Scaggs argues that for *CSI* the setting of Las Vegas to be crucial as it is the "epitome of materialism" (Scaggs 2005, 61). New York City is another large city, and every episode of *CSI NY* opens with shots of the city and its most famous trademarks such as the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building and the bridges. The city represents a very modern metropolitan.

The media co-exists with the notion of the modern city. The media is an outlet through which the truth should be spread, rather than a factor that stands in its way or places people in danger. Van der Kolk in his study of trauma states, "news media play a pivotal role in the ways that

societies deal with traumatized individuals. The media are the prime purveyors of traumatic news, and they determine whether victims are treated with compassion and understanding, or with scorn and neglect.” (Van der Kolk 1996, 42) Van der Kolk also argues for an appetite for traumatic narrative, especially for as long as the actual trauma does not personally involve the listener. (1996, 42) This happens with the case of Timothy Brown and Officer Hopkins.

Momentarily, the shooting of Timothy Brown turns the whole city upside down. It is up to the CSI to restore the disorder by solving the crime. Timothy Brown’s killing is a consequence of a jewelry store robbery. The two events wake up the whole city and show a community that is traumatized, a community that the CSI live in and intend to heal.

The media often reports disruption, making crime an issue of the whole city and not just of those personally involved. An example of this is seen in the final episode of the season, *917. Today is Life*. After the chaotic scene of two police officers chasing suspects, radio static and gunshots the series lets the media take narrative control. The media acts as a narrator to the crime and displays the crime from its point of view. The media states the shooting of Timothy Brown to be the second “fatality at the hands of the police” in a short period in the same area of NYC. (917. *Today is Life*) The contribution of the media to the case of Tommy Brown provokes a crowd of demonstrators demanding justice and information about the shooting.

At one point in the episode it is stated that 1,500 to 2,000 people are demonstrating and barricading the police precinct. A disorderly group actually forces itself inside the precinct, an ambulance gets over turned and the tensions are high. The demonstrators are seeking justice and the truth, but clearly show distrust in the police force, which must be quickly restored by Mac Taylor and his CSI. Objectively, any viewer can sense that the ways the New Yorkers are “peacefully” (it is not even peaceful) demonstrating are slowing down and harming the detection

process rather helping the department find out the truth. SWAT needed to rescue Officer Hopkins from the crowd. (917. *Today is Life*)

Even when faced with a problematic case and uproar from the people they serve, the CSI fight the pressure to think about politics and trust the science to tell them the truth. Finally, Mac and his team clear the officer. Evidence points out that Timothy Brown had had nothing to do with the robbery and had just come out of another jewelry store nearby and purchased an engagement ring. Officer Hopkins and Mac both agree that Hopkins had, even if following protocol, “killed the wrong man,” “an innocent, a good man.” (917. *Today is Life*) The actual suspect had been wearing the same clothes and had the same color of skin and ducked in to a deserted building as Tommy walked by. The real offender had shot at the police officer in question, and unlike what was first believed he did have a gun on him. (917. *Today is Life*)

917. Today is Life has a brilliant plot, since for a second the viewer actually doubts his or her own senses. The outbreak of the crowd and the initial evidence against officer Hopkins seems to be so strong that the gunshot the viewer has also witnessed can be questioned. Flack also feeds the viewer’s insecurity: “No one knows what happened in that alley except for Hopkins and Timothy Brown; we need evidence.” (917. *Today is Life*) The viewer knows, but our knowledge is questioned as the evidence at first points otherwise. The CSI give confirmation to the viewer’s senses when the evidence does indeed show that Officer Hopkins had been fired at, even though at least I doubted Hopkins’ word for a while. The demonstrating crowd and the viewer touched by the wise words of Timothy Brown’s girlfriend:

Uh... I can tell you that today is the worst day of my life. And it’s the worst day in the lives of Timothy’s family and the people who loved him. But it’s also the worst day in the life of Officer Hopkins. [crows murmurs: No] Hold on. Please. All of this [the demonstrating] has to stop. That officer didn’t wake up this morning, go to work, and set out to kill Tim. That happened because two men

decided they were gonna come to this neighborhood and steal what doesn't belong to them. They tried to take that policeman's life while he was protecting ours. And I hope... someday that maybe I can find a way to forgive Officer Hopkins. But I will never forgive those two men that came here with a gun. Because their actions took something from me a hundred times more valuable than all of the jewelry in that store. They stole the love of my life. (917. Today is Life)

The scene makes us sympathize with her loss. This is one time when Mac's apology "he was going to propose, I'm sorry" seems vain and hurt fills the viewers' hearts. Timothy Brown's family's and girlfriend's loss is soon forgotten as Mac finds his own silver lining and proposes to Christine. *The Final Season of CSI NY* shows a final closure or a happy ending but I am arguing that wound culture still remains underneath the supposed consolation.

The Final Season ties up knots and brings closure to the main characters of *CSI NY*. Side plots are also shown on the team member's days off. Flack visits his grandmother in (905. Misconceptions) and ends up finding a letter from his dead father. Mac is struggling with his aphasia (910.) and Jo is surprised by a visit from her dead sister's heart transplant recipient in 913. The characters are shown to receive closure to their own dilemmas.

The intended justice in detective fiction its in its closure and the ideology of the CSI is clear: "crime will always be punished" (Scaggs, 2005, 40). However, punishment does not help the victim recover from the crime and "for many victims, the loss of dignity, trust, often embarrassment or shame, and – if the offender is known – betrayal are constant companions" (Miller 2011, 161). In over coming the crime victims and their close ones must accept the horror of what has happened in order to move on with their lives.

In Miller's research on restorative justice none of the surviving victims saw moving on as closure and according to Miller, "Howard Zehr suggests that the word closure is often offensive

to victims (especially those who experience severe crimes) because it implies that ‘all can be put behind and the book closed, which is impossible’” (Miller 2011, 166). The terms closure and reassurance sound wonderful, but the closure brought on by each episode or a crime fiction narrative refuses to move forward, but rather goes on and on in the same circle reopening the wounds as they are superficially healed.

4. Conclusion

The popularity of television shows such as the *CSI* series have played a role in evolving a serious discourse such as trauma into a worldwide past time and an enjoyable activity. Is the enjoyment caused by the consolation each episode seems to offer? In this thesis, I have argued that the generically promised ideal of consolation attempts to provide momentary healing and represents a traumatized culture and a viewer who will never be fully healed nor consoled.

This thesis has introduced critics for and against the lack of proposed consolation. The certainties of solutions and their offers of consolation and closure are present within the genre of crime fiction. I will not claim that those critics who assume consolation to be mistaken, but rather have come to the conclusion that the trends of 21st century critics have sailed away from an assumed full consolation.

The facts and procedures of realistic crime fiction along with the personas of the characters make the experience of viewing the *CSI* series real and subjective. We accept the *CSI* as capable humans who have the intention of fixing a traumatized society. It is humanity what makes them most different from Golden Age detectives or the hard-boiled PIs, their own traumas and vulnerabilities. Most importantly, even though traumatic pasts may haunt the *CSI*, they still strive to accomplish good and clearly follow a moral code of the greater goodness and aim for the wellbeing of the society they live in.

Over the course of my research, I also noticed another trend. Rather than attempting to find superficial reassurance or consolation, crime fiction should address and talk about the psychological aftermath of the crimes. *The Final Season* addresses this aftermath through the traumatic stressors of the *CSI* and even more explicitly through plots such as *904. Unspoken*. Miller and her work with the restorative justice program often speaks of *the ripple effect*, or, in

other words, how far our actions and choices reach even when we are not fully aware of it. Perhaps, future of crime fiction may be shifting from the apparent reassurance of the resolution to the actual healing process needed to recover from trauma. In my opinion, this is a place for further study. The *CSI* series shows how trauma takes many forms and lives with us for a lifetime, but the presence of trauma does not make the viewers or the characters bad. Criminal action is seen as a choice and the bottom-line seems to be that brave, honest and hardworking people deserve happy endings.

What comes to the actions of Sid Hammerback, he shows how much more good will come out of giving rather than taking. To take a life or to take anything will cause pain to so many more than the perpetrator can initially realize. Obviously, serving criminals justice does not eliminate crime, but if the perpetrator were to realize the full effect of criminal action, would they think twice? The topics of criminal sentencing and what is thought of as proper punishment is a contemporary topic. It is argued that often criminals repeat criminal activity after doing time (as is seen also on *The Final Season*) and that the mere locking up of criminals does not eliminate the sufferings of the victim. Crime fiction addresses important and serious topics implicitly through entertainment and I believe that it should be held in high respect.

In conclusion, this research has shown crime fiction to narrate consoling endings, but the solutions to the crimes specified refrain from offering a solution to all. The *CSI* series shows a society that cannot eliminate criminal acts such as gang activity, rape, abuse or murder, but it offers a choice and a belief in a better today. The final consolation is not that all will be resolved, but how we all should make the best of what we have. Today being life, make the best of today.

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